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Holiness and Power in Syriac Hagiographic Collections

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INTRODUCTION

In the following pages, my aim is to offer some considerations and ideas about how hagiography has conceived and reworked the relationship between Holiness and Political Power; in particular, I am interested in investigating how this relationship has been expressed in and throughout a specific kind of documents, i.e. the collections of *Lives of Saints* preserved in Syriac.

Before starting the analysis, some clarifications are needed concerning the choice of the topic and the various levels of the study.

The research develops at three levels of study: (a) the philological level (the texts), (b) the narratological one (the texts in relationship with literature), (c) the ideological one (the texts in relationship with the historical background). For each one of these fields, a consistent tradition of studies already exists, but much more can be offered, in data and reflections.

In the binomial Holiness- Power, by the term **Power** I mean the political power in its various forms, expressed through the figures of all kinds of representatives – from the sovereign to the local ruler, from the aristocrat to the soldier, and so on -. More difficult is defining what I mean speaking of Holiness and, on the other hand, giving a definition of hagiography, as main field where the present research develops. What is **Holiness**? And who is the Holy Man?¹

Following Sofia Boesch Gajano, “holiness” - or “sanctity” - is basically the term *par excellence* to refer to the divinity; it can shift and indicate the condition of who, thanks to the exemplar life he leads, achieves a privileged relationship with God, becoming even a mediator between the humans and the divine.² In the Christian tradition, as Peter Brown pointed out, the “*Exemplar of all exemplars*”, is Christ, “*in whom human and divine had come to be joined*”³. The history then presents a succession of further exemplars: people, the holy men, who are supposed to make Christ accessible. So, the holy man, ἅγιος ἀνὴρ, is an imitator of Christ.⁴ This firstly happens through the martyrs; later, as the first chapters of the *Life of*

¹ The use of “holy” instead of “saint” was suggested by Brown (1971: 80-102), as this last term is compromise with the idea of the e.g. Catholic or Orthodox canonized sanctity. Cf. also Cameron 1999: 27. On the terminology related to the holiness in ancient languages, see e.g., among others, Boesch Gajano 1999: 4; Bremmer 2017: 44-47.

² Boesch Gajano 1999: 3.

³ Brown 1983: 6. Peter Brown, indeed, is the scholar who more than everyone analyzed the figure and construction of the holy man; see, among his contributions on the topic, Brown 1971b, id. 1982, id. 1983, id. 1995.

⁴ Cf. Kosinski 2016: 6; Delehaye (1927: 122-123) proposes to define “holy”, in absence of a formal canonization, the man who is venerated. Brown (1982: 153-165) suggests a sociological interpretation for the rise of the figure of the ἅγιος ἀνὴρ in Late Antiquity: the success of this figure should be linked to the institution of patronage. The

Pachomius demonstrate, this “*sequence of exemplars*”⁵ realizing - i.e. making real - the man before the Fall, the image of God, does not end: the monk is the new holy man, sign of a re-adaptation of the representation of Christ in a changed world and times.⁶

To quote Boesch Gajano, the hagiographic production appears as

“consapevole costruzione della memoria storica di una realtà i cui protagonisti sono personaggi eccezionali, eventi straordinari, luoghi sacri. Questa realtà storica viene fissata in testi, rappresentazioni, monumenti, oggetti, concepiti per incidere nella vita religiosa, ecclesiastica, sociale, di individui e di comunità: il ricordo del santo serve a promuovere o confermare la venerazione sua o delle sue reliquie o del luogo in cui esse sono conservate, divenendo così strumento di edificazione spirituale, di proselitismo, di prestigio”.⁷

These words at the same time open and answer to another interrogative: what does distinguish **hagiography** from other literary genres?

The answer is: the function, the aim. Opening the first volume of his monumental collection “*Hagiographies*”, Guy Philippart evokes Genicot, and re-proposes this latter’s criteria to use in order to define the hagiographic genre: the aim (“*le but*”, the purpose to which the document has been created) and, in addition, form and contents (“*la forme et le contenu*”).⁸ Therefore, the aim of the hagiographer is

patron had the function of interceding for the rural community with the outside world, especially the city; the role was usually a prerequisite of the aristocrats or military classes; when the aristocratic and military leadership fails, there is necessity to fill the gap. In this “*hunts for patrons*” (ibid. 158; id. 1971: 86), the holy man is the most suitable figure to assume the role: he is stranger enough to act as judge in the community; he has enough authority to act as mediator with the mighty; he has also a privileged relationship with God, as the miracles he performs demonstrate. Brown’s fascinating reconstruction has actually some limits: the hypothesis limits the collocation of the holy man in rural communities, impeding to extend the figure to other realities as for instance the city, where the holy man exists as well (cf. Browning 1981: 118, Rydén 1981: 106-113); some scholars are sceptic on the non-religious emergence of the holy man proposed by Brown (cf. Chadwick 1981: 11-24); in particular, some contested to Brown that it was not possible to propose a univocal model of holy man, but actually a variety of figure potentially fitting with the category exist (cf. Whitby 1987: 309-317); finally, a recurrent critic moved to Brown was the lack of an adequate approach to the hagiographic sources (cf. Cameron 1999: 37-39; Rousseau 1999: 47).

⁵ Ibid. 7.

⁶ Ibid. 10-16.

⁷ Boesch Gajano 1999: 37

⁸ Philippart 1994: 11; Genicot 1972: 9

to create a work on “*how to attain the sanctity*”⁹; all that considered, it is easy to accept the idea of hagiography as a path moving from the reality to the model, and not vice versa, in order to constantly propose new exemplarities, through narrative forms suitable for the purpose.¹⁰

The relationship between Power and Holiness can be analyzed looking at it from two perspectives. On the one hand, from inside, considering how this relationship has been expressed and developed through the narrative(s) – i.e. inside the text(s), in the representation of the dynamic of interrelation between the two or more representatives of the two parts-. On the other hand, from outside, the same relationship can be considered and eventually analyzed as a mirror of the socio-political context in which the hagiographic has been produced or transmitted.

In the Syriac field, studies on the relationship with the political power exist; I just mention a recent book by Wood, “*We Have No King But Christ*”, in which the topic of the link of some Syriac hagiographic and apocryphal works to the political context of production of the same is underlined;¹¹ looking at the Eastern Syriac tradition, one cannot avoid a reference to the commentary by Joel Walker to the edition of the story of the Persian martyr Qardag,¹² and to the contribution by Payne, “*A State of Mixture*”, more generally focused on the society during the Sassanian empire.¹³

The innovation of the present research lies in the choice of looking at the Holiness- Power topic and at the hagiographic tradition in general in a new perspective, focusing not only on the hagiographic texts as individual elements but also on the texts as part of a particular genre of documents, i.e. the hagiographic collections.

The idea of investigating the Syriac Hagiographic Collections arose reading an article by André Binggeli.¹⁴ Binggeli focused on the peculiarities of the collections in Syriac, compared to the same kind of documents in other and more studied traditions, as in particular the Greek one: as I will better show later, Syriac collections seem to be randomly organized, without following a common pattern or scheme. Indeed, each collection is an *unicum* and must be analyzed as such: its structure is the outcome of the specific aim and choice of its “author”, the collector; the reasons guiding the selection of texts to gather and even the order of these ones must be investigated case by case. Therefore, the focus on the hagiographic collections will allow a better understanding of the individual hagiographical texts; indeed,

⁹ Kosinski 2016: 16.

¹⁰ Cf. Boesch Gajano 1998: 826

¹¹ Wood 2010

¹² Walker 2006

¹³ Payne 2015

¹⁴ Binggeli 2012: 49-75

these last ones are not stand-alone elements, but an integral part of a combination of texts, whose significance is to be discovered and verified. I embrace Binggeli's idea that it is fundamentally inappropriate to analyse a hagiographical text (exclusively) apart from the literary context in which it is located. Beside its independent life, each text has, indeed, its own value inside the hagiographic collection, of which it became an integral part (in most cases, on a later stage).

Part I.1 will be devoted to the analysis of selected collections; my purpose is to go on in the analysis of individual collections, following the way traced by Binggeli, aiming also at gathering and furnishing further material for a desideratum: a future history of the constitution of Syriac hagiographic collections.

In the **Part I.2** of the present work, I will approach the hagiographic material by a point of view which is linked to some newly arisen perspectives of research. In the very recent years, indeed, a new line of investigation on hagiographic texts has arisen, of which even my study is part, although with marginal and limited contributions; the basis idea is to analyze the hagiographic text using categories and methods typical of the **literary analysis**. If the Bollandists' studies had focused on the historicity of the saint and of his tale, since a couple of years the hagiographic text has been re-evaluated as literary work. According to this new perspective, recent studies have opened the way to new possible perspectives of research; I think, for instance, to the possibility of putting in relation hagiographic material with texts belonging to other literary genres and even other traditions, as the non- or pre- Christian ones. This literary analysis applied to hagiography is possible if one considers hagiography as strictly linked in a mutual relationship to the other literary genres, by the point of view of the expressive means it uses; the originality of hagiography, indeed, does not reside in the means but in the religious and edifying aims.¹⁵ I can mention here, as example, the considerations offered by Marc van Uytfanghe about a common "hagiographic discourse" shared by a variety of different texts from the same epoch, early Roman Imperial Age and Late Antiquity, but belonging to different traditions, Christian and non-Christian.¹⁶ An even more broad approach to hagiographic literature is the one at the basis of the Novel Saints ERC Project, of which my research is part. The original aim of the project is to investigate the reception of the Greek and Latin ancient novels, looking in particular at the Late Antique and early Medieval hagiographic narratives as main place where searching for novelistic elements, in a period – which goes

¹⁵ These are some of the considerations proposed, for instance, by Luongo (1998: 7).

¹⁶ Cf. Van Uytfanghe 2011: 35-70. The author identifies the element characterizing what he defines the "hagiographic discourse" in: 1) characters in a specific relation to God or to the divine; 2) a stylization, both historical and literary; 3) a performative function of the text, which aims at persuading, defending, idealizing, exemplifying, promoting ideas; 4) use of archetypes connected to the concept of ἀρετή-*virtus* (virtue) and ἀρεταί-*virtutes* (miracles; cf. also, on this last point, De Certeau 1968: 207-209). According to the extant documents, the first work which seems to be an example of this hagiographic discourse, presenting a combination of the four elements, is the *Life of Moses* by Philo of Alexandria.

from the 3rd/4th to the 11th/12th century- when the novelistic genre lives a sort of crisis and nearly disappears.¹⁷

From the reading of the texts and from their contextualization within the collections, some questions and observations arise, concerning the literary development of Holiness-Power topic and the historical implications that its presence, relevance and expressions carry.

At a *literary* level, when the story presents a relationship between a saint and a representative of the political power, the analysis of how this relation is put on stage and of what kind of interaction between the parts was portrayed (also considering the differences in portraying Christian and non- Christian sovereigns), and what outcome(s) it had, aims at identifying possible patterns applicable to more than one text. Furthermore, if one takes into account that Syriac hagiography develops both under the Roman Empire and under the Sasanian kingdom, the possible differences between these two different situations, looking at the Holiness-Power relationship as portrayed in hagiography, can be traced. Indeed, if the Roman Empire early converts to Christianity, Christian people in the Persian Empire will always be a minority: how this (differently) translates in the hagiographic texts produced in the two different areas?

At a *historical* level, considering that most texts do not provide a truthful version of the history, the reasons of this reworking of history and well as the influence and consequence these legends have had on history in turn can be investigated.

Last, at a level of *analysis of collections*, the structure of these ones should- and, I guess, they usually do- say something about the intent of the collector, his and his audience's cultural background or the historical situation at the moment of the production, with special attention to the political dynamics that a text portraying the Holiness-Power relationship can reflect.

These and much more questions - some other will emerge, here and there, in the dissertation - demonstrate that the Holiness-Power topic is a treasure trove of information and interest. It is a mirror of historical situations, though it is not the reality. The relationship always undergoes adaptations and

¹⁷ Some exemplifications of this kind of approach can be traced in a couple of contributions by Bossu-De Temmerman-Praet on the *Passio Caeciliae* (Bossu and others 2015 and 2016), and in the article concerning the "Martyrs" in the forthcoming volume edited by De Temmerman on the ancient biographical genre (De Temmerman 2019). For the application of this new methodologies in Syriac studies, to Syriac texts, I can mention, e.g., Krueger article on the "*typological figuration*" in the *Religious History* by Theodoret of Cyrrhus (Krueger 1997), and the contribution by Ruani on the Syriac tradition on the *Acts of Thecla* and their secondary characters in the forthcoming volume on the *Literary reception of Thecla* (Ruani 2018?).

reworking, according to the aim of the hagiographer. Indeed, as Kosinski - following Elliot - notes, "*hagiography espouses ethical, rather than historical, truth*".¹⁸ All that can be object of investigation.¹⁹

Philological studies have known a great evolution in the last two centuries; actually, the application of these new approach to the Eastern languages and traditions is a very recent achievement. Without considering the major problem of approach to the texts in general – the everlasting question and problems concerning the application of the Lachmann method and the doubts about the most appropriate kind of critical edition to offer -, what interests here is, in particular, the philological approach to hagiographic texts.²⁰

By the word "hagiography" we usually indicate the complex of sources dedicated to the saints, to their story and venerations;²¹ the same term, on the other hand, is also used to refer to the critical exam of these sources.²² The object of hagiography is anyway the saint.²³ The historical approach to hagiographical texts began in the Bollandist milieu, at the end of the 19th century.²⁴ Before then, the

¹⁸ Kosinski 2016: 16; cf. Elliot 1987: 6, Cameron 1991: 92. On the similar concept of "memoria tendenziosa", applied not only to hagiography, see Canetti 2005: 152.

¹⁹ In recent years, the "rhetoric of power", especially (but not only) the one expressed by Christian authors, has attracted the interest of scholars; preceded by the fundamental works by Averil Cameron (e.g. Cameron 1991), today we can enjoy the useful collective volume edited by Frakes and others (2010), focusing on the interactions between religion and rhetoric in Late Antiquity.

²⁰ The last and extremely useful instrument for understanding the evolution of philological studies, their new achievements and consequent application of these latter to the Eastern languages and traditions, is the *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction* (COMSt), a collective volume aiming at presenting to a wide audience the state of the art in codicology, paleography, textual criticism, cataloguing, and manuscript conservation applied to Eastern languages. The Introduction, indeed, also translates into a kind of manual for each scholar wanting to approach the philological studies in Eastern traditions, as the Syriac one.

²¹ Boesch Gajano (1999:39) separates the sources in: witnesses left by the saints themselves (among them a further distinction between the ones personally recorded and the one dictated or later recorded by eyewitnesses) and external witnesses, linked to the memory of the contemporaries (oral sources, at first, later transcribed).

²² On the concept of "critical hagiography", see also Delehay 1976.

²³ For a definition of the field, see, among others: Aigrain 1953: 7; Kosinski 2016: 11; Talbot 1996: vii; Hinterberger 2000: 139-140; Van Ommeslaeghe 1981: 158; Kazhdan 1991: 897; Kötting 1960; Oligier 1948.

²⁴ The *Société des Bollandistes* had actually started its activity centuries earlier, and in the 17th century (1643) the first volumes of *Acta Sanctorum* had been published; although the *Acta Sanctorum* project, at this stage, was still characterized by the search for the historical truth (in order to deurate the Catholic faith from legendary saints), it is anyway considered as the starting point of the "scientific hagiography". It is two centuries later (since 1882), under the direction of De Smedt and thanks in particular to the fundamental contribution by Hyppolite Delehay,

status of high literature had been negated to hagiography; on the other hand, the post- Enlightenment historiography perceived hagiography as too much standardized and lacking in historical perspectives to be worthy of analysis. The Bollandists propose a new comprehension of hagiography; they also furnish the methodology and instruments that will be the necessary basis for the following studies. Despite this new critical method in approaching the hagiographic document, a confessional and in some way apologetical perspective guided the Bollandist activity; this emerged in their interest in the historicity of the saints, aiming at the final goal of eliminating the veneration of mythical and unhistorical figures.

The Bollandists introduced and applied for the first time in late 19th c. the methodology of literary critics and philology to hagiographic texts. On the other hand, new historical perspectives were elaborated after the Second World War, when every theological tendency was set aside, and the hagiographic texts were considered in their double dimension of cultural product and historical source.²⁵ Hagiography is by now considered as an important source for economic, social, political, cultural history, for topography and history of mentality: all these fields did not meet the interest of other literatures, so that the hagiographic documentation is a fundamental source of information.²⁶ The works of Peter Brown are among the most influent from this point of view; after his *“The Cult of Saints”* (1981), the attention to

that the “critical hagiography” re-gains strength. The introduction to the first volume of *Acta Sanctorum Novembris* (1882: 2-4) traces the new editorial guide-lines for the series, with a particular attention to the philological aspects of the edition and to the various versions of a same work: it is an idea of hagiography taking advantage of other fields, paleography, codicology, philology, archeology, iconography, liturgy, toponymy, sociology. It is in the same period that the revue *Analecta Bollandiana* is created, in order to furnish editions and studies on texts absent from *Acta Sanctorum*, or to complete with supplements the already existent ones. The same years see the publications of the fundamental databases *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* (BHL, completed in 1901), *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* (BHG, completed in 1909), and *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis* (BHO, 1910). For a complete overview of the story of the Bollandist activity, see Saxer 1984: 334-345; Saxer identifies three periods in the story of the Society: a Golden Age (17th - beginning 18th c.), an Interim (late 18th- end 19th c.), the Restoration of critical hagiography (starting from 1882).

²⁵ On the evolution of hagiographic studies and the new perspectives of study appeared in the 1960s-1970s and still valid and in use, see, among others, Boesch Gajano 1976: 7-48, id. 1999: 119-130; Scorza Barcellona 2000; Kosinski 2016: 11-13.

²⁶ After the pioneering work by Rudakov (1917), the 1965 is an important year: Graus starts using hagiographic sources to acquire information on the Merovingian Age, about which other attestations were poor; in the same year, Orselli published her basic study on the patron saint; Halkin 1971; Patlagean 1968, id. 1983; Talbot 1996; Garzya 1998; Geary 1996; cf. Boesch Gajano 1999: 119-130 Kosinski 2016: 13

the social, cultural and anthropological dimension of holiness becomes unavoidable.²⁷ Scholarship began to look then at the Lives of Saints from a strictly philological, historical and socio-anthropological point of view. So, the way of looking at the interest and relevance of the hagiographic text had changed: it was no longer perceived exclusively as a confessional (and so, historically untruthful and literary not interesting) work, but as a cultural product whose importance was fundamental also in the historical studies.

Talking about the story and evolution of philology and hagiography, we usually refer to the Western worlds, i.e. to the Greek and Latin traditions. If we have a look at the Syriac tradition, it seems to perceive a slowness on the development and in the application of the new achievements of the textual criticism applied to hagiography. First, I notice a lack of attempts to offer a complete and systematic discussion on Syriac hagiography before the rather recent articles by Sebastian Brock, published in 2008 and 2011, which offer an overview of Syriac hagiographic material,²⁸ and a collective volume on Syriac hagiography (*Hagiographie Syriaque*) published in 2012 the French *Société d'Études Syriaques*,²⁹ which is introduced by Muriel Debié with some important reflections on the evolution of Syriac studies in this field.³⁰ Before that, in the past decades, we primarily had comments and editions of single texts, some information at the level of manuscript tradition that we can find in Baumstark,³¹ and at a level of history of literature in some compendiums of Syriac literature.³²

At a level of contents and historiography, in 1999 the *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* catalogue completed its database of saints with the two volumes on the Eastern Churches;³³ the overview on the Syriac holiness

²⁷ The 1981 is also the year of publication of another fundamental volume, *La sainteté en Occident au Moyen Age*, by Vauchez.

²⁸ Cf. Brock 2008 and id. 2011. Maybe a first, dated attempt in this direction can be traced in the chapter that Duval dedicates to the hagiographic literature in his *Literature* (Duval 1899: 121-165)

²⁹ Cf. Binggeli 2012

³⁰ Cf. Debié 2012: 9-48

³¹ Baumstark 1922

³² See e.g.: Chabot 1935: 40-43 (on Martyr Literature), 156-159 (on Hagiographic narrations); Ortiz de Urbina 1958: 180-191; even more difficult to trace a coherent path in Baumstark's *Geschichte* (Baumstark 1922): see pp. 28-29 (on the Martyrs from Edessa), 55-57 and 136-137 (on Persian Martyr Acts), 93-100 (on Greek martyrdoms and other "legends").

³³ See BSO (*Bibliotheca sanctorum Orientalium*) 1999

was completed, then, in 2004 with the publication of the still useful volume dedicated by Jean Maurice Fiey to the Syriac saints.³⁴

Indeed, the recent contributions by Brock and Debié are the proof that, in the last years, we have assisted to a renovated interest in the hagiographic field among the historians of Late Antiquity and scholars interested in Syriac culture.

Syriac hagiography developed within a millennium, from the 4th to the 14th century, with a special climax in the Late Antique period, i.e. before the Arab conquests of the 7th century. As Brock rightly highlights, one has to take into account two basic considerations. First, Syriac hagiography consists both of works written in Syriac and of texts translated from other languages (especially Greek, but also Coptic, Middle Persian, Arabic)³⁵. Second, starting from the 5th century on, as a consequence of the Christological controversies, the Syriac tradition is to be articulated into three branches: the tradition of the Church of the East, in the Sasanian Empire; the Syrian Orthodox one, mainly - and originally - in Syria/Mesopotamia, a region that was part of the Roman Empire in the 5th century; a less consistent Chalcedonian (Melkite or Monothelete) literary tradition, spread until the 9th century circa, when these communities ceased writing in Syriac.

All that stated, as Muriel Debié observed, actually a real category of “**hagiography**”, used for designating either texts about saints and the study on the saints, their cult and the texts concerned with it, did not exist in Syriac until the 19th century; from 19th century onwards, scholarship recognized to hagiography an independent status as discipline of study, putting it in contrast with history, in order to distinguish fiction from reality, unhistorical and unfaithful narrations from the historical ones.³⁶ Actually, if the concept of hagiography originates just in the 19th century and it is conceived of in contrast with history, it is to be noted that probably hagiography and history were not conceived as distinct fields in Antiquity. Indeed, Syriac historians and chroniclers used hagiographic documents as well as the historical ones as sources, without considering them of less interest or reliability.³⁷ The modern concept of hagiography has long time looked at the “historicity” of the hagiographic material, trying to discover whether a text

³⁴ Fiey 2004. New instruments and tools are today available, in the Syriac field, starting from <http://syriaca.org>, the Syriac Reference Portal, “a digital project for the study of Syriac literature, culture, and history”, as the authors present it, which provides both a digital catalogue of saints or holy persons venerated in the Syriac tradition (*Qadishe*, i.e. “saints” in Syriac) and the so-long expected *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Syriaca Electronica* (BHSE), focused on Syriac hagiographic texts. BHSE is the “child” of Peeters’ *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis* (1910), now dated and in need of revision and improvements.

³⁵ On the Greek- Syriac and Syriac- Greek transmission, see e.g. Brock 1977.

³⁶ Debié 2012: 9-10.

³⁷ Cf. Debié 2012: 21.

was to be considered historically reliable or not.³⁸ A change in this attitude occurs in the 1960s-1970s, when the dimension of the literary creativity of the hagiographer, on the one hand, and the attention to hagiographies as sources for social and cultural history, on the other one, become the focus of hagiographic studies.³⁹

Editions of Syriac hagiographic texts started already in the 18th century, thanks to Assemani and his *Acta Sanctorum Martirum Orientalium et Occidentalium*.⁴⁰ At the end of the 19th century, Paul Bedjan published an immense quantity of hagiographic material in the seven volumes of *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (AMS)⁴¹. To them, we should add the *Acts of the Palestinian Martyrs* edited by Cureton in 1861,⁴² and a great number of editions of individual texts, thanks to the indefatigable activity of François Nau, Peeters, Kugener, Brooks, Guidi, Agnes Smith Lewis – this last one being the author of a collective edition of a selection of stories of holy women-, and others.⁴³ Thanks to these editions, most of the extant hagiographic (and not only hagiographic) narrations were made available; but these first editions are still characterized by a lack of attention to the elements and criteria of textual criticism that are the unavoidable basis on which critical editions are prepared today. For a definitive application of the textual critical approach to Syriac hagiographic texts, we have to wait the second half of the 20th century. In the Seventies, Brock started publishing some short texts, as the *Life of Maximus the Confessor* (1973) or *Martyrdom of the Persian martyr Candida* (1978), followed, for instance, in his endless work, by the *Life of John of Dailam*, in 1981-82, and, more recently, that of Epiphanius (2001) and Phokos (2013).⁴⁴ Now, critical editions of single hagiographic texts are available and other ones are in progress. Among the most important already available ones, one can mention the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, by Phenix and Horn,⁴⁵ the editions of some late Persian Martyr Acts for CSCO by Florence Jullien,⁴⁶ the *History of Mar Qardag* by Walker.⁴⁷

³⁸ Cf. Debié 2012: 28; Delehaye 1921: 13, who classifies Passions according to their degree of historicity.

³⁹ Debié 2012: 19-31; cf. the contributions by Peter Brown (1971b, 1982, 1995).

⁴⁰ Assemani 1748

⁴¹ Bedjan 1890-1897

⁴² Cureton 1861

⁴³ Cf. e.g. Nau 1899, id. 1900a, id. 1900b, id. 1901, id. 1902, id. 1905, id. 1910, id. 1914; Brooks 1923-1925, id. 1925; Guidi 1881, id. 1884, id. 1885, id. 1904; Kugener 1902a, id. 1902b; Peeters 1925b, id. 1925c, id. 1931; Smith Lewis 1900

⁴⁴ See Brock 1973, id. 1978, id. 1981-82, id. 2001, id. 2013.

⁴⁵ Horn and Phenix 2008

⁴⁶ Cf. Jullien F. 2015

⁴⁷ Walker 2006

The necessity of a rigorous philological approach to the hagiographic texts, which was the central point of the hagiographical studies since the Bollandist Age at least – and in particular, starting from the second half of the 19th century - results in the **Part II** of this dissertation; Part II is, indeed, the edition and translation of four selected hagiographic texts, chose among the ones preserves in the analyzed collections. Three of the selected texts are Persian Martyr Acts, originally Syriac works: the *Acts of Barhadbešabba*, the *Acts of Badmā*, the *Acts of Miles, Aboursam and Sinay*. The fourth text, the *Acts of Christopher and his companions*, was probably originally written in Greek, and then translated in Syriac. The reasons guiding my choice are mainly linked to a philological lack; recent editions are not available and the existing editions and translations – the most recent ones dating to a century ago - are not rigorous by a philological point of view or, in the best cases (see i.e. the *Acts of Christopher's* edition by Popescu), are incomplete by the point of view of the manuscript witnesses consulted and used. From these observations, the idea to propose new editions of the texts, more accurate in the philological aspects, and followed by the first English translation of all the proposed works.

The renovated interest in Syriac Hagiography is also demonstrated by the attention paid to the Eastern Syriac martyr tradition.

The interest in these originally Syriac texts started already in the 18th century, with the already mentioned edition of the *Acts* by Assemani, and then in the 19th-beginning 20th c. especially thanks to the already mentioned Paul Bedjan and his AMS, and to the contributions by Braun (1915) and Hoffman (1880).⁴⁸ Actually, we have to wait the 1967 and Wiessner to have an overview and an attempt of reconstruction of the tradition behind the texts, the opportunity to consider them as a collection or at least, more likely, a series of different group of texts conceived together as an *unicum*, or not.⁴⁹

Adam Becker is the general editor of the Gorgia Press series *Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac. Texts and Translations*, which, since 2009, is publishing new critical editions and English translations of some Persian Martyr Acts.⁵⁰ The interest on this kind of martyr literature (the Persian Martyr Acts) in Syriac hagiographic studies lies, in particular, in the fact that these are Syriac original and non-translated sources; indeed, most of them have also been translated into other languages, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic, even Greek, which demonstrates the extraordinary exchange of information and texts between different linguistic traditions; to that, we should add the interest linked to the information these texts

⁴⁸ Assemani 1748, Bedjan 1890; cf. Braun 1915, Hoffman 1880.

⁴⁹ Wiessner 1967

⁵⁰ At today, the series counts seven volumes: *The History of Holy Mar Ma'in* (Brock 2008), *The Story of Mar Pinhas* (McCollum 2013), *The Martyrdom and History of Blessed Simeon Bar Sabba'e* (Smith 2014), *The Martyrs of Mount Ber'ain* (Brock 2014), *Persian Martyr Acts under King Yazdgird I* (Herman 2016), *The History of the 'Slave of Christ'* (Butts and Gross 2017), *The History of Mar Behnam and Sarah* (Smith and Mellon Saint-Laurent 2018).

provides about the social and historical situation of the Sasanian Empire, if not during the age when the martyr protagonists were persecuted, at least for the period when the texts were produced.⁵¹

The studies by Wiessner are still mentioned and constantly reused by scholars; we have to admit that, unfortunately, his work is still unsurpassed, and though in the field of the edition of texts much has been done in recent years, and though a compendious on the available Acts and editions masterfully done by Brock is now available,⁵² an updated general and systematic reflection on the Persian Martyr tradition and on its development is still missing. Anyway, in order to lead the discourse undertaken by Wiessner to conclusion, I think that a contribute like the one I present, even in its exiguity, can be useful to provide new material in this field; my study, indeed, aims to look at the PMA as texts (providing critical editions) as well as in the context of the hagiographic collections.

⁵¹ More bibliography on the Persian Martyr Acts, even in relation to their translations in other languages, will follow, see p. 86 (n. 222) and 149-154.

⁵² Cf. Brock 2008

PART I
STUDY

Part I.1

The Collections

1. Production, Transmission, Reception: An Introduction

If we take into account the different moments of the life of a hagiographic text, i.e. its production, transmission, reception, we can notice that the text itself conveys different meanings that reflect the various aims guiding the actors of each phase, i.e. the author, the translator, the collector, the reader. All these meanings are part of the history of the text itself and need to be analysed in order to understand the latter.⁵³

The first moment is obviously the **production**, i.e. the writing of the text. As the proper outcome of the activity of an author, the meaning and reasons why a text has been produced must be searched in the cultural world of the author himself; at the same time, they will reflect this world - as I will show, the authorial intent is revealed through the narratives devices, features and literary motifs; I will devote most of the following chapter to that topic.

A second fundamental phase is the **transmission** of a text. By the term transmission one can mean both the translation into Syriac of a narrative originally written in another language, and/or the integration of the narrative itself within a group of other texts of the same - or similar- genre, constituting what we call a **hagiographic collection**. A text preserved within a collection is supposed to reveal the meaning it has for the collector who selected it; the authorial intent and the meaning that the author of the narrative has given to his product persist; the collector's intent has to be interpreted as an addition to this one - or a transformation of it. As I will suggest, not only the presence of a text in a collection but even its position therein may reveal the intent of the gatherer.

One should place the act of **translation** between the two above-mentioned phases of production and collection. The translation is a fundamental step in Syriac hagiographic tradition, which is mostly based on texts originally written in other languages such as Latin, Greek, and Coptic.⁵⁴ The translation cannot be clearly ascribed to one of the two previously mentioned phases - i.e. production and transmission; it would be better to say that it is in some way ascribable to both of them, as the translation is, on the one hand, a productive-authorial act, while, on the other, it pertains to the transmission of a text. The evidence that the translation act is an authorial operation and, by consequence, the translated text is a new literary work, different from the original one, clearly emerges in the cases of non-literal

⁵³ Binggeli 2012: 49-50

⁵⁴ Part of Sebastian Brock's studies are dedicated to the question of translations – in particular from Greek - into Syriac; see, among his numerous articles on this topic, Brock 1977: 406-422; id. 1979: 69-87; id. 1982: 17-34; id. 1983: 1-14; id. 1996: 251-262; id. 1998: 371-385; id 2005: 11-34; id. 2007: 935-946; id. 2015: 98-124

translations; whether we are dealing with a voluntary or an involuntary innovation, done by mistake, this leads us to consider the translation as an independent phase in the life of a hagiographic text.⁵⁵

Finally, the audience receiving the text could find in it a further meaning. In the case of texts transmitted within collections, the **reception** phase is deeply connected to the transmission phase; the collector usually produces his collection in order to please, instruct or guide a certain public; so, the choice of the texts to be inserted, their translation and even their copy with possible modifications of the original ones are guided by the collector's sensitivity to meet the needs and tastes of the readers. In such cases, we will not expect a different perception of the text by the audience's side. Actually, this keeps being true as long as the collection remains in the milieu of its original supposed recipients, the ones whom the collector addressed. Indeed, I will present cases of collections later transferred to a milieu different from the one for which they were originally conceived, at an ideological-theological level. In these cases, the meaning and value that a specific text has for the reader is different from the one it had for the collector and for the recipients he supposed to address; we clearly understand this through some marginal polemical notes the later readers have added to confute a story they thought false or even heretic.⁵⁶

So, a text is enriched in and through every step of its life; every phase can and often does provide it with new possible meanings, linked to the new aims the text has in its new situation(s). This means that the authorial intent does not disappear, but the translator, the collector, the reader himself participate in adding further aims and meanings to the text. The new meanings added by the collector or even more evidently by the reader do not overshadow the original one; and indeed, the reader's new perspective is not easy to trace, as it emerges just sometimes through his notes or comments on margin of the text. On the contrary, in case of translation, it sometimes happens that these new meanings in some way cover and hide the original value and purpose of the text.

⁵⁵ Talking of non-literal (and unfaithful) translations, I meanly refer, for instance, to the Syriac version of Athanasius' *Life of Anthony* (where a transformation operated by the Syriac translator on the figure of Anthony, in order to transform him according to the *typos* of the Syriac ascetic, has been underlined; cf. Takeda 1998; id. 2001: 148-157), and to the double *recensio* of the *Kephalaia Gnostica* by Evagrius Ponticus (in particular, a first translation is very non-literal, as it seems, and the problematical references to some origenist theological positions are avoided; on that, see Guillaumont 1962; id. 1977 [edition of the Syriac versions]; id. 1989: 64-77; id. 1983: 35-41; Bettolo 1988-1989: 107-125; Ramelli 2013: 49-66; id. 2015); cf. Berti 2010: 168-171.

⁵⁶ See below, e.g. the case of the stories of *Jacob Baradaeus* and of *John the little* in Par Syr 235 (pp. 65-66). It can sometimes happen that the original authorial intent coincides with the polemical reader's one, as the collector and/or the translator has modified the text in order to align it to his – and his audience's - beliefs and tastes; this is sometimes difficult to state for certain; linked to this point is the mentioned problem of the non-literal translations (see above, p. 23).

Starting from these considerations, the importance of studying a text «**in context**», i.e. as an integral part of a combination of texts instead of just an isolated element, becomes evident. This kind of analysis, of course, will integrate and complete the study of the text as an authorial product and an independent element, from this point of view: the two perspectives of analysis constitute, in my opinion, two parallel and equally necessary stages in the study of a text.

The Syriac world knows a great tradition of hagiographic collections, which gather a large number of *Lives* and/or *Martyrdoms*; if we compare them, for instance, with the Greek collections, usually arranged according to the liturgical calendar, the peculiarity of the Syriac ones is the apparently random-structure. As André Binggeli has observed, it does not exist a Syriac hagiographic collection identical to another one: each of them appears to be a *unicum* in the entire panorama of collections.⁵⁷ It is consequently difficult to study the structure of the collections unless analysing them individually, considering the existence of a great number of collections, produced in different times and places, having different aims and showing different ideologies. An analysis of each independent collection would aim at investigating how and according to what historical, geographical, ideological-theological criteria the collection has been assembled.

For each collection, the analysis will focus on the presence and order of the texts. It will be useful to check if there is an internal order of (some of) the narratives - following, for instance, the liturgical calendar or other criteria -, the prevalence of a certain geographical region or, on the contrary, if the order of the stories follows a sort of itinerary from one place to another, as well as a 'chronological itinerary', taking into account the possible reasons for this itinerary - filiation or derivation or something else -; the redactor's religious tendency has most likely oriented the choice of the texts and can be reflected even in the order of the narratives.

Contextually, the relationship between the texts has to be observed; I mean, for instance, the presence of groups of texts - often sub-sections -, that are sometimes pointed out in the manuscript, e.g. by a parallel secondary numbering -. In case of miscellaneous manuscripts - containing not only *Lives* but also other kinds of texts, e.g. theological or moral treatises - the possible logical-doctrinal connection between hagiographical and non-hagiographical works must be verified.

Finally, one has to take into account the historical-geographical place of the copy of the codex - if known - and, in parallel, the possible questions about the commission and potential editorial project behind its production.

In this chapter, my aim is to analyse some hagiographic collections preserved in Syriac, selected according to a list of criteria - see below - and to propose some observations about each single collection: first, I will provide a codicological description- which is the starting point of any analysis of a codex;- second, I will analyse the structure of the collection, in order to identify the reasons and aims that guided the collector. At the same time, I will investigate what are the reasons for a strong presence of texts

⁵⁷ Binggeli 2012: 49

portraying, in various ways, the Holiness-Power relationship, and how this very topic has been variously developed and described in the collections, through different kinds of narratives, probably for different aims.⁵⁸

My contribution to the studies in hagiographic collections in Syriac will be:

- on the one hand, to continue the work started by Binggeli in analysing the collections case by case, revealing the reasons and meaning of the presence of a text, and the links between the texts contained in each Syriac collection;
- on the other hand, I seek focusing the attention on a particular topic, whose interest and relevance are undoubtful, i.e. the relationship between Holiness and Political Power. This topic, indeed, represents the **hagiographical reworking** of an historical “meeting” of two kinds of power -the political and the religious one-, and of authorities -the temporal and the spiritual one. The way how this relationship is portrayed, mirrors the history and the historical Holiness-Power relationships, and, at the same time, it sometimes has effects on history itself, coming to even affecting subsequent historical events.

⁵⁸ By the reference to a strong presence of the topic, I mean that at least about 40% of the contained stories deal with the Holiness-Power relationship, portrayed in various ways.

2. The Selection: Criteria and Areas

2.1 The Criteria of Selection

A large number of Syriac hagiographic collections have survived; up to today, they are attested by at least fifty manuscripts.⁵⁹ The necessity of a selection derives from the evident impossibility of taking into consideration the entire corpus in this dissertation. I base my selection on the following criteria:

- A chronological criterion: the 13th century as *terminus ante quem* for the copy of the manuscripts; this choice is guided by the awareness that the 13th century corresponds more or less to the end of the Golden Age of Syriac literature;
- A content - or typological - criterion: a preference is accorded to manuscripts containing *exclusively* a collection of *Lives/Martyrdoms*, or manuscripts in which the collection itself represents, at least, a well recognizable macrotextual unit; this choice is guided by the desire to preserve a principle of coherence, as I aim at investigating the reasons behind the structure of the hagiographic collection;
- A thematic criterion: the connection with the Holiness-Power topic under examination has to be strong; in the sense that I will take into account those collections which contain a good number of stories referring to this topic;⁶⁰
- A historical-geographical criterion: I will deal with manuscripts linked to particular (historical) geographical areas; this will allow me to further investigate the collections as the product not only of an individual - the collector - but also of a specific historical milieu. Three areas were originally identified, linked to just as many historical moments and, in at least two cases, to as many leading figures in the Syriac cultural panorama.

2.2 The Areas

2.2.1 Area 1: Deir al-Surian, Desert of Scetis (Egypt)

⁵⁹ This observation on the number of extant hagiographic collections is based on my own check in the available catalogues of Syriac manuscripts preserved in the librarian collections all around the world. If my starting point for this research was the useful contribution by Alain Desreumaux (1991), now a list of the catalogues - usually providing also links to those ones - is available at <http://syri.ac/manuscripts>.

⁶⁰ About, at least, 40% of the collected narratives.

A first area of investigation has been recognized in the monastery of Deir al-Surian, the House of the Syrians, in the desert of Scetis (Egypt), and in a particular historical period, the tenth century, when Moses of Nisibis was the abbot of that monastery. The Nitrian valley (Wadi 'l-Natron) was inhabited by Christian ascetics since early times; according to the Arabic historian al-Makrīzī, in ancient times there were some one hundred monasteries, in that region, though, at his own time (d. 1441) only seven had survived.⁶¹ Among them, the one devoted to Saint Mary Deipara, or monastery of the Syrians.⁶² Every convent had its own library and that of Deir al-Surian knew a particular fortune: books coming from every place where Syriac was spoken were gathered there and many were the donors who contributed to enrich the library; the one who mostly worked to increase the catalogue was Moses. About Moses of Nisibis and his activity in Scetis and in the East, much has been written.⁶³ Living in the convent since 907, he was first a scribe there, becoming then abbot before 927; in this period (927-932) he went to Bagdad, to obtain the remission of a poll-tax imposed by the caliph. His visit was a double success: on the one hand, he obtained the sought fiscal exemption, while, on the other one, he spent part of his Eastern journey travelling through the Syrian and Mesopotamian regions, buying - or, in some cases, receiving as presents - some 250 volumes from Eastern churches and monasteries; many of these codices were very ancient, already at that time. During the rest of his life, once returned to Scetis, Moses continued to purchase and collect manuscripts for the convent's library. A scribe, recording the presentation of a codex (now the BL Add 14525) to the monastery, in 943-944, notes that this event

⁶¹ Cf. Wright 1872: iii

⁶² On the Egyptian convents and in particular on Deir al-Surian, cf. Wright (1872, i-xix). A description of the history and architecture of the monastery of the Syrians –with further bibliographical references- can be found in the *Coptic Encyclopaedia* (Cody 1991: 876-881); the monastery, still functioning today, was originally meant to welcome monks from the monastery of Dayr Anbā Bishoi, partisans of Severus of Antioch. It is probably around 710 that it became a Syrian monastery, thanks to a certain governor Marutha, who was a Miaphysite (cf. *ibid.* 876). Among the sources of information about Deir al Surian, we have to mention the dated but still useful work by Evelyn White (1923: especially 337-338); see also Meinardus 1961; *id.* 1965: 79-87; *id.* 1977: 59-70. On the architecture, see Grossmann 1982; Monneret de Villard 1928. Among the more recent studies on the monastery, its history, its inscriptions, its manuscripts, we cannot avoid mentioning some of the works by Van Rompay; see, in particular, Van Rompay 1999: 167-207; *id.* 2008: 735-749; *id.* 2012: 73-92; *id.* 2015: 343-371; van Rompay and Schmidt 2001: 41-60. Van Rompay is also the author of the lemma “al-Suryān, Dayr” in the GEDSH (2011: 385-387). On the paintings found in the monastery, I refer to the ample bibliography by Innemée on this topic (I mention just some of his titles, to which I also refer for further bibliography: Innemée and Van Rompay 1998: 167-202; Innemée 1998: 143-153; *id.* 2015: 193-214; we should add to these also a series of articles appeared on the online review *Hugoye*, presenting year by year the new discoveries of paintings in Deir al-Surian).

⁶³ See Evelyn White (1923: 337-338), Leroy (1974: 457-470); cf. Brock 1994: 108-109; Brock 1980: 27-28, Blanchard 1995: 13-24, Borbone 2017: 79-114

took place “*in the days of our pride and the adornment of the entire holy Church, Mar Moses, abbot of this monastery*”, highlighting the great esteem surrounding the figure of the Nisibene.⁶⁴

The later history of St. Mary Deipara is linked to the European travellers who, from the 17th century onwards, started “depredating” the library, despite the attempt made by the monks to preserve the collection there. Nowadays most of the books are kept in the Vatican collection, thanks to Elias and Joseph Simon Assemani who visited the Egyptian monastery in 1707 and 1715, and at the British Library, where they have been brought by scholars and diplomats like Lord Prudhoe, Robert Curzon, Henry Tattam, Auguste Pacho, Constantine Tischendorf.⁶⁵

Among the manuscripts preserved in Deir al-Surian, five hagiographic collections rightly fit with the other selective criteria: the two Vatican codices *Siriacus* 160 and 161, and three manuscripts from the British Library, catalogued as Additional 14644, 14645 and 14649.

The work of Moses as possible manuscripts’ selector - an uncertain supposition-, beside his role as collector of manuscripts, could to be taken into account in the analysis of these collections, together with the study of the various phases of constitution of the manuscripts, which have all been assembled in different original places - and in some cases reworked in Deir al-Surian-.⁶⁶

2.2.2 Area 2: Michael the Great and the Syriac Renaissance

The second selected area is 12th-century Syria, at the time of the episcopate of Michael the Great, patriarch of Antioch from 1166 to 1199.

Born in 1126, in Melitene, educated at Deir d-Mar Barṣawmā, where he later became monk and prior, in 1166 Michael was elected patriarch of the Syriac-Orthodox Church, until his death in 1199.⁶⁷ Ecclesiastical reformer, great scholar and historian, he wrote a monumental *Chronicle*, from the origin of the world to the year 1195.⁶⁸ His name is linked to a phase of renaissance within Syriac literary

⁶⁴ BL Add 14525, f. 1b; a description of the manuscript can be found in Wright (1870: 394); cf. Brock 1994:109.

⁶⁵ Brock 1994: 98-103; Wright (1872: vi-xv).

⁶⁶ By the term “collector” this time I mean *the one who collects manuscripts* and not the *producer* of a collection, as elsewhere in the following paragraphs.

⁶⁷ On Michael the Great and for some further bibliographical references, see the lemma “Michael I Rabo” by Weltecke in the GEDSH (Weltecke 2011: 287-290).

⁶⁸ Bibliography on Michael’s historiographical work is very conspicuous; see, in particular, the contributions on this topic by Dorothea Weltecke (see Weltecke 1997: 6-29; id. 2003; id. 2007: 7-35; 2009: 115-125; 2010: 95-11); we should also mention the recent publication by Muriel Debié on the Syriac historiography (Debié 2015: 577-

production in Upper Mesopotamia, when Syriac hagiographic literature in particular underwent an intense process of writing, rewriting, copying and collecting; this epoch was later known as Syriac Renaissance.⁶⁹ Michael himself was the promoter of a great endeavour of composition, copy, bounding and re-bounding of manuscripts, he himself composing some liturgical and hagiographic works.⁷⁰ The following manuscripts containing hagiographic collections belong to this area: Paris, BnF, Syr 234, 235, 236 and the two huge codices represented by BL Add 12174 and the couple of Damascene codices 12/17-18 (one unique manuscript, in origin). Moreover, these manuscripts should be all linked to Michael the Great's commission.

2.2.3 (Expected) Area 3: Alqosh-Mossul and the Eastern Syriac world

The rich manuscript tradition coming from the Eastern Syriac world was supposed to provide a third area of analysis. Indeed, the Alqosh-Mossul region, within its large number of manuscripts produced over the centuries, even keeps a great tradition of hagiographic collections. Actually, according to my knowledge and researches, no one of these documents satisfies the chronological criterion, as the oldest collections emanating from the East-Syrian side date back to the 15th century. This reason leads me to exclude this expected third area from my analysis of collections.⁷¹

585) and the studies on Michael and his sources by Van Ginkel (Van Ginkel 1998: 351-358; id. 2006: 53-60; id. 2010: 110-121).

⁶⁹ On the so-called Syriac Renaissance, see the works by Teule, in particular (Teule 2002 and 2010)

⁷⁰ Beside his *Chronicle*, considered his most important work, Michael composed a *Liturgy of prayers*, a *Pontifical* (i.e. the ritual for ordinations); concerning hagiography, he wrote and they survived in Syriac: a new version of the *Life of Mar Abhai of Nicea* (4th c.), and homilies dedicated to John of Mardin and to Barṣawmā. In his *Chronicle* he also mentions some other works, lost in Syriac but survived in other traditions, e.g. a Profession of Faith addressed to the emperor Manuel (today available in Greek and Arabic). Cf., among others, Chabot 1935: 127.

⁷¹ Anyway, the significance of this area, linked to the extent of its hagiographic manuscript tradition as well as to its relevance for the studies of modern-contemporary Syriac literature and history - codices were still produced, in the Alqosh area, in the 19th-20th century -, forbids us from avoiding a study in this particular direction. I hope to have in a forthcoming future the possibility of enlarging my research and analysis even in the direction of the later hagiographic collections coming from the Eastern Syriac world.

3. The Analysis

3.1 Area 1

3.1.1 Vatican, Syr. 160

3.1.1.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

The Vat Sir 160 is a very ancient parchment codex consisting of 239 folios.⁷² Describing the codex in his catalogue, Assemani reminds its provenience from the Nitrian monastery of Deir al-Surian. Assemani also suggests - probably wrongly- that the codex is made up of three original (independent) parts:

1) The first one (ff. 1v-79v) consisting in the story of *Simeon the Stylites* followed by a letter of the priest Cosmas to the same saint,

2-3) Two collections of Acts of Eastern and Western martyrs (ff. 80v-240v).⁷³

The first codicological unit of the manuscript has been completed in 471, according to an annotation at the end of the letter of Cosmas (f. 79) dating the end of the production of “*that Book about the [gesta] of Simeon the Stylite*” to the 17th of the month of Nisan in the year 521 of the Antiocheans (471 C.E.). On the other hand, there is no way to demonstrate, nor codicological evidence proving that the following part of the manuscript originally consisted of two independent codices later bound together. That they are two originally independent collections is in some way suggested by the repetition of three texts, i.e. the martyrdoms of *Agnes*, *Alois* and *Phocas*, twice in the manuscript; the second occurrence of these works seems to reproduce precisely the text of its first occurrence. Despite that, I do not see a change of hand between the supposed two collections. It is probable that a same copyist has transcribed stories from two original collections; this is the origin of the codicological unity of the second part of Vat Sir 160. Assemani dates this second part back to the 10th century at least, according to the writing; actually, Brock has more rightfully proposed a much earlier dating to the 6th century.⁷⁴

The text is distributed in two columns of 28-35 lines. Quires are numbered.

⁷² The *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana* catalogue provides a very short and imperfect codicological description of the manuscript (Assemani and Assemani 1759: 319-324); I add some further information based on my own observation of the codex.

⁷³ Assemani identifies the beginning of the second collection at f. 220, but this is impossible to state. I do not even see a change of hand. The numeration of quires actually is not trustful: we cannot exclude the possibility that it has been added in a second moment.

⁷⁴ Brock 2011: 268

Some losses of leaves have to be noticed in various places of the codex, sometimes already observed and pointed out by a cataloguer - see the marginal notes in Latin-, sometimes not recorded yet.⁷⁵

Structure of the collection:⁷⁶

- 1) Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e [BHSE 263]
- 2) Tarbō, Her Sister, and Her Servant [BHSE 269]
- 3) 120 Martyrs [BHSE 276]
- 4) Barba'smin and his Companions [BHSE 277]
- 5) Miles, Āboursām and Sinay [BHSE 270]
- 6) Baršebyā [BHSE 272]
- 7) Daniel and Wardē [BHSE 275]
- 8) Badmā [BHSE 284]
- 9) Narsā, Yawsef and Their Companions [BHSE 273]
- 10) Ya'qob and Maryam [BHSE 279]
- 11) Teqlā and Her Companions [BHSE 280]
- 12) Barḥaḏbšabā [BHSE 281]
- 13) 'Aqebšmā, Yawsef and 'Italāhā [BHSE 285]
- 14) Theodule and Agathopous [BHSE 1213]
- 15) Theodora and Didymus [BHSE 1214]

⁷⁵ A loss of folios is pointed out – by the cataloguer, in Latin- between the end of the martyrdom of Miles and the beginning of the martyrdom of Baršebyā. The second occurrence of the martyrdom of Agnes misses the beginning as well as the martyrdom of Mamas, that immediately precedes it, is missing the ending; it is impossible to state when this loss occurred, neither to say if we are dealing with a textual lacuna or a loss of folia. A similar situation inside the text of the *Acts of Miles* has to be recorded. In all the mentioned cases, according to the numbering of the quires, we should suppose a loss already in the manuscript used as basis for the copy; it is anyway possible that the numeration is later – actually, the concerned passage of *Acts of Miles*, as it is now, has no sense (for further information on *Acts of Miles*, see below, pp. 173-208; for some literary considerations on the *Acts*, see pp. 100-114).

⁷⁶ I show here the structure of the collection, i.e. the second part of the codex, without mentioning the Simeon the Stylites' corpus. Here and elsewhere in the presentation of the collections' contents, I identify the text/story/martyrdom referring to the respective entry in the Bibliotheca Hagiographica Syriaca Electronica (BHSE), if available. The BHSE database is a recent and extremely useful online-resource; it is unfortunately still in progress, so that there are cases of repetitions of items and, conversely, some texts have not been inserted (yet?). In cases of two lemmas for a same text, I provide both BHSE numbers; in cases of missing items, I will refer to the BHO lemma, if available - if not, I will use the catalogue's title of the text (in English translation) and bibliographical references, if available-. For original Syriac proper names, I do not follow the BHSE using the Anglicised form, rather preferring a more faithful transliteration of the Syriac name in Latin types.

- 16) Babyllas of Antioch and the Three Children [BHSE 1215]
- 17) The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste [BHSE 1318]
- 18) Theodote the Courtesan [BHSE 322]
- 19) Philemon, Cyrill, and Appollonius [BHSE 1216]
- 20) Lucianus, Thyrsus, and Callinicus [BHSE 1223]
- 21) Agnes [BHSE 321]
- 22) Theodute and his Son [BHSE 1224]
- 23) Victorinus, Victor, Nicephorus, Diodore, Serapion, Papias [BHSE 318]
- 24) Lucianus and Marcian [BHSE 317]
- 25) Procopius [BHSE 232]
- 26) Alphaeus, Zachaeus, and Romanus [BHSE 233]
- 27) Timothy [BHSE 234]
- 28) Apphian [BHSE 911]
- 29) Alosis, brother of Appian [BHSE 237]
- 30) Agapius [BHSE 238]
- 31) Sophia and her Daughters Pistis, Elpis and Agape [BHSE 370]
- 32) Hyperechius, Philotheus, Jacob, Paragros, Ḥabib, Romanus, and Lollian (The Seven Martyrs of Samosata) [BHSE 320]
- 33) Phocas of Sinope [BHSE 1225]
- 34) Eleutheria, Anthia, and Qorabor [BHSE 386]
- 35) Mamas [BHSE 388]
- 36) Agnes [BHSE 321]
- 37) Alosis, brother of Appian [BHSE 237]
- 38) Theodosia [BHSE 914]
- 39) Father 'Abshlomo [BHSE 915]
- 40) Phocas of Sinope [BHSE 1225]
- 41) Ignatius of Antioch [BHSE 301]
- 42) Crescens [BHSE 1230]
- 43) Dioscorus [BHSE 1231]

the Christian apostate is, on the contrary, a negative model not to be followed. His punishment is usually exemplary and divinely given.⁸² As seen for the noble martyr, the presence of the apostasy motif can be linked to a desire of giving strong examples; examples to be rejected, in this case. The apostate almost always belongs to high classes, being a noble, or he is an exponent of political or ecclesiastical power: this makes his moral condemn even stronger. Incidentally, apostasy is not necessarily something irreversible, as man is naturally subject to mistakes, but God is always ready to forgive the ones who mend their ways. The martyrdom of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e [1] presents a character who firstly chose apostasy, i.e. the eunuch Guhštazad; his re-conversion to Christianity will cause his martyrdom, joyfully welcomed by the bishop Šem'on.⁸³

Finally, it is interesting to observe a sequence of texts portraying a teacher and his disciple(s)⁸⁴, immediately followed by another one, similar at the beginning but with a very negative ending, i.e. the acts of Teqlā [11] I have mentioned just above, where the priest Paul is an absolutely bad-teacher and finally transforms himself in the executioner of his disciples.⁸⁵

an evidence proving that Christians were in need of positive models to follow as well as negative ones to keep far from them; the choice of putting on stage the character of a divinely punished apostate could be a good instrument of persuasion and dissuasion. On apostasy in the Iranian world, cf. Payne 2010; on reverse cases of conversion from Zoroastrianism to Christianity and the "law of apostasy", see Payne 2015 (in particular: 48-56, 192-196).

⁸² See, for instance, the stories of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste [17]: one of the martyrs-to-be is overcome by weakness and runs away from the iced lake to go getting warm in the near *calidarium* that was there precisely as a temptation; the heavenly punishment is not late to come upon him, who immediately dies.

⁸³ That happens also to the Persian Jacob who renounces to the Christian faith in order to please the king Iazdegard - he was the sovereign's counsellor- but thanks to the words of his wife and mother he mends his way, he reconverts and faces the terrible pain that the new king has chosen for him: the name Intercissus, cut-up, is the explication of the martyrdom he suffered. The martyrdom of Jacob the Cut-up is missing in this collection probably due to a chronological matter (the Vat Sir 160 contains only Persian Martyrs of the Cycle of Šapur and Jacob' story happens during the reign of Vahran); on the contrary, it is preserved in other collections (e.g. Vat Sir 161, see below).

⁸⁴ At least Daniel and Wardē [7], and then Narsā, Yawsef [9], Ya'qob and Maryam [10]

⁸⁵ The Persian martyr has not to be confused with the more famous Thecla, disciple of the apostle Paul protagonist of the apocryphal *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. It is anyway interesting to observe this homonymy, even if in an overturned perspective. On the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, see Bremmer 1996, Rordorf 1985: 272-283; on the Syriac reception of the Acts, see Burris and Van Rompay 2002: 225-236, id. 2009: 337- 342 (I refer to both these contributions for further bibliography on the topic). Cf. also the forthcoming contribution by Flavia Ruani (Ruani 2018?), in a volume dedicated to Thecla in various traditions.

3.1.2 Vatican, Syr. 161

3.1.1.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

According to the already mentioned BAV catalogue by Assemani, Vat Sir 161 is a very ancient parchment codex formed of 216 folios of 32-39 lines, in one column; the manuscript was probably composed in the 9th century.⁸⁶ The 27 extant quaternions are usually numbered – at the beginning and end – at the foot of the page.⁸⁷ The text is on one column and the writing hand appears to be the same along the manuscript. Even in this case the manuscript comes from the Deir al-Surian monastery.⁸⁸

It is a homogeneous manuscript; according to the title currently used to identify the manuscript's contents, it contains the *Acts of the Persian Martyrs*. Actually, this title pertains to the first part of the codex, which offers indeed a great number of Persian Martyr Acts preceded by two *Sermons of praise to the Eastern Martyrs* composed by Marutha of Tagrit, a Western-Syriac (Miaphysite) bishop who should have composed these hymns in the first half of the 7th century.⁸⁹ Actually, at f. 91 a note declares: “*Here the Acts of Eastern Martyrs end*”. This note marks the beginning of a second series of stories, i.e. those of the Western Saints. So, the general title actually does not pertain to the contents of the whole manuscript; it rather defines just the first part of the collection.

Taking into account what I have established until now, we can imagine the Western-Syriac area as the potential area of production of the collection - see Marutha's sermons at the beginning-; on the other hand, the area of origin of the majority of the texts the collection contains is the Eastern-Syriac one, and I can suppose that it is also the central interest of the collector himself. The manuscript, starting with the two homilies by the Syriac-orthodox bishop Marutha, actually ends with the story of Jesusabrani composed by the 7th century Eastern-Syriac patriarch Isho'yab II; this interesting observation testifies to a strong interconnection between the Eastern and the Western Syriac worlds, where the latter appears to be fascinated by and to focus its attention on the stories of the Persian martyrs.

⁸⁶ Assemani and Assemani 1759, 324- 328.

⁸⁷ A quaternion (ⲛ) is missing at the beginning; according to numbering and contents, another one (ⲛ) is missing.

⁸⁸ A more recent and complete description of the codex by Villey is available in the E-Ktobe database, at: <http://syriac.msscatalog.org/65160>

⁸⁹ The first eight leaves - i.e. a quaternion- are lost. According to my knowledge, no bibliography on these “discourses” (ⲉⲃⲗⲏⲉ) by Marutha is available. Bedjan (AMS 2: 57-122) published the text, probably on the basis of the ms Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek, or. oct. 1256. Assemani identifies in the second discourse (starting at f. 18v) the same prologue to the Eastern Martyrs found in Vat Sir 160, f. 80v; see Assemani 1759: 325.

The manuscript is entirely composed of *Martyrdoms*.

Structure of the collection:

- 1) The Martyrs of the Orient [BHSE 262]
- 2) Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e [BHSE 264]
- 3) Sergius and Bacchus [BHSE 1389]
- 4) Šāhdūst and his Companions [BHSE 271]
- 5) Tarbō, Her Sister, and Her Servant [BHSE 269]
- 6) 120 Martyrs [BHSE 276]
- 7) Barba'smin and his Companions [BHSE 277]
- 8) Martyrs of Persia [BHSE 278]
- 9) Miles, Āboursām and Sinay [BHSE 270]
- 10) Baršebyā [BHSE 272]
- 11) Daniel and Wardē [BHSE 275]
- 12) 'Abdā, 'Abdišō, and their Friends [BHSE 283]
- 13) Badmā [BHSE 284]
- 14) The Imprisoned Martyrs of Bet Zabday [BHSE 282]
- 15) 'Aqebšmā, Yawsef and 'Italāhā [BHSE 285]
- 16) Šabor, Ishāq, Ma'nā w-'Abrōhōm w-Šem'on [BHSE 261]
- 17) Mēharšāḅōr [BHSE 290]
- 18) Jacob the Cut-Up (Ya'qōḅ Mpasqā) [BHSE 291]
- 19) Panteleon, Hermaloas, and Companions [BHSE 1142]
- 20) Christopher and His Companions [BHSE 1233]
- 21) Paphnutius [BHSE 1236]
- 22) Philemon, Cyrill, and Appollonius [BHSE 1216]
- 23) Stratonike and Seleucus [BHSE 319]
- 24) Febronia of Nisibis [BHSE 367]
- 25) Theonilla [BHSE 1237]
- 26) Theodote the Courtesan [BHSE 322]
- 27) Julietta [BHSE 1247]
- 28) Gordios [BHSE 1248]
- 29) The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste [BHSE 1249]
- 30) A mime [BHSE 1250]
- 31) Lucianus, Thyrsus, and Callinicus [BHSE 1223]
- 32) George the Martyr, Anthony the General, and Alexandra the Queen [BHSE 249]
- 33) Cyriacus and Julietta [BHSE 1251]
- 34) Išo'sabran [BHSE 1032]

3.1.2.2 Some observations on the contents

The order of the Persian Martyrs is more or less chronological; they start with the cycle of the martyrs under Šapur II [2, 4-17], within which the cycle of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e,⁹⁰ and then the group of the martyrs under Vahran [17-19]⁹¹.

As already seen for the Vat Sir 160, the Persian Martyrs group includes a certain number of noble exponents; this observation is also true for this codex, where it is possible to notice a further interest in a sub-group of *counsellors* or *preceptors*, people fulfilling offices at court and who usually belonged to noble families and were of illustrious origins as well.⁹²

It is interesting to observe the presence of a somehow coherent group of texts staging the conversion of the persecutor, who is a governor or a soldier.⁹³ Although the hagiographer does not always narrate the end of the persecutor or executioner, the conversion of this personage is a recurrent motif.

In addition, a small group of soldier martyrs. Without taking into account the Persian ones,⁹⁴ Gordios [28] is situated beside the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste [29]; not far from them, the martyrdom of George [32], and a bit above we can see that strange case of monster soldier represented by Christopher

⁹⁰ I.e. Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e [2], Šāhdūst [4], Tarbō [5], Barba'šmin [7]. The group of text can be considered a cycle according to the bonds of familiarity (Tarbō is his sister) or of episcopal succession (Šāhdūst and Barba'šmin are his first and second successors as bishops of Seleucia) linking the protagonists of the various texts with the main and central figure of Šem'on.

⁹¹ It is interesting to underline the quite surprising presence of the martyrdom of Sergius and Bacchus [3] in second position, after Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e: they actually do not precisely belong to the Persian Martyrs; at any rate, one should notice the strong relationship established between Sergius and the Eastern and Persian world (on that, e.g., Fowden 1999).

⁹² The story of Jacob the Cut-up [18] is a meaningful example. We have already encountered, in the same Persian context and in particular within the story of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e, the figure of the eunuch Guhštazad, noble and preceptor of the king and "arzabades" (i.e. the keeper of the king's chamber or his high chamberlain), apostate Christian but later repented and martyr (cf. Smith 2012, 38-44).

⁹³ Panteleon [19], Christopher [20], Paphnutius [21], Philemon [22] and, a few later, the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste [29].

⁹⁴ At least Sergius and Bacchus [3] are concerned; indeed, they are not Persian, although their *Martyrdom* is placed among the Persian Martyr Acts, in Vat Sir 161.

[20]⁹⁵. Regarding Miles [9], bishop of Susa, his original military activity has just been hypothesised; the Latin meaning of the name could be a hint of this, but the text is not clear, stating his being a “*servant of the king*” at court.⁹⁶

Then, we find a coherent corpus of women martyrs.⁹⁷ According to the evangelic saying “*The last will be first*” (Matthew 20,16), martyr texts often show the superiority of women and children on men, in cases of groups of martyrs. Indeed, the lowest and weakest categories of the society are represented as displaying a greater strength at the moment of the martyrdom. The reason of the selection of this kind of texts to be part of a collection, should be searched, I guess, in this vivid perception of a discrepancy between what they represent in the society - inferior categories- and the attitude they show in front of the persecution in the story world. This emerges, for instance, in the words of Febronia [24], “*In a woman’s body I will manifest a man’s valiant conviction*”⁹⁸; they clearly show how courage and bravery were perceived as typical male characteristics. Indeed, martyr women often demonstrate a greater firmness in the faith, as Stratonike [23] who does not only convert her fiancé Seleucus but even supports him when he doubts and is afraid. On the other hand, children are often more perseverant and braver than their parents, as demonstrated by the young Cyriacus [33] portrayed in his attempt to encourage his fearful mother Julietta.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ For an in-depth analysis of the *Acts of Christopher* and its peculiar protagonist, see below, in Part I.2, pp. 117-123; in the Part II, pp. 209- 222.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Acts of Miles*, 2; on Miles, see below, in Part II, pp. 173-208.

⁹⁷ From Stratonike [23] to Julietta [27].

⁹⁸ English translation in Brock- Harvey 1987: 163; cf. the reference to “women and virgins [who were] masculine in their minds” (syr. ܩܘܪܒܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܐܢܐ), in the prologue of the *Acts of Sylvester* (ed. Di Rienzo 2016: 334). On this “masculinisation” of women and in particular for the case of the *Acts of Perpetua*, see Mazzucco 1989.

⁹⁹ In the *Martyrdom of Febronia* the old nun Bryene instructs the young martyr-to-be by narrating examples of women and children martyrs to be followed, showing this way that also the ones socially considered “inferior” can be valiant wrestlers in the good fight: “*Remember how you followed my instruction, remember that you too taught others; remember that when you were two years old I received you from your nurse into my hands: up to the present moment no man has set eyes upon your face, and I have not allowed laywomen to talk to you. Up to this very day have I preserved you, my daughter, as you yourself are very much aware. But now, my daughter, what can I do with you? Do not disgrace Bryene’s old age, do not do anything that will render profitless the work of your spiritual mother. Remember the wrestlers who went before you, who underwent a glorious martyrdom, receiving a crown of victory from the heavenly ringmaster of the fight. These people were not just men, but they include women and children as well; remember the glorious martyrdoms of Lewbe and Leonida: Lewbe was crowned at her death by the sword, Leonida by burning. Remember the girl Eutropia, who, at the age of twelve, was martyred along with her mother for the sake of our Lord’s name. Weren’t you always amazed and filled with wonder at Eutropia’s submissiveness and endurance? When the judge gave orders that arrows be shot in her direction in*

Finally, an observation should be done, concerning the two Vatican collections I have analysed in the previous pages. These martyrdom collections have been produced in a period when the exemplarity of the martyr was no longer required as an instrument of persuasion for the persecuted Christians; they rather reflect a desire of preserving the memory of the Christian heroes celebrated in the liturgical calendar and in the places of cult, as it happens in most Byzantine Martyrologies. So, the choice of the collected texts should be linked to this aim; a specific, personal intent of the collector does not emerge.

3.1.3 London, British Library, Add. 14644

3.1.3.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

Wright's *Catalogue* of the Syriac manuscripts at the British Library provides quite complete descriptions of the codices both from a codicological point of view and for the contents. The Additional 14644 (n. DCCCCXXXVI in Wright's numeration) is a parchment codex of 94 leaves in 11 quires, with 27-35 lines in each page; many leaves are stained and torn and almost all the quires are incomplete.¹⁰⁰ The script is of an Edessene hand from the 5th or 6th century; two folios, 44 and 45, are actually modern and palimpsest; here the Syriac older text that is readable in some place at 44v seems to be written in a 9th century writing.¹⁰¹

The manuscript provides us with marginal interesting information, thanks to the presence of some ending notes in a quite good state. At folio 92v one also finds an index of the stories that coincides with the contents of the manuscript (I will later present an opposite example, with another codex). At folio 93r there is a doxology originally followed by an ancient note – more precisely a prayer request- today only partially readable; the note has been replaced by a declaration about the volume as part of the 250 manuscripts that Moses of Nisibis carried to the monastery of Deir al-Surian in 932 CE.¹⁰²

order to make her run away frightened by the arrows, she heard her mother call out, Don't run away, Eutropia, my daughter, and clasping her hands behind her back she did not run away; instead she was hit by an arrow and fell down dead on the ground. She showed complete obedience to her mother's command. Was it not her perseverance and obedience that you always admired? She was just an unschooled girl, whereas you have actually been teaching others" (Brock and Harvey 1987: 160).

¹⁰⁰ For the description of the manuscript and its contents, see Wright 1872: 1083-1086; some starting notes for an analysis in Binggeli 2012: 57-58.

¹⁰¹ See Wright 1872: 1083, 1086.

¹⁰² Here the readable part of the ancient note:

3.1.3.2 Some observations on the contents

Probably, the group of the first five apocryphal texts was a *corpus* that had already circulated independently before its transcription in the BL Add 14644, where the seven following stories, especially focused on ascetic and martyr figures, were added.

Positive and negative figures of kings are portrayed: from the converted Abgar¹⁰⁵ and Carinus¹⁰⁶ and the queens who found the Holy Cross in two different times,¹⁰⁷ to the persecutors Nero and Vahran.¹⁰⁸ Whether the accounts concern an attempted or successful conversion, or a re-conversion, as in the case of Jacob [7], stories of conversion are the main interest and permeate the whole collection transmitted by this manuscript, often concerning noble people or even kings,¹⁰⁹ and representatives of other religions.¹¹⁰

But the main aim of the collector emerges once we look at the whole structure of the collection, rather than at particular motifs. As I have already said regarding the script, even the contents of the collection points to an Edessene redaction; the note attesting that it has been later brought to the Scetis monastery of St. Mary Deipara should confirm our supposition. We can, in fact, observe the centrality of Edessa,¹¹¹ and then of the Syrian region,¹¹² with an emphasis on the relationship with the city of Rome.¹¹³ It is interesting to notice especially the order of the first texts: they all describe the spread of Christianity in the first century, but the collector collocates the *Teaching of Addai* [1]

¹⁰⁵ Teaching of Addai [1].

¹⁰⁶ Cosmos and Damian [11].

¹⁰⁷ Protonike, according to the Teaching of Addai [1], and Helene [4].

¹⁰⁸ Respectively in the Teaching of Simon Peter [3] and the martyrdom of Jacob the Cut-up [7].

¹⁰⁹ An aristocratic origin characterises, on the other hand, Alexius [12], Sophia [9], Jacob [7]; I have already investigated the meaning that this choice of texts could have had for the collector, see above about the two Vatican collections (34-35, 38).

¹¹⁰ See the Jewish protagonist of the so-called Judah Cyriacus cycle, here represented by the Finding of the Cross [4] and his own martyrdom [5], or the Edessene pagan priest Sharbel [10].

¹¹¹ Teaching of Addai [1], 'Aḇrāhām Qīdūnāyā [6], Sophia [9], Sharbel [10], Alexius [12].

¹¹² See Jacob the Cut-Up [7], Julian Saba [8], Cosmos and Damian [11].

¹¹³ Teaching of Peter [3], Alexius [12].

before the teaching of Peter in Rome [3]; by this order, he claims a sort of a primacy of Edessa in the acceptance of the Christian message, preceding even Rome in that.¹¹⁴

It has been argued that the ecclesiastical perspective concerning the production of the *Teaching of Addai* was precisely an attempt to propose a double link Edessa-Antioch/ Antioch-Rome, probably to the disadvantage of Constantinople;¹¹⁵ this attempt clearly emerges when the redactor presents the episcopal consecration of the successor of Addai, Palut, as obtained from Serapion of Antioch, ordained in turn by Zephyrinus of Rome.¹¹⁶ This desire of establishing a communion with Rome actually has a deep link with the historical reality of the Antiochene patriarchate of the second half of the 4th- beginning of the 5th century: during the Meletian affair, Meletius himself searched for Roman support, though the Church of Rome and his bishop Damasus had recognised his opponent Paulinus as patriarch. It is only under the patriarchate of Alexander (beginning 5th c.) that a full communion with Rome is re-established. Considering the palaeographical dating of the BL Add 14644 collection, it well fits with this historical situation; this gives value to the hypothesis that a similar intention of creating a bridge Edessa- Syria- Rome guided the collector in the choice and order of the texts.

On the other hand, a second purpose emerges in the texts concerning Edessa: a parallel attempt to provide the city and its élite with a noble Christian orthodox past. Antedating the Christianization of the city, as *Teaching of Addai* does, meant to skip a problematic past: i.e. the historical presence of Bardaisan at the court of Abgar VIII or IX. The legend of Abgar IV and Addai gave the opportunity to present Edessa as already Christian and orthodox in a pre-bardesanite time.¹¹⁷ The emphasis on the names of the Edessean élites in the *Teaching of Addai* derives from that purpose.¹¹⁸ Actually, this same device of naming the noble families of the city interestingly recurs in martyr narratives as the acts of Šarbel [10] and those of Barsamyā; indeed, even the recurrence of some specific names has been underlined.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ If the hypothesis of a pre-existence of the *corpus* of the first five texts is confirmed and if the original order was the same, this order could be due to the creator of the pre-existing *corpus* – or of the manuscript whence the scribe of BL Add 14644 is copying- rather than to our copyist.

¹¹⁵ Camplani 2009: 272.

¹¹⁶ Howard 1981: 105; Desreumaux, 1993: 116. Cf. Camplani 2009:272; Camplani interestingly highlights a recurrence of the same scheme of ordinations in a martyr text, the martyrdom of Barsamyā (ibid. 271; cf. Cureton 1864: 71).

¹¹⁷ On the *Teaching of Addai* as an anti-Bardesanite text, see Camplani 2013: 145, id. 2009: 264-266.

¹¹⁸ Camplani 2009: 266-267; id. 2013: 145.

¹¹⁹ See Camplani 2013: 146, id. 2011: 42-43.

In conclusion, the intent of the BL Add 14644 collection is clearly linked to presenting Edessa as a completely orthodox city, whose Christianization dates back to the first century and to the apostolic time and whose connection with Rome is strong and deep.¹²⁰

3.1.4 London, British Library, Add. 14645

3.1.4.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

While, according to its colophon, the manuscript BL Add 14644 was brought to Deir al-Surian by Moses of Nisibis in 932, a different relationship links the codex that immediately follows in the British Library numeration (14645) with the same Egyptian monastery. In fact, thanks to its colophon, we know that this manuscript was among the ones produced at Deir al-Surian.

