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Résumé de l'article

Le *Contra Manichaeos*, rédigé en 364 environ après Jésus-Christ par l'évêque chrétien Titus de Bostra, fut traduit en syriaque dès l'année 411. Cet article montre que, plus tard, l'oeuvre joua un certain rôle dans les Églises syriennes, ainsi qu'il s'ensuit de citations par des auteurs syriaques postérieurs.

TITUS OF BOSTRA IN SYRIAC LITERATURE

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RÉSUMÉ : Le *Contra Manichaeos*, rédigé en 364 environ après Jésus-Christ par l'évêque chrétien Titus de Bostra, fut traduit en syriaque dès l'année 411. Cet article montre que, plus tard, l'œuvre joua un certain rôle dans les Églises syriennes, ainsi qu'il s'ensuit de citations par des auteurs syriaques postérieurs.

ABSTRACT : *Contra Manichaeos* was written in c. 364 C.E. by the Christian bishop, Titus of Bostra. Already by 411 it had been translated into Syriac. The article shows how the work came to play a role in the Syriac-speaking churches, as evidenced by quotations from later Syriac writers.

In continuation of my book of 2004 on the work *Contra Manichaeos*, written around 364 C.E. by Titus, Bishop of Bostra, in the Roman province of Arabia, I shall here seek to expand and develop one aspect of the book, namely the question of the use of Titus' works in the literature of the Syriac-speaking churches.¹

Titus himself wrote in Greek, but soon after the work was completed, it was translated into Syriac, and this translation proved to be of particular value, since only the first half of the Greek original has survived to this day. It comes as no surprise that Titus was soon translated into Syriac, for Manichaeism had arisen in the Aramaic-speaking countries with its origin in Mesopotamia, and with a single exception (namely the Persian *Šābuhragān*) Mani wrote his works in a form of Eastern Aramaic that is very close to classical Syriac²; the Syrian Church therefore needed to include

1. N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God. A Study of Titus of Bostra's Contra Manichaeos. The Work's Sources, Aims and Relation to its Contemporary Theology*, Boston, Leiden, E.J. Brill (coll. "Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies," 56), 2004, p. 66, 68, 112-113, 116. — I take this opportunity to correct some of the errors in the book. The reference to the Arians and Pelagians as not being in communion with the "Catholic" Church on p. 13 is untenable, since such groups were rather an example of the Church's continuing plurality mentioned on p. 12. — The concluding *semkath* (ⲱ) p. 112, l. 18, should be deleted. On p. 169, n. 26, l. 1, there should be a reference to p. 130-131. On p. 276, n. 59, l. 4, there should be a reference to p. 343, 349-350. On p. 294, l. 19-21 read: "Ostensibly Mani criticised that the oxen, which have a soul from the good, are slaving for the farmers." On p. 298, l. 18, the text should read: ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܡܘܨܝܢ ܕܥܡܘܨܝܢ ܕܥܡܘܨܝܢ (Sy 143.16-17). On p. 403, n. 118, l. 1, read "Theodore's view" for "Theodore." On p. 425, l. 39, read "ascribe" for "ascribes."

2. See further in N.A. PEDERSEN, *Studies in The Sermon on the Great War. Investigations of a Manichaean-Coptic Text from the Fourth Century*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1996, p. 39. In addition to fragments

Titus' refutations of Manichaeism in its polemical arsenal. However, as Bishop of Bostra³ and thereby also metropolitan of all the sees in the Roman province of Arabia, Titus' own church province was a largely Semitic-speaking area, and previous scholars such as F. Cumont and R. Reitzenstein have argued that by virtue of his geographical position Titus must have known Nabataean and probably also Syriac and must therefore have used Manichaean texts in Syriac for his work.⁴ This is far from certain, however; what is beyond dispute is Titus' Greek education and his use of Greek philosophy and the Greek Church fathers. As the wealth of Greek and Latin personal names found in inscriptions from the city prove, Bostra itself also contained a large Graeco-Roman population,⁵ and Titus' work must therefore be said to be a literary example of the same hellenization of Bostra to which the inscriptions bear witness.

