

FASHIONS IN EARLY SYRIAC COLOPHONS

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ABSTRACT

Syriac scribes were heirs to a long tradition in Mesopotamia of writing colophons. Although the content tended to be formulaic, nevertheless there was still considerable scope for individuality. Concentrating primarily on the evidence of fifth- and sixth-century colophons (but with occasional references to much later ones), seven specific aspects are considered: dating, prayer formulae, humility formulae, expressions of relief at completion, warnings against illicit removal, verbosity, and historical notes.

Syriac scribes were heirs to a long tradition of writing colophons in Mesopotamia,¹ and it is clear from the three Syriac legal documents from the early 240s that they enjoyed a higher status in local society to that of their Greek counterparts, for it is only the Syriac scribes who give their name (following ancient Mesopotamian practice):

¹ Cf. H. Hunger, *Babylonische und assyrische Kolophone* (AOAT 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968); for the constituent contents, see pp. 1-15; several features have remarkable parallels in some Syriac colophons, e.g. the phrase ‘written and collated’ (*ṣaṭir-ma bari*) corresponds exactly to *etkeleb w-etpabḥam*; some scribes wrote *ana balaṭ napšati-su* (e.g. Hunger, nos 157, 188 etc.), corresponding to ‘for the life/salvation of his soul’. A detailed comparison would be worth undertaking (Hunger makes some brief comparisons with Greek, pp. 22-3).

those who wrote out the contemporary Greek documents remain nameless.

Here our concern will be with literary manuscripts, for the most part dating from between the fifth to the seventh century, though here and there some attention will be paid to certain later colophons, including some contemporary examples. For the main period covered, some eighty-five colophons are available, sixty-seven of which are dated.²

At the end of a manuscript the scribe was no longer a servant of the text he is copying out, and he is finally free to express something of his individuality by choosing to provide his readers with a variety of different pieces of information. The most common items mentioned are:

- date of completion of writing (date of commencement as well is much rarer);
- place;
- person of who commissioned the manuscript, and/or its recipient;
- the scribe's own name, (ecclesiastical) rank; sometimes also the village of his origin;
- additional items.

Our interest here is focussed mainly on the last feature, but before turning to examples of these, brief mention should be given to the different modes of dating.

² A great deal of important data on the colophons of early Syriac manuscripts is to be found in the unpublished Oxford DPhil thesis by M. Mundell (Mango), *Artistic Patronage in the Roman Diocese of the Oriens, 312-634 AD* (1985); see also her 'Patrons and scribes indicated in Syriac manuscripts, 411-800 AD', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 32/4 (1982), pp. 3-12, and 'The production of Syriac manuscripts 400-700 AD', in G. Cavallo and others (eds), *Scrittura, Libri et Testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio* (Spoleto, 1992), pp. 161-79. In general see also my 'The art of the scribe', in *The Hidden Pearl* (Rome, 2001), II, pp. 243-62.

DATING³

The norm is provided by the Seleucid era, known either as that ‘of Alexander’ (anachronistically!),⁴ or ‘of the Greeks’. In sixth-century dated manuscripts, the former is more common than the latter, but in later centuries, although ‘of Alexander’ remains quite common, the standard becomes ‘of the Greeks’.⁵ From the late tenth century, perhaps as a result of the Byzantine reconquest of NW Syria, two different ways of expressing ‘the blessed Greeks’ begin to appear, *yannaye brike* in the East Syriac tradition (first in 981, but then common only from the sixteenth century onwards), and *yannaye mbarke* in the Syrian Orthodox and Melkite traditions (first in 998/9); the opposite, ‘perfidious Greek’ (*yannaye nekile*) is found in a number of Syrian Orthodox manuscripts of the thirteenth century (and only rarely later):⁶ the reason for this sudden outburst is not clear to me.

