

# Manuscript Discoveries and Debates over Orthodoxy in Early Christian Studies: The Case of the Syriac Poet-Theologian Jacob of Serugh\*

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## ■ Abstract

The uncovering of manuscripts over the last one hundred years has repeatedly changed how early Christian history is told. With no signs of this trend abating, this article seeks to take stock of how scholars respond to manuscript discoveries by focusing on three debates over the orthodoxy of an early Christian figure that extend over two hundred and fifty years. New manuscript evidence sparked no less than three debates over the christological views of the Syriac author Jacob of Serugh (d. 520/521) from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries. In the first debate, the arrival of manuscripts in Western Europe led to a conflict between the Maronite scholars who viewed Jacob as a Chalcedonian thinker and certain textual evidence that suggested otherwise. The second debate began in the late

\* All translations in the article are mine. In addition to the abbreviations in *The SBL Handbook of Style*, the following are employed: *GEDSH* = *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (ed. Sebastian P. Brock et al.; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2011); *Scr. Syri* = *Scriptores Syri*. There are several systems of sigla used to identify the homilies of Jacob of Serugh. For the sake of concision, I use only one here, indicated by the letter A and the corresponding number following the title of the homily in the footnotes. These sigla refer to the list of homilies in Roger-Youssef Akhrass, "A List of Homilies of Mar Jacob of Serugh," *Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal Journal* 53 (2015) 87–161. This article was originally developed as part of a dissertation submitted at Princeton Theological Seminary. I am grateful to my advisor, Kathleen McVey, committee members Paul Rorem and Lucas Van Rompay, external reader Susan Ashbrook Harvey, and the peer reviewers for many helpful suggestions about the clarity and framing of this article.

HTR 115:3 (2022) 416–440

nineteenth century after manuscripts from Egypt arrived in London that contained Jacob's extensive epistolary corpus, which includes clear expressions of non-Chalcedonian, miaphysite christology. A new acquisition by the Vatican Library in the mid-twentieth century featured a previously unknown homily that included two lines that could be interpreted in a Chalcedonian manner. This inspired several Western scholars to dig yet deeper into the manuscripts to resolve this long-standing debate over his christological views. The focused analysis of the pendulum swings initiated by manuscript discoveries in the scholarly discourse surrounding Jacob of Serugh serves as a mirror for self-reflection on the way that scholars discuss a past whose many unknowns still await discovery.

## ■ Keywords

manuscripts, early Christian studies, orthodoxy, heterodoxy, christology, Jacob of Serugh

## ■ Introduction

The last one hundred years have witnessed the uncovering of codices and fragments that seem to have changed all that we once knew about certain aspects of early Christianity.<sup>1</sup> This is evident with grand discoveries such as the Nag Hammadi codices, which offer an unprecedented view into the communities which read writings often labeled gnostic.<sup>2</sup> Newly discovered manuscripts have also changed scholarly perspectives on individual authors, such as a late medieval manuscript in the city library of Mainz that contains what has been called “the find of a century”: a series of sermons by Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) previously known only from a late-antique list of Augustine's sermons.<sup>3</sup> In a revised edition of his influential biography of Augustine, Peter Brown states that he found the bishop in these sermons “to be considerably less the authoritarian, stern figure that my reading of the evidence available to me in the 1960s had led me to suspect.”<sup>4</sup> Finally, the recent debate over the modern forgery known as the *Gospel of Jesus's Wife* reveals

<sup>1</sup> On the rhetoric of discovery in ancient and modern sources, see Eva Mroczek, “True Stories and the Poetics of Textual Discovery,” *BSR* 45.2 (2016) 21–31.

<sup>2</sup> On the change in scholarship brought about by these codices, see especially chs. 6 and 7 in Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2003), and *BSR* 45.2 (2016), an issue that commemorated the 70th anniversary of the discovery of the codices. On the readers of the codices, see Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 97; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> On the manuscript, see François Dolbeau, “Le sermonnaire augustinien de Mayence (Mainz, Stadtbibliothek I 9): Analyse et histoire,” *RBén* 106.1 (1996) 5–52, at 46–51. On its parallels with a list of sermons compiled by Possidius (d. after 437), see Cyrille Lambot, “Le catalogue de Possidius et la collection carthusienne de sermons de Saint Augustin,” *RBén* 60 (1950) 3–7. For the phrase “the find of a century,” see the subtitle to Gerhard May and Gesche Hönscheid, *Die Mainzer Augustinus-Predigten: Studien zu einem Jahrhundertfund* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (new ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) 445. This statement applies both to the Dolbeau sermons and to the Divjak letters.

the interest such finds can generate on both scholarly and popular levels.<sup>5</sup> The next major manuscript discovery remains difficult to anticipate but will surely shape scholarly discourse about and popular perceptions of early Christianity.

This article takes stock of the influence such finds can have on the study of early Christianity by analyzing turning points in a long-standing debate over the christological orthodoxy of one early Christian author. The figure at the center of this inquiry, Jacob of Serugh (d. 520/521), wrote in Syriac and has received much attention for his corpus of over three hundred metrical homilies and his smaller corpus of letters. Jacob was born in the middle of the fifth century, educated in Edessa at the time that many Greek theological works were being translated into Syriac, and became a bishop by the end of his life. His correspondence attests to his engagement especially with monastics and clergy in the eastern Roman Empire and beyond.<sup>6</sup> Modern scholarship now holds him as a supporter of miaphysite christology and an opponent of the christology of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. But both Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian traditions have received him as a saint—including the Maronite tradition that played an outsized role in the beginning of Syriac studies in the West. After an initial debate over his christological orthodoxy in the early eighteenth century, manuscripts came to light in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that immediately occasioned two further debates among Western scholars.<sup>7</sup> By tracing the contours of these debates, this article will expose the relationship between manuscript finds and debates on orthodoxy in early Christian studies. In this way, it intends to serve as a mirror for self-reflection on the way we discuss a past whose many unknowns still await discovery.

## ■ The First Debate and Publications of Jacob's Works

The surviving homiletical corpus of Jacob of Serugh rarely engages with christological debates in a direct manner. The seeming absence of references to controversial matters may have resulted in his positive reception by Chalcedonian

<sup>5</sup> Numerous articles on this forgery have appeared. For the investigative journalism that uncovered the origins of the forgery, see Ariel Sabar, "The Unbelievable Tale of Jesus's Wife," *The Atlantic* (July/August 2016) 64–78, and now Ariel Sabar, *Veritas: A Harvard Professor, a Con Man and the Gospel of Jesus's Wife* (New York: Doubleday, 2020). Several criticisms of the book have emerged; one of the lengthier reviews that summarizes these points of critique is: Tony Burke, "Some Reflections on Ariel Sabar's *Veritas*," *Apocryphicity: A Blog Devoted to the Study of Christian Apocrypha* (blog), 1 September 2020 <https://www.apocryphicity.ca/2020/08/29/some-reflections-on-ariel-sabars-veritas/>. On an earlier stage in the debate over the authenticity of this papyrus, see *HTR* 107.2 (2014).

<sup>6</sup> For a brief orientation to Jacob and his works, see Sebastian P. Brock, "Ya'qub of Serugh," in *GEDSH*, 433–35. For a reconstruction of his life based on his own works and contemporaneous writings, see Philip Michael Forness, *Preaching Christology in the Roman Near East: A Study of Jacob of Serugh* (OECs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 4–9.

<sup>7</sup> All three debates are discussed in Forness, *Preaching Christology*, 9–18, as well as in Khalil Alwan, "Mār Ya'qūb as-sarūjī: ʿAlāṭat qurūn min al-jadal ḥawla urṭūḏūksīyatihī," *Al-Manāra* 30 (1989) 309–40.

and non-Chalcedonian communities in late antiquity and the Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup> The first debate over his orthodoxy in the West took place in the early eighteenth century, after the influx of manuscripts to Paris and Rome, which I have discussed in a recent article.<sup>9</sup> This section will briefly summarize this debate, with attention to the role that newly discovered manuscripts played, before turning to the growing knowledge of Jacob's corpus through the publication of manuscripts that had arrived in Europe. The first debate and subsequent publication of his works set the stage for the second and third debates over Jacob's christology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The first scholarly dispute pitted the French Roman Catholic theologian Eusèbe Renaudot (1646–1720) against the *scriptor* of the Vatican Library Joseph Simonius Assemani (1687–1768).<sup>10</sup> Renaudot had gained access to a manuscript with a liturgy attributed to Jacob of Serugh through the bibliophilic activities of the French politician Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683) and his relatives.<sup>11</sup> He published it in a volume of “heterodox” liturgies in 1716 and argued that Jacob was not Chalcedonian.<sup>12</sup> A few years later, Assemani described the contents of the Syriac manuscripts that had recently come to the Vatican Library.<sup>13</sup> The first volume appeared in 1719, was dedicated to orthodox authors, included Jacob of Serugh, and argued against Renaudot's views on Jacob's heterodoxy.<sup>14</sup> The manuscripts that had entered the Vatican Library problematized his view of Jacob as Chalcedonian. One work found in a manuscript acquired from Egypt—the *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon*—directly rejects the council.<sup>15</sup> Further, in his letter to Samuel, abbot of the Monastery of Mar Gabbula, found in a different manuscript, Jacob denies the doctrine of two natures united in the one person of Christ.<sup>16</sup> Assemani denied

<sup>8</sup> See Philip Michael Forness, “Cultural Exchange and Scholarship on Eastern Christianity: An Early Modern Debate over Jacob of Serugh's Christology,” *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 70 (2018) 257–84, at 260–62.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* In the first few paragraphs of this section, I have necessarily had to include many of the same materials found in this article.

<sup>10</sup> “Renaudot, Eusèbe,” in *Nouvelle biographie générale* (46 vols.; Paris, 1852–1866) 41:997–99; Sebastian P. Brock, “Assemani, Josephus Simonius,” in *GEDSH*, 43–44.

<sup>11</sup> James Thomson Shotwell, “Colbert, Jean Baptiste,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.; 29 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910–1911) 6:657–59.

<sup>12</sup> Eusèbe Renaudot, *Liturgiarum orientalium collectio* (2 vols.; Paris, 1716) 2:356–66 (liturgy), 2:367–68 (arguments about heterodoxy).