According to Wright's description we are dealing with a vellum codex of 430 folios, in 43 quires; in each leave the text is divided in two columns of 28-42 lines. Wright defines the script as a "*rather peculiar angular hand*". The manuscript is dated to A. Gr. 1247 (936 CE).¹²¹

In the last page of the manuscript - f. 430v- there are three notes written by three different hands:

- The first note attests that the codex was produced at Deir al-Surian in 936, when Moses of Nisibis was abbot of the monastery;
- The second one attests that the book was purchased and belonged to a certain deacon Hauran Bar Dinara, from Tagrit;
- The third note records that the mentioned Hauran later offered the manuscript, together with thirteen others, to the convent of Sancta Maria Deipara.

It is interesting to observe a kind of circular movement of the codex: produced at Deir al-Surian and then sold, it came back to the monastery some years later, we do not know precisely when.

The other interesting point is an index at the very beginning of the manuscript, f. 1r; the index seems to be written by the same hand who copied the stories and who also wrote the first colophon, attesting the production (literally, the translation, it seems, as the verb used is *ترجم*) of the manuscript at Deir al-Surian in 936. Contrarily to what I have observed for the BL Add 14644, this list actually does not precisely correspond to the contents of the volume; beside the forty-one stories contained in the codex as it is today, some other hagiographic narratives are mentioned as part of the collection. They should have been places *after* the extant texts. This does not necessary mean that they are lost; indeed, as I will show, the possibility of a loss is almost improbable in our case. Unfortunately, the

¹²⁰ The connection with Rome could be even intended to justify and reinforce the claimed perfect orthodoxy of the city.

¹²¹ Wright 1872: 1111-1116.

additional titles are in some cases difficult to decipher.¹²² One cannot exclude that the index was meant to list the contents of two volumes.

Structure of the collection:

- 1) Thomas the Apostle [BHSE 297]
- 2) Matthias and Andrew [BHSE 891]
- 3) Dionysius the Areopagite (Vision of Heliopolis) [BHSE 1051]
- 4) The History of the likeness of Christ (De imagine Tiberiadis) [BHSE 450]
- 5) Simeon Salos [BHSE 1495]
- 6) Nicholas of Myra [BHSE 1935]
- 7) The 40 Martyrs of Sinai [BHSE 1937]
- 8) Julian Saba [BHSE 384]
- 9) John the Almsgiver [BHSE 346]
- 10) A story concerning a monk and his sister¹²³
- 11) A story of a man who robbed a grave and took away a woman's garments¹²⁴
- 12) Domitius [BHSE 398]
- 13) Sābā of Tour Mesatha [BHSE 1496]
- 14) Ḥananyā [BHSE 1340]
- 15) Martinien (Mār Tninā) [BHSE 1936]

¹²² Here is the list of the (readable part of the) additional texts mentioned in the table of contents as part of the collection:

١٥١٤
 ١٥١٥
 ١٥١٦
 ١٥١٧
 ...
 ...
 ١٥١٨
 ١٥١٩
 ...
 ١٥٢٠
 ١٥٢١
 ...
 ١٥٢٢

¹²³ Cf. Wright 1892: 1113.

¹²⁴ Cf. *ibid.* The story was originally part of the *Pratum Spirituale* by John Moschos. See on that, Ruani 2017.

- 16) Marutha of Tagrit [BHSE 690]
- 17) Aḥudemmeḥ [BHSE 689]
- 18) Šarbel [BHSE 924]
- 19) Barsamyā [BHSE 226]
- 20) Ḥabib [BHSE 228]
- 21) Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e [BHSE 263]
- 22) Tarbō, Her Sister, and Her Servant [BHSE 269]
- 23) Paphnutius [BHSE 364]
- 24) Theopompus, Theonas, and Friends [BHSE 379]
- 25) Procopio [BHSE 1938]
- 26) Sophia and her Daughters Pistis, Elpis and Agape [BHSE 370]
- 27) Probus, Tarachos and Andronicus [BHSE 1939]
- 28) Lucianus and Marcian [BHSE 317]
- 29) Ammonios, Doticos, Cyriacus, and Acmonicos [BHSE 1497]
- 30) Charisios, Nicephorus, and Papias [BHSE 372]
- 31) Acacius [BHSE 374]
- 32) Baršebyā [BHSE 272]
- 33) Šāhdūst and his Companions [BHSE 271]
- 34) Barba'šmin and his Companions [BHSE 277]
- 35) Ḥananyā of Arbela [BHSE 325]
- 36) 'Abdā, 'Abdišō, and their Friends [BHSE 283]
- 37) Stratonike and Seleucus [BHSE 319]
- 38) Mamas [BHSE 388]
- 39) Babylas and the Three Children [BHSE 344]
- 40) Eugenia and her Friends [BHSE 363]
- 41) John the Short [BHSE 910]

3.1.4.2 Observations on the contents

Starting from the end and considering the place of redaction of the manuscript, neither the presence nor the relevant position of the last story, that of John the Short [41], is a surprise, being one of the main figures of Coptic monasticism in Scetis.

Furthermore, the deep link between Eastern and Western Syriac Christianity is relevant and emerges in a way similar to what I have observed concerning the Vat Sir 161. Indeed, we see, in succession, the letter by the Miaphysite Jacob of Serugh referring the story of Ḥananyā [14], followed by the lives of two other Western-Syriac bishops who actually acted in the Eastern area, i.e. Marutha of Tagrit [16] and Aḥudemmeḥ [17]; then the Edessene cycle [18-20] and a first small group of Persian Martyrs

Acts,¹²⁵ separated from another larger group of texts concerning Persian martyrs [32-36] by a section of works concerning Western martyrs, some of Syriac provenance, but mostly of Byzantine origin;¹²⁶ after the second Persian group,¹²⁷ the collection comes back to the martyrs from the West.¹²⁸

Taking into account the provenance of the manuscript and the place of production, even the presence of Miaphysite texts does not surprise. On the contrary, the presence of a Chalcedonian text as the *Life of John the Almsgiver* [9] by Leontius of Neapolis, is much more interesting. This is not the only Chalcedonian text: the same orientation is detectable in the *Life of Simeon Salos* [5], by the same Leontius, and in the narration about the massacre of the monks of Sinai and Raithou [7], to be considered the founding text for the Sinai monastery, bastion of the Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Actually, it has been demonstrated that the *Life of Simeon Salos* at least has undergone transformations at the moment of its translation; the translator evidently aimed at regaining the saint at his own faction.¹²⁹ The same has been recently demonstrated for the *Life of John the Almsgiver*.¹³⁰ This quick overview allows us to identify the following narrative groups:

- A short series of Apocryphal texts of the New Testament at the very beginning;¹³¹
- The so-called Edessene cycle;¹³²
- Two separated groups of Persian Martyr Acts;¹³³
- Two separated groups of (Western) martyrs, of various origins.¹³⁴

The impression is that the copyist is putting together single texts or in some cases groups of stories, maybe from different manuscripts already present at the monastery. And indeed, the fact that the

¹²⁵ Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e [21] and his sister Tarbō [22].

¹²⁶ From Paphnutius [23] to Acacius [31]

¹²⁷ From Baršebyā [32] to the XL martyrs [36]

¹²⁸ From Stratonike [37] to Eugenia [40].

¹²⁹ Van Rompay 1994; cf. Binggeli 2012, 66-67

¹³⁰ This is what Guido Venturini has recently noticed; in his PhD dissertation (*“Studi sulla versione siriana della vita di Giovanni il misericordioso”*), Venturini studies the Syriac translation(s) of Leontios' work, comparing it to the Greek original text.

¹³¹ Thomas [1], Matthias and Andrew [2], Dionysius the Areopagite [3]

¹³² Šarbil [18], Barsamyā [19], Ḥabib [20]

¹³³ The cycle of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e, presenting the Martyrdom of Šem'on [21] and that of Tarbō [22]; the cycle of Šapur II, to which the texts from the martyrdom of Baršebyā [32] to that of the 'Abdā, 'Abdišō, and their Friends [36] belong.

¹³⁴ From Paphnutius [23] to Acacius [31] and from Stratonike [37] to Eugenia [40]; concerning this last group of four texts we can observe that all the stories of Stratonike [37], Mamas [38], Babylas [39] and Eugenia [40] show an emphasis on the theme of the family, developed in different ways.

codex has been produced at St. Mary Deipara easily explains the occurrence of texts of such different origins and orientations: we should remember that the production of the collection is to be placed in 936, after the return of Moses of Nisibis from his Eastern journey, with a gift of 250 books for the already existent – and maybe consistent- library of the monastery.

As I said above, it is interesting to observe that the actual contents of the manuscript do not correspond precisely to the table of contents proposed at the beginning of the codex; according to that one, other texts should have belonged to the collection; among them I can mention the readable titles with the names of the martyrs George - a bit mangled but still recognizable-, Sergius and Bacchus, and Theodore. This choice of texts is interesting as a sign of the fact that the collector planned to continue the collection with a group of martyr soldiers. As the same handwriting wrote both the texts and the table of contents, it seems evident that it was intention of the writer to complete the collection in this way. It is almost impossible to suppose the loss of some folios at the end of the manuscript: the colophon attesting the ending of the redaction of the codex is on the same page and even in the same column where the last story (that of John the Short) ends, and it has been written by the same hand - the same having redacted the entire collection, including the table of contents-¹³⁵. A possible change of mind of the redactor - collector and copyist- is more probable; he has probably decided to end the collection earlier, excluding some of the stories he had originally thought to insert.¹³⁶

3.1.5 London, British Library, Add. 14649

3.1.5.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

Vellum codex of 179 leaves in 18 numbered quires, with pages of 26-27 lines, the BL Add 14649 is written in a regular 9th century hand; a later hand has added Greek vowels in some points of the text.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ This observation is also based on the completeness of the quires and in particular of the last one, containing the page with the colophons. It is probable that the copyist had less space than hoped and could not copy as many stories as he wished. A different hypothesis can be suggested: the redactor was copying from an already existent codex and so, the table could reflect the content of the original one (the ancestor); even in this case, the absence of the last stories listed in the index should be due to a lack of space, preventing the copyist to write all the texts present in the ancestor. This last hypothesis is actually against the impression of the manuscript as an outcome of a gathering of various and originally independent material(s).

¹³⁶ An unprovable alternative hypothesis is that the index makes reference to two volumes.

¹³⁷ Wright 1872: 1108-1111.

time when no less than seventy Syrian monks lived there.¹⁴³ One finds the names of at least two other readers at f. 178r - at the bottom margin of the page-, where an unnamed monk of Ras'ain, whose name is effaced, is mentioned, and at f. 28r - on the margin-, where one can read the name of Ephraim, monk of the convent of Mar Sergius in Balad.¹⁴⁴

Structure of the collection:

- 1) Mary of Egypt [BHSE 357]
- 2) Euphrosyne [BHSE 358]
- 3) Alexis [BHSE 1065, 1279]
- 4) *Discourse of Chrysostom on virginity*
- 5) *Discourse of Athanasius on virginity*
- 6) Febronia of Nisibis [BHSE 367]
- 7) Eugenia and her Friends [BHSE 363]
- 8) John, Arcadius, Xenophon and Mary [BHSE 1953]
- 9) Andronicus and Athanasia [BHSE 385]
- 10) Daniel of Scetis (on Anastasia) [BHSE 1279]
- 11) Some holy women
- 12) A Virgin and a Child of Alexandria [BHSE 1628]
- 13) Marina [BHSE 1952]
- 14) Virgin of Caesarea of Palestine and Eustathius the Reader [BHSE 434]
- 15) Piamon [BHSE 441]
- 16) Onesima [BHSE 359]
- 17) Euphemia and Sophia [BHSE 930]
- 18) A Merchant of Harran in Constantinople [BHSE 1492]
- 19) Simeon of Kfar-'Abdin [BHSE 1493]
- 20) Andromedes of Jerusalem [BHSE 1488]
- 21) A Virgin and Collutus [BHSE 444]
- 22) John of Rome [BHSE 1955]
- 23) Eupraxius [BHSE 1486]
- 24) Hilaria [BHSE 920]

¹⁴³ Ibid.

למען חב[גמ] ונעמד נעמד

סגרא חלבוהא נעמד וראויעלג וראוהא לבוכרא סגרא טאכא וראוה כנזרא סגרא עבכא ונזרא סגרא.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

ענ ונעמדא סגרא עמא ארזכא סגרא חבוכא ונז, סגרא ונזלא סגרא חלבוהא.

Followed by the later hand addition:

סגרא חבוכא

3.1.5.2 Observations on the contents

Virginité is the main topic of the collection, concerning both the hagiographic narrations and the two non-hagiographical works, two discourses by Athanasius and John Chrysostom [4-5]; this is unsurprisingly linked to two literary *topoi*, i.e. the rejection of marriage¹⁴⁵ and the concealed identity - usually connected to the desire to lead a monastic life¹⁴⁶.

Three typologies of disguise are to be distinguished, in order to conceal one's own identity or holiness and each one of them is narratively portrayed in the BL Add 14649 collection: the cross-dressing women saints,¹⁴⁷ the disguise as a mendicant,¹⁴⁸ and the simulate madness.¹⁴⁹

The recurrence of the motifs of virginité, rejection of marriage and disguise is justified by the monastic milieu of production of the manuscript. The note by the scribe Simeon the monk I have mentioned above confirms this idea; the monk affirms that he has copied the codex for his own use. Actually, it is not clear whence Simeon was copying the stories; one can either hypothesize that he was taking stories from various manuscripts and putting them together according to his own ideas, or that, on the contrary, he was copying a whole already extant collection. If the latter case is true, I should ask myself about the milieu of production of this hypothetical original collection: maybe a female monastic context, considering the prevalence of stories about women, and ascetic women, in particular.

Even beside that, in the narratives mentioned above, the usual consequence of the desire of leading a monastic life is the escape from home and the hiding - with the final *agnitio* and sometimes a reunification with the family¹⁵⁰; indeed, Alexandria, the Egypt and in particular the desert of Scetis with its lauras are the privileged places where the saint aims to conclude his/her flight,¹⁵¹ so that it

¹⁴⁵ See the Stories of Euphrosyne [2], Febronia [6], Alexius [3], Eugenia [7], Andronicus and Athanasia [9], Anastasia [10].

¹⁴⁶ See Euphrosyne [2], Alexius [3], Andronicus and Athanasia [9], Anastasia [10], John of Rome [22], Hilaria [24].

¹⁴⁷ Eugenia [7], Hilaria [24], Anastasia [10], Athanasia [9], Marina [13].

¹⁴⁸ John of Rome [22], Alexius [3].

¹⁴⁹ Anastasia [10].

¹⁵⁰ On this topos, see Boulhol 1996

¹⁵¹ See Euphrosyne [2], Eugenia [7], Andronicus and Athanasia [9], Anastasia [10], Onesima [16], Hilaria [24].

comes as no surprise to find these stories in manuscripts produced or presented - or both- to the Scetis monastery of Deir al-Surian .

- 13) Nicholas of Myra [BHSE 345]
- 14) Theodosius of Jerusalem [BHSE 557]
- 15) Isaiah of Palestine [BHSE 555]
- 16) Ananias [BHSE 1640]
- 17) John of Tella [BHSE 558]
- 18) Eusebius of Samosata [BHSE 383]
- 19) Cyprian and Justa [BHSE 305]
- 20) Andronicus and Athanasia [BHSE 385]
- 21) A Merchant of Harran in Constantinople [BHSE 1492]
- 22) Daniel of Scete [BHSE 1948]
- 23) Eulogius and the Leper [BHSE 474]
- 24) Malcha the Solitary [BHSE 487]
- 25) Martinius (Mar Tnina) [BHSE 1629]
- 26) 'Awgen [BHSE 1945]
- 27) A man in prison [BHSE 1951]¹⁵⁶
- 28) Apollo and Amoun [BHSE 527]
- 29) Paphnutius [BHSE 530]
- 30) Copros and Patermoutis [BHSE 534]
- 31) Apollo the young [BHSE 548]
- 32) Constantine and Silvester [BHSE 1399]
- 33) Mark the merchant [BHSE 1947]
- 34) Zosimus [BHSE 1271]
- 35) The History of the likeness of Christ (De imagine Tiberiadis) [BHO 450]
- 36) 'Abrāhām of the high mountain [BHSE 1135]
- 37) Eulogius and the lion [BHSE 1500]
- 38) Gerasimus [BHSE 1501]
- 39) Isaiah of Aleppo [BHSE 312]
- 40) Yareth [BHSE 1316, 1949]
- 41) 'Awgen [BHSE 308]
- 42) John the Nazirite [BHSE 795]
- 43) John the Evangelist [BHSE 889]
- 44) Clement [BHSE 368]
- 45) Jacob of Nisibis [BHSE 342]
- 46) Jacob of Serugh [BHSE 1075]
- 47) Jacob Baradaeus (Life and Translation of his body) [BHSE 849,850]
- 48) First and Second Finding of the Cross [BHSE 972,974]
- 49) (1) Sergius and Bacchus [BHSE 1944]
- 50) (2) Romanus and a child [BHSE 1939]
- 51) (3) Mamas, Theodute, and Rufina [BHSE 387]

¹⁵⁶ Originally belonging to the *Pratum Spirituale* (see Ruani 2017).

- 52) (4) Christopher and His Companion [BHSE 1233]
 53) (5) Placidus (Eustatius) [BHSE 302]
 54) (6) 'Abdelmasih [BHSE 230]
 55) (7) Theodore [BHSE 397]
 56) (8) Stratonike and Seleucus [BHSE 319]
 57) (9) Babylas and the Three Children [BHSE 344]
 58) (10) Onesimus [BHSE 369]
 59) (11) Martyrs of Tur Ber'ain [BHSE 1502]
 60) (12) Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e [BHSE 264]
 61) (13) Posi [BHSE 1940]
 62) (14) Mārtā, daughter of Posi [BHSE 1941]
 63) (15) Šāhdūst and his Companions [BHSE 271]
 64) (16) Tarbō, her sister [BHSE 1942]
 65) (17) 120 Martyrs [BHSE 276]
 66) (18) Petyon [BHSE 1227]
 67) (19) Ma'in [BHSE 1226]
 68) (20) Romulus, Eudoxius, and Friends [BHSE 377]
 69) (21) Cosmos and Damian [BHSE 376]
 70) (22) Behnam and his Companions [BHSE 1625]
 71) (23) Jacob the Recluse [BHSE 1138]
 72) (24) Leonius and Publius [BHSE 380]
 73) (25) Talya [BHSE 1140]
 74) (26) Probus, Tarachos, and Andronicus [BHSE 379]
 75) (27) The Maccabees [BHSE 968]?
 76) (28) Thecla [BHSE 894]
 77) (29) Virgin of Caesarea of Palestine and Eustathius the Reader [BHSE 434]
 78) (29) On the Death of Mary Mother of God (Death) [BHSE 1412]

3.2.1.2 Observations on the contents

We notice a conspicuous group of Miaphysite saints, alternated with universally acknowledged figures of the Christian world: beside Basil the Great [11] and Gregory Nazianzus [12], we find, for instance, Isaiah of Aleppo [39], a saint recognised only by the Syriac-Orthodox Church. This Miaphysite presence does not surprise, given the milieu of production of the collection.

Indeed the position of some stories is equally interesting: the first part opens with the Story of Baršawmā [1], the founder of the monastery where the manuscript has been produced - that is the reason of the relevant position of his Life at the beginning of the collection-; keeping apart the Finding of the Cross [48], the same first part (*Lives*) ends with Jacob of Batna [46] and Jacob Baradaeus [47]; it comes as no surprise the life of the master of Baršawmā, 'Abrāhām of the High Mountain [36],

whose story is located nearly at the middle of the book (f. 227). All the mentioned texts deal with Miaphysite saints.

The milieu of production of the collection is reflected even in the prevalence of monastic literature; sub-groups of this kind of stories can be identified in the texts linked to personages, such as Daniel of Scetis¹⁵⁷ and 'Awgen,¹⁵⁸ or authors, as Palladius.¹⁵⁹

The group of the martyrs is very composite, and it is difficult to find a criterion of selection. The Persian Martyrs are the only evident sub-group.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, one can observe a recurrence of stories having martyr children as protagonists.¹⁶¹

The collection ends with a small group of stories having figures of women as protagonists, belonging to Biblical tradition,¹⁶² to "apocryphal" texts,¹⁶³ or to both, as in the case of the account on the Mother of God [78]. Actually, they are not all (or always) positive examples – see e.g. the story of the virgin of Caesarea [77].

Two points deserve a particular consideration on the level of literary analysis: on the one hand, the recurrence of the motif of the converted king¹⁶⁴ and of texts portraying already Christian

¹⁵⁷ Andronicus and Athanasia [20], Anecdotes of Daniel [22].

¹⁵⁸ Isaiah of Aleppo [39], Yareth [40], 'Awgen [41], John the Nazirite [42].

¹⁵⁹ The stories of Apollo and Amoun [28], Copros and Patermoutis [30], Apollo the young [31] are narrated one after the other; but we also find, in different places of the collection, Paul the Simple [10] and the anecdotes of Macarius [6].

¹⁶⁰ From the Martyrs of Tur Ber'ain [59] to the story of Ma'in of Singar [67].

¹⁶¹ See, for instance, the Acts of Romanus [50], Mamas [51], Babylas [57], Behnam [70], Ṭalya [73]; for some reflections about the presence of this motif, as for instance in the Vatican collection Sir 161, see above, p. 39.

¹⁶² Shmouni [75]

¹⁶³ Thecla [76].

¹⁶⁴ Actus Silvestri [32], the martyrdom of Behnam [70], the story of Mar Asya [4]. The motif of the king's conversion, as predictable, occurs in hagiography in a limited way. This happens for a variety of reasons: on the one hand, in the case of the so-called "historical" Passions and Acts, the conversion of the king is not the main interest of a narrator having the crowning of the martyr as focus of his narration; on the other hand, when a hagiographer, as usually, means to present himself as historically reliable, it is possible to deal with the conversion of the king only in those rare cases which history - or historiography - has presented as real or likely; finally, there are cases when the king's conversion is narrated on purpose, aiming at rewriting in some way the history, and presenting a sort of "alternative" history, collocating the conversion of a city or a kingdom - usually linked and consequent to the conversion of its king - in a certain historical period, generally antedating the real historical conversion.

kings/queens in relationship with holy men;¹⁶⁵ on the other hand, the emergence of the Christological debate.

The relationship between the Saint and the Christian orthodox - i.e. Miaphysite- emperors is presented as based on the respect, sustain and encouragement of the Saint's activity.¹⁶⁶ The interest of the collector in theological matters aims at positioning his party in a sequence of "orthodox" tradition; this emerges in a selection of stories staging a privileged relationship of Miaphysite saints with the Christian emperors.¹⁶⁷ This one is not the only way the collector uses in order to put the collection in line with his theological aims; from this point of view, looking at the structure of the collection, even the very central sequence of the three Jacobs is meaningful and even their very central position, at the middle of the manuscript and at the end of the Lives, is interesting. The succession of Jacob of Nisibis [45], Jacob of Batna [46], Jacob Baradaeus [47] is in fact fascinating, as it aims at situating the Miaphysite Baradaeus, the founder of the Syriac-orthodox church, in a well-defined tradition and maybe even at the acme of this one; this tradition is identified by the moderate Miaphysite Jacob of Serugh and, before him, by the orthodox and universally recognized father of the Syriac Christianity, Jacob of Nisibis. According to this operation, Jacob Baradaeus is presented as the heir and successor of Jacob of Nisibis, and therefore the Miaphysite Church as the legitimate descendent of the original Church of Syria. One could go even further looking at the texts that we find before the three Jacobs, i.e. an apocryphal on John the Evangelist [43], and the life of Clemens of Rome [44]; the sequence reconstructs a tradition that from the Evangelic times, through the first Father of the Western Church and the raising of the Syriac Church, is finally fulfilled with (and in) the Miaphysite Church founded by Jacob Baradaeus - a way to claim the legitimacy of his creed.

Different further reasons have guided the author of the collection in his choice of portraying the exponent of a spiritual power, i.e. the holy monk or bishop, as a guide for the political authority. Indeed, a possible didactic aim comes up: instructing the two "real" parts, i.e. the monks and the

¹⁶⁵ See Barṣawmā [1], Jacob Baradaeus [47], Aaron [7], Asya [4], Ma'in [67], the Finding of the Cross narratives [48], as well as the biography of Peter the Iberian [3] and the account about the Death of Theodosius of Jerusalem and the story of the monk Romanus [14].

¹⁶⁶ E.g. the examples of Barṣawmā and Theodosius [1] and Jacob Baradaeus and the royal couple of Justinian and Theodora [47]. A particular relationship is the one who links Peter the Iberian and Theodosius and his court (cf. Phenix and Horn 2008). Peter is the son of the king of the Iberians; hostage at Theodosius court since he was twelve, Peter actually establishes a sort of son-parents relationship with the pious emperors - the imperial couple is actually presented as leading an ascetic life-. But when he runs away to lead a monastic life, Peter refuses to maintain close relationships with Theodosius and Eudocia. Coming from a royal family himself, the saint fulfils what is the typical choice of nobles and princes who decide to abandon the world: the (almost) complete separation from the previous life, and consequently from the court and its exponents (on Peter the Iberian, see p. 83).

¹⁶⁷ See e.g. Barṣawmā [1], Peter [3], Jacob [47].

kings, about what the right relationship between power and Church should be and what examples should be followed.¹⁶⁸

I should notice, on the other hand, that the phenomenon of Christianisation has been itself re-written from a hagiographical point of view. It is obvious that the Christianisation of a kingdom is never the immediate consequence of a unique episode, but a long and complex process of gradual conversion; on the contrary, hagiography often presents it as a quick process usually consequent to the conversion of a sovereign. In order to do that, figures of “holy” kings have been “created” - or literary “re-created”-; I mean, for instance, a series of texts that I could define in a generic and maybe improper way as “Constantine cycle” (“improper” considering the various, historically and geographically distant and independent origin of the texts; in any case, this definition, even in its deficiency, is based on the fact that the texts share the same protagonists). Protagonists of these works are the emperor Constantine, hagiographically acknowledged as the maker of the Christianisation of the Roman Empire, and his family, especially his mother Helene. The texts are, in particular, the *Acts of Sylvester* [32], narrating the conversion of the emperor, of his mother and of his Kingdom, and the *Finding of the True Cross* [48], in a version identifying the protagonists of the discovery in Helene and Judas Cyriacus.¹⁶⁹ In both cases, actually, we cannot speak of a Holy Emperor in a strict sense, since the kings are not defined as such in the hagiographic texts; the tradition,

¹⁶⁸ The prince-monk character represents an intermediate figure: he comes from the political power, but he has renounced to this one in order to obtain the spiritual one. Actually, he himself does not recognise this latter as a real kind of “power”, as Power comes from and pertains only to God; but, on the contrary, this same spiritual power is recognised as “authority” even by the exponents of political power he deals with. For further examples of this character, not found in the BL Add 12174 but elsewhere in other collections, see e.g. Hilaria or Maximus and Dometius.

¹⁶⁹ A meaningful example of re-collocation of the episode in another historical moment is very famous. The protagonist is, in this case, the (fictional) wife of the emperor Claudius, Protonike, who was converted in Rome by the preaching of Peter and then went to Jerusalem to find the relics of the Holy Cross. This version of the *Finding of the cross* was born, it seems, inside a particular text, the *Teaching of Addai*, a Syriac work probably composed in the 5th century and aiming at antedating the conversion of the city of Edessa (where the story of the preaching of Jesus’ disciple Addai takes place) to an epoch far earlier than the historical one. Co-protagonist is once more a king who converts, Abgar V Ukkama; around his figure we note interesting parallels with the Constantine of the *Acts of Sylvester* and a tradition presenting him as ill and healed after and thanks to the baptism (see also a *Homily on the Baptism of Constantine* by James of Serugh; cf. Frothingham 1882; on the rapports between the two legends, of Abgar and Constantine, see my forthcoming contribution, Di Rienzo, 2019a?). On the Christianisation of Edessa, see also Camplani 2009: 251-252, Ross 2001: 135, Brock 1992: 212-234, Mirkovic 2004, Griffith 2003: 1-46, Segal 1970, Desreumaux 1993 (translation of the *Teaching of Addai*); on the relationship between Edessa and Rome, Camplani and Gnoli 2001: 41-68.

however, has fulfilled what hagiography had started, with the canonisation of Helene - both in the East and in the West- and his son -just in the Byzantine church.¹⁷⁰

The recurrence of texts portraying in various ways a relationship between the Saint and the wild beasts can have a link with the Holiness-Power topic as well.¹⁷¹ The presence of animals and wild beasts is a recurrent motif in hagiography and in particular in hagiographic tales putting on stage the relationship between the Saint and the Power, e.g. texts concerning saints of noble origin or coming from a military milieu. The motif can be developed in different ways. On the one hand, for instance, the taming of ferocious beasts often recurs in hagiographic texts, in a kind of restoration of the

¹⁷⁰ The figure of Constantine emerging from the *Acts of Sylvester* is that of a sovereign who redeems from the heavy crimes committed against the Christians, but at the same time his *pietas* precedes his conversion. Constantine is Christian in his heart, though he does not know that: his choice of renouncing to the sacrifice of innocent children and, as a consequence, to what had been presented to him as the only opportunity to recover, demonstrates his goodness (in Latin, his *pietas*) that comes before his baptism and, indeed, makes him deserving the sacrament and the recovering (cf. Di Rienzo 2016: 345-346). The queen Helene portrayed in the *Finding of the Cross* is, on the contrary, an already Christian sovereign who has been raised in the faith in Jesus and in the knowledge of the Bible; a figure who contrasts with the Jewish-friendly empress staged in the *Acts of Sylvester* (cf. Brooks 1919: 48-49). To the hagiographic cycle rotating around the figure of Constantine and his family we can also add another text, the so-called Julian Romance, known just in the Syriac area. Unfortunately, the unique manuscript that transmits it is lacking at the beginning, preventing us from knowing in a complete way the contents of the first part of the narration, about the reign of Constantine's heirs. And if the figure of Julian emerging in the second section of the tale, especially in his fight against the historically unidentified Roman bishop Eusebius is portrayed as an anti-hero, on the contrary, in the third and last part, his general and successor Jovian, is portrayed as a Christian pious ruler (Cf. Wood 2010: 132-162). Bibliography on the *Julian Romance* is ample: we should mention the old contribution by Nöldeke (1874: 660-675; id. 1874b 263-292) and the more recent works by Drijvers (1994: 201-214; 1999: 31-42; 2007: 1-20; 2010: 229-233; 2011: 280-297; 2011b: 131-162), Muravjev (1999: 194-206; 2015: 399-407), Van Esbroek (1987: 191-202) and Schwartz (2001: 565-587). The first edition of the Romance is by Hoffmann (1880 [Syriac text]); the first English translation is by Gollancz (1928). A new edition and translation are available: Sokoloff 2016 [Syriac text and English transl.]. Currently, Maryse Robert is working on a new study on the Romance in her PhD research, titled "*Le Roman Syriaque de Julien l'Apostat*": introduction, traduction, notes philologiques et commentaire".

¹⁷¹ Baršawmā [1], Aaron [7], Sylvester [32], Eulogius [37], Gerasimus [38], Mamas [51], Placidus [53], Theodore [55], Stratonike and Seleucus [56], Ma'in [67], Behnam [70], Tarachos [74]. On the relationship saints-animals, see the interesting article by Symeon Paschalidis (2018). Paschalidis identifies various possible reasons behind this relationship: the rapport with the lion, for instance, would mean the supreme sovereignty of the man of God on all the wild animals (see, in particular, *ibid.* 217); a relationship based on love and mercy towards animals would indicate the saint's love for the whole Creation (*ibid.* 219). The holy man-animal relationship appears as a restoration, in the man, of the features of Adam before the Fall, i.e. the obedience to God and the *parrhesia* towards Him (*ibid.* 222-223).

Paradisiac peaceful cohabitation of men with every kind of animals, or a sort of anticipation on earth of an Heavenly Kingdom, where, using Isaiah's words, "*The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest*" (Isaiah 11, 6-8).¹⁷² A different case is that concerning the dragon, in which some deeper links with the political power topic can be stressed. The dragon - or the snake- is biblically the symbol of the devil, from Genesis to Revelation. Indeed, the fight between the saint and the dragon/snake can be interpreted on two levels: without any doubt, the monster has always a demonic value, representing a manifestation of the devil;¹⁷³ on the other hand, it often (not always) has a further meaning, being figure of *something* else. According to a syllogism like the following

Devil= dragon dragon= x x= Devil

the saint's occasional adversary (x) is often identified with the devil, i.e. the *occasional adversary* is associated to the *generic* one (the devil). Now, the enemy (x) of the Saint is usually the paganism or other religions and cults;¹⁷⁴ later, in a Christianised empire, the heresy; or, more interesting for this analysis, the political power, according to some description of evil rulers, especially in Martyr texts.¹⁷⁵ Put differently, both fighting against heresy and facing an evil political power can sometimes be represented through a fight against a dragon.

3.2.2 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, syr. 234

3.2.2.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

Under the shelf mark Syriaque 234, the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* preserves in its collections of Oriental manuscripts a paper codex dated 1192 CE.¹⁷⁶ The codex consists of a collection of holy

¹⁷² Cf. the already mentioned Paschalidis 2018: 222-223.

¹⁷³ For biblical references, see e.g. Genesis 3; Revelation 12; Daniel 14.

¹⁷⁴ See the connection between a group of magicians and the dragon living under the Capitol and later imprisoned by Sylvester, as narrated in his Acts (Di Rienzo 2016: 344); parallels with the description of the imprisonment of the dragon in Rev. 20: 1-3 have been noticed. On the episode in *Acts of Sylvester* and other similar ones in connection with Constantine, cf. Canella 2014: 235-247; id. 2016: 533-557.

¹⁷⁵ For some occurrences, see also below, pp. 126, 133.

¹⁷⁶ An exhaustive description of this codex and the following two ones (235, 236) has been done by Emilie Villey in the E-Ktobe database; this is available at: <http://syriac.msscatalog.org/63925>. The description is based on

- 4) Dioscorus [BHSE 1070]
- 5) Zosimus (Summary of the Vision of) [BHSE 1626]
- 6) Mary of Egypt [BHSE 357]
- 7) Maximus and Dometius [BHSE 693]
- 8) Isaiah of Aleppo [BHSE 312]
- 9) 'Abrāhām of the high mountain [BHSE 1135]
- 10) Serapion [BHSE 356]
- 11) John the Almsgiver [BHSE 1627]
- 12) John of Antioch [BHSE 1134]
- 13) Letter of Pseudo Dionysius Areopagites to Timotheus on the death of the apostles Peter and Paul [BHO 968]
- 14) Placidus (Eustathius) [BHSE 302]
- 15) Jacob the Cut-Up (Ya'qōḇ Mpasqā) [BHSE 291]
- 16) A virgin and a child of Alexandria [BHSE 1628]
- 17) Archelides [BHSE 918]
- 18) Marina (Mary) [BHSE 1118]
- 19) Jacob of Nisibis [BHSE 343]
- 20) 'Abrāhām Qīdūnāyā [BHSE 396]
- 21) The History of the likeness of Christ (De imagine Tiberiadis) [BHO 450]
- 22) Martinus (Mar Tnina) [BHSE 1629]
- 23) Euphrosyne [BHSE 358]
- 24) Essays and examples on the adherence to the day of Friday¹⁸⁰
- 25) A bishop [BHSE 1630]
- 26) John bar Malke [BHSE 252]
- 27) Joseph, patriarch [BHSE 1631]
- 28) Mamas [BHSE 388]
- 29) Ḥīmyarite Martyrs [BHSE 1405]
- 30) Peter the publican [BHSE 1131]
- 31) The Maccabees [BHSE 968]
- 32) Mark the merchant [BHSE 1129]
- 33) The Rich Man and His Poor Neighbor [BHSE 1130, 1632]
- 34) Widow of Jerusalem [BHSE 1132]
- 35) The First Finding of the Cross [BHSE 973]
- 36) Fausta of Cyzicus [BHSE 1633]
- 37) Virgin of Jerusalem [BHSE 1133]
- 38) Euphemia and Sophia (Euphemia and the Goth) [BHSE 930, 1634]
- 39) The martyrs of Sebaste [BHSE 307]
- 40) Matthias and Andrew [BHSE 1635]
- 41) Alexius [BHSE 1065, 1279]

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Zotenberg 1874: 183; summary in Nau 1910: 192-193; see also the entry: <http://syri.ac/bnf-syr-234>

- 42) Finding of the head of saint Paul¹⁸¹
 43) Daniel of Scetis (on Anastasia) [1279]
 44) (1) Antonius [BHSE 681]
 45) (2) Macarius the great [BHSE 355]
 46) (3) Pachomius [BHSE 354]
 47) (4) A man in a tree [BHSE 1637]
 48) (5) John the Nazirite [BHSE 795]
 49) (6) Abraham and Maron [BHSE 796]

3.2.2.2 Observations on the contents

The collection mingles saints and martyrs of various provenance, but also anecdotes, apocryphal writings (e.g. the Acts Matthias and Andrew among the men-eater people [40]) and edifying stories. As usual, the original monastic milieu of production is detectable in the great prevalence of stories having monks and solitaries as protagonists.¹⁸² The cycle of Zosimus is kept together, with the sequence of the vision of the Rechabites [5] followed by the story of Mary of Egypt [6].

Most of the monastic stories deal with personages coming from the high society.¹⁸³ As already seen for the Persian Martyrs, it seems that the nobility of birth often becomes perfection of asceticism exceeding all the other monks,¹⁸⁴ as, once having abandoned the original social rank, a high position in the Saint's capability of approaching God corresponds to his original high position in the social scale. This could be interpreted: a) as a sort of compensation for what they have left (i.e. the elevated social rung) with a likewise elevated position in spiritual perfection; b) as if a nobility of the soul

¹⁸¹ Cf. Zotenberg 1874: 184; see also the entry: <http://syri.ac/bnf-syr-234>.

¹⁸² The whole second part, starting from Anthony [44]; but also the first stories, having as protagonists Bishoi [1], Macarius [2] and the acts of Behnam [3], where the monk Matthai plays the main role; then Maximus and Dometius [7], Isaiah of Aleppo [8], a witness of the original western-Syriac provenance of the collection, being a Saint venerated only by the Syriac-orthodox Church, as we have seen, 'Abrāhām of the high mountain [9], the already mentioned master of Barṣawmā, whose presence, as well as Isaiah, links the manuscript to the Miaphysite world, Serapion [10], John the monk [12], Archelides [17], Marina [18], 'Abrāhām Qīdūnāyā [20], Martinus [22], Euphrosyne [23], John bar Malke [26].

¹⁸³ Noble monks are recognizable in the figures of Archelides [17], John of Rome [26], Alexius, the anonymous Man of God of some versions [41], Anastasia [43], Euphrosyne of Alexandria [23]. Even among the martyr stories the example of a noble is not absent: this is the case of Mamas [28], son of Christian patricians persecuted for their faith, raised up then by the rich noblewoman Amya and designated as her heir at her death (so that his nobility is in some way double).

¹⁸⁴ See e.g. Maximus and Dometius [7], Archelides [17].

corresponds to the nobility of birth; c) as the monastic hierarchy more or less involuntarily mirrors the same social hierarchy, now completely at a level of spiritual perfection. Actually, although the other monks acknowledge this hierarchy, the protagonist himself does not; and at any rate, this acknowledgment of the saint's perfection does not occur in those cases when the holy man intentionally disguises himself - see the cases of the pretending-to-be fool saints -. In any case, the prince literally remains "*princeps*" - i.e. "the first one" - even in the monastery or among the solitaries, here in a spiritual sense of closeness to God. This is what happens inside the narratives. Does this reflect a custom in the life of a monastery? This is possible, although difficult to prove; the selection of texts portraying these aristocratic holy figures who excel above anyone else could aim at justifying, in front of an internal monastic audience, the legitimacy of the high position in the monastic hierarchy that probably, usually, this kind of men occupied. Indeed, one should notice that portraying nobles is typical of fictional narratives of any kind, starting from tales and fables, for instance.

3.2.3 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, syr. 235

3.2.3.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

This is a paper undated codex of 341 leaves; the text is distributed on two columns of 22-30 lines; actually, the volume is incomplete, and some folios are missing here and there.¹⁸⁵ The codex is composed of 36 quires, some of which are incomplete; in four cases The numbering of the quires is irregular and seems to be due to two different phases; anyway, according to the numbering two quires are missing at the beginning of the manuscript.

It is interesting that, according to Allgeier, the story of the Sleepers of Ephesus contained in Par Syr 235 seems to reproduce precisely the same text - and the same orthographical mistakes- of the 8th century Berlin Sachau 321 (ff. 179v-156v), so that the scholar has supposed that the Parisian codex was a direct copy of the Berlin one.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Description of the manuscript (from the E-Ktobe database) available at: <http://syriac.msscatalog.org/63975> ; cf. Zotenberg 1874: 185-187.

¹⁸⁶ See Allgeier 1915, 279-297 (cf. id. 1918, 33-87); if Allgeier is right, it would be interesting to see if even the other stories present both in the Paris and in the Berlin manuscripts can be considered linked by a direct original-copy relationship (I mean the stories of Julian Saba and Jacob Baradaeus, at least); and if it is so, it would be even more interesting to compare the contents of the two codices and try to understand why the collector preparing the Par Syr 235 has chosen to copy and insert some stories rather than others.

The scribe put his signature: we find his name, David, at f. 312r and also in a decorative frieze at f. 275v.¹⁸⁷ The manuscript has been produced in a Miaphysite milieu, as also the presence of the life of Jacob Baradaeus demonstrates. From this point of view, it is meaningful to observe the note of a Melkite reader who protests against some passages that criticize the Council of Chalcedon in the story of John the Short (ff. 118, 124, 315) and against the story of Jacob Baradaeus, considered untrue and heretic (f. 315v); this is a trace of the passage of the collection from a Miaphysite to a Melkite milieu. Even if the manuscript is not dated, it should date to the 12th century.

The structure shows a clear prevalence of monastic tales - almost the entirety of the collection-, to which the redactor has added three apocryphal texts and some edifying stories.

Structure of the collection:

- 1) John the Evangelist [BHSE 888]
- 2) 'Aḇrāhām Qīdūnāyā [BHSE 396]
- 3) Alexius [BHSE 1065, 1269]
- 4) Paul the bishop and John the priest [BHSE 1127]
- 5) Julian Saba [BHSE 384]
- 6) Maximus and Dometius [BHSE 880]
- 7) Dionysius the Areopagite [BHSE 1642]
- 8) Philip [BHSE 890]
- 9) Archelides [BHSE 917]
- 10) John bar Malke [BHSE 252]
- 11) A saint [BHSE 1638]¹⁸⁸
- 12) A man in a tree [BHSE 1639]
- 13) Martinius (Mar Tnina) [BHSE 1629]
- 14) Zosimus [BHSE 1271]
- 15) John the Short [BHSE 910]
- 16) Ephrem [BHSE 315]
- 17) Dioscorus [BHSE 1608]
- 18) Jacob the lame [BHSE 458]
- 19) Ananias [BHSE 1640]
- 20) Daniel of Galash [BHSE 1068]
- 21) Serapion [BHSE 356]
- 22) Andronicus and Athanasia [BHSE 385]
- 23) Antigone and Eupraxia [BHSE 1641]

¹⁸⁷ The discovery is due to Flavia Ruani, who published a contribution on the manuscript transmission of the Story of Philip (which is contained in the Par Syr 253), together with Émilie Villey, see Ruani and Villey 2015.

¹⁸⁸ I.e. Mari of Beth Sahde

- 24) Onesima [BHSE 359]
- 25) Euphrosyne [BHSE 358]
- 26) Virgin of Jerusalem [BHSE 1133]
- 27) Domitius [BHSE 398]
- 28) Dionysius the Areopagite [BHSE 1052]
- 29) Mark the merchant [BHSE 1643]
- 30) John the Almsgiver [BHSE 346]
- 31) Moses the Indian [BHSE 482]
- 32) Jacob Baradaeus [BHSE 849]
- 33) The Children or Sleepers of Ephesus [BHSE 250]
- 34) Barbara and Juliana [BHSE 306]

3.2.4 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, syr. 236

3.2.4.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

Par Syr 236 is a paper manuscript written in a Serto script, with an unsystematic Western vocalization on the first folios, much rarer in the rest of the codex. The manuscript is composed of 365 leaves, each one presenting one column of 22-28 lines.¹⁸⁹ Quires are 37, numbered at the beginning and end.

We know both the place and the date of redaction from a colophon at ff. 365 r-v; the colophon is easily recognisable, as a red undulating line surrounds it. According to it, the copy has been fulfilled on the 27th of March 1505 A. Gr. (1194 CE), at the time of the patriarchs Michael, John and Gregory and when John was bishop of Beth 'Arbaye; the copyist is the monk Behnam of the monastery of Mar Sergius, Mar Ze'ure and Mar B'uti on the mount Sahyo (Tura Sahya).

Each story is numbered; their order corresponds to the index found on the very first page (f. 1r)¹⁹⁰.

Structure of the collection:

- 1) Antonius [BHSE 681]
- 2) Macarius the Great [BHSE 355]
- 3) Bishoi [BHSE 313]

¹⁸⁹ The codex once belonged to the Segueriana library; then since 1735 to the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Près. For the description of the codex, see: <http://syriac.msscatalog.org/64011>; Zotenberg 1874: 187- 188

¹⁹⁰ The table of contents is not an addition, in this case; the handwriting appears to be the same of the rest of the manuscript.

- 4) Shenoute [BHSE 1288]
- 5) Pachomius [BHSE 354]
- 6) Maximus and Dometius [BHSE 880]
- 7) Malke [BHSE 362]
- 8) John the Evangelist [BHSE 888]
- 9) John, Arcadius, Xenophon, and Mary [BHSE 1491]
- 10) Antigone and Eupraxia [BHSE 1641]
- 11) John bar Malke [BHSE 252]
- 12) Serapion [BHSE 356]
- 13) The History of the likeness of Christ (De imagine Tiberiadis) [BHO 450]
- 14) Archelides [BHSE 919]
- 15) Jacob the Cut-Up (Ya'qōḅ Mpasqā) [BHSE 291]
- 16) Cyriacus and Julietta [BHSE 1644]
- 17) Zosimus [BHSE 1271]
- 18) Peter the publican [BHSE 1131]
- 19) Onesima [BHSE 359]
- 20) A Saint [BHSE 491]
- 21) An Elder [BHSE 499]
- 22) Disciple of an Elder of Scetis [BHSE 478]
- 23) Two Persian brothers [BHSE 500]
- 24) Paphnutius [BHSE 1386]
- 25) A holy man [BHSE 497]
- 26) Amoun [BHSE 413]
- 27) John of Antioch [BHSE 1134]

3.2.4.2 Observations on the contents

Beside the only apocryphal text¹⁹¹, and the two martyr ones,¹⁹² the prevalence of monastic narratives is evident; monastic tales both open and close the volume: the codex starts with the Egyptian monasticism,¹⁹³ ending with a group of texts belonging to the *Book of Paradise*,¹⁹⁴ with a prevalence of short tales.

¹⁹¹ John the Evangelist [8].

¹⁹² Jacob the Cut-Up [15] and Cyriacus and Julietta [16].

¹⁹³ From Anthony [1] to Malke [7].

¹⁹⁴ From Onesima [19] on.

The presence of five of the so-called “Constantinopolitan Romances” stands out.¹⁹⁵

Taking into account the whole complex of narratives, an attention to the theme concerning the “family” emerges, both considering the two martyr texts¹⁹⁶ and the monastic ones.¹⁹⁷

3.2.5 Damas, Patriarcat syrien orthodoxe, cod. 12/17-18

3.2.5.1 Codicological observations and manuscript contents

My review of the materials to be studied in this dissertation ends with the Damascus double-codex for two reasons: contrarily to the original character of the material I have presented until now, the following analysis is in great part the outcome of the work conducted by André Binggeli in the article that is at the basis of the entire idea of my project;¹⁹⁸ on the other side, Damascus 12/17-18 is the manuscript in which, more than in anyone else, both the meaning of the structure and the editorial project is clear.

Originally the two manuscripts constituted a unique codex of 125 hagiographic narrations in more than 500 folios (301 in 12/17, 223 in 12/18)¹⁹⁹. The whole of the two codices is composed of 49 quires. The text of each page is distributed into three columns.²⁰⁰ Despite the actual very damaged state of the manuscript, the original structure can be reconstructed on the basis of a 18th century copy-translation in Garšūni: that one, in fact, seems to be very faithful to the original, presenting the same mutilations of the Syriac.²⁰¹

A colophon of the Garšūni codex declares that this copy has been done by the monk Bishora at the monastery of Deir al-Za’faran in the Tur ‘Abdin, in 1733-1734, on the basis of a Syriac manuscript

¹⁹⁵ I mean the story of Maximus and Dometius [6], the story of John, Arcadius, Xenophon, and Mary [9], those of John bar Malke [11], of Serapion [12], of Archelides [14].

¹⁹⁶ Jacob the Cut-Up [15] and Cyriacus and Julietta [16].

¹⁹⁷ See for instance the familiar group expressed by Xenophon and his family [9], Euphraxia and her family [10], and the relationship with parents the stories of John bar Malke [11] and Archelides [14] stage, without forgetting the Rechabites’ family portrayed in the vision of Zosimus [17]; for some further notes on the presence of this motif, see above (p. 47, n. 134) and then below, in the literary analysis (pp. 90-91)

¹⁹⁸ Binggeli 2012, 50-54.

¹⁹⁹ Leaves are numbered through Syriac letters.

²⁰⁰ For a punctual description of the two manuscripts, see: <http://syriac.msscatalog.org/62048> and <http://syriac.msscatalog.org/62094>; cf. Brock and Samir 1994: 608-614

²⁰¹ For the contents of the Garšūni manuscript, see Graf 1913: 311-327.

found in the same convent and dated 1178-79 (A. Gr. 1490). Actually, in the Syriac basis manuscript, a note at the end of the life of Mar Abhai testifies that the story has been reviewed by the patriarch Michael the Great in 1184-85, when this one lived at Deir al-Za'faran, that was one of the patriarchal residences at that time. Despite this discordance of dates, it is anyway licit to think that the manuscript has been copied in the Tur 'Abdin in the last quart of the 12th century at the instigation - and probably in the same entourage - of Michael the Syrian.

Structure of the two collections (as we can read them today)²⁰²:

12/17

- 1-4) Lost
- 5) Bishoi [BHSE 313]
- 6) John the Short [BHSE 910]
- 7) Shenoute [BHSE 1288]
- 8) Lost
- 9) Serapion [BHSE 356]
- 10) John, Arcadius, Xenophon, and Mary [BHSE 1491]
- 11) Archelides [BHSE 917,918]
- 12) John bar Malke [BHSE 252]
- 13) Lost
- 14) Alexius [BHSE 1279]
- 15) Nobles of Rome and Antioch who despised world and lived in poverty²⁰³
- 16) Andronicus and Athanasia [BHSE 385]
- 17) Daniel and Eulogius [BHSE 1885]
- 18) Simeon of Kfar-'Abdin [BHSE 1493]
- 19) Roubil [BHSE 1494]
- 20) Euthalius [BHSE 1736]
- 21) Dometius [BHSE 1505]
- 22) 'Abrāhām Qīdūnāyā [BHSE 396]
- 23) Julian Saba [BHSE 384]
- 24) Aaron of Serugh [BHSE 692]
- 25) Simeon the Stylite [BHSE 351]
- 26) Barṣawmā the Syrian [BHSE 1073]
- 27) Daniel of Galash [BHSE 1886]
- 28) Jacob the Wandering Monk [BHSE 1485]

²⁰² Cf. Brock and Samir 1994: 608-614. I provide in square brackets the double numeration, where present.

²⁰³ Cf. Brock and Samir 1994: 609.

- 29) Martinien (Mâr Tnina) [BHSE 1305]
 30) A virgin and a child of Alexandria [BHSE 1628]
 31) Malcha the Solitary [BHSE 487]
 32) Zosimus [BHSE 1271]
 33) Mark the merchant [BHSE 1886]
 34) John the Siloitus [BHSE 1125]
 35) Simeon Salos [BHSE 1495]
 36) Gerasimos [BHSE 1501]
 37) Sergius and Abraham of Kashkar [BHSE 1144]
 38) Peter of Africa [BHSE 1887]
 39) Mar Beth-Sahda [BHSE 1128]
 40) 'Awgen [BHSE 308]
 41) Malke [BHSE 362]
 42) Isaiah of Aleppo [BHSE 312]
 43) Yareth [BHSE 1316]
 44) Evagrius [BHSE 496]
 45) Isaiah of Palestine [BHSE 555]
 46) The History of the likeness of Christ (De imagine Tiberiadis) [BHO 450]
 47) Jacob the recluse [BHSE 1138]
 48) Eulogius and the lion [BHSE 1500]
 49) 'Abrâhâm of the high mountain [BHSE 694]
 50) John the Nazirite [BHSE 795]
 51 [1]) Findings of the Cross [BHSE 1645]
 52 2]) Mary Mother of God (Death of) [BHSE 1888]
 53 [3]) Letter of Pseudo Dionysius Areopagites to Timotheus [BHO 968]
 54 [4]) John the Evangelist [BHSE 888]
 55 [5]) John the Evangelist [BHSE 889]
 56 [6]) Finding the head of John the Baptist [BHSE 1528]
 57 [7]) Ignatius of Antioch [BHSE 301]
 58 [8]) Clement of Rome [BHSE 368]
 59 [9]) Peter of Alexandria [BHSE 365]
 60 [10]) Athanasius of Alexandria [BHSE 1039]
 61 [11]) Jacob of Nisibis [BHSE 342]

12/18

- 63[13]- 69[19]) Basil the Great (Miracles of Basil and his brother Peter, by Helladios)[BHSE 1446]
 70 [20]) John Chrysostom [BHSE 1889]
 71 [21]) Gregory Wonderworker [BHSE 375]
 72 [22]) Gregory the Illuminator [BHSE 1409]
 73 [23]) Cyprian and Justa [BHSE 305]
 74 [24]) Paloutianos [BHSE 1890]

- 75 [25]) Paul the bishop and John the priest [BHSE 1127]
- 76 [26]) Nicholas of Myra [BHSE 345]
- 77 [27]) Abḥai [BHSE 399]
- 78 [28]) Letter of Severe of Antioch
- 79 [29]) Jacob of Serugh [BHSE 1075]
- 80 [30]) Jacob Baradaeus [BHSE 849]
- 81 [31]) John of Tella [BHSE 558]
- 82 [32]) Addai the chorepiscopus [BHSE 800]
- 83 [33]) Theodute of Amida [BHSE 1048]
- 84 [1]) Cain and Abel [BHSE 1047]
- 85 [2]) Placidus (Eustatius) [BHSE 302]
- 86 [3]) The martyrs of Sebaste [BHSE 307]
- 87 [4]) The Children or Sleepers of Ephesus [BHSE 350]
- 88 [5]) George the Martyr, Anthony the General, and Alexandra the Queen [BHSE 249]
- 89 [6]) Jacob the Cut-Up (Ya'qōḇ Mpasqā) [BHSE 291]
- 90 [7]) Sergius and Bacchus [BHSE 304]
- 91 [8]) John of Kfar Sanya [BHSE 1892]
- 92 [9]) Hyperechius, Philotheus, Jacob, Paragros, Ḥabib, Romanus, and Lollian (The Seven Martyrs of Samosata) [BHSE 320]
- 93 [10]) Panteleon, Hermalooas, and Companions [BHSE 1142]
- 94 [11]) Romanus [BHSE 2040]
- 95 [12]) Lawrence and Agrippa [BHSE 1894]
- 96 [13]) Ḥimyarite Martyrs [BHSE 1174]
- 97 [14]) Guria and Shmona [BHSE 929]
- 98 [15]) Habib [BHSE 228]
- 99 [16]) Pappos and 24000 Martyrs in Magdala near Antioch [BHSE 1895]
- 100 [17]) Christopher and his companions [BHSE 1233]
- 101 [18]) Cyriacus and Julietta [BHSE 1734, 303]
- 102 [19]) Mama, Theodute and Rufina [BHSE 387]
- 103 [20]) 'Abdelmasih [BHSE 230]
- 104 [21]) Pethion [BHSE 1227]
- 105 [22]) Theodore [BHSE 2041]
- 106 [1]) Onesima [BHSE 1751]
- 107 [2]) Onesima [BHSE 1751] (two texts)
- 108 [3]) Daniel of Scetis [BHSE 1279]
- 109 [4]) Eupraxius [BHSE 1486]
- 110 [5]) Hilaria [BHSE 920]
- 111 [6]) Euphrosyne (lost)
- 112 [7]) Marina [BHSE 253]
- 113 [8]) A Virgin and a Child of Alexandria [BHSE 1628]
- 114 [9]) Susan [BHSE 819]

115 [10])	A Fallen Virgin who Repented [BHSE 1897]
116 [11])	Mary of Egypt [BHSE 357]
117 [12])	Pelagia [BHSE 400]
118 [13])	Thecla [BHSE 892]
119 [14])	Barbara and Juliana [BHSE 306]
120 [15])	Mary [BHSE 1110]
121 [16])	Agnes [BHSE 321]
122 [17])	Sophia and her Daughters Pistis, Elpis and Agape [BHSE 370]
123 [18])	Eugenia and her friends [BHSE 363]
124 [19])	Febronia of Nisibis [BHSE 367]
125 [20])	Stratonike (lost)

3.2.5.2 Observations on the contents

The 125 stories (112 survived in Syriac) are numbered and thanks to a double numeration and to some subscriptions we can distinguish and divide the collection in four thematic sections, presenting four different kinds of sanctity.

Stories 1-50 are tales about monks. Even if some texts at the beginning are missing in the Syriac, the Garšūni copy helps us to reconstruct the original order, starting with the Fathers of the monasticism, Paul, Anthony and Macarius (missing in Syriac), followed by some Egyptian ones, in some cases probably translated from Coptic,²⁰⁴ then a group from Constantinople and Rome; then the attention of the collector moves to Edessa, Syria and Mesopotamia; a subscription at the end of this first section confirms that this part was devoted to the stories of monks.

Stories 51-83 seem at first sight a more heterogeneous group of texts, presenting firstly some apocryphal works, followed by those that should be stories of bishops, with the meaningful though surprising presence of Ephrem among them. The order of the bishops' stories is not dictated by chance: it starts with Ignatius of Antioch [57], then presents a number of important personages in the history of the Churches, from Clement of Rome [58] to Peter [59] and Athanasius of Alexandria [60]; then it moves to the East, with Jacob of Nisibis [61] and the mentioned Ephrem; it finally presents the stories of the 6th century anti-Chalcedonian founders of the Syriac-orthodox Church.²⁰⁵ The last life of Theodote [83] bishop of Amid (d. 698) ends with a subscription that also provides us with the definition of the contents of the just finished part: the subscription announces the end of the

²⁰⁴ This is what Binggeli argues (Binggeli 2012: 51); the hypothetically originally Coptic stories are those of Maximus and Dometius, only survived in Garšūni, Bishoi [5], John the Short [6], Shenoute [7], Serapion [8].

²⁰⁵ Severus of Antioch [78], Jacob of Serugh [79], Jacob Baradaeus [80] John of Tella [81], Addai [82].

story of Theodote of Amid, together with all the “*orthodox doctors - the presence of Ephrem is now justified- and bishops, chiefs and shepherds of the Church*”. We can suppose an attempt to establish a continuity of religious authority that, starting from the apostles (see the apocryphal texts at the beginning) arrives to the doctors of the Western-Syriac church. The joining link between the two half-parts is Ignatius [57], the first saint bishop of Antioch, the see-city of the patriarchate, also martyr and heir of the apostolic tradition.

Stories 84-105 are Martyrdoms, in an original way starting from the story of Abel [84], meant as a sort of *typos* of the future Christian martyrs, then moving to the West with some translations from Greek,²⁰⁶ to finally come to the Syriac world; the lack of Persian martyrs, only represented by the Ḥimyarite Martyrs [96], could be a result of the insisted Syriac-orthodox intent of the collector, who is conversely less interested in Persian martyr literature.

Stories 106-125 are a group of stories of women, firstly ascetic and in disguise, then martyrs.²⁰⁷

Thus, all that considered, it emerges the desire by Michael the Great, on the one hand, of collocating the hagiographical texts in a sort of universal holy history, and, on the other one, of establishing a sort of continuity linking the great figures of the Christian panorama and the Syriac Christianity with the representatives of the Syriac-orthodox patriarchate.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ Placidus [85], the Forty martyrs of Sebaste [86], the Sleepers of Ephesus [87], George [88] and so on.

²⁰⁷ This last sub-group starting from Thecla [118].

²⁰⁸ We have noticed a similar case analysing the BL Add 12174 collection; the Damascus one develops this attempt in a more systematic and larger way.

4. Final Considerations

At the beginning of this chapter, I observed that the structure of each of the selected hagiographic collection was absolutely original and worthy to be analysed independently; actually, this is precisely the point justifying the need of carrying on an analysis of this type. I add and remind that we are dealing with an infinitesimal part of the extant collections.

Concerning the relationship between sanctity and political power and its presence in the collections, we can observe how the topic is addressed in the different collections, looking at it by different perspectives. The copyist/compiler chooses the texts he judges worth gathering according to his particular aims and to the reasons why he produces the collection; so, even the perspective through which looking at the Holiness-Power motif will vary analogously.

4.1 The Area 1

In the Vat Sir 160 and Vat Sir 161 collections the relationship with the power is presented in the perspective of the martyr stories: we are actually dealing with two martyr collections. If it is obvious that the figure of the martyr is already linked to the political power *per se*, as I will show in the chapter devoted to the literary analysis of the topic; it is also interesting to notice the specificity of certain sub-groups inside the same martyr-category, where the saint is presented in relationship with the political world *not only* as a martyr but also for other peculiar features: for instance the noble lineage or the military provenance.

Coherently with the central topic of the collection, i.e. the virginity and the monastic life, in BL Add 14649 the power is staged especially through figures and stories of noble saints (monks, solitary men); I cannot say whether the conspicuous presence of characters who concentrate in themselves the features of both the monk *and* the representatives of power is linked to a precise editorial choice. I can say that, if so it is, two possible - though both hypothetical- and potentially interconnected observations can be deduced from that: 1) the noble monk would represent, in the readers' view, a stronger example of monastic sanctity, as his choice of renouncing to the world is without any doubt a radical renounce, considering the standard of living he/she abandons in order to lead a monastic, eremitic or, in some cases, mendicant life; 2) although the copyist informs us, in a note, that he is transcribing the codex for his personal use, this does not prevent us from thinking about the possible existence of a previous collection that he is copying and its original audience - anyway, it is as well possible that the collection in itself is a product of the copyist himself, who is taking and gathering texts from various original books -. The prevalence of stories of women leads us to imagine a female monastic milieu; similarly, the strong

presence of saints who are also exponents of political power or aristocracy leads us to suppose an audience linked in some way to the same noble world. We could think, for instance, to some semi-anchoretic female communities, which were particularly widespread in the Palestinian area.

In BL Add 14644 the political question seems to be developed by a completely different point of view. Here the interest of the redactor or the copyist is not especially directed to the martyrdom-power relationship, but rather the relation with power appears oriented by the intention of claiming the Edessene primacy and its relationship with the Church of Rome. If in the collections preserved at the BAV the relationship with the power is described *inside* the single stories and in the presentation of their main characters, the BL Add 14644 presents a situation where not the single story but the whole collection is meant to deal with the topic; and, even inside each text, what is more significant is not the role of the holy protagonist but rather that of a city. The BL Add 14644 collection best reflects the true meaning of my analysis: here, the reasons of the presence of the Holiness-Power topic are linked to a precise editorial choice, and the whole collection reveals this intent through its structure.

The discourse about the collection contained in the BL Add 14645 is more complex. As I have shown, the manuscript should have been produced at Scetis, probably born by the will of a copyist who has gleaned texts from already existent manuscripts kept there. It is interesting to see how the attention to the Holiness-Power topic eventually emerges in the choice of the single stories and even more in that of the textual groups; more than this, once taken into account the composite nature of the collection, it is predictably impossible to identify an unique criterion in the declination of the theme, differently from the manuscripts mentioned above.

4.2 The Area 2

Looking at the Area 2 manuscripts, the first observation to propose is that the numerical relevance of the Holiness-Power topic does not reflect a precise editorial purpose by the author/ copyist/ editor. Even considering the collected stories dealing with this theme, the selection of the texts is not based on the topic in question. Indeed, the attention of the producers of the collections is directed towards monastic or edifying stories.

Nonetheless, the presence of texts where the idea of a relationship between holiness and political power emerges is conspicuous, if we take into account figures of martyrs, holy soldiers, saint monks of noble or regal family, as well as stories having as protagonists emperors and sovereigns, as the *Acts of Sylvester* or the various versions of the Finding of the True Cross narration. One can apply to the whole group of collections selected as exemplar for the Area 2 what I have said above regarding the BL Add 14649 manuscript: i.e. the eventuality that the character of the saint of noble lineage was from a literary point

of view more interesting and more “exemplar” than other characters, so that the redactor/copyist was to some extent induced to prefer this type of stories rather than others.

However, it is necessary to notice that the larger the collection is, the less possible is the identification of a unique criterion in the collector’s choice of texts worth inserting. I have the impression that the collector tries to gather as much stories as possible in these collections; in some cases, as I have observed for the Damascus double codex, he is guided by the aim of constructing a sort of *summa* of universal history through - and throughout- the hagiographic collection. Indeed, even the presence of edifying stories can be considered as a hint of this effort to enlarge as much as possible the object of hagiography, i.e. the potential panorama of holiness, in a universal perspective.²⁰⁹

I have observed in the collections belonging to Area 2 a gradual movement from the prevalence of martyr texts - typical of the Area 1- to the preference accorded to a new kind of hagiography portraying new types of saints, as the monk. It has been observed that actually the supposed-universal perspective would have been incomplete without a look at the lay-world, beside the religious-monastic one; this should have been the main reason and aim of the presence of edifying stories, in particular in collections aiming at universality, as the ones produced at the instigation of Michael the Syrian. Actually, beside this motive, I think that the reason of the presence of a text or a kind of texts in a collection must be (also) searched in the audience to which the collection itself is addressed in the intention of the producer; I suggest a possible parallel between the universality of the message and perspective proposed by these 12th century collections and a potential enlargement of the aimed readership, at least in the vision of the instigator of this production, the patriarch Michael: I mean, he aimed at reaching as much readers as possible, as well as the panorama of sanctities his collections propose is as much wide as possible.

It is difficult to identify an editorial project behind such a frequency of texts facing the topic of the Holiness-Power relationship from one point of view or another; I cannot do much more than noticing the relevance of the theme in question; not by chance, the analysis of some collections, as the ones contained in Par Syr 235-236, does not go much farer than a presentation of the structure and some very schematic and short observations.

Nevertheless, some observations can be offered regarding specific texts: the presence, for instance, of the *Acts of Sylvester* in BL Add 12174 is to be taken into consideration: as things are today, we are dealing with a *unicum* in the Syriac tradition; at the same time the (central) position of the *Finding of the Cross* text(s) in the same collection, or the presence of the group of the so-called Constantipolitan Romances in the Par Syr 236, are to be taken into account as well. Indeed, these and other texts clearly show an interest in the Roman and Byzantine world and denounce an attempt at finding possible links between those worlds and the Syriac one (especially the Western-Syriac Christianity).

²⁰⁹ See Ruani 2017, also for definition of the corpus of edifying stories in Syriac tradition and further bibliography on this kind of narratives in Syriac and in Greek.

Much more interesting is the relationship with the theological-ecclesiastical area of production of the manuscript, i.e. the Miaphysite one. This observation is valid for the whole *corpus* of manuscripts analysed for the Area 2 and its interest resides in at least two factors. On the one hand, the marginal additions of correction or contestation of some stories or passages that some Chalcedonian readers have left attest the spread of the collections in milieus theologically different from the one where the manuscript has been produced. On the other hand, there are some individual very interesting cases worth being analysed, as the mentioned sequence of the three Jacobs in BL Add 12174 or the second group of stories in Damascus 12-17/18, i.e. that of orthodox doctors and bishops. I can observe there an attempt at establishing a sort of continuity of religious authority that from the apostolic age leads to the exponents of the Western Syriac church, that is the basin of production of the collections. The reference to the apostolic age is undoubtedly evident in the Damascus case, while the BL Add 12174 succession seems to propose as starting point the naissance of the Syriac church represented by Jacob of Nisibis. Actually, if one takes a better look at what stories precede the life of the Nisibene, one notices an apocryphal text on John the Evangelist and the Life of Clemens of Rome. One can therefore deduce that the reference to the apostolic or immediately post- apostolic age is stated here as well.

This theological- ideological perspective somehow even emerges in – and from- the contents of the narratives; in particular, the way how the relationship of the holy protagonist with the emperor in charge is presented reflects, in each case, a particular theological position: the emperor will be portrayed in his devotion to the holy protagonist of the story and to this latter's orthodox beliefs, or, on the contrary, as an evil figure when he does not share the doctrinal creed of the author.

Part I.2

Narrating Saints and Power: Some Literary and Historical Considerations

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter we have had a look at the texts as part of a more complex context, i.e. the collections. We have investigated them in the perspective of the collector who decided to insert each one of them into a specific group of texts having an internal coherence, so that the text itself has to be considered also as an unavoidable part of a greater work, and vice versa the meaning of the collection itself cannot be understood without taking into account all the narratives it contains. I will now move from the collector's choices and purposes to those of the authors of the individual texts. In this chapter I will analyse the hagiographical narratives from a literary point of view, looking at them in particular as expressions of the Holiness-Power topic; that is to say, I will study the texts as literary products, by investigating what strategies the author has adopted to deal with the Holiness-Power themes through and throughout the narration.

First, I will analyse the choice of the saint to be portrayed in relationship with the power, considering this choice as linked to the historical moments and to the consequent evolution of the hagiographic genre; hagiography, in fact, cannot be understood without taking into account its links with history and with the historical context where it developed. Indeed, we cannot even consider hagiography as a univocal literary genre; on the contrary, it has assumed different forms according to the intention of the author and to the historical moment and/or cultural milieu of production. Therefore, the choice of the holy protagonist is conditioned by the *historical* milieu of production of a text; we at first assist to the spreading of the figure of the martyr, later flanked by other kinds of saints, with the emergence of the monk. On the other hand, the description of the holy man - martyr or monk- and the narration of his story are usually characterized by the recourse to a series of *topoi* and common patterns that denote a specific *cultural* conditioning. As consequence of this double - cultural and historical- conditioning, the "authoriality" – i.e. the author's original creative instance – is, at a certain level, compromised.

I will focus, then, on the structure of the narratives, investigating in particular the ways in which the author presents the relationship between sanctity and political power, in a more or less dialectic or static way. Finally, I will deal with some case-studies; the examples are offered by four Martyr texts whose editions are presented in the second part of this dissertation; they are proposed, on the one hand, as exemplifications of typical features and hagiographical motifs, and, on the other hand, as expressions of peculiar and original kinds of sanctity.

In the final chapter, through some meaningful narratives and situations, I will examine how a single author, who is expression of a specific historical period and cultural milieu, portrays the power(s), the holy and the relationship between them.

Some premises are to be declared, before starting the analysis. First of all, for practical reasons, I will base my investigation only on stories and texts contained in the collections analysed in the previous chapter; actually, the extent of the *corpus* I have at my disposal should allow me to consider them as a good spectrum of investigation and statistically large enough to project my reflections beyond this starting *corpus*, so that the analysis and its conclusions may be considered as applicable to a more general set of texts. Secondly, I will focus my investigation on the text as it is, without implications linked to its transmission. I have already stated that a text potentially carries different meanings if considered at the different stages of its production - including translation-, reception, transmission; since in the previous chapter I have investigated its function and meaning *inside* given collections - i.e. its meaning linked to its reception and transmission-, now I am considering the text as independent element and product of an authorial intent.²¹⁰

1.1 A Methodological Premise

A methodological premise is needed. Each hagiographic text, with the exception maybe of some texts of purely legendary nature, usually conveys elements of historicity in a variable degree; the dividing line between hagiography and historiography is not a clear one. This is true from both perspectives, as indeed the two genres both mingle historical and hagiographical elements.²¹¹ By defining historiography as "*opus oratorium maxime*", Cicero in some way "justifies" the presence of unhistorical elements;²¹² some aspects of the *Ecclesiastical History* by Eusebius of Caesarea are evidence for this way of considering the historiographical work.

On the side of hagiography, we have to take into account the fact that each episode of a Life or a Story, whatever true or invented, has been *rewritten* by the author; in a literary analysis what matters is not

²¹⁰ Concerning the choice of the holy protagonist, the observations I will propose can apply not only to the author of the narrative, but also to the collector in his choice of texts to gather: anyway, I will just refer to this second potential face of the investigation from time to time, as this kind of analysis was already at the origin of the previous chapter, concerning.

²¹¹ As it will be soon clear from the following analysis, speaking of hagiographical element does not imply exclusively a reference to "fictional" element: "hagiographical" can be either a fictive – unhistorical, invented- addition to the story or the literary device(s) used in presenting even a historical fact in a hagiographic perspective, i.e. in order to show the sanctity of the protagonist, for instance.

²¹² Cic. Leg I. 2:5. On ancient historiography in general (although without a specific study on ecclesiastical historiography), cf. Mazzarino 1965-1966 (in particular, the Introduction to the volume I, 1-20); for an overview and further bibliographical references on ancient Christian historiography, see e.g. Siniscalco 2003.

the potential historical value of the episode - or character- but exclusively the episode - or character- as literary product of the author's invention.

Starting from the idea that a hagiographic biography cannot be considered exclusively as a historical product nor, on the other hand, as a complete fiction, a problematic situation arises when we deal with a particular text as e.g. the *Life of Peter the Iberian*.²¹³ The composition in a time very close to the events, the historical value of its contents, the problems connected to the definition of its literary genre, the polemical intent: this is what makes of this text a troublesome case.²¹³ If we can define the *Life* as a hagiographic work - more specifically a monastic biography, often in the form of an encomium-, it is undeniable that it equally provides, in a certain measure, certified historical data. In addition, we have to consider that even these historical data have been to some extent rewritten by the author, according to a perspective of "sanctification" of the protagonist, aiming at presenting him in a heroic way. Therefore, on the one hand, though the text recounts in great part historical episodes, this does not mean that everything in the *Life* is historical; indeed, it is worth reminding that even contemporary historiographical works are not free from legendary and fictive elements. On the other hand, the historicity of an episode does not exclude the authorial intervention on the episode itself: the outcome, i.e. the episode as we read it, is a re-writing of the historical datum in a hagiographic - and/or polemic - perspective.²¹⁴ It is right and sometimes even necessary to analyse each literary work - and each element this one is composed of - by taking into account (and in relation to) the historical moment of its production and the ideological position according to which the author acted; even more so in such a

²¹³ The *Life* is a very studied text. Edition and English translation of the text in Phenix and Horn 2008, to which I also refer for a more complete bibliography (on the identification of the author with John Rufus of Maiuma, see Phenix and Horn 2008: lxiii; cf, Schwartz 1912; Horn 2006: 4-12. For other hypothesis on the authorship, see Phenix and Horn 2008: lix; Horn 2006: 33).

