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Editorial

In the last three issues of the Harp (Vol. Nos. 30, 31 & 32) we published most of the papers presented in the 8th World Syriac Conference held in SEERI during Sept. 2014.

In this issue (Vol. No. XXXIII), we are happy to publish the remaining papers presented in the Conference, together with a few scholarly papers submitted by learned authors. We hope that those who did not get the opportunity to participate in the last conference will be greatly benefitted by these presentations. Let this issue be a valuable addition to their collection!

We could not bring out the entire papers presented in the last conference, as some of the participants failed to submit copies of their presentations in a digital form or as a hard copy even after repeated requests. Of course, this is a great loss to our readers and we sincerely regret for the same.

Sebastian Brock

TWO VITAL COLLECTIONS OF SYRIAC MANUSCRIPTS

It is a sobering fact that if we did not have the benefit of just two monasteries' collections of Syriac manuscripts, our knowledge of early Syriac literature would be immensely poorer; we would not, for example, have any complete poems of St Ephrem, and many works, including important translations from the Greek Fathers, lost in their Greek original, would remain unknown. The reason for this is a simple one: it is only thanks to the dry climate of Egypt that considerable numbers of Syriac manuscripts dating from the fifth to eleventh century have been preserved. Elsewhere in West Asia (or, from a European perspective, the Middle East) it is very rare for Syriac manuscripts that date from before about AD 1000 to have survived. The two monasteries in question are, of course, St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, and Deir al-Surian, between Alexandria and Cairo. Since they belong to different ecclesial traditions, Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian, each preserves a different selection of writings, as far as patristic and liturgical texts are concerned.

In the following brief survey of these two monastic collections, I include in the discussion those manuscripts which are not any longer in their original home, but are now scattered all over the world in public libraries and private collections. Since the collection of Deir al-Surian is of greater importance because of its size, I take it first.

Deir al-Surian (Dayra d-Yaldat Alaha)

The presence of Syriac monks at this Coptic monastery in the desert of Sketis goes back to the early ninth century and continued until the mid seventeenth century. That the monastery remained both Coptic and Syriac during this period is indicated both by the presence of inscriptions in both languages in the monastery church, and by the fact that Syriac manuscripts written in the monastery normally commemorate both the Patriarch of Antioch and the Patriarch of Alexandria in their colophons.

A certain amount about how the collection was built up can be learnt from notes about donors that have been added to manuscripts.¹ Thus we know that in the early period of the Syriac presence there was a close connection between the monastery and Takrit, through merchants from Takrit who were residing in Old Cairo. Quite a number of important old manuscripts go back to these early donations, but it is above all to the initiative of Abbot Mushe of Nisibis, in the early tenth century, that a large number of manuscripts were added to the library.² Abbot Mushe had travelled to Baghdad in 927 in order to negotiate a reduction in new taxes that had been imposed on the monasteries in the desert of Sketis. As is not unusual today as well, dealing with tax authorities can be a protracted business; in the case of Abbot Mushe's visit to Baghdad, it was only after six years that he returned, but his time in the Abbasid capital had by no means been wasted, for, as he proudly announces in notes inserted into quite a number of manuscripts:

To the honour, renown and exaltation of this holy Monastery of the shrine of the Bearer of God, of the Syrians, in the desert

- 1 An overview, with references to further literature, is given in the Introduction to S.P. Brock and L. van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt) (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 227; Leuven, 2014)*.
- 2 For the significance of Mushe's work, see my 'Without Mushe of Nisibis, where would we be? Some reflections on the transmission of Syriac literature', *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56 (2004), pp. 15-24.

of Sketis, Mushe, the insignificant sinner known as ‘the Nisibene’, made the effort to acquire this book, along with 250 others. He purchased most of them, but some were given him as a ‘blessing’ by individuals, when he went to Baghdad on behalf of this desert and the monks there. May God, for whose glory he did this and for the benefit of those who read them, - may God forgive him and everyone who has participated in them. By the living Word of God, no one is authorized to abscond with a single one of them, or to delete this memorandum, or to remove, cut out or take them away from this Monastery. Anyone who dares to do so is anathematized: have pity on your soul, O wretch! These books came with the above-mentioned Abbot Mushe in the year 1243 of the Greeks [= AD 932].

After the time of Abbot Mushe the library continued to increase its holdings of manuscripts, either by further donations, or with manuscripts written in the monastery itself. Already in the twelfth century the library of Deir al Surian had one of the richest collections of Syrian Orthodox manuscripts in the Middle East, and it was from this monastery that Patriarch Michael the Great (d.1199) borrowed a large quantity of manuscripts in order to have them copied at his own monastery of Mor Barsaumo (near modern Malatya in Turkey), in order to replenish its library after a disastrous fire. As we learn from notes in manuscripts still at Deir al-Surian, not all of them seem to have been returned.

By the sixteenth century the Syriac presence had dwindled, and since the Syriac manuscripts were of no special interest for the Coptic Orthodox monks, in the following centuries many were sold, others were donated, and yet others were illicitly removed from the library - all despite the dire curses written at the end of many manuscripts on anyone who removed the manuscript from the library. In the early seventeenth century two very important biblical manuscripts were brought to Europe where they found a new home

in the recently founded Ambrosian Library in Milan: these two manuscripts are the seventh-century complete Peshitta Old Testament (7a1 in the Leiden edition of the Peshitta Old Testament), and the eighth-century manuscript of the second half of the Old Testament in the Syrohexapla version (the ‘Seventy’ in Syriac), translated from Greek in a monastery outside Alexandria around the year 615. Both manuscripts are of prime importance for biblical studies. Some other manuscripts from Deir al-Surian reached Paris in the seventeenth century, but it was in the eighteenth century that a sizeable number were purchased for the Vatican Library in Rome, first by Elias Assemani (in 1706), and a little later by Joseph Simon Assemani (1715), both Maronite scholars. It was on the basis of these Syriac manuscripts brought to Rome that the polymath Joseph Aloysius Assemani produced his invaluable *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, published in three volumes (the third, a double one) over the years 1719-1728, constituting the first major guide to the history of Syriac literature; even today, this monumental work remains a major resource, thanks to the wealth of quotations from Vatican manuscripts. The catalogue of these and other Vatican manuscripts was undertaken by S.E. and J.S. Assemani.³ Amongst the new arrivals from Deir al-Surian were several sixth-century manuscripts with different collections of Ephrem’s *madrashe*, providing for the first time complete texts of his poems, as opposed to just excerpted stanzas incorporated into Fenqitho manuscripts; these were soon published (along with works in Greek attributed to Ephrem),⁴ and accompanied by not very accurate Latin translations.

The next major exodus of manuscripts from the monastery came in the nineteenth century, when the British Museum was able to

3 In volumes 2 and 3 of their *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus* (Rome, 1758-9).

4 Hitherto Ephrem had only been known in Europe from Greek and Latin texts, very few of which were translations of genuine works by Ephrem; see further my ‘The changing faces of St Ephrem as read in the West’, in J. Behr, A. Louth, D. Conomos (eds), *Abba. The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West* (Crestwood, 2003), pp.65-80.

purchase, over the years 1838-1851, a large number of manuscripts (now British Library, Add. 12,133 - 12,181; 14,425 - 14,739; 17,102 - 17,274, and 18,812-18,821).⁵ The academic value of this influx of ancient Syriac manuscripts was quickly recognized by British and other European scholars, and as a result many important editions of newly discovered texts were produced over the rest of the nineteenth century.

Despite the emigration from Deir al-Syrian of so many Syriac manuscripts, a certain number still remained in the monastery, and a handlist of these was made around 1950 by the fine Coptic Orthodox scholar, Murad Kamil. Amongst the manuscripts he listed was one containing parts of Ephrem's Commentary on the *Diatessaron* (otherwise only known in an Armenian translation); this was illicitly removed from the Monastery not long afterwards, for it eventually appeared, divided into two sections, for sale in Europe. Fortunately both parts were bought by the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, which quickly arranged for the publication of this important text by Dom Louis Leloir (who had previously re-edited the Armenian translation). About two-thirds of the original Syriac text thus survives.

In 1997 the London-based Levantine Foundation became involved in conserving some of the oldest manuscripts in Deir al-Syrian; this in turn led to the initiative to catalogue the Syriac collection that remained in the Monastery, the work being entrusted in 2000 to the Belgian Syriacist teaching at Duke University (USA), Lucas van Rompay. At an early stage he was assisted for a short time by Andrea Schmidt (Université catholique de Louvain-la-

5 An account of their acquisition is given by W. Wright in the Preface to the third volume of his great Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the Year 1838 (London, 1870-72). Four further manuscripts, now British Library Or. 8729-8732, had been acquired by Robert Curzon in 1837 (he was the author of *Visits to Monasteries of the Levant*, a best-seller of its day). A few other manuscripts from Deir al-Syrian reached St Petersburg at much the same time.

Neuve), but later on (in 2004) I was invited to join him in compiling the catalogue. Over the next few years we went out to the Monastery annually for about a fortnight each time to study the material; this turned out to consist of just under 50 ‘manuscripts’ (some in fact with just a single quire left) and over 200 fragments which ranged from a few folios to very small fragments. The great challenge was to try to identify as many of the texts as possible, but a few still remain unidentified. Our final Catalogue, well provided with images of the manuscripts, was published earlier this year (2014). Quite a number of the fragments and the manuscripts turn out to have joins with manuscripts now in the British Library; in some cases these manuscripts are unique witnesses to a particular text. For me, one of the most exciting moments was when the Librarian, Father Bigoul, handed me three small scraps, each only a few centimetres in size at the maximum: I immediately recognized the elegant estrangelo hand as being that of the earliest dated Syriac literary manuscript (Add. 12,150), copied in Edessa in November 411. The fragments (now Frgt 27) belonged to the final folio, and contained the names of women martyrs (missing in Add. 12,150) who suffered in the persecution of Christians by the Persian Shah, Shapur II, in the mid fourth century.

The Syriac manuscripts and fragments remaining in Deir al-Surian fall into three main categories, biblical, patristic and liturgical. Those of first category almost all date from the fifth to the seventh century, and include the earliest dated Gospel manuscript in any language, copied in Edessa in October 510 (Deir al-Surian Syr. 10). Also of great importance is a single folio (Frgt 9) from the manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels now in the British Library (Add. 14,451), known after its editor as the ‘Curetonian’. Several beautiful and well-preserved sixth-century manuscripts contain parts of single Old Testament books: Exodus (Syr. 1B), Samuel (Syr. 1A, 2), Job (Syr. 6A), and Daniel (Syr. 6B); rather surprisingly the last also contains the Acts of Thekla which again turned up in another biblical manuscript, Syr. 9B of the 8th/9th century, containing Esther, Judith and Tobit (Syr. 9A, of the same date, combines III

Maccabees, Ruth and Susanna with Book VI of Josephus' Jewish War, a work which also features in the Milan Peshitta manuscript mentioned earlier, 7a1). Syr. 14 provides the major part of one of the *Shmahe* (so-called 'Masorah') manuscripts, fourteen folios of which are otherwise preserved in the British Library (Add. 17,162, ff.1-14). One feels for the poor reader who accidentally spilt lamp-oil on part of the manuscript, rendering a whole section virtually illegible.

Manuscripts of the second category, with patristic texts, largely date from between the sixth and the thirteenth century. Especially important amongst these is a hitherto unknown work on Faith whose style suggests that it must have been composed in the early fifth century (a marginal note implies that the author may be Aba, a disciple of Ephrem).

There are new witnesses to a number of major works, such as the Book of Steps, the Book of the Holy Hierotheos (with an portrait illustration), and Anton of Tagrit's Book of Rhetoric. Several manuscripts contain large numbers of shorter works and of excerpts; one of these (Syr. 27B) includes several philosophical texts.

Some of the manuscripts contain fly-leaves derived from other manuscripts, which served to strengthen the binding; several of these damaged folios (used in Syr. 1, 9 and 31) turn out to belong to the unique manuscript (now Add. 17,270) of a Commentary on works by Mark the Monk which has been attributed to Babai. The large number of fragments, in so far as they can be identified, provides a valuable indication of the wide range of works that the Monastery's Library once contained.

The third category, of liturgical texts, ranges in date from about the ninth to the fourteenth or fifteenth century; amongst these four early manuscripts (not all complete) of the Fenqitho, dating from the ninth to the eleventh century, are of especial interest, in particular two which include homilies for the main festivals. In the Catalogue we have described the liturgical manuscripts in more detail than is

usual, so that liturgical scholars can gain a better idea of their structure and contents. One of the fragments (Frgt 8) is of particular significance since it provides two more (albeit damaged) folios of the very early list of Biblical Lections, belonging to the same manuscript as British Library, Add. 14,528 (5th/6th century).

Monastery of St Catherine, Mount Sinai

Connections between the Syriac-speaking world and Sinai go back to the fourth century⁶ when Abraham Qidunaya, contemporary with St Ephrem, made a pilgrimage to the Mountain; these links continued up to the beginning of the Ottoman periods when the Byzantine (Rum) Orthodox Monastery of St Catherine, hitherto host to monks of many different languages - Greek Syriac, Arabic, Georgian, Slavonic and Latin - became entirely Greek-speaking. The Syriac Melkite (Rum Orthodox) presence had been particularly strong in the thirteenth century. Thanks to the Monastery's multilingual background, it possesses important, and often large, collections of manuscripts in all of the languages just mentioned.

In the 1890s two remarkable autodidact widowed twin sisters from Scotland, Mrs Agnes Lewis and Mrs Margaret Gibson, visited the Monastery, and thanks to their knowledge of Modern Greek, they had endeared themselves to the Librarian, who asked them to draw up catalogues of the Monastery's Syriac and Arabic manuscripts - which they duly did. The Syriac catalogue, by Agnes Lewis, covers (in a summary form) over 250 manuscripts dating from between the fifth and the fourteenth century. By far the most famous of these is the 'Codex Sinaiticus Syriacus', which has a collection of Lives of Women Saints written on erased folios containing the Gospels in the Old Syriac version (otherwise known only from the 'Curetonian' manuscript from Deir al-Surian, mentioned

6 See my 'Syriac on Sinai: the main connections', in V. Ruggieri and L. Pieralli (eds), *Eukosmia. Studi miscellanei per il 75o di Vincenzo Poggi SJ* (Soveria Mannelli, 2003), pp.103-17.

above).⁷ Among the patristic texts translated from Greek is a manuscript containing the Apology of Aristides, lost in its original Greek form; the publication of the Syriac translation, however, led to the remarkable discovery that much of the Greek text had been re-used in chapter 27 of the Life of Barlaam and Ioasaph, a hagiographical tale attributed to John of Damascus which enjoyed a huge popularity in the Middle Ages, but whose origin was in fact Indian (Ioasaph is a corruption of Bodisatva)!

The fundamental importance, however, of the collection of Syriac manuscripts in St Catherine's Monastery lies in the fact that it is witness to the continued use of Syriac as a literary and liturgical language in the Rum/Byzantine Orthodox Church, alongside Greek and Arabic. In fact all the surviving early Syriac manuscripts from this tradition originate from the Library of St Catherine's Monastery.

In recent years the number of these Syriac manuscripts has been increased significantly, as a result of the discovery (after a fire in 1975) of a blocked-up room containing large numbers of fragmentary manuscripts in different languages. Since these 'New Finds' have been described in an earlier article in *The Harp*,⁸ it must suffice here to observe that, thanks to these 'New Finds', the Sinaitic origin (often already suspected) has become assured for a number of important manuscripts that are now scattered all over the world. Perhaps the most notable example of this concerns the manuscript of Sahdona's Book of Perfection, copied in 837 at Edessa and specifically intended for the 'Monastery of Mar Moses' on Sinai: hitherto parts of this manuscript have been known from libraries in Strassbourg, St Petersburg, Milan and Birmingham, but now a part of the same manuscript has come to light still in the Monastery (M45N of the Syriac 'New Finds').

7 A good account of the involvement of the two sisters with the manuscripts of St Catherine's Monastery can be found in J. Soskice, *Sisters of Sinai. How Two Lady Adventurers found the Hidden Gospels* (London, 2009).

8 See my 'The Syriac «New Finds» at St Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, and their significance', *The Harp* 27 (2011), pp.39-52.

In recent years excellent work in tracing and piecing together the large number of fragmentary manuscripts from Sinai, now scattered all over the world, has been done by Paul Géhin (Paris) in a series of articles.⁹ It is to be hoped that one day it will be possible to bring about virtual reconstitutions of these manuscripts in digital form - as has already been done with the famous Greek Bible Codex Sinaiticus,¹⁰ most of which is in the British Library, but further folios have now turned up among the Greek 'New Finds' in the Monastery.

After about the eighth century, for a number of different reasons many Syriac texts either ceased altogether to be copied, or only excerpts were transmitted: the latter was the fate of Ephrem's *madrashé* in the Fenqitho manuscript tradition,¹¹ while the former applied to numerous translations of the Greek Fathers, seeing that these proved to be of less relevance to readers now living under Muslim rule and in an Arabic-speaking milieu. This shift in taste and habits of the Syriac readership meant that the literature that fell out of fashion will only be found in manuscripts of the eighth/ninth century or earlier - which in effect almost entirely means in manuscripts preserved in the libraries of these two Egyptian monasteries, to whose monks who preserved them over the centuries, and above all to the initiative of Abbot Mushe of Nisibis, all modern Syriacists owe an immense debt of gratitude.

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9 'Manuscrits sinaïtiques dispersés, I-III', *Oriens Christianus* 90 (2006), pp.23-43, 91 (2007), pp.1-24, 94 (2010), pp.14-56.

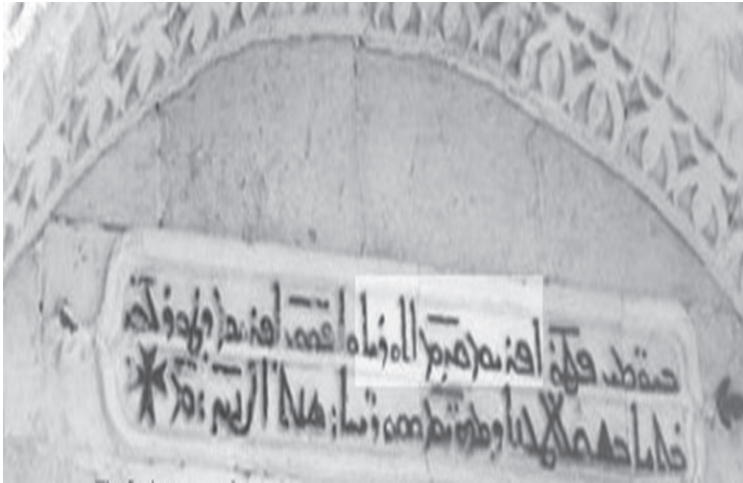
10 See www.sinaiticus.org

11 See my 'The transmission of Ephrem's *madrashé* in the Syriac liturgical tradition', *Studia Patristica* 33 (1997), pp.490-505.

Assad Sauma

WHY PATRIARCH APHREM BARSAUM WAS CALLED "ATHORAYA"? :

An Investigation into the
Geographical names Athor and Mosul in Syriac



The topic of my paper is connected to the city of “Mosul” in Iraq. For this reason I want to draw your attention to what has happened to its Christian people and churches when the Islamic organization (Isis) occupied the city of Mosul on June 10th, 2014. About 150,000 Christian Syrians fled the city and the plains of Nineveh to the northern parts of Iraq and even outside of Iraq.

The Islamic organization ISIS systematically destroyed the Christian symbols especially the cross and gave ultimatum to our Christian brothers and sisters to convert to Islam, or to pay Jizia (high poll tax) or to leave the city. The Christians fled at once leaving all they have behind them to be confiscated by the Islamists who burnt churches and Syriac manuscripts as it was reported by the media.

The city of Mosul which was the capital of Christianity in Iraq is now completely empty of its original people, the Christian, for the first time after at least 1700 years of long Christian history in the city.

It is not within the scope of this paper to tell you about the political situation in the city of Mosul, but to speak about its name as it is available in the Syriac language and sources.

Now let us go back to our topic about the name of the city of Mosul and its connection to patriarch Aphrem Barsaum.

PREFACE

During his early life, the Syrian orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem I Barsaum was sometimes called ܐܘܬܘܪܘܝܘܬܐ "Aphrem Barsaum Othuroyo (Athoraya)".¹ I shall in this paper, investigate why he was called "Athoraya" and what does this Syriac term mean? But first let's present him in a few sentences.

Aphrem Barsaum (1933-1957) was one of the most important patriarchs in the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church who played a big role in the life of his Syrian church and community, both as a church leader and as a scholar.

He renewed the Syrian Orthodox Church in several fields and supported Syriac language and learning. He revived the Syriac culture among his community members by starting a theological school and by writing a large number of books and articles that became important sources for the Syrian Orthodox community about their church history, literature, liturgy and identity, and he put the Syriac identity on the correct path based on the Syriac Aramaic heritage.

Aphrem Barsaum read almost all Syriac manuscripts that he found in various Syrian monasteries and churches and composed catalogues of these manuscripts;² he also used

¹ In this paper we shall sometimes use the east Syriac form "Athoraya" and sometimes the west Syriac form "Othuroyo".

² He composed the following three catalogues of Syriac manuscripts which were published in Damascus 2008 by the late patriarch Zakai I (1933-2014);

ܘܨܘܕܐ ܕܡܨܘܒܐ ܕܘܨܘܕܐ ܕܘܨܘܕܐ: ܡܨܘܒܐ ܕܘܨܘܕܐ (Catalogue of Manuscripts of TurAbdin), Damascus 2008;

them as a main source in writing his book on the history of the Syriac literature, *Al-Lulu al-Manthur*³ ܐܠܠܘܠܘܐܠܡܢܬܘܪ which is still in use as an important source for the Syrian community, both clergy and laity.

His achievements in the field of the Syriac culture makes him the greatest writer in the Syriac Orthodox Church during the last 700 years, and one of the most important of all times. Almost all learning of the Syrian Orthodox community about Syriac literature, Church history, liturgies and traditions is from his books and writings.

2. APHREM BARSAUM "ATHORAYA"

During his early life, patriarch Aphrem Barsaum was sometimes called ܐܦܪܝܡ ܒܪܫܘܡ ܐܬܘܪܝܐ "Aphrem

ܐܦܪܝܡ ܒܪܫܘܡ ܐܬܘܪܝܐ (Catalogue of Manuscripts of Zaafaran Monastery), Damascus 2008; ܐܦܪܝܡ ܒܪܫܘܡ ܐܬܘܪܝܐ (Catalogue of Manuscripts of Amed and Mardin), Damascus 2008.

³ This book *Al-lu'lu' al-Manthur fi Tarkh al-Ulum a al-Adab al-Suryaniya* was published many times: Homs 1943, Aleppo 1956, Bagdad 1977, The Netherlands 1987, Aleppo 1987. It was translated into Syriac by Y. Dolabani and published in Kamishli 1967; an English translation was made by Matti Moosa under the name *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*, Passegiata Press, Pueblo 2000 and second edition by Gorgias Press, New Jersey 2003; a Turkish translation under the title *Sacilmis Inciler: Surysnilerin yazinsal tarihi* by Zeki Demir, Istanbul 2005; a Swedish translation under the name *De spridda pärlorna: En historia om syriansk litteratur och vetenskap*, by Hanseric Hällzo, Örebro 2006; the book is translated also into Malayalm.

Barsaum Othuroyo (Athoraya)". But what does this mean and why was he called so?

Aphrem Barsaum was born in the city of Mosul in Iraq in 1887. The city of Mosul was called in Syriac ܝܘܬܘܪ "Othur" (in east Syriac Athor)⁴ and anyone who is descendant of Mosul/Athor was called in Syriac ܠܝܘܬܘܪ "othuroyo/athoraya" which means Mosulite (resident or descendant of Mosul).

Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum was called ܠܝܘܬܘܪ "othuroyo/athoraya" because he was from the city of ܝܘܬܘܪ Mosul/Athor. The word ܠܝܘܬܘܪ "othuroyo/athoraya" in this context should, therefore, not be translated as "Assyrian", because it is not "ethnic" but geographical, an attribution to the city of Athor/Mosul, and has nothing to do with the ancient "Assyria" except the name and the location. The word "Athoraya" in this context means only "Mosulite".

However, by the late nineteenth century, a few educated and politically conscious Syrians, especially Nestorians who had immigrated to the USA, began using the term *Aturaye*⁵ (Assyrians) in their writings.⁶ In the beginning of the 20th century, an "Assyrian political Movement" came out with an aim to connect the Christians of the Middle East

⁴ In this paper I shall use both pronunciations of the word as "Athor" and "Othur" depending on the context.

⁵ This is the pronunciations of the east Syrians in their spoken Neo-Aramaic language.

⁶ John Joseph, *The Modern Assyrians of the Middle East Encounters with Western Christian Missions, Archaeologists, and Colonial Powers*, (Studies in Christian Mission 26) Brill, Leiden 2000, p. 18.

with the ancient “Assyria” and to call them “Assyrians”.⁷ The members of this movement claimed an “ethnic relation” to the old Assyrians and alleged that the ethnic Syrians are descendants of the old Assyrians and represent their remnant in the Middle East; the members of this movement stressed that they have the right to call themselves “Athoraye” (Assyrians). As a result of this new usage of the word ܐܘܪܝܝܢ "othuroyo/athoraya" in the beginning of the 20th century, the word was, for the first time and after more than two thousand years, drawn into a new phase and given by the members of the Assyrian movement a political context to mean a member of an “Assyrian nation”.⁸

Because of the new development in the meaning of the word “Athoraya” by the members of this “Assyrian movement” and their new usage of the name, most of the Syrians became cautious to use it and they stopped calling the city of Mosul with its old name ܐܘܪܝܢ “Athor” and its inhabitants ܐܘܪܝܝܢ “othuroye/athoraye”. The Syrians, however, began using the common name ܡܘܨܠ "Mawsal" for the city of Mosul and ܡܘܨܠܝܝܢ "mawsloye" for its people (Mosulites) instead of “Athor” and “Athoraye”. They did so to avoid confusion between the traditional meaning of the word as "Mosul" and the new political meaning as "Assyrian/Assyria".

⁷ This political movement got some members from the Syrian, Nestorian and Chaldean groups.

⁸ J.M. Fiey commented on the Assyrian claim and wrote “I just finished compiling the index of my *Christian Assyria* which required drawing up some fifty pages of proper names of persons; needless to say that there is not a single Assyrian name.” J.-M. Fiey, “Assyriens’ ou Araméens” in *L’Orient Syrien* 10:2 (1965), pp. 141–160.

An example of this shift in the meaning of the city's name from “Athor” to “Mosul”, we can retrieve from the writings of the contemporary Syrian Orthodox writer Bishop Yuhanon Dolabani (1885-1969). In the first half of his life bishop Dolabani, as all other Syriac authors, used the term ܝܘܬܘܪ "Othur" for the city of Mosul and ܠܝܘܬܘܪ "othuroyo" for the Mosulite, but later in his life he gave up the name “Athor” and “Athoraya” and used only “Mawsal” and “Mawsloyo”. For example in his book about the Syrian Orthodox patriarchs that he wrote in 1929 we find the expressions:

ܡܘܨܠ ܝܘܬܘܪ “Giwargis othuroyo (Mosulite)”;⁹
ܠܝܘܬܘܪ
ܠܘܡܢ:ܕ ܡܘܨܠ -ܝܘܬܘܪ ܡܘܨܠ ܝܘܬܘܪ ܠܝܘܬܘܪ
“Patriarch Giwargis ܠܝܘܬܘܪ ܡܘܨܠ ܝܘܬܘܪ ܝܘܬܘܪ
from Othur (Mosul) who is Giwargis son of Abdelkarim
Othuroyo (Mosulite)”;¹⁰
ܝܘܬܘܪ ܡܘܨܠ ܝܘܬܘܪ “Isaac from Othur (Mosul)”;¹¹
ܠܝܘܬܘܪ “Maphrian Elias Othuroyo (Mosul)”;¹²
ܠܝܘܬܘܪ ܡܘܨܠ
ܡܘܨܠ “Bishop Behnam Othuroyo (Mosulite)”;¹³
ܠܝܘܬܘܪ ܡܘܨܠ

⁹ Y. Dolabani, ܡܘܨܠ ܝܘܬܘܪ *Die Patriarchen der syrisch-orthodoxen Kirche von Antiochien*, (Bar-Hebraeus Verlag) Glane/Losser 1990, p.214.
¹⁰ Ibid. p. 215.
¹¹ Ibid. p. 224.
¹² Ibid. p. 236.
¹³ Ibid. p. 257.

ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ “Patriarch Petrus Othuroyo (Mosulite)”;¹⁴

ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ

ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ “Mar Dionysius Behnam Othuroyo (Mosulite) of Maadan”;¹⁵

ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ “Mar Behnam Samardji of Othur (Mosul”).¹⁶

and ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ

These quotations reveal that the term “Athor” and “Athoraya” in Dolabani’s text is a typonym and those persons who carry this appellation were from Mosul (Athor) irrespective of their nationality.

Anyhow, in the second half of his life, Dolabani avoided using the terms “Athor” and “Athoraya” for Mosul and Mosulite; instead of them he used the names ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ "Mawsal" and ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ "mawsloyo" for the city and its inhabitants; he mentioned the name of his contemporary patriarch Aphrem Barsaum in the form of ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ "Aphrem Barsaum Mawsloyo" "Aphrem Barsaum of Mosul",¹⁷ not in the old form ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ "Aphrem Barsaum Athoraya”.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 261.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 262.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 262.

¹⁷ See what Dolabani wrote about Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum in the book اللؤلؤ المنثور في تاريخ العلوم والاداب السريانية (Al-Lulu al-Manthur...) "history of Syriac literature," which he translated into Syriac and published in Kamishli 1967 under the Syriac name ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ “kthobo d-berule bdire d-'al marduth yulfone suryaye hq̄ire”. Dolabani added an appendix to the end of his Syriac translation about the life of the author patriarch Aphrem Barsaum on pages 589-590 under the heading ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܩܘܪܝܢܘܣܝܘܣ

During the last 10 years of his life, Dolabani translated Aphrem Barsaum’s "History of Syriac literature" (اللؤلؤ المنتور في تاريخ العلوم والآداب السريانية (Al-Lulu al-Manthur...)) into Syriac and the translation was published in Kamishli in 1967, i.e. two years before Dolabani’s death and 10 years after Aphrem Barsaum’s death. Everyone who was called “Athoraya” by Dolabani in his book which he wrote in 1929,¹⁸ is called now “Mawsloyo” (Mosulite) in his translation of the mentioned book which was made about 40 years later.

An example from Dolabani about the shift from Athor to Mosul:

1. Dolabani wrote in 1929 *ܐܝܫܐܩ ܡܘܨܠܝܘܬܐ* “Isaac from Athor”.¹⁹
2. Dolabani wrote in 1967 *ܐܝܫܐܩ ܡܘܨܠܝܘܬܐ* “Isaac, born in Mosul”.²⁰

Another contemporary Syrian author, Isaac Armaleh (1879-1954) who wrote in Arabic, mentioned these persons

"Ignatius Aphrem Barsaum mawsloyo" "Ignatius Afrem Barsaum of Mosul"

¹⁸ As for example in the following: *ܦܝܠܘܣܘܦܝܐ ܕܥܝܣܝܐ ܡܘܨܠܝܘܬܐ* (1709-1687). *ܐܝܫܐܩ ܡܘܨܠܝܘܬܐ* (Dolabani, op.cit. p. 215); and *ܦܝܠܘܣܘܦܝܐ ܕܥܝܣܝܐ ܡܘܨܠܝܘܬܐ* (1894, Dolabani, op. cit. p. 261).

¹⁹ Y. Dolabani, *Die Patriarchen der syrisch-orthodoxen Kirche von Antiochien*, Glane/Losser, 1990, p. 231.

²⁰ *ܦܝܠܘܣܘܦܝܐ ܕܥܝܣܝܐ ܡܘܨܠܝܘܬܐ* “History of Syriac literature by patriarch Aphrem Barsaum”, translated into Syriac by Y. Dolabani, Kamishli 1967, p. 579.

as “Mosulite” because Arabic language does not use the term “Athor” as another name for the city of Mosul.

In 1909 Isaac Armaleh mentioned the above mentioned Isaac as اسحق الموصلی “Isaac of Mosul”.²¹

Another example from Dolabani and Armaleh:

Dolabani wrote in 1929 ܓܘܪܓܝܫ ܕܡܘܨܠ - ܓܘܪܓܝܫ ܕܡܘܨܠ “Georges of Athor-Mosul”.²²

Armaleh wrote in 1909 ܓܘܪܓܝܫ ܕܡܘܨܠ ܗܘܐ ܓܘܪܓܝܫ ܕܡܘܨܠ “Georges III of Mosul”.²³

In the second half of his life, Dolabani avoided using the term "Aphrem Barsaum othuroyo" in order not to be misinterpreted or to avoid mixing the name's traditional meaning as “Mosul” with the new political meaning as “Assyrian”. He didn't want to give a false picture of his patriarch Aphrem Barsaum.

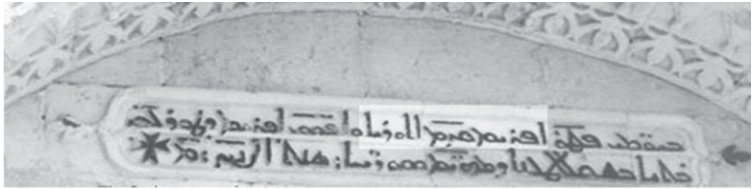
However, it seems that the expression ܓܘܪܓܝܫ ܕܡܘܨܠ "Aphrem Barsaum othuroyo" continued to be in use in TurAbdin even in the 1950s, when other Syrians stopped using it. There is a Syriac inscription at the entrance to the Mor Barsaumo Syrian Orthodox Church in the city of Mydiat in Turabdin where it says that the church was "renovated" during the time of *Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum othuroyo*. The inscription reads thus:

²¹ Isaac Armaleh, كتاب الزهرة الذكية في البطريكية السريانية الانطاكية “al-zahra al-dhakiya fi al-batriarkiya al-suryaniya al-antakiya” (On the Syrian Antiochean Patriarchate), Beirut 1909, p. 92.

²² Y. Dolabani, *Die Patriarchen der syrisch-orthodoxen Kirche von Antiochien*, p. 231.

²³ Isaac Armaleh, op. cit. p. 95.

ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ
 ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ
 ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ



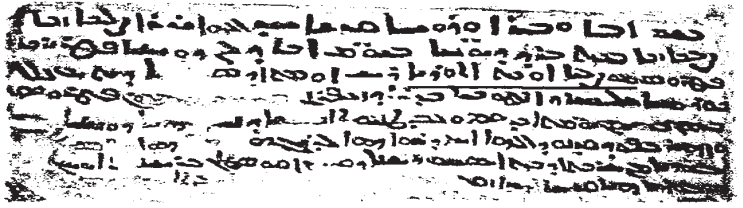
The translation reads: *"The inscription was carved during the time of Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum othuroyo (from Mosul) and Bishop Aphrem Botoyo (from the village of Bote) of Turabdin, with the diligence of the Syrian believers, in 1954 A.D."*

The Syriac inscription connects both Patriarch Aphrem and Bishop Afrem to their birthplaces Mosul/Athor and Bote; Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum to his city Mosul/Athor and Bishop Afrem to his village "Bote" in Turabdin, the first one is characterized as ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ (Aphrem Othuroyo) "Aphrem of Mosul" and the second one as ܘܢܝܢܘܢ ܘܢܝܢܘܢ (Afrem Botoyo) "Afrem from Bote".