<sup>13</sup> On the collection of manuscripts, see Pierre Raphael, *Le rôle du Collège maronite romain dans l'orientalisme aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Beirut: Université Saint Joseph, 1950) 39–52.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Simonius Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-Vaticana, in qua manuscriptos codices syriacos recensuit* (3 vols.; Rome, 1719–1728) 1:283–340.

<sup>15</sup> Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis*, 1:294. Assemani encountered this homily in Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 117, fol. 139v–140v. For the homily itself, see Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon* [A 211] (*Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug* [ed. Paul Bedjan and Sebastian P. Brock; 6 vols.; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2006] 6:331–37; Sebastian P. Brock, “The Syrian Orthodox Reaction to the Council of Chalcedon: Jacob of Serugh's Homily on the Council of Chalcedon,” *Texts and Studies: A Review for Hellenism in Diaspora* 8–10 [1989–1991] 448–59).

<sup>16</sup> Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis*, 1:295. This corresponds to Jacob of Serugh, *Letter 19*

the authenticity of the homily and found an explanation for Jacob's language in the letter. But the acquisition of new manuscripts and subsequent publication of Jacob's works would lay the groundwork for a reevaluation of his christological views.

Publications of Jacob's works before 1800 were limited. The Maronite George Amira (ca. 1573–1644) published a grammar of Syriac in 1596 in which he included excerpts from works attributed to Jacob.<sup>17</sup> Joseph Simonius Assemani printed excerpts from the Vatican manuscripts, and liturgical texts attributed to Jacob also saw publication.<sup>18</sup> The first publication of full texts that Jacob authored came in 1722 in an Armenian collection of texts called *Spiritual Writings and Homilies*.<sup>19</sup> Nine homilies—prose and metrical—of Jacob's appear in this volume, alongside the works of other authors.<sup>20</sup> Another Armenian publication that appeared in 1730 also included homilies by Jacob.<sup>21</sup> The publication of two homilies from Syriac manuscripts in the Vatican Library followed. The Maronite and Jesuit scholar Pietro Benedetto (1663–1742), who resided in Rome for much of his life,<sup>22</sup> published a Latin translation of Jacob's *Homily on the Sleepers of Ephesus* in *Acta Sanctorum* in 1729.<sup>23</sup> In 1748, Stephen Evodius Assemani published a translation of the *Homily on Symeon the Stylite*.<sup>24</sup> For nearly sixty years, these remained the only published homilies. When more publications based on the Vatican manuscripts followed, arguments for Jacob's Chalcedonian christology would gain strength at first. But they would falter when sources made available through manuscripts in London prompted scholars outside Rome to reject Assemani's conclusions.

Further publication of Jacob's works began early in the nineteenth century and gained momentum in the middle of this century. Gustaf Knös (1773–1828), who was educated at Uppsala University, where he later assumed a professorship,

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(*Jacobi Sarugensis epistulae quotquot supersunt* [ed. Gunnar Olinder; CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57; Leuven: Peeters, 1937] 102–29).

<sup>17</sup> Lucas Van Rompay, “Amīra, Jirjis,” in *GEDSH*, 20; George Michael Amira, *Grammatica syriaca, sive chaldaica* (Rome, 1596) 470–74.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the publication of Renaudot mentioned in n. 12, see Joseph Aloysius Assemani, *Codex liturgicus ecclesiae universae* (5 vols. [1–4, 8]; Rome, 1749–1766) 2:309–50. A breviary attributed to Ephrem and Jacob had also appeared, *Breviarium feriale syriacum Ss. Ephrem et Jacob syrorum* (Rome, 1787), and includes an excerpt from the *Homily on the Departed* 2 [A 69].

<sup>19</sup> Գիր եւ ճան հոգեշահ (Constantinople, 1722).

<sup>20</sup> On Jacob's works in Armenian and for further bibliography, see Andy Hilken, “The Armenian Reception of the Homilies of Jacob of Serugh: New Findings,” in *Caught in Translation: Studies on Versions of Late-Antique Christian Literature* (ed. Madalina Toca and Dan Batovici; Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 17 [Leiden: Brill, 2020]) 64–84.

<sup>21</sup> Գիրք որ կոչի Այսմաւուրք (ed. Grigor Marzvanec'i; 2nd ed.; Constantinople, 1730).

<sup>22</sup> Lucas Van Rompay, “Mubārak, Buṭros,” in *GEDSH*, 296.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Sleepers of Ephesus* [A 210] (Pietro Benedetto, “Acta antiquiora auctore Jacobo Sarugensi,” *AASS: Julii* 6 [1729] 387–89). He translated this homily from the text in Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 115, fol. 80r–83v.

<sup>24</sup> Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on Symeon the Stylite* [A 237] (*Acta sanctorum martyrum orientalium et occidentalium* [ed. and trans. Stephen Evodius Assemani; 2 vols.; Rome, 1748] 2:230–44). He edited and translated this homily from the text in Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 117, fol. 548v–551r.

undertook a trip to Western Europe from 1801 to 1807 to study Eastern languages.<sup>25</sup> He edited a selection of the texts he read from Western European manuscripts in his *Chrestomathia syriaca* in 1807. In Paris, he encountered a homily on Alexander the Great attributed to Jacob of Serugh and included it in the chrestomathy.<sup>26</sup> Twentieth-century scholarship determined that this homily should not be attributed to Jacob, but at the time it represented only the second of Jacob's homilies to be published in Syriac.<sup>27</sup> A translation and correction of the misprints of the same work appeared in 1852 by Albrecht Weber (1825–1901).<sup>28</sup> Despite these initial publications, knowledge of Jacob's writings still remained limited.

Pius Zingerle (1801–1881), a Benedictine monk at Marienberg,<sup>29</sup> made Jacob's writings available to a wider scholarly community. Zingerle published numerous translations of Jacob's works in a variety of journals, most frequently in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. His inaugural article, published in four parts from 1858 to 1861, describes the low status accorded Syriac poetry:

The publication of the selection of Syriac poetry from Jacob of Serugh that follows here finds its rationale in that the same not be regarded without worth, at least from the standpoint of the earnest and religious art of poetry. If seriousness and contemplativeness are gathered from Arabic, Persian, and Indian poetry charitably, Syriac poetry of such a category, which is not entirely worthless, may also be granted a small, allotted place—especially since outside of Ephrem's works still very few of the better works of Syriac poetry are known in the original text.<sup>30</sup>

At this point, Zingerle only knew of the publication of Jacob's *Homily on Symeon the Stylite*.<sup>31</sup> The first three parts of this article reproduce selections from Jacob's *Homily on the Departed 2*, the Maronite festal breviary, the Sunday office,

<sup>25</sup> For Knös and his travels see Sven Dederling, "Gustaf Knös," in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (33 vols.; Stockholm: A. Bonnier, 1918–) 21:406–8. Gustaf Knös, *Chrestomathia syriaca maximam partem e codicibus manu scriptis collecta* (Göttingen, 1807) iii–vi, also provides a brief description of his travels and how he acquired the manuscripts.

<sup>26</sup> Knös, *Chrestomathia syriaca*, 66–107. The manuscript from which he acquired the text was likely Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Syr. 16 (H. Zotenberg, *Manuscripts orientaux. Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaites) de la Bibliothèque nationale* [Paris, 1874] 5).

<sup>27</sup> Pseudo-Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on Alexander the Great* [A 226] (*Das syrische Alexanderlied. Die drei Rezensionen* [ed. and trans. Gerrit J. Reinink; CSCO 454–55, Scr. Syri 195–96; Leuven: Peeters, 1983], CSCO 454, Scr. Syri 195:22–135; CSCO 455, Scr. Syri 199:20–167). Knös, *Chrestomathia syriaca*, includes the first recension of this homily. *Das syrische Alexanderlied* (ed. and trans. Reinink), CSCO 455, Scr. Syri 196:1–15, discusses the debate over the authorship of this work.

<sup>28</sup> *Des Mor Yaḳūb Gedicht über den gläubigen König Aleksandrūs und über das Thor das er Mache Gegen Ogūg und Mogūg* (trans. Albrecht F. Weber; Berlin, 1852). In the foreword, Weber mentions that he is correcting Knös's text.

<sup>29</sup> Martin Angerer, "Albert Jäger und Pius Zingerle: Zum 200. Geburtstag zweier bekannter Marienberger Patres," *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens und seiner Zweige* 112 (2001) 461–66, at 463–66; Maria Doerfler, "Zingerle, Pius (Jacob)," in *GEDSH*, 449–50.

<sup>30</sup> Pius Zingerle, "Proben syrischer Poesie aus Jakob von Sarug," *ZDMG* 12 (1858) 117–31; 13 (1859) 44–58; 14 (1860): 679–91; 15 (1861): 629–47, at 12 (1858) 117.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 (1858) 117.

and his *Homily on Symeon the Stylite*.<sup>32</sup> The final part defends Syriac poetry by showing its merits in relation to other poetry.<sup>33</sup> Zingerle also comments on the unavailability of Jacob's writings: "It is lamentable still that his work lies buried as unused manuscripts in the Vatican Library and God knows where else."<sup>34</sup> Pope Pius IX (r. 1846–1878) appointed Zingerle professor of Arabic language at Sapienza University of Rome and *scriptor* of the Vatican Library the following year.<sup>35</sup> He then began unearthing Jacob's works.

Zingerle returned from Rome in 1864, only two years after arriving, but his encounter with Jacob's sermons there was productive. He published a two-part article on Syriac poetry, comparing the meters of Ephrem (d. 373), Balai (fl. early 5th cent.), and Jacob in 1863 and 1864.<sup>36</sup> He also published several of Jacob's homilies. An article from 1866 offered an edition and translation of a homily from a Vatican manuscript excerpted in his very first article, in addition to two related homilies.<sup>37</sup> Then, in 1867, he published a book containing translations of Jacob's six prose homilies that also came from a manuscript at the Vatican.<sup>38</sup> Throughout the remainder of his life, he would continue to publish editions and translations of Jacob's work from the manuscripts at Rome as well as studies on Jacob.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Zingerle reprinted and translated a section of Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Departed 2* [A 69] from the *Breviarium feriale syriacum* in Zingerle, "Proben syrischer Poesie," 12 (1858) 118. Further selections from the breviary and Sunday office appear in 12 (1858) 119–31; 13 (1859) 44–58; 14 (1860) 679–81. Those from the *Homily on Symeon the Stylite* [A 237] appear in *ibid.*, 14 (1860) 682–91.