In the pre-Islamic period local eras (Antioch, Apameia, Bosra) and Indiction years are also occasionally found. Regnal years (the norm in Babylonian and Assyrian colophons) are confined to the Sasanian Empire.⁷ In the seventh century dating by the Hijra first

³ For dating systems in general in Syriac manuscripts, see especially L. Bernhard, *Die Chronologie der Syrer* (Sitzungsberichte der Österr. Akad. der Wiss. 264; Wien, 1969), and F. Briquel-Chatonnet, ‘Le temps du copiste: notations chronologiques dans les colophons de manuscrits syriaques’, in F. Briquel-Chatonnet and H. Lozachmeur (eds), *Proche Orient ancien: temps vécu, temps pensé* (Paris 1998), pp. 177-210.

⁴ Alexander died in 323 BC, while the Seleucid era (for Syriac scribes) began 1st October 311 BC.

⁵ In both cases various extensions are found later on, such as ‘Alexander, son of Philip’, ‘the blessed Greeks’; for details, see ‘Perfidious Greeks, Blessed Greeks, Blessed Muslims, and the memory of Alexander in Dating formulae of Syriac manuscripts’, in the Festschrift for M. Tamcke (ed. S. Grebenstein; forthcoming).

⁶ For details, see ‘Perfidious Greeks’.

⁷ Local eras: Vat. Syr. 160 (473; Antioch); Add. 14,571 (518; Apameia); Ad. 17,176 (532; Bosra); Indiction: Add. 14,445 (of 532), Vat. Syr. 143 (of 563), Add. 14,609 (of 586) and Wolfenbüttel (of 633); a few later examples are also to be found; regnal years: Add. 14,460 (of 599/600), and 14,471 (of 614/5).

(2) ‘may He hold worthy ...’ ܠܥܠܐ. Thus Add. 14,530 (of 535; Kafra d-Barta), 12,166 (of 553; Edessa), 14,558 (of 557), Vatican Syr. 143 (of 563; Mon. of John of Nerab), Vat. Syr. 104 (of 563/4; Barbaron), Add. 14,597 (of 569; Sarmin), Florence, Laur. Plut. I.56 (Beth Zagba), Add. 17,102 (of 599), 12,135 (of 611; Hina), 14,472 (of 624; Gedalta), Wolfenbüttel (Assfalg, nr.5; of 633; Beth Hala).

(3) ‘may He give a reward/a good reward/a wage:

(a) with ‘a reward’ ܠܥܘܠܐ: Add. 14,425 (of 463/4; Amid), Vat. Syr. 142 (of 576; Sketis).

(b) with ‘a good reward’ ܠܬܘܒܐ ܠܥܘܠܐ: Add. 14,599 (of 597/600; near Palmyra), 14,458 (6th/7th cent.; the scribe’s assistant is described as ‘an Arab’, suggesting that the manuscript came from the region under Ghassanid control). It is interesting to note that ‘with a good wage’ also features in an inscription dated 504, but whose provenance is unknown.⁹

(c) with ‘a wage’ ܠܥܘܠܐ: thus Add. 14,425 (of 463/4; Amid); Add. 14,542 (of 509; the Monastery of P^NWR by a scribe from Amid); Add. 17,102 (of 599; original location erased); and Wolfenbüttel (of 633; Beth Hala).

HUMILITY FORMULAE

Formulae indicating the scribe’s unworthiness already feature in the early colophons with the scribe describing himself as ‘a sinner’ ܠܥܘܠܐ (17 examples in the sample), or as ‘insignificant’ ܠܥܘܠܐ (10 examples). After the seventh century humility formulae tended to become more and more expanded as time went on; a characteristic late example can be found in Berlin Or. quart. 580 (the text is printed in Sachau’s *Verzeichnis*, nr. 45, p.169), a *Qdam wad-Bathar* copied in July 1850 in North-West Iran.

The scribe may sometimes state that out of humility he will not even give his name - but then does so, since he wishes for the reader’s prayers.¹⁰ Alternatively, on occasion we find him giving his

⁹ R. Steiner, ‘A Syriac church inscription from 504 CE’, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 35 (1990), pp. 99-108.