This reminds us of another similar Syriac inscription in TurAbdin which contains the term ܘܢܝܢܘܢ "Athoraya"; it is carved in the church of Mar Elias in the Syriac village of "Bakesyone"; the inscription was performed during the time

of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Peter IV (or III) of Mosul;²⁴ the inscription reads:

ܘܥܠ ܕܢܘܨܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ
ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ
... ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ



(... The inscription was carved "in 1893, during the time of our spiritual father patriarch Peter from Mosul, i.e. from Athor, who is the leader of the Syrian (Orthodox) nation, and sits on the Apostolic See of Antioch in the Zaafaran Monastery ...").²⁵

The inscription shows clearly that both Mosul and Athor are two names for the same city, and that the word ܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ "othuroyo" means Mosulite i.e. a person from the city of Mosul. The expression ܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ "mawsloyo i.e. othuroyo" is a confirmation that the names ܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ "Mawsloyo" and ܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ "othuroyo" are synonyms meaning "anyone in or from the city of Mosul."

²⁴ Patriarch Petrus IV (1872-1894) visited India in 1875 and returned in 1877.

²⁵ Gabriel Akyuz and Shabo Aktas, ܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ (ܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ) ܕܡܘܨܠܝܢܐ "History of the Village of Beth Qustan (Boqusyone)", Mardin 2007. P. 21.

Anyhow, the inscription's use of the words "Mosul" and "Athor" as synonyms is not something unique, it is a fact known to all who are acquainted with the Syriac literature.²⁶

3. ATHORAYA AND MAWSLAYA SYNONYMS

3.1. THE NAME "ATHORAYA" AND THE EAST SYRIAN (NESTORIAN) PATRIARCHS

As we have seen above that the Syrian Orthodox patriarchs who were from the city of Mosul were called "athoraya" by their Syrian orthodox writers, it is in the same way that the East Syrian (Nestorian) patriarchs who were from Mosul were also called "Athoraya" in the writings of their East Syrian (Nestorian) writers.

Here I shall present a couple of examples from East Syrians authors about the term "Athoraya" which means "Mosulite".

The East Syrian poet *ܩܝܘܪܓܝܫ ܘܪܒܝܠ* Giwargis Warda of Erbil (died ca in the 1300), in his Syriac poem/song *ܩܝܘܪܓܝܫ* about the East Syrian (Nestorian) patriarchs, gives us the names of the East Syrian patriarchs and mentions some good qualities of everyone. The poem

²⁶ Several other Middle Eastern cities have other "older names" in Syriac; for example today's Diyarbekir is called Amed/Omid and Urfa is called Urhay/Urhoy. Anyone who is from Diyarbekir is called "Omidoyo" and the one who is from Urfa (Edessa) is called "Urhoyo".

and tradition and, therefore, he called Mosul "Athor" and every person from it "Athoraya".

However, the East Syrian writers who wrote in Arabic about the same patriarchs of the East Syrian church called these patriarchs "Mawsalli" موصللي (Mosulite), not "Athoraya", as we find in the book *Al-Majdal* by Mari Ibn Suleiman.

It seems that the main source of Giwargis Warda in compiling his list of the East Syrian patriarchs, was the Arabic book "كتاب المجدل: أخبار فطاركة كنيسة المشرق" *Al-Majdal: Stories of the patriarchs of the Church of the East*, written in Arabic by the East Syrian author Mari Ibn Suleimun (mid of the 12th cent.).²⁸

The mentioned book *Al-Majdal*, being in Arabic, its writer used all names according to the tradition of the Arabic language. The city of Mosul is, therefore, called "Mawsal"²⁹ موصل, not "Athor", and the persons from it موصللي "Mawsalli" not "Athoraya".

Giwargis Warda lived about one century after the historian Mari Ibn Suleiman and used Mari's book as his source, but he changed the names into the form and tradition of Syriac language. Whenever the name Mosul is mentioned by Mari, our poet Warda changed it into "Athor", and every time when Mari called someone موصللي Mawsalli (Mosulite), our poet Warda called him "Athoraya".

²⁸ Henricus Gismundi published the book in Rome in 1899.

²⁹ Another pronunciation of the word is Mawsil.

the son of Al-'Arid al-Mawsalli".³² But our poet Giwargis Warda called him Abdisho "Athoraya".³³

About Patriarch Makkikha (1092-1110), our historian Mari Ibn Suleiman wrote: استدعاه مار عبديشوع الجاثليق واسامه مطرانا على الموصل وحزة "Patriarch Mar Abdisho called him and consecrated him a bishop of Mosul and Hazza".³⁴ But our poet Warda says about him in Syriac *ܡܚܩܩܗ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠ ܕܗܙܙܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠ* "Makkikha who was a church leader in Athor"³⁵ (i.e. in Mosul).

Our historian says of patriarch Mar Elijah (1111-1132) انه كان من اهل الموصل، وكان مطران الموصل وحزة" "He was a resident of Mosul and became Bishop of Mosul and Hazza,"³⁶ and our poet Giwargis Warda says about him:

ܡܠܝܟܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠ ܕܗܙܙܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܘܨܠ "Elijah, who was full of virtues grew up among the scholars in Athor (Mosul), which is the home of scholars,"³⁷ he praises him with these words because his city Athor/Mosul was known for its writers and knowledge.

³² اخبار بطاركة كرسي المشرق "Akhbar Batarikat Kursi Almashriq", p.127.

³³ G. Warda, op. cit. p. 96.

³⁴ اخبار بطاركة كرسي المشرق "Akhbar Batarikat Kursi Almashriq", p.137.

³⁵ G. Warda, op. cit. p.96.

³⁶ اخبار بطاركة كرسي المشرق "Akhbar Batarikat Kursi Almashriq", p.152.

³⁷ Warda, op. cit. p. 96.

The historian Mari Ibn Suleiman says of another East Syrian patriarch:

الجائليق مار عبديشوع المعروف ابن المقلي بانه من
 "Patriarch Mar Abdisho known as ibn Almuqali
 was from Mosul",³⁸ but our poet Warda says of him:
 "Abdisho is a chosen instrument from the fine city of Athor
 (Mosul)."³⁹

Thus, we have seen that every East Syrian patriarch whom Mari Ibn Suleiman wrote of him that he was from the city of Mosul, the poet Giwargis Warda wrote about him that he was from "Athor". And every patriarch Mari Ibn Suleiman calls him موصلي "Mawsalli" the poet Giwargis Warda called him اثورايا "Athoraya". This means that the names "Mosul" and "Athor" are two synonymous words that mean the same thing by the two writers, and the words "Mawsalli" and "Athoraya" are also synonyms that means the same thing by the two authors.⁴⁰

Our two mentioned authors Mari Ibn Suleiman and Giwargis Warda, preserved the traditions connected to the languages they used in their writings, the first one wrote in Arabic and Mosul is called Mawsal by him, while the second

³⁸ "Akhbar Batarikat Kursi Almashriq", اخبار بطاركة كرسي المشرق", p.156.

³⁹ Warda, op. cit. p. 96.

⁴⁰ To call persons after their home cities and towns is an oriental old habit; several Syrian personalities carry their city names such as the Syriac philosophers Sargis of Rishaina (d. 536), Jacob of Sarugh (d. 531), Patriarch Athanasius of Balad (d. 687), Jacob of Edessa (d. 708), etc.

one wrote in Syriac and Mosul is called Athor by him. They also maintained an old oriental tradition by calling peoples after the name of their home areas, Mari Ibn Suleiman called people from Mosul “Mawsalli” and Giwargis Warda called the same persons from Mosul “Athoraya”.

4. "ATHOR" MEANS MOSUL IN SYRIAC LITERATURE

Syriac literature calls the city of Mosul with the name "Athor" ܐܘܪ and any person from Mosul ܐܘܪܝܘܬܝܐ “othuroyo/athoraya”. To confirm this we refer to two old East Syrian lexicographers who explained the name Athor/Mosul in their Syriac/Arabic lexicons.

The first East Syrian lexicographer is Barbahlul (10th cent.); in his Syriac Arabic encyclopedia he explains the name ܐܘܪ “Athor” by saying:

ܐܘܪ "ܐܘܪ ܐܘܪ" اسم مدينة بناها سابور الملك وهي الموصل
 "Athor is the name of the city of Mosul, it was built by King Sapur"⁴¹

The second East Syrian lexicographer and physician is Yeshu Barali (died about the year 900); in his Syriac-Arabic dictionary he explains the word ܐܘܪ “Athor” as follows: ܐܘܪ (آثور) هي مدينة الموصل وما يجاورها
 "Athor is the city of Mosul and its surroundings"⁴²

⁴¹ Barbahlul’s Syriac-Arabic lexicon was published by Rubens Duval in Paris 1888 - 1901, Col. 322.

⁴² See Part I of his dictionary that was published by G. Hoffmann in Rome in 1874, page 63; besides its name Athor the city of

This shows that Thomas of Marga used the names Athor and Mosul interchangeably as a place name (typonym) for the same city, province and diocese.

Another East Syrian author, Ibn Al-Tayyib (d.1043), in his Arabic commentary⁵⁰ on the Bible and in the chapter of his interpretation of Jabob's blessings, he called the old Assyrians *المواصلة* which means "Mosulites"⁵¹ because Mosul and Athor are the same name. In his French translation of this work J.C. Sanders translated the word *المواصلة* into "Assyriens".⁵²

The other Syriac author whom I want to mention in this regard is Michael the Syrian. In his Syriac chronicle,⁵³ the Syrian Orthodox patriarch and historian Michael the Syrian (d.1199) used the word "Athor" in the three mentioned meanings as other authors did, that is as a name

⁵⁰ Edited by J.C.J. Sanders, in CSCO 274/arabici 24, Louvain 1967.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 101. His Arabic text reads:

وتشبيه بنيامين بالذئب المختطف لتعويله اذا دخل ارض الوعد على السلب والنهب والاستيلا على الغربا. فانه سلب الهند في ايام اساء، والمواصلة في ايام حزقيا. وهذه صفة لجسارته واقدامه بالغداة ياخذ السلب وبالعشي يقسم القطوع (ص 101).

⁵² Ibid, p. 95.

⁵³ The Syriac Chronicle of Michael the Syrian was edited and translated into French by J.B.Chabot, he published a photographic copy in four volumes (1899–1910) with a French translation. The chronicle was typed on the computer and published in Sweden in 2006. In my quotations I use this Swedish edition. A facsimile of the Edessa codex which is in Aleppo now, was published by George Kiraz, Gorgias Press, in 2009.

“The rulers who seize the reign of the kingdom in Athor, Gzirta and Beth Nahrin”,⁵⁷ and *ܐܘܬܘܪܐ ܕܥܡܠܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ* “He was respected by all rulers in Beth Nahrin and in Athor”.⁵⁸

In all these quotations “Athor” is mentioned as a province together with other provinces.

In the third meaning, “Athor” as a name of a church diocese, Michael uses the term *ܐܘܬܘܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ* “the diocese of Athor”.⁵⁹

5. OTHER MEANINGS OF “ATHORAYA” IN SYRIAC

In addition to its meaning of “Mosulite”, the word *ܐܘܬܘܪܐ* “Athoraya-Assyrian” was used in Syriac both as a noun and an adjective in a mixture of negative meanings such as: “enemy” “tyrant”, “despot”, “oppressor”, “unfair”, “harsh”, “severe”, “cruel”, “tyrannical”, “tyrannous”, “oppressive”, “despotic”, “aggressive”, “hostile”, “offensive”, etc. When we read old Syriac texts we come across the word “Athoraya-Assyrian” in these negative meanings.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p.669.

⁵⁸ Ibid. P.717.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p.481-482; Even the 13th century Syrian orthodox polymath Gregory Barhebraeus (1226-1286) used the terms Athor and Mosul as two names for the same city, province and church diocese.

ܘܥܠܡܝܢܢ ܕܥܠܡܝܢܢ ܕܥܠܡܝܢܢ ܕܥܠܡܝܢܢ ܕܥܠܡܝܢܢ ܕܥܠܡܝܢܢ
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Its translation:

“Happy are you who believed in me without having seen me! As to your request that I should come to you, I must complete all and be taken up to the One who sent me. When I have been taken up I will send you one of my disciples to cure your disease and bring life to you. Your city will be blessed and no enemy “Athoraya” will overcome it.”

The term “Athoraya-Assyrian” was used as a bad adjective for people and persons who persecuted the Syrians and oppressed them. For example John of Ephesus (6th cent.) calls the Persians ܐܘܪܝܝܢܐ “Athoraye- Assyrians”⁶³ when they captured and spoiled the city of Dara;⁶⁴ and the

⁶² *Chronicon anonymi auctoris ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (CSCO, Scriptorum Syri, Series tertia) Tomus XIV. *Chronicon Anonymum*, edit I.-B. Chabot, Paris 1920, p. 122.

⁶³ John of Ephesus, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*; translated into English by R. Payne Smith, Oxford 1860, p.385. The Syriac text was edited by William Cureton, Oxford 1853, p.358.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 385; he says: And thus he (Khosru) spoiled (Dara) the city of a vast and incalculable prey, and took the people captive, and emptied it of its inhabitants, and left in it a garrison of his own, and returned to his land with an immense booty of the silver and gold taken from the inhabitants, and the churches, and everywhere else. Its capture, and deliverance into the hands of the **Assyrians**, took place seventy-two years, more or less, after

chronicler of Zuqin⁶⁵ (8th cent.) calls the Arab Abbasids “Athoraye”⁶⁶ while Michael the Syrian calls the leader of the Muslims, Imad al-Din al-Zangi, who captured Edessa in 1144 “Athoraya” ܐܘܪܝܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ “An Assyrian pig”.⁶⁷

A contemporary West Syrian author, Dionysius Barsalibi (d. 1171), used the term “Athoraya-Assyrian” in a meaning related to wrath, anger and fury. He says about the capture of Edessa by Zangi ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ “Edessa was stricken with a scourge of an Assyrian wrath”⁶⁸ and ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ⁶⁹ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ “Since a long time has the yoke of the oppressors become severe, and many people because of this left their faith”.

In his Syriac lexicon, the East Syrian (Nestorian) lexicographer Barbahlul (10th cent.) explains the term “Athoraya-Assyrian” as enemy by saying: ܐܘܪܝܝܐ

the time of its first being founded by king Anastasius. Nor was Dara the only place captured and spoiled by Khosru (pp.384-385).

⁶⁵ The author of this chronicle is actually an anonymous west Syrian monk who lived in the late eighth century in the Syrian Orthodox Monastery of Zuqin near Amida (Diyarbekier).

⁶⁶ A. Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqin Parts III and IV A.D. 488-755*, Toronto 1999, p.138.

⁶⁷ *The Chronicle of Michal the Syrian*, p. 717.

⁶⁸ *The Chronicle of Michael the Syrian*, p. 718.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p.741.

حداقثا الإعداء “Athoraya means enemy”.⁷⁰ In his explanation Barbahlul depended on older Syriac texts.

6. APHREM BARSAUM BETWEEN THE “ASSYRIAN” AND THE “ARAMEAN” NAMES

6.1 THE "ASSYRIAN" NAME IN APHREM BARSAUM'S WRITINGS

Aphrem Barsaum used the word "Assyrian" in a political context in a couple of documents that he wrote in English and French. He presented these documents to the European politicians in 1920 to defend the rights of his Syrian Orthodox Church and community after the genocide committed against them in the First World War in southeast Turkey.⁷¹

The first of these documents is a *Memorandum* in English written in February 1920 and was addressed to the *Peace Conference* in Paris after the First World War. In this document Aphrem Barsaum, who was the bishop of Syria then, explains the suffering and demands of the Syrian Orthodox people. In the document he uses the phrase: *Our ancient Assyrian nation*.

The second document is also in English and has the date of March 1920. He says in it: "The Syriac people belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church are descendants of the old Assyrian race".

⁷⁰ Hassano Barbahlule, *Lexicon Syriacum*, ed. Rubens Duval, Paris 1888, col.322.

⁷¹ Aphrem Barsaum compiled a list of the Syrian orthodox casualties and presented it to the European politicians. His list contains 93000 persons who were killed.

The third document is another *Memorandum* in French dated 2ed April 1920. It was presented to the *Peace Conference* in Paris in which he says: *Notre nation syrienne, ancienne descendante de la race assyrienne*, "our Syrian nation, the old descendant of the Assyrian race."⁷²

By saying "the descendant of Assyrians" Aphrem Barsaum broke a long tradition of his Syrian Orthodox community by claiming an Aramean origin. But did he do this intentionally and deliberately, and what was his purpose in saying "the descendant of Assyrians"? These questions need answers.

In the first decades of the 20th century, an "Assyrian political movement" arose among some Syrians who tried to connect themselves with the ancient Assyrians. These peoples began using the name "Assyrian" instead of "Syrian"⁷³ to rename themselves and the members of the Syrian, Chaldean and Nestorian churches and communities. These persons, even though they were not many, they could make influence. In using the "Assyrian" name they had various reasons and arguments:

Some of them thought that the "Assyrian" designation had capability to unite them and collect the Aramaic-speaking around it.

Others believed in a historical affiliation and claimed that the Syrians were the descendants of the ancient

⁷² Sébastien de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians. The Last Arameans*, Gorgias Press 2004, P. 334.

⁷³ By calling themselves Assyrians, they broke a 1500 years old tradition.

Assyrians and therefore they had the right to use the word "Assyrian" instead of Suryoye / Suryaye.

Some others believed that the ancient Assyrians were a part of the Syrian nation and spoke the same "Syriac" language.⁷⁴ They believed that if they are called "Assyrian" in the West this will give them more respect and support of the European nations. Those who believed in this used the word "Suryoye/suryaye in their Syriac language, but they used the word "Assyrian" in the European languages.

In the beginning of 20th century there was an idea of an Assyro-Chaldean nation⁷⁵ uniting all peoples of Syriac origin; this idea appeared publicly in the debates during the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919. The idea was put forward by an Assyro-Chaldean delegation in Paris which does not seem to have had any official contacts with the Syriac Catholic or Syriac Orthodox delegations from Syria and Iraq. The Syrian delegations to this conference used this Assyro-Chaldean name.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ They adopted this idea from the Syrian Orthodox patriarch and historian Michael the Syrian (d. 1199) who believed that the ancient Assyrians spoke Syriac therefore they belonged to the Syrian people, (See his Chronicle p.815.

⁷⁵ A Memorandum of the Assyro-Chaldean delegation, October 19, 1919, at Paris (from Sebastien de Courtois, *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans*, (Gorgias Press) Piscataway 2004, p. 217.

⁷⁶ J.M.Fiey wrote "In the summer of 1876, an emissary of the Anglican Archbishop is dispatched to visit the districts of Hakkari and Urmia, to study the situation and to evaluate the needs. The emissary Lewes Cutts would publish two works in 1877. The first is an official report to the Archbishop and to the two societies who had supported the expedition. It is titled *The Assyrian Christians*, which means the Christians of Assyria.

Even though it was only few who believed in the "Assyrian" name among followers of the Syrian Orthodox, the Chaldeans and the Nestorians, the absolute majority of East and West Syrians did not know anything about the new "Assyrian" name.

Anyhow, the "Assyrian" new name got a steady foot among the Syrian Nestorians. During the following decades most of the Nestorians began calling themselves "Assyrians" in the European languages, but continued up till now calling themselves "Suraye" (Syrians) in their Aramaic mother tongue.

Did patriarch Aphrem Barsaum belong to these groups? The answer could be both yes and no. His use of the "Assyrian" name in the mentioned couple of documents may explain that he could have believed that the Syrians were associated with the "Assyrian" name at the time when he wrote them, i.e. in 1920, but later on he refused any connection between the Syrians and Assyrians and strongly criticized those who used the Assyrian name.

It seems that in his early age Afrem Barsaum's knowledge of the name issue was inadequate and he lay under the influence of the "Assyrian" political environment. But later in his life when he became a Syriac scholars and church historian, he rejected the Assyrian name totally and defended the Syriac Aramean name as the only proper name for both the Syrian Orthodox community, the Syrian Orthodox church, and the language.

Except in the title, the word Assyrians is never mentioned in the report, and throughout the document the talk is about Nestorians" (*THE SYRIAN EAST*, vol. X (1965), p.6).

When Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum was in the zenith of his knowledge in Syriac culture and church history he made a research on the name issue; he also wrote a treatise on the subject defending the Syrian Aramean name against the "Assyrian" one. His book is called *في اسم الامة السريانية* *ܠܗܘܪܘܫܝܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ* "On the issue of the name of the Syriac nation".⁷⁷ In this book he collected tens of Syriac evidences from both East Syriac and West Syriac writers who confirmed the Syrian-Aramean origin of both east and west Syrians.

To avoid confusion in the name issue, patriarch Aphrem Barsaum suggested that the Syrian Orthodox Church in the West should be called "Syro-Aramaic Church" *ܠܗܘܪܘܫܝܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ*, and both the community and the language should also be called Syriac-Aramaic.⁷⁸

In his refusal of the "Assyrian" name, he gives us four arguments: Now, as for using the "Assyrian" word for the language and the community, it contradicts:

1. The truth in history
2. The old tradition kept by our scholars,

⁷⁷ The book is called *في اسم الامة السريانية* *ܠܗܘܪܘܫܝܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ* "On the name issue of the Syriac nation", Homs 1953. The book was translated into English, Turkish and German and was published in Holland in 1984; I have translated the book into Swedish and published it in Stockholm in 2007.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p.44, 46.

3. The universal recognition of our community over all the world,
4. The agreement of all the Western scholars in France, England, Italy, USA.⁷⁹

He explains the origin of the new “Assyrian” political name by saying: The “Assyrian” name is an invention of the Protestant English men in the beginning of the 20th century (about the year 1900); it was bequeathed to the Nestorians in the region of Mosul in 1919-1920 A.D. for a malicious, political purpose, so that they might create for themselves out of the Nestorian youth a militia they named “Assyrian” aiming at the realization of their political plan in Iraq, a plan which failed in 1933 and resulted in the exile of the Catholicus of the Nestorians and his exile from the country with his followers, the result being that all nations refused to permit his return to the East”.⁸⁰

Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum’s conclusion in this issue as regards the “Assyrian” name is: “In conclusion, the Syrians have no interest whatsoever in taking to themselves this strange name which will make them lose their race, their ecclesiastical support which is their unique and sole means of existence in the world”.⁸¹

6.2. THE NAME “ARAMEAN” IN THE WRITINGS OF APHREM BARSAUM

Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum was well versed in the Syriac literature, Syriac authors and church fathers; he read a

⁷⁹ Ibid, p.43.

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.45.

⁸¹ Ibid, p.45.

significant part of the corpus of Syriac texts. We understand this when we read his book about the history of the Syriac literature *Al-Lulu Al-Manthur*. Such a person, well acquainted with the writings of the Syriac authors, knows what these authors wrote about the Syrian people and the Syrian church. All this led him to confirm the Aramean origin of both East and West Syrians.

Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum in his important treatise on just the Syrian name and origin⁸² affirms the Syrian Aramean origin of this people.⁸³ The treatise contains tens of evidences chosen from both East and west Syrian authors who affirm his statement.

As a Syrian person Aphrem Barsaum was proud of being a member of both his nation and church with its Syrian/Aramean origin. He spared no opportunity to praise the Aramean belonging and affiliation, especially when he wrote of the old Syriac famous writers such as Ephrem the Syrian, Jacob of Sarugh, Jacob of Edessa, etc.⁸⁴

The Aramean affiliation occurs so often and very clearly in Aphrem Barsaum's books and writings, both when he was a monk and a bishop or a patriarch. We can quote evidences of this from some of his works by beginning with his first published work *نزهة الاذهان في تاريخ دير الزعفران*

⁸² Aphrem Barsaum, *Fi Ism Al-Umma al-Suryaniya* "On the Name of the Syrian community", Homs 1952.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 2 and 44.

⁸⁴ His love for the these Syrian authors and poets is shown when he praised them with very beautiful words in his poems and other writings especially in his *book صدى لحة القلب فيثار القلوب* "the Harp of Hearts".

Why Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum was called "Athoraya"? ... 45

"Nuzhat al-Adhhan fi Tarikh Deir al-Zaafaran" (History of Zaafaran monastery) which was published in Mardin in 1917 when he was still a monk in the monastery itself. On page 49 of this work, he wrote:

يقسم الاراميون من حيث لهجة لغتهم الى غربيين وهم السريان
 بوجه العموم وشرقيين وهم النساطرة الكلدان
 "Arameans are divided according to their language into
 Westerners, who are the Syrians in general, and Easterners
 who are the Nestorian Chaldeans".⁸⁵

In his *Poetry Collection*⁸⁶ *صلاة لحنه قيثار القلوب* which contains poems and literary prose in praise of the old Syrian writers, the terms "Aramean", "Aramaic", "Aram", occur so often.

In his poem on Ephrem the Syrian, he says: *هو حجة*
 (Mar Ephrem) is the
 great master of the Aramaic language".⁸⁷ The title of the
 introduction to the chapter on Mar Ephrem the Syrian is:

سنتك وحبه and *لواعج الهيام بنبي بني آرام*
صحتك وحتر كتر

"The great love passion of the Aramean prophet".⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Aphrem Barsaum, *Nuzhat al-Adhhan fi Tarikh Deir al-Zaafaran*, Mardin 1917, p. 49.

⁸⁶ Aphrem Barsaum, *صلاة لحنه قيثار القلوب* was published in Homs in 1954; it was translated into Syriac by Shleimun Hanno and published with its original text in Kamishli 1969. I use here the second edition of 1969.

⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 26-27.

⁸⁸ Ibid. pp.26, 27.

He also calls him:

He also calls him: "the Arameans' genius".⁸⁹

In another poem he says: "Come Arameans, let us climb the holy mountain of Edessa where God's chosen ones are".⁹⁰

الى مجتمع اصفياء العلي في جبل الرها المقدس هلموا بنا
نصعد يا ابناء آرام
لهنا حكمة وحكمة نكلمك صلاهنا منكم نكلمك
لهنا لحنه نكلمك نكلمك

He longs for the old Syrian greatness when he says: "May God reintroduce the glory of the Arameans in Edessa after alienation and exile...".⁹¹

عسى الله يؤتي مجد آرام في الرها حياة وبعثا بعد لأبي وغرب
حينئذ، كرسى عيسى صلاهنا منكم نكلمك: "كرسى عيسى حيا
صلاهنا منكم نكلمك

In another poem about the famous monastery of Qenneshrin, he says: "The souls of the Arameans thrive and long for you whenever you are mentioned o Qenneshrin monastery".⁹²

ترتاح نفوس الاراميين وتتوق كلما ورد ذكرك يا
دير قنسرين

⁸⁹ Ibid. pp. 28, 29.

⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 46, 47.

⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 52, 53.

⁹² Ibid. pp. 66, 67.

ܘܢܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ
ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ

In a poem on Mar Marutha of Tagrit (7th cent.) he says: "He invites the Aramean youth to commemorate the memory of a prelate who plaited a spiritual crown of glory for the Syrians".⁹³

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He praises Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) and calls him: "the irrefutable authority of Aram's sons".⁹⁴

ܘܢܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ
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and: "The honor of the Arameans".⁹⁵

ܘܢܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ
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He also calls him: "The greatest of the Arameans without hesitation, whose sea of knowledge does not come to end".⁹⁶

⁹³ Ibid. pp. 84-87.

⁹⁴ Ibid. pp. 94, 95.

⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 96, 97.

⁹⁶ Ibid. pp. 100, 101.

(يعقوب الرهاوي) إمام بني آرام غير مدافع لك الله بحرا علمه ليس
ينضب

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About the author Moses Barkifo (813-903) he says: "He has raised the Aramean rank" and by his favor "Greatness has embraced the Arameans".⁹⁷

(موشى بر كيفو)
بمرايض الأرام زاد غرامي
ومكارم الامجاد لج هيامي

ياحجة الاعصار طلاع العلى
يارافعا شأن الحجا الأرامي

سقيا لسعيك حكمة ومأثرا
والعز مكتنف بني آرام

ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܟܢ
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In his book on the history of Syriac literature اللؤلؤ
المنتثور *Al-lulu al-Manthur*, he says: "The Syrian Arameans
had at the beginning a beautiful language ..."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ibid. pp.18, 129.

⁹⁸ Aphrem Barsaum, *Al-Lulu Al-Manthur*, p. 17.

كان للسريان الاراميين في اول امرهم لغة مهذبة تزدان بادب من نثر
ونظم وكان لهم بالعلم عناية

To this degree was patriarch Aphrem Barsaum fond of the old Syrian authors, saints and monasteries, he praised them with fine words and called them Arameans.

Aphrem Barsaum preferred the Aramean/Aramaic name to the degree that he suggested the Syrian Orthodox Church in the English speaking countries should be called ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘܥܘܠܡܝܐ ܕܡܫܟܝܢܐ “Syrian Aramean church”⁹⁹ and his community “Syrian Arameans”.¹⁰⁰

7. CONCLUSION.

“Athor” and “Mosul” are two names for the same city. Athor was used in Syriac and Mosul in Arabic, but even the form Mosul is available in the Syriac literature. The terms “Athoraya” and “Mawslaya-Mawsalli” were synonyms; the one is in Syriac and the other in Arabic.

Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum was called “Athoraya”, that is to say “Mosulite” because he was from the city of Mosul/Athor. He was called both “Athoraya” and “Mawsalli” depending on the language and source.

A few patriarchs of the East Syrian church who were from city of Mosul were called “Athoraye” by the Syriac poet Gewargis Warda, but they were called “Mosulite” by Thomas of Marga.

⁹⁹ Aphrem Barsaum, *Fi Ism Al-Umma al-Suryaniya* “On the Name of the Syrian community”, p.44.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.44.

The name “Athoraya-Assyrian” was used in Syriac in other negative meanings such as “enemy”, “oppressor”, etc. and as pejorative adjective for unjust and unfriendly peoples. It was applied for those who persecuted the Syrians/Christians. Many Syrian writers used it in this meaning and they applied it once to the Arab Abbasids and once to the Persians because they persecuted the Christians.

Patriarch Aphrem Barsaum used the “Assyrian” name a couple of times in a political context in the beginning of his life, but he refused it later. When he was in the top of his knowledge he wrote a research on the name issue, he refuted the Assyrian name and suggested that his church in the USA and the English speaking countries should be called Syrian Aramean and his community Syrian Aramean.

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*Behnam Keryo**

THE SYRIAC CALLIGRAPHY:

**A secret incantation and an initiatory
journey which demands constant training
and impeccable principles**

Foreword

Since the last fifteen years the Institution - The Scribe's Home or **ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ** based in France, has been organizing scores of workshops dealing with Syriac calligraphy all over France, in high schools, cultural centers, museums, libraries – like *the Bibliotheque Nationale de France* (BNF), over Europe and north Africa, at the prestigious British Museum, at Lichfield cathedral, and in Algeria where for the first time since Rabban Bhira the monk who instructed Mohammad about the Bible and Jesus, the local school children learned how to write their names, Khadija, Ali, Issa, Fatima in Syriac, in remote Ghardaia at the gates of the Saharan desert. Also Syriac was present in many international calligraphy gathering, where Syriac calligraphy found the magnificent place it deserves i.e. glorious, illustrious and most venerable. I was invited to perform Syriac calligraphy, at an agricultural show in amongst heifers, goats and pigs, and in a wine fair in the middle of vineyards where the Syriac calligraphy of the verse:

سعدنا مسينا لابس دذنتنا – «Wine gladdens the heart of man» (Ps 104:15) was much appreciated. Furthermore, the *massai* tribes from the Kenya remote areas in the bush sang in their local dialect humming and praying while listening to **ܕܕܚܕ ܒܘܨܝ ܠܡܘܠܐܢܐ** «Bless my soul the Lord» (Ps 103:1) in amongst roaring lions and facing the eternal snows of Kilimanjaro allowing Syriac to quit for a while its well guarded scholar dungeon and promoting its culture and art within grass root population.

I. The purpose of this paper

As we all know, we drag always our childhood' memories and in fact we grow older but never become adult. The inscriptions of the churches of Mosul and specially Meskinta cathedral were like the trellis, around the arcades of the sacred Bema; or those adorning tomb stones... were sealed in our heart, carved in our flesh, engraved in our souls, we were kneeled in the echoes of their resounding marble. We assimilated our identities and selves so much to these writings that we thought we already understood them before learning or reading them. The elegant calligraphies produced by the *Alqosh'* scribes who produced countless manuscripts, the *ramsha* and *sapras* huge *houdhras* where we used to gather like bees feeding from the honey combs psalms and prayers, I say these immense breviaries covered with brocade, bound with chiseled silver seemed to sing all by themselves through the coloured calligraphies. They had a magical effect and a powerful charm on us kids. Mysterious and fascinating, you didn't need an interpreter to explain their meaning. But do we need really interpreters to explain a mother' tender look at her child or a lover's eyes whispering fabulous stories to each other. It was an intimate conversation with the invisible. Syriac calligraphy is first and foremost a story of love letters.

II. What is calligraphy?

Calligraphy - from ancient Greek: κάλλος *kallos* «beauty» and γραφή *graph* «writing» means beautiful writing. Calligraphy is a highly regarded visual art which requires long initiation, humility, and great degree of self control and restraint. Calligraphy, ܠܚܘܨܬܐ *serta*, or *serto* in Syriac is the discipline of shaping and mastering a line. Syriac calligraphers enjoy an outstanding prestige, for calligraphy is to be considered not only a science but as a true art, suited for enlightened and initiated people only.

Syriac Masters-calligraphers of Iraq, Mosul have carried this art to the summit of its expression. The Syriac calligraphy is a sincere song, a magical hymn, a secret prayer, an initiatory journey which requires purity and demands constant training and impeccable principles. The hands of the calligrapher like that of a magician, clamps on the reed, with intensity and great restraint of the deepest forces and gives life to words. It is an intimate incantation and is a haunting dialogue with the marble, the metal, the wood or the paper. With humility and with lots of modesty, the calligrapher must calculate his itinerary, explore his possibilities, move according to his means and limits and adapt.

As we know and contrary to the Arabic calligraphy used for sacred purposes as well as for profane and utilitarian motives, Syriac is only a sacred art, a media to transmit the message of the Gospel and the faith.

III. Calligraphy' manuals and guides

No one actually wrote a manual and scholarly adequate guide for Syriac calligraphy; and academic work with regard to this art is surprisingly in existent when we consider the incredibly rich history of the calligraphers and scribes who produced hundreds of manuscripts, and who left us an immense Syriac written heritage. Due to the lack of methods, the scripts in different regions and

countries and even down to the individuals themselves have different ways to write. In earlier manuscripts characters vary in structure even in a single manuscript.

IV. The focus of this paper: Estrangela and Syro-oriental script

There are no set rules or explicit style for the Estrangela script; the only common feature is the angular, rigid, linear, square, absolutely straight shapes of the characters which reject decorative accents or curves. This script is so stylized and refined that grace prevails on the readability. Every letter breathes harmonies, proportions and balance. Look at the SHINE, He, SIMKATH. Look at the admirable letter *Alap*; it represents the virility in its splendor.

Estrangela characters are thick, sober, powerful, geometrical, voluptuous and vehement in their grace and sensual in their abundance. To calligraphy them or to sculpt them you have to trace an imaginary musical stave – Gregorian- of four lines which will guide the calligrapher and where each letter of the Alphabet has its own style, rule, canon and technique. You can't allow yourself to improvise with Estrangela; it is a monument, a proud unshakable mountain.

