

- 21 SAMIR, Samir Khalil. *Alphonse Mingana 1878-1937 and his contribution to early Christian-Muslim studies*. Birmingham: Selly Oak Colleges, 1990 (Occasional Paper 7). 60pp.

ALPHONSE MINGANA (MSL TELK)

منجانا، ألفونس (١٨٨١-١٩٣٧)

مستشرق إيطالي الأصل .

كان أبوه قسيساً من قساوسة الكنيسة الكلدانية المتحدة مع روما . وتعلم من ١٨٩٣ إلى ١٩٠٢ في المعهد السرياني الكلداني للدعوة ، في الموصل (العراق). وأثر نزاعه مع الأدباء اليسوعيين ترك الكنيسة الكاثوليكية الرومية ١٩١٠ . وبتوسط من البعثة التبشيرية البروتستنتية سافر إلى إنجلترا، فاشتغل أولاً في كلية دبروك Woodbooke College (في Selly Oak بالقرب من برمنجهام)، ثم في ١٩١٥ عمل بعد ذلك في مكتبة جون رايند الشهيرة بمخطوطاتها العربية والسريانية. وفي سيللي أوك توجد مجموعة من المخطوطات الهامة .

المستشرقون في القرن العشرين

وبالتعاون مع مرجوليوث نشر " كتاب الدين والدولة " لعلي بن ربن الطبري ، وكتب بحثاً عنه في " أعمال الأكاديمية البريطانية " (المجلد السادس عشر) .

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ALPHONSE MINGANA AND THE LETTER OF  
PHILOXENUS TO ABU 'AFR

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IN 1925 Mingana published<sup>1</sup> a document concerning the conversion of a Turkish tribe in the time of the East Syrian Patriarch Acacius (485-495/6), a text which he found in the second part of a letter attributed to Philoxenus of Mabbug, and addressed to Abu 'Afr, the governor (στρατηλάτης) of Hirta d-Na 'man. The first half of this letter, with accounts of various heretics, was already known from the excerpt in Add. MS. 14529 of the British Museum<sup>2</sup> (dated to the seventh or eighth century), published by Martin in his *Introductio practica ad studium linguae Arameae*.<sup>3</sup> Since the British Museum manuscript is concerned only with doctrinal matters, it is not surprising that the excerpt from the letter of Philoxenus does not contain anything about the conversion of the Turkish tribe, and this second part of the letter only came to light when Mingana found a copy of the complete letter in a manuscript in the Rylands Library, Rylands Syr. 59.<sup>4</sup> In his article Mingana gave an English translation of the whole of the letter, but printed the Syriac of the second half only.<sup>5</sup>

The manuscript Mingana used, Rylands Syr. 59, is a modern one, copied by the assiduous scribe Mattai bar Paulos of Mosul, and completed on 29 January 1909. According to oral information given to Mingana by the copyist himself,<sup>6</sup> the text had been transcribed from "a vellum manuscript found in Tur 'Abdin,

<sup>1</sup> In "The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East: a new document", BULLETIN, ix (1925), 297-371 (reprinted separately, "with additions", Manchester, 1925; I give the latter's pagination in square brackets).

<sup>2</sup> Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, p. 920.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 71-78 (1873). French translation by Tixeront, R.O.C., 1<sup>o</sup> ser. viii (1903), 623-30.

<sup>4</sup> Formerly no. 9 in Mingana's own collection, cf. "Early Spread...", p. 346 [52].

<sup>5</sup> Translation: pp. 352-67 [58-73]. Text: pp. 368-71 [77-80].

<sup>6</sup> "Early Spread...", p. 346 [52], cf. p. 349 [55].

anthropology at the University of Michigan. He repeatedly conducted field-work in Algeria and Morocco; in 1961-1962 he was Fulbright lecturer at Makerere University, Uganda. His writings include *The primitive city of Timbuctoo* (1953); with George De Vos he published *Oasis and casbah; Algerian culture and personality in change* (1960). He died on 26 November 1993. AmM&WSc, 1973 S, 1978 S; Shavit - Africa; Unesco; WhAm, 12; *Who's who in America*, 1988/89-1994; WhoWor, 1974/75

**Mīnerbi**, Sergio Itzhak, born 3 August 1929 at Roma, he graduated in 1960 from the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and received a doctorate in 1967 from the Sorbonne, Paris. He was an Israeli diplomat whose writings include *L'Italie et la Palestine, 1914-1920* (1970), *ha-Vatikan, Erets ha-Kodesh veva Tsiyonut* (1985), and its translation, *The Vatican and Zionism; conflict in the Holy Land* (1990). WhoIsrael, 1968-2001; WhoWor, 1974/75; ZKO

