A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CLAVIS TO THE CORPUS OF WORKS ATTRIBUTED TO ISAAC OF ANTIOCH

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ABSTRACT

The corpus of extant Syriac works which are attributed to Isaac of Antioch have barely begun to be studied. There are no critical editions and the secondary literature is sparse at best. This little Clavis is a simple catalogue of work-to-date on this corpus.

PREFACE

- [1] The fifth-century Syriac writer, generally known in the scholarly world as ‘Isaac of Antioch’, is one of only very few Syriac authors to whom tradition has accorded the appellation ‘the Great’. Even Ephrem the Syrian, with whom medieval Syrian writers often associate Isaac, is never so dubbed. In the manuscript tradition, however, Isaac is far more often given the simple designation ‘teacher’ (Syr. *malfônô*), or even ‘teacher of the Syrians’. The Jacobite Patriarch John bar Shushan (†1073) considered the works of Isaac sufficiently numerous and edifying that he made an attempt to bring them all into a single collection. Unquestionably, Isaac should be numbered among the most prolific of Syriac

writers; his works, mostly *mêmrê* with a few *madrāshê*, have still not been collected or sorted out, but those that are known number considerably more than two hundred.¹ Yet, as nearly every student of Syriac knows, there remains the problem of who Isaac was or, more precisely, 'how many' Isaac was. It is commonplace in the sparse secondary literature on Isaac to cite a letter of Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite, one of his favorite correspondents, in which Jacob responds to John's query concerning the identity of Isaac, by enumerating three Isaacs who lived during the course of the fifth century, and to say that it is the works of these three Isaacs that constitute the corpus of works that scholars generally attribute to Isaac of Antioch. Yet, Robert Murray may be closer to the mark when he opts not to attempt to "solve the problem of how many writers shelter under the name of Isaac of Antioch."² As a single example, scholars have already noted that there are a number of works that are variously attributed to Isaac and to Ephrem, a division already reflected in early editions of these two authors (see below).

[2]

Despite the great number of works attributed to Isaac, however, there has been embarrassingly little work done on this corpus. Much less than half of the works have been edited at all, and then only on the basis of few and late manuscripts (see editions, below). This corpus has been accorded equally meager treatment in modern scholarly research; very little has been done to sort out the corpus and there has been almost no attempt to try to discover the identity, or identities, of the author or authors whose works are included in this corpus. A decade and a half ago now, Sebastian Brock noted that the state of the works of Isaac, along with those of Narsai and Jacob of Sarug, was "indicative of the underdeveloped state of Syriac studies."³ In the time since Brock's article appeared, only a very few works of Narsai and Jacob have appeared in new editions or translations, but only a very secondary works that deal with anything from the Isaac corpus.⁴ This little

¹ See E.G. Mathews, Jr., "The Corpus of Isaac of Antioch: An Overview of its Contents," forthcoming.

² R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom* (Cambridge 1975), 36.

³ S.P. Brock, "The Published Verse Homilies of Isaac of Antioch, Jacob of Serugh, and Narsai: Index of Incipits," *JSS* 32 (1987) 279.

⁴ A decade later Brock reiterated his plea in S.P. Brock, "Syriac Studies in the Last Three Decades: Some Reflections," in *VI Symposium*

Clavis constitutes, I hope, the very first attempt at rectifying this state of affairs.⁵

[3]

Readers of this journal will quickly note that the organization of the material below owes a great debt to the extremely clear and orderly presentation of Dirk Kruisheer and Luk Van Rompay in their *Bibliographical Clavis to the Works of Jacob of Edessa*, which appeared in the very first issue of *Hugoye*.⁶ Due to both the contents of the Isaacian corpus and the relatively smaller secondary literature, I was able to simplify the categories somewhat from theirs. The list of studies below was also compiled, for pre-1960, on the basis of C. Moss, *Catalogue of Syriac Printed Books and Related Literature in the British Museum* (London 1962) and I. Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca* (Rome 1965). For subsequent years I, like Syriac scholars everywhere, am indebted to the bibliographies of Sebastian Brock published in *PdO* 4 (1973) 393-465, 10 (1981-1982) 291-412, 14 (1987) 289-360, 17 (1992) 211-301. These four bibliographies have now been collated together and published in book form in S.P. Brock, *Syriac Studies. A Classified Bibliography (1960-1990)* (Kaslik 1996). Subsequent to these, S.P. Brock, "Syriac Studies 1990-1995. A Classified Bibliography," *PdO* 23 (1998) 241-342 has appeared; it is presumed—even hoped—that another installment for 1996-2000 should appear in one of the next volumes of *Parole de l'Orient*. I have made every attempt both to check all these earlier entries and to bring them as up-to-date as possible. Following Kruisheer and Van Rompay, I have also provided references to the standard handbooks and encyclopedias, which were necessarily not included in the previously mentioned