Titus also mentions in passing that Mani wrote in Syriac. This is without doubt a negative reference, since Titus' entire concern at this point is to portray Mani as an irrational, mythologizing barbarian, devoid of rationality and Graeco-Roman culture:

Thus he [i.e. Mani] fabulates and writes many other things like an old hag, using the Syrians' language, both how the earth is being borne (by Atlas), since he does not shun the poetic myth, and how the showers are formed from the sweat of the archons of matter [...].⁶

of Syriac-Manichaean existing in the form of quotations by Syriac writers, further Syriac-Manichaean material is published in F.C. BURKITT, *The Religion of the Manichees. Donnellan Lectures for 1924*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1925, p. 111-119; as well as material from Ismant el-Kharab (Kellis in antiquity) in the Dakhleh oasis in Egypt, by M. Franzmann and I. Gardner, in *Kellis Literary Texts*, t. 1, edited by Iain GARDNER with contributions by S. CLACKSON, M. FRANZMANN and K.A. WORP, Oxford, Oxbow Books (coll. "Oxbow Monograph," 69, Dakhleh Oasis Project, Monograph 4), 1996, p. 101-131.

3. "Bostra" is the Graeco-Roman form for the city, in Syriac texts it is called "Busar" or "Busara" (see *The-saurus Syriacus*, collegierunt Stephanus M. QUATREMER, Georgius Henricus BERNSTEIN, auxit, digessit, exposuit, edidit R. Payne SMITH, t. 1, ܒܘܫܪܐ. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1879, 473a).
4. Franz CUMONT, Marc-Antoine KUGENER, *Recherches sur le Manichéisme*, II, *Extrait de la CXXIII^e Homélie de Sévère d'Antioche*, III, *L'Inscription de Salone*, Brussels, H. Lamertin, 1912, p. 159; R. REITZENSTEIN, "Eine wertlose und eine wertvolle Überlieferung über den Manichäismus," *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* (1931), philol.-hist. Klasse, p. 48-49. BAUMSTARK ("Der Text der Mani-Zitate in der syrischen Übersetzung des Titus von Bostra," *Oriens Christianus, Halbjahrshefte für die Kunde des christlichen Orients*, 28, Leipzig, 1931, p. 23-42) even sought to show that Titus' sources were Syriac-Manichaean texts that Titus' Syriac translator in turn had employed in the rendition of the Manichaean quotations, but his argumentation is unconvincing; cp. N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, p. 82-83, 193-198. — As the discoveries from the Dakhleh oasis also show, the Manichaeans translated large quantities of their Syriac literature into other languages, including Coptic, Greek and Latin, but they also wrote new texts in these languages. Titus' Manichaean sources may thus have been in Greek.
5. Maurice SARTRE (*Bostra. Des origines à l'Islam*, Paris, Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient, Beyrouth, Damas, Amman [coll. "Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique," CXVII], 1985, p. 141-152), who also mentions the Semitic personal names, which can be related to Nabataeans, Safaïtes and other groups.
6. I, 17, DE LAGARDE, 10, 12-16 (*Titus Bostreni quae ex opere contra Manichaeos edito in codice Hamburgensi servata sunt graece e recognitione Pauli Antonii de Lagarde. Accedunt Iulii Romani epistolae et Gregorii Thaumaturgi KATA ΜΕΡΟΣ ΠΙΣΤΙΣ*, Berlin, 1859); ὅσα μὲν οὖν ἕτερα γράσος δίκην μυθολογεί καὶ γράφει, τῇ Σύρων φωνῇ χρώμενος, ὅπως μὲν ἡ γῆ βαστάζεται, τὸν ποιητικὸν μὴ διαφυγῶν μῦθον, ὅπως δὲ συνίστανται οἱ ἄμβροτοι, ὡς ἰδρωτὲς εἰσι τῶν ἀρχόντων τῆς ὕλης, [...]. Cf. N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, p. 168.

