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The integration of the category of *artron* in the Syriac grammatical tradition

ABSTRACT

Early Syriac linguistic theories were modeled upon the Greek tradition, by means of translations and adaptation of rhetoric, logic and grammatical texts. In the domain of grammar, the main source of inspiration was the *Téchne Grammatiké*, translated into Syriac in the 6th cent. and assimilated and manipulated by later Syriac authors. By examining the progressive integration and adaptation of the Greek category of ἄρθρον within the Syriac grammatical theory, this paper aims at showing how metalinguistic terms describing Greek morphological features can provide the conceptual and terminological tools for the identification of syntactic features of Syriac.

1. Introduction

This paper is devoted to a particular aspect of the adaptation of the categories elaborated by Ancient Greek Grammarians to the Syriac language, a phenomenon which is documented from the 6th cent. A.D. and that can be accounted for within the conceptual framework of "Greek extended grammar".[1] In the case of the Syriac tradition, the Greek textual models are represented essentially by the *Téchne grammariké*, Theodosius' *Canons* and, on the side of logic, Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias* and its commentaries according to the alexandrine tradition. These models are essentially active in structuring a metalinguistic terminology, defining the parts of speech and their morpho-semantic features and building a bridge between technical grammar and logic and rhetoric teachings, as part of the Hellenistic curriculum, as it was assimilated in Syriac education.[2]

Throughout the entire productive period of grammatical literature (6th-13th cent.), Syriac authors have been constantly going back to Greek-based models, in the earliest stages more directly, by means of translations an adaptation of the Greek texts, later on through a reworking and reorganization of traditional materials, always presupposing a minimal acquaintance with Greek grammatical sources.[3] At the same time, Greek metalinguistic categories, while acclimatizing, progressively shifted from the description of morphological features towards that of syntactic features proper of the Syriac language.[4] In this paper, I will try to show how the Greek categories of ἄρθρον and πτῶσις are integrated and re-elaborated by Syriac grammarians into a new system for delimitating a sub-class of affixes and designating their morphological behavior and their syntactic functions.

2. The category of ἄρθρον - *šārītā* in the earliest Syriac grammars

The Greek *Téchne grammatikè* represents the first and more influential model for the development of a Syriac grammatical theory, as it introduces the definition and denomination of the parts of speech and hence the core of metalinguistic terminology. The Syriac translation of the *Téchne* is attributed in some manuscripts (all belonging to the same East Syriac line of transmission) to the

[1] On this concept see Aussant and Dumarty 2021, for its application to the Syriac tradition see Farina 2021a.

[2] See the fundamental paper by Watt 1993 and also, more recently, King 2013.

[3] Cf., for example, the 8th-9th cent. David bar Paulos, who, in his *Treatise on the alphabet*, seems to loosely follow ch. 6 of the Greek *Téchne*, of which no Syriac translation is extant (Gottheil 1893, Farina 2021b), or the 11th cent. Elias of Tirhan, who in the preface to his grammar, explicitly admits having consulted Greek grammarians before composing his own work.

[4] See, in this respect, what has been noticed about the description of compounds and of participle, respectively, in Farina 2019 and Farina 2021a.

East-Syriac Joseph Huzaya (6th cent.).[5] This translation or, rather, adaptation, only includes the chapters from the 11th onwards, and thus begins with a definition of the word (Syr. *metʾamrānūtā*, Gr. λέξις) list of the parts of speech in Syriac, then in Greek transliterated in Syriac characters and, in some manuscripts (e.g. BL Add 14620), in Greek alphabet (see Table 1).

Gr. Téchne	**ὄνομα**	**ῥῆμα**	**μετοχή**	**ἄρθρον**	**ἀντωνυμία**	**πρόθεσις**	**ἐπίρρημα**	**σύνδεσμος**
Syr. Téchne (6th c.)	*šmā*	*memrā*	*šawtpūtā*	*šārītā*	*ḥlāp šmā*	*mqadmūt syāmā*	*ʿal memrā*	*ʾesārā*
	ʾonoma	*rīma*	*mētōkē*	*ʾartrō*	*ʾantōnīmā*	*prōtasīs*	*ʾepīrīmā*	*sīndēsmōs*
	noun	verb	participation	articulation	pronoun	preposition	adverb	conjunction

Table 1. The parts of speech in the Syriac *Téchne*

In what follows, I will focus on the Greek category of ἄρθρον and on its Syriac avatars *ʾartrō*, *šarītā* ('articulation') and *mappeltā* ('fall').

In order to understand how the passage on the Greek article has been integrated and adapted within the Syriac grammatical tradition, we need to keep in mind that Syriac has no definite article. Syriac nominals can feature in three so-called *states*:

- absolute *ktāb* 'book, a book'
- emphatic *ktāb-ā* '(the) book'
- construct *ktāb*

The absolute state is the basic and general form of a noun. The construct state, a reduced form,[6] is used to express genitive relation: *ktāb malkā* 'the king's book'. The emphatic state, characterized by an ending *-ā* appended to the absolute form, developed in most Aramaic dialects of the 1st millennium b.C. as a definite form of the noun, as opposed to the absolute state which was not marked for definiteness. Such a semantic opposition is lost in Syriac, where both forms can be semantically determined.[7] Thus, no direct functional parallel of the Greek definite article can be identified in Syriac.