¹⁰ Thus also in the recent colophon of 1992, described below.

name in cipher, either using alphabetical numerals,¹¹ as Add. 14,603 (7th cent.), or the Alphabet of Bardaisan (thus the collator of Add.14,431, dated 545, and the scribe of Add.17,193, dated 874). Early readers might also disguise their identity in this way (e.g. early readers of Add. 17,176 of 532 and of Add. 14,448 dated 557). Although the alphabet of Bardaisan is only rarely used later on, a nineteenth-century example is provided by the West Syriac scribe of Add. 21,211 (Bar 'Ebroyo, Grammar), dated 1831.

RELIEF AT COMPLETION

It is not surprising that, at the end of his months-long (or even year-long) enterprise of copying a manuscript, the scribe should express his relief at the completion of his task. Among the various images used in this connection, one is particularly distinctive. In December 535, after he had finished copying out Genesis, the deacon Damianos wrote:

ܐܘܪܝܢ ܕܢܘܨܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ
ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ

As the mariner (sappana) rejoices at his ship's final harbour, so too does the scribe rejoice at the last line.

Realizing, however, that he had to go on to Exodus, he wistfully added '(that is) if he is not beginning on another!' This happens to be the earliest known form of a very widely attested motif which is found in Greek and Latin colophons, as well as in Syriac. The earliest Latin example is from 669, while the Greek is not attested before 898. Syriac scribes adopted numerous variations and expansions,¹² and a versified form came to be adopted by the

¹¹ For the use of these for quire numbering, very common after the 7th cent., see my 'Les signatures en chiffres arithmétiques dans les manuscrits syriaques de la British Library', in F. Briquel-Chatonnet and M. Debié (eds), *Sur les pas des Araméens chrétiens. Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux* (Paris, 2010), pp. 159-67.

¹² See further my 'The scribe reaches harbour', *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995), pp. 195-202 (reprinted in *From Ephrem to Romanos. Interactions between Greek and Syriac in Late Antiquity* (Variorum Reprints, 1999), chapter XVI). See also now A.C. McCollum, 'The Rejoicing Sailor

late Mor Julius Çiçek (d. 2005) at the end of the numerous texts that he copied (one of which is further mentioned below):

ܕܒܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܘܢܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ
ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ

As the sailor rejoices / because his ship has reached
harbour

so does the scribe rejoice / as he writes the last line.

Considerable liberty is found in the choice of wording; Damianos' *sappana* happens to be unique among the examples known to me, the normal terms being *alpara*, or *quberniṭa*, or *mallaḥa*. Other scribes preferred to speak just of the boat (*elḥa*), without mention of the sailor.

As an example of the sort of elaboration that may be found I take the colophon of a Homiliary copied in 1015 in Hisn Patriq (Add. 12,165, of which Deir al-Surian Syr. Fragment 6 is part):

ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ
ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ
ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ
ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ

As a ship travelling on the sea, (nearly) wrecked by the waves and storms which surround and batter it so as to sink it, once it has left (the open sea) for the harbour, those who are on board the ship are filled with joy, so too with the last line at the hand of a lazy scribe.

Unusual phraseology can sometimes help point to connections between manuscripts. Thus the 'ship' colophon in Harvard Syr. 141 of 1201 opens 'In truth, experienced authors have said ...' (... ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ ܕܝܫܝܫܐ); this manuscript (or an intermediary) was evidently known to scribes of several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts who pick it up and imitate it.¹³

and the Rotting Hand: Two formulas in Syriac and Arabic colophons', *Hugoye* 18:1 (2015), pp. 67-93 (esp. 67-85).

¹³ Thus BL Or. 9632 (of 1898), substituting ܕܝܫܝܫܐ, as do a couple of eighteenth-century examples sold in recent years (Gospel Lectionary dated 1742, and Hudra dated 1733).