The context here is a polemical one, where the Manichaeans' use of Syriac could be turned against them; the fact that Titus' fellow-Christians translated his work into Syriac was doubtless a quite different matter for the orthodox bishop! At any rate the translation must have been done almost within Titus' lifetime, as is apparent from the remarkable manuscript in which it is preserved.

This manuscript, British Library Add. 12,150, contains 255 leaves: first a translation of Pseudo-Clement's *Recognitiones*, then the translation of Titus of Bostra's *Contra Manichaeos*. These are followed by translations of three texts by Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-339 C.E.), namely *Theophaneia*, *The Martyrs in Palestine* and *Panegyrics on the Christian Martyrs*, and finally comes a martyrology. A partly damaged colophon follows on f. 254a, but some of the handwriting is still visible and states that the manuscript was completed in Edessa in 723 (in the Seleucid era, i.e. 411 C.E.). Fortunately someone has later copied, as he himself informs us in the margin on f. 239b in 1398 (in the Seleucid era, i.e. 1086 C.E.) the entire original colophon. From this copy we also learn that the writer was called Jacob.⁷ This makes it the oldest preserved, dated Syriac manuscript.

Titus of Bostra's work is in four books or treatises. The first two and the beginning of the third are preserved in two Greek manuscripts from the High Middle Ages, while the remainder of the third book and all of the fourth are only preserved in the Syriac translation, which is moreover significant for the whole text, since it is so much older than the Greek manuscripts. The title of the text is ܐܘܬܘܪܐ ܕܬܝܬܘܫ ܕܩܝܡܐ ܕܡܢܗܝܘܢܐ, "The Discourse of Titus Against the Manichaeans," and the subscript reads ܕܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܢ ܕܡܢܗܝܘܢܐ ܕܬܝܬܘܫ ܕܩܝܡܐ ܕܡܢܗܝܘܢܐ ܕܡܢܗܝܘܢܐ ܕܡܢܗܝܘܢܐ ܕܡܢܗܝܘܢܐ, "Here end the four discourses of Titus Against the Manichaeans, translated from Greek into Aramaic." The text of the manuscript was published in 1859 by the German orientalist, Paul Anton De Lagarde (1827-1891).⁸

7. The description of the manuscript in W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum Acquired Since the Year 1838*, Part II, London, 1871, 631a-633b; and Samuel LEE, *Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea on The Theophania or Divine Manifestation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Translated into English with notes, from an ancient Syriac version of the Greek original now lost; to which is prefixed a vindication of the orthodoxy, and prophetic views, of that distinguished writer*, Cambridge, 1843, p. X-XII. Add. 12,150 remained for over a thousand years in the Syrian monastery (Deir al-Suryan) in Egypt, which is dedicated to the Virgin Mary and lies in the Nitrian desert (Wadi Natrun). Its extensive library was bought by Henry Tattam in the middle of the 19th cent. and moved to the British Museum; see further in S. LEE, *Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea on The Theophania...*, p. XIII-XV; *The Festal Letters of Athanasius*, discovered in an ancient Syriac version, and edited by William CURETON, London, 1848, Preface; Anton BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluss der christlich-palästinensischen Texte*, Bonn, 1922, p. 2. All the Syriac manuscripts have now been transferred to the British Library.

8. *Titii Bostreni contra Manichaeos libri quatuor. Syriace. Paulus Antonius de Lagarde edidit*, Berlin, 1859. See further in N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, p. 76-77. An edition of both the Greek and the Syriac text of Titus' book III,7-30 is to be found in Peter NAGEL, *Die antimanchäischen Schriften des Titus von Bostra*, Habilitationsschrift, Halle, 1967 — the Syriac part unfortunately still unpublished.

