CHIARA BARBATI

THE CHRISTIAN SOGDIAN GOSPEL LECTIONARY E5 IN CONTEXT

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PREFACE

In March 2006, during the Ehrencolloquium celebrating the 70th birthday of the late Prof. W. Sundermann, Prof. C.G. Cereti and Prof. D. Durkin-Meisterernst suggested to me that my doctoral thesis should be devoted to a new edition of the Christian Sogdian Gospel lectionary *E5*. It was Prof. W. Sundermann himself who stressed the need for a review of the whole material which he had published because of the numerous points of interest that this material has always shown. I accepted with enthusiasm, gratitude and also with a little fear for the challenge that awaited me. I want to add that my biggest regret is not having published this work before the death of Prof. W. Sundermann, on 12.10.2012.

My doctoral thesis – defended at "Sapienza" University of Rome in September 2009 – was characterized by a distinctly philological and linguistic analysis mainly aimed to restore the text – as far as preserved – of the Christian Sogdian Gospel lectionary *E5* by putting together fragments that had been published separately in different works over the years, i.e. Müller (1913), and Sundermann (1974, 1975, 1981). Yet even with such a clear philological and linguistic outlook there were matters for reflection in different fields, in particular that of translation studies since – as will be discussed in detail later – this particular work, and practically the entire Christian Sogdian literature in general, was translated from Syriac, forming part of the religious heritage of the Syriac-speaking Church of the East.

The present work is based on my doctoral thesis and, at the same time, it goes beyond it. The linguistic analysis of my doctoral thesis, which was the mainstay of the work, has been greatly expanded. The brief synchronic-descriptive analysis – as well as the historical and comparative reflections – are now seen through a magnifying glass consisting of translation studies, language contact and areal linguistics, all of which are indispensable, in my opinion, to a full understanding of Sogdian in general and of the linguistic area of the Turfan oasis between the 8th and the 11th century in particular (this being the time and place from which this material derives). In other words, the interpretation of the linguistic data must first undergo the theoretical rethinking which is strongly required by their context. It is a context in which one language, namely Sogdian, acted as a translation tool for a religious literature conceived and written in another language, namely Syriac, which was neither genealogically related nor typologically similar.

This context, in which multilingualism and multiculturalism played a dominant role, is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of the relevant linguistic material. Nor can this context be ignored when it is a matter of interpreting data related to disciplines other than linguistics, such as codicology or literary, cultural and religious history. The contextualization concerns all of these disciplines, because it is the most suitable tool to bring out the peculiarities and the many facets of what each manuscript is, namely a unique witness to its time and place. Thus, a multidisciplinary approach to the Christian Sogdian Gospel lectionary *E5* has as its ultimate aim that of tying the work itself to its own context in an attempt to return, as far as possible, to the *milieu* that generated it.

In so doing, perhaps I asked myself too many questions compared to the answers that I was able to give. Nevertheless, I hope that the issues discussed in this book may become the basis for further investigations.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams who generously dedicated time to read several versions of this book and offered invaluable advice and criticism. Surely, without his extraordinary help, this work could never have been published. It goes without saying that all remaining faults are mine.

Chiara Barbati, Vienna, January 2016

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To Amalia and Emmanuel, for all the smiles they give me.
To Florian, my husband, for an amazing, exciting journey that I never thought to start.
To Tiziano, my masterpiece.

INTRODUCTION

Text and context are the key words of this book. They are, in fact, the main axes of the theoretical framework built here. The different disciplines applied each time – philology, linguistics, literary history, religious history, cultural history, codicology, translation studies – are nothing more than necessary tools used to shed some light on these two words.

The present text is unique. This is the only Christian Sogdian Gospel lectionary so far discovered, or, to be more precise, the only predominantly monolingual Gospel lectionary – the use of "predominantly" will be specified later – belonging to the only available collection of Christian Sogdian manuscripts, namely the one which is preserved in the Berlin Turfan Collection[1].

The context is that of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages in an oasis, namely Turfan, that has not surprisingly and not unreasonably been defined by Hansen as "midway between China and Iran"[2]. The context is that of the missionary paths of the Church of the East[3] that meet the caravan routes of the Silk Road; of Sogdian communities, of Sogdian traders[4] as well as Christianized Sogdians; of different religious, literary and cultural

[1] For an overview of the Christian library of Turfan, ninth to fourteenth century, see: Hunter (2012). For the history of archaeological expeditions which have brought to light around 40,000 documents in more than 20 languages and scripts, see: Durkin-Meisterenst-Raschmann- Wilkens- Yaldiz- Zieme (2004); and Sundermann (2004). For the more specifically Christian Iranian tradition, see above all: Durkin-Meisterernst (2006); Sims-Williams (1992; 1992a; 2009; 2011; 2012); and Sundermann (1974a).

[2] See: Hansen (2012: 83).

[3] The correct modern term is "Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East": see Baum-Winkler (2003:3-5); and Brock (1996).

[4] See: de la Vaissière (2005). Of course, they were not only traders but also soldiers, diplomats, translators, farmers etc. As amply demonstrated by several scholars the Sogdians played an important role in the social, artistic, economic and political life in Central Asia and China. See: de la Vaissière - Trombert (2005). This volume shows to what extent the Sogdian migrants settled into local cultures and to what extent they maintain close links with the homeland. For instance, with particular regard to the Turfan oasis, the contribution of Skaff to the above mentioned volume entitled "Documenting Sogdian society at Turfan" (during the Tang dynasty) shows that Sogdians were mentioned as "government officials, bronze-smiths, ironsmiths, artists, a painter, leatherworkers, a veterinarian, and an innkeeper. Leatherworking may have been a Sogdian specialty at Turfan because one Tang government list of craftsmen from circa 640 reveals that all of the leatherworkers with visible surnames are Sogdian" (p. 320).

traditions which at the same time are very close one to one another. Here, languages on one hand show instances of internal change, on the other, interference phenomena.

Restoring the text (presented below) to its context means, in my opinion, first trying to answer the following *Fragestellungen*: which were the tools for the development and dissemination of a religious knowledge, typical of the East-Syriac tradition, with a mother Church which has its roots in Edessa (modern Urfa, Turkey) during the second century? How did communities – not only Sogdian communities – located along the Silk Road between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages recognize that knowledge[5]? And how, where and when were those tools modeled? And if we adopt Dickens's description of the role of the Syriac Bible in Central Asia, "The evidence, fleeting as it is, clearly shows that Christianity in Central Asia was not merely a thin veneer over the animistic and shamanistic religious core of the Turkic peoples. There was sufficient spiritual vibrancy and knowledge within the community to support teachers and interpreters of Scripture"[6], what was the role played by issues of translation, transfer of texts, also of images and cultural encounters?

