

PhD dissertation

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**The Syriac correspondence of Andreas Masius and Moses of Mardin**

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Budapest, 2022

Doktori (PhD) értekezés

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Budapest, 2022

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## Acknowledgments

The completion of this thesis shows many similarities with Moses' mission of the printing of the Syriac New Testament. It was a long and eventful journey with many ups and downs. Sometimes it seemed that the project would never materialise but after knuckling down to it again, it gained new momentum. The plans had to be redesigned several times and finally, "the scribe reaches harbour". Just like in Moses' case, this undertaking would not have been possible without the active help of several special persons around me.

I would like to express my gratitude first and foremost to my supervisor, Professor György Fodor for his invaluable advice, continuous support, and endless patience during the years of my PhD studies.

I am deeply grateful to Professor Miklós Maróth who introduced me to the world of the Syriac studies. Beyond being my first mentor, he also provided indispensable practical and financial help for the completion of this thesis by ensuring the frames for academic works in the Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies

I am thankful to my colleagues and fellow PhD students. It has always been an inspiration and encouragement for me to share my progress with you and follow yours. Some of you are ahead of me, I am very proud of you. Thank you for the presentations, stimulating discussions and valuable feedbacks.

I would like to say thank you to the personnel of the manuscript archives I visited for my research in Vienna, Berlin, Munich, Leiden and the Vatican. A special thanks goes to András Oross (Austrian State Archives, Vienna), Arnoud Vrolijk (Leiden University Library) and Helga Rebhan (Bavarian State Library) for their accommodating help.

I am thankful for my friends for their encouragement. Special thanks to András Handl for his support and practical advices; our discussions have always been an inspiration and a mental refreshment for me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank to my family for being at my side. To my parents, sisters and in-laws for their prayer and encouragement and for coping with my absence. To my nieces and nephews for the happy distractions to rest my mind outside of my research. And especially to my wife for her firm belief in me, for her interest in my research and for being my shelter throughout the final years of my work.



## Introduction

The core of the present dissertation is the edition of a 16<sup>th</sup>-century correspondence, testimony of a special friendship between a Flemish orientalist, Andreas Masius (1514–1573) and a Syrian Orthodox monk, Moses of Mardin († 1592). Research into early modern letter-writing has a long history, papers on this subject could fill a whole library. Studies can basically be divided into two main categories. On one hand, scholars examined the letters themselves, and on the other they explored the community created between different corresponding groups.

The first research direction, the traditional epistolography described the structure of the letters and the rules of letter-writing. It categorized the letters and determined different genres. Since the epistle was first and foremost a literary genre, several studies have examined the letters from literary and rhetorical perspectives. However, letters are also valuable historical sources thus they became also the subject of historical scholarship. Letters were also considered as objects: considerable research has been done on the material used for letter-writing, on the folding and sealing techniques and on the encryption methods. As printing had become widespread and easily available by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the study and publication of letters went hand in hand in this period. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), the Prince of the Humanists was the first who started to systematically publish his own letters. The modern edition of Erasmus' letters by Percy Stafford Allen (1869–1933) comprising 3162 letters is one of the crown jewels of the early modern scholarship. The publication of the scholarly correspondences has reached such a level that historians have come up with the idea of creating a huge database that would contain all the one to two million letters of early modern erudites. By now, the first steps have already been taken to realize this grandiose plan.<sup>1</sup> In sum, early modern epistolography is just as thoroughly investigated and nuanced field of research as classical epistolography.

The other research direction examines the act of correspondence and the community of the correspondents that is often called the *Republic of Letters*. The first recorded use of this expression in its Latin form, *Respublica litteraria*, dates to 1417. In that year, an Italian humanist Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) used this term in a letter, in which he acknowledged the work of his colleague, Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) in editing manuscripts and thanked him for 'bringing to this Republic of Letters the largest number of aids and equipments'. From

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<sup>1</sup> Hotson and Wallnig, *Reassembling the Republic of Letters*.

the 16<sup>th</sup> century this expression was used more and more frequently by the members of the scholarly and scientific community who considered themselves citizens of a virtual republic of letters. They were eager to absorb and spread knowledge and to make learning available for as many as possible regardless of social status.

Historical scholarship (re)discovered the term in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and started to use it to describe the network of scholars and the intellectual and social changes brought forth by the development of postal networks and the intensive growth of correspondence.<sup>2</sup> Studies looked at the extent and expansion of this imaginary republic from Italy all the way to England, Portugal, Poland and beyond. Historians examined its different periods: the revitalization of ancient literature in the fifteenth century, the turn to Christian sources in the sixteenth century, the rise of natural science in the seventeenth century, the radiance of philosophy in the eighteenth century and the Republic of Belles-Lettres in the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The specificities of different corresponding communities like artists, physicians or huguenots were also outlined. Orientalists were for a long time only mentioned in the literature as participants of a general scholarly correspondence and were not treated as a separate group. In the last two decades however, more and more papers were focusing explicitly on scholars of the Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, Ethiopian, Armenian, Turkish or Persian language. Letters sent from Eastern travels have been published in recent years in growing number. Several case-studies dealt with the forms of cooperation between oriental scholars but we are far from knowing how exactly knowledge-transfer worked among early modern orientalist. The best picture to illustrate the present state of scholarship is that of a semi-finished carpet. The weaving frame is the concept of the Republic of Letters on which scholars of other disciplines stretched the longitudinal warp yarns. A few colourful transverse weft yarns of oriental studies are already drawn through but the view is still dominated by the cream-coloured warp yarns and we are far from seeing the pattern of the carpet.

The present thesis adds a new thread to the carpet by publishing ten letters that were exchanged with one exception between the Flemish Hebraist, Andreas Masius (1514–1573) and a Syrian Orthodox monk, Moses of Mardin († 1592) between 1553 and 1556. This thread is special in two ways. Firstly, because the bulk of the previous papers dealt with cases of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; 16<sup>th</sup>-century orientalism is a partly unexplored area. Secondly, Masius and Moses corresponded in Syriac so this is an unparalleled corpus which provides a unique

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<sup>2</sup> Two trailblazing works on the subject are Bots and Waquet, *La République des Lettres*, and Fumaroli, *La République des Lettres*.

<sup>3</sup> van Miert, 'What Was the Republic of Letters?'

insight into the language learning process. Learning Hebrew by cultivating a pen-friendship with a Jewish scholar was a standard practice among Hebraists but only a small fraction of these correspondences came down to us and even less have been published. Examples in other languages are even more scarce and almost nothing has been published of them. Therefore, no synthesizing work can be done on this field yet, the first task is to edit these texts and make them accessible for the scholarly public. This philological work is done in the following pages. Manuscripts of the correspondence are gathered, described and assessed, the Syriac text and the English translation are published in the Annex.

The analysis of the content of the correspondence and the contextualisation of the raised issues constitutes the second part of the dissertation. The lives and works of Moses and Masius are so rich and complex that the discussion of the most relevant issues result a very ramifying structure. I seek to answer the question of how these letters complete our biographical knowledge on the participants. How does it rewrite the early history of the Syriac printing? How does it contribute to manuscript research? And what does it add to Syriac liturgical studies? In addition to the fact that the treated subjects are all rooted in the correspondence, there is another organizing principle: they all fit into three historical events that greatly shaped the 16th century, namely the Reformation, the Ottoman advance and the information revolution.

Although the political aspects of the Reformation also appear in the correspondence, such as the translation of the Protestant creed into Syriac and its dissemination in the Middle East, this is not the dominant theme. It is more important that both Protestants and Catholics turned to early Christian sources to convince the other and to support their own truth. This *ad fontes*-mentality has led to a spectacular development in the study of oriental languages. One of the most tangible signs of this trend was the publication of polyglot Bibles. The four famous polyglot Bibles of the period reflect this continued progress. The Complutensian Polyglot printed between 1514 and 1517 in Alcalá de Henares in six volumes contained the Greek and Latin text of the New Testament and the Hebrew, Greek, Latin and Aramaic versions of the Old Testament. The Antwerp Polyglot printed in 1572 was the first containing the Syriac New Testament in addition to the whole content of the Complutensian. The Paris Polyglot (1645) was extended with the Syriac Old Testament and an Arabic version of the entire Bible. And last but not least, the editor of the London Polyglot (1657), Brian Walton could boast adding the Persian version of the Pentateuch and Gospels, and Ethiopian version of the Psalms and New Testament to the project. Masius was an active participant in the edition of the Antwerp

Polyglot; he helped the work with manuscripts and his Syriac grammar and dictionary were published in the annex to make the Syriac Biblical text more accessible.

Another example where the authenticity of the text was decisive is the Missal. One of the objectives of the Council of Trent which ran in parallel with the correspondence between 1545 and 1563, was to renew the text of the mass. The Roman Missal was published in 1570 and it was in use in the Catholic Church for almost 400 years up until 1962. This huge enterprise was preceded by the study and edition of many Oriental (Greek, Ethiopian, Syriac) liturgies. Masius was also working on the translation of a Syriac anaphora. Questions concerning this text and Moses' answers make up the half of the correspondence.

The rise of the Ottoman Empire had undoubtedly a huge impact on the events of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. With the conquest of Northern Mesopotamia in 1514, Syria in 1516 and Egypt in 1517 by Selim I (1512–1520), the vast majority of Eastern Christians came under Ottoman rule. This led to a rapprochement between the Holy See and the Oriental Christian communities. The latter sought support and help in the face of hardships. The Pope, as a political leader, was motivated to find natural allies against the Turks at the back of the enemy, and as a spiritual leader he tried to increase his flock in compensation for the losses suffered in Europe because of the Reformation. The first attempts were done by the Maronites who sent a delegation to the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17). The union, however, was firstly brought off in 1553 with a representative of the Church of the East, Yoḥannan Sullāqa who became the first Chaldean patriarch of Antioch. There were negotiations between the Copts and Rome, too. And Moses also was sent by his patriarch to work on the union. Consequently, Moses was extremely well acquainted with the Roman elite, it is evident from several comments in his letters.

The other political power that had the most trouble with the Ottoman Empire was the Habsburg dynasty. Beyond the military preparation which is an extremely well-studied field of research, the Habsburgs also employed a wide range of 'soft power' tools against the Turks. A good example for this is Ferdinand I's (1531–1564) effort to strengthen Christian communities in the Middle East for instance by printing the Syriac New Testament in Vienna in 1555 and sending 300 copies to the Syrian Orthodox and Maronite patriarchs. One of the key-figures of this project was Moses of Mardin and his letters are extremely valuable sources on this enterprise.

And this leads us to the third historical event that serves as a frame of interpretation for this dissertation, the information revolution. The engine of this revolution was without doubt the invention of the printing by Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1400–1468) in 1455. Latin printing was

shortly followed by Greek, Hebrew, Arabic and Ethiopian and in 1555, only one hundred years after publication of the Latin Bible, the New Testament was printed in Syriac, thus Syriac became the sixth language on which this new technique became available. Moses was a pioneer of the Syriac printing; he took the lion's share of an abortive attempt to set up a printing press in Rome and of the first successful enterprise in Vienna. His letters contain many printing related terms and they are a unique source for early Syriac printing history.

The spread of reading motivated philologists and orientalists to become more productive, which in turn increased the demand for their working tools, the manuscripts. Oriental Christians knew that there is a hunger for manuscripts in Europe. Moses also came the second time to Rome loaded with Arabic and Syriac manuscripts. Information on these manuscripts in his correspondence help us to trace their way from the Orient to their current location in notable collections and libraries.

And finally, the information revolution increased the competition among the orientalists who strived to make a name for themselves by being the first in publishing. In the correspondence, we can read an example of how a scholarly friendship based on collaboration and knowledge-sharing turns into a fierce competition.

# 1. State of research

This chapter aims to give an overview of what has already been written on the participants of the correspondence and on the correspondence itself. In case of the correspondents, I have confined myself to summarising only those parts of their life which are necessary for the understanding of the correspondence instead of providing an itemized bibliographic account which would significantly exceed the space available here.

## 1.1. The correspondents

### 1.1.1. Andreas Masius (1514–1573)

One of the two main correspondents is Andreas Masius (or Maes), diplomat, versatile humanist savant and one of the first European syriacists. He is the addressee of eight letters and the author of a draft letter; moreover, all the ten letters that came down to us belonged once to his collection. He was born in Lennik, Flemish Brabant, and after having completed the *artes* curriculum at the University of Leuven, he studied Latin, Greek and Hebrew at the Collegium Trilingue.<sup>4</sup> In 1538, he started a diplomatic career in the service of Jan van Weze, who was Archbishop of Lund, Prince Bishop of Constance and secretary of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1519–1556). After the death of his patron, Masius joined the service of William V, Duke of Jülich-Cleves-Berg (1539–1592). In 1558, he married the cousin of his best friend and settled in Zevenaar, devoting himself in the last decades of his life entirely to the scientific research of the Bible and the Syriac language. His publications are landmarks in the history of scholarship, and some of them are still regarded as a point of reference, even today. The following bibliographical overview is centred around his life and his work as a Biblical scholar, Syriacist, and Hebraist.

The most important source for everyone conducting research on Andreas Masius is his extensive correspondence. As a highly esteemed and sometimes even admired member of the *Republic of Letters*, Masius corresponded with many intellectuals of his time. Among his correspondents, we find high-priests and papabile cardinals like Giovanni Morone, Marcello Cervini, Bernardino Maffeo, Guglielmo Sirleto or Francesco Commendone and erudites like

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<sup>4</sup> On this prestigious institution see: Nève, *Mémoire historique et littéraire*; de Vocht, *History of the Foundation*; and Papy, *The Leuven Collegium Trilingue*.

Latino Latini, Gabriele Faërno, Basilio Zanchi, Ippolito Salviani, Ottavio Pantagathus, John Metellus or Guillaume Postel. The renowned geographer Gerard Mercator asked for his help in some biblical geographical names for the composition of his world map, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, king Ferdinand I's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, offered him his help in purchasing Syriac manuscripts, and Andreas Vesalius, the best physician of his age, who is considered to be the founder of modern anatomy, cured him during an illness.<sup>5</sup> The bulk of Masius' correspondence was published by Max Lossen in 1886 in a volume containing the resumé of more than 150 formerly published letters along with the transcription of 352 new letters.<sup>6</sup> In the last one hundred years, several further documents have been published, and certainly a large number of letters are still hiding in the archives.<sup>7</sup> The review and reedition of Masius' correspondence is a desideratum.

In Masius' life, a considerable amount of literature has been published over the past centuries.<sup>8</sup> Some studies focus on a specific period of his life,<sup>9</sup> whereas others have a more general approach.<sup>10</sup> Albert Van Roey, having Andreas Masius' life and work as one of his primary research interests, was planning to prepare a grandiose monograph on this subject, but, alas, he could not fulfil his goal, and his notes remained unpublished in the library of the KU Leuven. However, based on this material, Wim François published in 2009 an extensive paper focusing on Masius' academic activities, which is still the best available study in the field today.<sup>11</sup> Although the current studies serve as a good starting point for any research on Masius' life, there are still many blank spots on the map of his life story.

Masius' Biblical scholarship is the most researched and most thoroughly explored part of his work.<sup>12</sup> In this field, Masius had two outstanding and undisputed achievements. The first is

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<sup>5</sup> de Vocht, 'Andreas Masius', 430–431.

<sup>6</sup> Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*.

<sup>7</sup> Just to name a few: Günter, *Gerwig Blarer*, II, 187–188; Ehses, 'Andreas Masius an Bernardino Maffei'; Ehses, 'Andreas Masius an Kardinal Morone'; Secret, 'Notes sur Guillaume Postel'; de Vocht, 'Andreas Masius', 436–441.

<sup>8</sup> Among others see: Paquot, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire littéraire*, 197–215; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, xvi–xx; Lamy, 'Maes (André), ou Masius'; Vercruysse, 'Un humaniste brabançon oublié'.

<sup>9</sup> On his early years see e.g. van Roey and Borremans, 'De Jeugd jaren van Andreas Masius' and de Vocht, *History of the Foundation*, III, 282–290. On his twilight years see van Roey, 'Masius en Zevenaar' and Jongkees, 'Masius in moeilijkheden'.

<sup>10</sup> de Vocht, 'Andreas Masius'

<sup>11</sup> François, 'Andreas Masius (1514-1573)'. It has to be noted that the most recent publications on Masius' life are two voluminous Flemish monographs: Stender, *De wereld van Andreas Masius* and den Besten, *Andreas Masius (1514-1573)*, but these works had no scientific impact.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g.: Roussel, 'De Jean Oecolampade et Martin Bucer à Andreas Masius'; Greenspoon, 'Masius, Andreas'. François, 'Andreas Masius (1514-1573)', 228–242; François, 'Augustine and the Golden Age', 239–240; Twining, 'Richard Simon'.

a text edition and commentary on the book of Joshua published posthumously in 1574.<sup>13</sup> The significance of this bilingual Greek-Hebrew edition is that Masius collated the texts with a Syriac version of an eighth-century Syro-Hexapla manuscript, the Syriac translation of Origen's Hexaplaric recension of the Septuagint, which plays a pivotal role in Old Testament-exegesis.<sup>14</sup> The Syro-Hexapla was formerly unknown among European Biblical scholars; therefore Masius' work was a remarkable novelty.<sup>15</sup> The importance of the edition increased even more because Masius' Syriac manuscript disappeared after his death.<sup>16</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Paul de Lagarde and Alfred Rahlfs meticulously scrutinised Masius' notes and publications to collect everything which could be known about his manuscript.<sup>17</sup> A few decades later, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Max Leopold Margolis devoted a 700-page long monograph to the question of how Masius used this famous Syriac document and gave voice to his opinion that Masius tacitly corrected Origen's critical signs, but this work remained unpublished.<sup>18</sup> In the '90s, Leopold J. Greenspoon set about editing Margolis' typescript and published the work's table of contents in a preliminary paper, but the monograph has not materialised yet.<sup>19</sup> The second part of Masius' book is a 350-page-long commentary on the Book of Joshua, in which he challenged the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, arguing that the real author of both the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua could be Ezra, and seriously questioned the reliability of the Vulgata-text. His reformative ambition and audacity triggered the disapproval of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition, which put Masius' work on Index and forbade its possession, reading, printing and

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<sup>13</sup> Masius, *Iosuae imperatoris historia*.

<sup>14</sup> Masius, *Iosuae imperatoris historia*, I, 2: "Iosuae historia duplici editione: Hebraica et Graeca. Haec Septuaginta duorum interpretum quidem est; sed admistione verborum Theodotionis suppleta. atque asteriscis, obeliscisque, et limniscis, ut olim ab Adamantio, ubique distincta, illustrataque: et ab incredibiliter multis mendis repurgata. Adiuncta est et duplex Latina. quarum altera Hebraicam illam; altera Graecam, paenè ad verbum, repraesentat. Et insuper interpretatio Chaldaica; ubi ab Hebraeo discessit; Latinè est in marginibus expressa." On Origen's Hexapla see Law, 'A History of Research'; Salvesen, *Origen's Hexapla*; and Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context*, 204–222 with a select bibliography for further reading. On the Syro-Hexapla see Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts*; and Vööbus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla*.

<sup>15</sup> Vööbus, *The Hexapla and the Syro-Hexapla*, 61.

<sup>16</sup> For a possible itinerary of Masius' notes (and the manuscript?) up until the 17th century see Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts*, 3 n. 4. Masius' manuscript contained part of the Pentateuch and the Historical Books of the Old Testament. Another Syrohexapla manuscript, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Ms. C 313 containing the Wisdom Books and the Prophetical Books, is thought to be the complementary part of Masius' lost manuscript. Cf. Carbajosa Pérez, 'Prolegomena', 272.

<sup>17</sup> de Lagard, *Bibliothecae Syriacae*. The information concerning Masius' remarks on the Book of Joshua has been included in the notes (p. 121–160) by de Lagarde himself. His pupil, Rahlfs collected the relevant information from Masius' Syriac dictionary (p. 19–32.)

<sup>18</sup> The typescript of this monograph entitled *Andreas Masius and His Commentary on the Book of Joshua* is still at the University of Pennsylvania: Library at the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, under the shelfmark 

ARC	MS	6.	Cf.
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[http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/ead/detail.html?id=EAD\\_upenn\\_cajs\\_USUSUSPUCJSCJSARCMS6](http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/ead/detail.html?id=EAD_upenn_cajs_USUSUSPUCJSCJSARCMS6) retrieved 19 July 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Greenspoon, 'A Preliminary Publication'. See also Lohr, 'The Life of Leonard'.



sale. However, despite the critical response of ecclesiastical authorities, the book enjoyed an enduring popularity in later centuries.<sup>20</sup>

Masius' second considerable achievement in Biblical scholarship was his participation in the edition of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible, the so-called *Biblia Regia*, financed by the Spanish king, Philip II (1556–1598) and published by Christopher Plantin in eight folio volumes between 1569 and 1572.<sup>21</sup> It was the second modern polyglot Bible project after the pioneer Complutensian Bible (1514–1517), and the first containing also the Syriac version of the New Testament.<sup>22</sup> Former research was inclined to overestimate Masius' role in the project. Van Roey argued that Masius gave the idea of a new polyglot to Christopher Plantin,<sup>23</sup> whereas Robert Wilkinson described the whole enterprise as a project led by Northern Kabbalistic scholars like Masius and Guillaume Postel.<sup>24</sup> Recent studies provide a more moderate and balanced account of Masius' contribution.<sup>25</sup> What is certain, Masius prepared a Syriac grammar and dictionary for the edition, which were added to the *Apparatus*, and lent his Aramaic Targum manuscript to Plantin; furthermore, he proofread the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and corrected a significant number of mistakes.<sup>26</sup>

The second field of research where Masius made his mark as a scholar is the Syriac studies. Beside Guillaume Postel and Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter, Masius belonged to the second generation of European scholars who turned with an academic interest in the Syriac language.<sup>27</sup> His work is described in papers focusing on the history of Syriac philology,<sup>28</sup> and studied in detail by Albert van Roey in two articles.<sup>29</sup> His acquaintance with the language started in 1552 when he met in Rome with Moses of Mardin, a Syrian Orthodox monk who became his Syriac teacher. Thanks to his profound knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic, Masius

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<sup>20</sup> On the different inquisitorial sanctions and on a number of subsequent editions of the work see François, 'Andreas Masius (1514-1573)', 232–237. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Masius work was already part of seminary teachers' curriculum. Cf. Darricau, 'La formation des professeurs de séminaire', 76.

<sup>21</sup> Montano (ed.), *Biblia Sacra*. Vols. 1–4 – Old Testament, vol. 5 – New Testament, vols. 6–8 apparatus, end matter.

<sup>22</sup> On the early modern Polyglot Bible editions see: Hamilton, 'In Search of the Most Perfect Text'.

<sup>23</sup> van Roey, 'Les études syriaques d'Andreas Masius', 150, 152–153.

<sup>24</sup> Wilkinson, *The Kabbalistic Scholars*. This work should be consulted along with the critical review by Alastair Hamilton in *Quaerendo* 38 (2008), 401–404.

<sup>25</sup> Portuondo, *The Spanish Disquiet*, 87–107; Domínguez Domínguez, 'Études sur les origines de la Bible Polyglotte d'Anvers'.

<sup>26</sup> van Roey, 'Masius en Zevenaar', 23; François, 'Andreas Masius (1514-1573)', 237–242.

<sup>27</sup> van Rompay, 'Masius, Andreas'.

<sup>28</sup> Strothmann, *Die Anfänge der syrischen Studien*, 12–20; Contini, 'Gli inizi della linguistica siriana nell'Europa rinascimentale', 20–22; van Roey, *Les études syriaques de 1538 à 1658*, 10–11, 16, 21, 27–28; Mércz, 'Mōšē bar Kēpha Paradicsom-kommentárja', 200–204; Wilkinson, 'Constructing Syriac', passim; Wilkinson, 'The Early Study of Syriac', 756.

<sup>29</sup> van Roey, 'Les études syriaques'; van Roey, 'Les débuts des études syriaques'.

progressed quickly, so much so that in 1553 he already translated the profession of faith of Moses and also of another monk, Sullaqa, for the Roman prelates.<sup>30</sup> His zeal and assiduity are also reflected by the fact that he was the first savant we can claim with certainty to have consulted the collection of the Vatican Library.<sup>31</sup> Masius was a pioneer of Syriac studies and the first one in many regards. He was the first European translator of Syriac literature: his Latin translation of the Commentary on Paradise by Moses Bar Kepha (813–903) was published in 1569.<sup>32</sup> Although the quality of the translation received criticism already from his contemporaries, its significance highly increased after the original Syriac manuscript disappeared, and Masius' Latin translation was thought to be the only extant version of Bar Kepha's work for four hundred years, until the rediscovery of other Syriac manuscripts in the middle of the 20th century.<sup>33</sup> He published several other translations in the same volume, among which his rendering of the Syriac anaphora of St. Basil is especially noteworthy. He was working on this translation in 1555 while being in correspondence with Moses of Mardin. Therefore, every time he came across a word he did not understand or had a question regarding the cultural background of the text, he asked for help from Moses, his master.<sup>34</sup> These questions constituted the greater part of the letters in 1555. He is also considered to be the author of the first proper Syriac grammar entitled *Grammatica linguae Syriacae*<sup>35</sup> and published in 1571, which was taken as a basis for the subsequent grammars.<sup>36</sup> Last but not least, Masius is known

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<sup>30</sup> Masius published these professions of faith a few decades later. In the preface of this edition, he described the circumstances noting that there was no one else at that time in Rome who would have been able to undertake such a task: *cum praeter me, quod sine arrogantia dico, tum Romae appareret nemo, qui quas hic a suis popularibus attulerat Syricas literas legere, nedum Latine interpretari quiret*. Cf. Masius, *De Paradiso*, 229. Sullaqa was ordained bishop and appointed by the Pope as Patriarch of Mosul, thus he became the first head of the East-Syriac Uniate Church. On him see Habbi, 'Signification de l'union chaldéenne', and Teule, 'Les professions de foi de Jean Sullāqā'.

<sup>31</sup> In his Syriac dictionary, Masius made reference to a Gospel of the Vatican Library, that Levi della Vida identified with Vat. Sir. 15 based on the presence of an extremely rare lexeme in both of them. Cf. Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 137–138, 444.

<sup>32</sup> Masius, *De Paradiso*; Smitskamp, *Philologia Orientalis*, 260–261.

<sup>33</sup> Vööbus, 'New Manuscript Discoveries'; Depuydt, 'Classical Syriac Manuscripts', 177–178; Moss, 'Scholasticism, Exegesis', 331–333.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Mércz, 'Andreas Masius' Copy of the Anaphora of Saint Basil'.

<sup>35</sup> There was a veritable competition among Orientalist, therefore Masius emphasised the novelty of his work in the title: "*Opus novum et a nostris hominibus adhuc non tractatum*". Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter published a rudimentary Syriac manual in 1556 but it was not a proper grammar. Immanuel Tremellius also came out with a 'Chaldean and Syriac' grammar in 1569, but he used Aramaic alphabet for the printing, while Masius employed the authentic Syriac characters. Cf. Smitskamp, *Philologia Orientalis*, 104–106; Wilkinson, 'Constructing Syriac', 205–206; Kaufhold, 'Die Wissenschaft vom Christlichen Orient', 44–45.

<sup>36</sup> Kaufhold, 'Die Wissenschaft vom Christlichen Orient', 46.

as the composer of the first Syriac dictionary entitled *Syrorum peculium*<sup>37</sup> which was published together with his grammar in the same year.

Before making a name as a Biblical scholar and Syriacist, Masius was first and foremost a renowned Hebrew scholar<sup>38</sup> who corresponded, partly in Hebrew, with several Jewish intellectuals and prominent, like-minded academic fellows.<sup>39</sup> One of the leading Christian Hebraists of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Sebastian Münster, spoke of him in flattering terms and dedicated two of his books to him.<sup>40</sup> It is also attested that Masius enriched the library of the Vatican with a Hebrew manuscript.<sup>41</sup> Probably that is why he was extremely embittered when a Papal decree condemning the Talmud imperilled his Hebrew books left in Venice.<sup>42</sup> One of the latest articles on Masius as a Hebraist examined his vast collection of Hebrew works.<sup>43</sup> From our point of view, the most important part of Masius' Hebrew scholarship is his composition of Hebrew poems because some of these pieces of poetry are bound together with the bulk of his Syriac correspondence in the Berlin manuscript.<sup>44</sup> These poems were formerly studied by two renowned German scholars, Arthur Spanier and Hans Striedl,<sup>45</sup> and recently by a Flemish Hebraist, Maxime Maleux.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Roey, 'Les études syriaques d'Andreas Masius', 157–158. It was not only used as a Syriac dictionary but also as a cultural and scientific encyclopaedia. Joseph Justus Scaliger for example drew from it for his groundbreaking work on calendars. Cf. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger, II*, 185–186.

<sup>38</sup> See e.g. Rosenthal, 'The Study of the Hebrew Bible', 91; Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance*, 149, 153; Secret, *Les Kabbalistes Chrétiens*, 54–56; Kessler-Mesguich, 'L'hébreu chez les hébraïsants chrétiens', 96–97; Burnett, *Christian Hebraism*, passim; Dunkelgrün, 'The Christian Study of Judaism', 338. Dunkelgrün, 'The Humanist Discovery of Hebrew Epistolography', 226.

<sup>39</sup> See the letters he exchanged with Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter, Cornelio Adelkind, Elias and Emanuel de Nola in Perles, *Beiträge*, 203–231. See also Dunkelgrün, 'The Humanist Discovery of Hebrew Epistolography'.

<sup>40</sup> He called Masius extremely learned in Hebrew: "Scripsit mihi praeterea superiori anno Andreas Masius, uir in Hebraicis supra modum doctus..." Sebastianus Munsterus Hebraicae linguae atq[ue] Astronomicae disciplinae studiosus S.D., sig.\*3r. Cf. Prijs, *Die Basler hebräischen Drucke*, 509–510; and Dunkelgrün, 'The Hebrew Library', 200–202.

<sup>41</sup> An inscription on Ms. Vat. ebr. 416, 3v reads: DICTIONARIVM HEBRAICVM Et Chaldaicum Sacra Scriptura, R. Daud Ben Ioseph filij Kimchi Hispani. Hic liber emptus est ab Andrea Massio pro Bibliotheca Vaticana, tempore Pontificat. Iulij III. P.M. iussu D. Marcelli Ceruini Card. Bibliotecharij, anno D[omi]ni 1552." [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.ebr.416](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ebr.416). Retrieved 14 August 2021. An account book of expenses confirms Masius' acquisition. See Ms. Vat. Lat. 3965, fol. 40 verso: "A messer Andrea Magi scudi dua et jul. 5 per altrettanti spesi da lui per un libro hebraico per ordine del R.mo Maffeo, per un mandato di S.S. R.ma sotto il dí 20 d' Agosto 1552' Dorez, 'Le registre des dépenses', 180.

<sup>42</sup> In 1553, the Inquisition led by Gian Pietro Carafa condemned the Talmud to destruction and Pope Julius III in his bull *Cum sicut nuper* corroborated the Inquisition's decree. Masius vehemently spoke out against the burning of the Talmud, and this has probably cast a shadow over his reputation of being a good Catholic. Cf. Perles, *Beiträge*, 223–231; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 185–186; François, 'Andreas Masius (1514–1573)', 221–223.

<sup>43</sup> Dunkelgrün, 'The Hebrew Library'.

<sup>44</sup> Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. or. fol. 13.

<sup>45</sup> Spanier, 'Ein hebräisches Humanistengedicht'; Striedl, 'Hebräische Lobgedichte'.

<sup>46</sup> Maleux, 'On Hebrew Nymphs and Aqueducts'.

To complete the description of Masius' outstanding scholarly versatility, it has to be noted that he was familiar with Arabic, too. During his stay in Rome in 1545–1546, he learned the basics from Guillaume Postel, one of the greatest Arabists of his time,<sup>47</sup> and he seized every opportunity to improve his knowledge later on as well, for instance, with Moses of Mardin.<sup>48</sup> Two Arabic manuscripts currently held in Leiden and have certainly passed through Masius' library testify to his Arabic interests: one is Leiden Ms. Or. 231, a twelfth-century Mozarabic Latin-Arabic glossary, which he borrowed from Postel, and the other is Leiden Ms. Or. 241, an illuminated Quran in elegant Maghribi script.<sup>49</sup>

### 1.1.2. Moses of Mardin († 1592)

All of the ten letters that came down to us are related to the other main correspondent, Moses of Mardin, the author of nine letters and the recipient of the tenth letter. He was a Syrian Orthodox monk and scribe, patriarchal legate to the Holy See, a major contributor to the *editio princeps* of the Syriac New Testament, 'the man who provided the greatest impetus to nascent Syriac studies in Europe',<sup>50</sup> Syriac and Arabic instructor at the *Collegio dei Neofiti*, and one of the greatest swindlers of his time. Research on his eventful life is full of twists and turns; therefore, it is worth surveying the papers one by one chronologically.

The first scholar who wrote about Moses' life academically was the partial editor of his correspondence, the famous 17<sup>th</sup>-century German Orientalist Andreas Müller (1630–1694). In a rudimentary study attached to his edition, he described briefly those topics in which scholarship has been interested from the beginning concerning Moses: his homeland, family, religious affiliation, ecclesiastical order, writings and manuscripts, the reason for his coming to Europe, his European acquaintances, and his participation in the first edition of the Syriac New Testament.<sup>51</sup> Curiously, he already devoted a separate paragraph to Moses' avarice at that time. A few decades later, in 1719, Joseph Simon Assemani wrote about him in a short entry in his grandiose *Bibliotheca Orientalis*.<sup>52</sup> One of the most important contributions to our knowledge

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<sup>47</sup> Secret, 'La rencontre d'Andreas Masius avec Postel à Rome'.

<sup>48</sup> In his letter dated 13 April 1554, he wrote to Postel: *Nam ut verum fatear, ego in Arabicis tam sum adhuc infirmus, ut ipsa etiam evangelia Arabica, quod Romae expertus sum, non nisi cum magna difficultate possem conferre cum nostris. Nam ex quo te Romae postremum vidi, ubi me sedulo instruebas sed nimis brevi tempore, nullum habui Arabicum codicem praeter quaedam grammatica, quae ego mea manu ex tuis illis excussis congesseram, nisi demum anno superiore, ubi denuo Mosis nostri opera uno atque altero mense usu sum.* Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 161. See also van Roey, 'Les études syriaques d'Andreas Masius', 142 n. 7.

<sup>49</sup> Hamilton, 'The Perils of Catalogues', 34.

<sup>50</sup> Brock, 'The Development of Syriac Studies', 96.

<sup>51</sup> Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ II. Dissertationes duae*, 1–11.

<sup>52</sup> Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I, 535–536.

of Moses was written by Giorgio Levi della Vida in the mid-twentieth century. He thoroughly explored Moses' activity during his first (1548–1550) and second (1551–1556) stay in Rome and described in detail the work of a homonym bishop who arrived in Rome in 1578 without noticing that Moses of Mardin and *vescovo Mosè* are the same person.<sup>53</sup> The traces of Moses' diplomatic career were investigated by the late Syrian Catholic Patriarch, Ignatius Antony II Hayek (1968–1998), who, based on documents found in the Vatican archives, identified the sending patriarch as Ignatius 'Abdullah (1520/21–1557) and showed that Moses was firstly sent to Pope Paul III (1534–1549) in 1549, and then to Pope Julius III (1550–1555) in 1551 to negotiate on the union of the Syrian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>54</sup> He found it plausible that Moses was a bishop and suggested that he might have been identical to the other Moses arriving in Rome in the late 1570s. However, it was Hubert Kaufhold who clearly established the identity of the two Moseses in a book review.<sup>55</sup> Until the early 2000s, the generally accepted view was that Moses was a bishop,<sup>56</sup> which Pier Giorgio Borbone challenged in 2017. Referring to Patriarch Ignatius Ni'amatallah (1557–1576), who called Moses a “slanderer” and “excommunicated” who deceived “the Franks, the Egyptians and the Armenians, saying he was a prelate” and showing other instances where Moses overstated his position, Borbone rejected the general opinion considering Moses being a consecrated bishop, archbishop or metropolitan.<sup>57</sup> Another exciting turn in research on Moses' life happened in 2018 when Giacomo Cardinali published a letter tallying with what Patriarch Ni'amatallah said about Moses. The letter was sent to Cardinal Marcello Cervini, one of Moses' Roman patrons, by two Syrian Orthodox pilgrims who called Moses a rascal excommunicated by the patriarch (Ni'amatallah's predecessor, 'Abdallah, who was believed to send Moses as an envoy to Rome).<sup>58</sup> They claimed that he duped the Roman elite by forging the letter himself, which stated that the patriarch had sent him to the pontiff. This letter raises more questions than it answers, but it certainly fits into the series of new sources, together with his Syriac correspondence, as it will be shown, which seriously question Moses' trustworthiness. Finally, the most recent

<sup>53</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*. See in the index *Mosè di Mārdīn* and *Mosè di Šōr, vesc.*

<sup>54</sup> Hayek, *Alāqāt kanīsat al-suryān al-ya'āqiba*, 61–104. This volume was republished in Italian by Pier Giorgio Borbone and Jimmy Daccache in 2015. Cf. Hayek, *Le relazioni della Chiesa Siro-giacobita*, 47–81.

<sup>55</sup> Kaufhold, 'Review of H. Anschütz, *Die syrischen Christen*', 207–208. He refers to patriarch Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum who tacitly identified them by giving the dates 1542–1587 as Moses' lifetime. Cf. Baršawm, *Al-lu'lu' al-manthūr*, 473, 494; and the English version published by Matti Moosa: Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, 527, 547. Wilkinson considered the matter still 'not proven' in 2012 (cf. 'Syriac Studies', 64–65 n. 34.) but later studies unambiguously clinched the case.

<sup>56</sup> Contini, 'Gli inizi', 19. n. 29; Weltecke, 'The World Chronicle by Patriarch Michael the Great', 7.

<sup>57</sup> Borbone, 'From Tur 'Abdin to Rome', 285–286; Borbone, "“Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria”", 83–85.

<sup>58</sup> The expressions applied for Moses in the document are 'mariolo' i.e. rascal and 'gabba mondo' i.e. arrant cheat. Cf. Cardinali, 'Ritratto di Marcello Cervini', 83–98, 340.

paper on Moses' life focuses on the years Moses spent in Vienna (1553–1556) and on the coat of arms he received from Ferdinand I (1526–1564) as an acknowledgement of his work in the setting up of the Syriac printing press.<sup>59</sup>

Many of the above-mentioned scholars and several others described Moses' scribal activity.<sup>60</sup> A precious contribution to this subject is Levi della Vida's monography, in which he showed that a significant number of the earliest Syriac and Arabic manuscripts of the Vatican Library were copied or brought to Europe by Moses.<sup>61</sup> The most up-to-date study in this field is authored by Borbone, who published the colophons and purchase notes of 25 manuscripts.<sup>62</sup> The most interesting manuscript written by Moses is Ms. Harley 5512 of the British Library, which contains parts of the Roman Missal in Latin, written in Syriac script. It is by far the longest Latin garshuni text we have, which was described in detail and put in context by Jules Leroy.<sup>63</sup> The most significant manuscript, however, written by Moses was undoubtedly a copy made on the autograph manuscript of the monumental world chronicle of Michel the Syrian (1126–1199), which preserved for us this highly important work, one of the most important sources on the history of the Middle East.<sup>64</sup>

Moses' other landmark achievement, his participation in the setting-up of a Syriac printing press in Europe and in the publication of the Syriac New Testament, has also been studied by several scholars. The first preparations made in Rome were discovered and described by Léon Dorez and Paolo Sachet: the types had been cut, but the project failed.<sup>65</sup> Finally, the press was established in Vienna, and the very first Syriac book was published there in 1555. Andreas Müller penned the first study on this subject.<sup>66</sup> Then, after a long time, the famous German biblical scholar, Eberhard Nestle, discovered that the types used for the *editio princeps* were modelled on Moses' handwriting.<sup>67</sup> Levi della Vida pointed out that before the creation of the Viennese printing press, Moses made arrangements to establish a Syriac press in Rome

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<sup>59</sup> Mércz, 'The Coat of Arms of Moses of Mardin'.

<sup>60</sup> Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ II. Dissertationes duae*, 8; Hayek, 'Alāqāt kanīsat al-suryān al-ya'āqiba, 75–79; Monferrer-Sala, 'Un manuscrito karšūnī'; Borbone, 'Syriac and Garšūnī Manuscripts', 34–35, 37; Kessel, 'Moses von Mardin'; Borbone, 'From Tur 'Abdin to Rome', 278–281;

<sup>61</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*. See in the index *Mosè di Mārdīn* and *Mosè di Šōr, vesc.*

<sup>62</sup> Borbone, "'Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria'", 99–113.

<sup>63</sup> Leroy, 'Une copie syriaque du Missale Romanum'. See also Brock, 'Greek and Latin in Syriac Script', 45–47.

<sup>64</sup> Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, I, XXXVII–XXXIX; Weltecke, *Die 'Beschreibung der Zeiten'*, 158–159. Moses' copy is perished, but a copy made on his manuscript by another scribe, Michael of 'Urbish in 1598 is preserved in Aleppo and was published in a facsimile edition in 2009. Cf. Ibrahim, *The Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex*. The manuscript is also available online under the project number of SOAA 00250 S of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library. <https://w3id.org/vhmmml/readingRoom/view/500917> Retrieved 21 March 2020.

<sup>65</sup> Dorez, 'Le registre des dépenses', 179–180, nos. 103–104; Sachet, *Publishing for the Popes*, 179–181.

<sup>66</sup> Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ II. Dissertationes duae*, 11–46.

<sup>67</sup> Nestle, 'Zur Geschichte der syrischen Typen'.

with the help and support of the cardinal librarian and future pope, Marcello Cervini.<sup>68</sup> James F. Coakley wrote about the importance of Moses' work in his monography on the history of Syriac printing.<sup>69</sup> George Anton Kiraz, who published a reprint of the *editio princeps*, tried to track down the traces of the 500 copies of the New Testament, which Moses brought with himself to the Near East, and managed to identify a specimen he sold at Famagusta, Cyprus, on 18 October 1556.<sup>70</sup> The most in-depth examination of the history of the Viennese Syriac printing project was delivered by Robert J. Wilkinson, who, after describing the antecedents: Teseo Ambrogio's and Egidio da Viterbo's work, examined in detail the contribution of the three key-figures: Moses of Mardin, Guillaume Postel and Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter. This volume appeared in 2007, and it is still the most current study on the subject.<sup>71</sup>

### 1.1.3. Guillaume Postel (1510–1581)

Postel is the recipient of a brief Syriac message written by Moses on a slip of paper attached as a postscript to a letter addressed to Jean de Renialme (on whom see below). Postel had a marginal role in this correspondence; therefore, only a roughly outlined biography is given here, instead of a full bibliographic overview, focusing on the most important events of his life and especially on the episodes related to the correspondence.

He was one of the greatest savants of his time, a linguist and polyglot, mathematician, astronomer and cartographer, Kabbalist and Bible scholar rolled into one. He was a prolific author who published 43 works<sup>72</sup> and earned the epithet of “abyss of knowledge” for his manifold scientific interests. His protean personality was coupled with a hectic life: he was a Jesuit whom his own church imprisoned in Rome for four years and a French diplomat whom his own king shut up in a monastery for the last eighteen years of his life. Many of his contemporaries admired him; others regarded him as mad. All in all, he is one of the most puzzling figures of the sixteenth century.<sup>73</sup>

Not surprisingly, it was his interest in oriental languages that brought him together with Masius and Moses. He already had a good knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic when he undertook

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<sup>68</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 145.

<sup>69</sup> Coakley, *The Typography of Syriac*, 31–34.

<sup>70</sup> Kiraz, ‘Introduction to the Gorgias Reprint’, v.

<sup>71</sup> Wilkinson, *Orientalism*, 63–95. This work should be consulted along with the critical review by Alastair Hamilton in *Quaerendo* 38 (2008), 401–404.

<sup>72</sup> Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi*, 300–304.

<sup>73</sup> His most important biographies are: Bouwsma, *Concordia Mundi*; Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel*; Weill and Secret, *Vie et caractère*. His letters and other important documents on his life were published in Chauffepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, III, 215–236; Kvačala, *Postelliana*. See also Secret, *Bibliographie des manuscrits*.

his first oriental journey (1534–1537) into the Near East in the frame of a diplomatic mission.<sup>74</sup> He visited Tunis, Istanbul, Syria, and Egypt, and this trip fired up his enthusiasm for oriental languages even more. In the following years, Postel wrote a treatise on the origin of the Hebrew language<sup>75</sup>, an Arabic grammar<sup>76</sup>, and a book entitled *Linguarum duodecim characteribus differentium alphabetum, introductio...*, in which he published the alphabet of 12 oriental languages, and in five languages some further texts, mainly the *Paternoster*. This book, which is considered the starting point of comparative philology, was the very first publication containing Syriac characters, for which Postel used a primitive method: imprints of woodcuts since there had not been movable Syriac types yet.<sup>77</sup>

Four encounters were especially determining concerning his Syriac studies. Already in 1537, he met the legendary Venetian printer, Daniel Bomberg, who had 280 employees and published more than 200 titles during his 30 years of activity.<sup>78</sup> His house was a meeting point for Jewish scholars and Christian Hebraists; therefore, Postel gladly frequented it. Their mutual interests in printing and ancient languages provided the basis for a close friendship. They have been cherishing the idea of publishing the New Testament in Syriac; therefore, Postel departed on a second oriental voyage (1549–1550/1551) with Bomberg's financial support to acquire the necessary manuscripts.<sup>79</sup> Around 1545, Postel met in Rome the German Orientalist Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter who invited him to participate in the setting up of the Syriac printing press a few years later and prepared a chair of Arabic for him at the university of Vienna.<sup>80</sup> It

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<sup>74</sup> Bouwsma (*Concordia Mundi*, 5.) and Kuntz (*Guillaume Postel*, 13.) date this journey to 1536–1537, but Vogel ('Ueber Wilh. Postel's Reisen', 51.) argued convincingly for an earlier departure. See also Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 377 n. 86.

<sup>75</sup> Postel, *De Originibus seu de Hebraicae linguae et gentis antiquitate*.

<sup>76</sup> On Postel's Arabic studies see Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa*, 36–44; Dannenfeldt, 'The Renaissance Humanists', 110–112; Secret, 'Guillaume Postel et les études arabes'; Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 365–498.

<sup>77</sup> Strothmann, *Die Anfänge der syrischen Studien*, 4–5; Smitskamp, *Philologia Orientalis*, 241–246. The second work containing Syriac characters was Teseo Ambrogio's (1469–1540) *Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam, Syriacam, atque Armenicam, & decem alias linguas...* which appeared only one year after Postel's publication. Cf. Nestle, 'Aus einem sprachwissenschaftlichen Werk von 1539'. Postel asked for Ambrogio's help in the preparation of Arabic and Armenian woodcuts, who willingly helped him but had been chagrined at seeing that Postel pre-empted him by publishing his own booklet. On this episode see Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel*, 27 n. 79.

<sup>78</sup> Bomberg published the first complete edition of the Babylonian Talmud and the first three editions of the Rabbinic Bible. On the importance of Bomberg in the Hebrew printing see: Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books*, 146–225; Mintz and Goldstein, *Printing the Talmud*; David Stern, 'The Rabbinic Bible'; Heller, 'The Earliest Printings of the Talmud'.

<sup>79</sup> Wilkinson listed three partly overlooked pieces of evidence proving that Postel have been working on Syriac publishing before Moses' arrival to Europe. Cf. Wilkinson, *Orientalism*, 75–77, 80–81, 105–106. Postel wrote two long reports from his trip to Masius: one from Jerusalem, 21 August 1549 (cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 216, Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 46–47) and another from Constantinople, 10 June 1550 (cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 216, Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 56).

<sup>80</sup> On their encounter see Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 383 n. 125.



was also at that time that he met Andreas Masius and became his Arabic teacher.<sup>81</sup> They formed a deep and lifelong friendship that is attested by their subsequent correspondence's honest and intimate tone. Their letters are a very valuable source of both of their lives. And finally, he also met Moses of Mardin, and according to his own account, he was the one who recommended him to Widmanstetter.<sup>82</sup>

The Syriac printing press was finally realised in Vienna but only with Postel's partial contribution. Postel arrived in Vienna at the end of 1553. He still gave his inaugural lecture at the university but then left the city unexpectedly after a few months' stay because two of his books were suspected of being heretical, and he was summoned to appear before the inquisition in Venice. The lawsuit dragged on; he was judged finally in 1555 and transferred to Rome, where he was incarcerated for four years until 1559. Despite the circumstances, Widmanstetter expressed his gratitude to Postel in the Syriac New Testament preface, which finally appeared in 1555.<sup>83</sup>

The reason why Moses wrote to Postel to Venice from Vienna is a fiddling detail: he asked him to send a book to Vienna; thus, it does not effectively broaden our knowledge of the history of the printing press. Nevertheless, the correspondence still brings some new elements to the Postel-research inasmuch as it clarifies the story of a few manuscripts that were thought to have belonged to Postel.

#### **1.1.4. Giovanni Rignalmo, alias Jean de Renialme (1512–b. 1570)**

Giovanni Rignalmo is the addressee of a letter that Moses sent on 23 November 1553. He is not as well-known as the previous persons; he has actually never been the subject of a scholarly investigation in his own right. Nevertheless, he was an important figure of his age; thus, the jigsaw of his life can be pieced together on the whole.

He signed his letters as Giovane de Renialme<sup>84</sup>, but his name appears in many other forms (Rignalmo, Remalmus, Remalinus, Rencalino, Romalinus, Reneaulme, Renialnus) in the

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<sup>81</sup> Secret, 'La rencontre d'Andreas Masius avec Postel'; François, 'Andreas Masius (1514-1573)', 212 n. 58.

<sup>82</sup> Kvačala, *Postelliana*, 60; Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 393–394.