Despite the manuscript with the translation being so old it must still itself be a copy ; for various errors can hardly otherwise be explained,⁹ and this implies that the translation is even more chronologically close to Titus' autograph, the very first manuscript of the text. Thus Add. 12,150 cannot have been the only Syriac manuscript with the text of Titus.

The manuscript is older than the Nestorian and Monophysite controversies that split the Syrian Church into a "Nestorian" Church (i.e. the "Church of the East") and a "Monophysite" ("Jacobite," "Syrian-Orthodox") Church, and this makes it likely that the translation may have been used by both churches. The use of the translation in the Syrian Orthodox/Monophysite/Jacobite Church is also documented by some of the other Syriac manuscripts from the monastery of Deir al-Suryan which are now in London, for Wright's catalogue from 1871 on the Syriac manuscripts in the British Museum contains a number of other testimonies to an interest in Titus of Bostra above and beyond Add. 12,150.

The fact that the same translation that exists in Add. 12,150 was used later is clear from the manuscript Add. 14,533, which according to Wright's catalogue dates from the 8th or 9th century and contains a large collection of demonstrations against various heresies ; Wright counts 64 of these,¹⁰ including the 51st "concerning the reason and the soul" (ܐܘܪܘܚܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ) on f. 179a, which consists of extracts from Didymus (the Blind) of Alexandria, Epiphanius of Salamis, Severus and Titus of Bostra with the heading :

✱ ܐܘܪܘܚܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܩܝܫܐ ܕܒܘܨܪܐ ܕܩܝܫܐ ܕܒܘܨܪܐ ܕܩܝܫܐ ܕܒܘܨܪܐ ܕܩܝܫܐ ܕܒܘܨܪܐ

“By Titus, Bishop of Busar, from his first treatise *Against the Manichaeans*.”¹¹ Here we see the Syriac form of the city's name, “Busar,” rather than the Graeco-Roman “Bostra.” On closer inspection the Titus extract proves to be completely identical with the translation in Add. 12,150, it being an extract from ch. I,32.¹² This was very much a principal text about what the soul is in its very nature, a text which could be removed from its polemical context and used by posterity as an authoritative statement on orthodox teaching ! Apart from the punctuation there are only a few divergences between the two Syriac manuscripts.¹³ Perhaps here we are dealing with a

9. N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, p. 468, 470. This also corresponds to GRESSMANN's (*Eusebius Werke*, III, Band 2, Hälfte, *Die Theophanie. Die griechischen Bruchstücke und Übersetzung der syrischen Überlieferungen*, herausgegeben von Hugo GRESSMANN, Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs [coll. "Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte," 11,2], 1904, p. XII*) and LEE's (*Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea on The Theophania*..., p. XIV) observations on another of the manuscript texts, namely Eusebius' *Theophaneia*.

10. The manuscript is described in W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts*..., 967a-976a.
11. Cf. *ibid.*, 975a. The heading is written in a different colour ink than the quotation.
12. Syriac in DE LAGARDE, *Titi Bostreni contra Manichaeos*..., 26,12-22, ܡܘܨܘܦܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ etc. ; Greek in DE LAGARDE, *Titi Bostreni quae ex opere*..., 20,16ff., ἔστι μὲν οὖν ἀσώματος ἡ ψυχή etc. ; "The soul is incorporeal, however [...]"; an English translation of the complete context is to be found in N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, p. 438-439.
13. The following are the divergences: ܐܘܪܘܚܢܐ Lagarde, 26,13 contra ܐܘܪܘܚܢܐ 14,533 ; ܡܘܨܘܦܐ Lagarde 26,15 contra ܡܘܨܘܦܐ 14,533 ; ܐܘܪܘܚܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ Lagarde 26,18 contra ܐܘܪܘܚܢܐ ܕܢܦܫܐ 14,533 ; ܡܘܨܘܦܐ Lagarde 26,21 contra ܡܘܨܘܦܐ 14,533 (here only an orthographic difference).

purely Syriac compilation, though if it is based on a Greek original we could also imagine that the translator has chosen to save time by employing the existing Titus translation instead of himself translating the entire text. At any rate the quotation is a sign that the “Monophysite” Church regarded Titus as one of the authorities of the past, a “father.”

