

of ancient writings,—had the effect of leading even the later Syriac authors, among whom were several considerable men, to wield their ancestral speech with great skill. Besides, the influence of the actually living tongues—the Aramaic popular dialects, and the Arabic—did not attain its prevalence with such a disturbing effect as might have been expected. But on the whole, for more than a thousand years, Syriac—as an ecclesiastical and literary language—has only been prolonging a continually waning existence.

PART FIRST.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND PHONOLOGY.

I. ORTHOGRAPHY.

LETTERS.

§ 1. A. The character most in use in Syriac printing is that of the West-Syrians (Jacobites and Maronites), of which the proper name is *Sertā* (*Sertō*). It has been developed out of the older one, which is called *Estrangelo*, properly *στρογγύλη*. This character also is pretty often employed in printing, particularly in more recent times. The same thing may be said of the Nestorian character, which comes nearer the *Estrangelo* than the *Sertā* does. We accordingly give, in the following Table not only the *Sertā* letters of the alphabet but also the old or *Estrangelo* letters, as well as the Nestorian letters.

B. All Syriac styles of writing are *Cursive*; the most of the letters must be connected right and left within the word,—and thus several small modifications of shape arise. In the case of the *Sertā*, we give all these forms; for the *Estrangelo* and the Nestorian character it may suffice to give the special final forms, in addition to the main forms.⁽¹⁾

The form, which is given here in European character, of the names of the letters, aims at representing the older pronunciation: brackets enclose the diverging pronunciation of the later West-Syrians. Secondary forms, varying both in sound and character, are also met with.

⁽¹⁾ Cf. besides, the Plate of Alphabetical Characters by Euring, appended to this work.

Usual Syriac Character.				Estrangelo.	Nestorian.	Names.	Sound-Value and Transcription.	Hebrew Equivalents.	Numerical Value.
1. Unconnected—(Detached finals)	2. Connected on right—(United finals)	3. Connected on left.	4. Connected right and left.						
Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ⲁ	Ālaf (Ōlaf)	Spiritus lenis (ʿ)	Ⲁ	1
Ⲃ	Ⲃ	Ⲃ	Ⲃ	Ⲃ	Ⲃ	Bēth	b; v (β)	Ⲃ	2
Ⲅ	Ⲅ	Ⲅ	Ⲅ	Ⲅ	Ⲅ	Gāmal (Gōmal)	g (hard); gh (γ)	Ⲅ	3
Ⲇ	Ⲇ	Ⲇ	Ⲇ	Ⲇ	Ⲇ	Dālath or Dāladh (Dōlath or Dōladh)	d; dh (ð)	Ⲇ	4
Ⲉ	Ⲉ	Ⲉ	Ⲉ	Ⲉ	Ⲉ	Hē	h	Ⲉ	5
Ⲋ	Ⲋ	Ⲋ	Ⲋ	Ⲋ	Ⲋ	Wau	w	Ⲋ	6
Ⲍ	Ⲍ	Ⲍ	Ⲍ	Ⲍ	Ⲍ	Zain, Zēn, or Zai	soft s (z)	Ⲍ	7
Ⲏ	Ⲏ	Ⲏ	Ⲏ	Ⲏ	Ⲏ	Hēth	hard h (ħ)	Ⲏ	8
Ⲑ	Ⲑ	Ⲑ	Ⲑ	Ⲑ	Ⲑ	Tēth	emphatic t (t)	Ⲑ	9
Ⲓ	Ⲓ	Ⲓ	Ⲓ	Ⲓ	Ⲓ	Yōdh (Yūdh)	y	Ⲓ	10
Ⲕ	Ⲕ	Ⲕ	Ⲕ	Ⲕ	Ⲕ	Kāf (Kōf)	k; kh	Ⲕ	20
Ⲗ	Ⲗ	Ⲗ	Ⲗ	Ⲗ	Ⲗ	Lāmadh (Lōmadh)	l	Ⲗ	30
Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Ⲙ	Mīm	m	Ⲙ	40
Ⲛ	Ⲛ	Ⲛ	Ⲛ	Ⲛ	Ⲛ	Nūn, Nōn	n	Ⲛ	50
Ⲝ	Ⲝ	Ⲝ	Ⲝ	Ⲝ	Ⲝ	Semkath	s	Ⲝ	60
Ⲟ	Ⲟ	Ⲟ	Ⲟ	Ⲟ	Ⲟ	Ē	peculiar guttural (ʿ)	Ⲟ	70
Ⲡ	Ⲡ	Ⲡ	Ⲡ	Ⲡ	Ⲡ	Pē	p; f, ph	Ⲡ	80
Ⲣ	Ⲣ	Ⲣ	Ⲣ	Ⲣ	Ⲣ	Šadhē (Šōdhē)	emphatic s (š)	Ⲣ	90
Ⲥ	Ⲥ	Ⲥ	Ⲥ	Ⲥ	Ⲥ	Qōf	guttural k (q)	Ⲥ	100
ⲧ	ⲧ	ⲧ	ⲧ	ⲧ	ⲧ	Rēsh (Rīsh)	r	ⲧ	200
ⲩ	ⲩ	ⲩ	ⲩ	ⲩ	ⲩ	Shīm	sh(š)	ⲩ	300
ⲫ	ⲫ	ⲫ	ⲫ	ⲫ	ⲫ	Tau	t; th (θ)	ⲫ	400