<sup>33</sup> See especially Zingerle, "Proben syrischer Poesie," 15 (1861) 629–30.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 (1861) 630.

<sup>35</sup> Angerer, "Albert Jäger und Pius Zingerle," 463.

<sup>36</sup> Pius Zingerle, "Beiträge zur syrischen Literatur aus Rom: I. Zur syrischen Metrik," *ZDMG* 17 (1863) 687–90; 18 (1864) 751–59.

<sup>37</sup> Zingerle used Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 92, fol. 91r–93r, to publish additional selections from Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Departed 2* [A 69] (Pius Zingerle, "Nachträgliches zu den Proben syrischer Poesie aus Jacob von Sarug," *ZDMG* 20 [1866] 511–26, at 513–16). In the same article, he edits and translates Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Departed 8* [A 184] (*ibid.*, 517–20), and *Homily on the Departed 6* [A 183] (*ibid.*, 521–24, 524–26). These selections come from the same manuscript: Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 92, fol. 97v–99r, 93r–94v, respectively.

<sup>38</sup> *Sechs Homilien des heiligen Jacob von Sarug* (trans. Pius Zingerle; Bonn, 1867). Zingerle does not indicate which manuscript he was using. But *Jacques de Saroug. Six homélies festales en prose* (ed. and trans. Frédéric Rilliet; PO 43.4 [196]; Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), 8, suggests that it must have been Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 109.

<sup>39</sup> Six of Jacob's sermons, which come from Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 109, 114, and 117, appear in the first volume of *Monumenta syriaca ex romanis codicibus collecta* (ed. George Mösinger and Pius Zingerle; 2 vols.; Innsbruck, 1869–1878) 1:21–96. *Chrestomathia syriaca* (ed. Pius Zingerle; Rome, 1871) 286–98, provides excerpts from three homilies from Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 109. Pius Zingerle, "Proben syrischer Hymnologie, aus dem Urtext übersetzt," *TQ* 55 (1873) 462–509, at 473–81, translates three liturgical prayers that draw on the work of the Assemanis. In Pius Zingerle, "Christi Leiden und seine Vorbilder im alten Bunde. Eine Rede des Jakob von Sarug," *Der Katholik* n.F. 2, 33 (1875) 269–76, at 269 n.\*, he indicates that he is making an effort to translate homilies he acquired from manuscripts in Rome. But he does not specify which manuscript he used for this homily. His studies on Jacob include "Über und aus Reden von zwei syrischen Kirchenvätern



Scholars in England and the Austrian Empire followed Zingerle's lead in the 1860s.<sup>40</sup> The increased availability of Jacob's works would contribute to interest in his christology.

A brief note on the christological opinions expressed by the individuals who published Jacob's works in this time will set the stage for the debate that followed. Both tacit and sometimes explicit acknowledgments of Joseph Simonius Assemani's conclusion appear throughout the publications of Jacob's writings. Neither Knös nor Weber comment on Jacob's orthodoxy. But, in his first article on Jacob, Zingerle calls him "the most celebrated teacher of the Syriac Orthodox Church after Ephrem."<sup>41</sup> He gives no indication whether he perceives this church as Chalcedonian Orthodox. But he does label Jacob's close contemporary Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) a "monophysite."<sup>42</sup> Jacob of Serugh appears Chalcedonian by contrast, especially as most of his writings included in his article came from the Maronite liturgy. William Cureton (1808–1864) and Johann Wenig (1827–1875), who published Jacob's homilies in 1864 and 1866, point their readers directly to Assemani for a fuller understanding of the Syriac saint.<sup>43</sup> These latent and patent affirmations of Assemani represent what had become the consensus for one and a half centuries. But the uncovering of new works in manuscripts was about to change the discourse regarding Jacob's christological views.

## ■ The Second Debate: Manuscripts and the Overturning of a Traditional View

The second debate in the West over Jacob's christology began in the late nineteenth century, as works found in manuscripts in Western libraries continued to be published. Jean Baptiste Abbeloos (1836–1906), a Belgian orientalist and Roman Catholic priest,<sup>44</sup> evaluated Jacob's christology in his doctoral dissertation, titled

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über das Leiden Jesu (Isaak von Antioch und Jakob von Serug)," *TQ* 52 (1870) 92–114; 53 (1871) 409–26; "Mittheilungen über und aus acht syrischen Reden des Hl. Jakob von Sarug Bischofs von Batnae in Mesopotamien über das Leiden Christi oder seine Kreuzigung," *TQ* 58 (1876) 465–75.

<sup>40</sup> *Ancient Syriac Documents* (ed. and trans. William Cureton; London, 1864) 86–107, 112, includes three complete works of Jacob and two extracts from manuscripts at the British Museum. *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae episcopi Edesseni, Balaei aliorumque opera selecta* (ed. Julian Joseph Overbeck; Oxford, 1865) 382–402, contains a prayer and two of Jacob's homilies from the Bodleian's manuscripts. Johann Baptist Wenig, *Schola syriaca* (Innsbruck, 1866) 88–89, 155–60, published extracts from *Letter* 19 (the letter to Samuel of Mar Gabbula [from Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 135]) and his liturgical rites (from Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 58, *Officia sanctorum*, and the *Breviarium*, 1787).

<sup>41</sup> Zingerle, "Proben syrischer Poesie," 12 (1858) 117. Zingerle often introduces Jacob in this manner. See, for example, his "Beiträge zur syrischen Literatur," 93; *Chrestomathia syriaca*, 286 n. 1; "Mittheilungen," 465.

<sup>42</sup> Zingerle, "Proben syrischer Poesie," 15 (1861) 634.

<sup>43</sup> *Ancient Syriac Documents* (ed. and trans. Cureton), 189; Wenig, *Schola syriaca*, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Edward Aloysius Pace, "Abbeloos, Jean Baptiste," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (15 vols.; New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907–1912) 1:7.



*De vita et scriptis Sancti Jacobi*. Although he earned his doctorate in Leuven, it was his encounter with Jacob's writings in Rome that allowed him to analyze the saint's life and works.<sup>45</sup> The dissertation first surveys classical sources for Jacob's life with translations and analyses.<sup>46</sup> Notably, Abbeloos discusses a life of Jacob from a manuscript at the British Museum in London.<sup>47</sup> The second part treats Jacob's christology directly. After surveying Jacob's theology more generally, Abbeloos turns to "the orthodoxy of Saint Jacob, and his doctrine concerning the most sacred mystery of the incarnation."<sup>48</sup> In this study, he offered the most comprehensive treatment of Jacob's christology since Assemani.

Abbeloos lays out his argument in three segments. First, he looks at other ancient and medieval authors who comment on Jacob. Some suggest that he is not orthodox, others that he is.<sup>49</sup> Abbeloos sees Jacob's own writings as more conclusive, and he turns to them in the second segment, writing: "It is certainly not possible to have furnished a criterion for adjudicating the teaching of a certain author more satisfactorily or safely than the indication which he himself offers of his mind and thought in his own writings."<sup>50</sup> Abbeloos then offers quotations from Jacob's work that demonstrate his Chalcedonian christology. He concludes:

I do not think there is need for a longer discourse, so that the catholic thought of our Jacob, determined in the aforementioned texts of his, would be held by all. Therefore, it is clear that [the texts] above all establish the divinity of Christ and the close and indissoluble union of the Word of God with the human nature, even as meanwhile the distinction of the natures is also constructed openly and clearly.<sup>51</sup>

The new works available in the manuscripts in Rome increased Abbeloos's confidence in Jacob's Chalcedonian orthodoxy. In the third and final section, Abbeloos addresses problematic texts.<sup>52</sup> He cites two particularly difficult passages in which Jacob "writes 'that his properties should not be attributed to each nature in Christ.'"<sup>53</sup> The first appears in a homily on christology and in the letter to Samuel of Mar Gabbula.<sup>54</sup> Abbeloos places each of the quotations under inspection in the

<sup>45</sup> Jean Baptiste Abbeloos, *De vita et scriptis Sancti Jacobi Batnarum Sarugi in Mesopotamia episcopi* (Leuven, 1867) ix–x.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 22–103.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 89 n. 1, 311–14. Abbeloos had seen a reference to this source in Jan Pieter Nicolaas Land, *Anecdota Syriaca* (4 vols.; Leiden, 1862–1875) 1:26. The manuscript is London, British Library, Add. 12174, fol. 285r.

<sup>48</sup> Abbeloos, *De vita et scriptis*, 136.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 136–49.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 166–85.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 171, 177. The *Homily on the Incomprehensibility of Christ and against the Dyophysites* [A 245] (*160 Unpublished Homilies of Jacob of Serugh* [ed. Roger-Youssef Akhrass and Imad Sryany; 2 vols.; Damascus: Department of Syriac Studies, Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate, 2017])

context of their respective homily and letter. He notes that Assemani had addressed this problem by making a distinction between substance and accidents.<sup>55</sup> But Abbeloos goes further by claiming that Jacob only rejects the communication of the properties abstractly; he supports it in a concrete sense.<sup>56</sup> Abbeloos concludes this section by rejecting the attribution of the *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon* to Jacob.<sup>57</sup> His defense of Jacob's Chalcedonian orthodoxy stands as one of the more prominent aspects of his dissertation. Its influence would be felt, but perhaps not in the way he expected.

Early reception of Abbeloos's defense proved mixed. In 1867, one of his teachers in Leuven, Thomas Lamy (1827–1907),<sup>58</sup> circulated news of this dissertation by publishing an article on the history of scholarship on Jacob of Serugh in *Revue Catholique*. Abbeloos's defense of Jacob's Chalcedonian orthodoxy has the final word here.<sup>59</sup> Although his teacher references the contributions of the Bollandist Henrico Matagne (1833–1872),<sup>60</sup> he does not engage Matagne's criticism of Abbeloos.<sup>61</sup> Matagne had independently assessed Jacob's life in an issue of *Acta Sanctorum* from 1867. Matagne argues that Abbeloos has not adequately explained the letter to Samuel of Mar Gabbula, for there are ambiguous thoughts in it that cannot be seen as orthodox.<sup>62</sup> Thus, rather than explain this letter away, Matagne suggests that Jacob originally supported the miaphysites. But, since he was not forced to leave his bishopric, he must have joined the Chalcedonians in the last years of his life.<sup>63</sup> Matagne published an addendum after he read Abbeloos's dissertation and became familiar with the account of Jacob's life in a manuscript from the British Museum.<sup>64</sup> In that addendum, he remains hesitant about Abbeloos's defense of Jacob's Chalcedonian orthodoxy: "May he prevail indeed and avenge some years

1:7–16) appears in Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 117, fol. 67v–70v, where Abbeloos encountered it.