²¹⁴ The biblical parallels the *Life* -often implicitly- proposes can be considered examples of this process; a similitude with Isaac has been noticed in the statement that Peter had not brothers or sisters but a step-sister, daughter of a concubine of his father (Phenix and Horn 2008: 8-11; cf. Gn 16); a clear comparison with Simon Peter, on the other hand, emerges in a passage of the story when God prevents Peter to commit suicide - in order to avoid to be consecrated bishop - addressing him with the same words Jesus used to persuade Simeon Peter to accept the washing of his feet (Phenix and Horn 2008: 116 [Syr] -117 [English transl.]: "*Peter, Peter, if you do this, you [will] have no part with me*". Cf. John 13, 8: "*Unless I wash you, I have no part with me*". As the editors have underlines, also the repetition of the name, "*Peter, Peter*", could be an allusion to John 21: 15-17). The parallels do not concern just the protagonist but also his ancestors. An uncle of Peter was victim of an injury by the side of the empress Eudocia, when he was guest of the emperor Arcadius; we can see in this episode an attempt to establish a parallel with the story of Joseph and Potifar, in order to underline the rightness and loyalty of the Iberian prince (on the parents and ancestors of Peter, see Horn 2006: 50-58; Peeters 1932: 54-58; Toumanoff 1983: 260-261).

problematic case as the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, whose meaning can be explained considering its anti-Chalcedonian aim.²¹⁵

On the other hand, it sometimes happens that the history itself is “hagiographically” rewritten; this happens in order to validate an ideal early and complete triumph of Christianity on Pagan cults (see the destruction of the idols referred to as definitive in various hagiographical texts portraying the saint who fights against the paganism), in order to re-settle the Christianization of a kingdom in a different and usually earlier epoch than the real one - see the case of the *Teaching of Addai* -²¹⁶, in order to establish and validate the orthodoxy of a sovereign, as it is the case with the *Acts of Sylvester*, concerning the figure of Constantine, whose baptism is unhistorically conferred by the pope of Rome. We can call these ones *founding texts*: they establish the reality as it is at the time of their composition. “Founding texts” are interesting and relevant even on the level of an analysis of the Holiness-Power topic. This relevance does not only reflect the fact that the conversion of a kingdom or a king is a matter of relationship with the power, since the figure who causes the conversion of the king and, by consequence, of his kingdom is usually the saint. Even more than this, the function of the text itself is usually linked to political authority’s claims: indeed, founding texts are an intentional product of a choice of presenting the history in a different way, and this choice is itself political. The aim of the producer of a text reveals his own desire of rewriting the reality and the history. In those situations where, as it happens in most cases, this rewriting- or re-reading- in a hagiographic perspective concerns the history of a reign, a kingdom, a city, this has clear origins, links, as well as consequences, at a level of relationship with the local power.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ The text clearly aims at exalting the religious piety of Peter. In order to do that, the author adopts the usual device of presenting the protagonist in a heroic perspective and of promoting his strict orthodoxy connected to the refusal of compromise with the Chalcedonian faction; Peter’s firmness in his orthodoxy is explicitly expressed when he refuses to be ordained by a non-orthodox bishop.

²¹⁶ On the *Teaching of Addai* in general and on the possible meanings and aims of this re-collocation, see Camplani 2009: 251-278; id. 2011: 39-47; id. 2013: 143-147; Camplani and Gnoli 2001: 41-68; Drijvers 1983: 171-185; Ross 2001: 135; Brock 1992: 212-234; Mirkovic 2004; Griffith 2003: 1-46; Segal 1970; Desreumaux 1993; Murray 1975: 4-7.

²¹⁷ I can mention the evident example of the *Acts of Sylvester*, whose author aims at presenting a complete Christianization of the Roman Empire at the age of Constantine, and more than this, at presenting the Christianisation in a perspective which is completely orthodox and based on the mutual recognition between the imperial power and the Roman Church authority, represented by Sylvester, made responsible of Constantine’s baptism. Indeed, even the consequences of this operation have been evident and long lasting: the *Acts* would be the basis on which the *Donation of Constantine* has been created; on this false medieval document the Church of Rome has based its claims of temporal power, with consequences that have deeply conditioned the relationship between Church and Power in the entire medieval age at least. About *Actus Silvestri*, its redactions, structure,

2. Hagiographic Characters and Narratives: Some Considerations

2.1. The Martyr and the Monk: The Evolution of the Hagiographic Genre

Hagiography is not a clearly defined literary genre; it developed through a certain number of different kinds of literary works, whose genre is not always simple to define.²¹⁸ Actually, what mainly distinguishes a hagiographic text is the nature of his protagonist(s), i.e. his/their holiness: indeed, hagiography is, by definition, a discourse on saints. Through the holy protagonist, the hagiographer aims at conveying an *exemplarity* for his readers.

So, the aim of the author is to propose a model to which his supposed audience is invited to conform; the hagiographer pursues this goal by presenting the holy protagonist in a heroic or anyway exemplar way; it comes as logical consequence that the type of saint to be portrayed and presented as an example will vary, according to the different historical moments and different addressed audiences. In a time of persecution, the example to be followed was the martyr; and indeed, hagiography in the first centuries is mostly composed by literature about martyrdom. With the end of persecutions in the West we assist to a change; the attention of the writer moves, so to speak, from the death towards the life, leading to the production of biographical works (*Vitae*). Actually an attempt to *re-semanticize* the martyrdom had started to spread already in the 2nd century, on the basis of the idea that one could consider as a martyr not only the one who dies for his faith, but also the one who chooses to sacrifice his whole life to ascetic practice and to the meditation of the Holy Scripture, exploring the possibility of being “holy in the

genesis and meaning, see Levison 1924: 159-247; Loenertz 1975: 426-39; Pohlkamp 1992: 115-96; Canella 2006. For a recent hypothesis concerning the possible origin and meaning of the text, see Wirbelauer 2015: 319-332. Versions of *Actus Silvestri* are known in Latin, Greek, Syriac and Armenian. For the Latin tradition, supposed to be the original one, a critical edition is still missing, but some old printed versions are available (in Lipomanus 1556: 354-63; in Mombritius 1475; in L. Surius 1573: 1052-65); the last part of the narration (the *Altercatio cum Iudaeis*) has been recently published by T. Canella (cit.). An old printed edition of one of the Greek manuscript witnesses exists (see Combefis 1660). The two extant Syriac witnesses are published: the oldest one, as part of the Syriac epitome of the *Ecclesiastical History* by Zachariah of Mytilene (Pseudo Zachariah), by Brooks 1919-1924: 39-65 [Latin transl.], 56-93 [Syr.]; the second and later by Di Rienzo, 2016: 321-41 (where I also offer an overview on the Syriac tradition and its relationship with the other ones). The Armenian text is published in Thomson 2005: 55-139 (useful also for further bibliographical references about the Armenian tradition). On the *Donation of Constantine*, see Fried 2007; Edwards 2003. Edition in Fuhrmann, 1968: 56-98.

²¹⁸ On hagiography as a non-unitary genre and on the fragilities in distinguishing typologies in the hagiographic production, see Boesch Gajano 1998: 802-817 (cf. Delehaye 1906; id. 1966).

world"²¹⁹. This idea develops in parallel with the conception of asceticism as instrument and witness of the Christian perfection;²²⁰ this new perception of holiness as a larger category leads the hagiographers to produce biographical works featuring a new kind of holy protagonist. This becomes more and more evident as the distance from the age of persecution increases. The holy protagonists of these *Lives* are various; we have a certain number of *Lives* of bishops, for instance, starting from the examples of Ignatius of Antioch, Policarpus of Smirne, Cyprian of Cartago, bishops and martyrs at the same time. But the most successful new saint is a holy man whose renouncement to the world in order to gain the Heavenly Kingdom does not turn anymore into the acceptance of the execution and whose martyrdom is no longer bloody but rather a spiritual one: the monk, who renounces not his earthly (human) life but his worldly (social) life, abandoning the world, not the life.²²¹

The evolution of hagiography from a martyrologic to a monastic one does not occur at the same time in the East, where actually a period of persecutions starts at the very moment when the West experiences the conversion of the Empire to Christianity, and probably even as a reaction to that conversion; it is probably in the 5th century that a martyrologic literature develops in Persia, with the production of the so-called *Persian Martyr Acts*.²²²

²¹⁹ Kosinski 2016: 6; cf. also Festugière 1961: 19; Monaci Castagno 2015: 414.

²²⁰ The spread of these new models of Christian perfection is just one of the faces of the question: on the other hand, there were the critical attitudes of the Gnostics towards the martyrdom; not by chance Clemens of Alexandria, in *Stromata*, on the one hand recognises the validity of the bloody martyrdom, while on the other one he affirms that even a life lived according to certain canons of religious and moral perfection can be considered "witness" as well (*Stromata* 3.15.3; cf. Monaci Castagno 2010: 34-35)

²²¹ Two observations: beside few exceptions, a real development and spread of martyr literature does not start precisely in parallel with the spreading of persecutions, but a bit later; on the other hand, the production of martyr texts does not end with the end of the persecutions' age. The legendary element that was even present to some extent in some ancient hagiographical works, becomes more and more preeminent in late texts; in fact, martyr stories are sometimes the founding texts narrating and justifying (founding, indeed) the building of some monasteries or churches; these texts have been produced even very later than the time of the narrated events. The story of Behnam is a clear example of that, narrating when and how the monastery and church of Mar Behnam was built and linking its founding to the legendary martyrdom of the son of the Assyrian king Sennacherib. The Syriac text of the Martyrdom has been published by Bedjan (1890,2: 397-441); a new edition and English translation is now available, by Kyle Smith and Jeanne-Nicole Mellon Saint-Laurent (2018); among the bibliography of the story of Behnam (even in relationship with the monastery), see: Wiessner 1978, 119-133, Younansardaroud 2002, 185-196, Novák- Younansardaroud 2002, 166-194, Horn 2006-2007, 439-462, Jacob 2012.

²²² A useful guide to the corpus of Persian Martyr Acts, their editions and (where available) translations, can be found in Brock 2008 (see the Appendix), to which I also refer for a more complete bibliography. Most of the Persian Martyr Acts were published by Bedjan in the volumes II and IV of his *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* (Bedjan 1890);

As these observations are true for hagiography in general, we can notice a parallel change in the context of narratives and episodes portraying the Holiness-Power relationship; from the portrait of the martyr facing the persecutor, we will arrive at the figure of the monk/bishop facing the “heretic” emperor, passing through the supporter and helper of the Christian king.²²³

Without taking into account the apocryphal literature for the hesitation in defining it as hagiography and for its peculiarities,²²⁴ the very first hagiography is martyr narrative.²²⁵ The first saints to be

selected translations to be found in Braun 1915 and summaries in Hoffmann 1880. Adam Becker is editing a series of *Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation*; until now, seven volumes have been published, and in particular the texts concerning *The History of Holy Mar Ma'in* (Brock 2008), *The Story of Mar Pinhas* (McCollum 2013), *The Martyrdom and History of Blessed Simeon Bar Sabba'e* (Smith 2014), *The Martyrs of Mount Ber'ain* (Brock 2014), *Persian Martyr Acts under King Yazdgird I* (Herman 2016), *The History of the 'Slave of Christ'* (Butts and Gross 2017), *The History of Mar Behnam and Sarah* (Smith and Mellon Saint-Laurent 2018). For an introduction to the Acts (with bibliography), see Jullien C. 2008 (available online: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/martyrs-christian>). Among the various studies on the topic, we should mention at least Devos 1966: 213-225; Brock 1982: 1-19; Payne 2015; Walker 2006. We cannot avoid to mentioning the numerous contributions to the Persian Martyrs and to the Persian story by Christelle and Florence Jullien: in particular, Jullien C. 2004: 141-169; id. 2004b: 243-269; id. 2007: 81-102; id. 2010: 279-290; id. 2011: 175-193; id. 2012: 127-140; id. 2014: 135-152; id. 2016: 5-19; Jullien F. 2004: 171-183; id. 2011: 195-204; id. 2015; cf. also Jullien and Jullien 2001: 127-143; id. 2002. We look forward to seeing finally published the forthcoming contribution by Adam Becker on the “*Invention of the Persian Martyr Acts*”. Some further notes on the Persian Martyr Acts in Part II (139-144). For a general story of the Christianisation of the Iran, see Chaumont 1988.

²²³ The evolution of the spreading of new and various literary genres applies not only to the production of texts, so that the author chooses to conform his main character to a particular kind of personage and to present his story through a specific kind of text; it also applies to the building of the hagiographic collections that will include texts of different typologies in a variable degree and number according to the period of production and the aim of the collector. For the structure of some of these collections, see above, Part I.1; some further considerations will follow, in the Conclusions (pp. 141-145)

²²⁴ About apocryphal literature (in particular the apocryphal Acts) considered as martyrial, see Hilhorst 1995: 1-14. As Monaci Castagno (2010: 54-55) observes, indeed, the apocryphal Acts narrating the preaching and martyr death of the apostles have been written at the same time of some Martyr Acts, between 2nd and 3rd c.; actually the title, Acts, can even be misleading, as they are Acts as the Biblical Acts of the Apostles (i.e. the Greek “*praxeis*”) and not trial acts, as the Martyr texts. On the other hand, clear links with narrative patterns typical of the ancient novelistic accounts have been underlined in the apocryphal texts.

²²⁵ Among the bibliography on and editions of martyr acts, to be mentioned: AA.VV. *Atti e passioni dei martiri* 1987, Musurillo, 1972. Among the general works about martyr literature, Delehaye 1906, id. 1921, id. 1933, id. 1966; Frend 1965, Leclercq 1907: 373-446, Pellegrino 1961: 151:175, Pezzella 1965, Simonetti 1955, id. 1955b, id. 1956: 39-57, id. 1957: 147-155, Boyarin 1999, Castelli 2004, Lanata 1973, Lazzati 1956, Rajak 1997: 39-67, Fevrier 1991:

portrayed are martyrs, i.e. witnesses; through their *martyria* they testify their imitation of Christ. Martyr literature, especially in the first centuries, has a prevalent pedagogical aim: the martyr is the example to be followed. It has been observed that the most ancient martyr *Acts* do not go far beyond the very essential evocation of the questioning and trial of the martyr-to-be.²²⁶ Little by little, we face an evolution towards more and more articulated narratives, starting to give colour to the data of fact with literary elements, later becoming authentic narrative constructions that sometimes build a tale around the simple evidence of a name or a burial - the so called legendary passions-²²⁷. At this moment, the literary aspect becomes much more relevant, in parallel with the prevalence of the creative hagiographical-literary construction built around the historical starting data. According to the evolution of times, in the Syriac collections the legendary passions seem to prevail, especially among the Western Martyr Acts. Beside these ones, the greatly barer *Acts of the Palestinian Martyrs* by Eusebius recur especially in the oldest collections and conversely are less frequent in the 13th century collections, maybe due to the evolution of the readers' taste.

With the end of the age of persecutions and the advent of a Christian Empire, we assist, in the West, to a gradual passage from a hagiography of martyrs to a hagiography of monks. As soon as the martyr becomes a model of sanctity still valid but relegated to a past that will not return, a new kind of unbloody holiness gains more and more popularity, i.e. the monk, carrier of a new possible interpretation and realization of the *imitatio Christi* ideal, based on an ascetic life lived in solitude or devoted to the service of the community.²²⁸ It is Athanasius of Alexandria with his *Life of Anthony* the acknowledged

51-80, and finally the general overview proposed by Monaci Castagno 2010, to which I refer for further bibliographical references.

²²⁶ Delehaye recognises six typologies of martyrial documents: 1) documents based on the official court records; 2) literary narratives based on the account of eyewitnesses; 3) reworked documents having in turn as sources documents of the type 1 and/or 2 mentioned above; 4) historical romances, i.e. texts having an historical nucleus; 5) purely fiction narratives; 6) forgeries. Cf. Musurillo (1972: LI-LII), who compares Delehaye's position with the simplification operated by Bardenheuer - who actually identifies three typologies: 1) texts having the court records form, 2) texts having a narrative form, 3) legends.

²²⁷ A link between the spreading of the cult of holy relics by the one side and legendary passions by the other one has been rightly highlighted (cf. Simonetti and Prinzivalli 2003: 52).

²²⁸ Cf. Simonetti and Prinzivalli 2003: 53; Brown 1983: 16. On the monk as successor of the martyr, cf. Malone 1950. Among the ample bibliography on monasticism, one cannot avoid mentioning the classical but still useful study by Chitty (1966); more recent and up-to-date, Desprex 1998, Camplani and Filoramo 2007. One should mention also some contributions by Goehring (1999; 2007: 390-407; 2005: 136-149). On monasticism in the East, for an overview see Filoramo 2015, Flusin 2002: 513-570; on specific topics/areas: for the Egypt, Wipszycka 2004:

father of monastic literature, who presents in a literary form the exemplar ideal of asceticism as martyrdom. The success of monasticism on one side and the end of persecutions on the other, tend to give the monk a central role in Christianity; in a time when the martyr is no longer the ideal of holiness to be fulfilled, the monk is the new saint.²²⁹

This quite linear movement from martyr to monk in the West does not precisely correspond to what happens in the Syriac tradition. If we look at the Syriac as an unitarian tradition, the trajectory of hagiography there seems rather a circular one: no martyrdom account is originally written in Syriac before the 5th century, when the first Persian Martyr Acts are produced, in the area belonging to the Sassanian Empire, although the Syriac accounts of the martyrdoms of some Edessene martyrs, as e.g. Shmona and Gurya, are produced maybe even earlier or at the same period;²³⁰ indeed, monastic tales starts spreading already in the 5th century, in the areas under the Byzantine Empire, preceded by translations of Greek original texts, even *Martyrdoms*. So, we have, at first, hagiographic narratives - often martyrdoms- translated from Greek, then the spread of a monastic literature, finally followed by the production of originally Syriac martyr texts, especially regarding the holy victims of the Persian persecutions, which were probably written starting from the 5th-6th century.²³¹ The later spread of a martyr literature in the Eastern (Persian) area is connected to the later spread of the persecutions there. On the other hand, the fact that Syriac tradition is, by a cultural point of view, also a tradition of translation(s), implies its initial looking at the Greek production, so that Syriac writers early begin translating first martyr and then monastic literature produced in the West, nearly in parallel with the spread of this literature in the Western world.

Indeed, it is more useful distinguishing the West-Syrian from the East-Syrian tradition, and seeing what happens in the two areas, belonging to two different political entities: the Byzantine empire, soon Christianized, and the Persian Sassanian empire, where Christianity was always the religion of a minority. So, in the West-Syrian world, hagiography starts with translations from the Greek, and then it knows a spread of monastic literature, both original and translated. In the Persian area, a production of martyr literature probably starts in the 5th-6th century circa, though relating events from the 4th century onward; martyrdoms are produced until the end of the Sassanian empire, with the advent of the Arabs,

831-855, id. 2009; for the Syria, the fundamental three volumes work by Vööbus (1958-1988) and Escolan 1999; for the Palestine, see Binns 1994, Parrinello 2010.

²²⁹ This does not mean that the creation of martyr texts, the copy and tradition of the extant ones, end.

²³⁰ Segal (1970: 83-84) hypothesizes for the *Acts* a dating to the 4th century.

²³¹ On the hypothetical dating of *Acts of Miles* to the 5th century, see below, pp. 100-101; 174-175.

in the 7th century, so that we cannot recognize a passage from the martyr to the monk protagonist, in the Eastern Syriac tradition: the two kinds of hagiographies continue to be produced contemporarily.

The monastic sanctity does not lose the relation with the power which was typical of the martyrial literature; if the monk is the new martyr and the new “second Christ”, he is so even when he faces the political power and/or when he is himself exponent of power. The fundamental difference with the past does not concern the portrait of the holy men; it concerns the political power itself: the political power is now Christian, and it does not *necessarily* represent anymore the adversary of the saint. While the martyr was by definition represented in relationship with the political power, three kinds of situations portray the monk in relation with power: when the monk is an exponent of aristocracy, coming from a noble or royal family; when he is meant to help or support a Christian king; when he faces a Christian (heretic) sovereign.

The figure of the noble monk has been already much studied and there is not much that can be added; indeed, as the noble martyr was a leading figure in martyr literature, we now assist to the spreading and recurrence of the figure of the noble monk, whose description usually follows a topical pattern, repeating the recurrent literary motifs of the escape from home, refusing the world, the splendour of a comfortable life (whence the choice of poverty), and, after a series of various vicissitudes, the finally fulfilled attempt to lead a monastic life.²³² The desire of living a life of concealment is affirmed; this

²³² The stories of these noble holy monks often propose some recurrent *topoi* or motifs, from the refusal of marriage in order to lead a monastic life (see Eugenia, cf. Smith Lewis 1900: 1; Eupraxia, cf. *Acta Sanctorum Martii II*, 260-270; of the Man of God, Alexius, cf. Amiaud 1889), to the disguise (see the numerous examples of cross-dressing female saints, as Eugenia, Cf. Smith Lewis 1900: 11; Hilaria, Wensick 1913: 43-45; Anastasia, Cf. Brock and Harvey 1987: 147-149; Athanasia, cf. Nau 1900: 404; see also the begging-life choice staged in the story of the Man of God and John of Rome, cf. Bedjan 1890, 1: 344-365; and finally the cases of simulated madness, as Simeon the Fool, on which see Van Rompay 1994: 381-398; and Onesima, cf. Smith Lewis 1900: 60-69). It sometimes even happens that a marriage is celebrated and dissolved in a second time, according to the decision of one of the spouses or of both of them: see the case of Andronicus and Athanasia, typical example of a couple of spouses who, at the death of their children, devote themselves completely to God (for the edition of the Syriac text of the *Story of Andronicus and Athanasia*, see Bedjan 1890, 6: 405-417; for a summary, Nau 1900: 401-405); 'Abrāhām Qīdūnāyā abandons his wife just ten days after the wedding, striving for a solitary life. Whether he chooses a monastic or a begging life, the noble saint renounces to his goods and denies his family, obeying to the evangelic precepts of Jesus to, respectively, the rich young man (Matthew 19:21) and to the disciples he called to follow him (Luke 14:25); the separation from the family is stated and reaffirmed by the refusal of the parental reunification (see Maximus and Dometius, cf. Nau 1910: 757; Archelides, cf. Wensinck 1911: 13-20); this last one, where it happens for superior reasons, occurs just in point of death (or after death) or is usually temporary (see Hilaria, cf. Wensinck 1913: 51-54). The moving away is often ratified by the gesture of abandoning the clothes and the

translates into the isolation of the monastic or solitary life or in the quiet and almost invisible presence of a begging life. For women, then, being the ascetic life ideal not realizable at the highest level, the pursuit of perfection through monastic life can often be fulfilled only thanks to a further concealment: the cross-dressing; this is a further and even more extreme renounce to one's own past, represented no longer and not just by the richness and the family but, in this case, also by one's own original sexual identity.²³³

With the spread of the doctrinal controversies - from the 4th c., and even more with the Christological controversy of the 5th century-, we assist to a series of attempts to delineate and, at the same time, give value to a faction rather than another through the presentation of figures coming from the monastic panorama, presented as sort of bastions and guardians of the orthodoxy, an operation that actually is much more historical than hagiographical, as it reflects the strong role the monks had in protecting their believed orthodox creed. We assist in parallel to a spreading of narratives portraying a monk-saint who faces the political and the religious power in a battle in the defence of the orthodox creed he represents. This period is characterized by a blooming of tales whose holy protagonists belong to the one or the other party and are portrayed in their relationship with the emperors. In the Syriac tradition the success of this kind of narratives will last long; the 5th century Christological controversy had split the Syriac Christianity in two main traditions and Churches; the claim for the superiority of one's own creed will constantly reappear, as the collections produced by Michael the Syrian - the Area 2 collections analysed in Part I.1-, in their structure and with their selected texts, attest.

The provenance of the main character from the monastic world is probably linked to two main reasons: on the one hand, the importance and spiritual power of the monk as leading figure; on the other one, the fact that monastic milieus were usually very strong places of defence of the claimed orthodoxy.²³⁴ So, it is crystal-clear that separating the historical from the hagiographical elements in this kind of texts is difficult. On the one hand, these works are usually written in a period which is not far from the time when the events happened, and this is also linked to the purpose of these texts: they aim to present the

familiar possessions (see e.g. Mar Asya, who leaves his luxury garments and his belt covered with precious stones to the ferryman who leads him from one to the other bank of the Tigri, cf. Nau 1915-1917: 18).

²³³ On the topic of cross-dressing saints, though particularly focused on Byzantium, see Anson 1974, Davis 2002, Patlagean 1968.

²³⁴ On the role of the monks, on the relevance of the monastic opinion in the 5th c. Christological controversies and also on the possible reasons of the common "sympathy" of the monastic milieu for the one-nature Christology, see Frend 1972: 136-142; on asceticism and the Christological controversies (in relation with the *Life of Peter the Iberian* in particular), see Horn 2006. On the relationship between monasticism and authority (in various senses), cf. Camplani and Filoramo 2007, Rapp 2005, Havelon-Harper 2005, Drijvers and Watt 1999, Caner 2002.

orthodoxy of one side against the heterodoxy of the opposite one, taking advantage of figures of holy men coming from the influential monastic world. On the other hand, this same “apologetic” intent can - and usually does- influence the portrait of the events and of the protagonists, on both sides, the good and the evil one: their respectively good or bad characteristics and actions will be stressed in order to validate the supposed-to-be right position against the supposed-wrong one; the orthodox protagonist, for instance, performs miracles, and God intervenes in support of him or against the opposite part, aiming at justifying the truthfulness of the “orthodox” creed. Historical elements are mixed up with unhistorical facts; as these last ones follow a sort of recurrent scheme and represent recurrent motifs, even the presentation of a supposed-to-be historical interaction of the holy monk - often also bishop- with exponents of political power is re-written according to a sort of schematic hagiographic pattern. The relationship established between the holy man and the exponent of political power is obviously different depending on the position the sovereign takes in the controversy, pro or against the one the saint represents.²³⁵ So, when the emperor/king takes a position opposite to the one the saint - and the author of the hagiographic text- expresses, this usually turns for the saint into a refusal of the obedience to the sovereign. The idea that a Christian has to obey to the emperor and follow his laws only when these ones are not contrary to the true faith actually is not an innovation: this same idea was usually the key point of some martyrs’ self-defence when the persecutor pressed them to respect the royal edicts imposing to sacrifice to the gods. A problem typical of the martyr time and texts features in monastic literature in a new perspective. *Mutatis mutandis*, in a different - and at this point Christianised- context, the problem of the relationship between Christians and the Law recurs again: as the refusal of anti-Christian edicts and laws was perceived as right and licit by the martyr who nevertheless kept his loyalty to the sovereign concerning the other laws of the empire, likewise the believer could consider equally licit the decision of refusing the resolutions of a Council and the consequent imperial deliberations in matter, if he perceived it as a distortion of the orthodoxy. This is what happens with Chalcedon.²³⁶

²³⁵ The monk Barṣawmā, for instance, is portrayed in excellent rapports with the emperor Theodosius. The situation changes when Theodosius’ successor, Marcian, convokes the Council of Chalcedon; after that, Barṣawmā starts preaching far and wide the necessity of disobeying the emperor’s decisions; Cf. Nau 1914: 127-133 (summary).

²³⁶ Another interesting example of relationship with the political power in a period of controversies regards Jacob Baradaeus, whose (spurious) Life has survived both in the *Lives of Eastern Saints* by John of Ephesus and as independent text – also present in some of the analysed collection. Edition and translation of John of Ephesus’ *Lives of Eastern Saints* by Brooks (1925: 574 [228]-614 [268]). The real *deus ex machina* who changes the situation in favour of the Miaphysite party is the queen, i.e. Theodora, wife of Justinian: it is according to the empress’ desires that Jacob becomes bishop of Edessa, Syria and Asia, in a moment when there were not orthodox bishops. Theodora more than once appears on stage in the *Lives of Eastern Saints* (see Brooks 1923: 189, 195, 207; id. 1924: 529, 676-684; id. 1925: 153, 161, 233-237; cf. Menze 2008: 207-228; on the Miaphysite movement and the

Behind the “saint versus king” episodes one can imagine an attempt to stress an “ecclesiastical versus political power” fight; in any case, the will of subordinating the political power to the religious one seems to shine through, both in the case where the king recognizes the superiority of the saint and in those ones where the author aims to put on stage an unsolved power-saint dialectic.²³⁷

2.2 Narratives: Static and Dialectic Interactions

Though each hagiographic text has to be considered as the expression of a particular time and historical situation, the way how the interaction between the holiness - represented by the saint- and the political power is developed in the narratives may be investigated. It is clear that the hagiographer writes his work according to his particular beliefs and aims, and he is influenced by the historical moment he lives in; but it is also true that the situations narratively portrayed usually recur, so that we are led to investigate these recurrent patterns and even the preference accorded to one or another – a preference anyway depending in turn on the historical background-.

In particular, this paragraph is meant to analyse what are the typologies of interaction and through what kinds of narrative strategies they are expressed, comparing the ones that I define “static” to the ones I suggest calling “dialectic” narrative interactions.²³⁸

patronage of Theodora see also Wood 2010: 164-175). Indeed, in narrations where she is present, the queen - or the empress- generally assumes an important role as advisor of his husband or son, the king; she was often presented as a guide for him in his approach to the Christian faith - see e.g. the role of the wife of Sennacherib in his conversion, in the story of Behnam-; with the spread of the Christological and doctrinal controversies, she plays the same role of guide, leading the king towards the right (orthodox) Christianity (see also the relationship of spiritual discipleship established between Eudocia and, in turn, the monk Baršawmā and the bishop Peter the Iberian; on the latter, cf. Horn and Phenix 2008, 297-299). On Eudocia, Helene and the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, see Hunt 1982 (cf. Devos 1983: 407-416). A biblical antecedent for this function of link between the king and the “holy” protagonist expressed by the queen could be traced in the character of Esther; for the image of the wife as counsellor of her powerful husband see also the case of Pilate’s wife (Matthew 26:19). It is interesting to see that this figure of female counsellor will develop in the Modern Age in the holy women hagiographically portrayed as counsellor at the court of the Italian princes in the 16th c.; see on that Zarri 1990 (about the figures of the “Sante vive”).

²³⁷ A limit case can be considered the Eusebian presentation of Constantine as bishop “for those outside” (actually, according to the historiographer, it should rather be a self-definition by the emperor himself); but this same position can be found in a passage from the *Acts of Ma’in* (ed. Brock 2008, par. 44), see below p. 130.

²³⁸ As these two kinds of relationship can – and often does- coexist into a same narration, speaking of different kinds of relationship or interaction seems far better than speaking of different narratives or different types of

2.2.1 Static narratives: Saints (and) Christian kings

I define “**static narratives**” (or static interactions) the cases in which the narration does not present a dynamic evolution of the relationship between the holy men and the exponents of power, as the representatives of Holiness and of Power are “on the same side”, so that the relationship remains the same from start to end. The absence of a dynamic element can be explained by two reasons:

a) The saint and the mighty man share the same ideological/religious position since the beginning, i.e. in most cases, the king is already Christian. The saint is perceived as in a favourable position in his interaction with the divine, i.e. as closer to God; this results in the acknowledgement of his sanctity. The function of the holy man is, in these cases, that of an instrument to obtain a grace, a healing, a miracle - being the saint a privileged spokesman of God and a mediator with the divine. There are two reasons urging the mighty to get in touch with the saint: (1) he considers him as an expression of a **divine power** - this is what usually happens in the stories of holy monks with a fame of miracle workers-; (2) he considers him as an exponent of a **religious-ecclesiastical power**, sometimes in competition with the political one, but always in a dialogic relationship - a political power that, in this time, is not only Christianised but usually eager to intervene in the life of the Church-.²³⁹

b) The holy and the mighty man are identified, i.e. the same personage is an exponent of both political power and sanctity. I mainly refer to some figures of holy kings or noblemen. Sovereigns, emperors, princes, queens, soldiers, noble and court counsellors, just rich men who decide to follow

narrative. I remind that every narration can and usually does stage more than one kind of relationship between holiness and power, so that everyone should keep in mind that the categories that I present in the following paragraphs are usually intersected.

²³⁹ This is what happens in particular in the period of the theological and Christological disputes (see above, pp. 91-93). Holy monks having fame of healers, in the East (Persian Empire) and in the West (Roman Byzantine Empire), attract the attention of Christian kings who, in case of diseases affecting themselves or more often their relatives, call them at court in order to obtain, through their hand, God’s saving intervention; see the cases of Aaron of Serugh, summoned at the court of Constantine in order to rescue his daughter from an evil possession (cf. Nau 1910: 724, 736), of Mar Asya, operating in favour of Theodosius’ possessed daughter (cf. Nau 1915-1917: 19); actually, Asya performs a healing miracle even in favour of a non-Christian (Persian) king. The other saint who is portrayed in relationship with Theodosius is Peter the Iberian, on which, see above p. 83

Jesus' commandment to the rich young (Matthew 19, 21 and parallels)²⁴⁰, all this kind of people can as well belong to the category of the "saint".²⁴¹ Beside few cases of royal martyrs, more extensive is the number of sons of king who, abandoning the pomp of the court's life, devote themselves to a monastic life. Sons of already Christian sovereigns, in kingdoms and historical moments where/when the empire has already lived the phase of conversion, they are the expression of a period when hagiography mostly puts aside the martyrs' stories to turn towards the new monastic sanctity.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ An explicit reference to this evangelic passage is not present in all the interested texts. The quote is for instance present in the *Life of Anthony*, where the future monk and saint decides to take up a life shaped on that commandment when he hears that passage proclaimed during a celebration (see *Life of Anthony*, 2)

²⁴¹ As stated at the beginning, the same narrative can include different kinds of interaction with the power, static or dialectic. So, within the group of what I generically call "holy kings" we can see a small sub-group of martyrs of royal birth, who are also expression of a dialectic interaction with the political power their own family represents, with a negative ending (i.e. the martyrdom); see the cases of Behnam, son of Sennacherib of Assyria, and his sister Sarah, or that of the empress Alexandra, portrayed in the *Martyrdom of George*. In both cases the static relationship concerns the figures of the holy princes and queen, while the narrative itself, the general martyr story, is expression of a dialectic interaction between the parts, with a negative ending in the case of Alexandra, with a double/ two-phases ending, firstly negative and then positive, in the case of Behnam (cf. below, p. 98).

²⁴² The tale always follows a typical structure: the Christian education of the young prince, the decision to dedicate himself to an ascetic life, the choice to move to some other places – generally Egypt and the desert of Scetis-, the escape from the palace in secret because of the opposition of the family to his decision, the refusal of honours and riches. Holy princes are e.g. the monks Maximus and Domitius, hagiographically identified with the sons of the Roman emperor Valentinian (or Valens) (cf. Nau 1910: 750- 766), Hilaria, daughter of the emperor Zeno (Cf. Wensinck 1913) or Onesima "daughter of a king" (Smith Lewis 1900: 60-69). The category of the noble saint is larger and more various than the one of the royal holy men, as e.g. the Seven Martyrs of Samosata. Of noble family and illustrious origins usually are the ones who fulfil offices at court in the role of counsellors or preceptors, as Jacob the Cut-Up or, in the same Persian context, the eunuch Guhštazad, the noble preceptor of the king, whose story of apostasy and conversion is narrated in the *Martyrdom and History of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e* (Cf. Smith 2014: 38-44). Archelides, Asya, Domic represent typical examples of noble who decide to devote themselves to a monastic life. For the story of Archelides, see Wensinck 1911: 3-20; for the story of Asya, see the summary in Nau 1915-1917: 17-20; an edition of the story of Domic exists, by Taylor 1938; on this second text see also Peeters 1939: 72-104. A beggar life is the one chosen by John of Rome and Alexius, the anonymous Man of God of some versions, whose stories proceed in parallel; Edition and translation of the *Story of the Man of God* by Amiaud (1889); the Syriac text of the story of John of Rome (even known as John bar Malke and corresponding to the Greek John Calibites) is edited by Bedjan 1890, 1: 344-365, 535-537.

2.2.2 Dialectic narratives

In cases where the saint and the exponent of political power start from two different and usually opposite positions, the narrative develops in a **dialectic** way; it presents, indeed, a kind of negotiation between the parts in dialogue, in a more or less reciprocal attempt to persuade the counterpart.

Biblical antecedents presenting a king *in dialogue* with the protagonist of a religious text can be considered the relationship linking in turn Joseph and Moses with the Pharaoh (Genesis 41, Exodus 5-14) and the prophet Daniel with the kings of Babylonia – Nebuchadnezzar, Darius and Cyrus-, where he has been deported since his youth (see the Book of Daniel)²⁴³.

A dialectic interaction between the parts entails an evolution in the tale; this does not necessarily involve a change in the position of each of the main characters. It can have, in fact, different outcomes:

a) It has a **positive** ending when the representative of the power converts. In these cases, the saint and the powerful man, starting from two opposite positions at the beginning, finally share the same one; this happens in cases of conversion of the king or of the persecutor.

One should actually even differentiate the outcome of the Holiness-Power interaction(s) from the general narrative's ending; the fact that the interaction/relationship has a positive outcome does not imply that the narration itself will have a happy ending too. In a narrative, in fact, the staged interactions between holiness and power usually are more than one and with possible different outcomes.

In a text featuring a persecutor's conversion, the element that usually differentiates the endings is the identity of the converted persecutor.²⁴⁴ The narration itself will have different endings if the converted

²⁴³ The story of Daniel has many traits in common with Christian hagiographic texts, so that we can consider it as one of the biblical bases on which the Saints' stories (as well as the Martyrdom texts) have been constructed. We can mention, as examples, the relationship with the kings (and the kings' conversion), his life as hostage at the Babylonian court (Daniel 1; cf. the *Life of Peter the Iberian*), the charges moved against the prophet by some envying men of venerating God and the condemnation to be left in the lions' den (Daniel 6; see also 14; on the motif of the martyr condemned to be devoured by lions but untouched by them, cf. e.g. Placidus, Eleutheria)

²⁴⁴ The instrument of conversion *par excellence* is the miraculous healing. The sovereigns Carinus (in the account on the miracles of Cosmos and Damian, cf. Bedjan 1890, 6: 107-119) and Sennacherib (*Acts of Behnam*, see Bedjan 1890, 2: 397-441) convert after a disease and a miraculous healing. In the *Martyrdom of Philemon* something similar happens to the governor Arrianus (cf. *Acta Sanctorum Martii I*, 752-757; a surprising identical episode recurs in the Western tradition on the martyrdom of Christopher and concerns the persecutor king Dagnus, cf. *Acta Sanctorum Iulii VI*: 125-149). Other instruments of conversion exist, some linked to the moment of the martyrdom, others to episodes connected to it but occurring previously (however the conversion is usually revealed only later, at the moment of death or torture of the saint). The martyr's perseverance in the faith sometimes pushes to conversion the ones who assist, including prefects (see Evilase and Maximus in the

one is an exponent of political power at the service of a sovereign (soldiers, governors, prefects, executioners) or if, on the contrary, it is the king himself who converts. According to a predictable scheme, once he has embraced the martyrs' faith, the representative of a lower level of power will become martyr himself: by converting, he has condemned himself to the same persecution of which he had been an instigator until then.²⁴⁵ So, in this case, the particular interaction saint- exponent of power has a positive outcome, considering the latter's conversion, while the narrative in general has a negative ending, since both characters die as martyrs.

More interesting, though rare, is the case when it is the king himself one repents and converts: the consequence of this change of attitude towards the martyrs' religion is the conversion of the kingdom.²⁴⁶

martyrdom of Fausta; the Syriac text is still unpublished, cf. *Acta Sanctorum Semptembris VI*, 144-147), soldiers (as the *clavicularium* appointed at guarding the forty soldiers condemned by Licinius to die in the iced waters of the lake of Sebaste; *Forty Martyrs of Sebaste*, in Bedjan 1890, 3: 355-375). The surviving of the saint, his supernatural endurance to the mortal trial, on the other hand, are perceived as signs of the divine providence towards the believers, causing conversions among the persecutors (this happens in more than one case in the *Martyrdom of Paphnutes*; cf. Bedjan 1890, 5: 514-543; see also the conversion of the prefect Qorabor and his consequent martyrdom in the *Acts of Eleutheria*, Bedjan 1890, 6: 417-430). The miracles and the preaching of the saint are to be considered further instruments of conversion; examples of both to be found in the mentioned *Acts of Eleutheria* (the *comes* Felix, invited to get and bring the saint before the emperor, but who actually converts as he listens his preach to the crowd; other soldiers who converts seeing how some ferocious beasts are tamed and defend the saint). Other examples of conversions operated through the miracles can be observed in the *Martyrdom of Christopher*, where through a miracle of multiplication of the bread the Saint, as a sort of *alter Christus*, succeeds in converting the soldiers sent to pick him up; the *Acts* also narrate the conversion (and then the suicide) of the executioner, thanks to a voice from the sky (text and translation below, in the Part II, 238-315).

²⁴⁵ In the *Martyrdom of Philemon* something like this happens to the governor Arrianus (see *Acta Sanctorum Martii I*, 752-757); similar cases can be found in the *Martyrdom of Panteleon* (cf. Nau 1915-1917: 21-22 [summary]), of *Paphnutes* (Bedjan 1890, 5: 514-543), as well as in the story of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, where the *clavicularium* converts (Bedjan 1890, 3: 355-375). The Syriac version of the *Martyrdom of Christopher* presents the conversion of the soldiers sent to take him and of the executioner of the martyr; but it is interesting to notice that in the Western tradition (transmitted by *Acta Sanctorum Julii VI*, 146-149) we can find an episode in many details similar to the healing and conversion of Arrianus in the *Acts of Philemon*.

²⁴⁶ See e.g. *Acts of Sylvester, Teaching of Addai, Martyrdom of Behnam*. Defining the *Teaching of Addai* as a hagiographic text is problematic, but its presence in some of the collections encourages me to include it among the analysed hagiographic works. The late story of the martyr Behnam, the son of the Assyrian king Sennacherib, features Sennacherib converted by Mar Matthai, having been healed by the intervention of this one - and thanks to the intercession of his wife, the queen- (cf. Bedjan 1890, 2: 397-441). If the prince Behnam, in facts, converts after a vision and thanks to the preaching of the solitary monk Matthai (but his sister, Sarah, is healed by the saint and converts), the Assyrian king is pushed to accept the Christian belief precisely by his own healing, in a way not

b) A dialectics has a **negative** ending when each one of the two parts stands firm on its position; in case of martyrial texts, there is no conversion of the persecutor and the usual consequence is the punishment of the saint who will become a martyr if he dies, while he will be a confessor (*homologetes*) if by chance he survives (I refer to the paragraph on *Martyrdoms* for further notes about this kind of narratives and relationships)²⁴⁷. Anyway, a negative ending does not only apply to martyrdom: we have seen cases of difficult relationship with Christian emperors considered as heretic; we should consider these situations as cases of negative ending dialectics, as there is no modification in the saint's and mighty respective positions (though in most cases the saint is not killed; nevertheless, he is often exiled and persecuted as well).

c) A narrative can actually (though rarely) have a double (or two-phases) ending, presenting a sort of dialectic *in progress*. I mean those cases where to a first negative ending, with the death of the saint killed by order of the political power, a subsequent positive one follows, featuring the conversion

different from two other sovereigns who are the protagonists of narratives that will have a different and greater success, i.e. Abgar IV of Edessa, the protagonist of the *Teaching of Addai*, and the emperor Constantine portrayed in the *Acts of Sylvester*. The characteristic of the *Acts of Sylvester's* Constantine which emerges above all is that here, more than in other texts and contexts, the divine decision to heal the king anticipates his own request of healing; the intervention of Sylvester, the Roman bishop summoned by the emperor precisely on divine hint, after a visit of the apostles Peter and Paul, is just the instrument for the baptism, instrument in turn of healing. What moved God to bring help - a not asked help, unlike the cases of Sennacherib and Abgar- is Constantine's *pietas* towards the children to be sacrificed in order to save him, according to a pagan ritual, and towards their mothers (cf. Di Rienzo 2016, 345). Concerning the relationship and the mutual attitude of the two protagonists, it is possible to observe that an expected modification in the attitude of the king towards the saint actually does not happen; what has changed by the king's side, has already changed before; once that the saint has been summoned before the sovereign, this last one has already chosen the way of conversion. We are dealing with a peculiar situation: the dialectic is not between the two protagonists, the king and the saint, but just between the two parts they represent. Conversely, neither modification in the dialectic nor in the collocation in originally different fields can be observed in those cases where the emperor, even after the persuading attempts from the bishop-monk-Saint's side does not convert nor repent: that comport as consequence the martyrdom of the Saint, (see the *negative ending*). It sometimes happens that the Saint and the emperor convert nearly at the same time: this is the original situation that we can observe in the story of Dometius the physician and his relationship with the emperor Valens. At the beginning of the narration, portraying the sovereign in his choice of abandoning his purposes against Rome to direct his aims to the East, some parallels with the so-called *Julian Romance* have been observed (cf. Peeters 1939, 87-88).

²⁴⁷ The Greek term "*homologetes*" is for the first time used by Eusebius to indicate the Christian who confess the faith before the judge but does not die (Eccles. Hist. 5.2.3).

of the sovereign and the parallel acknowledgement of the divinity (of God) and of the holiness (of the martyr).²⁴⁸

2.2.3 A Twofold Dialectic Interaction

Not a real typology, but anyway a different interaction, even different from the double-ending interaction. By the expression “**twofold dialectic (or dynamic) interaction**” I mean those cases where the narrative dialectic concerning holiness and power is expressed in a double direction: we have, in fact, on the one hand, a relationship between the saint and the power and, on the other one, an interaction between two powers.

We can apply this category to two kinds of situations, both found in a specific context, i.e. the Persian Martyr Acts:

1) Situations when one of the two mighty characters expresses a (filio-) Christian position and the other one a (filio-) Pagan one; when the Christian political power (usually the post-Constantine Roman Empire) obtains that the representative of the Pagan power (usually the non-Christian king) renounces to sentence to death the saint, we are dealing with a particular narrative situation: the general dialectic itself has a negative ending (i.e. the pagan king does not convert), while, on the contrary, the narration has a positive ending (the protagonist survives). The story of Ma'in of Singar stages this original situation, showing what happens when it is no longer the relationship of the saint with one emperor to be portrayed but with two ones, exponents of two different worlds and of two opposite positions: Šapur II, king of Persia, and Constantine, Roman emperor.²⁴⁹ The first one, non-Christian and persecutor, is the oppressor of Ma'in, the one who ordered him to be imprisoned because of his conversion to Christianity and to kill his teacher in the faith, the solitary Benjamin; the second one, Christian emperor of an already Christian kingdom, presents himself as *defensor* of the faith and even of the own life of the ex-general of the Persian army. The *Acts of Ma'in*, confessor for the faith, features a triple relationship: the one between Ma'in and Šapur, the martyr and his persecutor; the one between Ma'in and Constantine, the persecuted saint and his protector; finally, the one between Šapur and Constantine, the non-Christian and persecutor king and the Christian emperor and *defensor fidei* (as well as *fideliium*). If the Ma'in - Šapur dialectic is not far from the descriptions of the persecutor-persecuted relationships, the intervention of Constantine is the key point overturning the ending towards a final

²⁴⁸ The typical and clearest example is the story of Behnam, martyred by his father, the Assyrian king Sennacherib who, in turn, later converts together with his entire kingdom. Bedjan 1890, 2: 397-441.

²⁴⁹ Reference edition and translation of the *Martyrdom of Ma'in* are by Brock (2008)

resolution favourable to the Christian part, a kind of unusual and historically improbable happy ending; favourable not only towards Ma'in, saved from death and invited to live at the Constantinopolitan court, but also towards the Church of Persia, presented as, at this point, unhistorically out of danger of persecutions.

2) Different is the situation in some martyr texts where the "second" dialectic, i.e. that *between* powers, is all inside the same political power; I mean those cases where the Persian king charges an exponent of the local power, noble Christian apostate, with the execution of the martyr.²⁵⁰ A dialectics between two kinds of powers is featured here as well, but this is no longer a dialectics between two autonomous political powers - two kingdoms or empires-; it is rather a dialectic between the central power and the local one. The apostate executioner usually belongs to the aristocratic class, being often an exponent of local power, a chief of village or lord of a city. I suppose that the centralization of the Persian power against the local one plays a role in the choice of a noble executioner; a way to reaffirm that the local power, if it wants to survive, has to be subordinated to the central power's decisions.

2.3. Narrating Saints and Power: Some Case Studies

2.3.1 Miles: a Reformer, a Castigator, a Martyr

In the Eastern Syriac tradition, a martyr literature probably does not arise before a monastic literature; we should suppose an almost contemporary spreading of the two genres, in the 5th century. As witness of this supposition, we can mention the antiquity of the *Acts of Miles*, an interesting martyr text whose critical edition I am presenting in Part II; indeed, some hints and considerations easily demonstrate that the *Martyrdom* should probably date back to the beginning of the 5th century.

The attestation of the story in Sozomen and his reference to the existence, at his time, of a narration of the life and martyrdom of the bishop Miles, provide us with a valid *terminus ante quem*. Sozomen probably composed his *Ecclesiastical History* by 443 CE; so, by that time the *Acts* – we do not know in what form- were available.

About this period Miles suffered martyrdom. He originally served the Persians in a military capacity, but afterwards abandoned that vocation, in order to embrace the apostolical mode of

²⁵⁰ Examples can be found in the *Acts* of the Persian martyrs Badmā, Barḥabešabba, Ya'qob and Maryam, 'Aqebšmā, Yawsef and 'Italāhā, Šabor, Išḥāq and companions, Narsā, Yawsef and companions, Teqlā. For an analysis of the motif as presented in the *Acts of Badmā* and in the *Acts of Barḥabešabba*, see below.

life. It is related that he was ordained bishop over a Persian city, and he underwent a variety of sufferings, and endured wounds and drawings; and that, failing in his efforts to convert the inhabitants to Christianity, he uttered imprecations against the city, and departed. Not long after, some of the principal citizens offended the king, and an army with three hundred elephants was sent against them; the city was utterly demolished and its land was ploughed and sown. Miles, taking with him only his wallet, in which was the holy Book of the Gospels, repaired to Jerusalem in prayer; thence he proceeded to Egypt in order to see the monks. The extraordinary and admirable works which we have heard that he accomplished, are attested by the Syrians, who have written an account of his actions and life. For my own part, I think that I have said enough of him and of the other martyrs who suffered in Persia during the reign of Sapor [...].²⁵¹

The historian explicitly mentions the existence of the text (*“The extraordinary and admirable works which we have heard that he accomplished are attested by the Syrians, who have written an account of his actions and life”*). Moreover, it seems that the *Acts* that Sozomen knows were already more or less the same – in form and contents – as those that we can read today. He mentions the martyrdom Miles suffered and, on the other hand, he relates with precision some specific episodes of his life that we can as well read in the *Acts*: in particular, he alludes to his military career - in a way that is more explicit than in the *Acts* -, to his episcopal election, to the conflicts with the inhabitants of his episcopal see – without mentioning the name of Šuš, however-, the attempts to convert them and the final expulsion of the bishop and consequent destruction of the city by the Persian army with its elephants – as a sort of divine punishment-. References to Miles’ journey to Jerusalem and his visit to the monks of Egypt are equally present; even the fact that he carried with him a Gospel Book in his wallet is mentioned.²⁵²

The attestation in Sozomen is, on the other hand, supported by the hypothetical but probable dating of the oldest Syriac witness (BL Add 17204) to the late 5th century.²⁵³ All these evidences prompt me to place the redaction of the *Acts* at the beginning of the 5th century.²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Sozomen HE II.14 (transl. Hartranft)

²⁵² Here the historian stops: he explicitly declares that he has said enough about the Persian martyrs and wants to turn his attention towards other arguments. So, no reference to the crucial episode of the fight against Papa or to the martyrdom is present in the Ecclesiastical History. For the specific contents of *Acts of Miles*, I refer to the Part II of the present dissertation, in particular pp. 173-208.

²⁵³ Wright 1872. 3: 108; another witness is probably to be dated 5th-6th c. (cf. Wright 1872. 3: 1081-1083)

²⁵⁴ Besides that, I am inclined to date them before 410, due to an internal element concerning an episode narrated, i.e. a dispute between Miles and the bishop of Seleucia, Papa bar Aggai, on which I will come back soon. As the *Acts* are clearly an expression of a position hostile to the Seleucian patriarch, I hypothesize the text was written before the acknowledgment of the bishop of Selucia as *catholicos* of the Eastern Church, occurred at the Synod of Mar

As the passage by Sozomen already shows, the *Acts* appears as something more than a martyr text; the narration is much more composite and it is not limited to the presentation of the trial and martyrdom of the holy protagonist, as most Persian Martyr Acts usually do; in its first part, indeed, it rather appears as a *Bios* of the saint, like many monastic tales presenting the holy man travelling, fighting against heresy and theological mistakes, healing and performing miracles to people and places. His story is peculiar, and the relationships Miles establishes with the representatives of political (and even ecclesiastical) power show some interesting aspects.

About the historicity of Miles, we know almost nothing beside what the *Acts* narrate; they state his probable noble birth, his conversion, his consecration as bishop of Šuš, the expulsion from the city – and so the evident failure of his converting activity-, his peregrinations, a dispute with the bishop of Seleucia, Papa bar Aggai, other journeys, miracles, healings, and the final martyrdom with two companions, Abrousim (or Aboursam) and Sinai. Taking into account the testimony of Sozomen, I do not think realistic the hypothesis of considering the text as the fusion of two extant documents, the one concerning the life, career and peregrinations of Miles and the second narrating his martyrdom (or that of a homonymous martyr). On the other hand, Labourt has suggested to see in Miles the union of two two personages, an invented monk and a historical bishop.²⁵⁵

Anyway, if the historicity of the events concerning the bishop of Šuš is doubtful, the existence or at least a very early martyr cult arisen around his figure is testified by the mention of the names of Miles, Abrousim and Sinai in the list of Persian martyrs preserved at the end of the oldest dated Syriac manuscript, i.e. the BL Add 12150, dated 411; ²⁵⁶ the list of martyrs is usually attributed to Marutha of Maipherquat.

About the character of Miles some considerations can be proposed. First of all, the reference to his career at court before his conversion. Although the words the narrator uses are not clear (*[he] was destined from his youth to serve the king of the earth*), the possibility that he was a soldier is realistic -even without considering the Latin meaning of his name-; the martyr soldier, indeed, is a very common figure as we can see in the stories of Placidus, Tarachus, Romanus, Sergius and Bacchus, and Christopher. Actually, though no reference to a possible military career is present in the *Martyrdom of Miles*, something interesting can be found in the reference to the hunting context at the end of the story, at the moment

Isaac in 410. Although it may be equally possible that the *Acts of Miles* are a text containing an anti-patriarchal polemic.

²⁵⁵ Labourt, 1904: 22-24; cf. Sauget in BSCO IX: 482

²⁵⁶ Description and contents of the manuscript in Wright 1871.3: xxvii; id. 1871.2: 631-633.

of his martyrdom and, later, of the death of his persecutors;²⁵⁷ indeed, hunting was a typical aristocratic practice in the Sasanian empire and times, often involving nobles and/or soldiers, as also the *Story of Mar Qardagh* demonstrates.²⁵⁸

Like most martyrs, Miles is mainly characterized in his being a kind of *alter Christus*. This clearly emerges in his peregrinations, miracles – healings, chasing away demons, even walking on the water²⁵⁹- and finally in the trial he undergoes.

Miles's missionary activity of healing especially powerful people recalls something happening already in the apostolic age – see the case of *Teaching of Addai* and the healing and conversion of the king Abgar of Edessa- and then developed as a *topos* in hagiographic and especially monastic - and polemical-literature;²⁶⁰ on the other hand, the narrative structure of the real, final Martyrdom (arrest, trial,

²⁵⁷ Martyrdom of Miles, 13: *And the following year, at the same period when he had bound them prisoners, there was a great hunting outside, on the mountain, and the impious [Hormizda] was participating.*²⁵⁷ *And his heart rejoiced very much in his pride, and he gave command to bring the three saints in chains; ibid. 15: Then he, that Guprizes, passed the night in that place, and very early in the morning the great hunting of animals started for him and he lifted his heart up in his pride and exalted himself, and neglected and removed from his ear his (i.e. of Miles) word of truth and, at the same hour when the blessed Miles had been killed, the sentence of the glorious one fell upon those belligerent brothers, experts of the arc and valiant with the lance, trained in the blood and assiduous in the hunting. Since a doe forced the linen garments by which animals are captured, and swiftly went out, and they rode after her, the two swift-to-die ones, swiftly because they swiftly killed. And they were delimited, one by this side and one by this [other one], and they equally threw both arrows, so that both, one opposite the other, would skilfully strike the doe. But the arrow of Guprizes reached and passed through the belly of Narsā. And the arrow of Narsā went straight towards the breast of Guprizes. Both archers fell and died there, in the same place where the blessed Miles had been killed [...].*

²⁵⁸ Cf. Walker 2006: in particular, 121-163

²⁵⁹ See Acts of Miles 11; cf. Matthew 14: 22-23; Mark 6: 45-52; John 6: 15-21

²⁶⁰ See, for instance, the example of Mar Asya who heals the son of the Persian king (cf. Nau 1915-1917: 19), Mar Mattai who heals the Assyrian king Sennacherib in the story of Behnam (Smith and Mellon Saint-Laurent 2018); Aaron of Sarugh chasing the demon who possessed the daughter of Constantine (cf. Nau 1910: 724, 736), or the bishop of Rome Sylvester who heals Constantine himself (cf. Di Rienzo 2016). During his journeys through the Eastern regions, Miles heals the Lord of a (not better defined) city of the region of Mishan (Maisan) and then a noble woman, in a village of the Beit Raziqyo. Cf. Acts of Miles, 8: *And thence [Miles] went to the region of Mēšān, to [visit] a solitary man who lived in the desert. And it happened [that] the lord of that region had been sick of a severe disease for two years. And he heard that Miles had arrived there. And he sent asking Miles to go to him. Then [Miles] told the one who spoke with him: "Go! And when you enter, say aloud: 'Miles said: In the name of Jesus the Nazarene, be healed and stand up and walk!'"*. *And this was done this way, and it was successful. And the man was healed and stood up and came to him, and he and the inhabitants of that region glorified God. And many converted because of this miracle. Again, there was a young man seized by a demonic spirit and, because of it, he had been mute since his*

interrogatory, killing) of Miles and his companions is traditional and seems to follow some already extant literary and in particular evangelical examples. The capture is followed by the tortures undergone, the imprisonment for one year, the interrogatory and the sentence - even preceded by the prediction about the cruel death and after death punishment of the persecutor(s).²⁶¹ The structure of the trial retraces a standardized and recurrent scheme. In this case, as in many others, we perceive the author's intention to "re-construct" the figure of the saint according to a standardised image, modelling the figure and the trial on previous examples; the basis-example of the martyr trial usually is the double

youth. And so, as soon as [Miles] saw him, he prayed and signed him in the name of Jesus, and that spirit departed from him and it nevermore came back. And many things like these were performed by his hand in that region, to the glory of God. Ibid.,9: And thence he went to the region of Beit Raziqāyē; and he arrived in a village, and there was a noble woman. And a hard disease had paralyzed all her limbs for nine years. And the news [about] where [Miles] lived was heard, and her servants carried and brought her there, before him. And he noticed her and saw that she was suffering, because she prayed him very much. Then he told her: "Do you believe in the Only God, namely that He [alone] can heal you?". She told him: "I believe, my lord! There is a one and only God and there is nobody else but Him". Then he rose up, prayed, took her hand and told her: "In the name of God, in which you believe, rise and walk! And get well from your disease!". And at that very moment that woman was healed from her disease. And she rose and went home. And there was joy in the entire village.

²⁶¹ Acts of Miles 13: *The lord of that region, whose name was Hormizda Guprizes, heard about the fame of his catechizing; he was impious and arrogant and proud and vainglorious. And he summoned [Miles] in the city of Maheldagdar of Raziqāyē and bound him prisoner there for an entire year;²⁶¹ and with him two of his disciples, Abrusim and Sinay. And even with strokes and pains, for three times he tormented them²⁶¹ to make them worship the Sun. But they mocked him more and more, and they despised his pride and his arrogance against them; and they stood firm in their determination and they faithfully and truly magnified the glory of their God. And the following year, at the same period when he had bound them prisoners, there was a great hunting outside, on the mountain, and the impious [Hormizda] was participating. And his heart rejoiced very much in his pride, and he gave command to bring the three saints in chains. And as they rose up before him, he asked the blessed Miles, in a mocking way, telling him: "Are you a god or a man? And what is your faith? And what is your doctrine? Tell us your truth, and I will understand it, and so I will follow you. But then, if you will not make us know those things you hold, today I will behead you like one of those animals!". But the blessed one knew the dissimulation of that man and his unfaithfulness, and he told him: "I am a man and not a god. And I will not reveal my true faith to your vain dissimulation. And I will not infuse my pure doctrine into your impure ears. But, lo, I tell you a right word: Alas [, alas] for you! Oh, wicked, cruel man! And especially for all those who, as you, remain godless! Because, in His justice, God decrees about you that, in the time that comes, [you will be] in the Gehenna, and [in] the darkness, and mourning and gnashing of teeth is prepared and [will] repay your pride forever and ever, because you did not understand that he was Him who gave you those great things that, at this present day, you enjoy and in which you take delight".*

trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin and before Pilate.²⁶² The recourse to Jesus' trial as model already dated back to the *Acts of the Apostles*: describing the trial and killing of Stephan (Acts 6-7), Luke models these ones according to a narrative pattern that aims at assimilating them to the trial and death of Jesus.²⁶³

²⁶² See Matthew 26, 57- 27,26; Marc 14,53.15,15; Luke 22,54-23-25; John 18,12-19,16. The need to propose a parallel between the passion of the martyr and that of Christ is already present in ancient martyr texts as the *Martyrdom of Policarpus* or the *Passion of Perpetua* (cf. Bastiaensen 1987: XII-XIII). We could link this attitude to what Harnack (1910) said about the relationship between the martyr and Christ and their respective passions, to be considered as a sort of continuation of the New Testament and the place where Christ and the Spirit talk through the martyr. Bastiaensen actually expresses a more moderate position (1987: XIX): in his opinion, in fact, neither the passion of Jesus nor the Judaic martyrs were compulsory models in the composition of martyr literature. indeed, even the motif of the execution of the martyr on Friday or between Friday and Saturday - in some cases even on Good Friday- is a clear evocation of a parallel with Christ: See e.g. Policarpus and Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e. Actually, in my view, the recurring attempt to persuade and seduce the saint through the offer of gifts and power has a parallel in another evangelic episode, i.e. the satanic temptations of Jesus in the desert (See Matthew 4,1-11, Marc 1,12-13 e Luke 4,1-13). In this way, the author seems to associate to the usual identification martyr-Christ, another one linking the judge/persecutor to the Devil; this clearly emerges, after all, in texts where the governor/king is compared in his appearance to a snake or a dragon, explicit reference to Genesis and to the beasts portrayed by Neo- and Old- Testament apocalyptic texts; Genesis 3; Revelation 12; Daniel 14. Already the book of Ezekiel (29,3) portrayed the Pharaoh with the traits of a monster/snake: "*I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, you great monster [hebr.: tanim] lying among your streams. You say, 'The Nile belongs to me, I made it for myself.'*")

²⁶³ Cf. on that Monaci Castagno 2010: 21; Schneider 1985, I: 579. On the relationship martyr-Christ and its reflection on the Martyr Acts, see also Schneider 1985: 579; Falcetta 2006: 67-98; cf. Monaci Castagno 2010: 21. The trial, interrogatory and martyrdom recall another biblical antecedent, i.e. the story of Eleasar, Shemouni and her sons (2 Maccabees 6-7). On the the Maccabees episode as literary model for the martyr trial, see Bastiaensen 1987: XVI. Identifying in 2 Maccabees "*the first Acts of martyrs*", Frend started from the idea that the figure of the martyr actually originated in the Judaic tradition, in connection to the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (cf. Frend 1965: 44-47; cf. Ziadé 2007: 67. See also Bousset and Gressmann 1926: 122, 128; Fischel 1947: 265-280, 363-386; Del Verme 1976: 287-302; Stewart 1984: 119-124; Baumeister 1992; Deléani-Nigoul 1985: 315-338; id. 1989: 189-213; Boyarin 1999: 94-96, 115-118. For an opposite theory which considers martyrdom as a typical Christian phenomenon born with and in relation to the Roman persecutions, see Delehayé 1921; van Campenhausen 1936; Bowersock 1995, 26-27.). References to the Maccabees episode in Christian martyrial narrative since his spread - i.e. already in the first three centuries -, as well as some influence of the first on the latter, are undeniable (On the references to 2 and 4 Maccabees in the first Christian martyrology (1st -3rd c.), see Ziadé 2007: 66 and 70-103; cf. also Kellermann 1979: 71-75). It is not by chance, I guess, that this text, extrapolated from the biblical context, is preserved also in hagiographic collections, as a sort of example of martyrs *ante litteram*. On a Christian cult of the Maccabees already since the 4th century, see the reference to their celebration - on the 1st of August- in a 5th c. Syriac Martyrologium; cf. Ziadé 2007: 56, and Leclercq 1932: 2563-2571 (DACL X:

More interestingly, the *Acts of Miles* mention the mocking attitude that the bishop Miles and his companions show towards the governor.

But they mocked him more and more, and they despised his pride and his arrogance against them.²⁶⁴

The martyr's attitude towards the mighty man who will judge and condemn him is usually narratively "taken to extremes"; the authors portray the saint as being guided by strong feelings, having full control of himself and being at the same time already completely projected toward the Heavenly Kingdom so as to arrive at despising - literally meaning: "not giving value to" - the life itself. No fear in facing the tortures and the final death, no vacillation, the saint's attitude towards the king, the judge or the representative of power who interrogates him is characterized by two substantial elements: firmness and audacity.²⁶⁵

2, v. *Martyrologe*); edition in PO 10/1 (Nau 1915: 7-26). Actually, the isolation of the Maccabees' text from the Biblical collocation, considering it as a Martyrdom *ante litteram*, could be earlier: a Coptic version has been found in the probably 3rd-4th c. Bodmer codex Crosby-Schøyen 193 (cf. Camplani 2015: 98-135); Camplani has noticed an interest on the theme of the corporeal resurrection - probably to some extent in anti-Origen polemic - that similarly recurs in other (Greek) texts (even hagiographical, as the *Acts of Phileas*) found in other almost contemporary codices of the Bodmer collection (ibid. 123). Among the other Judaic martyrs worthy to be used as model for Christian martyrial literature, one should mention Isaiah: actually, the prophet was considered- by Christians- a Christian saint since the 4th c. at least, according to a short essay dedicated to him by Potamius of Lisbon (PL VIII: 1415-1416) and to Victricious of Rouen who counts him among the Christian martyrs (see ed. Demeulenaere CCL LXIV: 92). To be added, the cult of the martyrs had a Judaic parallel in the cult of the Righteous; this veneration had taken on a new form in the Hellenistic age, focusing on heroic figures, sometimes men dead for God or for the Law (as the Maccabees and some "martyr" prophets, e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zachariah, Micah). Cf. Bastiaensen 1987: XVII, Klauser 1960: 32-33, Jeremia 1958, Baumeister 1980:6, Baumgarten 2007; see also Falcetta 2006: 67-98 (on the parallels between the martyrdoms and the Jewish suffering of the Righteous and violent fate of the prophet), Van Henken and Avemarie 2006: 31-65 (on the Maccabee martyrs and martyrdom in Judaic tradition).

²⁶⁴ Act of Miles, 13 (see below).

²⁶⁵ To be noticed that the idea of death as a heroic act, the resistance in the trial, the disregard of tortures show also echoes of pagan traditions, as the Stoicism; cf. Bastiaensen 1987: XVIII. Audacity manifests first of all in the refusal to bowing in front of the king: see e.g. the attitude of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e and Ma'in towards Šapur (Cf. Smith 2014 (text and translation of the *Martyrdom of Simeon*); Brock 2008 (text and translation *Martyrdom of Ma'in*); a similar case recurs also in the story of the *Seven Martyrs of Samosata*. The martyr's disdainful attitude is linked to the evidence that he does no longer recognise authority to the mighty man, seeing in the man who is in front of him an exponent of a world and of a kingdom to which the saint himself, in his own view, does no longer

The disdainful and audacious attitude towards the persecutor is exemplified in the most eloquent way through the recourse to the devices of sarcasm and irony.²⁶⁶

The recourse to the sarcasm device is typical attitude of the saint who addresses the exponent of power; it could actually mean a lack - or loss- of acknowledgment of the authority of the politic power; a power that does not represent (anymore?) an authority for the holy protagonist of the Martyrdom. That laughing is an expression of a sort of superiority is already a biblical idea, as the reference to God's laughing in Psalm 2 reveals. Conversely, this irony of the martyr in facing the persecutor may also reveal an attempt to provoke the persecutor himself, in order to be martyred.

belong, and whose power anyway actually comes from God. The refusal is also linked to the consideration about the humanity and the non-divinity of the king: a bow has to be done before God, not before a man; and the king is a man, as Šapur himself recognises in the *Acts of 'Abdā, 'Abdišō, and their Friends* (See Assemani 1748 I: 156 (Syriac), 160-161 (Latin), (Forty Martyrs): *And the king laughed loud and told him: "Indeed, on that only thing these men who said that about me are wise! As I myself, I am a man and not a god; and even in the death, I am ready to die like every man"*. (Translation is mine; for the Syriac text, see also Bedjan I: 341)). However, the martyr often reflects on the superiority of the king compared to the pagan gods, since he is a creature of God, while the idols are just a human product. See, for instance the *Martyrdom of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e* (Smith 2014: 32): *The king said, "No, leave aside [the issue of] taxes. But in this I advise you, Simeon: that you should worship the sun god with me today and you and all your people will live". The holy one answered and said: "I did not worship you, who are greater than the sun, for in you there is no soul and wisdom, so why would I worship the sun in which there is no heart even to distinguish and honour you, who worship it, from me, who reviles it? [...]*. Nevertheless, the king interprets the refusal of the bow as lese majesty and denial of the power he represents.

²⁶⁶ Beside the example of Miles, where the reference to the mocking attitude is just mentioned, other cases are more explicit; *Martyrdom of Barba'smin* (Syriac passage in Assemani 1748, I: 113; cf. Bedjan 1890, 1: 298): *So, the king enraged, and he swore on the Sun, his god, and said: "I will cause your doctrine to disappear from the earth [...]. And Barba'smin laughed at that and said: "Why did you not bring the other two of your gods, the Fire and the Water? So [that] they will share the curse with the Sun? Maybe they are all your companions and you will cause us to pass from the earth, as you swore. (English translation is mine). See also the *Martyrdom of 'Aqebšmā, Yawsef and 'Italāhā* (Syriac text in Assemani 1748, I: 204; cf. Bedjan 1890, 1: 387): *And they were brought before him [i.e. the king] and Thamšapur answered and told them: "Eat the blood, and I will release you and you will not die. As I have pity of your old age." And the two saints told him: "Eat yourself the blood, you who secretly or openly eat the blood". (English translation is mine). It is interesting to see that the Christian martyr (or the Christian author) demonstrate his deep knowledge of Zoroastrian doctrine and practices, using those ones in his ironic observations. For an example coming from outside the Persian world, cf. the *Acts of the Seven Martyrs of Samosata* (Syriac text in Assemani II 1748, II: 137; Bedjan 1890, 4: 103): *Oh, heartless tyrant, you resemble so much to your gods who have ears but do not hear, if you have not heard that we told you, as to a man, that neither the height nor the depth, nor as we are nor for the future, [nothing] will separate us from the love of Our God Jesus Christ (English translation is mine).***

The sarcastic attitude of Miles, that can be even considered a hagiographic *topos* to some extent, actually does not surprise if we consider the absolute peculiarity of his own personality that shines through the whole narration. A strong character whose most characterizing trait is to be always “in conflict”, with the power; and not only with the non-Christian one. Miles lives his life in a continuous of protests and conflicts with anyone, Christian or not, who stepped away from the true way, religion and habits. If we look at his speeches, we do not perceive neither an evolution – from the beginning to the end of the story- nor a difference linked to the counterpart he faces from time to time, is this one a monk, a deacon, a bishop, a pagan governor and persecutor.²⁶⁷

Except for those (three) cases when he speaks in order to perform a healing miracle, Miles’ speeches usually contain a blame for what the person - or the demonic animal, in one case- did, and a prediction, in form of curse, of the future punishment of the person(s) involved accompanies the blame. All along the narration, he addresses in a similar way: the inhabitants of Šus,²⁶⁸ a snake who lived in a cave (actually, even Miles’ attitude towards the monk who had accepted to live with that beast is not less

²⁶⁷ In seven cases Miles blames the sins/mistakes and curses his counterpart (if we consider that he blames Papa twice, the cases are actually eight!). In another case (that of the monk in the cave) there is the blame but not the curse. So, we can say that Miles’ speeches, except for the ones by which he performs a healing miracle (there are three cases of that) usually contain the blame for what the person (or the demoniac animal) did, and a prediction/curse of his future punishment.

²⁶⁸ Acts of Miles 3: *And the day he went out of there, he cursed [the city] and so he spoke: “Since you did not consent to be restored and perfected in peace, a violent destruction and a desert of fear will suddenly rise against you; your high buildings will be destroyed, and your proud inhabitants will be dispersed”*

blaming!),²⁶⁹ the bishop Papa,²⁷⁰ a sinner deacon,²⁷¹ the pagan persecutor and governor Hormizda.²⁷² . In seven cases Miles blames the sins/mistakes and curses his counterpart (if we consider that he blames Papa twice, the cases are actually eight!). In another case (that of the monk of the cave) there is the blame but not the curse.

It emerges that the kind of people Miles faces in his typical polemical, blaming and provocative attitude is variegated and does not limit to the political representatives: before the governor, he faces a religious

²⁶⁹ Ibid. 4: *"Cruel snake and enemy of the human kind, why do you dare to cast us out and come inside yourself? Lo, indeed, in this hour, the lance of the Lord will miraculously cleave you from one end to the other". And immediately the whole snake swelled and burst open from his head to his end. Then Miles asked that brother and told him: "It seems you saw this snake here before. Isn't it?". And he told him: "He has always been living in this cave, even while I was (living) in it, and he did not hurt me in any way". Then the blessed Miles blamed him heavily, saying: "As God, in his judgement, installed enmity between humans and the snake, why did you trust the hated one and have you been with him in the same habitation?". Therefore, he departed from that brother to another place.*

²⁷⁰ Ibid. 6-7: *And [Miles] understood the pride of that man [and his blasphemy] against them and his ruin, that [comes] from God. He rose in the middle [of the crowd] and he told him: "Why do you dare to exalt yourself above your brothers and your members? And [why] do you rival with them in vain and without reason, as a godless man? Is it not written thus: He who is your chief, he himself should be your servant?". [...] And he loudly said, so that all that assembly could hear: "Since you, with your pride, venture against the living words of Our Lord, lo, His angel will come and will strike half of you and will dry it up. And many will dread and fear. And you will not die immediately, but you will remain [as] a sign and a wonder".*

²⁷¹ Ibid. 11: *And he arrived in a village where he found a deacon who was accused of adultery. And he called him and accused him in the church. And he told him: "Confess, my son, whether you are [truly] guilty of that [matter] and show penitence towards God. Because He is merciful and forgives your sins. And do not dare, while you are not pure, to serve before Him, because His justice will immediately destroy you!".*

²⁷² Ibid. 13-14: *But the blessed one knew the dissimulation of that man and his unfaithfulness, and he told him: "I am a man and not a god. And I will not reveal my true faith to your vain dissimulation. And I will not infuse my pure doctrine into your impure ears. But, lo, I tell you a right word: Alas [, alas] for you! Oh, wicked, cruel man! And especially for all those who, as you, remain godless! Because, in His justice, God decrees about you that, in the time that comes, [you will be] in the Gheenna, and [in] the darkness, and mourning and gnashing of teeth is prepared and [will] repay your pride forever and ever, because you did not understand that he was Him who gave you those great things that, at this present day, you enjoy and in which you take delight". [...] And when the great victorious man was at the doors of the Sheol and was invited at the banquet of death, hastening to sit down, in his lovely death, he prophesied about the two brothers' miraculous death, telling them at the same time: "Because you are very similar in your cruel brotherhood, and you have been joined in your bitter partnership in killing the pious men and shedding blood in vain, lo, tomorrow at this [same] hour, both your blood will be shed by each other's hands, in this place. And the dogs will lick your blood, and the birds of the sky will eat your flesh, and your mother will be bereaved of you two, and your women will be left widows of you both on the same day".*

authority –the bishop Papa-, a religious man – the solitary of the cave-, another exponent of the Church – the sinner deacon-, a city – Šuš, his episcopal see-, a demonic animal, i.e. the snake. They do not share a common milieu or provenance; they just have in common their acting against God and His will. Indeed, Miles is portrayed as a sort of “castigator of habits”.