Pinggéra writes about the evangelization practised by the Church of the East in Central Asia: "Es waren in aller Regel christliche Kaufleute, die auf den Handelswegen, namentlich der berühmten „Seidenstraße" ihren Glauben in diese fernen Regionen trugen. Ihnen folgte die Errichtung von Klöstern und Bischofssitzen, die eine fast ganz Asien fast umspannende kirchliche Organisation bildeten. Menschen unterschiedlichster Sprachen und Völker fanden sich so in einer Kirche zusammen. Sie schufen christliche Literaturen und beteten auch in ihren je eigenen Sprachen. Zusammengehalten wurden sie von einem weitmaschigen Kommunikationsnetz mit dem Katholikos-Patriarchen an der Spitze und von dem einigenden Band der syrischen Liturgiesprache, wobei Teile des Gottesdienstes in der Volkssprache gehalten werden konnten. Eine eigene Ausbildungsstätte für die Mission errichtete Katholikos Timotheos I. (780-823) im Kloster Bet Abe, wo geeignete Mönche in den Sprachen der verschiedensten Völker Asiens unterwiesen

[5] In this regard, it is suitable to mention the ongoing project on "The transmission of Christian texts at Turfan". The project protagonists, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, are the leading specialists in the field, Dr. Erica C.D. Hunter and Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams, both active at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

[6] See: Dickens (2009: 112).

wurden"[7]. Broadly speaking, we can say that the scholarly literature in general, and the aforementioned passage in particular, show that *a)* the patriarchate of Timothy I represents a watershed in the evangelization history relating to the Church of the East, *b)* the monastery is the pre-eminent place for cultural development both religious and secular, and *c)* writing and the book are two powerful dissemination tools for these cultural "products".

a) According to the scholarly literature in this field[8], the Church of the East started from Edessa (present-day Urfa, Turkey) in the second century, separated from the patriarchate of Antioch and broke with the Monophysite Jacobite Church of Syria in the fifth century, becoming the "Church of Persia", and spread to the East reaching Central Asia, China[9] and India[10] between the sixth and the eight century. From the middle of the ninth century on, the missionary advance experiences a setback because of persecutions by the Chinese empire whereas in the eleventh century conversions to Christianity started to flourish again among the Mongol-Turkish tribes. The following centuries, especially the thirteenth and fourteenth, represent

[7] See: Pinggéra (2011: 29).

[8] From the extensive literature the most important and most recent studies include the following: Baum-Winkler (2003); Borbone- Marsone (2015); Gillmann-Klimkeit (1999); Hage (1988); Hunter (1996); Lala Comneno (1995); Le Coz (2010), and Moffet (1998). We strongly recommend the *Proceedings of Salzburg International Conference on the Church of the East in China and Central Asia*, the conference that takes place every three/four years at the University of Salzburg thanks to the tireless work of Dr. Li Tang and Prof. Dietmar W. Winkler. It is almost a unique opportunity that brings together Syriacists, Iranists, Sinologists, Turkologists, philologists, historians, art historians, etc. on the theme of the Church of the East in Central Asia and China over the centuries to the present day. Having taken part to the conference in 2013 I can say that this is a unique opportunity for those who care about this issue: experts from different fields are called to share their studies regularly in a continuous and renewed exchange of ideas.

[9] With particular regard to the beginning of evangelization we can recall two dates: 635, when a group of monks from Mosul reaches the capital of the T'ang, and 781, when the stele of Xi'an Fu with a long inscription in Chinese and Syriac is erected commemorating the introduction of the "religion of light" in China. All this, however, would deserve a separate chapter, which goes far beyond this introduction. Similarly, in respect of an extensive bibliography on the subject, only Hunter (2009); Lieu (2007), and Standaert (2001) are cited.

[10] The evangelization of India follows the spice trade routes through the sea. Following a well established tradition, the gospel was first preached in India by the apostle Saint Thomas. For a brief survey, see: Baum-Winkler (2003:51-57); Brown (1956); Le Coz (2010: 242-244). For an overview concerning the Middle Iranian documentation, in India and in Sri Lanka see: Cereti (2003); Gignoux (1995); Gropp (1970); and Hage (1995/6).

another period of strong growth before a downward course. With particular regard to the Turfan oasis, its history can be divided into three periods[11]: prior to the Tang conquest of 640, Tang rule (640-755) when the oasis was one of the three hundred prefectures in the Tang Empire, and after 803 the Uighur Kaghanate. For the purpose of our research, we must stress that Manichaeism was the official state religion of the Uighur Kaghanate until circa AD 1000, when the same Kaghanate choose to patronize Buddhism and not Manichaeism. It means that in Turfan as well as in the Mother Church's region, Christianity was never a state religion. This has been clearly pointed out by Briquel Chatonnet in a volume devoted to the study of the churches within the Church of the East. She writes: "Il faut en effet rappeler que les chrétiens de langue syriaque ne sont presque jamais identifiés avec un royaume ou une structure politique. Dans l'Empire sassanide, ils sont face à un État qui se proclame mazdéen. Du côté byzantin, la communauté syriaque s'affirme très tôt, suite aux controverses christologiques, majoritairement miaphysite, et donc en résistance contre la politique impériale. La conquête arabo-musulmane soumet tous les chrétiens syriaques à un pouvoir musulman, et à un environnement qui finit par devenir majoritairement musulman. De ce fait, ils ne disposent pas d'organisation ou de structure, et donc d'édifice, à nature politique ou culturelle, dans lequel ils pourraient se trouver représentés comme groupe. C'est tout naturellement dans l'église qu'ils peuvent affirmer leur existence en tant que communauté"[12].