Let us now consider the paragraph specifically devoted to the ἄρθρον in the Greek *Téchne*:

> ἄρθρον ἐστὶ μέρος λόγου πτωτικόν, προτασσόμενον † καὶ ὑποτασσόμενον
> τῆς κλίσεως τῶν ὀνομάτων. καὶ ἔστι προτακτικὸν μὲν ὁ, ὑποτακτικὸν δὲ ὅς.
> Παρέπεται δὲ αὐτῶι τρία· γένη, ἀριθμοί, πτώσεις.
> Γένη μὲν οὖν εἰσι τρία· ὁ ποιητής, ἡ ποίησις, τὸ ποίημα.
> Ἀριθμοὶ τρεῖς· † ἑνικός, δυϊκός, πληθυντικός· ἑνικὸς μὲν ὁ ἡ τό, δυϊκὸς δὲ τώ τά †, πληθυντικὸς δὲ
> οἱ αἱ τά.
> Πτώσεις δὲ ὁ τοῦ τῶι τόν ὦ, † ἡ τῆς τῆι τήν ὦ.
>
> "An article is a part of the sentence which is subject to case inflection
> and may precede or follow the inflection of the nouns. When it precedes,
> it takes the form *ho*, and when it follows, the form *hos.*
> It has three attributes — gender, number, and case.
> There are three genders — *ho poiëtës* (the poet), *hē poiēsis* (poetry), *to*

[5] See Merx 1889: 1-28, Contini 1998, Conti 2018.

[6] The morphological distinction between absolute and construct is clearly visible in the plural: abs. *ktābīn*, constr. *ktābay* emph. *ktābē*.

[7] A morphosyntactic opposition is nevertheless preserved also in Syriac, as the absolute state is the form that is used in nominal predication, especially with participial and adjectival predicates (see Bertinetto, Ciucci and Farina 2019, esp. ch. 5).

poiēma (the poem).
There are three numbers — singular, dual, and plural; the singular form
is *ho, hē, to,* the dual *tō, ta* and the plural *hoi, hai, ta.*
The cases are *ho, tou, tō*, *ton, ō, hē, tēs, tē, tēn, ō.*”

(Kemp 1987: 182)

As explained by Lallot in his commentary to this chapter, the expression ἄρθρον ὑποτασσόμενον, a ‘postponed’ article, is to be understood as the relative pronoun ὅς, ἥ, ὅ which, due to its formal resemblance with the definite article, has been considered by some grammarians under the same category.[8] As far as the reconstruction of the Greek text of the *Téchne* is concerned, the words καὶ ὑποτασσόμενον are considered as a later interpolation, on the basis of their absence from a relevant part of the witnesses as well as from the Armenian and Syriac translations. Di Benedetto has brought several valid text-critical as well as historical arguments against the hypothesis of the interpolation.[9] As I will try to show in what follows, it is likely that, on the contrary, the Syriac tradition had knowledge of the longer version of this passage, or at least of some scholia or commentaries dealing with a preposed and postponed version of an element called ἄρθρον.

The Syriac text of the *Téchne* has been edited by Adalbertus Merx, in 1889, and this edition has provided the basis for the only extant commentary on the passage, by Contini (1998):

ܫܪܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܡܢܬܐ ܪܒܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܠܠܐ.. ܗܝ ܕܡܬܩܕܡܐ ܡܬܬܣܝܡܐ· ܩܕܡ ܩܪܝܢܗܘܢ ܕܫܡܗ̈ܐ. ܘܒܪܫܐ ܗܝ ܡܬܬܣܝܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ. ܒܫܘܠܡܐ ܕܝܢ
ܕܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܐܝܟ ܗܘ̇ ܕܥܒܘܕܐ. ܥܒܕܬܐ. ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܥܒܘܕܐ.. ܡܢ̈ܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܚܕܝܐܝܬ ܘܣܓܝܐܝܬ.. ܚܕܝܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܐܡܪ ܐܢܫ. ܣܓܝܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܐ̈ܢܫܐ..
ܡܦ̈ܠܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܘ ܫܘܡܠܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܡܗܦܟܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇..

“Article is the fourth part of speech, which is placed before the readings of the nouns. And it is placed at the head, according to the Greek language, while (it is placed) at the end according to the Syriac (language). Like: *ʿābūdā*, *ʿābdat*, *ʿbīdtā d-ʿābūdā.* Numbers are two: singular and plural. Singular is like when one says « man », plural [is like] « men ». Cases are either at the end, according to the Syriac language and usually, but in the Greek language it is the other way around. This for the article, as it needed to be said.”

(Merx 1889: 61*[10], my translation)

The Syriac text established by Merx does not correspond to the translation that he gives elsewhere in the work:

“ Ἄρθρον (add. δε) ἐστὶ μέρος quartum λόγου, προτασσόμενον τῶν κλίσεων τῶν ὀνομάτων. Et ab initio quidem ponitur sicut in lingua syriaca, in fine vero sicut (in) lingua graeca. [Desunt nonnulla] sicut id factor, factio, factum (fatoris) = ὁ ποιητής, ἡ ποίησις, τὸ ποίημα. Ἀριθμοὶ δὲ sunt duo, ἑνικὸς (om. δυϊκὸς) καὶ πληθυντικός· ἑνικὸς μὲν οἷον (add. litter. sicut ad dicendum) homo, πληθυντικὸς δὲ homines. Πτῶσις (…) δὲ vel perfectio sicut in lingua syriaca plerumque est, in lingua vero graeca est. Etiam ho de articulo, in quantum dici potuit.” [11]

(Merx 1889: 18)

As one can see, to the Syriac version “it is placed at the head, according to the Greek language, while (it is placed) at the end according to the Syriac (language)” corresponds a Latin interpretation “Et ab initio quidem ponitur sicut in lingua syriaca, in fine vero sicut (in) lingua graeca.”, describing the opposite state of affairs.