In particular, a parallel – even a terminological one- can be highlighted between the episode that presents Miles facing his persecutor Hormizda Guprizes and the one staging the saint contrasting Papa of Seleucia. The similarities do not limit to the attitude of the characters in facing each other, but also involve the words the narrator uses to present the two different adversaries of Miles, the pagan governor and the Christian bishop.

And [Miles] understood the **pride** (ܡܕܝܘܬܐ) of that man [and his blasphemy] against them and his ruin, that [comes] from God. [...] He rose in the middle [of the crowd] and he told him: "Why do you dare to exalt yourself above your brothers and your members? And [why] do you rival with them in vain and without reason, **as a godless man** (ܡܠܟܐ ܠܐ ܝܗܘܐ)? [...]". Then [the **impious** (ܠܘܘܝܐ)] Papa, with his evil²⁷³ fury, raised his hand with rage and, smiting the Gospel against him, he said [with derision²⁷⁴]: "Speak, Gospel! Speak!". [...] And he [i.e. Miles] loudly said, so that all that assembly could hear: "Since you, with your **pride** (ܘܝܡܘܘܬܐ), venture against the living words of Our Lord, lo, His angel will come and will strike half of you and will dry it up. And many will dread and fear. And you will not die immediately, but you will remain [as] a sign and a wonder".²⁷⁵

Besides the reference to Papa as acting as a godless man – which is already meaningful by itself! -, the recurrence of the nouns *pride*, *blasphemy*, and of the adjective *impious*, reminds the successive description of the governor Hormizda:

The lord of that region, whose name was Hormizda Guprizes, heard about the fame of his catechizing; he was **impious** (ܠܘܘܝܐ) and **arrogant** and **proud** (ܠܘܘܝܐ) and **vainglorious** (ܠܘܝܘܬܐ).

²⁷³ According to another witness (L2), *violent*; for the witnesses of the Acts I refer to the edition in Part II.

²⁷⁴ Addition only present in the mentioned L2 witness.

²⁷⁵ Acts of Miles, 6-7. For more details about the extant witnesses and the differences they present, see below, the edition of the text, pp. 117-208

The terminological parallelism is evident: they are both described in their impiety (ܩܕܘܫܐܝܐ), pride (ܩܕܘܫܐܝܐ) and vainglory (ܩܕܘܫܐܝܐܡܢܐ). The pagan persecutor and the bishop are equally negative figures.

Among the the political entities that Miles faces we can even list the city of Šuš. The text does not do any reference to the lord(s) of the “castle”. Šuš is presented as a unit, an individual - although collective-counterpart of the saint in his (failed) activity of conversion.²⁷⁶ A bishop that his citizens try to stone and send away, a bishop who finally curses his own city and its inhabitants, predicting its imminent destruction, is evidently a strongly “antithetical” figure. Indeed, this episode makes of Miles also a surprising figure of bishop without a see. The absence of any other reference to his bishopric in the second part of the narration is equally interesting; actually, the fact that Miles is presented as a bishop without a see does not deprive him of his authority, as the episode of his victorious fight against the more powerful bishop of Seleucia, Papa, demonstrates: his authority does not reside in his being a bishop, but in his holiness. This clearly emerges at the end of the story, when the relics of Miles and his companions are carried to Malqan and buried there.

That same night, the inhabitants collected the corpses of the three martyrs and carried and buried them in a village called Malqan. Thus, even in their death, a great portent was manifested through them. Since the thieves were continuing to arrive every time in that region to capture and devastate, they oftentimes reached the borders of that village but were kept back and could not commit any destruction there. And its inhabitants believed that it was because of the blessing

²⁷⁶ Acts of Miles, 3: *He, then, went out from the city of Beth Lapat and went down to the city of Ilam, where is the castle of Susa;*²⁷⁶ *and, with words of truth and faithful preaching, he instructed its inhabitants every day and showed [the true doctrine], as he had laboured and toiled there for three years in weariness and distress; and there, step by step, for his love for the Church of God, he reached the episcopate, through the laying-on of hands by Gadiab, bishop of the city of Beth Lapat, who was himself also crowned by honourable martyrdom in the name of Christ. And in those years when the blessed Miles was there and was in trouble, against God's and his own will, that city was not converted; and many times he persisted in his distresses, until they stoned him in the streets [of the city] and took and brought him outside the city; and every day he was scourged by blows, and he endured. And seeing that many persisted in idolatry and Magianism, he left the city and went away. And the day he went out of there, he cursed [the city] and so he spoke: “Since you did not consent to be restored and perfected in peace, a violent destruction and a desert of fear will suddenly rise against you; your high buildings will be destroyed, and your proud inhabitants will be dispersed”. And three months after he left, the chiefs of the city offended the king, and he sent three hundred elephants, and they threw down its houses and killed every inhabitant; and they turned the city into a plain; and they planted it with spring corn, until today.*

of the bones of the righteous ones, which were laying in that place, they (i.e. the thieves) were not allowed to enter.²⁷⁷

As for Šuš above, even here for Malqan no reference to the political authority ruling the village is done, no mention of the local ruler or lord. As Peter Brown observed years ago, the Eastern Christian world lives in Late Antiquity an attempt to replace the political local power with the patronage of the saint, in the task of protecting the city;²⁷⁸ here the protection is entrusted to the relics of the martyrs. Indeed, not even an ecclesiastic power – Miles, as we have seen, is not perceived/presented as an exponent of the church, having been “refused” as such- but by a religious power. In other words, by sanctity.

As we have seen, Miles carries on this activity of disputing all along his life, following a sort of circular itinerary. He departs from the Beth Raziqāyē, his original land, and finally comes back to this same land; during his journey, he passes through the regions and cities of Beth Lapat, Ilam- Šuš, Jerusalem, Alexandria; then an unspecified way back leads him to Nisibis, the Beth Aramaye, Mišan, and, finally, again to the Beth Raziqāyē. Looking at his travels in the perspective of his activity, one notices a change: before his travels to Jerusalem and Alexandria, Miles has undergone difficulties, which manifest even in his episcopal activity: he has been sent away from Šuš, his see, at the instigation of the citizens. The travel to Jerusalem and the Egypt in some way *legitimates* Miles; he there learns the *right* Christianity and can then come back, having assumed a charge of *reformer*. In a kind of *pars destruens* of his activity, he starts questioning the Syriac Christianity and its exponents, as I have shown: the monk living with a snake, symbol of a Syriac monasticism still unperfect; the bishop Papa. Only after that, begins Miles his Christianisation of those same territories, through his miracles (*pars construens*).

In a wider way, Miles’ relationships with power do not limit to the political power but they also extend to the religious-ecclesiastical authority. The episode of Papa, maybe the most interesting part of the narrative, is the key point to try to understand the character Miles, to try to place him in the historical context, to try to understand the *Acts* in their real intent and purpose, giving value to the historicity of the contents

If the historicity of Miles is disputed, Papa bar Aggai is an historical figure. According to the tradition, he has ruled the church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon for circa seventy years. Mesopotamic or Persian, according

²⁷⁷ Acts of Miles, 16

²⁷⁸ Cf. Brown 1982: 153-165

to the different sources, he dies during the reign of Šapur II (309-79), more probably between 326 and 335.²⁷⁹

The interest of the episode of the so-called Synod of Papa - i.e. the dispute between the bishop of Seleucia and Miles- for the comprehension of the *Acts* lies in two points: on the one hand, as we have seen, the fight represents a strong element of characterization of the holy protagonist and martyr in his being a reformer and a kind of protester; on the other hand, it can be used as further clue to date the *Acts* to the 5th century. Indeed, the Martyrdom is not the only witness of the dispute. The same episode recurs in a series of sources of various origins and literary genres.²⁸⁰ But if the version that the *Acts of Miles* furnish is completely hostile to Papa and offers a very negative portrait of this one – as demonstrated also by the mentioned parallelism of his description with that of the persecutor-, the Acts of a Synod gathered at Markabta, in the Lakhmid reign, in 424, refer a version of the episode that is very similar in the contents, but, on the contrary, expression of a position favorable to Papa. During the Synod of the 424 – the so-called Synod of Dadišo', from the name of the deposed patriarch that the Synod aimed at replacing on his seat- Agapeth of Beth Lapat narrates the episode of the 4th century "schism" of Papa; according to Agapeth, the Synod of Papa had been illegally gathered at the instigation of a group of rebel bishops in order to depose the bishop of Seleucia. The right situation had been restored thanks to the epistolary intervention of the Western Fathers – i.e. the bishops of Syria and Mesopotamia, in the Roman Empire-, Papa had been restored on his seat and the Synod had been declared illegitimate.

Considering the similarity of the two versions and, in particular, since the pro-Papa version also narrates the heavenly punishment the bishop receives when he approaches the Gospel without the due respect, my idea is that an antecedence of the tradition hostile to Papa can be stated with great probability, and that the author of the Acts of the Synod of Dadišo' knew the *Acts of Miles* or, at least, was aware of a

²⁷⁹ Bibliographical references and historiographical information on Papa Bar Aggai in Labourt 1904: 18-28; Chaumont 1988: 137-145. He was Mesopotamian according to Mari ibn Suleiman e 'Amr ibn Mattai (cf. Gismondi 1899; on the problematic identification of the author of the *History of Patriarchs*, see Debié 2015: 640) On the contrary, Barhebraeus presents Papa as a Persian (cf. Abbeloos-Lamy 1877: 27-34). The Aramaic origin of his and his father's name is clear and has been observed already Chaumont (1988: 138). Papa died in 326-7 according to 'Amr (see Gismondi 1899: 9); 335 is the date furnished by Barhebraeus (cf. Abbeloos-Lamy 1877: 27-34). The episcopal consecration took place in 246-247, according to 'Amr (cf. Gismondi 1899: 8.), about twenty years later according to Barhebraeus (Abbeloos-Lamy 1877: 27-28).

²⁸⁰ The sources concerned are: the Acts of the Synod of Dadišo' (424 CE; Syriac text and French translation by Chabot 1902); the (probably apocryphal) epistolary of Papa with some personages of the Syriac and Byzantine milieu (published by Braun 1894: 163-182, 546-565); the historiographical work by Barhebraeus (13th c.; ed. Abbeloos and Lamy 1877: 27-34), the so-called Chronicle Haddad (an Arabic text probably written in the 10th-11th c.; ed. Haddad 2000); the Chronicle of Arbela (whose composition could date back to the 6th c.; ed. Kawerau 1985; Italian translation by Ramelli 2002); cf. Di Rienzo 2017: 637-654.

tradition presenting Papa in a negative perspective; in other case, there was no reason to present, within a text that explicitly sustains the patriarch, the description of Papa also in his negative traits. As I have proposed in an article few years ago, here we are dealing with a “re-semanticization of the memory”, whose reasons are probably linked to the contextualization of the episode in the new context of the Acts of Synod Dadišo’ and to the function the episode has in this new context. The narration has a clear filopatriarchal position – the Synod aimed to restore the deposed Dadišo’-; besides that, the message that Agapeth wanted to convey, using the example of Miles and Papa, was the impossibility for any other bishop or priest to question the authority of the patriarch of Seleucia; the authority of the patriarch was comparable to that of Peter among the apostles.²⁸¹ The same was to be applied to the events concerning Dadišo’, whose deposition was to be considered illegitimate as well. In this way, the problems concerning the “imperfection” of the figure of Papa do not subsist, being the *function* of the patriarchate the focus, not the *figure* of the bishop.²⁸² In other words, this is a reinterpretation of already known material, functional to the conveyance of a new message.

All that considered, it is possible to hypothesize a redaction of *Acts of Miles*, witness of the probable original version of the episode, quite surely before 424; probably even before 410, when the Synod of Išaḡ stated the primacy of the episcopal see of Seleucia.

2.3.2 Noble martyrs and noble executioners: the cases of Badmā and Barḥabešabba

As Adele Monaci Castagno has underlined, the hagiographical language is based on antinomies; beside the more evident ones, victory/ defeat, life/ death (where the defeat and the death actually mean victory, for the martyr, and gaining the eternal life, the only true life, indeed), an antinomy strength/ weakness emerges, as demonstrated by the excellence of the martyr children and women.²⁸³

Conversely, the excellence of the noble martyr mirrors his social excellence. A typical example of noble martyr can be found among the protagonists of the martyr texts presented in the Part II: I mean the case of Badmā, of which the anonymous author says:

²⁸¹ For the text of the letter, see Chabot 1902: 47- 48 (French translation: 291-292)

²⁸² Cf. Di Rienzo 2017: 637-654 (in particular, 652)

²⁸³ Cf. Monaci Castagno 2010: 82-84. On the use of antinomies and binary oppositions in the hagiographic language, see Van Uytendange 1999: 158.

He was son of rich and noble people from the city of Beth Lapat; and, once converted, he gave everything he had to the poor people, and he went away and built a monastery outside the city, and he settled there.²⁸⁴

Indeed, nobility is – or, at least, can be- reflected in the nobility of the soul; but it is also true, in the case of Badmā, that the real spiritual excellence of the future martyr manifests itself when he gives away all his riches and becomes a monk, i.e. when he abandons his previous noble status in the society, preferring the true nobility, the spiritual one. This emerges from his description, based on the antinomies riches/ poverty, avidity/ humility:

The avidity saw him and escaped; and the desire also departed; mammon looked at him and was terrified; and the property also hid; the opulence met him and was humbled; and pride also was astonished; the ostentation was outraged in him; and the arrogance was trodden by him; the poverty walked after him; and the humility was fastened to his back; the faith looked upon him, as the righteousness grew with him; the love embraced him and rejoiced; the peace kissed him and was glad; the tranquillity exulted for his manner of life; and the harmony dwelled in his habitation, as his smell pleased them; and this one and his fruits were sweet to eat to them.²⁸⁵

The portrait of another noble man can be found in the same *Martyrdom*: he is the executioner charged to kill the blessed one. His name is Narsā:

And then a great man who was Christian in the name, whose name was Narsā and he was called Lord of the city of Arēwan, in the region of Beth Garmai, happened to be prisoner of the king, since he did not worship the sun. And he was weakened in his heart and he was agitated in his intention; and his cruel end did not resemble to his first blossoming state; and he agreed to possess the present life, that one in which he was not possessed and [did not] remained; and he preferred the honour of an earthly king more than the glory of the Heavenly one; and he had turned aside [as] to do the king's will in everything he would order.

Then, all at once an idea came, and the king ordered the mighty Badmā to be set free from chains and to be made come to Narphatqā, to the court of the king's palace of the city of Beth Lapat. And

²⁸⁴ Acts of Badmā 1

²⁸⁵ Ibid. 3

they also brought Narsā, bound in chains. And two confidential servants of the king, with him, were commissioned to see if he killed the blessed one.²⁸⁶

Narsā is “Lord” of a city, Arnun, in the Beth Garmai, i.e. he is an exponent of a local political power; but the fact that the redactor does not say “*he is Lord*”, he says that he “*was called Lord*” could be considered as a hint of his opinion about him. He is a Christian; but, following the text, it would be better to say that he *pretends* to be a believer, and here the author clearly gives a judgement about him. Through the following description, presenting him as “*weakened in his heart*”, “*agitated in his intention*”, the omniscient narrator clearly anticipates the dramatic consequences of Narses’ feelings. The “psychological” portrait is indeed followed by (and linked to, as in a cause-effect relationship) the continuation of his story: he prefers “*the honour of the earthly king*”, deciding to do everything the king would have asked him to do.

Indeed, the social status of the executioner is characterised by his nobility and his political role.

Narses is not an *unicum* in the panorama presented by the *Persian Martyr Acts*. Narses’ counterpart in the *Martyrdom of Barḥabešabba* is ‘Ag:

A noble layman from the village of Taḥal, whose name was ‘Ag, was imprisoned there since he did not worship the Sun, because he was a Christian in name; and the impious one ordered him, that coward, to be released and [himself] to kill the blessed one, so that he would namely commit a sin that was greater than the one that he did not do when he had been ordered to. They brought the glorious Barḥabešabba outside the village of Ḥazzā and they bound him on a hill; and they gave the sword to that man, ‘Ag, who took it trembling, and he beat it on [the saint’s] neck seven times and he did not attain to cut off his head, because of his trepidation and fear. The magicians, who stood firm against him, angered; then he seized the sword and wiped it on the body of the blessed one, since he had cast it while [it was] full of blood, and he stabbed him in his heart and immediately the blessed one’s soul went away.

Indeed, these portraits of noble apostate killers seem to share two traits: the first one - a “psychological” one- i.e. the cowardice, has a consequence into the second one (a “practical” one), i.e. the inability in the attempt to kill. Usually common is also the final punishment of the apostate. Narsā is condemned to be mocked by Pagans and hated by Christians’ hate, to finally undergo a bloody death.²⁸⁷ ‘Ag falls ill and is

²⁸⁶ Acts of Badmā 4-5

²⁸⁷ Acts of Badmā 6: *And he, that weak and murderer, was greatly put to shame and mocked, even by those who did not believe in the True God. So, after a time, with blood and by the sword, also his soul was separated from his body.*

abandoned by everyone.²⁸⁸ That we are dealing with a disease or with the abandon and the mockery, the punishment of the noble executioner is never late to come; it is in some way providential, since it comes from God; actually, except for the cases of sudden diseases, it is often also rationally coherent with the situation: the one who has made apostasy is rejected by his original Christian community as a traitor; he will no longer be perceived as belonging to their group; but actually he is no longer perceived by the Pagan ones as part of *their* group either; from that comes the mockery; from that comes also the abandon; indeed, he does no longer belong to any community.

The noble executioner is the Saint's *real antagonist* in the narrative, in place of the persecutor king or governor; in the Acts of Badmā and Barḥabešabba, for instance, the king is not mentioned by name, contrarily to the named executioners.

Not only a relationship Saint-Power emerges here, but also a relationship **between** Powers: between the central power - represented by the king- and the local one; the apostate executioner is usually an exponent of local power, a chief of village or lord of a city. What is the reason - if there is- guiding the king in this choice? In this decision I possibly see a way to enforce his central power on the local power; a way to reaffirm that the local power, if it wants to survive, has to be subordinated to the central power's decisions. Maybe (or beyond this) the sovereign also aims at contrasting the spread of Christianity among the local ruling class. It emerges, between the lines, the problem of apostasy. Stating beforehand that the apostasy question clearly does not emerge exclusively from this kind of situations in the *Persian Martyr Acts* - we have cases of apostate and then repenting people among the martyrs themselves, as James the Cut-up -, the noble Christian executioner is not a repenting but a "lost" one. Anyway, the recurrence of the theme, both in the case of noble executioners and in those ones where the martyr himself passes through a phase of apostasy, could mean that this was a strongly felt problem being something that usually happened.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁸ Acts of Barḥabešabba 3: *And then a sign appeared on that murderer 'Ag, and we must tell it as well. In that very moment, in fact, when he killed the victorious one, the Lord wounded him by a cruel illness and his right hand was puffed up like a beam. And he lied down in a bed and he laid his arm on another, and all his body became putrid and was lacerated. And, in a few days, he died of this cruel death, without anyone coming to visit him.*

²⁸⁹ By the other hand, the *historical verisimilitude* of noble apostate killers' cases can be discussed and: do the *Acts* really transmit a valid version of the history? Or maybe the idea of presenting a noble who commits apostasy was a way to make the condemn of apostasy even stronger?

2.3.3 Christopher, the Monstrous Saint

The evangelical idea that “*the last shall be first*” (Matthew 20:16), which we recognize behind the excellence of the weaker, actually emerges in a peculiar and even stronger way in the figure of a unique martyr: Christopher, whose Syriac Acts I publish in Part II.

In the war, then, occurring in that time, there was a [Byzantine] official; and this one seized the blessed Reprebus and he enlisted him in the place called Marmarito. This man was very wise. And this was his story. [He was] from the barbarian men-eater people and he had a disfigured appearance, since his head was like that of a dog; translated in Greek, “cynocephalus”. Then, to make everyone know that God did not give help only to the Christians but that also for the ones from the foreign Nations who turned towards the true faith there was a rewarding, in His understanding, He presented them as chosen and approved. And, so, this man was a believer in his knowledge, and he meditated the words of God in his thought. But he could not use our speech.²⁹⁰

Christopher is an outcast person, a monstrous figure whose appearance makes the persecutors laugh;²⁹¹ he is, indeed, a stranger (“[He was] from the barbarian men-eater people”²⁹²), and a monster (“he had a disfigured appearance, since his head was like that of a dog”²⁹³). His *alteritas* regards his nationality as well as it is revealed by his appearance. The Cynocephalus saint Christopher represents the example of the superiority of the “last” taken to extremes; so exceptional that it remains a *unicum* in the whole panorama of hagiography.

Problems around the figure of Christopher, the cynocephalus saint, concern both his historicity – with or without his monstrous appearance- and the reasons of his monstrosity and its possible functionality within the hagiographic narrative.

The monstrosity of Christopher is a peculiarity which is predictably very rare in the hagiographic panorama. In literary texts (including hagiographical ones), ‘monsters’ are usually associated with the bad side, the antagonist. Thus, there is a certain surprise in finding the protagonist of the tale himself,

²⁹⁰ Acts of Christopher, 2

²⁹¹ See Acts of Christopher, 10: *The judges came near the king and told him: “King, my lord! Do not torture this man by similar torments, as his appearance cause us rejoicing. But interrogate him with indulgent kindness”. And the king ordered him to be let descend from where he hanged up; and he told him: “Oh, good man! Come near, and sacrifice to the gods! In fact, your appearance gladdens us very much. And I desire to make of you my first squire”.*

²⁹² Ibid. 2

²⁹³ Ibid. 2

the hero of the hagiographic narration, presented and described as a terrifying monster. In traditional mythology, arts and literature, as well as from a social point of view, monstrosity usually had a negative function and it was generally linked to the evil/badness, often used to parody or perceived as consequence of divine punishment; on the other hand, monstrosity was usually used to describe wild unknown people from faraway lands, imagined as so far from the Western world to suppose their absolute diversity from the *norma* and from what was supposed to be 'normal': monsters, definitely. The Greek-Roman culture, in its ethnocentrism, imagines the foreign, far and unknown countries as inhabited by monstrous people, whose main characteristic distinguishing them from the Occidental people is the *alteritas*. People from 'outside' are imagined as absolutely other: they do not share the same cultural values, they do not eat what the Greco-Roman man usually eats (e.g., they are man-eaters), they speak different and undistinguished languages, their bodies are different (e.g. they have a dog-head).²⁹⁴ Among these kinds of monstrous populations, the cynocephalus race plays a significant role.²⁹⁵ However, the universality of the Christian message posed a problem: were these monsters (who were not mythological or literary) also men? And, therefore, should they be saved at the end of times? Maybe guided by his anti-Manichaean position, rejecting a radical dualism Good/Beautiful vs Evil/Ugly, Augustine is probably the first to provide a positive answer to the question: they are men, and, for this reason, they will be saved.²⁹⁶ The legend of the Cynocephalus saint Christopher has to be placed at this

²⁹⁴ This kind of repulsion towards what was perceived as different did not stop the *curiositas* of Western people who look for the opportunity of discovering unknown lands and meeting their inhabitants. Pliny, Ctesias, Megasthenes and many others refer to wonderful countries and strange populations as fascinating: charm, curiosity and repulsion were the ingredients to describe men seen as *mirabiles*. So, the monstrous entities were linked to far away times (i.e. the Time of Myth) and/or faraway lands; countries by definition inhabited by 'paradoxical' people, because of their distance from the center and from the *norma* (this is what scholars usually call climatic-environmental determinism; cf. Li Causi 2013: 61)

²⁹⁵ Stoneman (2012: 429) recognizes two branches within the tradition on the Cynocephali. The first branch (from Herodotus onwards) identifies them with a real animal race, the so-called Egyptian baboon; the second tradition (starting from Hesiod, who distinguishes between *hemikynes*, half-dog men, and the *kynokephaloi*, dog-headed men) sees the cynocephali as a human monstrous race, often locating them in India or on the Black Sea coast (see e.g. Ctesias F. Gr. Hist. 688 F fr. 45n. 37-43; actually, the geographical concept of India was not clear and precise in antiquity; cf. White 1991: 30; Martelli 2015: 141-44; about geographical concepts in Antiquity, cf. Racine 2006); cf. my forthcoming contribution of the Dog-headed Saint Christopher (Di Rienzo 2019b?).

²⁹⁶ For Augustine, monstrous or deformed men are creatures of God, with full rights included in the order of creation. '*A portent, therefore, happens not contrary to nature, but contrary to what we know as nature*' (Aug. Civ. Dei XXI 8.2 [trans. Dods]; cf. Marone 2013: 229-236). The argumentation by Augustine concerns both the so-called 'Plinian races' and those born malformed; in both cases, their *alteritas* reveals and glorifies the omnipotence of God. Monstrous races, for their part, are to be considered fully human, since they share with men the element that

point. Since the first description, the monstrosity of Christopher is linked to his race, to his being a Cynocephalus. From the beginning as well, the author provides us with the interpretative key to understand the meaning of the story, presenting Reprebus' conversion as a choice of God aiming to reveal that the salvation is given to everyone who converts, even to pagans; the cynocephalus race, to which Reprebus belongs, is counted among the stranger pagan people. The *Acts*, in my opinion, betray the influence of the late 4th-5th century cultural milieu, where a new element could be found: the possibility for a Cynocephalus not only of converting but also of becoming a saint, despite his race and his appearance. As I have shown, this idea was possible in the view of the soteriological theory that, from Augustine onward, looks at the monstrous beings as creature worthy to be saved.

Beside the original case of the *Acts of Christopher*, in hagiographic and apocryphal literature two cases at least exist where the cynocephalus is presented as a positive character and co-protagonist of the narrative. The most significant one – especially for the deep link with the story of Christopher - is represented by the story of Christomeos in the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew*.

The story relates the conversion of a man of cynocephalus race, named Christomeos. The composition of the apocryphal work probably dates back to the 4th -5th century and may be situated in Egypt, as also the insistence on the topic of fear seems to suggest.²⁹⁷ The dating to the 4th- 5th century is linked to the observations about the theme of converting the monster, partially valid also for Christopher's tale. One should add to the cultural panorama presented above - i.e. Augustine's consideration on the salvation for the so-called monstrous races and the probable anti-Manichean influence on this same idea - the redaction of *Acts of Philip*, presenting the episode of the conversion of a leopard. The episode, found in the 4th century *Acts*, is usually interpreted as the basis-account on which the various stories of conversion of monsters originated.²⁹⁸

distinguishes humanity from animals: rationality. According to this principle and to the universality of the Christian message (Matthew 28, 19: *Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*) they are part of the salvific plan).

²⁹⁷ A parallel with the insistence on fear in the Pachomian milieu has been underlined by Martelli (2015: 60), who suggests a link of the story with that monastic context; cf. Rousseau 1985, about fear in the Pachomian world.

²⁹⁸ It has been underlined that the connection of the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* with the episode narrated in the *Acts of Philip* is extremely deep; by a linguistic and contents' point of view the texts are very close (see Martelli 2015). Other elements concur to the dating of *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* to the 4th-5th century. Martelli mentions e.g. the reference to the theatre where part of the story takes place: as in the 5th-6th c. many theatres were destroyed to be replaced by Christian constructions, the 6th c. can be taken as *terminus ante quem* for the redaction of the *Acts*. At the end of the text, we find references to institution of the mono-episcopate, witnessed by the 3rd c. (cf. Martelli 2015: 53-54, 60; Moreschini 2007, 63), and of the lectors (ἀναγνώσται), institutionalized in

Concerning the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew*, similarities between Christopher and Christomeos are deep, as Martelli underlined: they both come from the land of the men-eating people, they both do not use the human language, they both change their name after the conversion, they both evangelize.²⁹⁹ Even their descriptions are similar; and, in particular, their descriptions do not correspond to the usual description of a cynocephalus.³⁰⁰

About the story of Christopher, Martelli proposes to identify the original nucleus of the account in the two elements that all the Greek, Syriac, Latin earlier and later traditions share, i.e. the monstrous nature of the saint and his conversion.³⁰¹

Martelli seems to suggest a chain of derivation that, from the *Acts of Philip* passes to the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* to finally be developed in the *Acts of Christopher*. The *leit-motif* should be that of the conversion of the animal.³⁰² Indeed, what is also meaningful and demonstrates the evident connection of the two texts is the final reference to the martyrdom of Christomeos under a certain king Delko (probable mistaken reading for Decius): that seems to be an echo of the notice about the martyrdom of

the church of Egypt by the 4th c. (cf. Martelli 2015: 54, 223-224; Martin 1996, 195-197).

²⁹⁹ Cf. Martelli 2015: 67-70, 149-154 (for the description of Christomeos and his story, see in particular the edition of the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew*: 76-95); the way they evangelize, their own behaviour and their instrument of conversion actually differentiate the two Cynocephali: the ferocity of Christomeos does not appear in Christopher, whose monstrosity and the consequent fear this one causes do not translate in a ferocious or savage attitude of the holy protagonist; contrarily to Christomeos, Christopher is a monster just in his appearance. On that, see my forthcoming contribution, Di Rienzo 2019b?.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Martelli 2015: 67; some sources of the *Martyrdom of Christopher* also share with the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* interesting literary elements: I mean, in particular, a passage where Christopher covers his face, while preaching, under a veil (see below, p. 214 n. 761, and p. 280 n. 1114), which clearly reminds the parallel observation regarding Christomeos in the apocryphal work (cf. Martelli 2015: 85-87)

³⁰¹ Martelli (2015: 152-153) seems to refuse the position expressed by Le Quellec (2008: 21-39) who supposes the antecedence of the Eastern tradition (the one presenting Christopher as cynocephalus) on the Western one (*Golden Legend* and others, presenting the saint as a giant). Martelli challenges the fact that Le Quellec bases his observations on an *argumentum ex silentio*, i.e. the evidence that for the earliest times only Eastern sources have survived and not Western; she contrarily hypothesizes the Cynocephality of Christopher as a subsequent step, being the saint originally just depicted as generically monstrous. Actually, as I have tried to demonstrate above, all evidences push us to suppose, with Le Quellec, a precedence of the Eastern tradition and of the dog-headed Christopher.

³⁰² Martelli also supposes that both the Eastern and Western tradition of *Acts of Christopher* possibly independently derive from the story of Christomeos (see Martelli 2015: 151-154). Actually, I have a different opinion; see below, p. 215, where I hypothesize a possible derivative chain inside the same tradition(s) of *Acts of Christopher*.

Christopher.

Stated the complex relationship between the *Acts of Christopher* and the apocryphal *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew*, we have to remind that Christomeos is not the unique case of a firstly savage and then converted and good cynocephalus, since the same type of character can be traced in the hagiographical tradition about saint Mercurius. According to a tradition reported by the Ethiopic *Mashafa Senkesar* and the Arabic-Jacobite Synaxarium, two anthropophagus cynocephalus men had assaulted and devoured the saint's grandfather; only the intervention of God had saved his son (the father of Mercurius). They convert and become servants of the man and, later, of his son Philopator, as the saint was called before his conversion; they join him during the military campaigns (he was a soldier) and God makes them ferocious again when it is useful in battle, so that no one can resist them. On the basis of the portrayal of this nearly identical situation, I think it is possible to hypothesize a connection with the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* (unfortunately, the main Greek and Coptic traditions relating the *Martyrdom of Mercury* do not refer to the episode of the cynocephali, it seems)³⁰³.

Summarizing, taking apart the question of the historicity of Christopher, the monstrosity of Christopher, maybe an *unicum* in hagiography, can be understood as the product of late 4th -5th century society where the evangelization of the so-called Plinian races tried to find, in parallel with Augustine's theological theorization, a literary and narrative translation.

But Christopher is not just a monster: he is a soldier. The *Martyrdom* starts with the enlistment of Christopher in the Roman army. This characteristic of his figure, actually, does not shine through in the first part of the tale: here the narrative focus is the scary appearance of the holy man and the consequence – of fear or of laugh- it has on the bystanders; indeed, apart from the starting reference to the enlistment, no reference to his state of soldier is present. The situation changes in the second part, during his interrogatory, when we assist to a change in the figure of Christopher and in the attitude of people towards him. The king tries to persuade him to worship the Pagan gods offering to making of him his first squire;³⁰⁴ the army converts and affirms that they have found in Christopher a leader;³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Cf. Delehay (1909: 90-101); White (1991: 37-38)

³⁰⁴ Acts of Christopher, 10: *And the king ordered him to be let descend from where he hanged up; and he told him: "Oh, good man³⁰⁴! Come near, and sacrifice to the gods! In fact, your appearance gladdens us very much. And I desire to make of you my first squire".*

³⁰⁵ Acts of Christopher, 19: *When he had said these things, lo, one hundred Roman men came as from a far way;³⁰⁵ and they deposed their instruments and arms and they fell at the blessed one's feet and bowed themselves and they saluted him and told him: "Now we have found a great teacher and we are not afraid of evil things. Since, thanks to you, Christ is with us!". As the king saw every one of them doing reverence to him, the king cried out and said: "Did you incite to rebel against me, Christopher?". But those Roman told him: "He did not incite us to rebel against you!*

Christopher is even accused of having caused the military uprising;³⁰⁶ the vision/dream that the martyr-to-be has is that of a war between heavenly and demonic armies.³⁰⁷ Meaningfully, on the other hand, no reference to his monstrosity is anymore available in this second part of the *Martyrdom*. The change, indeed, does not concern the bodily figure of Christopher: we should suppose his appearance is still the same fearful one. It is the attitude and the perception of the ones who look at him to be different: the saint is no longer perceived as a monstrous cynocephalus, now he is a soldier. And though being a soldier was his status since the beginning, in the intention of the narrator the perfection of that status is achieved just when he faces the trial and the martyrdom: as to say, the real soldier is just the soldier of Christ.

But by the Gehenna we are [frightened and] terrified. Indeed, we are Christian; since the time, in fact, that you sent us to the servant of Christ Christopher, we received the heavenly bread. And, for this reason, we do not apostatize our God: because we have a great leader and shepherd”.

³⁰⁶ Acts of Christopher, 20: *And then the king ordered the saint Christopher to be brought before him and he told him: “Proud and deprived of the adoration of the gods, wherefore is it required of you all this parrhesia before me³⁰⁶, so that you seek to deprive me of my servants?”. Cf. also above, ibid. 19: As the king saw every one of them doing reverence to him, the king cried out and said: “Did you incite to rebel against me, Christopher?”. But those Roman told him: “He did not incite us to rebel against you! But by the Gehenna we are [frightened and] terrified.*

³⁰⁷ Acts of Christopher, 21: *“I have seen, at this moment, in the middle of the city, a man very high in his stature and beautiful in his appearance. And his face was bright like the rays of the sun; indeed, hair white like snow descended from it. And the crown on his head was very adorned and beautiful. And now I am not able to tell his magnificence. So, a few Romans who were with him, they were also very splendid. And I have seen, then, another man who was black, and many other Romans who were black like him; and their hair was crisp and grown.³⁰⁷ And fear and threat were among them, and then he fought, that one, against the one who was glorious, and he prevailed on him. And he killed the people who were with him. And for a certain time, he was lifted on his throne. But then, after that, that glorious one turned against that black one and killed all those who served him. And he bound their king in chains of fire. And he demolished his palace and overthrew his bed”.*

3. When Power is Holy. Christians describing a Christian (or pagan) king

3.1 Christians facing a Christian King: Constantine and the others

The reference to the case of Ma'in allows us to open a page of further considerations about how and according to what canons and motifs the hagiographers have portrayed a political power that was Christianized by then; in particular, it is interesting to see how this description is presented in comparison with a parallel description of the exponent of non-Christian power in the same textual context.

These considerations, valid for the age of Constantine in the case of Ma'in, can be applied as well to later epochs with a substantial and meaningful innovation: the two exponents respectively featured as representatives of a good and a bad power actually are both Christian, in a time when the doctrinal controversies have lacerated the Christian world.

What is for a Christian the right behaviour towards the political power?

Jesus' words referred by the Synoptic Gospels - together with the Gospel of Thomas 100: 2-3 and the fragmentary Egerton Gospel 3:1-6- project in an optic of acknowledgement of the political power and of validity of its laws and in particular of the legitimacy of the tributes due to it.³⁰⁸

Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. So, the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. **22** Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" He saw through their duplicity and said

³⁰⁸ This idea of the necessity and righteousness of submitting to the authorities also emerges from Paul's words in Romans 13: *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor [...].*

to them, "Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?". "Caesar's," they replied. He said to them, "Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent. (Luke 20: 20-26)³⁰⁹.

Hagiographic literature, with undoubtedly a particular reference to the martyrial one, actually presents a more problematic situation: in a period when the political power shows its intolerance and aversion against the Christian faith and its exponents, the limit between the acceptance and refusal of this power becomes unstable/fragile. Concerning the fiscal politics, the evangelic teaching of "Giving to Caesar" is not into question, except for rare cases and precise reasons linked to an unfair taxation; much more often, on the contrary, the edicts and laws aiming at persuading the Christian to apostatise his religion are rejected. So, is it possible to claim that, in the perspective of the redactor of hagiographic texts, Christians are allowed not to recognize the political authority? The answer is yes, if this authority aims at compelling him to renounce to his faith. The martyr, after all, is already projected in an "other" Kingdom, so that he does not acknowledge the sovereignty of the earthly kings, who are all and anyway subordinated to the Heavenly One. However that does not turn into an attempt of sedition against the established power: even if the saint does not accept the laws of the kingdoms of this world, he does not pose into question these laws absolutely speaking; he feels that he does not belong anymore to a kingdom that, using Jesus' words, "*is from another place*" (John 18: 36) and so he is no longer tied to a

³⁰⁹ Cf. also Marc 12: 13-17: *Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?". But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?". "Caesar's," they replied. Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's." And they were amazed at him; cf. Matthew 22: 15-22: Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?". But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?". "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." When they heard this, they were amazed. So, they left him and went away.*

worldly legislation which, among other things, would keep him afar from the supreme Law of the Heavenly Kingdom and from the King of Kings.³¹⁰

It comes as no surprise that, observing how the description of the non-Christian king traditionally assumes demonic traits, he is introduced as a sort of incarnation of the Devil. For instance, descriptions and similitudes associating the persecutor to a dragon or a snake are an evident reference to the traditional association snake/dragon = Devil (see e.g. Revelation 12-13).³¹¹

Though recurring in many martyr acts of various geographic origins, this difficulty in acknowledging the political power assumes a particular political value in Persia. In this region persecutions start when the Roman empire is already Christianised, or in the process of Christianisation; in a situation like this one, where the equilibrium between the two kingdoms is always unstable - as the constant invasions of territories and cities from the one or the other part testify- a subject who refuses the local religion and the religion of his king in order to follow what a text as *The Imprisoned Martyrs of Bet Zabday* eloquently defines as “*the religion of Caesar*”,³¹² is understood by the Sassanian power as a possible betrayal of the

³¹⁰ Cf. the *Acts of Babyla*, where it is said that Numerian is king because of the human sins and it is by God himself that a king's power comes (cf. Bedjan 1890, 4: 274-290). The martyr Sharbel, portrayed in his *Acts* as fearing just the King of Kings and no one of the kings of this worlds, is accused for his audacity in insulting the emperors (*The judge said: “I will take vengeance upon thee today for thy blasphemy against the gods, and thine audacity in insulting even the emperors; nor will I leave thee alone until thou offer incense to them, according to thy former custom. [...] The judge said: Thy blasphemy against the gods and thine insolence towards the emperors have brought upon thee these tortures in which now thou standest; and, if thou add further to thine insolence, afflictions which are bitterer than these shall be further added upon thee; cf. Cureton 1967: 55*). Sharbel's answer is that he cannot obey to a sovereign who orders to venerated other ones but his Creator God (*Sharbil said: I will not obey the emperors, who command that to be worshipped and honoured which is not of its own nature, God; neither is God in its nature, but is the work of him that made it; Cureton 1967: 56*)

³¹¹ It seems to me interesting to underline the meaningful shift from the snake-dragon similitude in the Coptic version to a clear and explicit identification with the Devil in Syriac; this happens for instance in the *Martyrdom of George*, where the association of the governor Dadianus with the “evil dragon” (*Coptic Martyrdom of George: Saint George answered and said, “Neither for thy sake, O evil dragon, nor for that of the governors thy companions will I speak about the righteous ones and thy dead god, but for the sake of these multitudes here present; transl. Budge 1888, 206*) is substituted by the Syriac reference to him as “Satan” (ܫܬܢܐ; see Bedjan 1890, 1: 280). By the way, similar epithets putting the persecutor in relationship with the Devil are common; see, for instance, in the *Martyrdom of Sergius and Bacchus*, the definition of Maximian and Antiochus as “*servants of Satan and disciples of the son of perdition*” (ܫܬܢܐ ܕܒܝ ܕܡܝܟܝܡܝܢ ܕܥܢܬܝܘܫܝܘܫܝܢ; Bedjan 1890, 3: 305)

³¹² Assemani 1748, I: 136 (*Martyrdom of the Captives*).

homeland; so, being a Christian turns not only into a non-observance of the national laws but also in a lese-majesty crime.

In the same Persian context, we assist to a rare case where even the imperial fiscal policy is considered questionable. The texts concerning the martyrdom of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e, bishop of Seleucia, during the reign of Šapur, narrate of Šem'on's refusal to agree to the king's peremptory request of letting the new imperial taxation be respected by his Christian followers; the bishop thinks unfair those fiscal deliberations and cannot consent to reduce his flock to poverty.³¹³

In the meantime, in the Roman area situation has changed. After the Constantine-break, Christianity has been accepted as *religio licita* and supported by Constantine's successors, except for the short parenthesis of Julian. This turns into a change in the Christian's - and, for what concerns our texts, the saint's- attitude towards a political power that is now fully acknowledged, since also this power has recognised in turn Christianity and its God. Actually, the political authority begins even to be interpreted as derived from God; from this idea derive the portraits of the Christian kings, characterised by traits to some extent soteriological; if the pagan and persecutor king was a demonic figure, the Christian sovereigns are presented as descendants and heirs of the biblical righteous kings David and Solomon and, later, as an earthly projection of God, King of Kings, since their kingdom is the image of the Heavenly one. The hagiographic texts are explicit in associating the Christian kings to the Judaic ones. Constantine, in particular, is presented as heir of the kingdoms of David and Solomon (*"And you will be valiant as David and wise as Solomon"*³¹⁴). In his biography of the emperor, Eusebius seems to go even beyond that, silently comparing him to Moses, as Claudia Rapp has convincingly demonstrated.³¹⁵ Stating that the figure of Moses was used as the model of the perfect bishop, in Late Antiquity, even the much debated reference to Constantine as "bishop of those outside" becomes clearer:³¹⁶ Eusebius *"consciously invoked Moses as the prototypical leader in whom political and spiritual authority are combined – Rapp argues. - This is of great consequence for our understanding of the two passages in which Constantine is said to be 'like' a bishop"*³¹⁷. So, comparing Constantine to Moses means moving a step further: he is to be considered not just as a king – though a righteous one, like David or Solomon -: it means claiming on his figure a convergence of both a political and a religious power/authority.

³¹³ Cf. Smith 2014: 14-22.

³¹⁴ I quote from the Pseudo-Zachariah version of the *Acts of Sylvester* (ed. Brooks 1924: 49; translation is mine), since the other Syriac redaction is problematic in this passage (cf. Di Rienzo 2016: 333, 348).

³¹⁵ Rapp 1998: 685-695.

³¹⁶ See Life of Constantine IV, 24; cf. Rapp 1998: 687.

³¹⁷ Rapp 1998: 692.

Attributions of Christological traits are not lacking. Other descriptions of Constantine that we find in texts as the *Finding of the Cross* and the *Life of Peter the Iberian* and the story of Aaron of Serugh, where the emperor is just a secondary character, present him as a Christian and victorious king; the epithet “victorious” (ܘܚܪܝܩ), which is part of the official titulature of the Emperor,³¹⁸ indeed is the most frequent qualification attributed to the emperor.³¹⁹ Also his mother Helene is presented as a holy figure, in addition to a pious believer, in the *Finding of the Cross*.³²⁰ Another sovereign who gained fame of sanctity and would be described as a full of faith emperor as well as man of deep moral virtues - beside a strong body and a clever intellect- is, not by chance, Theodosius, the maker of the full Christianisation of the empire with the proclamation of Christianity as religion of the Empire in 376.³²¹

With the conversion of the empire, power has become holy, of divine origin. From this derives the full acknowledgment of its legitimacy by the Christian people and the hagiographer, who, together with a reinterpretation of the events linked to the conversion of the reign in a salvific perspective, attributes to the king who had been the maker of the conversion a nearly messianic function; the reinterpretation of the story of Constantine in the *Acts of Sylvester* is an evident example.³²²

This being the situation in the Roman world, in the Persian area, on the contrary, Christians are still a religious minority (and so it will always be) and are persecuted; in this context, it is interesting to notice how two sovereigns, the one Christian and the other one non-Christian and persecutor, are described by the words of the same hagiographer inside the same text. We are, of course, in the Persian context and it is possible to propose two examples that put on stage or present the description in parallel of

³¹⁸ The title *victor* actually had substituted, in 325 ca., the original *invictus*, which reminded the Pagan cult of the *Sol Invictus* (“Unconquered Sun”). On the complete official titulature of Constantine, see Scarre 1995: 214.

³¹⁹ Cf. Nau 1910: 726 [318], 746 [338], 748 [340]; Drijvers 1992: 165, 171; other epithets recur, as “great” (ܘܚܪܝܩ; see the *Life of Aaron* edited by Nau 1910: 724), “Christ-loving and believing” (ܘܚܪܝܩܘܢܐ ܘܚܪܝܩܘܢܐ ܘܚܪܝܩܘܢܐ; see the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, ed. Horn and Phenix 2008: 78-79).

³²⁰ Cf. Drijvers 1992 (in particular, for the Judah Cyriacus Legend, 165-180).

³²¹ We can see here the description offered by the author of the story of Maximus and Domitius, his brothers in law and holy monks: *Ce Théodose était d'une famille égyptienne; il monta à Constantinople parce qu'il avait grande force corporelle et grande science, et il craignait Dieu. On parla de lui à l'empereur Valentinien et il le fit chef des écuries et il le chargea de gouverner tous les endroits où il y avait des chevaux appartenant à l'empereur. Quand approcha la mort de l'empereur Valentinien il souffrait en lui même de ce que ne seraient pas ses enfants qui recevraient son pouvoir impérial après lui; et il ne savait pas ce qu'ils étaient devenus et qu'il n'y avait personne pour régner après lui. (Il souffrait surtout) de ce qu'il y avait un home de la race de Julien l'impie qui attendait d'être empereur. Dieu inspira au roi d'appeler Théodose, chef des étables et de lui donner en mariage sa fille, sœur de Maxime et de Domèce, car il savait qu'il était sage et saint, et il le pris pour son successeur sur le siège impérial (cf. PO 5: 754-755).*

³²² On the *Acts of Sylvester*, their meaning and aim, see above pp. 60 (n. 170), 84 (n. 217) 97-98 (n. 246).

Šapur and Constantine: i.e. the *Martyrdom of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e* and the *Martyrdom of Ma'in of Singar*.³²³

3.2 The Persian Martyr Acts and the Description of the King: Constantine vs Šapur

The definition of Constantine as “victorious emperor”, a typical epithet in the whole tradition about him, recurs three times at least in the *Acts of Ma'in*³²⁴. Presenting the scene where the sovereign hears about the Persian persecutions against the Christians and in particular the dramatic events in which the ex-general of Šapur and neophyte Ma'in is involved, Constantine is described in his deep *pietas*, compassion, for his Christian companions and brothers in the faith persecuted in Persia, and desperation for their destiny:

When this believer saw the distress with which his Christian coreligionists were afflicted there, and saw how Mar Ma'in was mercilessly flogged, he went back and told the victorious emperor, Constantine, his master, informing him of all that he had beheld, and about Mar Ma'in. The emperor was greatly distressed, and wept, refusing any food on that day. So affected by grief was he that he spent the night fasting in sympathetic mourning for the servants of God. He fell down and lay on sackcloth and ashes, supplicating Christ for his fellow-believers, asking that they be not further afflicted³²⁵.

On the contrary, he is absolutely pitiless when he threatens to kill the children of noble Persian families, hostages at his court:

In the morning he sent for and collected together all the sons of Marzbans who were hostages with him. He had them confined and treated badly, while to the wicked king he sent missives full of angry threats, as follows: “If you do not release all the Christians you have shut up in prison, and in particular your general, Ma'in, who is greatly oppressed, I will put to death the sons of your nobles who are here with me, and I will send you their heads [...]”³²⁶

³²³ For the *Martyrdom of Šem'on Bar Šabbā'e*, the reference edition is the one by Smith (2014); Brock edited the *Martyrdom of Ma'in* (2008).

³²⁴ Cf. Brock 2008 (in particular paragraphs 47, 60, 68).

³²⁵ Brock 2008: 36.

³²⁶ *Ibid.* 36.

The blessing the saint addresses to the emperor who has saved him and the Persian Christians from martyrdom – Šapur , in facts, has renounced to persecute Christians after Constantine’s intervention- traces a portrait of what the Christian sovereign represents: heir of David and Solomon, chosen by God, as well as these Jewish kings, to guide a kingdom that God Himself had wanted:

But tell the believing emperor Constantine that “Our Lord Jesus Christ in whom you have believed and have established his faith, shall preserve you and your crown, as with king David, and will increase your fame, like Solomon’s: the islands shall hear of your reputation and shall come with their gifts and do obeisance to you; the peoples shall tremble and the nations shall fear you; and your foot shall trample upon the neck of your enemies, and your right hand shall destroy your opponents. [...]”³²⁷

The further passage is quite surprising: the “full of faith” king becomes a sort of “bishop for the West”, as acknowledged by Ma’in – who has been consecrated bishop, at this point of the narrative.

The blessed man accompanied him as far as Edessa, where that believer urged Barse, who was the bishop in Edessa, to place the holy Gospel on the head of Mar Ma’in, and he made him a bishop. (Ma’in) then embraced and kissed that believer, saying to him, “Go in peace, and greet the victorious emperor and say to him, Do not be grieved because I have not come to you: I would not have been of any use to you, seeing that you are full of the faith, as I am. Instead, I have been made your associate, for you shall preach and teach in the west, as I in the east. Nevertheless, both of you shall see me in the spirit twice, and then we shall die. Go in peace, and may the lord be always with you”.³²⁸

The reference to this kind of episcopal function of the Emperor - see also the reference to the preaching as function of both Ma’in and Constantine- is a trace that a strict interconnection was perceived between ecclesiastical-religious power and political power. Indeed, *mutatis mutandis*, this is what Eusebius did: presenting Constantine as “bishop of those outside” and constantly insisting on parallelisms with Moses, the Christian historiographer and Constantine’s biographer had built a bridge between religious and political authority, represented by the figure of the Emperor who combined in himself both powers. In the *Acts of Ma’in*, it is interesting to observe how, in Ma’in’s perspective, it is only when he – i.e. Ma’in – has become a bishop that he can consider himself as a Constantine’s peer.

³²⁷ Ibid. 42.

³²⁸ Ibid. 44. On the historicity of the bishop Barse, see Fiano 2015: 85-125.

The counterpart of the “victorious emperor” is the persecutor Šapur , described by Ma’in as “a fool man”, reason why the general refuses, in a first moment, to break bread with him.³²⁹ But if the compassion and deep faith are the feelings moving Constantine to commotion, the characteristic of the non-Christian king, in the hagiographer’s perspective, is the fear: fear of a war against the Romans that he was not ready enough to fight; fear of an insurrection by the nobles’ side once they had learned that because of the king’s obstinacy in his desire to persecute Christians he has put in danger their children, hostages at Constantinople.

While this was still happening, a horseman entered and informed the king that the believer of the emperor of the Romans had arrived. Just as the king was wanting to get up to receive him, as though God’s working, (the envoy) quickly entered – to find the holy man hung up on some wood in the middle of the town in the process of having the combs applied. He dismounted from his horse and went up and kissed his feet. He then gave orders that he be taken down from the wooden frame, whereupon he immediately gave the letter from the believing emperor to Šapur and to all the nobility of his kingdom. On reading this, Šapur shook with fear, all the more so because the believer had seen the blessed man under torture. He was also afraid lest the nobles rise up against him on account of their children and kill him because they had heard how they were in distress, (subjected) to harsh judgement.³³⁰

Šapur is a weak and coward king, not able at all to keep control over the situation, who renounces to rule his reign according to what he believes in, accepting to follow the political dispositions dictated by another sovereign, under threat of revenges. In the hagiographer’s perspective, Šapur’s political power is put into question by himself: he has not enough strength to manage it and he consents that Constantine decides for him, putting an end to persecutions as intimated by the Byzantine emperor.

If in the *Acts of Ma’in* Constantine appears on stage in person, he is just evoked in the cycle narrating the martyrdom of Šem’on Bar Šabbā’e. It is interesting to see, in this situation, why he is singled out: evidently, in order to compare him to the description of the demonic figure of Šapur . So, here the contraposition is between an “angel of peace”, Constantine, and, on the other hand, a furious lion angering against the arrogance of Šem’on who has refused to accept further taxes for the Christian people.³³¹

³²⁹ Cf. Ibid. 40.

³³⁰ Ibid. 40.

³³¹ See Smith 2014: 72.

When the authorities heard the response that Simeon gave to the second edict, they wrote and informed the king, and their report was read before the king. Then, as a vicious lion tasting precious human blood, he forged a great anger in his heart and he sharpened his molars and gnashed his teeth. He became enraged to kill, wrathful to destroy, and he roared with his mighty and terrible voice and made the earth tremble with his powerful word.³³²

3.3 Good and Evil Christian Kings. The Period of the Christological Controversies

We have seen how the problem of the relationship with the political power is no longer perceived and presented in terms of contrast when the political power is itself Christian: the authority of the Christian king/emperor is acknowledged, and even his figure and the power he represents begin to be presented as provided with a privileged closeness to divinity, sign of a political power that now is not only recognized but even considered of divine origin. The biblical sovereigns David and Solomon are the models on which the same figure of the Christian king is shaped and upon which he is invited to model himself. But being Christian does not always guarantee the acknowledgment of an authority that, at this point, should be undisputed. Beside the portraits predictably demonic that the Christian propaganda in the Roman area proposes of those emperors who were seen as traitors of the new order of things, maker, in the Christian perspective, of an attempt to come back to the past and to paganism, i.e. Julian and Valens (see *Acts of Ephrem*, 8, 37), it is more interesting to highlight the cases when to be put into question and harshly criticized is a fully and indisputably Christian power, in the figure of the emperor. This happens when Christianity experiences some inner contrasts that lead to ecclesiastical divisions, factions having different visions mostly in theological/Christological field: this is the period of the great doctrinal controversies. During the Arian schism, the anti-Arianism expressed by the Council of Nicaea, a Synod traditionally - and in Eusebius' perspective- presented as promoted by Constantine, had promoted a re-interpretation of the position of the emperor himself as filo-orthodox; nevertheless, the connections with Arianism ascribed to him and to some of his successors (let us mention the accusations of Arian-friendship moved against Constance, and the baptism of Constantine received by the hand of an Arian bishop, Eusebius of Nicomedia), lead us to think that this is actually a re-interpretation developed in a period when the anti-Arian faction had already prevailed and an "orthodoxization" of the first Christian emperor and maker of the Christianisation of the empire was needed.

Indeed, the greatest clash that affects the hagiographic literature - which, in turn, becomes partisan itself- occurs with the 5th century Christological controversies. It happens that a saint faces a Christian emperor of a Christian empire but whose authority is not recognised, since he is the exponent or the

³³² Smith 2014: 94.

supporter of a faction opposite to the one the saint represents - the hagiographer who narrates his story usually shares the same position-. In a situation like this one, the negative descriptions of Marcian and Pulcheria that we find in the pages of hagiographic works written by anti-Chalcedonian authors originate.³³³

As we have seen for Šapur and Constantine, also for Marcian we can propose a comparison with his orthodox homologue, identified by the Miaphysite literature in Theodosius II, his predecessor, supported in turn by a powerful queen, Eudocia, who, even in the ambiguities surrounding her figure, is the counterpart of the evil Pulcheria. It is possible to draw a comparison between the two characters based on two texts, the *Life of Baršawmā* and the *Life of Peter the Iberian*.³³⁴

The author of this latter work, John Rufus, presents Theodosius and Eudocia's court as deeply Christian and living in a kind of monastic way:

[Peter] came to the blessed Theodosius and was received by him affectionately and was raised and loved by him like a son. He witnessed the diligence on account of the fear of God and the love of Christ of the emperor, of Eudocia, the empress, his wife and the companion of his zeal, of the men and women serving them, and especially of the eunuchs, who are called *cubicularii*. For they were all living in the palace as in a monastery, with prayers, fasts, night services, and the other [exercises] that are pleasing to God, [and Peter] became inflamed with zeal [...].³³⁵

On the contrary, his successor Marcian, "the new Assyrian" (Isaiah 10:24), is compared to the dragon of Isaiah 27: 1 (*"In that day, the Lord will punish with his sword—his fierce, great and powerful sword—Leviathan the gliding serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will slay the monster of the sea"*)

[...] Yet the just, powerful, and longsuffering Judge was no longer willing to continue suffering such evils. He, the Lord, who strikes and heals and chastises and cures, was aroused like one from sleep, who flashed his spear and with it killed the winding dragon, - I am speaking of

³³³ For some reflections about the figure of Marcian in Chalcedonian apologetical and Miaphysite polemical writings see Burgess 1993-1994, 747-768; Scott 2010: 115-131; cf. Camplani 2013: 240-255; id. 2015: 101-102;

³³⁴ The *Life of Baršawmā* is still unedited, but a summary is available (with quotations of some passages): Nau 1913: 272-276, 379-389; id. 1914: 113-134, 278-289. Reference edition and translation of the *Life of Peter the Iberian*: Horn and Phenix 2008: 2-281.

³³⁵ Horn and Phenix 2008: 30- 31 (text and translation).

Marcian, the new Assyrian. An angel struck him on his neck [with an incurable blow as with a sword, as those who saw [it] with their eyes and were assured [of it] bore witness.³³⁶

The *Life of Barṣawmā* does not give descriptions neither of the fair emperor Theodosius nor of Marcian, guilty of having convened and then supported the deliberations of the council of Chalcedon; but indeed some eloquent episodes suggest us some hints, in order to reconstruct the idea the hagiographer wanted to propose about the relationship between the Miaphysite saint and each one of the two sovereigns;³³⁷ and a phrase that the author attributes to Barṣawmā gives a clear idea of what was the theory of the saint about the problem of respecting and acknowledging the imperial authority, and also of what concept Barṣawmā had of Marcian, compared to the “fair” emperors - though the protagonist does not give names as examples, the reference clearly points to the predecessor of Marcian who, according to the events previously narrated in the *Life*, completely trusted Barṣawmā’s deliberations in the doctrinal field-:

I am Barṣawmā, the Christian; I have not abandoned the word of truth and I have not denied Christ, as you did. I am not the enemy of the faithful kings and I am not the murderer of the renegade pontiffs. I have never killed a bishop; but Our Lord kills the ones who deny the truth.³³⁸

Barṣawmā has no respect for Marcian and qualifies him as his “enemy”: he is an apostate, from his perspective, which is also the perspective of the narrator. This allows Barṣawmā to justify the position he takes of not obeying to the emperor; an affirmation that he had not spared to go preaching far and wide.³³⁹

In a moment when Christianity is divided and there is no unity of faith, a problem that was urgent in the period of persecutions, when Christianity was *religio illicita*, re-emerges, i.e. the problem of the acknowledgment of the political power; a problem that Constantine and Theodosius, through their

³³⁶ Horn and Phenix 2008:132-133. This is not the only negative portrait by this author; in another of his work, the *Pleorophories* (text and translation by Nau 1912: 5-208, PO 8.5), he described the king this way: *L’archevêque Timothée raconta (encore) à cet home ce qui suit: “Je croyais à la même époque voir un cheval sauvage et indompté qui donnait des ruades et troublait le monde; tandis que tous fuyaient devant lui, j’eus seul le courage d’aller à sa rencontre; et, après l’avoir vaincu avec l’aide de Dieu, je le liai et je l’enfermai dans une cellule, et depuis lors il ne reparut pas”. Il s’agissait là, sans aucun doute, de l’impie Marcien et de sa mort qui arriva par suite de la colère de Dieu (pleroph./par. 67; see, for further examples, the paragraphs 2, 3, 7, 10, 12, 25, 27, 29, 36, 61, 77).*

³³⁷ Nau 1914: 126-127.

³³⁸ Nau 1914: 280; English translation is mine.

³³⁹ See Nau 1914: 133-134.

politics, had succeed to solve. There is a difference, however: now the sovereign whose authority is put into question is a Christian emperor; this does not prevent hagiography from presenting him with demonic traits. Anyway, we have to observe also that if the authority of the king in a doctrinal field can be put into question, in a fully Christianized empire this one goes at the same pace with the authority also in political matters. The principle of "Giving to Caesar", the separation between the religious and political field that could exist until the beginning of the 4th century, does not exist anymore: accusing the emperor of heresy, in a Christian kingdom considered as directly instituted by God, means dismissing the sovereign of any authority, or, to better say, de-legitimizing him towards the people - a people of believers-, asserting that disobedience is licit. Medieval and Modern History will provide us with examples of how this situation has been used to favour or disfavour this o that sovereign.

We have to remember, anyway, that this is a partisan position: not the Christian people in general "rebel" against the emperor but just a group of them - in the analysed cases, the anti-Chalcedonian. If Diocletian or, even more than him, Julian, the traitor of the faith *par excellence*, are universally recognized as negative figures, in a Christian perspective, Marcian and Pulcheria will be the victims of a negative propaganda produced at the instigation of a part of the believers, i.e. the exponents of the Miaphysite faith who refused Chalcedon.

4. Final Considerations

This chapter aimed at investigating how the Holiness-Power topic develops through and throughout the narratives; it was based on the analysis of the hagiographic text as single and independent work, taking apart their connections and presence in collections. This means that my aim was to look at the text as independent element, as product of an authorial intent. Now, we have seen that the definition of a hagiographic text as “authorial product” in strict sense is problematic: actually, if by the term “authoriality” we mean the original creative instance of a hagiographer, hagiography can hardly be defined as an authorial product. Its originality is, in fact, conditioned:

- in the choice of the (kind of) saint to put on stage, by the **historical** context of production;
- in the way in which the holiness-power topic is developed throughout the narrative(s), by the **cultural** context of production (see the recourse to *topoi* and recurrent features and motifs).

So, I originally expected to deal with two aims, reflecting the two perspectives:

- 1) of the authorial construction of the single narrative;
- 2) of the development/evolution of the hagiographic genre over the centuries.

Actually, considering the authoriality- problem presented just above, the second aim has prevailed on the first one. Among the analysed texts and collections, the exception is represented by (rare) cases where the creative instance of the author is clear and emerges in particular not so much in the narrative structure or features, but rather in his aim, which is precise and exclusive -i.e. not shared with general hagiographic purposes-: I mean, in particular, among others, those cases (mentioned at the beginning of the chapter) where hagiography aims at a reworking of history, as e.g. the *Acts of Sylvester*.

The analysis was developed at two narrative levels: a) the choice of the sanctity to portray – and the connected question about how, i.e. according to what kinds of features and motifs, each kind of saint/ holiness is put on stage in relation with the political power, and b) the narrative structure of the tale as the way through which the hagiographer represents the Holiness-Power relationship.

Concerning the point (a) (choice of the saint), the evolution of the model of holiness to portray is linked to the required “exemplarity” in the context of production and reception of hagiography; this demonstrates a conditioning by the historical context. According to this observation, we assist, in the hagiography produced in the West (Latin and Greek world), to a passage from the martyr to the monk as protagonist of the tale. Conversely, in the Syriac worlds the situation is much more complicated and far to be as linear as in the so-called classic traditions. The Syriac tradition, indeed, is not unitarian; we can identify two different lines, the Western Syriac and the Eastern Syriac one; hagiography lives in each of these areas a different evolution. The Western Syriac tradition knows at first a martyr literature based on translated texts, and, more or less in parallel, a spread of monastic literature; the production of martyrdoms also in this area is later. The tradition who developed in the Persian Empire started

producing originally Syriac martyrdoms in the 5th or 6th century, and continued until the end of the Sassanian period, so that a disappearance of the martyr to leave the place to the monk does not occur. Martyr literature is tightly tied to the representation of the Holiness-Power relationship: the topic is present, by definition, in a kind of narratives portraying the holy martyr facing the persecutor, a judge, a king, anyway a representative of power. Regarding the way how the topic is staged, some case studies have been proposed. In particular, in the case of Miles, I have considered the context/episode of the trial; parallels with the trial undergone by Jesus and the biblical antecedent of the Maccabee brothers, seen as sort of martyrs *ante litteram*, and a suggested possible reference to the evangelic episode of the temptations in the desert, have been proposed. But the *Acts of Miles* offer further points of interest, concerning the sarcastic attitude towards the persecutor and the difficult relationship with the ecclesiastical power, represented by the bishop Papa bar Aggai. The martyr's attitude is characterized by the despise -of the king and of his own life-, the absence of fear, the firmness and audacity. According to the antinomy strength-weakness, all these features are taken to extremes in the figures of the martyr children and women. The relationship with the power assumes a more complex form when the martyr comes from a noble family, as we have seen for Badmā and Barhadbešabbā; the conversion of the noble, in fact, represents a risk for political authority: the noble is himself expression of a kind power; so, his conversion usually turns into a fight between two powers, which could betray a historical echo. The exemplarity of the punishment of the noble martyr can be interpreted as a consequence of that. The idea of a superiority of the "last ones" is central in the context of the *Acts of Christopher*, the story of a monster, a rejected and scary person, chosen by God to become His soldier and to guide a newly Christian army to the Heavenly reward.

If the martyr literature as a whole, by definition, is expression of the Holiness-Power relationship, this does not apply in the case of monastic literature. Here, the relation with the power recurs exclusively in specific (kinds of) situations. The kind of political power the saint faces -i.e. he has to deal with- has changed: it is a Christian power, by now. Even the kind of relationship established between the two parts can be different; the saint can be presented as a supporter or helper of the political exponent, or even as instrument of his power and *trait d'union* with the divine. This, anyway, does not mean that the fight with the power which was typical of martyr texts does not recur also in monastic literature - which means that the relationship with a Christian power is not always positive-: I think in particular to polemical-hagiographical texts originated in time of Christological controversies and narrating the conflict between the holy monk, expression of the Christian orthodoxy, and sovereigns considered as heretic. So, with the advent of monastic literature, we assist to a change in the quantity of texts staging the relationship between the saint and the Power; the topic recurs in three kinds of situations, in particular:

- stories portraying noble monks, for which the observations proposed concerning the noble martyr are also valid;

- stories portraying the monk in relation to a Christian king, as his helper/supporter (see also the cases of the monk-queen relationship);
- stories portraying the monk facing the heretic king, as his adversary.

Coming to the structure of the narrative, the point (b), the different typologies of relationship are represented through:

- Static narratives or interactions, where there is no evolution in the Holiness-Power relationship. This happens when the saint and the exponent of power belong to the same faction since the beginning, or when they are the same personage (see the holy noble men);
- Dynamic/dialectic narratives, when the saint and the mighty man start from different positions and their relationship is expressed through a dialectic between the parts, in a kind of negotiation of the positions. The dialectic evolution, which makes the narration by definition dynamic, always concerns the plot; but this does not necessarily imply a change in the relationship between the holy and the mighty man. That means, for instance, that a positive outcome in the two parts dialectic (e.g. the conversion of the persecutor), does not inevitably imply a positive ending of the story itself, which can actually end, for instance, with the death of the protagonist.
- Twofold dialectic interaction, where the Holiness-Power relationship is accompanied by a second kind of relationship, i.e. a relationship between two kinds or levels of powers; I have proposed two examples of this interaction: cases dealing with the presence of two sovereigns who respectively represent a Christian and a non-Christian power; cases of contrast between local and central power, recognized in the mentioned episode of the noble apostate executioner.

The attitude of the Christian towards the power is based upon the evangelical principle of “Giving to Caesar”, which means an acknowledgment of the political power and its legitimacy. In a period of persecutions one assists to a double attitude: on one side, the respect for the authority and the acceptance of the legitimacy of the general and particularly fiscal policy – with the meaningful difference represented by the case of Šem’on Bar Šabbā’ē and the problem of taxation in the Persian Empire-; on the other side, the refusal of the authority of the sovereign who compels to commit apostasy. This does not turn into a desire of uprising against the imperial laws; it rather means an affirmation of the superiority of another kingdom, the Heavenly one, and of its law: it is to this superior kingdom that the saint truly belongs.

With the advent of Christianity as religion of the Empire, hagiography happens to face the question of portraying a Christianized political power, often showing it in parallel and in relation with the non-Christian power. Here the Christological and soteriological traits of the Christian king emerge – first of all, in the figure of Constantine-, often in comparison with the demonic characteristic of the non-Christian counterpart (see the proposed cases of Constantine and Šapur in the *Acts of Ma’in* and in the *Acts of Šem’on Bar Šabbā’ē*).

During the time of the Christological controversies, one observes something similar happening in the description of two Christian powers, the one considered as heretic, the other one presented as orthodox. In the description of the heretic Christian emperor, there recur features that were typical of the representation of the persecutor king. Thus, hagiography has to face the problem of the (lack of) acknowledgement of a political power that is Christian and yet is considered as heretical; the problem of the acknowledgement was actually typical of the persecutions' period; it now re-emerges with two innovations: what it is challenged now is a Christian power; this challenging attitude is a partisan position which is not shared by all Christians.

CONCLUSIONS

In Part I, my main aim was to investigate the Holiness-Power topic in hagiography, looking at it through its presence in the hagiographic collections in Syriac; I was, indeed, persuaded that the hagiographic text can “say something” to us not only if considered as a stand-alone element, but also if analysed in the context of the collections whence it belongs. Syriac hagiographic collections cannot be meant as mere compilation works; they are authorial works, since we observe the absolute originality of each of them. Each collection is a *unicum*, and so, the intent of the compiler or editor has to be investigated in due manner; we can trace this intent looking at the structure of the collection, at the choice and order of the texts.

I have taken into account and analysed, on the one hand, the choice of the texts to convey and, by consequence, of the typologies of holiness worthy of being offered as examples to the users; on the other hand, the structure of the collection, the order of the texts, which could reveal, to a careful consideration, a specific will or aim of the compiler/collector, a message the author/editor wanted to convey.

Among the possible topics emerging from the collections of hagiographies, I perceived the great prospects of interest that an analysis of the relationship with the political power (what I called, the Holiness-Power topic) could offer. Indeed, this topic mirrors the historical rapport between two kinds of authorities - the religious and the secular power - through a hagiographical reworking. Political and religious power – where with religious we can, actually, mean both ecclesiastical and divine - met, faced each other, intersected, all along the History, in various formulations: a religious power facing an hostile political authority; a religious (often ecclesiastical) power in dialogue with a Christianised political power and legitimating it, as wanted by God; a religious power refusing the authority of a Christian political power considered illegitimate as heretic; and so on.

The Holiness-Power relationship emerges, on the one side, from the contents of single texts, and, on the other one, in the structure of the collections and in the selection of the works to gather. According to this observation, I have looked at the topic from two different but complementary perspectives: the hagiographic collections (analysed in I.1) and, more generally, the hagiographic literature (analysed in I.2, where I have offered an overview of how the narratives present the topic).

Examining the single narratives and hagiography as literary genre, it emerges that the relationship between holy men and political representatives is expressed through different “dialectics”, depending on whether the two parties, the saint and the exponent of power, share or not the same ideological/religious position.³⁴⁰ The holy man can be represented as symbol of the opposition to an evil

³⁴⁰ Cf. Kosinski 2016: 235-239.

authority considered unworthy of his own power, as a pagan (see e.g. the martyr literature) or as heretic (see e.g. the analysed context of the Christological controversies). On the other hand, the holy man can be portrayed as protector and patron of the representative of power; a figure, to quote Kosinski, “*to whose spiritual guidance the representative should submit*”³⁴¹, having the right to admonish and exhort the authority.

Looking at the collections, as I have tried to demonstrate, their structure and the texts they contain often reveal something about the public they were originally addressed. The audience can be identified by a pedagogical aim; for instance, a prevalence of monastic texts would suggest a monastic public as primary recipient of the collection, as observed e.g. for the manuscript Par Syr 234; an insistence on female figures, on the other hand, as observed for BL Add 14649, suggests looking at a female monastic milieu. A reference to the audience can be even searched in what I would call a “statement of identity” and/or profession of faith: I am thinking to the relevant presence of Miaphysite texts noticed in all the Area 2 manuscripts – and in particular BL Add 12174 and Damascus 12/17-18, where I have also highlighted a reconstructed or reworked chain of continuity from the origin of Christianity to the tradition represented by exponents of the Syriac-Orthodox Church. Indeed, the same statement of identity emerges also in the contents and structure of the codex BL Add 14644, where, instead of the element related to the Christological debate, the identity is represented by the centrality of Edessa as main place of development of the Christian religion.

How the Holiness-Power topic develops in and through the collections? The question allows two series of answers/considerations:

a) Looking at the contents - i.e. at the texts the collections contain -, the choice of the model of sanctity to convey is reflected at the level of the collector’s choice, in the selection of the texts to gather. Beside the in-depth study on the reasons and aims behind each single collection proposed in Part I.1, generally, a shift of attention from the martyr to the monk has been observed.