Syriacum 1992, ed., R. Lavenant (*OCA* 247; Rome 1994) 28; shortly after this article A. de Halleux, "Vingt ans d'étude critique des églises syriaques," in *The Christian East: Its Institutions and its Thought. A Critical Reflection*, ed. R.F. Taft (*OCA* 251; Rome 1996) 155, speaks of the corpus of Isaac as "un complexe littéraire encore mal débrouillé."

⁵ Other projects are also already in progress in conjunction with the newly established series Eastern Christian Texts (ECT) at Brigham Young University. It is hoped that editions of most of the ascetical works as well as a catalogue of all the works attributed to Isaac will appear within the next couple of years. Other editions are also in the planning stages.

⁶ D. Kruisheer and L. Van Rompay, "A Bibliographical Clavis to the Works of Jacob of Edessa," *Hugoye* 1.1 (1998), (<http://www.bethmardutho.org/hugoye>).

bibliographies. Likewise, I have not included catalogues of manuscripts. I hope to provide a revised checklist of incipits in a future issue of this journal; this will comprise a glimpse of a complete catalogue of Isaac's works in manuscript collections that is also currently in preparation.

- [4] Unlike Kruisheer and Van Rompay, I did not have the advantage of a symposium on Isaac, and as a consequence the following list suffers from the great disadvantage of having been compiled by one person—and one who is clearly not Sebastian Brock. Thankfully, George Kiraz offered the possibility of submitting this bibliography to *Hugoye*, whose electronic medium will easily allow emendations of omission and/or reparation, and of any other sort of necessary improvement to the present work. I, therefore, kindly proffer a similar invitation to readers of this journal, to send in any corrections, additions, or any other sort of helpful remark, all of which I will be happy to include and to acknowledge in future updates to a bibliography that I hope will begin to grow with greater rapidity than heretofore.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BA</i>	Byzantina Australiensia
<i>BKV</i>	Bibliothek der Kirchenväter
<i>CSCO</i>	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
<i>GCS</i>	Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
<i>GDFI</i>	Giornale critico della filosofia italiana
<i>JSS</i>	Journal of Jewish Studies
<i>JTS</i>	Journal of Theological Studies
<i>LM</i>	Le Muséon
<i>MGH</i>	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
<i>OC</i>	Oriens Christianus
<i>OCA</i>	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
<i>OKS</i>	Ostkirchliche Studien
<i>PdO</i>	Parole de l'Orient
<i>PO</i>	Patrologia Orientalis
<i>RTFR</i>	Rivista trimestrale di studi filosofici e religiosi
<i>TG</i>	Theologie und Glaube
<i>TU</i>	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>ZfS</i>	Zeitschrift für Semitistik

I. GENERAL STUDIES AND PRESENTATIONS

A. SECTIONS IN INTRODUCTORY WORKS AND HANDBOOKS

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B. ARTICLES IN DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

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II. SURVEY OF ISAAC'S WORKS

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Lamy, T.J. ed., *Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermones* I-IV (Mechlinia 1882-1902). [contains a number of mêmre that are also attributed to Isaac: II.313-333 (=Bedjan, 408-420), II.393-426 (Baumstark, 65 n.4, attributes this to Isaac), III.133-188 (Baumstark, 65 n.4, attributes this to Isaac), IV.147-185 (=Bedjan, 49-70), IV.207-215 (Ms. Ming. Syr. 190, ff. 124v attributes this to Isaac), IV.225-239 (=Bedjan, 36-44), IV.241-261 (=Bedjan, 13-24), IV.453-461 (Ms. Br. Lib. Add. 14612, ff. 84v attributes this to Isaac)] it is also likely that others in this volume belong to Isaac.

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B. TRANSLATIONS

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