

The Monastery of Saint John the Baptist of Hrach: Two Syriac Epigraphs

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The 17th century monastery of Saint John the Baptist of Hrach was the first convent for nuns in Kesrouan. It was custom among the Syriac Maronites to have monasteries for religious men and women combined. After the Council of Louaizé in 1736 [1] convents and monasteries for monks would become separated. The monastery of Saint John the Baptist of Hrach however, since its foundation, was exclusively reserved for nuns.

In 17th century Kesrouan, it was also custom for churches and monasteries to be founded by feudal families such as the Khazen [2]. This was not the case for Saint John the Baptist of Hrach, established on land bought by Bishop Joseph of Aqoura in 1642 [3]. After his election to the patriarchate in 1644, he built the monastery on this land and it was inaugurated in 1647. Instead of residing in the North at the patriarchal seat of Our Lady of Cannobin, he preferred to settle in the Kesrouan region, which was in full Christian expansion at the time. He made the monastery of Saint John the Baptist of Hrach his patriarchal residence and resided there until his death in 1648. He even convened a Syriac Maronite synod there on December 5, 1644 [4]. From then on, the name of this monastery was intricately linked to that of patriarch Joseph Peter of Aqoura or Yaoseph Petros Ainqouroyo, as evidenced by the two Syriac inscriptions engraved on stone and the numerous documents found in the monastery.

It was in 1725 that Bishop Abdalla Caraali proceeded with the restoration of the monastery but also with the elaboration of its monastic regulations. This monastic law code, established at Saint John the Baptist of Hrach, was adopted by the Lebanese synod of Louaizé in 1736 for all female congregations of the Syriac Maronite Church [5].

The monastery expanded and underwent major alterations since the 1725 restoration by Bishop Caraali. This is how an epigraph found itself upside down under the window of the north facade of Our Lady church. This window is today absorbed by the cloister gallery.

Saint John the Baptist of Hrach is a large monastery (fig. 1) with extensive properties. It has two churches attached to the main building. One, intended to welcome the laity, bears the name of Saint Peter head of the apostles (fig. 2), while the second, reserved for nuns, is dedicated to Our Lady of the Transfiguration (fig. 3). Every single church in the monastery has a Syriac inscription. That of Our Lady is under the North window, while that of Saint Peter surmounts its entry to the West. The two churches are correctly oriented according to the precepts of the Syriac Maronite Church [6].

Epigraph: Saint Peter of Hrach 1647

Date:	1647
Location:	Saint Peter church, Saint John the Baptist of Hrach monastery, Hrach, Kesrouan
Dimensions:	height 26 cm; width 42 cm
Support:	white limestone
Location:	West facade, above the little window
Writing:	Serto
Engraving:	protruding relief
Text:	Syriac

Being correctly oriented according to the rules and codes of the Syriac Maronite Church [7], the church of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 has its entrance to the West. It is therefore on this facade that its epigraph is placed (fig. 4), as well as the cross (fig. 5), in a composition that we named pyramidal (fig. 6), as explained in our work “Les Epigraphes Syriaques dans l’Architecture libanaise” [8]. This type of composition usually brings together, along a vertical axis, elements ranging from the largest at the bottom to the smallest at the top. It is typical of Syriac Maronite churches, especially those of the medieval type, a model that was perpetuated until the 18th century.

This composition therefore brings together in the axis of the door: the epigraph in Syriac characters, a Eucharistic symbol such as the chalice or the paten, a little window and one or more crosses. Their order varies, and some of these elements can even merge. This is how we come to meet a lintel carrying at the same time the cross, the inscription, and the Eucharistic symbol, all gathered with the Door, as is the case at Saint Shalito of Qotara 1857 [9]. Elsewhere, it is the window-oculus which carries in it the inscription and the cross as in Saint Maron of Mazraat-Yéshoua 1814 [10].

At Saint Peter of Hrach 1647, the representation of the Eucharist is lacking. We only find the door, the cross on the arch of this door, the little window, and the epigraph. The cross is however inscribed in a circle which could evoke the host as a Eucharistic symbol [11] thus recalling the example of Saint Shalito of Ghosta 1628 [12] (fig. 7).