At the end of a word we can only have a form from the 2nd column or the 1st, and from the one or the other according as the preceding letter has a form connecting to the left (Col. 3) or not. Forms from Col. 4 can only appear in the interior of a word; while initial forms must be taken from Col. 1 or 3.

Rem. The most judicious course for the beginner will be to impress upon his memory only Cols. 1 and 3.

C. Ⲛ with ʿ is generally written Ⲛ (Ⲛ), but initial ʿ with Ⲛ thus, Ⲛ. For ʿⲚ one sometimes puts Ⲛ, and thus draws in this case two words together. In Nestorian script Ⲛ is given for final Ⲛ (Ⲛ).

For Ⲛ, Ⲛ as single letters or as ciphers, one generally writes Ⲛ, Ⲛ.

In manuscripts Ⲛ and Ⲛ are often mistaken for each other from their resemblance; so is it with Ⲛ and Ⲛ, and also with Ⲛ on the one hand and Ⲛ, Ⲛ, Ⲛ, and Ⲛ on the other. Farther it is frequently difficult to distinguish Ⲛ from a simple Ⲛ, and occasionally even Ⲛ from a simple Ⲛ. Even in many printed copies Ⲛ and Ⲛ are far too like one another: (ʿ) farther, Ⲛ and Ⲛ, and Ⲛ and Ⲛ are not sufficiently discriminated.

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§ 2. The *pronunciation* of the letters can of course be determined only approximately. Notice the following: Ⲛ Ⲛ Ⲛ Ⲛ Ⲛ have a twofold ^{Pronun-}pronunciation. Soft Ⲛ is nearly the German *w*, or the English and French *v*; soft Ⲛ = γ (*gh*) is nearly the Dutch *g* (like the Arabic غ); soft Ⲛ = ð (*dh*) is the English *th* in *there, other*; soft Ⲛ = kh, or the German *ch* in *ach* (not that in *ich*); soft Ⲛ the German, English, and French *f*; soft Ⲛ = θ (*th*) is the English *th* in *think, both*. (ʿ) On the changes of the hard and soft pronunciations v. §§ 15, 23 *sqq.*

Ⲛ is always the vowel-sounding English *w*, never the German *w*, and accordingly it quiescens easily and completely into a *u*. Ⲛ has also more of a vowel character than the German *j*, being nearly the English *y*.

(1) *Translator's Note:* The same may be said for Ⲛ and Ⲛ.

(2) *Translator's Note:* In the transcription followed in this Edition, soft Ⲛ will be represented by *v*, soft Ⲛ by *kh*, soft Ⲛ by *f* or *ph*, and soft Ⲛ by *th*; while soft Ⲛ and Ⲛ will be rendered by *γ* and *ð* respectively.

j = z is a soft s as in chosen, German s in Rose, French in choisir or French z in zéro.

ω = h is quite a foreign sound to us, an h rattled in the throat (Arabic ح). The East-Syrians pronounce it as a very hard Swiss ch (Arabic ح).