**Mines**, Mattison, born 18 January 1941 at Seattle, Wash., he received a Ph.D. in 1970 from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., for *The Muslim merchants of Pallavaram, Madras*. He was since 1975 associated with the Department of Anthropology, University of California at Santa Barbara, a post which he still held in 2005. His writings include *Muslim merchants* (1972), and *Warriors merchants* (1984). AmM&WSc, 1973 S; AmM&WSc, 1976 P; NatFacDr, 1995-2005

**Mingana**, Alphonse, born 23 August 1881 near Mosul, he was successively a student and teacher at the Syro-Chaldean Seminary in Mosul. In 1913 he made his home in England, until 1915 in Birmingham, but thereafter moved to Manchester when invited to join the John Rylands Library, eventually becoming keeper of the Oriental manuscripts. In 1932 he returned to Selly Oak, Birmingham, to become curator of the manuscript collection. He made three journeys to the East, to the Mosul district, in 1924, to Kurdistan in 1925, and to Egypt and the Sinai in 1929; each time succeeding to assemble for the Selly Oak Library an amazing collection of Syriac and Arabic manuscripts. An appreciation of his life and work is *Alphonse Mingana, 1878-1937, and his contribution to early Christian-Muslim studies*, by Samir Khalil Samir (1990). The *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection* in Selly Oak Colleges Library was published in 1985. He died in Birmingham on 5 December 1937. Fück, p. 277; MW, 28 (1938), 186-188; WhE&EA; *Who was who*, 3

**Minganti**, Paolo, born in 1925 at Roma, he graduated in 1952 from the Istituto Orientale di Napoli. He taught successively Arabic and Islamic subjects at the universities of Roma, Torino, Cagliari, and again Roma. An editor of *Oriente moderno* since 1953, he became its director in 1965. After the death of Maria Nallino in 1974 he became chairman of the Istituto di studi orientali in the Università di Roma. His writings include *L'Egitto moderno* (1959), *I movimenti politici arabi* (1971), its translation, *Os movientos políticos árabes* (1976), *Vicino Oriente* (1979), its translation, *Proche-Orient* (1980), and he was a joint author of *Storia della letteratura araba* (1971), as well as translations from the Arabic of Badr Shākir al-Sayyāb and Nizār Qabbānī. He died on 12 December 1978. *Index Islamicus* (2); *Rivista degli studi orientali*, 52 (1978), pp. 149-51

**Mingote y Tarazona**, Policarpo, born in 1847 at Granada, Spain, he gained a doctorate in letters and philosophy and became a professor and director, Instituto de segunda enseñanza de Valladolid. He was a corresponding member of the Real Academia de la Historia, and a honoray professor of the Real Colegio de San Lorenzo del Escorial. His writings include *Guía del viajero en Leon y su provincia* (1879), *Varones ilustres de la provincia de Leon* (1880), and *Compendio de geografía de España*, 2nd ed. (1909). EncicUni

**Minio-Paluello**, Lorenzo, born 21 September 1907 at Belluno (Veneto), Italy, he received a doctorate in 1929 at Padua for *Terría della storia e gnoseologia in Kant*. For three years afterwards he was assistant librarian, in charge of the library of the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, and working on Isocrates, Plato, and Spinoza. In 1932-33, he studied at the Sorbonne, Paris, also taking courses at the École des hautes études, and the Collège de France. When he returned to Padua in 1933 he was again offered the library post, on the condition that he join the Fascist party, but he refused. He then taught at a school until 1935, concurrently beginning an Italian translation of Aristotle's works on logic. When he was excluded even from public teaching, he accepted an invitation from Oriel College, Oxford. He there took a D.Phil. for *The methods of the translators of philosophical works from Greek into Latin in the middle ages*, and became senior lecturer in medieval philosophy at Oxford in 1948. He was elected a professorial fellow of Oriel in 1962. He was the moving spirit behind one of the most important academic enterprises of the twentieth century, the Aristoteles Latinus. But his interests were even broader and extended to Boethius and Abelard, to Dante, and to a native son of his own city, James of Venice. On the basis of James' translations made directly from the Greek, he disproved the hoary legend that most of the West's knowledge of Aristotle in this period came through the Arabic language and Arabic schools. His writings include *Education in fascist Italy* (1946), *Opuscula; the Latin Aristotle* (1972), and he edited *Twelfth century logic* (1956), and *Aristoteles Latinus* (1961). He died in Oxford on 18 October 1986. ConAu, 119; Who, 1969-1985; *Speculum*, 62 (1987), pp. 789-91; *Who was who*, 8