The epigraph of Saint Peter of Hrach is 42 cm wide and forms the lintel of a 22 cm wide little window. Its text is entirely in Syriac.

1- Transcription:

1 ܐܘܪܘܐ ܕܘܪܘܝܢ ܩܘܪܘܐ ܩܘܪܘܐ ܩܘܪܘܐ
 2 ܘܦܘܩܘܫܐ ܕܡܪܘܢܝܬܐ ܘܐܢܬܝܘܨܝܐ ܕܥܝܘܪܐ ܩܘܪܘܐ
 3 ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܣܢܬܘܩܘܫܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ
 4 ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ
 5 ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ ܕܩܘܪܘܐ

2- Translation from Syriac:

1 Joseph of Ainqoura (Aqoura) patriarch
 2 weak (humble) Maronite Antiochian, we built
 3 this church of Saint Peter head of (apostles)
 4 in the year 1647 of the Lord in year 13
 5 of our investiture to the episcopal seat

3- Composition:

While usually the different elements of the so-called pyramidal composition are well placed on the vertical axis, the example of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 (fig. 2) has a fairly large misalignment. For that reason it can be compared to the case of Saint John the Baptist of Hrach of Rishmaya 1686 [13] (fig. 8) and especially to that of Our Lady of Bésri 1740 [14] (fig. 9) where the little window and epigraph are clearly off-centre with respect to the door. We even have the impression that the builders of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 sought to place the little window and its inscription in the central axis between the door and the bigger window (fig. 6). Thus, the pyramid effect of the composition is only obtained by adding the bigger window which adjoins the door.

The epigraph that forms the lintel of the little window is remarkably simple. It is composed of hollow horizontal bands containing the projecting script in salient relief. The strips end on a simple frame. No edge of the strips is arched. There are no crosses or ornaments whatsoever.

The cross is engraved in the key of the arch of the door, below. It is of the so-called “Maltese cross” type inscribed in a circle (fig. 5). It is this same phenomenon that we see at Saint Shalito of Ghosta 1628 (fig. 7).

The composition, which thus brings together the door, the cross, the circle, the Syriac epigraph, and the little window, constantly refers to other examples of this type. We have identified 36 to date in Lebanon [15]. Some evoke an obvious pyramidal effect with a bullseye window like Saint Joseph of Daraoun 1765 [16] (fig. 10) and Sainte Moura of Rishtaamout 1769 [17] (fig. 11). Others clearly show the chalice as a Eucharistic symbol like Saint Eutelios of Kfar-Sghab 1776 [18] (fig. 12). Saint Abdon of Maad 1797 [19] (fig. 13) also presents the sun and the moon near the cross. Some examples, such as Saint Sergius and Bacchus of Qartaba 1830 [20] (fig. 14), are remarkably simple showing only the cross with the epigraph. Others, such as Our Lady of Seeds in Kfifén 1838 [21] (fig. 15), offer a complete iconography with the cross of light, the two stars, the chalice, the oculus-host, and the snakes of Good and Evil.

Epigraph: Our Lady of Hrach 1647

Date:	1647
Place:	Church of Our Lady of the Transition, Saint John the Baptist of Hrach monastery, Hrach, Kesrouan
Dimensions:	height 27 cm; width 110 cm
Support:	white limestone
Location:	North facade, under the window in the gallery.
Writing:	Serto
Engraving:	protruding relief
Text:	Syriac and Garshouné

The Church of Our Lady of Transition forms the north side of the cloister of the Saint John the Baptist of Hrach monastery. This cloister remains open on the South looking at the valley which extends to Harissa. In the north facade of the church, a window opens which is now included in the gallery (fig. 16). Through its masonry, it bears witness to the numerous restorations, enlargements, and alterations to this monastery.

Indeed, the stone forming the base of this window, consists of an epigraph placed upside down. It also appears broken in the East, making its vertical cartridge illegible. The remaining part today is 110 cm wide under the window, the opening of which is 89 cm wide (fig. 17).