<sup>55</sup> Abbeloos, *De vita et scriptis*, 180. Assemani's distinction between substance and accidents is discussed in Forness, "Cultural Exchange," 278.

<sup>56</sup> Abbeloos, *De vita et scriptis*, 183.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>58</sup> John F. Fenlon, "Thomas Joseph Lamy," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (15 vols.; New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907–1912) 8:772.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Joseph Lamy, "Études de patrologie orientale. S. Jacques de Sarug," *Revue Catholique*, n.s., 1.9 [25] (1867) 513–25, at 522.

<sup>60</sup> "Elogia patrum Eduardi Carpentier, Henrici Matagne et Josephi van Hecke," *AASS: Octobris* 13 (1883) [vi–vii].

<sup>61</sup> Lamy, "Études de patrologie orientale," 513–15, only cites Matagne for his contributions to knowledge of Jacob's life.

<sup>62</sup> Henrico Matagne, "De S. Jacobo, episcopo sarugensi in Mesopotamia," *AASS: Octobris* 12 (1867) 824–31, at 828.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 828.

<sup>64</sup> This is the *Narrative of Mar Jacob, the Divine Teacher* (Abbeloos, *De vita et scriptis*, 311–14; Sebastian P. Brock, "Jacob of Serugh: A Select Bibliographical Guide," in *Jacob of Serugh and His Times: Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity* [ed. George Anton Kiraz; Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 8; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2010] 219–44, at 237–38). It appears in London, British Library, Add. 12174, fol. 285r.

of the Syrian teacher for the Catholic Church. I would rejoice, but I fear that not every doubt has been taken away. Let the two homilies on the Blessed Virgin Mary be subject to such an investigation!”<sup>65</sup> These two responses, published in the same year as AbbeLoos’s dissertation, suggest that his defense brought greater attention to Jacob’s works and therefore inspired a reevaluation of his Chalcedonian orthodoxy.

A brief note on the diffusion of Jacob’s manuscripts throughout Europe will help frame the responses to AbbeLoos’s work. Syriac studies grew in response to an influx of manuscripts in the nineteenth century. Many of them came from the Nitrian desert in Egypt, as Sebastian Brock writes:

The impetus given to Syriac studies in Europe by these manuscripts from the Syrian Monastery in Egypt was enormous. Whole new areas of Syriac literature—as well as otherwise lost Greek Patristic literature—were opened up to European scholars at exactly the time when Biblical and Patristic critical scholarship was making rapid advances.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, Cardinal Angelo Mai (1782–1854) would pen a ten-volume catalog of the Vatican’s new manuscripts. The fourth of these, published in 1831, mentions manuscripts of Jacob’s works translated into Arabic.<sup>67</sup> Jacob appeared also in the catalog of the British Museum, published later that decade.<sup>68</sup> In the 1860s and 1870s, catalogs of the Syriac manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, and the British Museum would appear, all showing the spread of Jacob’s manuscripts throughout Europe.<sup>69</sup> Although some scholars mentioned above (Renaudot, Knös, and Weber) encountered Jacob in Western Europe, the manuscripts in Rome had until this point dominated scholarship. Manuscripts throughout Europe would soon lead scholars to challenge the conclusion about Jacob’s Chalcedonian orthodoxy.

Gustav Bickell (1838–1906), whose experience reading Ephrem the Syrian led him to join the Roman Catholic Church in 1865,<sup>70</sup> followed Matagne in doubting Jacob’s orthodoxy. In his history of Syriac literature from 1871, Bickell presented Jacob as Chalcedonian: “Renaudot asserted that he adhered to the error of the

<sup>65</sup> Henrico Matagne, “Supplementum ad commentarium de S. Jacobo, episcopo sarungensi in Mesopotamia,” *AASS: Octobris* 12 (1867) 927–29, at 927.

<sup>66</sup> Sebastian P. Brock, “The Development of Syriac Studies,” in *The Edward Hincks Bicentenary Lectures* (ed. Kevin J. Cathcart; Dublin: Department of Near Eastern Languages, University College Dublin, 1994) 94–113, at 103.

<sup>67</sup> Jacob first appears and is briefly described in Angelo Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio e Vaticanis codicibus edita* (10 vols.; Rome, 1825–1838) 4:146.

<sup>68</sup> F. Rosen and J. Forshall, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo Britannico asservantur; pars prima, codices syriacos et carshunicos amplectens* (London, 1838) 58 n. 2.

<sup>69</sup> R. Payne Smith, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Bodleianae pars sexta, codices syriacos, carshunicos, mendaeos complectens* (Oxford, 1864); Zotenberg, *Manuscripts orientaux*; William Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired since the Year 1838* (3 vols.; London, 1870–1872).

<sup>70</sup> Andrew Alphonsus MacErlean, “Bickell, Gustav,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia: Index* (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1914) 10.

monophysites, while Assemani and Abbeloos denied it, and I think their opinion should be followed.”<sup>71</sup> But the following year, Bickell published a translation of select poetry from the Syriac tradition in which his opinion had changed. Citing Matagne, he argues that Jacob became Chalcedonian orthodox in the last years of his life. After reviewing the evidence that Assemani, Abbeloos, and Matagne bring forth, he determines that Jacob’s Chalcedonian orthodoxy remains an open question. He then turns to some letters that William Wright (1830–1889)<sup>72</sup> had made known through a new catalog of the British Museum the previous year: “Decisive in this regard [that is, concerning Jacob’s Chalcedonian orthodoxy] is Jacob’s correspondence with the monks of the monastery of [Mar] Bassus, about which some short notices arrived from Wright a short time ago.”<sup>73</sup> After evaluating this exchange, Bickell concludes: “Therefore the irrefutable conclusion seems to show that Jacob adhered to the *Henoticon* under Emperors Zeno and Anastasios, with, in fact, a strong leaning towards Monophysitism.”<sup>74</sup> At the end of the article, he comes to a conclusion similar to Matagne’s: “Our conclusive findings are therefore that Jacob of Serugh belonged to the church, in any case, during the last years of his life and his death, while the orthodoxy of his earlier life appears very doubtful.”<sup>75</sup> At this time, Jacob’s entire correspondence with Mar Bassus was only available in the British Museum.<sup>76</sup> The manuscripts that came to London from the Nitrian desert in the nineteenth century would thus leave their mark not only on Syriac studies in general but also, particularly, on studies on Jacob.

The doubts Bickell introduced about Jacob’s Chalcedonian orthodoxy would receive their fullest expression in the writings of Jean-Pierre Paulin Martin (1840–1890), a French Roman Catholic biblical scholar.<sup>77</sup> Before ever writing directly on the subject, Martin published part of one of Jacob’s letters to the monastery of

<sup>71</sup> Gustav Bickell, *Conspectus rei Syrorum literariae, additis notis bibliographicis et excerptis anecdoticis* (Münster, 1871) 25.

<sup>72</sup> G. J. Roper, “Wright, William (1830–1889),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online ed.; Oxford, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30069>.

<sup>73</sup> *Ausgewählte Gedichte der syrischen Kirchenväter Cyrillonas, Baläus, Isaak v. Antiochien und Jakob v. Sarug* (trans. Gustav Bickell; Bibliothek der Kirchenväter; Kempten, 1872) 211. The letters to the monastery of Mar Bassus are *Letters* 13–17 (Olinder, *Epistulae*, CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57, 52–86).

<sup>74</sup> *Ausgewählte Gedichte* (trans. Bickell), 212.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>76</sup> In addition, Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 107, contains Jacob of Serugh, *Letter* 13. But the beginning of this letter is missing in the manuscript (see *Epistulae* [ed. Olinder], CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:53; Stephen Evodius Assemani and Joseph Simonius Assemani, *Bibliothecae apostolicae vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus* [3 vols.; Rome, 1758–1759] 3:51). Perhaps this led to confusion over whether it came from *Letter* 19, the letter to Isaac of Mar Gabbula (as asserted by Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis*, 1:302; Assemani and Assemani, *Catalogus*, 3:51). For an updated list of the manuscripts that contain Jacob’s letters, see Philip Michael Forness, “Biblical Exegesis and the Manuscript Transmission of Letters: A Case Study on Jacob of Serugh’s *Letter to Maron* (*Letter* 23),” *Δελτίο Βιβλικῶν Μελετῶν*, forthcoming.

<sup>77</sup> Walter Drum, “Martin, Paulin,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (15 vols.; New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907–1912) 9:729–30.

Mar Bassus in a chrestomathy in 1873.<sup>78</sup> He includes his opinion in the footnotes: “From these fragments of the letters of Jacob, bishop of Serugh, to the monks of the monastery of Mar Bassus, what should be held in regard to the long-disputed orthodoxy of this most celebrated writer is already given.”<sup>79</sup> His opinion becomes clearer in an article published the following year, where Martin casually refers to Jacob as a “monophysite poet.”<sup>80</sup> In 1876, Martin published most of Jacob’s correspondence with Mar Bassus. He briefly reviews the contributions of Assemani, Abbeloos, Matagne, and Bickell, and then states his own opinion—again in the footnotes: “We are only publishing the letters to the monks of Mar Bassus as an example, for all of Jacob’s correspondence is full of monophysite professions and expressions.”<sup>81</sup> The letters alone justified Martin’s claim about Jacob’s miaphysite christology.