Crucial for mapping the links of Christian Sogdian communities within the spread of the Church of the East eastwards are several places like Rew-Ardashīr, Marv, Nishāpur, Herāt, Samarkand including western China during the sixth to the eighth centuries. In 2010 Le Coz writes: "Le mond latin s'est préoccupé de l'évangélisation des peoples barbares seulement à partir du VII siècle, et Byzance ne s'est tournée vers les Slaves que deux cents ans plus tard; en revanche, les chrétiens d'Orient ont entrepris très tôt de propager l'Évangile dans tous les territoires situés à l'est de la Mésopotamie, par la route de la soie, et au sud par la route des épices, qui empruntait la voie maritime. Bien que minoritaire et persécutée, l'Église de Perse a malgré tout fait prevue d'un dynamism missionaire tel, que le nombre élevé de nouveaux évêchés a amené le patriarche Joseph à créer, dès la seconde moitié du VI siècle, les deux premières provinces de l'extérieur, celles du Fars et du Khorasan"[13]. These two provinces are Beit Parsayé with the city of Rew-

[11] According to Hansen (2012: 83-112).
[12] See: Briquel Chatonnet (2013: 11-12).
[13] See: Le Coz (2010: 77).

Ardashīr, as metropolitan seat, and that of Khorasan with the centres of Marv and Nishāpur as metropolitan seats. Marv plays a pivotal role on the Christianization of the Central Asia. To give an idea of its connection within the eastern Iranian area, we can recall – according to Nicholas Sims-Williams[14] –that a legendary bishop of Marv, i.e., Barshabbā, was the founder of the Christian Church in eastern Iran. The complete legend is preserved only in Arabic sources but there is some additional evidence in a few Sogdian and Syriac fragments coming from Xinjiang[15]. Following the Sogdian version, Barshabbā founded several monasteries in a wide area including Fārs, Gorgān, Ṭūs, Abarshahr, Sarakhs, Marw al-Rūd, Balkh, Herāt, and Sīstān. Moreover, the Sogdian Gospel lectionary *E5* commemorates Barshabbā[16]. In so doing, according to Sims-Williams, who in turn quotes Bīrūnī, it agrees with the liturgical calendar of the Melkites Church in Khorezm which includes the commemoration of the priest Barshabbā on the 21st June. At this point, it is also interesting to note three other issues. Two of them link the Christian Sogdians, the Melkite Church and the Turfan oasis[17], while the third links the Church of the East and the Turfan area with the western Iranian area and also with Marv. The first point is that among the Christian Sogdian fragments in East Syriac script from the Turfan oasis, there is a unique fragment[18] containing a part of Psalm 33 (according to the numbering of *Septuaginta*) with Greek quotations as headlines and which accords partly with the *Septuaginta* and partly with the *Peshitta*[19]. The second one – as already pointed out by Sims-Williams[20] – is

[14] See: Sims-Williams (1989: 823).

[15] They are now in the Berlin Turfan Collection. According to the new classification system, the corresponding catalogue numbers of the fragments are: *E24/7*, *E24/9* and *E24/11*. See: Sims-Williams (2012: 75-77).

[16] See Chapter 2 of this book. Anyway, according to the new classification system, the corresponding catalogue numbers of the Sogdian fragment which mentions Barshabbā is: *E5/125*. See: Sims-Williams (2012: 40). With particular regard to the Syriac fragments, see: Hunter- Dickens (2014: 59-60).

[17] Another link will be discussed in Chapter 1 from a codicological point of view. It concerns the preference for the format in one column within the Christian (not only Sogdian) manuscript tradition in Turfan just like the Melkites manuscript tradition.

[18] See: Sims-Williams (2004).

[19] Instead of agreeing with the *Peshitta* as testified by the Christian Sogdian biblical texts which in the Turfan oasis are – quoting Sims-Williams (2012: 21) – "almost without exception, those which were required for liturgical use". There are only a few known accordances with Tatian's *Diatessaron* and with the Old Syriac version of the New Testament. With particular regard to the Sogdian Gospel lectionary *E5*, see Chapter 2. For

that an Armenian source from 1307 refers to people living in Khorezm, a "kind of Christians live in these parts, who are called Sogdians, and have their own writing and language; their beliefs are like those of the Greeks, and they are obedient to the Patriarch of Antioch…". The third point is that the so called Pahlavi psalter from the Turfan oasis – consisting of 13 fragmentary pages written in Middle Persian in Pahlavi script – could serve as evidence for the evangelization of the area from Marv. As clearly demonstrated by Durkin-Meisterernst, the Pahlavi psalter looks westward and very probably was not written in Turfan[21].

Two other crucial moments for the presence of the Church of the East in Central Asia, were the foundation of the see of Bactria with the city of Herāt as metropolitan seat and that of Beit Turqayé, i.e., Sogdiana with Samarkand as metropolitan seat. We are in the time of Yshoyahb II (628-644). The Church of the East also reached China in a short time, as we have already seen. At this point it seems apt to quote Le Coz again: "Ainsi, au moment de la conquête musulmane, l'Église d'Orient se trouve-t-elle installée dans la plupart des regions situées à l'est de l'Empire byzantin, organisée en douze provinces qui dependent d'un pouvoir fortement centralisé entre les mains du catholicos-patriarche de Séleucie-Ctésiphon[22]. L'unification de tous les territoires, s'étendant de l'Atlantique jusq'aux frontiers de la Chine sous l'autorité d'un même souverain, le calife de l'Islam, va permettre aux chrétiens de Perse de faire une percée dans le monde syrien……D'autre parte, la sympathie qu'eprouvera le maître musulman, en particulier à partir de son installation à Bagdad, pour la version nestorienne du christianisme, va permettre à l'Église d'Orient, non seulement de survivre, mais encore d'augmenter son influence, principalment en direction de l'Asie"[23].

With particular regard to the Iranian area, we can say that as for Iran

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a second fragment belonging to the manuscript with Greek lines, see also: Sims-Williams (2011a).

[20] See: Sims-Williams (1992b: 46).

[21] See: Durkin-Meisterernst (2006). It is a matter of fact that this text is the only Christian text written in Middle Persian in Pahlavi script at Turfan at that time; it is a matter of fact that the Middle Persian was a liturgical language within the Manichaean Church but not for the Christian one, not at Turfan, not in the early Middle Ages; finally, it is a matter of fact that the text sometimes agrees with the Syriac *Peshitta* but sometimes with the *Septuaginta*. See also: Gignoux (1969; 2001).

[22] Of course, as Le Coz pointed out in his volume, there are some differences between internal and external provinces with particular regard to the central power. See: Le Coz (2010: 235-247); and also Borbone (2015).