The *qanya* strokes cannot be corrected; it is like when you make an error singing or when you touch the wrong string of the harp, you can't correct it. It vanishes; you cannot bring it back and restore it. You have to re start your melody, your singing and your writing. For every correction shall be seen. Every move is transparent and spontaneous such as our hesitations, doubts, trembling hands, when expressing the inner storms of our soul and our life metamorphosis.

The calligraphy is like a *raga* or a *maqam*, improvised, according to the humor of the calligrapher in a given space and time and you can't reproduce exactly the same calligraphy again. Therefore, every calligraphy is unique.

Syro-Oriental – Chaldean - script

With the Syro-Chaldean script and the use of the *calamus* fatally modified the geometrical forms of the Syriac, connecting the lines and adding a gentleness and smoothness to the angles leading them to elusive curbs. In the western Syriac too, the cursive script lost its monumental character and acquired *plasticity*, rounded and smooth features.

V. A philosophical approach

Although we don't worship the letters, we don't assimilate them to astrological or kabalistic literature, and we don't treat them as idols as others do for their writing, Syriac calligraphy is an art that transcends meaning by giving the letters an intrinsic message and aesthetic beauty. In calligraphy you need not to understand the text, you have to trust, contemplate be amazed and believe. You view the text, with wonderment and delight, you are in a sort of beatitude, therefore understanding becomes irrelevant.

Here calligraphy takes on a mystical tone when contemplated and designated to see with the eyes of the heart. When contemplating calligraphy in a church, the faithful trust the texts without understanding them, for every one doesn't read or write Syriac.

If we had to extrapolate and talk about contemplation and action approaches I would say that with the process of calligraphy you are involved in contemplation and action at the same time. For you act sculpting or writing the text, and at the same time you contemplate the meaning and get inhabited by their sacred message.

The art of calligraphy requires patience and long practice to learn how to use the tools, trace the basic strokes and gestures. It is also a way of training and cultivating one's mind.

VI. Tools and technique

The scribe's kit: Whatever is the type of calligraphy, Syriac, Arabic or Latin, the tools and material used have a fundamental importance; they condition and determine the way of writing and thus affect the course and the size of the letters.

The Syriac calligraphy is practiced with the help of a *qanya*, a sharp edged reed, cut the opposite way of the Latin pens, for the Syriac is written from right to left. Inks can be bought readymade or can be prepared by the calligrapher himself. Recipes vary from one calligrapher to the other and most diverse ingredients can enter in their composition such as honey, gum Arabica, iron sulfate, lampblack, toasted gall nuts' powder etc.

Sure the width, thickness and viscosity of the ink can affect and may have an impact on the shape of the characters, and its intensity and dynamic can vary greatly.

Reed and bamboo pens are not steady or stable material, they too grow old with the use and you need permanently to re-cut, trim, clean and adjust them or use new ones.

You must frame the word adequately, nothing should be fortuitous, the beginning, the direction, the end use. The chosen text must be of an exceptional meaning, a living icon; here lies the responsibility of the calligrapher, although forever anonymous, he knows the power of the written word.

When you engrave a letter you have to choose the right material, calculate the space, trace at first four guiding lines, and count the words. When you engrave a prayer is like forcing the Lord to answer. Sure the sculpted word is even more powerful. It is a healer and gives life. Calligraphy is a journey through one's desert with your camel. You make a pause when dipping your stylus or *qanya* into the oasis of the ink; a pause to re-concentrate; a pause to breath for the cantor, a *repos du guerrier*. Don't drown your reed or

qanya with the ink. Take only the minimum necessary. Never overload your camel with futile weight for this initiatory journey. This means hours of laborious work.

For sculpture: Various kinds of chisels can be used such as: pointed, round, dented, angular.

VII. Conclusion

The letters are the body of the Syriac and calligraphy is its soul. This is exactly what our forefathers in Mesopotamia used to say about the strings of their harp being the body and their melody being the soul.

It is time to share this guarded pearl, unveil this beautiful bride, bring to life this lustrous maiden, which is the Syriac calligraphy, extirpate it up from its shroud and millennia old dust and convey her beauty to grass root populations. With what is going on in our beloved ancestors' land, everyone is called today to be a *Sahda*, a witness for our faith and cultural heritage.

The calligrapher, like the cantor, the poet or the sage is the spokesman of his community, he is never an accomplished person, he is always a project of his initiate' process. In calligraphy' initiations and Workshops, everybody is welcome and there is no age for learning as there is no age for singing or for being loved. An approach where the words which are fragile, daughters of ether, made of wind change into songs before moving into revered letters engraved in the heart of the Lord and of that of men as well.

Once I have been performing calligraphy demonstrations and I realized that there was a couple of French people standing behind me for about two hours. I was intrigued and asked them if I can help. They told me they were simply dazzled and stunned by the craft and the pleasure they had watching the simple reed re creating the universe.

Calligraphy has become today a most popular and highly regarded art in Europe. Typeset characters shall never replace calligrapher handwriting with a reed or a bamboo pen with their fluid grace, texture, nerves and curved ribs, achieving down strokes and upstrokes, evolving from shades to lights, highlighting and giving an importance even to the empty spaces.

Calligraphies' art works are admired no less than painting works.. Calligraphy has also fascinated many western artists throughout the centuries. Many have introduced calligraphy in their paintings. In addition, this aspect of plastic art has a further value of philosophical sense; it is a sort of an *Ayurvedic* therapy, a mystical exercise, a *Zen* practice and a calming activity.

As far as the Syriac is concerned: Is it possible to pioneer a standardization of the Syriac calligraphy styles, similar to what Ibn Muqla (886-940 A.D.) did for the Arabic Calligraphy? Ibn Muqla is highly regarded as the father and engineer of the classical Arab Calligraphy establishing systematic rules and proportions for shaping the letters based on X dots for each one.

VIII. Practical suggestions:

1 - Establish regular workshops for school children and public at large in other words people aged from 7 to 77 years old, in schools, cultural centers, museums, Sunday schools, book fairs.

Regarding workshops' setting: Tables should be placed in U form with napkin to give the idea of a convivial gathering and a ceremonial event. If you can accompany the workshops with a musical instrument it will be a plus. Workshops must not last more 3/4 an hour and numbers of the participants should not exceed 13-15 enabling the master to accompany and advise every one.

You start by humming to the sound of the cithar to put the audience into condition, and then taming the reed pens or the *calamus*. Most participants would presume it is an easy exercise,

but when coming to perform they are confronted with the difficulty of controlling inner forces. Participants never encroaches on each the other, no one judges the other. It is an intimate process. Everyone tries to do his best.

2 - Establish a course in Syriac calligraphy within Syriac institutions and especially in SEERI.

3 - Organize calligraphy and calligraphers' annual gathering.

4 - Organize calligraphy exhibitions and calligraphers' tournaments.




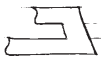
















5 - Combine calligraphy with other arts such as dancing, *Bharatanatyam*, music or painting.

Photos: Calligraphy sculpting and writing tools, Syriac tattoos, Syriac calligraphy accompanied by Dance & workshops at a school.

Attached: Sample Alphabet

***Dr. Behnam Keryo of Nineveh** was a musician, a sculptor and a calligrapher. He expired in Nov. 2017. He was running *La Maison du Scribe* or **ܠܐ ܡܘܨܝܘܢ ܕܟܬܒܐ** based in France, promoting, inter alia, Syriac language and literature in cooperation with the French educational institutions, targeting youth and public at large. His last book "*Le Jeune de Ninivek*" an art book in full colours accompanied by Syriac calligraphies is available on: <http://lamaisonduscribe.free.fr/>

Estrangela and Syro – oriental (Chaldean) Alphabet

Cursive. Syro oriental – Chaldean	Classical Estrangela
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	

Cursive. Syro oriental – Chaldean	Classical Estrangela

Cursive. Syro oriental – Chaldean	Classical Estrangela

Ionita Apostolache

THE THEOLOGY OF EXISTENCE IN THE WORKS OF VLADIMIR SOLOVYOV, PAVEL FLORENSKI AND SERGEI BULGAKOV

The theological evaluation of the human being is a natural and binding aspect for the Russian spirituality. Moreover, due to its particularity, it was stated that Russian thinking is an “*anthropocentric*” one. From the oldest to the youngest philosophers and theologians committed to this kind of studies, all of them have conceived man as above the material, ranking him among the most cherished creatures of God. From a philosophical point of view, we find out, for example, that man is quite the place where “*the mystery of the universe lies*” and which once clarified, endows us with the possibility to “solve the issue of God.” In theology, on the other hand, if we have in mind authors such as, Florensky, Bulgakov, Florovsky, Lossky or Evdokimov, the explanations are much more complete. In man, or rather through him, the true mystery of existence is revealed. Man is the main character of the most grandiose show of the human being, who encloses ontologically

and transcends God's plan eternally, from the moment he was born until he dies and further after this very moment.

This time, centred on the Holy Scripture and Holy Fathers as main sources of argumentation, the Russian spirituality reveals through theology more possibilities to understand existential reality. Generally speaking, man is seen as God's image and icon in the world, microcosm and microtheos. This being the starting point, the Russian theology further clarifies and offers answers to contemporary realities, focusing on the perspective of eternal life, which is developed and illustrated in a theonomous way starting with this very world. From this starting point, "*not only the knowledge of God coming from man, but also the knowledge of man coming from God is stated. The Russian are very aware of the fact that man is not known, but unknown, he is still a mystery.*"¹ It could be said that the Russian anthropology might be analysed: dogmatically, apologetically, liturgically and mystically. All these elements are almost always analysed and assessed in the context of modernity, thus, aiming at the practical applicability and dynamic size of theology about existence.² Its contemporary

1 Tomas Spidlik, *The Spirituality Of The Christian East. Man And His Destiny In The Russian Religious Philosophy*, translation by Maria-Comelia Ica, jr., Deisis Publishing Press, Sibiu, 2002, p. 21.

2 In this way, Bulgakov notes that "tradition should not be considered only as an ancestral gift, but also as an act that is taking place in our time ... It is a wrong modernism, of which, rightly, religious consciousness and true tradition must be aware of. But in man, there are legitimate and necessary aspirations so that he would understand the tradition of his time and consider it the guide of contemporary consciousness, since the times and years are under the power of God, and no age is forgotten by Him. Our Lord Jesus Christ calls in His Church all peoples, and each and every of them is assigned a gift and a mission, both in their general and private life, with the purpose of theological creation" (Sergei Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, translation by Nicolae Grosu, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 6).

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 character is mainly owed to a simple but very efficient wisdom:
 “back to the Holy Fathers.”³

In order to be able to develop a coherent on this topic, it is necessary to look into the works of the most eminent representatives of the theological field, together with the written legacy. The present debate is about “the meaning of the spiritual renaissance” (19th-20th centuries)⁴ and as such, about the new openness in interpreting and understanding the issue related to man and his existential realities.⁵

3 G. Florovsky, “The ways of Russian theology”, in *Aspects of Church History* (Collected Works of Georges Florovsky, 4), Belmont, Nordland, p. 207.

4 This period encompassed a true spiritual and cultural rebirth, crowned by numerous sacrifices and homage in most cases, martyrdom-like ones. Writers, poets, literary critics, journalists, scientists, philosophers, and last but not least theologians, “the Renaissance leaders did not have a common political, academic or ecclesial program. Their main elements of cohesion were neither in the academy nor in the Church, although many of them belonged to both institutions. Instead, these thinkers chose to popularize their ideas by creating unofficial artistic and literary circles (krujki), making new magazines, setting up new publishing houses and new philosophical-religious societies ... What united the leaders of the Russian religious renaissance was common religious seek and common pursuit of religious affairs, affecting all the aspects of human existence. They found inspiration in the Russian literature and 19th century thought in order to rediscover the truth and power of Christianity” (Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *George Florovsky and the Russian religious renaissance*, translation from English, Adela Lungu, Doxologia, Iasi, 2014, Pp. 40-41).

5 “The major coordinates of philosophical preoccupations will be exercised on the one hand in new attempts to re-evaluate speculative sophiology within the cosmocentric current of Orthodoxy, and on the other hand, in an attempt to rethink the Christian humanism, susceptible, this time, to become solid out of the vetero- and neotestamentary dogmatic. On the one hand, there are theologians such as Pavel Florenski and Sergei Bulgakov, and on the other hand philosophers and existentialists in the person of Nikola Berdiaev and Lev ^oestov (see: Ivan Ivlampie, *Russian Spiritualism In The Twentieth Century*, Eikon Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015, p. 96).

Vladimir Solovyov and the Sophianic perspective on existence

The modern period gives birth to new forms of orientation and manifestation which are introduced into the Russian theology. On the one hand, we deal with the opening to the West, characterized by numerous scholastic influences, and on the other hand, there is the nationalistic or slavo-philosophical perspective, intensely manifested through traditionalism and preserving the old customs. In this context, the beginning of the 19th century faces the dawn of sharp differences between ideologies and principles between the Orthodox and Catholic doctrine, one dominant, the other struggling to take roots. Orthodoxy remains, however, the “pillar of revealed religion in Russia”, and the Orthodox Creed sums up the “mystical and absolute expression of religious truth”⁶.

The one who endorses the relation set between culture, literature, philosophy and theology during the period analysed in the present paper is Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900). Considered by his contemporaries as “*the most original Russian philosopher*”, the great thinker was at the same time a poet, literary critic, journalist and distinguished theologian. Although, he was at first an atheist, he finally found the right path leading to the Church, first studying Kant and Spinoza, as well as the theology of the Church’s Holy Fathers and early modern mystics (e.g., Jakob Bohme). He was essentially influenced by Saint Augustine’s thinking and “*developed a unique notion about Sofia*”⁷. He was a student of the University and

6 Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, *The Spirit of Russia. Studies in History, Literature and Philosophy*, translated from the original German by Eden and Cedar Paul, vol. I, London, p. 242.

7 See for further study *Solovyev Anthology*, Londra, 1950, p. 9-13; Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000, p. 155-165; Fr. Roman Rytsar, *The Kenotic Theology of Antonie Bloom, The Metropolitan of Suroj, in Anthropological Perspective*, p. 59.

Academy of Theology in Moscow, whose professor he, eventually, become. He became particularly well-known by asserting theses such as: “*The Crisis of Western Philosophy*” and “*Critique of Abstract Principles*.” In his speech, before starting the presentation of his thesis, Paul Evdokimov notes, Solovyov states that for every educated man without any religion there are only two solutions: either he / she commits suicide or becomes aware that he / she is nothingness and has to confess that God is everything. He brutally ridiculed the progressive environment, saying: “Man evolved from monkey; this is why we love each other.”⁸

From a theological point of view, Solovyov can first be labelled as a mystic.⁹ In fact, he lived a hard life, in according to some, even ascetic. Not a few were the times when he outwitted his inner feelings in unprecedented acts of mercy, giving money and clothing to the poor. After the assassination of the Russian Tsar, he advised the new ruler to pardon the regicides of the latter’s father Alexander II, “as a proof, in front of the European world, of highest Christian morality of his Empire.”¹⁰ Any lingering hope Solovyov may have entertained of obtaining a professorship in Russia was now long and forever gone. From this moment on, his attachment to the values of the Russian traditions changes, becoming a fervent Occidentalist. The new vision he promotes will be one of absolute detachment from Russian traditions and spirit. Thus, his new way of thinking is illustrated in several works, essential in order to understand his personality, such as: “*The national question in Russia*” where he

8 Paul Evdokimov, *Christ in Russian Thought*, translation by Rev. Ion Buga, Symbol Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 126.

9 “It is extremely difficult to present Solovyov’s philosophy. An extremely fine and spiritual dialectician, in his words, the collocation often conceals its meaning. We can distinguish three principles in his thinking: 1. the idea of inner spirituality of being; 2. the idea of absolute unity and 3. the idea of Man-God(Ossip Lourie, *La philosophie russe contemporaine*, Paris, 1902, p.11.

10 Ivan Ivlampie, *Russian Spiritualism In The Twentieth Century*, pp. 67-68.

militates for the restoration of the universal Church: “*Russia and the Universal Church*” (1889) – where he militates against Caesaropapism and Slavophile nationalism “*The Living Christ*” and “*The Antichrist Story*”¹¹.

The contribution of his thinking can be considered as developing in two main directions of great importance for the formation and consolidation of Russian existentialism: philosophy and theology. The first one depicts him as a system maker, processing the Gnostic influence and Plato’s, the Slavophile and the Romantic Movement. As it concerns theology, the mystical particularity of his work “set the direction for Russian religious renaissance in the field of charity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.” Based on these principles, the legacy and conceptual influence upon those after him transformed religion into “the supreme and superior value of all culture.” This is why his ideas are prevailing in the works of most theologians, philosophers and poets of that period. For example, “Bulgakov, Berdiaev, or Merenhkovsky formulate their theories about *deified Manhood or man’s deification* in accordance with three soteriological periods: first, that of God the Father, or the Old Testament, the second, that of the Son, or the New The Testament, the third, *man’s deification*.”¹²

From an existentialist point of view, Solovyov’s thinking matches the real element as a feature of substance and particularity of approach. He himself was considered a “philosopher of the real”. In his opinion, “existence is always concrete”, although there are always ambiguous terms and puzzling meanings. Therefore, “*existence is the predicate of a subject, of real existent, and it is never the subject itself. Existence always indicates that one*

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 68.

¹² Wiktorja Krezemien, *L’influence de Soloviev sur la pensee philosophique et religieuse russe du debut du XXe siecle*, en “Nouvelles de L’Institut Catolique de Paris” (NICP), Colloque Vladimir Soloviev, 1978-1979, p. 26.

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*thing is, but not what it is. It can never be claimed that existence is, but only that the realexistent is. Although, these statements bring Solovyov closer to existential philosophy, he will not deepen these insights; his reality is always thought, covered by abstract, rational patterns*¹³.

Based on the complexity of the ideas Solovyov advances about Christian existence, he often brings forward arguments about the origin and *divine purpose of human nature* (the antropy). Without being considered a utopian, the great thinker sees *the antropy* as “the first and ultimate life reality”, “philosophy’s metaphysical peak... through which humanity frees itself”, while being also “the reason of human thought and historical time”. Hence, he announces without any doubt, as an absolute principle of existence, “*personal God*”. When confronted with the danger of pantheistic contradictions, which challenged the reality of God’s presence in the world, as well as the meaning of divine-human relationship, the Russian philosopher makes the mistake to use the concept of “Sofia”¹⁴ in an uninspired manner. In his opinion, “*Sofia is absolute humanity, the purest and most complete, the superior, all-encompassing form and the living soul of nature and of the universe, eternally united with the Godhead and uniting us with it temporarily, uniting with the Godhead all that is*”¹⁵. In this context, the Russian thinker often refers to Goethe’s “eternal feminine” (das Ewig-Weibliche), promoted in the sense of “drawing us upwards”. “This is one of the ingredients, says Father Andrew Louth, in what becomes the central notion of his theology, and that aspect of his theology that was to exercise (and still exercises) a profound influence: his notion of Sophia, the Divine Wisdom, and its place in his

13 Ivan Ivlampie, *Russian Spiritualism In The Twentieth Century*, p. 69.

14 Constantin Andronicof, *La theantropie dans la pensee de Soloviev*, en NICP, 1978-1979, p. 48.

15 V. Soloyiev, *L’idee de l’humanite chez Auguste Compte*, Ouvres VIII, 1898, , p. 240.

understanding of reality as “Godmanhood”, *Divine - humanity* (Bogocelovecestvo).”¹⁶

Going further deeper, Father Andrew Louth tries to identify the inspirational element of Solovyov’s sophiology. The first reference is, of course, a biblical one, referring to the sapiential books of the Old Testament, where “the term of *sofia* is more intensely illustrated.” The discussion here is about The Parables of Solomon, The Book of Job, The Ecclesiastes (Wisdom of Jesus the Sirah) or even the Psalms of David. “In the Hebrew text, Wisdom, *Hokhmah* describes herself as “master workman”¹⁷: Solovyov knew both the Hebrew and the Greek texts, and it was important for him that the word for wisdom is feminine in both Hebrew, *hokhmah*, and in Greek, *sophia*. So, Wisdom is God’s companion in the work of creation: there is a male-female complementarity there at the bringing-into-being of the world. Closely allied with this function, Wisdom appears as one who knows God, one that can bring human beings to knowledge of God”¹⁸. Advancing in this direction of his research, Solovyov gets to transform the biblical principle into a personal aspect, discovering it personalized in his famous visions. Therefore, it is obvious that “*Solovyov’s sophiology comes mainly from his personal experience of Sofia, from its mystical appearances and visions.*”¹⁹

From an apologetic point of view, Solovyov’s theological approach has a peculiar particularity. Beyond his emotional failures²⁰, he is undoubtedly a visionary and mystical author. His disapproval and criticism related to dialectical materialism, although it had not yet emerged, is quite remarkable. Even in this pragmatic aspect of his existence, the philosopher seeks to account for his *antropy*,

16 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox thinkers*, pp. 64-65.

17 Cf. Parables 8:20.

18 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox thinkers*, p. 66.

19 Paul Evdokimov, *Christ in Russian Thought*, p. 135.

20 Generated by the conflicts he has with the Tsar, he eventually, gets closer to the Catholic Church.

which will be preserved as a fundamental principle and example of Christian existence. He thus, illustrates the fact that, after the Incarnation, God's working presence in the history of human salvation passes to a new stage. It is the social and moral strengthening of the relation that the Lord rebuilds with the entire human race. This reality becomes possible due to "theocracy". Therefore, "this unity of the universal Church is based on the strengthening of the relation between the earthly and the everlasting kingdoms."²¹

Pavel Florenski - biographical sketch

The first among the most important theologians, an outstanding representative of "Russian spiritual renaissance", is the Russian scholar Pavel Florenski (1882-1937). "Russian theologian and philosopher, Orthodox priest, mathematician, physicist, art historian," this great spirit of the Orthodox tradition could be rather considered as an apologist and "confessor of the name of Christ during the persecution of the antichrists".²² He was born on 9/21 January 1882, in the town of Yevlakh, in Elisabethpol Governorate in Transcaucasia. He was the first of the seven children Alexander Ivanovich and Olga Pavlova Florenski had. The education he received from his family is completed by the knowledge he gets at school. Thus, completes his high school studies (1893-1899) at the Tbilisi classical lyceum where several companions were later to distinguish themselves as great Russian men. This is the moment when his love for secular sciences grows rapidly, so that *the books of physics, geology, astronomy and mathematics began to become true "positivist catechisms", and evolutionists like*

21 James Licoudis, *Vladimir Soloviev (The Russian Newman) and Christian Politics and Ecumenism*, in "The Catholic Social Science Review", nr. 16/2011, p. 196.

22 Fr. Sergei Bulgakov, "About Father Pavel Florenski" in Pavel Florenski, *Iconostasis*, translation and chronology by Boris Buzila, Anastasia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1994, p. 5.

*Laplace, Darwin and Haekcel, true "Fathers of the Church" of science.*²³ After this magnetization of personal truth with secular sciences, the young Florenski discovers the original spirituality of his own existence. It happened in 1899, when, after having a "metaphysical dream", he got convinced of "*the ontological nature of the spiritual world and of the fact that one cannot live without God*".

During 1904-1908, Pavel Florenski attends the courses of the Ecclesiastical (Theological) Academy near Troitse-Sergiyeva Lavra. He is herespiritually guided by the abbot Isidor Gruzinski and befriends Sergei Troitski, his future brother-in-law, to whom he will later dedicate his work "The Pillar and the Foundation of Truth". This is also the time, when together with other scholars, will found the "Christian Struggle Union", which, "inspired by apocalyptic ideas and the Solovyan vision of achieving a free theocracy, militated for serious political, social and church reforms, rejecting autocracy and the monarchy of the clergy in favour of a kind of religious socialism."²⁴ As a result of this experience, he writes "Steps", but it is not published.

His first moment of crisis consumes in 1906 when, on March 23rd, he presents the essay "*The Cry of the Blood*" in the plenary of the Academy as a cry of rebellion against the execution of the Uprising leader, Pyotr Schmidt. Subsequently, he is arrested but a few weeks later he is released at Easter after the writer Grigori Racinski puts in a good word. In the spring of 1908, he graduates the Academy, presenting the thesis "On Religious Truth" (the original version of the later "The Pillar and Ground of the Truth"). In the same year, on September 23rd, he becomes a professor of History of Philosophy at

23 Dea. Ioan Ica Jr., "*Pavel Alexandrovici Florenski and the ecclesial salvation of reason*" in Pavel Florenski, *Pillar and ground of the truth. An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*, translation made by Emil Iordache, Rev. Iulian Friptu and Rev. Dimitrie Popescu, introductory study by dea. Ioan Ica I, Jr., Polirom Publishing House, 1999, pp. 10-11.

24 Dea. Ioan Ica Jr., "*Pavel Alexandrovici Florenski and the ecclesial salvation of reason*", p. V.

the Theological Academy. After many arduous battles of his soul, he chooses to marry Anna Mihailovna Giatsintova, the “sister of a close seminarian friend”, and together they will have three children: Anna, Vasili and Olga. This is followed by his ordination as a deacon on April 23rd, 1911, and soon after as a priest (on April 24th)²⁵. After ordination, he serves for some time in the Chapel “Saint Mary Magdalene” of the Posad orphanage (1912-1929). It is also important to note that on May 19th, 1914, Florenski submitted to the Ecclesiastical Academy his dissertation, headed “About Spiritual Truth. An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy”, began under the obedience of Professor Aleksii I. Vvdenski and completed under the supervision of Bishop Feodor Pozdeievski.²⁶ His theological activity develops by publishing for three years the most important theological publication of that time “Bogoslovski Vestnic” (“Theological Herald”).

The oppression of the Communist regime (October 1918) finds him caring about the Troitse-Sergiyeva Lavra, which, although it was academically closed, he fought so that the regime keep it open “as a *living museum* in which the monks would achieve daily the complete work of art of the Orthodox Liturgy”. From this position, he foresees the disaster of the Nihilist crisis, which he criticizes without any hesitation in the notes of his correspondence.²⁷ It is

25 Boris Buzila, “Chronology”, preface to the study of Pavel Florenski, Iconostasis, p. 21.

26 In spite of apparent contradictions of professorial board, Father Pavel is appointed Professor at the Ecclesiastical Academy, succeeding his teacher Aleksii I. Vvdenski. Labelled as “a Pharisee” by some, Florenski is rightly considered as “the only faithful professor in the entire academy”, a confession made by Bishop Feodor Pozdeievski in the years of communist imprisonment.

27 “Everything that is happening around us now is of course, tortuous. But I believe and hope that, once ended, nihilism will prove its nothingness and the world will have had enough of it, it will be hated by all, and then, after the failure of this triviality, the hearts and minds will find a new way, but not as before, effeminate and indecisive, but eager to embrace the Russian idea, of Russia’s, of the Holy Russia” (Letter to A.S. Mamontova, July 30th, 1917).

worth mentioning that since 1920, his academic work is directed to science, publishing a great number of studies and attending conferences. However, “he continued to wear his priest cassock and cross even when lecturing”²⁸. In 1924 he gives up academic teaching, since he disagreed with the new “Pro-soviet innovative” movement, included and imposed in the communist theological education act. Having ended this stage, he re-embraces science in order to make a living. Thus, he teaches “Physics, Geometry, Mathematics, Astronomy and History of Matter Culture at the Folk Education Institute in Posad”²⁹.

In 1928 he was arrested and exiled to Nizhni Novgorod. After the intercession of Ekaterina Peshkova, Maxim Gorki’s wife, he is allowed to return to Moscow. In 1933, he was again arrested and sentenced to 10 years in the labour camps under the accusation of “agitation and counter-revolutionary propaganda and organized counterrevolutionary activity”. In spite of his painful years of imprisonment, Father Florenski continued to be scientifically active, giving numerous lectures on “mathematics, physics, aquatic plant technology and chemistry”. On 25th November 1937, he was secretly sentenced to death by shooting by an extrajudicial institutional commission (Special Troika), he too, being thus one victim of “*the massive action of elimination of the last non-and anti-Soviet elements organized by Stalin on the occasion of celebrating two decades since the Bolshevik Revolution*”³⁰.

The work of great Florenski is an extremely complex one³¹ and at the same time “controversial”, especially from a *sophiological*

28 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox thinkers, From the Philokalia to Present*, translation from English by Justin A. Mihoc, Cristian Untea and Lucian Filip, Doxologia Publishing House, Iasi, 2017, p. 78.

29 Dea. Ioan Ica Jr., “*Pavel Alexandrovici Florenski and the ecclesial salvation of reason*”, p. XV.

30 Dea. Ioan Ica Jr., “*Pavel Alexandrovici Florenski and the ecclesial salvation of reason*”, p. XXIX.

31 Among the most important works of the great Orthodox theologian translated into Romanian, it worth mentioning: *Iconostasis*

point of view³². Effortlessly dealing with theology, philosophy and science, his works are true acts of Christian confession in an agitated and challenging age. The works of the great scholar and theologian are the proof to posterity meant to illustrate the fact that he has preserved his spiritual and ideological integrity when confronted to the communist regime. However, he served his country getting largely involved in the technological progress, and although, deported and exiled, he categorically refused to emigrate. About Florenski, his good friend and brother in service, Sergei Bulgakov, used to say: “In order to be able to talk about a genius, who is actually a miracle of nature, one should be oneself the way he was or at least, to be able to depict his personality through the ability to live into the world of his experiences. Let us hope that there will be some who will be able to gather together precious shreds of memories about him in this quarter-century that has passed, although, they will too, have to face an insurmountable obstacle: the true work of Father Pavel is not the books he wrote, but he himself, his entire life, which has irreversibly passed from this age to the next one”³³.

Christian perspectives of existence in the vision of Father Florenski

Regarding Father Pavel Florenski’s theology, it must be known the fact that there have been many debates on the position (or rather paternity) of the *sophiological* movement. In an essay on this “*theological challenge*” in the Russian area at the beginning of the 20th century, Father and Professor Picu Ocoleanu offers a detailed analysis of the main historical and conceptual coordinates in relation to the above-mentioned debate. As a whole, the disapproval of this “Trinitarian heresy” is in the hands of theologian Georges Florovski.

(Amastasia, 1994); *Reverse Perspective and Other Writings* (Humanitas, 1997); *Dogmatic and Dogmatism* (Anastasia, 1998); *The Pillar and the Foundation of Truth* (Polirom, 1999).

32 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox thinkers*, pp. 79-80.

33 Fr. Sergei Bulgakov, “*About Father Pavel Florenski...*” p.13.

He proves to be “the author of the poorest and most unfair but at the same time – influential – criticism of Father Florenski and his *Pillar ...*”. Thus, in his work “The Ways of Russian Theology”, G. Florovski considers his co-nationalist work mentioned previously as the most representative work of this movement, “a sample of the ambiguity and failure of the movement of religious philosophy” as a whole. Its lack of reliability would be the consequence of a superficial Christological approach, which would have mainly directed the importance to “pneumatology and sophiology”, these resulting “here into the magic of this work”. Therefore, Florenski considered *The Pillar ...* as an “edifying and meaningful work but only as a psychological document and historical testimony ... a literary confession, an original combination between essayism and natural mysticism.” Using this argument, Fr. Picu Ocoleanu points out that in the sophiological dispute “Florovski’s main objection is not one based on the content, but rather one related to the lack of patristic substantiation of this content ... His objection would be quite a well-grounded one if it exclusively related only to Bulgakov’s thinking. However, in relation to Florenski, it is groundless, since the latter does not admit, at least as far as the doctrine of Sofia is concerned, any free speculation about biblical and patristic groundwork”³⁴.

Due to the personal character of his twelve letters, thought as a Foreword to his work *The “Pillar and Ground of Truth”*, Florenski develops an important **anthropological issue**. In search of the ontological support, defined by the words of Saint Paul³⁵, he seeks in his reflections “*The absolute and eternal Truth, the One and Divine Truth, the Bright Truth ... which is the sun of the*

34 Picu Ocoleanu, *Sophia Parthenos. Sophianic Ethics of Contemplative Life in German Pietism and Russian Orthodox Sophiology*, Mitropolia Olteniei Publishing House, Craiova, 2014, pp. 184-187.

35 “If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the **church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth**”. (1 Tim. 3:15)

world.” Chapter 11 of the Gospel of Matthew being the point of departure, he preaches about “the lack of rational knowledge and the need for spiritual knowledge.” “God, says Father Florenski, has “hidden these things from the wise and learned”, meaning everything that may be called worthy of being known, and “revealed them to little children” (Matthew 11:25) ... Of course, The Lord said without any irony exactly what He meant to say: true wisdom is superficial, precisely because it is human. And at the same time, mental “infancy”, the lack of intellectual richness, which prevents us from entering the Kingdom of Heaven, may prove to be the condition of acquiring spiritual knowledge. But the fullness of all is Jesus Christ, and therefore knowledge can only be obtained through Him and by Him³⁶.

Furthermore, Florenski illustrates the fact that the concern of the religious man is always to discover “**what or who is the Truth.**” Starting from defining “what is universal”, the great scholar ends in giving complex ontological explanations, about the meaning of Christian existence. He finds here a series of ethological arguments to support his thesis. Thus, starting from the Russian translation of the word “truth”, translated as “istina – estina”, Florenski points out the fact that “the Russian language illustrates the ontological aspect of this idea. Therefore, *istina* means absolute identity and, as such, something equal to itself, that is to say, precision, authenticity.” Tracing its evolution in scholastics, philosophy and linguistics, he reaches the conclusion that, for the Russian ethos “*truth is the permanent experience; it is what the living being lives, breathes, that is, what possesses the essential condition of life and existence. Truth as a living being par excellence, this is the concept that the people have made up. It is not difficult at all, of course, to notice that it is precisely this concept of truth that is the original and peculiar singularity of the Russian philosophy*”³⁷.

36 Pavel Florenski, *The Pillar and Foundation of Truth*, “Letter One, Two Worlds”, p. 15.

37 *Ibidem*, “The Second Letter”, pp. 17-18.

The same topic on the issue of “Truth” is discussed also in the Fourth Letter. Up to this point, Florenski is much more direct, referring to the direct relation of the ontological reality he had previously analysed to the hypostasis of the Godhead. The essential bind of human existence with its transcendental roots is therefore “**love**”, as a characteristic of the peculiarity of the hypostatic Truth, the Son and the Word of God, “who for us the people and for our salvation became fleshly, bodily and was made man for us and our salvation”³⁸. “If God exists, says Florenski, He is necessary absolute love. But love is not an attribute of God’s. God would not be absolute love if He were not love for something else, for the contingent, for the world; for then the divine love would depend on the contingent existence and therefore it would be itself contingent. God is absolute being because He is the substantial act of love, act-substance. God or Truth does not only have love, but above all, “God is love”³⁹ that is, love is the essence of God, His nature, and not just a mere providential relationship inherent to Him. In other words, “God is love” (more precisely “Love”) and not only “the one Who loves”⁴⁰. This offers Father Pavel the occasion to undertake a great detour into the philocalic spirituality of the monks’ stories, basing his approach on several examples of spiritual living “in the light of the love of the Divine Truth.”