This is true for the hagiographic text in its first stage of life - i.e. the production - (analysed in I.2.2): in a time of peace of the Church in the West, of tolerance in the East, where Christianity is not State religion, the bloody martyrdom cannot be the only kind of sanctity to which conform, anymore. From that derives the choice of presenting narratives having monks as protagonists. This also reflects a historical reality, where monastic places spread all over the *oecumene*, solitary men chose to live in the desert, as happens

³⁴¹ Kosinski 2016: 235.

in Egypt or Palestine for instance, attracting the attention of people who hope for a miracle or simply desire to meet those men of God; monastic communities of coenobites start to develop.³⁴²

On the other hand, this is also true for the hagiographic collections: after a period of prevalence of martyr texts, we assist to a gradual emerging and then preponderance of monastic literature within the collected works. The trend is actually different from the one observed concerning the *production* of texts: even when martyrdom accounts are not produced anymore - except for rare examples -, the *transmission* of martyr literature is not interrupted and is not (ever) completely replaced by monks' stories. The uninterrupted transmission of martyr stories is hint of a desire to keep the memory of the first saints of the Church, even in a time when Christians are no longer persecuted. On the other hand, the functionality of the monastic texts appears as stronger than the martyrdoms' one, at this time: a monastic story is supposed to be far more useful for the reader than a martyr story. The selection is also conditioned and, in some way, dictated by its supposed receivers; they have to be searched in the monastic world, so that the exemplarity of the holy monk is seen as a point of arrival: he is the goal, the example the other monks have to follow. Furthermore, the recurring presence of narratives portraying the relationship between holy exponents of the ecclesiastical and especially monastic world and representatives of political power, could indicate an interest in presenting what was to be considered the *right* relationship between the Christian part and the sovereign(s). To be a positive one, this relationship is meant to be based on a reciprocal acknowledgment: the acknowledgment of the political authority, on the one side; the acknowledgment of the spiritual authority of the holy monk and/or bishop, on the other one. The author - and/or the collector - promotes these ideas through proposing both positive and negative examples.

b) Looking at the place and time of composition - i.e. at the areas -, this recurring of topics related to the relationship with power, developed in various ways, could even mirror the historical situation the compiler of the collection or the producer lived. It is particularly interesting to look, for instance at the historical context of production of the Area 2 manuscripts, whose peculiarity is the communal editorial intent behind them, ascribable to Michael the Syrian. Chief of the Syriac-Orthodox Church at Melitene, in the 12th century, Michael lives the troubled story of a city which was the capital of one of the two principalities ruled by the Danishmend dynasty, to be later incorporated in the Sultanate of Rûm. So, the

³⁴² As a further hint of this perception of the living holy monk or solitary as the new link between the common man and the divine, pilgrimages to the places where they live start, beside the traditional ones to the Holy Land or to visit the relics of apostles and martyrs (about the pilgrimage to holy places and to relics, see Lugaresi 2000: 19-50; Otranto 1999: 239-256; id. 2005: 99-117; Aulisa 2015: 451-458. On pilgrimages in the East, I refer to Maraval 1985; concerning, on the other hand, the new travels to meet holy people/ monks, see at least two contributions by Frank, 1997: 191-195 and, in particular, id. 2000).

interest of the *editor* Michael in texts portraying the relationship with the political power, reflects the relationship that the *bishop* Michael established with the mighty during his episcopal career; the excellent rapports with the lords of the Crusade kingdoms he met in Jerusalem and Antioch, the good relationship with the sultan Kilij Arslan II he met in Melitene in 1182, the doctrinal divergences with the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Comnenos, whose attempt to reunite the Churches Michael refused, in the name of the superiority and rightness of the Miaphysite creed. We can see a direct mirroring of this last difficult rapport, for instance, in the figure of Barṣawmā portrayed facing the Chalcedonian emperors. After all, the centrality in the Area 2 collections of the monastery of Barṣawmā, which was the patriarchal seat since the 11th century, of his venerated founder and related figures, could reflect some other circumstances. I mean not only the fact that Michael himself grew up there and was there archimandrite, but also a sort of reaction to two troublesome moments of Michael's patriarchate: first, he had to face the monks of the same monastery, between 1171 and 1176; then a group of bishops who came to consecrate, in 1180, in Amid, another patriarch, Theodore bar Wahbon. This schism lasted thirteen years and ended with the death of Theodore; it had consequences even in the relationship with the political power: Michael was arrested twice, by order of the prefect of Mardin and then by the emir of Mosul. To that, one has to add the desire of claiming the rightness of the Miaphysite creed that, as I have already observed, emerges either from the choice of the texts to collect and from their positioning in the collection.

As I said above, the Holiness-Power theme emerging from collections and hagiographic narrations, mirrors historical situations and circumstances. Actually, that translates into an attempt to re-write and rework the history; this attempt emerges by the point of view of contents – so, of the single texts - and by the point of view of the collections and their structure. An example of the first case, beside the *Teaching of Addai* whose definition as hagiography is debated, are the *Acts of Sylvester*. Here the reworking of the relationship between the episcopate of Rome (Sylvester) and the Roman Empire (Constantine) has had not only a great success but also relevant historical consequences: on the basis of the legendary Sylvestrian baptism of Constantine the false *Donation of Constantine* has been created; this forgery, considered authentic until the Humanistic Age, has had in turn repercussions on the entire Medieval history: the revindications and reasons of the temporal power of the Church of Rome were based on it.³⁴³

At the level of the collections, the most evident example of a reworking of the historical traditions in a “partisan” perspective, among the analysed manuscripts, is represented by the BL Add 14644. In this collection, the centrality of Edessa, the claimed antecedence, greatest antiquity and superiority of the

³⁴³ On the *Acts of Sylvester* and the legend of the Sylvestrian baptism of Constantine as the basis for the Donation of Constantine, see my forthcoming contribution (Di Rienzo 2019a?), to which I also refer for further bibliography.

Edessene Christianity compared to the ancient traditions of Rome and Antioch does not only emerge from the selection of texts but also from the structure of the collection, where the tight bond with Rome and Antioch that the collector claims for Edessa can be even interpreted as in polemical anti-Constantinopolitan function: he seems to propose a direct link Edessa – Antioch - Rome, without any intermediary, and with Edessa in place of honour.

PART II

TEXTS

1. Original Syriac Hagiographies: the *Persian Martyr Acts*

I speak, though I am not able to. I narrate, though I am not adequate.

And my soul is sad not to be able to magnify the magnificence of the magnificent ones in their glory.

And my mind is weary not to be able to glorify the glory of the glorious ones in their magnificence.

Through these words, the author of the *Acts of Miles* affirms his inability to express the greatness of the men whose dramatic stories he is about to write: the Persian martyrs. Indeed, the prologue of the *Acts of Miles* could perfectly fit as a preface for the whole *corpus* of the so-called Persian Martyr Acts.³⁴⁴ By this name we mean a series of hagiographical-martyrial texts, different in length, form and style, but similar in their being some more or less faithful accounts on the Syriac Christian martyrs persecuted in the Persian empire from the late 3rd to the 8th century. According to the documents we have the first Persian martyrs have been persecuted under Bahram II (274-293)³⁴⁵; the last ones are attested during the reign of Kosroe II (d. 628).³⁴⁶

Stephanus Evodius Assemani (1711-1782) was the first “modern” scholar who paid special attention to this kind of texts and in particular to the two Vatican manuscripts 160 and 161 which preserve two important and considerable collections of Persian Martyr Acts.³⁴⁷

The literary aspect and value of these hagiographies are various: some are just little more than brief lists of names; some others are short or more literary developed accounts, maybe written on the basis of preexistent oral material; finally, we have some later and mainly legendary narrations.

Several decades ago, Paul Devos proposed a categorization of the Acts according to their historical value; he identified three groups, actually corresponding also to three periods of the Sasanian age: the historical passions, relating the persecutions the Christians of Persia underwent under the reigns of

³⁴⁴ A general overview can be found in the forthcoming article by Adam Becker on the *Invention of the Persian Martyr Acts* (Becker 2019?); I thank the author for sharing this contribution before its publication.

³⁴⁵ See, e.g. the case of Candida, whose martyrdom has been published by Brock (1978)

³⁴⁶ E.g. George (Mihramgushnasp, BHO 323), Christina (Yazdoy, BHO 187), Isho‘abran (BHO 451). Cf. C. Jullien 2012: 129-130. For an overview on the extant Persian Martyr Acts, in Syriac and/or other languages, see the essential “Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts” Sebastian Brock provides as Appendix to his edition of the *History of the Holy Mar Ma‘in* (Brock 2009: 77-125).

³⁴⁷ On the Vatican collections preserved in the mss Syriac 160 and 161, see above, pp. 31-40.

Kosroe I (531-579) and Kosroe II (590-628); the narrative passions, on the martyrs under Yazdegard II (438-457); the so-called novelistic passions of the martyrs persecuted by Šapur II (309-379)³⁴⁸. It is to this last-mentioned group of martyrdoms that the three Acts I will present in edition and translation in the following pages belong.

Though we usually refer to the Persian Martyr Acts as a sort of *corpus* of hagiographies, we have to remind that they are not to be considered as the outcome of a single, precise editorial project; they are rather the result of independent authorships operating in different periods. In any case, this does not prevent us from noticing that some texts constitute a coherent cycle, usually introduced by a general prologue.³⁴⁹

The redaction of some of the Acts of the martyrs persecuted during the reign of Šapur II should have been done by the beginning of the 5th century; the late antique Greek historian Sozomen knows and refers to texts related to the story of some Persian Martyrs.³⁵⁰ As Sozomen completed the redaction of his *Ecclesiastical History* around 443 CE, we should suppose that some accounts on Šapur's martyrs already existed by that date. By 450 CE also some of the Martyrdoms under Yazdegard I (399-420) and Bahram V (421-438) had been redacted, given the reference to them we find in the *Ecclesiastical History* by Theodoret of Cyrus dated to the middle of the fifth century.³⁵¹

³⁴⁸ Devos 1966: 213-225. Though the novelistic and legendary element is strong in this group of Acts, it has been noticed nonetheless that the Persian Martyr texts are our main source of information for the period of the persecutions under Šapur, begun in 344. This observation on the importance of the Acts as historical source also applies to the 6th-century text on the Martyrs of Najran (cf. Brock 2008: 185). The presence of unhistorical elements within these narratives is sometimes due to the reworking some of the texts have undergone; see e.g. the *Martyrdom of Pusai*: it narrates events of the 4th c., it probably circulated in some form by the 5th c., but it assumed the form it has today in the 6th c. (cf. Wiessner 1967: 231-251). The legendary element is sometimes linked to the fact that some Passions were composed centuries after Šapur's persecution. This is, for instance, the case of the *History of the Holy Mar Ma'in*: the story takes place under the reign of Šapur, but Brock has demonstrated that it was composed only in the 6th century and not in the Persian area, but in the Roman Empire (Brock 2009: 5). The same situation applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the *History of Mar Qardagh* which recounts events of the 4th century but, as Joel Walker has pointed out, can be considered as a "window into the cultural world of the 7th c. Iraq" and does not show any -or few- details about the 4th c. (Walker 2006: 1). Cf. Smith 2012: 16-18.

³⁴⁹ Wiessner (1967), for instance, identifies two groups or families of texts, grouped on the basis of the link with a location – which can be interpreted at the same time as the place of composition of the texts –, respectively Seleucia-Ctesiphon and Karka d-Ladan, in the Huzistan, and Arbela and the Adiabene region (further dividing the second family in three groups).

³⁵⁰ Sozomen HE II: 9-14

³⁵¹ Theodoret HE V:38

Assemani imagines the group of texts relating martyrdoms occurred under Šapur II as the work of a single hand, namely that of the bishop of Maipherqat, Marutha.³⁵² Marutha had collected in his city the relics of some Persian martyrs, so to gain to the town the name of Martyropolis. Coming back from the Synod of Seleucia, in 410, and from an embassy at the court of Yazdegard I, the bishop of Maipherqat probably wrote down a list of Persian Martyrs in a codex already containing a calendar of saints. In the list, the martyrs are catalogued according to their ecclesiastical rank, where applicable. The list is preserved in a manuscript copied in Edessa in 411 and now at the British Library, the BL Add 12150.³⁵³ Concerning the hypothesis of Marutha as author of the Acts of Persian Martyrs under Šapur, this identification actually has no basis, as Wiessner demonstrated.³⁵⁴ The hypothesis indeed is only based on a passage of the *Catalogue* of 'Abdišô' of Nisibis. The 13th-14th century *Catalogue* of 'Abdišô' presents Marutha as the author of a book of Persian Martyr Passions.³⁵⁵

Most part of the Acts we know concerns martyrs persecuted by Šapur II (309-379); based on Brock's repertoire, for this period, forty-one passions have survived, two of which are lost in Syriac but preserved respectively in Greek and Armenian³⁵⁶. For the 3rd century reign of Bahram II (274-293), just a passion is attested, i.e. that of Candida.³⁵⁷ Eight Martyrdoms of which we have accounts are placed during the age of Yazdgard I (399-420) and Bahram V (420-438). Five texts relate of martyrs under Yazdgard II (438-457). Two Passions narrates of episodes to be placed at the end of the 5th century, without providing dating. For the reign of Kosroe I (531-579) we have four Martyr Acts, of which one in Greek and another one in Armenian and Georgian.³⁵⁸ Finally, five accounts relate of martyrs persecuted

³⁵² Assemani and Assemani 1759: 324

³⁵³ The last folio of the codex is unfortunately very badly torn and some of the names are lost; three small fragments have been identified at Deir al-Surian, where the manuscript was preserved before its moving to London. Cf. Brock (2008: 186).

³⁵⁴ Wiessner 1967: 7-39;

³⁵⁵ See Assemani 1719-1728: 73; id. 1748: xlvi; cf. Tisserant 1928: 146. Already Peeters (1938: 121) and Vööbus (1918: 217-213) were not persuaded of the rightness of the attribution of the whole corpus of Acts under Šapur to Marutha; contrarily, van Esbroeck (1977b: 178-179) was inclined to accept the hypothesis in some way. The Christian- Arabic historiographers Mari, 'Amr, Sliba and the *Chronicle of Seert* identify the author of some Martyr Acts to the Eastern patriarch Ahha (410-414); cf. Jullien 2012: 131-132

³⁵⁶ The *Acts of Ia* are preserved just in Greek; the *Acts* of Bardišâ and of Sergius and Martyrius are preserved in Armenian

³⁵⁷ Cf. Brock 1978: 167-181

³⁵⁸ In Greek, the *Martyrdom of Širin*; in Armenian and Georgian, the *Martyrdom of Makhoz-Yazdbozd*

by Kosroe II (590-628), one of which has survived in its Georgian version,³⁵⁹ and another in Greek and Latin.³⁶⁰

From the survey presented above, an element emerges which is worthy to be noticed, i.e. the early translation of the Persian Martyr Acts in other languages. Translations of the Acts in Greek began in the 5th century. In the same epoch, some of the Acts have been translated in Armenian. The Armenian translations are done on the basis of the Syriac original and are due to the activity of Abraham the Confessor.³⁶¹

The surviving of some Persian Martyr Acts in languages such as Armenian, Georgian, Greek, and Latin, demonstrates, on the one side, the interest that other Christian traditions had in this kind of hagiographic texts, specifically Syriac, and on the other side, the importance of these translations for the textual transmission, as they sometimes preserve works otherwise lost in Syriac.

The earliest manuscripts containing Persian Martyr Acts date to the 5th- 6th century:

- the *Martyrdom of Miles* is included in the 5th c. BL Add 17204;
- the *Martyrdom of Ya'qub the Cut-Up* appears in the 5th or 6th c. BL Add 14644;
- the *Martyrdom of Candida* is contained in the 6th c. BL Add 12142;
- the 6th c. BL Add 14654 contains a collection of Persian Martyr Acts;
- another collection is included in the Vatican Syr. 160, whose dating to the 6th century, for the part concerning the Acts of Eastern Martyrs, is uncertain.³⁶²

If the first three mentioned manuscripts contain just isolated texts of Persian Martyr Acts, the last two contain large collections. In particular, the Add 14654 is the first available big collection of hagiographic texts and it does not contain exclusively Persian Martyr Acts. The manuscript may have been produced in Edessa, as the presence of some texts like the *Teaching of Addai* suggests.³⁶³

³⁵⁹ I.e. Golinduš

³⁶⁰ I.e. Anastasius (Mogundat)

³⁶¹ On Abraham the Confessor (5th c.) and his activity of translator (Syriac-Armenian), see Van Esbroeck 1977, commentary to Ter Petrossian's volume on the martyr texts translated by Abraham (Ter Petrossian 1976). Abraham probably got in touch with those texts during his deportation in the Beth Aramaye and then in the Khorasan, according to the Armenian Synaxarium; see Bayan (ed.) 1922: 183-183

³⁶² This datation has been proposed by Brock; on this manuscript, see above, p. 31.

³⁶³ BL Add 14654 contains all the three Persian Martyr Acts that I will present in text and translation in the following pages- i. e. the Martyrdoms of Barhadbešabbā, of Badmā and of Miles and his companions.

Concerning the Vatican Syr. 160 – already object of a detailed description in Part I.1- it proposes a precise distinction between Persian (i.e. Eastern) and Western Martyrs (with a particular reference to a group of Palestinian Martyrs).

As Adam Becker suggests, in the Islamic period we assist to “a shift from the spatial horizontal understanding of martyrdom in the post-Constantinian period as something that happens still over there in Persia [...] to a vertical temporal relation where pagan Rome and Zoroastrian Persia are both something of the past”.³⁶⁴ Starting from the seventh century, the Persian Martyr Acts are understood as part of an age of the martyrs which is, at this point, past and reimagined; in this time a few new Passions (as the *History of ‘Abdā da-Mšīha*) are redacted, but, in parallel, new collections of Martyrdoms are produced: the collection preserved in the Vatican Syr 161 dates, for instance, to the the 9th-10th century.

Among the manuscripts preserving collections of Persian Martyr Acts, another one has to be mentioned: i.e. the lost Diyarbakir 96. This 11th or 12th century manuscript, originally kept in the Church of Mar Pethion in Diyarbakir, get lost in 1915, at the same time when the Chaldean bishop of Siirt and Syriac scholar, Addai Scher, was killed.³⁶⁵ Fortunately, a copy of the collection, written in 1882, survived in two Berlin-manuscripts, Or. Oct. 1256- 1257.³⁶⁶

In the following pages, I will present three Martyrdoms selected among the Persian Martyr Acts survived in Syriac, the original language of redaction. The three, namely the *Acts of Barhadbešabbā*, the *Acts of Badmā* and the *Acts of Miles, Aboursām and Sinay*, all relate events occurred at the time of Šapur II. The choice of these texts, among the numerous ones being worthy of attention, was basically guided by a practical consideration: we are dealing with texts whose translation in Modern languages is still unavailable or, if available, is still based on the edition provided by Paul Bedjan; Bedjan’s volumes are, to be sure, a fundamental work, but questionable under many methodological aspects that could be considered satisfactory in the 1890s but no longer correspond to the parameters of the more recent practice of critical edition.

The Martyrdom of Badmā and that of Barhadbešabbā introduce us to two different situations, even at a level of stylistic choices. The *Martyrdom of Barhadbešabbā* has been interpreted as a text belonging to a sub-group of Martyr Acts related to the Adiabene region and to the city of Arbela (Erbil), presenting a well identifiable structure of short Passion and providing both the name of the governor-persecutor and the exact year when the martyrdom took place³⁶⁷. The *Acts of Badmā*, on the contrary, even in their

³⁶⁴ Becker 2019? (*Invention of the Persian Martyr Acts*)

³⁶⁵ Some short notes on the figure and life of Addai Scher in GEDSH: 361-362

³⁶⁶ Assfalg 1963 : 53-59; cf. Jullien, *Histoire* (édition), xvii-xxii.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Wiessner 1967; Becker 2019?

shortness, show a more interesting structure under a literary-narrative respect, in particular, the presence of a kind of flashback presenting the story of the martyr-to-be before his capture. An independent case is that of the *Acts of Miles*, a much more articulated and complex text, which is of fundamental importance also for the history of the Church of the East.

Last but not least, the three texts are valuable and, at the same time, variegated expressions of the Holiness-Power topic I have addressed in the first part: Badmā and Miles share the characteristic of being high-born men;³⁶⁸ Badmā and Barhadbešabbā are both killed by a noble Christian executioner;³⁶⁹ the story of Miles actually adds a further perspective, staging not only the relationship with the political but also with the ecclesiastical power, narrating a dispute between the protagonist Miles, bishop of Šuš, and the bishop of Selucia, Papa bar Aggai, in an assembly of bishops which has been later interpreted as the first Synod of the Church of the East.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ See below, pp. 162-172 (Badmā), p. 173-208 (Miles)

³⁶⁹ See above, on the apostate executioner, pp. 100, 115-117.

³⁷⁰ On dispute between Miles and Papa see above, pp. 109- 110, 112-114, and below, p. 201; cf. also Di Rienzo 2017.

1.1 Acts of Barḥadbešabba (BHO 138 - BHSE 281)

1.1.1 *The Tradition*

The very short *Acts of Barḥadbešabba* (or Barḥabešabba) narrate the martyrdom of a deacon of Arbela condemned during the persecution of Šapur II.³⁷¹

According to the Acts, the martyrdom took place in the city of Ḥazza, near Arbela, in the 15th year of the persecution (355 CE), on the 20th of the lunar month of Tammuz (15 July).

A first edition of the text by Assemani is available in his *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium*:³⁷² Assemani's edition is based on the Vatican Syriac manuscript 160; the same editor also provides a Latin translation of the Acts. A 19th century edition by Bedjan in *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* is done on the basis of a different manuscript, the Berlin Königliche Bibliothek or. Oct. 1256 (dated 1882), a copy of a more ancient and now lost codex, Diyarbakir 96.³⁷³

In his fundamental work on the Persian Martyr Acts, Wiessner places the *Acts of Barḥabešabba* in the first of three groups of martyrs linked to the Adiabene region and to the city of Arbela, modern-day Erbil, in Northern Iraq. In particular, the texts concerned are those about the martyrs John of Arbela, Abraham, Ḥnanya, Jacob and Mary, the mentioned Barḥadbešabba and Jacob and Azad.³⁷⁴ Wiessner theorizes that the whole *corpus* of Adiabene texts derive from earlier diptych lists, probably of clerical martyrs. The Acts should have been redacted upon the data provided by these lists.

³⁷¹ Fiey 2004: 75 (entry 75); Labourt 1904: 76; Peeters 1925: 276-277; Bardy in DHGE VI: 790. The identification of the martyr with the Barsabas commemorated in the Byzantine Synaxarium on the 11th of December (cf. Synax. Constantinop. c. 304) is doubtful.

³⁷² Assemani 1748 I: 129-130. For a French translation based on Assemani's Latin text, see LaGrange 1852: 102-103

³⁷³ On the uncertain dating of Diyarbakir 96, cf. Bedjan (AMS 2: vii), who suggests the 7th-8th century; a different opinion is expressed by Addai Scher, who suggests dating the codex to the 11th-12th century (Scher 1907: 401). Bedjan's edition can be found in Bedjan 1890, II: 314-316

³⁷⁴ See Wiessner 1967: in particular, 199-288. According to Wiessner, to a second Arbela group belong the *Acts of Aitallaha and Hophsai* and *Teqlā and her companions*; the third group actually includes only the *Acts of 'Aqebšmā*. This last text is interesting for its reference to Persia as "the land of the East", which seems to suggest it could have been composed not in Persia but in the Roman Empire (maybe in Edessa, as Becker suggests; cf. Becker 2019?)

1.1.2 *The Contents*

1. In the 15th year of the persecutions, the deacon Barḥabešabba is seized by the satrap Šabur Tamšabur who wants to persuade him to worship the fire and the water and drink the blood.

2. Having refused, B. is beheaded by the Christian apostate noble lord of Taḥal, a village in the Beth Garmai. The martyrdom takes place in the village of Ḥazzā, near Arbela.

3. The executioner is divinely punished, he falls ill and dies. Two sons of the covenants try to corrupt the guards who are keeping the corpse of B., in order to take the body of the martyr. As they do not succeed, the religious men strike them harshly and take the relics.

1.1.3 *The Edition*

The present edition is based on the following witnesses:³⁷⁵

L	London, British Library Add. 14654, f. 12v-13v (mutilated)	5 th -6 th c. ³⁷⁶
V	Vatican Syr. 160, f. 109 r/v	uncertain date (6 th c.) ³⁷⁷

To these manuscript witnesses, one should add the Bedjan edition of the text (B), based on the codex Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek, or. Oct. 1256 (Assfalg 26; copy of ms Diyarbakir 96), p. 520-523.³⁷⁸

I propose a negative apparatus, in note.

Some comments and observations in notes to the translation.

³⁷⁵ Cf. BHSE, at: <http://www.syriaca.org/work/281>

³⁷⁶ Cf. Wright 1872. 3: 1081-1083

³⁷⁷ For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above, p. 31

³⁷⁸ Bedjan 1890, II: 314-316; for the description of the codex, cf. Assfalg 1963: 53-59. Another witness of the Acts can be found in the Dawra, Monastère chaldéen cod. 631 (olim N.-D. des Semences cod. 218), manuscript not reachable at this moment; actually, according to the catalogue by Vosté (1929: 86), it is a manuscript copy of the printed edition by Assemani, so it is irrelevant for the edition.

For punctuation and diacritics, I usually follow V1, according to the fragmentarity of L. Eventual relevant divergences or my additions/corrections are signaled in apparatus.

384. אֲדַבְרָה אֲדַבְרָה מִלִּי וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.³⁸⁵
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֲדַבְרָה מִלִּי וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.³⁸⁶
 לְמַלְאָכָי וְלְמַלְאָכָי * עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.

V 109 v

3 אֲדַבְרָה אֲדַבְרָה מִלִּי וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי. וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי.³⁸⁷ וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי.
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.³⁸⁸
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.³⁸⁹
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.³⁹⁰
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.³⁹¹
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.
 וְיִשְׁמַע אֹמְרֵי מַלְאָכָי, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם, מִיָּד עַל עַלְמֵי עָרָם.³⁹²

L 13 va

V 109 vb

384 L אֲדַבְרָה
 385 B אֲדַבְרָה
 386 B אֲדַבְרָה
 387 B adds
 388 L אֲדַבְרָה
 389 LB אֲדַבְרָה
 390 L אֲדַבְרָה (no sense!)
 391 B אֲדַבְרָה
 392 B אֲדַבְרָה

1. In the 15th year of the persecutions,³⁹⁴ the deacon Barḥabešabba, from the city of Arbela,³⁹⁵ was seized by order of Šabur Tamšabur;³⁹⁶ and with many sufferings he was tormented, as he told him: «Honor the Fire and the Water! And eat the blood and you will be free! ». But he thrust out his glorious lip³⁹⁷ to him and said: «Who are you, you impious and profane, to turn me from my truth? And you desire me to reject the running³⁹⁸ that [I followed] from my childhood until now. As my God lives, he who I serve indeed, and Christ, who I truly trust! Neither you nor your king, of which you are so proud, nor your tortures or the murder by which you threaten me, could separate me from the love of Jesus,³⁹⁹ that I have loved every year until the old age of the present day».

2. Then with great rage that impious one ordered, regarding him, his head to be cut off. A noble layman from the village of Taḥal,⁴⁰⁰ whose name was 'Ag, was imprisoned there since he did not worship the Sun, because he was a Christian in name; and the impious one ordered him, that coward, to be released and [himself] to kill the blessed one, so that he would namely commit a sin that was greater

³⁹³ Witnesses: V= Vat Sir 160 (f. 109 ra-vb), L= BL Add 14654 (ff. 12vb-13va). Cf. B= Bedjan 1890, II: 314-316 (edition based upon the manuscript Berlin Or. Oct. 1256, ff. 520-523). Paragraphs are mine

³⁹⁴ I.e. 354 CE

³⁹⁵ Arbela (ܐܪܒܠܐ) is the capital of the Adiabene region, on the east side of the Tigris. Many Persian Martyr Acts place there the residence of the chief of the Magicians and of a *mobēd* (ܡܘܒܝܕ), having the function of magistrate (see also the *Acts of 'Aqebšmā, Forty Martyrs, Acts of Tarbo*); also, the *Chronicle of Arbela* mentions the name of a ܡܘܒܝܕ of the 4th c., Pagrasp (Chr. Arb. 56.3, 57.15). Cf. Jullien 2004: 144.

³⁹⁶ Identified by scholars as the satrap of the Adiabene in those days, actually his identity is not specified. It is clear by what the author says later that the personage cannot be identified with the sovereign Šapur himself (cf. some lines below, the reference to *his king*); cf. Bardy (DHGE, VI: 790); Sauget (BS, II: 782).

³⁹⁷ This is a mockery attitude, according to the meaning of the Syriac expression ܡܫܘܚܐ ܕܝܦܘܟܐ ܡܠܟܐ; cf. J. Payne Smith (ed.), *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 443.

³⁹⁸ I.e. the doctrine? Cf. 2 Tim 4,7.

³⁹⁹ Cf. Rom 8, 35-39.

⁴⁰⁰ Unidentified village in the Beth Garmai; it is attested also in the *Chronicle of Arbela* (Chr. Arb. 67.5; cf. Jullien 2004: 164).

than the one that he did not do when he had been ordered to. They brought the glorious Barḥabešabba outside the village of Ḥazzā⁴⁰¹ and they bound him on a hill; and they gave the sword to that man, ‘Ag, who took it trembling, and he beat it on [the saint’s] neck seven times and he did not attain to cut off his head, because of his trepidation and fear. The magicians, who stood firm against him, angered;⁴⁰² then he seized the sword and wiped it on the body of the blessed one, since he had cast it while [it was] full of blood, and he stabbed him in his heart and immediately the blessed one’s soul went away.

3. And then a sign appeared on that murderer ‘Ag, and we must tell it as well. In that very moment, in fact, when he killed the victorious one, the Lord wounded him by a cruel illness and his right hand was puffed up like a beam. And he lied down in a bed and he laid his arm on another, and all his body became putrid and was lacerated. And, in a few days, he died of this cruel death, without anyone coming to visit him. Two guards kept the corpse of the athlete Barḥabešabba and, when the evening came, two sons of the covenant⁴⁰³ contrived to hide themselves there, so that they would steal it while the guards slept. But those guards were not weak, and they did not fall asleep. And [the sons of the covenant] gave them a bribe, but they did not take it. So, when they saw that it was up, they fell upon them like robbers and they struck them harshly. They bound them, they took the corpse and went away. And that same night they hid it where they had a place. The saint was crowned on the 20th of the lunar month of Tammuz⁴⁰⁴.

⁴⁰¹ Ḥazzā (ܚܙܙܐ) is a village in the Adiabene. In the 13th-14th c. ‘Awdišo’ of Nisibis list of bishops, the city is associated to Arbela in the titlature (cf. Chabot 1902: 619). Cf. Jullien 2004: 154-155.

⁴⁰² The presence of an important group of Magicians (ܡܘܨܝܘܢܝܐ) in Arbela is also attested in other Martyr texts, as the *Acts of ‘Aqebšmā* and the *Acts of the Forty Martyrs*; they were nobles (ܡܘܨܝܘܢܝܐ) and usually have an executive role, under orders of the ܡܘܨܝܘܢܝܐ; cf. Jullien 2004: 144.

⁴⁰³ On the institution of the ܩܝܡܝܐ (bnay qyāmā, translated “sons of the covenant”), I refer to the contributions by Vööbus (1961: 19-27), Wensinck (1910: 561-564); a more general overview on the Syriac Monasticism in Berti 2010: 147-148, on the role of the *bnay* and *bnat qyāmā* (ܩܝܡܝܐ) in Persian Christianity, see Jullien 2006: 146-184.

⁴⁰⁴ The tenth Syrian lunar month, corresponding to July.

1.2 Acts of Badmā (BHO 131 - BHSE 284)

1.2.1 *The Tradition*

The *Acts of Badmā* narrate the martyrdom of a high-born man from Beth Lapat, converted to Christianity; appointed archimandrite of a small community of monks, he was condemned under Šapur II and martyred in Narphatqā, the quartier of Beth Lapat where, according to the text, the royal palace was.⁴⁰⁵

According to the Syriac source, the martyrdom took place on the 10th lunar Nisan; the year is not given, but the 375 (or 376) CE has been hypothesised.⁴⁰⁶

The name of Badmā is mentioned in the list of Persian martyrs included in the so-called Syriac Martyrologium of the 4th-5th century; here his name appears at the end of a list of martyr priests. A final note explains that those above are the names of twelve priests from Seleucia-Ctesiphon; actually, the names in the list are thirteen. This incoherence can be explained with the possible repetition of one of the names - that of Paul, which recurs twice - or with an erroneous positioning of Badmā, the archimandrite from Beth Lapat, in a list of priests.

In his *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium*, Assemani presents a first printed edition of the Syriac text, also providing a Latin translation.⁴⁰⁷ The Syriac base-witness for Assemani's edition and translation is the Vatican manuscript 160.

Bedjan, in the second volume of his *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, provides us with a new edition of the Syriac, based on a Berlin codex - Königliche Bibliothek or. Oct. 1256 -.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ Bibliography: Fiey 2004: 44-45 (entry 70); Labourt 1904: 52; Duval 1907: 122; Baumstark 1922: 56; Bardenewer 1924, IV: 381-382; Van Lantschoot in DHGE VI, c. 139

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. Fiey 2004: 44 (entry 70); DHGE VI, c. 139;

⁴⁰⁷ Assemani 1748 I: 165-68. For a French translation based on Assemani's Latin text, see LaGrange 1852: 124-126

⁴⁰⁸ Bedjan 1890 II: 347-351 (Syriac)

As a good number of the Persian Martyr Acts, the *Acts of Badmā* have been translated into Greek.⁴⁰⁹ It now exists just one Greek witness of the *Martyrdom*, preserved in the Vatican Greek manuscript 1660 (ff. 191-194v).⁴¹⁰

There also exists an Armenian translation.⁴¹¹

The Persian martyr Badmā is also commemorated in the Byzantine Synaxarium on the day 9 April.⁴¹²

1.2.2 *The Contents*

1. The archimandrite Badmā is arrested. As in a flashback, his previous story is narrated. An exponent of the nobility of Beth Lapat, he converts to Christianity; he gives all his possessions away and founds a monastery.
2. Description of Badmā's virtues.
3. Description of Badmā's virtuous way of life.
4. Imprisonment of the archimandrite and seven brothers for four months. There is in prison also the Christian ruler of the city of Arēwan, Narsā (or Narsai, or Narses). Description of the weakness of Narsā.
5. Narsā and Badmā are led to Narphatqā. Narsā is compelled to execute Badmā, under threat of being killed. Words of pity of Badmā towards the apostate executioner.
6. Fear of Narsā and long-suffering death of Badmā. Narsā dies few days later.
7. The date of the crowning of Badmā is 10 Nisan. Burial of the corpse. The seven brothers imprisoned with him remain in prison four more years; then they are released.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Delehaye 1905: 473-477 (n. IX)

⁴¹⁰ The Greek text has been firstly published by Henschenius in *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis* I: lxxxv-lxxxvi (Latin translation *ibid.* 825-826; Cf. *Acta Sanctorum Novembris* IV: 421). On this and other Greek translations of the Persian Martyr Acts, see Delehaye 1905 (in particular, 414, 473-477)

⁴¹¹ Ter-Petrossian 1976 (Արքայազն Խոստովանողի "Վկայք արեւելիցը")

⁴¹² Cf. Synaxarium of Constantinople: 593-594

1.2.3 *The Edition*

The present edition is based on the following manuscripts⁴¹³:

L	London, British Library Add. 14654, f. 10v-12 (mutilated)	5 th -6 th c. ⁴¹⁴
V1	Vatican Syr. 160, f. 103v-104v	uncertain date (6 th c.) ⁴¹⁵
V2	Vatican Syr. 161, f. 70v-71	probably 9 th c. ⁴¹⁶

To these manuscript sources, one should add the Bedjan edition (B), based on the codex Berlin, Königliche Bibliothek, or. Oct. 1256 (Assfalg 26; copy of ms Diyarbakir 96), p. 478-483.⁴¹⁷

I propose an eclectic edition, with a negative apparatus, in note.

Some comments and observations in notes to the translation.

For punctuation and diacritics, I usually follow V2 - which, is more regular in presenting punctuation/diacritics. Eventual relevant divergences - especially in the use of diacritics - or my additions/corrections are signaled in apparatus.

⁴¹³ Cf. BHSE, at: <http://syriaca.org/work/284>

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Wright 1872. 3: 1081-1083

⁴¹⁵ For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above, p. 31

⁴¹⁶ For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above p. 36

⁴¹⁷ Bedjan 1890 II: 347-35; for the description of the manuscript, see Assfalg 1963: 53-59. Another witness of the Acts can be found in the Dawra, Monastère chaldéen cod. 631 (olim N.-D. des Semences cod. 218), manuscript not reachable at this moment; actually, according to the catalogue by Vosté (1929: 86), it is a manuscript copy of the printed edition by Assemani (see above, p. 156 n. 378), so it is irrelevant for the edition.

שמגדולא ובגרא זיג גיגא.

1 כס בוכר מר אדוהעו אמא אדוהעו כפסנר גולכר בגרא זיג גיגא.
 קי כס לפי כוויגא כי חגיא אמא אדוהעו סב אדוהעו אמא. מוכ חל כוכר
 V1 103 vb גאט אמא⁴¹⁹ למ⁴²⁰ לחפכר. אפס בוכר למ* גיגא לבי קי כוויגא סגט
 L 10 vb אמא⁴²¹ כז. אפס חאט, לקי נסמ גראלמא כחל כוכר כפסנר אמא. סב⁴²²*
 שנימ אדוהעו כחל וק לאמל אפס אמא אדוהעו. אדלמ אדוהעו כפסנר
 אפס כזמ אמא אדוהעו.

2 גממ גק זי אמא אדוהעו. חלק אפס אדוהעו. גממ קי אדוהעו
 אדוהעו למ אמא⁴²³. אדוהעו אדוהעו אדוהעו. אפ מומ אדוהעו
 אמא אדוהעו⁴²⁴ מוכר גק זוכר לזיא אמא⁴²⁵ אמא למ אפס. כז
 חזק⁴²⁶ מ, אדוהעו, אדוהעו אמא אדוהעו. אמא אדוהעו אדוהעו אדוהעו

⁴¹⁸ Witnesses: V1 = Vat Syr 160 (ff. 103va- 104vb); V2 = Vat Syr 161 (ff. 70v-71r); L = BL Add 14654 (ff. 10va-11vb, fragmentary); B = Bedjan's edition (AMS II: 347-351; based upon ms Berlin or oct 1256, ff. 478-483).

Paragraphs are mine

- 419 V1, L omit
- 420 L omits
- 421 V1, L omit
- 422 V2 ח
- 423 V2. אפס
- 424 V1 מכל
- 425 V2 ח
- 426 V1 חזק

*Martyrdom of Badmā archimandrite*⁴⁵²

1. In that time⁴⁵³ the archimandrite Badmā was taken and imprisoned by decree of the king.⁴⁵⁴ He was son of rich and noble people from the city of Beth Lapat⁴⁵⁵; and, once converted,⁴⁵⁶ he gave everything he had to the poor people, and he went away and built a monastery outside the city, and he settled there.⁴⁵⁷ And through his good actions, God's will was fulfilled in everything.⁴⁵⁸ And every time people in need and in trouble went to him, they also received comfort, and he relieved and gladdened the tormented and sad ones, in his abundant charity.⁴⁵⁹

2. His fast, then, was great and amazing, since for the most part of the days, from week to week, the only food he ate was bread and water; and his vigil was also excellent and sublime, so that from the evening to the morning he was assiduous in the same position, lifting up his hands to the sky, in purity. It was this one who was chosen in his heart and resided in the high place; and he ascended the holy

⁴⁵² Witnesses: V1 = Vat Syr 160 (ff. 103va- 104vb); V2 = Vat Syr 161 (ff. 70v-71r); L = BL Add 14654 (ff. 10v-11v). Cf. B = Bedjan's edition (AMS II: 347-351; based upon ms Berlin or oct 1256, ff. 478-483). Paragraphs are mine.

⁴⁵³ The Greek version specifies: *At the time when the forty martyrs were killed*; cf. Delehay 1905: 473

⁴⁵⁴ The Greek anticipates the reference to the seven companions imprisoned with Badmā (cf. Delehay 1905: 473)

⁴⁵⁵ Also known by the name of Gundešabur, Beth Lapat was the capital of the Huzistān, situated between Šuš and Šuštar. According to the Acts of Mari (41.19), the city had been built on a pre-existent village called Bilapat (بيلاپات). It was the summer residence of the Sasanians; for that reason, it is the location of some martyrdoms narrated by the Persian Martyr Acts (e.g., that of the Forty Martyrs). Cf. Jullien 2004: 148-149

⁴⁵⁶ Lit. *Once instructed in the Christian faith*

⁴⁵⁷ Lit. *In it* = in that monastery

⁴⁵⁸ The Greek version adds a reference to Acts 9:15 (*He was, in fact a man full of grace and truth and a chosen vassel to God*; cf. Delehay 1905: 474)

⁴⁵⁹ This note is absent from the Greek translation.

mountain of the Lord⁴⁶⁰; this one, who received the blessing from the Saviour;⁴⁶¹ and he saw the face of the God of Jacob;⁴⁶² this one was the leaven that was left from the beginning for the mass of our senseless age.⁴⁶³ And through his blood, as on a balance, the weakness of our dissolute time was drawn out; it was this one who was cut from the mountain of the believers and quarried from the rock of Truth.

3. The avidity saw him and escaped; and the desire also departed; mammon looked at him and was terrified; and the property also hid; the opulence met him and was humbled; and pride also was astonished; the ostentation was outraged in him; and the arrogance was trodden by him; the poverty walked after him; and the humility was fastened to his back; the faith looked upon him, as⁴⁶⁴ the righteousness grew with him; the love embraced him and rejoiced; the peace kissed him and was glad; the tranquillity exulted for his manner of life; and the harmony dwelled in his habitation, as his smell pleased them; and this one and his fruits were sweet and edible to them.

4. And having been four months in jail, he and the seven brothers who had been imprisoned with him, they also suffered three times tortures and wounds for their True God, and they confessed and were glorified; and then a great man who was Christian in the name, whose name was Narsā⁴⁶⁵ and he was called Lord of the city of Arēwan⁴⁶⁶, in the region of Beth Garmai⁴⁶⁷, happened to be prisoner of the king, since he did not worship the sun. And he was weakened in his heart and he was agitated in his intention; and his cruel end did not resemble to his first blossoming state; and he inclined to gain the

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. Psalm 24:3

⁴⁶¹ According to Bedjan's edition: *From the Saviour of everything*. In V2 I uncertainly read: *From the pure Saviour*. In Greek: *From God Saviour* (παρά Θεοῦ σωτήρος)

⁴⁶² The whole passage is a reference to Psalm 23 (24), 3-6

⁴⁶³ Cf. Gal 5:9

⁴⁶⁴ *And*, according to V2

⁴⁶⁵ Narsai, Narses

⁴⁶⁶ In the Greek text, *Aria*. The city – rather a village- of Arēwan (ܐܪܘܳܐܢ) or Arnun (ܐܪܢܳܘܢ) was situated in the Beth Garmai, in the Little Zab valley. According to the different variants (which are indeed difficult to read) the name is ܐܪܘܳܐܢ or ܐܪܢܳܘܢ (cf. Bedjan 1890 II: 349 n.5). Cf. Jullien 2004: 144.

⁴⁶⁷ Region between the Little Zab and the Diyala, on the East of the Tigris. Cf. Jullien 2004: 147-148

present life, which [could] not be possessed by him and does not remain;⁴⁶⁸ and he preferred the honour of an earthly king more than the glory of the Heavenly one; and he had turned aside [as] to do the king's will in everything he would order.

5. Then, all at once an idea came, and the king ordered the mighty Badmā to be set free from chains and to make him come to Narphatqā,⁴⁶⁹ to the court of the king's palace of the city of Beth Lapat. And they also brought Narsā, bound in chains. And two confidential servants of the king, with him, were commissioned to see if he killed the blessed one.⁴⁷⁰ Then he was set free from his chain and they brought saint Badmā in front of him; and he, this weak and fearful, took the sword and attacked him; and, looking at him, that glorious one told him: «Oh, Narsā! So far your end arrives that you will shed the blood of the servants of God! Alas for you! Alas for you, for what you do! And how long will you escape the powerful judgement before God's justice? For me, indeed, I desire to die, through the witness for Christ. And I even gladly die; but I would prefer to die by hands other than yours».

6. Then he closed his eyes, that bold man, in his trepidation, and he restrained his compassion, that shameless man, in his fear. And four times⁴⁷¹ he struck [Badmā], by the sword, on his neck; and he did not succeed at once at depriving him of the life, because he trembled a lot and was very moved; and he made the blessed one endure very much until his soul migrated from him. And through this death and the excellent fame saint Badmā was glorified. And he, that weak and murderer, was greatly put to shame and mocked, even by those who did not believe in the True God. So, after a time, with blood and by the sword, also his soul was separated from his body.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Matthew 16:25 (*For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it*)

⁴⁶⁹ Cf. Jullien 2004: 160

⁴⁷⁰ The Greek version is more precise, quoting the king's words: "*If Nersan (this is the Greek reading for Narses) kills Badmā, free him from chains and give him his goods back*". *The king in fact had confiscated his goods.* (Cf. Delehaye 1905: 476)

⁴⁷¹ The reference to the four times is not present in the Greek, which just refers to the inability of obtaining the martyr's death with a sole hit (cf. Delehaye 1905: 477)

7. Then, the athlete was crowned on the 10th of the lunar month of Nisan⁴⁷². And his corpse was taken, in secret, that same night and it was buried, as it was right. The seven brothers who had been imprisoned with him remained in prison four more years, until the death of king Šabur. Then they were released and went out.

⁴⁷² The 8th of April, in the Greek version (ibid. 477). Nisan is the seventh lunar month of the Syrian calendar (corresponding to April).

1.3 Acts of Miles, Aboursām and Sinay (BHO 772 -BHSE 270)

1.3.1 *The Tradition*

The *Acts of Miles, Aboursām (or Abrusim) and Sinay* narrate the martyrdom of the 4th century Persian bishop Miles of Susa (Šuš)⁴⁷³, born in the Beth Raziqāyē⁴⁷⁴, who converted to Christianity, was consecrated bishop and was martyred together with the priest Aboursām and the deacon Sinay by order of the governor of the Beth Raziqāyē, Hormizda Guprizes, in an unprecised year of the persecution due to Šapur II.⁴⁷⁵

According to the Syriac text, the martyrdom took place on the 13th day of the lunar month of Tišrin II (= November); the year is not given, but we should suppose it happened before 341 CE.⁴⁷⁶

In his *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium*, Assemani published the Syriac text for the first time, adding a Latin translation.⁴⁷⁷ The Syriac base-witness for Assemani's edition and translation is the Vatican manuscript 160.

Bedjan, in the second volume of his *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, proposes a new edition of the Syriac, based on a Berlin codex (Königliche Bibliothek or. Oct. 1257).⁴⁷⁸

It also exists an Armenian translation (BHO 773).⁴⁷⁹

If the historicity of Miles and of the episodes of his life are doubtful, the mentioning of the names of Miles and his companions in a list of Persian martyrs preserved at the end of the manuscript BL Add 12150, dated 411, is a clear witness of at least a very early martyr cult; the list is usually considered due to

⁴⁷³ In the Beth Huzāye; Jullien 2004: 164

⁴⁷⁴ Northern Media; cf. Jullien 2004: 150

⁴⁷⁵ Bibliography on Miles: Fiey 2004: 141, entry 316); Devos, 1954: 304; Labourt, 1904: 22-24; Sauget in BSCO IX: 482-4.

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. Fiey 2004: 141.

⁴⁷⁷ Assemani 1748 I: 66-79. For a French translation based on Assemani's Latin text, see La Grange 1852: 61-73

⁴⁷⁸ Bedjan 1890 II: 260-275 (Syriac)

⁴⁷⁹ Ter-Petrossian 1976 (Արրահամ Խոստովանողի "Վկայք արեւելիցը")

Marutha of Maipherqat. Miles alone is mentioned in the *Roman Martyrologium* –day 22 April- among a list of Persian martyrs under Šapur.

Byzantine Synaxaria celebrate Miles and his companions on the 13th of November. The *Constantinopolitan Synaxarium* interestingly mentions among the companions of Miles even a certain Papa. This notice clearly depends on the Syriac Martyrdom text.⁴⁸⁰

The *Menei* celebrate Miles on the 10th of November.⁴⁸¹

Concerning the problem of the dating of the *Acts*, the attestation of the story in Sozomen gives a *terminus ante quem*, the 443 CE, when the historians probably completed his *Ecclesiastical History*. Sozomen attests the existence of an “*account of his actions and life*” (of Miles), so we can say that, by that time, the *Acts* were available.⁴⁸² Although we do not know what text Sozomen had at disposal, his references to some specific episodes of the first part of the Acts (military career, episcopal election, flight from Šuš and destruction of the city, journey to Jerusalem and Egypt, even his carrying a Gospel book with him) are clear hint that the text that the historian read was almost the same we can read today.⁴⁸³ As I said above, taking into account the attestation in Sozomen, the hypothetical dating of the oldest

⁴⁸⁰ SynCp c. 220; Doukakis (Sinassario) 1895: 225-228; cf. Sauget BSCO IX: 483

⁴⁸¹ Doukakis 1895: 225; cf. Sauget BSCO IX: 484; Menaion tou Noembriou, 1960, 122-123. The text, though original in some points, provides a narration depending on the Syriac martyrdom; for the Greek text and a Latin translation, see Assemani 1748: 61-63

⁴⁸² Sozomen HE II.14

⁴⁸³ Here the passage in Sozomen HE II.14: Ὑπὸ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον καὶ Μίλης ἐμαρτύρησεν· ὃς τὰ μὲν πρῶτα παρὰ Πέρσαις ἐστρατεύετο, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα καταλιπὼν τὴν στρατείαν τὴν ἀπο στολικὴν πολιτείαν ἐζήλωσε. λέγεται δὲ πόλεως Περσικῆς ἐπίσκοπος χειρο τονηθεὶς πολλὰ πολλὰκις παθεῖν καὶ πληγὰς ὑπομεῖναι καὶ ἐλκυσμούς. ὡς δὲ οὐδένα ἔπεισε χριστιανίσει, χαλεπῶς ἐνεγκὼν κατηράσατο τῇ πόλει καὶ ἀνεχώρησε. μετ’ οὐ πολὺ δὲ τῶν ἐνθάδε πρωτευόντων ἑξαμαρτόντων εἰς βασιλέα παραγενομένη στρατιὰ μετὰ τριακοσίων ἐλεφάντων τὴν πόλιν κατέσχευαν καὶ ὅσα ἄρουραν γεωργήσαντες ἔσπειραν. Μίλης δὲ μόνον πήραν ἐπιφερόμενος, ἐν ᾗ τὴν ἱερὰν βίβλον τῶν εὐαγγελίων εἶχεν, εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπῆλθεν εὐξόμενος, κάκειθεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἐπὶ θεῶν αὐτόθι μοναχῶν.
“About this period Milles suffered martyrdom. He originally served the Persians in a military capacity, but afterwards abandoned that vocation, in order to embrace the apostolical mode of life. It is related that he was ordained bishop over a Persian city, and he underwent a variety of sufferings, and endured wounds and drawings; and that, failing in his efforts to convert the inhabitants to Christianity, he uttered imprecations against the city, and departed. Not long after, some of the principal citizens offended the king, and an army with three hundred elephants was sent against them; the city was utterly demolished, and its land was ploughed and sown. Milles, taking with him only his wallet, in which was the holy Book of the Gospels, repaired to Jerusalem in prayer; thence he proceeded to Egypt in order to see the monks. [...]”. (transl. Hartranft)

Syriac witness (BL Add 17204) to the late 5th century,⁴⁸⁴ and the evidence that the text appears as expression of a position hostile to the Seleucian patriarch,⁴⁸⁵ I am oriented to date the *Acts* to the beginning of the 5th century.⁴⁸⁶

Historical information about the bishop of Šuš is few and is almost entirely linked to the aforementioned Synod of Papa. In any case, it seems interesting to remind that Miles is mentioned as author of letters and discourses on various topics by the *Catalogue* of 'Abdišo';⁴⁸⁷ this note could be connected to another reference in the *Chronicle of Seert*, where Miles of Ray is quoted as source for the information about the interest of king Bahram II in the Christian doctrine.⁴⁸⁸

1.3.2 The Contents

1. Prologue. The author blames his own inability to express the magnificence and glory of the martyrs; but he feels anyway compelled to write about them and their fights and the sufferings they endured in the name of Christ.
2. Presentation of Miles, from the region of Beth Raziqāyē, his previous life and the conversion to Christianity. Virtues of Miles and his way of life. Decision to depart from his country in order to be useful to as many people as possible.
3. He goes to Susa and is ordained bishop there by Gadiab of Beth Lapat. Persistence of the citizens of Susa in idolatry and magianism. Attempt to stone Miles; he leaves Susa, predicting the imminent destruction of the city.
4. Journey to Jerusalem; visit to Alexandria and to the Egyptian monks. Miles meets a monk who lived in a cave with a snake. Killing of the snake and departure of Miles.

⁴⁸⁴ Wright 1872. 3: 108; another witness is probably to be dated 5th-6th c. (cf. Wright 1872. 3: 1081-1083)

⁴⁸⁵ Cf. above, pp. 113-114

⁴⁸⁶ Although it may be equally possible that the *Acts of Miles* are a text containing an anti-patriarchal polemic.

⁴⁸⁷ See Assemani 1719-1728 III.1: 51

⁴⁸⁸ *Chronicle of Seert* I.1 (ed. Scher 27 [237])

5. Journey to Nisibis where Miles can appreciate the greatness of the work of Ya'qub. Departure to Arbela; Miles sends a hank of silk to Ya'qub of Nisibis, for the ecclesiastical expenses.
6. Miles arrives in the Beth Aramaye. Controversy with Papa bar Aggai, bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Arrogance and disrespect of Papa.
7. Miles predicts Papa's punishment. Papa is struck by a lightning and half of his body is dried up.
8. Travel to the region of Mišan and visit to a solitary man, in the desert. Miles heals the lord of the region. Conversion of many people and healing of a young man seized by a demonic spirit.
9. Journey to the region of Beth Raziqāyē; healing of a paralyzed noble woman.
10. Miles solves a controversy between two men about a theft. The falsely swearing one is punished and becomes leprous, according to Miles' words.
11. Miles goes to another region with two companions. Miraculous crossing of a river. In a village, Miles tries to persuade a deacon to confess his adultery; he does not, and he is punished.
12. Healing of a young man and of a child. Impossibility of writing all the miracles performed by Miles.
13. The governor of the Beth Raziqāyē, Hormizda Guprizes, captures Miles and two companions, Abrusim and Sinay and summons them in Mehaldegdar; tortures and attempt to persuade them to worship the Sun. Preparation of a great hunting and decision to bring the martyrs-to-be there. Interrogatory of Miles and refuse by his side to teach him his doctrine. Prediction of the final judgment and the Gheenna for the persecutor.
14. Hormizda and his brother Narsā beat Miles with their scimitars. Before dying, Miles announce the imminent and sudden death of the two persecutors by each other's hand. Death of Miles and stoning of his companions
15. During the hunting, Hormizda and Narsā kill each other while they are trying to hit a doe with their arrows. The prediction of Miles is realized.

16. The bodies of the martyrs are collected and buried in Malqan. Miracles linked to the holy martyrs' relics: every time the region is invaded by the Sabaeans, the village is never devastated by them.

1.3.3 *The Edition*

The present text edition is based on the following sources:⁴⁸⁹

L1	London, British Library Add. 14654, ff. 3r-5r	5 th -6 th c. ⁴⁹⁰
L2	London, British Library Add. 17204, ff. 8r-14v	late 5 th c. ⁴⁹¹
V1	Vatican Syr. 160, ff. 99r-102v	uncertain dating (6 th c.?) ⁴⁹²
V2	Vatican Syr. 161, ff. 61r-64v	probably 9 th c. ⁴⁹³
B	Berlin, Königliche Bibl., or. Oct. 1257, ff. 1r-12r	1869 ⁴⁹⁴

Some observations on the manuscript witnesses, their significance and their reciprocal connection are given here.

L1 is very fragmentary: we can read just the beginning and part of the end.

L2 is incomplete, missing the beginning and the end. In the restoration of the manuscript – I should suppose it was damaged- an error in the re-arrangement of the leaves occurred, so that f. 10 and f. 9 must be switched, in order that the text has sense and the usual sequence of the events is respected.

V1 misses the ending, as a Latin note by a cataloguer also attests; it is not signalled, on the contrary, the probable loss of one folio between f. 100 and f. 101 (see below). The lack of sense of the text as we read it now and the fact that the loss of a portion of text has occurred at the end of a folio, allow me to suppose

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. BHSE, at: <http://www.syriaca.org/work/270>. Beside the following witnesses, another one exists (though not reachable at this moment) in the Dawra, Monastère chaldéen cod. 631 (olim N.-D. des Semences cod. 218); actually, according to the catalogue by Vosté (1929: 86), it is a manuscript copy of the printed edition by Assemani (see above, p. 156 n. 378), so irrelevant for the edition.

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. Wright 1872. 3: 1081-1083

⁴⁹¹ Cf. *ibid.* 1081; on the date of composition, see also *ibid.* xvii

⁴⁹² For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above p. 31

⁴⁹³ For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above p. 36

⁴⁹⁴ Description and digitalized manuscript available at https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN749838965&PHYSID=PHYS_0001&DMDID=&view=overview-info (cf. also the description in Assfalg 1963: 53-59). It is a copy of a lost 11th or 12th c. Diyarbakir manuscript 96 (D) (on this last codex, see Scher 1907: 49-52)

- As for the independence of L2 from V2-B, this emerges from the readings ⲛⲁⲛⲁ (instead of ⲛⲁⲛⲁ)⁴⁹⁷ and ⲛⲁ (instead of ⲛⲁ)⁴⁹⁸, and from the whole passage of the Miles-Papa dispute (see below); on this last point, it is impossible to say whether the interesting variants occurring in L2 are to be considered additions by the L2 redactor – pointing to a posteriority of the text witnessed by L2 in relation to a supposed original source on which also V2 (and the ancestor of B) is based, and showing a precise stylistic choice in the negative presentation of the character of Papa- or on the contrary, L2 shows the original text and, as a consequence, I may suppose that a common ancestor has deleted some evil characterizations of the primate of Seleucia, maybe considered as too strong.

- I cannot state a derivation of L1 from L2 (or vice versa, as the date of redaction is very close), considering the noteworthy differences in the last part of the text; L2 is very original in the last paragraphs of the Martyrdom presenting variants that we do not find in anyone of the other witnesses; in order to propose a stemma or at least to present more hints about the familiarities of the versions, it would have been interesting to see the behavior of V1 in these points, considering the mentioned affinity V1-L2, but unfortunately this last part is lost in V1.

On the basis of these observations, I can sum up as follows: the two London witnesses (L1, L2) and the Vatican 160 (V1) seem to belong to the same family, independent from the one represented by the Vatican 161 (V2) and the Berlin codex (B) and its direct source (the lost D). I cannot state for the V1-L1-L2 group which is the internal reciprocal dependence, or if there was a common ancestor or more than one. For the group V2-(D)-B I can hypothesize- but not demonstrate- a derivative chain V2-(D)-B, were B would have added some corrections and very marginal and uninfluential additions on the basis of his own taste. Anyway, a dependence of D from V2 cannot be demonstrated; there could exist a (lost) intermediate witness.⁴⁹⁹

I propose an eclectic edition, with a negative apparatus in note.

Some comments and observations in notes to the translation.

For punctuation and diacritics, I usually follow V2 - which, is more regular in presenting punctuation/diacritics. Eventual relevant divergences - especially in the use of diacritics - or my additions/corrections are signaled in apparatus.

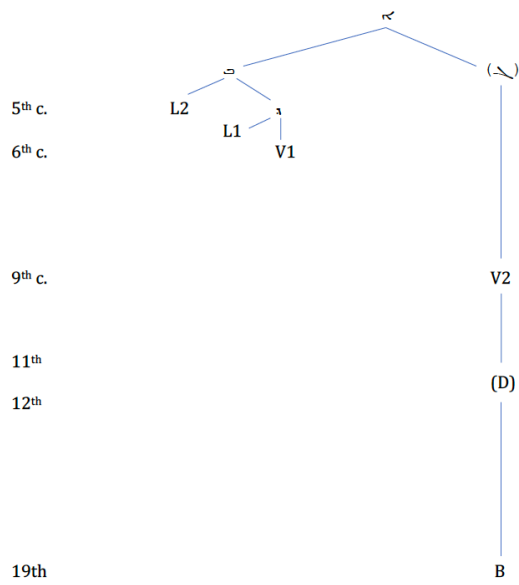
⁴⁹⁷ Par. 6; the error is probably due to a wrong reading of a letter

⁴⁹⁸ Par. 7; the terms are synonyms, this can be interpreted as a stylistic choice; the possibility of a paleographical mistake cannot be completely excluded, anyway.

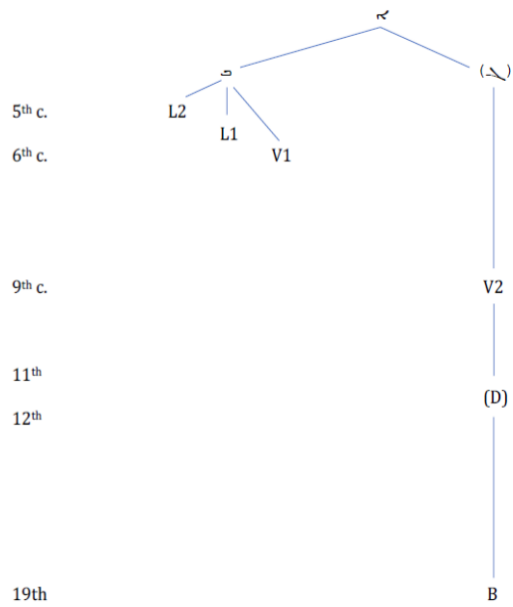
⁴⁹⁹ On the basis of the observations above, two possible *stemmas* of the manuscripts are given in the following page.

Two possible stemmas (*Acts of Miles*):

1)



2)



מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. ⁵¹¹ וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. ⁵¹²
מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

B 1v

מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

L1 3v

מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

B 2r

מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

V1 99v

מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. ⁵¹⁵ [וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ].

V2 61v

מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. ⁵¹⁶ וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. ⁵¹⁷

מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
מִן הַיָּמִים לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְהַיּוֹם לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

511 V1, L1 מִיָּמֵינוּ

512 V2 מִיָּמֵינוּ

513 B מִיָּמֵינוּ

514 B מִיָּמֵינוּ

515 V1, L1 מִיָּמֵינוּ

516 L1 מִיָּמֵינוּ

517 V1 מִיָּמֵינוּ

אהו וכוהא סחללס ליהמס⁵¹⁸ וכוהלס סס יו⁵¹⁹
 אהו וכוהא סגועס לללס. וכוהוהא סגועס ססס⁵²⁰
 אהו וכוהא סגועס לעזס⁵²¹ וכוהוהא⁵²² סגועס סגועס לללס.
 אהו *כוהוהא סגועס לללס וכוהוהא סגועס לללס⁵²³.
 אהו וכוהא סגועס סגועס⁵²⁴ וכוהוהא סגועס לללס⁵²⁵.
 אהו סגועס וכוהוהא סגועס: וכוהוהא סגועס.
 אהו סגועס לללס. וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס.
 אהו סגועס לללס. וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס.
 אהו סגועס לללס. וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס.
 אהו וכוהא סגועס וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס סגועס סגועס.
 וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס סגועס סגועס סגועס סגועס.
 לסס סגועס סגועס.
 אס סגועס לללס וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס סגועס.
 אס וכוהוהא סגועס⁵²⁶ לללס⁵²⁷ סגועס סגועס סגועס.
 סס לללס סגועס לס. וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס סגועס⁵²⁸ וכוהוהא סגועס.
 סגועס סגועס. אס וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס סגועס סגועס.
 וכוהוהא סגועס סגועס סגועס.

B 2v

L1 4

B 3r

518	V2 ליהמס
519	V1 יו
520	V1 ססס
521	V1 לעזס
522	V1 וכוהוהא
523	V1 לללס
524	V1 סגועס
525	V2 סגועס לללס
526	V1, L1 סגועס
527	V1, L1 סגועס לללס
528	V2, B סגועס

*Martyrdom of Miles the bishop and of Abrusim the priest and of Sinay the deacon,
at the beginning of the persecutions*⁶⁸⁴

1. I speak, though I am not able to. I narrate, though I am not adequate.
And my soul is sad not to be able to magnify the magnificence of the magnificent ones, in their glory.
And my mind is weary not to be able to glorify the glory of the glorious ones, in their magnificence.
Lo, indeed, their signs, through their wonder, whisper to me, and their portents, through their marvel,
beckon me.
Lo, their grace, in its truth, looks at me, and their ornament, in its labour, longs for me.
Lo, their charity, in its actions,⁶⁸⁵ inflames me, and their love, in its acts, sets me on fire.
Lo, their faith, in its triumph, writes to me about them, and their constancy, in its victory, describes and
delineates them to me.
Lo, their murder, in its sadness, makes me meditate about them, and their blood, in its effusion, makes
me explain and admonishes about them.
Lo, their beloved memory causes my sins to be forgotten, and their dear remembrance rubs away my
spots.
Lo, the champions of divinity manifest themselves to my intellect, and the strong men of the human race
transfer [that] before my thoughts, so that they exhort me to narrate their grace in its service and to
show their splendour in its merit, they permit me to show their manner of life in its good measure, they
order to me and also exhort me to make known their pain in its amount.
Lo, their source gained strength and became great in my mind, and it has not a spiritual flood in my
imperfect speech.
Lo, it filled in me and overflowed in its current, and my closed lips do not open a watercourse to that.
Lo, the cane, through its whisper, strives me because the writings are less than their greatness, and the
scroll, through its silence, blames me because the signs are less than their praises.
But the reader will understand in [his] intellect and the hearer will consider in [his] judgment that,
though we did not compose their praises in proportion to them, indeed, according to their truth, we wrote
of their death, and it is enough, and of their murder, and it was sufficient.

⁶⁸⁴ The provided text and translation are based upon the following manuscript witnesses: Vat Syr160, ff. 99r-102v (V1); Vat Syr161, ff. 61r-64v (V2); Berlin Or. Oct 1257 ff. 1r-12r (B); BL Add 14654, ff. 3r-5r (L1); BL Add 17204, ff. 8r-14v (L2). Paragraphs are mine.

⁶⁸⁵ According to V1 and L1, *truth*

Their death, indeed, gazes in the death of the great ensign,⁶⁸⁶ and is impressed [in it].

Toward him they raise and throw, to him they stretched out and directed their bow full of supplication and mercy, their arrow besmeared with pain and tears.⁶⁸⁷

It was not for the pride, [that] they impress in the ensign their arrow, but for the glory of the model they shake (sic!) their right [hand] and serve. By him and with him he takes courage to throw; to him he directs the life-giving arm like him. He is lifted up, he himself who threw, as like him his desire lifted him up in his love, and like him he is crucified, he himself who gives life/ wounded, as like him his freedom had crucified him in his love.

There the victory and the crown for the bravest ones⁶⁸⁸ as, with attention, he aimed at and stepped forward.

There the present and the gift for the disciple as, with discipline, he imitated and impressed.

There the pains and the shame to the childish one as, in [his] weakness, he sent his arrow to waste.

There the disgrace and harm to the foolish man as, in his arrogance, he did not apply himself to learn.

There the erect and stretched out lord of the signs, the Cross.

There the blood of the great martyr poured out, the prince of the dragged⁶⁸⁹ martyrs.

There the absolution of the sinner who raises his death through His death.

There the forgiveness of the guilty man who purges his blood through his blood.

There the retribution to the righteous one who magnifies his murder through his murder.

There the blood poured out of many who saw his blood that abounding flew on the wood and stepped forwards the murder of their living Lord. In their murder they were not preserved from that; and because they associated their death to his death, he recompensed them for their lives with his life.

Oh, the [ones] loving the murder in their blood! How much indeed his resurrection longs for your revival!


Oh, the [ones] loving the cross in their murder! How much indeed his company exults for your banquet!

He allowed you and you allowed him to allow you to take from him his true promise in the Reign, as he said: *Who will acknowledge me before the men, I will acknowledge him before my Father who is in the sky and before His angels.*⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁶ According to V1 and L1, *the high pain*

⁶⁸⁷ According to all witnesses but V1 (*mercy*)

⁶⁸⁸ Singular in V2

⁶⁸⁹ I.e. *dragged, lead to the martyrdom*; for this meaning of the verb , see R. Payne Smith 1879: 2404

⁶⁹⁰ Mt 10,32

2. Thus happened the election of the blessed Mar Miles, who was from the region of the Raziqāyē,⁶⁹¹ and who was destined since his youth to serve the king of the earth.⁶⁹² But the Grace did not leave him, this vessel of wonder, to be just an earthly being, as everyone else; rather it [i.e. the Grace] led him to serve the king of Heaven, like a heavenly angel. And, in his faith, he approached the baptism and the Holy Spirit revealed to him, in a vision, that on his path to becoming a disciple of Christ, he would remain chaste and continually fasting; and his body would be consumed by frequent vigil and made weary. And his soul proceeded in and knew the holy doctrine. And the great door of the new life, in the providence of God, was opened to his mind. And the vivifying word grew in his hearth and overflow; and as a flame in his bones, it was pure, and it burned. And he could not endure in the place where he had become a disciple, because he had been destined to be useful to many people.

3. He, then, went out from the city of Beth Lapat⁶⁹³ and went down to the city of Ilam,⁶⁹⁴ where is the castle of Susa;⁶⁹⁵ and, with words of truth and faithful preaching, he instructed its inhabitants every day and showed [the true doctrine], as he had laboured and toiled there for three years in weariness and distress; and there, step by step, for his love for the Church of God, he reached the episcopate, through the laying-on of hands by Gadiab, bishop of the city of Beth Lapat, who was himself also crowned by honourable martyrdom in the name of Christ. And in those years when the blessed Miles was there and was in trouble, against God's and his own will, that city was not converted; and many times he persisted in his distresses, until they stoned him in the streets [of the city] and took and brought him outside the city; and every day he was scourged by blows, and he endured. And seeing that many persisted in idolatry and Magianism,⁶⁹⁶ he left the city and went away. And the day he went out of there, he cursed [the city] and so he spoke: "Since you did not consent to be restored and perfected in peace, a

⁶⁹¹ Region in the Northern Media; together with Miles, the martyrs Daniel and Warda came from this province; cf. Jullien 2004: 150

⁶⁹² It is not clear what the narrator means: it has been generally interpreted as he was a soldier.

⁶⁹³ Syriac name of Gundešābur, the capital of Huzistan; see above p. 169

⁶⁹⁴ It was a city near Šuš (cf. Steve 2003: 571); sometimes supposed to be a province instead of a city, it is mentioned in the Talmud of Babylon as a city where Jews were deported during the reign of Nabucodonosor and 1 Maccabees celebrates the richness of that one at the time of Antiochus (1 Mac 4:1). The name also appears in the *Martyrologium* of 411; there the city is placed in the Beth Huzāye, but the text is difficult. Cf. Jullien 2004: 152.

⁶⁹⁵ Šuš is a city in the Beth Huzāye. The mention of the citadel of Susa is a reminiscence of Daniel 8:2, Nehemian 1:1; Esther 1:2 (cf. Jullien 2004: 164)

⁶⁹⁶ I.e. Zoroastrianism

violent destruction and a desert of fear will suddenly rise against you; your high buildings will be destroyed, and your proud inhabitants will be dispersed".⁶⁹⁷ And three months after he left, the chiefs of the city offended the king, and he sent three hundred elephants, and they threw down its houses and killed every inhabitant; and they turned the city into a plain; and they planted it with spring corn, until today.⁶⁹⁸

4. Then the saint [Miles] went to Jerusalem, carrying with him nothing but a Gospel [Book] in [his] wallet; and from here he went south, to the city of Alexandria, to hear the blessed Ammonius, disciple of Antony, chief of the monks. And he stayed there for two years, visiting the monks and their monasteries in the desert. And on his way back to his country, he found a monk who lived alone in a cave. And while the two of them were standing in prayer in the morning, suddenly a big snake appeared to them, called *nošepā*,⁶⁹⁹ whose figure was hideous, and he was greatly frightful too, and he was [over] twenty and thirty cubits⁷⁰⁰ and he began to enter the cave, according to his habit, since he lived there. The blessed Miles, then, seeing him, was not afraid or agitated, but he took heart and he spread out his hand toward him, and he told him: "Cruel snake and enemy of the human kind, why do you dare to cast us out and come inside yourself? Lo, indeed, in this hour, the lance of the Lord will miraculously cleave you from one end to the other". And immediately the whole snake swelled and burst open from his head to his end.⁷⁰¹ Then Miles asked that brother and told him: "It seems you saw this snake here before. Isn't it?". And he told him: "He has always been living in this cave, even while I was (living) in it, and he did not hurt me in any way". Then the blessed Miles blamed him heavily, saying: "Since God, in his judgement, installed enmity between humans and the snake,⁷⁰² why did you trust the hated one and

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. the cursing of Jonah against the Ninivites (Jonah 3:4), with the meaningful difference that, thanks to Jonah's preaching, Ninive converts and God spares it -though Jonah is disappointed by this divine decision (see Jonah 4: 1-3)-, while Miles does not achieve to convert Šuš.

⁶⁹⁸ Cf. Sozomen II.14 (*and its land was ploughed and sown*)

⁶⁹⁹ Syriac word for snake, according to the lexicons; see Brockelman 1895: 451, Margoliouth 1902: 219, Costaz 1963: 215, cf. for the Hebraic possible root (פנש; meaning *to blow, breath*) Jastrow 1903: 941

⁷⁰⁰ I.e. 13/14 meters long

⁷⁰¹ The image of the snake burst open from the head to the queue recurs in various hagiographical texts, especially in the Western Syriac world, it seems: see, for instance, the lives of Barsauma (see the summary by Nau, 1913: 387), Abrahām of the High Mountain (summary by Nau, 1914: 437), Aaron of Serugh (ed. Nau 1910: 744).

⁷⁰² Cf. Gn 3:15

have you been with him in the same habitation?". Therefore, he departed from that brother [and went] to another place.

5. The blessed one travelled and came to the city of Nisibis,⁷⁰³ where he found a Church that had been built by the bishop Ya'qub; and seeing that he was a great and excellent man, and his building was glorious and splendid, he was there for a short time and went south, to Arbela;⁷⁰⁴ and from there he sent to him [i.e. to Ya'qub] a hank of silk that [was] not little, for the expenses of the church.⁷⁰⁵

6. And he went down to the [region of] Beth Aramāyē,⁷⁰⁶ and he got involved in a great controversy with the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon,⁷⁰⁷ called Papa bar Aggai.⁷⁰⁸ And he saw that [Papa] was praising

⁷⁰³ On the famous city of the Beth 'Arabāyē see Takahashi 2011: 310-311; Fiey 1977; Drijvers 1994: 573-576; Palermo 2014: 456-471; cf. Jullien 2004: 161

⁷⁰⁴ On Arbela, see above, p. 160

⁷⁰⁵ Jacob of Nisibis, celebrated by Ephrem the Syrian, died around 337 (cf. Fiey 2004: 105-106, entry 220). The mentioned church was completed in 313-320, according to Elias of Nisibis (see Russel 2018). On the costs for building churches in the Syriac world, cf. Briquel Chatonnet 2013.