[23] See: Le Coz (2010: 81).

proper, as for the Central Asia territories, the secondary – Syriac – sources are to be considered[24] because of a constant lack of direct sources. Despite this, in recent decades fundamental studies have appeared that are essential for understanding these Christian communities in the Iranian area. Consider, for example, the work of Lerner (1977; 1992) and Gyselen (2006) in which each element, linguistic (Syriac-Iranian bilingualism), iconographic etc., is studied in order to understand the role played by Christians in the Sasanian administrative structure, and, consequently, as an attempt to establish the different degrees of the integration of religious minorities within the empire. As for Central Asia, a work that takes the same direction is that of Naymark (1996). Interesting insights are to be expected from the doctoral thesis of Ashurov, "Tarsākyā: an analysis of Sogdian Christianity based on archaeological, numismatic, epigraphic and textual sources"[25], a PhD thesis written at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, under the guidance of two leading experts in the field, Erica Hunter and Nicholas Sims-Williams. Each work so far mentioned – and any other one, not mentioned for brevity – represents a piece which aims to recreate the entangled puzzle of the East Syriac missionary activities. However, one thing seems to be certain, namely that Patriarch Timothy I (780-823) played a crucial role in the Evangelization of Central Asia, and always provided for the education of missionaries in several fields including theology, languages, bookbinding and calligraphy. When Berti (2009) analyzes the letters of the Patriarch, he gives us an image of Timothy as a man culturally linked to the territory which goes from Mosul and Baghdad to Elam, a Timothy who creates Syro-Oriental cultural elites which peak during the ninth century, the season of scholars and translators. This is the Timothy who establishes the patriarchate seat in Baghdad thereby entering into the heart of the Abbasid dynasty providing the administrative cadres of the Empire to the Arabian

[24] Both for Iranian and non-Iranian peoples (and not just Sogdians), for example, the discovery of ossuaries with crosses dating back to the late seventh-first half of the eighth century, took place at Mizdaxkan, not far from Tokkala, attesting the presence of Christian communities in Khorezm, see: de la Vaissière (2005: 257-258). Consider the work of C. Jullien (2004) for Sasanian Iran starting from sources such as *The acts of the martyrs*. Furthermore, Syriac sources also attest the ordination of a bishop for the Hephthalites around 550 and the conversion of the Kerait in the second half of the seventh century. See: Hunter (1989-1991) and Mingana (1925). These are only very few examples aimed at highlighting the complexity, the extent of the areas involved and the different and multiple empires, peoples, ethnic groups, tribes, etc. involved in a similar scenario.

[25] See: Ashurov (2015).

court[26]. This is the Timothy who was somehow responsible for the transmission of Greek knowledge to the Arab world, who organizes missions to the East, one designed to quell potential internal uprisings and to strengthen and expand the external acquired positions, without ever forgetting their own context. This is the Timothy who carefully watches the issues connected to the translations of texts, the so-called language question[27]. He implements – referring to what I think is a more than brilliant definition by Berti – "il governo della cultura come asse della vita ecclesiale"[28]. Here "monastery" comes into play, because it is the monastery that realizes that "government of culture" so much wanted and promoted by Timothy I.

b) As early as 1958, after two years of field research among the monasteries of the Near East, Leroy wrote, referring in particular to the evangelization of Central Asia "Cette prodigieuse page de l'histoire nestorienne, ce sont les moines qui l'ont écrite pour une grand part, et ce seul fait atteste l'importance de l'institution monastique en Perse. Il en exprime en même temps les traits caractéristiques: à la fois éducateur et missionaire..."[29]. As highlighted by recent studies on Eastern monasticism – especially in the Iranian area – conducted by those who studied this subject for years such as F. Jullien, for about ten centuries the monastery or the monastic community played an indispensable role in the existence, life and the spread of the missions in the Iranian area; this refers, as always, to the geographical area that reaches from Iran proper to China[30]. This phenomenon took place in the fourth century and went through the fifth and sixth century with the first definition of the monastic rules, until its real formulation with subsequent diffusion. So, within the Church of the East, the monastery becomes a

[26] Of course, things are never so simple: see, for example, the interpretation given by the scholar on the cultural vibrancy of the large and medium-sized towns vs. the progressive cultural depletion of the small ones that even had played a leading role in past centuries. See, in particular: id.: 363-364.

[27] See: in particular *id.*: 279-351.

[28] See: *id.*: 359.

[29] See: Leroy (1958: 212).

[30] See: F. Jullien (2006; 2011). It is significant that the Christian Sogdian corpus from Turfan also includes the story of Mār Awgen, generally – although not without some doubts – considered the founder of Persian monasticism. See Jullien, F. (2006: 149-51) and Sundermann (1994). According to the new classification system, the corresponding catalogue numbers of the fragments which contain the story are: *E28/9*, *E28/10a-c*. See: Sims-Williams (2012: 131-133).

genuine laboratory of knowledge, an extraordinary center of cultural communication, the place where the range of activities covers copying, translation[31], preservation, production and teaching[32] – not only of the Scriptures but also other disciplines such as medicine[33] and philosophy[34]. Furthermore the Syriac language was of course a liturgical language, or rather, the official language of the Church of the East, but it was also a language of scholarship[35]. Thus, through this language, different kinds of knowledge started to spread along a considerable period of time and space. But how, in detail, did this process of transfer and dissemination occurr?

c) Outlining the expansive policy of Timothy I, and above all the ideology that sustained and promoted it[36], Berti considers three episodes – that of Shuhalisho‘, that of Qardag and Yahbalaha, and that of Elijah – which demonstrate how the missionary monks were chosen according to their most commodious quality for a given context[37]. Sometimes figures more able in languages and in dialectic were singled out, as in the case of Shuhalisho‘, called to sustain the arguments of the Church of the East even against other denominations; sometimes, figures expert in copying and binding, as in the case of Qardag and Yahbalaha, and sometimes, especially for missions in

[31] Leroy speaks explicitly about monks as translators (for example, of Greek works) and as authors (for instances, of ascetical and mystical treaties). See: Leroy (1958: 217).

[32] See: Dagron, G.- Riché, P.- Vauchez, A. (1994: 459), who distinguish two types of schools, “nämlich Kirchliche Bischofsstädten und in den meisten Klosterschulen”.

[33] To stay within the Iranian setting, think of the role played by Christians belonging to the Syriac tradition in the transmission of Greek knowledge in Sasanian Iran so well highlighted by Gignoux (2001a). He also points out, rightly in my opinion, that the translations of Syriac knowledge into Middle Persian and Sogdian are a remarkable phenomenon of inculturation (ibid.: 232). Think, for instance, of the fragments in New Persian and in Sogdian from Turfan, both in East Syriac script, of pharmacological texts in the wake of medical knowledge attested in the Syriac tradition. See: Sims-Williams (2011). According to the new classification system, the corresponding catalogue numbers of the mentioned fragments are respectively: *E37*, *E38- E39*. See: Sims-Williams (2012: 186-187).