In the same year, Martin wrote an eighty-page article on Jacob’s life, works, and beliefs, in which he took on the question of Jacob’s christology directly. After reviewing the scholarship, he turns to the homilies, writing:

Therefore, it is not surprising that the defenders of Jacob of Serugh’s orthodoxy were able to appeal to his homilies. When one examines them superficially, quickly, with a preconceived idea, and without taking account of the period in which they were written, one can easily be deceived. One finds in them a number of passages which seem clearly conformed to the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>82</sup>

Yet Martin goes on to argue that even the homilies that Assemani and Abbeloos cited reflect non-Chalcedonian christology. Likewise, he considers the *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon* to be Jacob’s work.<sup>83</sup> Even if it were not, the letters leave no doubt that Jacob was in fact a miaphysite.<sup>84</sup> Martin disagrees with Matagne and Bickell on one point: that Jacob became Chalcedonian toward the end of his life. He argues rather that Jacob’s letters show that “Jacob was born, lived, and died in the heresy.”<sup>85</sup> Martin’s conclusion would persuade most scholars for nearly seventy-five years.

<sup>78</sup> Jean-Pierre Paulin Martin, *Syro-chaldaicae institutiones, seu introductio practica ad studium linguae aramaicae* (Paris, 1873) 78–79.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 79 n. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Jean-Pierre Paulin Martin, “Discours de Jacques de Saroug sur la chute des idoles,” *ZDMG* 29 (1875) 107–47, at 107.

<sup>81</sup> Jean-Pierre Paulin Martin, “Lettres de Jacques de Saroug aux moines du Couvent de Mar Bassus, et à Paul d’Edesse, relevées et traduites,” *ZDMG* 30 (1876) 217–75, at 218 n. 7.

<sup>82</sup> Jean-Pierre Paulin Martin, “Un évêque-poète au V<sup>e</sup> et au VI<sup>e</sup> siècles ou Jacques de Saroug, sa vie, son temps, ses œuvres, ses croyances,” *Revue des sciences ecclésiastiques* 4.4 [198] (1876) 309–52, 385–419, at 341.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 342, 345–47.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 419.

This section has covered the period in which scholarship reversed a three-hundred-year tradition of Jacob's Chalcedonian orthodoxy.<sup>86</sup> Although manuscripts in Rome would encourage Zingerle and others to publish Jacob's writings, those in London would ultimately provide decisive evidence in favor of Jacob's miaphysite identity. This debate highlights the tension between tradition and sources. The distancing of Western scholarship from the churches in the Middle East became a broader trend in this time, as Sebastian Brock suggests.<sup>87</sup> This debate shows even more clearly the perceived distance between Jacob's homilies and his letters. Even though Martin would argue that Jacob's homilies do not advocate Chalcedonian christology, he calls on the letters to chase away any doubt that Jacob belonged to the miaphysites. While the letters here reversed the scholarly consensus, a homily found in a new acquisition of the Vatican Library would spark the third debate leading some to question the authenticity of Jacob's letters.

### ■ The Third Debate: The Discovery of a Homily and a Reevaluation

By the start of the third debate in 1948, the pull of tradition had all but faded. The first half of the twentieth century saw a lull in scholarship on Jacob.<sup>88</sup> The research of Joseph Lebon (1879–1957) had nuanced scholarly views on the diversity and precision of non-Chalcedonian theology, especially regarding Severus of Antioch (d. 538).<sup>89</sup> But more than half of Jacob's corpus had become available to readers of Syriac, and translations of letters and homilies had spread knowledge of the Syriac saint. The key figures in the debate paid much attention to the perceived tension between Jacob's letters and homilies. Scholars struggled to see how Jacob could have written them both. The process of harmonizing his letters with his homilies began in the course of this debate.<sup>90</sup> A couple of lines from a homily found in a manuscript in the Vatican Library would inspire a reevaluation of the assumption that Jacob was a miaphysite, as clearly articulated in his letters.

Martin's identification of Jacob's christology as miaphysite gradually took hold in scholarship. Pius Zingerle had maintained Jacob's Chalcedonian orthodoxy until

<sup>86</sup> On the assumption of Jacob's Chalcedonian christology in the 16th and 17th cents., see Forness, "Cultural Exchange," 260–70.

<sup>87</sup> Brock, "The Development," 103.

<sup>88</sup> As discussed by Frédéric Rilliet, "Une victime du tournant des études syriaques à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Rétrospective sur Jacques de Saroug dans la science occidentale," *Aram* 5 (1993) 465–80.

<sup>89</sup> Joseph Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien. Étude historique, littéraire et théologique sur la résistance monophysite au Concile de Chalcédoine jusqu'à la constitution de l'Église jacobite* (Leuven: Joseph Van Linthout, 1909); idem, "La christologie du monophysisme syrien," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart* (ed. Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht; 3 vols.; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1951) 1:425–80. On Lebon, see Jean-Claude Polet, *Patrimoine littéraire européen. Index général* (Brussels: De Boeck Supérieur, 2000) 451.

<sup>90</sup> Tanius Bou Mansour, "The Christology of Jacob of Sarug," in *The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451 to 600* (ed. Theresia Hainthaler; trans. Marianne Ehrhardt; vol. 2.3 of *Christ in Christian Tradition*; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 430–77, at 432–35, provides a short summary of this debate.

his final publication on Jacob in 1876—the same year as Martin’s publication of Jacob’s letters and evaluation of his doctrine.<sup>91</sup> A few other nineteenth-century works on Jacob would fail to take notice of Martin’s contribution, asserting that Jacob remained Chalcedonian orthodox throughout his life.<sup>92</sup> Yet, Martin’s contribution found an early audience in the journal in which he had published the letters, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. Already in 1877, Martin appears as an authority when an article refers to Jacob as a miaphysite.<sup>93</sup> Jacob’s identification as a miaphysite became commonplace in reference works,<sup>94</sup> patrologies,<sup>95</sup> chrestomathies,<sup>96</sup> editions and translations of Jacob’s works,<sup>97</sup> and more focused studies.<sup>98</sup>

Martin’s publication also inspired broader interest in Jacob’s letters. The Syriac text and a German translation of Jacob’s letter to the Himyarite Christians

<sup>91</sup> See Zingerle, “Mittheilungen,” 465, 467.

<sup>92</sup> Arthur Lincoln Frothingham Jr., “L’omelia di Giacomo di Sarūg sul battesimo di Costantino imperatore,” *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Memorie della Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche*, 3rd series, 8 (1882–1883) 167–242, at 167, cites only Abbeloos for Jacob’s life. Charles James Ball, “Jacobus Sarugensis,” in *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines* (4 vols.; Boston: Little Brown, 1877–1887) 3:327–28, at 3:327, states that “his writings in general supply ample proof of orthodoxy on the doctrines in question.”

<sup>93</sup> Robert Schröter, “Trostsreiben Jacob’s von Sarug an die himyaritischen Christen,” *ZDMG* 31 (1877) 360–405, at 365–68, 397–98 n. 10, 398 n. 12.

<sup>94</sup> “Jakob von Sarug,” in *Kirchliches Handlexikon* (7 vols.; Leipzig, 1887–1902) 3:519; William Wright, “Syriac Literature,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th ed.; 25 vols.; Edinburgh, 1875–1889) 22:824–56, at 22:831; Norman McLean, “Jacob of Sērūgh,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.; 29 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910–1911) 15:114–15, at 15:115; Franz X. Schühlein, “Jakob von Sarug,” in *Kirchliches Handlexikon. Ein Nachschlagebuch über das Gesamtgebiet der Theologie und ihrer Hilfswissenschaften* (ed. Michael Buchberger; 2 vols.; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1904–1912) 2:17; Eugène Tisserant, “Jacques de Saroug,” in *DTC* (15 vols.; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1899–1950) 8.1:300–305, at 8.1:303–4; Martin Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium ab Ecclesia catholica dissidentium* (5 vols.; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1926–1935) 4:418–19.

<sup>95</sup> William Wright and Norman McLean, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894) 352–53; Carl Brockelmann et al., *Geschichte der christlichen Literaturen des Orients* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: C. F. Amelangs, 1909) 25–27; Jean-Baptiste Chabot, *Littérature syriaque* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1935) 63.

<sup>96</sup> *Morceaux choisis de littérature araméenne* (ed. Jacques Eugène Manna; Mosul: Imprimerie des pères dominicains, 1902) ٥٥١ (= 275); *Ausgewählte Schriften der syrischen Dichter Cyrillonas, Baläus, Isaak von Antiochien und Jakob von Sarug* (trans. Simon Konrad Landersdorfer; Bibliothek des Kirchenväter 6; Kempten: Josef Köseltsche Buchhandlung, 1913) 261.

<sup>97</sup> *S. Martyrii qui et Saldona quae supersunt omnia* (ed. Paul Bedjan; Paris: Harrassowitz, 1902) xviii; *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis* (ed. Paul Bedjan; 5 vols.; Paris: Harrassowitz, 1905–1910) 1.v; Richard Hugh Connolly, “A Homily of Mār Jacob of Sērūgh on the Reception of the Holy Mysteries,” *DRev* 8 [27] (1908) 278–87, at 278; *Die äthiopischen Anaphoren des Hl. Evangelisten Johannes, des Donnersohnes, und des Hl. Jacobus von Sarug* (ed. and trans. Sebastian Euringer; Orientalia Christiana 33.1 [90]; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1934) 79.

<sup>98</sup> Joseph Halévy, “Examen critique des sources relatives à la persécution des chrétiens de Nedjran par le roi juif des Himyarites,” *REJ* 18 [35–36] (1889) 16–42, 161–78, at 22; *Three Letters of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbôgh (485–519)* (ed. and trans. Arthur Adolphe Vaschalde; Rome: Tipografia della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1902) 57 n. 3.



appeared in 1877.<sup>99</sup> Within a decade, his letter to Stephen bar Sudaili would also be published.<sup>100</sup> Early in the twentieth century, Paul Bedjan (1838–1920), a Chaldean Catholic from Persia,<sup>101</sup> published an edition of his *Letter to the Blessed Ones of Arzoun*.<sup>102</sup> The Swedish scholar Gunnar Olinder published an edition of the entire letter collection in 1937. Olinder reaffirmed Martin’s suggestion that all of Jacob’s letters evoked a miaphysite christology: “Jacob’s letters, sent to diverse persons as well as to monasteries and congregations, perhaps all of them, even if other things are treated, discuss more or less the Trinity and the incarnation of the Word and demonstrate that their author was a manifest and ardent monophysite.”<sup>103</sup> Olinder intended to produce two companion volumes to the edition, but he only published one. This volume provides textual corrections and highlights locations in which Jacob addresses christological issues.<sup>104</sup> The letters would not be fully translated until the end of the twentieth century,<sup>105</sup> but their contents were now fully available.

