

**SYRIAC MISCELLANIES; OR EXTRACTS  
RELATING TO THE FIRST AND SECOND  
GENERAL COUNCILS, AND VARIOUS  
OTHER QUOTATIONS, THEOLOGICAL,  
HISTORICAL AND CLASSICAL**

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Syriac Miscellanies; Or Extracts Relating to the First and Second General Councils, and Various Other Quotations, Theological, Historical and Classical by B. H. Cowper

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*ܘܢܝܟܐ ܘܥܫܪܝܢ ܕܡܝܢ ܡܫܘܪܝܢ*

# SYRIAC MISCELLANIES;

OR

## EXTRACTS

RELATING TO THE

FIRST AND SECOND GENERAL COUNCILS,

AND VARIOUS OTHER QUOTATIONS,

THEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, & CLASSICAL

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FROM MSS. IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM  
AND IMPERIAL LIBRARY OF PARIS.

WITH NOTES

BY

B. H. COWPER.



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*Cowper*

## PREFACE.

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THE following pages owe their appearance to no public desire to investigate the Syriac Literature deposited in the British Museum. England has produced some of the most successful explorers and discoverers of Syriac Manuscripts, and has at this moment a most precious collection of such MSS., which is unequalled by any other in Europe. But, unhappily, there is little curiosity among the general or even the literary public to know anything about the matter. When Robert Huntington made his collections in the 17th century, he was held in honour and rewarded with a Bishopric. When Claudius Rich procured his invaluable collection it was purchased by the nation; and such modern names as Buchanan and Lee, are none the less remembered for their zeal in this department. Dr. Cureton we all pronounce illustrious in connection with this literature; he has been forward in promoting measures for procuring MSS., painstaking in their arrangement, diligent in their examination, and both accurate and learned as an editor. Dr. Etheridge also has

rendered good service to the cause as a compiler and translator. A few others have done something worth honourable mention, among whom is Mr. Payne Smith, the editor and translator of Cyril on Luke, and the translator of the third part of John of Ephesus' Church History. But beyond this, little has been done among us, and the deficiencies in this department are many and grievous. The MSS. in the British Museum have not been efficiently catalogued, and their full contents can only be known by wearisome personal inspection. We have no complete lexicon of the language, and only two or three Syriac English Grammars. There is very little general knowledge of even the old Peshito version, the most ancient, as to the New Testament, and still less acquaintance with other works. The immense collection in the British Museum has been stigmatized as a mass of Monophysitism, and thus depreciated by opprobrious epithets. And yet there is in some minds, happily an increasing number, a desire to know more of these things. This laudable curiosity ought to be gratified, and doubtless it will be eventually found that the MSS. in question are an important supplement to our knowledge on many subjects. The information and extracts they contain as to the Fathers, Creeds, Councils, and Church History, are considerable. In addition to versions of much that we already possess, there are many fragments and entire treatises hitherto unknown. This is true both of known and otherwise unknown authors.



The following miscellaneous matters owe their appearance to the request of the SYRO-EGYPTIAN SOCIETY, whose members feel a praiseworthy interest in this matter. They requested me to publish a few things in English in order to show what might be obtained from the Syriac MSS. with which I am acquainted. I cheerfully comply with this wish, and have thrown together, with a few supplementary observations, some of the extracts which I have made. These have been designedly few and brief. It would have been easier to select some one treatise, but perhaps not so well for the purpose intended. Hence there will here be found a diversity of quotations on a variety of subjects. Some of them I had already published, but I have thoroughly revised the translation of them and omitted many of the notes. Some of them are of little value, and yet all have peculiar features. Those on the first Nicene Council are the fullest, and to illustrate them I have added a remarkable Greek list of the Bishops who attended that Council, and a fragment of one in Coptic. I have also given a version of the Nicene Canons for comparison with the copies in Greek and Latin, and as this version, like the list of members, is from the oldest MS. of them yet known, it cannot fail to be interesting. From the same document I have copied a list of those who attended at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, and a few other matters. These\* lists are important in reference to the names of Bishops and of places,

as well as for the student of ancient geography. The fragments from Greek authors are obscure, and include some names with which I am otherwise unacquainted. Their chief interest arises from the fact that they clearly form part of some document of the nature of an apology, and are, therefore, in all probability, very ancient. It is well known that the apologists of the second and third centuries defended Christianity by copious citations from Pagan writers, and this is constructed on the same plan, as the conclusion shows. The extracts from Diocles may not be free from interpolation, but they claim to represent the first historian of Rome, a historian from whom, Plutarch tells us, Fabius Pieter drew largely. As to the extracts from Christian authors, they are merely specimens of thousands contained in the MSS., and yet present some points of interest. The matters drawn from the old Syriac Chronicle may furnish the student of history with a few facts, and among them the list of the first successors of Mahomet is peculiarly interesting. This MS. belongs to the 8th century, and is evidently a compilation from the Chronicle ascribed to Hippolytus, that of Eusebius, and others. The notice of two martyrologies is simply intended to show that at a very early period the legends of superstition were not confined to the Western world.

If any readers are disappointed with the selection I have made I shall regret it. But it must be borne in mind that my object has been somewhat peculiar, and

that this work is meant to meet the wishes of those who may take the trouble to investigate it. Yet even on such a text a large biographical, geographical, and chronological commentary might be written.

The version is for the most part very literal, and I have aimed rather to give the sense of the originals than to produce what is called a readable book. There are places where I may have missed the meaning, either because of the obscurity of the construction or the defects of our lexicons, which do not contain all the words.

I must express my thanks to the *Council* of the SYRO-EGYPTIAN SOCIETY for their kindness in promoting a publication for which they are well aware there can be no remunerative demand, and of which only a small number of copies have been printed. I have cheerfully done my part, and hope they will find in it at least a few things which will gratify them.

B. H. COWPER.