ϕ = t is an emphatic and completely unaspirated modification of t, in which the tip of the tongue is pressed firmly against the palate; ω is a similar modification of h, produced in the back part of the mouth. ϕ and ω are employed by the Syrians as equivalents for the Greek sounds τ and κ, which at all events were quite unaspirated.

ϑ = s is an emphatic articulation of the sound of s, by no means to be rendered as a German z (= ts).

ⲁ = ʿ is a guttural breathing, again quite foreign to us, which is formed by a peculiar compression of the upper part of the windpipe. It is nearly related to ω, and even to the Spiritus lenis (ʿ). Those who render it by the latter sound will make the least considerable mistakes.

Ⲃ = š is the German sch, the English sh, or the French ch.

ⲃ seems to have been a lingual-dental, not a guttural.

The remaining consonants have nearly the same sound as the corresponding German or English ones.

DISPOSITION OF WORDS.

Disposition of words.

§ 3. Particles, which consist of only a single letter, i. e. of a consonant with a short vowel, are attached as prefixes to the following word, thus **ⲃⲙⲗⲗ** bémalkā, "in rege", not **ⲃⲙⲗⲗⲁ**, **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** waqṭal, "and killed", not **ⲙⲗⲗⲁⲟ**, &c.

Certain short words, and to some extent even longer ones, which together belong to the same idea, are also frequently written as one, though not invariably. Thus **ⲗⲗⲁ** or **ⲗⲗⲁ** āf lā "neither", "not even"; **ⲃⲁⲛⲉ** or **ⲃⲁⲛⲉ** bar nāš, "son of man", i. e. "man"; **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** or **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** kul yōm "every day"; **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** or **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** kul meddem "quicquid"; **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ**, more commonly **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** rūḥ quḏšā "spirit of holiness", "the Holy Ghost"; even **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** instead of **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** māran Jesū mēšīḥā "our Lord Jesus Christ", appears. On the fusion

together of two words, of which the one ends in ⲗ, while the other begins with ⲗ (ⲗⲗ), see above § 1 C.

VOWEL EXPRESSION (A) BY VOWEL LETTERS.

Vowel expression: (a) By vowel letters. Actual use.

§ 4. A. The letters ⲗ ⲟ are frequently made use of by the Syrians to express vowel sounds.

ⲗ denotes every final ā and ē, and in certain cases ē within the word; that ā was pronounced ō by the later West-Syrians, and that ē in part ī. Thus **ⲙⲗ** mā (mō); **ⲙⲗⲗⲁ** malkā (malkō), **ⲙⲙⲙⲁ** mamsē; **ⲗⲁ** nē (nī); **ⲙⲗⲁⲛ** pēran (pīran).

ⲟ denotes every ī in the middle and end of a word, also certain cases of ē in the middle: **ⲃⲉ** biš; **ⲃⲁ** bī; **ⲃⲉ** dēn; **ⲃⲉ** ʿen (īm). For ē there appears also ⲗ: **ⲙⲗⲉ** or **ⲙⲗⲉ** kēn (§ 4b). In an open syllable ē is frequently not expressed at all, e. g. **ⲙⲙⲙⲗⲁ** meskēnā (meskīnā); in ancient MSS. it is sometimes unindicated even in a closed syllable, e. g. **ⲙⲗⲉ** hērēn.

ⲟ in the middle and end of a word denotes any long or short u or o: **ⲙⲙⲟ** qūm; **ⲙⲙⲟⲗ** purqānā; **ⲙⲗⲟ** neyṭōn (neyṭūn); **ⲗⲟⲃⲟⲃⲟ** teš-boḥtā (tešbuḥtā); **ⲙⲗⲟ** malkū; ⲟ ḏ. Only the very common words **ⲙⲗⲟ** kol, kul "all", "every", and **ⲙⲙⲟⲗ** meṭṭol, meṭṭul "because of" are often in old times, and always in later times, written without ⲟ, thus **ⲙⲗⲟ**. **ⲙⲗⲟ**. The Cod. Sin. frequently leaves out the ⲟ even in other words, e. g. **ⲙⲗⲟ** for **ⲙⲙⲟⲗ** luqṭal.

