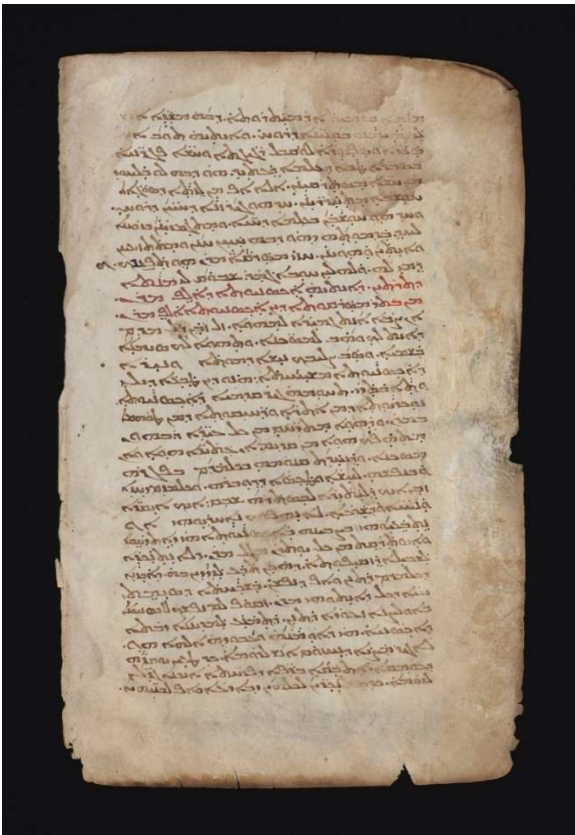


2 newly-digitised Syriac manuscripts

Westminster College is pleased to announce that we've just been able to add two more manuscripts to [Westminster's Digital Library web page!](#)

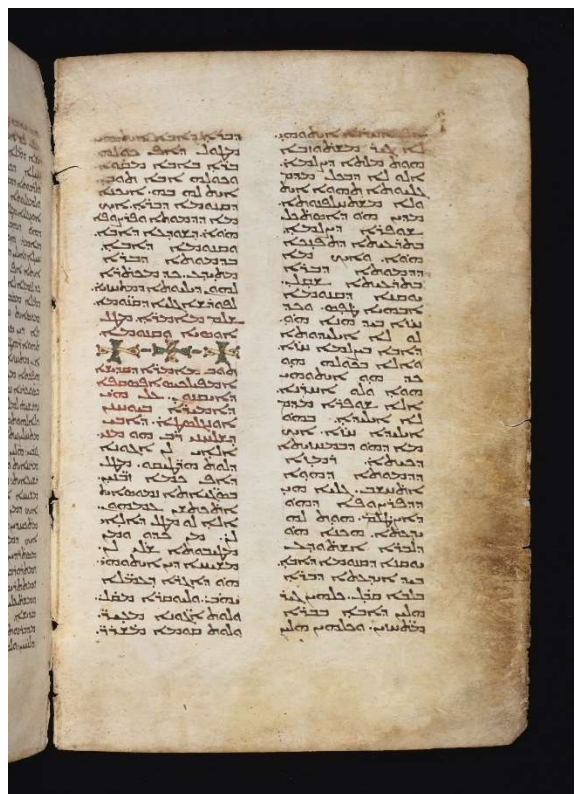


WGL9/19 Leaf from the Book of Gifts by Shubḥalmaran

These manuscripts are in Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic used perhaps most widely in the first to thirteenth centuries (and still used today). This first one, WGL9/19, is a leaf from a 9th century manuscript containing a series of writings known together as the *Book of Gifts*, written by Shubḥalmaran, a Metropolitan – a type of senior bishop – from Beth Selog, in modern-day Iraq, who died in about 620. This is the only known manuscript of this work.

Lane describes the *Book of Gifts* as a collection of five writings on asceticism and one on the Last Things, and this leaf consists of the end of Part I, the first gift (renunciation), and the beginning of Part II, the second gift (detachment from home).

The manuscript is dispersed, which means different parts are owned by different institutions: we have one leaf, and the other parts are held at the British Library in London (ms BL Or. 6714), in the Mingana Collection at the University of Birmingham (ms Mingana Syr. 631); and at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (ms Arabe 6725).



WGL9/20 Part of a homily by Amphilochius of Iconium

The second manuscript is two leaves from the middle of a quire, containing the beginning of a copy of a homily by bishop Amphilochius of Iconium on John XIV: 28 : (“the father, who sent me, is greater than I”). Amphilochius was born around 340, and died around 400.

Just like the *Book of Gifts*, this manuscript is also dispersed: the rest is at the British Library in London (BL Or. 8606). Our folio is from the middle of the work, and is undated - but because we know where the rest of manuscript is, we can date it! The British Library's part of the manuscript includes a colophon, which is information added by a scribe at the end of a manuscript, describing who wrote it and when. The colophon says our manuscript was copied out by a scribe called Gabriel, in Edessa, in the year 723. And it's a particularly fine example of a Syriac manuscript in estrangela script.

Both these manuscripts were purchased at some point between 1892 and 1906 by Mrs Lewis and Mrs Gibson, probably in Cairo, and later donated by them to Westminster College, Cambridge.

Both these manuscripts have been digitised by Westminster College as part of our ongoing commitment to making our archives holdings available to everyone. We have added them to our College page of the [Cambridge University Library's Digital Library](#) – a fantastic platform which hosts the images of our digitised manuscripts.

Our digitisation programme is still in its infancy, but we hope to be able to add more manuscripts as time goes by. Watch this space!

Helen Weller, Archivist - with many thanks to Dr Chip Coakley
January 2023

See also:

Brock, Sebastian, "The Provenance of BM Or 8606" in *The Journal of Theological Studies* (1968)

Coakley, J. F., *Amphilochius of Iconium: the opening of his homily on 'My Father who sent me is greater than I'* (Jericho Press, 2021), which includes an introduction, transcription, and translation of the text.

Coakley, J. F., *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in Cambridge acquired since 1901* (Jericho Press, 2018)

Hatch, W. P. H., *Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts*, (1946), which includes a plate of BM Or 8606

Lane, David J. Šubḥalmaran, *The Book of Gifts*, (CSCO 612-3, 2004), which includes an index of all the extant leaves

Lane, David J. "Šubḥalmaran," in the *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (Gorgias Press, 2011)

Leuven Database of Ancient Books 115159;

Moss, Cyril, "S Amphilochius of Iconium on John 14,28" in *Le Muséon* XLIII (1930), pp317-364

Moss, Cyril, "A Syriac Patristic Manuscript", in *The Journal of Theological Studies* vol 30 (April 1929)