Jacob’s homilies continued appearing in independent publications, articles, and chrestomathies through the end of the nineteenth century. But these would all be overshadowed by the vast output of Bedjan, who published extensively when he traveled to the West. In his seven-volume *Acta martyrum et sanctorum*, Bedjan published editions of eight of Jacob’s hagiographical homilies.<sup>106</sup> Early in the twentieth century, he published nine homilies by Jacob in a single volume titled *Cantus seu homiliae Mar-Jacobi in Jesum et Mariam*.<sup>107</sup> He reprinted these homilies and added two more at the end of an edition of the works of the Syriac monastic

<sup>99</sup> Schröter, “Trostschriften,” 369–95. This corresponds to Jacob of Serugh, *Letter 18 (Epistulae* [ed. Olinder], CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:87–102).

<sup>100</sup> Arthur Lincoln Frothingham Jr., *Stephen bar Sudaili, the Syrian Mystic, and the Book of Hierotheos* (Leiden, 1886) 10–27. This corresponds to *Letter 1 (Epistulae* [ed. Olinder], CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:2–11).

<sup>101</sup> For a summary of Bedjan’s life and works, see Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “Paul Bedjan, Missionary for Life (1838–1920)” in *Homilies* (ed. Bedjan and Brock), 6:339–69.

<sup>102</sup> *S. Martyrii* (ed. Bedjan), 605–13. This corresponds to *Letter 6 (Epistulae* [ed. Olinder], CSCO 110, Scr. Syri 57:28–34).

<sup>103</sup> *Epistulae* (ed. Olinder), i.

<sup>104</sup> Gunnar Olinder, *The Letters of Jacob of Sarug: Comments on an Edition* (Lunds Universitets Årsskrift, n.f., avd. 1, 34.1; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1939), throughout. The planned second volume would have contained discussion of the literary, philological, biographical, theological, historical, and exegetical aspects of the letters: Olinder, *Comments*, 3.

<sup>105</sup> A nearly complete German translation was the first major translation project of Jacob’s letters: *Jakob von Sarug. Ausgewählte Briefe* (trans. Severin Matthias Grill; 3 vols.; Heiligenkreuzer Studien 17; Heiligenkreuz: Heiligenkreuzer Verlag, 1971–1972). Arabic, French, and Italian translations followed: *Rasā’il Mār Ya’qūb as-surūjī al-malfān* (trans. Behnam M. Boulos Sony; 2 vols.; Dekwaneh, Lebanon, 1995); *Les lettres de Jacques de Saroug* (trans. Micheline Albert; Patrimoine Syriaque 3; Kaslik, Lebanon: Parole de l’Orient, 2004); *Lettere di Giacomo vescovo di Sarug, 451–521 a.d.* (trans. Behnam M. Boulos Sony; Rome, 2008).

<sup>106</sup> *Acta martyrum et sanctorum* (ed. Paul Bedjan; 7 vols.; Paris: Harrassowitz, 1890–1897) 1:131–43; 3:665–79; 4:471–99, 650–65; 5:615–27; 6:650–89.

<sup>107</sup> *Cantus seu homiliae Mar-Jacobi in Jesum et Mariam* (ed. Paul Bedjan; Paris: Harrassowitz, 1902).

author Sahdona (7th cent.). The title page of this volume includes a quotation from one of Jacob's homilies.<sup>108</sup> With the addition of one of Jacob's letters, this amounts to nearly a third of the volume. But even this work would be overshadowed by the five-volume set of Jacob's homilies that Bedjan published from 1905 to 1910. Nearly two hundred of Jacob's homilies appear in this set, bringing the total number of homilies edited by Bedjan to around 220.<sup>109</sup> No one would equal Bedjan's accomplishment, but his work would inspire a flurry of translations and editions of Jacob's homilies and liturgical writings.<sup>110</sup> This work laid the groundwork for an informed debate on Jacob's christology.

Paul Mouterde (1892–1972), a French Jesuit who worked in Lebanon,<sup>111</sup> published two newly discovered homilies in 1946. These homilies came from a manuscript that had arrived at the Vatican Library via Beirut only eight years earlier.<sup>112</sup> One of the two, the *Homily on Mary and Golgotha*, was named as Jacob's last in one account of his life.<sup>113</sup> Mouterde did not think that these homilies would spark a debate, as he considered Jacob a miaphysite as late as 1948: "Although a monophysite, his homiletical work stands outside the doctrinal controversies and

<sup>108</sup> *S. Martyrii* (ed. Bedjan), 614–865.

<sup>109</sup> *Homiliae* (ed. Bedjan). This was reprinted in *Homilies* (ed. Bedjan and Brock), vols. 1–5.

<sup>110</sup> Carl Hunnius, *Das syrische Alexanderlied* (Göttingen: Dieterichschen Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1904) 3, 31, in which he refutes the long-held assumption that this is Jacob's homily; Carl Hunnius, "Das syrische Alexanderlied," *ZDMG* 60 (1906) 169–209, 558–89, 802–21; Michael Kmosko, "De apocrypha quadam dominici baptismi descriptione corollarium," *OrChr* 4.1 (1904) 195–99; Anton Baumstark, "Zwei syrische Dichtungen auf das Entschlafen der allerseligsten Jungfrau," *OrChr* 5.1 (1905) 82–125, at 91–99; Connolly, "Reception of the Holy Mysteries"; Richard Hugh Connolly, "A Homily of Mâr Jacob of Sérûgh on the Memorial of the Departed and on the Eucharistic Loaf," *DRev* 10 [29] (1910) 260–70; Jacques Babakhan, "Essai de vulgarisation des homélies métriques de Jacques de Saroug, évêque de Batnan en Mésopotamie, 451–521," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 17 (1912) 410–26; 18 (1913) 42–52, 147–67, 252–69, 358–74; 19 (1914) 61–68, 143–54; Landersdorfer, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, 272–431; Israel Friedlaender, *Die Chadhrilegende und der Alexanderroman. Eine sagengeschichtliche und literarhistorische Untersuchung* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913) 50, who assumes that this homily is authentic; Arthur Allgeier, "Untersuchungen zur syrischen Überlieferung der Siebenschläferlegende," *OrChr*, 2nd series, 4 [14] (1914) 279–97; 5 [15] (1915) 10–59, 263–270, at (1915) 43–53; Heinrich Näf, *Syrische Josef-Gedichte, mit Übersetzung des Gedichts von Narsai und Proben aus Balai und Jaqob von Sarug* (Zürich: A. Schwarzenbach, 1923) 43–50; Samuel Alfred Brown Mercer, "The Anaphora of Saint James of Serug," *JSOR* 11 (1927) 71–75; I. K. Cosgrove, "Three Homilies against the Jews by Jacob of Sarug. Edited with Introduction, Translation and Notes" (PhD diss., University of London, 1931); *Die äthiopischen Anaphoren* (ed. and trans. Euringer), 86–112; Cyril Moss, "Jacob of Serugh's Homilies on the Spectacles of the Theatre," *Le Muséon* 48 (1935) 87–112.

<sup>111</sup> Henri Jalabert, *Jésuites au Proche-Orient. Notices biographiques* (Collection Hommes et Sociétés du Proche-Orient; Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1987) 310–11.

<sup>112</sup> Paul Mouterde, "Deux homélies inédites de Jacques de Saroug," *MUSJ* 26.1 (1944–1946) 1–36, at 4. The manuscript is Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 566. The two homilies are Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on Mary and Golgotha* [A 212] (Mouterde, "Deux homélies," 15–22, 29–36); and *Homily on the Burial of Strangers* [A 213] (Mouterde, "Deux homélies," 9–14, 23–28).

<sup>113</sup> The short biography of Jacob in London, British Library, Add. 12174, from 1196 or 1197, mentions this homily: *Narrative of Mar Jacob the Divine Teacher* (Abbeles, *De vita et scriptis*, 312; Brock, "A Select Bibliographical Guide," 238).



It would take thirty years for scholars to sort out the question that Peeters poses in the title of this article and to unravel the thesis he advocates at the end.

Reactions to Peeters's thesis varied. Ishaq Armalah (1879–1954), a Syrian Catholic priest,<sup>122</sup> had published an Arabic survey of Jacob's life and scholarship on Jacob in 1946 in which he independently argued that Jacob held to Chalcedonian orthodoxy and that some of his letters were misattributed.<sup>123</sup> Peeters had only heard of this work after he had sent his own article to the printer.<sup>124</sup> Armalah would enter into a debate with a cleric from the Syriac Orthodox Church on this matter,<sup>125</sup> but Western scholarship did not in general take notice of it.<sup>126</sup> By 1951, one of the major patristic reference works included Peeter's argument: "According to the convincing statements of Peeters, Jacob thought in an orthodox manner and was not an adherent to monophysite teaching."<sup>127</sup> Several works written around the same time testify to the prevalence of Peeters's findings, claiming that he had adduced solid grounds for Jacob's orthodoxy.<sup>128</sup> Yet doubts remained. Joseph Lebon, writing in 1951 in a definitive volume on the christology of Chalcedon, accused Peeters of providing no evidence for his claim of the inauthenticity of Jacob's letters.<sup>129</sup> Peeters's article had, however, reopened the conversation.

Emerging around the same time was the voice of Paul Krüger (1904–1975), a German Roman Catholic priest.<sup>130</sup> Krüger's first interest in Jacob centered on his Mariology, as he writes at the beginning of his first article: "The question of whether and to what extent Jacob of Serugh has worth as a witness of the Syriac Catholic tradition cannot yet be answered. We point to fact that he thought in a monophysite way, but at other times he bordered to a large extent on catholic,

<sup>122</sup> George Anton Kiraz, "Ishāq Armalah," in *GEDSH*, 33.

<sup>123</sup> Ishaq Armalah, *Mār Ya'qūb usquf sarūj al-malfān baḥṭ intiḡādī tāriḡī dīnī* (Jounieh, Lebanon, 1946).

<sup>124</sup> Peeters, "Jacques de Saroug," 134 n.\*.