ⲟ and ⲟ farther express the diphthongs au and ai: **ⲗⲟ** lau, **ⲗⲟ** baitā; the diphthongs īu and ēu are written ⲟ: **ⲗⲟ** gallū; **ⲗⲟ** neyṭēu.

B. A final and originally short a in Greek words is expressed by ⲗ: in pronunciation it was doubtless always lengthened. Greek α in the middle of a word is also often written ⲗ, e. g. **ⲙⲗⲟ** or **ⲙⲗⲟ** δόγματα &c. Even the Syriac a is sometimes thus expressed, e. g. **ⲙⲗⲟ** ṭallā for the usual **ⲙⲗⲟ**. In the very same way ⲟ appears pretty often for ī in the middle of a word, e. g. **ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ** (or **ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ**) episkopā, ἐπίσκοπος; **ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ** (ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ) χριστός. In quite isolated examples this happens even in Syriac words, as **ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ** (ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ) yīšrā; **ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ** (ⲙⲙⲟⲗⲟ) šīyrē.

Greek ε and αι are in some writings expressed by **ⲉ**, *e. g.* **ⲉⲗⲉⲓⲉ** λέξις. The desire to render Greek vowels with accuracy gave rise to various strange forms of transcription among learned Syrians.

Greek ο on the other hand is frequently left entirely unexpressed, *e. g.* **ⲃⲁⲥⲓⲗⲉⲓⲟⲥ** Βασίλειος, alongside of **ⲃⲁⲥⲓⲗⲉ**; **ⲉⲡⲓⲥⲓⲕⲟⲡⲟⲥ**, alongside of **ⲉⲡⲓⲥⲓⲕⲟⲡ**, **ⲉⲡⲓⲥⲓⲕⲟⲡⲟⲥ** ἐπίσκοπος. Thus the placing of the vowel letters in Greek words is far more fluctuating than in native ones.

Apparent use of **ⲓ**.

§ 5. A distinction is to be made between the employment of **ⲓ** as a vowel sign and those cases in which it has its place from etymological considerations,—especially from having been formerly an audible *spiritus lenis*: *e. g.* **ⲙⲁⲗⲁⲕⲁ** malakhā “angel”, from **ⲙⲁⲗⲁⲕⲁ** **ⲃⲉⲣⲁ** bēra (bīrō) “a well” from **ⲃⲉⲣⲁ** (Hebrew **בְּאֵר**); **ⲁⲗⲗⲓⲛ** ‘allīn “enter” (p. part.), because of the sing. **ⲁⲗⲗ** ‘ā’ēl “enters” (sing. part.) &c.

Vowel expression: (b) By other signs. Simple points.

VOWEL EXPRESSION (B) BY OTHER SIGNS.

§ 6. This insufficient representation of vowel sounds was gradually made up for by new signs. At first, in some words which might be pronounced in various ways, *a point over* the letter concerned was employed to signify the fuller, stronger pronunciation, and *a point under* it to denote the finer, weaker vocalisation, or even the absence of vowel sound. Thus there was written (and is written) **ⲭⲃⲁ** ‘evāḏā “a work”, set over against **ⲭⲃⲁ** ‘avḏā “a servant”; **ⲙⲁⲛ** mōn “what?” and **ⲙⲁⲛ** “who?”, **ⲙⲉⲛ** men “from”; **Ⲓⲁⲧⲉⲗ** qātel “he kills” (part.) and **Ⲓⲁⲧⲉⲗ** “he murdered” (Paēl), **Ⲓⲉⲧⲉⲗ** qēṭal “he killed” (Peal); **ⲥⲁ(ⲛ)ⲧⲁ** ša(n)tā “a year”, **ⲥⲉⲛⲧⲁ** šenthā “sleep”; **ⲙⲁⲕⲁ** malkā “king”, **ⲙⲉⲕⲁ** melkā “counsel”; **Ⲓⲁⲩ** ṭāvā “good”; **Ⲓⲉⲃⲁ** ṭebbā “fame”; **ⲕⲁ** kau “that” (masc.), **ⲕⲁ** hū “he”; **ⲕⲁ** hāi “that” (fem.), **ⲕⲁ** hī “she”; **ⲕⲁ** hānōn “those”, **ⲕⲁ** hemōn “they” &c. Frequently it is held to be sufficient to indicate by the upper point the vowels ā, a,—*e. g.* in **ⲥⲉⲕⲁ** séyāmā “setting”, **ⲁⲓⲃⲁ** aidā “what?” (fem.), **ⲁⲕⲏⲗ** dahhīl “timorous”, without giving also to words written with the same consonants the under point proper to them, *viz.*—**ⲥⲓⲙⲁ** sīmā “set”, **ⲓⲃⲁ** ṭdā “a hand”, **ⲓⲃⲁ** dēhīl “terrible”. Here too we must note the employment of **ⲉ** almost without exception to signify the suffix of the 3rd pers. fem. sing., *e. g.* **ⲃⲁⲕ** bāh “in her” as set over against **ⲃⲁⲕ** bēh