A curious adaptation of this motif is to be found in an inscription in Qaraqosh, dated 1738, where it is used at the end of a long verse inscription describing the digging of a well:¹⁴

ܠܗ ܨܘܚܐ ܘܕܘܚ ܕܠܦܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ
 ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ

The sailor in his boat that he has brought to harbour does not rejoice more than I have rejoiced at the last stone of this well.

BORROWERS BEWARE!

Failure to return books is no modern phenomenon. Manuscripts might be borrowed for a variety of purposes: a colophon of 584 (Add. 12,160) mentions reading, collating and copying as possibilities why someone might want to borrow a manuscript. Already in our early sample we encounter several warnings, specifying penalties of one sort or another for borrowers who failed to return the manuscript. The most common phraseology used of the recalcitrant borrower is ‘he who holds on to it’ (ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ), found in the following sixth-century manuscripts: Vatican Syr. 111 (of 522), Add. 12,160 (of 584), Florence Laur.Plut. I.56 (of 586), Add. 17,152 (of 593), and Add. 14599 (of 597/600). Only slightly less common is ‘he who does not return it’ (ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ). Later scribes might combine the two: thus the scribe of BL Or. 8606 (dated 723) has ‘he who holds on to it and does not return it to its owner’. A more heinous crime (from which all too many manuscripts have suffered) was the excision of folios: that this was already a problem in the sixth century is indicated by three scribes who give warnings against ‘anyone who cuts something out’ (ܕܠܡܢܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ); thus in three of the five manuscripts mentioned above (those dated 584, 586, and 593).

Various penalties are threatened against miscreants. A quite frequent one which starts to appear towards the end of the sixth century is based on Romans 2:22. The earliest example of this is in Add. 12,160, containing John Chrysostom on the Epistles, copied in 584 at the Monastery of Gubba Barraya by an ‘Edessene scribe’:

¹⁴ Inscription AD.04.1 in A. Harrak, *Recueil des inscriptions syriaques*, t. 2, *Iraq. Syriac and Garshuni Inscriptions* (Paris, 2010), I, p. 269.

VERBOSITY

There was a strong tendency for scribes to grow increasingly verbose over the centuries, reaching a climax in the nineteenth century, especially among East Syriac scribes, who piled up long series of epithets for reigning bishops or abbots. A very early example, exceptional for its time, is to be found in a manuscript dated 535 containing the Acts of the Second Council of Ephesus, 449 (Add. 14,530; Wright, *Catalogue*, p.1029), where the abbot is described as:

ܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ
 (ܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ)

the excellent and God-loving wakeful shepherd, wise pilot, lover of strangers, mighty adamantine wall for his flock so that none of the ravaging wolves can enter and harm any of the simple lambs gathered in the peaceful sheepfold, (namely, the priest and abbot John).

We shall see an example of the longevity of a couple of these epithets in due course. One of the more curious titles given to bishops (and others) by late East Syriac scribes is ‘cherub of flesh’ ܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ; by far the earliest example of this in a colophon that I have come across is the eleventh-century East Syriac manuscript containing the Second Part of the Discourses of Isaac of Nineveh (Oxford, Bodleian, Syr.e.7), copied in the Monastery of ‘Abdisho’ of Kom, in north Iraq; the phrase itself, however, can be traced back to Jacob of Serugh, who describes Joseph as a ‘cherub of flesh’ in one of his *memre* on the Nativity.²⁰

As Thomas Carlson has nicely illustrated elsewhere in this issue of *Hugoye*, later scribes tended to build up their colophons on the basis of a pool of stock phrases and formulae. Every now and then some enterprising scribe would introduce a new and distinctive feature which would then be imitated by others. An interesting example of this is to be found in a description of the Tigris as ܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ ܕܡܫܘܠܐ ‘the third river of Eden’, which was taken

²⁰ T. Kollamparmpil, *Jacob of Serugh's Homilies on the Nativity* (Piscataway NJ, 2010), I, line 768.

up by scribes working in towns situated on the river Tigris; thus we find examples from different locations over quite a span of time:

1586, Mansuriyeh (Cambridge Add. 1975)

1607, Cizre (Cambridge Add. 1981)

1826, Mosul (Cambridge Add. 1966)

Further examples will no doubt turn up in manuscripts digitized by the HMML project.