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[8] See Lallot 1998: 191 for the reasons of this categorization and for a discussion of the sources. The association of ἄρθρον with the relative pronoun is found in the Greek grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus (2nd cent.), cf. Traglia 1956: 63, Melazzo 1988.

[9] Di Benedetto 1959: 108-109.

[10] Here and everywhere else in the paper, the asterisk indicates a Syriac page-numbering according to the use of 19th cent. editions.

[11] Merx indicates in Greek the Syriac text corresponding to the Greek *Téchne* and in Latin what he considers to be Syriac adaptation or addition to the original text.

In his study devoted to the Syriac *Téchne*, Contini, based on Merx's translation, but integrating also Merx's editorial choices, interprets the passage as follows:

"Certo per una svista, *Sir* afferma che l'articolo è prepositivo in siriaco, pospositivo invece in greco, volendo dire l'inverso: con questa precisazione il grammatico siro poteva eludere il problema rappresentato dall'opposizione greca tra articolo prepositivo ὁ e 'pospositivo' ὃς, corrispondenta quello che la grammatica scolastica definisce "pronome relativo", e mostrava di aver intuito l'antica – ma nel 6° secolo quasi scomparsa in siriaco – valenza determinativa dello "stato enfatico" aramaico. La *TGSir* successiva ha cancellato l'articolo, categoria irrilevante in siriaco a livello morfologico, dall'inventario delle parti del discorso, riducendole a 7."[12]
(Contini 1998: 108)

According to Contini, hence, the Syriac translator would have seized the occasion offered by the ambiguous Greek passage to introduce a feature proper to Aramaic (but no longer productive in Syriac): the postpositive determinative nominal ending *-ā*. As I will try to show in what follows, this explanation is not necessary and a closer look at the genesis of the Syriac text will provide a clue for a different interpretation.

The reference to a post-positive article that we find in the Greek original, although the result of an interpolation, clearly finds an echo in the Syriac version. However, the Syriac translation of this chapter poses a number of problems in the textual tradition, which need to be addressed before examining its content. The text of the Syriac *Téchne* is witnessed (to the best of our knowledge) by five manuscripts:

1. British Library Add. 14658 (estrangelo, 7th cent. ms. B in the edition by Merx 1889)[13];
2. Add. 14620 (West Syriac, 9th cent., Merx ms. A**[14]**);
3. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Sachau 226 (East-Syriac,18th cent.? Merx ms. C[15]);
4. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Vat. sir. 593 (East-Syriac, 1917[16]);
5. Chaldean Patriarchate of Baghdad (CPB) 223, *olim* Mosul 35 (East-Syriac, 16th cent. according to Scher, first half of the 17th cent. according to Kessel & Bamballi 2018: 27[17]).

The last two mss. were not used for the edition of the text. Moreover, as Merx explains, ms. Sachau 226 was made available to him only at the end of his editorial work, so that he was able to mention its variants in the text, but not of fully evaluating its text-critical importance. As it has been shown by Kessel – Bamballi 2018, both Sachau 226 and Vat. sir. 593 are copies of CPB 223. CPB 223 has been collated with different witnesses, as it is shown by the marginal insertions that were added by the copyist himself (cf., e.g., f. 66r) and as it is stated by eth copyist himself in a marginal note at f. 68r ("I have studied several copies..."). One of such witnesses had a text very close to Add. 14620 (although maybe with slight variants).

As far as the section on the article is concerned, of the two ancient West Syriac manuscripts from the BL, the oldest one Add. 14658 does not contain it, while the latest one Add. 14620 presents a corrupted and incomplete text. CPB 223 has a text that is somewhat more complete in the first and

[12]"Admittedly due to an oversight, *Sir* states that the article is prepositional in Syriac, postpositional instead in Greek, meaning the reverse: with this clarification the Syrian grammarian could circumvent the problem represented by the Greek opposition between prepositional article ὁ and 'postpositional' ὃς, corresponding to what scholastic grammar calls the "relative pronoun," and showed that he had a hint of the ancient -but in 6th century almost disappeared in Syriac- determinative value of the Aramaic "emphatic state." The later *TGSir* deleted the article, an irrelevant category in Syriac at the morphological level, from the inventory of parts of speech, reducing it to 7 parts." (my translation).

[13] Wright 1870: v. III, 1156, n. 5 and Kessel and Arzhanov 2020.

[14] Wright 1870: v. II, 802 n.9.

[15] Sachau 1899: v. I, 335A, n. 89.

[16] Van Lantschoot 1965: 121-123.