<sup>83</sup> *Dum porro ad mandata haec tua conficienda, Rex Augustae, necessaria omnia apparantur, insperantibus etiam nobis interuenit Gulielmus Postellus, vir supra aetatis nostrae consuetudinem, supra etiam multorum captum mirabiliter eruditus qui parte Asiae meliore semel iteru[m]que peragrata, magnas & Syriacae & Arabicae linguae opeis consecratus, minime vulgare nobis attulit adiumentum: a quo multo maius habituri eramus, nisi peruersi quidam homines, quibus turbare omnia libet, confictis de periculo sibi procreato rumoribus, eum, ne hic diuitius haeret, deterruissent.* Cf. Widmanstetter, *Liber sancrosancti Evangelii*, 15r–v.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Two of his letters to Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle in 1548, MSS/7913/21-22, Biblioteca Nacional de España, <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000194017&page=1>, accessed 22 August 2021. I owe this reference to Bruce Nielsen who kindly shared with me his notes on Jean de Renialme.

different correspondences of that time. In the following, he will be referred to as Jean the Renialme, because this form is preponderant in the secondary literature. He was a scion of a wealthy Flemish merchant family who had solid bonds with other influential trader dynasties.<sup>85</sup> Together with his brother, Corneille, they were the 41st largest Flemish exporters in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>86</sup> Later, he moved to Venice and lived there with his wife, Claire de Jonghe, whom he married in 1544, and their four children.<sup>87</sup> He made a name for himself, especially among the intellectuals, as a business agent of the renowned Venetian printer, Daniel Bomberg. It was easy for him to get the job because he was Bomberg's nephew: the son of Françoise van Bomberghen (Daniel's sister) and Charles de Renialme.<sup>88</sup>

Bomberg's most important clients, beside the Jewish communities who contacted him from all over the world<sup>89</sup>, were the orientalists who, through their philological work, provided the necessary expertise to produce the books and, thanks to their extensive networks, were at the same time the main factors at the buyer's market, too. Therefore, Renialme had to maintain a good relationship with them, and he did so. He probably met Postel in 1547, when the latter stayed in Venice and frequented Bomberg's house,<sup>90</sup> and by 1549, he surely was in contact with Masius, too.<sup>91</sup> According to their correspondence, they cooperated closely in sale and purchase of Oriental manuscripts in the subsequent years until 1555.<sup>92</sup> We also learn from Postel's letters

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<sup>85</sup> E.g. de Cordes, van Bomberghen, Mannaert. Cf. Brulez, *De firma della Faille*, 479, 482, 487.

<sup>86</sup> Brulez, 'L'Exportation', 473.

<sup>87</sup> Bomberghen and Goovaerts, *Généalogie de la famille Van Bomberghen*, 17–18; den Tex, 'Aanvullingen en vebeteringen', 6: "#11. Zijn [Gasparus de Renialme] broeder Jean, sgr. de Naves, woonde 1547-1555 in Venetië met zijn jonge vrouw Clair de Jonghe." ; Brulez, *De firma della Faille*, 487.

<sup>88</sup> Brulez, *De firma della Faille*, 487 ; Nielsen, 'Daniel van Bombergen', 62–63.

<sup>89</sup> The books he printed were shipped to Africa, Ethiopia, the Indies and Egypt, and he received requests from Jewish communities living in Aleppo and other parts of the Ottoman Empire, or even from the Crimean Karaites. Cf. Nielsen, 'Daniel van Bombergen', 70.

<sup>90</sup> 22 January 1547, Postel wrote a letter to Masius answering his very first, by now lost letter and started it with the following words: "Accepi literas tuas 22 Januarii postquam multos dies delituerant Venetiis in manu Curtorum (sic!) Bomberg". Chauffepié, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique*, III, 219; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 23.

<sup>91</sup> Renialme delivered a letter from Masius (Rome) to Postel (Venice) some time before May 1549: "*Literas tuas mihi, a peregrinatione quam ante 15 dies ad montes Euganeos animi & valetudinis gratia inieram, redeunti obtulit noster Remalmus, gratissimas quidem ipsas, & in quibus candorem tui animi perspexi, ut soleo. Video itaque me in te vivere, unde et tibi et mihi loquor. Ut autem paucis ad singula. Dederam quidem opus de ultimo adventu, sed ob molem majusculam non misit Remalmus, addidi nunc et Latinam Editionem Candelabri, tibi ut puto non ingrato animo legenda, mittere enim fueram tum oblitus.*" Postel's letter dated 19 May 1549. Cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique*, III, 220; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 46.

<sup>92</sup> "*Scribe vicissim ad nos, sicut dedi directionem literarum Danieli Bombergo et D. Joanni Renialmo...*". Letter dated 21 August 1549. Cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique*, III, 216 and Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 46–47; "*Psalterium et Evangelia, quae jam in duobus voluminibus ad nostrum Renialmum, cum Epistola ad Hebraeos, a me transcripta, misi.*" and "*Cura ut perquam diligenter asservetur τὸ βιβλίον quod ad te misit discutiendi causa Remalmus.*". Letter dated 10 June 1550. Cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique*, III, 216 and Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 56; "*Ego adhuc aliquantisper haereo hic donec responsum regiae majestatis habeam ... quum te legisse in Domini Remalmi literis dicas molestia plenam sententiam.*" This letter dated 24 February 1555, is full of lacunae. Cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique*, III, 228–229 and Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 195; "*...etiam tibi gratificandi animo, maxime vero Remalmo nostro*

that he was working with Renialme when Moses appeared unexpectedly in Venice and that they helped him to achieve his plans.<sup>93</sup>

It is also recorded that Renialme lived in Bomberg's house after the latter's departure from Venice. The story is related to Masius, who relied on Renialme's assistance, when he tried to secure his precious Hebrew manuscripts which he had left in Venice. Following the issue of a decree by the Roman Inquisition, the Talmud was publicly burned in Rome in the Fall of 1553. In the subsequent months, other Italian cities also confiscated and burned the copies of the Talmud. In Venice, Hebrew books and manuscripts that were found in Daniel Bomberg's office – among which many belonged to Masius – were sequestered. It was a fundamental issue for Masius to recover the most precious part of his library, so he bent over backwards to succeed. He even managed to convince Elector Palatine Frederick II the Wise (1544–1556) to intercede on his behalf, who, using his influence, wrote a letter to the Venetian Senate mentioning *Ioannis Rencalino*, relative and business manager of Daniel Bomberg.<sup>94</sup> At the same time, Masius contacted Marc Anton de Mula, Venetian ambassador to the emperor, and asked his help in retrieving and shipping the collection to Germany through the agency of Jean de Renialme.<sup>95</sup> From de Mula's answer to Masius, we learn that Renialme lived in Bomberg's house.<sup>96</sup> It is an interesting detail because Moses wrote twice, in his letters, on 19 May 1555

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*intercedente, misi ad te charissimum fere omnium meorum Exemplarium Arabicorum Latino-Arabicum Lexicum...*" Letter dated 4 March 1568. Cf. Chaufepié, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique*, III, 232 and Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 408.

<sup>93</sup> "...attuleram inquam exemplar fidelissimum Novi Testamenti quam ad rem meo succurrens desiderio pridem etiam eiusdem linguae manifestandae studio incitatus Daniel Bombergus, curatore suarum rerum Johanne Renialmo impensas suppeditaverat: a cuius conquirendi peregrinatione quum vix rediissem, se statim mihi Venetiis obtulit Cassis ille sacerdosve T. M. notus, Moses Mesopotamus Syrus, vetustis exemplaribus instructus, cuius opera sum usus ad mei collationem, eo quod meum erat recentius scriptum..." and "...et tandem rebus desperatis, reque infecta vellet [scil. Moses] in Syriam redire: ego una cum Renialmo illo Bombergi curator fui illi auctor, ut non sic discederet re infecta..." Letter dated 1561. It was originally published by Postel in the preface of his *Cosmographicae disciplinae compendium*, and republished by Kvačala, *Postelliana*, 59–60; "... attuli Venetias multa vetustissima fidelissimaque exemplaria Arabici novi testamenti, de quibus utrisque per Typos multiplicandis ut in orientem referantur aut deferantur, et dum maxime de hac re cum Joh. Renialmo Dan. Bombergi curatore, cuius aere Syriaca ipsa exemplaria paraveram, pertractarem, Ecce (o admiranda Christi providentia) se offert utrique Moses ille Syrus sacerdos..." Letter dated 1562. Cf. Kvačala, *Postelliana*, 72.

<sup>94</sup> Frederick II, Elector Palatine's letter to the Venetian Senate on 19 February 1554 "*Ex fideli dilecto nostro consiliario et familiari, Andrea Masio, intelleximus, quod superioribus mensibus ob decretum quoddam pontificium libri Talmudici, et fortasse alii quidam Hebraici libri, ex auctoritate vestra et publico edicto sint combusti, quibusdam tamen exemplaribus, praesertim a Daniele Bombergo Antverpiano non sine summorum Pontificum auctoritate et privilegiis impressis, ad preces Ioannis de Rencalino, dicti Danielis et Antonii Bombergorum cognati, et isthic negotiorum curatoris, ad ulteriorem apostolicae sedis determinationem reservatis, et in magazeno (ut vocant) dictorum Bombergorum inclusis, ut inde non possint sine vestro jussu et auctoritate amoveri.*" Cf. Lamey, 'Epistolae', 347.

<sup>95</sup> Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 147.

<sup>96</sup> Letter of Marc Anton de Mula to Andreas Masius on 19 February 1554 "*Quod per te in hac re apud inclitum senatum agetur, id ut resciat Joannes Remalinus, Bombergorum, ut dixi, Venetiis institor, qui in illorum aedibus habitat, necesse est, quo possit congruenter ad ea ipse quoque senatum interpellare.*" Cf. Lamey, 'Epistolae', 350.

and 15 July 1555, that he left his chest in Renialme's house; therefore, it means that he left it in Bomberg's house.

Not much is known about the end of Renialme's career after the bankruptcy of Bomberg's company in 1554. He probably left Venice in 1556 and moved to Germany or back to the Netherlands. In 1558, his name popped up in the registries of a renowned Antwerpian printer; he ordered several books from Christoph Plantin, who was the continuator of the Bombergs' Hebrew printing activity.<sup>97</sup> The date of Renialme's death is uncertain, but it seems probable from an indirect source that he died before 1570.<sup>98</sup>

Despite Renialme's unknown character, he might be the most well-known figure among the participants of this correspondence because there is an exquisite portrait in the San Francisco De Jong Museum attributed to Tintoretto that possibly depicts him. Almost nothing is known about the birth of this painting portraying a man wearing a fur robe, but the coat of arms of the Renialme family appears in its corner. That is why art historians tried to relate it to Jean de Renialme, whose residence in Venice (1547–1555) coincided with Tintoretto's early successes.<sup>99</sup> We can find many patrons of arts in his family, and one of his homonym descendants was the most significant art dealer of his age in the Netherlands; therefore, a commission to Tintoretto fits perfectly in the picture and makes this hypothesis plausible.<sup>100</sup>

### **1.1.5. Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter (1506–1557), the odd man out**

After this overview of the correspondence participants, there is one more person, an odd one out, who has to be introduced. He was neither a recipient nor a sender of any letters to Moses, but it is only because he was in the same city as Moses most of the time. Johann Albrecht

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<sup>97</sup> Colin and Nixon, 'La question des reliures de Plantin', 62–63. In 1563, Bomberg's son, Charles van Bombergen and Bomberg's nephew, Corneille Bomberg, Jean's cousins, concluded an agreement with Plantin on the Hebrew types. Plantin bought the Bomberg company's Hebrew typeface and continued to publish Hebrew books with the Bomberg logo. "Item, seront imprimez tous les livres, en toutes langues, eccetté l'ebrieu, au nom dudit Plantin, mais les livres hebrieux s'imprimeront au nom de Bomberghes sans contrediction quelconque." See the copy of the full agreement in Rooses, *Christophe Plantin, imprimeur anversois*. 385–388.

<sup>98</sup> According to an entry in a church register, his widow appeared at a baptism as godmother. Cf. von den Velden, *Das Kirchenbuch*, 30: "Baptêmes administrez en l'Eglise françoise de Heydelberg, 1570 II. 19 Matthieu fs. de mons<sup>r</sup> de Lannoy. – PM: mons<sup>r</sup> Junius, le sr Charles de Renialme, mad<sup>lle</sup> la ve. de Jan de Renialme." PM = Parrains et marraines, fs = fils, mons<sup>r</sup> = monsieur, sr = sieur, mad<sup>lle</sup> = mademoiselle, ve = veuve, fle = fille. Montias (*Art at Auction*, 284 n. 405) wrote that the widow of Jean de Renialme appeared as a witness to a baptism on 20 February 1575, but this is a mistake. The article he cites (*Nederlandsche Leeuw* 75 (1958), col. 19.) refers to the same church register which was published by von den Velden.

<sup>99</sup> Nash, Orr, and Stewart, *Masterworks*, 49.

<sup>100</sup> On the art dealer Johannes de Renialme (ca. 1600–1657) see Montias, *Art at Auction*, 130–143.

Widmanstetter's figure was looming over Moses; his humanist pseudonym, Lucretius,<sup>101</sup> is mentioned several times in the correspondence. He is a key figure in the story, and it is impossible to understand the correspondence without knowing him. Also, in his case, only a short biographical sketch is given here, focusing on the main points of contact instead of a full bibliographical survey.

His career strongly resembles that of Masius and Postel inasmuch as he undertook different diplomatic missions and indulged his passion for oriental studies at the same time. He studied jurisprudence, theology and Hebrew in Tübingen, Basel and Heidelberg. Then he travelled around Italy, staying in Bologna, Naples and Rome; he learned Arabic, deepened his Hebrew knowledge and lectured in Greek. In 1533, he became secretary to Pope Clement VII and continued to serve Pope Paul III for one year. Between 1535 and 1537, he worked for Cardinal Nikolaus of Schönberg, archbishop of Capua and then joined the service of Duke Ludwig X of Bayern-Landshut. In 1542, he married the natural daughter of his employer, Anna of Leonsberg.<sup>102</sup> In 1553, Widmanstetter was appointed Chancellor of Lower Austria by King Ferdinand I, and in the next year, he became superintendent of the University of Vienna. After the death of his wife in 1556, Widmanstetter retired from public life; he became a priest and joined the cathedral chapter in Regensburg, where he was buried in 1557.<sup>103</sup>

Widmanstetter's importance in the field of classical and oriental studies lies mainly in his extremely rich personal library composed of about 1200 items. The bulk of this precious collection formed the core of today's Bavarian State Library in Munich.<sup>104</sup> Although Widmanstetter was a well-trained classical philologist<sup>105</sup> and a good Hebraist<sup>106</sup>, he had not published scholarly works in these fields. He was more productive as an Arabic and Syriac scholar. He considered these languages important for evangelization and missionary work; that is why he suggested to Pope Clement VII to introduce the teaching of these languages in

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<sup>101</sup> On this pseudonym see Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 287 n. 59. His other *nom de plum*: Oesiander is a Greek translation of his name (Weide-*oisos* and Mann-*aner, andros*). Cf. Müller, *J. A. v. Widmanstetter*, 20.

<sup>102</sup> She is also mentioned in the correspondence. On Widmanstetter's affection for his wife see Ingersoll, 'Emblems', 49.

<sup>103</sup> Widmanstetter's two best biographies are: Müller, *J. A. v. Widmanstetter* and Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 282–295. Two shorter, more recent biographical accounts: Wilkinson, *Orientalism*, 137–169 and Cecini, 'J. A. Widmanstetter', 235–239.

<sup>104</sup> Hartig, *Die Gründung der Münchener Hofbibliothek*, 9–19 and 170–193; Striedl, 'Die Bücherei'.

<sup>105</sup> Striedl, 'Widmanstetter als klassischer Philologe'; Frede, *I lettori di umanità nello studio di Napoli*, 102–108.

<sup>106</sup> He corresponded in Hebrew with Egidio da Viterbo, Elia Levita, Paulus Aemilius. Cf. Perles, *Beiträge*, 154–199. He possessed 136 Hebrew manuscripts and 50 Hebrew printed books, cf. Striedl, 'Die Bücherei', 2018–219; Striedl, 'Hebraica-Sammlung', 1–10; On Widmanstetter's Hebrew erudition see Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 297–302, Burnett, *Christian Hebraism*, *passim*, and Molière, 'Ex Bibliotheca Aegidiana'.

Christian schools.<sup>107</sup> Widmanstetter started to learn Arabic in Italy and later perfected his knowledge with a Damascene deacon, Petrus Ghalinus, sent to him by Cardinal Cervini.<sup>108</sup> Based on earlier medieval works and completing them with his own annotations, Widmanstetter published a composite apologetic volume.<sup>109</sup> He is also said to have written an Arabic grammar and to have translated the Qur'an into Latin, but these works have not survived.<sup>110</sup>

Probably, his work as a Syriac scholar is the most remarkable.<sup>111</sup> He is the first one from among the second generation of Syriac scholars who met Teseo Ambrogio degli Albonesi, the very first European syriacist.<sup>112</sup> Later on, he further deepened his knowledge with the help of a Maronite bishop, Symeon,<sup>113</sup> whom Moses also mentions in his letter dated 1 August 1556. The achievement Widmanstetter is the most famous for is, beyond any doubt, the publication of the *editio princeps* of the Syriac New Testament.<sup>114</sup> He met Moses in Dillingen in the autumn of 1553 and brought him immediately to Vienna, where they set up a Syriac printing press with Ferdinand I's financial support. The technical conditions were provided by the printer Michael Zimmerman (Cymbermannus)<sup>115</sup>, and the punches for striking the matrices were engraved by

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<sup>107</sup> Müller, *J. A. v. Widmanstetter*, 26. The Council of Vienne (1311–1312) issued a decree enacting the establishment of chairs of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic at the Universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca, but this objective has not been accomplished. On this issue see Altaner, 'Lullus und der Sprachenkanon'; Altaner, 'Die Durchführung des Viennener Konzilsbeschlusses'; Weiss, 'England and the Decree of the Council of Vienne'.

<sup>108</sup> On his Arabic studies, see Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 302–311. About Petrus Damascenus, Widmanstetter wrote in the Preface of the Syriac New Testament: "Anno deinceps à Clementis obitu Decimo, Marcellus Ceruinus, qui nuper in Summo Pontificatu, necdum menstruo tamen, veteris Sanctitatis exemplum Illustre reliquit, Petrum Ghalinum Damascenum Diaconum, abs se, vt mihi in excole[n]dis Arabicis studiis tanquam Christianae Reip. frugiferis adiutor esset, in Germaniam dimisit..." Widmanstetter, *Liber sancrosancti Evangelii*, [sig]a\*\*\*1r. On the abrupt end of their cooperation see Cardinali, 'Ritratto di Marcello Cervini', 79–83 and 338–339.

<sup>109</sup> Widmanstetter, *Mahometis...theologia*; See also: Burman, *Reading the Qur'an*, passim; Fisch, *Umm-al-kitâb*, 29–31; Cecini, 'J. A. Widmanstetter', 239–245; Tommasino, *The Venetian Qur'an*, passim.

<sup>110</sup> Cecini, 'J. A. Widmanstetter', 236–237.

<sup>111</sup> Strothmann, *Die Anfänge der syrischen Studien*, 9–16; Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 312–322.

<sup>112</sup> On his life and work see: Terenzio, *Ambrogio Teseo*; Nestle, 'Aus einem sprachwissenschaftlichen Werk'; Levi della Vida, 'Albonesi'; Wilkinson, *Orientalism*, 11–27.

<sup>113</sup> "Quarto post anno in Bibliotheca Lactantij Ptolemaei reperi quatuor Euangelistarum libros una cum Ephremi & Iacobi Syrorum opusculis nonnullis, quae ipse mox tra[n]scripsi, atq[ue]; cum Thesei munere splendidissimo conseruauit; vsq[ue]; dum Symeonis, Syrorum, qui iuga Libani incolunt, Episcopi Catholici et doctissimi viri institutione profeci adeo, vt sentire[m] Thesei desyderium quod è Christi lingua in Latinam Ecclesiam introducenda capiebet, leniri ia[m] aliquantum posse." Widmanstetter, *Liber sancrosancti Evangelii*. [sig]a\*\*\*3r. In his own copy, Widmanstetter added to this section on the margin: "Symeon Episcopus Libani, p[rae]ceptor meus".

<sup>114</sup> Wilkinson, *Orientalism*, 171–188.

<sup>115</sup> He was one of the most renowned printers of his time who beyond Latin published works in Greek and Hebrew as well. What is more, he was the first in the German language area who used Arabic types in 1544 preceding by a quarter of a century the Heidelberg Arabic printing. In 1554, he published Postel's inaugural lecture entitled *De linguae phoenicis sive hebraicae excellentia...Panegyris*. In 1559, he was ennobled for his enduring merits by emperor Ferdinand I. On his life and work see Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte*, 69–85; Fritz, *Geschichte der Wiener Schriftgiessereien*, 20–22; Reske and Benzing, *Die Buchdrucker*, 968.

Kaspar Kraft of Ellwangen<sup>116</sup>. In 1556, Widmanstetter published a short introduction to the Syriac language.<sup>117</sup> He would have certainly continued printing further Syriac works, but Moses' return to the East and the unexpected early death of his wife ruined his plans.

Beyond Moses, Widmanstetter was also in close connection with the Orientalists mentioned above. He met Masius at the Imperial Diet in Regensburg in 1541, and they immediately were on familiar terms. Masius wrote Widmanstetter a Hebrew letter so others could not understand his message.<sup>118</sup> As for Postel, Widmanstetter met him in Rome, and he quickly palled up with him thanks to their shared interest in Kabbala.<sup>119</sup> It is not attested that Widmanstetter knew personally Jean de Renialme, but he was in contact with his uncle, Daniel Bomberg.

## 1.2. Studies on the correspondence

After reviewing what has been published on the correspondence participants, let us now turn our attention to the letters themselves and examine what has been done so far regarding them. Since their genesis, there was a more or less constant scientific interest in Moses' and Masius' Syriac letters. The correspondence became the subject of scholarly research already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and the last few decades witnessed a veritable effervescence around the subject. Four researchers set about the corpus edition; their work will be described in detail. Other minor studies or translations will be discussed briefly.

### 1.2.1. Andreas Müller (1630–1694)

Müller was a versatile Orientalist who could read Turkish, Persian and Syriac and had a sufficient command of Arabic as well.<sup>120</sup> In 1660, he was invited by Brian Walton to take part in the edition of the London Polyglot Bible. Later on, he achieved fame for his Japanese and Chinese studies and combined them with his Syriac knowledge by contributing to the heated

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<sup>116</sup> On him see Franck, 'Kraft, Kaspar'; Fritz, *Geschichte der Wiener Schriftgiessereien*, 20–22. After the publication of the Syriac New Testament, Kraft quitted Zimmermann and joined another Viennese printer, Raphael Hoffhalter. They worked together until 1562, when Hoffhalter, who sympathized with Protestantism and felt his life endangered, fled to Debrecen, Hungary. Fritz also mentioned that Kraft followed Hoffhalter and that they published an elegant Hungarian Bible there. Hoffhalter published three books in Debrecen, two of which were indeed partial Hungarian translations of the Bible. One was set with the types of Gál Huszár, in case of the other, the origin of the types is uncertain. Kraft's name is not mentioned on Hungarian publications around that time. Cf. Borsa et al., *Régi magyarországi nyomtatványok* [Early printed materials from Hungary], 236–239 and 766–808.

<sup>117</sup> Widmanstetter, *Syriacae linguae prima elementa*.

<sup>118</sup> Published by Perles, *Beiträge*, 203–204. Facsimile edition and German translation by Prys, 'Hebräische Büchereien', 134, 136.

<sup>119</sup> Secret, *Les Kabbalistes Chrétiens*, 171–186.

<sup>120</sup> On his life see Noack, 'Der Berliner Propst'; and Noack and Splett, 'Müller, Andreas (1630-1694)'.

scientific debate on the authenticity of the famous Xi'an Stele, also known as the Nestorian Stele.<sup>121</sup> From 1667, he was a provost in Berlin and undertook different smaller cataloguing works in the Oriental department of the Library of the Elector, Frederick William, which was opened to the public in 1661. That is where he came across the Syriac correspondence of Masius and Moses.

In 1673, he published two letters together with a Latin translation.<sup>122</sup> Interestingly, he already remarked that they are autograph letters. A very important feature of his edition is that he published Masius' draft letter written in cursive Hebrew script with Syriac characters. Considering the technical conditions of his time, his edition is a fairly good one: it contains only a handful of mistakes that, judging by the correct Latin translation, are mostly merely typos. As for his translation, it is mostly a verbatim rendering of the text<sup>123</sup>, but it shows that he rightly understood the meaning. There is only one ambiguous passage in the text where his Latin translation is inaccurate, which will be described later in the present edition. In the preface, he noticed that there are six more letters in the collection that he briefly summarized. He also attached philological and theological notes to his edition and shared further interesting details from the other letters. He did the same in a separate study he wrote on Moses' life and on the history of the *editio princeps* of the Syriac New Testament, which was already referred to above. In these pieces, he published several essential pieces of information, e.g. that the New Testament was printed in 1000 copies, of which 500 were kept by King Ferdinand I, 300 were sent to the Syrian Orthodox and Maronite patriarchs and 200 were given to Moses. It is a widely known fact in the secondary literature, the origin of which sank into oblivion, and it is cited many times without the indication of the source.<sup>124</sup> Müller's edition is especially valuable because he could still observe such details on the manuscripts that have vanished by now. By way of example, he could still read an inscription on the surface of a seal, "*ad oram Sigilli*", which has been lost afterwards.<sup>125</sup> His edition enjoyed great popularity; it has been republished

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<sup>121</sup> This stele which was discovered in 1625 contained a bilingual, Chinese-Syriac inscription, which is one of the most significant evidence of the presence of Christian communities in Northern China. Protestant scholars considered it as a Jesuit fake. Müller was one of the Protestant savants who defended its authenticity. Cf. Keevak, *The Story of a Stele*, 50–51; Osterkamp, 'The Japanese Studies', 104–105.

<sup>122</sup> Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ I. Epistolæ duæ Syriacæ*, 4–11.

<sup>123</sup> "*Ceterum de versione scito, Benevole Lector, quod quidem verbum verbo, qua fieri potuit, reddiderim, sed maxime tamen sensum exprimere laboraverim. Reliqua ex Notis & Dissertationibus plenius intelliges.*" Cf. Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ I. Epistolæ duæ Syriacæ*, 4.

<sup>124</sup> E.g. Strothmann, *Die Anfänge der syrischen Studien*, 15.

<sup>125</sup> "*Istuc est Sigillum meum. Superius scriptum est (nomen meum) Moses, Insigne, crux erecta.*" Cf. Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ I. Epistolæ duæ Syriacæ*, 8.



already in Müller's life<sup>126</sup> and later appeared also in Syriac grammars and chrestomathies; thus, a whole generation of future scholars learned the basics of this language from Moses' letter.<sup>127</sup>

### 1.2.2. Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738)

Just like Müller, Bayer was also a Protestant theologian who had an all-round education in Classical and Oriental studies and later became famous primarily as a Sinologist.<sup>128</sup> After graduating in Königsberg in 1715, he set off on a study trip to Berlin, Halle and Leipzig. During this journey, he copied several Oriental manuscripts in several libraries.<sup>129</sup> On his way home, he wrote a letter to Maturin Veyssière de La Croze, the Prussian royal librarian inquiring about the holdings of the Oriental collection of the library. In his answer, de La Croze wrote that they have only two Syriac manuscripts: the correspondence of Moses of Mardin and a garshuni codex of the Psalms.<sup>130</sup> Bayer copied the letters probably with the intention of a future publication. At least, we can conclude this because he omitted the first two letters, which Müller had already edited. Nevertheless, this copying happened at the beginning of Bayer's career, and there is no evidence suggesting that he later took steps to publish them. After his death, his manuscripts ended up in the University of Glasgow library, where his copies of Moses' correspondence are preserved under the shelf mark Ms Hunter 31.<sup>131</sup>

### 1.2.3. Jan Wim Wesselius (1954– )

The next scholar who worked on the letters and made a very valuable contribution was the Dutch Theologian and Hebraist, Jan Wim Wesselius.<sup>132</sup> He talked about the correspondence at the V. Symposium Syriacum in 1988 in Leuven and published a preliminary report in the proceedings of the congress.<sup>133</sup> His most outstanding achievement was the discovery of two further letters, which he found by an unnamed Dutch owner; thus, the number of the items of the correspondence together with the already known eight letters increased to ten. He numbered

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<sup>126</sup> Müller, *Opuscula*, VIII *Epistolae duae Syriacae* and IX *Dissertationes duae*.

<sup>127</sup> E.g. Tychsen, *Elementale Syriacvm*, 94–98.

<sup>128</sup> On his life and work see: Babinger, *Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer*; Lundbæk, *T.S. Bayer (1694-1738)*.

<sup>129</sup> Weston, *The Bayer Collection*, 13.

<sup>130</sup> “*Nullos codices Syriacos in bibliotheca Regia habemus, nisi in eorum numerum referre uelis τα ἀυτόγραφα Epistolarum Mosis Mardeni, quarum nonnullas Andreas Mullerus edidit, et codicem manuscriptum Psalmorum lingua Arabica litteris Syriacis scriptorum.*” Letter dated 1 June 1717. Cf. Uhlius, *Thesaurus Epistolicus Lacrozianus*, III, 31.

<sup>131</sup> Weir, ‘The Arabic, Syriac, and Hebrew Manuscripts in the Hunterian Library’, 755; Young and Aitken, *A Catalogue*, 456.

<sup>132</sup> For a list of his publications between 1979–2009 see: [http://www.jwwesselius.nl/pageID\\_7370321.html](http://www.jwwesselius.nl/pageID_7370321.html) - Retrieved 12 May 2018.

<sup>133</sup> Wesselius, ‘The Syriac Correspondence’.

the letters allotting a number to the missing letters as well in order to ease their fitting into the sequence in case some of them turn up, just like the two letters he discovered popped up unexpectedly. In this way, he counted sixteen letters altogether and intended to publish the remaining ten items of the corpus, but the work was never realized. He also pointed out that the letters contain a considerable amount of quotations from the Syriac anaphora of Saint Basil.

#### **1.2.4. Pier Giorgio Borbone (1956– )**

Finally, the last scholar who has been dealing with Moses and his letters in detail lately is the Italian classical philologist and Hebraist, Pier Giorgio Borbone.<sup>134</sup> In 2017, he published two papers on this subject. In the first article, he wrote about several Syrian Orthodox men who displayed activities in Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Concerning Moses, he focused on his third and longest European stay at the end of his life and listed eight manuscripts Moses copied in Rome in this period.<sup>135</sup> In the second paper, which he devoted exclusively to Moses, he scrutinized Moses' manuscript copier and book collector activity and published the colophons of 25 manuscripts that can be related to him. He also published a long excerpt from one of Moses' unpublished letters and announced his intention to publish the whole collection in a forthcoming edition.

#### **1.2.5. Further minor contributions**

Beyond the four aforementioned major contributions, several other scholars dealt with the correspondence. In 1822, Johann Georg II Wenrich writing about the history of Oriental studies in Austria, published an updated, not so verbatim Latin translation of a few excerpts from the first two letters.<sup>136</sup> Still, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ernst Ranke drew from the correspondence for a lexicon entry he wrote about Biblical pericopes. He asked his friend, the German Egyptologist Maximilian Adolph Uhlemann to copy a few excerpts from one of Moses' letters. Uhlemann consulted the Berlin manuscript and copied a marginal note from the letter dated 15 July 1555. Ranke published this passage in his lexicon entry and expressed his hope that the entire correspondence would be published soon.<sup>137</sup> The edition has not materialized, but one

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<sup>134</sup> For a list of his publications see:

[https://arpi.unipi.it/browse?type=author&sort\\_by=2&order=DESC&rpp=100&authority=rp12715](https://arpi.unipi.it/browse?type=author&sort_by=2&order=DESC&rpp=100&authority=rp12715) – Retrieved 12 October 2021.

<sup>135</sup> Borbone, 'From Tur 'Abdin to Rome'.

<sup>136</sup> Wenrich, *Commentatio historica*, 7–20, esp. 11–12.

<sup>137</sup> Ranke, 'Perikopen'.

letter has been translated into German. In 2012, Hubert Kaufhold writing about the history of Syriac studies in Europe, published the German translation of the letter dated 8 June 1553.<sup>138</sup>

### 1.3. State of research – Tabular overview

The following table summarizes the present state of knowledge on Moses’ and Masius’ Syriac correspondence. It lists the letters as they were surveyed by Wesselius and shows the corresponding manuscripts, editions and translations. A grey cell with an “x” means that a particular letter is contained in that specific manuscript and edition or translated in that publication. The applied abbreviations denote the following manuscripts and works:

- B – Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. or. fol. 13.
- G – Glasgow, University Library, Ms Hunter 31
- L – Leiden, University Library, Ms. Or. 26.756
- M – Müller, *Symbolae Syriacae* – Edition and Latin translation
- K – Kaufhold, ‘Die Wissenschaft vom Christlichen Orient’ – German translation

	Manuscripts			Ed.	Transl.	
	B	G	L	M	M	K
Letter 1 – 8 June 1553 – Moses (Rome) to Masius	x			x	x	x
Letter 2 – 22 or 26 June 1553 – Masius (Brussels) to Moses	x			x	x	
Letter 3 – 15 July 1553 – Moses (Venice) to Masius	x	x				
Letter 4 – 23 November 1553 – Moses (Vienna) to Renialme	x	x				
Letter 5	MISSING					
Letter 6	MISSING					
Letter 7 – 26 March 1555 – Moses (Vienna) to Masius	x	x				
Letter 8	MISSING					
Letter 9 – 19 May 1555 – Moses (Vienna) to Masius			x			
Letter 10	MISSING					
Letter 11 – 15 July 1555 – Moses (Vienna) to Masius	x	x				
Letter 12	MISSING					
Letter 13 – 18 August 1555 – Moses (Vienna) to Masius			x			
Letter 14	MISSING					
Letter 15 – 26 October 1555 – Moses (Vienna) to Masius	x	x				

<sup>138</sup> Kaufhold, ‘Die Wissenschaft vom Christlichen Orient’, 25–26.

	Manuscripts			Ed.	Transl.	
	B	G	L	M	M	K
Letter 16 – 1 August 1556 – Moses (Venice) to Masius	x	x				

*Table 1: Letters of the correspondence according to the current state of scholarship*

## 2. The corpus

Wesselius' action of numbering also the missing letters was a forward-thinking procedure. It shows that he considered the ten accessible letters as parts of a more extensive corpus. This example has to be followed and carried further in the edition of the letters. It will be done in three steps. Firstly, the total number of letters has to be determined. In light of this, in a second step, the currently available letters and their provenance has to be examined. And finally, the possible finding places of the missing letters has to be assessed.

### 2.1. Reassessing the number of letters

A careful reading of the letters showed that there were originally more than sixteen letters in Moses' correspondence; there are more than six missing letters. At the same time, it also became evident that, in some cases, the date of the missing letters is not known; thus, their place in the chronological order cannot be determined. What is more, not even the exact number of the letters is clear; therefore, identifying the letters with a serial number is misleading. For this reason, a new identifier is proposed: a *letter ID* which is the date of the composition in *dd/mm/yy* format. Since all the letters were written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the year in the letter ID is abbreviated into the last two digits. In the following, letters will be referred to according to their letter ID.

#### 2.1.1. Letters between Moses and Masius

##### *Internal evidence*

The great majority of Masius' missing letters can be dated precisely because he wrote the date of his response on Moses' letters several times. Sometimes, Moses also started his letters by referring to the reception of Masius' letter mentioning the exact date of its posting. The datable letters of their correspondence are the following:

Nr.	Letter ID	Sender (Location) and Recipient (Location)
1	08/06/53	Moses (Rome) to Masius (Brussels)
2	22/06/53	Masius (Brussels) to Moses (Rome)
3	15/07/53	Moses (Venice) to Masius (Brussels)
4	30/07/53	Masius (Brussels) to Moses (Venice) - MISSING

5	26/03/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
6	28/04/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
7	19/05/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
8	14/06/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
9	15/07/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
10	17/07/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
11	18/08/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
12	05/10/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
13	26/10/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
14	01/08/56	Moses (Venice) to Masius (Rome–Trento–Weingarten)

*Table 2: Letters between Moses and Masius*

Their correspondence was interrupted in 1553, and, to the best of our knowledge, it was resumed only in 1555. In the first letter of this year, in letter 26/03/55, Moses wrote that he had already answered Masius' letter, and it was only recently that he learned that his letter had not reached Masius. So the resumed correspondence was started by Masius, and Moses also had at least one letter before March 26th. Moses referred to that lost letter also in his next letter in May. In letter 19/05/55, Moses wrote the following: "As for the previous letter, I really gave it in Johann Lucretius' (i.e. Widmanstetter's) hands, so I do not know what he has done with it." Consequently, two more letters should be considered between Moses and Masius.

### ***External evidence***

Two external sources confirm that not only Masius' letters were lost. One of these sources is Masius' translation of the anaphora of Saint Basil. Several passages were abbreviated in the manuscript's text, therefore Masius asked for Moses' help to complete these phrases. Moses' letters in 1555 are full of extensions of such abbreviations. Those parts of the text that Masius learned from Moses, he put in brackets in the Latin edition.<sup>139</sup> Not counting repetitions, there are 24 such extensions in brackets in the text. The vast majority of them can be found in Moses' letters, and they will be presented in chapter 4 in details. However, there are six passages that cannot be found in the letters known today:

- Pax [et tranquillitas omnibus vobis.]<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Quae his signis [ ] inclusi, ea ut notissima non habebantur in exemplari Syrico: sed sic addenda esse, rescripsit mihi meus doctor Syrus Moses Mardenus." AnaBas, 235.

<sup>140</sup> AnaBas 235.

- Stemus decenter, [stemus reverenter, intentique simus dum haec Anaphora cum pace peragitur.]<sup>141</sup>
- Caritas Dei Patris [et gratia Domini nostri Iesu Christi, ac communicatio sancti Spiritus sit cum omnibus vobis.]<sup>142</sup>
- Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus [Dominus Deus Zabaoth, plena sunt caelum et terra gloria tua, etc.]<sup>143</sup>
- Sit misericordia [magni Dei, et servatoris nostri Iesu Christi cum omnibus vobis.]<sup>144</sup>
- Sacerdos, Pax [omnibus vobis.] Populus. Et Spiritui tuo. Sacerdos. Sit gratia Trinitatis [cum omnibus vobis.]<sup>145</sup>

In some cases, Moses' assistance was unnecessary, since Masius could find out the missing words of the Syriac anaphora based on the Latin liturgy. A good example for this is the ending of the Sanctus. However, the text starting with "Let us stand well" (Stemus decenter) is not part of the Latin mass, therefore Masius had to rely on Moses. Based on these passages, it is impossible to determine the number of Moses' lost letters.

The other source demonstrating that some of Moses' letters to Masius vanished is Masius' Syriac dictionary, the *Syrorum peculium*. In this lexicon, he usually indicated where he had read a particular expression. Not surprisingly, his primary source was the Bible but he frequently mentioned Moses bar Kepha's Commentary on the Paradise as well that he translated to Latin. In 24 instances, he referred specifically to Moses of Mardin. These references are displayed in the table below:

Page	Lexeme	Lexicon entry in <i>Syrorum peculium</i> mentioning Moses of Mardin	Letter ID
8	ⲥ	Cor, per literarum traiectionem: in epistola quadam Mosis Mardeni ad me; et in scholiis Severi Patriarchae, in 4. Reg. 9. caput. Quo modo Daniel quoque est locutus cap. 6. Scribit autem Moses ⲉⲥⲥⲉ ⲉⲗⲓ ⲉⲥⲥⲉⲗⲓⲁ ⲉⲗⲓ ⲉⲥⲥⲉⲗⲓⲁ. Ea non legit è corde suo, hoc est, memoriter.	19/05/55

<sup>141</sup> AnaBas 237 and 252.

<sup>142</sup> AnaBas 237.

<sup>143</sup> AnaBas 239.

<sup>144</sup> AnaBas 250.

<sup>145</sup> AnaBas 252.

Page	Lexeme	Lexicon entry in <i>Syrorum peculium</i> mentioning Moses of Mardin	Letter ID
8	حالا وانا	Usurpat meus doctor Moses Mardenus in quadam sua ad me epistola, pro حالا وانا , hoc est, pro hoste, adversario, inimico. atq. similiter in sua professione, qua suam fidem Romae profitebatur. quae est à me Latina facta.	?
10	هنا	Adulter. Ut mihi est interpretatus doctor meus Mardenus. Vide infrà : هنا	19/05/55/ 15/07/55
12	قوله	Culpa, Bar-Cepha. Moses Mardenus in epist. ad me scribit, هنا قوله لا احبها احبها hoc est, Ne me culpes.	26/03/55
15	محمدا	Usurpatur à Syris, pro aeterno Patris Filio; qui et λόΓος appellatur in sacris literis. Unde meus praeceptor Moses Mardenus scribit ad me in quadam epistola: هنا محمدا. Hoc est, Laus ipsi filio Dei, qui descendit et mansit in virgine, et formatus est ex ea homo.	?
18	سلا	Cum dativo, Congruere, appositum esse, Moses Mardenus in quadam ad me epistola: هنا سلا. Non inveni in eo quidquam quod congrueret cum epistola quam scripsi ad tuum amorem. (In his own copy, Masius crossed out the last two words and corrected to “charitatem tuum”.)	18/08/55
19	سلا	Sapor acris, ita Moses Mardenus mihi est interpretatus	
19	سلا	Item congruere, accommodum esse, atq. aptum. Luc. 9. Et Moses Mardenus in epistola quadam ad me sic scribit, هنا سلا, hoc est, Characteres maiores non sunt accommodati ad reliquos illos.	15/07/55
22	هنا	Vocat Moses Mardenus, quod nos in libris, quaternionem, dicimus. Est in epistola quam ad me dedit 15. Iul. Anno 1555.	15/07/55



Page	Lexeme	Lexicon entry in <i>Syrorum peculium</i> mentioning Moses of Mardin	Letter ID
22	مئلا	Natura, Φύσις. hac voce utuntur Syrorum Theologi, cum de duabus in Christo naturis loquuntur universe. Ceteroqui alteram speciatim eo vocabulo nuncupant, alteram vero مئلا, hoc est sigillum, ut ad me scripsit Moses Mardenus quadam epistola.	26/03/55
32	همملا	Auxilium. Bar-Cepha. Moses Mardenus scripsit ad me absq. Iud, همملا.	
34	حج	Et verbum ipsum اِحْتَب usurpatur à Mose Mardeno in epistolis ad me, pro Consuevit.	?
35	حوم	Congruere, convenire, utile ac singulariter commodum esse, [...] Et Moses Mardenus in Epistolis.	?
35	حار	Et Moses Mardenus, eos qui ceteros dignitate praececellunt, atque potentia, vocat حار .	23/11/53
37	حرفلا	Duplex, apud Bar-Cepha, & Mosen Mardenum	
37	حمم	Investigare, accuratè inquirere. [...] Item Retinere, obtinere. in epistola Mosis Mardeni ad me, et in professione fidei facta ab Assyrio quodam, Pontificatu Pii quarti.	19/05/55
41	حيم	Circa, versus, ad, apud. [...] Et Moses Mardenus in epistola ad me, حيم فم همملا, Apud quemnam reliquit.	19/05/55
42	حيمم	Collucere, splendere [...] Est etiam apud Syros, vt mihi meus doctor dixit, Grammatica absolutissima de Syrica lingua, cui titulus est حيمملا. Nimirum quia luculenter omnia quae ad puerilim doctrinam et literarum cognitionem pertinent, explicat.	15/07/53
42	حيمملا	Audere. sed cum quodam pudore et verecundia; sicut حيمملا, sive حيمملا Cum impudentia. Ita Moses Mardenus doctor meus mihi dixit.	
43	حيمملا	Locus terribilis: qualis est infernus. Ut mihi est interpretatus per epistolam Moses Mardenus.	26/03/55

Page	Lexeme	Lexicon entry in <i>Syrorum peculium</i> mentioning Moses of Mardin	Letter ID
45	ٴ	Iter facere. [...] Propriè magno studio ac diligentia, ut mihi doctor Mardenus dixit.	
48	ܡܚܘܒܝܢ	Solitarius. Ita mihi explicavit hanc vocem meus doctor Mardenus.	
48	ܡܘܨܝܐ	Calefieri, absolutè. Mardenus in epistola ad me.	15/07/55
54		Porro annum, ut caeteri ad Orientem colentes homines, numerant ab Alexandro magno. Affirmabat autem mihi Moses Mardenus, Syros numerare, ab Alexandro usque ad initium anni Christi MDLIII quo anno utebar eo praeceptore horis succisivis Romae. affirmabat, inquam, ad id usq. tempus ab Alexandro numerare Syros, annos MDCCCLXIV. Qui computus non ferè dissentit ab eo, quem Ecclesiastica historia Nicephori ab Alexandro ad Concilium Nicenum prodidit. Sullaka vero Mozallanus, quo familiariter Romae utebatur, cum creandus esset in Patriarcham Nestorianorum, scribit ab Alexandro ad nuncium Gabrielis Archangeli, quo Christvm nobis ille nunciauit, fluxisse annos CCC. verum opinor hunc, annorum circiter XXIIX. qui supersunt, rationem non habuisse.	

Table 3: Lexicon entries in *Syrorum peculium* mentioning Moses of Mardin

Out of these 24 references 13 could be identified in Moses' letters. In several cases, Masius referred to Moses' verbal instructions: "As my teacher, Moses of Mardin said" (p. 45), "As this expression was explained by my teacher of Mardin" (p. 48). Masius probably learnt these words from Moses during his stay in Rome. Even in those cases, where allusion is made to a written assistance, e.g. "Moses of Mardin wrote to me" (p. 32), it could take place during a lesson in the Eternal City. Nevertheless, there are four expressions (p. 8, 15, 34, 35) where explicitly Moses' letter is indicated as the source, but there is no trace of the quoted texts in Moses' letters known today. Here again, it is impossible to tell the number and dates of these lost letters that contained the aforementioned expressions.

In sum, two more letters were identified in Moses' and Masius' correspondence that have been lost in the course of time and it is clear, that there were possibly more. Thus, this branch

of the correspondence consisted of at least 16 letters, or perhaps even more, and not 14 as it was thought so far.

### 2.1.2. Letters between Moses and Jean de Renialme

From Moses' and Renialme's correspondence, only one letter came down to us: the 23/11/53, which was sent by Moses from Vienna to the Bomberg-agent in Venice. One could assume with good reason that a further letter in this relation was Renialme's reply, but the historical context does not confirm this. In this specific letter, Moses asked Renialme to send him some money (13.5 *Zecchini*, i.e. Venetian gold ducat) and a book or manuscript. To play it safe, Moses sent the same request to Postel as well. Since Postel went to Vienna a few weeks later, sometime in December 1553 or early 1554, it is a realistic scenario that Renialme sent what Moses asked with Postel, and he used him as a messenger to transmit a verbal message at the same time. All the more so because there was a language barrier between them: Renialme did not know Arabic or Syriac, and Moses had very limited knowledge of Latin or Italian. This letter under discussion was a bilingual letter: Moses wrote his message in Syriac and asked someone to translate it into Italian.

Nevertheless, it was not the only letter Moses sent to Renialme. In letter 26/03/55, we read:

*The Lexicon is with the other books is in Giovanni Rignalmo's house in Venice. I have already written to him twice because of the three books to send them to me, but no answer came to me from him.*

In the same letter, Moses wrote a second time about Renialme, based on which it seems that their correspondence was not one-sided since he said:

*Our friend, Giovanni, talks to me differently every day and does not remain at all with the same word. It means that he speaks differently.*

Thus, it seems that Renialme replied to Moses somehow. From another passage, we can learn that Moses wrote three times to the Bomberg-agent:

*I beseech your grace, oh my friend, to write to Giovanni Rignalmo about those dinars 'dinare' to send them to Cyprus 'cipro' and let me know 'che fari intender' whether they have arrived in the hands of their owners or not.*  
*I wrote to him a third time and did not answer.*

In letter 19/05/55, Moses mentioned Renialme again. It seems that his message arrived to him but Moses still had not got any answer from him:

*I do not know what Giovanni Rignalmo did with them because I left my chest in his house, and there are other books in it. And now I do not know by whom he left them. I am really worried because of the money he sent to Cyprus, for he did not give me an answer about it, nor about the books that are in his house. That is why I am asking your grace now to write to him urgently in order he informs us what he has done with the money and the books. I pretty much trusted him because I saw him as a good man doing good things.*

And finally, in letter 15/07/55, Moses gave a very detailed account of the story:

*Let me start with Giovanni Rignalmo. I wrote to him three times. Twice in Arabic, and I sent these letters to my Arabic friends whom I know in Venice, asking them to go and speak with Signor Giovanni Rignalmo as if I gave a commission with my letter. One of them was not found in Venice and this letter returned to me unread. The other, he did not reply. After all this, I wrote in Italian, at least as I could, because I did not find anyone to write for me. And again, he did not answer me.*

It is a very concrete and plausible account, and the historical background also supports this description. Bomberg's business went bankrupt after his departure from Venice in 1554. Although Renialme was not Bomberg's direct heir, he was his nephew and an important business dealer of the company, so he was probably also busy with the bankruptcy proceedings around that time together with his cousins.

Presumably, there were no more letters between Moses and Renialme. At the end of 1555, Masius informed Moses about his impending trip to Rome. Therefore, Moses asked Masius in letter 26/10/55 to give his message to Renialme when he meets him in Venice. Masius waited for the beginning of spring before setting off. He was in Trento on 11 March 1556 and arrived to Rome on 31 March, so he went to see Renialme in the middle of March. This meeting also explains how Moses' letter sent to Renialme ended up in Masius' collection. Renialme could not do anything with a Syriac letter, but for Masius it was an important source, therefore he asked for it when they met.