As opposed to the spiritual fathers, Florenski places the **skeptics**, for whom the divine light of Truth remains “distant as the light of the day”. They are the ones who place reason before faith, who “saw something, but did not understand and could not understand the meaning of those they saw.” Hence, “in order to see, a premise was needed”, that goes beyond the “norms of reason”. At this level, Florenski thinks that “it is necessary to live in the depths

38 Article II of the Confession of Faith (Creed).

39 I In. 4, 8, 16.

40 Pavel Florenski, *The Pillar and Foundation of Truth*, “The Fourth Letter: The light of Truth”, p. 52.

of the Holy Trinity, to be the Son of God.” The support and argumentation of this apophatic reality is to be found in that “infinite authority”, supported “by a self-sacrificing love, by a sinless purity, by an unimaginable beauty, and by invincible wisdom”. This arises out of man’s perfect communion with Christ, and without Him “the premise of Trinity was unconceivable, so absolute vision was impossible.”⁴¹

Florenski’s **pneumatological thesis**, developed in his 5th letter, highlights his attributes as an apologist and polemist. In addition to illustrating the charismatic nature of man’s relationship with God and pointing out the ascetic-mystical characteristics of the Russian tradition on the subject debated, he also pays attention to the destructive consequences of *Filioque*. Hence the autonomous understanding that Scholastic attributes to our relationship with God. In other words, without reporting as such to the grace of the Holy Spirit, man alienates from his own existence. Offering also, the Orthodox answer to this issue, Florenski emphasizes the fact that “*the aspects of Christian life, which relate to the Holy Spirit, namely: Christian freedom, filiation, were substituted or perverted in the moment some or other of the heretics wanted to bring them to life groundlessly. By their deeds, the so-called people of the new religious consciousness, from the first to the 20th including, have always betrayed, because on the rose seedlings they planted there grew thorns and burs ... Who possess The Spirit as the Saints possessed, clearly sees that it is pure madness to claim more. But not being Spirit-bearing at all, men of all times find it extremely easily to be dominated by a tempting self-indulgence and replace the condition as Spirit-bearers with their own, subjective, psychological and human involvement, and then with devilish illusions*”⁴²

41 *Ibidem*, p. 73.

42 *Ibidem*, “*The Fifth Letter: The Comforter*”, pp. 90-91.

Father Florenski refers also to “**the heart and its significance in man’s spiritual life, according to the Word of God**”.⁴³ Taking into account the fact that “man’s determination to do one thing or another come out in his heart”, and it is here where “various intentions to act and desires rise”, the Russian theologian starts from the idea that man’s heart is the centre of human existence. First, he grounds his thesis on a series of biblical arguments, he first positions himself gnoseologically, pointing out that “heart is the place of all the soul’s acts of knowledge. Reflections are “plans in the heart” (Proverbs 16:1), the reproach of the heart: “My heart is troubled” (Nehemiah 5:7), to understand with heart means “to know in your heart” (Deuteronomy 8:5); to know “with all your heart” means to know completely (Joshua 23:14)”.⁴⁴

One of the most important existential issues we find in the works of the Russian theologian is that of the **dialogue between reason and faith**. Highly concerned with this issue, Florenski uses this relation in a positive way, going beyond the materialistic barriers of his time. On the other hand, his apologetic approach does not in any way follow “the desperate desire to reach the West, with all its

43 According to the Old Testament, the term “**leb** – heart” clearly defines man’s willing and intellectual feelings. Heart is the center of feelings, affections and spiritual life, of mind, or intelligence: “The heart of a fool is like a broken vessel, and no wisdom at all shall it hold. A man of sense will praise every wise word he shall hear, and will apply it to himself: the luxurious man hath heard it, and it shall displease him, and he will cast it behind his back. The talking of a fool is like a burden in the way: but in the lips of the wise, grace shall be found. The mouth of the prudent is sought after in the church, and they will think upon his words in their hearts. As a house that is destroyed, so is wisdom to a fool: and the knowledge of the unwise is as words without sense.... The heart of fools is in their mouth: and the mouth of wise men is in their heart.” (The Wisdom of Jesus, Sirah 21:15-20, 28) See further our work: *Orthodox Apologetics confession and apostolate*, Mitropolia Olteniei Publishing House, Craiova, 2017, pp. 262-268).

44 Pavel Florenski, *The Pillar and Foundation of Truth*, p. 332.

progress in thinking that the Russians have missed – The Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, and Romanticism. His arguments are always based on interaction and dialogue. His concern for what lies beyond appearances bloomed when he was barely a teenager. This is the reason for which, although he knew pretty well the very essence of science, he was aware of the fact that he could not “clarify all human issues”. In his opinion, “faith, prayer, worship could not be excluded”, but they opened up new “dimensions of meaning” which rational knowledge “was unaware”.⁴⁵

Sergei Bulgakov and the kenotic dimension of existence

The third representative of “the Russian sophiological existentialism” is Sergei Bulgakov. His thinking about man is mainly an Christological one. Always sharing the vision of the teachings learned from the Scriptures, the Russian theologian analyzes reality, history and the destiny of modern man from a critical point of view. In his opinion, even the atheist humanism is full of aspirations, which, though incorrect, direct towards “the Absolute”. “In the time of the Revelation and socialism, he compares Marxism with the utopian Judean Millenarianism, with an impact on economy and politics. Released from the social sin of the capitalist era, through its troubles, Marxism saves mankind and leads it to irrational salvation in a kingdom of freedom where Reason and Fraternity will reign”⁴⁶.

Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov first saw the daylight in 1871 in the small town of Livni, 400 km far from Moscow. He was the descendant of an old family of church servants, his father was a priest. He first graduates from his native town theology seminary, which will be later described as the place, “where he lost his faith”. For this reason, the next step is towards secular education, graduating from economics and law faculties (1890-1894). His atheistic time

45 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, pp. 81-82.

46 Paul Evdokimov, *Christ in Russian Thought*, pp.211-212.

is consumed in Marxist preoccupations, which he appropriates as a field of study and scientific research. Thus, in 1896, when he was barely 25 years old, Bulgakov studies market economy in the capitalist system. Two years later, he publishes a thorough study about the relationship between capitalism and agrarian economy. His re-embrace of the Orthodox faith can be viewed from a certain point of view as a “reconversion”, through which he succeeds in getting reintegrated in the spirit of the religious values which he had once experienced during his childhood. From this moment on, his intellectual preoccupations are exclusively directed to the study of philosophy and theology. In 1918 he was ordained to the priesthood, and in January 1923 he was forced to leave the country and go into exile. He establishes in Paris, the city where he will lay the basis of one of the most prestigious Orthodox theology schools in Europe, St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute⁴⁷. Here he becomes a dean and professor of dogmatic theology, a subject he taught until his death (1944). His activity as a professor was doubled by an intense and successful activity as a writer. **His two greatest trilogies** have preserved their theological importance up to present: I. *The Friend of the Bridegroom* (1927), *The Burning Bush* (1927) and *Jacob’s Ladder* (1929) – where he deals with subjects such as God’s glory, the uncreated light, the repentance baptism of St. John the Baptist, The Mother of God and the holy angels; II. *On Godmanhood* or “his great theological trilogy”, as he himself called it⁴⁸, including: *The Lamb of God* (1933 – A Christological Analysis), *The Comforter* (1936 – a study of Pneumatology) and *The Bride of the Lamb* (A Treatise of Orthodox Ecclesiology and Eschatology, published after his death, in 1945)⁴⁹.

47 See: A. Kniazeff, *L’Institute Saint-Serge. De l’Academie d’autrefois au rayonnement d’aujourd’hui*, in *Le Point Theologique*, nr. 14/1974.

48 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, pg. 107.

49 Boris Jakim, *Introduction to Sergei Bulgakov, The Lamb of God*, translated by Boris Jakim, William Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K., 2008, p. XI.

Existential related topics are a subject of great interest for Bulgakov's research even since the time of his Marxist preoccupations. After having been the author of several studies in this field which concerned capitalism or the agrarian economy, he comes to realize the fact that, the strings of the new atheist system were not enough and they were also extremely weak to be able to shed light on the issue of human existence and get into its depths. He first tried to link Marxist socialism to the justification of rational ethics discovered in Kant's philosophy. His research attempt was meant to illustrate the idea that "man must not be seen as a passive object swept along by the forces of the economic development, but as a creative agent in history, freely acting in pursuit of fundamental values". His approach suffers a change in 1903, when he openly admits that "he could no longer stand the strain of combining Marxism with idealism, with a rational ethics based on the creativity of the personal subject. He therefore announced his conversion to idealism proper. This did not necessarily involve the shedding of all his earlier thought. As we shall see, his eventual theological activity as an Orthodox priest is at least partly to be explained on the basis of his Marxian inheritance".⁵⁰

After the detour in Marxist ideology, Bulgakov heads towards the arguments of German ideological philosophy, expressing a particular interest in the vision of Hegel and Schelling. The works of the two pillars of the German culture are his first springs that will nourish the foundations of his sophiological system. If Hegel's criticism helps the Russian theologian explain the connection between the Logos and the world, Schelling's philosophy provides him with the idea that God, out of His boundless love for human beings, "agrees with the kenosis not only in the act of the Incarnation. But kenosis is also present in the work of the Holy Spirit since the moment of the Pentecost; it is also present in the moment when the

50 Aidan Nichols, *Light from the East. Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology*, Sheed & Ward London, 1995, p. 58.

Holy Trinity is created”. The next and most important step in defining his theological thinking is considered to be the one related to the ideological influence that two of his countrymen had upon his vision development: Vladimir Solovyov and Pavel Florenski. He will discover in their works main sophiological coordinates which he will follow and later use them existentially in developing his own kenotic theology. All these are enriched with a so called “personal” approach. Starting from the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils in Nicaea and Chalcedon, he sets as his main research aim “*the cataphatic reinterpretation of the mystery of Christ. In this case, only the assertion of a real kenosis can offer a positive content to the hypostatic union and can save the dogmatic definition issued in Chalcedon from the danger called Docetism or Monophysitism*”.⁵¹This is the formula under which, the great Russian thinker will succeed in developing a much wider analytical system, inevitably finding support in sophiological theories⁵².

From a cosmological point of view, according to Bulgakov, kenosis aims at the act of creation of both man and the world. The Creator does not descend to men due to necessity, “but to the impossibility that God would not share His love. Descending towards the object outside Himself – to the creation, the result and aim of His divine love – the Absolute becomes a personal God for His creation. Creation is a kenotic event for the whole Trinity, because the Father consents to wait until His creation will respond to His

51 Florin Toader Tomoioga, *The Mystery of Kenosis in Orthodox Theology of the 20th Century*, Mitropolia Olteniei Publishing House, Craiova, 2013, pp. 242-243.

52 “Bulgakov’s kenotic theories cannot be understood without reference to the nature and place of Sophia or divine Wisdom in his system, since kenosis and generally speaking his entire Christology are constituent parts of his sophiological synthesis. According to his opinion, a valid theology of kenosis must be based on sophiology. This is the main premise of a Christology that allowed the Chalcedon doctrine to be thought positively” (*Ibidem*, p. 244).

love”⁵³. We witness here the Russian theologian’s manifestation of his sophiological conception. Trying to explain in cataphatic terms the relation between God and the world, Bulgakov tries to overcome the “ontological abyss that separates them”. He thus comes to the conclusion that the existential binder which makes it possible to reintegrate man into the kenotic love of the Holy Trinity can only be achieved through Sofia. Not having stated his idea clearly, the Russian theologian points out, on the one hand, the cosmological role of Sofia, failing to define in quite a comprehensive manner its relation to the Holy Trinity. The ambiguity of the explanations offered would be according to some specialists the result of the “*author’s personal creative evolution*”. His passing from Marxism to Christianity “*made him first seek in the idealist philosophy and then in church thinking, the relation that connects heaven with the earth, God with man.*”⁵⁴

Getting back to the existential particularity of Bulgakov’s theology we must take into account *the liturgical aspect of his sophiology*. This is particularly emphasized by Father Andrew Louth. Starting from the “*way to rebuild the relation between God and creation*”, Father Louth points out the fact that, Sofia can be understood as “*the face that God turns towards His creation, and the face that creation, in humankind, turns towards God*”⁵⁵. Starting from this very idea, the loving relation between “Uncreated Wisdom” and “created wisdom” is highly illustrated as specificity of Orthodox theology. It goes beyond gnostic influences and conceptual definitions of philosophy, and it is to be identified charismatically in the reality of the Eucharistic existence. Thus, based on the example of the theology of Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, Father Andrew Louth illustrates the fact that “*for Bulgakov, to celebrate the Eucharist*

53 Pr. Roman Rytsar, *The Kenotic Theology of Anthony Bloom*, pp. 79-80.

54 Florin Toader Tomoioga, *The Mystery of Kenosis in Orthodox Theology of the 20th Century*, pg. 245.

55 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, p. 128.

entails that Creation belongs to God, that is not alien to him, that to be a creature is already to be graced, something that Fr. Schmemmann's "third image" seems to suggest: Bulgakov's celebration of the Divine Mysteries seemed to him something autochthonous, something rooted in the very being of Creation. It is this intuition that lay at the heart of his sophiology."⁵⁶

In the work "The Lamb of God", Father Sergei Bulgakov carries out a deep existential analysis of the creation as understood in terms of his sophiology. Based on the arguments of Orthodox theology, he considers cosmos to be a divine work, eternally discovered and supported by the power of divine love. This makes that the *liturgical vision of his sophiology* goes beyond the autonomous tendencies promoted by scholasticism. "Furthermore, in the biblical depiction and in the Christian belief that is based on, God lives in the world and with the world, in an inter-relationship. Not only does he act in the world, but He is also defined on the basis of the world: He "repents" (of the creation of the world), He is angry, joyful and so on. To reduce all this to anthropomorphism is to close one's eyes to the Divine reality and to replace the fiery words of the Holy Scripture with the scholasticism of seminarians. In Himself, God is eternal with Divine eternity, which is the Divine Sophia, the fullness of His life, un-changeability and all-blessedness. In Himself, God is eternal with Divine eternity, in his trihypostatizedness, which is the eternal act of the love of the Three in reciprocity. But God is also the Creator, who creates life outside Himself and lives in this life outside Himself. The reality of this world is established by God, and therefore the reality of the time of this world holds for God as well, for this reality is His proper work and also His proper self-positioning. Proceeding out of God in the creation of the world, His love in its kenosis establishes time for Him as well and makes Him live in time. In this sense,

56 Andrew Lough, *Modern Orthodox Thinkers*, p. 130.

God participates in the becoming of the world: its history is the history of the Incarnation and in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 the apostle Paul depicts nothing other than God's becoming all in all for the world.”⁵⁷

The theology of existence in the light of Divine Wisdom

The three great thinkers of the Russian Church have succeeded, due to their reputation, in developing a strong relation between philosophy and theology. In this enriched dialogue, they have constantly nourished the confessing spirit, experiencing intensely the spiritual oppression of the nation under the heavy chains of Bolshevik atheism. Characterized by permanent openness to dialogue and complementarity, they are always in a constant quest for the “philosopher’s stone” of the hypostatic Truth, the Incarnated Son of God. Throughout their approach, they illustrate the fact that, Christ the Saviour is the beginning and ultimate reality of Christian existence. Due to our Lord, the Way, which seemed to be interrupted by the long line of persecutions and ideological duplication, “*begins a new chapter in the history of the Orthodox Church.*”

The reality of Christian existence acquires from the perspective of the thinking of the three Russian theologians a confessional character. They seem to know what is the true value of the sacrifices fulfilled to the end, agreeing that their written inheritance must be in the spirit of the Orthodox Church. Following the specificity of the age they belong to, they ceaselessly popularize “the universal truth of Orthodoxy – not of Byzantinism, not of the East, but of an all-embracing, final Christian synthesis. These were not only mental patterns; behind them, the light of spiritual resurgence in the Church itself glows more and more brightly– the return within the Church’s own consciousness to the vital and eternal sources of its faith.”⁵⁸

57 Sergej Bulgakov, *The Lamb of God*, pp. 133-134.

58 Alexander Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, translation from English and Foreword by Fr. Vasile Gavrilă, Sofia Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 420.

In other words, Vladimir Solovyov, Pavel Florenski and Sergei Bulgakov are through their ideas an important step towards a theology of dialogue. They, thus overcome the old imprisonments and detentions of the previous epochs, and together with them, Russian Orthodoxy acquires more boldness, gains in popularity, and self-promotes itself within the European area of school theology. Each of the three imprints Russian theology with his own particular specificity, essential in the issue of Christian existence. If, on the one hand, Solovyov tries to justify the antropy of the created existence, Florenski focuses more on the relation between reason and faith. On the other hand, Bulgakov gives a complex plea on the binder of love between God and the world, grounded on a profound theology of kenosis. Together, they are acknowledged as the promoters of the sophiological movement, which we have tried to illustrate in the above, relating it to the issue of Christian existence. Within this framework, Sofian approach persists in the preoccupations of such a case, precisely because it “would contain the idea or the archetype of creation, the divine world that is over-eternal in God. The Trinitarian God in hypostases bears only one substance or nature, one life and one self-revelation, and this revelation of Divinity, as being in itself, is the glory of God and His Wisdom. This very wisdom is the goal of creation.”⁵⁹

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59 Serge Boulgakov, *L'Echelle de Jacob*, Paris, 1929, p. 44.

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***Darge Kahanauthe
d Etha d Madenha***
**GRADES OF PRIESTHOOD
IN THE EAST SYRIAN
TRADITION**

“How exalted are your Orders! For she that was a sinner anointed, as a handmaid, the feet of her Lord. But for you, as though His minister, Christ by the hand of His servants, seals and anoints your bodies. It befits Him the Lord of the flock, that in His own person He seals His sheep.”¹

In this short paper I wish to introduce the nine grades of priesthood in the East Syrian tradition based on the teachings of the Fathers of this Church. This paper has two parts: the first deals with the general notions about priesthood according to the East Syrian Fathers and the second part deals with the nine specific grades of the priesthood.

Part I: The Idea of Priesthood in General

1) What is Priesthood and who is a Priest?

A short but rather comprehensive answer to the relevant question, what is meant by priesthood is given by Abdiso Bar Berika in the following words: *“The Priesthood is the ministry of mediation between God and man in those things which impart forgiveness of sins, convey blessings, and put away wrath. It is divided into imperfect, as was that of the law; and perfect, as is that of the Church.”*² From this definition it is clear that a priest is a mediator between God and humans. This mediating role a Christian priest fulfills through imparting blessings and forgiving sins. In the NT there is only one mediator and one priest that is Jesus Christ and Christian priesthood is participation in these two mutually complementing roles of Jesus. About this role Mar Narsai says as follows: *“The priest is the eye of the whole ecclesial body and he is also the tongue of the whole body of Jesus: he is an attorney and fulfils an advocacy on its behalf.”*³

2) What is the Foundation of the Priesthood?

Mar Abdiso gives also three Gospel events as the foundation, super-structure and perfection of the priesthood: *“The foundation of the Priesthood in the Church is laid on that declaration of the Lord of the Priesthood to S. Peter, in the town of Caesarea Philippi: “To thee I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” Its superstructure comes from that other injunction: “Feed My lambs. Feed my sheep. Feed My sheep.” Its ornament and perfection from Christ’s breathing on the Apostles when He said: “Receive you the Holy Spirit; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”*⁴ The three quotations from the Gospel found are three ‘mission mandate texts. So the mediation includes the

participation in the priesthood of Christ in order to carry out his mission on earth. The primary mission is to forgive and impart grace. By exercising the ministry of forgiveness a priest participate in the therapeutic ministry of Jesus while exercising the ministries of imparting of grace a priest participates in the mediating mission of Jesus.

3) What is the Difference between OT Priesthood and NT Priesthood?

Yet another and important question regarding the Christian priesthood is about the continuity of Old Testament priesthood with the New Testament priesthood. We have already seen the perfect priesthood is that of New Testament and the Old Testament one is imperfect. About this Mar Abdiso says: *The old Priesthood was one of generation, was not irrespective of family, and did not depend upon the will of those who succeeded to it. But the new Priesthood handed down from the Apostles, and imparted in the Church through the laying on of hands, is committed to those who are deemed worthy of it after examination had of their life and conversation.*⁵ The most important is here stated by Mar Abdiso, the Old Testament priesthood is by hereditary and the New Testament one is by grace. The Old Testament priesthood can be received by anyone without proper examination of character and intention, while the New Testament one is grace given through the liturgical service of the Church who are elected and selected.

4) Christian Priesthood is Participation in the Ministries of Jesus Christ

The East Syrian authors in general try to find out a Gospel event to create a Christological foundation for different grades of the priesthood. This is synthesized by Abdiso and says: *Therefore, brother, the degrees which are in use in the church, as the reason and holy Gospel teach us, are those orders which our Lord in His dispensation has exercised; sc. when He was baptized until*

when, by sending the Spirit upon the apostles, He completed His dispensation. He became a baptized when He was baptized by John; and we are baptized and are reborn from water and Spirit in His resemblance.⁶ According to George of Arbela Jesus assumed the role of each Order in a particular moment of His life.⁷ A similar but not the same theory can also be found also in the writings of Abdiso Bar Berika.⁸ In next part of this short paper I am indicating the grades and their attributed Christological foundations.

Part II: The Grades of Priesthood

1. Reader (*Qaroya*)

In the East Syrian Tradition the first grade of priesthood is *qaroya*. The history is not clear about the origin and development of such an order. Looking at the situation of the early Christian communities one can justly guess that there came the need of someone who can read in the community. A ceremonial initiation to read the Sacred Scripture was also was a Jewish custom. It might have had influenced the early Church to ordain someone as a *qaroya*. Jesus took role of the *qaroya* when he took the scroll at the synagogue in Nazareth and read from the book of the prophet Isaiah. This event given in the Gospel according to Luke⁹ is considered as the Christological foundation of this order by George of Arbela and Abdiso Bar Berika.¹⁰ On the other hand, the disciples served as 'readers' when Jesus chose from among his followers the Twelve and the Seventy.¹¹ Reader is the lowest rank of the clergy,¹² parallel to the choir of celestial beings known as Angles (*Malakhe*).¹³ The *qaroya* reads from the Old Testament during the liturgy. They are given the book of *Keriyane*, the Old Testament readings with the *urara*. According to the ancient practice of the East Syrian-Malabar traditions the *qaroya* stand outside the sanctuary. At present this Order is conferred upon the candidates of diaconate and presbyterate.

2. Sub-Deacon (*Hupadhyaqna*)

We do not have many historical documents how the order of *hupadhyaqna* came to exist in the Church. The NT does not give any clear indication or event regarding the origin of the *hupadhyaqna*. Its possible origin is with the development of Church edifice for the Eucharistic celebration and other liturgical services. The East Syrian Fathers however connect the institution to a Gospel event to show the Christological origin of this order. According to George of Arbela and Abdiso Bar Berika¹⁴ the Lord served as a *hupadhyaqna* when he made a whip from rope and drove out those who were selling as well as buying in the temple at Jerusalem.¹⁵ According to George of Arbela Jesus ordained the Apostles as *hupadhyaqna* when he sent them out in two's.¹⁶ The *hupadhyaqna* is the eighth rank, and resembles the choir of angles known as the Archangels (*Rabbai Malakhe*).¹⁷ The *hupadhyaqna* receives the ministry to read the Old Testament readings during the Eucharistic assembly, and to shut the doors of the church at the exhortation of the deacons when they proclaim, "Let him who has not received baptism depart." According to the *Book of the Fathers (Kthawa d'Awahatha)*, the *hupadhyaqna* is given permission by the bishop to light the lamps of the nave and those in the altar (up to the lamp at the door of the altar) during the liturgical services and hours of prayer.¹⁸ According to the ancient practice of the East Syrian-Malabar traditions the *hupadhyaqna* stand outside the sanctuary. At present this Order is conferred upon the candidates of diaconate and presbyterate.

3. Deacon (*Msamsana*)

The *msamsanutha* was instituted by the apostles, who elected seven men full of the Holy Spirit.¹⁹ According to George of Arbela, the Lord served as a *msamsana* when he washed the feet of the disciples in the Upper Room.²⁰ Whereas Abdiso Bar Berika attributes another Gospel event for the same. According to him, Jesus took the role of a *msamsana* when he began to preach saying:

‘Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand’.²¹ George of Arbela considered Jesus taking the Apostles to Mount Tabor as the Gospel event for Jesus appointing the Apostles as *msamsana*.²² The *msamsana* is the seventh rank in the priesthood, and he resembles the rank of angles known as the Principalities (*Arkos*).²³

During the ordination, the one who is to be ordained as *msamsana* put his thumbs in his ears and have his other four fingers of both hands pointing straight up; this is a sign of obedience and submission to the church and to the head of the priests (prelate) who is ordaining. During the prayer of ordination, he is to kneel on his right knee only, as a sign of his being given the gift of one talent, i.e. that of ministering before the head of priests (the bishop) and the presbyters. The Parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25:14-30 speaks of the servants to which the Master had given a distribution of one, two and five talents, respectively. These are interpreted by the fathers as being Scriptural symbols for the diaconate (one talent), presbyterate (two talents) and the episcopate (five talents).²⁴ The deacon, therefore, kneels only one knee because he has received one talent-that of serving his superior ministers before the Lord’s altar.

4. Priest (*Qasisa*)

The Lord Jesus served as a *qasisa* when he baptized in Judea at the same time that John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon near Shalim²⁵, and when he broke the bread and gave his Body and Blood to his disciples at the Last Supper²⁶ are considered as the Christological foundation of this order by George of Arbela and Abdiso Bar Berika.²⁷ The apostles acted as *qasisae* when Christ gave them the command to do as he did at the Last Supper in his memorial²⁸ according to George of Arbela.²⁹ The *qasisae* is the sixth rank from the top and it parallels the choir of the angles known as Powers (*Shultane*).³⁰

5. Chor-Bishop (*Chor-Apisqopa*)

The title *chor-apisqopa* is Greek for «bishop of the village,» and it indicated in the Early Church the presiding presbyter of the village (*choros*) communities who directly represented the bishop. At one point, the rank of *chor-apisqopa* and visitator (*sa'ora*) were distinct, but are now combined into one. The *chor-apisqopa* directly represented the bishop in the rural (village) parishes, and visited them on his behalf in order to see that the order and canons of the Church in these rural parishes were being observed according to the ecclesiastical ordinances, and that the priests and deacons were correctly celebrating the Church's liturgies according to the ritual. This event given by Luke³¹ is considered as the Christological foundation of this order by George of Arbela and Abdiso Bar Berika.³² The Lord (and the disciples) fulfilled the function of a *chor-apisqopa* when he said to his disciples»... I must preach the kingdom of God in other cities also, because I was sent for this"³³ The chor-bishop is the fifth rank of the priesthood from the top, and resembles the angelic choir known as the Authorities (*Khyle*).³⁴

6. Archdeacon (*Arkadhyaqon*)

Jesus sending the Apostles in two in two to preach without gold, silver, money, two vestments, mantle or shoe is considered as the Christological foundation of this order by Abdiso Bar Berika.³⁵ The Lord (and his disciples) fulfilled the function of *arkadhyaqon* when he said to the disciples:"... Keep away from pagan practices, and do not enter a Samaritan city; but above all, go to the sheep which are lost from the house of Israel"³⁶ The *arkadhyaqon* is the fourth rank from the top, and is equivalent to the angelic choir called the Dominions (*Marawatha*).³⁷ The highest degree of the presbytral Order is Archidiaconate. The *arkadhyaqon* in different traditions were doing variety of important ministries in the Church especially in the field of administration. According to the East Syrian Fathers the *arkadhyaqon* is the administrator of all services, particularly the charitable services in the Church. In the Malabar tradition they

had very important administrative role as the Archdeacon looked after the entire temporal goods in the Church. He was powerful authority in Malabar next to the Bishop.

7. Bishop (*Apisqopa*)

The word *apisqopa* is Greek for ‘overseer,’ and is interpreted in the Church of the East to be “one who bears afflictions.”³⁸ The Lord Jesus functioned as a *apisqopa* when he came to his disciples and said to them “All authority has been given me, in heaven and on earth”³⁹ and again when he breathed upon them and said to them “Receive the Holy Spirit”⁴⁰ is considered as the Christological foundation of this order by George of Arbela and Abdiso Bar Berika.⁴¹ The rank of bishop is the third from the top, and resembles the choir of angles called Thrones (*Mowtbe*).⁴²

8. Metropolitan (*Metropolita*)

The word ‘metropolitan’ (from ‘metropolis’) is the Greek for ‘mother city,’ indicating a major, urban city, the bishop of which was also associated with the prominence and precedence among his fellow bishops of minor and less important cities.⁴³ According to George of Arbela, Lord Jesus functioned as a *metropolita* when he appeared by the sea of Tiberius and said Cephas: ‘Pasture for me my lambs, sheep and ewes.’⁴⁴ Whereas Abdiso considered as the Christological foundation of this order the Gospel event of Ascension of Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ The second rank of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, or priesthood, is the metropolitan. His rank is parallel to that of the angelic choir known as the Seraphim (*srape*).⁴⁶

9. Catholicos-Patriarch (*Qatholiqa-Pateryarka*)

The patriarchal rank is the highest of the Episcopal grade. Already by the time of the Synod of Mar Isaac in 410 AD, the bishop of Seleucia-Stesiphon acquired the title of *Catholicos* in light of his primacy in the East. This term is Greek in origin and means ‘universal’ (incidentally, the same origin for the word

catholic), and he was known as the ‘Bishop Catholic,’ or the prime bishop of the whole East. Later, with the growth of the Church, in both the East and the West, the primatial sees acquired the title Patriarch during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Theodosius II (401-450), and by the time of the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), the five patriarchates of the West were established (i.e. Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem). The exalted office of the patriarchate was given to the Bishop Catholicos of the East with the ‘Epistle of the Western Fathers’ given to the Catholicos Mar Isaac in his synod of 410 AD, through the agency of Mar Marutha the bishop of Marteropolis. The title of ‘Patriarch’ was certainly used by the time of Mar Aba I (540-552), whose synodical records are extant and make use of this title for the first time in the synodical records and written canons of the Church of the East.⁴⁷

In the writings of George of Arbela there are two offices: *qatholiqa* and *pateryarka*. Jesus became a *qatholiqa* when Jesus blessed the Apostles during his ascension into heaven. And he became *pateryarka* when he sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.⁴⁸ *Pateryarka* is the first order of the ecclesiastical priesthood, and the fountain (source) from which flow all of the ranks of the priesthood, is the rank of *qatholiqa pateryarka*, which parallels the angelic rank of the Cherubim (*Krowe*).⁴⁹

Conclusion

In the East Syrian patristic literature the priesthood is understood as a single reality which shares different aspects of Christ’s life to renderer different services in the Church. According to this vision different grades are part of same priesthood which participates in the different ministries of Christ. As Church is the mystical body of Christ and all have their role and importance, one same *icona Christi* is manifested through complementary functioning of different grades of priesthood. This is what we understand when we take the Christological foundation attributed to different grades of the Holy

Orders by two eminent East Syrian authors, George of Arbela and Abdiso Bar Berika. This Christological foundation gives all grades of the Orders a basic equality and importance, as all their origin is in Christ Himself. As regards the documents of Arbela and Abdiso, they are similar but with significant differences. At times the event attributed to different Orders in Arbela is different from Abdiso. Inconsistency in the number and title of the Holy Orders is also evident in their writings. Here probably the authors wanted to highlight the Apostles as the perfect models of the ecclesial ministry in the fullness of Orders, which they received directly from Jesus. When Jesus really performed the ministries in historical moment of time, He might not have thought about constituting a particular Order or ministry, but they are later theological attributions to find Jesus as the origin of Holy Orders in the Church. Reading together these two authors one can justly conclude that the East Syrian Fathers have tried to find in Jesus the origin of all grades of ministerial priesthood.⁵⁰

From this theological vision about priesthood one gets the idea that priesthood is participation in the ministry of Christ with a new title through the laying on of the hand by an Episcopus. All priestly ministries are in the Church and for the Church. All grades of priesthood together manifest the true *icona Christi* in the world. According to the famous ‘book of pearls’⁵¹ in the East Syrian tradition the Priesthood is the ‘mother of all Sacraments’ as without priesthood no other Sacrament can be celebrated in the Church and without Sacraments there is no Church. From this one can arrive at the conclusion that ‘priesthood is in the Church and for the Church’.

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Endnotes

- 1 ECArm 3:17; quoted by Yousif, *L'Eucharistie chez Saint Ephrem de Nisibe*, OCA, Rome, 1984, 243-246.
- 2 ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *Marghianeetha (the Perl)*, in GEORGE PERCY BADGER, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals*, Vol. II, Joseph Masters, Aldersgate Street and New Bond Street, London, 1853, 405.
- 3 NARSAI, *An Exposition of the Mysteries, Homily XVII (A)*, in CONNOLLY, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Wip and Stock Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 2004, 7.
- 4 ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *Marghianeetha (the Perl)*, 405-406.
- 5 ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *Marghianeetha (the Perl)*, 405-406.
- 6 GEORGE OF ARBELA, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 9.
- 7 GEORGE OF ARBELA, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 9-10.
- 8 ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum, Tractatus VI, I*, 106-107.
- 9 Luke 4: 16-21.
- 10 GEORGE OF ARBELA, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 9-10; ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum, Tractatus VI, I*, 106-107.
- 11 GEORGE OF ARBELA, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 11-12; refers to Luke 9:1.
- 12 *Liber Patrum*, 16-17.
- 13 ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis, Tractatus IV; Caput II*, 109-110.
- 14 GEORGE OF ARBELA, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 9-10; ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum, Tractatus VI, I*, 106-107.
- 15 John 2:15-16.
- 16 GEORGE OF ARBELA, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 11-12; 17 ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis, Tractatus IV; Caput II*, 109-110.
- 18 AWA ROYEL, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, CIRED, Edessa Publications, California, 2011, 94.
- 19 Acts 6:1-6:
- 20 GEORGE OF ARBELA, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 11-12; reeferes to John 13:5.
- 21 ABDISO BAR BERIKA, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum, Tractatus VI, I*, 106-107.; refers to Matthew 4:17.

- 22 George of Arbela, On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6, 9-10; Abdiso Bar Berika, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum*, Tractatus VI, I, 106-107.
- 23 Abdiso Bar Berika, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis*, Tractatus IV; Caput II, 109-110.
- 24 Awa Royel, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, 90.
- 25 John 3:22-23.
- 26 Matthew 26:26-28.
- 27 George of Arbela, On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6, 9-10; Abdiso Bar Berika, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum*, Tractatus VI, I, 106-107.
- 28 Luke 22:19.
- 29 George of Arbela, On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6, 11-12; refers to Luke 9:1.
- 30 Abdiso Bar Berika, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis*, Tractatus IV; Caput II, 109-110.
- 31 Luke 4: 16-21.
- 32 George of Arbela, On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6, 9-10; Abdiso Bar Berika, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum*, Tractatus VI, I, 106-107.
- 33 George of Arbela, On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6, 11-12; refers to Luke 9:1 and Luke 4:43.
- 34 Abdiso Bar Berika, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis*, Tractatus IV; Caput II, 109-110.
- 35 Abdiso Bar Berika, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum*, Tractatus VI, I, 106-107.
- 36 Awa Royel, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, 105; Matthew 10:5-6.
- 37 Abdiso Bar Berika, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis*, Tractatus IV; Caput II, 109-110.
- 38 Awa Royel, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, 105-106.
- 39 Matthew 28:18.
- 40 John 20:22-23.
- 41 George of Arbela, On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6, 9-10; Abdiso Bar Berika, *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum*, Tractatus VI, I, 106-107.
- 42 Abdiso Bar Berika, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis*, Tractatus IV; Caput II, 109-110.
- 43 Awa Royel, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, 114-116..
- 44 George of Arbela, On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6, 9-10; John 21:15 ff.