The central rosette is inscribed in a 23 cm diameter circle placed between four cartridges, two on each side (fig. 17). They are more readable than what remains of the broken side cartridge. After returning the epigraph to the place by returning the photos, we obtain the following organization of the epigraph:

The cartridge on the top right has 3 writing lines (fig. 18).
The cartridge at the bottom right has 4 writing lines (fig. 18).
The cartridge on the top left has 4 writing lines (fig. 19).
The cartridge at the bottom left has 5 writing lines (fig. 19).
The independent cartridge on the far left has 8 writing lines (fig. 20).

The text is partially in Syriac and partially in Garshouné.

1- Transcription:

1 كعبه كالمه ك سة

2 لالحم كالحم كالحم

3 كعبه كالحم كالحم

4 كعبه كالحم كالحم

5 كعبه كالحم كالحم

6 كعبه كالحم كالحم

7 كعبه كالحم كالحم

8 كعبه كالحم كالحم

9 كعبه كالحم كالحم

10 كعبه كالحم كالحم (كعبه)

11 كعبه كالحم كالحم

12 كعبه كالحم كالحم

13 كعبه كالحم كالحم

14 كعبه كالحم كالحم

15 كعبه كالحم كالحم

16 كعبه كالحم كالحم

17 كعبه

...ܟܠܟ 18

ܟܟܟܟ 19

(ܟܟ)ܟܟܟܟ 20

ܟܟܟܟ 21

ܟܟܟܟ (ܟܟ) 22

ܟܟܟܟܟܟ 23

...ܟܟܟܟܟ 24

2a- Translation from Syriac:

1 In the name of the living God
2 for centuries and centuries Amen
3 in the year 1647 of our Lord
4 Joseph of Ainqoura (Aqoura)
5 bishop of Sidon the city, weak (humble)

2b- Translation of Garshouné:

6 bought Hrach and built
7 the monastery from his money
8 may God have the soul of whom
9 made efforts and feeds on it
10 he who is good for the nuns; excommunicated will be
11 whoever attacks them and betrays them
12 And he bought half of ... and named it
13 ... for regular priests [22] and sub deacons who
14 serve the nuns at Saint John's monastery
15 (of) Hrach, and they celebrate two masses the days (false plural)

16 of Friday and Monday in all
17 ...
18 ...
19 ...
20 the bishop (?)
21 Joseph
22 Son of (?)...
23 Bishop of ...
24 Al Aqou (ra) (?) / Al naqou (s) (the bell?)

2- Composition

The epigraph Our Lady of Hrach 1647 is astonishingly reminiscent of that of Saint George of Roumié (fig. 21) whose date of construction we estimate to be from the 17th century [23]. But in Roumié it is broken and buried in the masonry of a corner of the wall up to the level of the circle which contains the cross. By estimating the embedded part to a third of the visible part, its dimension is no longer distant from that of Our Lady of Hrach 1647. Thus, the latter is 27 cm high by 110 cm long, and that of Saint George of Roumié is 29 cm high by 65 cm long for the visible part. The central circle containing the cross is larger than the remaining height of the stone. The two compositions are similar, with their central cross inscribed in a circle and with their use of Serto script for the spelling.

The writing of Saint George of Roumié (17th century) is in the direction of the height of the stone, while for Our Lady of Hrach 1647 it is in the direction of the length. We can also only note the presence of cartridges for the inscriptions of Hrach, while in Roumié, the inscription is done directly on the free space near the cross inscribed in its circle.

Our Lady of Hrach 1647 thus presents a rosette with six petals inscribed in a central circle and flanked by two lily flowers. These stylized lilies slip into the interstices created by the pointed edges of each of the four writing cartridges.

Said cartridges consist of hollow horizontal bands containing the raised relief writing. Placing them in pairs creates this twin shape with cross or lily patterns in their interstices. This pattern is typical of Syriac inscriptions [24] and can contain one or more lines of writing in each band.

Analysis on the two epigraphs

1- The text:

The language used in Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 is Syriac while Our Lady of Hrach 1647 uses both Syriac and Garshouné. This phenomenon is typical of the 17th century, which was the pivotal period of the transition from Syriac to Arabic. Thus, the 17th and 18th centuries were characterized by the predominance of a form of Syriac-Arabic bilingualism [25]. The Arabic used was still very steeped in grammatical forms or syntax or even vocabulary of Syriac origins [26]. Also written in Syriac characters, it was called Garshouné [27].