**WOLFGANG BEHN, CONCISE BIOGRAPHICAL COMPANION TO INDEX ISLAMICUS: AN INTERNATIONAL WHO'S WHO IN ISLAMIC STUDIES FROM ITS BEGINNINGS DOWN TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY : BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUPPLEMENT TO INDEX ISLAMICUS, 1665-1980, VOL. II(H-M), LEIDEN 2006.**

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A. Fedeli

**MINGANA AND THE MANUSCRIPT OF MRS. AGNES SMITH LEWIS,  
ONE CENTURY LATER**

**Leaves from Three Ancient Qur'āns, Possibly Pre-'Uthmānic**

While Cambridge University Press was printing one of many articles about Oriental studies — Horse Guards were manoeuvring in front of Buckingham Palace and Uhlans were parading through the streets of Berlin — who could even have the slightest suspicion that when the article was published, once again through the air of Europe the words of the Poet would be heard:

Di falangi un tumulto e un suon di tube  
E un incalzar di cavalli accorrenti  
Scalpitanti su gli eimi a' moribondi.

The article I am writing about is “Leaves from Three ancient Qur'āns, Possibly Pre-'Uthmānic, with a List of Their Variants”, edited by Alphonse Mingana and Agnes Smith Lewis [1]. In this article, in a preface by Agnes Lewis and an introduction by Alphonse Mingana, the authors were giving news about a palimpsest, whose *scriptio inferior*, containing part of the Qur'ānic text, was written with three principal kinds of script: Qur'ān A, Qur'ān B and Qur'ān C.

Mingana reported a list of the various readings, omissions and interpolations he found in comparison with the established *textus receptus* of the Qur'ān and the full transcription of the Qur'ānic text of the *scriptio inferior* of

the manuscript, with the parallel *textus receptus*, together with three pictures of the manuscript.

Some years later, in 1937, Arthur Jeffery in his work [2] collecting the variant readings of the Qur'ānic text, wrote that there was not any direct manuscript evidence of these variants. His “Materials” are only quotations, a reconstruction derived from the literature on the readings. The evidence of the manuscript belonging at that time to Agnes Lewis, seems to have been completely snubbed, except a small note:

“It was at first thought that Dr. Mingana's find in the palimpsest leaves published by him in 1914, ‘Leaves from three Ancient Qur'āns Possibly Pre-'Uthmānic, with a List of Their Variants’, might provide us with fragments of one of these earlier Codices. Closer examination, however, has shown that neither they nor the curious variants found by him in Syriac in a MS of Barṣalībī [3], have any relation to the text of these Old Codices with which we are here concerned” [4].

While the scholar complained about the absence of evidence of variant readings, at the same time he seems to be biased towards the palimpsest of Mrs. Lewis.

Why the variants that Mingana compared and noticed are “curious”?

**From al-Mawṣil (Mosul) to Birmingham**

It is necessary a flashback. In his youthful years, Mingana had wrecked his career and lost his reputation in scientific studies.

Born [5] of Chaldean parents in Iraq, he studied in a seminary in Mosul, from 1891 to 1902, following in the footsteps of his father. After eight years of teaching, he had to leave the seminary in 1910. The following period is totally obscure and, after having broken off relations with his Church, he left Mosul on January 1913. After travelling two months in Persia and the Ottoman Empire, on 17 March 1913 Alphonse Mingana left Iraq and a friend of his had given him a single address, that one of Rendel Harris [6] in Birmingham. He arrived at the end of the month and he was

a guest at Rendel Harris' place before going to live in Woodbrooke, the earliest of the Selly Oak Colleges.

Through the friendship of Rendel Harris, Mingana knew the sisters Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson [7], the two famous travellers and scholars, who lived in Cambridge. In their house in Cambridge, he spent two days, on 27 November 1913 and here, in an atmosphere of lively cultural exchange of information and discoveries in the common field, Mrs. Lewis showed Mingana her book about a palimpsest manuscript containing the Syriac text of the *Protevangelium Jacobi* and *Transitus Mariae*, the No. XI of the *Series Studia Sinaitica* [8], with a few notes about “Leaves from Two Ancient MSS of the Qur'ān” [9].