### 2.1.3. Letters exchanged with other persons

According to the current state of research, Moses was only in contact with the aforementioned three persons: Andreas Masius, Jean de Renialme and Guillaume Postel. The previous example shows that he maintained contact with several Arabic friends. Furthermore, his letters suggest one more correspondent. In letter 26/10/55, Moses wrote the followings:

*As for the New Testament you read in Rome, you asked me many times to inform you about it honestly, and I informed you sincerely. It is still by me, no answer came from this ruler.*

It is evident from the context that Moses offered his books for sale to a ruler who can be identified as Otto-Henry, Count Palatine of Palatinate-Neuburg. This sales promotion surely happened by correspondence, since Otto-Henry was in Neuburg an der Donau in Bayern, and Moses was in Vienna. From another section in letter 01/08/56, it is obvious that a meeting took place, and the transaction was completed:

*I want to let you know that I went to that leader, Otto-Henry, and gave him all the old manuscripts I had. He gave me 40 thalers. As for the New Testament, about which I talked to you, he paid me for it 22 thalers.*

Moses had a limited knowledge of Latin and Italian and there is no evidence that he had even a basic knowledge of German or French. Therefore, it is unlikely that he had extensive correspondence with Europeans but a few letters sent by Moses may emerge from European correspondences.

### 2.1.4. Conclusion – Tabular overview

The findings of the previous points can be summarised in the following table:

Nr.	Letter ID	Sender (Location) and Recipient (Location)
1	08/06/53	Moses (Rome) to Masius (Brussels)
2	22/06/53	Masius (Brussels) to Moses (Rome)
3	15/07/53	Moses (Venice) to Masius (Brussels)
4	30/07/53	Masius (Brussels) to Moses (Venice) - MISSING
5	??/??/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses - MISSING
6	??/??/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius - MISSING
7	26/03/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)

Nr.	Letter ID	Sender (Location) and Recipient (Location)
8	28/04/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
9	19/05/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
10	14/06/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
11	15/07/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
12	17/07/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
13	18/08/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
14	05/10/55	Masius (Waldsassen) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
15	26/10/55	Moses (Vienna) to Masius (Waldsassen)
16	??/??/55	Moses (Vienna) to Renialme via an Arabic friend in Venice - MISSING
17	??/??/55	Moses (Vienna) to Renialme via an Arabic friend in Venice - MISSING
18	??/??/55	Moses (Vienna) to Renialme in Italian - MISSING
19	??/??/55	Moses (Vienna) to Otto-Henry of Neuburg (Neuburg) - MISSING
20	??/??/55	Otto-Henry of Neuburg (Neuburg) to Moses (Vienna) - MISSING
21	01/08/56	Moses (Venice) to Masius (Rome–Trento–Weingarten)

Table 4: Letters of the correspondence according to the new findings

## 2.2. The manuscripts

Moses' and Masius' letters are preserved today in three places. In Berlin, eight autograph letters are kept in the State Library. Two further autograph letters are preserved in Leiden in the University Library. And an 18<sup>th</sup> century copy of six Berlin letters can be found in Glasgow. The manuscripts were only very briefly described earlier, therefore a more comprehensive analysis is needed.

### 2.2.1. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. or. fol. 13

The Syriac manuscripts of the Berlin State Library (former Prussian Royal Library) were catalogued in 1899 by Eduard Sachau. He shortly described this manuscript in a succinct entry (Nr. 342) as one of the last items of the 346 Syriac manuscripts that belonged at that time to the collection of this remarkable library.<sup>146</sup> It is a composite manuscript containing Syriac and Hebrew documents as well. The Syriac folios are all Moses of Mardin's letters. The rest of the

<sup>146</sup> "Einige Syrische Briefe an Andreas Masius von einem Syrer Moses Sohn des Priesters Isaak aus den fünfziger Jahren des 16. Jahrhunderts; daneben ein Hebräischer Brief und Hebräische Verse von Andreas Masius." Sachau, *Verzeichniss der syrischen Handschriften*, II, 910.

documents: Hebrew poems, a Hebrew booklist, an Aramaic draft letter, are Masius' notes. The Hebrew poems were already examined and partially published by two renowned German scholars, Arthur Spanier and Hans Striedl.<sup>147</sup> Most recently, a Flemish Hebraist, Maxime Maleux, republished the same folios with an English translation.<sup>148</sup>

The content of the 27 folios of the manuscript can be summarized as follows:

1. recto-verso: blank
2. recto: blank; verso: a damaged Hebrew poem on Jesus' life (partially published by Spanier), apparently written in another hand than Masius'
3. recto: blank; verso: the first version of Masius' Hebrew 'Aqua Virgo poem' (published by Spanier and Maleux)
4. recto: the final redaction of the 'Aqua Virgo poem', with a Latin prose translation in Masius' hand (published by Spanier and Maleux); verso: blank
5. recto: blank; verso: a small Hebrew poem of four lines, in Masius' hand
6. recto: a Hebrew list of books on Kabbalah from Elijah ben Menachem of Nola; verso: blank
7. recto-verso: blank
8. recto: unvocalized Hebrew poem of four lines in Masius' hand (?), with the name 'Felice Crispino da Ravenna' in Latin script; verso: a version of the 'Aqua Virgo poem', almost identical to the final version (published by Maleux)
9. recto-verso: the 'nympha addormentata' poem (published by Striedl and Maleux)
10. recto-verso: blank
11. recto-verso: Moses' letter to Masius dated 1 August 1556
12. recto: blank; verso: address of the previous letter
13. recto: Moses' letter to Masius dated 26 October 1555; verso: blank.
14. recto: blank; verso: address of the previous letter
15. recto-verso: Moses' letter to Masius dated 26 March 1555
16. recto: continuation of the previous letter; verso: address of this letter
17. recto: Moses' letter to Masius dated 8 June 1553; verso: blank
18. recto: blank; verso: address of the previous letter
19. recto-verso: Moses' letter to Masius dated 15 July 1553
20. recto: blank; verso: address of the previous letter

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<sup>147</sup> Spanier, 'Ein hebräisches Humanistengedicht', 72–74; Striedl, 'Hebräische Lobgedichte des Andreas Masius', 126–33.

<sup>148</sup> Maleux, 'On Hebrew Nymphs and Aqueducts', 67–87.

- 21. recto: Moses' letter to Giovanni Rignalmo dated 23 November 1553; verso: address of this letter
- 22. recto: address of the letter dated 25 July 1555; verso: blank
- 23. recto: blank; verso: Moses' note to Guillaume Postel
- 24. recto-verso: Moses' letter to Masius dated 25 July 1555
- 25. recto: Latin note to Masius' Aramaic letter<sup>149</sup>; verso: blank
- 26. recto: blank; verso: the draft of Masius' letter to Moses dated 22 June 1553
- 27. recto-verso: blank

The only organizing principle that appears in the composition is that Masius' Hebrew documents are separated from the Aramaic-Syriac correspondence. The letters are not ordered chronologically, addresses and letters belonging together are not next to each other, and Masius' draft letter is upside down. One has the impression that the folios fell out of the binder's hand before the binding, and, not being able to read the documents, he put them together completely randomly. The manuscript was never studied in detail; therefore, it merits a thorough examination.

#### *Provenance*

Searching for traces of the manuscript in the various catalogues to learn when it reached the library, one must go back in time quite far: until the institution's foundation in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg (1640–1688), opened his library in his palace in Berlin to the public in 1661, he appointed Johann Raue as the head and protector of the collection. Raue undertook the arduous task of cataloguing and presented the first official register to his patron in 1668. In this very first catalogue, he already made mention of a corpus of “*Syriac letters sent to Masius*”.<sup>150</sup> Unfortunately, the number of the letters is not specified, and there is no mention of any Hebrew poems either, so we do not know precisely what this manuscript looked like three centuries ago. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the Syriac letters were in Berlin already in 1668 and being one of the 1273 volumes that formed the base of the institution that is called today Berlin State Library, belonged to its core collection.

The circumstances of the acquisition are unknown. Regrettably, Raue communicated the provenience of the items only in a few cases. No firm conclusion can be drawn by looking at

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<sup>149</sup> According to Maleux, it is Masius' note. Cf. Maleux, *On Hebrew Nymphs and Aqueducts*, 69. Masius' writing is different. However, the note is rather in Andreas Müller hand.

<sup>150</sup> A revision of the Elector's collection took place already in 1659 but no documents have been preserved on this listing. Cf. Tautz, 'Die ersten Revisionen der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek', 57–58. As for Raue's catalogue, see his entry “*Litterae Syriacae ad Masius*” in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Cat. A 465, f. 117v. Cf. Winter, *Die Handschriften der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln*, 101.



the neighbouring items of the catalogue either because Raue did not follow any systematic plan in the arrangement of the documents.<sup>151</sup> Nevertheless, three possible hypotheses can be suggested.

The first possibility is that the Great Elector, Frederick William, inherited the document from his ancestors.<sup>152</sup> Masius deceased on 7 April 1573, so only a period of about 90 years needs to be bridged between his death and the library's opening in Berlin. The town where he lived in the last decades of his life, Zevenaar, was a small town in the Duchy of Cleves (today in the Netherlands). Among many other titles, Frederick William also bore the title of Duke of Cleves, so if we assume that the lords of the duchy bought up Masius' documents after his death, the manuscript's path to the library through four generations is outlined. The problem with this theory is that in Masius' life, the House of La Marck was in power in Cleves, and the Hohenzollerns, in the person of Frederick William's grandfather, took over this territory only a few decades later. Moreover, getting hold of the duchy did not happen with a peaceful dynastic marriage, but at the cost of fierce struggles in the war of the Jülich succession, so the road of the letters to Berlin would have been rather bumpy.<sup>153</sup> The other weak point of this hypothesis is that according to Christoph Hendreich, Raue's successor as the principal librarian, Frederick William inherited only very few books that "would have been enough to an ordinary man".<sup>154</sup> In addition to the lack of concrete evidence, these considerations further weaken this hypothesis.

The second possibility is that the manuscript was donated to the library by Daniel Weimann, Frederick William's strongly supported chancellor of the Duchy of Cleves. Eight works have already been identified that belonged to his collection before reaching the library: four of them were donated by him in his lifetime, and four other works were bought at the auction organised for his collection after his death in 1661.<sup>155</sup> One of the items he gave to the library as a present is a Quran that shows his interest in Oriental studies. Therefore, it would not be surprising if Moses' letters also came from his possession but here again, there is no concrete evidence that would support this hypothesis.

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<sup>151</sup> Winter, *Die Handschriften der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln*, 23.

<sup>152</sup> That is what Spanier and Maleux in his footsteps suggest. Cf. Spanier, *Ein hebräisches Humanistengedicht*, 72; Maleux, *On Hebrew Nymphs and Aqueducts*, 69.

<sup>153</sup> The Hohenzollerns' claim to take possession of the duchy was an indirect kinship: Frederick William's grandfather, John Sigismund married the eldest niece of the last La Marck duke of Cleves, John William.

<sup>154</sup> "A majoribus vix tot acceperas libros, quot privato sufficere poterant." Cf. Paunel, *Die Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, 5.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Winter, *Die Handschriften der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln*, 35, 269.

Finally, our manuscript's third possible previous owner is Christian Raue, the principal librarian Johann Raue's brother. He was a famous and acknowledged Orientalist who sold his books and manuscripts to his brother in 1642 for 200 thalers.<sup>156</sup> The bulk of the collection was collected at Johann Raue's flat after his death in 1691, but some pieces were added earlier to the library of the Elector. Johann Raue mentioned his brother's name explicitly only once in his catalogue, but three further manuscripts have already been identified that most probably belonged to Christian Raue's collection.<sup>157</sup>

Although the first century of the manuscript's history remains obscure, the following 350 years are clear since the manuscript stayed all along in the same collection. This statement is true, but it does not necessarily imply that the document's integrity and unity remained unchanged. An exciting episode shows why.

Raue's catalogue was later completed by one of his successors, Christoph Hendreich, who added the *Catalogus Manuscriptorum Orientalium* to the last few blank pages (f. 183r–189r) of the library catalogue. More precisely, he only transcribed it because the composer of this list was most probably Andreas Müller, cataloguer of the Oriental manuscripts.<sup>158</sup> In this section, manuscripts are arranged according to their language, and entries that Raue already recorded are listed again together with new acquisitions. With a few exceptions... Moses' Syriac letters, for instance, are missing from the Syriac section.<sup>159</sup> It is interesting, especially in the light of a later event that happened in 1679. Hendreich accused Andreas Müller of borrowing manuscripts without a receipt and not having returned them. Not surprisingly, Müller vehemently denied these accusations. It was already mentioned above that Müller worked on these letters and published two of them in 1673. Did he want to keep these letters for himself to complete the edition later, hoping that no one would miss them? Or he just accidentally forgot to mention them in the Syriac section of the catalogue's supplement? We might not know. Nevertheless, this episode testifies to a turbulent history of the correspondence even after its addition to this prestigious collection. Therefore, further investigation is needed to learn whether some letters are scattered or not.

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<sup>156</sup> Tautz, *Die Bibliothekare der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln*, 18, n. 2.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Winter, *Die Handschriften der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln*, 36, 262.

<sup>158</sup> Kraft, 'Frühe Chinesische Studien in Berlin', 101 n. 38 and 123. This opinion is also confirmed by Winter. Cf. Winter, *Die Handschriften der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln*, 31.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Winter, *Die Handschriften der Churfürstlichen Bibliothek zu Cölln*, 137.

### Physical description

The manuscript is in a modern cardboard cover. The fly-leaves (f. 1 and 27) are somewhat yellowish-greenish, modern papers that can be dated judging by their watermarks to the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. That is probably the same date when the manuscript was bound.<sup>160</sup>

The essential part of the manuscript consists of ten bifolios (f. 4–5, 6–7, 9–10, 11–12, 13–14, 15–16, 17–18, 19–20, 22–24, 25–26) and five folios (ff. 2, 3, 8, 21, 23) thus it is an ensemble of 15 documents. The size of the pages varies mainly between 205x290 and 215x310mm except f. 23, which is 110x155mm. This tiny scrap of paper is Moses' message to Guillaume Postel that is erroneously inserted between f. 22 and 24 (Moses' letter to Masius dated 15 July 1555) since it was sent together with the letter addressed to Giovanni Rignalmo, so it should stand next to f. 21.

F. 5, 12, 16 and 25 are slightly, f. 3, 6 and 7 are severely damaged and have been restored. On the restored side of f. 2r, a seal of the Staatsbibliothek can be seen that was in use between 1795–1840, so it is the *terminus ante quem* of the restoration.<sup>161</sup> F. 13 and 14 are damaged by huge brown water stains, making the text indecipherable. Minor water stains are present on several other folios, but they do not affect the legibility. The letters were folded in French fold, and the stains appear mainly on the edges of the foldings. 8–16 small slits: traces of letterlocking can be seen symmetrically 1-2 cm from the edge of the paper. The corners of f. 14 and 20 are cut off along a straight line so that a large piece, approximately 140x50-70 mm, is missing from the side.

### Foliation

The manuscript contains a striking number of folio numbers; altogether, eight different foliations were identified. Examining them more closely can help us to answer two important questions. Firstly, did Masius number his documents; can any of the numbers be linked to him? And secondly, is there anything that would suggest that some folios that were once part of the manuscript have been lost in the course of time? We saw above that the manuscript spent some time in Andreas Müller's apartment. The collection had been moved several times to new buildings, so it is not inconceivable that some folios were scattered. Striedl pointed out that the

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<sup>160</sup> A few letters can be clearly deciphered on their watermarks. On f. 1: S&W and on f. 27: IWE BART. This latter is found in a dispatch that was written in Berlin on 19th September 1806 by David Dubois. The dispatch was on auction at Mehlis under catalogue nr. 1073. Cf. <https://www.mehlis.eu/de/catalogs/8817/item/1073/> - Consulted on 16th December 2020.

<sup>161</sup> The text „Ex Bibliotheca Regia Berolinensi” stands in a round, double-rimmed stamp. This is the oldest stamp of the library which is published on their website: <https://staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/die-staatsbibliothek/geschichte/besitzstempel/abbildungen/> - Consulted on 17th December 2020.

Latin translation of the Hebrew poem on f. 9r–v of this manuscript is among the Latin manuscripts of the Berlin State Library.<sup>162</sup> The Latin and the Hebrew versions were probably next to each other in Masius' collection, and they got separated from each other later. So, this is another reason for examining the integrity of Ms. or. fol. 13.

The current foliation follows a Semitic, right-to-left reading direction. Folios are numbered in the upper left corner on the recto from 1 to 27 with Arabic numerals with a right parenthesis. An inscription written in pencil by the same hand on f. 1r reads: "Neue Pagination, ERóth". Ernst Róth was an erudite Hungarian rabbi who worked under Hans Striedl's guidance in the library after World War II.<sup>163</sup> In his study in 1976, Striedl already referred to Masius' Hebrew poems following this numbering, so it had to be there by then. This numbering also contains the two fly-leaves; therefore, it postdates the current binding. Similar numerals also ranging from 1 to 27, originally on the verso's upper right corner, were rubbed out thoroughly, probably because they followed a left-to-right reading direction that does not correspond to the Semitic-language content. Apart from these two latest foliations, there are six others; three from the period when Masius' Hebrew poems and the Syriac correspondence formed one manuscript, and three from the period when they were treated as separate units.

Going back in chronological order, the next foliation used numbers from 1 to 22 written in pen. It postdates the manuscript's binding because it numbers the bifolios twice. Two foliations numbers the documents one by one, i.e. folios and bifolios are allotted only one number; therefore, they possibly predate the manuscript's binding. One sequence ranges from 1 to 13 written in pencil, and another from 1 to 10 written in pen. Several anomalies can be observed in the order, but there is no higher number among folio numbers than in today's foliation that would indicate the loss of once registered folios.

Coming to the numberings that number only the letters, the most recent one is a sequence of Roman numbers ranging from I to VIII written in pencil. Several Latin inscriptions from the same hand help the reader to link together the documents that belong together;<sup>164</sup> therefore, these numbers were probably added to the letters when the folios were already in the current, completely haphazard order. Another hand put Arabic numbers from 1 to 8 written in pen in the upper right corner of the letters. Number 1 is allotted twice: it appears on f. 23v (Moses'

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<sup>162</sup> Ms. lat. fol. 241, f. 19r–v. Cf. Striedl, *Hebräische Lobgedichte*, 132.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Hs.or.sim. 8939. He accomplished important cataloguing work in other German libraries as well. Cf. Hollender and Lehnardt, 'Genizat Germania.' 538.

<sup>164</sup> E.g. 'ad IV' on f. 23v indicates that Moses' message to Postel belongs to letter 4 (i.e. letter 23/11/53, Moses' letter to Jean de Renialme on f. 21r-v), and 'ad VI' on f. 22r shows that this address, belongs to letter 6 (i.e. letter 15/07/55 on f. 24r-v).

message to Postel) and f. 26v (Masius' draft letter). Since similar numbers appear on Hebrew documents as well (numbers 2 and 3 on f. 6r and f. 9r), it is possible that the person in question classified the documents according to their language, and Masius' draft letter written in Hebrew characters was counted among the Hebrew documents. Nevertheless, nothing indicates the loss of documents in these sequences either.

Finally, a last numbering has to be described, which seems to be the earliest. It appears in three cases next to the seal: 'IIIa ad Masius' on f. 20v, 'VIa' on f. 22r and 'VIIa' on f. 14r. This numbering is missing from the other letters because it was written on the letterlocking slip, i.e. a slice of paper that was stabbed through the folded letters through small slits and closed with a wax seal, and this piece of paper has been lost in the course of time from the other letters. The person in question probably numbered the letters at this place because it was also visible when the letters were folded. It seems that he studied the letters carefully. He certainly read Masius' draft letter because he added on f. 25r: 'IIa Andreas Masii Epistola caractere Hebraico concepta. 1553. 22. Haziran s[ive] Iunii.' Furthermore, he was aware of the content of Moses' message to Postel because he added on f. 23v: 'P.S. Epistolae IVae'. Thus he might be identified with Andreas Müller.

In conclusion, the numbering of the folios does not indicate that documents were lost from the manuscript. None of the serial numbers is related to Masius since apparently, the persons responsible for the numbering took into consideration only the letters in Berlin. They were not aware of any other letters that would belong to the correspondences, not even the letters in Leiden.

### *Seal*

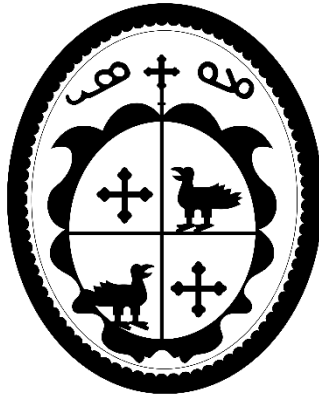
Another important diplomatic element that merits an investigation is the seal. With the exception of Masius' draft that had never been posted, all the other seven letters that Moses wrote contain traces of seals (cf. f. 12v, 14v, 16v, 18v, 20v, 21v, 22r). In most of the cases, the wax had already been broken, but on three folios, f. 14v, 20v, 22r, the seal is still somewhat visible. Moses' seal had already gained attention from former scholars; Andreas Müller published even a drawing about it in his booklet. According to him, it shows a shield divided into four quarters, the first and fourth a cross crosslet, the second and the third a cock. At the place of the helmet, there is a cross with two-two Syriac letters on both sides, abbreviating Moses' name: Moses the Syrian.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> "Figura eius haec est; Quadripartita scilicet insignia sunt, et in crucem secta. Eorum primum et ultimum spatium *crucem* habet; secundum et tertium *gallum*. Petri, nisi fallor. Sed et Galea crux est. Circa quam literas MO. SU.



In sum, the seal looks today rather like this:



*Figure 2: Moses' seal as it appears today (drawn by Rita Várfalvi)*

In Moses' time, it was not the mount and the cock that attracted attention but rather the cross at the place of the helmet, which is actually a long cross behind the shield. Masius had presumably objected to the use of this cross because it was a privilege of bishops.<sup>167</sup> Moses who was apparently not aware of the heraldic rules, felt compelled to answer Masius' concern and defended his right for the cross even as an ordinary Christian in letter 15/07/53 writing:

*Concerning your remark that "there is a cross on your seal," [please note that] the cross is not only for metropolitans but for every baptized person who has been baptized in the name of the Trinity. What does the cross mean? It means 'Atacato' [hung out]. Therefore, it shows that the cross is Christ. It does not matter if it is engraved on paper, wood, or something else. And if the cross means Christ, then it is not only for those you mentioned but for everyone who believes in Christ. This cross is the sign and memory of the one who was crucified. And it should not be used for anything else than to remind of Christ our Lord, whom we worship.*

Masius was not the only person who was tricked by the presence of this cross on Moses' seal. Georges de Revelles who bought from Moses a copy of the Syriac New Testament in Famagusta recorded the purchase on the title page with the following words: "This book was bought from Moses of Mardin from Mesopotamia, Catholic bishop for one Venetian scudo on the island of Cyprus on 18 October 1556."<sup>168</sup> Apparently de Revelles thought that Moses was

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<sup>167</sup> Heim, *Heraldry in the Catholic Church*, 74.

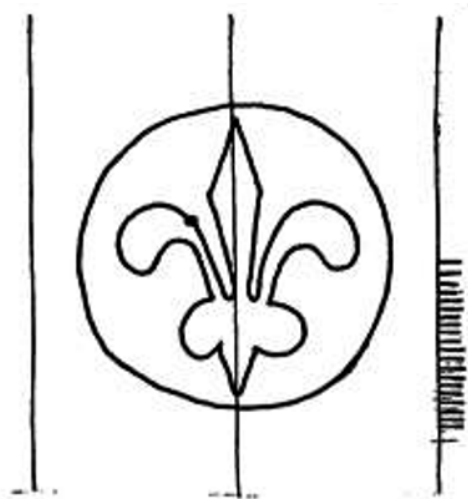
<sup>168</sup> "A Mose Meredineo ex Mesopotamia ep[iscop]o chatolico emptus hic liber Cipri Insulae die 18 mensis Octob[ris]. Anni 1556 uno scudo Venetiano .... Georgius de Revelles: Cipri in Famagusta: 18 die Octob[ris] Anno 1556." The copy was sold at auction by Sotheby's (London, 29 May 2012). The link is not available any more.

a bishop and Moses' seal might have played a role in this misunderstanding. Writing about this episode, Borbone noted that Moses had a tendency to overstate his position.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, even if he opted for such a seal out of ignorance, later calculatedly benefitted from its deceptive pattern.

### **Watermarks**

The study of papers used for Syriac manuscripts is a neglected area of Syriac codicology. Nina Victorovna Pigulevskaya prepared a trailblazing work on the subject in her catalogue of Syriac manuscripts in Saint Petersburg in 1960.<sup>170</sup> Lately, Margherita Farina made a significant contribution to the field.<sup>171</sup> Both of them pointed out the preponderance of Venetian paper among Syriac manuscripts. A similar result would not be astonishing, since two letters were literally sent from Venice. Nevertheless, it is worth to cast a glance at the watermarks of Ms. or. fol. 13.

The following watermarks were identified in the letters:



#### **Letter 08/06/53 - sent from Rome – f. 18**

Fleur de lis in a circle without symbols in vertical position. The watermark is attached to the mould between three chain-lines in a way that the middle chain-line forms the central axis of the watermark. 33 mm width, 33 mm height.

Origin: Rome – mid 1560s<sup>172</sup>

*Figure 3: Watermark on Letter 08/06/53 (Piccard, Die Wasserzeichenkartei Piccard, Band 13: Wasserzeichen Lilie, description: 26; figures: 156–157.)*

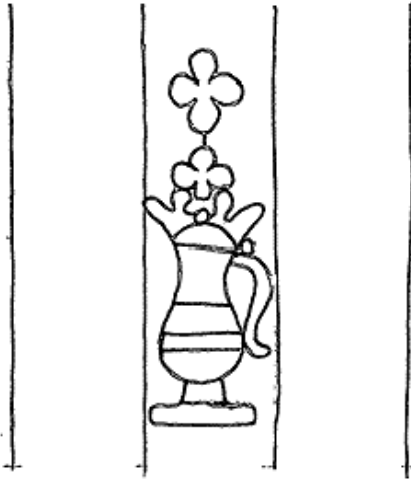
<sup>169</sup> Borbone, *Monsignore vescovo di Soria*, 83–85.

<sup>170</sup> Pigulevskaya, 'Katalog siriyskikh rukopisey Leningrada', 199–213. Cf. Borbone, Briquel-Chatonnet, and Balicka-Witakowska, 'Syriac Codicology'. 253.

<sup>171</sup> Farina, 'La circulation de manuscrits syriaques'.

<sup>172</sup> <https://www.piccard-online.de/struktur.php?klassi=013.004&anzeigeKlassi=013.004.001&Id=100778&sprache=en&weitere=struktur>. Retrieved 12.08.2021



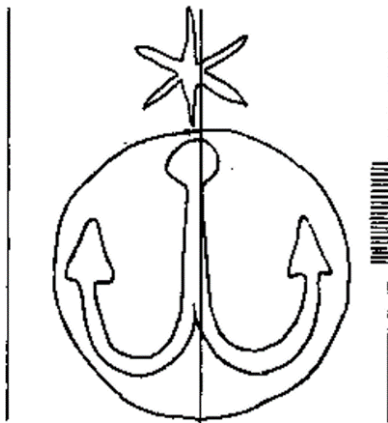


**Letter 22/06/53 – sent from Brussels – f. 25**

Jug with simple lid and one handle consisting two lines, with a crown and a quatrefoil on the top. 15 mm width, 50 mm height.

Origin: West-Germany, Low Countries – mid 1560s<sup>173</sup>

Figure 4: Watermark on Letter 22/06/53 (Briquet, *Les Filigranes*, IV, 624.)



**Letter 15/07/53 – sent from Venice – f. 19–20**

Anchor in a circle with a star above. The watermark is attached to the mould between three chain-lines in a way that the middle chain-line forms the central axis of the watermark. 40mm width, 65 mm height.

Origin: Venice<sup>174</sup>

Figure 5: Watermark on Letter 15/07/53 (Piccard, *Die Wasserzeichenkartei Piccard*, Band 6: *Wasserzeichen Anker*, description: 37–39; figures: 219–234.)

<sup>173</sup>. <https://www.piccard-online.de/struktur.php?klassi=026.006.001.009&anzeigeKlassi=026.006.001.009.002&Id=102279&sprache=en&weitere=struktur>. Retrieved 12.08.2021

<sup>174</sup> Briquet, *Les Filigranes*, I, 40; Mošin, *Anchor Watermarks*, 24–25.

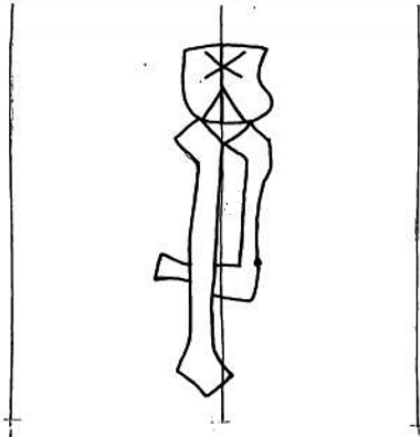


Figure 6: Watermark on Letter 23/11/53 (Piccard, *Die Wasserzeichenkartei Piccard, Band 4: Wasserzeichen Buchstabe P., description: I, 124–130; figures: III, 270–282.*)

**Letter 23/11/53 – sent from Vienna – f. 21**

An angular letter P consisting of two lines with a shield above containing a vertical stroke and saltires, and the pall reversed at the lower end. The watermark is attached to the mould between three chain-lines. 25 mm width, 65 mm height.

Origin: German lands – mid 1500s<sup>175</sup>

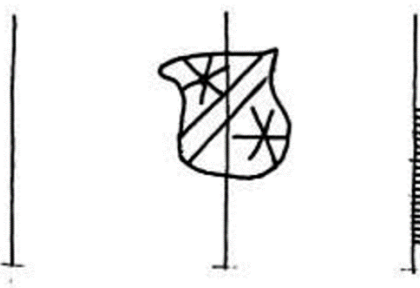


Figure 7: Watermark on Letter 26/03/55 (Piccard-Online Nr. 24043)

**Letter 26/03/55 – sent from Vienna – f. 16**

Escutcheon with bend and two stars consisting of one line over and below the bend without additional motif. The watermark is attached to the mould between three chain-lines. 17 mm width, 17 mm height

Origin: Austria – mid 1500s<sup>176</sup>

<sup>175</sup> <https://www.piccard-online.de/struktur.php?klassi=004.002.002.002.011&anzeigeKlassi=004.002.002.002.011&weitere=zurueck&sprache=en>. Retrieved 12 August 2021

<sup>176</sup> <https://www.piccard-online.de/struktur.php?klassi=024.011.002.007&anzeigeKlassi=024.011.002.007.001&Id=101517&sprache=en&weitere=struktur>. Retrieved 12 August 2021

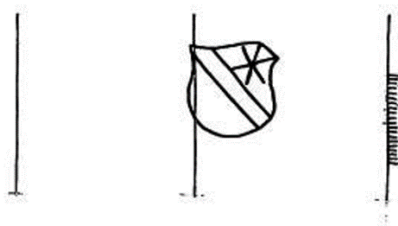


Figure 8: Watermark on Letter 26/10/55 (Piccard-Online Nr. 23985)

#### Letter 26/10/55 – sent from Vienna – f. 14

Escutcheon with bend and one star consisting of one line over the bend without additional motif. The watermark is attached to the mould between three chain-lines. 17 mm width, 17 mm height

Origin: Austria – mid 1500s<sup>177</sup>

The watermarks provide two takeaways. The first is a quite obvious one: the watermarks support the datings of the letters. This means that Masius and Moses always used local paper: in Rome Roman, in Venice Venetian, in Vienna Viennese and in Brussels Brussels paper. They did not bring reserve with them from one city to another.

The second takeaway is more exciting. In letter 23/11/53, Moses proudly added to the date that he is writing from the “Chancellery of the Kings of Rome”. For the first sight it is an odd information. What business did he have at the chancellery? The service he did for the king with the edition of the Syriac New Testament, required his presence in the printing office. Nevertheless, it seems that Moses was a frequent visitor at the chancellery. His patron and colleague in the printing project, Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter was Chancellor of Lower Austria, a confidant of the king. Through his intervention, Moses might have had an easy access to the administrative offices. And the letters he sent support this theory, because the paper he used show agreement with the paper of the central administration. This is the most striking in the case of the watermark of letter 26/03/55. There are currently 225 samples of this paper in the biggest watermark database, and the vast majority of these documents were issued by King Ferdinand or archduke Maximilian personally, or by one of main offices of the court.<sup>178</sup> Thus it seems, that Moses did not lie when he told to write from the chancellery and he literally used the same paper as the king.

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<sup>177</sup> <https://www.piccard-online.de/struktur.php?klassi=024.011.002.001&anzeigeKlassi=024.011.002.001.001&Id=101509&sprache=en&weitere=struktur>. Retrieved 12 2021

<sup>178</sup> <https://www.piccard-online.de/struktur.php?klassi=024.011.002.007&anzeigeKlassi=024.011.002.007.001&Id=101517&sprache=en&weitere=struktur>. Retrieved 12 August 2021

### 2.2.2. Leiden University Library, Ms. Or. 26.756

This manuscript has not yet been described in a catalogue and has hardly been studied. It contains two Syriac letters sent by Moses to Masius: letters 19/05/55 and 18/08/55.<sup>179</sup> When Jan Wim Wesselius bumped into them in the late 1980s, they were still at an unnamed Dutch owner.<sup>180</sup> Wesselius realised their connection with the Berlin letters and broadly described their content.<sup>181</sup> Apart from his introductory paper, no study has been published on this manuscript.

#### *Physical description*

The manuscript consists of two bifolios. The 420x310 mm sheets were originally cross-folded into *sextodecimo*. Minor water stains are visible at several places along the fold, but they do not affect the legibility of the text. A large piece was cut out of both folios at a corner. The shape of the cut-out part is very similar: the cut line is broken in the middle; therefore, the mutilation possibly happened at once when the two folios were next to each other. Similar damage is visible on f. 14 of the Berlin manuscript, but the cut line is completely straight there so that one is probably due to another truncation.

The letters were sealed; there is a round blot of red wax on each of them. The figures of the seal are not visible anymore because the seal was pushed into the paper band that closed the letter, and this narrow scrap of paper is lost. Sixteen small slits: traces of letterlocking can be seen symmetrically close to the edges and the axis of the paper.

Unlike Ms. or. fol. 13, which contained a plethora of page and folio numbers, this manuscript contains hardly any numbering. Number 15, written in pencil, can be seen under the address at the bottom of the page on letter 18/08/55, and number 16 from the same hand is placed similarly on letter 19/05/55. This numbering does not fit in any of the Berlin manuscript's numbering, so it was possibly the serial number of the letters in the Dutch owner's collection whom Wesselius mentioned. Apart from this, a Roman 'I' is written in pencil above the address on letter 19/05/55. This number is also not related to any other foliation system.

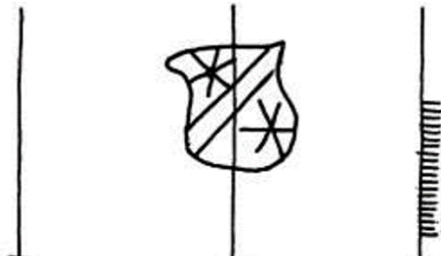
The watermark in letter 19/05/55 is the same as in f. 16 of the Berlin manuscript:

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<sup>179</sup> The photos are available online in the Digital Collection of the Leiden University Library: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357616>. Retrieved 05.01.2022

<sup>180</sup> Wesselius, 'The Syriac Correspondence', 23.

<sup>181</sup> Wesselius, 'The Syriac Correspondence', 25–26.



Escutcheon with bend and two stars consisting of one line over and below the bend without additional motif. The watermark is attached to the mould between three chain-lines. 17 mm width, 17 mm height

Figure 9: Watermark on Letter 19/05/55 (Piccard-Online Nr. 24043)

Origin: Austria – mid-1500s<sup>182</sup>

In letter 18/08/55, it is the same escutcheon, but it is not clear whether it contains one or two stars because of a crease.

### **Provenance**

Examining the provenance of this manuscript, the most burning question is when and how these letters were separated from the rest of the collection. This question is especially intriguing because these are not the first two or the last two letters that could easily split from a bunch of manuscripts. What is more, they are not even two subsequent letters. So the letters were not ordered chronologically when they were separated. The letters do not provide many handholds for the examination, but let us see what can be found out.

The unnamed Dutch private owner mentioned by Wesselius was Gautier Hendrik Albert Juynboll (1935–2010), a renowned scholar of Islam specializing in *Hadīth*, a native of Leiden. Juynboll lent the letters to Wesselius for his research. After Juynboll's passing away, they were collected from Wesselius' home on 22 November 2011 as part of the Juynboll collection (Or. 26.717–26.736) bequeathed to the Leiden University Library.<sup>183</sup>

Jan Just Witkam meticulously described the Oriental manuscripts of the Juynboll family, but the letters are not treated in his paper because he examined only the documents he found in Gautier Juynboll's house, and the letters were not there.<sup>184</sup> The only Syriac item his study mentions is a one-page print entitled *Specimen typorum Syriacorum quos possidet Academia Leidensis* (Ms. Or. 26.731 (44)).<sup>185</sup> The Juynboll family has brought forth six Orientalists in the past two centuries. Most of them were engaged in Arabic and Islamic studies, but the first

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.piccard-online.de/struktur.php?klassi=024.011.002.007&anzeigeKlassi=024.011.002.007.001&Id=101517&sprache=en&weitere=struktur>. Retrieved 12.08.2021

<sup>183</sup> Cf. the description of the acquisition in the library catalogue: [https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=UBL\\_V1&lang=en\\_US&docid=UBL\\_ALMA21229003180002711&context=L](https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/primo-explore/fulldisplay?vid=UBL_V1&lang=en_US&docid=UBL_ALMA21229003180002711&context=L). Retrieved 22.10.2020

<sup>184</sup> Witkam, 'The Oriental Manuscripts in the Juynboll Family Library', 24.

<sup>185</sup> Witkam, 'The Oriental Manuscripts in the Juynboll Family Library', 80.

Orientalist of the family, Theodoor Willem Jan Juynboll (1802–1861), was a scholar of theology and Semitic languages.<sup>186</sup> Among other things, he extensively published on the history and literature of the Samaritans, a research field that is tightly interwoven with Syriac studies. Therefore, he is the best candidate for the family member who might have acquired Moses' Syriac letters.<sup>187</sup>

Examining the manuscripts' origin, Witkam found that, with a few exceptions, none of the Oriental manuscripts in the Juynboll collection show a clear provenance. Nevertheless, he managed to identify one common source: the private library of the Orientalist and librarian Nicolaus Wilhelm Schröder (1721–1798), son of Johann Joachim Schröder (1680–1756), professor of Oriental languages in Marburg. The collection of the Schröder family was sold by auction in Groningen on 1 May 1835. Witkam showed that several of the Juynboll manuscripts were brought by Th.W.J. Juynboll on that occasion.<sup>188</sup> The catalogue compiled of the documents put up for that auction enumerates 120 items, but none of them can be identified with Moses' Syriac letters.<sup>189</sup> Thus, the investigation is interrupted here. Although 200 years in the manuscript's history is covered, there are still 300 years until Masius' death that remains uncertain.

For lack of concrete evidence, we have to confine ourselves to drawing an analogy between the provenance of these letters and the itinerary that Masius' other letters went over. The overwhelming majority of Masius' letters that came down to us are today in Germany. The bulk of his Latin and German letters, especially those he received, are preserved in Munich.<sup>190</sup> A few other letters are in Düsseldorf, Münster, Würtemberg, Regensburg and Hamburg.<sup>191</sup> The letters that have been found until now outside Germany, e.g. in Leuven<sup>192</sup>, Antwerp<sup>193</sup>, or Rome,<sup>194</sup> are, without exception, letters written by Masius that were preserved in the collection of the recipient. Two of Masius' Hebrew letters, written by the Hebraist Sebastian Münster (1488–1552), were also kept in German hands for centuries. One was owned by the numismatist Julius Friedlaender (1813–1884) in Berlin, and the other was part of the State Library's

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<sup>186</sup> Witkam, 'The Oriental Manuscripts in the Juynboll Family Library', 22.

<sup>187</sup> I owe this hint to Dr Arnoud Vrolijk, curator of Oriental Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Special Collections of the Leiden University Libraries.

<sup>188</sup> Witkam, 'The Oriental Manuscripts in the Juynboll Family Library', 25–26.

<sup>189</sup> s.a., *Pars altera bibliothecae Schroederianae*.

<sup>190</sup> Munich, Bavarian State Library, Clm. 23736 contains 207 letters mainly written to Masius.

<sup>191</sup> Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, XI–XIII.

<sup>192</sup> de Vocht, 'Andreas Masius', 436–441.

<sup>193</sup> Rooses and Denucé, *Correspondance de Christophe Plantin*. In Plantin's collection, there are also letters he wrote to Masius, but these are copies made before posting the letters.

<sup>194</sup> Ehses; 'Andreas Masius an Bernardino Maffei'; Ehses, 'Andreas Masius an Kardinal Morone'.

collection.<sup>195</sup> Ultimately, the majority of Masius' Syriac letters also found their way quite quickly to the Berlin collection. Therefore, it is very likely that also the Leiden letters were in German territories before they arrived in the Netherlands, but the exact route of the manuscript is fogbound.

A dim light flickers in this obscurity that might illuminate one station of the manuscript's journey in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: around 1694, the letters might have been in Herborn. In that year, Johann von Lent (1654–1696) published a book entitled *De moderna theologia Judaica* and announced in its preface that his following work would include a commentary on the psalms of David along with (the edition of) Andreas Masius' manuscript letters.<sup>196</sup> Because of his unexpected early death, the work has never been realised; therefore, we do not know which letters he was talking about. Did he want to publish the Leiden letters, or the Berlin letter, or perchance some of the lost letters? The Berlin letters were already in Berlin in 1694 when von Lent published his book, and Müller's partial edition of the letters also had appeared by then. Von Lent was a professor of Church History, Hebrew, and Syriac at the *Academia Nassauensis* in Herborn and the librarian of its collection between 1686 and 1696.<sup>197</sup> Herborn is between Cologne and Frankfurt, 500 km from Berlin, so it is less probable that he intended to publish the Berlin letters. There is more chance that he was writing about the Leiden letters or some of the lost letters, but it remains an assumption.

That is all that can be established from the past of the manuscript. The 200 years of its provenance before it reached its present holding place have been determined. The circumstances of how the correspondence was split still remain unclear. The sources suggest that it happened sometime before 1694.

### 2.2.3. Glasgow, University Library, Ms. Hunter 31

Ms. Hunter 31 contains a considerable part of the corpus, numbering six letters. Unlike the Berlin and Leiden letters that are autograph documents, Ms Hunter 31 contains an 18<sup>th</sup>-century copy of the letters. The accessibility of the autograph letters significantly deducts from the value of later copies. Nevertheless, an overview of the manuscript's features is necessary to assess its importance correctly.

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<sup>195</sup> Burmeister, *Briefe Sebastian Münsters*, 40–43 and 88–91.

<sup>196</sup> “Lectori Benevolo Salutem. Ex quo tempore... Sic pariter textum Hebraeum cum versione quandoque correctiori et augmentis quibusdam apponemus. Vale interim, conatibus fave nostris, et mox observationes sacras in hymnos Davidis, cum epistolis MSS. Andreae Masii, viri maximi, exspecta. Herbornae Nassoviorum, a.d. VIII. februari, anni MDCXCIV.” Lent, *De moderna theologia Judaica*, Preface without page number.

<sup>197</sup> Lucae, *Europäischer Helicon*, 799–800. On the history of the institution see Menk, *Die Hohe Schule Herborn in ihrer Frühzeit*, and Steubing, *Geschichte der Hohen Schule Herborn*.

### ***Provenance***

It was already mentioned above that the copy was made by Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738) in 1717 with the assistance of the Prussian royal librarian Maturin Veyssière de La Croze (1661–1739) based on the letters of the Berlin collection. He copied only those letters that were still unpublished and brought the copies to Russia with the intention of a future publication. However, the edition was never realised. After Bayer's death, his widow handed over his collection to the Russian Academy of Sciences.<sup>198</sup> Later, the library was sold to a Lutheran pastor in London, Heinrich Walter Gerdes. The last private owner, William Hunter (1718–1783), the famous Scottish anatomist and avid collector purchased the collection from Gerdes' widow. After a brief stay in the house of Hunter's nephew in London, the manuscript finally reached the University of Glasgow in 1807.<sup>199</sup> Today, it is part of the University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, built especially to receive Hunter's collection.<sup>200</sup>

### ***Physical description***

The manuscript has already been described twice. In 1899, Thomas Hunter Weir (1865–1928) published a succinct entry on it defining the language and the main content.<sup>201</sup> A few years later, in 1908, a modern catalogue of the manuscripts of the Hunterian Museum was published, which provides a complete description of the manuscript touching upon several physical aspects.<sup>202</sup> Since it is easily available online, its findings are not reproduced here.<sup>203</sup> However, we call attention to two misleading inaccuracies.

The first ambiguity concerns the origin of the manuscript. In the general description, the catalogue states that it was copied by Bayer in Halle, Saxon. This statement is only true for some parts of the manuscript and not for all of its parts. According to the catalogue, the manuscript contains three documents:

1. Syriac Alphabet
2. S. Ephraim the Syrian and others' Prayers
3. Moses Mardenius' Epistles to Andreas Masius

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<sup>198</sup> Lundbæk, *T.S. Bayer (1694-1738)*, 209.

<sup>199</sup> <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/archivespecialcollections/discover/specialcollectionsa-z/hunteriancollection/> Retrieved 22.10.2021.

<sup>200</sup> Weir, 'The Arabic, Syriac and Hebrew Manuscripts in the Hunterian Library', 739.

<sup>201</sup> Weir, 'The Arabic, Syriac and Hebrew Manuscripts in the Hunterian Library', 755.

<sup>202</sup> Young and Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum*, 456.

<sup>203</sup> <https://archive.org/details/catalogueofmanus00hunt/page/n9/mode/2up> Retrieved on 19.09.2021



The reason for the misunderstanding is probably an entry written by Bayer on f. 1v, stating that he copied the ‘Rudimenta Syriacae Linguae’ in Halle. It might be true because we know from Bayer’s biography that Halle was also part of his study trip. But this inscription concerns only the first part of the document. Concerning the pagination, the catalogue describes two partial paginations in the manuscript (pp. 1–15 and 1–29), suggesting that the different parts were formerly different entities. Bayer’s correspondence with de la Croze also proves that Bayer copied the letters in Berlin, not in Halle.<sup>204</sup> Weir’s description also confirms this information, so there is no reason to doubt that.<sup>205</sup>

The second error concerns the number of letters. The catalogue states that the manuscript contains eight letters written by Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius following the Latin headings that effectively count eight letters: *Epistola Prima – Epistola VIII*. Nevertheless, a careful study of the text proves that this numbering is erroneous. This will be discussed in detail in the following subchapter.

#### ***Accuracy and affordance in the edition***

In order to assess the manuscript’s value properly and determine whether it adds something to what is known of the autograph letters, the text of Ms. Hunter 31 was collated to Ms. or. fol. 13. The comparison showed considerable differences.

A tabular overview of the letters clearly shows the anomalies in the numbering:

	<b>Berlin Staatsbibliothek Ms. or. fol. 13.</b>	<b>Glasgow, University Libr., Ms. Hunter 31</b>
<b>Letter 08/06/53</b> Moses (Rome) to Masius	<b>I.</b> fol. 17r–18v	
<b>Letter 22/06/53</b> Masius (Brussels) to Moses	<b>II.</b> fol. 25r–26v	
<b>Letter 15/07/53</b> Moses (Venice) to Masius	<b>III.</b> fol. 19r–20v	<b>Epistola III.</b> pp. 13–15.
<b>Letter 23/11/53</b> Moses (Vienna) to Renialme  Moses (Vienna) to Postel	<b>IV.</b> fol. 21r–v  <b>P.S.</b> 23r–v	<b>Epistola II.</b> pp. 11–13.  <b>Epistola IV.</b> p. 16.

<sup>204</sup> Uhlius, *Thesaurus Epistolicus Lacrozianus*, III, 31.

<sup>205</sup> “Epistulae [8] Mosis Mardeni ad Andream Masius ex autographis quae in Bibliotheca Berolinensi Regia sunt.” Weir, ‘The Arabic, Syriac and Hebrew Manuscripts in the Hunterian Library’, 755.

	<b>Berlin Staatsbibliothek Ms. or. fol. 13.</b>	<b>Glasgow, University Libr., Ms. Hunter 31</b>
<b>Letter 26/03/55</b> Moses (Vienna) to Masius	<b>V.</b> fol. 15r–16v	<b>Epistola V.</b> pp. 16–25.
<b>Letter 15/07/55</b> Moses (Vienna) to Masius	<b>VI.</b> letter: fol. 24r–v address fol. 22r–v	<b>Epistola prima</b> pp. 1–11. p. 1, 11.
<b>Letter 26/10/55</b> Moses (Vienna) to Masius	<b>VII.</b> fol. 13r–14v	<b>Epistola VII.</b> pp. 25–27.
<b>Letter 01/08/56</b> Moses (Vienna) to Masius	<b>VIII.</b> fol. 11r–12v	<b>Epistola VIII.</b> pp. 28–29. – incomplete

*Table 5: Comparison of the number of the letters in the Berlin and Glasgow manuscripts*

This overview helps to understand how the Glasgow collection may contain only six letters if the titles indicate eight. Firstly, Bayer considered Masius' note to Postel as a separate letter, although it was merely a post scriptum in the letter sent to Jean de Renialme. Secondly, he made a mistake in the numbering and simply left out Epistola VI. Although he transcribed the dates, so he was undoubtedly aware of the chronological order of the letters, he rather based the numbering on the order as the letters got into his hands.

The discrepancy is not restricted to the numbering of the letters; it is also attested within one letter. For example, it is unclear why Bayer split the paragraph which is next to the address in letter 15/07/55 on f. 22r. He copied the first two lines of the paragraph to the beginning of the first letter on page 1 and the subsequent four lines to the end of the letter on page 11.

The pagination of Bayer's manuscript is also incorrect since the first page is followed by page 4; pages 2 and 3 were omitted. However, nothing is missing from the text; the text on the bottom of page 1 continues on page 4 without a missing word. Bayer left the last letter (VIII) unfinished; 8 lines from folio 11r and the whole 11v of the Berlin manuscript are missing from the Glasgow copy. The text on page 29 fills out the page to the bottom. There might have been a page 30 that disappeared. If there had been, it had been lost by the time the manuscript arrived in Glasgow, since also the catalogue mentions only 29 pages.