The inscription of Our Lady of Hrach 1647 constitutes a precious epigraphic testimony of this extremely common custom in the manuscripts of the time [28]. The phenomenon of bilingualism began to intensify from the sixteenth century and lasted until the nineteenth century [29] with an increasingly reduced share for the Syriac. This bilingualism was, writes Ray J. Mouawad, a characteristic feature of Maronite literature until the 18th century [30].

The Garshouné makes it possible to perceive the conditions for the slow and gradual transition to the current Lebanese dialect. Its juxtaposition with Syriac makes the linguistic approach even more interesting. In their Syriac texts, the two inscriptions of Our Lady of Hrach 1647 and Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 use the term Ain-Qouroyo meaning “from Ain-Qoura”.

We learn from this double testimony that the Lebanese of the 17th century still used the Ain Qoura (cold source) form which today is Aqoura. Anis Frayha rightly advanced in his book on the origin of toponyms in Lebanon, that Ain Qoura – the cold spring – is at the origin of the name of Aqoura [31]. However, he hesitated between ‘Aqar (barren land) and ‘Ain-Qoura. The two epigraphs of Saint John the Baptist of Hrach put an end to this uncertainty.

The patriarch mentioned as Yaoseph Ainqouroyo (or Joseph of Ain-Qoura) is none other than Joseph Halib who occupied the Maronite patriarchal seat from 1644 to 1648 [32]. He is called Patriarko (Patriarch) in the inscription of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 while he is mentioned as Mitron [33] d Sidon (Bishop of Sidon) in the epigraph of Our Lady of Hrach 1647 which dates to the same year. For, in fact, this last inscription recounts the facts of 1642 when Joseph of Aqoura, still bishop, was in the process of buying the lands of Hrach to build the monastery there.

Another toponym is interesting. If the inscription of Our Lady of Hrach 1647 says Sidon (or Saidon) on line 5, this form would have therefore also survived until the 17th century, while today the Arabic version Saida is used.

We also learn from the Garshouné part of Our Lady of Hrach 1647, that Hrach is noted Ahrach on lines 6 and 15.

Finally, in line 3 of the inscription of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647, we read: Petros risho d (Peter head of...). The line on the D indicates to the reader that it is an abbreviation or a number. Is this for Peter the head of the apostles?

In the text of Our Lady of Hrach 1647, lines 12 and 15 are partially indecipherable. It is the third word on line 12 that we have failed to read. As for line 15, it presents two uncertain words. We are perhaps reading qeddasyn (two masses) followed by nahayer which would possibly be a plural of nahar (the day).

This plural form is non-existent and incorrect in Arabic. If it is indeed nahayer, the choice of this term would thus demonstrate the lack of mastery of this language by the Syriac Maronites of the seventeenth century.

Finally, the lateral cartridge which includes lines 17 to 24, is almost entirely illegible.

2- The spelling:

Although there is almost never a Garshouné text that uses the monumental spelling called Estrangelo, it very often happens that Syriac texts on the other hand can make use of the cursive spelling known as Serto and this, since very ancient times [34]. Many inscriptions prove this as much in Mount Lebanon [35] as in Tur Abdin [36]. This is how the two epigraphs of Hrach use the Serto to note the Syriac.

This is even more logical in the epigraph Our Lady of Hrach 1647, a large part of which is in Garshouné and justifies the use of Serto writing. However, Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 also opts for the Serto while its text is entirely in the Syriac language. It thus obeyed the general tendency which allowed the Serto to predominate at the expense of the Estrangelo from the 16th century both in Tur Abdin [37] and in Mount Lebanon [38].

3- The cross:

The cross has a special dimension for Christianity and especially for Christians of the East. It is the Resurrection of the Son and the glory of the Father [39]. Its forms are numerous [40] and most often seem to generate from the lily cross as it appears in the example of Our Lady of Hrach 1647 near the central rose window. This lily flower is quite common in Lebanon where the white lily (*Lilium Candidum*) has its roots in Phoenician antiquity [41]. Thus, the lily, flower of divine grace is associated with the cross of Salvation in a soteriological iconography.