“in him”; **Ⲓⲉⲧⲉⲗⲗⲁ** qēṭaltāh “thou hast killed her”; and so also **ⲙⲉⲃⲁⲙⲉⲕ** qēḏāmēh “before her”; **ⲛⲉⲒⲉⲗⲗⲁ** neqṭēlāh “he is slaying her” (Impf.), &c.

In the latter case this system has already in part given up the exact, and relatively phonetic significance of the ‘points’. That significance, however, came to be abandoned in many other cases besides, as when, for instance, one began to write **ⲥⲁⲙ** sām “he placed”, because it is a Perfect like **Ⲓⲉⲧⲉⲗ** qēṭal. Other considerations too mixed themselves up with the matter; thus it became the practice to write the 1st pers. sing. perf. with — over the first consonant, *e. g.* **Ⲓⲉⲧⲉⲗ** qeṭleth “I killed” (interfeci). The points, upper and under,—particularly the former,—are often wrongly placed; thus **ⲭⲃ** is found for **ⲭⲃ** ‘āved “does”, and **ⲙⲉⲃ** for **ⲙⲉⲃ** sāleq “ascends”.

§ 7. Farther, a second or third point was often added to distinguish more exactly between verbal forms in particular; for example, there was written **ⲕⲭⲃ** ‘evdeh, **ⲕⲭⲃ** or (East-Syrian) **ⲕⲭⲃ** ‘evdath “she did”; **ⲙⲁⲛ** manū “who is?” compared with **ⲙⲁⲛ** mānau “what is?”; **ⲕⲃ** bēre “creatus” as distinguished from **ⲕⲃ** bēra “creavit” and **ⲕⲃ** bārē “creat”, &c. This complicated system, often fluctuating according to districts and schools, and seldom faithfully attended to by copyists, still maintained a footing in many forms, even alongside of the employment of a more exact indication of the vowels.

Combination of points.

§ 8. Out of this punctuation then, there was formed, with the Nestorians first of all, *a complete system of Vowel-Signs*. To be sure it never attained to perfect consistency and universal acceptance: even the appellations of the vowels fluctuate a good deal. The system is used in Nestorian impressions, on the authority of good manuscripts, after the following scheme:—

System of vowel-marking by points.

- ⲁ̇ ā Pēlhāhā, *e. g.* ⲃ̇ bā.
- ā Zēqāfā (or according to Nestorian pronunciation, Zēqāpā): ⲃ̇ bā.
- ē, ĩ Rēvāšā arrīkhā or Zēlāmā pēšiqā: ⲃ̇ bē.
- ē Rēvāšā karyā or Zēlāmā qāšyā: ⲃ̇ bē.
- ⲃ̇ ĩ Hēvāšā: ⲃ̇ bī.
- ⲟ u, ū ‘Ēšāsā allīšā: ⲃ̇ bu.
- ⲟ o, ō ‘Ēšāsā rēwīhā: ⲃ̇ bo.

Rem. This orthography,—which otherwise is tolerably consistent,—substitutes in certain cases —̣ for —̇ , for no reason that can be discovered, e. g. in Passive Participles like ܘܢܝܢ “built”. In old manuscripts —̣ is largely interchangeable with —̇ or —̈ . —̣ is also found in isolated cases for —̇ , particularly for an initial —̇ . —̣ is also written for —̈ . For other variations, v. §§ 42. 46. 48.—On the representation of *ai* and *au* v. § 49 A.