However, this anti-Chalcedonian “Monophysite” Christianity was marked by a tendency to fragment into still further factions. Among the new sects that arose within Monophysiticism and lasted for a time was the so-called “Tritheism,” gathered around the remarkable John Philoponus (pre-510-c. 565). Tritheism involved the Aristotelian concepts being applied to the doctrine of the Trinity, with the result that the three persons or hypostases of the godhead become individual natures and the godhead becomes their joint nature. Among their most active supporters was Conon, Bishop of Tarsus in Cilicia, who for this reason was exiled to Palestine. But when Philoponus in a new work denied that the resurrected body is identical with man’s earthly body, the Tritheists themselves were divided, with the “Cononites” around Conon condemning this teaching.¹⁴

As mentioned, by this time Titus of Bostra was a recognised authority, a “father,” whose texts were searched for significant quotations. And indeed from the Tritheists we actually have two testimonies to this: firstly in the fragments from Stephanus Gobarus’ florilegium preserved in Photius’ *Bibliotheca*, which contains references to Titus of Bostra and also a quotation from *Contra Manichaeos* I,15,¹⁵ and secondly another Titus quotation in a Cononite florilegium preserved in Syriac translation in two manuscripts. Van Roey has published this florilegium and argues persuasively that it is an extract from a larger work against Philoponus written by Conon, Eugenius and Themistius which is also mentioned by Photius in his *Bibliotheca*.¹⁶ The two Syriac manuscripts are designated Add. 14,532 (with the florilegium on f. 213vb-217vb), here designated “A”, and Add. 14,538 (with the florilegium on f. 147r-148v), here designated “B”; they are described in Wright’s catalogue and appear to derive from the 8th and the 10th century respectively.¹⁷

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14. See A. VAN ROEY, “Un traité cononite contre la doctrine de Jean Philopon sur la résurrection,” in *ΑΝΤΙΔΩΡΩΝ, Hulde aan Maurits Geerard bij de voltooiing van de Clavis Patrum Graecorum. Hommage à Maurits Geerard pour célébrer l’achèvement de la Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, I, Cultura, Wetteren, 1984, p. 123-139, with further references to these controversies.
 15. PHOTIUS, *Bibl.*, cod. 232 (PHOTIUS, *Bibliothèque*, t. V, *Codices 230-241*, texte établi et traduit par René Henry, Paris, Les Belles Lettres [“Collection byzantine”], 1967, p. 70-71). See further in N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, p. 67, 114-115, 153, 430-431. Moreover, Stephanus may himself have been a Cononite, and the epithet “Gobarus” can be Syriac; see further in Adolf VON HARNACK, “The ‘sic et non’ of Stephanus Gobarus,” *Harvard Theological Review*, XVI (1923), p. 205-234, esp. p. 213; Gustave BARDY, “Le florilège d’Étienne Gobar,” *Revue des études byzantines*, V (1947), p. 5-30; ID., “II. Sur Étienne Gobar: Compléments et corrections,” *Revue des études byzantines*, VII (1949), p. 15-52; A. VAN ROEY, “Un traité cononite contre la doctrine de Jean Philopon sur la résurrection,” p. 124.
 16. A. VAN ROEY, “Un traité cononite contre la doctrine de Jean Philopon sur la résurrection.” PHOTIUS, *Bibl.* cod. 23 (PHOTIUS, *Bibliothèque*, t. I, *Codices 1-84*, texte établi et traduit par René Henry, Paris, Les Belles Lettres [“Collection byzantine”], 1959, p. 14).
 17. Add 14,532 is described in W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts...*, 955b-967a, including the Cononite florilegium 966a-967b. Add 14,538 is described in *ibid.*, 1003b-1008b, with the florilegium in