At Our Lady of Hrach 1647 (fig. 17), the lily is flanked to the rose window, while at Saint George of Roumié, 17th century (fig. 21), it forms the ends of the cross.

The keystone of the arch of the door of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 presents another type of cross. Inscribed in a circle, it is a type known as the Maltese cross. We find it in the Tur Abdin, in Mor Gabriel, on an epigraph from 1188 [42], still inscribed in a circle.

4- The pyramidal composition:

With its circle, the epigraph, the little window and the door, the cross enters the pyramidal composition of the facade. This composition, as defined in our work on Syriac epigraphs in Lebanese architecture [43], constitutes the representation of the Christic Cycle.

According to a soteriological approach, this composition stages the different representations of the Christic Cycle. Thus, the epigraph, whose spelling remains devoid of all kinds of embellishments, evokes the Word (Melto) in all its purity. The writing therefore participates in the iconographic whole as is often the case with the Syriacs [44].

The circle, alone or with the chalice, then materializes the incarnation of the Word in the flesh (bésro) and in the blood (dmo) represented by the bread (lahmo) and the wine (hamro). Having become human, the Lord is then crucified for the salvation of humanity. It is the cross of Passion, and the glorious cross of the Resurrection. It is then that in its verticality, the entire composition refers to the idea of the Ascension.

Conclusion

The two inscriptions of Saint John the Baptist of Hrach are added to the repertoire of a hundred epigraphs published in 2008 in the first volume on Syriac epigraphy in Lebanon [45]. They provide historical, linguistic, and artistic information which corroborates or enriches the observations made in the second volume [46] published in 2014.

Our Lady of Hrach 1647 and Saint Peter of Hrach 1647 therefore confirm the traditions mentioned in the other Syriac epigraphs of Lebanon. From Syriac-Garshouné bilingualism, to the use of the raised relief Serto, passing through the horizontal stripes, the crosses, and certain vocabulary choices, all correspond to the different characteristics noted on the hundred or so published epigraphs.

All these properties concern the epigraph in itself. But there is also the mode of its incorporation into a whole. And this is verifiable on the facade of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647. This facade joins the 36 pyramidal compositions already drawn and published in the second volume of the Syriac Epigraphy in Lebanon [47]. It is part of the purely Maronite tradition which places the Syriac epigraph in the composition of the facade of the church. Of the 36 compositions, some are more iconographically complete and represent the Eucharist or its symbols. It is an evocation of both the Christic Cycle and the liturgy. These compositions then make it possible to detect the message and to project it to other incomplete facades, including that of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647.

The Eucharist represented on the facades is central to the liturgy and Maronite spirituality [48]. It is at the heart of the identity of this Church, as the Maronite Nomocanon or “Book of Directions” clearly shows [49]. It has a soteriological dimension which associates it with other manifestations of the theology of Salvation such as asceticism [50] and baptism [51].

This salvation notion which brings the Eucharist closer to Baptism is particularly evident in Saint Ephrem [52].

The many so-called pyramidal compositions, especially those which clearly display the image of the Eucharist, are typical of the architecture of Maronite churches with Syriac epigraphs. It is therefore important to continue research to be able to continuously enrich the repertoire which now amounts to 37 examples thanks to the addition of Saint Peter of Hrach 1647.

NOTES

[1] Pierre Dib, *Histoire des Maronites*, Librairie Orientale, Beirut, 2001, t. 3, pp. 81.

[2] Michel CHEBLI, *Une Histoire du Liban à l'époque des Émirs*, Publications of the Lebanese University, Beirut, 1984, pp. 48-51.

[3] Pierre Dib, *op. cit.*, t. 3, pp. 81-82.

[4] *Ibid*, p. 81

[5] *Ibid*, p. 323.