[34] See: Walker (2006: 164-205).

[35] At least until the ninth century when it began to be partially replaced by Arabic. For an overview, see: Le Coz (2010: 89-125; 185-200).

[36] Very interesting is Berti’s consideration on the creation of new metropolitan seats. According to his analysis, they could also depend on Timothy I’s will in order to create their own trusted network able to face older and well established metropolitan seats that disapproved him because of his controversial election in 780. See: Berti (2006: 147-148).

[37] See: Berti (2006: 2011).

distant lands that were particularly hard to reach and little known, a simple monk could be singled out, as in the case of Elijah[38]. However, beyond individual skills that are more or less specific, what is indisputable is the importance of being able to read and write. From F. Jullien[39] we learn that the aspirant monk was required to be able to read[40], that his education consisted in carefully listening to the biblical texts read by chapter[41], in learning how to write and that the continuous reading of the Psalms in his cell was one of his fundamental activities. We know that in the first half of the eighth century, in the convent school of Mosul, the education of an aspiring monk was divided into three stages: the first was based on the study of the New Testament, the second focused on the Pentateuch, and the third on readings from the Prophets and the Psalms[42]. Examining the texts from Turfan, Hunter[43] recalls how the Psalms seem to be the first reading tools for the new converts. Dickens (2013), who reaffirms the general importance of the Psalter especially in the monastic context, stresses how this is also true of Turfan – no religious text has been translated into more languages and scripts than the Psalter: in Syriac, in Sogdian language in Sogdian secular script[44], in Syriac and New Persian, in Syriac in Uyghur script[45], in Middle Persian in Pahlavi script. Dickens also noted that the only other text found in different traditions is the legend of St. George, which is in Syriac, Sogdian in East Syriac script and Uyghur Turkic. So, even from this point of view, the Turfan monastery is not an exception but fits perfectly into the East Syriac tradition. In particular, then, the Psalter in Turfan, according to Dickens, seems to attest the very first traditions[46], and is extremely useful to reconstruct the literary and religious history of the Church of the East.

Another important point that F. Jullien highlights in her works and that will have a significant importance in the present argument concerns the

[38] Berti writes (2006: 147) about Elijah: "Elia infine si portava dietro un vangelo di piccolo formato come segno distintivo e, tra le prime cose che fece, tradusse i Salmi per iniziare alla preghiera le popolazioni da lui convertite".

[39] See: F. Jullien (2006; 2011).

[40] Rule of Dadīshō': see F. Jullien (2006: 165).

[41] This could explain, in my opinion, the reason why in Turfan we have Syriac texts with Sogdian rubrics, i.e. to allow local monks – who probably were not of Syriac mother tongue – to better understand what was read to him.

[42] See: F. Jullien (2006: 161).

[43] See: Hunter (2012: 82).

[44] In particular see: Schwartz (1974); Schwartz- Sims-Williams (2014).

[45] In particular see: Dickens- Zieme (2014).

[46] It is not the only example, as we will see in the next pages.

existence in the Sasanian Empire of mixed monastic communities, where it frequently happened that each linguistic group led its own ascetic life in a part of the monastery[47]. In other words multilingualism[48] has not been a characteristic of Turfan but of the entire East Syriac tradition over the centuries, throughout a broad geographical area. As already mentioned, Edessa was where the Church of the East began to spread in the second century, and in fact its Aramaic dialect Syriac, despite its continuous role as the official language of the Church[49], was put together with other vernaculars during the religious services. We have some evidence of the controversies between Syriac and Iranian speaking monks with regard to the choice of the language used during the liturgy, in several fragments of a Sogdian version of the life of John of Dailam, an Eastern Syrian saint and founder of monasteries in Fārs[50]. With particular regard to Central Asia[51], it is not surprising that among the vernaculars permitted in the Church service, the main role was played by the Sogdian language which was already the language spoken by the traders along the Silk Road[52] and therefore was adopted by the missionary communities to spread their religious message. In the same way, it seems to me that not only the choice of the language[53] but

[47] See: F. Jullien (2006: 165-166).

[48] See: Dickens (2009a).

[49] The use of Syriac along the caravan routes of the Silk Road is testified by literary and archaeological sources. See: Baum-Winkler (2003); Lala Comneno (1995). To give just few examples, in addition to the fragments found in Turfan in several languages – Syriac, Sogdian, Old Turkish, Middle Persian, New Persian – and scripts – East Syriac script, Sogdian secular script, Pahlavi script, Uyghur script – one may mention a clay vessel bearing a Syriac inscription from Jambulin, Kazakstan (fifth-sixth centuries), a clay fragment with the first two psalms in the *Peshitta* version from Penjikent, Tajikistan (seventh-eighth centuries), a stele in Chinese and Syriac (781) recording, as already said, the coming of Christianity to China one and a half centuries earlier; twenty-five Syriac rock inscriptions in the modern-day region of Urgut, Uzbekistan (tenth century), a church (eighth century) excavated in the village of Aq-Beshim, Kyrgyzstan as well as two East Syriac cemeteries (generally dated eleventh - late thirteenth centuries) with 568 gravestones with Syriac inscriptions where over 3.000 people had been buried in the north of the same country. See also: Dickens (2009b); Dickens- Savchenko (2009).

[50] See: Sims-Williams (1996; 2014).

[51] Taking into account Iran proper, see: Panaino (2007); and Shaked (1990).

[52] See: Hansen (2012: 113-139); and de la Vaissière (2005).