⁷⁰⁶ Central province on the Mesopotamia and land of the Arameans, it corresponds to the Persian Surestan region. Cf. Jullien 2004: 146-147

⁷⁰⁷ Capitals of the Sasanian Empire built one in front of the other on the banks of the Tigri. Cf. Jullien 2004: 151 and 163

⁷⁰⁸ Historiography gives discordant notices about Papa bar Aggai. He should have been bishop of Seleucia for about seventy years. His consecration should date back to the 246, according to 'Amr ibn Mattai (for the edition of the historiographical work, see Gismondi 1899: in particular, 8); Barhebraeus, on the contrary, attests it twenty years later (Abbeloos-Lamy 1877: 27-28). According to Mari ibn Suleiman e 'Amr, he was a Mesopotamian (for an in-depth analysis of the structure and origin of the works, see Debié 2015: 640; Debié actually collocates the redaction of the *Liber Turris* by 'Amr in the 11th c. and identifies in Mari just a prosecutor of 'Amr's work for episodes concerning the period from the 11th c. to the 1147). Contrarily, Barhebraeus says he was a Persian and able to speak as a native speaker both Persian and Syriac (see Abbeloos-Lamy 1877: 27-34). Anyway, the Aramaic origin of his and his father's name is evident (cf. Chaumont 1988: 138). Historians place his death under the reign of Šapur (309-379): according to 'Amr in 326-327 (cf. Gismondi 1899: 9), according to Barhebraeus in 335 (Abbeloos-Lamy 1877: 27-34). Cf. Labourt 1904: 18-28; Chaumont 1988: 137-145

himself above the bishops of the regions who were thither gathered to judge him.⁷⁰⁹ And he was very arrogant towards the priests and the deacons of his town. And [Miles] understood the pride of that man [and his blasphemy]⁷¹⁰ against them and his ruin, that [comes] from God. He rose in the middle [of the crowd]⁷¹¹ and he told him: "Why do you dare to exalt yourself above your brothers and your members? And [why] do you compete with them in vain and without reason, as a godless man? Is it not written thus: *He who is your chief, he himself should be your servant*⁷¹²". Papa told him: "You, oh fool, you want to teach me [these things]! Do I not indeed know these things myself?". And suddenly [Miles] approached and put the Gospel he had in his bag on a pillow before him [i.e. Papa] and told him: "If you do not want to learn from me, because it is from a man, then you are condemned by the Gospel of Our Lord; this one that, lo, I put before your profane eyes, since you do not see his command with the hidden

⁷⁰⁹ Acts of Miles is not the only witness of this first attested Synod of the Church of Persia. The Synod of Papa is also attested: a) by the Acts of the so-called Synod of Dadisho', gathered in Markabta in 424 (cf. Chabot 1902: 43-53 [Syriac], 285-298 [French translation]); b) by the probably apocryphal epistular correspondence of Papa (cf. Braun 1894: 163-182, 546-565); c) by historiographical texts as the work by Barhebraeus (13th c.; cf. Abbeloos and Lamy 1877: 27-34), the Haddad Cronicle (*Mukhtasar al-Akhbar al-Bi'iyâ*, in Arabic, probably dated to the 10th-11th c.; see Haddad 2000, cf. Teule 2009 : 161-77), the *Chronicle of Arbela* (whose composition is now dated, with some doubts, to the 6th c.; cf. Kawerau 1895; Ramelli 2002); d) a reference can be found also in the *Chronicle of Seert* that lists the names of the bishops who opposed against Papa, mentioning Miles of Susa, Gadyab (o Gadhimhab) of Gundešapur (Beth Lapat; in the Martyrdom, he is supposed to be the one who consecrated Miles bishop, see above, par. 3, p. 199) 'Abdisho' of Kaškar, Yohannân of Maišan, Andreas of Beth Mihraq, Abrahâm of Šuštar, David of Perath d-Maišan (see Scher 1908: 26 [236]; cf. Chaumont 1988: 138). If the narrative nucleus is common to the various sources, deep differences emerge in relation in particular to the more or less favorable position expressed toward Papa and his actions. I have analysed in depth the sources and the positions they express in a recent article (Di Rienzo 2017: 637-654); in this contribution, I proposed to hypothesize an antecedence of the against-Papa position and a posteriority of the pro-Papa one (see *ibidem*, in particular 651-654): I base my supposition in particular on the observation that if even the sources which express a position favorable to Papa present references to his unrespectful attitude towards the Gospel Book and, more than this, speak of his paralysis as a punishment for this behavior, it is at least licit to imagine that the original nucleus of the episode should include those elements; from this observation it is logical to derive the hypothesis that the original source for the episode is the *Martyrdom of Miles*.

⁷¹⁰ L2 adds

⁷¹¹ L2 adds

⁷¹² Matthew 20, 27

eye of your mind". Then [the impious⁷¹³] Papa, with his evil⁷¹⁴ fury, raised his hand with rage and, smiting the Gospel against him, he said [with derision⁷¹⁵]: "Speak, Gospel! Speak!".

7. The holy Miles, then, was moved; and he ran to take the Gospel, and he kissed it, and he put it against his eyes. And he loudly said, so that all that assembly could hear: "Since you, with your pride, venture against the living words of Our Lord, lo, His angel⁷¹⁶ will come and will strike half of you and will dry it up. And many will dread and fear. And you will not die immediately, but you will remain [as] a sign and a wonder". And at that very moment he (i.e. the angel) descended from the sky in the appearance of a lightning and struck him and dried up half of his body; and he fell sick on one side of him, with unspeakable torment, for twelve years. And for this same distress he died. And there were fear and trembling among all that assembly.

8. And thence [Miles] went to the region of Mēšān,⁷¹⁷ to [visit] a solitary man who lived in the desert. And it happened [that] the lord of that region had been sick of a severe disease for two years. And he heard that Miles had arrived there. And he sent asking Miles to go to him. Then [Miles] told the one who spoke with him: "Go! And when you enter, say aloud: 'Miles said: In the name of Jesus the Nazarene, be healed and stand up and walk!'"⁷¹⁸ And this was done this way, and it was successful. And the man was healed and stood up and came to him, and he and the inhabitants of that region glorified God. And many converted because of this miracle. Again, there was a young man seized by a demonic spirit and, because of it, he had been mute since his youth. And so, as soon as [Miles] saw him, he prayed

⁷¹³ L2 adds

⁷¹⁴ According to L2, *violent*

⁷¹⁵ L2 adds

⁷¹⁶ According to L2, *the angel of the Lord*

⁷¹⁷ Corresponding to the ancient Characene reign. The reference to the "lord of the region" in Miles text allows to deduce that at the beginning of the 4th century a local sovereign – vassal of the Sasanians- reigned on that region. Cf. Jullien 2004: 160

⁷¹⁸ The recurrence of healing miracles is typical of hagiographic texts, meant to present a parallel between the saint and Christ and his apostles and disciples. The parallel with Christ is also clear here in the usual words the holy man uses in his healing attempt ("rise and walk!"), reminding the ones generally used by Jesus himself (cf. for instance, the episode of the healed paralytic in Matthew 9:5-6; Mark 2: 9-11; Luke 5: 22-24; John 5:8)

and signed him in the name of Jesus, and that spirit departed from him and it nevermore came back. And many things like these were performed by his hand in that region, to the glory of God.

9. And thence he went to the region of Beit Raziqāyē;⁷¹⁹ and he arrived in a village, and there was a noble woman. And a hard disease had paralyzed all her limbs for nine years. And the news [about] where [Miles] lived was heard, and her servants carried and brought her there, before him. And he noticed her and saw that she was suffering, because she prayed him very much. Then he told her: “Do you believe in the Only God, namely that He [alone] can heal you?”. She told him: “I believe, my lord! There is a one and only God and there is nobody else but Him”. Then he rose up, prayed, took her hand and told her: “In the name of God, in which you believe, rise and walk! And get well from your disease!”. And at that very moment that woman was healed from her disease. And she rose and went home. And there was joy in the entire village.

10. And, in that same village, two men came to him, one of them wanting his companion to swear for the theft of something. Miles told the one who swore: “Now, my son, you shall not swear falsely and wrongly accuse your companion of all these things”. And he did not listen to him and dared to swear. Then [Miles] looked at him and told him: “If what you swore is true, go to your temple, being faithful and firm, and if not, you will catch the leprosy of Gehazi,⁷²⁰ and, being ashamed, you will go out from there”. And that man immediately became completely leprous. And there was a great fear in that entire village, and many converted from paganism in that [village].

11. And [Miles] departed from there to go to another place. And two brothers went with him as companions. And they arrived at a great river, which forbade them to enter it for one day, because it did not allow a passage on foot. Then [Miles] persuaded his brothers, and he rose and prayed and let them go, so that they would return to their region. Indeed, they departed a little from him, observing him, [to see] what he would really do or how he would cross [the river]; and he rose up and prayed and walked above it, above the river; and he crossed [it] not even losing his sandals from his feet.⁷²¹

⁷¹⁹ For some observations on the itinerary of Miles, see above, p. 112

⁷²⁰ Cf. *2Kings* 5, 27

⁷²¹ Like most saints (and especially martyrs), Miles is presented as a kind of *alter Christus*. So, his actions and his speeches are characterized by a comparison to Jesus' ones. One of these, is the walking on the water allowing him to cross the river (cf. Matthew 14: 22-23; Mark 6: 45-52; John 6: 15-21).

And he arrived in a village where he found a deacon who was accused of adultery. And he summoned him and accused him in the church. And he told him: "Confess, my son, whether you are [truly] guilty of that [matter], and show penitence towards God. Because He is merciful and forgives your sins.⁷²² And do not dare, while you are not pure, to serve before Him, because His justice will immediately destroy you!". That man was persistent and told him: "Ah! My lord! Do not sin and speak wickedly to me, because I am falsely accused of this matter!". And he dared to take the writings of David; he went up on the throne to sing, and a sort of palm of hand came out from the temple and casted him down, because of his sins; and he suddenly fell and died. And there was a great fear in that entire region.

12. There was in that village a young man who, from his mother's womb, crawled on his knees, because his feet were distorted at the level of his shin-bones; and when [Miles] saw him, he rose up and prayed and he took him by his hand and told him: "In the name of Jesus Nazarene, rise up and walk!".⁷²³ And at that very moment he strengthened his feet and his bones were made able to move⁷²⁴; and he was healed and rose up and walked. And, he was ten years old, that young boy who was healed. About all the signs and great cures that, indeed, by the power of God, were performed by Miles' hand we cannot write, because they are so many. We shortly arrive, then, to the great sign of his blood and to the excellent suffering of his murder and to the glorious martyrdom, crown of his victories.

13. The lord of that region, whose name was Hormizda Guprizes, heard about the fame of his catechizing; he was impious and arrogant and proud and vainglorious.⁷²⁵ And he summoned [Miles] in

⁷²² According to L2; the other witnesses: *He [...] forgives you*

⁷²³ Cf. the evangelical episode of Jesus healing a paralysed man (Luke 5: 23-24; Matthew 9:5-6; Mark 2:9-10; John 5:8-9); similar miracle is performed by Peter, using similar words, in Acts 3:6 (*Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk"*).

⁷²⁴ According to V1, L2: *and he was made able to move his bones*

⁷²⁵ The description of the governon Hormizda has strange but meaningful parallels with that of Papa; cf. above paragr. 6-7, and in Part I.2, pp. 110-111

the city of Maheldagdar⁷²⁶ of Raziqāyē and bound him prisoner there for an entire year;⁷²⁷ and with him two of his disciples, Abrusim and Sinay. And even with strokes and pains, for three times he tormented them⁷²⁸ to make them worship the Sun. But they mocked him more and more, and they despised his pride and his arrogance against them; and they stood firm in their determination and they faithfully and truly magnified the glory of their God.

And the following year, at the same period when he had bound them prisoners, there was a great hunting outside, on the mountain, and the impious [Hormizda] was participating.⁷²⁹ And his heart rejoiced very much in his pride, and he gave command to bring the three saints in chains. And as they rose up before him, he asked the blessed Miles, in a mocking way, telling him: “Are you a god or a man? And what is your faith? And what is your doctrine? Tell us your truth, and I will understand it, and so I will follow you. But then, if you will not make us know those things you hold, today I will behead you like one of those animals!”. But the blessed one knew the dissimulation of that man and his unfaithfulness, and he told him: “I am a man and not a god. And I will not reveal my true faith to your vain dissimulation. And I will not infuse my pure doctrine into your impure ears. But, lo, I tell you a right word: Alas [, alas] for you! Oh, wicked, cruel man! And especially for all those who, as you, remain godless! Because, in His justice, God decrees about you that, in the time that comes, [you will be] in the Gehenna, and [in] the darkness, and mourning and gnashing of teeth is prepared and [will] repay your pride forever and ever, because you did not understand that he was Him who gave you those great things that, at this present day, you enjoy and in which you take delight”.

14. But that wicked man was sitting on the throne and many people were standing before him; and when he heard these [things] he greatly inflamed, and he rose up in his fury and drew out his scimitar, that was bound to his thigh, and he beat the holy Miles on the shoulder from the front proceeding to his

⁷²⁶ City attested just in the *Acts of Miles*, it was the place where the tribunal and the prison were. Actually, the name ܡܗܠܕܘܕܐܘܪ could be meant as an emphatic expression indicating “The City of Raziqāyē” par excellence, i.e. the capital of the region (Ray); so, following Gignoux, Jullien (2004: 158) suggests seeing in the name a word composed by the Persian *mahal* (meaning “place”) and the Syriac ܡܚܠܐ (meaning “cistern”), and consequently in Maheldagdar a neighbourhood of Ray.

⁷²⁷ Lit. *from season to season*

⁷²⁸ According to V1, B. V2, L2: *They tormented them* (or *they were tormented*, though actually the ܐܘܪܘܢ of the person construction of ܡܚܠܐ in the Ethpa’el form usually has active sense). For a detailed study on the imprisonment and tortures the Persian martyrs undergo, see C. Jullien 2004b.

⁷²⁹ The hunting was a typical Sasanian royal practice; cf. on that the Story of Mar Qardagh (ed. Walker 2006: in particular, 121-163); cf. also Harper 1978; Gignoux 1983.

back. And by doing that, he troubled [the others], so that a wicked brother of that impious man, whose name was Narsā, drew out his scimitar as well and beat him (i.e. Miles) on his side, going out from the front. And when the great victorious man was at the doors of the Sheol and was invited at the banquet of death, hastening to sit down, in his lovely death, he prophesied about the two brothers' miraculous death, telling them at the same time: "Because you are very similar in your cruel brotherhood, and you have been joined in your bitter partnership in killing the pious men and shedding blood in vain, lo, tomorrow at this [same] hour, both your blood will be shed by each other's hands, in this place. And the dogs will lick your blood, and the birds of the sky will eat your flesh,⁷³⁰ and your mother will be bereaved of you two, and your women will be left widows of you both on the same day". And having said these [things], the soul of the saint left him. Then, that impious [Ormizda] gave order concerning the glorious Abrusim and Sinay and made them ascend two hills, one in front of the other, and he sent there many men from his army, and there they stoned them, in the same hour when the blessed Miles had been killed.

15. Then he, that Guprizes, passed the night in that place, and very early in the morning the great⁷³¹ hunting of animals started for him and he lifted his heart up in his pride and exalted himself, and neglected and removed from his ear his (i.e. of Miles) word of truth and, at the same hour when the blessed Miles had been killed, the sentence of the glorious one fell upon those belligerent brothers,⁷³² experts of the arc and valiant with the lance, trained in the blood and assiduous in the hunting. Since a doe forced the linen garments⁷³³ by which animals are captured, and swiftly went out, and they rode after her, the two swift-to-die ones, swiftly because they swiftly killed. And they were delimited, one by this side and one by this [other one]⁷³⁴, and they equally threw both arrows, so that both, one opposite the other, would skilfully strike the doe. But the arrow of Guprizes reached and passed through the belly of Narsā. And the arrow of Narsā went straight towards the breast of Guprizes. Both archers fell and died there, in the same place where the blessed Miles had been killed.⁷³⁵ And there were a vision of

⁷³⁰ This was a Persian practice hint at a persian practice (see on that the *Eyclopaedia Iranica Online*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/burial-iii>; cf. also Francisco 2016)

⁷³¹ Lit. *Not little* (litotes)

⁷³² V1: *Upon the two brothers*. V1 witness stops here, having lost a *folio*; the loss is indicated by a Latin footnote

⁷³³ Meaning, *the nets*?

⁷³⁴ According to L2: *And they were divided from one another, each one from his side*

⁷³⁵ The death of the two brothers, who kill each other by mistake, recalls the Greek myth of the Aloadae, Otus and Ephialtes, who kill each other while they are trying to strike with their spears Artemis changed into a doe.

marvel and a sound of trembling in the entire region. And the animals and the birds ate their bodies, since the Persians do not bury [the corpses] until the flesh wastes away from the bones, and then they entomb the bones.

16. That same night, the inhabitants collected the corpses of the three martyrs⁷³⁶ and carried and buried them in a village called Malqan.⁷³⁷ Thus, even in their death, a great portent was manifested through them. Since the thieves were continuing to arrive every time in that region to capture and devastate, they oftentimes reached the borders of that village but were kept back and could not commit any destruction there. And its inhabitants believed that it was because of the blessing of the bones of the righteous ones, which were laying in that place, they (i.e. the thieves) were not allowed to enter.⁷³⁸ The saints were crowned on the 30th of the lunar month of Tešri the second⁷³⁹.

⁷³⁶ In L2 a different hand corrects “martyrs” (ܡܪܝܪܝܘܬܐ) in “godless ones” (ܡܢܠܝܗܘܬܐ; sic!); this misunderstanding is probably due to the loss of one or more folios: f. 14v ends here, as well as the story of Miles (the following folio already belongs to another text); maybe the reader (I must suppose the copy he is reading has already lost the folio) thought it was an error by the redactor who was still talking about the corpses of Guprizes and Narsā

⁷³⁷ The village is not attested elsewhere but here; cf. Jullien 2004: 159.

⁷³⁸ For the term ܡܘܨܝܩܝܐ, I embrace the translation “*thiefs*” proposed by R. Payne (2015: 77), who guesses they probably came from the nearby Alburz Mountains. An alternative possible translation would be “Sabaeans”. The protection granted to a city by the presence of the relics of a saint is a hagiographical *topos* (cf. e.g. a similar episode in the *Acts of Christopher*, 28, see below p. 312). In some way, the holy reliques (i.e. holiness) replace the local rulers (i.e. political power) in the task of protecting the city. An interesting parallel could be traced with the protection that Jesus promises to Abgar in the *Teaching of Addai* (Desreumaux 1993: 59); see, on that, Debié 2010: 71-75.

⁷³⁹ November. B adds the ending: *The martyrdom of the Blessed Miles is finished*

2. Translated Hagiography: the *Acts of Christopher and His Companions*

2.1 The Tradition

An original holy personage is the protagonist of two surprising stories: the story of a monstrous and scary dog-headed saint, and that of a giant desiring to serve the most powerful king of all and finally finding Jesus. The cynocephalus and the giant are actually the same saint, Christopher; the martyr is celebrated in the East on the day 9th May, in the West he is remembered on the 25th July.

The *Martyrdom of Christopher* is indeed a surprising, peculiar text.⁷⁴⁰ It is surprising since it presents a good monster as its protagonist, which is very unusual in hagiography.⁷⁴¹ It is peculiar since the text itself has lived a very interesting path, developing the original nucleus, consisting in the martyrdom - the probably given historical datum - in a completely new tale, with a brand-new protagonist.

The first witnesses of the existence of a martyr named Christopher, persecuted under the reign of Decius according to the sources, date back to the 5th century. The first literary mention of the story of Christopher can be found in the *Martyrologium Ieronimianum*, supposed to derive its information from an ancient *Martyrologium Syriacum*: the document, for the 25th of July, alludes to the martyrdom of a certain Christopher, under Decius; the data coincide with those provided by the *Acts*, even if we cannot, at this stage, deduce a derivation of one from another.⁷⁴² Christopher, whose original name was actually Reprebus, was a dog-headed man from the land of cynocephalus and men-eating people, enlisted in the Roman army and then converted to Christianity; he was finally martyred. The literary tradition, according to the sources survived in Syriac, Greek, Latin and other, including modern, languages, places the martyrdom during the reign of the Roman emperor Decius, i.e. around 250 CE.⁷⁴³

⁷⁴⁰ Available editions of the text in the various traditions: for the Latin, Mombritius 1910 (original edition ca. 1475): 364- 367 (BHL 1767); 'Passio Sancti Christophori Martyris' (BHL 1764), Analecta Bollandiana 1 (1882): 394-405; 'Passio Sancti Christophori Martyris' (BHL 1766), Acta Sanctorum Julii 6: 146-149. For the Greek, Usener 1886: 54-76 (BHG 309 and 310c), Van Hooff 1891: 394-405 (BHG 310). For the Syriac, Popescu 1903: 1-29 [Syriac], 30-47 [German translation]

⁷⁴¹ Cf. my contribution, Di Rienzo 2019b? (forthcoming)

⁷⁴² Cf. Richter 1896:18. The reference to the 25th July for the celebration is the date provided by the Western tradition, since in the East the martyrdom is placed on the 9th Nisan, according to the Syriac sources, on the 9th May, in the Greek tradition.

⁷⁴³ As I will show, there are problems in placing the martyrdom in the middle of the 3rd c.: these problems are linked both to the mention of the army where Reprebus was enlisted, the *numerus Marmaritarum*, and to the reference to the third or fourth year of reign of Decius as the year when Christopher was martyred; Decius, indeed,

Even the first epigraphic attestations of the cult of Christopher come from the East and from the 5th century: an inscription found in Haidar Pacha, reports the building and dedication, on the 22nd of September 452, by the bishop Eulalios of Chalcedon, of a church in honour of the martyr, in Bithynia.⁷⁴⁴ And if an icon of the dog-headed Christopher seen in the St Catherine monastery on Mount Sinai during the reign of Justinian has not been found,⁷⁴⁵ a 6th century terracotta found near Vinica, in Macedonia, portrays a dog-headed Saint Christopher, in company of the martyr George: this is the very first evidence of the dog-headed saint we have. Besides that, among the signatories of the Council of Constantinople of 536 we read the name of a certain Photinus from the not better identified monastery of St. Christopher τῶν Ταρυλλίου.⁷⁴⁶

Everything suggests an Eastern origin of the cult and, at the same time, of the legend.

It is already from the 6th century that the cult had started spreading to the West: in Sicily, according to Gregory the Great, there was a monastery dedicated to the Saint; then, in the timespan of a pair of centuries, we have attestations of the same cult through an inscription in Rome (687-8 CE), a chapel in Reims (attested in 535, at the death of Saint Rémi), a basilica in the nearby of Ravenna (mentioned in the *Liber Pontificalis*, in 743), a relic conserved in Toledo (7th c.)⁷⁴⁷. A still preserved image in Sancta Maria Antiqua, in Rome (10th century) portrays a figure recognizable by the name (*Cristofarus*) and, despite the fact that the painting is not in a good state, by the rest of a blooming branch (reference to the miraculous blooming narrated in the *Martyrdom*). The cult of Christopher knows an enormous success in the Middle Ages; Christopher is very well known in the East as well as in the West; actually, in the two areas, we are not dealing with the same figure, but rather with two different interpretations of the same saint.

Surprisingly, as his fame and success spread out, Christopher has soon lost his most peculiar attribute: the dog head.

Christophorus genere Cananeus procerissime stature uultuque terribilis erat et xii cubitos in longitudine possidebat. Qui, ut in quibusda, gestis suis legitur, cum staret cum quodam

reigned for less than two years – actually, this second problem does not apply to half of the Syriac tradition, which places the martyrdom in the first year of his reign; see below, pp. 233 [Syr], 278 [English]. It should be noticed that, at a certain time, the reference to Decius disappears in the Latin tradition, being replaced by the name of Dagnus/ Dano, and the story is relocated in Samo, instead of Antioch and its nearby.

⁷⁴⁴ Halkin 1973: 28; cf. Racine (2006: 114, n. 316), Martelli (2015: 149)

⁷⁴⁵ Ameisenowa 1949:42, Racine 2006:104,

⁷⁴⁶ Cf. Martelli 2015: 149

⁷⁴⁷ Rosenfeld 1937; cf. also the review of Rosenfeld's book by V. Grumel, in *Échos d'Orient* (Grumel 1938: 464-470)

rege Cananeorum, uenit sibi in mente ut maiorem principem qui in mundo esset quereret
et ad eundem secum moraturus accederet.

This is the beginning of the story of saint Christopher, according to the *Legenda Aurea*⁷⁴⁸. It is the 13th century, and Jacopo da Varazze does not speak about a cynocephalus: in his tale, Christopher is a giant. The new story, though in the second part of the text it is a sort of summary of the older version of the legend, revealing the dependence on the original Eastern martyrdom (which is also known in Latin, in more than one redaction, in some cases divergent from the Greek-Syriac tradition), begins narrating another apologue: the giant Christopher goes along the world, looking for the most powerful of all kings, to become his soldier. First, he is attendant of a powerful king; then, he becomes servant of the Devil; finally, he understands that the greatest of all is Christ. Instructed in the Christian faith by an eremite and having asked how he could serve his new king, he is appointed to transport on his shoulder from one to the other bank of a river people who needed to pass by. One day a child asks to be carried to the other side: he is Jesus in disguise. Christopher, during the transport, feels the child's weight increasing more and more and asks to his passenger what is happening. Jesus eventually reveals himself and explains that, carrying Him on his shoulder, the giant is carrying also the entire world.⁷⁴⁹

The *Golden Legend* is probably the most famous proof of the renovated portrait of Christopher, though not the earliest one: a lost German poem, composed in the 12th century (of which a rework, dated 1230-39, is preserved) should be the first literary witness; actually, it seems that the evolution should not have been produced in literature but in iconography. In about 1107, in the church of S. Vincenzo in Galliano, near Como, Saint Christopher is already portrayed as a giant.

⁷⁴⁸ Jacobus de Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, 100 (*De Sancto Christophoro*); for a recent critical edition of the text, see Maggioni (Maggioni 1998).

⁷⁴⁹ The references to Greek mythology and tradition are numerous in the story: from the imagine of the giant with the world on his shoulder, reminding the myth of Atlas, to the idea of transporting a Goddess by a river, who seems to be a reference to the story of the old Phaone, who transported Venus in disguise on his boat, earning, in return, a restored youth and beauty (cf. Virgil, *Aeneid* III 275; Ovid, *Eroides* 15); the motive of "carrying a God" can be also found in other mythological stories, characterized by an interesting link with the Christopher-problem: I mean the legend of Heracles carrying Eros and that of Hermes and Dionysus. The interest resides in the fact that both Hermes and Heracles have known a tight connection with the Egyptian dog-headed God, Anubis: in the Roman period, the "syncretistic" figures of Hermanubi and Heraclanubi knew a good success of cult. For a more in-depth analysis of the link of these Greek and Egyptian divinities with the legend of the dog-headed saint Christopher, see Saintyves's works (in particular 1936 and 1924: 376-383).

2.1.1 Eastern and Western Traditions

We do not know in which language the text was originally redacted. Manuscript tradition is very varied and complex, counting witnesses in Greek, Latin, Syriac and various other (even medieval vulgar) languages; but if it is difficult to follow the evolution of the text and its transmission, it seems to me reasonable to exclude the possibility of a Latin original. The references to the Eastern world, to Antioch, to the bishop Babylas (whose episcopate is traditionally placed during the reign of Decius, in 250 ca.), as well as the first attestations of a cult of Christopher found in the Eastern regions (Bithynia, Sinai), and the link with Egyptian traditions (as the cult of the dog-headed God Anubis, but also with the Christian Apocryphal *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew*, whose origins are likely to be found in Egypt), have been used to corroborate an Oriental (Greek or even Syriac) origin of the narration⁷⁵⁰.

The Syriac tradition should be divided into two branches:

- a first one, whose manuscript tradition dates back to the 9th c., is expressed by the witness preserved in the codex Vatican Syr. 161 and three much later manuscripts from the 17th-19th centuries (Cambridge Add. 2020, Berlin Kön. Bibl. or. Quart 1051, Berlin Kön. Bibl. Syr. 74);
- a second branch can be observed in at least two late 12th c. manuscripts, BL Add 12174 and Damascus 12/17-18.

Differences between the two branches do not concern the general structure and contents of the tale; they are mainly stylistic, although some variations in the name of some characters seems to indicate an attempt to “syriacising” the text.⁷⁵¹

Concerning the Greek and Latin, for both traditions a critical edition in strict sense, accompanied by an analysis of the relationship among the manuscripts, does not exist yet.

The BHG recognized three *recensiones* of the Acts: 1a (BHG 309), 1b (310) and 2 (cf. BHG 311)⁷⁵².

⁷⁵⁰ Cf. among others, Saint-Yves 1936: 11-21. Actually, the references to Antioch could be interpreted as successive, (maybe in polemical reply to the Egyptian and Alexandrian origin of the legend which has been hypothesised; cf. below, p. 217).

⁷⁵¹ On that point, see below, p. 227.

⁷⁵² Some excerpts of this redaction have been published by Lavriotis (1900: 472-474); according to this available part of the text, it does not seem we are dealing with an original version, compared to the other Greek ones, except for the title and the attribution to Peter of Ittalia (sic!) at the beginning (according to Lavriotis' edition; a check of the manuscript source would be necessary).

Actually, the Pinakes database goes even further, and identifies 12 recensions (308w-311m)⁷⁵³; the oldest attested redaction is the one classified as 309, whose oldest manuscript witness probably comes from the 8th- 9th c. The witness preserved in the Par Gr 1470 (dated 890) and published by Usener in 1886, belongs to this tradition. Usener proposes in parallel the edition of the variants contained in another Parisian manuscript, the Par Gr 1534 (12th c.), exponent of the recension 310 c (Greek 1b?), according to Pinakes. Considering the antiquity of the tradition and the proximity with the Syriac text, the recension 309 (Greek 1a) is reasonably the basis-text on which the Syriac translation has been done, if one supposes the precedence of the Greek tradition - as most scholars and myself do -, or, vice versa, the first Greek translation from Syriac. Greek 1b (BHG 310), represented by the Leiden codex Periz. F. 10 (11th c.) published by Van Hoof in 1891, shows some interesting differences from 1a (BHG 309)⁷⁵⁴; we should suppose an independent derivation from a common original tradition or, on the contrary, innovations made by the author of one of the two *recensiones*.⁷⁵⁵

In any case, as things are, it is impossible to put an end-word to this question; one should check all the Greek witnesses before stating anything. Without a critical edition of the Greek text and a study on the manuscript tradition, even an identification of the original language and, beyond that, of the original recension of the text is impossible if not at a very hypothetical (and absolutely uncertain) way.⁷⁵⁶

Even more difficult is the situation of the Latin tradition. Here too a complete study on the manuscript tradition does not exist.⁷⁵⁷ According to the BHL, manuscript witnesses belong to more than 20 different

⁷⁵³ <http://pinakes.irht.cnrs.fr/notices/saint/173/>

⁷⁵⁴ Van Hooff 1891: 394-405

⁷⁵⁵ The mentioned narrative elements regard, in particular: the direct intervention of Satan disguised into a man (ed. Van Hoof par 24.), differences in the whole episode of the arriving and conversion of the soldiers at the saint's place (paragraphs 6-7; e.g. the miraculous multiplication of the food is operated by an angel, Raphael, the singing of a Psalm), the reference to the vanity of the name of Christ explicitly stated by the words of Decius (par.9), the fact that it is Christopher himself to incite the soldiers to manifest their faith, when it is the right moment (par.20).

⁷⁵⁶ The difficulty emerges even in analyzing the data given by BHG and Pinakes and comparing them each other and with the witnesses themselves: it seems strange, for instance, that the Pinakes database collocates in the group 309 both the mentioned Par Gr 1470 (edited by Usener) and the Leiden codex Periz. F. 10 (11th c.); as it is clear from the edition and translation of this last witness by Van Hooff, we are dealing with a different recension; BHG actually collocates this text among the 310 (1b), not 309 (1a); and the texts published by Usener and Van Hoof's are indeed really different. All this to say that studying in a precise and correct way the tradition is not possible without a critical edition and study of the manuscript tradition of the *Acts*.

⁷⁵⁷ Even the subdivision proposed by BHL is not completely trustful; I could not investigate the whole Latin manuscript tradition, but for what I have seen consulting some of the witnesses, some problematical points clearly

extant recensions; the oldest codex preserving the text in Latin dates to the 8th century. Actually, this oldest attested recension (BHL 1766) already differs enough from the Greek-Syriac ones, presenting another king, Dagnus, instead of Decius, and a very different end, with the king's miraculous healing from the wounding caused by an arrow, through the holy relics of saint Christopher, and his consequent conversion.⁷⁵⁸ Even the description of Reprebus as *canineus* in his appearance and not as a cynocephalus seems to be a re-elaboration.

It exists a Latin version (BHL 1764, whose manuscript tradition dates back to the 9th-10th c.) which seems to be more faithful to the Eastern ones, even if it is a literary re-elaboration, with some insertions. The witness found in the manuscript Par N.A. Lat 2179, published in *Analecta Bollandiana* in 1882, is supposed to belong to this tradition.⁷⁵⁹ Latin BHL 1764 shows familiarity with the Greek 1b version (BHG 310); it shares, indeed, some of the elements which characterize the Greek 1b redaction.⁷⁶⁰ At any rate, the Latin source adds some further elements of innovations and passages; it is probable, for instance, that the final apparition of Christ himself to the saint at the moment of his execution is an addition by the Latin redactor (or his ancestor), due to his own taste.⁷⁶¹

emerge. I do not understand, for instance, why the Par Lat 17002 and the Par N.A. Lat 2179 should belong to two different redactions – namely 1764 and 1766 – as they clearly provide the same text, though the Par Lat 17002 is imperfect and misses the beginning. And actually, contrarywise, the Würzburg MP. TH. F. 28 is supposed to belong to the BHL 1766: this is the witness on which the edition of the Martyrdom in *Acta Sanctorum* is based, and it is completely different from the Par Lar 17002 (BHL 1766 as well!). These things stated, an upgrade of the database, based on a new revision of the manuscript witnesses is necessary.

⁷⁵⁸ The oldest witness of the Latin Martyrdom (Würzburg MP. TH. F. 2) has been published in *Acta Sanctorum*: 'Passio Sancti Christophori Martyris', *Acta Sanctorum Julii* 6: 146-149. It belongs to the BHL 1766 version.

⁷⁵⁹ 'Passio Sancti Christophori Martyris' (BHL 1764), *Analecta Bollandiana* 1 (1882): 394-405. On the reasons internal to the text leading me to suppose a deep link with the Syriac tradition in particular, see below, pp. 217-218 and 288 (n. 1135).

⁷⁶⁰ See e.g. the apparition of Satan in disguise, the angel who multiplies the food, the singing of the Psalm, the "vain name of Christ", Christopher's incitation to the soldier when it is time to confess they are Christian. Cf. the Greek 1b Leiden codex Periz. F. 10, ed. Van Hooff 1891. The numbering of paragraphs is the same for the Latin and for Van Hooff's edition of the Greek.

⁷⁶¹ Much interesting the reference to Reprebus who initially preaches having his head covered by a veil and then puts off the veil and shows his face (scaring the bystanders; par. 2): the episode is not present in the Greek 1a/Syriac tradition; indeed, it recalls a scene of the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* (see Martelli 2015: 85-88). Innovations also include a meaningful change of the baptizer of Christopher, identified in a certain priest Peter (maybe meaning Peter of Alexandria, it has been proposed), and of the bishop who collects the corpse of the martyr, Athanasius of Italy (an identification with Athanasius of Alexandria has been proposed as well; while the error Italia instead of Attalia can be also found in some Greek and Syriac sources).

It seems reasonable to suppose that this Latin BHL 1764 redaction depends on the Greek 1b version, innovating in some points.

In sum, we have seen that in Latin at least two major different traditions exist, and they will have parallel life, since in the 9th century and later we have attestations of the BHL 1764 version and considering that since the 8th century a much innovative version emerges. This last version will have a great fortune in the West: the BHL 1766 *recensio* includes witnesses from the 8th to the 15th century.

From the 12th century, a completely new version emerges, expressed by the one preserved in the *Golden Legend* by Jacopo da Varazze. This version presents an introductory digression where Christopher is presented as a giant searching for the most powerful one of all and finally leading Jesus disguised into a child to one to the other bank of a river. In the second part of the narration, the story of the martyrdom recurs; although we are dealing with a summarized version of the tale, considering some narrative elements, one can easily notice that the author of the original version on which the *Legenda Aurea* depends, knows both the Latin BHL 1764 version and the BHL 1766 one (published in *Acta Sanctorum*): the reference to Samo and the name of the king (Dano, Dagno) and the original end with the healing of the king show a dependence from the BHL 1766 recension; on the other hand, minor elements as the reference to the covering-uncovering of the face, the prostitutes who embrace the saint, the reference to the vain name of Christ, actually cannot be found in the BHL 1766 tradition and they should depend on the BHL 1764 version. Actually, both the reference to the embraces of the prostitutes and that to the saint hiding his face are among the innovations made by the Latin redactor on the Greek 1b, which, according to our knowledge, does not refer to these elements.

Differences between the different witnesses and the various recensions -if of *recensiones* one can talk- cannot be analyzed more in depth in absence of critical editions.

However, it is of great interest trying to follow an important evolution in the texts; an evolution which translates also in the iconography of the saint and, more meaningfully for us, in a complete innovation in the contents themselves of the legend: i.e. the transformation of Christopher from a cynocephalus into a giant.

2.1.2 Historicity of Christopher and of His Martyrdom

Though the text has many legendary traits which make us doubt about the historical existence of the saint, the oldness of the attestations (and in particular the mention of his name in the *Martyrologium*) has been interpreted as possible evidence of the real historical existence of a martyr called Christopher. Concerning the historicity of Christopher, some elements are actually problematic. An analysis by

Woods has pointed out some possible interpretations of the facts⁷⁶²; Woods even suggests replacing the martyrdom in a time different from the age of Decius, when the *Acts* place it. We should start from the evidence that the Greek sources – and, among those ones, the easily available ones, at least, since a critical study of the whole manuscript tradition does not exist - place the martyrdom in the 4th year of the reign of Decius; this is actually unhistorical, as Decius' reign lasted less than two years.⁷⁶³ All the Greek witnesses and even the Syriac ones mention Antioch – and Perge - as the place where the facts happens;⁷⁶⁴ but there is no historical evidence of the presence of Decius in Antioch ever. Problematic is also the mentioning of the bishop Peter of Attalia - or "Italia", as some sources call him -: we do not know anything about the existence of a bishop by this name in that places, for that time. So, if one aims at trying to imagine the historical background for the story, the hagiographic work is very unreliable.

The most difficult point resides anyway in the reference, clear and precise, to the enlistment of Reprebus in the so-called *numerus Marmaritanum*; the reference is present in all the different linguistic traditions. Just one historical military unit is identified by this name, i.e. the *Cohors III Valeria Marmaritarum*. The name of the *Cohors* has been preserved in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a document recording names and locations of the units of the Roman army. The document, for the part where the reference to the Marmaritae *cohortes* can be found, should date to the 394 ca. The location of the *cohortes* in Syria is meaningful, as it coincides with the references to Antioch present in the text. The *Cohors III Valeria Marmaritarum* seems having been instituted by Diocletian, taking its name from his daughter Galeria Valeria. So, the reference to the enlistment in the Marmaritae army is not compatible with the martyrdom under Decius. It is therefore possible, as Woods argues, that the reference to Decius is a corruption of another name; this one should have originally been Daza. Daza actually was the name of Maximinus, Caesar of the Eastern part from 305 – so the date is compatible with the reference to the Marmaritae.

Woods has also noticed that an Ethiopic document concerning the martyrdom of Peter of Alexandria gives interesting elements helping us to reconstruct the possible facts. According to this document, Peter was consecrated bishop in the 19th year of the reign of Diocletian. After Easter, it happens that Marmarite people are captured and deported, and Peter rescues five hundred of these prisoners, as they pass through Alexandria. The reference to the 19th year is problematic, as we know that Peter was actually consecrated in 300 CE, while the 19th year of Diocletian's reign should fall between 302 and 303. Woods suggests associating the reference to the 19th year not to the consecration but to the deportation. Anyway, whether the Ethiopic text refers the date to the consecration or to the deportation, if we

⁷⁶² Woods 1999 (<https://www.ucc.ie/archive/milmart/chrsorig.html>)

⁷⁶³ Actually, the reference to Decius is common in martyrial texts and can be interpreted as topical.

⁷⁶⁴ In the Latin tradition and since the first reworking of the text, a reference to Samo of Licia appears; we have witnesses of this since the 8th century (but it is not Decius anymore the persecutor)

consider that the reference of the *Acts* to the enlistment of Reprebus in the Maramaritae army is historical, the 302 should be considered as the *terminus post quem* for his martyrdom. Woods goes even further, considering plausible an identification of Peter of Attalia, the bishop who according to the Martyrdom took the corps of the saint and brought him to his city, with the same Peter of Alexandria - Attalia (and Italia) should be a corruption of the name -. If Woods is right, we can provide also a *terminus ante quem* for the martyrdom, i. e. the 311: in this year Peter was martyred.⁷⁶⁵

More problematic appears the reference to Babylas of Antioch as baptizer of Christopher. The reference to Babylas, certainly martyred under Decius, is incompatible with the re-placement of the story of Christopher in the time of Maximinus and Diocletian. The Greek and Syriac sources refer to him, but some Latin *Acts* (e.g. BHL 1764) mention the name of a priest Peter as baptizer. Who is Peter? It has been suggested to identify him with the same Peter of Attalia and in turn with Peter of Alexandria. It is worth noting, anyway, that in the same Latin text (BHL 1764) the bishop who ransoms the body of the martyr is no longer Peter but a certain Athanasius of Italy. Woods suggests seeing in the reference to Babylas a later addition aimed at linking in a stronger way Christopher to the city of Antioch.⁷⁶⁶ The Latin *Acts* would reflect a different and probably earlier tradition, being based on a Greek lost previous *recensio*. What is mostly interesting, in my opinion, resides in two passages suggesting a Syriac source on which the Latin is based – or which it knows, at least. Both points are related to the name(s) of the protagonist. I mean in particular the following passage:

Et surgentes, arcesserunt presbyterum sancti loci, nomine Petrum. Veniens autem baptizavit milites, similiter autem et beatum Reprebum, et vocavit nomen ejus Christophorus, id est Christum induens.

It has been observed that the name Reprebus, mostly interpreted as a corruption of the Latin word *Reprobus*, could actually be based on an Aramaic word, deriving from *rabrab* (Syr. ܪܒܪܒܐ), meaning “very great”; it is, indeed, quite strange that the Latin source does not re-correct the corrupted word: it seems that the redactor does not recognize in the name a reference to the Latin word *reprobus*, “wicked”. More meaningful, according to me, is the translation provided by the Latin redactor for the name Christopher, translated as “*Christum induens*”: this is quite surely a calque of the Syriac ܪܒܪܒܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ - as the translation of the Greek name would have been “*Christum ferens*” instead; ܪܒܪܒܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ, indeed, is precisely the name of Christopher in the Syriac *Acts*.

So, the Latin *Acts*, in their recension 1764, could be Syriac-based; this anyway does not prevent us from

⁷⁶⁵ Woods is even more precise: according to a series of considerations, he suggests placing the martyrdom in May 308 (<https://www.ucc.ie/archive/milmart/chrsorig.html>); cf. also Woods 1994: 178.

⁷⁶⁶ I add that this could even be a polemical reply to the original Egyptian and Alexandrian traits of the *Acts*.

supposing an original Greek for the Syriac in turn. The extant Syriac sources appear as probably Greek-based. But we do not know whether the *Acts* were originally written in one or the other language.⁷⁶⁷ On the problem of the name of Christopher, something should be added. The name Christopher is not precisely or at least not necessarily a proper name; it is more likely an honorific title, often used to refer to a martyr. As Woods argues, the real name of Christopher could have been a different one.⁷⁶⁸ As the very first witnesses of the cult, including iconography, and the reference to the church and monasteries in his honor all refer to him as Christopher, as the *Acts* in all their redactions and languages also do, if the hypothesis is right the name was already lost at a very early date. If even the author of the supposed original lost version of the *Acts* did not know the real name of the saint, where can we search for that, in order to try to identify him? Woods suggests again looking at Egypt and Alexandria.⁷⁶⁹ There we find the remembering of a saint Menas, about which we do not know quite anything; his cult spread over his supposed burial chamber in the 4th century; the earliest account of his martyrdom is actually a fictional one, probably based on Basil's account on the martyrdom of the centurion Gordius.⁷⁷⁰ Both Greek and Coptic sources about Menas' martyrdom provide very poor material, from the historical point of view. An account attributed to Cyrus of Cotyaeum, born in Panopolis of Egypt and composing his work in 450 ca., says about Menas that he was a soldier, he came from a land far from the place where he was martyred, and, after the execution, his body was returned to his native land.⁷⁷¹ On the basis of these observations, Woods suggest identifying our Christopher with the historical Menas. Indeed, Woods' reconstruction of the facts, though suggestive, does not persuade me so much; although it is true that the mentioned elements about Menas really fit and correspond to what the *Acts of Christopher* narrate about the protagonist, I think that identifying the two personages means taking to extremes, without solid basis, the elements we have at our disposal.

2.1.3 From Cynocephalus to Giant

In order to try to understand the evolution of the portrait of the saint, two different lines should be considered: the loss of the dog-head and the motive of the carrying-Christ giant.

⁷⁶⁷ I hypothesize a Greek original redaction; cf. below, pp. 228-229

⁷⁶⁸ Woods 1999 (<https://www.ucc.ie/archive/milmart/chrsorig.html>)

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Cf. Woods 1994: 186; id. 1999 (<https://www.ucc.ie/archive/milmart/chrsorig.html>); on Cyrus, see Cameron 1982: 245-247.

The loss of the dog-head seems to be linked to a philological problem. If, therefore, Syriac and Greek sources agree in defining Christopher as cynocephalus, most of the ancient Latin witnesses referred to him as a man “(quasi) canineus capite” or “*Canineorum genere*”.⁷⁷² The switch from cynocephalus to *caninaeus*, in the passage from the Greek-Syriac tradition to Latin, is followed, it seems, by a further transformation. At a certain point, in the tradition, we notice a transition from *canineus* to *cananaeus*, so that the dog-headed man becomes a man from the Canaan land. It is interesting to notice that the change occurs inside the same Latin tradition, the BHL 1766, where witnesses having the variants *canineus* and *cananeus* coexist. When did this transition happen?

That is not completely clear, at this stage of the studies. As hypothesis, I would suggest looking at the period 8th- 9th century as a possible moment of transition, according to the coexistence of two factors:

- inside the Latin tradition, at least one 8th century witness still refers to Christopher as “*ex genere canineorum*”⁷⁷³, while from the 10th century on, in witnesses from the same Latin redaction (BHL 1766), the saint is usually defined as “*cananeus*” (later, “*chananeus*”)⁷⁷⁴;
- Without tracing any consequence from the previous observation, it is interesting to see that a reference to the martyrdom and legend of Christopher in the *Menologium Graecorum* for Basil II (9th century), on the 9th of May (date of the martyrdom, according to the Greek tradition), narrates, in a very summarized way, the content of the story, which is almost the same as in the *Martyr Acts*, with a meaningful difference: Christopher is presented as originally having the face of a dog, but Christ, at the moment of his conversion, would have mutated his appearance.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷² In the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* a parallel divergence between the witnesses has been highlighted; if on the one hand the Coptic source talks about a cynocephalus Christomeos, the Greek text rather refers to his canine appearance. Cf. Martelli 2015: 135-138 (also the scheme at p. 69)

⁷⁷³ Witness found in the Würzburg MP.TH.F.28 manuscript (belonging to the BHL 1766 tradition, basis-text for the edition of the Legend in *Acta Sanctorum*; a text already re-elaborated and showing many differences with the Eastern versions)

⁷⁷⁴ BHL 1766 is also the Latin oldest one, according to the extant manuscripts. A still missing stemma of the Latin tradition could help identifying at which point of the tradition the error precisely occurred; It is interesting to see how this process of transformation is not painless: we notice, for instance, that some Latin witnesses keep maintaining the fearful reaction of people meeting Christopher, (see Mombritius 1910 [original ed. ca. 1475]: 364-367; Mombritius actually reconnects the fear of the emperor to the enormous figure of Christopher: *Cumque ingressus fuisset sanctus Christophorus ante conspectum Dani imperatoris nimio terrore perterritus est propter magnitudinem eius*; on the other hand, the women are scared by the saint’s face, which actually is supposed to be “cananea”)

⁷⁷⁵ Considering the attestation of the *Menologium*, even a check of the Greek tradition seems to be required.

The name Christopher is a talking name: it means, “carrying Christ”⁷⁷⁶.

Actually, the motive of the carrying-Christ Christopher appears for the first time in iconography only in the 12th century. It is usually (and reasonably) interpreted as an etiological re-elaboration of the name Christopher (*Christo-phoros*, *Christum-ferens*)⁷⁷⁷. The first image of a giant saint Christopher is the painting of the church of S. Vincenzo at Galliano, near Como, dated around 1107. We have to wait the 1150 circa, to see appearing the figure of the carrying-Christ saint; this happens in two representations, found in two distant geographical areas: in Sud Tirol, at Hocheppan, and in Portugal, at Rio Mau. Contrary to what will be portrayed in the *Golden Legend*, the transport takes place on solid ground (instead of across a river) and in at least one of the two images Jesus is not a child (he is portrayed with the beard).

Contrary to the etiological motivation, Rosenfeld interestingly hypothesises that we are dealing with a case of *Wortillustration*, the explanation of a name (or a text) through images: in this case, the name of the saint (*Cristoforus*) had been translated into images, simply depicting what the name itself meant, i.e. “the one who carries Christ”.⁷⁷⁸

Soon not recognizing anymore in the picture a *Wortillustration*, people interpreted it as the figurative reproduction of a tale; and, actually, in the 12th century, also another story of a “carrying-Christ” saint was earning fame, i.e. that of Saint Julian the Hospitaller, where Julian himself was supposed having transported Jesus in disguise - while, on the other hand, an antecedent of the saint who, at first, is devoted to the devil, choosing to move to the devotion of the more powerful Christ can be found in the story of saint Ciprian -. Probably because of the contrast between the gigantic dimension of Christopher and the “little” Jesus on his shoulder, looking at the pictures where Christ was portrayed as adult, as usual, but without beard, Christ was interpreted as a child, giving the start to the legend as we know it. The new legend probably originates, in the South Alps- Northern Italy area, where a popular cult of both saint Christopher and saint Julian was intense.

The Eastern martyr Christopher was destined to finally come back to the land whence he came; it happens in the 14th century ca. But he is no longer the Cynocephalus saint: he has lost the dog-head, his peculiar feature. Under Western influence, the saint who re-appears in the East is the carrying-Jesus Christopher.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁶ The motive of “carrying a God” can be found in mythological stories, as the legend of Heracles carrying Eros and that of Hermes and Dionysus. See above, p. 211 n. 750.

⁷⁷⁷ See Martelli 2015:67; anyway, as Le Quellec (2008:21) underlines, *Cristoforus* was an honorific title given to martyrs. Saint-Yves (1936: 11-21) proposed another different etymology, from *Christ-Apheron*, deriving it from the Greek expression *Osiris-Apheron*, calque, in turn, from the Egyptian *Ouapouaitu*, “the one who opens the way”.

⁷⁷⁸ Cf. Rosenfeld 1937

⁷⁷⁹ The dog-head will reappear in Orient as attribute of the saint in the 15th century, as a Russian icon testifies.

Chronological table of the events related to the Acts of Christopher and its tradition

	HISTORICAL EVENTS	EPIGRAPHICAL AND ICONOGRAPHICAL ATTESTATIONS	RELATED DOCUMENTS	MAIN MANUSCRIPT WITNESSES OF THE MARTYRDOM/STORY
249-251	Decius (reign)			
250 ca.	(Supposed) Martyrdom of Christopher			
	Martyrdom of Babylas			
284-305	Diocletian (reign)			
302-303	Probable enlistment of the Marmaritae			
305-313	Maximinus Daza (reign)			
311	Martyrdom of Peter of Alexandria			
328-373	Athanasius of Alexandria (bishop)			
394 ca.			<i>Notitia Dignitatum</i> on <i>Numerum Marmaritarum</i>	
4 th c.			Acts of Philip	
450 ca.			Martyrdom of Mena (by Cyrus of Cotyaeum)	
452		Inscription of Heidar Pachar		
4 th -5 th c.			Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew	
5 th c.			Martyrologium Ieronimianum	
535		Chapel in Reims		
6 th c.		Icon St. Catherine Sinai		
6 th c.		Terracotta of Vinica (dog- headed Christopher)		
687		Inscription in Rome		
7 th c.		Relic in Toledo		
743		Basilica near Ravenna (attestation in <i>Liber Pontificalis</i>)		
8 th c.				Cambridge Gr Add 4489 (BHG 309)
8 th c.				Würzburg UB MP. TH.F 28 (BHL 1766) (<i>canineorum genere</i>)
890				Par Gr 1470 (BHG 309)
9 th c.				Menologium Graecorum for Basil II (transformation of the face after conversion)
9 th c.				Vat Sir 161 (Syriac 1)
Late 9 th c.				Montpellier FM 156 (BHL 1764)
10 th c.		Painting S. Maria Antiqua (Rome)		
10 th c.				Par Lat 5301 (BHL 1766) (<i>cananaeus</i>)
10 th c.				Turin, BN F.III 16 (BHL 1767)

10 th c.				Jerus. Patriarc. Bibl. Hagiou Saba gr 242 (BHG 310c)
11 th c.				Leiden, Bibl. Rijksuniv. Periz F 10 (BHG 309)
11 th c.				Par N.A. Lat 2179 (BHL 1764)
1107		Painting S. Vincenzo (Galliano, Como) (Giant Christopher)		
1150		Paintings Hocheppan (Sud-Tirol) and Rio Mau (Portugal) (carrying-Christ Christopher)		
1197				BL Add 12174 (Syriac 2)
12 th c.				Damascus 12/18 (Syriac 2)
12 th c.				Vat Lat 5772 (BHL 1767)
12 th c.			Legend of St. Julian Hospitalier	
12 th c.				German Poem on the Story Christopher (lost)
12 th c.				Par Gr 1534 (BHG 310c)
1230-39				Reworking of the lost German Poem
13 th c.				Legenda Aurea (by Jacopo da Varazze)
1697				Cambridge, Add. 2020 (Syriac 1)
1705				Berlin, Kön. Bibl., or. Quart 1051 (Syriac 1)
1881				Berlin, Kön. Bibl, Syr. 74 (Syriac 1)

2.2 The Contents

1. During the reign of Decius, an edict imposes to all Christians to eat impure food in order to avoid the death penalty.
2. Reprebus, a dog-headed man from the men-eaters' land, is enlisted in the Roman army. Seeing the Christians suffering persecutions, he converts and asks God to give him the ability to use the human speech, in order to go preaching the true faith.
3. As Reprebus goes confessing his faith, he is noticed and smacked by a Roman soldier, Bactil.
4. Bactil goes to the king and tells him what he saw: a monstrous dog-headed man preaching the Christian faith and blaming the king and his reign. Decius sends two hundred soldiers to take him.
5. A miracle is performed: while Reprebus is praying at the door of a temple, his staff flourishes.
6. A woman who was in the garden beside the temple, sees the monstrous man and is scared; she tells the people and the soldier what she has seen. The soldiers are afraid to come near Reprebus.
7. The Romans finally approach him and ask him who he is and why he is weeping. Reprebus accepts to come with them before the king, though they are not compelling him. The saint performs a miracle of multiplication of the provisions, and the soldiers convert.
8. Reprebus and the soldiers depart. They first come to Antioch, where the bishop Babylas baptizes them all; then they go to Perge, before the king. Reprebus tells his companions to fasten him, in order to avoid the vengeance of Decius against them. Decius, seeing the face of the man, is scared.
9. Blaming of the saint on the king, who is afraid of a man. Decius interrogates the man who confesses that his name is Reprebus, but he is called Christopher since his baptism.
10. Decius asks Christopher to sacrifice and tortures him. The judges ask the king not to torture such an amusing creature and suggest putting him in jail with two beautiful women asked to seduce him, in order to bring out his barbarian nature.
11. Christopher prays in jail; the two girls are scared by his appearance and do not dare to look at him

or to answer to his questions. The women do not know what to do, and they meditate to convert.

12. The girls convert, and Christopher instructs them in the Christian faith. They confess they are prostitutes; Christopher promises that their sins will be cancelled.

13. The prisoners are summoned before the king. The women confess they converted. Interrogatory, torture and martyrdom of Eucaline.

14. Interrogatory of Kallinica. The woman affirms she will sacrifice. She is conducted in the temple for the sacrifice.

15. Kallinica pretends to worship the idols, but she actually mocks the gods and destructs their statues.

16. Kallinica is seized again and brought before the king. New interrogatory of the woman.

17. Tortures of Kallinica and her martyrdom.

18. Christopher is brought before Decius to be interrogated. Refusal to worship the idols.

19. One hundred soldiers, already converted since the time they had been sent to take Christopher, confess their Christian faith. Decius thinks that Christopher has incited them to rebel, but they deny. The king tries to corrupt them and persuade them to commit apostasy by promising a better pay; they refuse.

20. New interrogatory of Christopher who denies he is organizing an uprising of the army, but he is sure that, even if he dies, many will turn to the Christian faith thanks to his sacrifice.

21. Torture of Christopher. The martyr-to-be has an apocalyptic vision of a fight between a white heavenly man and a black and evil figure and their armies.

22. Seeing that Christopher has survived to the attempt to kill him, the multitude converts, frees the saint and praises God.

23. Decius emanates a new order to sacrifice to the gods under threat of death punishment. Christopher and a multitude of believers refuse to sacrifice and sing they are ready to die. Many pagan bystanders convert.

24. The king orders the massacre of the gathered Christian people. Christopher incites the Christian to be strong. The massacre of the 4203 believers takes place on Sunday 9th of Nisan.

25. New attempt to execute Christopher; he miraculously survives. Decius accuses Christopher of sorcery. The saint is tortured again, and he refuses again to worship the idols. Decius finally sentences him to death.

26. Christopher is brought in a place outside the city. He asks his executioner to wait a moment to allow him to pray. The saint prays God to give to his bones the power to heal all the men who will touch them and to save all the places where they will be kept.

27. A voice from the sky assures Christopher that his desire will be fulfilled. The executioner is troubled; he beheads the saint and then kills himself with the same sword. The martyrdom occurs on the 27th of Nisan.

28. Peter of Attalia of Pisidia gives a sum of silver to take the corpse of the saint. He brings the body to his city. Miracles linked to the body of Christopher.

29. Decius falls ill. His wife persuades him that this is a punishment for having persecuted Christians. Decius sends his men to the place where Christopher was executed: if they find a piece of his body or his garments, he will use it to obtain the rest. Do not finding anything, they take some dust from the place. The king drinks it poured in the water and finally dies.

30. List and number of the martyrs Christopher and companions and praise to them.

2.3 The Edition

The following manuscript witnesses of the *Acts of Christopher* have been considered in order to present this new edition and translation of the Syriac version of the text:

V	Vatican Syr. 161, ff. 99v-106v	probably 9 th c. ⁷⁸⁰
D	Damas, Patriarcat Syrien Orthodoxe 12/18, ff. 121v-124	12 th c. ⁷⁸¹
L	London, British Library Add 12174, ff. 306-311v	1197 ⁷⁸²
C	Cambridge, University Library, Add. 2020, ff. 131-141v	1697 ⁷⁸³
T	Berlin, Königliche Bibl., or. Quart 1051 (Assfalg 25), ff. 21v-33v	1705 ⁷⁸⁴
B	Berlin, Königliche Bibl, Syr. 74 (Sachau 222), ff. 271-281	1881 ⁷⁸⁵

According to the BHSE, another (incomplete) witness can be found in the Dawra, Monastère chaldéen cod. 635 (olim Alqosh, N.-D. des Semences cod. 211); unfortunately, this manuscript is not reachable at this moment and so I could not use this manuscript for my edition.⁷⁸⁶

To these first-hand sources, one must add the very first edition of the Syriac Martyrdom, which was done by Popescu in 1903 (1-29 [Syriac], 30-47 [German translation]); Popescu has consulted and uses the witnesses L, B and C.

I base my edition on the direct consultation of V B T L D manuscripts; I refer to Popescu's work for the source C.

All that stated, I suggest grouping the Syriac manuscript witnesses of the *Acts of Christopher* in two groups, which I call Syriac 1 and Syriac 2, though speaking of *recensiones* is doubtful. To the Syriac 1 tradition belong the manuscript witnesses V B T C; to the Syriac 2, the texts contained in L D.

The differences, indeed, between the two Syriac versions are mostly of stylistic type, including onomastics.

Concerning the onomastic differences, we should distinguish:

- some different transliterations of Greek names;

⁷⁸⁰ For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above, p. 36

⁷⁸¹ For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above, p. 69

⁷⁸² For the description and analysis of the manuscript, see above, p. 53

⁷⁸³ Description in Wright 1901.2: 583-589

⁷⁸⁴ Description in Assfalg 1963: 48-53

⁷⁸⁵ Description in Sachau 1899: 289-291

⁷⁸⁶ On this ancient but undated manuscript, see Vosté 1929: 79. Two further witnesses should be possibly found in two manuscript belonging to the Mingana collection, i.e. ms Birmingham, Selly Oak College Library, Coll. Mingana, Syr. 85 (ff. 166v-181v) and Syr. 593 (ff. 124-133). They are both late manuscripts, respectively dating 19th and 20th c. As I have not had the possibility to consult them, I hope I will in the near future.

- some errors or misunderstanding, of which the most evident is the birth name of the protagonist, ܘܥܘܕܝܐ, in Syriac 1, and ܘܥܘܕܝܐ, in Syriac 2, but also the name of the place where he is enlisted is ܩܘܪܘܢܐ or ܩܘܪܘܢܐ;⁷⁸⁷

- finally, and mostly interestingly, the very original change of the proper names of two important characters, i.e. those of the two prostitutes Christopher converts in prison, ܡܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ and ܡܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ, according to Syriac 1 (which transliterates the Greek), ܡܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ and ܡܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ, according to Syriac 2. This change can be read as an attempt to “syriacize” the text, operated by the common source of L and D, as both manuscripts present these readings.

Regarding the stylistic divergences, I have to state beforehand that they can actually be explained as a choice of the Syriac redactor who voluntarily modifies Syriac 1 according to his linguistical tastes. Among the stylistic different choices, one can mention, in particular, the choice of the verbal form - often of a same verb - to use in parallel passages.

Last but not least, worth noticing are especially some cases of variants compatible with a common Greek reading, as the same Greek word/verb supports both the proposed translations/interpretations, in case of either similar or different meanings of the two Syriac chosen translations. To mention just few examples, ܩܘܪܘܢܐ - ܩܘܪܘܢܐ, ܩܘܪܘܢܐ - ܩܘܪܘܢܐ, can easily be intended as synonyms; on the other hand, the Greek verb περιμένω means either ܩܘܪܘܢܐ (to wait), as the reading of Syriac 2, and ܩܘܪܘܢܐ (to remain), as the reading of Syriac 1; the same consideration applies to κελεύω, which can be translated in Syriac ܩܘܪܘܢܐ (to say, see Syriac 1) and ܩܘܪܘܢܐ (to order, see Syriac 2). The reader will find other examples of similar cases in note to the edition/translation.

Concerning the relations between the single witnesses, some observations can be offered:

- Syriac 1: considering the differences, it is not necessary to suppose a direct derivation of the later witnesses (B T C) from the oldest one (V). B T C, on the one side, and V, on the other one, could derive from a same (direct) ancestor. On the other hand, a strict familiarity of B T C is very probable, also considering the common geographical origin -all three have been produced in Alqoš - and the common period of composition for at least T (1705) and C (1697). B is independent in some points: I mean, in particular, a passage between paragraphs 4 and 6, where it offers a different text. It is impossible to

⁷⁸⁷ These two are probably both mistakes in the reading/copying activity; considering the similarities of the letters composing the words in question, it is reasonable thinking the change/error occurred in occasion of a Syriac-to-Syriac copy (and not while translating from Greek); the fact that they identically recur in the two Syriac 2 witnesses (L D) is one of the (many) hints of a connection between the L and D (one can consider them as direct or indirect apographs of a same ancestor, or the one as the copy of the other one).

imagine B as a direct copy of T, because T is incomplete, missing a long portion of text.⁷⁸⁸ The presence of the mentioned alternative passage in B suggests that this one is not a copy of C as well, but the possibility that the redactor of B is just innovating according to his taste cannot be excluded.

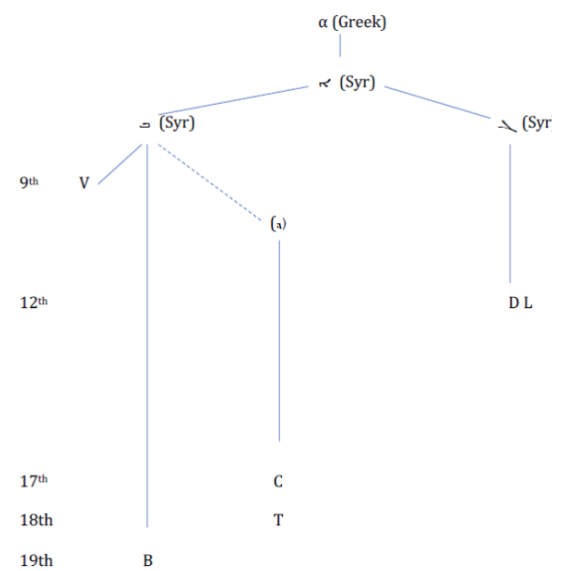
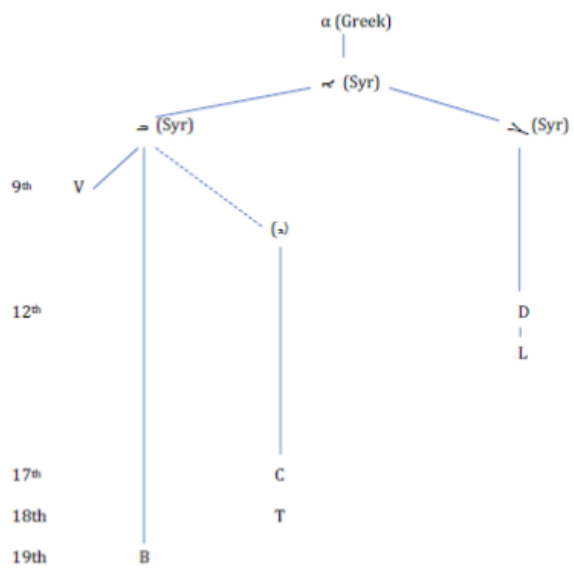
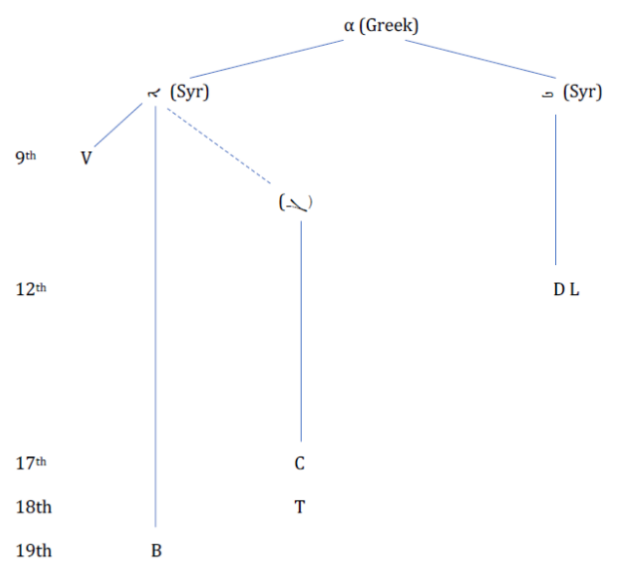
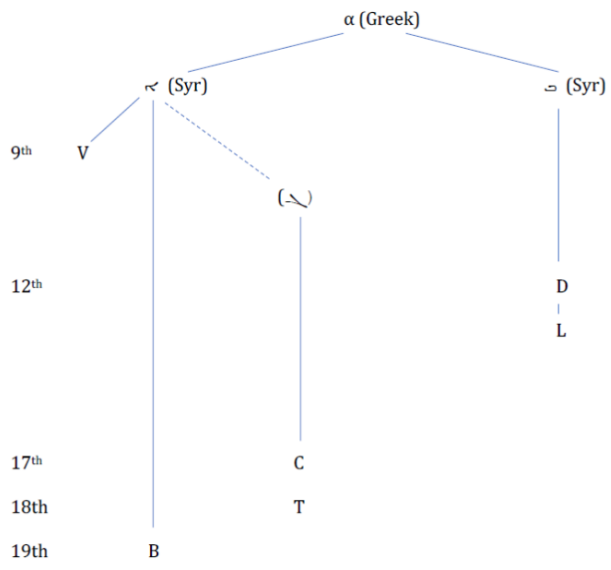
- Syriac 2: it is impossible to define the exact relation between L and D, also considering that they are almost contemporary. The strict familiarity between the two is undeniable, as also the presence of the same additions and of the same lacunae in at least two cases (namely, in the paragraphs 19 and 22) suggests. A short phrase which is present in all the witnesses but L (see at par. 22) suggests that D is not copying L; the other differences between the two manuscripts are irrelevant. The most probable hypothesis is that L and D are copies of the same Syriac manuscript, which had already the variants in relation to Syriac 1 that L and D share.

On the basis of what observed about the stylistic innovations which should have been originated in the translation from Greek (see the choice of the verbal forms and the synonymous-cases), I would not suppose a common Syriac ancestor - though this possibility cannot be excluded -. I would rather hypothesize two original Syriac translations from the same Greek tradition/recension, to be identified, more or less, with the one represented by the 1a (BHG 309) tradition. On the other hand, considering the divergent readings due to mistaken reading or misunderstandings of Syriac terms and graphemes, I suppose a Syriac intermediate where this second series of innovations found in Syriac 2 has been introduced. I can hypothesize either a double passage linking the Greek to the extant witnesses of Syriac 2 (L D), or that one of these two texts (L or D) depends on the other. According to what I have said above, I lean towards the first hypothesis.

All that considered, the following possible genealogies of the witnesses and redactions may be proposed:⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁸ See the paragraphs 4-7; cf. pp. 232-237 [Syr], 275-279 [English]

⁷⁸⁹ The proposed stemmas are hypothetical; it was not possible to identify a precise classification in the group of the Syriac 1 late sources (BTC); the relationship between the Syriac 2 L and D is doubtful.



		ܘܥܘܕܐ ܠܝ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܘܕܡܠܟܐܘܬܐ. ܡܢ ܫܠܡܐ ܥܘܕܘܬܐ ܠܝ ⁷⁹⁰ ܡܠܟܐ ܥܘܕܘܬܐ	ܘܥܘܕܐ ܠܝ ܡܠܟܐ ܥܘܕܘܬܐ
ADDITIONS	1	ܡܫܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ	ܡܫܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ. [ܕܡܫܐ ܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܥܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ]
	7	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ. ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ. [ܡܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ] ܡܘܕܘܬܐ [ܡܘܕܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ] ܡܘܕܘܬܐ [ܡܘܕܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ] ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ
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	14	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ
	25	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ⁷⁹¹	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ [ܡܘܕܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ] ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ.
	28	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ	ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܠܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ ܡܘܕܘܬܐ. ܡܘܕܘܬܐ.

⁷⁹⁰ BT add (in T the second word is added in the frame)

⁷⁹¹ It may be an addition of Syriac 2 or, as well, a jump in Syriac 1

In the following pages, I present:

- a comparative/synoptic critical edition of the two versions, Syriac 1 and Syriac 2 (with negative apparatus in note);
- a synoptic presentation of the two translations done respectively on the basis of Syriac 1 and Syriac 2; in *Italics*, the main differences between the two texts; some observations and comments in note.⁷⁹²

⁷⁹² For the most interesting points, I propose, in note, some parallels with the Greek and Latin sources of the *Acts*. Where not specified, I refer to the Greek and Latin different witnesses as follows:

Greek 1a (BHG 309) = ed. Usener 1886: 54-76

Greek 1b (BHG 310) = ed. Van Hooff 1891: 394-405

Latin (BHL 1764) = ed. *Analecta Bollandiana* 1 (1882): 394-405

Latin (BHL 1766) = ed. *Acta Sanctorum Julii* 6: 146-149

Latin (BHL 1767) = ed. Mombricitus 1910 (original ed. 1475 ca.): 364- 367

Where not otherwise specified, when I generally speak of Latin (redaction), I mean the Latin BHL 1764, which is the term of comparison in the following commentary (due to the proximity with the Greek and Syriac sources in question).