[6] The apse is still towards the East; see Charbel ABDALLAH, *L'architecture des églises Maronites – Le traité liturgique et artistique du Patriarche Douaihy*, PUSEK, Lebanon, 2007, Vol. II, pp. 441-442; see also Estéphanos DOUAYHI, *Le Candélabre des Saints Mystères*, Chartouni, Beirut, 1895.

[7] *Ibidem*.

[8] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, *Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban*, Vol. II, *Les Epigraphes syriaques dans l'architecture libanaise*, NDU Press, Louaizé (Lebanon), 2014, pp. 343-252 and 392-395 and illustrations pp. 419-428.

[9] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, *Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban*, Vol. I, *Catalogue des Epigraphes syriaques au Liban du Haut Moyen Age à 1925*, NDU Press, Louaizé (Lebanon), 2008, pp. 370-371.

[10] *Ibid*, pp. 334-335.

- [11] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 239.
- [12] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 86-87.
- [13] Ibid, p. 115.
- [14] Ibid, p. pp.172-173.
- [15] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 419-428.
- [16] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 228-229.
- [17] Ibid, pp. 232-233.
- [18] Ibid, pp. 244-245.
- [19] Ibid. pp. 322-323.
- [20] Ibid, pp. 352-353.
- [21] Ibid, pp. 362-363.
- [22] The regular priest (known as Qassis), in the Syriac Maronite Church, is a monk priest attached to an order. The secular priest (known as Khouré) is a generally married parish priest.
- [23] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. I, op. cit., pp. 94-95.
- [24] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 185-192.
- [25] Ray J. MOUAWAD, « Une approche différente de la langue arabe par les Melkites et les Maronites du Liban d'après un poème d'Ibn Al-Qala'i (XV°S.) », in PDO, 34, 2009, p. 351 ; see also Ray J. MOUAWAD, « Maronites and the Garshûnî Script », in PDO, 37, 2012, pp. 239.
- [26] Ray J. MOUAWAD, « Maronites and the Garshûnî Script », in PDO, 37, 2012, pp. 235-236.
- [27] Boutros GÉMAYEL « Avant-messe maronite », in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 174, 1965, p. 49; also, in Louis WEHBÉ, « Le témoignage monastique de l'Église maronite », in *Collectanea Cisterciensia*, 28, 1966, p. 91.
- [28] Ray J. MOUAWAD, « Une approche différente de la langue arabe par les Melkites et les Maronites du Liban d'après un poème d'Ibn Al-Qala'i (XV°S.) », in PDO, 34, 2009, p. 350.

[29] Henri LAMMENS, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 4, 1899, p. 603-604; Alphonse de LAMARTINE, *Voyage en Orient*, Gosselin, Paris, 1903, t. II, p. 539.

[30] Ray J. MOUAWAD, « Une approche différente de la langue arabe ... loc. cit., p. 349.

[31] Anis FRAYHA, *Lexique des Localités Libanaises*, Librairy of Lebanon, Beirut, 1972, 3^e éd. 1992, p. 111.

[32] Youakim MOUBARAC, *Pentalogie Antiochienne / Domaine Maronite*, Cénacle Libanais, Beirut, 1984, t. II, vol. I, p. 221; et Pierre Dib, op. cit., p. 80.

[33] We read in the epigraph of Our Lady of Hrach 1647: "MTR", which could be the abbreviation of Mitron or Metropolis, both meaning Bishop.

[34] Françoise BRIQUEL CHATONNET, « De l'écriture édessénienne à l'estrangela et au serto », in *Semitica*, 50, 2000, pp. 81-90.

[35] For epigraphs in Lebanon see Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, *Épigraphie Syriaque au Liban*, Vol. I, op. cit.

[36] Tur Abdin is the mountain of the Syriacs (Orthodox) today in Turkey; for Tur Abdin epigraphs, see Henri POGNON, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul*, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1907 ; Jacques JARRY, « Inscriptions syriaques et arabes inédites du Tur 'Abdin », in *Annales Islamologiques*, 10, 1979; Andrew PALMER, « The Syriac Letter-Forms of Tur 'Abdin and environs », in *OC*, 73, 1989, pp. 68-89 ; Andrew PALMER, « A corpus of inscriptions from Tur 'Abdin and environs », in *OC*, 71, 1987, pp. 53-139; Andrew PALMER, « The epigraphic diction of Tur 'Abdin and environs », in *OC*, 72, 1988, pp. 114-123.