[17] Scher 1907: 237, Kessel and Bamballi 2018.

last part, but also incorporating different variants in a puzzling way in the central portion.[18] Let us now examine these two witnesses in a synopsis:

On the article[19]

BL Add. 14620 f. 24v		CPB 223 f. 72r-v	
Article is the fourth part of speech,	ܐܪܬܪܝܛ ܗܘ ܪܒܥܝܐ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܘܡܕܒܪ ܘܡܫܬܡܫ ܒܫܡܗ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܘܡ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܘܡ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܟ	ܐܪܬܪܝܛ ܗܘ ܪܒܥܝܐ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܐ ܘܡܕܒܪ ܘܡܫܬܡܫ ܒܫܡܗ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܘܡ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܟ	Article is the fourth part of speech,
which is placed before the readings of the nouns.	ܕܡܬܣܡ ܩܕܡ ܩܪܝܢܬܐ ܕܫܡܗ̈ ܕܡܬܣܡ ܩܕܡ ܩܪܝܢܬܐ ܕܫܡܗ̈	ܕܡܬܣܡ ܩܕܡ ܩܪܝܢܬܐ ܕܫܡܗ̈ ܕܡܬܣܡ ܩܕܡ ܩܪܝܢܬܐ ܕܫܡܗ̈	which is placed before the readings of the nouns.
And it is placed at the head, according to the Syriac language,	ܘܡܬܣܡ ܗܘ ܒܪܫ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘܡܬܣܡ ܗܘ ܒܪܫ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ	ܘܡܬܣܡ ܗܘ ܒܪܫ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘ. ܘܡܬܣܡ ܗܘ ܒܪܫ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘ. ܘ	And it is placed at the head, according to the Greek language, Mm Syriac, Ww
at the end according to the Greek.	ܘܒܣܘܦ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܣܘܦ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘ	ܘܒܣܘܦ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘ. ܘ	at the end according to the Greek. Ww
		ܕܡܬܦܫܩ ܒܐ ܐܠܦ	Syriac. A
		ܫܡܘܗܝ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢܝܢ. ܡܬܬܢ ܘܡܩܕܡ ܫܡܘܗܝ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢܝܢ. ܡܬܬܢ ܘܡܩܕܡ	Its accidents are genders, numbers, cases
like: *ʿābūdā*, *ʿābdat*, *ʿbīdtā d-ʿābūdā*.	ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܒܘܕܐ ܕܥܒܕܬ ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܥܒܘܕܐ ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܒܕܬ ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܥܒܘܕܐ	ܕܡܬܐ ܕܥܒܘܕܐ ܕܥܒܕܬ ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܥܒܘܕܐ ܕ	Genders are like: *ʿābōdā*, *ʿābdat*, *ʿbīdtā*
Numbers are two: singular and plural. Singular is like when one says « man », plural [is like] « men ».	ܬܪܝܢ ܗܘ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܦܪܫ ܕܡܬ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܬ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ	ܡܬܬܢ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܣܓܝܐ ܡܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܘܡ ܒܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܦ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘ.	Numbers are two : singular and plural. Singular is like when one says « man », plural [is like] « man » [sic].
Cases are either at the end, according to the Syriac language and usually, but in the Greek language it is the other way around.	ܬܪܝܢ ܗܘ ܒܪܫ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘܒܣܘܦ ܠܦܘܡ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܫܘܡ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܟ	ܡܬܦܫܩ ܒܐ ܐܠܦ ܠܫܢ ܫܡܘܗܝ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢܝܢ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘ. ܒܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢܝܢ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘ.	Case is either ending, according to the Syriac language and usually, A. In fact, in the Greek language, it is the other way around.
This for the article, as it needed to be said.	ܗܢܐ ܥܠ ܕܒܪ ܐܪܬܪܝܛ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܡܐ ܕܢܐܡܪ ܗܢܐ ܥܠ ܕܒܪ ܐܪܬܪܝܛ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܡܐ ܕܢܐܡܪ		

As it can be seen from the table above, ms. CPB 223 displays a very peculiar feature, for the passage under discussion: the copyist has inserted in the text different textual variants from three copies of the text, which he has indicated by three Syriac letters, penned in red ink: ܡ (*mem*, M), ܘ (*wāw*, W) and ܐ (*ʾālap*, A).[20]

If we reconstruct the text contained in each manuscript, therefore, we have:

A. First set of variants

Manuscript ܡ (M)

ܡܬܬܢ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢ ܒܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܒܠܫܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ:

[18] This means that in Merx' edition one only finds the text witnessed by A and C, which has been re-elaborated by Merx according to his interpretation of the content. The Vatican and the Berlin manuscripts, being copies from CPB 223 are not relevant for our scope.

[19] In this section of the paper, only the Syriac script will be used, due to the length and complexity of the text that is being examined and to the philological and paleographic problems under discussion. For the rest of the paper, a transliteration will be provided, in order to make the argument more broadly understandable.

[20] Elsewhere in the manuscript (folio 68r), the copyist declares, in marginal notes, that he has been consulting several copies (*ṣḥāḥē saggīʾē*). This method of indicating testimonies and textual variants, quite common in modern textual criticism, is unusual in Syriac manuscripts and I was not able to find any other example. The lexicographer Bar Bahlul adopts a somewhat comparable system in indicating some of his sources, rather than textual variants (see Duval 1901: II, vi). As the manuscript is dated to the first half of the 17th cent. by Kessel and Bamballi, one could speculate of a Western influence, possibly brought by Carmelite or Capuchin missionaries. The latter were in Mosul a first time in 1636, and then, more permanently, from 1660.