לעתה כתיב⁷⁹⁷ וכל אקליב
ועליו

ותק גב גבתי וקב: ב: למען מ,
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פלה א: חקיקת א חקיקת
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ותק גב גבתי וקב: ב: חקיקת
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T 22r

797 D omits
798 LD, חקיקת
799 D חקיקת
804 T omits
805 BC חקיקת
806 B adds
807 D חקיקת
812 BT חקיקת C חקיקת
813 BT חקיקת
814 C חקיקת
815 BT חקיקת
816 C חקיקת

מבטלם 817. וכל זה ביד:
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אל תלמדו לחתפליהן חזו 808
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L 306v

V 100r אל תלמדו לחתפליהן חזו
אל תלמדו לחתפליהן חזו

808 D uncertain reading

809 D uncertain (both variants are possible!)

810 D אל

817 BT מבטלם

818 BT בעם

819 V אל תלמדו לחתפליהן חזו

820 BT אל תלמדו לחתפליהן חזו

מסר יבוא עו אהיב, למ טבסע
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מסר יבוא עו אהיב, למ טבסע
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ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס

3 מסר ניאס ניאס ניאס למ
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס

3 מסר ניאס ניאס ניאס למ
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס

יבוא עו אהיב, למ טבסע
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס

יבוא עו אהיב, למ טבסע
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס⁸²⁴.
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס

T 22v 4 מסר ניאס ניאס ניאס למ
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס

4 מסר ניאס ניאס ניאס למ
ניאס ניאס ניאס למ. ניאס

811 C ניאס

821 BTC ניאס

822 BT ניאס

823 D illegible

824 D uncertain

אֲדַלְפֵם וְגַם וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם אֲנִי לְמֵהָרָא.
 וְגַם כִּסְוֵי־הַיָּדָיִם, אֲנִי אֲנִי כִּי לְכַוֵּן.
 חֲבֵה אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי וְגַם חֲבֵה־
 וְכִשְׁוֵי־הַיָּדָיִם: לְמֵהָרָא אֲדַלְפֵם
 וְכִשְׁוֵי־הַיָּדָיִם. חֲבֵה וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם וְגַם אֲנִי
 אֲדַלְפֵם: אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי חֲבֵה־
 אֲנִי [אֲנִי וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם: 877 חֲבֵה־
 חֲבֵה־

אֲדַלְפֵם וְגַם וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם אֲנִי לְמֵהָרָא.
 וְגַם כִּסְוֵי־הַיָּדָיִם, אֲנִי אֲנִי כִי לְכַוֵּן.
 אֲנִי אֲנִי אֲנִי וְגַם חֲבֵה־
 וְכִשְׁוֵי־הַיָּדָיִם חֵה אֲדַלְפֵם:
 לְמֵהָרָא אֲדַלְפֵם. חֲבֵה וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם
 וְגַם אֲנִי לְכַוֵּן אֲדַלְפֵם: אֲנִי
 אֲנִי חֲבֵה־ וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם: חֲבֵה־
 חֲבֵה־

אֲנִי לְמֵהָרָא אֲדַלְפֵם. אֲנִי כִי
 אֲנִי לְכַוֵּן חֲבֵה־ אֲנִי אֲנִי לְ
 אֲנִי לְכַוֵּן חֲבֵה־ וְגַם אֲנִי אֲנִי
 חֲבֵה־ לְכַוֵּן חֲבֵה־

אֲנִי לְמֵהָרָא אֲדַלְפֵם. אֲנִי כִי
 אֲנִי לְכַוֵּן חֲבֵה־ אֲנִי אֲנִי לְ
 אֲנִי לְכַוֵּן חֲבֵה־ וְגַם אֲנִי אֲנִי
 אֲנִי חֲבֵה־ לְכַוֵּן חֲבֵה־

B 273r
V 101r

אֲדַלְפֵם וְגַם וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם אֲנִי לְמֵהָרָא.
 וְגַם כִּסְוֵי־הַיָּדָיִם אֲנִי חֲבֵה־
 אֲנִי חֲבֵה־ 878 חֲבֵה־ חֲבֵה־
 חֲבֵה־ 879 חֲבֵה־

אֲדַלְפֵם וְגַם וְנִשְׁמַעְתֶּם אֲנִי לְמֵהָרָא.
 וְגַם כִּסְוֵי־הַיָּדָיִם אֲנִי חֲבֵה־
 חֲבֵה־ חֲבֵה־: אֲנִי חֲבֵה־
 חֲבֵה־ חֲבֵה־ חֲבֵה־ חֲבֵה־

877 T re-starts

878 BT חֲבֵה־

879 V חֲבֵה־

הוא יבוא ויגדל את הארץ ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
כאלה

הוא יבוא ויגדל את הארץ ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
כאלה

8 קח את הארץ ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
885 את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
כאלה

8 קח את הארץ ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
כאלה

הוא יבוא ויגדל את הארץ ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
886 את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
887 את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
כאלה

הוא יבוא ויגדל את הארץ ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
כאלה

T 23r

הוא יבוא ויגדל את הארץ ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
888 את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
הוא יבוא ויגדל את הארץ ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
889 את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה

הוא יבוא ויגדל את הארץ ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
את המצודה ויבנה ויבנה ויבנה
את המצודה ויבנה את המצודה
כאלה

L 307v

884 L

885 BT omit

886 B

887 LD omit

888 T

889 BT omit

לְיַסְמֵן וְיָמֵן פִּי־הַיָּדָיִם חֲסֵד
חַלְמָה. ❖

לְיַסְמֵן⁸⁹⁵ וְיָמֵן פִּי־הַיָּדָיִם חֲסֵד
חַלְמָה. ❖

V 101v וְיַסְמֵן וְיָמֵן לְמֵן * עַל־חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן
לְתַלְמֵד וְיָמֵן⁸⁹⁸. וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן
לְחַלְמָה וְיָמֵן עַל־חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן
וְיַסְמֵן חֲסֵד לְתַלְמֵד. ❖

וְיַסְמֵן וְיָמֵן לְמֵן עַל־חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן
לְתַלְמֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן לְחַלְמָה
וְיָמֵן עַל־חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן וְיַסְמֵן
חֲסֵד לְתַלְמֵד. ❖

וְיָמֵן עַל־חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן
חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן וְיָמֵן [לְמֵן]⁸⁹⁹. וְיָמֵן
וְיָמֵן עַל־חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד

וְיָמֵן עַל־חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן
חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן וְיָמֵן וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד

10 חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד * וְיָמֵן
לְתַלְמֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד

10 חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
לְתַלְמֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד
וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד לְמֵן חֲסֵד וְיָמֵן חֲסֵד

895 L חֲסֵד

898 BT יָמֵן

899 BT add

900 D לְמֵן

910 V לְמֵן or לְמֵן

יפוחהו שריא קוליה דגלגל מן
גלגל 911 וכן 912 אבסמ, 913. לך דג
מא נהינא לך יריא דגלגל *

יפוחהו שריא קוליה דגלגל 901
מן גלגל דגא אבסמ. לך * דג D 122v
מא נהינא לך יריא דגלגל *

מנדפ אדפינחא זי מל דגלגל חלמ,
חלמ, חפמ דגלגל דתפמ 902
לפמחמ דגלגל. * דגלגל דג יפוחה
B 274r
לדא דגלגל אדפינחא למ. דג, גלגל.
ל דגלגל, אדפינחא, מן גלגל
דגא מלפ. חלג דגלגל דתפמ לך.
דלג דגלגל דגא דגלגל, *

מנדפ אדפינחא זי מל דגלגל
חלמ, חפמ דגלגל דתפמ 902
לפמחמ דגלגל. דגלגל דג יפוחה
יפוחה לדא דגלגל אדפינחא למ. דג,
גלגל. ל דגלגל, אדפינחא, לך
[דגא] 903 מן גלגל דגא 904
מלפ. חלג דגלגל דתפמ לך.
דלג דגלגל דגא דגלגל, *

חפמ גלגל דגלגל, חן מן, דגלגל
מא אדפינחא למ. אדפינחא דגא
מזא דגלגל דגלגל. חלג דגלגל
דגא לך דגלגל. חפמ דגא
דגלגל לך דגלגל דגא 914 דגלגל. *

חפמ גלגל דגלגל, חן מן, דגלגל
מא אדפינחא למ. אדפינחא דגא
מזא דגלגל דגלגל. חלג דגלגל
דגא לך דגלגל. חפמ דגא 905
דגלגל לך דגלגל דגא דגלגל. *

מנדפ דגא דגלגל למ. דגלגל
דגא דגלגל, אדפינחא, דגלגל 915

מנדפ דגא דגלגל למ. דגלגל
דגא דגלגל, אדפינחא, דגלגל

901 L דגלגל
902 D דתפמ
903 L adds
904 L omits
905 D omits
911 BT omits
912 BT דגלגל
913 BT, אבסמ
914 C דגלגל
915 B omits

אזכר חנוכה שלשה ימים. חזקת אמונתו
הוא [אמונתו] 922 מן המלכות.

אזכר חנוכה שלשה ימים. חזקת אמונתו
הוא מן המלכות.

L 308r

והוא יגלה חזקת אמונתו. מן חזקת
הוא חזקתו, 923 וזו חזקת אמונתו.

והוא יגלה חזקת אמונתו. מן חזקת
הוא חזקתו, 920 וזו חזקת אמונתו.

T 24r

אמונתו. אמונתו מן חזקת אמונתו. *
אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו.

אמונתו. אמונתו מן חזקת אמונתו. *
אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו.

אמונתו. אמונתו [אמונתו] אמונתו, 924
אמונתו 925

אמונתו. אמונתו 921 אמונתו, אמונתו, אמונתו

אמונתו. אמונתו 926 אמונתו. אמונתו

אמונתו. אמונתו אמונתו. אמונתו

V 102r

אמונתו. אמונתו * אמונתו. אמונתו
אמונתו 927

אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו
אמונתו 927

B 274v

אמונתו. אמונתו * אמונתו. אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו.

אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו. אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו.

אמונתו. אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו 928 אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו

אמונתו. אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו
אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו אמונתו

920 L omits

921 L omits

922 BT add

923 BT omits

924 B omits

925 BT add

926 BT add

927 BT add

928 V add

תָּמַד יִפְּתַח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי

תָּמַד יִפְּתַח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי

וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
 וְיִפְתָּח לִי אֶת פִּי
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V 102v

934 L adds

935 L adds

936 L adds

937 D adds

941 B omits

942 BTC adds (in T, is added above)

943 BT adds

944 BT omit

945 V omits T adds in the frame

946 BT (T in frame) add

למלך המלכות
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הוא

הוא המלך⁹⁵²
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הוא

15 והוא המלך המלכות
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הוא המלך המלכות
הוא המלך המלכות⁹⁶³
הוא המלך המלכות⁹⁶⁴
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הוא המלך המלכות⁹⁶⁵
הוא המלך המלכות⁹⁶⁶

15 והוא המלך המלכות⁹⁶⁰
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הוא המלך המלכות⁹⁶⁷
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⁹⁵² D (uncertain reading)

⁹⁶⁰ The whole paragraph is very corrupted in D and difficult to read

⁹⁶³ BT למלך

⁹⁶⁴ BT ה

⁹⁶⁵ VC תלך

⁹⁶⁶ C המלך

⁹⁶⁷ BT omits

⁹⁶⁸ BT המלך

⁹⁶⁹ BT המלך

⁹⁷⁰ BT המלך

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B 276r
T 25v

V 103r

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 978

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 976
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 978

961 D

962 L

971 BTC

972 B

973 BT omits

974 BT

975 BT

976 C

977 V adds between the lines

978 BTC

כאן נאמר, וכל, וכל, וכל, וכל.
והוא 988 * על הנושא *

כאן נאמר, וכל, וכל, וכל, וכל.
והוא 988 * על הנושא *

17 תהיה זהו המצב של הנושא.
הוא נוסח עתיק: וכל, וכל, וכל.
B 276 v הוא חלקי זהו *.
T 25v לחיפה * תהיה זהו.
הוא נוסח עתיק 994 *.
הוא נוסח עתיק *.
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הוא נוסח עתיק *.

17 תהיה זהו המצב של הנושא.
הוא נוסח עתיק: וכל, וכל, וכל.
הוא נוסח עתיק *.
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הוא נוסח עתיק *.

988 V (another hand probably adds something unreadable between the lines, maybe trying to correct)

989 D

990 D uncertain

991 D illegible

992 L

994 BT

1008
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 1010
 1011

L 309v

1003 L

1004 L

1008 V

1009 BT add

1010 BTC

1011 BT

1012 *הכלל נהג עליון*

T 26v

ל * והענין

תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
ל * והענין. [הכלל נהג עליון].
1014 *הכלל נהג עליון* ל * והענין.
B 277v *הכלל נהג עליון* * והענין.

תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון* [ל *].
הכלל נהג עליון. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
והענין ל *.

תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
הכלל נהג עליון. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
והענין ל *.

תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
הכלל נהג עליון. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
והענין ל *.

20 תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
הכלל נהג עליון. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
והענין ל *.

V 104r

20 תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
הכלל נהג עליון. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
והענין ל *.

תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
הכלל נהג עליון. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
והענין ל *.

תנן איתא דאורייתא. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
הכלל נהג עליון. *הכלל נהג עליון*.
והענין ל *.

1005 L adds

1012 B *הכלל נהג עליון*

1013 In B, this is an addition (probably by another hand and ink)

1014 The omission of the phrase in LD is maybe due to a *saut du même au même*

1015 D adds

והלך זעק. ויכלה כל קבץ
 וכלהו. ראשית מכל לומר
 למכל כלל. והוא לומר
 מעד מעד. מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 והוא ותר. נזה. קלע.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *

והלך זעק. ויכלה כל קבץ
 וכלהו. ראשית מכל לומר
 למכל כלל. והוא לומר
 מעד מעד. מן הן קטן נד.
 והוא ותר. נזה. קלע.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *

21 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *
 1020 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *
 1021 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *
 1022 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *
 1023 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *

21 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *
 1017 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *
 1022 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *
 1023 מן הן קטן נד. אה.
 ופוח. כתר. וביה ללמ. *

T 27r

B 278r

1016 T

1017 L

1020 C

1021 BT

1022 B adds

1023 BT (with the marginal addiction/correction: מן הן קטן נד. אה.)

הנה לעלה¹⁰³⁴ הנה נהג נהג
*הנה נהג

23 לנהג¹⁰⁴² הנהג נהג
הנהג נהג נהג נהג
נהג נהג נהג נהג
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23 הנהג נהג נהג נהג
הנהג נהג נהג נהג
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D 124r

1034 BT לעלה

1035 D uncertain

1036 D adds

1042 BT נהג

1043 T had a נהג, cancelled in a second time (red ink)

1044 V נהג

1045 B נהג נהג נהג נהג

1046 BT נהג

כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
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V כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות

L כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות

T כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות

D כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות

B כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות
כחולות כחולות כחולות כחולות

And now the martyrdom of the glorious Mar Christopher and of all the ones [who were] with him.

1. *In the days when the impious king Decius [was] in first year of his reign¹¹⁰⁹, a great insanity was among the great crowd [of] those who [worshipped and] served the idols; as those sons of error had taken courage for a little while against the faith of the Christians, an edict was issued: namely, those who were in the *Christian* piety, if they would eat some impure food, would live and would not die.*

The judges of that time, upon receiving that mandate *in their impure hands*, harmed the churches of Christ, showing the mandate of the

[And now] the story, i.e. the martyrdom of the saint Mar Christopher, the barbarian, and of all the saint martyrs [who were] with him.

1. *In the third year of the reign of Decius, a great insanity was among the great crowd [of] those who served the idols; as those sons of error had taken courage for a little while against the true faith of the Christians, then an edict was issued *by the emperor*: namely those who were in the *true* piety, if they would eat some impure food, they would live and would not die; *but if they would have not been persuaded, they would be delivered to cruel tortures of every suffering.**

The judges of that time, upon receiving that edict *from the impure hands [of the emperor]*, harmed the church of Christ, showing the

¹¹⁰⁷ Translation done on the basis of the Syriac 1 manuscripts: V= Vat Sir 161 (ff.99v-106v); T= Tubingen/Berlin, Konig Bibl.or.quart 1051 (Assfalg 25) (ff.21v-33v); B= Sachau 222 (ff.271-281)

¹¹⁰⁸ Translation done on the basis of the Syriac 2 manuscripts: L= BL Add 12174 (ff.306-311v); D= Damas 12/18 (ff.121v-124); C= Cambridge 2020 (ff.131-141v)

¹¹⁰⁹ In the Greek tradition (1a, 1b), the reference is to the fourth year of the reign of Decius (Ἔτους τετάρτου τῆς βασιλείας Δεκίου). The Latin BHL 1764 does not specify the year (*In temporibus illis*); the reference to the emperor Decius is in the title (*Passio sancti ac beatissimi martyris Christophori et comitum ejus, qui passi sunt in civitate Antioch[h]ia sub Decio caesare die IV idus julias*). Later Latin sources miss even the reference to Decius, identifying the king with a certain Dagnus (see BHL 1766, e.g.) or Danus (see Mombricitus, BHL 1767). Syriac 2 (see column beside) refers to the third year of the reign of Decius.

king [in their hands]; and everyone hastened to obey *the order*.

2. In the war, then, occurring in that time, there was a [Byzantine] official; and this one seized the blessed *Reprebus* and he enlisted him in the place called *Marmarito*¹¹¹⁰. This man was very wise¹¹¹¹. And this was his story. [He was] from the barbarian men-eater people and he had a disfigured appearance, since his head was like that of a dog; *translated* in Greek, “cynocephalus”¹¹¹². Then, to make everyone know that God did not give help only to the Christians but that also for the ones from the *foreign* Nations who turned towards the true faith there was a rewarding, in His understanding, He presented them as chosen and approved.

And, so, this man was a believer in his knowledge, and he meditated the words of God in his thought.

But he could not use our speech.

Then, when he saw the suffering that Christians endured, he was greatly sad and distressed. So,

mandate of the king; and everyone hastened to obey *it*.

2. In the war, then, occurring in that time, there was a [Byzantine] official; and this one seized the blessed *Deprebus* and he enlisted him in the place called *Marmanato*. This man was very wise. And this was his story¹²¹⁴. [He was] from the barbarian men-eater people and he had a disfigured appearance, since his head was like that of a dog; *called* in Greek, “cynocephalus”. Then, to make everyone know that God did not give help only to the Christians but that also for the ones from the Nations who turned towards the true faith there was a rewarding, in His understanding, He presented them as chosen and tried.

So, this man was a believer in his knowledge, and he meditated the words of God in his thoughts

But he could not use our speech.

Then, when he saw the suffering that Christians endured, he was greatly sad and distressed. So, he went out from the city and he cast himself

¹¹¹⁰ Greek 1a-1b: ἐν τῷ νομῆρω τῶν Μαρμαριτῶν; Lat. BHL 1764: *in numerum armarianorum*.

¹¹¹¹ According to BT, *awful*

¹¹¹² The Greek witnesses obviously just refer to the Cynocephalus race, avoiding explaining (e.g. Greek 1a: ἦν οὖν ὁ ἀνήρ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους τῶν Κυνοκεφάλων). Latin BHL 1764 does not refer to the race, just mentioning the dog-wise appearance (*quasi canino capite*)

¹²¹⁴ According to C, *appearance*

he went out¹¹¹³ from the city and he cast himself down in prayer before God and said: “Oh Lord, Omnipotent God! *Look at* my affliction and *show to me the abundance* of your mercy. And revive my tongue with the speech of this People, so that I can go blaming this tyrant”.

And, lo, a man appeared to him in white dresses and told him: “Reprebus, your prayer has been heard before God. Rise on your feet!”. And he drew nigh his lips and breathed on him; and the speech he asked for was given to him.

3. At that time, he rose and entered into the city and told everyone: “Oh, full of shameful things! If you surrender yourselves to Satan, why do you also compel us to perish with you? Indeed, I am a Christian and I am not compelled to adore *made* gods”.

A man called Bactil¹¹¹⁴ came near and beat him on his cheek.

The blessed Reprebus, then, told him: “What will I do to you, as I am bound by Christ and I cannot do anything to you? But if my Lord asks

down in prayer before God and said: “Oh Lord, Omnipotent God! *See* my affliction and *restore in me the beauty* of your mercy. And revive, *my Lord*, my¹²¹⁵ tongue with the speech of this People, so that I can go blaming this tyrant”.

And, lo, a man appeared to him in white dresses and told him: “Deprebus, your prayer has been heard before God. Rise on your feet!”. And he drew nigh his lips and breathed on them; and [*at that very moment*] the speech he asked for was given to him.

3. At that time, he rose and entered into the city and told everyone: “Oh, full of shameful things! If you surrender yourselves to Satan, why do you also compel us to perish with you? Indeed, I am a Christian and I am not compelled to adore *handmade* gods”.

A man called Bactil came near and beat him on his cheek.

Deprebus, then, *answered and* told him: “What will I do to you, as I am bound by Christ and I cannot do anything to you? But if my Lord asks

¹¹¹³ According to BT: *descended from*

¹¹¹⁴ Greek 1a: βαχθιοῦς. Greek 1b does not give the name of the man. The scene is in part different in Latin BHL 1764 where Rebrebus (Reprebus) addresses directly the king. The Latin source interestingly differs from the Greek and Syriac ones for another point: it presents the saint preaching wearing a *chlamys* on his face (*Et loquebatur iste habens chlamydem super faciem suam*). This observation is meaningful: indeed, the same situation occurs in the *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew*, where Christomeos covers his face in order to avoid scaring people by his monstrous appearance (see Martelli 2015: 84-85).

¹²¹⁵ According to D: *his*

me, you (pl.) will not oppose to me, neither your kingdom, that is corrupted”.¹¹¹⁵

me, you will not oppose to me, neither your kingdom, that is corrupted”.

4. And Bactil departed from there and went before the king and told him: “King, may you live forever! The prefect, *according to the order of your majesty*, manifested an edict, and while everyone shows the diligence of the obedience¹¹¹⁶, among the people an awful man has been seen, who is very great and strong *in his appearance*¹¹¹⁷; and, as I noticed him, I make you know, my Lord, that he has the appearance of a dog¹¹¹⁸; and his hair is very abiding¹¹¹⁹. And his eyes like the star of the early morning when it rises. And his teeth are prominent like [that of a] wild boar. And this one came saying words of blasphemy about the gods and your kingdom. So, as I heard, I struck him on his cheek. And he

4. At that time, Bactil departed from there and went before the king and told him: “King, may you live forever! The prefect, *according to your order*, manifested an edict, and everyone shows the diligence of the obedience; among the people an awful man has been seen, who is very great and strong *in his force and* in his appearance; and, as I noticed him, I make you know, my Lord, that he has his head has the appearance of a dog; and his hair is very abiding. And his eyes like the star of the early morning when it rises. And his teeth are prominent like [that of a] wild boar. This one came saying words of blasphemy about the gods and your kingdom. So, as I heard *his*

¹¹¹⁵ Somehow different in Greek: Κατέχομαι ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δέδεμαι ὑπο τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ οὐ δύναμαί σοί τι ποιῆσαι. ἐὰν| δὲ ἡ καρδία μου πικρανθῆ, ὑμεῖς παρ’ ἐμοὶ οὐχ ὑπάρξετε οὐδὲ τὸ βασιλείον ὑμῶν τὸ διεφθαρμένον. For the reference to the heart, the passage reminds in some way, the episode of Christomeos in *Acts of Andrew and Bartholomew* (cf. Martelli 2015: 78-79, and then, 86-87)

¹¹¹⁶ T misses part of the text; a marginal red note (partially deteriorated) signalizes the problem: *Mistakes are noticed. The entire paper on your left has not ...*

¹¹¹⁷ According to B: *I have seen, today, a man who was hideous in his appearance*

¹¹¹⁸ The reference to the appearance of a dog is missing in Greek 1b. Here the description is in part different; anyway, one can also imagine the lack of any reference to the dog-head in this particular passage as due to a *saut du même au même*. This hypothesis is based on the comparison between the text in Greek 1a and Greek 1b. Greek 1b (BHG 310): ἐφάνη ἐνώπιον τοῦ λαοῦ ἀνὴρ νεανίας, φοβερὸς τῷ εἶδει, καὶ ὑπὲρμεγέθης τῷ σώματι καὶ τῷ πάχει. Οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀστήρ ὁ πρῶτι ἀνατελλῶν [...]; Greek 1b (BHG 309): ἐφάνη ἐνώπιον τοῦ λαοῦ ἀνὴρ φοβερὸς τῷ εἶδει καὶ ὑπὲρμεγέθης ὁ εἶδον ἀναγγελῶ τῷ κυρίῳ μου ἢ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ ὄν τρόπον κυνός, οὕτως ἐστὶν ἢ δὲ θριξ αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρμεγέθης ἠπλωμένη καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὡς ὁ ἀστήρ ὁ πρῶτι ἀνατελλῶν [...]

¹¹¹⁹ It is difficult to render the meaning of the past participle Pa ‘el of *طام* (طام), referred to the hair, in this passage. The Greek present the (easier) reading ὑπερμεγέθης.

answered and said: 'If I was not a Christian, you would not oppose to me'. So, I made known to my Lord [king] these things, as they are. So, refer and see if the God of the Christians heard the voice of their prayer and sent him in their aid".

Decius said¹¹²⁰: "*You and the one who appeared to you have a devil*". And he ordered two hundred Romans to go with him and take him [i.e. Reprebus]. And [the king] told them: "If he withstands you, cut him limb by limb; bring me only his head, so that I will see that his death occurred this way.¹¹²¹ Because he said that he is strong".

5. So, while they had planned these things, the blessed Reprebus went to the door of the church, and he infixed his staff and sat, bending his head between his knees, and the hair of his head descended from the two sides. And he prayed and so he said: "Lord omnipotent God, you who heard the three children from inside of the burning furnace,¹¹²² [you,] whose dwelling is in the Heaven and who are glorified by the *celestial* companies and by your saints on earth magnified and worshipped, [you] who are celebrated by cherubs, and at whose sight they tremble; listen to the voice of my prayer! And

blasphemies, I struck him on his cheek. And he answered and said *to me*: 'If I was not a Christian, you would not oppose to me'. So, I made known to my Lord these things, as they are. Refer and see if the God of the Christians heard the voice of their prayer and sent him in their aid".

Then the king Decius said to him: "*You have a devil and he appeared to you*". And he ordered two hundred Romans to go with him and take him [i.e. Deprebus]. And [the king] told them: "If he withstands you, cut him limb by limb; bring me only his head, so that I will see that his death occurred this way. Because he said that he is strong".

5. So, while they had planned these things, the blessed Deprebus went to the door of the church, and he accepted (*sic*) his staff and sat, bending his head between his knees, and the hair of his head descended from the two sides. And he prayed and so he said: "Lord omnipotent God, you who heard the three children from inside of the burning furnace, [you], whose dwelling is in the Heaven *of Heavens* and who are glorified by the *spiritual* companies and by the saints on earth magnified and worshipped, [you] who are celebrated by cherubs, and at whose sight *the Heavens* tremble; listen to the

¹¹²⁰ Here a different text in B starts (for the translation, see below, p. 284, n. 1125)

¹¹²¹ On the head of the saint, cf. Matthew 14:18, Mark 6: 24, concerning John the Baptist

¹¹²² Cf. Daniel 3: 14-97

bend your ear to my request and perform a good sign upon me, and let your grace be manifested towards me. Because I was dumb in the speech of the men, and you allowed me to speak. And now make this wood spring up¹¹²³, so that, this way, I will be offered up with good desire and I will deserve your glory". And, at that very moment, that staff flourished and confirmed the man.

6. So, while he was praying these things, lo, a woman entered the garden to collect a rose; and when she saw him sitting and weeping, she turned back for fear of him and moved (away). And she told the men what she had seen next to the temple *of the Lord*: "I think he is a dragon, by

voice of my prayer! And bend your ear to my request and perform a good sign upon me, and let your grace be manifested towards me. Because I was dumb in the speech of the men, and you allowed me to speak. And now make *also* this wood springing up, so that, this way, I will be offered up with good desire and I will deserve your glory". And, at that very moment, that staff flourished and confirmed the man.¹²¹⁶

6. So, while he was praying these things, lo, a woman entered the garden to collect a rose; and when she saw him sitting and weeping, she turned back for fear of him and moved. And she told the men what she had seen next to the temple: "I think he is a dragon, by the absurd figure he has. *He weeps bitterly*. And I do not understand what that is".

¹¹²³ Greek 1b (cf. ed. Van Hoofs par.4) adds a reference to the staff of Aaron. The miraculous blossoming of the staff recalls the episode narrated in Numbers 17 having Aaron as protagonist: *The Lord spoke to Moses: "Speak to the Israelites, and receive from them a staff from each tribe, one from every tribal leader, twelve staffs; you must write each man's name on his staff. You must write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi; for one staff is for the head of every tribe. You must place them in the tent of meeting before the ark of the covenant where I meet with you. And the staff of the man whom I choose will blossom; so I will rid myself of the complaints of the Israelites, which they murmur against you."* So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a staff, one for each leader, according to their tribes—twelve staffs; the staff of Aaron was among their staffs. Then Moses placed the staffs before the Lord in the tent of the testimony. On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony—and the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted, and brought forth buds, and produced blossoms, and yielded almonds! So Moses brought out all the staffs from before the Lord to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his staff. Cf. similar miracles occurring to John the Little, to Ephrem, Serapamon (Saintyves 1936: 2; id. 1922: 61-138)

¹²¹⁶ The whole paragraph is very summarized in Latin BHL 1764 (par. 4). It has been suggested to suppose that the Latin text is a witness of a more ancient version.

the absurd figure he has. *And why does he weep bitterly?* I do not understand what that is".¹¹²⁴

As she had said these things, the Romans who sought for him came there and, hearing the words of the woman, they asked her and told her: "Where did you see someone like this?". And she showed [him] to them. So, because of the report *about the man*, they did not venture to come next to him; so, they went on a high place *opposite him*, to look at him¹¹²⁵.

As she had said these things, the Romans who sought for him came there and, hearing the words of that woman, they asked her and told her: "Where did you see the one whose appearance is so?". And she showed [him] to them. And so, because of the report *of his awful appearance*, they did not venture to come next to him; but they went on a high place to look at him.

¹¹²⁴ Different is the reaction of the girl according to BHL 1764 (par. 5): *Eo autem orante, quaedam mulier, consuetudinem habens, ingressa est ad colligendas rosas, et videns eum sedentem et plorantem, reversa est retro, et abiens, narravit vicinis suis, dicens: Quidam homo Dei est hic. Sed et jam tormenta adversus eum praeparantur, ego scio.*

¹¹²⁵ Here the translation of the different text of B (see above p. 240 n. 862):

"There is a devil in you. Now, then, a hundred Romans will be sent to go and bring him". And the king told them: "If he wants to come with you, well; and if he does not, bind him and bring him alive so that I see him, that Repebus". At that moment he went to the door of the church of the place where he was. And he turned his eyes to East, and he was praying, saying: "Powerful Lord God, who dwelled on high and is magnified and adored on earth by his saints and has to be celebrated by the cherubs and by his appearance the angels are terrified, listen to the voice of my prayer and turn your ear to my request. And perform upon me a great sign and everyone will understand your grace [that is] upon me. As I was dumb in the language of men and you allowed me to speak. And now do that, by your power, this wood that [I have] in my hand springs up. And this way also with good desire I will approach and deserve your glory". And at that very moment the staff sprang up. And that encouraged the blessed one, acknowledging the grace that Christ had performed upon him. A woman entered the garden that was beside the church to pick an herb; and, as she saw the blessed one, she was scared by him. And she fled towards men and told them: "Today I have seen something at the church, and I have been scared by it. And his figure was altered and his face disfigured. And I saw him praying and weeping. And I thought he was a dragon and I fled for fear of him". And when she said to the men [who were] gathered the affair of the man, the Romans arrived and heard his story; and they were scared by the words of the woman that she had repeated to them and by the fame of the man. They were scared and told the woman to show him to them. And she went and showed him to them from afar. And they did not venture to come near him, but they ascended a high place in front of him in order to look at him.

7. The athlete of Christ lifted his eyes to the sky and supplicated. Those Romans, then, approached him and told him: “Who are you? And what is the reason why you are bitterly weeping?”.

And he told them: “It is right for me to weep more than everyone; because when still I did not know God, I was not persecuted. And now that I know God, lo, I am oppressed”.

The Romans, then, told him: “We have been sent to you to bring you before the king in bonds, so that you will consider the adoration of the gods”.

The athlete of Christ, then, told them: “Willingly, if I will desire to come, I will come *with you*; but if constrained and in chains, you will not be able *to carry me*. Because Our Lord Christ came and took flesh; and he untied the bonds [of death and] of sin and set me free from your father Satan”.

Those Romans told him: “If you want to come with us, come! And if not, we will tell the king: ‘We did not find him’. And depart from here to where you desire”.

The athlete of Christ, then, told them: “I will come with you and I will show to you the power of Christ. Just wait for me a little”.

7. The athlete of Christ lifted his eyes to the sky and supplicated God. The Romans, then, approached him and told him: “Who are you? And what is the reason why you are bitterly weeping?”.

And he told them: “It is right for me to weep more than everyone; because when still I did not know God, I was not persecuted. And now that I know God, lo, I am oppressed”.

The Romans, then, told him: “We have been sent to you to bring you before the king in bonds, so that you will consider the adoration of the gods *and not of God*”¹²¹⁷.

The athlete of Christ, then, told them: “Willingly, if I will desire to come, I will come; but if *you want to carry me* constrained by chains, you will not be able to. Because Our Lord Christ came *in the world* and took flesh; and he untied the bonds of sin and set me free from your father Satan”.

Those Romans told him: “If you want to come with us, come! And if not, we will tell the king: ‘We did not find him’. And depart from here to where you desire”.

The athlete of Christ, then, told them: “I will come with you and I will show to you the power of Christ. Just wait for me a little”.

¹²¹⁷ The clarification “*and not of God*”, missing in Syriac 1, recalls the Greek καὶ μὴ θεόν (Greek 1a, 1b).

Those Romans told him: “Lo, we have also finished our provisions and we cannot *remain*”.

So, he told them: “Comply with me and you will eat good things, and you will see the power of my *Lord*”. And again, he told them: “Put *before me* what of your provisions is left over”. They gladly put [them]; and he knelt down and prayed, and so he said: “You, the one who blessed five loafs and satisfied many people,¹¹²⁶ also now You, Our Lord Jesus Christ, listen to the voice of my weakness, so that, seeing all these [*things*], they will find *you*, Our True God”.

And at that very moment their vases were filled with bread as much as they needed; and when they saw this miracle that had been performed before them, they believed in God.¹¹²⁷

8. Then, the athlete of Christ led them and went to Antioch,¹¹²⁸ and he and those Romans who were with him received the baptism by our

Those Romans told him: “Also we have finished our provisions and we cannot *wait*”.

So, he told them: “Comply with me and you will eat good things, and you will see the power of my *God*”. And he told them: “Put *before yourselves* what of your provisions is left over”. They gladly put [them]; and he knelt down and prayed, and [so] he said: “You, the one who blessed five loafs and satisfied many people, also now You are Our Lord Jesus Christ; listen to the voice of my weakness, so that, seeing all these *miracles performed by you*, they will find *and confess your name*, Our True God”.

And at that very moment their vases were filled with bread as much as they needed; and when they saw this miracle that had been performed before them, they believed in God.

8. Then, the athlete of Christ led them and went to Antioch, and he and those Romans who were with him received the baptism by our lord Babylas, bishop of Antioch. And then they went to Perge.

¹¹²⁶ Cf. Matthew 14:13, 15:32; Mark 6:30, 8:1; Luke 9:10; John 6:1

¹¹²⁷ The Greek 1a has also: καὶ ἐπηκολούθησαν τῷ ἁγίῳ μάρτυρι. The paragraph is partially different in Greek 1b (par. 10) and Latin 1764 (par. 7): there an angel (Raphael in Greek, unnamed in Latin) comes and performs the miracle. In this and other passages Greek 1b and Latin 1764 show meaningful parallels, which seems differentiating them from Greek 1a and the Syriac sources.

¹¹²⁸ The reference to Antioch is also in the Greek versions (1a: Ἀντιοχεία τῆς Συρίας; 1b: Ἀντιοχεία). The Latin 1764 does not mention the city neither the fact that the saint and the soldiers are baptized during their trip to the king's palace (they actually decide to reach the king after the baptism; cf. BHL 1764, parr. 7-8).

lord Babylas¹¹²⁹, bishop of Antioch. And then they went to Perge¹¹³⁰.

And when they came near the city, the athlete of Christ told them: “My brothers, fasten me and then bring me, so that no one accuses you *before the king*, seeing that I am unfastened, because you would receive punishment. But, first of all, think of your salvation and your eternal life”.

As the Blessed one had persuaded them of these things, they brought him before the king; and when the king saw his person, his appearance (*sic!*) was troubled, and he got agitated, and he was about to fall from his throne.

9. So, the athlete of Christ told him: “Oh, poor corrupted Kingdom!¹¹³¹ If you are troubled this way by¹¹³² a humble servant of *Christ*, how will you answer to God and apologize for the

And when they came near the city, the athlete of Christ told them: “My brothers, fasten me and then bring me *before the king*, so that no-one sees that I am unfastened and accuses you *before him, who is the king*, because you would receive punishment. But, first of all, think of your salvation and your eternal life”.

And as the Blessed one had persuaded them of these things, they *fastened him and* brought him before the king; and when the king saw his person, *his heart* was troubled, and he got agitated, and he was about to fall from his throne.

9. But he, the athlete of Christ told him: “Oh, poor corrupted Majesty! If you are troubled this way by a humble servant of *God*, how will you answer to God and apologize for the many

¹¹²⁹ On Babylas, bishop of Antioch and martyr under Decius, see Fiey 2004 (entry 68). Both the Greek and the Syriac sources recognizes in him the baptizer of Christopher. This does not apply, on the contrary, to the Latin 1764 (par. 7), where the saint and his companions are baptized by a certain and unidentified priest Peter (*Petrus*). The Latin passage, anyway, shows some similarities with Greek 1b (par. 7), despite the different identification of the baptizer with Peter or Babylas. Even a quite long passage who follows in Latin and Greek 1b is missing in all Syriac witnesses and in Greek 1a; the passage presents an exhortation of Christopher to the soldiers (the possibility of a jump cannot be excluded, considering the iteration of the invocation “*My brothers*” in almost all the sources). For the hypothesis of identifying in the baptizer Peter of Alexandria, see above p. 217.

¹¹³⁰ The capital of Pamphylia Secunda. The reference to Perge is both in Syriac and in Greek. No mention in Latin.

¹¹³¹ Greek (1a, 1b): Ἦ ἀτυχέστατον βασιλεῖον καὶ κατεφθαρμένον. Latin (BHL 1764): *O infelicissime regnum et corruptibilem*.

¹¹³² According to B: *by me*

many souls you destroyed? But God is ready to destroy you, since he claims by you the souls of many men that you caused to err”.

Then, Decius said: “Whence do you come? And what is your family? Are you a servant or a freeborn?¹¹³³ And what is your name?”.

Reprebus said: “If you desire to learn from what religion I am: I am a Christian. The name, then, that my fathers gave to me is Reprebus. Since, then, I received the baptism I am called Christopher, that is translated, in the *Aramaic* language, «having put on Christ»¹¹³⁴. My face, then, *shows* my generation”¹¹³⁵.

Decius told him: “Listen to me and sacrifice to the gods, *Reprebus*. And I will write to everyone who is under *my* authority to constitute you a priest of the gods”.

Then the athlete of Christ answered to him and said [to him]: “Your gold and your silver and your honour will accompany you to the

souls you destroyed? But God is ready to destroy you, since he claims by you the souls of many men that you caused to err”.

Then, Decius said: “Whence do you come? And what is your family? Are you a servant or a freeborn? And what is your name?”.

Deprebus then said: “If you desire to learn from what religion I am: I am a Christian. The name, then¹²¹⁸, that my fathers gave to me is Deprebus. Since, then, I received the baptism I am called Christopher, that is translated, in the *Roman* (*sic!*) language, «having put on Christ». My face, then, *testifies* of my generation”.

Decius then told him: “Listen to me and sacrifice to the gods. And I will write to everyone who is under *our* authority to constitute you a priest of the gods”.

Then the athlete of Christ answered to him and said: “Your gold and your silver and your honour will accompany you to the perdition of

¹¹³³ This phrase is present just in the Syriac text. The other sources usually refer the three questions about the religion, the race and the name. Actually, the Syriac could remind the reference to the τύχης in Greek 1b (par. 9).

¹¹³⁴ The Syriac translation (ܠܚܝܫܬܘܫܘܫܘܬܐ) of the Greek Χριστοφόρος is actually later used as proper name to identify the martyr (see below). The Latin does not provide, at this point of the text, the meaning of the name, as it has given the Latin translation of Χριστοφόρος above, at the moment of the baptism; actually, the provided translation is *Christum induens* (“Wearing Christ”), which is a strange interpretation of the Greek, as we would expect *Christum ferens* (“Carrying Christ”); surprisingly and meaningfully, the Latin expression seems to be a calque of the Syriac ܠܚܝܫܬܘܫܘܫܘܬܐ; cf. above p. 217.

¹¹³⁵ In Greek 1b (par. 9) and Latin 1764 (par. 9) a passage about the vanity of the Christian name follows, absent from the other versions.

¹²¹⁸ According to L: *my name*

perdition of your punishment. In fact, the gods who did not do the sky and the earth will be deprived of everything under the sky”.

10. As he saw (that), the king ordered him to be hanged up from his hair; and he told him: “Sacrifice to the gods and you will live!”. And again, he ordered him to be tortured by an iron comb while he hanged. And he told him: “Do not labour yourself; but sacrifice to the gods!”.

Reprebus said: “The sufferings of *this world* are temporary; as for you, indeed, lo, the eternal fire will retain you!”. Then the anger of the king was kindled against him; and he ordered three lamps to be applied to *the body of* the blessed one. The judges came near the king and told him: “King, my lord! Do not torture *this man by similar torments*, as his appearance rejoices us.¹¹³⁶ But interrogate him with indulgent kindness”.

And the king ordered him to be let descend from where he hanged up; and he told him: “Oh, good man¹¹³⁷! Come near, and sacrifice to the gods! In fact, your appearance gladdens us very much. And I desire to make of you my first squire”¹¹³⁸.

¹¹³⁶ The whole passage, here and in the other sources, plays with the appearance of Christopher, which makes the by-standers having fun. The reference to the amusing appearance is missing in Latin (par. 10)

¹¹³⁷ In Greek, the king appears more ironic, addressing the martyr-to-be as καλὲ ἄνθρωπε (1a), κάλλιστε ἀνδρῶν (1b), “beautiful man”.

¹¹³⁸ *Strator*, i.e. soldier, a groom for senior officers. Similar reference in Greek (1a: καὶ θέλω σε στρατόρα εἶναι τοῦ ἄρματός μου; 1b: Βοθλομαι γὰρ σε εἶναι εἰς τὸ ἄρμα μου στρατόραν).

your punishment. In fact, the gods who did not do the sky and the earth will be deprived of everything under the sky”.

10. As he heard *these things*, the king ordered him to be hanged up from his hair; and he told him: “Sacrifice to the gods and you will live!”. And again, he ordered him to be tortured by an iron comb while he hanged. And he told him: “Do not labour yourself, *Deprebus*; but sacrifice to the gods!”.

Deprebus said: “The sufferings of *this time* are temporary; as for you, indeed, lo, the eternal fire will retain you!”. Then the anger of the king was kindled against him; and he ordered three lamps to be applied to the blessed one. The judges came near the king and told him: “King, my lord! *Do not torture a man like this by these torments*, as his appearance rejoices us. But interrogate him with indulgent kindness”.

And the king ordered him to be let descend from where he hanged up; and he told him: “Oh, good man! Come near, and sacrifice to the gods! In fact, your appearance gladdens us very much. And I desire to make of you my first squire”.

The saint told him: “If you think so, be like me and you will reign in the sky, *you too!* And I will be squire of your *dominion*”.

Decius said: “I am persuading you to sacrifice to the gods and you entice me to abandon them?”.

An official said to the king: “We implore your power, my lord: let us prove to this man that he is a barbarian.¹¹³⁹ Just order to bring to him two beautiful women, so that when he is *excited* by the desire of them, he will sacrifice and immolate to the gods”. And *the king liked this word*¹¹⁴⁰ and gave them the permission to seek for two beautiful women and to clothe them with many precious garments and to perfume them with excellent perfumes. And they imprisoned them in a small room.

11. So, the blessed *Christopher* fell on his face, in prayer, on the floor, a long time, weeping and supplicating God.

And when he finished his rogation and said “Amen”, he rose from that place where he had prayed, and he turned and looked at those women. And they said: “Alas for us!”, each one

The saint told him: “If you think so, be like me and you will reign in the sky! And I will be soldier of your *chariot*”.

Decius said: “I am persuading you to sacrifice to the gods and you entice me to abandon them?”.

An official said to the king: “We implore your power, my lord: let us prove to this man that he is a barbarian. Just order to bring to him *from the street* two beautiful women, so that when he is *seduced* by the desire of them, he will sacrifice and immolate to the gods”. And *this pleased the king*, and he gave them the permission to seek for two beautiful women and to clothe them with many precious garments and [also] to perfume them with excellent perfumes. And *they did so*, and they imprisoned them [*with him*] in a small room.

11. So, the blessed *Deprebus* fell on his face, in prayer, on the floor, a long time, weeping *in prayer* and supplicating God.

And when he finished his rogation and said “Amen”, he rose from that place where he had prayed, and he turned and looked at those women. And they said: “Alas for us!”, each one seeking refuge in the walls. And they answered and said: “Alas for us! What misfortune came

¹¹³⁹ Greek 1a and 1b: ἀλλόφυλός

¹¹⁴⁰ This seems to be a more literary translation, translating the Greek ῥῆμα or λόγος. On the contrary, Syriac 2 witnesses are freer in translating.

seeking refuge in the walls.¹¹⁴¹ And they answered and said: “Alas for us! What misfortune came upon us? And our sins are manifested upon us; since if this one, with his aspect, stays with us, we die!”¹¹⁴².

So, the blessed *Christopher* told them: “Why have you been brought here?”.

But *they could not give him an answer*. Again, he told them three times: “Tell me: why have you been brought here?”. But they did not venture to look at him.

So, he told them: “Let me instruct you! And believe in the God in whom I believed and that I serve”. Then, *they told him*: “A hard affair came upon us. In fact, if we say no, we die. But if, on the other hand, we obey *this one*, the king kills us”.

upon us? Our sins are manifested upon us; since if this one, with his aspect, stays with us, we die!”.

So, the blessed *Deprebus* told them: “Why have you been brought here?”.

But *they did not venture to answer to him*. Again, he told them three times *so*: “Tell me: why, then, have you been brought here?”. But they did not venture to look at him.

So, he told them: “Let me instruct you! And believe in the God in whom I believed and that I serve”. Then, *they said within themselves*: “A hard affair came upon us *now*. In fact, if we say no, we die. But if, on the other hand, we obey *him*, the king kills us”.

¹¹⁴¹ Both Syriac 1 and Syriac 2 miss a reference to the face of Reprebus, elsewhere present. Cf. Greek 1a: αἱ δὲ ἰδοῦσαι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐταράχθησαν ἀπὸ φόβου καὶ ἐκρύβοντο μία πρὸς τὸν τοῖχον λέγουσαι [...]; Similar in 1b (par. 11): Αἱ δὲ ἰδοῦσαι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ διεταράχθησαν, καὶ ἐκρυπτετο μια πρὸς τὴν μίαν πρὸς τὸν τυχον. In Syriac the phrase is replaced by the first “Alas for us”. In Greek 1b, this passage is preceded by a prayer by Christopher, while in all the other available sources the redactor just refers to the saint praying, without quoting his words.

¹¹⁴² Concerning the whole dialogue between the saint and the women in the various sources, we can notice differences in the structure, as the Greek 1b and the Latin present a more articulated but also more regular structure (question- answer- question- answer, and so on); on the contrary, in the Syriac ones and the Greek 1a, maybe in a more theatrical way, the women are first staged in their refuse, for fear, to look at Christopher and to answer; the saint indeed has to ask them three times before obtaining answer. It seems also that one of the repetitions of the question by Christopher- which are three in Syriac, as the narrator explicitly says- has been lost in the Greek manuscript belonging to 1a *recensio* whose edition is available; this could actually be due to a jump caused by the anaphorical repetition of the question; anyway, one should check the whole Greek 1a tradition in order to have a more precise idea.

Eucaline said: “It is better to obey this one than the king, and we will inherit the eternal life”.¹¹⁴³

Emina said: “It is better to obey this one than the king, and we will inherit the eternal life”.

12. And *having planned these things together as from one mouth and one mind, they answered* and told him: “We pray you, my Lord: just pray for us Our Lord to forgive our early sins and we will turn to your *true doctrine*”.

12. And *having agreed these things together, the two, as from one mouth, told him*: “We pray you, my Lord *servant of the Living God*: just pray for us Our Lord to forgive our early sins and we will turn to your *doctrine of life*”.

He told them: “Just believe in Christ with your whole mind, and he will cancel your sins”. So, they answered and told him: “If you pray God to cancel our sins, in His great mercy, he is powerful”.¹¹⁴⁴

He told them: “Just believe in Christ with your whole mind, and he will cancel your sins”. So, they answered and told him: “If you pray God to cancel our *early* sins, in His mercy, he is powerful. *Indeed, we believe in him with our whole heart*”.

Then he told them: “Did you have to do with murder or sorcery?”.

Then *the saint Christopher* told them: “Did you have to do with murder or sorcery?”.

And they told him: “We did not, my Lord. But in something that is fornication. And, so, more and more we saved the ones who were condemned to death; we also ransomed, thanks to this *impious* money, freeborn ones that had been enslaved by force”.

And they told him: “We did not, my Lord. But in something *that you have seen that we persisted in it*, that is fornication. And, so, more and more we saved the ones who were condemned to death; we also ransomed, thanks to this money, freeborn ones that had been enslaved by force”.

¹¹⁴³ The conversion of the prostitute is a hagiographic *topos*. Cf. Luke 7:37-50; converted prostitutes are sometimes protagonists of hagiographies: e.g. Thaïs, Mary of Egypt, Pelagia, the martyr Theodota

¹¹⁴⁴ The sentence is not present in the two Greek versions, according to the published sources; this is meaningful, and this loss can be linked to two different reasons: Greek 1b, as I have shown, differs from Greek 1a and from the Syriac sources in many points, so there it is not surprising to see it goes on differently even there; in Greek 1a, the missing part could have fallen due to a jump between the two sentences attributed to Christopher and introduced by “*And he told them*” or similar. Even Latin 1764 skips this passage, but we have elsewhere noticed that Latin 1764 seems to summarize in some points.

And he told them: “Believe only in *Christ* with your whole souls and I will pray for you and the torments of the *corruptible* king will not cause pain to you”.¹¹⁴⁵

13. Then, having meditated these things between themselves, a guard came in the prison and told them (i.e. to the women): “*Come!* The king summoned you!”¹¹⁴⁶.

And when they came and stood before the king, the king told them: “Did you persuade the man to have intercourse with you?”¹¹⁴⁷.

So, they told him: “We have been persuaded that *there is no salvation elsewhere than in Jesus Christ*¹¹⁴⁸, the one that this one preaches”.

So, the king told them: “Have you too been enchanted, so to deprive yourselves of the adoration of the gods?”.

And he told them: “Believe only in *God* with your whole souls and I will pray for you and the torments of the king will not cause pain to you”.

13. Then, having those [women] meditated these things between themselves, a guard came in the prison and told them (i.e. to the women): “The king summoned you!”.

And when they came and stood before the king, the king told them: “Did you persuade *this* man to have intercourse with you?”.

So, they told him: “We *too* have been persuaded that *there is no other God than Jesus Christ*, the one that this one preaches”.

So, the king told them: “Have you too been enchanted, so to deprive yourselves of the adoration of the gods?”.

¹¹⁴⁵ These words addressed to the women here and in Greek 1a, in Greek 1b are presented as a prayer to Christ. The Latin avoids this passage.

¹¹⁴⁶ The Latin 1764 (par. 13) is a bit surprising: *Heac eis dicentibus, ingressus est clavicularius carceris et dicit eis: Surgite. Ecce vocation vestra; vocat vos rex. Sed deprecor, sancte Dei, ne obliviscaris me in tuo bono martyrio. It seems the clavicularium converted.* No other source gives this information. The Greek 1b (par. 13) just refers to the summoning by the emperor, but then the prison officer informs the king that he is persuaded that the women have fulfilled their task: Τάχα, ὡς ὑπολαμβάνω, ἔπεισαν τὸν ἄνδρα. ὁμοῦ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εὐρων αὐτοῦς κατεζομένους καὶ λέγει αὐταῖς.

¹¹⁴⁷ Cf. Greek 1a: Ἐπίσατε τὸν ἄνδρα ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς). Greek 1b (par. 13): Ἐπίσατε τὸν ἄνδρα θῦσαι τοῖς θεοῖς; Latin (par. 13): *Suasistis viro huic sacrificare diis*

¹¹⁴⁸ According to BT: *that there is no salvation elsewhere than through the hand of Christ.* V version is closer to the Greek 1a than the Syriac 2 version, for the reference to the salvation in Christ. Cf. the Greek: καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλω ἡ σωτηρία ἡμῶν, εἰ μὴ ὡς λέγει ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς

Eucaline, then, said: “One is God, in the sky as well as on earth. Your gods, indeed, are unreal, so that they cannot do good neither do evil to the souls of the men who obey them”.

Then *the anger of* the king burnt, and he ordered her to be hanged up by her hair; and he ordered two perforated stones to be hanged on her, so that for the weight of the stones the limbs *of the pure one* would be destroyed.

So, she turned towards the blessed *Christopher* and told him: “I beg you, my lord: pray for me to be strong in this moment”.

So, he turned his eyes towards the sky and said: “I adore you, *my* Lord, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ! Have pity of your servant *Eucalina*”. And having him prayed these things, that blessed woman passed away from the world.¹¹⁴⁹ And then the king ordered the body of the blessed one to be kept, to burn it in the fire.

[But God sheltered her body and it was buried by the Christians as it was right]¹¹⁵⁰.

14. Then he also ordered also her companion *Kalinica* to be brought to him.

Emina, then, *answered and said to the king*: “*Indeed*, one is God, in the sky as well as on earth. Your gods, indeed, are unreal, so that they cannot do good neither do evil to the souls of the men who obey them”.

Then the king burnt, and he ordered her to be hanged up by her hair; and he ordered two perforated stones to be hanged on her, so that *also* for the weight of the stones the limbs *of the maid* would be destroyed.

So, she turned towards the blessed *Deprebus* and told him: “I beg you, my lord: pray for me to be strong in this moment”.

So, he turned his eyes towards the sky and said: “I adore you, Lord, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ! Have pity of your servant *Emina*”. And having him prayed these things, that blessed woman passed away from *this* world. And the king ordered the body of the blessed one to be kept, to burn it in the fire.

14. Then he also ordered also her companion *Aminida* to be brought to him.

¹¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, both Latin and Greek 1b refer to the “good sleep” of the blessed woman (*beata Gallenice* [sic! The order of the two women is inverted] *bono somno requievit*; ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ δούλη ἐκοιμήθη καλῶ ὕπνω)

¹¹⁵⁰ Addition only found in B and T.

And he told her: “Have pity of yourself! That you do not pass from this world so badly, you too! So, have pity of yourself and offer and sacrifice to the gods; and do not make me stretch my hands on you! In fact, I have pity of your beauty that I will destroy. And moreover, so that I will not be stoned by the city, do that and sacrifice to the gods! And golden statues in every city under my authority I will erect for you!”.

Then she said: “To what gods do you order me to sacrifice?”. And he told her: “Sacrifice to *Zeus and Heracles*”¹¹⁵¹.

So, she said: “I received a judgement from your majesty; I must sacrifice”.

Hearing that, the king greatly rejoiced and ordered the porches (*stoa*¹¹⁵²; sic!) of the city with *diligence* to be gathered and shed, and veils to be dragged from his palace to the temple of the gods where he used to sacrifice, and then her to be brought. The heralds stood up and cried out with loud voice and said: “*Kalinica*, lover of the gods, sacrifices”. So, the priests greatly rejoiced, thinking that she would truly sacrifice to the gods.

15. Then she looked at the priests and the assembly of men who stood there and said:

And the king told her: “Have pity of yourself! That you do not pass from this world so badly, you too! So, have pity of yourself and offer and sacrifice to the gods; and do not make me stretch my hands on you! In fact, I have pity of your beauty that I will destroy. And so that I will not be stoned by the city, do that and sacrifice to the gods! And golden statues in every city under my authority I will erect for you!”.

Then she said: “To what gods do you order me to sacrifice?”. And he told her: “Sacrifice to *Zeus, Apollon and Artemis*”.

So, she said to *him*: “I received a judgement from your majesty; I must sacrifice”.

And hearing that, the king greatly rejoiced and ordered the porches (*stoa*; sic!) of the city to be gathered and shed with *perfumes*, and also veils to be dragged from his palace to the temple of the gods where he used to sacrifice, and then her to be brought. The heralds stood up and cried out with loud voice and said: “*Aminida*, lover of the gods, sacrifices”. So, the priests greatly rejoiced, thinking that she would truly sacrifice to the gods.

15. Then she looked at the priests and the assembly of men who stood there and said to

¹¹⁵¹ Cf. Greek 1a: Θῦσον τῷ Διὶ καὶ τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ; Greek 1b: Τῷ Διὶ καὶ τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ; Latin: *Sacrifica Herculi, Jovi et Apollini*

¹¹⁵² The meaning of the sentence is difficult to understand; I suppose an error occurred in the Syriac or in a lost Greek, as no reference to the *stoa* can be found in the Greek texts consulted.

“Look at me and observe the sacrifice that today I present to my God¹¹⁵³”. So, she got *on their bema* and she came near and stopped before the image of Zeus; and she looked at it and said: “If you are god, tell me: what will I do for you? Today, in fact, your servant has been designated from the erring ones”. But not a voice neither a noise was heard from it.

So, she said: “Alas for me! Alas for a sinner! In anger the gods have been called; since I have provoked them, and they do not answer to me!¹¹⁵⁴. Indeed, are they overcome by sleep?”.

And again, she came near and with high voice *she cried out* and said: “Pagan gods¹¹⁵⁵, hearken to me! And if, indeed, you are not gods, why do you cause many people to err?”.

And then she took the altar of Zeus and *overthrew* it.¹¹⁵⁶ And she prayed, saying *thus*: “Giver of every benefits and Saviour of our souls, help me in this moment!”. So, at that moment, she had untied her turban and her belt from her back, and she bound them the one on

them: “Look at me and observe the sacrifice that today I present to my God”. So, she got *on the bema of the idols* and she came near and stopped before the image of Zeus; and she looked at it and said: “If you are god, tell me: what will I do for you? Today, in fact, your servant has been designated among the erring ones”. But not a voice neither a noise was heard from it.

So, she said: “Alas for me! Alas for a sinner! In anger the gods have been called; since I have provoked, and they do not answer to me. Indeed, are they overcome by sleep?”.

And again, she came near and with high voice *she answered* and said: “Pagan gods, hearken to me! And if, indeed, you are not gods, why do you *also* cause to err many people?”.

And then she took the altar of Zeus and *demolished* it. And she prayed, saying: “Giver of every benefits and Saviour of our souls, help me in this moment!”. So, at that moment, she had untied her turban and her belt from her back, and she bound them the one with the other, and she put them on the neck of the idol of Zeus and she seized *it* and she broke it on the floor. And it was broken in pieces like sand. Then, as she had

¹¹⁵³ According to BT: *to the gods*. Cf. Greek (1a, 1b): τῷ μεγάλῳ θεῷ

¹¹⁵⁴ According to BT: *these gods have been called by name, as I spoke with them and they did not answer to me*.

¹¹⁵⁵ Cf. Greek 1a, 1b: οἱ θεοὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων. Greek 1b has, before that, a short dialogue between the woman and the priests, missing elsewhere (cf. par. 16)

¹¹⁵⁶ Cf. Greek 1a: καὶ περὶ Δία κινήσασα τὴν τράπεζαν αὐτῶν, ἀναβλέψασα εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἶπεν. The last reference to the woman looking at the sky is missing in Syriac; the Syriac passage is partially different in general.

the other,¹¹⁵⁷ and she put them on the neck of the idol of Zeus and she seized and broke it on the floor. And it was broken in pieces like sand.¹¹⁵⁸ Then, as she had also made Apollon fall, she said: “If you are gods,¹¹⁵⁹ rise and help yourselves and those who trust in you!”.¹¹⁶⁰

16. Then the priests laid their hands on her and took her. And they brought her to the king, saying to the king: “She is mad! Whence did you bring her to us? Since, lo, she dropped the great gods and broke them to pieces. And if we did not hold her, she would not leave one of them to which she would not do that!”.

So, Decius told her: “Lo, you did not obey to sacrifice to the gods. Wherefore you dare to do that? And wherefore, instead of presenting to them adoration, *offerings* with perfumes and good libations, you threw and brake them to pieces?”.

So, she said: “I rolled *that stone* as for the edification; and they are not gods as you call

also made Apollon fall, she said: “If you are gods, rise and help yourselves and those who trust in you!”.

16. Then the priests laid the hands on her and took her. And they brought her to the king, saying to the king: “She is mad! Whence did you bring her to us? Since, lo, she dropped *all* the great gods and broke them to pieces. And if we did not hold her, she would not leave one of them to which she would not do that!”.

So, Decius told her: “Lo, you did not obey to sacrifice to the gods. Wherefore you dare to do that? And wherefore, instead of presenting to them adoration, with perfumes and good libations, you threw and brake them to pieces?”.

So, she said *to him*: “I rolled *the stones* as for the edification; and they are not gods as you call them. See, thus, that they cannot be your gods, the ones which have been overcome by a

¹¹⁵⁷ The other sources just do reference to the turban (σουδάριον): difficult to state whence does this reference originated, if it is an addition occurred inside the Syriac tradition or if I should suppose a similar reference in a previous and not available Greek version.

¹¹⁵⁸ The reference to the sand is present in all the versions.

¹¹⁵⁹ This pericope (“*If you are gods*”) is present only in Syriac. In Greek, she just addresses them as Gods (Ἀνάστητε οἱ θεοὶ)

¹¹⁶⁰ Latin BHL 1764 (par. 16) and Greek 1b (par. 16) continue showing the blessed one addressing her attention towards the statues of Heracles and Apollon, before the priest finally stop and seize her.

them. See, thus, that they cannot be your¹¹⁶¹ gods, the ones which have been overcome by a woman. Indeed, I believe in my God, He who cannot be won by a man”.

17. So, *the anger of the king was kindled*, and he ordered some darts to be warmed and her to be seized from the heel of her foot until her shoulder; and he ordered her to be bound and hanged by two iron hooks, on one of her hands and on one of her feet. And *another on her thigh and on her arm*; he ordered *another* stone to be bored and suspended *to her*, so that she would be cut in two pieces.¹¹⁶²

And when she had come to this great suffering, she looked at the blessed *Christopher* and told him: “I pray you, servant of the High God: pray for me, as I am in a great suffering, that I will be relieved”.

And then the blessed Christopher lifted up his eyes towards the sky and prayed and he spoke so: “God of all Saints, accept your servant and take into account her pain because of you, as you are the only merciful and compassionate God”. And, when he had prayed these things, the blessed *Kalinica* gave her spirit.

woman. Indeed, I believe in God, He who cannot be won by a man”.

17. So, *the pagan king became furious* and he ordered some *iron* darts to be warmed and her to be seized from the heel of her foot until her shoulder; and he ordered her to be bound and hanged by two iron hooks, on one of her hands and on one of her feet. And he ordered a *big* stone to be bored and suspended *to her arm*, so that she would be cut in two pieces.

And when she had come to this great suffering, she looked at the blessed *Deprebus* and told him: “I pray you, servant of the High God: pray for me, as I am in a great suffering, that I will be relieved”.

And then the blessed Christopher lifted up his eyes towards the sky and prayed and he spoke: “God of all Saints, accept your servant and take into account her pain because of you, as you are the only merciful and compassionate God”. And, when he had prayed these things, the blessed *Aminida* gave her [*holy*] spirit *to her Lord*.

¹¹⁶¹ According to BT: *their*

¹¹⁶² The torture/martyrdom inflicted through metallic hooks is attested also in the Persian milieu, as Christelle Jullien pointed out in 2004; see for instance the cases of the Persian martyrs Qardag and Isaac. Jullien notices that, despite the legendary character of the two mentioned “epic” passions, this use was foreseen by the *Avesta* (cf. C. Jullien 2004: 257)

And that evil tyrant ordered the *holy* body of the blessed one to be kept until the athlete of Christ Christopher sacrificed before his *bema*, so that, for the power of her torments, *he would convert from his truth*.¹¹⁶³

18. So, he ordered the blessed Christopher to be brought before him.

And the king told him: “A bad name, and a badly living, and a hideous appearance;¹¹⁶⁴ and so, you chose to die very badly. Lo, indeed, the *whole city with all its territory has dealt with your sorcery*. Then, what do you say? Do you now offer and sacrifice to the gods, or do you remain in your foolishness?”.

Then the athlete of Christ laughed and said: “Rightly you are [called] Decius, since you are a

And that tyrant ordered the body of the blessed one to be kept until the athlete of Christ Christopher sacrificed before his *bema*, so that, for the power of her torments, *he would depart from his torments*.

18. So, he ordered the blessed¹²¹⁹ Christopher to be brought before him.

And the king told him: “A bad name, and a badly living, and a hideous appearance; and so, you chose to die very badly. Lo, indeed, *you turned the whole city with all its territory by your sorcery*. Then, what do you say? Do you now offer and sacrifice to the gods, or do you remain in your foolishness?”.

Then the athlete of Christ laughed and said: “Rightly you are called Decius, since you are beam of the adversary and companion of your father Satan. Because you are really guided by

¹¹⁶³ Cf. Greek 1a (referring also to the gathering of the bodies of the two women): ἐκέλευσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτῆς φυλάττεσθαι τὸ ἅγιον σῶμα σὺν τῇ ἀδελφῇ αὐτῆς Ἀκυλίην, ἕως ἂν προσέλθῃ καὶ ὁ ἀθλητῆς τοῦ θεοῦ Χριστοφόρος. Similar in Greek 1b (which adds a sort of ending title): Ἐκέλευσεν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς φυλάσσεσθαι τα σώματα τῶν ἁγίων, ἕως οὗ τῆ ἐξῆν προσέλθῃ καὶ ὁ ἅγιος Χριστοφόρος. Ἔστεφανώθησαν δὲ Ἀκυλίνα καὶ Καλλινίκη ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ Κυριῷ ἡμῶν. ὧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. Ἀμήν. See also Latin BHL 1764 (par. 18; which also gives the date of the martyrdom): *Et cum consumpta fuisset haec beatissima, jussit tyrannus servare corpora ebatissimarum martyrum, ut incenderet ea. Consummatae sunt autem octavo kalendas julias.*

¹¹⁶⁴ Cf. Greek 1a: Κακῶνυμε καὶ κακόβιε καὶ κακοπρόσωπε, προέικετο σὲ μᾶλλον ἀναλωθῆναι. Greek 1b (par. 19) plays with the antithesis ugly-beautiful: Ἀπόννημένη, κακοπρόσωπε, κακόκυμε, ἀλλοτριόμορφε, οὐκ ἠρκέσθης ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ ἀπολείᾳ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς περικαλλῆς τῆς πόλεως δια μαγείας ἡμάτησας; ἔδει σὲ μόνον ἀναλωθῆναι ἢ τὴν περικράτησιν τῆν πόλεως Καλλινίκην. Similar in Latin BHL 1764 (par. 19): *Pessimi nominis et deformis, aliene a diis, oportuerat te magis solum perire et non ornamenta civitatis per magicas perdere artes.*

¹²¹⁹ According to L: *saint*

beam of the adversary¹¹⁶⁵ and companion of your father Satan. Because you are really guided by him *in the evil things* that you commit in your erring. Even your mind, indeed, was *worthy of him*¹¹⁶⁶ and you have not been persuaded yet about that, as I told you that I will not sacrifice. Indeed, I told you many times that, if I could, I would have turned you towards the good actions and the true knowledge. But since you do not deserve to apprehend this knowledge, you threaten those things: *indeed*, I am ready to bid to Our Lord Jesus Christ many labourers through your hands”.

19. When he had said these things, lo, one hundred Roman men came as from a far way;¹¹⁶⁷ and they deposed their instruments and arms and they fell at the blessed one’s feet and bowed themselves and they saluted him and told him: “Now we have found a great teacher and we are not afraid of evil things. Since, thanks to you, Christ is with us!”.

As the king saw every one of them doing reverence *to him*, the king cried out and said:

him *in the badness* that you commit in your erring. Even your mind, indeed, was *dull* and you have not been persuaded yet about that, as I told you that I will not sacrifice *to the deceiving gods*. Indeed, I told you many times that, if I could, I would have turned, as towards the good acting, to the true knowledge. But since you do not deserve to apprehend this knowledge, you threaten those things: *so*, I am ready to bid to Our Lord Jesus Christ many labourers through your hands”.

19. When he had said these things, lo, one hundred Roman men came as from a far way; and they deposed their instruments and arms and they fell at the blessed one’s feet and bowed themselves and they saluted him and told him: “Now we have found a great teacher and we are not afraid of evil. Since, thanks to you, Christ is with us!”.

As the king saw every one of them doing reverence *to the saint Christopher*, the king cried out and said: “*“Did Deprebus incite to rebel against me?”*”.

¹¹⁶⁵ كَمِيَا (beam) literally translates the Greek δοκός (see Greek 1a). This point suggests a Greek original having this variant, since this way the reference to the etymology of Decius from δοκός makes sense. Interestingly, the other Greek 1b presents a different etymology from δεκτικός.

¹¹⁶⁶ According to BT: *has been taken*. Cf. Greek 1a: μωρός

¹¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, in Latin and Greek 1b, it is the saint himself who incites the soldiers: this is the right moment to manifest the faith they kept hidden until now. See Greek 1b par. 20 (cf. Latin par. 20)

*“Did you incite to rebel against me, Christopher?”*¹¹⁶⁸.

But those Roman told *him*: “He did not incite us to rebel against you! But by the Gehenna we are [frightened and] terrified. Indeed, we are Christian; since the time, in fact, that you sent us to the servant of Christ Christopher, we *received* the heavenly bread. And, for this reason, we do not apostatize our God: because we have a great leader and shepherd”.

So, the king told Christopher and to the rest of those (who were) with him: “Is your pay insufficient for you? Or have you been deprived of your garments? And if there is anything else you want, tell me and I (will) satisfy you seven times. But just do not leave me!”.

So, the Romans told him: “Keep your promises for you *and ride your horse and keep for you your garments in the* torments falling down on you!”¹¹⁶⁹.

Having heard, the king ordered every one of them to be killed at the same time and a furnace to be prepared, so that all the bodies would be cast in it.

But those Roman told *the king*: “He did not incite us to rebel against you! But by the Gehenna we are terrified. Indeed, we are *all* Christian; since the time that you sent us to the *pious* servant of Christ Christopher, we *ate* the heavenly bread. And, for this reason, we do not apostatize our God: because we have a great leader and shepherd”.

So, the king told Christopher¹²²⁰ and to the rest of those [who were] with him: “Is your pay insufficient for you? Or have you been deprived of your garments? And if there is anything else you want, tell me and I [will] satisfy you seven times. But just do not leave me!”.

So, the¹²²¹ Romans told him: “Keep promises for you *together with* the torments falling down on you!”.

Having the king heard *these things*, he ordered every one of them to be killed at the same time and a furnace *of fire* to be prepared, so that all the bodies *of the blessed ones* would be cast in it.

¹¹⁶⁸ Similar in Greek 1a, where the king also directly addresses Christopher (on the contrary, in the other Syriac text the question is addressed to the soldiers).

¹¹⁶⁹ The phrase in Syriac 2 is shorter: actually, this longer version appears as the direct derivation from the Greek (original?): Τὴν ἐπίνοιάν σου σὺν σοι ἔχε. Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων ἡμῶν σὺ καθέζου. Καὶ τὰ βέστια ἡμῶν συντεθήσονται σοι ἐν τῷ ταρτάρῳ τῷ μέλλοντί σε ὑποδέχεσθαι.

¹²²⁰ According to L: *Deprebus*

¹²²¹ According to L: *those*

20. And then the king ordered the saint Christopher to be brought before him and he told him: “Proud and deprived of the adoration of the gods, wherefore is it required of you all this *parrhesia* before me¹¹⁷⁰, so that you seek to deprive me of my servants?”¹¹⁷¹.

Christopher, then, answered and told him: “I am not the cause of these things. But if Christ, *he who separated the gold from the dung*¹¹⁷² in the flock of His sheep¹¹⁷³ and *also* saved those who trust Him, for you, then, he reserves vengeance and to punish you eternally, impious and full of all the hateful things of the enemy¹¹⁷⁴; so, take the courage to withstand those who turn towards Our Lord Jesus Christ! Indeed, you learned that even if my life will be carried away, many will approach God, through me”.

21. So, the king ordered a brass seat (*subsellium*) having iron nails to be constructed, and the saint to be stretched out on it; and by

20. Then the king ordered the saint Christopher to be brought before him and he told him: “Proud and deprived of the adoration of the gods, wherefore is it required of you this *parrhesia* before me, so that you seek to deprive me of my servants?”.

Christopher, then, gave him *this* answer and told him: “I am not the cause of these things. But if Christ *My Lord, he who separated the sheep from the goats and joins them* (cf. Matthew 25,32) in the flock of His sheep and saved those who trust Him, for you, then, he reserves vengeance and to punish you eternally, impious and full of all the hateful things of the enemy; so, take the courage to withstand those who turn towards Our Lord Jesus Christ! Indeed, you learned that even if my life will be carried away, many will approach God, through me”.

21. So, the king ordered a brass seat (*subsellium*) having iron nails to be constructed, and the saint to be stretched out on it; and by

¹¹⁷⁰ The reference to the *parrhesia* also recurs in all the Greek sources.

¹¹⁷¹ Cf. Greek 1a (quite the same as 1b): ὅτι ἀστρατόπεδόν με ἐποίησας. The whole paragraph in Greek is structured around the use of a military language. See also below, n. 1173.

¹¹⁷² The same in Greek 1a (quite the same as 1b): ἀλλ’ ὁ Χριστός ἐστὶν ὁ ἐκλεγόμενος τὸν χρυζὸν ἐκ τῆς κόπρου. The other Syriac sources differ (“*he who separated the sheep from the goats*”). with a reference to Matthew 25,32 (this second one is probably a re-elaboration).

¹¹⁷³ This reference is not found elsewhere than in Syriac. In Greek (1a, 1b), whose meaning is different, we find again the recourse to a military language: καὶ στρατεύων εἰς τὸ ἴδιον τάγμα

¹¹⁷⁴ According to T: *and enemy*

those nails the body of the blessed one would be nailed while stretched out. And afterwards, he ordered *a hundred and seventy* wooden stalks to be summoned; and that they would be [like] a shed above him; and to bring twenty pitches of oil and to put [them] above those pieces of wood. And, then, he ordered fire to be set from three sides of the shed.¹¹⁷⁵ And *while the pieces of wood burnt and the brass* was like a flame of fire, a multitude of Christians and of pagans was standing *and looking*. The Christians, in fact, were standing and waiting to collect the body of the saint, and also the pagan [waited] to see the death¹¹⁷⁶ of the blessed *Reprebus*. But he was found sitting on that *subsellium*, and he told those who were standing in front of him: “I have seen, at this moment, in the middle of the city, a man very high in his stature and beautiful in his appearance. And his face was bright like the rays of the sun; indeed, hair white like snow descended from it. And the crown on his head was very adorned and beautiful. And now I am not able to tell his magnificence. So, a few Romans who were with him, they were also very splendid. And I have seen, then, another man who was black, and *many* other Romans

those nails the body of the blessed one would be nailed while stretched out. And afterwards, he ordered *a hundred* wooden stalks to be summoned; and that they would be [like] a shed above him; and to bring twenty pitches of oil and to put [them] above those pieces of wood. And, then, he ordered *again* fire to be set from three sides of the shed. And *after that the pieces of wood had burnt and the oil* was like a flame of fire, a multitude of Christians and *also* of pagans was standing. The Christians, in fact, were standing and waiting to collect the body of the saint, and also the pagan [waited] to see the death of the blessed *Christopher*. But he was found sitting on the *subsellium*; he *also* told those who were standing in front of him: “I have seen, at this moment, in the middle of the city, a man very high in his stature and beautiful in his appearance. And his face was bright like the rays of the sun; indeed, hair white like snow descended from it. And the crown on his head was very adorned and beautiful. And now I am not able to tell his magnificence. So, a few Romans who were with him, they were also very splendid. And I have seen, then, another man who was black,¹²²² and the other Romans

¹¹⁷⁵ The judgement through fire is a *topos* in hagiography, having its archetype in the Biblical episode of the three children in the furnace (Daniel 3); it is sometimes meant as a trial by ordeal, as C. Jullien suggests for the Persian Martyr Acts milieu (cf. Jullien 2004: 258).

¹¹⁷⁶ According to BT: *the victory* (with the marginal addition, *or the death*). Cf. Greek (1a, 1b): θάνατος (θάνατον).

¹²²² The demonic figure of the black man reminds a topical appearance of Satan, looking as a black man, e.g. in *Life of Anthony* 6.1, where the devil assumes the aspect of a black boy. This was typical of the Coptic culture, for instance, the milieu whence the *Life of Anthony* belongs: in the Egyptian tradition the image of the black men was associated to the Ethiopians, who represented the adversaries of the Egyptians par excellence (cf. on that, also

who were black like him; and their hair was crisp and grown.¹¹⁷⁷ And fear and threat were among them, and *then he fought, that one, against the one who was glorious, and he prevailed on him.* And he killed the people who were with him. And for a certain time, he was lifted on his throne. But then, after that, that glorious one turned against that black one and *killed* all those who served him. And he bound their king in chains of fire. And he demolished his palace and overthrew his bed”.

22. When the multitude heard about the vision that he related before them and that he was alive after this punishment and not a part of *his hair* was singed¹¹⁷⁸, and the smell of the fire did not touch him, so, when they saw that wonder that had happened, they all cried *together as from the same mouth* and said: “Glory to you, *God of Christopher! From all of us, [glory to you,] Heavenly King!*¹¹⁷⁹ *So, now we also believe that you are God and you are the only to perform marvels, God, Lord of the Heaven and of the earth: help also us at this*

who were with him who were black like him; and their hair was crisp and grown. And *great* fear and threat were among them, and *that obscene man who was black fought and he prevailed.* And he killed the people who were with him. And for a certain time, he was lifted on his throne. But then, after that, that glorious one turned against that black one and all those who served him. And he bound their king in chains of fire. And he demolished his palace and overthrew his bed”.