[37] Andrew PALMER, « The Syriac Letter-Forms of Tur 'Abdin and environs », in *OC*, 73, 1989, pp. 78, 81 et 87.

[38] Henri LAMMENS, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 4, 1899; in Youakim MOUBARAC, *Pentalogie Antiochienne*, op. cit., t. I, v. 1, p. 617.

[39] Ac, I, 9-11; 2, 22-36 et He, 12, 2, cited in Piotr SKUBISZEWSKI, *La croix dans le premier art chrétien*, Geuthner, Paris, 2002, p. 9.

[40] See for the Cross in Jean SADER, *Croix et Symboles dans l'Art Maronite Antique*, Dar Sader, Beyrouth, 1989; and Volkmar GANTZHORN, *Le Tapis Chrétien Oriental* (trad. F. Évéquoz), Germany, Taschen, 1991; and Romualdo FERNANDEZ, « Symboles chrétiens dans les monastères syriens », in *Patrimoine Syriaque, Actes du Colloque V, Antélias (Lebanon)*, 1998, pp. 151-164.

[41] Volkmar GANTZHORN, *Le Tapis Chrétien Oriental* (trad. F. Évéquoz), Taschen, Germany, 1991, p. 482.

[42] Andrew PALMER, « A corpus of inscriptions from Tur 'Abdin and environs », loc. cit., pp. 87-89; this is registration n°A.18.

[43] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, *Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. II, Les Epigraphes syriaques dans l'architecture libanaise*, NDU Press, Louaizé (Lebanon), 2014, pp. 343-252 and 392-395 and illustrations pp. 419-428.

[44] Claude SELIS, *Les Syriens orthodoxes et catholiques*, coll. *Fils d'Abraham*, Brepols, Belgium, 1988, pp. 145-146.

[45] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, *Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. I*, op. cit,

[46] Amine-Jules ISKANDAR, *Epigraphie Syriaque au Liban, Vol. II*, op. cit.

[47] *Ibid*, pp. 419-428.

[48] A. RAES, « La liturgie eucharistique en Orient, son cadre architectural », in *La Maison-Dieu*, 70, Paris, 1962, p. 62; also see Michel HAYEK, *Liturgie maronite, Histoire et textes eucharistiques*, Geuthner, Paris, 1964.

[49] The “Livre de la Direction” or Maronite Nomocanon was translated from Syriac to Garshouné in 1059 by Maronite Bishop David; It was published in Arabic by Fahed editions under the title *Kitab Al-Huda*, Aleppo, 1935; see on this topic Emmanuel KHOURY, « Les Canons sur l'Eucharistie dans *Kitab Al-Huda* », in *PDO*, 2, 1966, pp. 254-256 et p. 260.

[50] See “Le Monachisme Syriaque II^o – début VII^o siècle”, and “Le Monachisme Syriaque du VII^o siècle à nos jours”, in COLL SYR, 5, 1998, and COLL SYR, 6, 1999; especially Simon ATALLAH, loc. cit., pp. 53-84.

[51] Augustin MOUHANNA, « Les Rites de l’initiation dans l’Église maronite », in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 212, 1980, pp. 231-232; Augustin MOUHANNA, « Le symbolisme dans les rites d’initiation de l’Église maronite », in *I Simboli dell’Iniziazione, Atti 1 Congr. Int. Di Liturgia*, Rome, 1982/83, pp. 105-121; and see P. GINOUX, « Homélie sur le baptême et sur l’eucharistie », in *L’Initiation Chrétienne*, Paris, 1963, pp. 195-247.

[52] Dominique CERBELAUD, « La Dialectique du Caché et du Manifesté dans la Théologie d’Éphrem le Syrien », COLL SYR, 7, 2001, p. 125; and see Tanios BOU MANSOUR, *La pensée symbolique de saint Ephrem le Syrien*, op. cit., p. 401.

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Fig. 3. The Church of Our Lady of Hrach, 1647: northern facade.

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