Apparently, Bayer intended to do a thorough job since he also transcribed Masius' Latin notes. However, he was not entirely consequent since he left out the Masius' Hebrew notes. There are many mistakes in his copy. His attention faded: there are almost zero mistakes in the

first letter, but typos and omissions accumulate from the second letter. The most serious mistake is on page 20, where he left out a 9-word passage.

The availability of the autograph manuscripts and the vast amount of mistakes in Bayer's copy bring into question its use in the edition. Despite the mistakes, Bayer's manuscript could have been useful if it had preserved such passages of Moses' letters that were legible in Bayer's time but later became undecipherable. Such passage could be, for instance, the vast water stain in letter 26/10/55 on f. 13r. However, this section was already damaged at the beginning of the 18th century because Bayer could not decipher it either. He marked the missing parts with dots on pages 26 and 27.

In conclusion, Bayer's manuscript is a very deteriorated version of the autograph manuscripts. Since it does not contain any additional information compared to Moses' letter, it is not taken into consideration in the present edition of the letters.

### **2.3. Possible finding places of missing manuscripts**

Having demonstrated that the correspondence comprised more letters than it is known today, and after presenting the letters known so far, there is one more question that has to be treated in connection with the corpus. Where can missing letters emerge from? This chapter aims to answer this question.

#### **2.3.1. Letters between Moses and Masius**

The most significant shortcoming of the corpus in its today's form is that it is very one-sided since, apart from a draft letter by Masius, only Moses' side is represented. The main reason for this situation is that Masius regarded Moses' letters as essential sources for his Syriac studies, valued them highly and kept them safe. By contrast, Masius' letters for Moses were valueless papers that probably ended up in the garbage. Even if Moses preserved the letters for some time while he was in Vienna, he certainly did not take them with him to the Middle East. Therefore, if these letters were still preserved somewhere, one should begin searching for them in Vienna. In quest of Masius' letters, the following potential places of occurrence were checked.

During his stay in Vienna, Moses resided in the Jesuit residence hall at Am Hof square. So, the first possible location of the missing letters was the archive of the Austrian Jesuit province. This, however, was a dead end, since the holdings of the archives were largely destroyed when the order was abolished in 1773. The remains of these archival holdings are

scattered among several institutions: the Austrian National Library, the Austrian State Archives, the University Library of Vienna, and the library of the Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma in Hungary. A basic search in these collections did not achieve success. A few documents were discovered, but not the letters. The *historia domus* of the Jesuit residence hall from Moses' time is preserved in two copies in the aforementioned collections; unfortunately, none of them mentions Moses.<sup>206</sup> Another significant discovery is the privilege granting a coat of arms for Moses, found in the Austrian State Archives.<sup>207</sup>

While searching for Moses' letters, another clue that merits investigation is a sentence from letter 19/05/55. Moses complained to Masius that he did not know what happened to his previous letter, asserting that he had handed it over to Widmanstetter.

*I really gave the previous letter to Johann Lucretius' hands, so I do not know what he has done with it.*

Syriac manuscripts were extremely scarce at that time in Europe, and it was difficult to obtain them. Therefore, just like Masius, probably Widmanstetter also preserved any Syriac writing he got hold of. Widmanstetter had an enormous collection of manuscripts, and the Oriental manuscripts were his most treasured pieces. After his death, there was a great competition for his library. Finally, Albert V, Duke of Bavaria, managed to obtain the collection; therefore, it is today in Munich.<sup>208</sup> Widmanstetter's 49 Arabic and two Syriac manuscripts were leafed through to learn whether they preserved any of Moses' letters by chance. The most promising item was Cod. Arab. 1058 comprising 20 folios from Widmanstetter's grammatical notes. Nevertheless, no Syriac letter was found among these notes.<sup>209</sup> A single letter from Widmanstetter's heritage that has escaped the attention of researchers is preserved in the City and States Archives of Vienna, but this is not a Syriac letter either.<sup>210</sup> Therefore, no letter from Moses was preserved in Widmanstetter's legacy either.

Finally, there is one more potential place of occurrence which is worth mentioning. Supposing that Moses' letters or drafts written by Masius were preserved hidden in Masius' books, it is worth tracking down the destiny of Masius' library. The problem is that, according to the current state of research, Masius' Hebrew and Syriac manuscripts vanished into thin

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<sup>206</sup> Vienna, Austrian National Library, Cod. 8367; Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma, Ms. 118.E.5.

<sup>207</sup> 'Wappenbrief, Moses Meredineus, Wien, 15 March 1556' Adelsakten, Reichsadelsakten, box 272, no. 57. Cf. Mércz, 'The Coat of Arms of Moses of Mardin'.

<sup>208</sup> Hartig, *Die Gründung der Münchener Hofbibliothek*, 9–19 and 170–193; Striedl, 'Die Bücherei'.

<sup>209</sup> Striedl, 'Die Bücherei', 219; Sobieroj et al., *Arabische Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek zu München*, 1–2.

<sup>210</sup> Hauptarchiv, Akten, Reihe B, A1, Akte 548. It is a letter to Joachim Camerarius dated 10 March 1556.

air.<sup>211</sup> The only printed book from Masius' library that can be identified today with certainty is his annotated copy of the Septuagint.<sup>212</sup> It was already mentioned in connection with the letter's fate that Masius's legacy got to German territories. Consequently, it is not surprising that this book was also preserved in Munich. However, two hints that researchers have overlooked so far indicate that part of the Masius' heritage might have gotten to Spain.

The first is a Hebrew book preserved today in the 'Real Biblioteca de El Escorial' that once belonged to Andreas Masius.<sup>213</sup> The book was printed in 1538 by Soncino in Constantinople and acquired by Masius in 1539 in Frankfurt.<sup>214</sup> It is not clear how it ended up in Spain. The second is the Codex 1628 of the El Escorial, which contains the Apocalypse in Syriac and a Syrian Orthodox baptismal ritual in garshuni.<sup>215</sup> Masius' ownership is not attested in this case, but Moses wrote this manuscript; therefore, it might have possibly passed through Masius.

These two documents show that part of Masius's legacy may have headed south. Cataloguing in the Spanish archives is not as advanced as in the German collections, so there is some chance that documents related to Masius, or even, at best, some letters, may still pop up in Spanish collections.

### **2.3.2. Letters exchanged with other persons**

As for the other correspondents, we saw that Moses also sent three letters to Venice to Jean de Renialme. One of the Arabic letters was returned to Vienna because the deliverer could not find the recipient. This letter had a similar fate as the rest of Moses' writings: it was most likely lost. It is also certain that the other Arabic letter addressed by Moses to an Arab friend in Venice and left unanswered will not turn up. There is also little chance of finding the Italian letter sent to Renialme. Renialme did not respond to Moses because he was busy handling the bankruptcy of his uncle's famous printing house, where he worked. Moses' letter must have been lost in the turmoil of the bankruptcy.

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<sup>211</sup> Cf. Dunkelgrün, 'The Hebrew Library'.

<sup>212</sup> *Divinae scripturae, veteris ac novi testamenti, omnia* (Basel: Johannes Hervagius 1545), with a preface by Philip Melanchton. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2 L.impr.c.n.mss. 80. Cf. Dachs, *Die schriftlichen Nachlässe*, 98; Dunkelgrün, 'The Hebrew Library', 231, n. 76.

<sup>213</sup> Its registry number in the collection is EI 83.VIII.24. Cf. Lacave Riaño, 'Manuscritos hebreos de la Biblioteca de El Escorial', 307.

<sup>214</sup> Masius' correspondence proves that he visited Frankfurt in 1539. Cf. Lossen, *Briefe Andreas Masius*, 4.

<sup>215</sup> Monferrer-Sala, 'Un manuscrito karšūnī'.

The correspondence of Otto-Henry, Count Palatine of Palatinate-Neuburg has not been examined yet. His letters are scattered. Looking for Moses' letter among his documents is like looking for a needle in a haystack, an effort that offers a poor prospect.

In sum, the chance is very little that new letters pop up from Moses' correspondence. It is not completely impossible, but it has even worst odds than before 1989 when Wesselius discovered the two Leiden letters.

### 3. The correspondence as a historical source

#### 3.1. Biographical elements

##### 3.1.1. Masius and Widmanstetter: friends or foes?

Masius and Widmanstetter have a lot in common. They did the same studies, shared the same passion for biblical exegesis and Oriental languages. Both of them undertook diplomatic services and maintained good relations with high-ranking church leaders and even popes. And both played a major role in the birth of the European Syriac studies. It was almost inevitable that they would become good friends when they met in 1540 in Ghent and one year later at the Imperial Diet in Regensburg.<sup>216</sup> Nevertheless, based on the intensity of their correspondence, their friendship was not as close as that of Masius and Postel, for example. From Masius' and Widmanstetter's correspondence only one Hebrew letter remained to us.<sup>217</sup> A few years later in the 1550s, their friendship ran aground. Joseph Perles noticed the deterioration of their relation and referred to several passages in Masius' writings where he expressed his opinion about Widmanstetter's achievement in a rebuking manner.<sup>218</sup> Hartmut Bobzin, however, found Perles' arguments unconvincing and doubted whether he was right.<sup>219</sup> Moses' letters contain further elements on this issue and a careful examination of the events help to understand what had happened.

In some places, Masius wrote reprovingly of Widmanstetter's work without naming him, and in other places, he passed over his contribution to the *editio princeps* in complete silence. In the preface of his Syriac grammar, Masius attributed the printing of the Syriac New Testament only to king (and later emperor) Ferdinand's benevolence and Moses' expertise.<sup>220</sup> In letter 01/08/56, there is a Latin inscription by Masius next to Widmanstetter's name: '*fallit ingratus*' that is 'ungratefully deceived me'.<sup>221</sup> The meaning of this pregnant remark becomes clear if we reread the events of the year 1553.

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<sup>216</sup> Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 8, 17, 160–161; François, 'Andreas Masius (1514-1573)', 210.

<sup>217</sup> Perles, *Beiträge*, 203–204; Prys, 'Hebräische Büchereien', 134, 136.

<sup>218</sup> Perles, *Beiträge*, 207.

<sup>219</sup> Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 290 n. 85.

<sup>220</sup> "...ille librarius, qui in urbe Mozal ad flumen Tigrim exemplar illud Novi Testamenti scripsit; de quo id optimi et benignissimi Caesaris Ferdinandi liberalitate, et Mosis Mardeni industria typis est expressum, quod unum nos habemus." Masius, *Grammatica linguae syriacae*, 4.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ II. Dissertationes duae*, 9–10.

Moses and Masius were together in Rome. Masius left the city in April but they remained in contact via correspondence. When Moses left Rome in the summer, he was desperate. Masius helped him by putting him in contact with Jean de Renialme in Venice. Furthermore, he also interceded for Moses with Johann Jakob Fugger (1516–1575), the noted banker in Augsburg in order he patronises Moses' plans for a Syriac printing press. Based on the letters it seems, that they agreed that Moses will head to Augsburg and they will meet there. Finally, Moses joined cardinal Reginald Pole's (1500–1558) company, with whom he could have travelled all the way to Brussels, where Masius stayed at that time.<sup>222</sup> Nevertheless, when Masius learned from his friends among Pole's entourage, that the cardinal was constrained to stop at Dillingen, he decided to meet Moses there.<sup>223</sup> He left Brussels on 8 November, and met Pole in Dillingen, but Moses was no longer there.<sup>224</sup> He had gone to Vienna a few days earlier with Widmanstetter, whom he had just met. Widmanstetter participated at the Imperial Diet in Heilbronn as king Ferdinand's commissioner together with Johann Ulrich Zasius.<sup>225</sup> On the way home from the Imperial Diet, Zasius met Pole in Dillingen on 5 November, Widmanstetter was most probably with him, and this was the occasion where he met Moses.<sup>226</sup> Their unexpected encounter is also commemorated by Widmanstetter in the preface to the New Testament.<sup>227</sup> So that's why Masius was disappointed: for almost a year he had been helping Moses and smoothing his path from Rome to Germany, and Widmanstetter had snatched Moses almost from under his nose just before they could have met.

In the spring of 1554, in a letter to Postel, Masius inquired intensely about the state of the printing press and politely sent his compliments to Widmanstetter.<sup>228</sup> His joy over the printing of Syriac and Arabic works was bigger than his feeling of loss.<sup>229</sup> And seeing that Widmanstetter invited Postel to participate in the project, could give him the hope that he will also find his place in this cooperation. But Widmanstetter did not invite him. What is more,

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<sup>222</sup> Lutz, *Friedenslegation des Reginald Pole*, LXIII.

<sup>223</sup> The emperor, Charles V held him up. Cf. Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, 218, 220. See also Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 141.

<sup>224</sup> Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 143, 152.

<sup>225</sup> Druffel and Brandi, *Briefe und Akten*, 277–286.

<sup>226</sup> Zasius wrote a report on his meeting with Pole to king Ferdinand I. Cf. Lutz, *Friedenslegation des Reginald Pole*, 338–343.

<sup>227</sup> Widmanstetter, *Liber sancrosancti Evangelii*, 14r–v.

<sup>228</sup> “*Gratulor tibi ac clarissimo optimoque viro domino Joanni Lucretio suavissimam isthanc (communitatem?) in literis, imo gratulor universae rei literariae et inprimis ecclesiae Christi, quum et simul regia liberalitate brevi pulcherrimum et in ecclesia atque philosophia utilissimum idioma punicum apud vos proditurum sperem.*” Masius' letter to Postel on 14 April 1554. Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 160–161.

<sup>229</sup> “*Ego vero optarim Mosen illum Syrum quoque persuaderi posse, ut non prius vos desereret, quam Novum Testamentum Syrum, quod habet vetustissimum et accuratissime scriptum, typis evulgatum esset.*” Masius' letter to Postel on 14 April 1554. Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 161.



Masius could feel that Widmanstetter wants to isolate him from Moses. In letter 26/03/55, Moses mentioned a letter he sent to Masius but it did not arrive to him. Masius asked about the circumstances of the letter's disappearance, and it turned out that Widmanstetter might be behind it. In letter 19/05/55, Moses asserted that he gave it in Widmanstetter's hands and does not know what he has done with it.

After this incident, Masius' remarks on Widmanstetter always denigrate him before Moses. In letter 18/08/55, Moses wrote the following:

*As for what you said about Johann Lucretius, that he wrote to one of the sovereigns and said that he translated the New Testament from Greek into Syriac, I was really astonished about such a lie and I had got to laugh. But what should we do with people who ascribe themselves vain glory? God is their judge.*

It was not only Moses' opinion that Widmanstetter ascribe himself vain glory, Postel also had the same experience. He wrote in a letter to Masius that Widmanstetter wanted to reap the laurels of the success of the Syriac edition alone. In sum, it was Masius' own bitter experience, and the testimony of two of his friends, that was behind the deterioration of his relationship with Widmanstetter.

### **3.1.2. Did Moses become a Catholic?**

Moses' religious affiliation is a controversial issue, which has not been fully clarified yet. Originally, he was Syrian Orthodox, but many signs indicate, that he might have converted to Catholicism. The most concrete evidence for his possible conversion to Catholicism is the Catholic profession of faith he made before the Pope and the cardinals during his second stay in Rome in 1552.<sup>230</sup> There are, however, many uncertainties concerning this document and its exact status is unclear.<sup>231</sup>

There is, for instance, an inconsistency between this act and his behaviour a few months later. In May 1553, Roman cardinals wanted to reordain Moses in a proper, Catholic way, but he firmly resisted. He wrote to Masius in an indignant tone calling the Roman prelates "*lacking love and desiring vain glory*".<sup>232</sup> Admittedly, it was a humiliating proposition from Moses'

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<sup>230</sup> The Syriac text of this profession of faith perished, but Masius, who was the only competent person in Syriac at that time in Rome, prepared a Latin translation and later published it. Masius, *De paradiso commentarius*, 257–262.

<sup>231</sup> van Rompay, "Mushe of Mardin", 300–301.

<sup>232</sup> Müller, *Epistolae duae*, 6.

point of view, but many other non-Chalcedonians had to undergo this procedure, it was an established custom in the Catholic Church.<sup>233</sup> One of Moses' Roman friends, the Ethiopian Giovanni Battista Negro, alias Yohānnes accepted to be reordained and later became the second black bishop and the first black nuncio in the history of the Roman Church.<sup>234</sup> If Moses really wanted to become Catholic, he only would have to accept to be reordained and thus his dream would have come true. In sum, despite his visible rapprochement to the Catholic Church, Moses left Rome as a Syrian Orthodox.

In the light of this, it is surprising, that he appears to be a Catholic priest in Vienna according to the testimony of different documents. In the first instance, he is referred to as a 'Syrian Catholic priest' in the text of the grant of arms.<sup>235</sup> The Syrian Catholic Church did not exist at that time, so the word 'Syrian' should refer to his birthplace and 'Catholic' to his religion. Moreover, Widmanstetter systematically called Moses a Catholic priest in the edition of Syriac New Testament.<sup>236</sup> And finally, the same appellation appears in a Latin note in a manuscript, which was copied by Moses in Vienna in January 1556.<sup>237</sup>

No wonder, that also Müller was led to the conclusion that after all he probably accepted to be reordained as a Catholic priest in Vienna.<sup>238</sup> Unfortunately, the ordination protocols of the diocese of Vienna, which could clinch the matter, are preserved only from 1574, but other circumstances do not confirm Müller's supposition. There were hardly any seminarists at that time in Vienna. In a 20 years period, only 20 young priests finished their studies, i.e. one per year on average, and the majority of the students at the Faculty of Theology were Jesuits.<sup>239</sup> If Jesuits gave the bulk of the seminarians and Moses lived among them, it would be obvious that he was reordained with them. Fortunately, the most important ecclesiastical events are soundly documented in Jesuit sources. While these documents make mention of Erhardus Leodiensis' ordination in 1554 and that of Martinus Stevordiensis and Johannes Dirsius in 1555, Moses'

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<sup>233</sup> On this see Kennerley, "Ethiopian Christians in Rome"

<sup>234</sup> Salvatore, "African Cosmopolitanism in the Early Modern Mediterranean".

<sup>235</sup> F. 2r. Cf. Mércz, 'The Coat of Arms of Moses of Mardin'.

<sup>236</sup> Moses is referred to as "*Moses Meredinaeus ex Mesopotamia Catholicus sacerdos*" four times in the *Liber Sacrosancti Evangelii*.

<sup>237</sup> "...descripsit Moyses Meredinaeus Syrus presbyter catholicus, Vienna Austriae, mense Ianuario, Anno M.D.LVI." Cf. Borbone, 'Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria', 105; Kessel, Moses of Mardin, 149.

<sup>238</sup> "*Attamen Catholicum non omnino frustra vocat Widmanstadius. Siquidem tandem passus est sacerdotem se denuo a Catholico creari. Liqueat hoc ex verbis ejus, quae in dorso epistolae VI. Masio scripserat, anno MDLV 15. Julii, post absolutum jam Evangeliorum codicem: Ne scribas (inquit) in Epistolis Padre (hoc forte titulo Mosen, Sacerdotem jam Pontificium, honorare voluit.) Neque enim huc usque Schema Monasticum gero. Sed Sacerdotale. Et antehac habitum Laicum gestavi Vienna circiter annum. Postea Canisius Sacerdotali me induit habitu.*" Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ II. Dissertationes duae*, 6–7.

<sup>239</sup> Heiss, 'Die Wiener Jesuiten', 247; Polanco, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae*, Vol. IV, 234–235.



hope, that the Catholic faith will be reinforced in his home against the Nestorians and the Muslims and that God will gather the Syrians “*under the wings of the Roman Church and Empire*”, but in the Syriac colophon, he explicitly referred to himself as a Jacobite Syrian.<sup>247</sup> Why was this double play necessary?

Answering this question, one must not forget the historical background: the religious struggles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In Vienna, Canisius was the front-line fighter of the Counter-Reformation. As a member of the reform commission at the university, he stood for the dismissal of ‘heretic’ professors, while the others inclined to tolerate them as long as they do not propagate their beliefs at lectures.<sup>248</sup> Moses’ judgment, as a Syrian Orthodox was different, but his Church was basically also considered heretical. Although Oriental Christians were welcomed in Rome and there was intensive contact with the representatives of the most denominations, the negotiations aimed at purging these churches of heterodox tenets and embracing them in the Catholic Church. Similarly, there was at that time an ambivalent attitude to the use and legitimacy of Oriental languages, because on one hand, they could serve missionary purposes and supply new arguments for the theological disputes with Protestants, but on the other, scriptures written in these languages could also contain heretical teachings which could be controlled at the expense of great difficulties. Several interest groups contested with each other at the Roman Curia, and with the shift of power relations, it also could change all of a sudden, whether Oriental studies and publishing were supported or prohibited. Pope Paul III (1534–1549) and Cardinal Marcello Cervini, later Pope Marcellus II (1555) patronized the edition of the Ethiopian New Testament in 1548–1549,<sup>249</sup> but a few years later, in 1553, the Talmud was burned in Rome by the decree of the Roman Inquisition.<sup>250</sup> Although the decree was directed against blasphemous Jewish doctrines, regrettably Syriac scriptures also fell victim to the subsequent raid on Hebrew books.<sup>251</sup> In 1571, the Antwerp Polyglot Bible, which was the first Polyglot Bible containing the Syriac text of the New Testament, almost failed to obtain the Papal approbation, because the collaborators were suspected of being kabbalistic or

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<sup>247</sup> Borbone, ‘Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria’, 102–103.

<sup>248</sup> Mühlberger, ‘Universität und Jesuitenkolleg in Wien’, 24–25.

<sup>249</sup> Guidi, ‘La prima stampa del Nuovo Testamento in etiopico’, 273–278; Juel-Jensen, ‘Potken’s Psalter’, 480–496.

<sup>250</sup> Stow, “The Burning of the Talmud”, 435–459.

<sup>251</sup> Masius repined over the loss of his Syriac manuscripts in a letter to his friend, Latinius: “*Sed utinam codices saltem meos Syros Novi Testamenti expeditos habeam (...) Sed illi pari cum aliis hebraeis calamitate premuntur.*”. Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 185–186. See also Wilkinson, *The Kabbalistic Scholars*, 46; François, *Andreas Masius*, 221–223.



current state of research or puts it in completely new perspective. This chapter is divided into three main points.

Whose idea was the establishment of the Syriac print and the printing of the New Testament and who initiated the project are two of the most ardent questions on this matter. According to the most accepted opinion Ignatius ‘Abdullah, Syrian orthodox patriarch came up with the idea of Syriac printing. He was the one who sent Moses to Europe to arrange the project. This standpoint goes back until the 1555 edition of the New Testament, where Widmanstetter included this narrative to the preface.<sup>254</sup> Since this information came from Moses, he referred to himself several times as the delegate of the patriarch, therefore all researchers treating this issue up until recently, considered this information as set in stone.<sup>255</sup> In 2017, Pier Giorgio Borbone suggested that it might rather have been Moses’ idea, since he was in Rome in close contact with the publishers of the Ethiopian New Testament (published in 1548–1549), and they might have inspired him. Borbone finally concluded that “*whether the printed edition of the Syriac New Testament was a personal initiative or a task entrusted to Moses by the Syriac Orthodox patriarch – the two things being by no means mutually exclusive*”.<sup>256</sup> This status quo was completely upset by the source published by Giacomo Cardinali in 2018. A document found among the notes of cardinal Cervini, later Pope Marcellus II (1555) contains the testimony of two Syriac pilgrims, who were together with Moses in Cyprus and in Rome. They claimed that Moses was a troublemaker excommunicated by his own church, who deceived the high priests with a letter forged in Cyprus in the name of his patriarch.<sup>257</sup> Cardinali argued that the idea of Syriac printing came from Rome, originating from Cervini and the orientalist belonging to his circle.<sup>258</sup> There are two questions that need to be clarified. Firstly, was Moses the delegate of the patriarch or a lying rascal? Secondly, who initiated the foundation of the Syriac press: the patriarch, Moses or Cardinal Cervini? There is an interpretation that could reconcile these ambiguities and could integrate the sources available so far on Moses. This will be first attempted.

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<sup>254</sup> “...*Moses Meredinaeus ex Mesopotamia Catholicus sacerdos [...] ab Ignatio Patriarcha Antiocheno cum ob alias grauissimas causas, tum ut Novi Testamenti Volumen Prelo excusorio multiplicatum, in Syriam reportaret, Romam missus Orator fuit...*” Widmanstetter, *Liber sancrosancti Evangelii*, f. 14r.

<sup>255</sup> Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I, 535–536; Leroy, ‘Une copie syriaque du Missale Romanum’, 372; van Roey, ‘Les débuts des études syriaques’, 15; Wesselius, ‘The Syriac Correspondence’, 24; Kiraz, ‘Introduction to the Gorgias Reprint’, i; Wilkinson, *Orientalism*, 64–65; van Rompay, ‘Mushe of Mardin’; Borbone, ‘From Tur ‘Abdin to Rome’ 278.

<sup>256</sup> Borbone, ‘Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria’ 82.

<sup>257</sup> Cardinali, ‘Ritratto di Marcello Cervini’, 340.

<sup>258</sup> Cardinali, ‘Ritratto di Marcello Cervini’, 84, 87–91.

The second question regarding Syriac printing is related to the preparations made in Rome for the setting up of a Syriac printing press there. While examining the registry of expenses of the Vatican Library, Léon Dorez noticed that there is an entry in the accounting in December 1552 concerning the foundation of a Syriac press.<sup>259</sup> Therefore, it is certain that there was an attempt in Rome to establish a Syriac press, but the views differ on how far the project reached. Dorez considered it as an initial step in a larger programme that finally resulted in the establishment of a polyglot Press in Rome, but did not precise what was prepared in Rome in December 1552. In his letters, Moses referred several times to a printing accessory that he took with him from Rome to Vienna. Pier Giorgio Borbone suggested that they might have been the punches or matrices prepared in Rome.<sup>260</sup> According to Paolo Sachet, however, also the fonts were cast and even a type specimen sheet was printed in Rome.<sup>261</sup> Cardinali opined that the matrices remained in Cervini's hands, but the types were taken by Moses to Vienna. He went further suggesting that the fonts of Kaspar Kraft were only used to correct the Roman fonts, and the *editio princeps* of the New Testament in Vienna was in fact printed with the '*syriaques du cardinal*'.<sup>262</sup>

Finally, in the third point, Moses' role in the printing of the New Testament is reconsidered based on the information found in his letters. His correspondence is a valuable source especially concerning the creation of the second bigger Viennese *serio* font, which appears only on an errata leaf in the New Testament. Since it was hardly used, its creation seems totally unnecessary and the question arises why it was prepared at all. Moses' letters answer this question.

### **3.2.1. Moses' role in initiating the Syriac printing**

For answering the question whether Moses was a rascal or not, Cardinali's source has to be scrutinised first. Three arguments proving its credibility will be listed below. Then this new image of Moses' figure will be inserted in his curriculum and reconciled with the former view which considered him as a patriarchal delegate. Finally, the last question: who initiated the foundation of the Syriac press, will be treated.

The letter of the Syriac pilgrims raises several questions.<sup>263</sup> If they were pilgrims in transit in Rome, why did they find it important to make an unsolicited statement for the cardinal on

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<sup>259</sup> Vat. lat. 3965, f. 39r. Cf. Dorez, 'Le registre des dépenses', 166, 179–180, nos. 103–104.

<sup>260</sup> Borbone, 'Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria', 86.

<sup>261</sup> Sachet, *Publishing for the Popes*, 180.

<sup>262</sup> Cardinali, 'Ritratto di Marcello Cervini', 94–96.

<sup>263</sup> Cardinali, 'Ritratto di Marcello Cervini', 340.

Moses who was also an insignificant figure? Why did they send the letter from Paris? Is not it possible that Moses or rather his patron, Petrus Ethiops had an adversary who wanted to discredit them with this letter? In the absence of other related sources these question can not be answered, but the credibility of their statement concerning Moses can be examined.

The first argument for the authenticity of two Syriac pilgrims' opinion is another description about Moses which tallies with it. It is namely another letter, in which Patriarch Ignatius Ni'amatallah (1557–1576), the successor of the patriarch who supposedly sent Moses to Rome, called Moses 'slanderer' and 'excommunicated'.<sup>264</sup> We might think that it is a specially relevant source on Moses. Nevertheless, when evaluating this source, it should be kept in mind that the patriarch had an interest to discredit Moses. Ni'amatallah had a bad conscience, because he converted to the Muslim faith, resigned, left his flock and fled to Rome.<sup>265</sup> Since Moses knew this dark period of his past, he might have wanted to discredit Moses before he could spread the news about the patriarch's scandal in Rome. Nevertheless, the two independent, concordant sources, i.e. Ni'amatallah's letter and the two pilgrim's letter, form a firm basis for taking them seriously.

What is more, it might happen that Moses himself also referred to his expulsion in one of his writings. In the colophon of the first manuscript he composed in Rome in 1549, he wrote: "Written by the wretched Moses when he took refuge in God in the year 1860 of the Greek Alexander, son of Philip".<sup>266</sup> Leroy tentatively interpreted the expression 'refuge in God' (ملاى الله حلاية) as '*pérégrination en Dieu*'<sup>267</sup> but in the light of the newest discoveries it can be understood also literally, i.e. '*he fled for succour to God*', since Moses might have been actually chased away from his home.

And finally, the third argument for the authenticity of the pilgrims' claim is the lack of source on the opposite side. Nothing proves that Moses was a patriarchal envoy during his first visit in Rome (1549–1550).<sup>268</sup> The first source on Moses in Europe is the pilgrims' letter dated 29 September 1549. The second is the letter of pope Jules III (1550–1555) sent to the Antiochian patriarch in April 1550. Although the pope refers in this letter to a former letter sent by the patriarch, this letter has not yet been discovered.<sup>269</sup> The existence of such a letter was not

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<sup>264</sup> Borbone, "From Tur 'Abdin to Rome", 285–287. On the patriarch see also Kiraz, 'Ni' matullāh, Ignatius'.

<sup>265</sup> Borbone, 'From Tur 'Abdin to Rome', 282.

<sup>266</sup> London, British Library, Ms. Harley 5512, f. 178r.

<sup>267</sup> Leroy, 'Une copie syriaque du Missale Romanum', 367.

<sup>268</sup> Hayek could also only guess concerning the reason of this "mission". Cf. Hayek, '*Alāqāt kanīsat al-suryān al-ya'āqiba*', 83; Hayek, '*Le relazioni della Chiesa Siro-giacobita*', 63.

<sup>269</sup> "...*litteras quas non minus pietatis, quam humanitatis plenas ad Stae memoriae Paulum Papam Tertium praedecessorem nostrum per dilectum filium Mosen sacerdotem scripsisti, nos ad summum Apostolatam per*



disputed in the testimony of the two Syrian pilgrims, only its authenticity. If this letter turns up one day, we will be able to examine its origin and content, but for the time being no source supports the idea that Moses was sent to Europe in 1549 by the patriarch.

Based on these three arguments, we can give credence to the pilgrims' claim on Moses. The next question is how the opposing views on Moses can be reconciled. It is easier than it seems to be at the first sight, based on Moses' twofold European adventures. It is absolutely plausible that Moses as a rebellious youth kicked up dust with the superiors of his own church, fled his home and skilfully tried to survive during his first European wanderings in 1549–1550. In Rome, he managed to make the pope and the curia believe that he was a patriarchal envoy. When he returned to his home with a letter from the pope and news about the printing press, the patriarch pardoned his sins and sent him, for the first time as an official patriarchal delegate, back to Rome in 1551. Thus, Moses could be a rascal and a patriarchal envoy at the same time.

This leads us to the final question, who initiated the Syriac printing press. Cardinali argues that the concept was conceived in Rome and the project was initiated by Cervini.<sup>270</sup> Cervini's support was indispensable, there is no doubt about it. However, Cardinali was not yet aware of a letter sent by the patriarch to Cervini, asking his help for the creation of a Syriac printing press.<sup>271</sup> Such a letter would have been unnecessary if the initiative had come from Cervini. Therefore, it is more probable that Moses was first inspired by the success of the Ethiopian printing. Knowing that he could gain Cervini's support for a Syriac press, he travelled home, convinced the patriarch to stand up for the cause and make the request more formal. And finally, he returned to Rome with a patriarchal request and a Syriac New Testament in order they can immediately launch the work and contacted Cervini with the project plan which is prepared in its every detail.

### **3.2.2. Considerations on the very first Roman Syriac font**

Based on the evidence currently available, it is sure that a Syriac font was under preparation in Rome in 1552, but it is not clear what stage the work was at when Moses left Rome. There are only two sources at the moment researchers can rely on regarding this question: an entry in the accounts of the Vatican Library and Moses' letters. Concerning the

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*Spiritum S. tum assumpti libenter legimus...*" ASV, Arch. Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII, n. 1771, f. 2. Hayek, 'Alāqāt kanīsat al-suryān al-ya'āqiba, Document II, 23.

<sup>270</sup> Cardinali, 'Ritratto di Marcello Cervini', 84, 87–91.

<sup>271</sup> ASF, Cervini, vol. 48, f. 53r–v. Quoted by Sachet, Publishing for the Popes, 179 n. 108.

entry in the registry of expenses,<sup>272</sup> researchers are divided. Some of them consider it as the beginning of the enterprise and others deem it as the final settlement of accounts at the end of the project.<sup>273</sup> In the followings, three arguments will be presented in favour of the first view that will hopefully clinch the matter. In a second step, a new argument will be added also to the discourse on what Moses brought with him from Rome to Vienna.

Type casting was an extremely complex and time-consuming process. Putting aside the technical considerations, in our case the issue is simply a question of time. In the 1470's and 1490's, it took 10 months to produce new punches and matrices from scratch and 3 months to cast letters based on already existing matrices.<sup>274</sup> Over time and with the development of technology, this period has been shortened. According to Vervliet, the whole procedure lasted between four and six months in the 16th century.<sup>275</sup> Nevertheless, it was only true for the production of Latin fonts, in which punchcutters had already great experience. The creation of a Syriac typeface, however, came with a new set of challenges and certainly lasted longer. Let us compare this with the time-frame which was available for the creation of a Syriac font in Rome:

- 28 May 1551** The date of Patriarch Ignatius 'Abdullah's letter to Pope Jules III – *terminus post quem* for Moses' departure from Mardin<sup>276</sup>
- 15 October 1552** Patriarch Ignatius 'Abdullah's letter arrived to Cervini in Rome – *terminus ante quem* for Moses' arrival to Rome<sup>277</sup>
- 3 December 1552** Date of the entry in a register of expenses of the Vatican Library authorising a payment of thirteen scudi to 'Moysè soriano'

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<sup>272</sup> Vat. Lat. 3965, f. 39r. "*La spesa fatta in polzoni per la stampa di libri soriani importa dieci scudi, che di tanto si è fatto patto col M[astr]o... Item in la forma scudi tre... Item ha speso in mistura per tragettare littere da fare una mostra Iulii 8. R.do Mons. di Forlì piaccia a V.S. di far pagare detti denari della libreria a Moyse Soriano, li sopradetti scudi tredici d'oro, quali si sonno spesi per far la stampa da stampare libri in lingua soriana per uso della libreria. Di Palazzo, il di 3 di dicembre 1552*". Cf. Dorez, 'Le registres des dépenses', 179–180, nos. 103–104. Sachet corrected Dorez reading noting that "*the cost of the type specimen, incorrectly reported by Dorez as amounting to 3 giuli, was not included in the refund given to Moses and was likely to have been covered by Cervini himself*". Cf. Sachet, *Publishing for the Popes*, 180 n. 110.

<sup>273</sup> Dorez ('Le registres des dépenses', 166) and Borbone ('Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria', 86) represent the first group, Cardinali ('Ritratto di Marcello Cervini', 94–96) and Sachet (*Publishing for the Popes*, 180) the second.

<sup>274</sup> Haebler, 'Schriftguß', 85 and 97.

<sup>275</sup> Vervliet, *Sixteenth-Century Printing Types*, 344.

<sup>276</sup> Mansi, *Stephani Baluzii Tutelensis Miscellanea*, 199–206. See also Hayek, 'Alāqāt kanīsat al-suryān al-ya'āqiba', 86–89, and Hayek, *Le relazioni della Chiesa Siro-giacobita*, 66–68, where it is analyzed extensively. Sam Kennerley noted that a Latin copy of this profession survives among Cervini's papers (ASF, Cervini, vol. 34, ff. 120r–129r), annotated with manicules (pointing hands) that guide the reader's attention towards incriminating passages about Christ's natures, and to the patriarch's failure to mention his acceptance of Chalcedon. Cf. Kennerley, *Rome and the Maronites in the Renaissance*, 70.

<sup>277</sup> ASF, Cervini, vol. 48, f. 53r–v. Quoted by Sachet, *Publishing for the Popes*, 179 n. 108.

- 8 June 1553** Moses' letter to Masius from Rome – *terminus post quem* for Moses' departure from Rome
- 11 July 1553** Moses' arrival to Venice

Based on this schedule, Moses may have returned to Rome sometime during 1552. The fact that Cervini received the Patriarch's letter on 15 October suggests that Moses arrived in Rome in the autumn, because it is not plausible that he waited months to deliver the letter. If this is the case, then the two months between Moses' arrival and the issuing of the library bill were certainly not long enough to create a set of letters. Sachet was well aware of this, therefore he suggested that a plan for printing Syriac books had already been conceived during Moses' first stay in Rome, and Cervini was only waiting for the patriarch's permission to proceed.<sup>278</sup> But even if there was a plan, and preparations were made in Moses' absence, although it is not clear exactly which stages of work this meant, the period of two months was unrealistically short for the completion of a new font.

The second argument, is the text of the entry itself which also suggests that the Syriac press was not ready on 3 December 1552. It uses many infinitive forms which gives the impression that the money paid was needed to launch the works. One would expect “per le littere” instead of “per traggere littere” if the letters were already ready, “per la mostra” instead of “da fare una mostra” if the print sample was tangible, and “per la stampa” or “per aver fatto la stampa” instead of “per far la stampa” if the project was already finished. Therefore, it seems very likely that the lettertypes were not ready at that time.

And finally, the third argument is the example of the printing of the Ethiopian New Testament which took place a few years earlier in Rome. A record in the accounts of the Apostolic Chamber dated on 2 April 1547 authorised the payment of 12 or finally actually 13 scudi to the Ethiopian monks for casting types.<sup>279</sup> And the New Testament was printed only one and a half year later, in 1548–1549.<sup>280</sup> On this example, it is clear that the papal subvention and the entry in the Vatican records marked the beginning of this grandiose printing project,

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<sup>278</sup> Sachet, *Publishing for the Popes*, 180.

<sup>279</sup> ASR, *Camerale I*, vol. 1293, f. 125r: “A dì 2 di Aprile scudi 12 d'oro in oro alli frati indiani per pagare lo stagno per fare la stampa della lor lingua”. Cited in Lefevre, ‘Documenti e notizie’, 81, and Sachet, *Publishing for the Popes*, 178. Sachet corrected Lefevre's incorrect number who published ‘*scudi I d'oro*’. He also noted that the compiler recorded this payment as 13 scudi and added this figure to the general sum written at the bottom of the page. According to him this inconsistency may either be the result of a mistake or indicate that the monks were actually given 13 scudi.

<sup>280</sup> Guidi, ‘La prima stampa del Nuovo Testamento in etiopico’; Romani, ‘La stampa del Nuovo Testamento in etiopico’.



*small like these, but big and the others cannot be compared to these.*” It is clear from the context, e.g. in letter 19/05/55, that he uses this word for the types: “*Know, oh, my brother, that I am very pressed by the printing work. Because I am the one who sets the types...*”. The case of the matrices is even more interesting because Moses applied three different words for them. In letter 01/08/56, we read: “*As for the types of the press that we prepared, he took them all, and did not give me a single letter. I wrote to the governor/prince twice because of the ‘mothers’ i.e. the ‘matrige’ or ‘matrice’ but he did not help at all.*” Beyond the Italian word, he used the same term in Syriac transcription and in Syriac translation as well.

Since Moses used adequately the terms ‘types’ and ‘matrices’, at the occasion when he was unsure how to express himself, he might have wanted to say punches. This is however, just a try to bypass the lack of other concrete evidence. The word ‘matrices’ appears only in the last letter, three years after his departure from Rome. It is possible that back in 1553 he would not have been able to name the matrices either.

### **3.2.3. Moses’ role in the printing of the Syriac New Testament and the background of the bigger Viennese serto font**

Whether the types were finished in Rome or just the punches were prepared, it is still not sure. However, there is one thing the Roman printing project shows that has been overlooked so far: Moses arrived in Vienna with months of first-hand experience in letter-cutting. It was already shown above that during his first stay in Rome, he could closely observe the work of the Ethiopian printing press, therefore he had the chance to learn the basics of typesetting. And now, during his second stay, he could closely follow the work of a letter-cutter. This is important because he is depicted as playing a secondary role in the printing of the Syriac New Testament behind Postel and Widmanstetter. The letters, however, prove the contrary. They show Moses as a typesetter, as someone playing an active and creative role in the developing of the types and also as someone having a vision to create his own printing press. These three characteristics will be described below.

In the letters, Moses clearly refers to himself as the responsible for the typesetting. In letter 19/05/55, we read: “*Know, oh, my brother, that I am very pressed by the printing work. Because I am the one who sets the types...*”. In some cases, he also mentioned a colleague who might be identified with Kaspar Kraft, the punch-cutter.<sup>286</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that Moses did the bulk of the work. In letter 18/08/55, he wrote: “*Know, oh my brother, that in this month*

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<sup>286</sup> Borbone, ‘Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria’, 87 n. 40.



published in February 1556.<sup>290</sup> Making one *estrangelo* and one *serto* font was absolutely reasonable for such a highly prestigious edition. However, it is unclear why a bigger *serto* was made. Preparing typesets costed an enormous amount of money, and, since it was apparently hardly used, its creation seems to be totally unnecessary. Except if it was not meant to remain in Vienna. In letter 15/07/55 Moses wrote the following:

*The new types that I had made are not as small as those [i.e. those used for printing the New Testament] but large, so that it is impossible to combine them with the others. I had them made at my own expense. They are not finished yet, because the man who makes them is working with me in the printing press. Every day I allow him an hour or two to work on them, because he helps me a lot in the printing.*<sup>291</sup>

It is clear that Moses had a new typeface made for himself that was larger than the type used for the *editio princeps* of the New Testament. From a later letter, letter 01/08/56, we also learn that he wanted to bring these types with him:

*As for the types of the press that we prepared, he [Widmanstetter] took them all, and did not give me a single letter. I wrote to the governor/prince twice because of the ‘mothers’ i.e. the ‘matrige’ or ‘matrice’ but he did not help at all.*

It seems that Moses had this typeface made without Widmanstetter’s knowledge and consent. When Widmanstetter discovered it, he took it away from Moses. Therefore, it is only at the end of the New Testament that this typeface appears in the *errata folio*. Moses wanted to take this typeface with him, but finally it ended up staying in Vienna, thus Widmanstetter could use it when publishing his own grammar. Knowing Moses’ personality and learning Widmanstetter’s reaction, we can suspect that Moses did not really have them made at his own expense. Nevertheless, it shows how obsessed he was with the spread of printing in Syriac. Some of his remarks in previous letters suggest that he wanted to visit Masius and set up a new printing press with him: a project they were planning together before Moses decided unexpectedly to follow Widmanstetter to Vienna in 1553. However, at this point of their correspondence, when Moses’ relationship with Masius already deteriorated, it is more

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<sup>290</sup> Smitskamp, *Philologia Orientalis*, 100–103; Coakley, *The Typography of Syriac*, 31–34.

<sup>291</sup> Cf. Borbone, ‘Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria’, 87 n. 40.

probable that he wanted to bring it with him home. The first Syriac printing press in the Near East was set up in 1610 in the Monastery of Quzhayya, Lebanon.<sup>292</sup> The first Syrian Orthodox printing press in Moses' native land was set up in 1881.<sup>293</sup> If he had succeeded, Moses would be celebrated today as the trailblazer in printing in the Near East. In any case, it is clear that, at least in his mind, Moses was 50 or 300 years ahead of his time.

### **3.3. Contributions to the provenance of some manuscripts of the Vatican Apostolic Library**

Provenance research is a very dynamically developing field of codicology.<sup>294</sup> It helps to reconstruct lost libraries and collections, discover patterns and trends in the history of book, and understand the dynamics of knowledge transfer and transmission of culture.<sup>295</sup> In some cases, it can also help to date works or identify authors.

Moses was the most significant Syriac manuscript dealer in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; he copied himself or brought from the Near East dozens of manuscripts. Giorgio Levi della Vida identified several manuscripts in the collection of the Vatican Apostolic Library, and Pier Giorgio Borbone extended the survey to a European level. Nevertheless, there are still new and new manuscripts that turn out to belong to Moses. Among the oriental manuscripts of the Vatican Apostolic Library, there are several pieces which are known to arrive in the Vatican from the Bibliotheca Palatina, but their preceding history is a mystery. According to the current state of research several manuscripts belonged once to Guillaume Postel, who had brought them from the Middle East. Nevertheless, Moses' letters prove that this view has to be reconsidered. This is discussed in detail in this chapter.

#### **3.3.1. Syriac manuscripts in the Bibliotheca Palatina; the current state of research**

The *Bibliotheca Palatina* or *Palatinate library* of Heidelberg was the most important library of the German Renaissance, numbering approximately 5,000 printed books and 3,524 manuscripts. The origins of the library date back to the founding of Heidelberg University in

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<sup>292</sup> Coakley, *The Typography of Syriac*, 45–48; Moukarzel, *Facsimile of the Editio Princeps*.

<sup>293</sup> Taşğın and Langer, 'The Establishment of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate Press', 185.

<sup>294</sup> Cf. Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History*. On the use of provenance research see p. 2–7, for further reading see the bibliography on p. 391.

<sup>295</sup> For an example for what traditional codicological approaches combined with big data can bring forth see the Mapping Manuscript Migrations (MMM) project in cooperation of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies, Bodleian Library, Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, and Aalto University. Cf. Burrows et al., 'A New Model for Manuscript Provenance Research'.



1386, but it is the book-loving Elector Otto-Henry (1502–1559) who is considered to be the founding father of the collection. Thanks to its wide coverage of different fields of science and its precious manuscript treasures, the collection was lauded far and wide as 'the mother of all libraries' during its heyday in the 16th and 17th centuries. The region suffered a lot in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1848), and the library was taken as spoil in 1622 when the Catholic League sacked Heidelberg. Although Maximilian of Bavaria (1573–1651), commander of the Catholic troops, originally wanted to add the *Bibliotheca Palatina* to his own library in Munich, finally decided to present the collection to Pope Gregory XV (1621–1623). Thus, in December 1622, almost the whole collection of the library was packed in 197 crates and transported to the Vatican.<sup>296</sup>

Although the library's crown jewels were the German<sup>297</sup>, Latin<sup>298</sup> and Greek<sup>299</sup> manuscripts, it also contained several precious Oriental manuscripts. In 1623, 262 Hebrew, nine Arabic, five Syriac, two Turkish, one Ethiopian and one Tamil manuscripts arrived in the Vatican Library from Heidelberg.<sup>300</sup> The Syriac manuscripts are the following:

- **Vat. Sir. 5** – Book of Ezekiel according to the version of Jacob of Edessa – dated 8<sup>th</sup> century – Dayr al-Suryān, Egypt<sup>301</sup>
- **Vat. Sir. 16** – New Testament of the Peshitta – dated 13<sup>th</sup> century – Mosul, Irak<sup>302</sup>
- **Vat. Sir. 19** – Melkite Evangeliary – dated 1030 – Antioch at Orontes<sup>303</sup>
- **Vat. Sir. 154** – Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew by George of Be'eltān (d. 790) – dated 9–10<sup>th</sup> century<sup>304</sup>
- **Vat. Sir. 193** – A metrical Syriac grammar by Barhebraeus (1226–1286) – dated 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>305</sup>

<sup>296</sup> For a detailed description of these events see Bähr, 'Zur Geschichte der Wegführung der Heidelberger Bibliothek nach Rom'; Montuschi, 'Le biblioteche di Heidelberg in Vaticana'.

<sup>297</sup> [https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle\\_bibliothek/codpalgerm/index.html](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle_bibliothek/codpalgerm/index.html). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>298</sup> [https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle\\_bibliothek/codpallat/index.html](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle_bibliothek/codpallat/index.html). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>299</sup> [https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle\\_bibliothek/codpalgraec/index.html](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle_bibliothek/codpalgraec/index.html). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>300</sup> Piemontese, 'La raccolta vaticana di orientalia', 428. The digital version of the manuscripts is available online on the following website: [https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle\\_bibliothek/weiteresprachen.html](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/en/bpd/virtuelle_bibliothek/weiteresprachen.html). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>301</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 302. For further bibliography see <https://opac.vatlib.it/mss/detail/Vat.sir.5>. For the digital version see: [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.sir.5](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.5). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>302</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 303–306. For further bibliography see <https://opac.vatlib.it/mss/detail/Vat.sir.16>. For the digital version see: [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.sir.16](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.16). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>303</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 307. For further bibliography see <https://opac.vatlib.it/mss/detail/Vat.sir.19>. For the digital version see [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.sir.19](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.19). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>304</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 302. For the digital version see [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.sir.154.pt.1](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.154.pt.1) and [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.sir.154.pt.2](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.154.pt.2). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>305</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 302. For further bibliography see <https://opac.vatlib.it/mss/detail/Vat.sir.193>. For the digital version see [https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/bav\\_vat\\_sir\\_193/0001/image.info.thumbs](https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/bav_vat_sir_193/0001/image.info.thumbs). Retrieved 12.11.2021.

