

The Life of Rabban Hormizd



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The Life of Rabban Hormizd

and the foundation of his Monastery at Al-Kosh

By

Wahle Sergius

Edited with an Introduction by

E.A. Wallis Budge



2012

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Series Foreword

This series provides reference works in Syriac studies from original books digitized at the ICOR library of The Catholic University of America under the supervision of Monica Blanchard, ICOR's librarian. The project was carried out by Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute and Brigham Young University. About 675 books were digitized, most of which will appear in this series.

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We are grateful to the head librarian at CUA, Adele R. Chwalek, who was kind enough to permit this project. "We are custodians, not owners of this collection," she generously said at a small gathering that celebrated the completion of the project. We are also grateful to Sidney Griffith who supported the project.

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The life of Rabban Hôrmîzd.

By

E. A. Wallis Budge.



Berlin

Emil Felber

1894.

THE LIFE OF RABBAN HÔRMÎZD

and the foundation of his Monastery at Al-Ḳôsh.

A metrical discourse

by

Wahlê, surnamed Sergius of Âdhôrbâîjân.

The Syriac Text edited with glosses, etc.,
from a rare Manuscript

by

E. A. Wallis Budge,

Keeper of the Department of Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum.



Berlin
E m i l F e l b e r
1894.

PREFACE.

On Sunday, November 30th, 1890, I visited, with Mr. Nimroud Rassam, the monastery of Rabban Hôrmîzd at Al-Kôsh, and before leaving me for the night, one of the monks lent me a manuscript containing histories of the foundation of the monastery in prose and in verse; the prose version was written by Simon, a disciple of Mâr Jôzâdhâk, a friend of Rabban Hôrmîzd, and the metrical version by Wahîlê, surnamed Sergius, of Âdhôrbâijân, whose period is unknown to me. Both versions were, I thought, new, and as I read on into the night, I came to the conclusion that they were practically unknown in Europe.¹ On the morrow I asked permission to have the book copied, and the courteous and hospitable monks of that old-world house readily granting it, a copy made its way to me in Europe in due course. I gave in my *Book of Governors*² some account of the life of Rabban Hôrmîzd derived

¹ For the history of Rabban Hôrmîzd by ‘Ammânûêl al-Bâgarmî, Bishop of Bêth Garmai, see Cardahi, *Liber thesauri de arte poetica Syrorum*, Rome 1875, p. 142, and Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 19; for an account by one Adam of ‘Akrâ in Margâ, see Cardahi, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

² *I. e.*, *The Historia Monastica of Thomas of Margâ*, vol. 1. pp. CLVII—CLXVII. London, 1893.

from the prose history by Simon, the disciple of Mâr Jôzâdhâk, and nothing further need be said here except that this distinguished Nestorian was born at Shîrâz in the first half of the seventh century of our era¹; that he was the son of wealthy parents; that he first became a monk in the Monastery of Rabban bar-Idtâ, and received the tonsure at the hands of Mâr Sabhr-Îshô of that house, where he lived for thirty-nine years; that he dwelt for six or seven years in the Monastery of Mâr Abraham of Rîshâ, and then went to Bêth 'Edhrai; and that subsequently, at the request of the people of the country round about, he built his monastery at Al-Kôsh, where he died about twenty-two years later, aged eighty-seven years.

The manuscript of the metrical Life of Rabban Hôrmîzd by Sergius of Âdhôrbâijân consists of 89 paper leaves measuring 9½ in. by 6½; each page is occupied by one column of writing, generally containing 20 lines. The quires are nine in number and are signed with letters, the writing is fine and bold, the whole text is fully pointed, and the heading, titles of the sections, and colophon are in red. The composition, or as its author modestly calls it, "little discourse" ܦܕܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ was written to be recited on the day of the commemoration²

¹ He is mentioned, together with Mâr Sabhr-Îshô^c of Kûk, as a contemporary of the Catholicus Îshô'-yahbh of Gêdhâlâ, who sat from 628—644 A. D.; see Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 179. The period when Rabban Hôrmîzd flourished can also be ascertained from the statement (see *infra*, p. 57, l. 1205) that Mâr Abraham, his friend, had lived in the Monastery of Bêth 'Âbhê for thirteen years before he joined him.

² See Brit. Mus. MS. Egerton No. 681, fol. 115 *a* (Wright, *Cat. Syr. MSS.*, p. 191, col. 2, at the foot).

of Rabban Hôrmîzd. It is divided into twenty-two ܡܕܢܐ or "gates", each of which is named after a letter of the Syriac alphabet: the longest (letter ܐ) contains 1098 lines, and the shortest (letter ܙ), 50 lines. Each line of a ܡܕܢܐ ends with the letter after which the ܡܕܢܐ is named, i. e., in ܐ ܡܕܢܐ each line ends with ܐ, in ܒ ܡܕܢܐ each line ends with ܒ, and so on; when we consider the length of the text and the skill with which the consistency of this arrangement has been maintained, no doubt can exist about the profound knowledge of Syriac which Sergius of Âdhôr bâijân must have possessed. In ܐ ܡܕܢܐ he is driven to omit frequently ܐ from nouns ending in ܐܢܐ, as well as ܘ from words borrowed from Greek, e. g., ܥܕܝܩܬܐ for ܘܥܕܝܩܬܐ, ܥܦܐ for ܘܥܦܐ, etc.; and in ܐ ܡܕܢܐ we meet with a large number of adverbs of rare occurrence like ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܗܘܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ, etc., as well as such purely artificial adverbs as ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ, ܠܚܕܐܪܒܐܝܬܐ. Examples of verbal forms, and of nouns derived from them, not usually given in our lexicons, occur in every section,ⁱ and a glance at such pages as 16, 59, 82, 83, 94, 114, 120, 121, 134, 152, 157 and 161—164 will reveal many groups of these; words like ܡܕܢܐ (l. 923) and ܡܕܢܐ, plur. ܡܕܢܐ (ll. 908, 2328), which are usually known only from the native lexicons, or from quotations from them in Dean Payne Smith's great work, also occur.

An interesting feature of the MS. which the monk at Al-Kôsh lent to me were the numerous glosses, over

¹ Words and forms which do not occur at all in Dean Payne Smith's *Thesaurus*, or are only there quoted from native lexicons, or of which only a few quotations are there given, are marked with an asterisk*. In line 1760 for **𐎠𐎢𐎡𐎹** read **𐎠𐎢𐎡𐎺**.

five hundred in number, which occurred throughout the work; these were written in red, and in places where the ink was faded were not always easy to read. They are reproduced in small type as notes at the foot of the page, and it is hoped that they will be found tolerably accurate. As to their authorship and the date when they were added to MSS. of Sergius' work I can give no information, but they are of interest as shewing that even Nestorians found difficulties in reading a work which contained so many unusual forms and words. It was intended to add a complete vocabulary to the text, but subsequently the idea was given up, because it was thought that scholars would like to have the work in their hands as soon as possible, and it was hoped that it might appear soon enough to help to supply additional material for the two new Syriac lexicons which are announced to appear shortly.

Fol. 88 b.

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Fol. 89 a.

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