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- 45 Abdiso Bar Berika , *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum, Tractatus VI, I*, 106-107.
- 46 Abdiso Bar Berika, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis, Tractatus IV; Caput II*, 109-110.
- 47 Awa Royel, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, 105-106.
- 48 George of Arbela, *On Holy Orders, Tract 2, Chapter 6*, 9-10.
- 49 Abdiso Bar Berika, *De Ordinibus Ecclesiasticis, Tractatus IV; Caput II*, 109-110.
- 50 A discussion about this theme is found in Soro, B., «Priesthood in the Church of the East,» in Hofrichter & Wilfinger (eds.), *Syriac Dialouge-6, Pro Oriente*, Vienna, 2004, 96-99.
- 51 Abdiso Bar Berika, *Libri de Margarita Circa Veritatem Fidei, II*, in Assamano, A. (tr. & ed. in Syriac and Latin), *Collectio Canonum Synodicorum, Ex Chaldaicis Bibliothecae Vaticanae Codicibus Sumpta*.

JOHN THE SOLITARY
(Letter to Hesychius)

Beware, my brother, of cunning snares, of hidden traps and secret nets, do not grow weary of asking our Lord by night and by day to guard your steps, lest you be caught in Satan's cunning traps. If you are persistent in making this request, God will not hesitate to listen to your wish.

Hold fast, brother, to that spiritual glory of which our Lord's passion has made you worthy. Be vigilant so as to guard your thoughts from tempests; beware lest the glorious things you have in Christ undergo change due to some indication of pride. Now it is only when your mind is wrapped in meditation on the incarnation of Christ our Lord- at whose good will and pleasure you have been held worthy to perform good works - that pride will not be sown within you. For without his self-abasement, we should have been far too low down for those beautiful qualities of his, and not even a distant recollection of them would have entered our minds. For this reason his grace has granted to us that he should, of his own will, listen to us, and that he will bring us close to his Father. What is required of us is to give him thanks unceasingly - not indeed to the full extent that befits his gift, for no one is capable of giving him thanks as would be appropriate, for his grace is far greater than the thanksgiving of all peoples, it is enough for us to realize that we have not the ability either to repay him, or even to thank him sufficiently - and in the case of a person who has such an understanding of God's grace, it could almost be said of him that by grace he has repaid it.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp. 83-84)

Thomas Koonammakkal

ACTS OF THOMAS RE-EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF THE SONG OF THOMĀ RAMBĀN

Acts of Thomas contains two different stories, each centring on a king. As a result there is an underlying disagreement and confusion in the text. This two-structured narration of Thomas' mission in the kingdoms of Gudnapar (of the Syriac Acts becomes Gundaforos -Indaforos in one manuscript - in the Greek Acts) and Mazdai/Misdeus has already been pointed out by the scholars¹. The king of the royal city and Gundaforos the palace seeker are identified as the king of India; Mazdai who is behind the murder of Thomas becomes a relic seeker and convert is also the king of India. But if we connect the tomb of Thomas with Mylapur he is the Chola king the palace seeker and hence is identified with Gundaforos. Thus three kings are one and the same Gundaforos! If Gudnapar stands for the Chola king Kandapar/Kandanapar/ Kundapar/Kuttanapar, and Gundaforos

1 P.J. Thoma, "The South Indian Tradition of the Apostle Thomas", *JRAS, Centenary Supplement*, October 1924, 213-223; P.J.Podipara, *The Thomas Christians* (London, Bombay 1970) 16-30; A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas* (Leiden 1962) 28-29.

for the Indo-Parthian king the confusion will be complete. It becomes all the more complex if Gudnapar and Gundaforos are identified with any South Indian king. But analysing the story further one can observe a triple structure: Thomas' landing in the royal city of Sandarūk/Andropolis (where *the See of Thomas* is going to be and in that case close to Kodungallur, on the Malabar coast), Thomas' palace-building under Gudnapar, and Thomas' martyrdom under Mazdai. Copyists give *Sandaruk* as *Kalumenen Enadrok, Enadok, Edron, Zenadrok* revealing their ignorance of the royal port². According to South Indian traditions Thomas preached in many kingdoms within and without India; but he was martyred in Mylapur in the Chola kingdom where he came to build the palace; no king is responsible for his martyrdom; the Brahmins in charge of a *Kali* temple attacked him brutally and one of them eventually pierced him in Mylapur mount. Piercing with a spear was only a sharing in the suffering of Christ pierced even after death on the cross (Jn 19:34).

The Syriac, Greek and Latin Acts of Thomas are in total disarray and confusion. That Gudnapar has nothing to do with Thomas after the palace story, the royal conversion, is a curious mystery. Their India is very vague though Thomas' mission involves three kingdoms. The Acta is ignorant about the king of the royal city Thomas landed first. The Acta need another king Mazdai to kill Thomas in a third kingdom where he can locate the tomb of Thomas. Why did the author locate a tomb at all for Thomas in a third kingdom? This question becomes crucial once we find that the Mylapur tomb is in the Chola kingdom. Otherwise Gundaforos and Mazdai should be the king of one and the same Chola kingdom! Thus the story needs a Gudnapar who needs a palace and a Thomas who needs a killer king and

2 M. Bonnet, *Acta Thomae : Supplementum Codicis Apocryphi I* (Lipsiae 1883) 104:4.

a tomb. Neither Gundaforos nor Mazdai can supply the Mylapur tomb for Thomas in the Chola kingdom. The tomb cannot be in Parthia of Gundaforos the Christian friend of Thomas. For all other authors the tomb is in India and relic in a casket is located in Edessa! If the tomb was in Edessa Mazdai who killed Thomas and later opened the tomb for relics should be the king of Edessa! Edessan propagandists might have constructed a first century tomb in Chola kingdom at Mylapur with two hills, Western Ghat, a royal port to land and establish the See for Thomas, to reconvert the non-existent Barthulmai Christians (so-called by Dihle) in the Chera Kingdom artificially creating Thomas legends throughout the Chera, Chola, Pandi kingdoms of South India! What an ingenious and idiosyncratic idea to fool the fourth century Ephrem who wrote (Nisibian Hymns 41) about the Thomas martyred, entombed in India and present in the relic at Edessa! And all early Christian authors who insist on the South Indian mission are blindly following a myth unknown to the wise Alexandrians just because Edessans wanted to make the Barthulmai Christians of Alexandria Thomas Christians of Syriac world? Theologically and hierarchically well-established Alexandrians were so generous as to allow Indian Christians under them to desert Barthulmai and to become Thomas Christians? South Indian Barthulmai Christians had no scruples to throw out their founder father for an intruding duplicate? Most crucial of all, when or in which century this took place? It can only be possible after the visit of Pantaenus (between 180 and 190 AD). How can the Parthians allow the Edessans a takeover especially when the Churches of those regions were not yet hierarchically well organized? Development of hierarchy in the Syriac world of Persia took place only by 410 AD.

King Mazdai commanded his soldiers to pierce Thomas on a hill-top. Two hills in Mylapur connected with the martyrdom of Thomas need an explanation from Dihle. After many years it is Mazdai who opens the tomb for a relic to cure his mad son

and Mazdai gets converted! South Indian tradition does not speak about the conversion of any Pandi king or piercing by his soldiers. It knows that Thomas was pierced by angry *Embrans* of *Kali* temple. The temple of Sun in the Acta gives us a parallel. *Kali* temple became *Sol* temple. Poor Mazdai will get only the dust from the tomb of Thomas whom he killed since bones were taken away to the West/Mesopotamia. The pilgrims of Malankara coast used to go to that tomb and collect *hnana* even in recent past. Chera, Parthia and Edessa are all west of Mylapur of the Chola kingdom to get the relics. Thus the Syriac, Greek and Latin Acta fall apart along with the royal city of some unknown Indian king, Gundaforos and Mazdai. But the case of Gundaforos can be redeemed if we suppose two Thomistic missions: first in the Indo-Parthian Kingdom of Gundaforos and a second one in South India with three kingdoms. The authors of the Acta combined both missions only on the basis of South Indian stories for two reasons: the kingdom of Gundaforos was no more; already before the composition of the Acts the Christians of South India and the former Indo-Parthian kingdom were in contact or pastoral communion.

First and foremost, Mylapur is in Chola kingdom and there is a first century tomb of a holy man important for Mar Thoma Nazranis of India.³ It is not a legend; seven places of Malankara coast associated with the preaching of Thomas have a series of traditions and stories shared even by non-Christians (who were not easily brain washed by Edessan propaganda). All these cannot be artificially created to fool the people of South India who according to Dihle simply exchanged Barthulmai for Thomas. The very introduction of Gundaforos and Mazdai and

3 G. Schurhammer, "New Light about the Tomb of Mailapur", *The Malabar Church*, ed., J.Vellian (OCA 186, Roma 1970), 99-101; H.Hosten, *Antiquities from San Thome and Mylapore* (Madras 1936).

the identity of three kings and three kingdoms as an unknown India is real mystery for Syriac, Greek, Latin authors of the Acta. They depend on secondary South Indian sources - written and oral - and hearsay. The royal capital is a port where Thomas landed and made a few disciples and went to another kingdom to build a palace for the king who is converted in the end. Martyrdom of Thomas took place under another king called Mazdai. Mazdai will seek relics, open the tomb and will be converted. All elements have no parallels in the South Indian stories. Thus the Acta written outside India contain a lot of later contradictory additions, encratite forgeries, imaginary geography and total confusion of personalities, in contrast with the elementary and primitive South Indian stories which became the raw material for the Acta. The fragmentary and original stories are from South India and the Acta are only a doctrinally reworked climax in the third century ascetical, Gnostic context of Edessa. The Syriac and Greek Acts have very little historical interest; but the Latin versions - fourth to sixth century - have access to more historical and geographical details, though they fail to correct the already popular Syriac and Greek Acta.

The first century tomb of Thomas in Mylapur (under Chola kingdom) is an additional riddle to this textual disharmony. In that case both the kingdoms of Gudnapar and Chola are one and the same and there is only one king in Parthia and Chola who wants Thomas to build a palace! How can Mazdai kill Thomas and open the tomb (in Mylapur) in the kingdom of (Chola/Parthia) Gudnapar/Gundaforos? Perhaps, Gundaforos is an unhistorical mid-second century intrusion into South Indian Thomas stories. The already well-established contacts between South Indian Nazranis and Parthian Christians might have been the historical background that prompted this fusion between the first (Parthian) and second (South Indian) missions of Thomas. If that is the case the historicity of both missions are safe. The

Parthian mission ended before AD 47 and the South Indian mission began in AD 50. The second part of the royal name *Gudnapar* is the same as *apan/apar* (father) in Dravidian languages. We notice the presence of Thomas in three kingdoms unless the royal city is belonging to Gudnapar, father of Gud/Gad, which is contradicted by the First Acts. Is this inconsistent nature of the text resulting from the intention of the author to 'extend' Thomas' story to South India?⁴ Can the South Indian Thomas' stories - oral or written- however late they are, help us to explore this supposed 'extension' of Thomas' mission? Or should we see the application of South Indian stories to the North West Indo-Parthian kingdom of Gundaforos? The first Parthian mission and the second South Indian mission were fused together by the Syriac-Greek-Latin Acta with an ascetical propaganda. Both missions were historical and deliberately fused together. The total confusion of geographical and personal names, point towards a Parthianization of actual South Indian stories - just the opposite of what Dihle proposes. An accommodation of both missions was possible even without any fusion.

4 L. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas* (Cambridge 1956, 2ed) 43-46; A Dihle, "Neues zur Thomas-Tradition", *JAC* 6(1963) 54-70. Nearly three decades later he read this same article without any change except the title, "The Earliest Christians of India", Lecture in the Sheldonian Theatre, Tuesday, 20th August 1991, Eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford. His theory of Barthulmai Christians becoming Mar Thoma Christians is the most curious of all 'extension' stories that has ever been proposed. Rejection of original founder and acceptance of an unhistorical duplicate defies common sense. Why should the Indians forget their original founder just because of supposed propaganda motive of Persian Church? See also A.F.J. Klijn, *op.cit.*, 28-29; H. Waldmann, *Das Christentum in Indien und der Koenigweg der Apostel in Edessa, Indien und Rom* (Tuebingen 1996), 9-57. See H. Suermann, "Mission of Thomas/Bartholomew", in *The Harp XXXI* (2016), 45-57; J-N.Pérès, "Quel apôtre a prêché en Inde: Thomas, Barthélemy ou Jacques? Un enquête dans les Gadla ḥawāryāt éthiopiens", in *The Harp XXXI* (2016), 317-327.

The present paper is only an introductory study based on the so called Song of Thomā Rambān⁵ with special reference to the above mentioned three-structured story of the Acts of Thomas. While analyzing the Song I shall compare and contrast it with the Acta. It is also called *Thoma Parvam* (Song of Thomas but not one and the same). Though the written down versions are all from the 19th century the oral version is much older. Many of the famous ballads, songs and legends of Malayalam once existed only orally. *Veeradiyan Pattu*, *Keralolpathi*, *Vadakkan Pattukal* and a series of 14th century Malayalam Songs are examples. Only a decade ago Malayalam got an entirely new ballad through an illiterate sweeper of S.B.College, Changanacherry. She had learned the whole ballad in her childhood from another illiterate generation. Oral traditions were never written down in the past. People used to by-heart the whole story, song, legend, grammar, dictionary, etc. For many generations they had only an oral existence and oral transmission. But each generation used to add or update the materials to the original. So a recent written version does not mean a modern composition.

The Syriac, Greek, and the two Latin versions (*Passio sancti Thomae apostoli*, *De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli*) are

5 *Rambān* is only the typical South Indian pronunciation of *Rabban*. A few similar examples are *humba* (*hubba*), *qandisha* (*qaddisha*), *entān* (*eddān*) *ambah* (*shabbah*), etc. This is only the pronunciation in the pre-fourteenth century Alkosh (where it survived even after the mid-twentieth century), Iran, Southern Iraq, etc. It takes us to the days of Imperial and Biblical Aramaic. See my “Suryaya Hendwaya” in *The Harp* XX:2 (2006), 295-304. The Mandeans follow the similar pronunciation; so too the Persians before some centuries. See the comment on the name *Habban/Amban* below. Gabriel, Syro-Chaldaic Grammar (Mannanam 1922), 12-13; Arayathinal, Aramaic Grammar I (Mannanam 1957) 10-13; Jerome, *Suriyanibhashaprvashika* (Mannanam 1944), xxii-xxiii. 2.9.12-13.19-20; Ludovic (Mannanam 1951), 6-7.22-24.32-33; William (Mannanam 1954), 6-7; Thelly (Mannanam 1984), 7-8.14-17.

contaminated with confusion which is unknown to the Song of Thoma Ramban whose written and/or oral source points to a South Indian story prior to the sources of non Indian Acta. The third century ascetic, enkratite and gnostic ideas of the Syriac, Greek and the sixth century Latin versions prompted authors to re-write the whole story. The South Indian oral or written traditions are not a much corrected, contaminated or borrowed version. The non-Indian Acta versions are in total disarray and confusion because of some radical indoctrination of later theology into some original and primitive story that originated in South India about which their information was meagre, defective and confusing. A comparative study indicates the historicity of the oral Ramban Song and the contamination of the Parthian/Edessan version which lie behind the written Acta whether in Syriac, Greek or Latin. The written Acta knew some of the stories of South India. But they had some vague idea of the less dramatic Parthian mission of Thomas. Already well established connections between Parthian and South Indian Christians were also known to them. So they applied the readily available South Indian sources to the first missionary journey as well. The first mission of Thomas was by the land route (reaching Parthia) whereas the second was by sea route (reaching South India). If the Alexandrians mention only the first/Persian mission it is no denial of the second/South Indian mission about which they had no first hand information until Pantaenus. The arrival of such an exceptionally famous scholar need not necessarily support the theory of a primitive Alexandrian connection giving way to a later Parthian connection. The concept of territorial jurisdiction and super bishop did not develop in South India in those days or even later for many centuries. If the South Indian Christian merchants contacted the Alexandrian bishop Demetrius for an expert help it does not mean that South Indian Christianity was under Alexandria. The Alexandrian help might have been a deliberate attempt to defeat the local non/anti Christian

propaganda of the late first century which lasted for nearly a century. Tradition says that only a deacon was left to guide the Church since all other higher clergy perished in the persecution. Deacon Xanthipus/Zenophon of the Acta might be a distant echo of the late first century situation of South Indian Christian community. After his death lay people used to carry on the guidance of the Church with Palliyogam and annual Pesha celebration in the second century. Theological, pastoral, hierarchical help sought from Persia or Alexandria did not mean any previous connection. Schools of Nisibis or Edessa did not exist at such an early period and if the Nazranis of Thomas turned to Alexandria for a help it is only quite natural. The idea of territorial jurisdiction and super-bishop was unknown to India in those days or even later.

The Song of Thoma Ramban

This Malayalam Song is written in 1601 as the author claims in the text, though the year of composition has been disputed or doubted on the basis of no textual-critical reason.⁶ Mingana ruled out any historical value for this song as he considered the text as a late forgery. How can a forgery appear in more than a dozen

6 Bernard of St. Thomas, *Mar Thoma Kristyanikal* (Palai 1916) I, 62-79; L.M. Zaleski, *The Apostle Thomas in India* (Mangalore 1912) 203-208; F.X. Rocca, "La leggenda di S. Tomaso Apostolo," *Orientalia Christiana* XXXII, 89 (1933) 170-179; H.Hosten, *The Song of Thomas Ramban* (Cochin 1931). The real and reliable text is available in Bernard of St Thomas alone. Hosten is satisfactory. All others give only a misleading summary. Short studies have been made by Placid J. Podipara, E.R. Hambye, P.J. Thomas, T. K. Joseph, M.O.Joseph, V.C. George, L. Brown, A.M. Mundadan and Chummar Choondal. Hosten's detailed discussions on the various manuscripts (at least nine in the CMI collections have helped to establish the authenticity of the song; P.J.Thomas and J. Kollaparampil had many more manuscripts of *Thoma Parvam*, *Ramban Pattu* and Marriage Songs).

written manuscripts and many slightly variant oral versions appear fooling thousands of people belonging to different religions and different places? Such a blind dismissal without any trace of evidence is only an easy escape from a very serious problem of Church history. Others suspect that the author was using Acts of Thomas and even Latin Passio.⁷ No Greek and Latin Acta were known to or available to Kerala scholars as far as one can look back. But the Syriac Acts was accessible, but not clear from manuscript evidences. They would have been misled by the common elements of the Song and the Acta. But what if these common features come from a common source - oral or written - from the period AD 72-160 and periodically revised and updated between 4th and 12th centuries? An initial literary scrutiny of the song, supported by internal evidence proves the date of composition without any doubt. But the more crucial issue about the 'source' used by Thoma Ramban XLVIII has never been studied in detail. Thoma Ramban XLVIII speaks about his source thus: For the use of simple and uneducated people I have simplified and put together in to a song *that history* written by Māliëkkal Thomā Rambān II who lived forty eight generations ago: Thoma Ramban II is evidently the nephew (the son of the younger brother) of Thoma Ramban I who was baptized by Apostle Thomas. Whatever be the exact historical situation under which Thoma Ramban II wrote down *the history* there is undisputable internal evidence that supports the existence of a (later) written source that was used (most probably an oral collection based on long lost written version?) by Thoma Ramban XLVIII. The Song of Thoma Ramban is based on three linguistic sources orally transmitted for generations, but based on three written texts which got mutilated beyond recovery or reconstruction: from Sanskrit, Syriac and Old Tamil backgrounds. The original and primitive layer was in Sanskrit (slightly preserved in the oral remnants of a long lost written version),

7 L. Brown, *op.cit.*, 49 n.1.

which emerged around AD 72-160. As an oral or written tradition, (rewritten many times later with additions and updating), it was older than any other South Indian Thomas' stories.⁸ The second Old Tamil and Syriac influenced sources better lie behind the so-called *Margamkali* Songs accompanying a military dance of twelve men, but not the today's Southist version. This cluster of three linguistic versions (Sanskrit, Tamil and Syriac) eventually survived only through oral traditions shared even by non-Christians of Chera kingdom. The Thomas stories of Chola and Pandi are lost except for some traces. Later additions and modern layers have made the earlier stories almost untraceable. From Chola the Nazranis escaped to Chera regions between AD 72 and 160 probably due to local problems, royal rivalries, economic reasons or persecutions. Such a migration of Pandi Nazranis to Kollam is a different story.

Many later written sources about Thomas' mission in India did disappear in the aftermath of Diamper in 1599⁹ and even before. Oral traditions might have survived, but always with new additions and updating of era, names, terms, grammar, language, etc. There were many Thomas songs in Kerala in the pre-Portuguese period. Some of them were only orally transmitted which could be changed easily by personal updating additions and omissions. But the written 'sources' of Song of Thoma Ramban might have been lost many centuries before, after leaving some fragments or only oral versions. This song itself is characterized by a surprising consistency of narration, very primitive and undeveloped Thomas legends which cannot

8 This I call 'history' of Thoma Ramban II which in its later form (?) was used by Thoma Ramban XLVIII in order to compose Song of Thoma Ramban. The Maliekkal family of Niranam had a collection of written documents and orally transmitted traditions. The family had its branches in Kodungallur, Palayur, Kuravilangad, Ankamaly, Kallurkad, etc.

9 This we know from the writings of P. Maffei, Du Jarric, Gouvea, etc.

be a later forgery based on Syriac, Greek, Latin or any other Acts of Thomas. A careful analysis points towards many layers in the song. The whole text of AD 1601 is divisible in to units of 16, 8 and 4 lines as a result of which even the very few variant readings do not create a serious problem. Here I shall give a small survey of the text and its main contents with some clarifying comments:

Introduction: 16 lines. A prayer followed by an introduction proper from Thoma Ramban XLVIII re-writing the original introduction.

I: The WAY (*Margam*) of the Son of God in Keralam (a very modern name). Apostle Thomas embarked in Arabia (corrupted from Araba/Arava) the route between Dead Sea and the port of Eilath, (or the city of Petra leading to the port of Leuke Kome) and arrived at Mālyām̄kara in the year AD 50. (Christian era is a later addition on the basis of some unknown source which could be *Arivu* (written sources) and *Paravu* (oral traditions) of Maliekkal Rambans of Niranam, Kodungallur, Palayur, etc) in the company of Avan (Habban) a royal Jewish merchant of South India. It is strange that so far scholars have not yet noticed the typical Indian Syriac (Aramaic) pronunciation of the name Habban/Abban as *Amban* in the Greek versions *Ambanes*¹⁰ (2:41,3:40,4:34,4:36,5:39,6:31, 102:6, 105:5, 105:9), *Ambanis* (105:5), *Ambane* (3:38, 99:1, 102:3, 102:6, 124:15), *Ambanen* (3:40,3:43,4:31,4:36, 102:6, 103:1). Who can rule out all these 21 variants as a mere scribal error? These variant readings point towards the possibility of some lost Indian Syriac

10 M. Bonnet, *Acta Thomae* (Lipsiae 1883), 2-6; R.A.Lipsius, M.Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha : Pars Alterius, volumen alterium* (Lipsiae 1903), 99. 101-103.105. 124.

document of the 2nd century, first, original, Acts of Thomas. The Greek and Latin authors or copyists depended upon a Syriac work (oral or written?) from Malankara. A deliberate play on the name Avan repeatedly occurs and it cannot be ruled out as casual. Most probably it is an indication of the traditionally held South Indian view that a few Jewish merchants residing in India¹¹ had been to Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost and they came back to South India as Nazranis, who after two decades brought Thomas to South India. The connections of Malankara coast with Phoenicians go back to tenth century BC. But Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians were already there. Then Aramaic speaking Jewish traders came especially after the exiles. Evidently Syriac came to India not as Syriac in the fourth century, but as Aramaic in the pre-Christian post-exilic period. Presence of the Jewish flute girl in the royal wedding scene is a clear indication. The Ramban Song speaks of the conversion of 40 Jews (or 40 Jewish families) in the royal capital in the years AD 51-52. Such small colonies of Aramaic speaking Jewish traders existed in different centres in South India. They all listened to Thomas and became followers of this new Way.

Ramban Song points out two earlier arrivals of Thomas at Malyamkara in AD 50 and 51 before he definitively established a full-fledged Church in 52 whereas all other traditions speak only about the year AD 52 as the year

11 S. S. Koder, *Kerala and Her Jews* (Cochin 1965); J.B.Segal, "White and Black Jews of Cochin: the Story of a Controversy", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 2 (1983), 228; B.J.Israel, *The Bene Israel of India: Some Studies* (London 1984), 30-40; T.Puthiakunnel, "Jewish Colonies of India paved the Way for St Thomas", *The Malabar Church*, ed. J. Vellian (OCA 186, Roma 1970), 187-191.

of Thomas first landing. Here Ramban had access to a source (oral or/and written?) which others did not have. His first arrival is unknown or neglected by other traditions (because no full-fledged Church is founded). Another unnoticed story is even more puzzling: Thomas landed first at Ankamaly. Malyamkara is only a general term for the Kerala seashore and not a particular city. Earliest leader of the Nazranis resided for sometime in Ankamaly before moving the headquarters to *Malyavumkara/Malyamkara* between North Paravur and Kodungallur/Thiruvanchikulam. Ankamaly is one of the earliest Nazrani centres in India and it is an ancient port at the river Periyar. *Maly* - land near the river, or *malay*-hilly area, we find as a prefix or suffix in many names like Malyamkara, Malayattur, Maleyam, Mala, Malayalam, Malankara (Malabar), Male, Malai, Anamalai, Malavazhi, Sabarimala, Koozhmala, Malaynad, Kozhimalai, Malampuzha, Vanchimala, Pazhamala, Ezhimalai, Thenmalai, etc.

Sometimes the same miracle stories are repeated in the case of Palayur, Niranam, Kollam, Mylapur, etc. These are indications of a series of local Thomas stories most of which are unknown, twisted or lost in all the available and accepted versions of the Acta. Some of these stories are later additions, but worth collecting. In the Acta Thomas is a slave (sold by Christ in very dramatic manner) bought and brought by Habban to land in *Andronopolim* (*Andranopolim/Mandronopolim/Mandropolim* - See of Thomas according to *Passio, in Indiam citeriorem/interiorem in Indiam /primam Indiae civitatem* - of *De Miraculis; Andrapolin the royal city/ Andrapolin/Andropolin/Andranopolim/Sandaruk/Hilioforum/Elioforum/Hyroforum Indiae civitatem* of Greek, Latin and Syriac

Acta. Hilioforum /Helioforum/Elioforum/Yroforum/Hyroforum/Hienoforum/ Hierapolim/ Inforum, is depicted as a kingdom or a royal capital. Such a kingdom did mean the secular and sacred authority of *the See of Thomas*.¹² It is only a literal translation of Pakalomattam - forum of the Sun - one of the noble families which traditionally held *the See of Thomas*. But its royal connection is not known to us. *Gazi* mountain of *Passio* (144:2) is (Western) *Ghat*. Variant readings include *Gazim, gozi, guzi, gadzi, garizim, dizim, gurizi*. All these confusing geographical and historical elements fit very well to Malankara. Pakalomattam which is said to have held *the See of Thomas* from 4th to 16th century is not a fiction created by Acta. It is based on some historically reliable data known to the Acta by fourth century to sixth century. I first made this identification in 1987 and after three decades I find no reason to change it. *Helioforum* is only the alienated Graeco-Latin term for Pakalomattam family which held *the See of Thomas* through the Arkadiakon and Gate of All India.¹³ It is only natural that the copyists did not understand the real meaning of the term. For Malankara coast he was a prince who ruled as *Mdabrana d' Kol Hendo* - Governor of All India. He was the head of the Mar Thoma Nazranis, the Administrator of *The Christian Republic* as we see later. With the help of *Palliyogam* (the decision making body of the Church as in the days of the apostles) he guided the Church as a royal leader. Role of the bishop remained in the pre-Nicene, pre-Constantinian era: ordination of priests and consecration of the Church with Olive oil. Mar Thoma Nazranis held fast to the

12 M. Bonnet, op.cit., *Passio* 140:1, 15-17.

13 J. Kollaparampil, *The Archdeacon of All-India* (Kottayam 1972).

Way (*margam*) of *Mshiha* as taught by Thomas and called it *Thoma margam* - Way of Thomas, The Law of Thomas, the Tradition of Thomas, etc. Their apostolic traditions such as Church as *Margam*, *Palliyogam* as hierarchy, a Christianized Pesha on Maundy Thursday evening where senior most male member acts as priest,¹⁴ etc are worth further study.

The Ramban Song speaks of the cordial friendship between Abban and Thomas but no hint of compulsion or slavery. They are not owner and slave, but friends and equals. It is their cordial friendship which brought Thomas to India! After eight days Thomas ‘went in great hurry’ to Mylāpūr where he ‘preached’ for four and a half months. Then he went to China for four and a half months. More studies on Thomas’ mission to South East China and the constant commercial relations between South India and South Eastern coast of Chinese subcontinent provide new areas of further research.¹⁵ No wonder that the authors of Acta did not include China because of their utter ignorance about the frequent sail of ships between South East China and South Indian ports. When Thomas came back to Mylāpūr he received money (for a second time?) to ‘build something’ (a palace later!). The Cross erected as a sign by Thomas has become a palace of the king/

14 See my “The Passover Celebration of Mar Thoma Nazranis and the Origins of Christianity in India”, *Parole de l’Orient* 41 (2015), 223-238; “Judeo-Christian and Patristic Roots of St. Thomas Christians”, *Mar Thoma Margam: The Ecclesial Heritage of St. Thomas Christians*, ed. A.Mekkattukunnel et al. (Vadavathoor 2012), 68-78; “Syro-Malabar History and Traditions”, *Orientalia Christiana: Festschrift fuer Hubert Kaufhold zum 70 Geburtstag*, ed. P.Bruns & H.O.Luthe (Wiesbaden 2013), 259-62.

15 J.Tubach, “Der Apostel Thomas in China, Die Herkunft einer Tradition”, *The Harp* VIII/IX (1995/96) 397-430.

temple of God. The palace story is a later secondary addition associated with the liturgical assembly constructing its own Church building!

Thomas is a wandering preacher of the Way! It is the Way of the *Msiha* which is exactly copied by Thomas the Twin of Jesus. At least in the First Acts both Jesus and his slave Thomas are identical and interchangeable. Both are sold for a price as slaves, but not according to the Ramban Song. The real name of the preacher in the Acta is Judah who was called Thoma/Twin of Jesus. The Master is teaching through the disciple. Identity of the Way of Jesus as the Way of Thomas is a crucial theme and the similarity with first century apostolic days argues for a totally different ecclesiology (Acts 9:2, 16:17, 18:25-26, 19:9, 23, 22:4, 24:22). The *Margam* brought to India by Thomas is the *Margam* of Jesus Himself. The term *Margam* stood for the Way of life started by Jesus, planted by Thomas and followed by Nazranis. Through out history their lifestyle is called the *Margam* of Thomas, the *Vazhipad* (traces, footsteps, traditions, inherited property, sacred offering consecrated by a personal vow to deity, etc). It is precisely for this Way they fought with the Portuguese. Thomas went about preaching in Mylapur and even China and giving away the money to the needy, the Way is growing.

II: The nephew (who was also the son-in-law) of the King of Thiruvanchikulam (*Chēra* king) came to Thomas (in Chola Kingdom; Greek and Latin Acta speak of a migration of the baptized community to the kingdom of Gundaforos the palace seeker! What a funny story if the migration is from Socotra or Malankara wherefrom the followers go to settle down in the Indo-Partian kingdom which will disappear in the second half of the first century). Because of the Chera royal request Thomas came back to *Mālyāmkara* in AD 51 by sea-rout. It is a return to the royal city he

first landed. It is not either Socotra or Indo-Parthian kingdom. Clearly the royal port where Thomas landed first in AD 50 by sea-rout is *Maleyamkara*. Our Song speaks of a Chera royal plea to Thomas who is in the Chola kingdom. According to oral traditions the Christians of the Chola kingdom migrated to Chera Kingdom soon after the martyrdom of Thomas. *Sandaruk* and *Andropolis* (identified as *Helioforum* that is *Pakalomattam*) are born out of utter ignorance of geography and confusion of various kings from the part of the Syriac, Greek and Latin authors. The confusion of the subcontinent of India is notable: *ad Indiam superiorem* (Passio 147:19), *partes citerioris Indiae* (De Mir 97:4,), *descendere in Indiam* (De Mir 97:4), *rege Indiae missus*(97:20), *ceteriores*(97:25), *inferioris* (97:25) *in Indiam citeriorem* (98:5), *ceteriorem* (98:25) are all signs of a very distant and vague geography. The phrase *primam Indiae civitatem* (98:8) is a reference to Vanchi, Kodungallur, Chennamangalam, Makothai, Mahadevarpattanam, Mahodayapuram, Muchiri, Muziris, Malyankara, Chengal, Karur, Trikariyur, Karurpadanna, etc the Chera capital where Thomas and Avan landed first. In great hurry he went to the (kingdom of Chola/Gundaforus) which is in ulterior India: *jam enim cum negotiatore ad ulteriores Indiae partes processerat* (101:11-12) *in ulteriorem Indiam* (101:16), *partes Indie* (101:32), *ulteriore India* (101:34.35).

The Acta knows only of a first landing, but not the second and the third long missions in the first city of India though it speaks of a second departure from there without telling us of his second arrival there. Thomas called his royal deacon from the royal port city; but

that youth had already been to ulterior India (the Kingdom of Gudnapar/Gundaforus) to be baptized and get ordained as deacon! If Thomas had not been to his wedding feast how does he come to hear about Thomas at all? Did he go from Socotra/Arabia to Parthia and instead of going back to his country came to Kodungallur to establish *the See of Thomas* and make a tomb for Thomas at Mylapur? In that case Kodungallur should be in Socotra/Arabia and Mylapur in Parthia!

According to the Song the royal nephew and few others had already been disciples of Thomas who established the Way in eight days with a miracle and in great hurry went to Chola kingdom on the South Eastern coast of India. The royal nephew of Chera kingdom went and brought Thomas back to his Kingdom. So Thomas came again to the royal capital of Chera kingdom. This second mission lasted for many years. Then Thomas went for the palace building business of Chola King. After a few years he came back to Chera Kingdom. So there are repeated visits to the seven communities and the royal deacon/priest/bishop is called to Chayal to make him his successor as we hear in the Song. But the Acta are really a confusing forgery based on the early second century sources of the Ramban Song: *tunc sanctus apostolus uocauit diaconem suum illum qui rex fuerat ciuitatis primae Indiae ubi apostolus fuit ad nuptias inuitatus* (*De Mir* 106:18-20). But this text does not say how and when Thomas made him his deacon. Here we find the historicity of Thomas' first mission at Malankara coast starting with Chera kingdom. Palace story and Gundaforus of Indo-Afghan border becomes redundant, contradictory, useless and later intrusion for

some other reason. Gundaforus is an unhistorical second century intrusion as if he were the Chola king who sent Avan for finding *Umman* who can build a palace/temple/church in heaven. So by second century the Parthian and South Indian Nazranis are in the same Church. In that case the arrival of Pantaenus does not mean any earlier connection with the Alexandrian Church.