And it is placed at the head, according to the Greek language,

Manuscript ܘ٢٥ (W)

ܘܟܙܢ ܡܢ ܪܫܐ ܡܫܡܫܢ ܒܗ ܒܟܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܬ:

And it is placed at the head, according to the Syriac language,

B. Second set of variants

Manuscript ܘ٢٥ (W)

ܘܒܣܘܦܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܠܫܢ ܝܘܢܝܬ.

while (it is placed) at the end according to the Greek language.

Manuscript ܟܟ١ (A)

ܒܣܘܪܝܝܬ ܒܗ [ܘܒܣܘܦܐ.]

while (it is placed) at the end according to the Syriac (language).

If we group the variants we have the following combinations:

ܡܡ Article is the fourth part of speech, which is placed before the readings of the nouns. And it is placed at the head, according to the Greek language, + ܟܟ١ while (it is placed) at the end according to the Syriac (language).

ܘ٢٥ Article is the fourth part of speech, which is placed before the readings of the nouns. And it is placed at the head, according to the Syriac language, while (it is placed) at the end according to the Greek language.

Finally, manuscript ܟܟ١ is also mentioned further down the text, apparently as the only witness to have a certain portion of the paragraph on case (*mappūltā*), but the actual scope of the variant is unclear.

The first reconstructed version is quite uncertain, as it seems to be the result of the combination of two witnesses that are given in an incomplete form. The second version, on the contrary, corresponds to the text of Add. 14658. This means that we have at least two witnesses providing a text different from the one reconstructed by Merx, and used by Contini, for the Syriac description of the article (*šārītā*). Moreover, from the reconstruction above, we deduce that not only the version shared by Add. 14658 and CPB 223 ܘ٢٥ is the oldest witness (obviously not a warrant of quality), but also that the text reconstructed by Merx and used by Contini is actually not witnessed by any manuscript, but is rather the result of a combination of variants given in CPB 223, of unknown origin and of unclear structure (how should ܡܡ and ܟܟ١ be combined?).

This state of affairs allows to question Contini's assumption that the Syriac text stating that the article is preposed in Syriac and postponed in Greek is the result of *lapsus* (by the translator? By the copyist?). Rather, I am inclined to assume that the Greek double reference, to a preposed and postponed article generated some confusion, when, in the translation, a Syriac parallel came to be added in the text (as it is often the case in the Syriac *Téchne*).

A somewhat simplified state of affairs is found in a version of the same definition quoted in Bar Bahlūl's Syriac-Arabic *Lexicon* (10th cent.). In a passage attributed to one of his lexicographical sources, Bar Seroshway (9th cent.) *sub voce šārītā* we find:

ܗܝ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܬܡܫ ܒܗ ܒܣܘܪܝܝܬ ܘܒܝܘܢܝܬ ; ܘܡܢ ܒܣܘܦܗ ܒܝܘܢܝܬ ܘܠܐ ܒܣܘܪܝܝܬ. ܪܒܛ ܟܠܡ. ربط الكلام

"[Syr.] The article (*šārītā*), according to Bar Serošway is the fourth part of speech, that is placed before the nouns. And it is placed at the head in the Greek language and in Syriac. And at the end in the Greek language, but not in Syriac. [Ar.] Junction of words."[21]

(Duval 1901: II, 2014, my translation)

[21] Duval 1901: v. II, 2014.

In this case, the complex passage of the *Téchne* has been re-organized assigning the preposed article to both Greek and Syriac and the postponed one only to Greek. However, once again no example is given that would allow the reader to understand what a *šārītā* is.[22] At any rate, even in the text of the Syriac *Téchne*, the examples reproducing the Greek original do not provide any hint to the identity or function of the *šārītā*. This might be the reason for which it disappeared from the list of the parts of speech in all the subsequent grammatical tradition, which will only take into account seven parts of speech (except for the *Lexicon* of Bar Bahlūl).[23]

3. *ʾArtrōn* vs *šārītā* in early Syriac grammatical and logic tradition

Although in the very first paragraph of the Syriac *Téchne* the translator has established a correspondence between Syriac *šārītā* and the transliterated Greek term *ʾartrō*, in later Syriac grammatical tradition these two terms seem to follow a different path.

While, as we said, the category disappears from the list of the parts of speech, the term *ʾartrōn* gains a place in both East and West Syriac grammatical, logic and lexicographical texts. Let us examine a text dating to the same epoch as the translation of the *Téchne*, Proba's *Commentary on Peri Hermeneias* (6th cent.)[24], more specifically the commentary to section 16b, 19-20 of Aristotle's treatise: Αὐτὰ μὲν οὖν καθ' ἑαυτὰ λεγόμενα τὰ ῥήματα ὀνόματά ἐστι καὶ σημαίνει τι "Verbs in and by themselves are substantival and have significance". Proba presents the following example, aiming at determining the contexts in which a verbal form can have the role of a noun: *ʾāmar ger ʾnāš hāy d-āmar meltā ʾīteh* "One can say that 'he says' is a verb"[25], which has (correctly) been considered as a Syriac translation of a subjacent (but unattested) Greek example Τὸ λέγει ῥῆμα ἐστι. About this sentence, Proba observes that: "this 'he says' [*āmar*] is set in the place of a noun; in fact, it is not just *ʾāmar*, but *d-ʾāmar*, which, when this *d-* is added, which has the place of the article (*b-dukat ʾartrōn*), fills the place of the noun". It is clear that in this passage, more or less contemporary to the translation of the *Téchne* (if the attribution to Huzaya is to be trusted), the word and the category of *ʾartrōn* are associated with the morphological element *d-*, a relative particle. This commentary is thus one of the earliest instances in which, unlike in the translation of the *Téchne*, we find a concrete Syriac linguistic content for the category of the article.