<sup>125</sup> A response to Armalah appeared in 1949: Būlus Bahnām, *Ḳamā'ilu ar-rayḡān aw urtuḡsīyat Mār Ya'qūb as-sarūjī al-malfān* (Mosul, 1949). Khalil Alwan, "Bibliographie générale raisonnée de Jacques de Saroug (†521)," *ParOr* 13 (1986) 313–83, at 374, cites one more work by each author, but I have not been able to acquire access to them.

<sup>126</sup> Peeters likely heard of it through a review of the work in a European periodical: Johannes Petrus Maria van der Ploeg, "Review of Ishaq Armalah, *Mār Ya'qūb usquf sarūj al-malfān baḥṭ intiḡādī tāriḡī dīnī* (Jounieh, Lebanon, 1946)," *BO* 5.5 (1948) 153–56.

<sup>127</sup> Berthold Altaner, *Patrologie. Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Freiburg: Herder, 1951) 303.

<sup>128</sup> A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First: An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 1; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950) 235; Ernst Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (CSCO 127, Subsidia 2; Leuven: L. Durbeck, 1951) 189; W. de Vries, "Primat, Communio und Kirche bei den frühen syrischen Monophysiten," *OCP* 18 (1952) 52–88, at 59–60; Costantino Vona, *Omelie mariologiche di S. Giacomo di Sarug* (Lateranum, n.s., 19.1–4; Rome: Facultas Theologica Pontificii Athenaei Lateranensis, 1953) 28–35.

<sup>129</sup> Lebon, "La christologie," 427 n. 6. Lebon also cites Armalah in this footnote.

<sup>130</sup> *Kleines Wörterbuch des christlichen Orients* (ed. Julius Assfalg and Paul Krüger; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975) ix.

that is, orthodox, teachings.”<sup>131</sup> Krüger suggests that this tension can be resolved by positing two authors: an original and a redactor. The same might help solve similar tensions in relation to Jacob’s christology.<sup>132</sup> He first took on the question of Jacob’s christology in an article published in 1953, titled “Was Jacob of Serugh a Catholic or a Monophysite?” He evaluates several issues that all support Peeters’s conclusion<sup>133</sup> and mentions the two-author theory briefly.<sup>134</sup> Here, Krüger seems content to support Peeters’s conclusions. But this would soon change.

Krüger developed his foundational thesis on Jacob’s christology in an article published in 1956, “The Problem of the Orthodoxy of Jacob of Serugh and Its Resolution.” In his 1953 article, he had briefly criticized Peeters for not taking into account the entire corpus of Jacob’s letters.<sup>135</sup> Krüger took on this task himself in his new article, concluding that of the forty-two letters, fifteen clearly represent miaphysite thought.<sup>136</sup> His subsequent evaluation of the homilies revealed harmony between the genres: “The Christology of the sermons, which form the backbone and body of Jacob’s work, does not stand in contradiction to the Christology of the letters. . . . In some letters and sermons parallel lines of thought can be demonstrated that must come from the same author.”<sup>137</sup> With this harmony, any remark about the duality of Christ’s natures in the homilies must be seen within the frame of miaphysite christology. If this is not the case, Krüger suggests that the two-author theory can help resolve the apparent contradiction: “If the monophysitism does not appear starkly in the sermons, this is because the sermons found use in Catholic liturgy and therefore were corrected and harmonized.”<sup>138</sup> The argument of Assemani, Armalah, Peeters, and of previous advocates for Jacob’s Chalcedonian orthodoxy is turned on its head. It is now the Chalcedonians—not the miaphysites—who corrupted Jacob’s works. The letters have once again become the principle sources for evaluating Jacob’s christology.

Krüger followed up on his groundbreaking article with studies that treated the topic from different angles. A short article from 1957 addressed the *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon*.<sup>139</sup> He uses a second version of the homily, found in a manuscript in the British Library that predated the manuscript Assemani used. The likelihood of its authenticity thus increased, and with it the evidence for Jacob’s

<sup>131</sup> Paul Krüger, “Die Frage der Erbsündigkeit der Gottesmutter im Schrifttum des Jakob von Serugh,” *Ostkirchliche Studien* 1 (1952) 187–207, at 187.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 206–7.

<sup>133</sup> Paul Krüger, “War Jakob von Serugh Katholik oder Monophysit?,” *Ostkirchliche Studien* 2 (1953) 199–208, at 201.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>136</sup> Paul Krüger, “Das Problem der Rechtgläubigkeit Jakobs von Serugh und seine Lösung,” *Ostkirchliche Studien* 5 (1956) 158–76, 225–42, at 167.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>139</sup> Paul Krüger, “La deuxième homélie de Jacques de Saroug sur la foi du concile de Chalcédoine,” *OrSyr* 2 (1957) 125–36.

miaphysitism.<sup>140</sup> In 1959, Krüger defined his position more clearly in response to criticisms.<sup>141</sup> He sought to specify how Jacob conceived of the unity of the divinity and humanity in Christ. Looking exclusively at Jacob's letters, Krüger determines: "A *communicatio idiomatum* has no place in Jacob's christological views according to the findings of these sources. All statements, including those concerning Christ's humanity, pertain to the divine nature or person."<sup>142</sup> Thus, Jacob's christology does not give equal weight to Christ's two natures, as he emphasizes the divine nature. A follow-up article includes a translation of one of Jacob's letters that gave classic expression to miaphysite christology.<sup>143</sup> For some years, Krüger had not faced opposition to his views, but this too would change.

Taeke Jansma (1919–2007), a Dutch Semiticist known for his work on Genesis in the Syriac tradition, furthered the debate.<sup>144</sup> Jansma first contributed to scholarship on Jacob in 1959, in an extended article exploring Jacob's *Homily on the Creation of the World*, or *Hexaemeron*,<sup>145</sup> in which he made a passing comment about Jacob's christology still being an open question.<sup>146</sup> Jansma took on Jacob's christology as an independent question in 1962, basing his analysis on the letter collection and seven homilies.<sup>147</sup> In that analysis, he portrays Jacob as an author who longs for peace in the church. Although he rejects dyophysite christology, both miaphysites and Chalcedonians rightly revere him as a saint.<sup>148</sup> Jansma's article reached Krüger and encouraged him to look again at Jacob's christology.<sup>149</sup> In an article in 1964, Krüger advocated the relevance of a hagiographical account of Jacob's life found in a Parisian manuscript. Krüger concludes that Jacob was a miaphysite early in

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 126. The manuscript Krüger uses is London British Library, Add. 14651, which dates to 850 (Wright, *Syriac Manuscripts*, 3:1101). Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 117, which Assemani used, dates to 1197.

<sup>141</sup> Paul Krüger, "Untersuchungen über die Form der Einheit in Christus nach den Briefen des Jakob von Serugh," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 8 (1959) 184–201, at 184. He refers to Ignacio Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia Syriaca* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1958) 100, who claims that Jacob "held to Chalcedonian orthodoxy at the end of his life," and to Taeke Jansma, "L'hexaméron de Jacques de Sarûg" (trans. Louis-Marcel Gunthier), *OrSyr* 4 (1959) 3–42, 129–62, 253–84, at 3–4, who states that there was still uncertainty in this debate, with Peeters and Armalah on one side and Krüger on the other.

<sup>142</sup> Krüger, "Das Problem der Rechtgläubigkeit," 199. A. Michel, "Idiomes (Communication des)," in *DTC* (15 vols.; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1899–1950) 7.1:595–602, at 599–600, briefly outlines the debated nature of the *communicatio idiomatum* among the miaphysites.

<sup>143</sup> Paul Krüger, "Le caractère monophysite de la troisième lettre de Jacques de Saroug," *OrSyr* 6 (1961) 301–8.

<sup>144</sup> Lucas Van Rompay, "Taeke Jansma (1919–2007)," *Hug* 10 (2007) 95–102.

<sup>145</sup> Jacob of Serugh, *Homily on the Creation of the World* [A 71] (*Homiliae* [ed. Bedjan], 3:1–151).

<sup>146</sup> Jansma, "L'hexaméron de Jacques de Sarûg," 3–4.

<sup>147</sup> Taeke Jansma, "The Credo of Jacob of Sērûgh: A Return to Nicea and Constantinople," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 44 (1962) 18–36, at 22.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 29–30, 32–33.

<sup>149</sup> Paul Krüger, "Die kirchliche Zugehörigkeit Jakobs von Serugh im Lichte der handschriftlichen Überlieferung seiner Vita unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Pariser Handschrift 177," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 13 (1964) 15–32, at 19.

life but adhered to Chalcedonian thought at the end of his life.<sup>150</sup> This short debate between these authors would lead Jansma to revisit the question.

In 1965, Jansma produced what have become nearly standard opinions on Jacob's christology. He first evaluates Krüger's latest article, noting that he finds his reliance on this hagiographical account surprising.<sup>151</sup> He then turns to Jacob's letters to the monastery of Mar Bassus and searches for a new way to express Jacob's christology.<sup>152</sup> His response builds on his previous attempt to show Jacob's longing for the harmony of Nicaea. Rather than Nicaea, it is his two spiritual ancestors that frame his christology: "The profile of his personality shows an unmistakable relationship to Cyril of Alexandria and Ephrem the Syrian, however much he may have distinguished himself from his spiritual ancestors."<sup>153</sup> Jansma followed up this publication with a four-part essay that addresses Peeters's suggestion at length, especially considering the major historical events in Jacob's life.<sup>154</sup> Within, he restates more clearly the conclusion of his previous essay:

For [Peeters], as for Abbot Lazarus, it is either Chalcedonian or monophysite; *tertium non datur* [there is no third possibility]. But Jacob—whose system is composed, on the one hand, of Cyril's Christology and, on the other hand, of religious convictions that have Ephrem's tendencies—recognizes a third possibility, for he himself lives in two worlds. While his inquisitorial contemporaries limit the possibilities to two, the Alexandrian Christology that he appropriated leads him naturally to a monophysite confession of faith; but it is barely pronounced under external pressure and not without hesitation on his part, or the follower of *docta ignorantia* [learned ignorance] is immediately pulled back, taken by pre-Nestorian nostalgia, in silence before the ineffable mystery of the incarnation.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 32. This text is the *Homily on Mar Jacob, the Teacher, of Batnae of Serugh*. It was first printed based on Rome, Vatican Library, Sir. 117 (Abbeoos, *De vita et scriptis*, 24–85), and then Krüger produced a critical edition using Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Syr. 177 (Paul Krüger, "Ein bislang unbekannter sermo über Leben und Werk des Jakob von Serugh," *OrChr* 56 [1972] 80–111, at 82–111).