The final farewell of Thomas took place in Chayal and not in Parthia. The South Indian See of Thomas is entrusted to a royal convert of Chera dynasty whose royal capital - the other side of Paravur- known under different names because of the change of ruling families, was near Kodungallur. There from the apostle is invited by a prince of Mazdai's kingdom (*the Pandi vazhi* - the way to Pandi- as we read in the Song). But demons have a difficulty to find a safe haven in India because of this Thomas! *Jam enim de alia India nos eiecisti, nec est locus in quo fugiamus a facie tua. Tunc intellexit apostolus hoc esse daemonium quod eiecerat prius a muliere Indiae secundae. (De Mir 107:9-12).* This Second India is Chola/Gudnapar kingdom.

In the second coming to the Chera royal city Thomas' mission lasted for one and a half years; he baptized the royal family, 3000 or 4000 *Kāvvyar*¹⁶ along with 40 Jewish members or families who had been living in

16 *Kapora* (pronounced as *Kavora* in Indian Syriac) became *kāvôra* from which the Malayalam term *kāvvyar* originated. (Some Malayalam lexicographers wrongly suspect an Arabic origin! If it was from Arabic it would have been only *kaphir* and in no way *kavora* or *kavyar* since that latter two represent the typical Indian Syriac pronunciation). Soft *Pe* is always *v/w* sound for Indian Syriac and never *ph/f*. A typical case is that of *navsha* or *nawsha* meaning soul.

the Chera kingdom. A *sliva*/cross/ a 'house' (for worship) was established. Planting or drawing the picture of a *sliva* was the beginning; in due course it became a place of gathering. It was known as *beth sliva/kurisupura/kurisadi*, house/place of the cross, *Kottakurishu* (Fort of the Cross) in front of St Thomas Christian Churches. Even today some of such *kurisadis* can be seen in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Perhaps they are reconstructions of older models. *Beth Sliva* was the original and the most ancient type of the Church building in India. The base is four-sided representing the four corners of the world and the four gospels. That seems to be the first altar before the evolution of a Church building. Then there is an octagonal tower (with many columns around) standing for the Church. In some cases the four-sided base is absent and we find only the octagonal structure with oil lamps, columns, etc. On the top of the octagonal tower a lotus base and a cross in the middle of the lotus base. As in Palayur one may find even seven crosses around the lotus base. This structure seems to be something unique and found only among Mar Thoma Nazranis of South India. It will be made of laterite (earlier) or granite (later). Gradually it became a palace or temple with an additional, the actual church building. Such a development took many centuries and thus the cross, cross-house and the church are three stages of slow evolution. Local influence is clear: instead of the idol and the *kavu* Nazranis have *sliva* and *beth sliva*. This was the way for starting a new Church among them and I strongly hold that it is a second century development based on some instructions of Thomas the first preacher and *Umman* (*architect*) of the Church of India. 'With the permission/consent/choice of all',

(as in the case of deacons in Acts 6:3-6) the leaders are chosen by the community and for the community, never imposed from above; such a democratic tradition is apostolic, pre-Constantinian and it is going to remain among Mar Thoma Nazranis until 16th century and even thereafter.

Kēpa royal nephew, son-in-law of King Andrew (*Andrapolis/Andropolis* of Greek Acts born from his name?) brings Thomas back to Chera kingdom. In Latin *Passio Dionysius* goes to India after sometime to get ordained as presbyter and finally a bishop whose wife became a consecrated *Pelagia*; for the Greek Acts he is *Xanthippus/Zenophontos* who becomes a deacon/teacher/bishop whose wife is called *Pelagia*. Story is the same in Latin and Greek where someone with a group joins Thomas in India. But the Song is bringing back Thomas, from Chola kingdom to Chera kingdom where he had landed first and made a handful of disciples almost a year ago. Latin and Greek versions do not know of such a return of Thomas to Andropolis. The Song describes a series of missionary travels within the boundaries of Chēra kingdom or Kuttanadu, extended between Palaghat in the North and Kollam in the South and to Coimbatour-Salem regions in the East. Since then Kēpa remained with Thomas as an interpreter or royal patron without whose help the establishment of Christianity in the traditional seven Brahmin strongholds was impossible. A stay of one year and a conversion of a very negligible number (1100, 1400, 1600, 1750, 200, etc.) who are given the sign of ṣliva and a house (for worship). Kollam, Triḱpālēswarem, *Malanagaram* (mount-city) Chāyal, Niraṇam (where the paternal uncle of Thoma Ramban

II is ordained priest), Gōkkamangalam, Kōttakkāyal are mentioned. Thomas made a third visit to Mālyāmkara and then went to Pālūr. This section contains undeniable historical elements. *Thomathkadav* (port of Thomas) on river side near Trikpaleswaram and Niranam exists even today. An ancient Hindu family has inherited the term *Thomathkadav* as their family name. Only one family is there at present; but in the past there were many families and compounds known under that name. If Thomas has nothing to do with South India how should the Nazranis of Niranam invent such names to local places, families, a series of legends?

III: The agent of Choḷan came to inquire about the ‘building of the palace’, and Thomas went back to Mylāpūr in AD 59. The rest of this section is more or less as in the Acts of Thomas. Within two and a half years Thomas baptized the royal brothers and some 7000 people. The kings of *Chandrapuri*¹⁷ (moon-city)

17 R. Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South-Indian Family of Languages* (London 1875) 10, 20, 24, 35. A city near river *Chandragiri* once in Chōla kingdom is a possibility. If Pakalomattam was translated as Helioforum (Suncity in Chera), Chanthirapuri may be same as Gundoforum (Moon city in Chola)? Former is the city of Andrew (Andropolis) whereas the latter is the city of Chanthiran/Chundaran, the city of Sundaran (Chandrapuri/Chola). Even today many places in South India are called Chandrapuri, Chandragiri, etc. The Chandrapuri (modern Chanda) in Maharashtra is another possibility; it was also in the Chola kingdom comprising Andhra. I will not be surprised even if these two families migrated respectively from the Chera and Chola kingdoms of the first century to the Malankara (Malabar) coast. If Pakalomattam and Sankarapuri are found in Palayur, Malyamkara, Ankamaly and Kuravilangad, it is the story of migrating ecclesiastical leadership which move with a migrating population of South India or Limurike of the Greek authors.

were Patrose and Paulose (the converted royal brothers of Chōla dynasty?). Thomas gave *guruppattam* (episcopate?) to ‘Beautiful Paulose’ (*Chanthiran/Sundaran* who adopted the name Paul) appointing six priests under him. So too twenty one deacons were selected. All gave up their property to Thomas who made arrangements how it should be administered for common good. Leaving their personal property for common good and arrangements for its common administration take us again back to the days of the apostles (Acts 2: 41-47, 4: 32-37; 5: 1-10; 6:1-7).

IV: Thomas was travelling by land along with ‘angels’ or royal messengers (via Munnar mountain path?) and he reached Malayātūr where he baptized 220 people in two months - not a commendable achievement for an apostle! It is believed that there he used to go up the hill to pray. Thomas spent one year re-organizing the “seven royal” Churches appointing priests, ordering to erect ‘house’ (for worship), at the end of all giving *rūḥāvaram* (gift of the Spirit meaning the completion of priesthood that ensures the continuation of baptism, and celebration of Eucharist- all these taking place only because of the epiclesis of the Spirit through the ministry of priests, but no confirmation as argued by Church historian Mundadan, and folklore scholar Choondal, etc! Though post-baptismal anointing existed in some other traditions, it did not exist in the Syriac Church. A separation between baptism and confirmation was unknown until the influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.350-428) who became bishop in AD 392. The initiation mysteries were celebrated together without a post-baptismal anointing. Many scholars - foreign as well as local - following their own methodology and intellectual footsteps, reach

unwarranted conclusions neglecting the local languages, idioms, customs, legends, oral traditions, etc. Here it is the hand of priesthood and high priesthood that is being described as completion or perfection of a Christian community with full fledged priests or high priests. We should not forget the miracle stories about the “continuation of the hand of Thomas” throughout the pre-Portuguese period.

Thomas made repeated visits (like St Paul) to select places where he had initiated the Way; now it is given an institutionalized, organized structure or a stable, spiritual leadership. This is what St Paul did (Acts 15:35, 39-40, 18:22-27). Along with Thoma Ramban I of Niraṇam Thomas went to Chāyal where he gave his garment to Kēpa. Kēpa wore this mantle of Thomas. Thomas placed his hands on Kēpa’s head and ordered all to accept Kēpa as Thomas himself. It is as if Jesus delegating Simon Kēpa as the leader and entrusting the flock of followers to him. Thomas revealed that he is going to ‘make his last journey’ (departure from them as well as from the world). This filled all with great grief and all wept at this touching farewell. It reminds us of Paul’s farewell in Acts 20:37-38.

Thomas gave the position of Rambān to Māliēkkal Thomā whose family is going to have priests in every generation. Though first century ascetical orientations are not ruled out the term Ramban meant a teacher of the Way of the Word. Preaching and teaching the Way is officially entrusted to him. So he is given a collection of scrolls, books, including *The Book of Remembrance* (the gospel of Matthew in Aramaic). Some Old Testament scrolls were also given. South Indian tradition speaks of a Chronicle or Diary (said to be a

draft Gospel combined with the notes on his activities in India - the Gospel and Acts put together?), which the apostle Thomas used to write on *skin*. How it is connected with the Gospel of Thomas is unknown to our author. It was written on *skin* (a non Indian custom). This Diary was mostly the source of Maliekkal Thoma Ramban II. The latest we hear about this Diary is from mid-nineteenth century. Until 1986 there was a Malayalam manuscript copied in the 19th century containing all these details. Some 150 years ago there were oral traditions about *Thoma shihayude Thukalppusthakam* (*The Skin-Book of Thomas the Apostle*). Somewhere hidden in my collection a copy of the Malayalam Mannanam manuscript is kept. But where is the Mannanam original which contain a long introduction by Romeo Thomas? I am waiting for a reply from Mannanam. It is probable that Gundert came across some one who knew about this book - lost centuries ago - upon which our Song is based. All the nine or more manuscripts from different sources is not a forgery as Mingana thought. It was a Syriac document the contents of which are known only through the Song. Apostle Thomas accompanied by bishop Kēpa and Thoma Ramban I travelled along the ‘mountain-passage’ (in Western Ghats). At the end Thomas went on to travel to Pāṇḍi (the third South Indian kingdom with Mathura the capital) along with ‘angels’ in AD 69. Here seems to be the end of the original story.

V: A fantastic interpolation about the number of miracles worked by “that hand which was clothed” with the blood of Christ.¹⁸ All numbers begin with ‘two’ for

18 St. Ephrem, Comm. *On Diates.* XXI, 18; W. Strothmann, *Jakob von Sarug, Drei Gedichte uber den Apostel Thomas in Indien* (Wiesbaden 1976) I, 11-12, 49, 196 (pp. 29, 34, 58).

poetical reasons. The extra ordinary number of miracles (29 dead raised to life, 260 demoniacs, 230 lepers, 250 blind, 220 paralytics, 20 dumb and 280 incurably sick were healed) is a pre-Song of Thoma Ramban development. A literal reading may not be helpful here.

VI: This section too seems to be another appendix or interpolation. The total number of converted people in Keralam (Chera kingdom) is given as 17480 (17450, 17500, etc.) with some sub-divisions according to various castes the existence of which in those days is a matter of dispute. Two Perumāls (royal title), became bishops (one in Keralam and the other in Chōlam?). Royal conversion does not mean a total change of all rulers and kings, but conversion of a few members of a large family with lesser role. ‘Seven gramams’ were given one (high?) priest each. These became “Seven Royal Churches” because of royal patronage. If there is a half-church it is none other than Malayatur where there existed a very small group of Nazranis without a *sliva*, priest, church, etc. Probably they were put under Ankamaly/Malyamkara or Paravur. A full-fledged ecclesia did not develop there. Thiruvamcode is not part of Chera kingdom. It was in Pandi kingdom, owned by Paṇḍi Nazranis and “seven royal” or “seven and a half churches” is associated with Chera kingdom. Among the seven priests four were made Rambāns: Māliyekkal, and Kadapūr are explicitly mentioned in the song; but the other two are implicitly pointed out as Sankarapuri and Pakalōmattam (Helioforum of the Greek/Latin traditions). There is also another allusion to Shankarapuri to indicate that Thoma Ramban II was writing after the death of Kēpa and Episcopal/priestly leadership was taken up by the Pakalōmattam family or already the Episcopal system came to a complete

halt due to persecutions, isolation from Christian communities outside India, ignorance or absence of an Ignatius' model of episcopacy, etc. It is traditionally believed that the Episcopal and priestly succession was broken before AD 160 and only a deacon was left as the sole authorized spiritual leader of Mar Thoma Nazranis of All India. Elderly lay leaders took up the leadership to assist the deacon. Formal or informal contacts with the Parthian Christians were made. Three deacons (?) had been appointed originally by the apostle in each of the 'Seven *grāmams*' in order to administer the public property as in the days of first generation of the followers of Jesus. The *grāmam* or community had no private property after conversion? This indicates a very primitive apostolic situation.

VII: Thomas' martyrdom in the kingdom of Chōḷan. In AD 72 on 3 July Thomas encounter some *Embrāns* (Brahmin priests of Tamil origin) in a *Kāḷi*-shrine. In *Passio* and *De Miraculis* it is a temple of the Sun in Mazdai's kingdom.¹⁹ Thomas was thrust with a *shūlam* (a fork-like lance associated with *Kāḷi*-worship). For *Passio* it is the sword of the high priest that kills him. Thomas "fell on a stone in that thicket which is near the sea shore". Angels reported this to bishop Paulose who gave a glorious burial to Thomas. That bishop's royal brother too was there. How can we situate this martyrdom and burial in the kingdom of Gundaforos? Is there any tradition of a tomb of Thomas in Parthia or North West India? The tomb has to be in the Chola kingdom! Then how can Mazdai open it in his kingdom? The Parthian palace building, Gundaforos and Mazdai stories of murder and opening the tomb fall apart! Whatever be the tomb opened by Mazdai where is it

¹⁹ Zelzer, op.cit., 37-38; 62-63.

located is crucial. For Ephrem it is in India and not in Parthia of Gundaforos! Satan is troubled because of Thomas' tomb in India and relics in Edessa! Parthia of Gundaforos is nowhere! It is precisely here the Parthianization of original South Indian stories of the second mission of Thomas becomes clear. 'Angels' or royal messengers of Chola king brought the news to bishop Kēpa of Kodungallur who went in great hurry to Maylāpūr accompanied by two Rambāns - Maliekkal from Niranam and Kadapur from Kuravilangad. They travelled by the land-route (easy to use in those days) and reached the *Palli* (church, but originally a Buddhist term associated with royalty and deity) where Thomas was already buried. Their arrival at Thomas' tomb was on 21 July. Their travel to the tomb is the beginning of pilgrimages to Mylapur? For ten days all kinds of sacrifices and prayers were offered without any interruption. Then Thomas made a miraculous appearance in a heavenly palace. (The palace of Thomas is only an imitation of the heavenly mansions (*āvānē*) - once again a play on the plural of the name *Āvān* - already promised and prepared by Jesus in John 14:2-3. It is similar to Pentecost and the post resurrection theophanies experienced by the apostles in Jerusalem. Bishop Paulose (like St Paul in 2Cor 12:1-9) could identify this as the one which he saw once! A glorious theophany of Thomas (as on the day of Pentecost in Acts 1-2 is reflected in the narration of this 'vision'. It is parallel to the post-death resurrection appearances of Jesus. This is no wonder since Thomas is the twin of Jesus! Finally all departed after receiving special commissions and blessings from Thomas seated in a heavenly throne in a heavenly palace! Thomas is advising to make pilgrimages to his tomb!

There is a significant text in *Passio* regarding the arrival of relics and its veneration in Edessa: Corpus autem apostoli cum honore apostolico cum laudibus, cum hymnis transtulerunt ad ecclesiam, condientes aromatibus pretiosis corpus et fiebant signa magna et prodigia in loco ubi positum erat, nam et daemoniosi liberabantur et omnes aegritudines curabantur. Denique supplicantes Syri ab Alexandro imperatore Romano veniente victore de Persidis proelio Xerse rege devicto impetrarunt hoc ut mitteret ad regulos Indorum ut redderent defunctum civibus . Sicque factum est ut translatum esset de India corpus apostoli et positum in civitate Edissa in locello argenteo quod pendit ex catenis argenteis.²⁰

The relic is obtained from India through an imperial intervention. If the Edessans knew about his original martyrdom and burial anywhere else why do they rely upon the relic from India? Alexander Severus was born in AD 208. When he was 14 he became the sole emperor in 222. He waged a war against the Persians in 231-232. He was favourable towards Christians and he used to venerate Christ too along with his gods. Sextus Julius Africanus was one of his Christian friends. In 235 he was assassinated by his soldiers. The Syriac and Greek Acta and the arrival of relics from India are closely related. The original Syriac Acts was written before 250 making use of the oral or written South Indian stories. The mentioning of the Abgar legend in this context becomes all the more important for Edessa. It is the relic from India and the letter of Jesus to Abgar that brings pride and glory to Edessan Christianity.

20 K.Zelzer, *op.cit.*, 41; M.Bonnet, *op.cit.*, 159.

Epilogue: Thoma Ramban XLVIII wrote this song for simple and uneducated people removing the “details and defects from *that history* written by Māliyēkkal Thomā Rambān II. This song is placed at the feet of Apostle Thomas on July 3 in AD1601. It is what we know (*Ariv*) and let it be known (*Arivan*) by the mercy of God”

‘Planting of a *shliva* and building of a house’ (for worship) is the typical way of Thomas’ procedure. Apostles travelling about and planting a *shliva* is known to us from a fourth century (?) text.²¹ Until recently a new Church was erection of a square platform with a cross in the middle and a small roof to protect it from heat, rain, etc. It took some centuries to erect a Church building along with the cross and then the cross stood in front of the church building. Even today this tradition is seen among the Nazranis as they build a new Church. Later Christianizing interpolations in the original Sanskrit oral or written version of the second century are clear.²² There is a series of rather puzzling veiled or mysterious phrases scattered throughout the song; a number of these phrases escape all our attempts at an accurate translation. Some of the ‘numbers’, astronomical data and geographical details are worthy of further study. I shall enumerate a few of such words after explaining one of them in detail:

Line no 23 of our Song has a mysterious phrase: *Arivan paraven* (You should know my saying; I say to inform you; you know what I narrate). In the first reading nobody may suspect anything behind this phrase which is apparently coming from two Malayalam verbs: *ariyuka* (to know) and *parayuka* (to say). Here Thoma Ramban XLVIII is giving a clear allusion to the source he is using. It is evident from the repeated use of this Malayalam verb in the song. But soon after the ‘introduction’ as

21 W. Wright, *Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles* (London 1871) II, ix, 58.

22 Cf. P.J. Thoma, *The South Indian Tradition of the Apostle Thomas*, *JRAS Cent. Supplement* (October 1924) 213 -224.

well as twice in the ‘epilogue’ the terms *arivin* (most probably *Arivan/Aravan/Araven* was wrongly written by a scribe), *Arivu/Arive* (knowledge) and *Arivan* (that you may know) *Arivil* (in the knowledge), are all possible; but when *Arivan* occurs a third time in the epilogue even in the very last line we can suspect and ask why soon after the introduction, as well as in the epilogue this term appears 4 times at least in two cases where they seem rather absurd from a linguistic point of view. Thoma Ramban XLVIII is just alluding to the Syriac term *arban/arvan* which became *ARVAN, ARAVAN*, etc. in Malayalam. It is amazing that a Mannanam manuscript of his song has *Arivu/Arive* as the title of the document. It is the last word of the last line of the whole Song in all versions. Syriac *beth* soft is *v* in Malayalam (Avraham, avun, b-vayta, Gavriel, Avan, not Abraham, *abun*, *b-bayta*, Gabriel, Haban).

None of the modern Malayalam lexicographers or grammarians admits the existence of such a Malayalam term formed from Syriac. But this term existed until last century and it was known to Gundert as it is clear from his dictionary. Gundert used to collect unusual and obsolete Malayalam words from the remote villagers whose vocabulary was unknown to the outside world. *Mainathan* (foreign washer man) is another example. Northists of Athirampuzha were using this term even in 1960s to mean the Southists of Kallara, Kaipuzha, Neendur, etc. Lexicographers of Malayalam have no idea about the early Christian contributions. Assyrian, Aramaic, Persian, Syriac and Chinese influences in the emergence of Malayalam, are worth exploring. Though Gundert knew the term *Aravan* in all probability he could not detect the real meaning and hence he refers to (some unknown) Syriac document in a very vague manner.²³ *Arban* means ‘papyrus’, ‘translation of Bible’, etc.²⁴

23 H. Gundert, *Malayalam-English Nighandu* (2ed; Kottayam 1962) 76.

24 I. Low, *Aramaeische Pflanzennamen* (Leipzig 1881) 54-55; R. Payne Smith, *Thes. Syr.* I, 366-67.

This special term was applied to the ‘history’ written on *ôla* (specially prepared palm leaves as the typical writing material in South India) because it was kept along with ‘the Book of remembrance’.

There are two similar Dravidian terms: *Aravam* and *Aravan* whose origin and exact sense is a matter of dispute.²⁵ *Aravam* can mean ‘half’, ‘low’, ‘Tamil language’, etc. *Aravan* means ‘a virtuous one’, ‘a Buddhist or Brahmin monk of South India’, ‘name of caste (?) who lived in Kerala c. fourth century AD and who were more respected than Brahmins’, etc.²⁶ Most probably Thoma Ramban XLVIII who knew these playing with all these meanings around the term *arvan*. But until someone finds out, why and how Gundert happened to connect an apparently Malayalam term with some Syriac document, which we have not yet indentified; we cannot be certain until we get more information about this lost document of the Maliakkal family of Niranam. It was a written document (*Aravan*) which was kept as a talisman inside the wooden walls of the house. Written down stories were circulated orally (*Paravan*) too from one generation to another. So we hear about Arivu and Paravu - written and oral versions - of Maliakkal family of Niranam. Various manuscripts of the Song play on these two words as if referring to lost written text and surviving oral tradition. One oral version has *ariyuka*, *parayuka* (know, tell).

A few other terms which are not as complex as the ones we saw are the following:

Urha (way), *urhaya* (about the way), *Haban/avan*, *avana*, *Semeon Kepa*, *malka*, *malaka*, *dukрана*, *Hendo d-kol*, *tama*, *thoma*, *Paulose*, *mar*, *bayta*, *sliva*, *ihidaya*, *tlithaya*, *karozutha*, *akrez*, *kthava*, *evangalion*, etc. Terms like these point to an

25 R. Caldwell, *op. cit.*, 92-95.

26 S.G.P. Pillai, *shâbdatârâvali* (10 ed., Kottayam 1983) 247 cf. nn 14, 16.

underlying Syriac manuscript. There is a very subtle development based on the terms *avane* and *avana* connecting them with Jn 14, 2-23 where we have the same terms. It is also a play on the name Haban or Avan. The whole palace-building story is indeed a theological interpretation of some lost or distant historical content. The way to the *heavenly mansion* is another motive. In the present study we leave out further details. Playing with entirely different meanings or slightly different meanings of some Malayalam or Sanskrit term is a literary technique of Thoma Ramban XLVIII; for the sake of brevity we leave out this section from the present paper and proceed to the second part of our study.

St. Thomas in three South Indian Kingdoms

Acts of Thomas envisage three kingdoms - imaginary or real - to situate the Thomas' mission. Attempts either to identify these kingdoms or to rule out the entire story as a Gnostic romance are well known to us.²⁷ Song of Thomas Ramban is indeed a seventeenth century adaptation that can shed some light into this much disputed Thomas' story; the source from which Song of Thomas Ramban drew is not an 'extended Thomas tradition'²⁸ and hence it is necessary to re-examine most primitive layer of the story behind the written Acts of Thomas.

The royal city of Sandarûk which is reached by sea-route remains a riddle. As a possible location scholars propose Egypt, Sindh, Indo-Parthian border, Socôtra, ancient Andhra kingdom (whose borders extended up to the North Western region of modern India), etc.²⁹ But those who see Acts of Thomas as a Gnostic romance prefer the term *Andropolis* interpret it as an

27 F.C. Burkitt, *Early Eastern Christianity* (London 1904)193-94, 206.

28 Cf. n 2. The legends underlying Song of Thoma Ramban are more primitive and rudimentary.

29 A. Dihle, *art.cit.*, 59f.

imaginary place: *Man city*³⁰ or *people city*.³¹ A comparison of all variant readings confirms Sandarûk as the original term which rules out the term *Andropolis* from the original story whether imaginary or historical.³²

All South Indian Thomas traditions - written or oral - argue that St. Thomas landed in Kodungallûr in 52 AD.³³ But as a unique and notable exception Song of Thoma Ramban argues that Thomas disembarked in Māliyām̄kara in the year 50 AD.³⁴ A critical study of this difference of opinion eventually supports the existence of a Rambān tradition behind Song of Thoma Ramban an ancient, 'independent' tradition - both oral and written. Today there is a place called Māliyām̄kara, close to the ancient royal city of Chēra kings. Without further archaeological studies under water the exact location of this royal capital is risky especially after recent excavations at Pattanam. The ancient Māliyām̄kara literally means land/shore of sandal wood. *Mālēyam*³⁵ or *Malayajam* (that which is born on the mountain), is a Sanskrit term coined from Dravidic term *malai/mala/male*. It meant a mountain product from the Western Ghats. Sandal wood grew there and hence called the birth place of sandal wood. Our

30 R. McL. Wilson, *The Acts of Thomas* in W. Foerster, ed. *Gnosis: A Selection of Gnostic Texts* (Oxford 1972) I, 338.

31 M. Lafargue, *Language and Gnosis: The Opening Scenes of the 'Acts of Thomas'* (Harvard Dissertations in Religion 18, Philadelphia 1985) 71.

32 A. Dihle, *art.cit.*, 59

33 Muchiri (Muziris), Vanchi, Thiruvanchikulam, Makôthai, Mahâdēvarpattanam, Mahodayapuram, Chengal, Shingly, Shengale, Chendamangalam, Muyirikkôdu, Kodungallûr, etc. refer to one and the same geographical location near modern Māliyām̄kara. See of Thomas is there and hence Acta called it Helioforum (literal translation of Pakalomattam) an unheard of kingdom! Perhaps it indicates the autonomy and authority of the All India Governor the Arkadiakon.

34 Bernard of St. Thomas, *op.cit.*, 79.

35 H. Gundert, *op.cit.*, 729, 743: R. Caldwell, *op.cit.*, 20, 21, 27.

initial study reveals that the term *mālēyam* was coined in ancient Keralam by forefathers of Nampûthiri Brahmins.³⁶ The Aryans or Brahmins were in ancient Kerala or Kuttanad since fourth century BC through their supremacy is only a later development.

The term Sandarûk can be a literal translation of Mālēyamkara or Land of sandal wood. It ultimately goes back to a Sanskrit word *chandana* which means sandal wood.³⁷ Thus *mālēyam* and sandar/sandal are one and the same. The last two letters of Sandarûk seem to come from *uruk*, *ûr*, *ûrak*, *ûrakam*, *ram*, *kara*, etc. and they indicate a town, sea shore the land close to the sea or river. Thus the term Sandarûk seems to be the royal port and capital of Chêra kings.

Acts of Thomas situates the ‘palace-building’ in Gudnaper’s kingdom where he could not situate Thomas’ martyrdom because of the relationship between Thomas and Gudnapar. But the author of the Acts had only some vague idea about Thomas’ mission in a third kingdom for which he supplied ‘a king Mazdaï’. As we critically evaluate the legends, stories, miracles, inconsistencies, etc. of the Acts of Thomas in the light of ‘Rambân tradition’ (available only in Song of Thoma Ramban) a crucial question about the ‘wandering’ of Thomas’ mission emerges: Did the author of Acts of Thomas draw on some ‘wandering legends from South India’ in order to combine Thomas’ Parthian mission³⁸ and Indian mission? According to Song of Thoma Ramban, there is only an indication of Thomas going to Pandi.

36 F. Day, *The Land of the Perumals* (Madras 1863) 299-300.

37 C. Brokelmann, *Lex. Syr.* (2ed. Göttingen 1928) 484, 633; *op. cit.*, 107, 422. I wrote this paper in 1987 for a seminar at Oxford. A few years later I came across Klijn who had already admitted such a possibility in 1962. After thirty years of this in-dependant and casual finding I hold that Klijn has entirely solved the whole problem of identification of the royal city though he did not realize it; see Klijn, *op. cit.*, 164.

38 Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III.

If Song of Thoma Ramban is drawing on Acts of Thomas the legends and kingdoms merge in to one unit which is against the very purpose of the two authors. Ultimately they are not competing to deny Thomas' mission in India. Acta writers want to establish some ascetical doctrines; but Ramban is more interested in history of his family version of the mission of Thomas older than and independent from the Acta.

The Greek version did not translate Sandarūk, but translated another Sanskrit term: *Purushapuram* which is modern Peshawar. *Purusha* is man (*Andropos*) or person. *Puram* is town or city (Polis). The Andropolis is the literal translation of Purushapuram (the city of man, the man-city). For the Gnostic propaganda motif such literal translation of the name of a city known to them and the first century king Gundaforos ruled was best suited for a heavenly palace where Thomas did work out his first mission. So the available stories from South India were transferred to the North West Indo-Parthian kingdom of Gundaforos without any care for history, geography or persons. Encratite, ascetic-gnostic propaganda motives led the authors of the Acta. *Purusha* is also the name of the famous Indian king *Pururavas* whom Alexander the great encountered. In Greek the Indian king was immortalized as Poros or Phoros; Poros of Indi or Indiphoros stood for any Indian king. Though Alexander won the battle he was won over by the philosophy of Poros the Indian king. Alexander was educated by Aristotle. So two philosophies met and a physically defeated India won philosophically and spiritually the war of words. Poor Alexander reached the anticlimax and he decided to return and retire from further foolish conquest. It is clear that the final victory proved to be the end of his wandering warfare. This Indian king *Purusha* created a lasting impression in the Greek world about India. His name *Purusha* was known to the Greek world as *Poros*. All Indian kings were considered only as descendants of *Poros*. The *King of Indi* or *Pāṇḍi* and his kingdom are confused with *King Poros* and Indo-Bactrian region.³⁹ The

39 R. Caldwell, *op.cit*, 15f.

author of Syriac Acts is trying to explain Thomas' Parthian mission depending on wandering oral traditions from India.⁴⁰ The confusion as well as the term Andropolis⁴¹ is explaining a story behind the composition of Acts of Thomas itself. Since the Chola 'palace-building story' was transferred to Gundaforos' kingdom he had to situate the 'martyrdom and tomb-story' in the third kingdom inventing king Mazdai.⁴² South Indian stories provided three missions of Thomas in three Indian kingdoms. The Rambān tradition is about Thomas' mission in the three South Indian kingdoms - Chēra, Chōla and Pāṇḍi - get miserably confused in the Acts of Thomas. The doctrinal motives of the author prompted him to re-write the oral traditions (?) which could have easily reached Edessa or elsewhere towards the end of second century.⁴³

As we put together the Syriac, Greek and Latin versions of Thomas' story we get some interesting details. *De Miraculis* speaks of the (Sandarūk mission) thus: *exeuntes de navi ingressi sunt primam Indiae civitatem*.⁴⁴ This first city is 'first emporium' of India.⁴⁵ *Passio* mentions a mountain *Gazus* between *Andranopolim*⁴⁶ and *Elioforum* (apparently, the city of

40 The relics of Thomas reach Edessa from India and some legends too?

41 The Greek Acts complete the process started in Syriac Acts is transferring Indian legends in to Parthia.

42 There is no description of Pāṇḍi mission in Song of Thoma Ramban, though the author knew that Thomas travelled by *Malavazhy* or *Pandivazhy* the mountain path that connects Malankara coast with Chola and Pandi kingdoms.

43 Cf. U. Monneret De Villard, *La fiera di Batnae e du Traslazione di S. Tomaso a Edessa, Rendiconti delle Sedute dell' Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, Ser. VII, vol. VI, 3-4 (Roma 1951) 74-104.

44 M. Bonnet, *Acta Thomae* (Supplementum Codicis Apocryphi i, Lipsiae 1883) 98; K. Zelzer, *Die alten lateinischen Thomasakten* (Berlin 1974)47.

45 This identification is a most probable one.

46 M. Bonnet, *op. cit.*, 140, 144; K. Zelzer, *op. cit.*, 6, 18.

Gundaforos).⁴⁷ Between Chēra and Chōla kingdoms the mountain *Ghat* exists. This cannot be another accidental similarity. The author of *Passio* misunderstood *Elioforum* as a city or kingdom. This *Elioforum* is *Helioforum* as we observe from variant readings. *Helioforum* is a literal translation of *Pakalōmattam*, the most celebrated Brahmin-Christian family which gave the Archdeacons in every generation. *Pakalōn* was translated into Greek *Helios* (sun); *mattam* is *forum*. Wherefrom did all these South Indian details creep in to these Latin versions? There is absolute certainty that the sixth century Latin author had access to the actual situation of South Indian Nazranis. The Pakalomattam is seen as the ruling family among the Christians. The very presence of this term in the Latin Acts is significant and for the time being I leave out further details.

The Syriac Acts ends the Sandarūk mission thus: “and he (Thomas) left them (the royal couple) and went away... And they (the royal couple, the flute-girl, etc.) taught the king too, and collected a number of brethren, until news was heard of the Apostle (being) in the realm of India; and they went to him and were united unto him”.⁴⁸ *De Miraculis* has the following parallel:

Et requirentes beatum apostolum non inuenerunt. Jam enim cum negotiatore ad ulteriores Indiae partes processerat. Adolescentes autem praedicabant uerbum dei ita ut omnis populus per eos conuerteretur ad dominum. Sed et ipse rex qui erat pater puellae compunctus corde credidit in dominum Iesum Christum, et audiens beatum apostolum in ulteriorem Indiam commorari abiit cum omnibus qui crediderant, et peruenit ad eum, et procidens ad pedes eius rogauit ut eos omnes baptismatis gratia conseseraret. Haec audiens beatus apostolus gaudisus est

47 Concept of *grāman* or *puram* could be easily misunderstood by a foreign writer. Cf. V.A. Gadgil, The Village in Sanskrit Literature, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Ser. II, 2 (1926) 150-166.

48 W. Wright, *op. cit.*, 155, 159; A.F. J. Klijn, *op. cit.*, 72f.

et gratias egit deo, ac transacto septem dierum ieiunio baptizauit eos in nomine sanctae trinitatis. Ipse quoque rex rogauit sibi caput tondi, et diaconus ordinatus est, et adhaerebat incessanter apostolicae doctrinae.⁴⁹

All the phrases underlined in these two citations had literal contact with the ‘source’ used in Song of Thoma Ramban. *Passio* has some additional information which strengthens our identification of Sandarûk as Mālēyamkara. History knows only the royal capital of Chera kingdom Kodungallur on the Malankara coast as the See of Thomas. Parthia and Edessa never dared to boast of such a proud claim as they knew the truth. Who would have been so generous as to supply South India with an apostle and his tomb?