System of vowel-marking by Greek letters.

§ 9. Much clearer is the *system of vowel designation by small Greek letters* set above or below the line,—a system which grew up among the Jacobites about A. D. 700. Unfortunately, however, this system represents in many parts a later pronunciation of the vowels, which had become prevalent at that time, so that we cannot in the Grammar altogether dispense with the other system,—the Nestorian. The method practised is as follows:

- $\overset{\alpha}{\text{—}}$ a *Pēthōhō*.
- $\overset{\omicron}{\text{—}}$ \bar{o} (older \bar{a}) *Zēqōfō*.
- $\overset{\epsilon}{\text{—}}$ e *Rēvōšō*.
- $\overset{\eta}{\text{—}}$ \bar{i} (partly for old \bar{e}) *Hēvōšō*.
- $\overset{\omega}{\text{—}}$ \bar{u} (partly for old o) *‘Éšōšō*.

Rem. Sometimes \bar{i} or \bar{u} is found for —̈ i. e. H, γ, following later Greek pronunciation; for $\overset{\epsilon}{\text{—}}$ or $\overset{\omega}{\text{—}}$ there appears σ , and ω too for \bar{o} . This ω has been in use with the interjection ܘܐ “O!” from very ancient times: a later and disfigured form is ܘܐ . The diphthongs *av* and *ai* are written ܘܐ , ܘܐ ; ܘܐ is an earlier form for ܘܐ ; and similar forms occur for other diphthongs.

Mixed system.

§ 10. A combination of a modified point-system with the Greek system is in favour among the later West-Syrians and in our own impressions. In this usage

$$\frac{\overset{\alpha}{\text{—}}}{\underset{\alpha}{\text{—}}} = \frac{\overset{\alpha}{\text{—}}}{\underset{\alpha}{\text{—}}}$$

—̣ and —̇ without distinction = $\overset{\alpha}{\text{—}}$.

—̣ , —̇ or merely —̣ = —̈ , $\overset{\epsilon}{\text{—}}$.

ܘܐ or ܘܐ without any certain distinction = ܘܐ .

§ 11. *Rem.* No one of these systems carries out a distinction between long and short vowels. The designation of vowels by the Syrian Grammarians as “long” or “short” rests upon a misunderstanding of Greek terms and has nothing to do with the natural quantity. Thus the first and certainly short *e* in *neylē* is directly designated as “long *Rēvōšō*”, and the second and long *e* as “short”. The original *o* is for the Jacobites a “short *‘Éšōšō*”; for the Nestorians on the other hand it is “broad”, while *u* is for the former “long”, for the latter “compressed”; and in neither case is the quantity of the vowel considered, but merely the quality.

§ 12. No established sign has been formed to denote the want of any vowel (*Sh’va quiescens*), nor yet the absence of a full vowel (*Sh’va mobile*). Here and there the sign —̣ (§ 6) or —̈ (§ 17) serves this purpose.

§ 13. A. Examples: Nestorian: $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ}$ *sūth lémillē* Examples: *démalkā dīlhōn*. Greek: $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ}$ *sūth lémelē dēmalkō* *dīlhūn*. Mixed: $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܝܢ}$. The blending might be contrived in many other ways besides, for instance, ܘܢܝܢ *ܘܢܝܢ* &c.

B. From practical considerations, we employ in this work the Greek vowel-signs almost always, using however,—in conformity with the practice of the East-Syrians, and in general of the West-Syrians also,—the sign —̇ for that vowel which is pronounced \bar{e} by the East-Syrians, and \bar{i} by the West-Syrians, and in most cases discriminating ܘܐ (original *o*, West-Syrian *u*) from ܘܐ = ܘܐ (original *u*).

C. Syriac manuscripts are commonly content with the indication of the vowels given in § 6: only occasionally do they give exact vowel signs. But Nestorian manuscripts, in particular, are often fully vocalised. Many Nestorian manuscripts of the Scriptures produce quite a bewildering impression by the large number of points of various kinds employed in them (cf. § 14 sqq.).