Vat. Sir. 19 is a palimpsest containing an underlying Greek text (f. 3–8). It was written in 1030 by a monk called Elias, a native of ‘Ābūd, Palestine, who was a member of the community of Abbot Moses in Antioch. A note on f. 1a v by Elias’ hand is one of the oldest dated texts containing garshuni words.<sup>306</sup> Umberto Cassuto, who studied the Hebrew manuscripts of the Palatina, showed in 1935 that this Syriac manuscript, together with many Hebrew items, came from the collection of the protestant Ulrich Fugger (1530–1584), who left his books to Otto-Henry in his will.<sup>307</sup>

The provenance of the remaining four manuscripts was examined most extensively by Levi della Vida who described in detail the circumstances of their transport from Heidelberg to Rome and also tried to find out from where they could get into the collection of the Bibliotheca Palatina.<sup>308</sup> In his research, he relied on a historical catalogue of the Bibliotheca Palatina, Ms. Pal. Lat. 1951, which he dated to the 16-17<sup>th</sup> century. This catalogue contains a list of 15 Oriental manuscripts. Along ten Arabic and one Ethiopian items, four Syriac manuscripts are listed that can be identified with Vat. Sir. 5, 16, 154 and 193.<sup>309</sup> Levi della Vida noticed that a copy of this catalogue mentions in its title that it is a list of Guillaume Postel’s manuscripts.<sup>310</sup> After having painstakingly browsed through Postel’s correspondence, he found that Postel, writing about the circumstances of the selling of his manuscripts, distinctly mentioned 15 manuscripts sold through Masius’ agency to Count Palatine Otto-Henry in 1555.<sup>311</sup> Thus, Levi della Vida convincingly argued that the 15 items of Vat. Lat. 1951 are identical with Postel’s 15 Oriental manuscripts.<sup>312</sup>

Later scholars followed him on this path. Concerning Vat. Sir. 16, Harmut Bobzin noted that Postel brought it with himself to Vienna in order to use it at the edition of the Syriac New

<sup>306</sup> Piemontese, ‘La raccolta vaticana di orientalia’, 434.

<sup>307</sup> Cassuto, *I manoscritti palatini ebraici*, 183.

<sup>308</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 290–337.

<sup>309</sup> Ms. Pal. Lat. 1951, f. 97r–98r. For the digital version see: [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Pal.lat.1951](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.lat.1951). 13.11.2021.

<sup>310</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 293, n. 2. “Libri Arabici quos habet Bibl. Palat. a Guil. Postello” Ms. Hamburg, State and University Library, Cod. hist. litt. : 4° : 31, 54. For a digital copy see <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/6UQJOLUAY4V5MHR5A4UOXH3XWNTXLG6N>. Retrieved on 13 November 2021.

<sup>311</sup> “Si quando ex Bibliotheca illa Ducis Bavariae D. Otthonis Henrici ubi ducentis aureis nummis Abilfedeam nostrum cum 14 aliis voluminibus oppignerare sum coactus, licebit recuperare, erit unde et meorum laborum et tuae diligentiae assertionisque nostrae sedulitatis possis abunde confirmare.” Letter from Postel to Abraham Ortelius (1527–1598) on 9 April 1567. Cf. Hessels, *Abrahami Ortelii [...] epistulae*, 42–43 and Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 308, n. 1; “Caeterum valde vereor ne ille Scrimingerius Scottus, cui, quum mihi ducentos aureos nomine commodati dedisset pro 15 voluminibus illis Arabicis quae oppignerare me putabam D. Clariss. bonaeque memoriae Duci Bavariae Otto-Henrico tibi noto...” Letter from Postel to Masius on 23 June 1568. Cf. Chaufepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 232; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 421 and Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 316–317.

<sup>312</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 307–308, 317.

Testament but finally, they did not use it. He also added that the manuscript was sold with Postel's other Oriental volumes to Otto-Henry and thus ended up in the Vatican.<sup>313</sup> Writing about Immanuel Tremellius' 1569 edition of the Syriac New Testament which was based on Vat. Sir. 16, Robert J. Wilkinson noticed that his manuscript was one of Postel's fifteen manuscripts that he sold for 200 gulden to Count Palatine Otto Henry.<sup>314</sup> And Juan Francisco Domínguez Domínguez also opined that Vat. Sir. 16 was a Syriac New Testament that Postel brought from the Near East.<sup>315</sup> With regard to Vat. Sir. 5 originating from Egypt, Pier Giorgio Borbone argued that Postel might have brought this volume from his first Oriental journey (1535–1537) when he also visited Egypt. He also highlighted that Postel was apparently the responsible for the first transfer of a book from Dayr al-Suryān to Europe; and Moses the second.<sup>316</sup>

Levi della Vida's argumentation was accepted not only by scholars writing on Syriac topics. François Secret approached to this question as Postel's biographer. He also referred to the Italian scholar's discovery and counted those 15 manuscripts in his monograph surveying Postel's handwritten legacy.<sup>317</sup> Robert Jones was interested in Arabic scholarship in early modern Europe, and he also wrote about the ten Arabic manuscripts of that list in Pal. Lat. 1951 as Postel's manuscripts.<sup>318</sup>

Thus, according to the current state of scholarship, the Syriac manuscripts of the late Bibliotheca Palatina are all but one attributed to Guillaume Postel, and the outlier was a manuscript of the protestant Ulrich Fugger.

### **3.3.2. Moses' manuscripts in the Bibliotheca Palatina**

Moses' correspondence contains an important fact proving that he had also sold manuscripts to Otto-Henry. In letter 01/08/56, he gave an account of this transaction with the following words:

*I went to that leader, Hottenrico, and gave him all the old books I had with me in manuscript. He gave me 40 thaler. As for the New Testament, about which I talked to you, he paid me for it 22 thalers.*

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<sup>313</sup> Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 315–316, n. 229.

<sup>314</sup> Wilkinson, 'Immanuel Tremellius' 1569 Edition of the Syriac New Testament', 13.

<sup>315</sup> Domínguez, 'Arias Montano y Guillaume Postel', 152–153, n. 19.

<sup>316</sup> Borbone, 'Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria', 97–98.

<sup>317</sup> Secret, *Bibliographie des manuscrits*, 58.

<sup>318</sup> Jones, *Learning Arabic in Renaissance Europe*, 17.

Former researchers were not aware of this action, therefore they could not take it into consideration. If we reconsider the current state of research bearing this information in mind, several weak points of its argumentation are revealed.

### ***Weak points of the current state of research***

It was already known for Levi della Vida, that the fifteen items of Vat. Lat. 1951 are not identical one on one with Postel's fifteen Oriental manuscripts, because Postel had a musical-astronomical manuscript he mentioned several times,<sup>319</sup> and it was not included in the list. This manuscript is Vat. Ar. 319<sup>320</sup> which is proven to be from the Palatina collection, therefore it has to be Postel's manuscript. Levi della Vida put this discrepancy down to a mistake by the compiler of the list and suggested that, by contrast, Vat. Ar. 249, al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* did not belong to Postel and it had reached the Heidelberg library from a different source.<sup>321</sup>

In fact, it is not the only manuscript on the list whose association with Postel is doubtful. Actually, there are eight manuscripts on the list, for which it is not sure whether they belonged to Postel or not. Levi della Vida was also aware of this, because he too emphasized that of the 15 manuscripts on the list, only seven - six Arabic and one Syriac – manuscripts were referred to by Postel in his letters as his own.<sup>322</sup> Therefore, from among the Syriac manuscripts, only the New Testament can be said to have been Postel's, and no such clear-cut evidence has survived for the others.

A further uncertainty is caused by the fact that there is no data on the number of Postel's manuscripts in the year of the sale, 1555. The number 15 was first mentioned by Postel only 12-13 years after the sale. Furthermore, he got bogged down after four while listing the books and admitted that he could not remember the titles of the others.<sup>323</sup> He also noted that one of

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<sup>319</sup> "Nactus sum in Oriente pleraque Arabica exempla, et ante omnia Cosmografiae Orientalis et neotericarum urbium volumen, cum Musica et Astronomia, accessere varia Evangelii et Novi Testamenti exemplaria." Letter from Postel to Masius on 10 June 1550. Cf. Chaupepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 216–217; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 56 and Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 310. "Habeo etiam cosmographum illum insignem Abulfedeam nomine, Ptolemao nec arte, nec mole inferiorem. Sunt etiam Damasceni Opera [, Musica ?] et Astronomia." Chaupepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 221 and Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 312.

<sup>320</sup> This manuscript contains Naṣīr-ad-Dīn Ṭūsī's work entitled *at-Taḍkira fī 'ilm al-hay'a* and Ṣaḥī-ad-Dīn al-Urmawī's *Kitāb al-Adwār fī al-mūsīqā*. Cf. [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.ar.319](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.319). Retrieved 14 November 2021.

<sup>321</sup> Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 317–318.

<sup>322</sup> 1. Taqwīm al-buldān by Abū al-Fidā' (Vat. Ar. 266). 2. A chronicle of Jirjis ibn al-'Amīd al-Makīn entitled al-Majmū' al-mubārak (This manuscript was taken from the Vatican-collection and is preserved today in Oxford under the shelfmark Ms. Marsh 309). 3. An Arabich Pentateuch (Vat. Ar. 1). 4. A Syriac New Testament (This is supposed to be Vat. Sir. 16). 5. Letters of Saint Paul in Arabic (Vat. Ar. 23). 6. Kitāb Minhāj al-Bayān by Yahyā Ibn- 'Isā Ibn-Jazla (Vat. Ar. 374). 7. Treatises by John of Damascus (Vat. Ar. 177). Cf. Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 318, n. 1.

<sup>323</sup> "Sed scio in Europa Occidua Cosmographum Abulphedeam nullum esse praeter meum, una cum Tacuinis summa, quae possit fieri charta, ut quae longissime Imperialem amplissimam superet. Praeterea Theologia Naturalis Damasceni Arabica lingua, hoc est Authoris propria scripta, licet Graece extet. Adhaec Tomus perampus

the books was worth 200 golds, although he received altogether 200 golds for the entire collection. Apparently, Postel's memories faded and he was also exaggerating. Both the time passed after the sale and Postel's boastful tone warn us not to take the number 15 as read.

However, there is one thing in Postel's letter, that could be accepted without reservation and namely that Postel wrote about only Arabic manuscripts, and did not mention any Ethiopian or Syriac items at all.<sup>324</sup> Nevertheless, Levi della Vita considered it as a "lapsus di memoria", because he stuck to the list of Pal. Lat. 1951 and according to it Postel should have had an Ethiopian and four Syriac manuscripts.<sup>325</sup> However, it is much more likely that Postel remembered the language of the manuscripts correctly than that he was able to recall the exact number of them. Curiously, the Hamburger list which explicitly mentioned Postel above the 15 titles, also confirms this view it refers only to the Arabic items as Postel's manuscripts, Although Syriac manuscripts are below the Arabic ones, they are not mentioned, and the Ethiopian manuscript is not on the list at all.<sup>326</sup>

In sum, there are so many questions about Postel's manuscripts in the Palatina collection that it seems more reasonable to consider only the seven manuscripts that Postel himself referred to as his own as his belongings, until further concrete evidence is found.

### ***Evidence supporting Moses' ownership***

Contrary evidence showing that the Oriental manuscripts of the Palatina are not all from Postel, does exist. Moses' correspondence is an example for it. In his letters, Moses mentioned several manuscripts that might be identical with some of the Palatine-Vatican manuscripts listed above: a copy of the Book of Ezekiel with the Vat. Sir. 5, a New Testament with Vat. Sir. 16, and a Syriac grammar with Vat. Sir. 193. Were these Postel's books at Moses? If so, how did they end up in the Palatine collection? Or if they belonged to Moses and not to Postel, what proves it? Let us have a look at them one by one.

The grammar book' case is the most obvious, because Moses and other sources as well confirm that it was his manuscript. In letter 15/07/55, Moses wrote the following:

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Historiarum Giaphiri, Pentateuchus Arabice, etc. quorum nunc non memini. Certe unus illorum non minus 200 aureis aestimandus esset..." Letter from Postel to Masius on 23 June 1568. Cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 232; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 421 and Levi della Vita, *Ricerche*, 317.

<sup>324</sup> "Caeterum valde vereor ne ille Scrimingerius Scottus, cui, quum mihi ducentos aureos nomine commodati dedisset pro 15 voluminibus illis Arabicis quae oppignerare me putabam D. Clariss. bonaeque memoriae Duci Bavariae Otto-Henrico tibi noto..." Letter from Postel to Masius on 23 June 1568. Cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 232; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 421 and Levi della Vita, *Ricerche*, 316–317.

<sup>325</sup> Levi della Vita, *Ricerche*, 308, n. 1.

<sup>326</sup> "Libri Arabici quos habet Bibl. Palat. a Guil. Postello" Ms. Hamburg, State and University Library, Cod. hist. litt.: 4<sup>o</sup>: 31, 54. For a digital copy see <https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/6UQJOLUAY4V5MHR5A4UOXH3XWNTXLG6N>. Retrieved on 13 November 2021.

*If you wish, I give you my grammar that you saw by me in Rome. Just pay me for it 10 ducat or a bit less 'o manco poco'.*

Masius also attested that Moses had a Syriac grammar manuscript. In the preface of his printed Syriac grammar, Masius lamented that he had not had access to it.<sup>327</sup>

*In this matter I do not see before me the footprints of any man to follow. But a Grammar written by Syrians themselves exists. Those who have a zeal for these things will be able to soothe their desire for more complete erudition by their expectation of it. Indeed, there is hope that this Grammar at some time will appear. For when Moses Mardenus had brought back from Assyria that Grammar and likewise a dictionary of Syrian words, as they call it, and had left them at Venice, he therefore could not make a copy of those books for me, who privately sometimes used to hear that learned man at Rome. Later, Moses arrived at Vienna from Rome and transcribed each book for Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter, as he indicated to me in his own letters.*

We can disregard the detail whether or not Moses took this manuscript with him to Rome, it is not crucial for our investigation. The copy mentioned by Masius in the previous excerpt, has long been known. Moses prepared it right after his arrival to Vienna in November 1553.<sup>328</sup> Although there are many points in common between Vat. Sir. 193 and the Vienna copy, the two manuscripts have not yet been linked together. Both include a Latin title written by Widmanstetter.<sup>329</sup> There are Arabic inscriptions on several pages from the same hand in both of them, probably also by Widmanstetter.<sup>330</sup> And last but not least the writing of Vat. Sir. 193 uncannily resembles Moses' hand so it was probably also written by him. Since, as we saw above, Postel never claimed to have a Syriac grammatical manuscript, we can consider Vat. Sir. 193 as Moses' own copy.

There are equally convincing arguments for Moses' ownership in the case of the Syriac New Testament, Vat. Sir. 16. We have seen above that this was the only manuscript mentioned by title when Moses reported to Masius on the deal he concluded with Otto Henry. His letters

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<sup>327</sup> Masius, *Grammatica linguae syriacae*, 4. Cf. Kuntz, 'Guillaume Postel and the Syriac Gospels', 477.

<sup>328</sup> Munich, Bavarian State Library, Cod. Syr. 1 ff. 1–32r: *Metrical Grammar* by Barhebraeus; ff. 32v–51v: *De vocibus aequivocis* by the same author. Cf. Blum, 'Aus den Anfängen der syrischen Studien'; Contini, 'Gli inizi', 21; Borbone, 'Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria', 101.

<sup>329</sup> At the bottom of the page on f. 1br in Vat. Sir. 193 and on f. 1r in Munich, Bavarian State Library, Cod. Syr. 1.

<sup>330</sup> Munich, Bavarian State Library, Cod. Syr. 1 f. 3r, 3v and Vat. Sir. 193 f. 2v, 3r, 3v...

contain further pieces of information about this manuscript. In letter 26/03/55, Moses wrote the following:

*If you, brother 'tuo fratelmo' want me to keep the lexicon, the grammar, and the New Testament that Your Grace has read in Rome together with the Latin New Testament as Cardinal Santa Cruz<sup>331</sup> ordered, I will keep them for you.*

So, this manuscript was by Moses in Rome, and Masius consulted it. It is also clear from the letter 19/05/55 that Moses first offered it to Masius for sale:

*Concerning the New Testament, of which your grace asked me to make a decision, in other words, to say how many dinars I want for it: I would like to get for it 30 gold dinars. Please write to your disciple whether this is more or less than what you anticipated for it. And then if I want, I will give it to you, and if not, I will not.*

Masius seriously considered to buy it, but he was worried about its condition (letter 15/07/55):

*And do not waver [being afraid that] the New [Testament] is more damaged than you saw it with me in Rome. And do not think that I deceive you. God forbid! I do hope that I can see your face and not only because of this but also because of our Lord. I swear that only a few fascicules came untied in the middle of the book, nothing else and if you want, I can tie it back nicely. Know that I wrote the chapters in this book in the order as they are in our church.*

Vat. Sir. 16 is indeed in poor condition. Especially compared to the grammatical manuscript. The pages are heavily waterstained, the first and last folios are fragmented. Moses was right saying that only a few fascicules came untied. F. 119 and 128, unlike the rest of the manuscript, are written in serto in a hand very similar to Moses. These two folios are inverted; f. 128 comes after f. 118 and f. 119 comes after f. 127 so they were untied indeed and someone tied them back wrongly. Masius was probably shocked by the price and reluctant to buy it (letter 18/08/55):

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<sup>331</sup> Marcello Cervini (1501–1555), later Pope Marcellus II (1555). The moniker comes from his titular church: he became the Cardinal-Priest of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme on 19 December 1539.

*I said that the New Testament you read in Rome when I was in Rome, is still in the same condition and it is not damaged at all. Only those two or three fascicules 'quaterni' came untied in the middle of the book and if you want, I can tie them back nicely. There are no more spots on it, only what you saw in Rome. That is what I let you know in the other letter that I wrote to your love. And now your authority asked me to inform you sincerely that it did not damage more than before and that it will last for many days. If you keep it nicely, it can last for a thousand year. But if you do not believe my words, I do not know how could I write it to your love. Truly, I swear to God that it is not damaged. Now, if this nobleman wants to buy it, I will give it to him as I said before. And if not, remain in peace, this book is very precious for me.*

So Moses tried to sell it to someone else, but in October 1555 he had not yet succeeded (letter 26/10/55):

*As for the New Testament you read in Rome and asked me many times to inform you about it honestly, and I informed you sincerely. It is still by me, no answer came from this ruler.*

Finally, as we have seen above, Moses writes to Masius from Venice in August 1556 that the meeting finally took place, he managed to sell several of his manuscripts to Otto Henry, and he received 22 thalers for the New Testament.

Masius, who knew Moses's manuscript well because he had worked with it, mentioned further information about it in the preface to his grammar book.<sup>332</sup> On one hand he stated that the Syrians "use that most accurate style of writing only in the script of sacred books", just like in the case of Moses' New Testament manuscript. With this, he probably wanted to say that the Gospel was written in *estrangelo*, unlike Moses' letters and other manuscripts that were written in *serto*.<sup>333</sup> Vat. Sir. 16 is indeed written in *estrangelo*. Another even more decisive piece of information is that Moses' manuscript was written in Mosul at the Tiger. This also strengthens

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<sup>332</sup> "*Sed ut Iudaei, ita Syri quoque accuratissimo illo scribendi genere in sola sacrorum librorum scriptura utuntur. Atque utinam etiam usus fuisset ille librarius, qui in urbe Mozal ad flumen Tigrim exemplar illud Novi Testamenti scripsit: de quo id optimi et benignissimi Caesaris Ferdinandi liberalitate, et Mosis Mardeni industria typis est expressum, quod unum nos habemus.*" Masius, *Grammatica linguae Syriacae*, 4.

<sup>333</sup> The term 'estrangelo' refers to the use of this script; it seems to be an Arabic loan word سطر انجيلي meaning 'line of the gospel'. On the earliest development of Syriac script see Briquel-Chatonnet, 'De l'écriture édessénienne'; Healey, 'The Early History of the Syriac Script'; Penn, Crouser, and Abbott, 'Serto before Serto'.



our argumentation because the Vatican-copy was written in the monastery of St. Michael in the vicinity of Mosul.<sup>334</sup> Nevertheless, the clinching argument is that Postel also approved the difference in the origin of his and Moses' manuscript noticing that his copy was bought in Damascus, whereas Moses' copy was written in the 'middle of Mesopotamia'.<sup>335</sup>

The identification of Moses' manuscript with Vat. Sir. 16 also fits in the broader context. Widmanstetter mentioned in the preface of the *editio princeps* that the text is based on two Syriac manuscripts. It is generally known that Ms. Vienna, Austrian National Library Syr. 1 served as direct antecedent of the edition, but it is a contemporary copy Moses prepared in Vienna in 1554. Neither the original of this manuscript, nor the identity of the other manuscript has been determined yet. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Jacob Georg Christian Adler (1756–1834) examined the different printed and manuscript versions of the Syriac New Testament and found affinities between the Vienna edition and several 'Nestorian', i.e. East Syriac manuscripts, especially Vat. Sir. 16.<sup>336</sup> One century later, George Henry Gwilliam (1846–1913) rejected this suggestion based on partly textual, partly formal reasons emphasising that in the 1555 edition both the characters and the vowel-point system suggest Western origin.<sup>337</sup> The concept of an East Syriac base manuscript (Vat. Sir. 16) revised by a West Syrian monk drawing from a West Syriac manuscript, reconciles the conflicting views and confirms further our thesis.

Two further pieces of evidence prove that this manuscript was used for the *editio princeps*. Firstly, a Latin inscription on f. 1r saying: "Hoc libro comp[...]. Quatuor Euang[elii], Acta Apostolorum, Pauli Epistolae XIII et Catholicae litteres" is clearly in Widmanstetter's hand. And secondly, the sermo notes on the margin indicating the order of the lectures at the liturgy which tally with the same marks of the Viennese New Testament.

There is a third manuscript, the Book of Ezekiel that also merits an investigation. Moses mentioned it only once in letter 26/03/55, when he confirmed for Masius' question that this manuscript is with him in Vienna. Moses did not claim that it was his manuscript, he only stated that it is with him. Consequently, we have to examine how realistic it is that he kept by him a manuscript owned by Postel. First of all, it should be noted that Postel never mentioned that he

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<sup>334</sup> Cf. Adler, *Novi Testamenti versiones Syriacae*, 22; Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 305.

<sup>335</sup> "Dolet quidem vehementer quod exemplaria illa Syriaca quae attuli tibi non sint data sicut et promissa. Sed sis omnino certissimus ne Iodo quidem uno differe ab eo exemplari Mosis Mesopotamii, quo uti sumus ad emittendum typis. Nam una cum eo contuleram meum, eo quod antiquius videbatur suum esse, et ne litera quidem una differre comperi, licet meum exemplar Damasci sim nactus, suum autem Meredinii sit scriptum, in media Mesopotamia" Bibliothèque nationale, fonds lat. 3402 f. 91, quoted by Kuntz, 'Guillaume Postel and the Syriac Gospels', 481 n. 62.

<sup>336</sup> Adler, *Novi Testamenti versiones Syriacae*, 39–41.

<sup>337</sup> Gwilliam, 'The Ammonian Sections' 268.

possessed such a manuscript. It is not among his seven Arabic-Syriac manuscripts we know by title. Postel's books were sold in the spring of 1555. Masius helped him to find a purchaser, they had been corresponding for months before the transaction to discuss the details, to set the price, etc... Postel's manuscripts were collected in March from Venice by Nicolaus Stopius, but the Ezekiel-manuscript was at that time in Vienna by Moses. If this manuscript had belonged to Postel, we would certainly have heard of it in either Moses' or Postel's correspondence around that time. We know so many details of the circumstances of this book sale, it is surprising that we don't know anything about how the book of Ezekiel was attached to the rest of Postel's collection. Neither Postel asked Masius not to forget about this volume, nor Moses mentioned that someone came to collect it from his house. What is more, Postel sent a list of books for sale in January 1555 to Masius, and he referred to this list in a later letter as "catalogue of Arabic books".<sup>338</sup> So there is no question of selling Syriac books as well. Consequently, although the evidence for Moses' ownership in case of the Book of Ezekiel is not as convincing as in the case of the grammar and the New Testament, there are more arguments speaking for it than for Postel's ownership.

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<sup>338</sup> "Transcriptum excerptumve ex iis literis meis, quas ad te Ianuarii mense scripseram Catalogum Librorum Arabicorum attulit representavitque mihi communis noster amicus Nicolaus Stopius 17 Martii Patavii, dixitque hunc una cum literis ad D. Ianiacobum Fuckerum fuisse a D. et Ill. Principe Otthone-Henrico transmissum, ut illi libri ad eum mittantur, deposito interim eo precio ducentorum aureorum quod postulavi, ut si libri placuerint ipse retineat, sin autem remittat." Letter from Postel to Masius 20 March 1555. Cf. Chauffepié, *Nouveau dictionnaire historique*, 221; Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 196 and Levi della Vida, *Ricerche*, 314.

## 4. The correspondence as a liturgical source

Wesselius has already pointed out that the correspondence contains a great number of fragments of the anaphora of Saint Basil.<sup>339</sup> This is an important discovery because Masius' Syriac manuscript disappeared, and these fragments could open the way to identify it or find a similar copy among the other known manuscripts. It would be beneficial for both philological and liturgical reasons. The anaphora of Saint Basil is one of the most significant Eucharistic Prayers of all Christendom: it has a central position in the Antiochene and Alexandrian liturgical tradition. Furthermore, it was the principal liturgy in the Byzantine and Armenian Rite for centuries; thus, it played a pivotal role in the development of Oriental liturgies.<sup>340</sup> It has a version in virtually all the languages of the Christian East – Greek, Armenian, Syriac, Coptic and Ethiopic.<sup>341</sup> The Greek version had been known for some time in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in manuscripts, and an *editio princeps* was published already in 1526 by Demetrios Doukas.<sup>342</sup> The Syriac version came to light shortly afterwards, and its Latin translation published by Masius in 1569 enjoyed great popularity.<sup>343</sup> Nevertheless, this head start is not reflected in the scholarly production of the past centuries: a critical edition or a thorough analysis has been published on all other versions of the anaphora except the Syriac.<sup>344</sup> Many steps had been taken regarding the Syriac text as well. At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Eusèbe Renaudot (1646–1720) discovered a manuscript in Paris.<sup>345</sup> The *editio princeps* was published almost two centuries later, in 1922, by the Syriac Catholic Patriarch, Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani (1848–1929), based on another single manuscript of unknown origin.<sup>346</sup> And finally, in the middle of

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<sup>339</sup> Wesselius, 'The Syriac Correspondence', 25–26.

<sup>340</sup> On the importance and the *Sitz im Leben* of this anaphora see Winkler, 'Über die Basilius-Anaphora' and Vorhes McGowan, 'The Basilian Anaphoras'.

<sup>341</sup> For an (almost) comprehensive list of manuscripts in the different languages and traditions see Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana*, IV, 1459–1514.

<sup>342</sup> Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana*, IV, 1291 and 1512.

<sup>343</sup> Masius, 'Anaphora divi Basilii'. Within a few decades, it was republished five times and six more reprints appeared in later centuries. Cf. Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana*, IV, 1297–1298 and 1490.

<sup>344</sup> For the Ethiopian version see Euringer, 'Die äthiopische Anaphora', for the Sahidic: Doresse and Lanne, 'Un témoin archaïque'. In 2004, Achim Budde published an extensive edition of the Egyptian recension with its Greek, Sahidic and Bohairic translations. Cf. Budde, *Die ägyptische Basilius-Anaphora*. The Armenian version was published twice: Renhart, 'Die älteste armenische Anaphora' and Winkler, *Die Basilius-Anaphora*. And finally, the Greek version was published in 1995 and revised in 2000 by Parenti and Velkovska, *L'eucologio*.

<sup>345</sup> Renaudot, *Liturgiarum orientalium collectio*, II, 557–560. This is today Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Syr. 76.

<sup>346</sup> Rahmani, *Missale*, 172–196. Cf. Guidi, 'Review of Missale...' and Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana*, IV, 1490. An earlier edition dated 1843 is mentioned in several studies, e.g. Fedwick, *Bibliotheca Basiliana*, IV, 1331. Although there is indeed an anaphora entitled Anaphora of St. Basil in this publication, its content is in fact identical with the anaphora of Philoxenus of Mabug. Cf. *Missale syriacum*, 155–161.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hieronymus Engberding (1899–1969) published an insightful study on the intercessions of the Syriac anaphora based on Rahmani’s edition and taking into consideration Masius’ translation and the Paris manuscript.<sup>347</sup> But the critical edition was slow to come until most recently. The arduous task of preparing the critical edition of the Syriac anaphora of Saint Basil has been finally undertaken by Erich Renhart.<sup>348</sup> This work will be a substantial contribution to liturgical studies. It completes the series of critical editions of the most important redactions of the anaphora of Saint Basil, and it will be an essential study in the field of Syriac studies at the same time.<sup>349</sup>

Identifying Masius' lost manuscript would be necessary for two reasons. Firstly, because Masius’ copy is known to be a very early witness of the anaphora, therefore determining its place in the manuscript tradition is crucial. And secondly, a possible identification of Masius’ text would allow us to prepare a correct examination of Masius’ translation, this landmark achievement of early Syriac scholarship. Some efforts already have been made in this regard.<sup>350</sup> Renaudot set the Latin translation against the Syriac text of the Paris manuscript and found them divergent at several points.<sup>351</sup> Nevertheless, for the greater part of the text, he found Masius’ translation accurate.<sup>352</sup> Two centuries later, Engberding concluded that Masius’ translation was strongly influenced by Humanistic style and judged it to be rather a paraphrase than a translation.<sup>353</sup> It is possibly due to this harsh verdict that no attempt has been made to compare Masius’ Latin translation to the since discovered manuscripts of the Syriac anaphora of Saint Basil.

This chapter aims to track down Masius’ copy relying on the anaphoral fragments found in Moses’ letters. As a first step, the historical sources of Masius’ manuscript will be collected, and the circumstances of its acquisition will be examined. Secondly, the fragments of the anaphora will be gathered one by one from Moses’ letters. The fragments will be collated with the text of several anaphora-manuscripts known today. After examining the provenance of those

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<sup>347</sup> Engberding, ‘Das anaphorische Fürbittgebet’.

<sup>348</sup> Renhart, ‘Die syrische Basiliusanaphora und ihre Quellen’ and most recently: Renhart, ‘Die Basiliusanaphora’; Renhart, ‘The Critical Edition’.

<sup>349</sup> For an overview of the editions of Syriac anaphoras, see Feulner, ‘Zu den Editionen’, 259–277, and most recently Brock, ‘Two Further Editions’, 323–326.

<sup>350</sup> Cf. Renhart, ‘Die syrische Basiliusanaphora und ihre Quellen’, 299.

<sup>351</sup> Renaudot, *Liturgiarum orientalium collectio*, II, 557: “*nam exemplar quo usus est Masius a Colbertino differ in multis*”.

<sup>352</sup> Renaudot, *Liturgiarum orientalium collectio*, II, 557: “*cum ubique ferme sententiam Syriaci Codicis fideliter Masius expresserit*”.

<sup>353</sup> Engberding, *Das eucharistische Hochgebet der Basileiosliturgie*, LXX: “*Wenn wir zum Schluß noch ein Wort über das Verhältnis der beiden Zeugen M[asius] und R[ahmani] zueinander sagen sollen, müssen wir uns zunächst die Eigenart von M klar machen. M ist eine vom Stil des Humanismus stark beeinflusste lateinische Übertragung einer syrischen Vorlage; an vielen Stellen ist M eher eine Paraphrase als eine Übersetzung zu nennen.*”

manuscripts that prove to be the closest to Masius' copy, a hypothesis will be provided concerning the manuscript Masius might have held in his hand.

## 4.1. Historical and textual evidence on Masius' manuscript

### 4.1.1. Historical sources on Masius' copy of the Anaphora

The early modern period is a well-documented epoch of European history that indulges historians with various sources. The life and work of many significant figures of the 16th century can be pieced together based on a wide range of documents. It is especially true for influential personalities like Masius, whose scholarly activity is well documented. Merely one hundred years after the invention of the printing press, Masius could already benefit from Gutenberg's device in printing his translations and scholarly works. On account of his social status, he corresponded extensively with prominent personalities of his time: he was undoubtedly part of the *Republic of Letters*. From among these various sources, four important pieces contain information on Masius' copy of the Syriac anaphora of St. Basil.

#### *Masius' Latin translation of the anaphora*

In the last 15 years of his life, Masius devoted himself to the study of the Syriac language. He published many outstanding scientific works and Latin translations of several Syriac texts during this period. His translation of the anaphora is by far the most important source on his Syriac manuscript. The title page informs us about a notable characteristic of his copy, namely that it was copied from a very ancient codex: "ex vetustissimo codice Syrica lingua scripto".<sup>354</sup>

The preface of the translation provides further information.<sup>355</sup> We can learn from it that the manuscript was a thin booklet held in a cylindrical container. This is an important detail because Syriac anaphoras rarely stand alone; they usually constitute part of a bulky collection of several texts, forming a thick volume that would not fit into such a container.<sup>356</sup> The fact that the title of the Syriac booklet was the Anaphora of the divine Basil, bishop of Caesarea in

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<sup>354</sup> Masius, *De paradiso commentarius*, 1.

<sup>355</sup> "Cum nuper Mosen Bar-Cepha de Paradiso, quem ex Syro Latinum feceram, constituisssem ad Plantinum meum, industriam sane & diligētem typographum dare ... atque ea occasione capsam Syriacarum litterarum meam euoluerem, obtulit se Anaphora Diui Basilii Caesareae Cappadociae episcopi (is enim exstat Syrici libelli titulus) quam ante annos complusculos crebro hortatu summi viri Iulij Pflug Pontificis Numburgensis ex peruetusto exemplari, quod Syriaca lingua et caractere scriptum ab Syro homine precio fueram nactus, traduxeram in Latinum sermonem." Masius, *De paradiso*, 227.

<sup>356</sup> In the 1980's, Arthur Vööbus gained access to an important collection of manuscripts in the Monastery of Mōr Hanānyā or Dayr al-Za'farān. He published an article about the freshly discovered liturgical manuscripts and listed 35 anaphora collections. Out of these 35 items only 1 contained one anaphora, all the others many more, up to even 26 anaphorae. cf. Vööbus, 'Die Entdeckung', 82–88.

Cappadocia, suggests that it was a rare example of a single anaphora that looked like a few folios rolled together. We cannot exclude that there were other texts after it, but Masius did not mention it. The text was written in Syriac with Syriac characters. Masius prepared the translation for the inspiration of Julius von Pflug (1499–1564), bishop of Naumburg; therefore, he had to be aware of such a manuscript in Masius' collection. The seller's identity remains in obscurity, but Masius found it essential to emphasize that he paid a price for it. For a possible identification of this obscure Syrian man, the first choice would be Moses of Mardin, who was Masius' most important manuscript supplier.

### ***Julius von Pflug's (1499–1564) correspondence***

The second source, which seems to be promising after reading the preface of the anaphora, is the correspondence of the above-mentioned renowned bishop, Julius von Pflug, who seems to be the initiator of this pioneering translation project. He was a learned Humanist with a wide intellectual horizon, an active polemist of the theological debates of the Reformation.<sup>357</sup> His library comprised almost 2000 volumes with a significant collection of classical and patristic sources.<sup>358</sup> Being a good philologist, he wanted to rely on original, authentic and even Oriental sources in religious disputes. This was also the case with the structure of the holy mass: he had a Latin translation of the Greek anaphora of Saint Basil and another Ethiopian anaphora.<sup>359</sup> Basil was especially important for Pflug: he referred to his works many times in his correspondence, and he was a good friend of Janus Cornarius (c. 1500–1558), the first editor of Basil's *opera omnia*, who dedicated the Greek edition to Pflug.<sup>360</sup> Therefore, it is completely plausible that he commissioned the translation of the Syriac anaphora of Saint Basil.

It is also known that he was in close connection with Masius. They met personally in September 1554, but their acquaintance dated back many years: they exchanged letters already in 1549.<sup>361</sup> Heinrich van Weze, Masius' patron, wrote to Pflug in April 1549, reassuring him that the letter he (i.e. the bishop) sent to Masius had arrived to the addressee, who was at that time on his way from Trento to Rome.<sup>362</sup> Unfortunately, no letter has come down to us from

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<sup>357</sup> On his life and work see Pollet, *Julius Pflug (1499-1564)*.

<sup>358</sup> The whole library is currently being digitized. See <http://pflug.reformationsportal.de/index.php?id=733>. Retrieved 12.11.2021.

<sup>359</sup> Witzel, *Exercitamenta sincerae pietatis*.

<sup>360</sup> Cornarius (ed.), *Omnia D. Basilii Magni opera* and Cornarius (ed.), *Apanta ta tou Theiou kai Megalou kaloumenou Basileiou*.

<sup>361</sup> François, 'Andreas Masius (1514-1573)', 221.

<sup>362</sup> Pollet, *Julius Pflug, Correspondence, III*, 187–189.

their correspondence.<sup>363</sup> What is sure is that Pflug was already actively dealing with liturgical questions by this time. In a letter dated 11 January 1549, for example, he wrote to Joachim II Hector, Elector of Brandenburg, about his conviction that based on the testimony of Greek manuscripts, the Catholic canon is in accordance with the Oriental canons.<sup>364</sup> He claimed it after a thorough study of the Greek version of the anaphoras of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil, which he managed to acquire from Venice in 1549 with the help of his nephew Damian.<sup>365</sup> Thus, it would not be surprising if he asked Masius to translate the Syriac version of the anaphora of St. Basil.

The disappearance of their messages is regrettable because we could have learned from them when Masius purchased his manuscript. Lacking this information, alas, this source proves to be useless for our search.

### *Masius' correspondence*

Another obvious corpus to be consulted in the quest for Masius' manuscript is his own correspondence. The anaphora crops up several times in his letters. At the end of 1554, when he was probably enjoying the hospitality of bishop Julius Pflug, Masius wrote about his Latin translation of the Syriac anaphora of St. Basil to two of his friends, the noted historian Hubertus Leodius and the renowned humanist Latinus Latinius. On 7 November, Leodius replied to him, expressing his hope to receive a copy of the translation.<sup>366</sup> Similarly, Latinius communicated his wish on 20 November to read Masius' new translation.<sup>367</sup> Unfortunately, we do not know what was in Masius' letters and how he flaunted his new scholarly achievement because these letters were scattered. Nevertheless, it is very likely that his enthusiasm was a bit premature because, at that time, he was only at the beginning of this grandiose translation project.

Since these are the only two occurrences of the anaphora in his published letters, this corpus does not provide any new pieces of information on the manuscript itself.

### *The Syriac letters of Moses of Mardin to Masius*

The evidence proving that Masius was far from ready with the translation in 1554 is his Syriac correspondence with Moses, an outstanding source in our quest. Four of these letters: 26/03/55, 19/05/55, 15/07/55 and 18/08/55, testify that Masius was still working on the translation in 1555. According to the testimony of these letters, he had difficulties rendering

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<sup>363</sup> Pollet, *Julius Pflug, Correspondence, III*, 188. n. 2.

<sup>364</sup> Pollet, *Julius Pflug, Correspondence, III*, 168–171.

<sup>365</sup> Pollet, *Julius Pflug, Correspondence, III*, 171. n. 1.

<sup>366</sup> Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 182, 401.

<sup>367</sup> Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 187.

some passages, therefore he diligently made notes about these sections and asked for his Syriac teacher's help.

Letter 19/05/55 broadens further our knowledge of Masius' manuscript. Moses wrote to Masius: „As far as I know, the one, who wrote this anaphora, was not a teacher. Truly, I say [to you] that there are many dots in this language, and not all of us know them.” This passage suggests that the manuscript was not written by Moses himself but by someone else Moses seems to know at least from hearsay. Anyway, Moses was Masius' principal Syriac manuscript supplier, so it would not be surprising if Masius also acquired this manuscript with Moses' assistance.

That is all the historical evidence that can be gathered on Masius' manuscript. His Syriac correspondence, however, contains much more information which is why it merits a thorough examination.

#### 4.1.2. Fragments of Masius' copy in Moses' letters

With the exception of letter 26/03/55, which contains 28 numbered fragments, the fragments are not numbered in the letters; therefore, their exact number is arguable. Some occur up to four times in the letters, sometimes in a more and more extended form. They were counted only once in these cases and usually added to the list in the most extended form. In order to avoid any inconsistencies caused by fragments popping up several times in several letters, fragments have been ordered according to their occurrence in the anaphora and not according to their occurrence in the correspondence. It is conspicuous that the length of the fragments varies considerably. This is because Masius had more and more complex questions. In the beginning, he asked for the translation of concrete words, and Moses answered them, repeating the given expression along with a Syriac synonym or a Syriac definition. It also happened that he translated the word into Italian. In subsequent letters, the fragments and Moses' explanations are longer. In these letters, Moses provided more detailed theological or liturgical comments and completed the responsorial passages, which are usually abbreviated in liturgical manuscripts. As much as possible, efforts had been made to distinguish Moses' comments and liturgical text fragments. The table below displays almost explicitly liturgical fragments and explanations of abbreviations; Moses' further comments can be read in the annexe.

	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Letter ID
1	ܡܫܝܘܫ ܐܘܘܪܝܢܐ	26/03/55 19/05/55







	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Letter ID
37	مربص	26/03/55
38	لأقفل ولا حكا وحده لا وسكسوه مفرص حب. سمفلهوا مدلحهوبع حوه. حب خلا فاونعا وبج حوهوبنا حطرهبهلا وبحهه مسعب. حطرهبهه وبلمزح حب مفرصع.	15/07/55
39	هوقملا قسما وبجلا هبح انه اب وبهنا احلا وبكف ابب حه هصملا حسهوبهه. هلا مدلمعب حبنا لهوبلا. حخلا ههوا حلا صهنا وبلمعب حبنا لمصملا حكسلا ههه حنا قلا. ههه صهصنا	26/03/55
40	قحلا سملاوقنا	26/03/55
41	الابح مينا للاصع هاستع وبجه. ممتعا ممتعنا متهه. وبنا حلاقح حلا هه. حكصلا. ههه وبصههه حكهوبب بهه ان. بهبنا للبح وبملاصهه.	26/03/55 18/08/55
42	حلا صهنا	26/03/55
43	صهنا حصهنا	18/08/55
44	نلانلا	26/03/55
45	انس اوقا	19/05/55 18/08/55
46	انصلا وانلاوههه ههه انلاوههه نلاو حبوقح حكصلا وبلمبهه	19/05/55
47	صهنا مزا هزهر ممتعنا مخرز ملاه حصف	26/03/55 18/08/55
48	حكننا ومع نبحه حصلا مبرص مينا الاله. اه مينا الاله	19/05/55
49	مقوعا حمتعنا حبقنا	26/03/55
50	به انا مبعنا. به حنا مبعنا به وهنا نبنا مبعنا. ههصلا لاط هكنا هكسلا مبعنا. به انلاوههه حكصع	19/05/55
51	مهوبع حب الاله سنانلا مهوبع حب	19/05/55
52	ممتعنا مع حلاو بصحهلا واوقا مبعنا وانلاوههه. مبر مينا ممتعنا ومع نبحه.. حصلا امن. مبرص مينا الاله صهنا حب	26/03/55 19/05/55

*Table 6: Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters*

## **4.2. Masius' manuscript and the Vatican, Borg. Sir. 159**

In order to learn which manuscript could be Masius' copy, the fragments of the anaphora have to be collated with manuscripts of the anaphora of St. Basil known today. In a first phase, only 39 such fragments were identified, and they have been compared to several copies of the Syriac anaphora.<sup>368</sup>

1. Vatican, Borg. Sir. 159 – before 1247
2. Jerusalem, Saint Mark's Monastery 96 – 1418/19
3. Cambridge, University Library, Add. 2917 – 16<sup>th</sup> century
4. Vatican, Sir. 30 – 1714
5. Vatican, Sir. 297 – 18<sup>th</sup> century
6. Vatican, Sir. 414 – 18<sup>th</sup> century
7. Charfet, Fonds Rahmani 89 – probably 18<sup>th</sup> century
8. Charfet, Fonds Rahmani 100

It became clear at first sight that manuscripts of the Syriac anaphora of St. Basil show an immense diversity. One manuscript, however, Borg. Sir. 159 showed an almost word for word agreement with the fragments. Therefore, as a working hypothesis, Borg. Sir. 159 is considered Masius' copy and carefully scrutinized in the followings.

### **4.2.1. Comparison of the fragments with Borg. Sir. 159**

In the following table, the 52 fragments are compared to Masius' Latin translation and the Syriac text of Borg. Sir. 159. In case of a verbatim agreement between the fragment and the Syriac text of Borg. Sir. 159, only the given folio number is indicated. In case of textual differences, the whole passage is quoted in order to make the comparison easier. In some cases, red colour is applied to direct the attention to differences. They should not be confused with rubrics of liturgical manuscripts, which are frequently used to show the actual speaker (priest, deacon, people) in the dialogic parts. The fragments will be discussed one by one in the next chapter.

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<sup>368</sup> I had access personally or through high quality photos to Cambridge Add. 2917, Vatican Sir 30, Vatican Sir 297, Vatican Sir 414, Vatican Borg. Sir. 159, and Jerusalem, Saint Mark's Monastery 96. The text of the Charfet manuscripts: Fonds Rahmani 89 and Fonds Rahmani 100 were examined in the form as found on the Syriac anaphoras website: "Anaphora of Basilus of Caesarea", accessed December 12, 2018, <https://syriac-anaphoras.org/anaphora/basilios>. On this subject, see also Mércz, 'Andreas Masius' Copy of the Anaphora of Saint Basil', 316–317.