[53] Sometimes the result was a monolingual text, often a bilingual one, i.e. focusing of course on the Christian Sogdian corpus, Syriac-Sogdian. On the languages alternation Brock stated (2006: 145): "Bilingual Syriac biblical manuscripts are rather more commonly found, and normally the second language is Arabic (it is striking that there are no known bilingual biblical manuscripts providing just Syriac and Greek). Although bilingual

also that of script[54], terminology, images, symbols, and layout[55] is strongly related to the kind of text, its function and its context. Broadly speaking, we can assert that the Christian Sogdian material from the monastery of Bulayïq, dating back from the eight to the eleventh century, perfectly fits within the missionary framework of the Church of the East. Apart from biblical-liturgical texts[56], the Christian Sogdian literature is a monastic and ascetic literature. In fact, this translation literature consists of several biographies including those of St. Serapion, Eugenius, John of Dailam; the legend of St. Barshabbā, bishop of Marv; the story of Daniel; the Wisdom of Aḥiqar; the Dormition of the Virgin Mary; Acts of the Persian martyrs under Shābūr II- Martyrdoms of St. Shahdost, of St. Tarbo, of St. Barbaʿshmin; several martyrdoms such as those of St. Pethion, St. Eustathius, St. Sergius and St. Bacchus, Cyriacus and Julitta, St. George; the legend of the Finding of the Cross by St. Helen, the mother of Costantine; Antirrheticus of Evagrius Ponticus; part of the homily by Bābay of Nisibis; Apostolic Canons; Commentary on the baptismal and Eucharistic liturgies entitled "Explanation of the Mysteries of the Church"; Questions and answers from the Apophthegmata Patrum; Legend of the Sleepers of Ephesus; parts of works of Shemʿon d-Taibūtēh and Dādishoʿ Qaṭrāyā; several fragmentary homilies on the ascetic life. Sometimes, the Christian Sogdian literature from Turfan testifies an older tradition in comparison to the Syriac literary tradition[57]. The main examples concern the Sogdian translation of Shemʿon d-Taibūtēh[58], the Wisdom of Aḥiqar[59] and the life of John of Dailam[60].

These few pages are aimed at showing that it makes little sense to regard the Christian Sogdian corpus in isolation: the faithful retention of both

manuscripts normally present the two languages side by side, in some biblical fragments from Central Asia a different arrangement is found: here Syriac and a translation into Sogdian are given in alternate lines". Finally, about the idea that the bilingual lectionaries would testify an early liturgical use, see: Baumstark (1921: 11); Sims-Williams (2009: 276, n. 30); and Sundermann (1981: 169).

54 With particular regard to the Sogdian corpus, see: Barbati (2014a) on the use of the East Syriac script; and Reck (2008); Sims-Williams (2013) on the use of the Sogdian secular script.

55 The last issues are still under investigation and are part of my project "Christian Sogdian Book Culture" hosted at the *Institute of Iranian Studies*, *Austrian Academy of Sciences* and funded by the *Austrian Programme for Advanced Research and Technology*.

56 See: Sims-Williams (2012: 21-66).

57 I am referring to the whole Syriac literary tradition, not only that from Turfan.

58 See: Kessel- Sims-Williams (2011).

59 See: Sims-Williams (2014a).

60 See: Debié (2010: 131; 140); and Sims-Williams (2014).

Syriac literary[61] and manuscript[62] tradition shows the strength of the missionary character of the Church of the East.

I would like to end this brief introduction referring to one of the most recent works of the Syriacist Borbone[63] where the scholar, illustrating the structure of the churches of the Church of the East in Central Asia and in China, focuses, among other things, on an illustration in an album of the second half of the fourteenth century, and now preserved in Istanbul. The illustration represents a multi-storey building where several characters are illustrated in their main occupations which seem to be, as pointed out by Borbone, reading and writing. Borbone defines this illustration "scène de monastère"[64] and says: "L'image, qui met côte-à côte des éléments d'origine iranienne et chinoise, ne permet pas une identification précise et ne renvoie probablement à rien de réél. Toutefois, dans cette image se trouvent les éléments caractéristiques d'un monastère, selon le point de vue et les notion du peintre centre-asiatique (parmi lesquelles l'activité de l'étude, les cloches et les simandres, et les peintures murales)"[65].

Therefore, the monastery is the center of religious and secular culture, it is the keystone on which the cultural life turns. It is from a monastery, indeed from the ruins of a monastery, those of Shūī-pang near Bulayïq[66], that the Christian Sogdian corpus mentioned in this introduction comes from, and, of course, also the Christian Sogdian Gospel lectionary which will be discussed in the next chapters from several points of view.

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[61] With different degrees of adherence to the Syriac original. The biblical and liturgical texts are of course the most faithful. Among the ascetic and monastic texts, we have some examples where the Sogdian version agrees with versions in other languages, i.e. readings which were once in the Syriac but which were lost in the later Syriac tradition. For instance, Sims-Williams has demonstrated that the Sogdian version of the Wisdom of Aḥiqar sometimes agrees with the Armenian, Slavonic and Ethiopic versions and not with the Syriac one. See: Sims-Williams (2014a: 108). We can find some differences between the Sogdian and the Syriac versions also with particular regard to the Dormition of the Virgin Mary. See: Sims-Williams (2014b).

[62] Even if the last topic is still under investigation, it seems to me that it goes in the same direction of the literary one.

[63] See: Borbone (2013).

[64] See: Borbone (2013: 450).

[65] See: Borbone (2013: 450-451).

[66] See: Sims-Williams (1990). About that monastery, many aspects are still unclear. See: Barbati (2015a: 92-97). Concerning the closing date and/or destruction, Hunter is inclined to consider the fourteenth century, the *terminus ad quem*. See: Hunter (2012: 88).

E5[67]: THE MANUSCRIPT

The Sogdian manuscript *E5* represents one of the largest and best-preserved manuscripts among the Christian Sogdian examples in either East Syriac or Sogdian secular script belonging to the Berlin Turfan Collection. It is well known that in this case, too, only fragments exist[68]; no entire manuscript has been preserved – at least as far as we know. In the case of *E5*, we have more than 30 fragments for a total of about 800 lines of writing. Being a lectionary, it is not difficult to deduce that what has survived is only a small part of the total. Sims-Williams states: "This manuscript is written in a very distinctive hand with full recitation vocalization and accents. Since the gospel texts contained in even the smallest scraps have been identified, there can hardly be any doubt that all the surviving fragments belong to a single manuscript"[69]. Today, most of these fragments are depositum of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin- Preußischer Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung, while nine of them have been lost – probably during the II World War bombings – although, fortunately, photographic reproductions have been preserved in the Andreas papers in the Niedersächische Staats- und Landesbibliothek in Göttingen[70].

Before analyzing the codicological features related to the Christian Sogdian manuscript fragments *E5*, I consider it worthwhile to voice a few general considerations. The motivation for including a chapter dedicated to codicology comes from my strong conviction that joining the study of the textual as well as that of the material aspects will lead to a better understanding of the manuscript fragments *E5* as a whole. In fact, most previous studies have focused on the content, of course with pioneering exceptions. I am referring, for example, to the interesting annotations made by Sundermann about the number of writing lines regarding this

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[67] Formerly *C5*. Throughout the present volume the new classification system introduced by Sims-Williams will be adopted. See: Sims-Williams (2012: 11-16; 28; 199-220).