OTHER READING-SIGNS.

§ 14. Very ancient is the point which never fails in genuine Syriac manuscripts,—that which distinguishes ܘܐ from ܘܐ .

Diacritic point in ܘܐ and ܘܐ .

Rukkākḥā and Quṣṣāyā.

§ 15. The soft pronunciation (Rukkākḥā) of the letters د و ي ل (§ 2) can be expressed by a point placed under them, the hard pronunciation (Quṣṣāyā) by one placed over them, e. g. نَسَات nēsart "thou didst take", نَسَبَتْ nesbeth "I took" &c. (For farther examples v. in particular § 23 et sqq.). In the case of پ the hard sound is commonly indicated by a point set within the letter, something like پ; and by پ is represented the sound of the Greek π (§ 25), which diverges from this, being completely unaspirated (¹) and peculiarly foreign to a Semite. Others set down پ = f, پ = p, and پ = π. We shall however denote the Syriac hard p also by پ.

This system, of which certain variations appear (such as پ, with two points, instead of پ) is only carried out in very careful writing. In Nestorian manuscripts, however, particularly those of later origin, and in Nestorian printed matter, the system is largely employed. At the same time these points are usually left out, when they would interfere with the vowel points, e. g. كَا, not كَا; مَبَا, not مَبَا.

Plural points.

§ 16. A. From the oldest times, and regularly, plural forms, of substantives in the first place, have been distinguished by two superscribed points —, called Sēyāmē (²): thus مَلِكَا, مَلِكَا malkē, malkāthā "kings, queens" are distinguished from the singulars:—مَلِك, مَلِكَا malkā, malkāthā. And so also مَلِكَا malkau "his kings" &c., although in such a case there was no possibility of mistaking the word for a singular.

B. Substantive plurals in ع commonly receive the sign —, but not those of the predicative adjective, thus, اَمَمَا ammā "cubits", but هَمَمَا ḥammā "are) true".

True collective nouns, which have no special plural, must take —, e. g. حَنَا ḥnā "a flock", but we have بَقَرَا baqrā "herd (of cattle)", because a plural بَقَرَا baqrē "herds" appears.

(¹) Answering to the representation of π by پ (not by پ) and of ρ by پ (not by پ).
(²) The Hebrew appellation in vogue,—Ribbūi is naturally unknown to the Syrians. It was borrowed by a European scholar from the Hebrew Grammarians, and means "plural".

The feminine plural-forms of the finite verb and of the predicative adjective take —, e. g. مَلَكْنَ "they (fem.) wrote", يَكْنْنَ "they (fem.) write" (Impf.), يَكْنْنَ "are good (&c.)". Only, these points are generally wanting, when the 3rd pl. fem. in the perfect is written like the 3rd sing. masc. (§ 50 E).

With the numerals there is a good deal of fluctuation. The rule that only feminine numbers of the second decade,—because they end in the plural in ē,—are to be supplied with —, is seldom strictly followed. Numerals with ه generally take —; farther, all which end in ه,—in particular اِثْنَيْنِ, اِثْنَيْنِ "two". The plural sign is the rule in numerals which have a possessive suffix (§ 149).

C. Generally speaking, a tolerable uniformity is found,—and that in old manuscripts,—only in cases under A; in cases under B, these manuscripts often omit the sign —, where it should stand, and employ it instead in other cases, but without consistency, e. g. in the masc. of the finite verb, as اَمَعْنَا "they (masc.) found"; بِسَمْعَانَا "that they (masc.) may be sanctified". (¹)

D. The position of the points — was not thoroughly determined: most frequently they were permitted to rest upon the third or fourth letter from the end of the word. Much depends here on the fancy of the writer; the position most favoured is over those letters which do not rise high above the line. With the point of the letter ه the plural sign generally blends into ه, e. g. لُؤَهْ "lords"; حَمِيْ "true"; still there are found also تَقِيْب "revered", عِشْرِيْن "twenty", قَهْنِيْل "villages", and many others.