HISTORICAL NOTICES

Given the availability of space at the end of a manuscript, a scribe might, instead of indulging in lengthy accumulations of traditional phraseology, provide a note about some contemporary event or circumstances, thus providing the modern scholar with valuable historical information, sometimes not to be found elsewhere.²¹ A good example is provided by two manuscripts written in Jerusalem in 1138 (Lyon 1 and Paris Syr. 51), which give important details concerning the Syrian Orthodox community in the Holy City at that time.²²

It will be appropriate to conclude with three modern examples of such colophons, each one long and informative.

In 1987 the late Metropolitan Mor Julius Yesu Çiçek published a photographic reproduction of a Gospel Lectionary that he had copied out earlier in the year. At the end, in the colophon, besides listing the manuscripts he used and the source for the illustrations (the thirteenth-century Gospel Lectionary of Bishop Dioscoros Theodoros),²³ he provides the reader with two valuable sets of information, namely details of how long he took to copy the text, and a brief history of the Syrian Orthodox diaspora (*golutho*) in western Europe.²⁴ It happens to be quite rare for scribes to indicate

²¹ For some examples taken from Paris manuscripts, see F. Briquel-Chatonnet, 'Le temps du copiste', pp. 207-210.

²² For a translation and study of these, see A.N. Palmer, 'History of the Syrian Orthodox in Jerusalem, Part II', *Oriens Christianus* 76 (1992), pp. 74-94.

²³ For this illuminated manuscript see now A. Kaplan, *Le Lectionnaire de Dioscoros Theodoros (Mardin syr. 41/2). Calligraphie, ornementation et iconographie* (Bruxelles, 2013).

²⁴ Much of this valuable information is also to be found in his 'The Syrian Orthodox diaspora in Western Europe', *Sobornost/Eastern Churches*

how long they took over copying a manuscript,²⁵ so it is of particular interest to learn that Mor Julius began on 5th January 1987 and ended on 4th February, having spent not less than twelve hours each day writing, with a total of 340 hours; a further week was then spent on making corrections. His outline of the growth of the diaspora includes a list of all the bishops in office at the time, including those in India.

Since the final volume (VI) of George Kiraz's invaluable *A Computer-Generated Concordance to the Syriac New Testament* (1992) contains the Appendix which is devoted to the prepositions, probably most users will not have occasion to refer to this volume – which is a pity, for at the end it contains a two-page colophon. In part the contents are traditional (though adapted to printing, giving the publisher's name): the reigning Patriarch is named, accompanied by various epithets, including 'friend of strangers' ܩܘܪܕܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܕܐܢܐ, a nice example of continuity from the colophon of 535 quoted earlier. Prayers are requested for himself (with a fine array of traditional humility formulae) and his family. Helpers are mentioned, and the place of writing – the Cambridge college of Peterhouse. Readers are also asked to pray for the Head of the College, Henry Chadwick (d. 2008; the famous Patristic scholar, at that time Master of Peterhouse). Finally the date of completion, 5th Nisan (April), with the comment 'in this year the rowers of Oxford University won in the ܩܘܪܕܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܕܐܢܐ (Boat Race) against Cambridge University on the river Thames in London'.

Four years later, 1996, saw the publication of George Kiraz's equally invaluable *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels*. The colophon at the end of the fourth volume runs to five and a half pages. This commences with similar preliminary information, but with different phraseology (thus the Patriarch is described with a different epithet that is already found in the colophon of 535, namely 'wakeful shepherd' ܩܘܪܕܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܕܐܢܐ). Mention is then made of the departure 'from this wearisome and temporal life' of his father and of Metropolitan Mor Athanasius Samuel 'our metropolitan in the United States of America and Canada'. The colophon then goes

Review 28:2 (2006), pp. 19-27, and 'I cristiani siro-occidentali nella diaspora: l'emigrazione dei siro-aramaici nei secoli XVIII-XX', in E. Vergani and S. Chialà (eds), *Le Chiese siri* (Milan, 2005), pp. 41-48.