[68] No date and no colophon have been preserved.

[69] See: Sims-Williams (2012: 28). As regards the full vocalization and the recitative accent, they follow the rules belonging to the East Syriac tradition. See: Segal (2003: 7-36; 78-118).

[70] Copies of these were kindly provided by the late Prof. Sundermann and Prof. Durkin-Meisterernst during my study periods in Berlin. These are now available on the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and International Dunhuang Project websites under the numbers *n 497* - n 506**. For a general overview of the history of the Berlin Turfan Collection, see: Sims-Williams (2012: 11-16).

manuscript[71], or to those by Sundermann and Sims-Williams about the numbering of the quires in use at the monastery of Bulayïq[72]; or to those by Reck about the use of different kinds of ink found in Christian Sogdian fragments in Sogdian secular script[73]. At present, two new and fundamental publications allow us to take a further step: the catalogue of Iranian manuscripts in Syriac script and the catalogue of Syriac manuscripts of the Berlin Turfan Collection[74]. Both catalogues contain precise and accurate codicological information. It allows us to know much more about each single element and at the same time to adopt that comparative perspective which is necessary and essential to fully understand a material – the Christian Sogdian – that on one hand takes form within the Syriac tradition, proper to the Church of the East, and on the other is set in a *milieu* where other religious traditions play a prominent role, in a process that is both osmosis and differentiation, innovation and conservation; a process which cannot be ignored for the correct understanding of this material.

It is for this reason that in the following pages I will attempt to analyze in detail the main codicological aspects related to the Christian Sogdian manuscript *E5*. I shall meanwhile always consider the general view, i.e., the Christian Sogdian manuscript tradition, which is yet to be defined. And I shall also keep in mind those traditions in contact with it: vertically, as in the case of the Syriac tradition due to its prestige, and horizontally, as in the case of the Manichaean tradition, which mostly stems from the same area and mainly belongs to the same period.

Finally, it is also important to point out that in this study the word codicology is used implying a codicological approach *lato sensu* in order to achieve a broader contextualization[75]. Each element considered here is analyzed according to the traditional codicological investigation but it does

[71] See: Sundermann (1975: 87-88).

[72] See: Sims-Williams (1985: 14-16); and Sundermann (1975: 85-86).

[73] See: Reck (2008: 194).

[74] See respectively: Sims-Williams (2012) and Hunter- Dickens (2014).

[75] I do not intend codicology as "archaeology of the book". See for instance: Lemaire (1989). Instead, the theoretical framework I follow is that developed by the Research Networking Programme *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies (COMSt)*. See: Bausi- Borbone- Briquel Chattonet- Buzi- Gippert- Macé- Maniaci- Melissakis- Parodi- Witakowski (2015). Finally, in reading this chapter it is important to underline that the research on the Christian Sogdian manuscript tradition is at an early stage; for first results see: Barbati (forthcoming). A detailed paleographical investigation is still missing with very few exceptions. Concerning the manuscript fragments *E5* see: Sundermann apud Reck (2008: 193-194). For Syriac fragments from Turfan see now: Dickens (2013a: 9-10).

not want to be the point of arrival, rather the starting point, not the main aim, but the tool even at the expense of giving fewer answers and to formulate, in contrast, more questions.

1.1. Materials

The manuscript fragments *E5* is written on yellow-brown paper. As recently pointed out by Dickens[76], all Christian fragments from Turfan are written on paper.

Concerning the ink[77], the manuscript fragments *E5* as well as all Sogdian manuscript fragments in East Syriac script are written in black ink, whereas the twenty-eight fragments in Sogdian secular script, which have all been attributed to one scribe, were written in brown ink[78]. To remain in the Turfan oasis, the Pahlavi psalter text is written in black ink too, as happens for Manichaean texts, while in general in the Syriac manuscript tradition the use of black ink is attested – which unlike in Turfan can also be glossy or shiny – as well as of brown ink. Red ink is instead used in titles and sections, not only in Christian Sogdian texts but also in the Pahlavi psalter, in the Manichaean tradition and in the Avestan one which uses it also for marking the beginning and end of a section. Generally speaking, besides red ink, the Syriac manuscript tradition uses green and sometimes blue and yellow ink, often with golden embellishments[79].

With particular regard to the Christian material from Turfan, we are still waiting for a detailed analysis on writing materials[80].

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[76] See: Dickens (2013a: 5). For a general overview on Syriac manuscripts written on paper see: Borbone- Briquel Chatonnet- Balicka-Witakowska (2015: 253). Quoting these scholars (ibid.): "The oldest Syriac manuscript on paper is a dated copy of the *Book of the Ḥimyarites* finished in April 932, transcribed in Qaryatēn".

[77] In this section, unless otherwise specified, apply the following references: for the Pahlavi Psalter (Durkin-Meisterernst 2006: 3); for the Manichaean manuscript tradition (Gulácsi 2005: 59-104); for the Syriac manuscript tradition (Hatch 1946: 10-11); and, finally, for the Avestan manuscript tradition, (Panaino 2002).

[78] See: Reck (2008: 194).

[79] About the use of the ink in the decorative elements of the *E5* manuscript fragments, see below paragraph *1.4.3. Decorations and verso marks*.

[80] For the first attempt in this direction, see: Durkin-Meisterernst- Friedrich- Han- Helmann-Ważny- Nöller- Raschmann (2015).

1.2. Book form and ordering system

The manuscript fragments *E5*, like the entire available Christian documentation from Turfan, uses the codex as book form[81]. The codex format is the most common among the Manichaean manuscript fragments stemming from Turfan even if it is not the only one[82]. Obviously, owing to the multicultural and multi religious environment, the codex is not the only book format in Turfan during the Early Middle Ages: in this regard, the Christian manuscript tradition from Turfan looks to the Mesopotamian Mother Church.

With particular regard to the ordering system, Borbone- Briquel Chatonnet- Balicka- Witakowska state: "The structure of the quires in Syriac books is remarkably uniform and stable over time, for all geographical areas in which Syriac manuscripts were produced"[83]. Generally speaking, quires in Syriac manuscript tradition are formed from four or five sheets but the latter seems to be the most common[84]. With particular regard to the Christian material from Turfan, Sims-Williams hypothesized a quire of five sheets[85]. Moreover, in accordance with the Syriac tradition, in the Christian Sogdian corpus the quire is numbered with Syriac letters[86].