	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Masius' Latin translation (page number)	Ms. Borg. Sir. 159
1	لهذه الاما	simultatis pertinacia (235)	67v
2	حب فاله حبسا هانزا حمر ووسا وحب مبه حلا. لظا ههيبا ههحب ستا هعا حب حاهسا وب هحلا هحلم حلا	...tibi debetur gloria, honor et potestas, una cum sanctissimo tuo Spiritu [bono, adorando, vitam largiente, atque tibi in substantia aequali, nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum] (e.g. 235)	67v, 68r, 72r, 72v, 74r, 75v حب فاله حبسا هانزا هاسبنا حمر ووسا وحب مبه حلا هظا
3	هحمر ووسا وحب	Et cum Spiritu tuo (235, 250) Et Spiritui tuo (252)	68r, 75r, 75v هحمر ووسا
4	بلاا حلا	Demus pacem (235)	67v
5	حلا اعا ح مننا الله.	Populus. Dignare nos [Domine Deus noster.] (236)	67v حلا اعا ح
6	محصنا مع مبر بصحلا واورا مبنلا ولامنحه مبر مننا منبنا ونع نبح. حلا مبرحب مننا الله الله.	Diaconus. Ante [sumptionem mysteriorum sacrorum quae offeruntur, capita nostra coram Domino misericorde inclinamus] Populus. Coram te Domine [Deus noster] (236)	67v محصنا مع حلا؛ حلا حلا مبرحب مننا
7	فنبها	extendisti (236)	67v
8	رحلا وچلا فنبها	Precatio super velamine (236)	68r
9	نعالما	requie (237)	68r
10	ونسلا حلا هوسلا هاسبنا	Misericordiam et pacem [ac sacrificium, et gratiarum actionem] (237)	68r ونسلا حلا

	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Masius' Latin translation (page number)	Ms. Borg. Sir. 159
11	ⲥⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	<i>Sacerdos inclinatus</i> (e.g. 237)	68r, 69r, 71v, 72r, 72v, 73r, 73v, 74r, 74v
12	ⲱⲛⲓ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	qui sedes super solium maiestatis tuae (238)	68v ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ
13	ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	qui est imago bonitatis tuae, et forma aequali sigillum (238)	68v
14	ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	quod revelavit nobis <b>spiritum</b> illum bonum et sanctum, spiritum veritatis, et adoptionis piorum; spiritum principalem, arrabonem futurae haereditatis (238)	68v ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ
15	ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	ne adurantur ab aestu (238)	69r
16	ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	variisque oberrantes viis (239)	69v
17	ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	surrexit tertia die, fecitque viam universae carni (240)	70r
18	ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	Hoc est corpus meum (241)	70v ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ
19	ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ ⲛⲉⲛⲉ	spargitur (241)	70v

	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Masius' Latin translation (page number)	Ms. Borg. Sir. 159
20	<p>حَمْدًا مِنْ مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ:</p> <p>وَمِنْ مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ:</p> <p>وَمِنْ مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ وَتَأْتِي</p> <p>مَعَهُ. وَتَسْبِيحُ لَهُ</p> <p>حَلَا حَلَا</p>	<p>Mortem tuam Domine [annunciamus, atque resurrectionem profiteamur, et adventum tuum secundum expectamus; misericordiae tuae sint super nos omnes.] (241–242)</p>	<p>71r</p> <p>حَمْدًا مِنْ</p>
21	<p>لَا تَهْمَلْ</p>	<p>ne ... negligas (242)</p>	<p>71r</p>
22	<p>حَمْدًا</p>	<p>expertium (242)</p>	<p>71r</p>
23	<p>وَسَمِ حَمْدًا أَلِمْ</p> <p>حَلَا</p>	<p>Miserere nostri [Domine Deus, Pater omnipotens] (243)</p>	<p>71v</p> <p>وَسَمِ حَمْدًا</p>
24	<p>أَفِ سَمِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p> <p>مَعَهُ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p> <p>مَعَهُ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p> <p>حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p>	<p>Et nos miseri [peccatores consecuti gratiam tuam, gratias agimus tibi de omnibus, et pro omnibus] (243)</p>	<p>71v</p> <p>أَفِ سَمِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p>
25	<p>حَمْدًا حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ:</p> <p>مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ:</p> <p>وَمِنْ مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ.</p> <p>سَمِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p>	<p><i>Populus</i>. Te laudamus: [tibi benedicimus: te adoramus, obsecramusque Domine Deus, ut parcas nobis, miserearisque; nostri.] (243)</p>	<p>71v</p> <p>حَمْدًا حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p>
26	<p>مَعَهُ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا</p> <p>حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p> <p>سَمِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ:</p> <p>وَمِنْ مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p> <p>وَمِنْ مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ.</p> <p>سَمِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ</p>	<p><i>Diaconus</i>. Quam veneranda est hora [ista, et hoc tempus, dilectissimi, cum Spiritus vivus et sanctus e supremis caelorum sedibus descendit, atque; incubat, manetque super hanc Eucharistiam propositam;</p>	<p>71v</p> <p>مَعَهُ حَمْدًا مَلَأْتَهُ بِرَبِّهِ حَمْدًا</p>

	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Masius' Latin translation (page number)	Ms. Borg. Sir. 159
	<p>وهيكله منصوبه حيه  صعلا هديكلا  وهيكله منصوبه  مركب: رجه هكلمه حص  هعلا حص</p>	<p>eamque consecrat. tacite  igitur, et reverenter orate.]  (243)</p>	
27	<p>منبلا ووهسا مبرعا مدهلا  وهلا منبلا اف سح محققلا</p>	<p><i>Invocatio Sancti Spiritus.</i>  Propterea Domine et nos  miseri... (243)</p>	71v
28	<p>هح مبرع هعلا لهفها  وهيكله منبلا هكيب  ح</p>	<p>Et qui proposuimus typum  corporis &amp; sanguinis Christi  tui, adoramus, ac supplices  rogamus te... (243)</p>	<p>71v  هح مبرع هعلا لهفها  وهيكله منبلا هكيب  وهكيب هكيب  هكيب هكيب ح</p>
29	<p>مهوكهه</p>	<p>Kyrie eleison (243)</p>	71v
30	<p>همنبلا فح ككسلا هلا  فح</p>	<p>Et *efficiat panem istum  corpus...  *legitur etiam, <b>Effice.</b> potest  autem hoc verbum etiam  interpretari, ostende, sive  exhibe.  (243)</p>	<p>71v  هنبلا فح ككسلا هلا  فح</p>
31	<p>لهف حمر وهف</p>	<p>Cum navigantibus navigato ...  esto (246)</p>	<p>73r  لهف حمر وهف</p>
32	<p>اصهه وهف</p>	<p>exilio (246)</p>	<p>73r  اصهه وهف</p>



	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Masius' Latin translation (page number)	Ms. Borg. Sir. 159
33	حَقَّقْهَا بِمَحْ لَأَنْزِبْ مَعَهَا	regum nostrorum laudabilis memoriae (247)	73r
34	هَهْوَإِلَّا	galea (247)	73r
35	صَحْهَلَا	humilitatem (247)	73v
36	هَلَا مَكْرَهٌ أَوْ حَبْرَقْنَا مَحْتَبْنَا هَلَا هَمْخَبْنَا هَوْحَلْنَا مَح فَتَمَلْنَا. بَعْدًا حَيَّوَا وَمَبْتَقِبْ	Et sublata voce. Et si ad loca gloriosa, omnisque materiae expertia, et quae extra omnem comparationem sunt, receperis in coetum sanctorum tuorum... (247)	73v
37	مَدْبَحْ	imitantes (247)	73v
38	لَاصْقَلَا وَلَا عَكَلَا هَحْهَلَا وَسَلْفِيَهْ مَعْمَحْ حَب حَب. هَمْهَلْهَلَا مَلَا حَبْ هَبْ حَبْ. حَب حَلَا فَاؤْمَعَلَا وَحَب حَبْ هَبْ هَلَا هَلَا وَبَحْ هَبْ هَلَا هَمْهَلْهَلَا وَبَلْمَحْ حَب مَعْمَحْ سَبْ.	assiduas preces, atque obsecrationes <b>pro nobis</b> tibi offerant; eoque memoriam illorum celebremus, ut quando nobis ipsi parum fidimus, memoria, et legatione illorum protecti, per eos audeamus ad te accedere (248)	73v لَاصْقَلَا وَلَا عَكَلَا هَحْهَلَا وَسَلْفِيَهْ مَعْمَحْ حَب هَمْهَلْهَلَا مَلَا حَبْ هَبْ حَبْ. حَب حَلَا فَاؤْمَعَلَا وَبَحْ حَبْ هَبْ هَلَا هَمْهَلْهَلَا وَبَحْ هَبْ مَعْمَحْ هَلَا هَلَا وَبَلْمَحْ حَب مَعْمَحْ سَبْ
39	هَمْوَمَلَا قَسْمَلَا وَحَبْلَا هَمْحَبْ أَنْهْ أَيْ وَحَبْلَا رَحَلَا وَحَكْمَلَا أَيْ حَبْ هَمْهَلْهَلَا حَبْ هَبْ هَبْ. هَلَا مَلَا حَبْ حَبْلَا هَمْوَمَلَا. هَلَا هَمْوَمَلَا	Membra ecclesiae remota congregato in unam professionem, et religionem Apostolicam ut pares omnium sint voces et pares laudes (248)	74r حَبْ هَمْوَمَلَا قَسْمَلَا وَحَبْلَا هَمْحَبْ حَبْلَا هَمْوَمَلَا هَمْهَلْهَلَا مَعْمَحْ هَلَا هَلَا هَمْوَمَلَا

	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Masius' Latin translation (page number)	Ms. Borg. Sir. 159
	<p>حدا دونا وبلاصنع حسابا  لعصلا عكسلا عوب  حنا قلا. عوب عوصلا</p>		
40	<p>قحلا صلا قحلا</p>	voluntatem mentemque (248)	74r
41	<p>ااوجن حنا لادحة هاستح  وحبه. معقلا معقلا  متسا. وتسا حلا ح  حلا عا. ححلا. هاستح  ومعقلا ححسوم ب  انلا. ببحلا لالح  ومعقلا عوب.</p>	<p>Memento etiam Domine  patrum fratrumque nostrorum  qui obierunt <b>in vera fide</b>  presbyterorum, diaconorum,  <b>hypodiaconorum</b>, lectorum,  coenobitarum in coelibatu  perpetuo viventium, laicorum,  quorum omnium <b>tu</b> numerum  solus nosti; potissimum vero  qui iam nominantur (249)</p>	<p>74r  ااوجن حنا هلا ح هاستح  وحبه <b>حوصلا ونا</b>  معقلا معقلا  <b>هافنا عمتسا</b> متسا وتسا  حلا ح ححلا ححلا  هاستح ومعقلا <b>انلا</b>  ححسوم ب انلا ببحلا  لالح ومعقلا عوب</p>
42	<p>حلا صلا</p>	mansiones cruciatu horrendas (249)	74v
43	<p>عصلا ححلا</p>	tenebris et caligine (249)	74v
44	<p>سلا سلا</p>	acrem quaestionem (249)	74v
45	<p>انس اوجلا</p>	Ignosce, remitte (249)	74v
46	<p>انحلا وانلا هاستح  هاستح نلا وحب ووج  ححلا وحب.</p>	Sicut erat, [et est permanens in generatione generationum, et in saeculo futuro.] (250)	<p>75r  انحلا وانلا</p>
47	<p>حنا قلا هاستح معقلا  محبر ملا ح</p>	Sacerdos frangit et signat. Diaconus proclamat Catholicam (250)	<p>75r  حنا قلا هاستح معقلا  محبر ملا ح</p>

	Fragments of the anaphora of St. Basil found in Moses' letters	Masius' Latin translation (page number)	Ms. Borg. Sir. 159
48	<p>لحزينا ونسبح نوح * حصلا *  موصي مننا الاله. او  من هاللاه</p>	<p>Domino capita nostra  [inclinemus] <i>Populus</i>. Coram  te [Domine Deus noster.]  (252)</p>	<p>75v  لحزينا ونسبح حصلا موصي</p>
49	<p>مقوبلا حمتيلا هحزينا</p>	<p>Sancta sanctis (252)</p>	<p>75v  مقوبلا حمتيلا</p>
50	<p>سب انا مبيلا. سب حنا  مبيلا سب زوسا نينا مبيلا.  مهصلا لالا هحزينا  هحزوسا مبيلا. سب  انالوسه، ححكص</p>	<p>Unus Pater sanctus , [unus  Filius sanctus, unus Spiritus  vitae efficiens sanctus: gloria  Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui  sancto, qui unum sunt in  saecula.] (252)</p>	<p>75v  سب انا مبيلا</p>
51	<p>مهوبع حب الاله  هالانانا مهوبع حب</p>	<p>Gratias agimus tibi [Deus  noster] (252)</p>	<p>75v  مهوبع حب</p>
52	<p>محصلا مع حلاو  نصحهلا واورا متيلا  والسحه. مبر مننا  منصلا ونسبح نوح... حصلا  اننا. موصي من هاللاه  صهلا حب</p>	<p><i>Diaconus</i>. Post [sumtionem  sanctorum sacramentorum  quae exhibita sunt, coram  Domino misericorde capita  nostra inclinemus.] <i>Populus</i>.  Coram te Domine [Deus  noster.] <i>Sacerdos</i>. Tibi...</p> <p>(253)</p>	<p>76r  محصلا مع صهلا حب</p>

Table 7: Comparison of the anaphoral fragments with Borg. Sir. 159

#### 4.2.2. Assessment of the fragments

Two essential aspects have to be highlighted before assessing the fragments one by one. The first is a characteristic of liturgical texts. Anaphoras contain two types of texts: on the one hand, prayers and intercessions read by the priest, and on the other dialogic parts cited by the priest, the deacon, and the people alternately. This difference also appears in the manuscript tradition. Since the responsorial passages were all known by heart, they are usually abbreviated

or sometimes even completely omitted in liturgical manuscripts. Moses explained this phenomenon to Masius in his letter 26/03/55 with the following words:

*Oh, my brother, know that wherever you find incipits, i.e. something the deacon says and the people respond, they are not complete. This is the habit of the scribes who tend to abbreviate everything in writing.*

This custom caused many troubles for Masius because he was not familiar with Syriac liturgy and did not know these phrases from memory. What is more, he was not even sure which sentences were abbreviated and which were not. Therefore, he turned to Moses every time he suspected to have bumped into an abbreviation, and Moses helped him complete the relevant passages. These fragments give us plenty to think about because they are difficult to compare with other anaphoral manuscripts, in our case with Vat. Borg. Sir. 159. In the case of fragments read by the priest, we can be sure that Masius had the complete text in his hand. However, in the case of dialogic fragments, it is not always clear whether Masius took into consideration the incipits he saw in the text or if he blindly followed Moses' explanations. Masius tried to indicate in his translation Moses' addenda by putting them in brackets.<sup>369</sup> By way of illustration:

*Sacerdos: ... ac dignare nos mutuuum nobis inter nos precari pacem cum osculo sancto et divino: ut experts omnis culpae fiamus participes donorum tuorum caelestium et immortalium per Christum Iesum Dominum nostrum per quem et cum quo tibi debetur gloria, honor et potestas, una cum sanctissimo tuo Spiritu [bono, adorando, vitam largiente, atque tibi in substantia aequali, nunc et semper et in saecula saeculorum]*  
*Populus: Amen.*<sup>370</sup>

In this case, it seems that after 'Spiritu', the next word Masius saw in his text was 'Populus'. Therefore this method presents a reasonable basis for comparing fragments with anaphoral texts. Nevertheless, at the same time, it leaves many uncertainties because we cannot be sure how consistently Masius applied this differentiation and how he proceeded when there was a discrepancy between the words he saw in his text and Moses' explanation.

The second aspect concerns the genesis of the fragments, namely that they might have gone through several alterations. Firstly, it is clear from a few examples that, in some cases,

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<sup>369</sup> "Quae his signis [ ] inclusi, ea ut notissima, non habebantur in exemplari Syrico: sed sic addenda esse, rescripsit mihi meus doctor Syrus Moses Mardenus." AnaBas, 235.

<sup>370</sup> AnaBas, 235

Masius had trouble deciphering the manuscript's text. Therefore, Masius' limited Syriac reading skills can be one reason for the differences between the fragments and the text of Borg. Sir. 159, which is the supposed origin of Masius' manuscript. Secondly, even if Masius managed to read the text correctly, he might have made mistakes while reproducing the fragments in his letters addressed to Moses. As it was already highlighted in the description of the correspondence, the only letter which was composed by Masius and came down to us is an Aramaic draft letter. Moses could not read Biblical Aramaic, therefore, the final letter Masius sent to him was definitely transcribed with Syriac characters. Nevertheless, the fact that Masius composed the draft in Aramaic shows that he did not have confident Syriac writing skills at the time of their correspondence. In letter 26/03/55, Moses suggested to Masius to write to him in Italian, probably because Masius' writing was not a well-trained hand, and it was hard to read for Moses. Therefore, Masius' limited Syriac writing skill is a second possible reason for the differences. Thirdly, we cannot exclude the possibility of smaller textual corruptions on Moses' side since he also might have made some mistakes while reproducing the fragments in his own letters sent to Masius. And fourthly, we can see several examples of when Moses corrected orthographical mistakes. In these cases, we cannot know whether these mistakes were due to Masius' limited knowledge or they were already in his manuscript. In sum, we have to take into account these four filters dimming our vision while trying to judge whether Borg. Sir. 159 could be Masius' copy or not.

Fragments can be divided into three categories. The first and most straightforward category is where fragments tally with the text of the Borg. Sir. 159. In the second group, the fragments differ from the wording of the Vatican manuscript, but Masius' Latin translation proves that the Syriac text he read coincided with that of Borg. Sir. 159. And finally, the third category contains those fragments in the case of which it is impossible to reconstruct the wording of Masius' text based on the information we have. The first two groups support our working hypothesis, and the third group leaves the question open.

Having a closer look at these 52 fragments, it can be stated that half of them fully coincide with the wordings of Borg. Sir. 159. In those 25 cases, where only the folio number is given in a cell (Frag. 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 27, 29, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45), there is a verbatim agreement between the fragment and the text of the Vatican-manuscript.

The second group is also a large group with 16 fragments (Frag. 5, 10, 14, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 31, 38, 39, 41, 46, 48, 50, 51) comprising fragments which differ from Vat. Borg. Sir. 159, but despite the difference, we can be sure that Masius's text was identical to the Vatican

manuscript's text. This category can be subdivided into two subgroups. Frag. 14, 28, 31, 38, 39 and 41 are passages read by the priest, whereas the other fragments are dialogical passages. In Frag. 14, the word 'spirit' was missing; this is why this phrase was a puzzle for Moses, too. However, Masius finally managed to translate it, and the word 'spiritum' is there in his Latin translation and in Borg. Sir. 159 as well. Frag. 28 is five words shorter than the same passage in the Vatican manuscript. However, Masius' Latin translation shows that the additional words marked with red were also present in his manuscript because he translated them (*sanguinis Christi tui* and *supplices rogamus*). In Frag. 31, Moses dropped a personal pronoun, but Masius' translation (*Cum navigantibus navigato ... esto*) properly renders the passage's meaning. Frag. 38 is another example proving that Moses' explanations were sometimes misleading, but Masius noticed the difference between his text and Moses' version and adhered to the former. Talking about angels, the anaphora says: "...they offer to You unceasingly supplications and prayers on our behalf...". Taken out of context, Moses got confused and changed the subject and object so that his version said: "...we offer to You unceasingly supplications and prayers on their behalf..." In this case also, Masius' Latin translation bears a resemblance with the text of Vat. Borg. Sir. 159. The same goes for Frag. 41, where Moses omitted a few words and expressions, but the very same missing words are included in Masius' translation (*in vera fide, hypodiatonorum, tu solus*). In Frag. 39, the difference between Moses' version and the text of Borg. Sir. 159 is striking. This is because Moses changed the verb form of the anaphoral phrase and inserted his explanatory remarks into the texture of the liturgical supplication. Nevertheless, he uses the same theological terms as Borg. Sir. 159 and Masius' Latin translation follows the wording of the Vatican manuscript; therefore, Masius' text was most probably identical to it. Responsorial sections were abbreviated in Masius' manuscript; therefore, he asked Moses' help to complete the incipits. Masius put the endings of these sentences that Moses had written out in full, in brackets in order to separate them from what he saw in his manuscript. Assuming that Masius applied this method consistently, we can have a guess which words he could see in his manuscript. In Frag. 5, for example, the bracket starts after two words, and exactly these two words are written out in Vat. Borg. Sir. 159. In the other fragments (Frag. 10, 20, 23, 25, 26, 46, 48, 50, 51), we can find the same coincidence.

The third category includes those fragments where Masius Syriac text cannot be defined (Frag. 2, 3, 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 32, 38, 39, 47, 52). In three cases (Frag. 2, 3, 49), the place of the square brackets is questionable. In Frag. 2, the first word Masius indicated as Moses' addition (*bono*) is still written out in Vat. Borg. Sir. 159. Was it not included in his manuscript, or did

he just made a mistake when he put out the bracket in his Latin translation? In Frag. 3, Masius did not put the possessive pronoun (tuo) into brackets, although it is not visible in the Vatican manuscript. And finally, Frag. 49 consists of three words, but Masius translated only two and did not indicate further words. In the following fragments, there is only a slight grammatical or orthographical difference between the two texts, or a few letters, and words are affected at most. The drop of the *olaph* and *yodh* in Frag. 32 and 47 might be a real difference, but they also can result from inattention on Masius' or eventually Moses' part. The use of a different form of the first-person possessive pronoun in Frag. 18 seems to be a more serious variance. However, since the two forms are interchangeable, it cannot be ruled out that Moses unconsciously used the shorter form in his letter, which is more common in liturgical manuscripts. So much the more because the phrase in question, "This is my body..." which is pronounced before the elevation of the Host, is a central phrase of the liturgy which is said by heart by the priests. In Frag. 38, the way of writing the word 'confidence' is different, and it is impossible to decide which form was used in Masius' manuscript. Frag. 24 reads in English: "We also, O Lord, weak and sinful [servants], offer You thanksgiving...". The Syriac text of Borg. Sir. 159 contains only the first four words: "We also, O Lord, weak..." Moses helped Masius and wrote out the rest of the sentence but omitted the vocative unit: 'O Lord'. Masius' Latin translation follows Moses' wording. Is it because he relied on this version since it was more complete and did not crosscheck it with his own manuscript, or he did not translate the address of God because it was not part of his text? It cannot be decided. Frag. 30 is a very interesting one. In English, the text reads: "And appoint this bread the honoured Body of our Lord God Jesus Christ [...] for the remission of debts..." Borg. Sir. 159 uses the verb in imperative form (ܐܘܨܝܒܐ), Moses applied an active participle form (ܐܘܨܝܒܝܐ), and Masius' Latin translation (Et efficiat panem istum corpus...) suggest an imperfect form (ܐܘܨܝܒܝܐ). According to the note added by Masius to this phrase, the verb can also be read in imperative form.<sup>371</sup> This could indicate that he had the same verb in front of him as the Vatican manuscript, but it cannot be proved. Especially because the imperfect form is also an existing variant that was used, for example, by Rahmani in the *editio princeps* of the anaphora.<sup>372</sup> The last three fragments show considerable divergence from Borg. Sir. 159. In order to better understand Frag. 12, one has to see the broader context:

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<sup>371</sup> "Legitur etiam, Effice. Potest autem hoc verbum etiam interpretari, ostende, sive exhibe." AnaBas, 243.

<sup>372</sup> Rahmani, *Missale*, 182.

*“Who is capable of speaking of Your mighty acts and to make heard all Your deeds of glory, or to relate all times all Your wonders. O Ruler of all, Lord of heaven and of earth and of all creation, visible and invisible, who is seated on the throne of glory...”*

The text first talks about God in second-person singular and then switches to third-person singular. In his letter, Moses transformed this phrase and applied second-person singular in the second sentence as well: “You are the one who is seated on the throne of glory...” and Masius followed his explanation in his Latin translation. Interestingly, the fact that Masius asked about this section suggests a change of subject in his version, too. If so, he just took advantage of the translator's freedom by keeping the second-person singular subject. Nevertheless, based on the available evidence, it cannot be determined what exactly appeared in his manuscript.

Frag. 6 and 52 are two similar dialogical passages. Frag. 6 is from the ceremony of the kiss of peace that reads:

***Priest:** Peace be unto you all.*

***People:** And with your spirit.*

***Deacon:** Let us give peace to one another, everyone to his neighbour with a holy and divine kiss, in the love of our Lord and God.*

***People:** Make us worthy, O Lord and God, of this peace all the days of our lives.*

***Deacon:** After this holy and divine peace which has been given, let us once again bow down our heads before the merciful Lord.*

***People:** Before You, our Lord and our God.*

Frag. 52 is from the prayer of thanksgiving, which contains a similar dialogue:

***Priest:** Peace be unto you all.*

***People:** And with your spirit.*

***Deacon:** After having received these Holy Mysteries, that have been given, let us again bow down our heads before the merciful Lord.*

***People:** Before You, our Lord and our God.*

***Priest:** To You...*

Moses linked these two passages saying:



*Netel šlomo... [Let us give peace...]. Here other words are coming. And after the deacon has finished his chant, the people respond: 'Make us worthy, O Lord, our God.' After the people have finished, the deacon responds, saying: 'After the communion...' or 'Before the communion...', for this text comes twice: before and after the reception of the sacrament. And when the deacon finishes, the people answer, 'Before You, Lord and God.'*

And later specified:

*After the communion... We say it twice. Before giving the body [of Christ] to the assembly, we say: Before receiving the Mysteries... And after the body was given, we say it again: After having received the Holy Mysteries that have been given, let us bow down our heads before the merciful Lord. The people respond: Before you, our Lord and our God. The other: Before receiving the Holy Mysteries that are offered, let us bow down our heads before the merciful Lord. The people respond: Before you, our Lord and our God.*

Moses made a mistake here because the deacon's text before the communion, in the ceremony of the kiss of peace, is not related to communion as Moses said (Before the communion...), but to the peace (After this holy and divine peace which has been given...). If Masius had before him the text of Borg. Sir. 159, he could have noticed the mistake despite the abbreviated form because the Vatican manuscript reads (Frag. 6):

*Deacon: After the peace*

*People: Before You, Lord*

Therefore, in this case, he either blindly followed Moses' explanation and overwrote what he found in his anaphora, or this passage is a counterargument to our working hypothesis.

In Frag. 52, Borg. Sir. 159 reads:

*Deacon: After*

*Priest: To You...*

It abbreviated the deacon's text to one word and completely omitted the people's answer. Masius indicated the abbreviation of the deacon's text (*Diaconus: Post [sumtionem...]*) but

marked the people's reply as partly present in his manuscript (Populus: Coram Te Domine [Deus noster]). Therefore, he either forgot to countercheck Moses' explanation with his own text, or this is another proof that he did not work from Borg. Sir. 159.

In sum, the great majority of the fragments support our hypothesis. Those that do not, can be explained by the circumstances. Based on the philological examination of the anaphoral fragments, we cannot rule out that Masius used Borg. Sir. 159. But was this manuscript already in Rome in the 16<sup>th</sup> century? Is it really possible that he prepared his translation based on this text? If yes, does it look like the sources describe it? This will be examined in the next chapter.

#### 4.2.3. The provenance of Borg. Sir. 159

A cursory glance would be enough to answer the question of whether Borg. Sir. 159 could be identical with Masius' copy or not. It is clear at first sight that it is a thick volume that does not fit Masius' description, according to which his copy was a booklet (*libellus*) held in a cylinder. Nevertheless, it is worth to scrutinize the provenance of this manuscript.

Its story is partly documented, but the pieces of this puzzle have not been put together yet. Addai Scher described it shortly in 1909 when it was already part of the collection of the Vatican Library.<sup>373</sup> As its current shelfmark indicates, it was formerly part of the *Museo Borgiano*, a famous collection of manuscripts, coins and art treasures of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. The seal of this institution can be seen on several pages of the manuscript.<sup>374</sup> The collection of the *Propaganda Fide* was attached to the Vatican Library in 1902, so this is the *terminus ante quem* of the arrival of the codex to Rome. The 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century history of the documents of the Museo Borgiano was explored by Paola Orsatti. There were several stocktakings during this period; therefore, the majority of the items in the collection contain several shelfmarks.<sup>375</sup> The last full-scale stocktaking took place in 1855, during which a label was stuck into the books.<sup>376</sup> In 1869, Monsignor Clément-Joseph David acquired more than 54 Syriac manuscripts in Mossul at the request of the *Propaganda* and brought them to Rome when he came to join the First Vatican Council. But the present volume was not among these documents.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>373</sup> Scher, 'Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia', 282–283.

<sup>374</sup> e.g.: f. 1r, 86r, 172v

<sup>375</sup> Orsatti, *Il fondo Borgia*, 45–83 and 124–129.

<sup>376</sup> Orsatti, *Il fondo Borgia*, 68–76.

<sup>377</sup> The inventory of these manuscripts is in Borg. Lat. 767, ff. 80–84. Judging by the short entries, the closest description is the item No. 23 "Siriaco - Questo codice contiene tutte le (40) liturgie Siriace che usate dalla Chiesa Siriaca nella celebrazione della Messa", but Borg. Sir. 159 contains only 30 anaphoras. In 1894, Pierre Cersoy

Arabic and Syriac manuscripts have been rearranged in 1873, but Ms. Borg. Sir. 159 does not contain a trace of these inventories.<sup>378</sup> Therefore, we can assume that the manuscript reached the collection after 1873, and we can set this date as *terminus post quem*. There were two occasions when the collection was enriched after this date. First, in 1882, when cardinal Agostino Ciasca donated 19 manuscripts to the Propaganda Fide.<sup>379</sup> These volumes are also without any mark, but based on the short description prepared on this donation, none of them is identical to Borg. Sir.159.<sup>380</sup> The second occasion was in 1891, when ten codices were attached to the library from the bequest of Monsignor Clément-Joseph David. The inventory of this collection reads:

1. *Un manoscritto contenente diversito scritte nelle lingue araba, turca e syra, ha, titolo Thesaurus Polyglottus.*
2. *Officio syriaco scritto antico contenente ancora Betchas, vale a dire il libro dei canti syriaci. Legato questo con una fettucia nera.*
3. *Il psalterio scritto con lettere stranghele raro assai ed antico. N. 805.*
4. *Un libro syriaco e carscioni, vale a dire, arabo scritto con lettere syriache, mancante da princio N. 818.*
5. *Evangelo syro antico con lettere stranghele scritto sopra pelle di cervo, mancante al principio ed alla fine N. 809.*
6. *Epistole di San Paolo ed alter cose con alcuni evangeli, parimenti antico mancante al principio ed alla fine N. 822.*
7. *Missale syriaco, la cui scrittura e all'antica, e legato. N. 823.*
8. *Officio dei Syri antico e raro N. 816*
9. *Libro di preghiera e canti syriaci, mancante al principio. N. 819.*
10. *Missale syriaco assai antico e ben legato N. 669.*<sup>381</sup>

Borg. Sir. 159 seems to be identical to item N. 10 described as ‘*a very ancient Syriac missal in a good binding*’, but this description is too general to base reasoning on it. If N. 669 appeared in the manuscript, it would be a more decisive proof, but there is no trace of it. Borg. Sir. 160, however, was, without doubt, one of these ten items. There is a slip of paper at the end

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described 46 manuscripts of this acquisition, and noted that almost all of them were copied in the surroundings of Mossul a few year before 1869. Cf. Cersoy, ‘Les manuscrits orientaux de Monseigneur David’, 362.

<sup>378</sup> Orsatti, *Il fondo Borgia*, 76–77 and 128.

<sup>379</sup> Orsatti, *Il fondo Borgia*, 77–78.

<sup>380</sup> Cf. Borg. Lat. 767, f. 114r–v

<sup>381</sup> Borg. Lat. 878, f. 199r–v. Orsatti did not identify these items: “Non sono riuscita a individuarli nel fondo siriano attuale.” Cf. Orsatti, *Il fondo Borgia*, 80.

of the manuscript headed ‘No.6. (822)’, precisely as it appears on Borg. Lat. 878, f. 199r. Unfortunately, I did not have access to Borg. Sir. 156, 157, 158, but judging by their contents described by Scher, they seem to match items 7, 8, 9 of this inventory.<sup>382</sup> If both the previous and the following item(s) were part of this collection, we could rightly think that Borg. Sir. 159 was also one of these ten manuscripts.

It is unknown when the manuscript came into Monsignor David’s possession: still when he was chorbishop of Mossul, on his way to Rome when he travelled through Aleppo and Lebanon, or at the end of his life when he was archbishop of Damascus.<sup>383</sup> But, it is sure that they arrived in Rome only after he died in 1890. This date fits perfectly the period defined for the possible arrival of Borg. Sir. 159 in Rome. Moreover, the fact that this piece was added to the collection of the *Museo Borgiano* so late explains why this manuscript does not contain any of the several seals and labels that other manuscripts do.

Since the codex arrived in Europe only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Masius personally could not have access to it. This discovery tallies with what the historical sources on Masius’ manuscript suggest. Borg. Sir. 159 contains 30 anaphoras as opposed to Masius’ copy which included only one or very few anaphoras. Masius held his manuscript in a cylindrical container, but Borg. Sir. 159 is a thick volume that could not be rolled into it. Masius’s text shows a close connection to this Vatican manuscript, but he did not use this specific volume. A reasonable solution to this situation could be if he used a copy of Borg. Sir. 159. The possibility of such a scenario is examined in the following chapter.

#### **4.2.4. Giwargis’ copy of Borg. Sir. 159 – An appealing hypothesis**

The last folios of Borg. Sir. 159 are missing, and the final colophon perished. Apart from two scribal inscriptions, no other purchase note or ownership note is visible in the manuscript that would help to trace its journey. On fol. 107v, a scribal inscription informs us that the copyist, the priest Rabban Īshōʿ died in 1558 (AD. 1247) and was buried in the church he built in Rumkale.<sup>384</sup> Rumkale was a mighty fortress on the river Euphrates, 50 km west of Edessa/Şanlıurfa. Although it is not impossible that Moses passed by this town on his way to Europe, there is not any direct evidence of it.

The other scribal inscription, however, on fol. 7r appears as a red thread for our investigation. We learn from it that the deacon Giwargis, son of Joseph, copied from this book

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<sup>382</sup> Scher, ‘Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia’, 282.

<sup>383</sup> On his life see Vosté, ‘Clément-Joseph David’, 219–302.

<sup>384</sup> Scher, ‘Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia’, 283.



October 1556, i.e. only one month after he sent the last letter to Masius from Venice; therefore, he had to be on his way back to his homeland. Since he had a loan to repay, we can rightly think that it was also Famagusta where he stopped on his way to Europe.

Setting what we know about the deacon Giwargis' copy against what we learned of Masius' manuscript, it can be stated that they tally in every aspect: Anaphora of St. Basil stood on the title page; it was a copy of a few folios containing only one anaphora and the explanation of the divine mysteries, which could be stored in Masius' cylindrical container; it was effectively copied from a very ancient codex dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which is the oldest known copy of this text today; and Moses' statement on the copyist, namely that he was not a *'teacher'*, could refer to the fact that Giwargis was 'only' a deacon. Whether it was the very manuscript Masius held in his hands cannot be proved. Nothing is known about this copy apart from this marginal note and that a similar manuscript has not yet appeared on the map of the Syriac liturgists. It is more probable that Moses did not bring Giwargis' copy to Europe but a copy he prepared of it. Such a scenario is in accordance with the above-described sources.

### **4.3. Masius' manuscript and Atchaneh 5/11**

Having set up this hypothesis, I contacted Erich Renhart, whom I knew was working on the critical edition of the Syriac anaphora of St. Basil. He called my attention to another manuscript, the Atchaneh 5/11, which he found very close to Borg. Sir. 159, and he also kindly shared with me the draft of his upcoming monograph. Therefore, it has to be examined whether this manuscript is closer to Masius' copy or the Vatican manuscript.

#### **4.3.1. Assessment of the fragments**

Just like in the case of Borg. Sir. 159, first, the 52 anaphoral fragments were compared to the text of Atchaneh 5/11. Only a few differences were found in these passages, and they are all dialogical passages. Anaphoral passages in Moses' letters cover only approximately 10% of the whole anaphora. Therefore, the study was extended to the entire anaphora in order to gain a broader view to decide which manuscript Masius' copy was closer to. The whole text of the Borg. Sir 159 and Atchaneh 5/11 were compared, and the variances found between them were set against Masius' Latin translation. This can be seen in the following table. The first column shows whether a relevant Syriac fragment is available in Moses' letters or not. Only those differences are listed here, which can be compared with Masius' translation. Atchaneh 5/11



Frag.	Masius' translation	Borg. Sir. 159	Atchaneh 5/11
26	Quam veneranda est <b>hora</b> [...] (243)	ملا وبتلا <b>محللا</b> f. 71v	ملا وبتلا <b>هه</b> f. 111r
29	Kyrie eleison (243)	موزكسهه f. 71v	موز موز موز f. 111v
–	atque uno <b>corde</b> (250)	هه <b>حط</b> f. 74v	هه <b>حط</b> f. 116r

Table 8: Differences showing that Masius' copy is closer to Borg. Sir. 159

Out of these ten differences, six concern abbreviated dialogical passages. If Masius used the brackets consequently, what he saw in his manuscript, was closer to Borg. Sir. 159. As for Frag. 29, the word 'Kyrie eleison' appears three times in an abbreviated form in Atchaneh 5/11, and we see only one in the Vatican manuscript and one in Masius' translation. More decisive is Frag. 20, where a word is missing from the Atchaneh manuscript (your second coming). Even more interesting is that 'with one tongue' is used in Atchaneh 5/11 instead of 'with one heart'.

Frag.	Masius' translation	Borg. Sir. 159	Atchaneh 5/11
–	redemptoris <b>nostri</b> Iesu Christi (235)	هه <b>هه</b> <b>هه</b> هه f. 67v	هه <b>هه</b> <b>هه</b> هه f. 104v
–	coronato eos <b>spe</b> bone voluntatis (247)	هه <b>هه</b> <b>هه</b> هه <b>هه</b> f. 73r	هه <b>هه</b> <b>هه</b> هه <b>هه</b> هه f. 113v
–	<i>Populus</i> Amen (253)	– f. 76r	هه <b>هه</b> f. 117v
52	<i>Populus</i> Coram te Domine [Deus noster] (253) (253)	– f. 76r	هه <b>هه</b> f. 117v



–	<i>Populus. Amen. Diaconus. Benedic Domine. Sacerdos. Benedic omnibus nobis. (254)</i>	– f. 76r	حصل اصبغ معصوم حزقيا حبلا حزي حصح f. 118r
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*Table 9: Differences showing that Masius' copy is closer to Atchaneh 5/11*

The first two variances are typical scribal mistakes that can happen while copying a text. Nevertheless, Masius' Latin translation shows that the reading of his copy was identical in these cases to the Atchaneh version. The last three passages are completely missing from the Vatican manuscript, but they are present in Masius' translation and the Atchaneh manuscript. Normally, this should immediately exclude the possibility that Masius' manuscript was copied from the Vatican codex. Nevertheless, it is not so evident in this particular case because they are all dialogical passages that were often abbreviated or omitted, but a diligent copyist could anytime rewrite them if he wished so. Therefore, judging by the number of differences, Masius' copy is a bit closer to Borg. Sir. 159. Nonetheless, it is worth taking a look at the provenance of the Lebanese manuscript as well.

#### **4.3.2. The provenance of Atchaneh 5/11**

Little is known about this manuscript. The succinct entry of the manuscript catalogue gives only the most basic information: it is a large volume of 676 pages containing 37 anaphoras copied in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by deacon Abraham and priest Moses of Homs.<sup>395</sup> The modern route of this manuscript from Homs to Atchaneh via Damascus is easily traceable, but not much is known of its past. Nothing suggests that it ever left the Middle East, so Masius could have consulted it only if Moses had brought him an accurate copy.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

The results of the investigation into Masius' manuscript can be summarized as follows. Masius' copy is not among the Syriac anaphoral manuscripts known today; it can still be considered lost. Philologically, two manuscripts, Borg. Sir. 159 and Atchaneh 5/11 are closely related to it. Differences are so slight that Masius' copy could be a duplicate of any of them.

<sup>395</sup> Dolabani et al., 'Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque du patriarcat syrien orthodoxe', 577. Renhart provides a detailed description of the content in a long note in his forthcoming publication (p. xxvi n. 59).

Nevertheless, both philological and historical evidence suggests that he worked from a copy of Borg. Sir. 159.

If one day Masius' copy turns up, it will perhaps contain another prayer, the translation of which he published immediately after the anaphora of St. Basil under the title: *Precatio Divi Basilii, qua solet operatus sacris uti apud Deum, tralata ex Syrico per eundem Andream Masium Bruxellanium*.<sup>396</sup> The reason for uncertainty is that Masius did not explicitly mention that this prayer was in the same manuscript as the anaphora. It is a Husoyo, prayer for absolution, consisting of a Proemion (i.e. introduction) and a Sedro (i.e. rank or order of petitions). Its content is of general nature, so it is not an integral part of the anaphora of St. Basil. It is not clear why Masius attributed it to him.<sup>397</sup> In today's liturgy, the Husoyo precedes the anaphora, so it is also questionable why Masius put it after the anaphora.<sup>398</sup>

Nevertheless, as long as we are waiting for the emergence of Masius' actual copy, we have to content ourselves with those fragments that Moses' letters have preserved for us.

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<sup>396</sup> AnaBas, 254–256.

<sup>397</sup> Eberhard Nestle mentioned in the bibliography of the Syriac literature prepared for his chrestomathy that this text was translated by Moses and published already before Masius' edition but he did not provide any bibliographical reference (*Iam ante Masium tralatio a Mose Mardinensi facta impressa est, ubi?, quando?*). Cf. Nestle, *Syriac Grammar with Bibliography*, Litteratura Syriaca 37.

<sup>398</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Mor Severos Roger Akhrass who helped me to identify this prayer.

## 5. Conclusion

The dissertation provides the edition and the English translation of a predominantly unpublished, early modern Syriac letter corpus, testimony of the pen-friendship of the orientalist Andreas Masius and the Syrian Orthodox monk Moses of Mardin. The corpus has been examined with different methods. Philological analysis based on inner and outer sources demonstrated that the correspondence consisted of at least 21 letters and not 16 as it was thought earlier. After a thorough examination of the provenience of the manuscripts, possible hiding places of the missing letters were determined. Attempts were made to find some of them in five archives but no new letters were discovered. The comparative analysis of the Berlin and Glasgow manuscript showed that the latter is a poor copy of the former, it does not add to our knowledge, therefore it was disregarded in the text edition. The codicological analysis revealed that the watermarks support one of Moses' astonishing remarks, namely that he sent his letters from the chancellery of the king, the veracity of which has not yet been verified due to lack of parallel source.

The content of the correspondence has been examined as a historical source and seven questions were investigated closely.

Two biographical questions were scrutinized. Firstly, concerning Widmanstetter and Masius' friendship the dissertation confirms the deterioration of their relationship. Based on a wide range of other sources, it was established that their scholarly cooperation ended due to professional rivalry; Widmanstetter practically poached Moses from Masius. Secondly, the circumstances of Moses' conversion to Catholicism were analysed. It has been proved that his Catholic profession of faith made in Rome was rather due to an external compliance pressure than to an inner conviction.

Three important statements have been made on the early history of the Syriac printing based on the correspondence. Former studies named different persons as the initiator of Syriac printing. It was argued here that the idea came not from the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch but from Moses and Cardinal Marcello Cervini. As for the establishment of a Syriac printing press in Rome, I reasoned that only the punches were prepared in the Eternal City. And thirdly, concerning the bigger types of the Viennese printing press, it was demonstrated that they were prepared on Moses' own costs and he wanted to bring them with him.

Two findings concern the field of provenance studies. Current state of research holds that 15 Oriental manuscripts of the Vatican Library which belonged once to the collection of the illustrious Palatina Library were all Guillaume Postel's manuscripts. The dissertation demonstrated that two of them (Vat. Sir. 16 and Vat. Sir. 193) were Moses' manuscripts and argued that a third one (Vat. Sir. 5) was possible also brought to Europe by Moses. Secondly, it was also showed that the *editio princeps* of the Syriac New Testament was prepared based on Vat. Sir. 16.

Last but not least, the content of the correspondence was examined as a liturgical source since it contains many fragments of Masius' lost manuscript of the anaphora of St. Basil, a significant text for the study of Syriac liturgy. The fragments were compared to a great number of other manuscripts. It has been pointed out that Masius' copy can not be identified with any other manuscripts known today. The study also showed that the manuscript Masius held in his hands was a copy of the earliest version of the anaphora.

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## 7. Editorial principles and notes on the translation

For Syriac editing, there are no such meticulously worked out rules set in stone as for classical philology.<sup>399</sup> No handbook is available that would contain clear-cut editorial principles by which Syriacists should abide, only a few studies have been published on this subject. There are a few guidelines but even the major series lack consistent methodological approach. For a long time, scholars followed the instructions of René Draguet, editor of the Syriac series of the prestigious *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* for almost half a century 1948–1995 who favoured the diplomatic edition.<sup>400</sup> Sebastian Brock distanced himself from this method and stressed that the aim of the philological work is the publication of a readable text.<sup>401</sup>

My aim was also to make the edition of the correspondence as easy to follow as possible. For this reason, several changes have been made on the text. The letters are full of corrections, blacked out words and struck-through passages are very common. Masius' letter in its today's form is explicitly a draft and Moses also wrote his letters by constantly altering and rewriting them. Those parts which were not intended by the authors to be included into the final version of the text have been omitted from the edition. These omissions are most of the time undecipherable. At the same time, interlinear interpolations and insertions written on the margins have been incorporated into the text.

I did not stick to the original layout of the letters; my aim was to help the reader with insertions of new paragraphs or by highlighting the numbered enumerations. A special attention was made to render Moses' words and quotations from the anaphora easily distinguishable. In some cases, a sentence was cut into three-four parts randomly and completed with Moses' explanatory remarks. This made the text difficult to follow therefore citations from the anaphora are written in blue in order to ease the orientation in the context.

I did not apply changes on the language of the letters. There are only very few Syriac works which have been written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century therefore such sources as these letters are valuable snapshots of the state of language in this period.

The letters contain a considerable number of fragments from the Syriac anaphora of St. Basil. For the English translation of these fragments, I could draw from two former publication. The anaphora text was translated by Sebastian Brock and published by Baby Varghese in

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<sup>399</sup> Heal, 'Syriac Studies in the Contemporary Academy', 281–283.

<sup>400</sup> Draguet, 'Une méthode d'édition'.

<sup>401</sup> Cf. Mengozzi, 'Past and Present Trends', 439.



2017.<sup>402</sup> The basis of this translation was Rahmani's *editio princeps* which differs considerably from the version of Masius' manuscript, origin of the fragments therefore the passages taken from this translation were sometimes reshaped. The other text which served also only as a starting point, is the English translation of the anaphora of St. James. This anaphora is closely related to the anaphora of St. Basil, the text of these liturgies shows a big overlap thus I could rely on it at some places.

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<sup>402</sup> Varghese ed., *West Syrian Anaphoras*, 370–397.





Letter 2 – 22/06/53

Andreas Masius to Moses of Mardin

Brussels, 22 June 1553 (actually sent on 26 June)

Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 25r–26v

(26v)<sup>404</sup>

שלמה דמרן ואלהן ישוע משיחא נהוא עמך או אחי ורחמי מחיקא. אתמלי מטא לות  
אידי כתבך דכתבת אנת תמניא יומין בירחא חזירן ואתדמרת סגי דצבו רישנא דרהומי  
למעבד לך כהנא חדתאית. סברת גיר דלא מעדו למעבד אנש כהנא מן דריש איכונא  
דלא מעדו למעמד אנש מן דריש. ומדין סבר אנא דאנת לא סכלת למליהון מא דאמרו  
לך אן קבא אנת עבדינן לך כהנא חדתאית. והכן סבר אנא דלא נשדרונך מן לותהון  
ספיקא אלא נתלין לך כספא (דפסקו) דאשתודיו למתל לך. אפן דאורכין למתל איכונא  
אורכין הני אף למשדר לפטרירכא. ומודע אנא לך דמללת במדינתא אוגוסתא עם רב  
חילא הו דכתבת אגרתא לותה מן רהומא ושמה יוחנן יעקב פוגיר ומא דאמר לי. וכל  
פתגמוהי תשמע מן חבדי הו דעומר בתוני. הו דנתל לך אגרתה הנא והא כתב אנא יומנא  
מנא לותה מן דריש ופתגמוהי אודע אנא לך מחדא. וכתב אנא אף לות אחי. אלא לא  
תאזל השא לותה. קרסא גיר רבא אית עדכיל על גנב מדינתה. אלא תכל אנא במריא  
דנהוא עגל שינא. ואנת אחי אן תאתא אנת למדינת אוגוסתא שקל עמך לכתבא  
דדיתיקא חדתא ולסתאמפא דבאיךך וזיל לביתא דיוחנן יעקב פוגיר הו דנחזא לך  
בסימאית. ואן אנת תאזל לפטרירכא דילך וכל מא דעבדו עמך ברהומא כתוב לי מחדא.  
אנא גיר סהד לי מריא דרחם אנא לך סגי. וכתבת אף לחברי הו דבויניציא מדינתא  
דשמה יוחנן ריניאלמו על כתבא דיתהון לך בהי מדינתא ומן פומה תשמע לרעיוני. קוא

<sup>404</sup> On f. 25r, there is a note by Andreas Müller: *Ila Andreas Masii epistola caractere Hebraico concepta 1553. 22. Haziran s[ive]. Iunii*

בחובה דמשיחא פרוקן לעלמין אמין אתכתב בשנת אלף וחמשמאא ונג בירחא הזירן כב

יומין בה









1553. 23. die in viana. in cancelleria di Reges Rome

(21v)

Viennae 1553. 23. Tisri poster. s. Novembr.

نصل الى يد الاخ العزيز سيدي

يوحانون رينالما في ابينسيا

لربنا الرب الهنا الذي هو ربنا

والله اعلم

(23v)

**P. S. Epistola IV<sup>a</sup>**

وعلما وعلما لهؤلاء هي خلا من قديا بهما هتديا مهتديا قديا  
 قديا اذنا حسبي حسبي. وعلما هتديا اذنا حسبي. مهتديا مهتديا  
 وعلما اذنا. مهتديا اذنا مهتديا وعلما مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا.  
 مهتديا اذنا مهتديا وعلما مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا  
 مهتديا اذنا مهتديا وعلما مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا  
 مهتديا اذنا مهتديا وعلما مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا  
 مهتديا اذنا مهتديا وعلما مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا  
 مهتديا اذنا مهتديا وعلما مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا مهتديا

SG.



٥٠. فَيَسْمَعُ. <sup>410</sup> حَمِيْنَه فَيَسْمَعُ. هَفَيَسْمَعُ لَهٗ مَحْ فَيَسْمَعُ اَلْمَلَا. هَفَيَسْمَعُ اَلْمَلَا اَسْمَا فَيَسْمَعُ. اَسْمَا اَسْمَا  
 وَجَاهِي حَمِيْنَه مَحْ زَيْدٌ سَمِعَ حَلَا حَلَا. فَتَمَّ فَيَسْمَعُ مَدَاتِي سَمِعَ جَاهِي سَمِعَ: اَجَلًا وَبِهٖ قَتْلًا  
 هَفَيَسْمَعُ مَدَاتِي حَمِيْنَه تَا وَتَا مَدَامِيَا فَيَسْمَعُ.

٥١. رِيَا سَمِعَ <sup>411</sup> 'riposare'

٥٢. مَحْ سَمِعَ. <sup>412</sup> اَسْمَا سَمِعَ: مَدَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ فَيَسْمَعُ مَحْ فَيَسْمَعُ. مَحْمَعْمَعُ اَلْمَلَا مَحْمَعُ 'alsar la voce'. مَحْمَعْمَعُ  
 مَحْمَعُ. سَمِعَ مَحْ سَمِعَ اَلْمَلَا هَفَيَسْمَعُ ' del riposar et del liberar et ancora come uno che meter il  
 ' capo Abasio non alsar il capo. مَحْمَعُ وَفَيَسْمَعُ مَحْمَعُ لَّا قِيَا وَبِهٖ حَمِيْنَه. اَلْمَلَا حَمِيْنَه قِيَا. مَحْمَعُ  
 وَفَيَسْمَعُ مَحْمَعُ مَحْمَعُ قِيَا وَبِهٖ حَمِيْنَه حَمِيْنَه.

٥٣. اَسْمَا لَّا نَبِيَا اَسْمَا قَتْلًا اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا قَتْلًا. هَلَا اَسْمَا وَنَمَّ حَمِيْنَه. رَحْمَعُ وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا  
 حَمِيْنَه مَحْمَعُ هَلَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا اَسْمَا حَمِيْنَه اَسْمَا. حَمِيْنَه اَسْمَا اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ. اَسْمَا حَمِيْنَه اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا  
 حَمِيْنَه اَسْمَا اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا. لَّا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا. هَلَا حَمِيْنَه مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا  
 مَحْمَعُ حَمِيْنَه اَسْمَا اَسْمَا لَّا نَبِيَا اَسْمَا. اَلْمَلَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا حَمِيْنَه مَحْمَعُ مَحْمَعُ 'sigillo et natura'.

٥٤. اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا: مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ. <sup>413</sup> مَحْمَعُ:

٥٥. اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا حَمِيْنَه حَمِيْنَه اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا  
 وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا لَّا نَبِيَا اَسْمَا اَسْمَا اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا. <sup>414</sup> اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا. حَمِيْنَه  
 اَسْمَا: وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا حَمِيْنَه مَحْمَعُ. اَسْمَا  
 مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا ' اَسْمَا حَمِيْنَه مَحْمَعُ. هَلَا اَسْمَا لَّا نَبِيَا اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا..  
 ٥٦. وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا. <sup>415</sup> مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا. مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا اَسْمَا اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا  
 اَسْمَا.

٥٧. مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا. <sup>416</sup> 'diferente mō multi modi asai modi'

<sup>410</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 67v; AnaBas 236.

<sup>411</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 68r; AnaBas 237.

<sup>412</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 68r, 69r, 71v, 72r, 72v, 73r, 73v, 74r, 74v; AnaBas 237, 239, 243, 244, 246, 247, 248, 249.

<sup>413</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 68v; AnaBas 238.

<sup>414</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 68v; AnaBas 238. One word is missing here, this caused the problem. The quoted passage of the anaphora reads:

اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا حَمِيْنَه حَمِيْنَه اَسْمَا مَحْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا. اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا وَفَيَسْمَعُ اَسْمَا

<sup>415</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 69r; AnaBas 238.

<sup>416</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 69v; AnaBas 239.









أما في كتابنا هذا. هذا الف ستمعنا هته. جارت أؤو. قه. بقصه ده. حاتب مفعلا  
الحصبي.