<sup>151</sup> Taeke Jansma, "Die Christologie Jacobs von Serugh und ihre Abhängigkeit von der alexandrinischen Theologie und der Frömmigkeit Ephräms des Syrers," *Le Muséon* 78 (1965) 5–46, at 6.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 21–35.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>154</sup> Taeke Jansma, "Encore le credo de Jacques de Saroug. Nouvelle recherches sur l'argument historique concernant son orthodoxie," *OrSyr* 10 (1965) 79–88, 193–236 (Paul of Edessa); 331–70 (Jacob's homilies and letters); 475–510 (other historical sources).

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.



Krüger published other articles that draw out even more hagiographic materials on Jacob's life and reaffirm his position,<sup>156</sup> but the debate has effectively ended here.<sup>157</sup> Jansma provided a solution that both affirms that Jacob adheres to non-Chalcedonian christology and suggests why his christology appears discreetly in the majority of his writings. Reference works and focused studies received Jansma's answer to this question as definitive.<sup>158</sup>

The discovery of Jacob's letters in manuscripts brought to the British Museum in the nineteenth century seemed to have closed the case on his christological orientation. But the publication of Jacob's works by Bedjan inspired other scholars to look back to the manuscripts. Mouterde discovered a homily in one new acquisition of the Vatican Library that would spark the third debate and lead to reflection on the tension between Jacob's letters and homilies.

## ■ Conclusion

This focused study has covered the history of Western scholarship on Jacob of Serugh's christology from the eighteenth century to the late twentieth century. It has emphasized the importance of manuscripts in each of the three major debates. A manuscript in Paris prompted Renaudot to investigate Jacob's christological thought, and Assemani had to deal with challenging passages found in new acquisitions of the Vatican. A manuscript brought to the British Museum in the nineteenth century led to the second debate, while two lines from a homily in a codex brought to the Vatican Library sparked the third debate in the twentieth century. Manuscripts

<sup>156</sup> Paul Krüger, "Neues über die Frage der Konfessionszugehörigkeit Jakobs von Serugh," in *Wegzeichen. Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag von Prof. Dr. Hermenegild M. Biedermann OSA* (ed. Ernst Christophor Suttner and Coelestin Patock; Das östliche Christentum, n.F., 25; Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1971) 245–52; idem, "Ein bislang unbekannter sermo"; idem, "Ein zweiter anonymes memra über Jakob von Serugh," *OrChr* 56 (1972) 112–49; idem, "Die sogenannte Philoxenosvita und die Kurzvita des Jacob von Serugh," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 21 (1972) 39–45; idem, "Zur Problematik des Mēmṛā (Sermo) über den Glauben des Jakob von Serugh und seine Lösung," *Ostkirchliche Studien* 23 (1974) 188–96; idem, "Jakob von Sarūg," in *Kleines Wörterbuch des christlichen Orients* (ed. Julius Assfalg and Paul Krüger; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975) 151.

<sup>157</sup> But *Jakob von Sarug. Die Forschung und das Heiligtum der Kirche* (ed. and trans. Severin Matthias Grill; Heiligenkreuzer Studien 13B; Horn: Berger, 1973) 11–12, still supports Krüger over Jansma.

<sup>158</sup> Arthur Vööbus, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Mēmṛē-Dichtung des Ja'qōb von Serūg* (4 vols.; CSCO 344–45, 421–22, Subsidia 39–40, 60–61; Leuven: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1973–1980) 1:34–37; François Graffin, "Jacques de Saroug," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* (15 vols.; Paris: Beauchesne, 1932–1995) 8:56–60, at 8:56; Sebastian P. Brock, "An Early Maronite Text on Prayer," *ParOr* 13 (1986) 79–94, at 79 n. 1; Wolfgang Hage, "Jakob von Sarug," in *TRE* (36 vols.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–2004) 16:470–74, at 16:471; Frédéric Rilliet, "Jakob von Sarug" (trans. Heinzgerd Brakmann), in *RAC* (30 vols.; Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1950–) 16:1217–27, at 16:1220; P. Bettiolo, "Lineamenti di patrologia siriaca," in *Complementi interdisciplinari di patrologia* (ed. Antonio Quacquarelli; Rome: Città Nova, 1989) 503–603, at 559; Bou Mansour, "The Christology of Jacob of Sarug," 477; Peter Bruns, "Christologie" and "Jakob von Sarūg" in *Kleines Lexikon des Christlichen Orients. 2. Auflage des kleinen Wörterbuches des christlichen Orients* (ed. Hubert Kaufhold; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007) 123–37, at 129; 210–11.

were the catalysts for each of these debates, and they threatened to (and in some cases did) overturn long-held conceptions of Jacob's christological views. In this conclusion, I will briefly explore the ongoing research that built on the results of the third debate and reflect further on the implications this has for the broader study of early Christian texts.

Several important developments in the study of Jacob of Serugh's christology came after the third debate. In 1976, Roberta Chesnut analyzed Jacob of Serugh's christology alongside those of his fellow miaphysite leaders Severus of Antioch and Philoxenus of Mabbug. Her book highlighted Jacob's identity as a miaphysite thinker for subsequent scholarship.<sup>159</sup> Then Sebastian Brock translated and eventually edited the *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon*.<sup>160</sup> Brock and Lucas Van Rompay later identified excerpts from this homily in a sixth- or seventh-century manuscript, presenting further evidence for its authenticity.<sup>161</sup> Micheline Albert charted a new approach to discerning the christology of Jacob of Serugh, by tracing the language of Chalcedon in eight of his letters.<sup>162</sup> She intended to issue an article on the language of the Emperor Zeno's *Henoticon* in Jacob's letters, but this article never saw publication.<sup>163</sup> Tanius Bou Mansour investigated Jacob's christology for the Christ in Christian Tradition series. There, he argued that the letters and the homilies exhibit the same christology.<sup>164</sup> In 2017, Roger Akhrass and Imad Syryany edited 160 previously unpublished homilies attributed to Jacob of Serugh, using manuscripts both from Western libraries and from Middle Eastern collections.<sup>165</sup> This publication appeared just as my own monograph on the use of the *Henoticon* in Jacob's formulation of christology in both his letters and homilies went to press.<sup>166</sup> These studies strengthened the conclusion that Jacob held to a miaphysite christology, all building upon the results of the third debate. But newly published works or new manuscript finds may yet change the discourse on aspects of Jacob of Serugh's life and thought.<sup>167</sup> For, as the long debate over Jacob's christology shows,

<sup>159</sup> Roberta C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysite Christologies: Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug* (Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976). But this work has not been received well; see the reviews by Lionel R. Wickham in *JTS*, n.s., 28 (1977) 567–71, and Iain R. Torrance in *SJT* 32 (1979) 183–85, at 185.

<sup>160</sup> *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon* [A 211] (*Homilies* [ed. Bedjan and Brock], 6:331–37; Brock, "Reaction"). For a defense of its authenticity, see Forness, *Preaching Christology*, 135–39.

<sup>161</sup> Wadi al-Natrun, Deir al-Surian, Syr. 28A, fol. 5r (Sebastian P. Brock and Lucas Van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)* [OLA 227; Leuven: Peeters, 2014] 181).

<sup>162</sup> Micheline Albert, "Jacques de Saroug (†521) et le magistère," *ParOr* 17 (1992) 61–71, at 61, states that she is using *Letters* 13–17, 19–21.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 61 n. 1. The connections between the *Henoticon* and Jacob's letters and homilies are explored at length in Forness, *Preaching Christology*.

<sup>164</sup> Bou Mansour, "The Christology of Jacob of Sarug," 434–35, 456, 456 n. 116.

<sup>165</sup> *160 Unpublished Homilies* (ed. Akhrass and Syryany).

<sup>166</sup> Forness, *Preaching Christology*.

<sup>167</sup> In this regard, two studies on one of these newly published homilies have already appeared that add significant information about Jacob's engagement with the events of his day: Muriel

manuscripts and the texts they contain have the potential to spark new debates and change the way we tell the history of early Christianity.

What does a study on the scholarship on a single figure reveal about the relationship between manuscript discoveries and the study of early Christianity? Let me suggest just two aspects. First, manuscript discoveries can and do destabilize the consensus. Three times scholars reevaluated the entire corpus of Jacob's works to find if what they encountered in works previously unknown to them could be reconciled with what they thought they knew. The discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices and a new collection of Augustine's sermons had similar effects on the study of Gnosticism and the understanding of the bishop of Hippo. The destabilizing effects of manuscript discoveries should encourage us to recognize the contingency of studies regarded as foundational or even authoritative. The interpretive aspects of such articles and books do not present certain facts but rather authors' attempts to sort through the available evidence at that time.

Second, manuscript discoveries can and should occasion reevaluations of existing evidence rather than simply being slotted into preexisting paradigms. Even the third debate, initiated by Peeters's reading of just two verses of poetry, prompted scholars to look more deeply into Jacob's works to examine his christology with more precision than ever before. Here we might also think of the Nag Hammadi codices, Augustine's sermons, or even the forgery known as the *Gospel of Jesus's Wife* that occasioned much reflection on how scholars interact with manuscripts without a known provenance. It is not our task to harmonize new evidence with generally accepted knowledge but rather to read these works with an openness that could lead us to reevaluate the scholarly consensus or even what we ourselves have argued in the past.

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Debié, "Guerres et religions en Mésopotamie du Nord dans l'Antiquité tardive. Un *mimro* inédit de Jacques de Saroug sur l'église Saint-Étienne que les Perses ont transformée en temple du feu à Amid (Diyarbakır) en 503 è.c.," *Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal Journal* 56 (2018) 29–89; eadem, "St Stephen in Amida in a New *mimro* of Jacob of Serugh: Christianity vs. Zoroastrianism in a Clash of Religious Shrines," in *Syriac Hagiography: Texts and Beyond* (ed. Sergey Minov and Flavia Ruani; Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity 20; Leiden: Brill, 2021) 340–64.