The manuscript fragments *E5* played a fundamental role in identifying the numbering system of the quires at the monastery of Bulayïq. According to Sundermann and Sims-Williams[87], the same quire-number is placed on the last page of a quire and on the first page of the following quire. We have some examples in the present manuscript fragments[88]: *d* = 4 in *E5/41/r/*, i.e., the first page of the fourth quire; *h* = 5 in *E5/51/r/*, i.e., the first page of the

[81] According to Borbone- Briquel Chatonnet- Balicka Witakowska (2015: 255), the Syriac manuscript tradition does not attest the use of horizontal rolls but only that of the vertical rolls, especially in the Melkite manuscript tradition.

[82] See: Gulácsi (2005: 59-97).

[83] See: Borbone- Briquel Chatonnet- Balicka Witakowska (2015: 255).

[84] See: Borbone- Briquel Chatonnet- Balicka Witakowska (2015: 255-256); Dickens (2013a: 12).

[85] See: Sims-Williams (1985: 14-16).

[86] According to Hatch (1946: 23), in the Syriac tradition sometimes they are numbered with Syriac arithmetical figures, until the ninth century, or letters of the Greek, Coptic or Arabic alphabets.

[87] See: Sundermann (1975: 87-90) and Sims-Williams (1985: 14-16; 2012: 28).

[88] On the Syriac examples belonging to the Christian Turfan material already pointed out by the scholars above mentioned, see also: Dickens: (2013a: 12).

fifth quire; *t* = 9 *in E5/91/r/*, i.e., the first page of the ninth quire[89]. Other examples are attested in *E5/100/v/*[90] which has *y* =10, i.e., the last page of the ninth quire and in *E5/101/r/* which has *y*=10, i.e., the first page of the tenth quire[91].

Finally, in *E5*, as well as in *E27*, the quire-numbers show a rhomb of four dots as ornaments: it seems to me that the difference between the two manuscripts is that in *E5* they only enclose the quire-number whereas in *E27*[92] "they extend right across the page"[93]. Usually two points are in black ink and two in red ink[94].

1.3. Page layout and spatial organization

According to the best-preserved fragments belonging to *E5*, it can be seen that the width of the manuscript *E 5* is approximately 14.5~15 cm and the length is about 19.5~20 cm. The upper margin size, as well as that of the inner margin, measures approximately 1~1.5 cm, where the lower margin size, as well as that of the outer margin, measures approximately 3 cm. As regards the written area, the width is around 10-11 cm while the length around 16-17 cm. As pointed out by Dickens in analyzing the Christian material from Turfan, "Lectionaries, hagiographies and ascetical literature range from medium to large format"[95].

1.3.1 Columns

The format of the Christian Sogdian manuscript fragments *E5* is one single column. This perfectly reflects the Syriac tradition, if what Hatch reported is true[96], namely that between the seventh and tenth centuries all the Syriac

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[89] Anyway, the quire numbering system in the Christian Sogdian manuscript tradition related to the Syriac manuscript tradition is a very interesting point which I am still investigating.

[90] In this book, the fragments belonging to the manuscript *E5* are cited according to the new classification system developed by Sims-Williams (2012: 28).

[91] For practical reasons, the numbering system of the quires as well as the decoration points and the cross are not included in my edition but one can easily find all these elements in the photo reproductions of the manuscript fragments *E5* at the end of this work.

[92] Formerly *C2*. See: Sims-Williams (1985; 2012: 99-126).

[93] See: Sims-Williams (1985: 15).

[94] With regard to this alternation in *E5*, see paragraph *Decorations*.

[95] See: Dickens (2013a: 6-7). Of course, the size of format is linked to the function of the text. This is another interesting research point which I am still investigating.

[96] See: Hatch (1946: 13-14).

manuscript traditions tended to prefer the single or the double column, with a preference for the single one by Melkites. The Christian Sogdian texts are usually dated between the ninth and tenth century, although in the case of *E5* I am inclined to opt for the late tenth to eleventh century for linguistic reasons, which will be discussed in the course of this work. Again, in general, in the Syriac manuscript tradition the number of columns does not seem to be determined either by the content of the manuscript, or by the length of the page. As stated by Hatch[97], the number of columns of a manuscript may, instead, depend on the scribe and, in part, by the local styles that each *scriptorium* develops. While it can be anticipated that the use of a single column characterizes the Bulayïq *scriptorium*[98], it will be interesting to see in detail the reasons for such a claim[99]. Finally, according to a comparative perspective, I think it is appropriate to cite what Durkin-Meisterernst stated: "the use of columns in Syriac manuscripts seems greatly relevant to their use in Manichaean manuscripts not only because of the Christian and the common Jewish background to some aspects of Christian and Manichaean writing: the use of large-column scrolls, mirroring the Torah scroll, in the Christian Acts of the Apostles and in the Manichaean equivalent, the Manichean Church history, seems very likely indeed"[100].

1.3.2 Number of lines

Among the best-preserved fragments belonging to *E5* there is a fluctuation in the number of writing lines. Six fragments are listed as follow – *E5/91*; *E5/100-101*; *E5/125-126* – with 22 lines of writing in both */r/* and */v/*, one fragment – *E5/127/a-c* – with 22 lines of writing in */r/* and 21 lines in */v/*,

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97 See: Hatch (1946: 14).

98 With very few exceptions where the format consists of two and six columns. See: Dickens (2013a: 7). Another point which still expects exploration is what *scriptorium* would really mean in the context of the medieval Turfan oasis. See: Barbati (2015a: 93); Kotsifou (2012: 326); and Walker (2010: 326).

99 Another issue which calls for further investigations through a broader contextualization which take into account the Christian material from Turfan, is its relationships with the Mesopotamian Mother Church as well as with other Syriac manuscript traditions such as the Melkite. In the previous chapter, we have seen the literary relationships between the Christian Sogdian material stemming from Turfan and belonging to the Church of the East and the Melkites. Here, we perhaps have evidence from a codicological point of view. Of course, the issue needs to be studied and, even it is so, the next question requiring an answer is to what extent we can establish these relationships. Finally, according to a comparative approach, we should mention that the format of the Pahlavi psalter also consists of one single column.

100 See: Durkin-Meisterernst (2008: 14).