A crucial author for the study of the reception of Greek grammatical categories by the Syriac tradition is the West-Syriac bishop and polymath Jacob of Edessa (d. 708). Jacob is the author of two grammatical works: a treatise on punctuation, which is not based on a Greek grammatical model, and a grammar largely based on the Greek model of Theodose's *Canons*, the *Turoṣ mamllo*, which although celebrated by the later Syriac tradition, nowadays only survives in a few fragments that do not contain any reference to the category of *ʾartrōn*.[26] However, Jacob offers us a hint of his view on the matter in a non-grammatical text: the translation that he made of the *Homiliae Cathedrales* of

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[22] Notice that the *Lexicon* contains two more entries dealing with this matter: *ʾartrōn* "like *b-, d-* in front of a noun, and, according to Bar Serošway, *ʾartrōs*, is the conjunction of words (*mellē*) like *w-, d-, k-*"; *ʾartrā* "according to Bar Serošway these are the letters that are added at the head of a noun, like *d-, l-, w-*" (Duval 1901: v. I, 304). On the lexicographer Bar Serošway see Kiraz 2021, esp. the Introduction on pp. 195-196). The presence of a prefix *k-* in this list seems awkward, as Syriac does not have aby such particle. One could tentatively interpret this passage as referring to the Arabic preposition *ka-* "like, as", as Bar Serošway's was a Syriac-Arabic lexicon.

[23] In the *Lexicon*, the eight part of speech are listed *sub voce meltā* ("speech"), Duval 1901: II, 1098. See Farina 2021a: 49 and, for an analysis of all the quotations from the Syriac *Téchne* in Bar Bahlūl's *Lexicon*, see Farina à paraître.

[24] On this author see Brock 2011, Hugonnard-Roche 2004: 276-277 and *passim*.

[25] Hoffmann 1869: 75 Syriac text, 100 Latin translation. In this case, we add a transliteration of the Syriac text, in order to make our argument easier to follow.

[26] On Jacob's grammatical works see Talmon 2008, Farina 2018 and the introductory chapter in King and Merx forthocoming.

Severus of Antioch (5th-6th c.).[27] Indeed, the translator added several linguistic commentaries, some of which are embedded in the translation itself, some others laid out on the margins of some of the oldest manuscript copies of the text. Some of such commentaries happen to be on *ʾartrōn.*

In Hom. CVII Severus is commenting upon the Isaiah verse 19,18, which, according to his reference version, the Septuagint, is: Πόλισ-ασεδεκ κληθήσεται ἡ μία πόλις ("this one city will be called Polis-Asedek").[28] The Syriac translation of the passage *aṣēdeq tetqrē hāy ḥdā mdīntā* "Asedeq will be called this one city"[29] is followed by the commentary: «By this small addition of the article (*ʾartrōn*), that is of this *hāy* ("this") [the text] shows the stronger sense of this meaning». This Syriac translation, literally following the Greek text, does not correspond to the Peshitta version of the biblical passage. In fact, the verse has some textual difficulties and the original Hebrew crucially differs from the Greek Septuagint version. The text does not seem to follow the Syriac Hexapla either, as in that version we read *aṣēdeq tetqrē ḥdā mdīntā*, without the demonstrative *hāy*, which therefore seems to be rather an addition by Jacob himself.[30] From Jacob's translation and from his remark, we can deduct that, according to him, the Greek article can sometimes be translated by a demonstrative pronoun in Syriac, to which the grammatical term *ʾartrōn* can be applied.

Ms. BL Add. 12159 (868 AD)[31] contains a copy of a subset of Severus' *Homiliae*, accompanied by several marginal notes by Jacob. Among the homilies contained in the ms. is also Hom. XXVIII, in which Severus gives a long explanation of the value of the article in the Greek passage ὁ κύριος μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου (Jn 20,28), trying to show that it should not be interpreted as in support of a dyophysite doctrine[32]. On f. 43vB of Add. 12159, we can read the following remark by Jacob upon this passage: "In the Greek language there are certain parts of speech that are called *ʾartrā* (ΑΡΘΡΑ). They are placed before the nouns when they are ordered and laid within a sentence. And when for one person several names are given, it is not necessary that the article (*ʾartrōn*) is placed in front of (all of) them, but just before one of them, in order not to convey a meaning of a plurality of persons…".