22. When the multitude heard about this¹²²³ vision that he related before them and [that] he was alive after this punishment and not a part of *him* was singed, and the smell of the fire did not touch him, [and] so when they saw that wonder that had happened, they all cried from the same mouth and said: “Glory to you, Heavenly King! We also believe that you are God and you are the only to perform marvels, God of the Heaven and of the earth. *We pray you, Our Lord Jesus Christ: help also us at this moment*”. And then they rose and mount on the fire and they took by force

the Pseudo-Barnabas 4:10, where the Devil is called “the Black”). See on that topic: Bartelink 1994: 147, in particular n.2; cf. Steidle 1958: 339-350, Penco 1971: 31-36.

¹¹⁷⁷ Cf. Greek 1a (the same in 1b): οὐ ἡ θριξ ὡσπερ ἀλύσεις πεπλεγμένα, καὶ πολλή πανοπλία μετ’ αὐτῶν. The similitude of the hair with the chains is absent in Syriac, as well as the following reference to the arms the soldiers bring.

¹¹⁷⁸ The reference to the hair is also in Greek 1a and similar in 1b (par. 24) (cf. the absence in Syriac 2)

¹¹⁷⁹ The anaphorical invocation is a literally translation of the Greek 1a (Δόξα σοι ὁ θεὸς Ἰεσὺ Χριστέ, δόξα σοι βασιλεῦ οὐράνιε

¹²²³ According to D: *that*

moment". And then they rose and mount on the fire and they took by force from inside the athlete of Christ, and all of them together, as from the same mouth, cried out and said: "Be ashamed, Decius! Because, *indeed*, Christ overcame you and He caused to cease all your tricks!".

When the king heard that crying voice, a great stupor took him, and he moved from the tribunal to his palace *on that day*.¹¹⁸⁰

23. And the early next day he ordered sacrifices to the gods to be done, and the heralds *to cry* at the high spots and proclaim and say: "Today sacrifices to the gods are offered. Everyone will offer; and each one who will not offer, will receive the capital punishment of the sword".

And while every man had hastened towards the act of impiety, the blessed Christopher together with all the Christians went to the place where the furnace burnt and began to sing this way: "Oh glorious crown of the promise of the confession! Oh Paradise, desirable in its promises¹¹⁸¹! The fire of this furnace is nothing for those who are faithful to their God. But we will endure a little in order to be crowned"¹¹⁸².

from inside the athlete of Christ *Christopher*, and all of them together, as from the same mouth, cried out and said: "Be ashamed, Decius! Because the *king* Christ overcame you and He caused to cease all your tricks!".

When the king heard [that crying voice], a great stupor took him, and he moved from the tribunal to his palace *with great agitation*.

23. And the early next day he ordered sacrifices to the gods to be done, and the heralds *to rise* at the high spots and proclaim and say: "Today sacrifices to the gods are offered. Everyone will offer; and each one who will not offer *and sacrifice*, will receive the capital punishment of the sword".

And while every man had hastened towards *this* act of impiety, the blessed Christopher together with all the Christians went to that place where the furnace burnt and began to sing this way: "Oh glorious crown of the confession! Oh Paradise, desirable in its promises! The fire of this furnace is nothing for those who are faithful to their God. But we will endure a little in order to be crowned". And so, they sang following him

¹¹⁸⁰ Cf. Greek 1a: καὶ ἀναχωρήσας τοῦ σεκρέτου ἦλθεν εἰς τὸ παλάτιον. Greek 1b: πτωθεις ἀνεχώρησεν τοῦ σεκρέτου καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸ παλάτιον.

¹¹⁸¹ According to B: *Reign that do not pass over*

¹¹⁸² The Syriac is longer than the other sources, both Greek and Latin; cf. Greek 1a: Λαμπρὸς ὁ στέφανος τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, λαμπρὸς ὁ παράδεισος σφόδρα. Μικρὸν ὑπομεινόμεν, ἵνα στεφανωτῶμεν. Greek 1b (par. 25):

And so, they sang following him all those who were with him. And *for their pleasant and kind songs*, many from the pagans came with them.

Then some *foot-soldiers*¹¹⁸³ informed the king and said: “*Our religion perished*¹¹⁸⁴! And if you do not help yourself, you will also perish soon”.¹¹⁸⁵

24. And he rose from his throne and sat on the chariot among many armed Roman soldiers; they surrounded the blessed ones from seven spots¹¹⁸⁶ and they began to massacre them.

And, so, he, the blessed Christopher, like a military commander *spoke to them saying*: “Brothers, take heart and be strong! Since the life of the Paradise [of the heavenly kingdom] is ours and is kept for us, while the eternal Gehenna is kept for them!”.

Those ones, hearing the words of the blessed one, took more and more courage and heart, and

all those who were with him. And *by the sound of their kind and sweet songs*, many from the pagans came with them.

Then some *insolent and bad in their boldness men* informed the king and told him: “Your religion *namely* perished! And if you do not help yourself, you will also perish soon”.

24. And *hearing these things, the king Decius* rose from his throne and sat on the chariot among many armed Roman soldiers; they surrounded the blessed ones from seven spots and they began to massacre them.

So, the blessed Christopher, like a military commander *told them*: “Oh brothers, take heart and be strong! Since the life of the Paradise is ours and is kept for us, while the eternal Gehenna is kept for them!”.

Those ones, hearing the words of the blessed one, took more and more courage and heart,

Λαμπρός ὁ στέφανος. Φαιδρός ὁ παράδεισος. ἔλαιόν ἐστὶν ἡ καύστρα. Μικρὸν ὑπομείνωμεν, ἵνα στεφανωτῶμεν.
Latin (par. 25): *Clarus est paradisus; modico sustineamus, ut coronemur.*

¹¹⁸³ *Sic!* Cf. Greek 1a: τινὲς δὲ τῶν φλυάρων. Greek 1b: Τινες οὖν τῶν θρμωτέρων τῆς ἐλλήνων. Latin (par. 25): *Miserabilis autem diabolus* (see below)

¹¹⁸⁴ The same in Greek (different from the other Syriac), see 1a: Ἡ θρησκευία ἡμῶν ἤρται

¹¹⁸⁵ The sentence in Latin (par. 25) is attributed to Satan, appeared to Decius in human disguise, in order to instigate him. In Latin actually, the vision and dialogue with the devil in disguise begins already in the precedent paragraph (par. 24). The same passage which we find in Latin, also recurs in Greek 1b (par. 24).

¹¹⁸⁶ Cf. on the contrary, the only Greek 1a: εἰς τρεῖς ἀρχὰς

they trusted so; and encouraging each other, they gladly gave their spirits to the blade of the sword. As, then, they massacred them, *it was not in an ordinary way*,¹¹⁸⁷ but as wolves who massacre a flock who are without shepherd.¹¹⁸⁸ So the *blessed ones*¹¹⁸⁹ were made perfect on the 9th of the month of Nisan, on a Sunday.¹¹⁹⁰

Four myriads and two hundred and three became martyrs¹¹⁹¹, according to the word of the blessed Christopher.

25. Then the king Decius *took the blessed Christopher* and went to his palace.¹¹⁹² And he ordered a stone that thirty¹¹⁹³ men could roll to be pierced, and to be hanged to the neck of Christopher, and him to be put in a *dried* well without water. Then Decius said: "I will cause to him that not a bone among his bones *will be found*".

and they trusted so; and encouraging each other, they gladly gave their spirits to the blade of the sword. As, then, they, *those impious ones, without compassion*,¹²²⁴ massacred them, [but] as wolves who massacre a flock of *lambs* who are without shepherd. So the *saints* were made perfect on the 9th of the month of Nisan, on a Sunday.

And *the blessed ones* became martyrs, according to the word of my lord Christopher.

25. Then the king Decius went to his palace. And he ordered a *big* stone that thirty men could move to be pierced, and to be hanged to the neck of Christopher, and him to be put in a *deep* well without water. Then Decius said: "I will cause to him that not a bone among his bones *will last safe*".

¹¹⁸⁷ More explicit the Greek, where we find a reference to the usual punishment by be-heading, cf. Greek 1a (almost the same in 1b): οὐ γὰρ ἀπεκεφάλισεν αὐτούς

¹¹⁸⁸ Cf. Numbers 27:17; Ezekiel 34:8; 1 Kings 22:7; 2 Chronicles 18:16; Matthew 10:16, 9:36; Mark 6:34; Acts 20:29

¹¹⁸⁹ According to LD: *the saints*

¹¹⁹⁰ Cf. Greek 1a: τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἀναλωθέντων ἐνάτη τοῦ μηνὸς ἰουλίου, ἡμέρα κυριακῆ ἔμαρτύρησαν

¹¹⁹¹ The number of the martyrs is only found in Syriac 1 and Greek 1a: μύριοι διακόσιοι τρεῖς. Both the reference to the date and to the number of martyrs are missing in Latin.

¹¹⁹² Cf. Greek 1a (similar in 1b): συλλαβόμενος δὲ τὸν ἅγιον Χριστοφόρον ἀπήει εἰς τὸ παλάτιον [...]. To notice that the Greek version is closer to Syriac 1 than to Syriac 2 (which is shorter)

¹¹⁹³ According to B: *three*

¹²²⁴ It seems to recall the Greek οὕτως ἀνελεημός (1a), ἀνελεημόνως (1b)

But when that stone, that had been rolled, was casted, so that it should fall with the blessed one himself, it was broken in pieces and it became like sand. And the blessed one was raised by angels and went to the palace of the king *and informed the king*; then, the king ordered [him] to be seized, and the king told him: “Reprebus, how long do you *go on* with your sorcery?”.

The athlete of Christ did not give him answer. So, the king himself was filled with rage and ordered to give him a *phelonion*¹¹⁹⁴ of iron leaves, and to warm it with great care and to clothe [with it] the blessed one. And in all this suffering the servant of God did not feel it.

And again, the tyrant was bold in his severe look and told the blessed one: “*Although now, you will sacrifice to the gods!*”¹¹⁹⁵. But the blessed athlete of Christ¹¹⁹⁶ prayed and so he said: “Lord Omnipotent God, Jesus Christ, accept my spirit, so that I will come to your glory as well!”. And while saying these things, he knelt down and prayed.

But when that stone, that had been rolled, was casted, so that it should fall with the blessed one, it was broken in pieces and it became like sand. And the blessed one was raised by angels and went to the palace of the king *and when the king saw him, he immediately* ordered [him] to be seized, and the king told him: “Christopher, how long do you *succeed* in your sorcery?”.

The athlete of Christ did not give him answer. So, the king himself was filled with rage and ordered to give him a *paten (sic!)* of iron leaves, and to warm it with great care and to clothe [with him] the blessed one. And in all this suffering the servant of Christ did not feel it.

And again, the tyrant was bold in his severe look and told the blessed one: “*Even now you will not sacrifice to the gods?*”. But the blessed athlete of Christ *told him: “I sacrifice to the living God”*. *And he* prayed and so he said: “Lord Omnipotent God, Jesus Christ, accept my spirit, so that I will come to your glory as well!”. And while saying these things, he knelt down and prayed.

¹¹⁹⁴ Calque of the Greek φαινώλιον (also φαινώλες, φελώνιον, φελόνιον). Surprisingly, the Greek witnesses I have consulted do not refer to this but to another kind of garment, i.e. the καράκαλλον

¹¹⁹⁵ Cf. Greek 1a: καὶ νῦν θύης τοῖς θεοῖς. Greek 1b (par. 26): Κἂν ἄρτι ἄκουσόν μου καὶ θῦσον τοῖς θεοῖς

¹¹⁹⁶ Here a sentence is missing, which is on the contrary present in Syriac 2; the loss could be due to a *saut du même au même*. But indeed, the sentence is not found in Greek either; this can mean that Syriac 2 has added the phrase according to stylistic reasons, or that the jump is occurred in the Greek sources whence Syriac 1 derives and also in the sources whence the Greek published texts derive (I cannot state if it is the same source for Syriac 1 and Greek 1a, which is a possibility, anyway). Considering the kind of loss, it is anyway even possible to imagine a contemporary and independent fall/ jump in various witnesses.

As the king saw [that], he sentenced about him saying: “*Christopher*, who neglected the gods and blamed my command, will receive the punishment of the sword”.¹¹⁹⁷

26. And when he received the sentence, he went out from the palace and went to a known place, where the malefactors receive the punishment of death.

Then, he turned and saw many Christians who went after him, weeping. And he told the soldier who was with him in order to hold him: “Wait a little, my son, so that I pray”¹¹⁹⁸. And he rose in prayer and so he said: “*Our Lord* Jesus Christ who many times assisted me, give back to the king the rewarding recompense of his bad actions, being tormented by the devil, and his body instead of bread will be his food; and so, he will be finished”.

As the king saw *him, the saint, praying*, he sentenced about him saying: “*Deprebus*, who neglected the gods and blamed my commands, will receive the punishment of the *death by sword*”.

26. And when he received the sentence, he went out from the palace and went to a known place, where the malefactors were receiving the punishment of death.

Then, he turned and saw the many Christians who went after him, weeping. And he told the soldier who was with him in order to hold him: “Wait a little, my son, so that I pray”. And he rose in prayer and so he said: “Jesus Christ who many times assisted me, give back to the king the rewarding recompense of his bad actions, being tormented by the devil, and his body instead of bread will be his food; and so, he will be finished”.

¹¹⁹⁷ The paragraph is much more developed in the Latin BHL 1764 (par. 26). The editor of the Latin text attributed this addition to the Latin redactor himself. Beside differences in the tortures the martyr-to-be undergoes and a more developed dialogue between the saint and the king, we see also a certain Athanasius appearing on stage: the archdeacon of the bishop comes and takes the relics of the martyrs in order to bring them to his city, in Italy (*sic!*). He will appear again, in the last paragraph of the narrative, to take also the body of Christopher (see below). An identification with Athanasius of Alexandria has been proposed; indeed, if one accepts this identification, considering, on the one hand, that in his second occurrence in the *Acts* he is referred as bishop and, on the other hand, the period of episcopate of Athanasius (i.e. since 328 circa), one must also deduce that the translation of the relics took place years after the death of the martyr.

¹¹⁹⁸ In the Latin witness, the saint actually addresses a group of soldiers (par. 27: *Et conversus ad milites, dicit: Sustinete me modicum, ut orem*). The phrase actually recurs twice in a few lines; the Latin text is much longer; it also presents a divine vision of Christ and four angels and a chorus of righteous ones appearing to the blessed one. It has been interpreted - by the editor - as an interpolation by the Latin redactor.

Again, the blessed one prayed and said:¹¹⁹⁹ “Omnipotent King, *Maker and not made*, Saviour of those who believe in Him, this request I ask from you, do not refuse it to me! Assist, my Lord, these Christians who take refuge in you. And confer me the grace after my death as in my life. And for everyone on whom a bone from my bones is found, let the sign of the glory of your power appear on him; he will banish the evil spirits and he will heal every disease; and the sin will not reign on him. Since many people desire to take my body by force, for faith, as for their benefit, and to bring [it] to the villages and to the towns, that not a cloud of hail *pass* there, and no sultry wind hurt in that place, and nothing damaging the race of men, as it came upon them, from you, the correction, even if they have been *harmed* of old. My tabernacle¹²⁰⁰ will guard those places, so that, as there would be neither harm nor distress, they will glorify you and give honour to me forever. So be it, amen”.

27. And a voice from the sky came and said: “You will obtain, according to your request *and I will not distress you*¹²⁰¹ forever. And more and more in that *you will glorify me*, since you had

And again, the blessed one prayed and said: “Omnipotent *Eternal* King, Saviour of those who believe in Him, this request [that] I ask from you, do not refuse it to me! Assist, my Lord, these Christians who take refuge in you. Confer me the grace after my death as in my life. And for everyone on whom a bone from my bones is found, let the sign of the glory of your power appear on him; *so that* he will banish the evil spirits and he will heal every disease; and the sin will not reign on him. Since many people desire to take my body by force, for faith, as for their benefit, and to bring [it] to the villages and to the towns, that not a cloud of hail *be* there, and no sultry wind hurt in that place, and nothing damaging the race of men, having come upon them, from you, the correction, even if they had been *instructed* of old. My tabernacle, (*the tabernacle*) *of your servant*, will guard those places *in your mercy*, so that as there would be *of old* neither harm nor distress, *so it will be that* they will glorify you and give honour to you forever. So be it, amen”.

27. And a voice from the sky came and said: “You will obtain, according to your request forever. And more and more in that *you will you will be praised*, since you *will have* this care. So,

¹¹⁹⁹ This sentence, present in both Syriac versions, is absent in Greek. It may be an addition occurred in Syriac, but one should suppose a common basis-text for both the recensions (improbable possibility) or that one Syriac tradition depend on the other (hypothesis to be excluded). It could have been occurred at a certain point of the Greek tradition.

¹²⁰⁰ Cf. Hebrews 9

¹²⁰¹ Also, in Greek 1a (quite the same in 1b): καὶ οὐ μὴ σε λυπήσω ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος

this care. So, thence, give your body to those who desire it. But also, something else I tell you: If someone *will be* in *unavoidable* peril¹²⁰², even if not a bone from your bones is found on him, but just he will remember your name in prayer or with faith, he will obtain rest from his sufferings”.

And hearing these (things) that God had told him, he glorified God.

And he told the executioner: “*Come, my son!*¹²⁰³
And do what the king *told* you¹²⁰⁴”.

So, the executioner agitated, while his tears were falling down; he made the sign of the Cross on his face, and he prayed and said: “Powerful Lord God, make also me worthy of his crown”. And by one sword he beheaded the blessed ܕܡܚܘܪܐܢܐ, who is called, in Greek, Christopher, and, at that same moment, he also stabbed himself next to him and ended his life in presence of the blessed one.¹²⁰⁵

thence, give your body to those who desire it¹²²⁵. But also, something else I tell you: If someone *happens to be* in peril, even if not a bone from your bones is found on him, but just he will remember *my name and your name*¹²²⁶ in prayer and with faith, he will obtain rest from suffering”.

And hearing these [things] that God had told him, he glorified *and confessed* God.

And he told the executioner: “*Follow me!* And do what the king *ordered* to you”.

So, the executioner agitated *a lot*, while his tears were falling down; he made the sign of the Cross on his face, and he prayed and *so* he said: “Powerful Lord God, make also me worthy of his crown”. And by one sword he beheaded the blessed ܕܡܚܘܪܐܢܐ ܕܡܚܘܪܐܢܐ, *he* who is called, in Greek *language*, Christopher, and, at that same moment, he also stabbed himself *by the sword and fell* next to him and ended his life in presence of the blessed one.

¹²⁰² Literally: *in peril of need*

¹²⁰³ Cf. Greek 1a and 1b: Δεῦρο τέκνον. Different in Syriac 2.

¹²⁰⁴ The Greek verb κελεύω does support both the Syriac translations ܕܡܚܘܪܐܢܐ (“to say”) and ܕܡܚܘܪܐܢܐ (“to order”)

¹²⁰⁵ Problematic passage. The Syriac indeed is very clear, portraying the conversion of the executioner; the scene surprisingly misses in Greek. Greek 1b just refer to the suicide of the guard, but in a very less deep way than the Syriac witnesses. The passage is entirely avoided by Greek 1a. The Latin witness does not present the conversion of the executioner at all.

¹²²⁵ According to D: *who desire you*

¹²²⁶ The phrase does not recur this way in any other witness; in Greek 1a and 1b, as well as in Syriac 1, the reference is just to “*your*” name (i.e. the name of the saint Christopher). Cf. Greek 1a, e.g.: τοῦ ὀνόματός σου

The crowning of the blessed ones was on the 27th of the month of Nisan, in the fourth day [of the week].¹²⁰⁶

28. And when Peter, bishop of Italy¹²⁰⁷, that is on the boundary of Pisidia, heard [these things], he came to Antioch, which is in Pisidia, since the crowing of the blessed ones had taken place there. And he gave a certain sum of silver, and he took the body of the saint Christopher with many [*others*] and enveloped it with linens and great ointments.

Then he brought the body of *the blessed one* with him to his city. A river passed through that city, harming it, at the time of his arrival. So, at the beginning of the river, where the spring flew, there the blessed Peter, who deserves a good memory, built a temple for the bones of the saint; and there, *with honour*, he put him. And from the time the bones of the blessed one have been put there, that city was preserved and was not harmed again by that river, thanks to the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to intercession of ܠܘܨܬܐ ܩܪܝܫܬܘܨܬܐ Christopher, and by the will of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; *to him the glory* forever and ever, amen.

The crowning of the blessed ones was on the 27th of the month of Nisan, in the fourth day [of the week].

28. And when Peter, bishop of Italy, that is *as well* on the boundary of Pisidia, heard [these things], he came to Antioch, which is in Pisidia, since the crowing of the blessed ones had taken place there. And he gave much silver, and he took the body of the saint Christopher with many *blessed people who were martyred with him* and enveloped it with linens and great ointments.

Then he brought the body of *the holy Christopher* with him to his city. A river passed through that city, harming it, at the time of his arrival. So, at the beginning of the river, where the spring flew, there Peter, who deserves a good memory, built a temple for the bones of the saint; and there he put him. And from the time the bones of the blessed one have been put there, that city was preserved and was not harmed again by that river, thanks to the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ and to intercession of *the holy Christopher*, and by the will of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; forever and ever, amen.

¹²⁰⁶ Reference to the day of the martyrdom not found in Greek 1b. Cf. Greek 1a: ἐτελειώθη δὲ μηνὶ μαῖω ἐνάτη.

¹²⁰⁷ *Sic*; cf. Greek: Ἀταλίας (1b), Ἀτταλείας (1a); the corruption of the name occurs as well in Syriac and in Latin, where the reading is Italia as well. Surprisingly, the Latin differs also for the name of bishop: *Eudivit autem episcopus civitatis At[h]anasius Italiae quae juncta est terminis Persidis*. It seems clear that we are dealing with the same Athanasius who had collected the corps of the blessed ones massacred before Christopher (see above p. 309, n. 1197).

29. After the confession of the blessed Christopher, the anger came *from the sky* above the king Decius, *as by intercession of the blessed one* and his curse.¹²⁰⁸ In fact, his body (i.e. of Decius) was broken up by fever and shivering; and he was melted as wax before the fire. And he began to say: “Woe is me, impious! I killed of a harsh death a man of God”. Then his wife came and stood in his presence and said: “Woe is me, as I am going to become widow from this time! I told you, indeed, and you did not consent, that the God of the Christians is great, and you did not want¹²⁰⁹ to believe.¹²¹⁰ And now what will I do, me miserable, separated from your majesty? And it is not only that: but [because of you] I was also deprived of the faith of the Christians. Maybe your gods withstand the Christ and separate you from the sufferings that you carry?”.

29. And after the confession of the blessed¹²²⁷ Christopher, the anger came above the king Decius, *as by his intercession* and his curse. In fact, his body (i.e. of Decius) was broken up by fever and shivering; and he was melted as wax before the fire. And he began to say: “Woe is me, impious! I killed of a harsh death a man of God”. Then his wife came and stood in his presence and said: “Woe is me, as I am going to become widow from this time! I told you, indeed, and you did not consent, that the God of the Christians is great, and you did not want to believe. And now what will I do, me miserable, separated from your majesty? And it is not only that: but because of you I was also deprived of the faith of the Christians. Maybe your gods may withstand the Christ and separate you from the sufferings that you carry?”.

¹²⁰⁸ The story of the illness of Decius and his attempt to find some part of the body of Christopher is absent in Greek 1b and in Latin. The Latin completely avoids any further reference to Decius; Greek 1b just does reference to his illness, due to the divine punishment, and subsequent death. One finds it, without relevant differences, in Syriac 1 and 2, and Greek 1a.

¹²⁰⁹ According to BT: *did not consent*

¹²¹⁰ The illness of the king seen as consequence of the persecutions moved against the Christians is a *topos* in hagiography: we can mention the parallel references in the *Acts of Sylvester*, where the leprosy of Constantine is ascribed to his behavior towards the Christians (see Di Rienzo 2016: 336 [Syr], 344 [Ita]), or in the story of Tiridates, where the Armenian sovereign is affected by a physical-mental disease as consequence of his persecutions against some Christian holy women (cf. Thomson 1976; Langlois 1867: 97-194; Ter-Mkrтч'ea and Kanayeants' 1904 [Armenian]; for the Syriac version, Van Esbroeck 1977: 291-359).

¹²²⁷ According to L: *saint*

Then the king, gnashing his teeth and sighing, told the men who stood before him: “Run quickly, I beseech you, to the place where the blessed one received the sentence of death; and if you find [something] from his body or a strip from his clothing, let me have them, so that I will touch my body and I will escape from this distress”¹²¹¹. They went, according to his word, and they did not find anything. Then they took some dust from the place where that saint had received the sentence of death and they came back, and they poured it in the water and served it to the impious one.¹²¹² And so, he consigned himself to a hard judgment.

30. So, he was glorified, the holy ܘܚܘܨܬܐ ܕܩܝܫܬܐ, translated in Greek language Christopher; and be God glorified forever and ever. Amen.¹²¹³

They were martyred because of the saint Christopher, Eucaline and Kalinica; and two hundred Romans and *among the spectators* four magistrates; all them were in number of 40 (sic!) thousand and two hundred and three, with the executioner.

Then the king, gnashing his teeth and sighing, told the men who stood before him: “Run quickly, I beseech you, to the place where the blessed one received the sentence of death; and if you find [something] from his body or a strip from his clothing, let me have them, so that I will touch my body and I will escape from this [hard] distress”. They went, according to his word, and they did not find anything. Then they took some dust from that place where that saint had received the sentence of death and they came back *to him*, and they poured it in the water and served it to the impious one. And so, he consigned himself to a hard judgment.

30. So, he was glorified, the holy ܘܚܘܨܬܐ ܕܩܝܫܬܐ, that is translated in Greek [language] Christopher; and be God glorified *through him* forever and ever. Amen.

They were martyred because of the saint Christopher, *two women, whose names were* Emina and Aminida; and two hundred *and three* Romans and four magistrates; all them were in number of four thousand and two hundred and three, with *one* executioner. *Those ones were*

¹²¹¹ The Greek 1a is clearer than the Syriac, referring to Decius' aiming at dying: Δράμετε, παρακαλώ. Καὶ ἐὰν εὕρητε τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἢ κράσπεδον τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ, μόνον ἄψωμαι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀποθάνω.

¹²¹² It seems to remind the ḥnana (see Jullien and Jullien, 2010), “*un genre de pâte que l'on pourrait assimiler à une «pâte de reliques», qui correspond pour Jean Maurice Fiey à une sorte de «galette sacrée»* (Jullien and Jullien 2010: 333; cf. Fiey 1966: 218). The meaningful difference is that the ḥnana usually had healing powers: in the case of Decius, here, this “*potion*” causes his death!

¹²¹³ Here the Greek text ends. The following part, with the list of the martyrs, is present in the Syriac witnesses only.

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- BHG *Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca, revised edition* (Subsidia hagiographica, 8a), Brussels: Société des Bollandistes 1957
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- BHO *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis*. (ed. P. Peeters) Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1910
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Agnes	BHSE 321	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: 159-164 (Syriac; Latin transl.)</p> <p><i>Atti del Martirio di S. Agnese vergine Romana</i>, trans. Fausto Lasinio (Pisa 1864) (Italian transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890) vol. 4: 116-12 (Syr)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/321</p>
Aḥudemmeh	BHSE 689	<p>Nau F. (ed.), <i>Histoires d'Ahoudemmeh et de Maroutamétropolitains jacobites de Tagrit et de l'Orient (VIe et VIIe siècles): suivies du traité d'Ahoudemmeh sur l'homme</i> (Paris: Firmin-Didot 1909): 15-51. (Syriac; French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/689</p>
Alexius	BHSE 1065 1279	<p>Amiaud A. (ed.), <i>La légende syriaque de saint Alexis, l'homme de Dieu</i> (Paris: É. Bouillon 1889): 3-14 (Syriac); 1-9 (French transl.); 15-28 (Syr) 10-17 (French).</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1065</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1279</p>
Aloisibrother of Appian	BHSE 237	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890) vol. 1: 229-232 (Syr)</p> <p>Cureton W. (ed.), <i>History of the martyrs in Palestine: Discovered in a very ancient Syriac manuscript</i>, trans. Cureton W. (London: Williams and Norgate 1861): 17-21 (Syr; English transl.).</p> <p>Violet B. (ed.), <i>Die palästinischen Märtyrer des Eusebius von Cäsarea: ihre ausführliche Fassung und deren Verhältnis zur kürzeren, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literaturvol. 14.4</i> (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1896): 43-46 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/237</p>

Alphaeus, Zachaeus and Romanus	BHSE 233	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: 177-181 (Syriac; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1 : 208-214. (Syr)</p> <p>Cureton W. (ed.), <i>History of the martyrs in Palestine: Discovered in a very ancient Syriac manuscript</i>, trans. Cureton W. (London: Williams and Norgate 1861): 4-9 (Syriac; English transl.)</p> <p>Violet B. (ed.), <i>Die palästinischen Märtyrer des Eusebius von Cäsarea: ihre ausführliche Fassung und deren Verhältnis zur kürzeren, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i> vol. 14.4 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1896): 7-15 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/233</p>
Ammonios, Doticos, Cyriacus and Acmonicos	BHSE 1497	http://syriaca.org/work/1497
Amoun	BHSE 413	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 38-41. (Syr)</p> <p>Draguet R. (ed.), <i>Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiaque, I. Les manuscrits. Édition des pièces liminaires et des ch. 1-19</i>. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 389 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CSCO 1978): 68-77 (Syr); vol. 390 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO 1978): 48-54 (French transl.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 1: 146-149 (English transl.); vol. 2: 122-124 (syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/413</p>
An Elder	BHSE 499	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 277-281. (Syr)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 1: 388-390 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/499</p>
Ananias	BHSE 1640	http://syriaca.org/work/1640
Andromedes of Jerusalem	BHSE 1488	http://syriaca.org/work/1488

Andronicus and Athanasia	BHSE 385	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 405-417. (Syr)</p> <p>Nau F., "Vie et récits de l'abbé Daniel de Scété (VIe siècle): texte syriaque. Histoire d'Andronicus et d'Athanasia femmeet de la fin bienheureuse qu'ils firent," <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> vol. 5 (1900): 78-82 (French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/385</p>
Antigone and Eupraxia	BHSE 1641	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1641</p>
Antonius	BHSE 681	<p>Draguet R., <i>La Vie primitive de S. Antoine conservée en syriaque [Text]</i> vol. 1 Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 417 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpuSCO 1980): 1-148. (Syr); vol. 418 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpuSCO 1980): 1-88 (French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/681</p>
Apollo and Amoun	BHSE 527	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 369-392. (Syr)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 376-393 (syr.). vol. 1: 520-540 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/527</p>
Apollo the young	BHSE 548	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 438-441 (Syr)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 1: 582-585 (English transl.); vol. 2: 429-431 (syr.).</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/548</p>
Apphian	BHSE 911	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: (1) 189-195. (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Violet B. (ed.) <i>Die palästinischen Märtyrer des Eusebius von Cäsarea: ihre ausführliche Fassung und deren Verhältnis zur kürzeren</i>, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literaturvol. 14.4 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1896): 24-43 (German transl.)</p> <p>Zingerle P., <i>Chrestomathia syriaca</i> (Romae: Typis S. C. de propaganda fide 1871): (2) 191-201. (Syr)</p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/911
Archelides	BHSE 917 918 919	Wensinck A.J., <i>Legends of Eastern saints chiefly from Syriac sources</i> (Leyden 1911) (Syr; English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/917 http://syriaca.org/work/918 http://syriaca.org/work/919
Asia	BHSE 1141	Nau F., "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Baršauma, Abraham de la Haute Montagne, Siméon de Kefar 'Abdin, Yaret l'Alexandrin, Jacques le reclus, Romanus, Talia, Asia, Pantaléon, Candida, Sergis et Abraham de Cašcar", <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> II, 10 [20] (1915-1917): 17-20 (summary) http://syriaca.org/work/1141
Athanasius of Alexandria	BHSE 1039	http://syriaca.org/work/1039
Babyllas of Antioch and the Three Children	BHSE 344 1215	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 274-290 http://syriaca.org/work/1215 http://syriaca.org/work/344
Badmā	BHSE 284	Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distribute adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 165-167. (Syr; Latin transl.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 347-351. (Syr.) <i>A new edition of the text is available in Part II of this dissertation</i> http://syriaca.org/work/284
Barbašmin and his Companions	BHSE 277	Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 111-116 (Syr; Latin transl.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 296-303. (Syr.) Braun O., <i>Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer: mit einem Anhang: Ostsyrisches Mönchsleben</i> (Kempten: J. Kösel 1915): 100-104 (German transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/277

Barbara and Juliana	BHSE 306	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 345-355 (Syr.)</p> <p>Weyh W., <i>Die syrische Barbara-legendemit einem anhang: Die syrische Kosmas- und Damian-legende in deutscher uebersetzung</i> (Schweinfurt1911): 5-11 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/306</p>
Barḥaḏbšabā	BHSE 281	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 129-130. (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 314-316 (Syr.)</p> <p><i>A new edition of the text is available in Part II of this dissertation</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/281</p>
Barsamyā	BHSE 226	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1 : 120-130 (Syr.)</p> <p>Cureton W., <i>Ancient Syriac documents relative to earliest establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the neighbouring countries, from the year after our Lord's Ascension to the beginning of the fourth century</i> (Amsterdam: Oriental Press1967): 63-71 (Syr.; English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/226</p>
Baršawmā the Syrian	BHSE 1073	<p>Nau F., "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Baršauma, Abraham de la Haute Montagne, Siméon de Kefar 'Abdin, Yaret l'Alexandrin, Jacques le reclus, Romanus, Talia, Asia, Pantaléon, Candida, Sergis et Abraham de Cašcar", <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> II, 8 [18] (1913): 272-276379-389; 9 [19] (1914): 113-134278-289 (Summary)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1073</p>
Baršebyā	BHSE 272	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 93-95. (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 281-284 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/272</p>
Basil the Great (Miracles of Basil and his brother Peter, by Helladios)	BHSE 1446	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1446</p>

Basil the Great	BHSE 382	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 297-335 (Syr.)</p> <p>Zetterstéen K. V. (ed.), <i>Eine Homilie des Amphilochius von Iconium über Basilius von Caesarea</i> (Berlin 1915): 223-247 (Syr.)</p> <p>Zetterstéen K.V., "Eine Homilie des Amphilochius von Iconium über Basilius von Cäsarea," <i>Oriens Christianus</i> vol. 9 (1934) : 66-98 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/382</p>
Behnam and his companions	BHSE 1625	<p>Smith K. and J.-N. Mellon Saint-Laurent (Eds.), <i>The History of Mar Behnam and Sarah. Martyrdom and Monasticism in Medieval Iraq</i>, Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation 7 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press 2018) (Syr; English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1625</p>
Bishoi	BHSE 313	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 572-620 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/313</p>
Cain and Abel	BHSE 1047	<p>Brock S.P." A Syriac Life of Abel," <i>Le Muséon</i> vol. 87 (1974): 87 (1974): 467-492</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1047</p>
Charisios, Nicephorus and Papias	BHSE 372	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 52-56 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/372</p>
Christopher and his companions	BHSE 1233	<p>Popescu J., <i>Die Erzählung oder Das Martyrium des Barbaren Christophorus und seiner Genossen</i> (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1903): Leipzig19031-29 (Syr.); 30-47 (German transl.)</p> <p><i>A new edition of the text is available in Part II of this dissertation</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1233</p>
Clement of Rome	BHSE 368	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 1-17 (Syr.)</p> <p>Mingana A., <i>Some early Judaeo-Christian documents in the John Rylands library</i> (Manchester; New York: University press; Longmans, Green and Co. 1917), 4 (1917-1918): 90-108 (Syr.); 66-76 (English transl.)</p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/368
Constantine and Silvester	BHSE 1399	Di Rienzo A. "Gli Actus Silvestri nella tradizione in lingua siriaca: il testimone contenuto nel manoscritto BL Add 12174", <i>Adamantius</i> 22 (2016): 328-348 (Syr; Italian transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1399
Copros and Patermoutis	BHSE 534	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 411-424 (Syr.) <i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i> , trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904), vol. 2: 407-417 (Syr.); vol. 1: 558-569 (English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/534
Cosmos and Damian	BHSE 376	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 107-119. (Syr.) Bruns P., "Die Syrische Kosmas- und Damian-Legende," <i>Rivista di archeologia cristiana</i> vol. 80 (2004): 195-210 (German transl.) Weyh W., <i>Die syrische Barbara-legendemit einem anhang: Die syrische Kosmas- und Damian-legende in deutscher uebersetzung</i> (Schweinfurt 1911): 45-52 (German transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/376
Crescens	BHSE 1230	http://syriaca.org/work/1230
Cyprian and Justa	BHSE 305	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 322-344. (Syr.) Ryssel V., "Der Urtext der Cyprianuslegende," <i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen</i> vol. 110 (1903): 280-311 (German transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/305
Cyriacus and Julietta	BHSE 303 1251 1644 1734	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 254-283 (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/303 http://syriaca.org/work/1251 http://syriaca.org/work/1734 http://syriaca.org/work/1644
Daniel and Eulogius	BHSE	http://syriaca.org/work/1885

	1885	
Daniel and Wardē	BHSE 275	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 103-104 (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 290 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/275</p>
Daniel of Galash	BHSE 1068 1876	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1068</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1876</p>
Daniel of Scete	BHSE 1948	http://syriaca.org/work/1948
Daniel of Scetis (on Anastasia)	BHSE 1179	<p>Brock S. Pand S.A. Harvey, <i>Holy women of the Syrian Orient</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press 1987): 143-149 (English transl.)</p> <p>Nau F., " Vie et récits de l'abbé Daniel de Scété (VIe siècle): texte syriaque. Histoire d'Andronicus et d'Athanasie, sa femme, et de la fin bienheureuse qu'ils firent," <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> vol. 5 (1900): 5 (1900) 68-78; 391-401 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1179</p>
Dionysius the Areopagite (Vision of Heliopolis)	BHSE 1051 1052 1642	<p>Kugener M., "Une autobiographie syriaque de Denys l'Aréopagite," <i>Oriens Christianus</i> vol. 7 (1907): 312-338.</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1051</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1642</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1052</p>
Dioscorus	BHSE 1070	<p>Théopiste, <i>Histoire de Dioscore patriarche d'Alexandrie</i> (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale 1903): 1 (1903) 21-106 (Syr); 241-308 (French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1070</p>
Dioscorus	BHSE 1608	http://syriaca.org/work/1608
Dioscorus	BHSE 1231	<p>Quentin H. and Tisserant E., <i>Une version syriaque de la passion de S. Dioscore</i> (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes 1921): 340-342 (Syr.); 342-344 (Latin transl.)</p>

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Disciple of an Elder of Scetis	BHSE 478	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 215-217. (Syr.) <i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 263-264 (Syr.); vol. 1: 323-325 (English transl.)</i> http://syriaca.org/work/478
Dometius	BHSE 398 1505	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 536-556 (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/398 http://syriaca.org/work/1505
Eleutheria, Anthia and Qorabor	BHSE 386	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 417-430 (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/386
Ephrem	BHSE 315	Amar J.P., <i>The Syriac vita tradition of Ephrem the Syrian</i> (Lovanii: In aedibus Peeters 2011) (Syr.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 621-665. (Syr.) Lamy T.J. (ed.), <i>ܩܘܪܒܘܬܐ ܕܥܦܪܝܡ ܕܩܘܪܒܘܬܐ ܕܥܦܪܝܡ ܕܩܘܪܒܘܬܐ II</i> (H. Dessain 1886) vol. 2: col. 3-89 (Syr.); 4-90 (Latin transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/315
Eugenia and her friends	BHSE 363	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 469-514 (Syr.) Smith Lewis A., <i>Select narratives of Holy women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai palimpsest</i> (London: Clay 1900): 1-48 (Syr.; English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/363
Eulogius and the Leper	BHSE 474	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 193-200. (Syr.) Draguet R.(ed.), <i>Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiaque, II. Édition des ch. 20-71 épilogue [72-73]</i> , Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 398 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO 1978) vol. 2: 169-181 (Syr.); vol. 399: 118-126 (French transl.) <i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 237-242 (Syr.); vol. 1: 293-299 (English transl.)</i>

		http://syriaca.org/work/474
Eulogius and the lion	BHSE 1500	http://syriaca.org/work/1500
Euphemia and Sophia (Euphemia and the Goth)	BHSE 930 1634	<p>Burkitt F.C., <i>Euphemia and the Goth, with the Acts of martyrdom of the confessors of Edessa</i> (London; Oxford: Published for the Text and translation Society by Williams and Norgate 1913): 44-74 (syr.); 129-153 (English transl.)</p> <p>Nau F., <i>Hagiographie syriaque. St. Alexis. Daniel de Galas. Hannina. Euphémie. Sahda: Récits de Méléce sur le vendredisur Marc et Gasparet sur un homme riche qui perdit tous ses enfantsetc</i> 2e sér. 5 (1910): 66-72, 173-181 (Syr.); 182-191 (French transl.)</p> <p>Пайкова А. В <i>Легенды и сказания в памятниках сирийской агиографии</i> Палестинский сборник vol. 30 [93] (Ленинград: Наука 1990) : 95-100 (Russian transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/930</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1634</p>
Euphrosyne	BHSE 358	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 386-405. (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/358</p>
Eupraxius	BHSE 1486	http://syriaca.org/work/1486
Eusebius of Samosata	BHSE 383	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 335-377. (Syr.)</p> <p>Devos P., "Le dossier syriaque de S. Eusèbe de Samosate," <i>Analecta Bollandiana</i> vol. 86 (1968): 203-240 (French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/383</p>
Euthalius	BHSE 1736	http://syriaca.org/work/1736
Evagrius	BHSE 486	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 231-236 (Syr.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 275-279 (syr.); vol. 1: 339-344 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/486</p>

Father 'Abshlomo	BHSE 915	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: 208-209. (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Violet B. (ed.) <i>Die palästinischen Märtyrer des Eusebius von Cäsarea: ihre ausführliche Fassung und deren Verhältnis zur kürzeren, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i> vol. 14.4 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1896): 71-73 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/915</p>
Fausta of Cyzicus	BHSE 1633	http://syriaca.org/work/1633
Febronia of Nisibis	BHSE 367	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 573-615. (Syr.)</p> <p>Brock S.P. and S. A. Harvey, <i>Holy women of the Syrian Orient</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press 1987): 152-176 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/367</p>
Finding the head of John the Baptist	BHSE 1528	http://syriaca.org/work/1528
Finding(s) of the Cross	BHSE 972 973 974 975 1645	<p>Drijvers H. J. W. and J. W. Drijvers, <i>The Finding of the True Cross: The Judas Kyriakos Legend in Syriac: Introduction, Text and Translation</i>, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 565 (Leuven: Peeters 1997) (Syr.; English transl.)</p> <p>Drijvers J.W., <i>Helena Augusta, waarheid en legende</i> (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen 1989): 172-180 (Dutch transl.)</p> <p>Loftus D., <i>An History of the twofold invention of the Cross whereon our Saviour was crucified. Translated out of an antient Aramæan biologist. Together with an account of the conversion of the Ethiopians out of Abulpharagius's Ecclesiastical History</i> (Dublin 1686) (English transl.)</p> <p>Nestle E., <i>De Sancta Cruce: Ein Beitrag zur christlichen Legendengeschichte</i> (Berlin: Reuther 1889): Berlin 1889 (Syr.; German transl.)</p> <p>Pizzi I., "Due legende siriache intorno all'invenzione della Croce," <i>Giornale Arcadico</i> sér. 32 (1899): 346-354 (Italian transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1645</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/972</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/973</p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/974 http://syriaca.org/work/975
George the Martyr, Anthony the General, and Alexandra the Queen	BHSE 249	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1: 277-300 + variantes 527-528 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/249</p>
Gerasimos	BHSE 1501	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1501</p>
Gordios	BHSE 1248	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1248</p>
Gregory Nazianzus	BHSE 1499	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1499</p>
Gregory the Illuminator	BHSE 1409	<p>van Esbroeck M., "Le résumé syriaque de l'Agathange," <i>Analecta Bollandiana</i> vol. 95 (1977): 293-357. (Syr.; French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1409</p>
Gregory Wonderworker	BHSE 375	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 83-106. (Syr.)</p> <p>Ryssel V., "Eine syrische Lebensgeschichte des Gregorius Thaumaturgus," <i>Theologische Zeitschrift aus der Schweiz</i> vol. 11 (1894): 228-254 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/375</p>
Guria and Shmona	BHSE 929	<p>Burkitt F.C., <i>Euphemia and the Goth, with the Acts of martyrdom of the confessors of Edessa</i> (London; Oxford: Published for the Text and translation Society by Williams and Norgate 1913): 3-25 (Syr.); 90-110 (English transl.)</p> <p>Theophilus, <i>Acta sanctorum confessorum Guriae et Shamoniae: exarata Syriaca lingua</i> (Romae: Salviucci, 1899): 3-28 (syr.); 3-19 (Latin transl.)</p> <p>Von Gebhardt O. and E. von Dobschütz, <i>Die Akten der edessenischen bekennen GurjasSamonas und Abibos</i> (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1911): 2-63 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/929</p>
Habib	BHSE 228	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1: 144-160 (Syr.)</p> <p>Burkitt F.C., <i>Euphemia and the Gothwith the Acts of martyrdom of the confessors of Edessa</i> (London;</p>

		<p>Oxford: Published for the Text and translation Society by Williams and Norgate 1913): 26-43 (Syr.)</p> <p>Cureton W., <i>Ancient Syriac documents relative to earliest establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the neighbouring countries, from the year after our Lord's Ascension to the beginning of the fourth century</i> (Amsterdam: Oriental Press 1967): 73-86 (Syr.); 72-85 (English transl.)</p> <p>Von Gebhardt O. and E. von Dobschütz, <i>Die Akten der edessenischen bekennen Gurjas, Samonas und Abibos</i> (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1911): 64-99 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/228</p>
Ḥananyā	BHSE 1640	http://syriaca.org/work/1640
Ḥananyā of Arbela	BHSE 325	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 131-132. (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/325</p>
Hilaria	BHSE 920	<p>Wensinck A.J., <i>Legends of Eastern saints chiefly from Syriac sources</i> (Leyden 1911): 3-31 (syr.); 37-57 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/920</p>
Ḥimyarite Martyrs	BHSE 1174 1405	<p>Knös Gust, <i>Chrestomathia syriaca: maximam partem e codicibus manu scriptis collecta</i> (Gottingae 1807): 37-54 (Syr.)</p> <p>Devos P., <i>L'Abrégé syriaque BHO 104 sur les martyrs himyarites: La Vie syriaque de saint Eusèbe de Samosate</i> (Société des Bollandistes 1972): 344-354 (Syr.); 354-359 (French transl.)</p> <p>Shahîd I., <i>The martyrs of Najrân. New documents</i> (Bruxelles: Soc. des Bollandistes 1971) (Syr.; English)</p> <p>أغناطيوس يعقوب (الثالث) الشهداء الحميريون العرب في الوثائق : 24-42 (1966) <i>المجلة البطريركية، السريانية (دمشق)</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1405</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1174</p>
Hyperechius, Philotheus, Jacob, Paragros, Ḥabib, Romanus and Lollian (The Seven Martyrs of Samosata)	BHSE 320	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: 124-147 (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 88-116. (Syr.)</p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/320
Ignatius of Antioch	BHSE 301	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 199-214 (Syr.)</p> <p>Wright W. and J.B. Lightfoot (eds.), <i>The Apostolic fathers: Part II, S. Ignatius, S. Polycarp. Revised Texts with Introductions, Notes, Dissertations, and Translations</i> vol. 3 (London: Macmillan 1889): 103-124 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/301</p>
Isaiah of Aleppo	BHSE 312	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 534-572 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/312</p>
Isaiah of Palestine	BHSE 555	<p>Ahrens K. and G. Krüger (eds.), <i>Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte des Zacharias Rhetor</i> (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner 1899): 263-274 (German transl.)</p> <p>Brooks E.W. (ed.), <i>Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimorum</i> vol. 1 <i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> vol. 7 (Paris 1907): 3-16 (Syr.); vol. 8: 3-10 (Latin transl.)</p> <p>Land J.P.N., <i>Zachariae episcopi Mitylenes aliorumque scripta historica graece plerumque deperdita</i> (Lugd. Bat 1870): 346-356 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/555</p>
Isho'sabran	BHSE 1032	<p>Jean Baptiste Chabot, <i>Histoire de Jésus-Sabran</i> (Paris: E. Leroux 1898): 503-584</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1032</p>
Jacob Baradaeus (Life and Translation of his body)	BHSE 849 850	<p>"Lives of the Eastern Saints III," <i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> vol. 29.2 (1925): 228 [574] - 268 [614]; 268 [614] - 273 [619] (Syr.; English transl.)</p> <p>Kugener M., "Récit de Mar Cyriaque racontant comment le corps de Jacques Baradée fut enlevé du couvent de Casion et transporté au couvent de Phesiltha," <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> vol. 7 (1902): 7-10, 198-201 (Syr.); 11-17, 202-208 (French transl.)</p> <p>Land J.P.N. and W. J. van Douwen (eds.), <i>Joannis episcopi Ephesi Syri Monophysitae commentarii de beatis orientalibus; et Historiae ecclesiasticae fragmenta</i> (Amsterdam: Iohannem Müllerum 1889): 203-215 (Latin transl.)</p> <p>Land J.P.N., "Joannis Episcopi Ephesi Monophysitae Scripta Historica quotquot adhuc inedita superant," in <i>Anecdota Syriaca</i> (Lugdunum Batavorum: Brill 1862): 364-383.</p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/849 http://syriaca.org/work/850
Jacob of Nisibis	BHSE 342 343	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 262-273. (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/342 http://syriaca.org/work/343</p>
Jacob of Serugh	BHSE 1075	<p>Abbeloos J.B. (ed.) <i>De vita et scriptis Sancti Jacobi Batnarum Sarugi in Mesopotamia Episcopi</i> (Lovania: Vanlinthout 1867): 310-312 (Syr.); 312-314 (Latin transl.)</p> <p>Krüger P., "Die sogenannte Philoxenosvita und die Kurzvita des Jacob von Serugh," <i>Ostkirchliche Studien</i> vol. 21 (1972): 44-45 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1075</p>
Jacob the Cut-Up (Ya'qōb Mpasqā)	BHSE 291	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 539-558 (Syr.)</p> <p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 242-257 (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Braun O., <i>Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer: mit einem Anhang: Ostsyrisches Mönchsleben</i> (Kempten: J. Kösel 1915): 150-162 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/291</p>
Jacob the lame	BHSE 458	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 164-172 (Syr.)</p> <p>Draguet R. (ed.) <i>Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiaque, II. Édition des ch. 20-71, épilogue [72-73]</i>, <i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> vol. 398 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO 1978) vol. 2: 307-315; vol. 399: 201-205 (French transl.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 217-222 (syr.); vol. 1: 265-274 (English transl.)</p> <p>Tullberg O.F., <i>Præs. Libri qui inscribitur Paradisus Patrum partes selectæ e Codicibus MSS. Syriacis Musei Britannici et Bibliothecæ Vaticanæ</i> (Upsaliæ 1851): 13-21 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/458</p>
Jacob the recluse	BHSE 1138	<p>Nau F., "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Baršauma, Abraham de la Haute Montagne, Siméon de Kefar 'Abdin, Yaret l'Alexandrin, Jacques le reclus, Romanus, Talia, Asia,</p>

		Pantaléon, Candida, Sergis et Abraham de Cašcar", <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> II, 10 [20] (1915-1917): 3-12 (summary) http://syriaca.org/work/1138
Jacob the Wandering Monk	BHSE 1485	http://syriaca.org/work/1485
John Bar Aphthonia	BHSE 1119	Nau F., "Histoire de l'illustre Jean, Supérieur du Saint Monastère d'Aphthonia, écrite par l'un de ses disciples," <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> vol. 7 (1902): 113-120 (Syr.); 121-132 (French transl.) Nau F., <i>Vie de Jean Bar Aphthonia</i> (Paris: A. Picard 1902): 17-24 (Syr.); 25-36 (French transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1119
John bar Malke	BHSE 252	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1 : 344-365 + variantes 535-537. (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/252
John Chrysostom	BHSE 1889	http://syriaca.org/work/1889
John of Antioch	BHSE 1134	http://syriaca.org/work/1134
John of Kfar Sanya	BHSE 1892	http://syriaca.org/work/1892
John of Rome	BHSE 1955	http://syriaca.org/work/1955
John of Tella	BHSE 558	Brooks E.W. (ed.), <i>Vitae virorum apud monophysitas celeberrimorum</i> vol. 1 Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 7 (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae 1907): 31-95. (Syr.); vol. 2 Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 8 (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae 1907): 15-19 (Latin transl.) Kleyn H.G. (ed.), <i>Het leven van Johannes van Tella</i> (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1882): 3-83 (Syr.); xix-lxxxviii (Dutch transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/558
John the Almsgiver	BHSE 346 1627	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 303-395. (Syr.) <i>A new edition by G. Venturini is in preparation.</i>

		<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1627</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/346</p>
John the Evangelist	BHSE 888 889	<p>Wright W., <i>Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles</i> (Williams and Norgate 1871) vol. 1: 1-72 (Syr.); vol. 2: 3-68 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/888</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/889</p>
John the Nazirite	BHSE 795	<p>Jean de Ephèse, "Lives of the Eastern Saints I," <i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> vol. 17.1 (1923): 36-55 (Syr.; English transl.)</p> <p>Land J.P.N. and W. J. van Douwen (eds.), <i>Joannis episcopi Ephesi Syri Monophysitae commentarii de beatis orientalibus; et Historiae ecclesiasticae fragmenta</i> (Amsterdam: Iohannem Müllerum 1889): 14-21 (Latin transl.)</p> <p>Land J.P.N., "Joannis Episcopi Ephesi Monophysitae Scripta Historica quotquot adhuc inedita superant," in <i>Anecdota Syriaca</i> (Lugdunum Batavorum: Brill 1862): 22-30, 330-332 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/795</p>
John the Short	BHSE 910	<p>Nau F. (ed.), <i>Histoire de Jean le Petithégoumène de Scété, au IVe siècle: Version syraque éditée et traduite</i> (Paris: A. Ricard 1914): V-LXXVI (Syr.); 1-40 (French transl.)</p> <p>Nau F., <i>La Version syriaque de l'histoire de Jean le Petit</i>, 2e sér. 7 (1912): 351-375; 8 (1913) 53-62, 124-130, 283-298; 9 (1914): 33-48</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/910</p>
John the Siloitus	BHSE 1125	<p>Nau F. and M. Brière, <i>Histoire de Jean le Siloite</i>. 2e sér. 4 (1909): 157-167 (Syr.); 167-173 (French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1125</p>
John, Arcadius, Xenophon and Mary	BHSE 1491 1953	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1491</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1953</p>
Joseph, patriarch	BHSE 1631	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1631</p>
Judas Cyriacus	BHSE 1123	<p>Guidi I., <i>Textes orientaux inédits du Martyre de Judas Cyriaque, évêque de Jérusalem</i> 9 (1904): 87-95 (Syr.); 79-86 (French transl.)</p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/1123
Julian Saba	BHSE 384	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 380-404. (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/384
Julietta	BHSE 1247	http://syriaca.org/work/1247
Lawrence and Agrippa	BHSE 1894	http://syriaca.org/work/1894
Leonius and Publius	BHSE 380	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 210-217 (Syr.) Garitte G., "Textes hagiographiques orientaux relatifs à saint Léonce de Tripoli," <i>Le Muséon</i> vol. 81 (1968): 428-440 (Syr.; Latin transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/380
Lucianus and Marcian	BHSE 317	Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: 49-54 (Syr; Latin transl.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 1-7. (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/317
Lucianus, Thyrsusa nd Callinicus	BHSE 1223	http://syriaca.org/work/1223
Macarius of Alexandria	BHSE 1548 1950	van Lantschoot A., "Révélations de Macaire et de Marc de Tarmaqa sur le sort de l'âme après la mort," <i>Le Muséon</i> vol. 63 (1950): 168-176 (Syr.); 176-181(French transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1548 http://syriaca.org/work/1950
Macarius the Great	BHSE 355	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 177-262. (Syr.) Toda Satoshi, <i>Vie de S. Macaire L'egyptien: Edition et traduction des textes copte et syriaque</i> , 263-368 (Syr.); 371-485 (French transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/355

Malcha the Solitary	BHSE 487	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 236-251. (Syr.)</p> <p>Sachau E., <i>Verzeichniss der syrischen handschriften der Königlichen bibliothek zu Berlin</i> (Berlin: A. Asher & Co.1899): 105-109 (Syr.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 279-290 (Syr.); vol. 1: 344-357 (English transl.)</p> <p>van den Ven P., <i>S. Jérôme et la vie du moine Malchus le Captif</i> (Louvain: J.-B. Istas 1901): 450-455. (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/487</p>
Malke	BHSE 362	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 421-469. (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/362</p>
Mama, Theodute and Rufina	BHSE 387 388	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 431-445; 445-458 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/387</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/388</p>
Mar Beth-Sahda	BHSE 1128	<p>Delehaye H. and P. Peeters, <i>Acta Sanctorum Novembris, collecta, digesta, illustrata</i> vol. 4 (Brussels: Socii Bollandiani 1925) vol. 4: 435-472</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1128</p>
Marina (Mary)	BHSE 253 1118 1952	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1 : 366-371 (Syr.)</p> <p>Nau F., " Histoire de sainte Marinequi vécut sous des habits d'homme au couvent de Kanoubine, siège patriarcal des Maronites," <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> vol. 6 (1901): 283-285 (Syr.); 286-289 (French transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/253</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1118</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1952</p>
Mark the merchant	BHSE 1129 1643 1886	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1947</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1129</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1886</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1643</p>

	1947	
Mārtā, daughter of Posi	BHSE 1941	http://syriaca.org/work/1941
Martinien (Mār Tnina)	BHSE 1305 1629 1936	http://syriaca.org/work/1936 http://syriaca.org/work/1629 http://syriaca.org/work/1305
Martyrs of Persia	BHSE 278	Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 118-120 (Syr; Latin transl.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 303-306. (Syr.) Manna J. E., <i>Morceaux choisis de littérature araméene</i> (Mossoul: Imprimerie des Pères Dominicains 1901) vol. 1: 146-149 http://syriaca.org/work/278
Martyrs of Tur Ber'ain	BHSE 1502	Brock S.P. (ed.), <i>The Martyrs of Mount Ber'ain</i> , Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation vol. 4 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press 2014) (Syr.; English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1502
Marutha of Tagrit	BHSE 690	Nau F. (ed.), <i>Histoires d'Ahoudemmeh et de Marouta, métropolitains jacobites de Tagrit et de l'Orient (VIe et VIIe siècles): suivies du traité d'Ahoudemmeh sur l'homme</i> (Paris: Firmin-Didot 1909): 61-96. (Syr.; French transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/690
Mary	BHSE 1110	Smith Lewis A., <i>Select narratives of Holy women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai palimpsest</i> (London: Clay 1900): 111-122 (syr.); 85-93 (English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1110
Mary Mother of God (Death of)	BHSE 1412 1888	Erbetta M., <i>Gli Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento. I. Vangeli. 2s.l.</i> (1981): 537-544 (Italian transl.) Wright W., <i>Contributions to the apocryphal literature of the New Testament, collected and edited from Syriac manuscripts in the British Museum</i> (London: Williams and Norgate 1865): 33-51 (Syr.); 24-41 (English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1412

		http://syriaca.org/work/1888
Mary of Egypt	BHSE 357	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5 : 342-385 (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/357
Matthias and Andrew	BHSE 891 1635	Wright W., <i>Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles</i> (Williams and Norgate 1871) vol. 1: 102-126. (Syr.); vol. 2: 93-115 (English transl.) Schulthess F., <i>Christlich-palästinische Fragmente aus der Omajjaden-Moschee zu Damaskus</i> (Berlin: Weidmann 1905): (re-print, Jérusalem 1971): 86-92 http://syriaca.org/work/891 http://syriaca.org/work/1635
Maximus and Dometius	BHSE 693 880	Nau F., "Les légendes syriaques d'Aaron de Saroug, de Maxime et Domèce, d'Abraham maître de Barsôma et de l'empereur Maurice; Les miracles de Saint Ptolémée," <i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> vol. 5 (1910): 752 [344] - 762 [354] (Syr.; French transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/693 http://syriaca.org/work/880
Ma'in	BHSE 1226	Brock S.(ed.), <i>The History of the Holy Mar Ma'in. With a Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts. Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation 1.</i> (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press 2008) (Syr.; English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1226
Mēharšābōr	BHSE 290	Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 234-236 (Syr; Latin transl.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 535-539 (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/290
Miles, Āboursām and Sinay	BHSE 270	Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 66-79. (Syr; Latin transl.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 260-275 (Syr.)

		<p><i>A new edition of the text is available in Part II of this dissertation</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/270</p>
Moses the Indian	BHSE 482	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 219-224 (Syr.)</p> <p>Draguet R. (ed.), <i>Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiaque, I. Les manuscrits. Édition des pièces liminaires et des ch. 1-19</i>, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 389 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO 1978): 154-164 (Syr.); vol. 390: 108-114 (French transl.)</p> <p>Pizzi I., "Storia di San Mosè Ladrone," <i>Bessarione</i> vol. 10 (1901): 387-389 (Italian transl.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 266-270 (Syr.); vol. 1: 328-332 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/482</p>
Narsā, Yawsef and Their Companions	BHSE 273	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 97-101. (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 284-286. (Syr.)</p> <p>Delehayé H. and P. Peeters, <i>Acta Sanctorum Novembris, collecta, digesta, illustrata</i> vol. 4 (Brussels: Socii Bollandiani 1925) vol. 4: 425-427</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/273</p>
Nicholas of Myra	BHSE 345 1935	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 290-302 (Syr.)</p> <p>Павель Константинович Коковцовъ" Чудеса св. Николая епископа города Миръ (Перевод съ сирійскаго)," <i>Записки Восточнаго Отдѣленія Императорскаго Русскаго Археологическаго Общества</i> vol. 9 (1896): 79-86 (Russian transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/345</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1935</p>
Onesima	BHSE 359 1751	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 405-419. (Syr.)</p> <p>Smith Lewis A., <i>Select narratives of Holy women from the Syro-Antiochene or Sinai palimpsest</i> (London: Clay 1900): 81-93 (syr.); 60-69 (English transl.)</p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/359 http://syriaca.org/work/1751
Pachomius	BHSE 354	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: (1) 122-176. (Syr.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: (2) 301-343 (syr.); vol. 1: 432-480 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/354</p>
Paloutianos	BHSE 1890	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1890</p>
Panteleon, Hermalos and Companions	BHSE 1142	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1142</p>
Paphnutius	BHSE 364 530 1236 1386	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 514-542. (Syr.); vol. 7: 400-407 (Syr.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 400-405 (Syr.); vol. 1: 548-554 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/364</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/530</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1236</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1386</p>
Pappos and 24000 Martyrs in Magdala near Antioch	BHSE 1895	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1895</p>
Paul the bishop and John the priest	BHSE 1127	<p>Rahmani I. E., <i>Studia Syriaca: seu collectio documentorum hactenus ineditorum ex codicibus Syriacis</i> (In Monte Libano: In Seminario Scharfensi 1904) vol. 5: Sharfés.d. 41-60 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1127</p>
Paul the simple	BHSE 424	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 81-87. (Syr.)</p> <p>Draguet R. (ed.), <i>Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiaque, II. Édition des ch. 20-71, épilogue [72-73]</i> Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 398 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO 1978) vol. 2: 183-195 (Syr.); vol. 399: 127-134 (French transl.)</p> <p><i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert</i>, trans. E. A. Wallis</p>

		<p><i>Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 154-159 (syr.); vol. 1: 183-189 (English transl.)</i></p> <p>Tullberg O.F., <i>Præs. Libri qui inscribitur Paradisus Patrum partes selectæ e Codicibus MSS. Syriacis Musei Britannici et Bibliothecæ Vaticanæ (Upsaliæ1851): 21-29</i></p> <p>Wallis Budge E.A., <i>The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas, Bishop of Margâ A. D. 840 vol. 2 (London: K. Paul Trench Trübner & co. 1893) vol. 2: 32-35</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/424</p>
Pelagia	BHSE 400	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 616-649 (Syr.)</i></p> <p>Gildemeister J., <i>Natalicia regis augustissimi Guilelmi Imperatoris Germaniae (Bonnae: Georgius 1879): 1-12 (Syr.); 3-14 (Latin transl.)</i></p> <p>Brock S. P. and S. A. Harvey, <i>Holy women of the Syrian Orient (Berkeley: University of California Press 1987): 41-62 (English transl.)</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/400</p>
Peter of Africa	BHSE 1887	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1887</p>
Peter of Alexandria	BHSE 365	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 543-561. (Syr.)</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/365</p>
Peter the Iberian	BHSE 928	<p>Horn C. B. and R.R. Phenix (eds.), <i>The Lives of Peter the Iberian, Theodosius of Jerusalem, and the Monk Romanus, Writings from the Greco-Roman world, vol. 24 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2008): 2-281 (Syr.; English transl.)</i></p> <p>Raabe R., <i>Petrus der Iberer: ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts: syrische Übersetzung einer um das Jahr 500 verfassten griechischen Biographie (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1895) (Syr; German transl.)</i></p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/928</p>
Peter the publican	BHSE 1131	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1131</p>
Peter, Apostle	BHSE 923	<p>Cureton W., <i>Ancient Syriac documents relative to earliest establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the neighbouring countries, from the year after our Lord's Ascension to the beginning of the fourth century (Amsterdam: Oriental Press1967): 35-41 (Syr.; English transl.)</i></p>

		http://syriaca.org/work/923
Pethion	BHSE 1227	Corluy J., <i>Historia Sancti Mar Pethion martyris syriace et latine</i> (Bruxellis: typis Polleunis Ceuterick et Lefébure 1888): 8-44 (Syr; Latin transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1227
Philemon, Cyrill and Appollonius	BHSE 1216	http://syriaca.org/work/1216
Philip	BHSE 890	Wright W., <i>Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles</i> (Williams and Norgate 1871) vol. 1: 74-99. (Syr.); vol. 2: 69-92 (English transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/890
Phocas of Sinope	BHSE 1225	http://syriaca.org/work/1225
Piamon	BHSE 441	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 7: 124-126 (Syr.) Draguet R. (ed.), <i>Les formes syriaques de la matière de l'Histoire lausiaque, II. Édition des ch. 20-71, épilogue [72-73]</i> , Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium vol. 398 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO 1978) vol. 2: 231-233 (Syr.); vol. 399: 158-159 (French transl.) <i>The Book of Paradise: Being the Histories and Sayings of the Monks and Ascetics of the Egyptian Desert, trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (Leipzig: W. Drugulin 1904) vol. 2: 187-188 (Syr.); vol. 1: 227-228 (English transl.)</i> http://syriaca.org/work/441
Placidus (Eustathius)	BHSE 302	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 215-253. (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/302
Posi	BHSE 1940	http://syriaca.org/work/1940
Probus, Tarachos and Andronicus	BHSE 379 1939	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 171-209. (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/379 http://syriaca.org/work/1939

Procopio	BHSE 232 1938	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: 169-171 (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1 : 205-207. (Syr.)</p> <p>Cureton W. (ed.), <i>History of the martyrs in Palestine: Discovered in a very ancient Syriac manuscript</i>, trans. Cureton W. (London: Williams and Norgate 1861): 3-5 (Syr.); 3-4 (English transl.)</p> <p>Violet B. (ed.), <i>Die palästinischen Märtyrer des Eusebius von Cäsarea: ihre ausführliche Fassung und deren Verhältnis zur kürzeren, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i> vol. 14.4 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1896): 3-7 (German transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/232</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1938</p>
Romanus	BHSE 2040	http://syriaca.org/work/2040
Romanus and a child	BHSE 1939	<p>Nau F., "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Baršauma, Abraham de la Haute Montagne, Siméon de Kefar 'Abdin, Yaret l'Alexandrin, Jacques le reclus, Romanus, Talia, Asia, Pantaléon, Candida, Sergis et Abraham de Cašcar", <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> II, 10 [20] (1915-1917): 13-15 (Summary)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1139</p>
Romulus, Eudoxius and Friends	BHSE 377	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 119-132 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/377</p>
Roubil	BHSE 1494 1954	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1494</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1954</p>
Sābā of Tour Mesatha	BHSE 1496	http://syriaca.org/work/1496
Šabor, Išḩāq, Ma'nā w-'Abrōhōm w-Šem'on	BHSE 261	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 226-229 (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 51-56 (Syr.)</p>

Serapion	BHSE 356	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 5: 263-341. (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/356
Sergius and Abraham of Kashkar	BHSE 1144	Nau F., "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Baršauma, Abraham de la Haute Montagne, Siméon de Kefar 'Abdin, Yaret l'Alexandrin, Jacques le reclus, Romanus, Talia, Asia, Pantaléon, Candida, Sergis et Abraham de Cašcar", <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> II, 10 [20] (1915-1917): 24-32 (summary) http://syriaca.org/work/1144
Sergius and Bacchus	BHSE 304 1389 1944	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 283-322. (Syr.) http://syriaca.org/work/304 http://syriaca.org/work/1944 http://syriaca.org/work/1389
Shenoute	BHSE 1288	Nau F., <i>Une version syriaque inédite de la vie de Schenoudi</i> (Paris: E. Leroux 1900): 153-167 (Syr.); 252-263 (French transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/1288
Simeon of Kfar-'Abdin	BHSE 1493	Nau F., "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Baršauma, Abraham de la Haute Montagne, Siméon de Kefar 'Abdin, Yaret l'Alexandrin, Jacques le reclus, Romanus, Talia, Asia, Pantaléon, Candida, Sergis et Abraham de Cašcar", <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> II, 9 [19] (1914): 420-431 (summary) http://syriaca.org/work/1493
Simeon Salos	BHSE 1495	http://syriaca.org/work/1495
Simeon the Stylite	BHSE 351 1946	Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 507-644. (Syr.) Lent F., "The Life of St. Simeon Stylites: A Translation of the Syriac Text in Bedjan's <i>Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum</i> Vol. IV," <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> vol. 35 (1915) : 103-198 (English transl.) Lietzmann H., <i>Das Leben des heiligen Simeon Stylites</i> (Leipzig 1908) : 80-180 (German transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/351 http://syriaca.org/work/1946

Sophia and her Daughters Pistis, Elpis and Agape	BHSE 370	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 6: 32-52. (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/370</p>
Stratonike and Seleucus	BHSE 319	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 2: 68-121. (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 4: 14-88 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/319</p>
Susan	BHSE 819	<p>"Lives of the Eastern Saints II," <i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> 18.4 (1924): 541 [339] - 558 [356].</p> <p>Brock S. P. and S.A. Harvey, <i>Holy women of the Syrian Orient</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press 1987): 133-141 (English transl.)</p> <p>Land J.P.N. and W. J. van Douwen (eds.), <i>Joannis episcopi Ephesi Syri Monophysitae commentarii de beatis orientalibus; et Historiae ecclesiasticae fragmenta</i> (Amsterdam: Iohannem Müllerum 1889): 190-196 (Latin transl.)</p> <p>Land J.P.N., "Joannis Episcopi Ephesi Monophysitae Scripta Historica quotquot adhuc inedita superant," in <i>Anecdota Syriaca</i> (Lugdunum Batavorum: Brill 1862): 343-353 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/819</p>
Ṭalya	BHSE 1140	<p>Nau F., "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Baršauma, Abraham de la Haute Montagne, Siméon de Kefar 'Abdin, Yaret l'Alexandrin, Jacques le reclus, Romanus, Talia, Asia, Pantaléon, Candida, Sergis et Abraham de Cašcar", <i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i> II, 10 [20] (1915-1917): 15-16 (Summary)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/1140</p>
Tarbō, her sister	BHSE 269 1942	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 54-59 (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 254-260. (Syr.)</p> <p>Braun O., <i>Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer: mit einem Anhang: Ostsyrisches Mönchsleben</i> (Kempten: J. Kösel 1915): 89-92 (German transl.)</p> <p>Brock S.P. and S. A. Harvey, <i>Holy women of the Syrian Orient</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press 1987): 73-76 (English transl.)</p>

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Teqlā and Her Companions	BHSE 280	<p>Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 123-127 (Syr; Latin transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 308-313. (Syr.)</p> <p>Braun O., <i>Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer: mit einem Anhang: Ostsyrisches Mönchsleben</i> (Kempten: J. Kösel 1915): 106-109 (German transl.)</p> <p>Brock S. P. and S. A. Harvey, <i>Holy women of the Syrian Orient</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press 1987): 78-81 (English transl.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/280</p>
The 40 Martyrs of Sinai	BHSE 1937	<p>http://syriaca.org/work/1937</p>
The Children or Sleepers of Ephesus	BHSE 250	<p>"I sette dormienti. Storia e leggenda," <i>Bessarione</i> vol. 1 (1896-1897): 318-320 (Italian transl.)</p> <p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 1 : 301-325 + variantes 528-535. (Syr.)</p> <p>Chabot J. B.(ed.), <i>Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum: [pars] I</i>, <i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i> vol. 91, 104 (Louvain, Paris 1927.) 1: 135-143 et 195-206. (Syr.); 101-107 et 145-153 (Latin transl.)</p> <p>Guidi I., <i>Testi orientali inediti sopra i Sette dormienti di Efeso</i> (Roma 1884): 12 (1884): 35-44 (Syr.)</p> <p>Manna J. E., <i>Morceaux choisis de littérature araméene</i> (Mossoul: Imprimerie des Pères Dominicains 1901) vol. 2: 210-224 (Syr.)</p> <p>Ryssel V., "Syrische Quellen abendländischer Erzählungsstoffe: III. Der Pariser Text der Siebenschläferlegende," <i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen</i> vol. 94 (1895) vol. 2: 251-277 (German transl.)</p> <p>Tullberg O.F. and Bergman C. H., <i>Dionysii Telmahharensis Chronici liber primus e codice Ms. syriaco Bibliothecae Vaticanae</i> (Upsaliae 1851): 167-178 (Syr.)</p> <p>http://syriaca.org/work/250</p>
The (Forty) Martyrs of Sebaste	BHSE 307	<p>Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 3: 355-375. (Syr.)</p>

	1249 1318	Weyh W., "Die syrische Legende der 40 Märtyrer von Sebaste," <i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i> vol. 21 (1912): 76-93 (German transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/307 http://syriaca.org/work/1249 http://syriaca.org/work/1318
The Imprisoned Martyrs of Bet Zabday	BHSE 282	Assemani J. A. (ed.), <i>Acta sanctorum martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium in duas partes distributa adcedunt Acta S. Simeonis Stylitae</i> (Rome 1748) vol. 1 : 134-139 (Syr; Latin transl.) Bedjan P. (ed.), <i>Acta martyrum et sanctorum</i> (Parisiis; Lipsiae: Harrassowitz, 1890), vol. 2: 316-324. (Syr.) Braun O., <i>Ausgewählte Akten persischer Märtyrer: mit einem Anhang: Ostsyrisches Mönchsleben</i> (Kempten: J. Kösel 1915): 110-115 (German transl.) http://syriaca.org/work/282
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Theodore	BHSE	http://syriaca.org/work/2041

	2041	
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Theodute and his Son	BHSE 1224	http://syriaca.org/work/1224
Theodute of Amida	BHSE	http://syriaca.org/work/1048

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Theonilla	BHSE 1237	http://syriaca.org/work/1237
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