Post non multum uero temporis misit unum ex discipulis suis quem presbyterum ordinans ita constituit, ut in eadem ciuitate consistens ordinaret ecclesiam, in qua multus est deo populus acquisitus, et est ibi sedes Thomae apostoli et fides catholica usque in hodiernum diem. Ipse autem puer Dionysius nomine episcopus factus sponsamque suam Pelagiam nomine sacro uelamine consecrauit; quae post obitum eius duplex martyrium tenuit, unum quia uirum habere contempsit, alterum quia sacrificare idolis noluit, ac pro his duabus causis sententiam decollationis accepit. Et super tumulum eius graecis sermonibus et litteris ita scriptum est: in hoc loco requiescit sponsa Dionysii episcopi quae est filia Thomae apostoli . Igitur, quia longum est tendere historiam uirtutum eorum, in quantum possumus ad rerum exitum succincte pergamus. Cum autem intrasset Elioforum apostolus Indiae ciuitatem, ingressus Abbanes ad Gundaforum regem nuntiauit Thomam.⁵⁰

49 M. Bonnet, *op. cit.*, 101; K. Zelzer, *op. cit.*, 49f.

50 *Ibid.*, 139; K. Zelzer, *op. cit.*, 11f.

The phrases underlined in the above text had a better contact with the ‘source’ behind Song of Thoma Ramban. The phrases with interrupted underlining support our identification of Sandarûk. *Sedes Thomae Apostoli* is said to be in *Andranopolin*.⁵¹ Vat. Syr. XXII written in AD 1301 speaks of *the Seat of Apostle Thomas in Shengale* which is identified with Kodungallûr. Dionysius the bishop, Xanthipus the deacon and Kepa the first disciple, constant travel companion and successor of Thomas is the bridegroom of the royal city where Thomas landed first! Ramban mentions the travel of the royal son-in-law to Chola kingdom to bring Thomas to his royal city where Thomas had landed in AD 50. Indeed Thomas came along with him by the sea route from Mylapur and founded the seven Churches of the Malankara coast. The Syriac Acts mentions a deacon Xanthippus who was given charge of the community before Thomas left for Mazdai’s kingdom.⁵² In that case Mazdai and Gudnapar stand for the same king and it contradicts the very purpose of Acta in Syriac, Greek and Latin! ‘A deacon’ who assists Thomas is mentioned in another context⁵³. In *Transitus Mariae* Thomas is gone to India ‘to visit’ or ‘to baptize’ some members of a royal family: a ‘sister’ of the king, her ‘son’, ‘a royal nephew’, etc. are in that group⁵⁴. All these are just confused references to the royal son-in-law and nephew of the Chêra king mentioned in Song of Thoma Ramban. It is this royal nephew who goes to Chôla kingdom to ‘bring back Thomas kissing his feet’ and asking pardon for some initial dishonour suffered by Thomas. Story of migration from Chera to Chola/ Parthia is unheard of. Just the opposite is true and historical, the reason being a persecution.

51 M. Bonnet, *op. cit.*, 135, 139.

52 A.F.J. Klijn, *op. cit.*, 99f.

53 *Ibid.*, 90f.

54 A.S. Lewis, *Apocrypha Syriaca: The Protoevangelium Jacobi and Transitus Mariae* (Studia Sinaitica XI, London 1902) xiv, 31, 28.

One of the most popular Christian names of Kerala is *Umman* (carpenter, architect, skilled worker, fabricator, etc) who is none other than Thomas because of the ‘palace-building’ tradition. The Acts of Thomas uses this term, but never as a proper name for Thomas.⁵⁵ Some of you from the Syriac Churches outside India may be able to find out whether *Umman* is used as substitute for Thomas.

Conclusion

The original Acts of Thomas was re-written with some special doctrinal motives connected with encratism, asceticism and Gnosticism. The author combined two Thomas’ missions using a single mission. When the traditions about Thomas mission in the Chēra, Chōla and Pāndi kingdoms of South India reached Edessan region by means of travelling merchants the original story got an unrecognizable colour. When this story was used to combine the Parthian and Indian missions adding the doctrinal propaganda of the author, a series of inconsistencies mutilated the ‘history’. But Song of Thoma Ramban based on the lost second century ‘history’ of Thoma Ramban II helps us in some way to re-examine the story concealed and confused by the author of the Acts of Thomas. Ignorance of local geography, history, languages and legends has misled many scholars in interpreting this work.

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55 E. Beck, “Téxne und Texnites bei dem Syrer Ephrām”, *OCP*47 (1981) 295-331. Syriac Acts has the term *ummana*, and it is used also by Jacob of Serugh. But is there a whole interchange of *Umman* for *Thomas*?

Pablo Argárate

**“The Perfect road is this, ‘Bless him who curses
you and love him who hates you, and pray for
whomever harms you and persecutes you’ ”
(LG XIX, 12) Bible and Perfection in the
*Liber Graduum***

Introduction

The *Ktābā dmasqātā*¹ or *Liber Graduum* (LG) is a collection of 30 discourses or *mēm̄rē* (M) from an

¹ For a *status quaestionis* see P. Argárate, “Das Ktābā dmasqātā. *Forschung und Bedeutung des syrischen Liber Graduum*”, in *Festschrift Stephen Gerö.E. Grypeou, A. Toepel, T. Sailors and D. Bumazhnov* (ed). Leuven: Peeters (Series: Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta), 2001, 239-258. Another publication attempts to cover the most relevant issues regarding our book, Robert Kitchen– K. Heal (ed), *The Syriac Book of Steps. “The Breaking of the Mind”*. *Collected Essays (Catholic University of America Studies in Early Christianity)* Catholic University of America Press. Washington D.C. (2014) These are the chapters contained in it: R.A. Kitchen, “Disturbed Sinners: The Pursuit of Sanctity in the Book of Steps”; Brian Colless, “Adelphios of Edessa as Author of the *Liber Graduum* and Messalianism”; John Corbett, “The Ascetic Life as Holy War: The Biblical Basis of the *Book of Steps*”; Jeff Childers, “A Broken Mind: the Path to Knowledge in *Liber Graduum*”; Martien Parmentier, “The *Liber Graduum/Book of Steps* on Magic”; René Roux, “Biblical Exegesis in the *Book of Steps*”; Geoffrey Greatrex, “The Romano-Persian Frontier and the Context of the *Book of Steps*”; Timothy Pettipiece, “Parallel Paths: Tracing Manichaean Footprints Along the *Syriac Book of Steps*”; Pablo Argárate, “Perfects and Perfection in the *Book of Steps*”; Kelli Bryant, “You Are What You Eat: Dietary Metaphors in the *Syriac Liber*

anonymous author, preceded by a prologue written by the Syrian editor of the work. It was not until 1719, that the *LG* is mentioned in the manuscripts of the Vatican. Kmosko found it in 1901 within the manuscripts of the British Museum, edited, and published it in 1926 with an extensive introduction ("Praefatio"), a Latin translation, and a dossier on the development of Messalianism.² Kmosko's work will strongly determine the directions of research for many years. In addition, he mentioned in the introduction, three key areas, namely the date of the *LG*, its relation to the Messalian movement, and the Diatessaron as its underlying biblical text.

Graduum"; Tera Harmon, "Falling from the Path of Perfection: Sin in the Syriac *Liber Graduum*"; Kyle Smith, "A Last Disciple of the Apostle: The 'Editor's' Preface, Rabbula's *Rules*, and the Date of the *Book of Steps*"; Gregory Kessel, "A previously unknown reattributed fragment from Memra 16 of *Liber Graduum*"; Matthias Westerhoff, "Did the Author of the *Book of Steps* Understand Paul?"; Kristian S. Heal "Repentance in the *Book of Steps*"; David Taylor, "Future Directions in the Study of the Book of Steps"; Sergey Minov, "Marriage and Sexuality in the Book of Steps"; Thomas Kollampampil, "Hidden Work of the Heart in the *Liber Graduum*"; Aryeh Kofsky und Serge Ruzer, "Reading the Ascetic Ideal into Genesis 1-3: Hermeneutic Strategies in *Liber Graduum* 21" . See also D. J. Lane, *The Book of Grades or Steps*, in *The Harp* 14 (2001), 81-88.

² M. Kmosko (ed), *Liber Graduum (Patrologia Syriaca I, 3)*, Paris, 1926. An English translation is provided in *The Book of Steps. The Syriac Liber Graduum*. Translated, with an Introduction and Notes by Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F.G Parmentier. Kalamazoo, MI, 2004. This is the translation used in my study. In referring to the *LG*, I provide *mēmra*, paragraph, and page of this translation.

In Kmosko's edition the text takes 460 columns of the *Patrologia Syriaca*. About the *author* of the *LG*, states the editor that he wished to remain anonymous, and that nothing is known about his life and time. He holds only to traditions which consider the author to be one of the last disciples of the Apostles. The editor assumes that that he was one of the first teachers who wrote in Syriac. He also calls him "Blessed" (*tubana*). It is clear therefore that even the editor of the *LG* does not know much about the author. Almost all experts now agree on a deliberate *anonymity*. The author regards himself as a charismatic interpreter of the Bible. Furthermore, the content of the work shows that the writer is a spiritual leader of a pre-Christian monastic community in a time of change.³

The *date* of the *LG* is today fixed in the second half of the fourth century with the *terminus ante quem* of 400.⁴ It has to be *placed* in the Persian Empire in Mesopotamia, Adiabene in what is today northern Iraq⁵; more precisely, in a hilly region with frost in winter, in the vicinity of the Roman Empire.

The various *mēm̄rē* are diverse regarding extension and genre. While M19 is the longest, M6 is the shortest *mēm̄rā*. There is usually no continuity among the different pieces. R. Kitchen suggests the following *structure*: a) basic commands (M 1-9) b) advanced perfection (10-24) c) last

³ R. A. Kitchen, *Becoming Perfect: The Maturing of Asceticism in the Liber Graduum*, in *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 2 (2002), 31.

⁴ Vgl. M. Kmosko, *Liber Graduum*. Praefatio, CXLIX-CLX.

⁵ Other position has L. Wickham, *Teaching about God and Christ in the Liber Graduum*, in: H. Brennecke (hg.), *Logos. FS Luise Abramowski*, 1993, 488: "The work probably comes from the fourth century; its milieu is West, rather than East, Syria."

period and salvation of the righteous (25-30). According to the *genre* the *LG* is a rule for the community, with long biblical stories, sermons, treatises on the controversy over the role of the contemporary church and also about sexuality and marriage, brief oppositions between righteous and perfect, and justification and encouragement of the spiritual ministry of the righteous.⁶ Above all, Kitchen sees the *LG* as a "sect-canon", which serves the needs of the community.⁷

Regarding *reception and impact* of the *LG*, they are almost nonexistent. The fundamental distinction between the righteous and perfect occurs only in Philoxenos of Mabbug, however in a different context. The *community* of the *LG* appears as an isolated, short-lived, and localized phenomenon. It will not survive the internal and external conflicts and violent upheavals. On the one hand, this form of Christianity is strongly rooted in the archaic characteristics of the Syrian Church. On the other hand, it remains an unsolved mystery. Nevertheless, the *LG* is one of the most ancient works which has come to us from ancient Syriac literature devoted to the subject of spiritual life and asceticism. As such it is a very precious source and witness to the very archaic spirituality of Christianity in Mesopotamia. It unfolds a pneumatic mysticism, characteristic of archaic Syrian spirituality indigenous to Mesopotamian Christianity. Indeed, this manifestation of an enigmatic form of Christianity puzzled scholars since the publication of Kmosko's edition of the *Ktābā dmasqātā*.

⁶ R. A. Kitchen, *Becoming Perfect: The Maturing of Asceticism*, 3.

⁷ R. A. Kitchen, *The Gattung of the Liber Graduum, Implications for a Sociology of Asceticism*, in H J W Drijvers (hg), *IV Symposium Syriacum, 1984: Literary Genres in Syriac literature (Groningen, Oosterhesselen 10-12 September) (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 229)*, Rome, 1987, 175.

Among many features, it is the profusion and variety of *religious groups* portrayed throughout its thirty *mēmṛē*, what particularly drew attention to our anonymous work. Along with some more traditional forms such as the leaders of the community, the priests, the “sick” and the “children”, some mysterious sorts of Christian enter into the picture like the group of “faith” and that of “love”. Nevertheless, the most frequent and consistent ones are the *Upright* (or righteous) and the *Perfect*. This distinction is closely associated to that one between major and minor commandments or between corporal and spiritual ministries. The origin of the separation between Perfection and Uprightness is traced by the *Liber Graduum* to the very origins. Adam, created in Perfection, by failing to keep God’s commandments fell from that state and Uprightness, which was sanctioned until the coming of Christ, who would manifest in himself the true nature of Adam and Perfection.

The *LG* portrays this *Perfection* in a rather negative way, by denying the features of Uprightness.⁸ Whereas the upright live in the world and care for it, working, possessing and getting married, the Perfect are characterized by radical renunciation of the world (they “fast to the world”), neither working nor marrying nor having any tie with that world. On the contrary, they closely follow Christ by taking up his cross in complete poverty and lowliness. And in doing so,

⁸ This has lead to believe that the *LG* might be addressed to the Upright rather than to the Perfect, being these more a theological category. See R. A. Kitchen, *The Gattung of the Liber Graduum*, 181: “The Just, who undoubtedly are the majority of the *LG* community, are more concretely described and are the principal audience of the *LG*. The Perfect are not as clearly defined and in fact, represent more a school, not an individual. Its function as a canon for the community was the purpose for writing.”

according to the *LG*, they have succeeded in acquiring the status that Adam had in paradise before the fall.⁹ Their functions within the community comprise teaching to all the new life and the distinction between major and minor commandments. However, repeatedly the *LG* places the hallmark of Perfection in unlimited love and forgiveness, in the footsteps of the Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The Perfect are thus required to love and forgive all, without distinction: women, heretics, pagans, sinners and even their own murderers.¹⁰

The *quest for perfection* builds without any doubt the centre of the *LG*. From its very outset, already in the first paragraph of M1, Perfection and Uprightness are brought into relation with the commandments of the Lord. These falls into two major categories: major and minor commandments. Furthermore, this distinction is closely related to that, which separated between Perfection and Uprightness. Indeed, M1 begins by summarizing its topic:

“In which can be found an exposition of the commandments, showing for what purpose each single one has been given and to whom, why our Lord Jesus Christ gave major and minor commandments, and how

⁹ See A. Kowalski, *Perfezione e Giustizia di Adamo nel Liber Graduum (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 232)*, Rome 1989; G. A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination*. Louisville, 2001, and R. A. Kitchen, *Syriac Additions to Anderson: The Garden of Eden in the Book of Steps and Philoxenus of Mabbug*, in Hugoye 6,1 (2003).

¹⁰ See Pablo Argárate, “Perfects and Perfection in the *Book of Steps*”, in Robert Kitchen– K. Heal (ed), *The Syriac Book of Steps. “The Breaking of the Mind”. Collected Essays (Catholic University of America Studies in Early Christianity)* Catholic University of America Press. Washington D.C. (2014).

one can distinguish Perfection from Uprightness, and that through the major commandments one becomes Perfect and through the minor ones Upright.”¹¹

At this juncture, the author identifies the rationale of the *LG* as teaching the fundamental discernment between both types of commandments. In fact, the major commandments constitute the topic of M2,¹² where the author rehearses a long list of exhortations taken from the New Testament, mostly from the Gospel, and especially from the Sermon on the Mount/Plain. Curiously, among these, there is no mention of love of God, but chiefly love of Christ, love among the disciples, and even to the enemies. In addition, it is worth noting that in the *LG* the major commandments do not primarily refer to the Decalogue but to the new Law proclaimed by Christ.¹³

Love to God is addressed in a general sense,¹⁴ referred as one of “the great commandments in the Torah”, on account of their object. These are even called “the two great commandments of love,”¹⁵ which are at the same time

¹¹ I, 1 (7).

¹² II, 1 (13): “Now let us expound the major commandments, through which a person is made Perfect; that is to say, those commandments that were given by our Lord and his apostles to the Perfect, and distinguish them from the 'vegetables and milk'.”

¹³ And also by the apostles. II, 1 (13).

¹⁴ VII, 13 (74): “Then, let us deeply love our God and love and honor every person so that we may inherit the kingdom”; 79: human persons “should treat one another well and love their Creator”

¹⁵ IX, 3 (90): “Sometimes the Lord cast them down even below Uprightness, [the stage] that fulfills these two great commandments of love, because Uprightness does not curse or harm anyone.”

one.¹⁶ One ought to point out here the variations in the rendering of these commandments. Traditionally couched as “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your strength and with all your soul and with all your mind”,¹⁷ following the biblical text, it also appears as: ‘Love the Lord your God more than yourself and your neighbour as yourself.’¹⁸ In addition, this love to God is required to be deep and “with everything you have”,¹⁹ even loving “God more than yourself”.²⁰

Nevertheless, this love to God does not appear usually without reference to the *love to the neighbours*.²¹ These are interpreted in a broad sense and entail “all people” or, expressed in another way, “all descendants of Adam”.²² It is this love to all fellow humans, which takes the central position in the *LG*. The quest for perfection, is thus deeply linked to love, more than to ascetical renunciation.

¹⁶ XI, 1 (113) “When the Law says, ‘Love the Lord your God more than yourself and your neighbor as you’ you should say, ‘This commandment is mine’.”

¹⁷ XXX, 26 (360).

¹⁸ XI, 1 (113).

¹⁹ Instead of “with all your soul”.

²⁰ XXII, 23 (270-271): Know this, my friends, that all the beauty of the virtuous commandments, which you find in the Law or in the prophets, that is their sense, these commandments, which are called *iota* as our Lord said, “You shall love the Lord God and the people who are all descendants of Adam, who are your neighbors, relatives, and family.” Therefore let us fulfill the Gospel and the *Iota*, which are one testament by which people conduct themselves in a new way.”

²¹ XXX 26 (360): “and love your neighbour as yourself.”

²² XXII, 23 (271).

Turning our attention to the *biblical realm*, the *text* underlying the *LG* is in first place the Diatessaron,²³ while the Pauline corpus appears to be based on a pre-Peshitta form. Besides the canonical books we find reference to Sirach, the Acts of Thekla, the Didache, the Shepherd of Hermas and the Gospel of Thomas.

A basic feature of the *LG* can be seen in its *strong biblical approach*.²⁴ Although it is not primarily an exegetical work, it is full with more than 1,200 quotations from the Bible.²⁵ In addition to this there are countless

²³ A. Rücker, *Die Zitate aus dem Matthäusevangelium im syrischen "Buche der Stufen"*, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 20 (1932), 342-354.

²⁴ In this way states Kitchen: "Virtually all his illustrations and allusions are biblical – with the exception of Memra Six...". *The Book of Steps. The Syriac Liber Graduum*. Translated, with an Introduction and Notes by Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F. G. Parmentier. Kalamazoo, Michigan, 2004, lxiii. On the general biblical preaching in Syria, see Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church*. Bd. 2: *The Patristic Age*. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1998, 247-295. Also L. Wickham, *Teaching about God and Christ in the Liber Graduum*, 487: "The work is certainly learned in its scriptural exegeses and wealth of biblical quotations especially from the gospels and the Pauline corpus inclusive of Hebrews (without Revelation, 2 Peter, Jude and the small Johannines, though James is not cited either)".

²⁵ See Matthias Westerhoff, *Zur Paulus-Rezeption im Liber Graduum*, 254: "Der *LG* entfaltet keinen Gedanken ohne Berufung auf die Heilige Schrift und hier insbesondere auf 'alles was unser Herr und er Apostel (...) ihren Jüngern befohlen haben' (5,5 [108]). Die Herrenworte entstammen der Bergpredigt und der Spruchtradition der Synoptiker insgesamt, weniger dem Johannesevangelium".

allusions and ultimately the whole horizon of thought of the work is biblical.

The exegesis of the *LG* is the subject of several studies. Here we have to mention the studies by Louf,²⁶ Strothmann,²⁷ Kowalski,²⁸ Juhl,²⁹ Bettiole³⁰ and Kitchen.³¹ The attention of scholars, as is particularly the case with Kowalski, focuses on the first three chapters of Genesis, namely the state before and after the Fall. Additionally, Corbett believes to have found in "call for a holy war" of Deuteronomy the basic symbolic structure, upon which is the

²⁶ A. Louf, *Une ancienne exégèse de Phil. 2, 6 dans le K^otaba d'Masqata (Livre des degrés)*, in *Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicis*, AB 17-18, Rom 1963, II, 523-533.

²⁷ W. Strothmann, *Jesus-Sirach-Zitate bei Afrahat, Ephraem und im Liber Graduum*, in R.H. Fischer (ed) *A Tribute to A. Vööbus. Studies in early Christian literature and its environment, primarily in the Syrian East*, Chicago, 1977, 153-158.

²⁸ A. Kowalski, *Perfezione e Giustizia di Adamo nel Liber Graduum (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 232)*, Rome 1989, 183-200.

²⁹ D. Juhl, *Die Askese im Liber Graduum und bei Afrahat. Eine vergleichende Studie zur frühsyrischen Frömmigkeit*, Wiesbaden 1996.

³⁰ P. Bettiole, *Scritture e cristianesimi nella Siria tra II e IV secolo*, in *Cristianesimo nella storia* 19,3 (1998), 479-481.

³¹ R. A. Kitchen, *Making the Imperfect Perfect: The Adaptation of Hebrews 11 in the 9th Memra of the Syriac Book of Steps*, in In: L. DiTommaso und L. Turcescu, (ed), *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity. Proceedings of the Montréal Colloquium in Honour of Charles Kannengiesser, 11-13 October 2006 (The Bible in Ancient Christianity)*, Leiden, Brill, 2008, 227-251.

LG based.³² However, despite this structural significance, the biblical main reference is, in my opinion, to be placed in the Sermon on the Mount, as I will discuss below.

In dealing with the Bible the LG shows a *double attitude*. On the one hand, one may say that the LG is faithful to the integrity of the biblical story, being insofar in line with the Antiochene exegesis.³³ On the other hand, however, a certain "targumic" freedom from the text cannot be overlooked.³⁴ In this regard we can see a certain *eisegesis*³⁵ that functions as a legitimization of the institution of the Upright and Perfect.³⁶ In this context, we have to see M9 and

³² J. Corbett, *They Do not Take Wives, or build, or Work the Ground: Ascetic Life in the Early Syriac Church*, in *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 3 (2003) 16-17: "Semeio-structural analysis will clearly demonstrate how the Call to Holy War (with its associated themes of standing up, ascetic warfare, fasting and the single life—together, of course with the messianic banquet and the bridal chamber) generates the fundamental symbolic structure underlying the complex text of the Book of Steps".

³³ Cf. R. Kitchen "Slouching Towards Antioch: Biblical Exposition in the Syriac Book of Steps," in R. D. Miller (ed), *Syriac and Antiochian Biblical Interpretation for the 3rd Millennium*, Piscataway, NJ, 2008, 29.

³⁴ Cf. A. Kowalski, *Perfezione e Giustizia*, 192: "Come abbiamo già osservato a proposito dell'AT, nel LG la Scrittura, pur conservando tratti facilmente riconoscibili della tradizione testuale siriana, viene trattata in un modo abbastanza libero, parafrastico, si potrebbe dire 'targumico'".

³⁵ *The Book of Steps. The Syriac Liber Graduum*, lxiv.

³⁶ See P. Nagel, *Die "Märtyrer des Glaubens" und die "Märtyrer der Liebe"*, in B. Köhler (ed) *Religion und Wahrheit. Religionsgeschichtliche Studien. F.S. Gernot Wießner zum 65. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden, 1998, 129: "Aus diesem hermeneutischen Ansatz [d.h. der Unterscheidung zwischen

M19. While the former presents a real catena of texts, it is the important M19, which has given the title of the whole work.

Mēmrā XIX

Mēmrā 19 is the longest of the entire *LG*. Its significance is not only given by its contents that I will later analyze but also by its reference to steps and ascent that eventually made from this anonymous work the “Book of Steps.”

Although it is quite challenging to provide a general structure and organization of our book it is clear that the first *mēmrē* offer a first approach. As already exposed, M1 has the title of “*On the distinction between the major commandments, for the perfect, and the minor commandments, for the upright.*” Indeed, this serves not only as a description of the first M, but constitutes meanwhile a programmatic presentation of the entire book. From the very beginning, the author establishes a clear distinction within the community at which he is addressing his work. Perfect and upright are served by different classes of commandments, i.e. major and minor. In other words, it is through these different commandments, that one attains either of these states. To a great extent, the entire message of the *LG* is summarized here. On the basis of this fundamental distinction, the *LG* will address either this or another group (or even some other³⁷). In this vein, M2 addresses those who

kleinen und großen Geboten] resultiert eine Zwei-Stufen-Lehre: die erste Gruppe der Gebote gilt, den Gerechten’, die zweite den, Vollkommenen’. Alle weiteren Unterscheidungen sind diesem Grundsatz untergeordnet oder erscheinen als dessen Folge.”

³⁷ See particularly XXX.

wish to be perfect. M3 establishes another distinction based on the prior one between physical and spiritual ministry. In fact, it reflects that distinction of M1, this time from another perspective. M 4-7 focuses on those who have not attained perfection. M4 and M5 are to great measure parallel since based upon Pauline imagery they refer to the sick and infant, who are fed by vegetables and milk. M7 following upon this, deals finally with the commandments for the upright. From the very outset, it is clear that the *LG* proposes different categories of Christians and provides for that a biblical support, i.e. the diverse commandments. At the end of M7, among many other passages, this is clearly stated: “God desires that all people should live. For this [reason], he gave major and minor commandments so that all might endeavor according to their strength. With the major ones, one becomes perfect and with the minor ones, one becomes an Upright one.”³⁸

It is this discernment, which constitutes content and title (“On the Discernment of the Way of Perfection”) of our M19. In addition to this, we discover here the emergence of another key concept: “way”.

This *mēm̄rā* is *structured* in the following way: After a relatively short introduction on the distinction between road and paths (paragraphs 1-8), the bulk of the chapter (paragraphs 9-34) provides a highly-significant contraposition of biblical passages drawn almost exclusively from the New Testament. As it has been done in prior *mēm̄rē*, this contraposition aims at presenting the core of the biblical message. In effect, 25 (24) sets of relatively short biblical texts.³⁹ While the road is almost exclusively

³⁸ VII, 21 (80).

³⁹ In some cases, several passages appear convoluted.

designed as “the road of perfection”⁴⁰, the other element of the contraposition is “the path(s) that deviate from that road.” The superiority of the road over the paths is apparent. This is why the author of the *LG* feels obliged to briefly explain why the minor commandments or paths have been promulgated. In the conclusion (paragraphs 35-40), the author back to the introduction by underscoring again the superiority and in the meantime the necessity of undertaking the road, while stating the temporal character of the paths.

Relevant for our present study, is the *use of biblical texts* within the *mēm̄rā*. With the only exception of two Old Testament passages, interestingly situated at the beginning and end of the lists, all the other texts proceed from the New Testament, chiefly the Synoptics (no reference to John) and the Pauline letters (included Hebrews) and only one mention of the book of Acts. Besides this concentration upon the New Testament, we can observe the *centrality of some passages* that come again on different occasions as it is especially the case of Phil 2:3: “Consider every person better than yourself.”⁴¹

⁴⁰ On two occasions in different order the adjective “straight” is added to this description. XIX,17 (194): “straight and Perfect road”; XIX,20 (195): “Perfect and straight road”.

⁴¹ Also in II, 6 (18); V, 2 (46).4 (48).11 (53); VIII, 5 (85); XI,4 (116).5 (117); XIX,9 (191); XXX,14 (352). There are, however, some variants in the rendering of the text. For instance V,11 (53) is: “Regard your neighbor better than yourself”; XI,4 (116): “Consider your brother better than yourself”; XI,5 (117): “Think of him as better than you”, or even XXX,14 (352), in an expanded way and in plural: “Take up the illness of the sick and consider everyone as better than yourselves.”

I have already pointed out the significance of the concept of road, which is opposed to the multiple paths. It was also stated that this couple is connected to the one that distinguishes between major and minor commandments. The Road of Perfection is the one of the so-called major commandments, while the paths are the minor ones.

First of all, we have to begin by stating that the *distinction between road and paths* has no biblical basis. On the contrary, both concepts appear usually in parallel, mainly in Isaiah (2:3; 26:7; 30:11; 40:3; 43:16) but also in the Synoptics in reference to John the Baptist and the Messiah (for instance Mt 3:3 that quotes Isa 40:3⁴²). Especially interesting is Isa 2:3: “And many people will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Its relevance is due not only by the reference to road and paths and having both in plural, but also because of the image of the “mountain of the Lord.” This text is, nevertheless, never alluded in the *LG* nor are the concepts of road and paths opposed. On the contrary, they appear to be a parallel expression. Lastly, another couple comes here referring, also in parallel, the eschatological revelation of God by his law/will. In any case, significant for us is here that the author of the *LG* cannot refer to Scriptures as support for his distinction between road and paths.

In ancient culture (biblical and extra-biblical), the *images of road and of path* are very well known and design moral conduct and options based on personal freedom in

⁴² Here the road is rendered in singular, while path appears in plural.

shaping the own life. In the Synoptics, we have in addition the reference to the way or road “of life” (Mt 7:14), which is connected to a narrow gate. The *LG* quotes this text. However, that “life” as goal of the road is opposed to “perfection”: “But listen to what our Lord said, ‘The road that leads to life is narrow’; but how much more narrow is that [road] that leads to Perfection and to the greater glory?”⁴³ In the *LG*, therefore, there is no mention of the gate and the road leads not to life but to perfection, while the paths are said to conduct to “places of life”. Beside this, the image of *LG* is not of walking but mainly of ascending a steep road on a mountain that leads to the “city of the saints”. To some extent it could be drawn into parallel with Moses ascent, however with different nuances. Gregory of Nyssa’s *Vita Moysis* moves in this direction. Perhaps closer is the later 7th century *Scala Paradisi*. Nevertheless, in *LG* there is no mention of a ladder, as it is the case of the work of John Climacus.

Regarding the *paths*, we cannot avoid noticing a certain ambiguity. Almost all the biblical passages referring to the path are introduced by stating from them that they “deviate from the straight road.” Their function is therefore clearly negative. In two passages there is, nevertheless, an attempt of reverting this to some extent by affirming that these paths are God’s will. In effect, they “are not despicable, but our Lord and his preachers made them deviate from that great road because of the infant and the sick.”⁴⁴ The same is expressed almost at the end of the *mēmṛā*: “Because of this [the infants and the ill] our Lord and his preachers prepared for them paths...”⁴⁵ In this vein,

⁴³ XIX,3 (185).

⁴⁴ XIX,2 (184).

⁴⁵ XIX,35 (205).

the paths appear to be a concession to weakness and have only a temporary value and eventually they inevitably have to lead to the road. Nevertheless, it is apparent that, in most of the cases, it is exactly the opposite what occurs and they end up preventing people from taking up the road.

The topic of the road and paths has led us – already from the very title – to the concomitant subject of the different kind of *commandments*. While the images of road and paths are mostly concentrated on M 19⁴⁶ the distinction of commandments pervade the entire *LG*.

The significance of the commandments (*mitzvuot, entolai*) in the Bible does not need to be underscored. Due to its relevance and in the meantime its number, already in the sacred texts we find the quest for finding some kind of order and hierarchy within the large number of commandments. While the Decalogue takes a crucial place in biblical revelation, this “ten words” or commandments are not in any way the unique systematization of God’s commandments. In fact, besides the key function of the ten words of the Sinai, we observe throughout the Bible, constant efforts of reducing God’s commandment to a manageable number and, in the same way, to establish, which the fundamental of all this series are. Tradition will soon regard in the *Sh^ema* the crucial mandate and in the meantime attitude of Israel towards its Lord. Love of the neighbor (Lv 19:18) will soon take a second to place to the *Sh^ema*. In this context, Jesus himself provides in Mt 22, Mk 12, Lk 10 this answer when he is asked about which of all the commandments are the most important. In this statement of Jesus, the New Testament is a witness to the ongoing question of the relevance of the commandments and its structure and

⁴⁶ And to some extent XX.

hierarchy. In other words, a distinction between many commandments needs to be established. This requires, however, certain hermeneutical criteria that ground that distinction and hierarchy.

In this sense, Jewish tradition, and as such also reflected in the New Testament, provides certain precedent and basis for the *LG*'s distinction between major and minor commandments, although without using its explicit terminology.

Within this context of systematization of the commandments, the *LG* acknowledges the key function of *Jesus Christ as the definitive interpreter of Scriptures*:

“Look, the apostle said, He made the first and last Testaments one Testament. He eliminated the law of the commandments, which were not necessary by his own commandments so that in both of these testaments of which he had made one Gospel, he might create people anew... For he took these major commandments of the Old Testament, these upon which hung the whole power of the Law and the prophets, and fixed them in the New Testament and gathered all of its power, the first and the last and placed them in a single New Testament...”⁴⁷

In the *set of 25 pairs of biblical texts*, which constitute the center of M19, major commandments can be reduced to an unlimited love that forgives and reaches sinners, the ones who hate, offend, and even murder us. This had been previously stated in M11:

⁴⁷ XIX, 7 (188).

“For a person will never rise above that [commandment], ... nor will he attain Perfection, unless he approaches that [commandment], ‘Forgive him seventy times seven’ and ‘Think of him as better than you.’ ”

Unlimited love makes the heart pure. Ascetical elements such as not possessing anything, fasting, or even not marrying, although present within the major commandments, have only the preliminary function of enabling perfect love. On the contrary, every kind of limitation refers to the minor commandments, addressed to those who are not capable so far of going beyond any boundary. In this sense, major commandments regard *the other as a mysterious presence of God that needs to be acknowledged and venerated*. Within this context, one can understand how the precept of loving “your neighbor *as yourself*” can be considered by the *LG* as being a minor commandment. In fact, the Gospel, concentrated in the Sermon of the Mount, requires as the often-quoted passage of Phil 2:3 states, considering everybody better than oneself.

When the author of the *LG* has to explain the *rationale for the minor commandments*, his answer refers almost always to a concession to the weakness and their transitory value. These commandments are provided mostly for the infant, the immature, the sick and feeble. In this sense, these minor commandments are described as *spiritual milk* to the *solid food* of the major commandments. There are few passages, however, where the minor commandments are addressed to the dissolute, the stiff-necked and corrupt⁴⁸ or the wrong-doers & offenders. Interesting to note, is that the *LG* regards the leaders and rulers of the community as incapable of perfection mainly due to their duty of judging

⁴⁸ XIX,24 (199).

and punishing the guilty ones. On this basis, as long as they carry out their duty they are not able to accomplish the unlimited love towards sinners and, by this, of attaining perfection.

Having distinguished from the very beginning major from minor commandments as a key criterion and rationale for the *LG*, and manifested the significance of the major commandments, the *LG* goes yet even beyond, by maintaining the possibility – and to some extent even the requirement – of *transcending those major commandments*. Moreover, this is explicitly linked to love.