²⁵ See Briquel-Chatonnet for examples in some Paris manuscripts, 'Le temps du scribe', p. 205.

on to detail important information about the involvement of both his father and Mor Athanasius Samuel with the Dead Sea Scrolls in the early days after their discovery. Much of this information was new and had not been known to scholars at the time of publication; subsequently George Kiraz has made it available in much fuller and documented form in his book, *Anton Kiraz's Archive on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2005). The colophon once again mentions the annual Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and we are told that 'in this year' (1995) it was Cambridge who won. The reader is also informed that in the same year the Syrian Orthodox Synod of Bishops divided the North American diocese into three. A final note, added subsequently, states that the author completed his Ph.D. dissertation in January 1996.

IN CONCLUSION

In this brief survey of some prominent features of dated colophons up to the mid seventh century, a number of forays have been made into more recent examples, indeed right up to our present time, in order to illustrate something of the remarkable continuity shown by colophons in their choice of phraseology. Returning now to the sample of early, and mostly dated, colophons, it is worth considering whether the combination of certain features might help identify local scribal schools. In an earlier study, of manuscripts written in Edessa, or by 'Edessene scribes', a few distinctive features were isolated, namely:

In the seven manuscripts copied in Edessa the city is regularly described as 'the capital of Mesopotamia' (ܩܝܡܝܘܬܐ ܕܡܫܘܬܝܘܬܐ).²⁶

In a separate study, devoted to the dating formulae of sixth-century inscriptions and manuscripts, another set of distinctive features were identified.²⁷ In the early Syriac inscriptions and in the three legal documents of the early 240s, in conformity with practice in Nabataean, Palmyrene and Hatran inscriptions, the month regularly precedes mention of the year, but in the course of the sixth century the reverse, with the year coming first, becomes the

²⁶ Add. 12,150 (of 411), Add. 17,182 (of 474), Deir al-Surian 10 (of 510), Vatican Syr. 140 (of 528), Add. 14,479 (of 533/4), Add. 17,107 (of 541), and Vatican Syr. 12 (of 548); cf. 'Manuscripts copied in Edessa'.

²⁷ 'Dating formulae'.

norm; only a few manuscripts retain the older usage. The older sequence, month-year, features in two early Edessene manuscripts, Add. 12,150 (of 411), and Deir al-Syrian 10 (of 510);²⁸ a variant of this, with inclusion of the day between the month and the year, features in four further manuscripts, two of which definitely have connections with Edessa, while the other two may possibly have been written there: St Petersburg 1 (of 462; very possibly written in Edessa), Add.14,445 (of 532; perhaps written in Edessa), Add. 12,160 (of 584; the scribe was from Edessa), and Add. 17,152 (of 593; copied by an 'Edessene scribe').

Drawing now on several of the features covered in the present study, one can observe certain recurrent combinations occurring, as will be apparent from table II below where, for the sake of brevity, manuscripts are identified by their dates rather than by their library numbers, for which see Table I. Two particular sets of recurring combinations emerge from Table II, and these are indicated by dates given in bold and in italic.

TABLE I: SELECT DATED MANUSCRIPTS²⁹

For convenience the page number in Wright's *Catalogue* is given for manuscripts in the British Library.

Date	Manuscript	Hatch, plate #	Place of Writing
462 Apr	St. Petersburg 1	III	
463/4	Add. 14,425 = <i>Cat.</i> , 5	IV	Amid
510 Oct	Deir al-Syrian Syr. 10		Edessa
512	Add. 17,182 = <i>Cat.</i> , 404	IX	
522 Dec	Vat. syr. 111	XI	
535 May	Add. 14,530 = <i>Cat.</i> , 1029	XVIII	Kafra d-Barta, Mon. of Eusebius

²⁸ A second archaism in these two manuscripts is the use of *šnat* without any preposition.