Finally, in Hom. CIX, Severus describes the importance of the presence of the article in Ex. 3,15 (Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν) Θεὸς ʿΑβραὰμ καὶ Θεὸς ʾΙσαὰκ καὶ Θεὸς ʾΙακὼβ, which is rendered in Syriac by Jacob as *haw alāheh d-abrāhām w-haw alāheh d-īsḥaq w-haw alāheh d-yaʿqūb* "The God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob". In this case, the Syriac text seems to presuppose a Greek version different from the Septuagint (and, also, from the Hebrew original): the definite article that is presupposed by the Syriac translation and rendered by the demonstrative *haw* "this" is not to be found in the biblical passage. The presence of the article is not only inferred by the presence of the Syriac demonstrative, but explicitly mentioned by Severus, as a crucial point in his argument: "The addition of the articles (ἄρθρα) before the nouns provides an important clue for this. Indeed, he did not say 'God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob', but carefully, for every single one of them, '*the* God of Abraham and *the* God of Isaac and *the* God of Jacob'…".[33] Whatever the source or the theological reason for this insertion may be, it is important here to notice that, on f. 248vB of Add. 12159, Jacob of Edessa notes "In the Greek language there

[27] On this text and the vicissitudes of its Syriac translations see Brière 1960.

[28] As Severus of Antioch was a prominent Anti-Chalcedonian Greek Church Father, his reference version for the Old Testament is mostly the Septuagint. Severus' texts were quickly obliterated within the Greek Chalcedonian milieu, but they survived in Syriac translation, as the Miaphysite Syriac Church venerated the figure of Severus.

[29] Brière 1985: 189.

[30] Cf. Ceriani 1874: folio 179r. The Codex Ambrosianus pulished by Ceriani in a fac simile edition is the only witness for this passage of the Isaiah according to the Syro-Hexapla. On Jacob's handling and revision of the book of Isaiah in its Syriac versions see Ter Haar Romeny 2010, Juckel 2008, Juckel 2005, where, however, Is. 19 is not taken into consideration.

[31] Wright 1870: v. II, 534-546.

[32] Brière 1974: 46-47.

[33] Brière 1985: 235-236.

are some small particles (lit. limbs *haddāmūnē zʿūrē*) that are called *ʾartrā*, that is articles (*šaryātā*), they are placed in front of the nouns, and they are not found in the Syriac language. And it is by necessity (*ananqī*) that we have put *haw* in front of the name of God, by saying «this God», where what is put before the nouns shows that the realities designated by the nouns are specific and distinct, and not general."

These passages from the translation of Severus' homilies show us that Jacob, as a translator from Greek, was well aware of the presence and of the meaning of the Greek definite article. Moreover, he was familiar with the grammatical category of ἄρθρον, which he considered as a specific feature of Greek, not shared by Syriac, but that could often correspond, in their syntactico-semantic value, to a Syriac demonstrative.[34] Never does Jacob suggest that Syriac would have any morphosyntactic counterpart of the Greek article, nor that the forms in the emphatic state would have a definite/determinate meaning. Jacob does not use the Syriac equivalent *šārītā* either, and one could wonder whether the list of the parts of speech that we find in the translation of the *Téchne* was as meaningful for him as it will appear to be for some later Syriac grammarians. The fragmentary state of his grammar does not allow us to answer this question with certainty.

4. Stabilization of a metalinguistic category: 9th-11th cent.

If we now move to consider the definition of the term *ʾartrōn* given in later Syriac lexicography, we observe a constant reference to a preposed position. As was mentioned above (note 22), Bar Bahlūl, quoting from his 9th cent. predecessor Bar Serošway, lists the preposed particles *w-* "and", *d-*(relative particle), *b-* "in", *l-* "to" under the entries *ʾartrōn* and *ʾartrā*. The same opinion, as we will see, is shared by later Syriac grammarians, who mean by this term the prepositions *b-, d-, w-, l-*. Moreover, in the list of the eight parts of speech that Bar Bahlūl gives under the entry *meltā*, the order of the Greek and Syriac *Téchne* has been modified and *šārītā* has moved from fourth to sixth position, being thus grouped together with preposition (seventh) and conjunction (eighth) at the end of the list.[35]

By means of this identification, the category of *ʾartrōn* intersects with another metalinguistic category, again adapted from the Greek tradition: that of case *case* (*ptosis*, Syr. *mappeltā* "fall"). Already in the Syriac *Téchne*, we find an association between Syriac prepositions and functions associated with Greek cases, as Syriac does not have a complex nominal inflection nor a case system:

> The cases of the nouns, like in the Greek language, are five, that is straight, genitive, dative, accusative and vocative. Straight is the one who is named, like *barnāšā* "man", genitive is possessive or paternal, like *d-barnāšā* "of the man", *d-sūsyā*, "of the horse", dative is the name of the receiver, like in the expression *l-barnāšā* "to the man", accusative is the name of the one who causes, like when one says *b-barnāšā* "through the man", *men barnāšā* "by the man", vocative is the name of the one who is called, like *ō barnāšā* "oh man".
> (Merx 1889: 51*, my translation)

When one compares the Greek cases as they are listed in the *Téchne grammatiké* with their corresponding Syriac names and examples, one gets the following list:

Nominative: ὀρθή ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ *trīṣāʾīt* : *barnāšā* (man)
Genitive: γενική ܓܢܣܢܝܬ *gensānāʾīt* : *d-barnāšā*
Dative: δοτική ܡܬܝܗܒܢܝܬ *metyahbānāʾīt* : *l-barnāšā*

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[34] An original association of the metalinguistic term ἄρθρον with the demonstrative is already found in part of the Greek grammatical tradition, namely the peripatetic Anaximenes of Lampsacus and some of the Stoics (see Traglia 1956: 62-63).