§ 17. Here and there a line over the letter is found as a sign of the want of a vowel, e. g. پَيْلِيْ pēley "were divided", as contrasted with وُجِيْلِيْ "distributed"; لَحْمِيْ laḥm "my bread". Oftener this — stands as a sign that a consonant is to be omitted in the pronunciation, e. g. مَدِيْتَا mēdītā "town", بَثَا bath "daughter", وَوَا wā "was". The West-

(¹) The sign — is even set improperly over words, which are singular, but look like plural, e. g. over لَيْلَا "night" (sing. abs. st.) and over Greek words in ل— like لَوَا ἰλαγ.

Syrians employ in this case partly —, partly — especially in more recent times; and this use of the *linea occaltans* is followed in the most of our impressions. But commonly in MSS. such a sign is altogether wanting.⁽¹⁾

In contrast with the use of the upper line —, the under line — is made use of, especially with the Nestorians, to denote a faller vocalisation, that is to say when a vowel is inserted in order to avoid harshness, e. g. $\text{ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ} = \text{ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ}$ for ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "wisdom" (§ 52 C) &c. So also $\text{ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ} = \text{ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ}$ for ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ they ask (§ 34).

INTERPUNCTUATION AND ACCENTS.

Interpunct-
uation.

§ 18. The oldest *interpunctuation*, which is frequently retained even in later times, consists of a single strongly marked point . after larger or smaller divisions of the sentence, for which, in the case of large paragraphs, a stronger sign †, or the like, appears. But even in very ancient manuscripts a system of *interpunctuation* is found, of a more or less formed character. Later, alongside of the chief point ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ (ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ), the main distinction made is between "the under point" ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ (ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ), "the upper point" ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ (ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ), and "the equal points" ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ (ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ),—to indicate different clauses of the sentence of greater or less importance. To some extent other signs also are used for this purpose. The tests of the usage are not clear, and the practice is very fluctuating, at least on the part of copyists.

Accents.

§ 19. In order to signify with accuracy, whether,—in the recitation of the sacred text in worship,—the individual words of a sentence should be associated with more or with less connection,—and also what relative tone befits each word,—a complicated system of "Accents" was employed in Syriac as well as in Hebrew. This system however appears only in manuscripts of the Bible, and in a grammatical point of view it is of very slender importance. In isolated cases, signs taken from this

(1) Sometimes the under line is found in still wider employment as a sign of the want of a vowel, in Western MSS., e. g. ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *hēnīnō* "who has obtained favour", as contrasted with ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "rancid".

system are found also in other uses: thus, for instance, we may meet with an upper point lending emphasis to the word in a summons, a command, an interrogation. Such a point is not distinguishable in all cases, so far as appearance goes, from the points treated of in § 6 sq.

II. PHONOLOGY.

1. CONSONANTS.

GENERAL STATEMENT.

§ 20. *Every word and every syllable commences with a consonant.* Beginning of the syllable.

That no word can begin with a vowel sound is expressed clearly in Semitic writing by ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ [preceding such sound], e. g. ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *āthē*, or rather *'āthē* "comes"; ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *'urhā* "a way"; ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *'idā* "hand", &c. In cases like ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "knew", the word is spoken as if it stood ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *'idā'*, and so it is even written at times (§ 40 C).

No Syriac word begins originally with a double consonant. Yet such a consonant seems to have been produced by the falling away of a very short vowel in ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ , ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *stū*, *stin* (as well as ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ , ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "six", "sixty" (in East-Syriac also, ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "the sixth"); cf. the forms for *sixteen* § 148 B); in the later pronunciation still oftener, and even in other cases, as perhaps in ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *ksē* from *kēsē* "covered".

§ 21. The West-Syrians appear to have lost long ago the original Doubling. *doubling of c consonant*; the East-Syrians seem generally to have retained it: the former, for example, pronounce ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "people", ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *'amō*, the latter ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *'ammā*. Nearly every consonant then is to be held as doubled, which is preceded by a short vowel and followed by any vowel, thus ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "murdered", ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ "takes" are pronounced *qattēl*, *nessar*.

The absence of doubling may be relied on only when a softened consonant continues soft, e. g. ܘܒܝܨܘܕܐ *'ethā* "came", not *'eththā*, for this softening, or assibilation, is inadmissible in a doubled letter; while on the contrary the hard sound in such a consonant after a vowel is a sure