²⁹ For a complete list, see my 'A tentative check list of dates Syriac manuscripts up to 1300', *Hugoye* 15 (2011), pp. 19-46; also 'Dating formulae', pp. 92-4 (for the period covered here).

541	Add. 17,107 = <i>Cat.</i> , 23	XIX	Edessa
545 Apr	Add. 14,431 = <i>Cat.</i> , 14		
548 Jul	Vat. syr. 12	XX	Edessa
554	Add. 14,635 = <i>Cat.</i> , 414		
557 Apr	Add. 14,558 = <i>Cat.</i> , 466	XXIV	
562	Add. 12,156 = <i>Cat.</i> , 648		
563 Aug	Vat. syr. 143	XXV	Mon. of John of Nerab
569 May	Add. 14, 597 = <i>Cat.</i> , 648	XXX	Sarmin, Mon. of John of Nerab
576	Vat. syr. 142		Sketis
581 Jun	Add. 17,169 = <i>Cat.</i> , 543	XXXI	
584 Jul	Add. 12,160 = <i>Cat.</i> , 472	XXXIII	Mon. of Gubba Barraya (scribe from Edessa)
586	Florence, Laur.Plut.I.56	XXXIV	Mon. of John, B. Zagba (‘Rabbula Gospels’)
593 Dec	Add. 17,152 = <i>Cat.</i> , 477	XXXV	‘Edessene Scribe’
597/600	Add. 14, 559 = <i>Cat.</i> , 468		Natpa d-Zagal, nr Palmyra
599	Add. 17,102 = <i>Cat.</i> , 11	XXXVI	
600	Add. 17,110 = <i>Cat.</i> , 118		Mon. of Ramsha, exiles from Mon. of Orientals, Edessa
604 Jul	Add. 12,170 = <i>Cat.</i> , 458	XXXVIII	Mathan, nr Bosra
611 Sep	Add. 12,135 = <i>Cat.</i> , 487		Mon. of Kawkba, Hina
pre 618	Add. 14,567 = <i>Cat.</i> , 478		Mon. of Qashir, mt Sharda
621/2	Add. 14,478 = <i>Cat.</i> , 91	XLII	Haluga, nr Sarug
624	Add. 14,472 = <i>Cat.</i> , 82		Gedalta

633	Wolfenbüttel	Bet Hala, Damascus
VII	Add. 18,818 = <i>Cat.</i> , 471	Mon Quryaqos, Tell Halfika

TABLE II: SELECT RECURRENT FEATURES

Robber on Right:	522 545 548 586 593 624
<i>sam simta</i>	510a 512 548 557 563 569a 576 581a 584 611
<i>haw dmeṭul šmeb</i>	535 541 548 557 562 563 576 599 604 611 633
<i>ka'em 'al</i>	522 584 586 593 597/600 611 622
<i>la napne</i>	522 557 576 618 622
<i>yabeb petgama</i>	584 593 597/600
<i>mḥalles</i>	584 586 593 600 622
<i>paseq menab</i>	584 586 593
<i>meṭul ḥubeb</i>	584 593
Mt 25 'Blessed'	510a 563/4 586 611 624
Mt 25 'Good servant'	576 586 599

The close links between 584, 586 and 593 have already been noted; Table II suggests that they also have looser links with 522, 557, 597/600, 611 and 622 (all indicated in bold). The other linked group (indicated in italic) consists of 548 (Edessa), 563, 576 and 599.

*

According to the great Assyriologist R. Borger, 1968 saw the birth of a new academic discipline of 'Kolophonologie'.³⁰ It is to be hoped that Beth Mardutho's initiative in organising the present conference will ensure that colophonology will now have been provided with some solid foundations in Syriac studies as well.

³⁰ In a review article of Hunger's volume, 'Bemerkungen zu den akkadischen Kolophonen', *Die Welt des Orients* 5 (1970), pp. 165-71, here p.165.