(16v)

يا صلياً لحنال ههوا لي رفا مني للبر ومحب ابواهه ملامهه انا ووجه

Al Rev andreas masius<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>441</sup> Andreas Masius' note below reads: Viennae 26 martii. R[es]p[on]di 28 aprilis 1555











حب فقيب حلا ولا مدلي انا واطلاهت حسبو حب وبعلا حس. الا نوهو رصده وفتنلا.  
هخدا انا مدسه وبلالا حب مبحلا ففصلا ولبوا حبده جعلل ههونلا نوهنلا: انا افنم.  
الاصلا كرايت ايتن maius . ملى به صبح حه. هدا انا مبعبتلا. صح ونصحب هلاصحب مبعلا  
انلا مياتا انا ليه قتا

ههوب سكيم.

وبه اه وتيمص. صلاهت حلاصحب اصلا وانن كاسفه وا بحب. سب حلاو سب. هه وانن مبعصلا اه  
مبعلا هصلا. صلاهت حلهصلا اصلا وانلا ههون حبلم كاسفه وا بحب. ههوب حب. هانلا  
صلاهت ههون ونبه انا. افلاهت حسبو فلا سب حلهصلا \* انا حلام انلا اسفه وا الا نبه  
انا ولا انلا مبعصلا انا وبحب \*  
لى زحلا فنن اصلا ههون انلا لاتب انا هونصلا كسطا. ابوا هه مبعصلا

Al R[everen]do s[ignor] mio Andrea Masio<sup>464</sup>

<sup>464</sup> Andreas Masius' inscription below reads: 1555 Viennae Maii. Valsaxae 8 Junii. Respondi 14 ejusdem. Another hand added 1555 [...] 29 Maii

Letter 7 – 15/07/55

Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius

Vienna, 15 July 1555

Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 22r–v, 24r–v

(24r)

حيمر قدنا مدينهنا ووتكدهم.

مكتوبه وخطي هالده يعفد معيتم. انه وراي خلا لاحتبرا متبعلا حيدلا ورومى: فملا  
حيدله في نيهالا. به. انه مكملا كتلاه تلي خلا آس هوييمع هبنيك صميمنا: ابيواهه  
ملاهمه به به به امص.

وآ آة نريتم فمديون صبحالا لُحالا: وملا اُنبا لالتب لُحمنب مفعلا. انه وملا سُبقر  
xiii di Guni تم كسمن. ملا حب. ت. حاصره نسا وانلاهت فحتا iulius xiii فمينا  
هسبلا كه فقب خلا ميلا ولحصلا هومصهالا. حلا انه فمكها (laude) فغنا وفحصه  
ححب مفعلا. من به به خصم امص.

ممدنا اننا ملا هسه وبتلحمه. وانا يلاخا حه لُحلا زحم. لاقم احم ملاخا حيمنا  
اوتتا هعونا حه وتيمل وبع اوتلا ونبح حب حوايلاهمنا. ويارحم بهس بفحص حم منب  
هسه وبتلحمه اصلا وقميا كُحالا وبع. سب مع لاقم لا اعلاب حوايلاهمنا: هه فجا  
ملا حلا وانا ملا لالتب. هاسنا لا فب حب فليما. همع حلا به حب: يلاخا انا حيمنا  
ولحتيل اسب انه ونبه انا ملا ولا اعلاب فم وبتلاهت حب. هلاهت لاقب حب فليما.  
هحالا وصلنا انلاهت انوا. وبه بهت حب هه هه هه ووهط نلان مع وان حب حلاه. هبه  
هه حلا ييب واهبه انف حه. هه فنيلا فليما حه. وان حب فحلا حقهلا حلاه  
اننا حه ونبح انه. فحلا اه فقيس. انه قلا ومحصص حه. هه فغنا هه مع  
وبلنحص هبارحم لالحنا هكحم انحب اءا حلاه. هلاهت منب حلاط وبع حوايلاهمنا  
حم قهلا حلا زط انا ويعنحم. هه لا ففحم: قلا واننا انا حلامي ايننا حه وقنا انا حب  
له فغنا: هبه فليما لا بهت.













يَهْدِيَا قَتَا لَوِي<sup>475</sup> لَأُوتِ عَفْنِ اِبْنِيَا. وَسِعَ لَّا اِنْلَاحَ قَتَا وَاِلَاحَا حَصْبِ: اَلَا حَلِيحَهَا. هَقْتَا  
وَلِيحَهَا اِنْلَاحِ ❖

حَبِ فَا اِبْحَا اِنْمَا حَمِ زَهَا وَاِحِبِ فَبِيحِ حَقَا. لُحَا هَهَيْبَا هَمُحِيحِ سَتَا فُوعِيَا حَبِ  
حَاةُ هَيْبَا اِنْبِ هَحَدَاحِ هَحَاكَمِ حَاكَمِ<sup>476</sup> ❖

اَلْوِيحِ مَدِيحَا لَاحِيحِ هَاَسِحِ وَاِحِبِيحِ. مَعْتَلَا مَعْتَمَلَا. مَتَهَا. وِتِيحَا حَلَاةُ حَبِ حَقَا عَدَا. حَخَقِيحَا.  
اِنْمَا وِيحِيحِيحِيحِ حَاكَمِ وِيحِ نَبِيحَا اِنْلَا. بِيحَا اِنْلَا لَاحِيحِ وَاِحِبِيحِيحِيحِ. <sup>477</sup> اِنْحَبِ قَتَا مَعْتَمَلَا اِنْلَا  
هَحَلَا اَتِيحِ حَقَقَا. هَاِنَا لَّا نَبِيحَا اِنْلَا مَلَا حَلَاةُ اِنْلَا حَاكَمِحِ وَاِلَا هَمِيحِيحِ حَلَا لُؤِيحَا حَبِيحِيحِيحِ اَتِيحِ.  
هَا مَدَا حَقِيحِ اِنْلَا وَاِلَا قَلَقِيحِ حَسِيحَا حَلَا وَاِلَا قَمَرِ هَاةُ حِيحِيحِ حَلَا يَحَلَا مَبِيحِيحِيحِ: لَّا هَمِيحِيحِ حَلَا  
هَاةُ. اِنْمَا لَّا نَبِيحَا اِنْلَا مَلَا زَا سَوِيحِ حَاةُ اِنْلَا نَبَقَا حَبِ ❖

سَعْمَا هَجْمَلِيحَا<sup>478</sup> حَاكَمِيحِ هَمُحَلَا سَعْمَا لَّا اِنْلَا هَاةُ هَاةُ حَقِيحِ اِنْبِ حَمَلِيحَا. حَمَلِيحَا  
اِنْلَا هَاةُ سَاكَمِ وَاِسَعْمَا وَاَقَبِ لَّا مَدَا سَا هَاةُ مَدَمِ: ❖

اِنْبِ اُوِيحَا. <sup>479</sup> اِنْبِ نَمِ حَاةُ قَتَا اِنْتَبَلَا. اَلَا لَّا اِنْلَا هَاةُ هَمِيحِيحِ. هَاةُ حَاةُ حَاةُ اِنْمَا اِنْحَبِ.  
هَاِنَا لَّا نَبِيحَا اِنْلَا مَلَا نَمِ حَاةُ. هَمِيحِ حَبِ اِهْ اِنْسِ ❖

هَمِيحِيحَا اِنْمَا اِنْمَا. وَاَقَبِ قَمِيحِ حَلَاةُ اِنْحَبِ اِنْمَا. سَلْهَاتَا وَاِحِبِيحِ بِيحِ اِهْ سَتَا وَاِحِبِيحَا. اِنْمَا اِنْمَا  
زَحَلَا وَاِحِبِيحِ. وَاَقَبِ. اِنْمَا وَاِحِبِيحِ سَلْهَاتَا وَاِحِبِيحِ هَمِيحِيحِ حَبِ. اِهْ حَلَا اِنْمَا وَاِحِبِيحَا هَاةُ اِنْمَا سَلْهَاتَا  
هَجْمَلَا حَمَلَا. وَاِحِبِيحِ. اِنْمَا وَاِحِبِيحِ سَلْهَاتَا وَاِحِبِيحِ حَبِ. اِهْ اِهْ حَلَا اِنْمَا وَاِحِبِيحِ مَعِ قَلَا. <sup>480</sup> هَاةُ  
وَاِحِبِيحِ اِنْلَا وَاِحِبِيحِ نَبَاةُ مَلَا نَبِيحَا حَاةُ حَبِ وَاِحِبِيحِ. هَمِيحِيحِ مَعْمَلَا اِنْلَا حَمِيحِيحِيحِ ❖

حَاةُ اِنْمَا فَا هَمِيحِيحِ. مَعْمَلَا وَاِحِبِيحِ مَلَاةُ حَمِيحِ. <sup>481</sup> مَعْمَلَا اِنْمَا اِنْمَا حَبِ. وَاِحِبِ حَلَاةُ مَتَبَلَا وَاِحِبِيحِ مَدَمِ  
حَاةُ حَاةُ. هَاةُ نَبِيحَا اِنْلَا مَقْتَلَا هَاةُ حَجَلَا وَاِحِبِ اَلَا نَبِيحَا اِنْلَا وَاِحِبِ حَلَاةُ وَاِحِبِيحِ مَقْتَلَا  
حَاةُ حَاةُ. هَاةُ لَّا مَقْتَلَا اِلَاةُ مَعْمَلَا حَاةُ حَبِ. اَلَا حَمِيحِ وَاِحِبِيحِ حَاةُ حَبِ  
مَقْتَلَا حَمِ سَتَا وَاِحِبِيحِ حَمَلَا. هَاةُ مَعِ حَلَاةُ وَاِحِبِيحِ اَلَا وَاِحِبِيحِ حَمِيحِ وَاِحِبِيحِ  
حَاةُ. اَلَا مَعْمَلَا هَاةُ. اِنْلَا مَعِ حَلَاةُ وَاِحِبِيحِ. اِلَاةُ مَدَمِ اِنْلَا حَبِ. هَاةُ اِلَاةُ مَقْتَلَا  
هَاةُ. هَاةُ نَبَاةُ حَمَلَا اِهْ لَّا نَبَاةُ وَاِحِبِيحِ لَّا اِنْلَاةُ هَمِيحِيحِ. هَمِيحِ حَبِ اِهْ اِنْسِ حَلَا حَمِيحِ وَاِحِبِيحِ

<sup>475</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 68v; AnaBas 238.

<sup>476</sup> Cf. e.g. Borg.sir.159 f. 67v; AnaBas 235.

<sup>477</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 74r; AnaBas 249.

<sup>478</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 74v; AnaBas 249.

<sup>479</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 74v; AnaBas 249.

<sup>480</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 76r; AnaBas 253.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. Borg.sir.159 f. 75r; AnaBas 250.





ح مدحونل صهفنهات سحك صدهه صنتعلا. مدهلا صلاط وابعن سحك واللا (...). حنصلا  
 وبعك حبلل هجمدل حدها انا مكلل صكعلل واكلل ولا اعلاصك. هانل وبعك انا نهك  
 صاتب حلاط. هجمدل حدها لا نهد انا صلا زح وبعك حص هال نهوه صعبو انا صعبو  
 انا ح س. هوب سحك. هدهلا انا هوسلا وبعك وحصصلا سس وبعك صه انا حه هكلا  
 قكب. هخل انا صده هكب انا صدها صسلا صبلل وبعك وهسه حك مدهلا منل هانل  
 فنل انا حه. هال زط وبعك حكبلا نورا بلا هسه هومل وانا حصلاه همنط: للتب مَّح وبعك.  
 هصلاه هوه وبعك وبعك انا هص ح صلاط همنط. هدهلا وارا وبعك لوب: خل انا صده  
 وبعك صه؟ هه مل وهه زح مدهلا منل وبعك حصلاه صر قصبلا. هوه مل وقيل حه  
 نهك انا انا حدهل وبعك صابنهه. هال نرا انا افقهه حوانل صلا مدم نهه بعك  
 صدهه وبعك.

اعلابول هورا انا ص حبالل: هلا انهه صعبسلا. صه صصك صلعن مدم  
 صسلا هصصلا صدها ههونل

(14v)

ال زط منل ابعكلا هورا انا للتب وبعك هصصلا  
 انا وهه صلههه

Viennae 1555.

26. tisri prior. seu Octobr.

Dno Andrea Masio<sup>483</sup>

<sup>483</sup> Andreas Masius' inscription on the margin reads: in hac ep[isto]la potes Syrum ingenu[m] cognoscere homo ingratisimus oblitus o[m]niu[m] beneficiorum quae ego in ipsum ipse in me se co[n]tulisse simulat per summam impudentiam







وَأَمَّا نَبِيَّ آتَى اس. وَنَزَلَ خَيْلَهُنَا. وَنَهَى وَأَمَّا حَمَلَهُنَّ وَنَهَى وَنَهَى اسبِحْ حَمَلَهُنَّ لَوْحًا.  
هَلَّا فَحَصَ وَأَمَّا مَدِينَهُ نَعَمَ حَكِي. وَأَمَّا قَتْلَ وَمَضِيحًا وَأَمَّا اسْبِحْ فَدَلِيحَ كُتَيْلًا اسْتَبْرًا. أَلَا لَا قَتِيلًا  
مَكْتُمَ حَكِي مَحَ لَوْحًا سَمِعًا أَمَّا مَلَأَ أَمَّا نَبِيَّ فَيَحْكُلًا أَمَّا حَرِيحَ مَكْتُمًا.  
مَدْيِيحًا فَهَوَّتْنَا لِحَصْبِيحَ. مَدْيِيحَتْنَا. وَأَسَلَمَ. حَكِي فَيَحْكُلًا اسْتَبْرًا.  
لَمَّا أَمَّا وَنَهَى حَمَلَهُنَّ مَدْيِيحًا اسْتَبْرًا وَنَهَى. وَنَهَى حَمَلَهُنَّ اسْتَبْرًا مَقْتُلًا خَكِي. مَدْيِيحًا  
أَمَّا قَتْلًا مَدْيِيحًا مَدْيِيحًا مَقْتُلًا اسْتَبْرًا وَنَهَى لَمَّا حَمَلَهُنَّ لَمَّا أَمَّا أَمَّا لَمَّا.

Al clar[issi]mo s[ign]or il s[ign]or andrea

Magio suo obseruandissimo

Roma<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Another hand added: Trento. Masius' inscription on the margin reads: 1556. Venetiis in august. praesentata Weingarten 14 calendas octobris

## 8.2.English Translation

Letter 1 – 08/06/53

Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius

Rome, 8 June 1553

Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 17r–18v

(17r) In the name of the Lord who protects those who fear him

The peace of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, who was crucified because of us be with you, oh my friend, Andreas Masius, you who love the divine teachings and the guidance of the Gospels. God of heaven and earth be with you where you are, you who love and are loved by Christ. Amen.

I am conscious of your sweet love. It shines like the sun and does not fade even among the strife of the people. Likewise, I testify to you that my love towards you is strong. I call God to my witness that I love you very much not only with words but also in deeds.<sup>485</sup> And if everyone's love fails, our love remains steady forever. Firstly, towards Christ, and then towards each other. God make long your life on the earth in good actions of faith in Christ our God. Amen.

Listen, oh my brother in Christ what the Roman elite did with me who are without love and pursue vain glory. They acted like sending me to our patriarch and decided to give me 50 gold scudi.<sup>486</sup> And I have been waiting for their words [to be fulfilled] since you left Rome until the month of Haziran that is the third month of the Jews.<sup>487</sup> And after all this weariness, they told me: “*You [in the Syriac Orthodox Church] don't have priesthood. If you wish we ordain you priest again and we will not allow that someone recognises you.*”<sup>488</sup> In my heart, I did not accept these words and when they heard that I do not accept it, they all left me and no one stayed with me to help me only our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. So now I feel like I was in the waves of the sea and I don't know where to go. Moreover, I don't have any dinar to go somewhere only those

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<sup>485</sup> cf. 1Jn 3:18

<sup>486</sup> Müller p.23. describes how much it was worth.

<sup>487</sup> i.e. June. Masius left Rome some time in April 1553. He was still there on 28 March and on 2 May he was already in Augsburg. cf. Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 119–122.

<sup>488</sup> Müller misunderstood this passage and gave a wrong translation: “Non est vobis sacerdotium. Si vis, creabimus te sacerdotem denuo. (Vos Jacobitae non habetis sacerdotes rite creatos; nec estis, qui dicimini.) Neque te deseremus, quotquot te novimus. Hayek proposed a better rendering: “creabimus te sacerdotem denuo neque deseremus ut quispiam hoc noverit”, cioè lo faremo senza che nessuno lo sappia. Hayek, *‘Alāqāt kanīsat al-suryān al-ya‘āqiba*, 73. n. 107. Hayek, *Le relazioni della Chiesa Siro-giacobita*, 56. n. 118.

that you gave me. When I came, I brought from Cyprus 30 scudi and I don't have anything to give them back, so I don't know what to do. I would like to ask your grace to do me a favour by recommending me to your brother in order when I go to him, he also takes good care of me in the measure that our Lord gives him by giving me good reference to all of his and your friends who will help me in their goodness from what they have and will not send me away with empty hands. That is what I hope from God and from you that you do this favour for me. And concerning the New Testament that is with me, they did not say anything, neither about the *stampa*. They are with me. If you have any idea, what should I do, write to me and send it quickly to the place you prefer.

Remain in the love of Christ our Saviour for ever, amen.

Written in the year of 1553 on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month of June.

Moses of Antioch

(18v) Get this letter – if God wants – to Andreas Masius' hand. Sent by Moses, the simple-minded<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> An inscription by Andreas Masius reads: Rome, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1553. Received on the 21<sup>st</sup> of the same month. Reply sent on 26<sup>th</sup> of the same month in the same language.

**Letter 2 – 22/06/53**

**Andreas Masius to Moses of Mardin**

**Brussels, 22 June 1553 (actually sent on 26 June)**

**Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 25r–26v**

(26v) The peace of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ be with you oh, my brother and bosom friend. Your letter that you wrote on 8 June arrived to me yesterday.<sup>490</sup> I was very astonished (reading) that the Roman elite wanted to reordain you as a priest. I think that they do not used to reordain someone, just like it is not possible to rebaptise someone.<sup>491</sup> Therefore, I think that you did not understand when they said: “If you wish, we will ordain you to the priesthood again.” Thus, I think that they will not send you away with empty hands, but they will give you the money they promised to you, even if they spin out the paying just like the they spin out to send you to the patriarch.<sup>492</sup>

I would like inform you that I talked to an influential person in Augsburg whose name is Johann Jakob Fugger – he is the one to whom I wrote from Rome – and I would like to let you know what he told me. You will hear everything he said from my friend who lived in my house and who will give you this letter. Today, I will write to him (scilicet Johann Jakob Fugger) again and I will let you know his response immediately.

And I write to my brother<sup>493</sup>, too. But don’t go now to him, because there is a big war now around his town but I trust in God that there will be peace soon.

And you, my brother, if you come to Augsburg, bring with you the New Testament and the types that you have and go to the house of Johann Jakob Fugger. He will warmly welcome you.<sup>494</sup> And if in the meantime you happen to go to your patriarch please write to me quickly everything they did to you in Rome.

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<sup>490</sup> According to a strikethrough text “on 20 June”.

<sup>491</sup> Müller provided the following translation: “Arbitror enim, quod non soleant quenquam sacerdotem denuo creare, sicuti non solent quenquam secundum baptizare.”

<sup>492</sup> This sentence contains another word “hny” that does not seem to have a meaning in this context.

<sup>493</sup> He is Hendrik Rudolf up ten Haitzhovel, also known as Heinrich von Weeze (1521–1601), an old friend of Andreas Masius who later became acquainted with him by marrying his cousin, Elza up ten Haitzhovel. Cf. Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius und seinen Freunden, 1538 bis 1573*, at various instances; François, ‘Andreas Masius (1514-1573)’, 207, 224–227, 232, 242.

<sup>494</sup> Masius’ advice directing Moses to Johann Jakob Fugger (1516–1575) was a clever one. This famous Augsburg patrician and banker, besides being one of the most well-to-do figures of his time, was also committed in patronizing the edition of scholarly works. He possessed a rich library containing several Greek and Oriental manuscripts and he was always ready to enrich it further. Therefore, Moses had a good chance to gain his support.

I swear by God that I love you a lot. I also wrote to my friend who is in Venice whose name is Yūḥnan Rignalmo concerning the books that you have in that city. From his mouth you will hear my thoughts.

Remain in the love of Christ, our Saviour for ever. Amen.

Dated in the year 1553, in the month of June, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day.

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Cf. Costil, 'Le mécénat humaniste des Fugger', 156–165; Steimann, 'Jewish Scribes and Christian Patrons'. The more than ten thousand volumes of his library ended up in the Bavarian State Library. On this see: Hartig, *Die Gründung der Münchener Hofbibliothek*, 193–275, and Lehmann, *Eine Geschichte der alten Fuggerbibliotheken*.

**Letter 3 – 15/07/53**  
**Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius**  
**Venice, 15 July 1553**  
**Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 19r–20v**

(19r) **God**

**In the name of the eternal Being that is hidden from everything**

I would like to inform your grace<sup>495</sup>, Andreas Masius, what a sweet name, who are brilliant in the divine science, about my visit in Augsburg at the potentate (you mentioned).<sup>496</sup> I would like to ask you to write to him [the following]: if I go to him, he should send me to the Eastern land in order I bring for everyone the books he wants, because I know where they put the books we need. And when I bring all of the books you need, we will print all these books one after another. And you, O my brother, let him know about our books, since you know them: such as the book of Moses bar Kepha,<sup>497</sup> commentary on the Psalms by Daniel,<sup>498</sup> or the book of St. Ephrem and Jacob, his teacher,<sup>499</sup> or the books of the Old [Testament], or the book of Kings. And we have plenty of books that are in harmony with the pious conduct of life and the light of divine theology: Commentary of the Gospels, book of the Cause of all causes,<sup>500</sup> book of the Wisdom

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<sup>495</sup> Literally: “your sweet love”

<sup>496</sup> He can be identified with Johann Jakob Fugger who was already mentioned in the previous letter.

<sup>497</sup> Moses bar Kepha (d. 903), bishop of Beth Raman, whose writings cover a wide area of biblical exegesis, traditional theology, and liturgy. Cf. Coakley, ‘Mushe Bar Kipho’. The work that Moses refers to, is most probably his commentary on the Paradise that was later translated by Masius into Latin. Masius, *De paradiso commentarius*.

<sup>498</sup> This is the Great Commentary on the Psalms by Daniel of Ṣalaḥ (fl. mid-6<sup>th</sup> cent.) This vast work that runs to more than 1000 manuscript pages appears to be the oldest known psalm commentary composed in Syriac. Cf. Taylor, ‘Daniel of Ṣalaḥ’.

<sup>499</sup> Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373) is one of the most prominent Christian theologians and writers, and the most notable hymnographer of Eastern Christianity, who is venerated as a saint by all traditional Churches. Cf. Brock, ‘Ephrem’ and Biesen, *Bibliography of St Ephrem the Syrian*. Jacob of Nisibis (d. 337/8) is the first recorded bishop of Nisibis. Although he is identified as the author of several different writings, no authentic works were preserved under his name. Cf. Amar, ‘Ya‘qub of Nisibis’. Since Moses is referring here to one book mentioning these two historical figures together, he probably thinks on the Nisibene Hymns of Ephrem, in which he invokes several times his teacher. Cf. Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Carmina Nisibena, I. and II.*

<sup>500</sup> A work by an unknown author aiming to bring the reader to the perfect knowledge of Truth or God, the Cause of all causes. Cf. Kayser, *Das Buch von der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit oder der Ursache aller Ursachen. Nach den syrischen Handschriften zu Berlin, Rom, Paris und Oxford herausgegeben*; Kayser, *Das Buch von der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit oder der Ursache aller Ursachen. Aus dem syrischen Grundtext ins Deutsche übersetzt*; Teule, ‘Ktābā d-‘al-ida‘tā da-shrārā’.

of all wisdoms<sup>501</sup>, the *Book of rays* and [the *Book of*] *splendors*,<sup>502</sup> the book of Eudochus<sup>503</sup>, the Book of Dialogos, the Book of Names, the book of *Cream of wisdom*<sup>504</sup>, and many other books that I do not remember. However, I do not say that I bring a particular book, but those that you have asked for. He should not be worried that if he gives me money to buy books, I will put away his silver and will not return. God forbid! I would not do that! However, if he gives me dinars, I will appoint someone as my guarantor. And if I do not come back and bring the books you asked for, this man whom I appoint as my guarantor will give him back his silver. Therefore, I ask you, friend of Jesus, our God, to let him know these words clearly and please present my regards to him.

Concerning the issue I wrote you about from Rome, that they did not want to give me money, truly, it happened like this. But after much trouble, they gave me the answer [intended] to our patriarch, and the silver they had promised to me. Lately, I came to Venice on the 11th day of July, and the Pope's nuncio<sup>505</sup> gladly welcomed me in his house. And now, if God wills, soon I will go to Augsburg. Remain firm in the faith of Christ, our King, who is King forever and ever, amen.

Dated on the 15th, in the middle of Tammuz, in Venice.

(19v) Oh, my brother, what are these dinars for me!? I brought 30 pieces of gold from Cyprus, and I would like to give them back their dinars for not to be indebted. I spent of it on the way from Rome to Venice and made new clothes out of it without going back and forth. And if I go to Augsburg, I want to spend of it again, so it will not be enough to cover my needs. Understand, oh brother, that I ask from God and from you to do good to me, according to your will, either as with your brother, or another way. You are a learned and wise man, you do not need more

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<sup>501</sup> I.e., *The cream of wisdom* or *Butyrum Sapientiae* by Barhebraeus (1225/6–1286), maphrian and polymath, one of the most prolific Syriac authors and key figure of the Syriac Renaissance in the 12–13<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is a voluminous philosophical work modelled on Avicenna's vast encyclopaedia, *The Book of Healing*. It was partially published, cf. Takahashi, 'Edition of the Syriac Philosophical Works of Barhebraeus', 114–115. On the misnomer see Janssens, 'Crème de la science ou Science des sciences?' and Takahashi, *Aristotelian Meteorology in Syriac*, 7, n. 13.

<sup>502</sup> Two famous works of Barhebraeus. The *Book of rays* is a still unpublished work of dogmatic theology in ten books. The *Book of splendors* is a grammatical treatise that was published by Paulin Martin. Cf. Martin, *Oeuvres Grammaticales d'Abou'lfaradj*. On Barhebraeus see Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*.

<sup>503</sup> Eudochus of Melitene was a lexicographer who flourished in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and composed a lexicon of obscure words that was used by Barhebraeus for his grammatical treatises. Cf. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 294–295; Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, 299.

<sup>504</sup> Cf. n. 14.

<sup>505</sup> Ludovico Beccadelli (1501–1572), humanist and poet, secretary of cardinals Gasparo Contarini and Reginald Pole. He was papal nuncio in Venice between 1550–1554, then became archbishop of Ragusa (today Dubrovnik, Croatia) between 1555–1564. Cf. Alberigo, 'Beccadelli, Ludovico'; Gaeta, *Nunziature di Venezia. V-VI*.



words, what I wrote to you is enough. If you want to answer, write and send it to Augsburg and to Venice as well because you do not know where you can reach me.

(20v) May this letter arrive, if God wills, into the hands of Andreas Masius, to the place in Germany where he is.

Concerning your remark that “there is a cross on your seal,” [please note that] the cross is not only for metropolitans, but for every baptized person who has been baptized in the name of the Trinity. What does the cross mean? It means ‘Atacato’ [hung out]. Therefore, it shows that the cross is Christ. It does not matter if it is engraved on paper or wood or on something else. And if the cross means Christ, then it is not only for those you mentioned but for everyone who believe in Christ. This cross is the sign and memory of the one who was crucified. And it should not be used for anything else than to remind of Christ our Lord, whom we worship.<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> An inscription by Andreas Masius reads: Venice, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1553. Received in Brussels on the 30<sup>th</sup> of the same month. Reply sent on the same day.

**Letter 4 – 23/11/53**  
**Moses of Mardin to Jean de Renialme and Guillaume Postel**  
**Vienna, 23 November 1553**  
**Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 21r–v**  
**PS. f. 23 r–v**

(21r) Peace from Moses, the sinful servant to Mr. Yūḥanon Rignalmo. I ask your grace to send me the thirteen and a half *zecchini*<sup>507</sup> I have given you and not to miss anything out of it. I need them very much because I can not ask anything from Mr Johann Lucretius<sup>508</sup>. He did very well by me and it would not be nice to cause him trouble. I look forward to the completion of his love. What a great love he and his wife<sup>509</sup> showed to me! As for my horse, I sold it for 4 gold dinars. And from these 4 gold dinars I bought wide trousers<sup>510</sup> and other similar things that I need, but now I do not have anything else. That is why I am asking you very, very much to send me those dinars and not to miss anything out of it. If God wills, I will go to you and do everything for you that I would like to. Know, oh my brother, that a little talk is enough to the man of intellect instead of a lot. And you shall remain in peace with all the people of your house. And many greetings to your wife and daughters and little son.<sup>511</sup> God save them! Amen. Greetings to Johann, your servant, since he spared no trouble on my behalf. Stay with the Lord. Amen.

Many, many greetings and thanksgiving to Mr Guillaume Postel, man of intellect and master of the divine teaching. Our Lord Jesus Christ, protect you all from the evil. Amen.

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<sup>507</sup> Venetian gold ducat. This term coming from the word ‘Zecca’, the mint of the Republic of Venice, became popular in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>508</sup> ie. Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter; cf. Wilkinson, *Orientalism*, 152. n. 61.

<sup>509</sup> Anna Lucretia von Leonsberg (1525–1556), the illegitimate daughter of Ludwig X, Duke of Bavaria (1495–1545) who married Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter on 15 January 1542. His writings attest to their happy home life. On her epitaph Widmanstetter called his wife his “learned partner of literary activities”. Cf. Ingersoll, ‘Emblems’, 49.

<sup>510</sup> The word used here is a rare word of Persian origin, meaning: loose, buggy oriental pants or thick riding breeches.

<sup>511</sup> Jean de Renialme married Claire de Jonghe in 1544 with whom they had four children. Cf. Bomberghen and Goovaerts, *Généalogie de la famille Van Bomberghen*, 17–18. Historical sources attest to three of their children: Anne, Daniel and Alexander.

Finally, I ask you, oh my brothers, to send the other book to Mr. Johann Lucretius in order he lobbies these kings for my own good. But do not tell him that I asked from you to write to him. Remain in the love of our God! Amen.

I, Moses, servant of Jesus Christ, ask Your Honour, oh my Lord, Iohanon Rignalmo to [send] the 13 and a half *zecchini* that have been given to me because I need it, for God's sake. Please do not to miss anything out of it. And then, if God wishes so, when I can return, I will do whatever you want.

[Dated] November 23, 1553, Vienna, at the Chancellery of the Kings of Rome

(21v)

Venice 1553 23 November

May this letter arrive to Johan Rignalmo's hand, who is my brother and lord, in Venice

P.S. to Guillaume Postel

(23v) Many peace and thanksgiving to my lord, lord of the intellect, and the lord of many teachings, Guillaume Postel. I inform your sweet affection that you are always in my heart. First, because of the love of our God, Christ, and then, because Mr. Johann Lucretius received the book and greatly rejoiced over it. By the way, I would like to ask Your Holiness to bring your love for God and for me to perfection and send the other book to Mr. Johann Lucretius in order he intercedes on my behalf with the King of Rome and with his son, the King of Bohemia, who also lives in Vienna, in the city of his father. I ask you to write to him as soon as possible in order he does what he wants. Do it fast! But you, when you write to him, do not tell him that I asked you to write to him. Remain in the love of our God Jesus. Amen.

**Letter 5 – 26/03/55**  
**Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius**  
**Vienna, 26 March 1555**  
**Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 15r–16v**

(15r) Peace from the poor and sinful Moses to his dear and honourable brother, Andreas Masius. Concerning the letter that your grace wrote to me, know, my brother, that I answered it immediately. And now, on 26 March, I learned that my letter had not reached you. I suffered a lot [because of this]. So now I answer to you again. Stay healthy!

As for the words your affection asked my modesty to translate, forgive me, my brother and do not blame my weakness as I am not a teacher, just a disciple of teachers. Nevertheless, I will answer them as far as I can.

First of all, the word *akto* [anger]. Its root is: *akey. Ntiyrut akto* [harbouring resentment] means ‘guardar del mal’.<sup>512</sup>

2. I think that rendering ‘*and with your spirit*’ with ‘*et qum. spi. tuo*’ is very elegant.

3. *Netel šlomo...* [Let us give peace...]. Here other words are coming. And after the deacon has finished his chant, the people respond: ‘*Make us worthy, O Lord, our God.*’ After the people have finished, the deacon responds saying: ‘*After the communion...*’ or ‘*Before the communion...*’, for this text comes twice: before and after the reception of the sacrament. And when the deacon finishes, the people answer, ‘*Before You, Lord and God.*’. Know, oh, my brother, that wherever you find incipits, i.e. something the deacon says and the people respond, they are not complete. This is the habit of the scribes who have a tendency to abbreviate everything in writing.

4. *Prist* [Eucharistic Host]. Its root is *pras*, and *proso* [veil, curtain] also comes from *pras*. *Pras* means: to spread out. For example, in the gospel, when Jesus rode on a donkey, the crowd spread their clothes out on the road. Therefore, when the chalice and the paten are covered with a large cloth, it is called *proso* [chalice veil].

5. *Napišo* [respice] means ‘riposare’.

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<sup>512</sup> Moses’ translation is correct, but his grammatical reasoning is dubious. Masius will come back to this word several times.

6. *Kad ghin* [bowing]. That is, when the priest mutes his voice, the deacon raises his voice ‘alsar la voce’ and the priest bows down.<sup>513</sup> *Ghin* comes from the words *ghoyto* [liberation] ‘del riposar et del liberar’ and *ghono* ‘et ancora come uno che meter il capo abasio non alsar il capo’.<sup>514</sup> When the priest bows down, he speaks so silently that the people do not hear and when he raises his voice, he speaks loudly in order the whole assembly can hear it.

7. I do not know what is before these words, nor what follows them: ‘... *the image of Your goodness, the identical seal of Your likeness...*’. I do not know who this is about: about the Son, about the Holy Spirit, or about something else?<sup>515</sup> If these refer to the Son or to the Holy Spirit, they do not seem to be correct. Or perhaps it refers to the likeness of our nature, which is composed of us, the Son of God, I do not know. As for the word *tab ‘o*, it can be translated either as seal or as nature ‘sigillo et natura’.<sup>516</sup> But I think you know and understand the meaning of these words even better than me.

8. ‘*He who showed us the good and holy [spirit], Spirit of Truth, the treasure of true sons, principal pledge of the inheritance to come...*’ I don't know who is showing here. The Father, the Son or the Spirit? ‘*The Spirit of Truth, the treasure of true sons, principal pledge of the inheritance to come...*’ As far as I know, there is no separation between these words. If you understand their meaning, it is good. I, if I do not have the book in front of me, cannot translate these clearly.<sup>517</sup>

9. ‘...*who do not burn from the flame*’. *Gawzalto* and not *gzawlto*. *Gawzalto* [flame] is the glow of the fire that burns indeed.

10. ‘*And when we strayed in different ways.*’ [Different ways means] ‘*Diferente mō, multi modi, asai modi*’.

11. “*And when He had risen on the third day, opened a way for all flesh...*” The phrase “*he opened a way for all flesh,*” wants to say that when our father, Adam had sinned and fell out of his glory, the way he was on became abandoned. And no man could walk on it until our Lord came in flesh, and opened this gate, which was closed after the departure of Adam. And he

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<sup>513</sup> Cf. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 663–664.

<sup>514</sup> Cf. Masius, *Syrorum Peculium*, 9.

<sup>515</sup> This section of the anaphora talks about the Son: “*You are without beginning, invisible, unchangeable, unknowable, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great God and Saviour, our hope, who is the image of Your goodness, the identical seal of Your likeness, revealing You the Father in Himself...*” Cf. Masius, *De Paradiso*, 238 and Ms. Vat. Borg. Sir. 159, 68v.

<sup>516</sup> Masius included this word in his dictionary, but only with one meaning (seal). Cf. Masius, *Syrorum Peculium*, 20.

<sup>517</sup> Moses’ perplexedness is understandable, because Masius randomly picked out this passage of the context and even omitted a word ‘spirit’ which is in the bracket. All this made the Syriac sentence uninterpretable.

opened this way that was abandoned. And now everyone is able to walk on it all the way to the Father.

12. Regarding *pagro* [body], what is the context? In our church, there is no transubstantiated body before the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when the priest says: “*This is my body.*”, it is only a commemoration of what our Lord has done. After this, he calls the Holy Spirit, and it is after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, that he says, “*Let there be flesh of this bread.*” This is true. All confirmation comes from the Holy Spirit. He says these. And after this he says no more bread, but the transubstantiated body of Jesus, our God. In the Roman Church, on the other hand, the Holy Spirit is called, unlike in the Syrian Church, before they say, “*This is my body, etc...*”.<sup>518</sup>

13. ‘*When do the people say the offertory?*’ As far as I know, the people do not say the offertory at all, but only the Kyrie eleison. This is written like *Qur*, its letters are not completed.

14. „*Metersis*”. When someone sprays water with his hands and sprinkles it on clothes or on the ground or something else. Psalm 50 reads: ‘*Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean*’. (15v) *Tahme* comes from the word *ahmi* [turn the eyes, neglect]. Psalm 10 says, “*Why stayest thou away, O Lord, and why shalt thou turn away thine eyes?*”

16. “*How awful is this our...*” The deacon here draws attention to the coming of the Holy Spirit so that everyone pay attention.

17. “*As we present and offer the symbol of the body of the Lord, we bow before you.*” I do not know whether these words come before or after the invocation of the Holy Spirit. If it is before the invocation of the Holy Spirit, until then, we are talking about a “symbol” and not a transubstantiated body, as I wrote above. And if it is after that, then I don't know.<sup>519</sup>

18. “*Sail with those who sail*”. *Tuf* and *toyfin*. It means someone who sails or swims in the sea. At the same time, there are those who roam the dry land and preach the gospel of our Lord and become hated by everyone for our Lord. *Eksuriyas*<sup>520</sup> is Greek, not Syriac, and it means ‘*del*

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<sup>518</sup> In most Eastern Christian liturgies, the invocation of the Holy Spirit (*Epiclesis*) follows the historical narrative of the Last Supper (*Words of Institution* or *Narratio Institutionis*). In the Roman Church, however, the *epiclesis* disappeared from the liturgy, because according to the medieval Latin theology, the consecration of bread and wine and their transubstantiation into the body and blood of Christ took place when the priest pronounced the words of institution. This difference is treated by Moses in this section. The question of the *epiclesis* became a subject of debate at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–45) and the medieval Latin view was endorsed by the Council of Trent (1545–63). Finally, the liturgical reforms adopted after the second Vatican Council (1962–65) have included the *epiclesis* in the canon of the Roman Catholic mass, but placed it before the words of institution in order to maintain the consecratory function of the latter. Cf. Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. ‘*Epiclesis*’ For a longer summary of the theology of the *epiclesis* and its place in the holy mass see, Salaville, ‘*Epiclèse*’ and Jungmann, *The Mass*, 132–138.

<sup>519</sup> This passage is part of the *epiclesis*, these words are pronounced just before the transubstantiation takes place, which explains the use of the word ‘symbol’.

<sup>520</sup> Cf. Masius, 1572, 4.

*caciar fora*’ [expel]. Adam, for example, was expelled from Paradise. Or else, when a synod got rid of those who do not follow the faith of the others. Sometimes, those who tell the truth oust those who do not tell the truth. And sometimes, those who tell lies oust those who tell the truth. And thus, there are some who tell the truth and have been sent away from the synod. They wander on dry and water and teach true faith to the world. They are the ones in exile.<sup>521</sup>

19. “...our orthodox kings...” This is a commemoration, as they say in Latin. *Sanwarto* and not *sakwarto*, there is no *sakwarto* in Syriac at all. *Sanwarto* [helmet] is what warriors ‘*quegli che fanno guer[ra]*’ wear on their head in battle. It is made of iron or bronze, or something else. Humility is like modesty ‘*del humilita et del obedi[enza]*’.

20. The root of *mdamin* is *dami* [compare with, imitate, become like]. For instance, he imitates others, or he is compared to him. ‘*del similitudine uo[mi]ni*’.

21. ‘...the remote members of the church...’ They are those who at the time when everyone took the only faith, did not join the single religion. That is why the priest prays that they be gathered in the only apostolic faith, equal in saying and worthy of glory. *Šawi* [equal] means ‘*eguale*’ and *šowya* [worthy] means ‘*degni*’. As for *bart qolo* [saying, word, lit. daughter of the voice], it is very clear. However, *bart* [daughter] has a nice meaning in itself as well, if someone made a mistake here. Just like *šubho* [glory], with or without *beth*, it has a meaning.

22. Shepherds means ‘*i pastori*’. *Metra yone* are those who intend or plan to do something regarding faith or something else and it comes from *re yono* [thought, opinion, will, mind]. *Metra yone* has two other meanings, but here it can only come from *re yono*.

23. Your translation of ‘*monks living always in celibacy*’ is perfect. However, ‘*olamoye* and not ‘*olmoye* [laymen].<sup>522</sup>

24. *It is qeṅto* [fear] and not *qeṅno* [people] where there is fear and trembling, and it is called the *house of fear*.

25. *Ḥatituto* and not *yatituto*. *Ḥatituto* [care, accuracy, seriousness] is, when someone pays attention to everything, then he is careful. That is to say with all of his knowledge, ‘*tserca con tutto la mente*’.

26. ‘*The priest breaks and signs...*’. It means that he takes from the body and dips it into the blood in the chalice. He takes from the blood and signs the body with that same piece of body

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<sup>521</sup> Cf. Hebrews 11:38. Based on Coptic examples, Elisabeth R. O’Connell pointed out that Non-Chalcedonian monastic literature made a virtue of exile, layering the actual or threatened exile of non-Chalcedonian heroes over the biblical exile of the Hebrews. O’Connell, ‘They Wandered in the Deserts’, 450–457.

<sup>522</sup> Moses is wrong here. His reading would mean something like *monks living always and forever in celibacy*, but the context ‘...priests, deacons, subdeacons, lectors, monks living always in celibacy, laymen...’ proves that Masius’ reading is correct, ‘*olmoye* is already the next item of the enumeration.

in order that the body and blood unite and the two become a perfect body.<sup>523</sup> The *qatuliqi* that the deacon proclaims, is intended, as I said, to announce to the people and to show them that the body [of Christ] is something of great importance. He exalts it with his chant before the people, so that they hear and long for receiving the body of our Lord with faith and love.<sup>524</sup>

27. “*The Holies to the holy and pure...*” says the priest. The Holies are for the holies and not for the sinners. In regard to the body [of Christ] says the Holies, that should be given to the holies and not for the sinners.<sup>525</sup>

28. I do not know whether it is *g‘aş*, *gliz* or *glaz* because *glaš* and *gliş* do not exist. *Gliz* [deprived of, unprovided with] is like someone who does not have children or property or anything else, we can say that this man is *gliz* of property, *gliz* of children, he has no children. *G‘aş* or *g‘iş* [scorn, despise, disgust] means ‘*del scorrossa venir*’. *Nasisuto* [weakness] is when someone gets up from an illness and does not have much strength. He is called weak ‘*come meddio malato*’. *Muyoqo* [mockery, scoffing] Psalm 2 says ‘*The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.*’

Absolve your servant, Moses since he has corrected the words that you have not spelled properly.

Know, oh, my brother and friend, about the books that are in Venice. The book of Ezekiel is here with me.<sup>526</sup> The Lexicon is with the other books is in Giovanni Rignalmo's house in Venice. I have already written to him twice because of the three books to send them to me, but no answer came to me from him. If you, brother ‘*tuo fratelmo*’ want me to keep the lexicon, the grammar, and the New Testament that Your Grace has read in Rome together with the Latin New Testament as Cardinal Santa Cruz<sup>527</sup> ordered, I will keep them for you. But I am in great need of money, and you do not give me as much as would be needed. Yet you are rich, and you do not help my poverty, who is one among many. How will be there help for the others? And now I am about to ask something of you. If you want me to keep them [i.e. the above mentioned

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<sup>523</sup> The fraction of the bread is described in detail by Moses bar Kepha and Dionysius Bar Salibi. Cf. Codrington and Connolly, *Two Commentaries on the Jacobite Liturgy*, 67–71; Labourt, *Dionysius Bar Şalībī. Expositio Liturgiae*, 76–78 and Varghese, *Dionysius Bar Salibi*, 86–88.

<sup>524</sup> *Qatuliqi* is a prayer said during the fraction that is known in different versions. Cf. Codrington and Connolly, *Two Commentaries on the Jacobite Liturgy*, 71–72; Labourt, *Dionysius Bar Şalībī. Expositio Liturgiae*, 76, and Varghese, *Dionysius Bar Salibi*, 85–86.

<sup>525</sup> These words are pronounced before the elevation of the Holy Mysteries: “Priest: *The Holies to the holy and pure alone ought to be given. People: One Holy Father. One Holy Son. One Holy Spirit. etc...*”

<sup>526</sup> This is Ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Syr. 1, ff. 53–88. It is an incomplete copy that was copied from Ms. Vat. Syr. 5. Cf. Borbone, “Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria”, 103–104.

<sup>527</sup> Marcello Cervini (1501–1555), later Pope Marcellus II (1555). The moniker comes from his titular church: he became the Cardinal-Priest of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme on 19 December 1539.



books] for you, write quickly and hastily responding to me and write down how much you will give me in return for them. I give them to Giovanni Rignalmo in Venice, or to the one you want. As for the printing press, we are now finishing the Gospel of Matthew and Mark, and have started Luke. The scripture is what is in the midst of this leaf. And if God wills, we will finish the New Testament in *aylul*, which is ‘Augustus’. And then, if God wants, I will go to Venice and from there to Syria. Believe me that I really want to see your face before I leave, but I do not know how to do it. If you can wait for me at your place until I am released, please let me know. (16r) And write to me which way I should take when I go to you and how far you are from us. Write in Italian. I have friends here who read them to me and I can also read your letter quite well.

Inform me in your letter, whether I should bring with me a few books when I go to you, or not. Let us say, about eight copies of the book we prepared here in Vienna. We could give them to the chief people of that place in order they give us something in return. [I am asking] because my expectation is very low based on what I see here.

Our friend, Giovanni, talks to me differently every day and does not remain at all with the same word. It means that he speaks differently.

Know, oh my brother, that I wrote the Gospel on parchment ‘*super carta bergamono*’ in an elegant writing in gold and silver and I presented it to the king. He was very happy for it and gave me his hand, as is customary in Germany.

And behold, I made another lexicon here to the best of my ability at the request of Mr. Johann Lucretius.<sup>528</sup> If you want, I will make a copy for you, too. And when I go to you, I would like to stay with you for a month to do the Latin translation of the dictionary.

And if you write to me, send your letter to ‘*Alconlegio*’, since I live now with ‘*studiosi*’.<sup>529</sup>

I beseech your grace, oh my friend, to write to Giovanni Rignalmo about those dinars ‘*dinare*’ to send them to Cyprus ‘*cipro*’ and let me know ‘*che fari intender*’ whether they have arrived in the hands of their owners or not. I wrote to him a third time and he did not answer. Stay in the peace of Jesus, our God, forever. Amen.

And if you receive the previous letter I wrote to you, also let me know.

And I also ask of your grace to send me the anaphora you translated into Latin.

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<sup>528</sup> This is Ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Syr. 1, ff. 89–329, entitled *Dictionarium syriacae linguae cum interpretatione Arabica et Latina, atque ubi opus est, etiam Graeca*. Cf. Borbone, “Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria”, 103–104.

<sup>529</sup> It is most probably the Jesuit College in the former Carmelite Monastery, where the sons of the chancellor Jakob Jonas and other high-ranking persons lived under the supervision of Johannes Dyrsius. Cf. Mércz, ‘The Coat of Arms of Moses of Mardin’, 363–365.

Dated in Vienna on the 26th day of the month *adar* in 1555 by the hand of your disciple Moses.

(16v)

Let this letter, if God wills, get into the hands of Mr. Andreas Masius where he is.

To the most honourable Andreas Masius

**Letter 6 – 19/05/55**  
**Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius**  
**Vienna, 19 May 1555**  
**Leiden, University Library, Ms. Or. 26.758**

Peace to the honorable brother in Jesus Christ and skilful teacher, Andreas Masius. I inform your sweet love that your letter arrived to me on 14th May. Be healthy!

Firstly, please be sure, oh, my brother, that I did not say you cannot [write in Syriac] or that your writing is not beautiful. I can read and understand it clearly and easily. I wish every Syrian priest knew as much as you did. I wrote you not to write in Syriac because I know you do not have a lot of time and for that you can write quickly, of which I know that you cannot. So that is why I said [what I said]. Now, I ask you to always write to your disciple in Syriac.

Regarding *akto*: Psalm 91 says: “The sun does not hurt you by day...” The word hurt [*nkik*] comes from *akto*.<sup>530</sup> So I think that you translated it properly, at least I do not know any other meaning than what I said ‘*guardar del mal*’. You might well know other forms ‘*modi*’ of it. Me, I do not know.

*Gaqro*. I think that this should be *gawro* [adultery] because the *waw* is never joint with *rish*. *Gawro* is when a married man goes to another women. We call it a fornicator if he does not have wife and adulterer if he has a wife. Forgive me for I do not know whether it is *gawro* or *gabro*.

*After the communion...* We say it twice. Before giving the body [of Christ] to the assembly, we say: *Before receiving the Mysteries...* And after the body was given, we say it again: *After having received the Holy Mysteries, that have been given, let us bow down our heads before the merciful Lord*. The people respond: *Before you, our Lord and our God*. The other: *Before receiving the Holy Mysteries, that are offered, let us bow down our heads before the merciful Lord*. The people respond: *Before you, our Lord and our God*. The deacon says: *Let us give*

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<sup>530</sup> In fact, it is Psalm 120 (121), 6 and not Psalm 91 that says, “By day the sun will not harm you...” Furthermore, Moses applies here an erroneous and misleading folk etymology, since the word *akto* [anger] is not related to the verb *aki* [to harm, to hurt] the root of which is *nko*.