<p>“And what was there wonderful in it, if he had only promised life to the souls whose nature it is clearly not to die, unless it will — together with the soul — fall to the body, which perishes, not to perish? And this is especially fitting, for it would not be right if the one which together with the soul exerted itself for virtue, should not take delight in the crown of victory together with it (i.e. the soul).”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thus A ; B shortens ܘܢܘܪܐ with a long horizontal line over the last 3 letters. 2. Thus A ; no full stop in B. 3. Thus A ; no full stop in B. 4. ܘܢܘܪܐ A ; ܘܢܘܪܐ B. 5. ܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐ A ; ܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐ B. 6. ܘܢܘܪܐ A ; ܘܢܘܪܐ B. 7. ܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐ A ; ܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐ B.
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In content the two texts are so close to one another that it is impossible to see if there had been variants in the Greek original from which they are translated. Otherwise the translation in A + B seems clearer and more accessible, and the punctuation is a good help, for example between ܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐ and ܘܢܘܪܐ.

The text contains two arguments for the resurrection of the body. Firstly, there would have been nothing special about Jesus merely promising immortality to the soul, which by nature is already immortal. Secondly, Titus is arguing that since in this life the body has taken just as much part as the soul in the struggle for virtue against the vices, it should also have a share in the reward after death. These are of course arguments which the Cononites could employ against Philoponus.

A final example of the use of Titus' *Contra Manichaeos* in the Jacobite Church is to be found in an apparent Titus-quotation in a treatise on freewill and predestination by Moše bar Kepha preserved in a manuscript from the 11th cent., Add. 14,731.²⁰ In f. 73a, lines 11-12 we read in red ink : ܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐ, “And Titus of Busar said in those,²¹ which are against Mani, these (words).”²² As in Add. 14,533, Moše bar Kepha has used the Syriac form of the city's name, “Busar,” rather than “Bostra,” as found in Add. 14,532/Add. 14,538. Moše bar Kepha speaks of the work as being against ܘܢܘܪܐ, “Mani,” in contrast to Add. 12,150, which, like the Greek text tradition and Jerome, speaks of the text as being against ܘܢܘܪܐܘܢܘܪܐ, “the Manichaeans,” which was undoubtedly the original title.²³ However, what then

20. See the description in W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts...*, 853a-855b. The title is not preserved, but Wright (*ibid.*, 853ab) summarised the content as “A treatise [...] on freewill and predestination.” So far the only existing work on this text is Sidney H. GRIFFITH, “Free Will in Christian *Kalām* : Moshe bar Kepha Against the Teachings of the Muslims,” *Le Muséon. Revue d'études orientales*, 100 (1987), p. 143-159. An overview of the research on Moše and a survey of the information available on his life can be found in Jobst RELLER, *Mose bar Kepha und seine Paulinenauslegung nebst Edition und Übersetzung des Kommentars zum Römerbrief*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz (coll. “Göttinger Orientforschungen,” I. Reihe, Syriaca, 35), 1994. I have examined the quotation myself in the manuscript in the British Library.

21. I.e. Titus' works.

22. W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts...*, 855a.

23. See N.A. PEDERSEN, *Demonstrative Proof in Defence of God*, p. 179.

Manichaeans. But these minor differences in relation to Add. 12,150 must be laid at Abdišo's door. The portrayal of Mani as mad or deluded contains a Greek pun based on the similarity between the Greek form of the name Mani, Μάνης, and μανείς, 2. aorist participle of μανίνομαι, "be mad" (because of the iotacisms they were pronounced identically, apart from the stressed accents). Normally Syriac literature, including Add. 12,150, otherwise uses the expression ܡܢܝܘܢ ܡܢܝܘܢ ("the mad Mani") to reproduce this pun.

The limited material presented here thus shows that Titus of Bostra was used both in the Jacobite and the Nestorian Church, and we must assume that this usage could be considerably expanded if other manuscript collections were examined. These brief observations may perhaps be included in a larger picture of the reception of the Greek Church fathers in Syrian Christianity.