[35] Cf. n. 23 above and the table in Farina 2021a: 49 for a broader overview of the order of the parts of speech in the Syriac tradition.

Accusative: αἰτιατική ܐܠܬܢܝܐ *eltānāʾīt* : *b-barnāšā*, *men barnāšā*
Vocative: κλητική ܡܬܩܪܝܢܝܬ *metqaryānāʾīt* : *ō barnāšā*

Although no explicit list of prepositions is given, this passage is at the base of the inventory of cases that we find in later grammarians. This association between cases and prepositions remains constant throughout the tradition. In Bar Bahlūl's *Lexicon* we find the list of the particles *b- d- w- l-* sub voce *pṭōsis* (Greek loanword, defined by Bar Serošway as *mappūltā da-šmā ʾaw d-meltā* "case of the noun or of the verb").[36] In 11th century, we find the following definition in the Syriac grammar by the East-Syriac grammarian Elias of Nisibis (d. 1046):

> "The letters which are called cases [*mapplātā*] are four: *b- d- w- l-*. These letters are called cases because they fall (i.e. they come to stand) before nouns, as one says *b-pagrā, d-pagrā, w-pagrā, l-pagrā, b-sūsyā, w-sūsyā, l-sūsyā* …"
>
> (Gottheil 1887: 30, Syr. text 12*).[37]

In this etymologizing definition, we find an explicit association between the category of *mappeltā* "case" and the preposed position of the particles that are designated by this term. This seems to be a further step towards the identification between *mappeltā* and *ʾartrōn*.

Finally, in contemporary grammar by the East-Syriac Patriarch Elias of Tirhan (Elias I, d. 1049), we find an explicit equation of the categories of *ʾartrōn*, *šārītā* and *mappeltā*, associated with the prefixed position and with the preposition and particles *b- d- w- l-*, as well as with the functions of the Greek cases. Elia's grammar is structured as a series of thirty questions and answers. Question 16 is devoted to the Greek category of *ʾartrōn*: "The *ʾartra*, that is articles (*šāryātā*) or cases (*mapplātā*) in Syriac *b*, *d*, *l*, how are they prefixed to nouns?" (Bäthgen 1880: 19*, my translation). Question 18, instead, treats of the grammatical differences between Greek and Arabic, on the one hand, and Syriac on the other, with respect to inflection. Here Elias observes that Syriac "does not have the five « inclinations » (*meṣṭalyānwātā*), that is *pṭōsis*, that is *mapplātā* that Greek uses." (Bäthgen 1880: 24*, my translation).

From these two observations, it emerges that the Syriac term *mappeltā* has (at least) two different meanings: it translates the Greek term πτῶσις, either meant as a morphological feature that Syriac does not share with Greek, or as designating a syntactic function that in Syriac is covered by the preposed particles *b- d- w- l-*, which come to constitute over time a closed and formalized sub-class of particles (Syr. *ʾesārē*). In their turn, these particles can also be designated as *ʾartra* or *šāryātā*, when there are considered in their morphological facie of preposed elements, rather than in their morphosyntactic function of nominal "case-markers" (in the perspective of the Syriac grammarians).

5. Concluding remarks

A few observations can be added to this brief overview of the path followed by the Greek category of ἄρθρον into the Syriac grammatical theory.

First of all, the close examination of the manuscript witnesses of the Syriac translation(s) of the *Téchne* reveals a much less coherent and homogeneous text, than the one that Merx's account has set at the foundation of Syriac grammatical tradition. As the earliest complete witness that we have is dated to the 9th cent., we do not know in which shape and to what extent a version of the Greek grammar had been circulating in the Syriac world in the previous centuries. Moreover, the variety of manuscript copies laying behind CPB 223 and its distance from the (corrupted) text of 9th cent. Add. 14620 witness to a quite inhomogeneous tradition, at least as far as the section we have examined is concerned. The fact that the earliest copies of the Syriac *Téchne* stem from a West-Syriac

[36] Duval 1901: v.II, 1535.

[37] I have adapted the transliteration of Syriac in the quotation to the system used in this paper, to facilitate the reading.

environment, whereas the later and more elaborated ones (including the version scattered through Bar Bahlūl's *Lexicon*) are East-Syriac also points to a more complex genesis of this translation. Finally, the reworking of the text that we can see in Bar Serošway and Bar Bahlūl proves that the text of the *Téchne* was being red and used, but also that it was subject to reworking and re-adapting to a different understanding of the morphosyntax of Greek and Syriac, respectively.

As far as the evolution of the Syriac understanding of the category of ἄρθρον is concerned, the earliest sources (*Téchne*, Proba and Jacob of Edessa) display a predominance of a pronominal interpretation (relative, demonstrative), which is in line with the different values given to the term in the Greek linguistic tradition. A different morphosyntactic interpretation, in connection to the syntax of prepositions, prevails in later authors. However, in spite of this evolution, the Syriac grammatical tradition proves to be reluctant to abandon a metalinguistic term, although its direct Greek linguistic referent, the definite article, is not found in Syriac. The ἄρθρον is abandoned as a part of speech, but is persistent as a descriptive tool, delimitating the sub-class of prepositions that convey values corresponding to the Greek nominal declensions.

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