*peace to one another with a holy and divine kiss in the love of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. People: Make us worthy, our Lord and God.*<sup>531</sup>

*Mercy, peace, sacrifice and thanksgiving.*

*Your death, our Lord, we commemorate, Your resurrection we confess and Your second coming we wait for. May Your mercy be upon us all.*

*Have mercy upon us, O God, Father Almighty. People: We glorify You, we bless You, we worship You and we beseech You, O Lord our God, have compassion and mercy upon us. The deacon replies: How awful is this hour and how dreadful is this moment, my beloved, wherein the Living and Holy Spirit from the upper heights of the heaven takes wing and descends and hovers and rests upon this Eucharist here present and sanctifies it. Be in calm and awe, while standing and praying. Pray that peace may be with us and tranquillity to all of us.*

*We also, weaks and sinfult, offer You thanksgiving and acknowledge You for all.*<sup>532</sup>

As for the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the priest does not say this by heart, that is to say from memory, but he reads it from the book which is placed in front of him. *Therefore, O Lord, we also miserable...* Before this, the priest invokes the Holy Spirit as Mary called for Him and then says: *Therefore, O Lord, we also miserable, etc...* in a way that the people do not hear it. But it is not from the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. I do not know it by heart and there is no need for it.

After the Kyrie eleison, nothing is missing.

*Remove and forsake...* I do not know it by heart, because there are many prayers in the canon of the mass. Everyone learns as much as they can.

*As it was is now and he remains [or we remain] unto ages of ages until the world to come.*

People: *Amen.* But I do not know wheter it is He who remains or we remain with Him. I think that it is rather us who remain with Him, namely with Christ.<sup>533</sup>

*“Let us bow down our heads. People: Before you, O Lord and God.” Or “our Lord and God”.*

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<sup>531</sup> Moses tangles here two different sections and confounds Masius. The prayer recited before the communion is in the section of The Prayer of the Kiss of Peace and goes like follows: Deacon: *Let us give peace to one another with a holy and divine kiss in the love of our Lord and God, Jesus Christ.* People: *Make us worthy, our Lord and God.* Deacon: *After this holy and divine peace which has been given, let us bow down our heads before the merciful Lord.* People: *Before you, our Lord and our God.*

<sup>532</sup> This section was abbreviated to the first two words in Masius copy. Moses helped him to complete the phrase, but he omitted a few words that made the sentence difficult to understand. The sentence with the missing words is the following: *We also, O Lord, Your weak and sinful servants, offer You thanksgiving and acknowledge Your loving-kindness unto all and for all.*

<sup>533</sup> In today's form of the text one word is slightly different (mkatar instead of nkatar), thus it reads: *As it was is now and ever shall be unto ages of ages...*

“*One Holy Father. One Holy Son. One Living and Holy Spirit. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, who are one forever.*”

“*We give thanks to You, our God, we give you thanks especially...*” Please forgive me, my teacher, that I forgot many words from the rite of the mass. Before “*We give thanks to You*”, there are other words but I cannot elucidate them. As far as I know, you do not need them anyway.

“*Prayer over the veil.*” What follows, is in that book and not elsewhere.

“*For you are the one who is sitting on the throne of the glory...*” Your translation is correct. You are right to contradict the teacher in the Syriac language. Nevertheless, in the passage “*Your goodness, the identical seal*”, of which you said that there is no dot in it, I think that these dots (.) should be there, like this: “*your goodness:*” or in a way that one point is under and the other is above the last letter of the word. These two dots do not separate the sentences one from another. They are rather like a passage that helps the reader not to feel hastened or pressed by the lengthiness of the sentence. That is why we put these dots in the middle of the sentence.<sup>534</sup> And do not think that they are above the letter ܦ, but under K.<sup>535</sup> I think that the one who wrote this anaphora was not an expert. Truly, I say to you that there are many dots in this language, and not all of us know them well because they are really difficult and they have different names.<sup>536</sup> That is why I am saying that do not grumble after these points that are put between the words because all of them ensures the necessary meaning.

“... *the treasure of true sons, principal...*” It is necessary to put this dot (.) because it is a *posuqo*.<sup>537</sup> At a *posuqo*, [the accent] falls like a man of noble character (*omo da bene*) at the end of the speech “*nel fine del horatione si casca*”. “...*the treasure of true sons...*” means “*tezauro di figlioli retti*”.

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<sup>534</sup> This mark is called *taḥtoyo*. Cf. Duval, *Traité de grammaire syriaque*, 146–157; Segal, *The Diacritical Point and the Accents in Syriac*, 58–77; 119–151.

<sup>535</sup> K is the last letter of the word in question and ܦ is the first letter of the following word. Driven by the momentum of the writing, scribes sometimes put the marks in a way that they seem to belong to the following letter. That deceived Masius.

<sup>536</sup> One of the first Syriac grammarians who treated the question of the Syriac punctuation marks, Thomas the Deacon (c. 600) listed 23 different points. Cf. Phillips, *A Letter by Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa, on Syriac Orthography*, Appendix I, 66–83. Two other significant West Syrian grammarians who wrote about the subject, are Jacob of Edessa (c. 640–708) and Barhebraeus (1225–1286). Cf. Phillips, *A Letter by Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa, on Syriac Orthography*; Martin, *Jacobi episcopi Edesseni Epistola*; Merx, *Historia artis grammaticae apud Syros*; and Ktobo d-Šemḥe IV, 6 edited by Moberg, *Le livre des Splendeurs*, 243–256, and translated in Moberg, *Buch der Strahlen*, 108–131.

<sup>537</sup> Cf. Duval, *Traité de grammaire syriaque*, 146–157; Segal, *The Diacritical Point and the Accents in Syriac*, 58–77; 119–151.

*Bayirto* [barren, neglected] The land that is not cultivated is called neglected. And if it was first cultivated and then abandoned, it is also called neglected.

“...do not neglect...” If someone sees something that previously belonged to him but went to ruin and perished. He stands up, looks at it and does not suffer because of it and does not want to replace it. “*non gura*”.

Forgive me, O my brother in Christ, that I do not know how to give an explanation. Later on, if you do not understand what your disciple wrote, write and send it to him again and he will always be at your service.

Know, oh, my brother, that I am very anxious about the printing work. Because I am the one who arranges the letters and there is someone with me who is learning to make the letters. Anyhow, I work a lot. Therefore, I beseech you to answer all these to your disciple quickly, and do not stop writing because of me, but always write to your disciple, Moses.

Know, O my brother, and forgive your disciple that I cannot give you a nice answer, because I am not able to make you understand clearly if I am not with you. As for the prayers that the priest and deacon say by heart: now I do not know them all, because it has been a long time since I did not recite them. But I have books in Venice and one of them contains this ordo in a complete form. If God wants, I will copy them all for you.

I do not know what did Giovanni Rignalmo do with them because I left my chest in his house, and there are other books in it. And now I do not know by whom he left them. I am really worried because of the money he sent to Cyprus, for he did not give me an answer about it, nor about the books that are in his house. That is why I am asking your grace now to write to him urgently in order he informs us what he has done with the money and the books. I pretty much trusted him because I saw him to be a good man doing good things.

As for the books that your grace ordered me to write to you, I will do as you have commanded. I just do not understand what you said that no Chaldean words will be included in the dictionary, only Syriacs. But I can speak only in Syriac, and if a Chaldean word pops up among the others, I cannot recognize whether it is Chaldean.

Concerning the New Testament, of which your grace asked me to make a decision, in other words, to say how many dinars I want for it: I would like for it 30 gold dinars. Please write to your disciple that what you can give for it is less or more. And then if I want, I will give it to you, and if not, I will not.

Regarding the other books that your disciple is ready to copy for you: if I do not go to you, what should I do with them? Please, also write this and send me what should I do with them. If, on the other hand, I go [to you], everything will be fine, in the name of God.

Know, oh, my brother about the *stampa*, in other words the sealing workshop, that I developed to it a nice shape and invented another type so that all the letters can be joined together at once. I am very happy for that. As soon as they are finished, I will send it to you, my brother, so that you can see.

The previous letter, I really gave it in Johann Lucretius'<sup>538</sup> hands so I do not know what he has done with it.

Regarding Pope Marcellus, I have heard from your letter that he had become pope. And again, I have just learned from your letter that he died.<sup>539</sup> And now, may the Lord's will be done.

God knows, oh brother, that I love you so much. And I am very sorry for I am not able to write about everything you had asked me. May the Lord's will be done. Therefore, I ask him to give you a clear mind so that you know the whole Syrian language so brilliantly like Ephrem.

Dated on the 19th day of May *maius* in the year 1555 AD by your friend and disciple, Moses of Antioch.

Stay strong.

Listen, my friend, please write to your disciple what is in your anaphora one by one. What the deacon, the priest or the people say. Write everything in the order as they are by you, in you anaphora, and send it to me. I will write everything I know to your grace in a nice order. I have another anaphora,<sup>540</sup> but I know that it is not in the same order as yours.

If God wills, let this letter get into the hands of my brother and my blessed friend, Andreas Masius.

To the honourable lord, Andreas Masius

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<sup>538</sup> I.e. Johann Albrecht Widmanstetter

<sup>539</sup> Cardinal Marcello Cervini was elected pope on 9th April 1555 and choose to retain his birth name, so he became Pope Marcellus II. Only 22 days later, he passed away tragically on 1st May 1555 due to stroke.

<sup>540</sup> Moses probably talks about one of Widmanstetter's manuscripts, Ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Syr. 5, that contains 7 anaphoras but not the anaphora of St. Basil. Cf. *Verzeichniss der orientalischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München, mit Ausschluss der hebraeischen, arabischen und persischen*, 114.

**Letter 7 – 15/07/55**  
**Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius**  
**Vienna, 15 July 1555**  
**Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 22r–v, 24r–v**

(24r) In the name of the Lord who keeps those who fear him.

Peace from our Lord and God, Jesus Christ who made descend [the Holy Spirit] on the saint disciples in the upper room on the [Mount] Zion and filled their hearts with his joy. May this peace of his house may rest on my brother, sweetheart and friend in Christ, Andreas Masius and remain there forever.

Know, oh, you who are brilliant and excellent in good knowledge that the letter you wrote on 14th June, *xiiii di Guni* arrived to your disciple, Moses. It arrived to me on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Tammuz that is July, *iulius xiii*. I read it and rejoiced over it, over the words of kindness and humility and I was very happy for the nice praise with which you praised your servant, Moses. May our Lord be with you. Amen.

Let me start with Giovanni Rignalmo. I wrote to him three times. Twice in Arabic, and I sent these letters to my Arabic friends whom I know in Venice, asking them to go and speak with Signor Giovanni Rignalmo as if I gave a commission with my letter. One of them was not found in Venice and this letter returned to me unread. The other, he did not reply. After all this, I wrote in Italian, at least as I could, because I did not find anyone to write for me. And again, he did not answer me. The situation between us is the following. He gave me 6 gold scudi, (that is) more than what I have by him. He wrote to me asking to send it back to him. I answered him that I have a few pieces of garment in his house, I told him to sell them cheaply or dearly, at any price he could. It is much better if he does so and keeps the money for him than [to wait until the cloths] get spoiled and lost. The other thing is that I read his book in Venice with Postel and I would like him to give it back to me, and if they can not, I told him that when I will come to you, I will neatly give it back to you. And he did not reply.

Now, I would like to ask you to write to him to sell them [i.e the clothes] and to decide about how much he would like to get for the Bible. I read with Postel and the rest of the debt, I will pay back for him. And if he cannot sell those garments and does not give anything for the Holy Scripture, my chest *cassa* is left there, in his house, when I go to him, I will pay him back. And



if he does not want to do that, that he writes to me and let me know and I will send [the money] to him. That is what I would like from you to do, because it torments me a lot since I knew that he struggled a lot with himself because of me and thinks that I did not answer to him. Although I answered as I could. My soul does not like that such a good man like him suffers because of me. Because I love him very much, God is my witness. He also similarly, could not answer me for a long time concerning the 15 scudi that he sent to Cyprus and I doubted a lot because of this. Stay firm and everything be in love if our Lord wants.

As for the word *akto* [anger], you translated it nicely and correctly. The word *ibto* does not exist in Syriac. At this place, you translated *akto* correctly, but in Psalm 91, it also comes from *akto* when he says that “The sun does not hurt you by day...”. But at this place, it can be understood in a different meaning. Because there are many words that cannot be explained everywhere with the same meaning [paršupo] but there is a difference *mutatione* between them. Like the word *paršupo* means normally *fachia* [face], but when I said *paršupo* here, it does not mean face, but *modo* [mode]. Similarly, *akto* and *nkik* change from place to place, but it cannot be understood that *nkik* comes *brusciare* [to burn], because it does not come from this.

“...seared in their conscience...”<sup>541</sup> The root of *kawin* is *kawi* [to burn, to sear]. It is like when someone puts iron in fire, warms it up very much and then puts it on the body of a man or an animal. To sear something into the conscience is similar to this.

Concerning “*lo tqm wa-lo teṭur at*”, we do not have these. Rather [we say] “*lo tqum wa-lo teṭar*”<sup>542</sup>

As for *gawro*, I read it correctly in your first letter,<sup>543</sup> I just do not know whether you say *gaqro*, *gawro* or *gabro*. *Gaqro* with *qof* does not exist, only *gawro* with *waw*, and the *waw* is not connected to *riš*. *Gawro* [adultery] is when an adulterer man and an adulterer woman leave their beds “*loro letto*” empty and go to sleep “*dormeno*” with others. This is called adultery. As for the adultery of wrath, it is possible that someone commits adultery with anger, with bad word or with evil intent, etc.

“*You are admonished*”. You translated *interpretar* it nicely. And you do not understand *brusciare*, and it does not come from *wakwin*. It is like someone who teaches the people and says “Do not do this and do not sin!”. And if someone notices his brother committing a sin, he should tell him why it is a sin. Because the law does not allow it *non da licentia*. As for “*your*

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<sup>541</sup> Cf. 1Tim 4:3. “...speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.”

<sup>542</sup> It is not clear from where Masius quotes these words. As for Moses’ grammatical explanations, he is not completely right here. The *teṭur* form does exist.

<sup>543</sup> Cf. Letter 19/05/55.

*sins/sacrifices, oh, my brother, etc...*” And the rest like this is admonition/warning which comes from “you are admonished” and not from the fire/conflagration/heat as said the book from above.<sup>544</sup>

*Simto* [treasure] is *thesoro* in Syriac as you said. As it is said in the Gospel: „*Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy...*”<sup>545</sup>

As for that you said that you give me a lot of travail “*fastidio*” and weariness, I would like to ask you not to say it again “*altra uolta*” because I am at your disposal at any time. It is a huge pleasure for me before God and the people that you know this language and especially that you said that I had taught you. If you wish, I give you my grammar that you saw by me in Rome. Just pay me for it 10 ducat or a bit less “*o manco poco*”. If I will be able to give it to you, I myself will give it to you, because I love you very much. You have a good base in believing in our Lord and in good deeds. And in this grammar, you find a lot of help, even such things that I do not know, me neither, without it, like the dots for example. I will write you down everything that I know, just let me know in your letter to whom I should give them, I mean the grammar, the lexicon, and the New Testament, and who will pay for me. Also, do not be afraid that the New [Testament] is more damaged (f. 24v) than when you saw it with me in Rome, and do not think that I deceive you. God forbid! I do hope that I can see your face and not only because of this but also because of our Lord. I swear that only a few fascicules came untied in the middle of the book, nothing else and if you want, I can tie it back nicely. Know that I wrote the chapters ‘capituli’ in this book in the order as they are in our church. I think it is very accurate.

“*The image of Your goodness, the seal...*” [The word seal is] *tab ‘o* and not *tab ‘* as you wrote. As for the order of mass, it is indeed in Venice. But who will bring it here to me? Since I wrote already three times because of the three books, namely the lexicon, the *bethgazo* that contains the prayers of our church, and the Psalms of David in Arabic but nobody replied. If God wills, when I go to Venice, I will quickly write [about them] to you.

The new letters *litre* I made are not small like these, but big and the others cannot be compared to these. I made them at my own expense. They are still not finished because my colleague who prepares them, toils with me in the *stampa*. Every day, I give him an hour or two to work on them. He helps me a lot in the *stampa*.

Regarding the lexicon, I will write you such a one I wrote for Johann Lucretius. It is a good one and you don’t need anything else for the Syriac language than this. Everyone is wanting, no one

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<sup>544</sup> Syrorum Peculium, 22.

<sup>545</sup> Mt 6:20

is perfect but only God. And if I left out a few words and did not write them down, it is no wonder. I tired myself with it a lot day and night.

As for the saints: “*We offer you unremitting supplications and prayers in favour of them, therefore we remember them.*” *Met’ahdinan* [we remember] and not *meṭ’ahdinan*, write it with *tau* and not with *teth*. As for confidence, I think it is *parhesia* and not *parišia* or *parisia*.<sup>546</sup> The first scholars wrote *parhesia* with *he*. Nowadays however, they put a *yod* instead of *he*. Know that *parrhesia* means *fidansa* [confidence]. “*Although our confidence in the commemoration of their intercession – d-izgaduto*, I suppose, and not *wa-b-izgaduto*<sup>547</sup> – *and it is through them that we dare to approach to you...*” Know, oh, my brother, that there is a habit in our Syrian Jacobite Church that we commemorate the saints and we pray for them and they also for us. And many times, when the priest celebrates the Holy Sacrifice, commemorates them and prays in favour of them. Not that they be delivered from the Gehenna or from the divine punishment, because they are saved. But as David said: “*Who perceives his own faults?*”<sup>548</sup> Because also the saints sinned and erred and after they repented, they are endeared before our Lord. But when the priest celebrates the Holy Sacrifice, he represents the High Priest in that hour, if you understand, and he is able to pray for everyone in this confidence that he has in the body and blood of our Lord. But also the saints pray him for us and does not look at their sins they committed and failed formerly. Like someone saying: I forgave you your fault, it is not worthy to you, but I ask you for the others. That is why the priest commemorates them and prays for them. And they also pray for us and offer their prayers for us. Forgive me, oh, my brother, because I am not learned in these words. But this “*we offer you supplications in favour of them*” is correct. *Meqarbinan* and *met’ahdinan* testify it. And if it is not *d-ḥlofayhun*, then *ḥlofayn*. And *mqarbin* and *metahdin lan* and not *lhun*. But actually, it is *d-ḥlofayhun*.

You translated correctly [the following passage]: “*He [the priest] raises his voice: Even though You have taken for the bands of Your saints, Lord, glorious places, immaterial and beyond comparison, etc...*” I think what you did not translate correctly is: *ofan* [even though]. It is a conjunction, like someone saying: *Si bene*, etc. “*ai loci glorificati et non materiali. et sopra del misure o uero Altro io non so piu.*” But the rest, you explained correctly and you gave a nice translation.

Stay strong in the faith of our Lord. And if there is anything else you do not understand, just write and send it to your disciple, he will assist you as far as he can.

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<sup>546</sup> Cf. SP, 38, without any reference to the source.

<sup>547</sup> Moses is wrong here; the text of the anaphora reads as Masius cited. Cf. Ms Vat Borg Sir 159, f. 73v.

<sup>548</sup> Ps 19, 12

As for the Pope Theatine<sup>549</sup>, my spirit does not want it. I do not mind if Giovan Battista Negri becomes more influential or less important.<sup>550</sup> I am not planning to return to Rome anyway, only if cardinal of England or cardinal Morone becomes the pope.<sup>551</sup>

Dated 1555 AD, 15 Tammuz

Concerning the dots and the words, I will write to you soon, do not doubt.

(22r)

To the reverend and most honourable Andreas Masius

To the for me most beloved and honourable brother, the apple of my eyes and the light of my life, Andreas Masius, what a sweet name!

Do not write in your letters: ‘*padre*’ because I am in priestly garb here, not in monastic habit. Formerly, I was in Vienna in laic dress, like in the first year, and after many times Canisius spoke with me and dressed me as a priest.<sup>552</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> Giovanni Pietro Carafa (1476–1559), who was elected pope on 23 and installed on 26 May and chose the name Paul IV (1555–1559). The nickname refers to his congregation: together with Saint Cajetan (Gaetano dei Conti di Thiene), he was the founder of the *Congregation of Clerics Regular*, commonly called the Theatines. He is the only Theatine pope of the history. Moses’ antipathy towards him is due to the fact that he, being the Father of the Roman Inquisition, was an unapologetic enforcer of Catholic orthodoxy and a staunch opponent of the *spirituali*, i.e. members of a reform movement standing for the ecumenical dialogue, among whom we find Moses’ patrons and supporters. Moses’ misgivings shortly proved to be true. One of his patrons, Cardinal Morone, a leading figure of the *spirituali* was imprisoned by Pope Paul IV.

<sup>550</sup> Giovanni Battista “the Indian”, also known as Yoḥannēs of Cyprus (1509–1565), was a protégé of Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa who took him in his household. He subsequently enjoyed a glittering career: he became the second black bishop and the first black nuncio of the Roman Catholic Church. On his life see: Lefevre, ‘Roma e la comunità etiopica di Cipro nei secoli XV e XVI’; Kelly and Nosnitsin, ‘The Two Yoḥannēs of Santo Stefano Degli Abissini, Rome’; Salvatore, ‘African Cosmopolitanism in the Early Modern Mediterranean’.

<sup>551</sup> Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–1558) who was at that time papal legate to England, and became next year, in 1556 archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509–1580).

<sup>552</sup> Masius’ inscription reads: 1555. Moses Antiochenus. Viennae 15 July. Waldsassen 10 August

**Letter 8 – 18/08/55**  
**Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius**  
**Vienna, 18 August 1555**  
**Leiden, University Library, Ms. Or. 26.758**

Loving peace to my brother and master who is the most respected to me, Andreas Masius. I would like to inform your sweet love that I received your letter on 18 *ob* that is equivalent with *augustus*, that your love wrote on 17 of July. I did not find in it anything that would come near to the writing I wrote to your love. Because I said that the New Testament you read in Rome when I was in Rome, is still in the same condition and it is not damaged at all. Only those two or three fascicules *quiterni* came untied in the middle of the book and if you want, I can tie them back nicely. There are no more spots on it, only what you saw in Rome. That is what I let you know in the other letter that I wrote to your love. And now your authority asked me to inform you sincerely that it did not damage more than before and that it will last for many days. If you keep it nicely, it can last for a thousand year. But if you do not believe my words, I do not know how could I write it to your love. Truly, I swear to God that it is not damaged. Now, if this nobleman wants to buy it, I will give it to him as I said before. And if not, remain in peace, this book is very precious for me.

As for what you said that when I go to you, I go to this nobleman in order he has a look at the book and he makes a sale. [The problem is that] I do not know how I should go. If the king gives me books and travel allowance in order I go [to the East], and by taking another road I disregard his command, it would not be nice. But if he does not give me books, I will be able with God's help to go to you. Because I earnestly desire to see you and also to help you. But what your love said to me to take the book and go to this nobleman, it was not nice.

As for [the passage:] “*the identical seal of Your likeness*”, *ἴψο* [likeness] means *τυπος*, you said it correctly, but the rest, I was not able to make you understand them.

“...*the treasure of true sons*”, you said it correctly, that we are not sons of God by nature but only by his goodness. So we are sons of goodness.

“...*to You belong glory and honor with Your all holy, good, adorable, life-giving and consubstantial Spirit, now, always and forever.*”

“Remember, O Lord, our fathers and brethren who have departed [in the orthodox faith]: priests, deacons, [subdeacons,] lectors, monks living always in celibacy, laymen, whose number only you know, and especially those who became renowned...” These words are complete and they are not difficult. I do not know what I could add to them because they do not need clarification since they are clear. And if you doubt that they do not complete each other because [the scribe] did not put waw at the beginning of each word, [I can say] that they do not need the waw. Other than this, I do not know what your love would like from me concerning this passage, please absolve me.

“...darkness and gloom...” there is a difference between them. Darkness is not better than gloom. Gloom has the same meaning as darkness: nothing can be seen in it.

“Remove and forsake...” Other words are missing here, indeed. But they are not necessary and not every priest says them. Me, I do not know what is missing here, forgive me, my brother.

You say correctly [the following three expressions]: *already committed, still persist, may come.*<sup>553</sup> They refer to the sins that we or others who died, committed in the past. The sins that still persist are the ones we commit now or the ones that were committed by those who died and are still not absolved. And the sins that may come are the ones that we or those who will come after us will commit. I think you understand these passages better than me and correctly understand their translation.

‘*The priest breaks and signs, the deacon proclaims qatuliqi...*’ Truly, I tell you that after breaking the body the priest exalts it. I do not know what is the reason for it, but I know that after it becomes body, the priest divides or breaks it. We do not lift up the eucharist with hands showing it to the people, but we lift it up together with the paten, in which the body is put, and show it to the people. And after it becomes the body [of Christ] we draw a cross on it with our hands. From it and with it. You, however, after it becomes the body [of Christ], you bless it, and this is an excess. Whether we show it to the people or do not show it to the people, it is not a necessity.

Forgive me, oh my brother, for everything I omitted from my response. What is missing, please write and send it to your disciple, and I will be at your service as much as I can. And please do not say that you give me a lot of work and weariness, because I am here for you.

As for what you said about Johann Lucretius, that he wrote to one of the sovereigns and said that he translated the New Testament from Greek into Syriac, I was really astonished about

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<sup>553</sup> The whole passage reads: “may the participation in the holy mysteries be for remission of faults already committed, and for the healing of sins and the absolution of those that still persist, for delivery and preservation from those that may come...”

such a lie and I had got to laugh. But what should we do with people who ascribe themselves vain glory? God is their judge.

I was also astonished about what you said earlier that he, Johann and the king make me work for every penny [lit. gold]. If thus vain glory is in him, there is no love in him. And if there is no love in him to do me good before the king, who will make gold, silver, bronze or iron for me? That is why, I do not really believe him. But what should I do? I will stay until the end and I will see the end.

Know, oh my brother, that in this month which is *ob* i.e. Augustus, I finished the New Testament in the *stampa*. Know, my brother, if you would like me to keep my copy of this book for you, hurry up with the answer as I wrote clearly already at the beginning of this letter. Stay firm in Christ. And me, in any case, if I have the opportunity, I will go to you.

I think that the letter you sent on 17 July is not an answer to those other letters, but I do not know which day I wrote to you, I forgot it.

Dated AD 1555, 18 of the month *ab augusto*

Love from your splendid brother and sweet love, Moses Mushe the Syrian, your disciple who desires to see you.

If God wants, may this letter come to the hand of honourable and beloved friend, Andreas Masius where he is.

To my honourable patron, Andreas Masius<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> Masius' inscription below reads: 1555 Moses of Antioch. Vienna 18 August. Waldsassen 1 October

**Letter 9 – 26/10/55**  
**Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius**  
**Vienna, 26 October 1555**  
**Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 13r–14v**

To the brother and friend, Andreas Masius, peace.

The letter you wrote on 5 October *ottobre* arrived to me on 25<sup>th</sup> of the same month by Rawimo Kuk<sup>555</sup> who talked to me with great love. But what you wrote, they seem to me being words far from what happened. You said from the beginning that [you want me to] write you a lexicon like the one I wrote to Johann Lucretius, etc. And you said in your letter that you will reward me, and now I wrote it and wearied, and now you are saying that you do not want it, and neither the other books. Oh, my brother, what should I say to that? I forgive to you, [remain] in peace and in good health.

As for the New Testament you read in Rome and asked me many times to inform you about it honestly, and I informed you sincerely. It is still with me; no answer came from this ruler. And I do not get anything from those previous answers that I am aimed at. And everything I built, collapsed and was overthrown, and there is anything else I could reply to you but this. For I am still in Vienna, and as far as I know, I was not allowed to leave in the winter, but I do not know certainly. And when I leave from here, I will rapidly find you in Venice, if God wills. If not, let there be the will of our Lord. God knows, and you, too, that I was in Rome a bit shameful because of you. And here, too. And I suffer all this because of you, and I acknowledge your scholarship in Syriac and other languages. And you do not want to give me a little money for my work in writing, although I am a stranger and needy. Do you think money will stay with us in the afterlife? I am afraid they do not stay with me, but I trust in the Lord and he helps me until the end.

Please manifest in your letter where you are and how many days you want to stay in Venice. I have no other expectation towards you, to receive help from you, it is because of the spiritual love that I ask our Lord to see your face. I wrote to you with tears, God is my witness. Not only because of you but also because of those men whom I trusted that they do good with me [...]

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<sup>555</sup> Most probably refers to Hieronymus de Cock (Kockhe / Kocke / Kock), Ferdinand's secretary in Burgundian relations. Cf. Lossen, *Briefe von Andreas Masius*, 300, 491–492, 494; Fellner and Kretschmayr, *Die österreichische Zentralverwaltung*, II, 175, 179, 182, 186, 191.



empty and vain. I did not see one man who would have kept his promise to me, Jesus Christ [...] helps me in my calamity instead of all these people.

As for the book you asked me to give [...] your friend [...] until now there is only a little in Latin that is not finished. I think that [...] books. Until now I do not know what they want to do with me, but when it becomes sure, I will send you one. Stay strong.

Regarding our brother and friend in Christ, Yuhnan Rignalmo, give my best regards to him. Me, the ignorant Moses, want him very much to open his heart for me because of our Lord, and I will give it back to him. And if he wants to travel Lafiyanadro he can give those papers that are in his house and everything else to anyone he wants, and write me and inform me [...] my books, etc. And with regard to his money, I ask him to return [...] because of the lectionary I read his books with Postel. And what remains to him, I will give those books that are in their hands. And if I see his face in Venice, all will be well in the name of the Lord.

This letter was sent from Vienna, AD 1555, 26<sup>th</sup> day of October.

Poor and unfortunate Moses the Syrian

**Letter 10 – 01/08/56**  
**Moses of Mardin to Andreas Masius**  
**Venice, 1 August 1556**  
**Berlin, State Library, Ms. or. fol. 13, f. 11r–12v**

Sincere peace with pure love, saint kisses and sure peace to Andreas Masius, the blessed and blissful brother in our Lord, Jesus Christ, may his name last long.

I inform your sweet affection that I arrived to Venice with the books the king had sent to our patriarch. These are the books of the New Testament we printed in Vienna. Know, oh, my brother, that the king made 1,000 copies of the New [Testament]. He kept 500 of them and sent 300 to two patriarchs with me. To our patriarch and [to the patriarch of] the Maronites. He gave me 200 books after so much work, and he did not give me any dinar, only 20 thalers. God knows that I am telling the truth before him and before you. And I spent the money on books from Vienna all the way to Venice. And on the top, the illusion that Lucretius allowed me to do this and that. I was helpless and he did not help me at all. When he received them, he did not want to give you a book of it, as we thought. But the Lord helped me, I praise his name. He took all the letters of the print, we prepared, and did not give me any letter. I wrote to the governor twice because of the ‘mothers’ that is the *matrice* (counterfoil, stencil), but he did not help at all. How could I tell you, oh, my brother to what you already said, that they make me to gold?

Now I am asking you to forgive me as I know I have become difficult for you with my previous writing. Forgive me for the name of the Lord! For the Lord is merciful to those in whom there is love. Tell your disciple now, if you want, write to one of your friends in Venice and I will give him the New Testament to send it to you. Or if you want, I will send it to your grace. But at the moment, I do not know whether you are in Rome or not. That is why I have not sent it yet.

Also, I would like to inform your love, and again this time I am asking you very much to help me and give me advice on what to do with these books of mine i.e. the New Testament, as I say. And if your grace wants, I will send you as many books as you want. Could you please give it those friends of yours, who are thinking about helping my poverty. Because everything I had in Vienna, I spent it on books and on myself. And now I have hope only in God and in you. Anything you can help me, the unfortunate, is help for the cross of Jesus, our God.

I ask a lot of your grace. Give my greetings to Filippo<sup>556</sup> in Cardinal Morone's house and tell him about all my needs. I would like to send him and the cardinal books but not before I receive your answer in order I know whether they are in Rome or not. And if Monsignor Ludovico Beccatello<sup>557</sup> is there, let His Excellency know about me. I consider him as my father because he did a lot of good to me in Venice. Likewise, if Mr Pietro Paulo<sup>558</sup> is in Rome, give him my greetings and inform him about me. And if he wants me to send him a book or more, I will do it. I ask you to let them know about my difficult situation *mi bisogno*. If it is possible, oh my brother, that I come with the books and stay with you secretly that no one recognizes me, I will come if you want. I am asking you now that everything good that can be found at you, teach me to do it for God's sake. Stay strong in the faith in our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dated in the 1556<sup>th</sup> year of our Lord, on the first day of August.

I want to let you know that I went to that leader, Otto-Henry, and gave him all the old manuscripts I had. He gave me 40 thalers. As for the New Testament, about which I talked to you, he paid me for it 22 thalers. And he made me promise to come back to him quickly with other books and to stay with him as long as our Lord wants. I made mention of you to him that you know Syriac very well because he wants to translate new things like the creed they have from Latin to Syriac, he wants to print it and send them to our region. Thus, if God wills, I will come back to him after I go to Syria. Therefore I say to your grace that if I manage to find money here to buy books there, in Syria. I will return immediately. Because there are no such books in my father's house, and I do not have a lot of money to buy books like that. But I did not tell this noble man whether I have it or not, for if I say I have it, I am a liar, and if I say that I do not have it, I was afraid that he would doubt in his soul that I want money, more than anything. else. Therefore I said, that I go and bring books if God wants. And if I do not bring books, he will gladly welcome me, and if I return from there he will gently welcome me.

Oh, my brother, know that I was at Pietro Paulo Vergerio, and he wrote everything to him.<sup>559</sup> Now let the Lord's will be done. Amen.

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<sup>556</sup> He can be identified with Filippo Gheri (1520–1575), a significant member of the *spirituali*. On him see, Giusti, 'Gheri, Filippo'.

<sup>557</sup> Ludovico Beccadelli (1501–1572), who hosted Moses during his stay in Venice in 1553. Cf. letter 15/07/53. Moses copied a Syriac Psalter for him as an act of gratitude: Ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Syr. 6 (Orient. 145). Cf. Borbone, "Monsignore Vescovo Di Soria", Also Known as Moses of Mardin, Scribe and Book Collector', 100–101.

<sup>558</sup> Pietro Paolo Gualtieri (1501–1572).

<sup>559</sup> Pietro Paolo Vergerio (c. 1498–1565), a papal nuncio to King Ferdinand in Germany and later Protestant reformer. Cf. Biasiori, 'Vergerio'. Their meeting is confirmed also by Vergerio: "A Mose Meredineo audivi, Joannem Lucretium, praeter Evangelium Syriaca lingua scriptum habuisse seorsum aliquot folia, etiam Syriace..." Vergerio, *Primus tomus operum Vergerii*, 202. Cited by Müller, *SYMBOLÆ SYRIACÆ II. Dissertationes duae*, 33.

Once again, I ask your grace to inform me of everything that is happening in Rome these days. About Ambrus, whether he returned from Syria, from Sulaqa, the patriarch of the Nestorians, and inform your disciple of all that you have heard.

I have heard, oh, my brother, that here, in Venice, those who have that disease are closed and not allowed to leave. As far as I have heard, two hundred houses are taken, but there are no more deaths every day, than four, five or six or much less or a little less.

The Syrian Moses, your disciple and your servant. The son of Isaac the priest.

And also inform your disciple of the bishop of the Maronites if he is in Rome and what he did.

And whether Negro Giovan Babtisto and the other Ethiopians who live there and Benjamin are there or not.

## 9. Abstract

The objective of this dissertation is twofold. On one hand, the edition of the unique Syriac correspondence between a Flemish orientalist, Andreas Masius (1514–1573) and a Syrian Orthodox monk, Moses of Mardin (died after 1592) in order to make available a new source hitherto hidden in manuscript archives for a large number of researchers working on different fields of science. And on the other, to identify the most relevant issues raised in the letters and assess their importance for historical and cultural historical studies.

The essay consists of four major parts. The first chapter overviews the history of the research. It presents in details the literature on the five most important figures of the correspondence, and describes the work of the four most important Orientalists who worked with these letters. A tabular overview shows the current state of scholarship on the publication and translation of the correspondence. The second part presents the corpus. It reassesses the original number of letters, describes in detail the manuscripts containing the letters which are kept in Berlin, Leiden and Glasgow, and then considers where some of the lost letters may have been found. The final two chapters examine the content of the correspondence. A historical approach is applied to discuss biographical questions and issues concerning the early Syriac printing, and for the presentation of the new findings on the provenance of important manuscripts. Finally, it treats the liturgical significance of the correspondence based on the anaphoral fragments preserved in the letters. The edition of the Syriac texts and the English translation is added to the Annex.

From among the results of the dissertation, eleven can be highlighted. Two concerns the corpus and nine the content of the letters. As for the latter, seven new findings belong to the domain of historical research and two is related to liturgy.

Current research estimated that originally 16 letters belonged to the corpus. Philological analysis based on inner and outer sources proved that the correspondence consisted of at least 21 letters, five more than it was thought earlier. Since the autograph letters came down to us, the copies of six Berlin-letters have not received much attention earlier. For the critical edition, it was necessary to consult them in order to assess whether they could contain any valuable information which has been lost in the autograph letters due to the water stains. The comparative analysis of the Berlin and Glasgow manuscript showed that the latter is a poor copy of the former, it does not add to our knowledge, therefore it was disregarded in the text edition.

As for the content of the correspondence, it has been examined as a historical source and seven questions were investigated closely. Two of them concerns biographical questions. Three new findings can be formulated regarding the early history of the Syriac printing. And finally, two discoveries were made on the provenance of valuable Syriac manuscripts.

Two biographical questions were scrutinized. Firstly, concerning Widmanstetter and Masius' friendship the current state of research holds that they were good friends who cooperated in their Syriac studies. Nevertheless, there are a few passages in Masius' writings where he expressed his opinion about Widmanstetter's achievement in a rebuking manner. The interpretation of these passages is polarising. New information found in the letter help us to review this question. The dissertation confirms the deterioration of their relationship. Based on a wide range of other sources, it was established that their scholarly cooperation ended due to professional rivalry; Widmanstetter practically poached Moses from Masius.

Moses' religious affiliation is the second controversial biographic issue, which has not been fully clarified yet. Originally, he was Syrian Orthodox, but many signs indicate, that he might have converted to Catholicism. The most concrete evidence for his possible conversion to Catholicism is the Catholic profession of faith he made before the Pope and the cardinals during his second stay in Rome in 1552. There are, however, many uncertainties concerning this document and its exact status is unclear. It has been proved that his Catholic profession of faith was rather due to an external compliance pressure than to an inner conviction.

Three important statements have been made on the early history of the Syriac printing based on the correspondence. Former studies named different persons as the initiator of Syriac printing. According to the most accepted opinion Ignatius 'Abdullah, Syrian orthodox patriarch came up with the idea of Syriac printing and he was the one who sent Moses to Europe to arrange the project. It was argued here that the idea came not from the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch but from Moses and Cardinal Marcello Cervini.

Based on the evidence currently available, it is sure that a Syriac font was under preparation in Rome in 1552, but it is not clear what stage the work was at when Moses left Rome. Fresh evidence gained from the letters suggests that only the punches were prepared in the Eternal City, and they were brought by Moses to Vienna where the types were casted.

And thirdly, the background of the bigger *serto* types of the Viennese printing press were scrutinized. In Vienna three typesets were made: one *estrangelo* and two *sertos*. Making one *estrangelo* and one *serto* font was absolutely reasonable for such a highly prestigious edition. However, it is unclear why the bigger *serto* was made. Preparing typesets costed an enormous

amount of money, and, since it was apparently hardly used, its creation seems to be totally unnecessary. Based on the letters, it was demonstrated that they were prepared on Moses' own costs and he wanted to bring them with him but Widmanstetter intervened and stopped him.

Two findings concern the field of provenance studies that help us to piece together the way of several manuscripts to Europe. The *Bibliotheca Palatina* or *Palatinate library* of Heidelberg was the most important library of the German Renaissance, numbering approximately 5,000 printed books and 3,524 manuscripts. Current state of research holds that 15 Oriental manuscripts of the Vatican Library which belonged once to the collection of the illustrious Palatina Library were all Guillaume Postel's manuscripts. The dissertation demonstrated that two of them (Vat. Sir. 16 and Vat. Sir. 193) were Moses' manuscripts and argued that a third one (Vat. Sir. 5) was possible also brought to Europe by Moses.

Secondly, it was also determined which manuscript was used as a source for the *editio princeps* of the Syriac New Testament printed in Vienna in 1555. Current research knows about the Ms Austrian State Library, Sir 1 which is a copy prepared by Moses in 1554 in Vienna. It has not yet been investigated which manuscripts Moses used for this work. In the dissertation it was argued that Moses prepared the copy from Vat. Sir. 16.

Last but not least, the content of the correspondence was examined as a liturgical source, since it contains many fragments of Masius' lost manuscript of the anaphora of St. Basil. The anaphora of Saint Basil is one of the most significant Eucharistic Prayers of all Christendom: it has a central position in the Antiochene and Alexandrian liturgical tradition. Furthermore, it was the principal liturgy in the Byzantine and Armenian Rite for centuries; thus, it played a pivotal role in the development of Oriental liturgies. It has a version in virtually all the languages of the Christian East – Greek, Armenian, Syriac, Coptic and Ethiopic. A critical edition or a thorough analysis has been published on all other versions of the anaphora except the Syriac. Fragments found in the letters were compared to a great number of other manuscripts. It has been pointed out that Masius' copy cannot be identified with any other manuscripts known today. The study also showed that the manuscript Masius held in his hands was a copy of the earliest version of the anaphora: Ms. Borg. Sir. 159 and Ms. Atchaneh 5/11.

## 10. Magyar nyelvű összefoglaló

A disszertációnak két fontos célkitűzése van. Egyrészt egy flamand orientalista, Andreas Masius (1514-1573) és egy szír ortodox szerzetes, Mardini Mózes (meghalt 1592 után) egyedülálló szír nyelvű levelezésének kiadása, amellyel egy új, eddig csak kéziratos formában hozzáférhető forrás válik könnyen elérhetővé a különböző tudományterületeken dolgozó kutatók számára. Másrészt pedig a levelekben felmerülő témák forrásértékének meghatározása a történeti és kultúrtörténeti kutatások szempontjából.

A dolgozat négy nagy egységből áll. Az első fejezet a kutatástörténeti előzményeket tekinti át: részletesen bemutatja a levelezés öt legfontosabb szereplőjével kapcsolatos szakirodalmat, majd pedig a levelekkel foglalkozó négy legjelentősebb orientalista munkásságát ismerteti. Egy áttekintő táblázat is megjeleníti a tudomány jelenlegi állását a levelezés kiadása és fordítása terén. A második rész a szövegkorpusz bemutatását tartalmazza. Újraértékeli a levelek eredeti számát, részletesen leírja a leveleket tartalmazó berlini, leideni és glasgow-i kéziratokat, majd számbaveszi, honnan kerülhetnek elő esetlegesen az elveszett levelek. A két utolsó fejezet a levelezés tartalmát vizsgálja. Történeti megközelítéssel életrajzi és nyomdatörténeti felfedezéseket közöl, valamint jelentős kéziratok provenienciájával kapcsolatban tesz új megállapításokat. Végül pedig a levelezésben megmaradt anafora-töredékek liturgiátörténeti jelentőségét taglalja. A szír szövegek kiadása és angol fordítása a függelékben kapott helyet.

A disszertáció tizenegy fontosabb tézise közül kettő a korpuszra vonatkozik, kilenc pedig a levelek tartalmával kapcsolatos. Utóbbiak közül hét a történeti kutatás területéhez tartozik, kettő pedig a liturgiához kapcsolódik.

A legutóbbi kutatások alapján a levelezés eredetileg 16 levélből állt. A belső és külső forrásokon alapuló filológiai elemzés bebizonyította, hogy valójában legalább 21 levél született. Mivel az autográf levelek is ránk maradtak, a másolatok korábban kevés figyelmet kaptak. A kritikai kiadáshoz szükséges volt ezeket is alaposan megvizsgálni, hogy kiderüljön, tartalmazznak-e olyan értékes információkat, amelyek az autográf levelekből a vízfoltok miatt elvesztek. A berlini és a glasgow-i kézirat összehasonlító elemzése azt mutatta, hogy a másolatok nem bővítik érdemben az ismereteinket, ezért a szövegkiadásban figyelmen kívül hagytam ezeket.



A levelezés tartalmát elsősorban mint történeti forrást vizsgáltam, és hét kérdést jártam körbe. Ezek közül kettő életrajzi kérdésekre vonatkozik, három a szír nyomtatás korai történetével kapcsolatos, két felfedezés pedig értékes szír kéziratok provenienciájához köthető.

Ami az életrajzi kérdéseket illeti, Widmanstetterről és Masiusról a kutatás úgy tartja, hogy jó barátok voltak és együttműködtek a szír nyelv tanulmányozásában. Masius írásaiban ugyanakkor van néhány olyan rész, ahol Widmanstetter eredményeiről lekicsinylő hangnemben fejt ki véleményét, amely kétségbe vonja a fenti megállapítást. A levélben talált új információk alapján a disszertáció bemutatja kapcsolatuk megromlását és számos más forrás bevonásával amellet érvel, hogy együttműködésük szakmai rivalizálás miatt ért véget. Widmanstetter gyakorlatilag elorozta Mózes Masiustól.

Mózes vallási hovatartozása a második vitatott biográfiai kérdés, amely még nem teljesen tisztázott. Eredetileg szír ortodox volt, de számos jel utal arra, hogy katolikus hitre tért. A legkonkrétabb bizonyíték erre vonatkozóan az a katolikus hitvallás, amelyet 1552-ben, második római tartózkodása során a pápa és a bíborosok előtt tett. Ezzel a dokumentummal kapcsolatban azonban sok a bizonytalanság. A doktori dolgozat bemutatja, hogy katolikus hitvallása külső megfelelési kényszerből és nem belső meggyőződésből fakadt.

Három tézis a szír nyelvű könyvnyomtatás korai történetével kapcsolatos. Korábbi tanulmányok különböző személyeket neveztek meg a szír nyomtatás kezdeményezőjeként. A leginkább elfogadott vélemény szerint Ignatius 'Abdullah szír ortodox pátriárkában fogant meg először a szír nyomtatás gondolata, és ő volt az, aki Mózeset Európába küldte a projekt megszervezésére. A dolgozat amellet érvel, hogy az ötlet nem a szír ortodox pátriárkától, hanem Mózesától és Marcello Cervini bíborostól származott.

A jelenleg rendelkezésre álló adatok alapján biztos, hogy Rómában 1552-ben már történtek előkészületek egy szír nyomda felállítására, de nem világos, hogy a munka milyen stádiumban volt, amikor Mózes elhagyta a várost. A levelekből nyert friss bizonyítékok arra utalnak, hogy az Örök Városban csak a patricák készültek el, és azokat vitte magával Mózes Bécsbe, ahol ezek alapján állították elő a matricákat és öntötték ki a betűket.

Végül pedig a dolgozat a bécsi nyomda nagyobb *serto* betűtípusainak hátterét vizsgálja. Bécsben három betűkészlet készült: egy *estrangelo* és két *serto*. Ezek közül egy-egy betűtípus készítése teljesen indokolt volt egy ilyen nagy presztízsű kiadáshoz. Nem világos azonban, hogy miért volt szükség a nagyobb *serto* karakterekre, amelyeket ráadásul alig használtak az *editio princeps* kiadásához. Figyelembe véve azt is, hogy a betűkészítés hatalmas összegbe került, feleslegesnek tűnik a készítése. A levelek alapján bebizonyosodott, hogy Mózes ezt

magának, saját költségen készítette és magával akarta vinni, de Widmanstetter megakadályozta ebben.

A provenienciakutatás területén két eredmény fontos keleti kéziratok Európába vezető útját rekonstruálja. A heidelbergi *Bibliotheca Palatina* a német reneszánsz legjelentősebb könyvtára volt, mintegy 5000 nyomtatott könyvvel és 3524 kézírral. A kutatások jelenlegi állása szerint a Vatikáni Könyvtár 15 keleti kézirata, amelyek egykor az illusztris Palatina gyűjteményéhez tartoztak, mind Guillaume Postel kéziratainak voltak. A disszertáció bebizonyította, hogy ezek közül kettő (Vat. Sir. 16 és Vat. Sir. 193) Mózes kézirata volt, és amellet érvel, hogy egy harmadik (Vat. Sir. 5) szintén Mózes által Európába hozott kézirat lehet.

A disszertáció bemutatja, hogy melyik kézirat szolgált forrásként a szír Újszövetség 1555-ös első kiadásához Bécsben. A kutatás jelenlegi állása szerint az Osztrák Nemzeti Könyvtár Ms, Sir 1. kézirata alapján készült a kiadás. Ez ugyanakkor egy Mózes által 1554-ben Bécsben készített másolat, és azt még nem vizsgálták, hogy Mózes milyen kéziratokat használt ehhez a munkához. A disszertációban amellet érvelek, hogy Mózes az osztrák kéziratot a Vat. Sir. 16-ról másolta.

Végül, de nem utolsósorban a dolgozat a levelezés tartalmát liturgikus forrásként vizsgálja. A levelezés számos töredéket tartalmaz Masius azon kéziratóból, amely a Szent Vazul-anafora szír nyelvű változatát tartalmazta. A Szent Vazul-anafora az egész kereszténység egyik legjelentősebb eucharisztikus imája, amely központi helyet foglal el az antiochiai és az alexandriai liturgikus hagyományban. Évszázadokon át a bizánci és örmény rítus fő liturgiája volt és kulcsszerepet játszott a keleti liturgiák fejlődésében. A keresztény Kelet szinte valamennyi nyelvén - görögül, örményül, szírül, koptul és etiópul - létezik fordítása. A szír kivételével az anafora minden más változatóról megjelent kritikai kiadás vagy legalább egy alapos elemzés. A levelekben talált töredék két dolog lehetőségét vetették fel. Egyrészt Masius elveszett kéziratójának azonosítását egy ma ismert kézírral. Másrészt egy olyan szövegvariáns részleges rekonstruálását, amely meghatározó lesz a miseszöveg kritikai kiadása során. A dolgozat az anafora-fragmentumok számos más kézírral történt összehasonlítása nyomán kimutatta, hogy Masius másolata nem azonosítható egyetlen ma ismert kézírral sem. A tanulmány azt is kiderítette, hogy a Masius kezében tartott kézirat az anafora legkorábbi változatójának, az Ms Borg. Sir. 159-nek vagy az Ms. Atchaneh 5/11-nek a másolat volt.