“If one is prepared to try, it will prove possible not only to surpass the minor commandments for the sake of love, but even the major ones.”⁴⁹

This transcendence of major commandments is the special topic of M16, which deals “about how a person may surpass the major commandments in love”. And this is explained through texts drawn from the Gospels, chiefly from the Sermon on the Mount.⁵⁰ In a paradigmatic passage, the author renders even in a clearer fashion what is meant with transcending those commandments:

“Again he said to you: ‘Love your brother more than yourself. From here you shall understand what is love – whoever will put himself in the place of his friend. If my love is true for you, offer yourself in place of your brothers.’ However, if you love the evil ones, your despisers, more than yourself, you are much greater than he who [only] loves his neighbor more than himself and

⁴⁹ II, 41 (20)

⁵⁰ XVI, 388-389 (159-160). The same takes place in 393-396 (161-162)

his despiser as himself. In this way, you will greatly surpass the major commandments and be glorified with our Lord... Kiss the feet of your betrayers, and look, you will surpass one who [only] washes the feet of his betrayers.”⁵¹

This passage clearly transpires Christian maximalism, linking Perfection to love to the enemies and murderers. The Sermon on the Mount and its logic appear at the core of the *LG* rather than the Call to Holy War.⁵² Indeed, I would like to draw the attention to its usage of the first part of the section immediately following the beatitudes in Lk 6:27-28. In five places, the *LG* refers to this passage expressed by the conjunction of the three verbs, i.e. bless, love, and pray, however, with some variants. While the text of Luke presents four verbs, *LG* always omits “do good,” placing “bless” before “love,” and connecting “love” with those who “hate,” and replacing “those who abuse you” by “those who [harm and] persecute [and deals harshly with] you.”⁵³ As a result, the opposition between love and hate is stronger. In addition to this, the *LG* introduces the topic of persecution that was not explicitly present in the New Testament text⁵⁴.

⁵¹ XVI, 396 (162)

⁵² J. Corbett, *They Do not Take Wives, or build, or Work the Ground: Ascetic Life in the Early Syriac Church*, in *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 3 (2003) 16-17.

⁵³ Luke 6:27-28: "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." *NT LG* Love – enemies bless – curse Do good – hate Bless – curse love – hate Pray – abuse pray – (harm) persecute (deals harshly).

⁵⁴ Although it was somehow present as closing element in the previous Beatitudes, there is no explicit mention of persecution there. Nevertheless, this connection is made in Mt 6:43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'"

This evidently has its own purpose in addressing the persecutions taking place in the community⁵⁵. In the highly significant M19, which opposes road and paths, the author holds:

“The Perfect road is this, ‘Bless him who curses you and love him who hates you, and pray for whomever harms you and persecutes you.’”⁵⁶

The relevance of this passage lies in identifying these three attitudes with the perfect road, i.e. with Perfection. In some other places, alongside the above-mentioned three verbs, forgiveness appears as well.⁵⁷ Another significant passage in the same *mēmṛā*, conflating texts from Matthew and Luke, states in an even more persuasive fashion:

⁵⁵ See S. Abouzayd, *Violence and Killing in the Liber Graduum*, in *Aram* 11-12 (1999-2000), 451-465 and R. A. Kitchen, *Conflict on the Stairway to Heaven. The Anonymity of Perfection in the Syriac Liber Graduum*, in R. Lavenant (ed), *Symposium Syriacum VII (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 256)*, Rome, 1998, 211-220.

⁵⁶ XIX, 12 (192). See also II, 2 (14): “Love him who hates you, bless him who curses you, pray for the one who harms you and persecutes you” and XXX, 2 (341): “Bless whoever curses you and love whoever hates you, and pray for whoever persecutes you and deals harshly with you. Have in your mind to become like lambs for the slaughter, just as it is written, ‘Because of you, our Lord, we die every day and have become like sheep for the slaughter.’”

⁵⁷ XVII, 7 (173): “These and such like them are the sufferings: If you bless whoever curses you and love whoever hates you and pray for whoever persecutes you and forgive whoever does you wrong seventy times seven in one day, all this because our Lord said, ‘Never be angry against one who sins against you.’”

“This is the Perfect road: If you love only the one who loves you and you greet only your brothers, what is your righteousness? Because even tax-collectors, heathen and sinners act in this way. But love whoever hates you and persecutes you, and your peace will increase toward the good and the evil, and you shall be imitating the Father in heaven who makes his sun rise⁵⁸ and his rain fall upon them equally.”⁵⁹

Conclusions

The *LG* interprets the Bible against this background of the fundamental distinction between major and minor commandments – already present in the title of M1 –, which provides the key instrument for presenting the different ways of perfection and uprightness, under the images of the road and the paths. It is not clear that this constitutes, as Kitchen has suggested, a presupposed agenda in interpreting the biblical texts.

Although to some extent the *LG* is moving in the direction of the later Antiochene School there is no full identification, first of all since the *LG* precedes it. Its analysis while fully respecting text and context turns often into *eisegesis* and reading into the texts its main intuitions, i.e. the distinction between perfection and uprightness.

The Syriac *Liber Graduum* is to be situated rather in the history of reception and interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. Within this context, it remains almost unparalleled in reflecting Jesus’ uncompromised maximalism and radicalism.

⁵⁸ Instead of Kitchen’s “shine”.

⁵⁹ XIX, 508-509 (204).

“Therefore, when we have climbed these steps and have rooted up sin and its fruits from the heart, then we will be filled with the Spirit, the Paraclete, and our Lord will dwell in us completely. We will eat freely from that tree of life that is our Lord, from which we were deprived by the transgression of the commandments; and then, we will be able to love and be merciful to all people, even our murderers, and be able to pray with love for all people and for our murderers. When we [are able to have] mercy upon and love everyone in this way, including our murderers, our heart being pure, then we will increase in Perfection and live according to that great, acceptable, and perfect will of our Lord.”⁶⁰

The *LG* acknowledges therefore the centrality of scriptures in the life of the life of Christian communities. It is these scriptures that shape the community. In doing this, the author of the *LG* seeks in the meantime for the center of scriptures, of divine revelation, and finds this in Jesus’ message of universal and unlimited love. This is the deepest revelation of the mystery of God, of the Father’s heart and will. The radicality of that message is not watered down in the *LG*’s understanding of perfection. This cannot be reduced to asceticism or even to mysticism, but requires a dynamism that goes beyond any limitation.

Perfected and Perfection in the *LG* require indeed an extreme asceticism⁶¹ that entails full renunciation of the world in all its forms. Nevertheless, goal of this tremendous asceticism is having received the Spirit, the configuration with the humble and suffering Christ and his all-embracing

⁶⁰ XX,7 (216).

⁶¹ For asceticism in the *LG* see R. A. Kitchen, *Becoming Perfect: The Maturing of Asceticism in the Liber Graduum*, in *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 2 (2002), 30-43 and D. Juhl, *Die Askese im Liber Graduum und bei Afrahat*.

love.⁶² In this *imitation Christi*, we become servants not only of the good but especially of the evil ones, the enemies, and even their own murderers,⁶³ Perfects are called not only to imitate Christ, but also, in doing so, to an *imitatio Patris*, by reflecting upon the world the deep mystery of God – like God’s sun –, the unlimited compassion of the Father, who does not distinguish between saints and sinners.⁶⁴

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⁶² See A. Guillaumont, *Le “Liber Graduum“ dans la spiritualité syriaque*, 313: “Les vertus du parfait sont avant tout l’humilité, le pardon, la douceur. Il s’applique à faire la paix parmi les hommes, à les enseigner avec humilité, à les corriger s’il le faut, mais en s’abstenant de les juger: aussi bien il s’estime inférieur à tous les hommes, bons ou pécheurs”.

⁶³ P. Argárate, “Das *Ktābā dmasqātā*. Forschung und Bedeutung des syrischen Liber Graduum”, 257: “Aus den 30 Mēmēreresultiert ein faszinierendes Bild einer asketisch charismatisch geprägten Gemeinde. Mitten in den verschiedenen und sogar komplexen Verfolgungen werden die Christen aufgerufen, ihren leidenden, armen und gedemütigten Herrn nachzuahmen. Auf diesem Weg werden sie durch die steigende Präsenz und Wirksamkeit des Geistes zu einer mystique pneumatique bewegt. Ziel des Weges ist die Stadt Gottes, der Garten von Eden, die Wiedererlangung des verlorenen Paradieses”.

⁶⁴ Cf. Mat.52:45.

JOHN THE SOLITARY
(Letter to Hesychius)

Live in concord with your brethren, for you are a source of tranquility in the monastery. The interior labour is sufficient for you: choose vigilance, even in preference to fasting, for vigilance makes the understanding luminous, it keeps the intellect awake, it makes the body still, it is more beneficial than all other labours. Nevertheless those who labour in fasting are also in converse with the Lord, and fasting chases away cravings, ensuring that they do not become enslaved to sin.

Pay attention to the reading of the words of Scripture, in order to learn from them how to be with God. Do not choose for yourself just standing in prayer and neglect reading, for it is not required of you that just your body should be at labour, while your mind is idle. Intersperse your way of life with various kinds of occupations a time for reading, a time for prayer. In this way you will be illumined in prayer as a result of your reading. For the Lord of all does not require of us an outward stance, but a mind that is wise in its hope for him, and which knows how to draw close to perfection.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, p. 87)

Charis Vleugels

READING MAZMŪRE AND MĀDRAŠĒ: A CROSS-POLLINATION BETWEEN PSALM(79/80) AND EPHREM THE SYRIAN'S HYMN ON FAITH 12

The Old Testament Psalms have a long tradition in the liturgy of the Church. They must have played an important role in Ephrem the Syrian's formation as well. Reading the Psalms next to his *Madrashe* gives the impression from time to time that there are connections which can help to understand both these Psalms and these hymns more deeply. The ancient songs inspired the poet-theologian to integrate them in his hymns (or 'teaching songs') for the instruction of his fellow believers.

In one hymn (HdNat 26:6), the poet allows a glimpse in his mind: in an ode to Christ's birth involving every day of creation, he urges:

Let the third day weave a wreath of Psalms (مَآذِنًا) in Hymns (مَآذِنًا), and offer it in one voice for the birth of Him who made flowers and blossoms grow on the third day.

This probably is more than a stylistic phrase. If the teacher desires a specific style, this style is to be expected in his own writings as well. As a master of art, the poet must have left many multilayered examples for his pupils to follow. In that case one may find beads of psalm verses throughout the strings of Ephrem's teaching songs.

This article is conceived as a case study on the interrelation between both collections of songs and attempts to be part of broader future research exploring the Psalms in Ephrem's writings. Almost nothing has been attempted in this field before.¹ More research in this area could help to attain deeper insight in the role of the Psalms in the early

1 After the presentation of this initial comparative study at SEERI for the eighth World Syriac Conference (from 8 – 13 September 2014), I finally found one similar article, also comparing a hymn of Ephrem with a Psalm of Asaf: Carmen Fotescu Tauwinkl, "The Dialogue of Spiritual Texts or Intertextuality as a Strategy of Conveying a Mystical Message: A Hermeneutical Key to Ephrem the Syrian's *Hymnus de Fide* 10 and Its Dialogue with *Psalm* 80/81," *Caietele Institutului Catholic* VII (2008, 1), 79-101. <http://caiete.ftcub.ro/2008/Caiete%202008-1%20Fotescu.pdf> For other studies researching how the Psalms occur in Ephrem's writings, please inform the present author at charisvleugels@hotmail.com.

Syriac Church as well as to throw a new light on both hymn collections and their interpretation.

The present article explores Psalm 80 and the 12th Hymn on Faith. Could Ephrem have written this hymn as a conscious answer to the Psalm? Or was his thought so permeated by the Psalms that he just had to make a reference here and an allusion there? How far reaches the influence of Psalm 80 on this particular teaching song? The first part will focus on the older biblical text. Moving on with the time, the second and main part tracks to what extent Ephrem made use of these ancient verse lines in a fourth century setting. Naturally, this methodology paves the way for the interpretation of Ephrem's highly symbolical hymn.

Part 1: Psalm 80 – A Song of Despair

Psalm 80 is a song of Asaf,² a desperate prayer directed to God for salvation and restoration. What stands

2 See 1 Chron. 6:16-17,24. 1 Chron. 6:1,18,24,28-29 and 33, together with 2 Chron. 35:15 show that David appointed Asaf to be a conductor to lead his family in song before the tent of the covenant, which was continued later in the temple. The Psalm sounds as if written after the destruction of the temple (even more when read after Psalm 79), written by a descendent of Asaf. Or would it be prophetically written by Asaf himself, as H.J. Koorevaar suggests (personal email of September 1st 2014)? In that case, the psalm acts like the song of Moses in Deut. 32 as a prophetic warning for future generations. That would explain why Asaf is called 'a seer' in 2 Chron. 29:30. However it be, the perspective of the Psalm is that of exile and downfall with the remembrance of a period of prosperity and bloom.

out in this Psalm, is the culmination of supplications and lament, a cry of distress beseeching God to come, to return to his people and to save what is his own: “Listen! - Make yourself known! - Show your might and come to save us! - Restore us! - How long? - Why? - Return! - Look down from heaven and see! - Give us life!” The refrain of the song expresses the heart of the prayer (verse 4 and 8): “Powerful God, make us return! Let your face shine, that we may be saved.”³

In the core of the Psalm which follows the second refrain, Asaf remembers by means of a poem how God brought His people out of Egypt like a vine, how He watched and planted it, and thus assisted it to grow and flourish to mighty heights. The leaves of this vine overshadowed the mighty cedars and its branches reached from the sea in the West to the Euphrates⁴ inland (verse 9-12). The blessing of his people was obvious.

3 ܕܠܗܘܐ ܫܘܒܘܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ The Syriac Psalm-texts are from the Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon, the Peshitta according to the Leiden critical edition (<http://call.cn.huc.edu/>), reworked in Serto. The translations are of my hand.

4 The Hebrew text just reads ܢܗܪܝܢ (river), which modern translations sometimes specify as “the Euphrates,” or insinuate by reading “the River” with a capital. The plural of the Peshitta, apparently denoting the Euphrates and the Tigris, confirms this interpretation. This verse is reminiscent of Gods promise of the land to Moses and Joshua – from the river to the sea – where the river *is* specified as the Euphrates (Deut. 11:24; Josh. 1:4).

The anticlimax is all the more sudden (verse 13-18):

Why have You broken down its wall, so that all who pass along the way trample it? The boar from the forest eats it, and the wild animals feed it off. Powerful God, return! Look down from heaven, and see, and care for this vine, the shoot that your right hand planted and the son you have exalted⁵ for yourself. He burnt its sprigs in the fire⁶ – they will perish at the rebuke of your countenance!⁷ Let your right hand rest on the man and on the son of man You have exalted⁸ for yourself!

The poet, in sackcloth and ashes, urges God to remember his own and to turn their fate.

He speaks for the people as a whole: they pledge to be faithful. Let God give them life and save them (ٱلْحَيَاةِ), and they, for their part, will continue to call on his name (verse 19). The psalmist hopes fervently and pleads for the restoration of his people, for the return of God's blessing on his flock, his son, and for a renewal of the covenant.

The Psalm ends with the refrain, calling on God, calling on His name in full to suit the action to the word:

5 Or: made strong.

6 The Hebrew text has the 3rd person plural: “they burnt.”

7 Cf. Is. 5:5-6; a remarkable parallel. Mark how Aphrahat expands on the latter in his fifth Demonstration: *AphDem5.97:20* (English translation of 5:22: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf213.txt>).

8 Or: made strong.

(verse 20) *LORD*, powerful God, make us return! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!⁹

This brief introduction to Psalm 80 paves the way for an exploration of Ephrem's 12th Hymn on Faith. That will raise the recurring question as to how much of terminology and ideas from this ancient prayer of despair inspired him in his 4th century composition.

Hymn on Faith 12 – A Song of Dependence

Just like the 20 verses of Psalm 80, if you count the heading as in the Hebrew text, this hymn has 20 strophes. Only in the eighth strophe, the first and only clear reference to the Psalm appears. It is the only strophe with an *obvious* overlap. Besides some allusions throughout the poem, what is especially striking is the overall atmosphere of Ephrem's writing, compared to the atmosphere of the Psalm.

The first strophe sets the tone and serves as an introduction to the song as a whole.

9 كَلِّمْنَا سَيِّدَنَا أَهْلًا. ٱلْهَيْبَةُ ٱلْقَدِيمَةُ ٱلْقَدِيمَةُ. ٱلْقَدِيمَةُ ٱلْقَدِيمَةُ. In the Hebrew BHS the refrain builds up even more gradually in its supplication to God: from אֱלֹהִים in v. 4, via אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת in verse 8 to the culmination of אֱלֹהִים צְבָאוֹת הַיְהוָה in verse 20.

Season our minds with Your salt, the truth.¹⁰

↓
May we¹¹ produce fruits, tasty to those who eat them.

→
Unite¹² (in our minds) knowledge and taste with
contemplation ↓
and may we give these to the infant ear.

→

10 Andrew Palmer: “Yours [i.e. your salt] is the true salt – season our minds with it!” (Personal conversation, 2nd August 2014) It indeed looks like two phrases in one line, just like the beginning of strophe 2. The present translation is chosen for readability.

11 Literally “it,” meaning either the salt (< truth) or our minds. The present translation reflects the latter.

12 For the pael of ܘܥܠܘܢܐ to mean “unite,” see for example HdF 41:6: “It pleased Him to reveal His nature, how He is; It pleased Him to become small and to bow down; to show Himself to us and to unite His Son with us (ܘܥܠܘܢܐ ܘܥܠܘܢܐ); and to join His Spirit to us (ܘܥܠܘܢܐ ܘܥܠܘܢܐ) and to show His love to us.”

See also Lucas van Rompay, “Mallpânâ dilan suryâyâ: Ephrem in the works of Philoxenus of Mabbog,” *Hugoye* 7.1 (2004): 97. In the context of the two natures of Christ, Philoxenus explains that Ephrem's choice for the word ܘܥܠܘܢܐ, usually translated as “He mingled” should be understood as “He united.” <http://bethmardutho.org/index.php/hugoye/volume-index/158.html>

strophe:

ܡܕܕܟܝܢܐ maddek – ܬܬܠܬܐ tettel – ܡܙܙܥܓܐ mazzeg – ܬܬܠܬܐ
tettel

Season – may [our mind/we] give – mingle – may [our
mind/we] give

This parallelistic wordplay exclaims once more how our mind should be seasoned and instructed before we pass on the truth, with a prayer that the fruits which are passed on will give a tasty experience for the audience as opposed to unsuitable teaching.

Similar to the psalmist, Ephrem prays in first person plural, as such including his supposed audience of fellow teachers. He wants all of them to be attuned to God's inspiring truth, and be receptive of the teaching that He handed down to us. Once the attitude towards God is right, Ephrem seeks to serve his fellow humans with this God-given truth. He expresses his hope that he and his teaching audience may bear fruit for those who want to accept their words (let's say: the second or indirect audience). He prays that the seasoning they received themselves may be multiplied as tasty fruits around them, horizontally. If God seasons his followers with his instruction (↓), like He seasoned the prophets¹⁴ and the apostles before, his pupils can embody his salt/truth in their environment (→),¹⁵ which

14 Cf. HdNat 1:86 “Today [i.e. at the birth of Jesus] the sweet salt of the prophets is spread out among the peoples so that we acquire a new taste by which the former people lost flavour.”

15 Cf. Mt. 5:13 and also HdF 2:3: “Blessed is he who became, Lord, the salt – which is the truth (ܡܫܠܬܐ, ܡܫܠܬܐ) – in this

implies a holistic, exemplary teaching in word and deed.

After this introduction, Ephrem wants to gather his fellow teachers in a humble openness to refinement and correction. They feel the need to check whether everything they are about to pass on to others, actually conforms to God's measures.

2. Look, Your crucible is ready. Let each one of us bring↑
whichever metal and teaching he mints and teaches!¹⁶
May Your crucible expose it, if it is a counterfeit which
is clothed
in the likeness and outward appearance of the truth! X

3. Your balance hangs ready. Let us weigh our
deliberations with You; ↑
Let Your will be the counterweight to strike a balance
with all our desires.
And if our desire is of much less value than Yours,
perfect it in Your generosity. +

This hymn is full of symbols. Every image in daily life refers to God's divine truth and helps to understand his ways.¹⁷ The image of the crucible evokes a picture of

generation and whose faith (الْمُؤْمِنِينَ) did not lose flavour among the flavourless who inquire into You!"

16 As Andrew Palmer pointed out in a conversation (2nd of August, 2014), in these first two strophes three word pairs appear which combine each a metaphor with an explanation: knowledge and taste; metal and teaching; to mint and to teach.

17 Cf. HdVir. 8:2-4.

refining silver and gold in fire, which since long denotes being tested.¹⁸ Ephrem lived in a difficult and turbulent time. He and his contemporaries have not been saved from war, exile, sickness and contentions.¹⁹ The poet could refer to these trials and the human response to them with his metaphor of the crucible. In face of opposition, the true disposition of a person comes to the front, showing in his actions. These situations may function as a divine means of testing, revealing the truth beneath the surface of words.²⁰

In the context of this hymn, however, the furnace could also be interpreted as the Scriptures. As we will see throughout this teaching song, Ephrem refers to biblical passages and imagery time and again, as a range of examples how to be purged in the furnace of the divine word. In HdF 44:1, the Scriptures are explicitly called “our furnace,” and the poet-teacher urges his audience to approach them accordingly so that true teaching may be revealed. Also HdF 48:1-5 exclaims that “we are not a furnace ourselves,” but that human beings need the God-given lamps of nature and

18 Cf. eg. Prov. 17:3; Is. 48:10.

19 For example, the various attempts of the Persian king Shapur II to besiege the city of Nisibis where Ephrem lived, then the rule of the pagan emperor Julian, followed by the surrender of the city and the expulsion of the Christian inhabitants. Add to this the Arian controversy, all the more painful since it caused severe contentions *inside* the Church. Ephrem refers to all these difficulties in his own writings—in his *Hymns on Faith* mostly to the Arian controversy.

20 Cf. HdVir 44:10-11, in the context of Christ addressing Jonah about his attitude: “The trying furnace of the name is the deed. In it is tested whether the name is the truth. For there is fruit which looks most shiny, but has a taste contrary to its beauty.”

Scripture to help them in distinguishing the truth. The latter teaching song emphasizes too that man needs to be open to God's instruction through his beloved Son, otherwise he will never reach true understanding of God and his ways.²¹

Hymn on Faith 11:18-20, arranged just before the present hymn, similarly seems to suggest that the crucible refers to Jesus' instruction and to the timeless challenge for Christians to respond properly; not only in words, but in deeds that testify to their stance.²² Both its allusions to the wedding banquet (Mt. 22:1-14), and its reference to the ten virgins (Mt. 25:1-13), as well as the one to the narrow gate (Mt. 7:13-14), accentuate that human beings can only approach God and his truth on his terms – they have to strip themselves of their own conditions and baggage and be open and receptive for the seal of his truth acquired through the crucible (↑).²³ This divine crucible which is met through the

21 Cf. HdVir 31:10, where Christ himself is personified as a testing furnace of the truth. The strophe ends with a blessing as a means to urge the listeners to judge themselves by Him.

22 “Your banquet thirsts for invitees without end; / Your marriage supper rejoices in guests – and in their robes; / Your bridal chamber longs for virgins / whose lamps are rich with oil. // Many who are called yearn for Your gate, / but, because Your gate is very narrow, there are few / who stripped off and rejected everything / and were able to enter it, for it hates possessions. // Your crucible delights in us, for we will be perfected by the trial / and become truthful through the test. / While its seal is formed, Lord, let this seal of Your truth / be imprinted on our words and on our mind!” (HdF 11:18-20)

23 All three specified passages end with a warning which highlights once more this human disability to approach God on their own terms: “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few” (Mt. 7:14);

Scriptures will correct Jesus' followers (X).²⁴ It is through engagement with God's words that the seal of his truth will be formed and imprinted on the disciples' words and mind. Accordingly, what they say and think becomes permeated with his words and vision and as a matter of fact should show forth in their lives. This crucible will expose what is true and lasting and divinely inspired,²⁵ and what is just an appearance of this truth and thus needs refinement and correction.

The following strophe (3) with the symbol of the balance has a parallel structure and interpretation, but it does add two considerable aspects. First, the picture of the balance reminds one quite vividly that the counterweight of God's measures will be difficult to live up to. But then, in the suspense of the last line, and with the heat of the furnace still close at hand, one may ask for the addition of the warmth

“For many are called, but few are chosen” (Mt. 22:14); “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour” (Mt. 25:13).

24 Cf. HdF 53:5 “And because He is the God of truth who does not err / and also does not make man err, for He is good and just, / (for how many times did He make us chaste by his teaching?) / and by means of his true ones shows the way without error, / He even put a curse on whoever causes the blind to err on [his] way.” (Deut. 27:18)

25 As an example, see also HdF 33:1-2 where Ephrem urges not to make our own image of Christ, but to be content with the truth which the Spirit revealed through the witness of – in this example – John. “We shall not dare to depict anything foreign to You. / Our hearts, minds and thoughts are stamped (نُطْبِئُ) / with the appearance the Spirit fashioned (صَوَّرَ) for us through John.”

and weight of God's mercy. When a person opens himself to the Most High (↑), he can also plead for a divine perfection of his own lack, counting on God's generosity to restore the balance of the scales (+).

How can this text be compared with Psalm 80? Both songs reflect a time of difficulties and trials. In the Psalm, this is experienced as a disaster: God burnt the vine's sprigs in the fire and they will perish at his rebuke (v. 17)! In the teaching song, however, the image of the furnace highlights the trial as an opportunity to grow. Both songs reflect on God engaging with his people. But in the Psalm, the trials cause a feeling of desolation, whereas in the teaching song they are experienced as a means to be purified and perfected. While Psalm 80 focuses on God who needs to hear and act on their behalf, and sounds (almost) like an accusation, this hymn starts with a humble search for the right human attitude, with a readiness of the reciters to be accused and corrected themselves.

Now, the focus of Ephrem's hymn lingers on God and his goodness or grace, as well as his justice: **لِيُخَدِّدُوا هُوَ جَانِبُهُ**.

4. The scales of Your balance are grace and justice
and how and when they agree – You know it!
While they do not match, still they do,
for they are not discordant with the One Lord of all.

تَقَالُ وَيَصْفَا بَرُّهُمُ جَالٌ هَجَانُهُ
 هَاجِبٌ هَاجِبٌ مُقْتَدِرٌ أَيُّهَا هَاجِبٌ
 كِبْرٌ لُ هَقَّةٌ هَقَّةٌ هَقَّةٌ
 كِبْرٌ جَلِيحٌ حَلٌّ سَبٌّ مُدَارٌ كِبْرٌ

5. Your balance shepherds the slight who are small,
 and also the average, with weights²⁶ comparable to
 them,
 a full measure for the mature ones,
 and also a merciful weight for the seekers.

The fourth strophe sounds like a gentle but firm reprimand towards those who doubt God's fairness in judging them. Even if it does not always seem likely, the poet acknowledges God's justice and goodness. His justice requires an equal balance. His grace even reaches out to us and provides a counterweight according to the personal needs. While this surpasses the human understanding, it invites into an ode towards the merciful God to express wonder and thankfulness.

26 Beck does not indicate this, but Ms B clearly shows a seyame for both *هَجَانُهُ* and *هَاجِبٌ*. Ms C shows the same, albeit less clearly in the damaged text. This reading makes the strophe more uniform and understandable. Cod. Vat. Sir. 111, f 58v, http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.111/0108/scroll?sid=d2e8c2398a2b88b53e777a709b6587c9, downloaded on the 6th of June, 2015. Ms Cod. Vat. Sir. 113, f 37r, http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.113/0005/scroll?sid=404bb09d85302e0d23ed14221a9cbf69, downloaded on the 9th of June, 2015.

This is the first of ten occasions within the *Hymns on Faith* where Ephrem addresses God's justice and grace in one and the same strophe. The second instance will follow in the concluding strophe of this same hymn, which accentuates the importance, Ephrem accords to these two aspects of God's character within the present chain of thoughts. To acknowledge both in awe flows naturally from the poet's experience with God and his teachings.

Looking back on Psalm 80, one realises the more that it is a song full of questions and doubts. HdF 12, on the other hand, is full of firm affirmations – no doubt about God's sovereign righteousness *and* kindness. Could this be an intended reaction of the poet after reading the Psalm?

The poet continues his ode, now extended to the theme of God longing for his children to come to his Paradise and about his provision during their life to proceed towards his kingdom.

6. Look, the bosom of your Kingdom watches for the pure;
your Paradise, Lord, watches also for the cleansed;
the table of your Kingdom waits for your twelve
that they may recline there.

Even in the time of 'harvest', in the last days, the labourers are not on their own. Any possible human contribution is overshadowed by and embedded in divine doings. Note the exact words the poet selected: **قَفَا**, **وَأَحْمَلُ**. The word **قَفَا** could be translated as bundle or sheaf in this context of harvest. But probably Ephrem uses this word on purpose after his earlier image of the balance with the two scales (12:4).³¹ In a subtle way, the poet seems to remind his audience of the scales of grace and justice, and also of the prayer to perfect the human shortcomings (12:3). A concordant translation may be necessary to mark this red thread.

Also the word **وَأَحْمَلُ** works like a flashback to the preceding part on God's kindness and righteousness: in strophe 5, a word with the same root (**أَحْمَلُ**) was used to assert that God's balance 'shepherds' or 'provides for' everyone according to his need and ability.³² Reconciliation

withholding and restraining, neglecting and teaching / so that by all these He might give Life as the Knower of all.”

31 It can mean anything hollow or curved: a scale, a censer; a handful, and accordingly in manual harvest: a bundle or sheaf. I wonder whether the translations of Beck ('Garbe') and Russell ('sheaf') were primarily led by this immediate context of the harvest, without taking into account the earlier use of **قَفَا**. Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, CSCO 155 (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1955): 42. Paul S. Russell, *Ephraem the Syrian: Eighty Hymns on Faith: translated, with notes* (to be published by Peeters, Leuven, 1995): 51.

32 Note the striking similarity of words and concepts used in HdF

is a way of providing where something essential is missing, and thus restoring peace.³³ The poet is hoping that their efforts shall be an acceptable offering to God. Meanwhile, he is very aware of the fact that human beings can do nothing on their own.³⁴ Accordingly, the text reads like a prayer and a humble acknowledgement of dependence: “Lord, gather our fruit as the farmer, and offer to your Father a reconciling scale; may this scale embedded in your provision restore the balance in spite of our lack.”

What is at the heart of Ephrem's hymn? It is that humanity is utterly dependent on the Lord's provision and reconciliation. And this leads us to the core-connection *and* -polarity between the assurance of the hymn and the longing

38, especially strophes 8 and 11. They mention a balance with two scales, farmers for the Truth, a scale/sheaf in harvest, reconciliation (but here among the various parties within the church in a context of peace as opposed to dispute and contention). The poet even brings forward a similar concept as the furnace, now personified by the Holy Spirit, 'winnowing the wheat' in purification.

33 Another passage where Ephrem quite clearly uses ܠܘܚܘܢܝܘܬܝܢ with this notion of provision is HdP 13:1: “May I say what is needed and teach what can be heard, / search what is comprehensible and reject what's [merely] prying, / ask what is suitable and say what pleases you, / what is needed and necessary, / may I receive in grace and give in gratitude, / and may, because of your grace, my offering reach your 'providing reconciliation'. (ܠܘܚܘܢܝܘܬܝܢ ܠܘܚܘܢܝܘܬܝܢ ܠܘܚܘܢܝܘܬܝܢ ܠܘܚܘܢܝܘܬܝܢ)” In other words, when Ephrem is trying to live a life pleasing to God and presents that like an offering, he asks for a graceful provision where his efforts fall short of God's standards.

34 Cf. John 15:5, where the subject of dependence is even more closely intertwined with the imagery of the vine.

of the Psalm, which makes Ephrem burst out in song, reminiscent of Asaf's poem of the vine:

8. *You* are the sprig of that vine from Egypt
which the wild boar of the wood ate.
How it did grow again! – A shoot sprouted
bearing the blessed bunch and the cup of the
medicine of Life.³⁵
9. From among the circumcised and from the land of
tares
came forth for us a scale full of new bread;
from the bitter ones a sweet fruit
and from the murderous, the Healer who heals all.
10. From a sweet root the son of David came forth
and from the thirsty earth the Source of Life flowed
for us.
How could we deny that source
which the Merciful³⁶ poured out on my thirsty
fields?³⁷

The first two lines are the clearest reference to the Psalm. Both passages mention the vine from Egypt which the boar of the wood ate (Ps. 80:9, 14). Also the word 'sprig' (هَشْمَةٌ) causes a flash back to the Psalm (v. 17): “He burnt its sprigs (هَشْمَتَيْهِ) in the fire – they will perish at the rebuke of

35 On the imagery of the vineyard, see Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2004): 95-130.

36 Literally, the subject of the sentence is “mercy.”

37 Like Ephrem does more often, here he switches from the communal to the personal.

your countenance!” Asaf’s lines about the wild boar and the consuming fire depict an image of destruction and divine judgment. In the teaching song the fate of God’s son Israel is narrowed down to God’s Son: Christ is the ultimate subject of this curse unto death. He does not only provide for his children’s lack, but He even took the devastating doom upon himself.

Quite contrary to the psalm, the boar gnawing the vine is the landmark of a new beginning in Ephrem’s hymn. The deadly destruction is not final. It is as if the vine is being pruned – “how it did grow again!” The shoot that appears from the remnant³⁸ reminds of the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1: “A staff will come up from the trunk of Jesse, and a shoot will sprout from its root.” This new vine is beyond all expectations: it bore “the blessed bunch” of grapes and “the cup of the medicine of Life”. Obviously, this is a reference to the symbolism of the Last Supper, and again to the contrast of death yielding new life. For the grapes are treaded down and pressed in granting the medicine of Life, which sheds a new light on Psalm 80:13: “Why have you broken down its wall, so that all who pass along the way trample it (سُوقُوا حَائِطَهُ)?”³⁹ The parallels go back and forth through time and space.

38 Cf. 2 Kgs. 19:30-31: “The surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward; for from Jerusalem a remnant shall go out, and from Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

39 Cf. HdVir 31:13 about the pressing of the grapes, but the manuscript is barely readable. Beck: “Ex coniectura; Ms l. n. p. Cf. also HdPar 6:8.

Once more the word 'scale' points back to the balance where God provides (strophe 3-5), and to the scale of fruit offered in a prayer for mercy (strophe 7). Ephrem prayed that his Lord may harvest 'our' fruits and offer a reconciling scale to His Father. But in the following strophes he reminds his audience that the Lord Himself is the bread and the cup, which He offers to His Father on behalf of his children. Even if their contribution is limited, Christ offers Himself, the new bread, as the merciful counterweight. The cup with the pressed grapes and the scale with the broken bread come together⁴⁵ in his life-giving sacrifice for them. His grace and justice come together and balance the scales according to their needs.

The tenth strophe is embedded in Scripture. Ephrem does not only draw from Psalm 80, but also from other Psalms and from the prophecies of Isaiah, as well as from the song of Moses.⁴⁶ In another teaching song, the poet relates how God has planted the vine from Egypt, but that it has cut off its own “sweet stems (مَحْتَلًا تَحْتًا) from the house of Abraham and, [instead], grafted on to its branches from the bitter plants of the people of Sodom.”⁴⁷ That is the scenario which called for radical pruning. When the people endured destruction ('the pruning boar'), the psalmist seemed stuck in despair. Ephrem, though, links this image with the prophecy

45 Both phrases use the verb *بَعَثَ* : A shoot sprouted / bearing (بَعْدًا) the blessed bunch and the cup of the medicine of Life. // From among the circumcised and from the land of tares / came forth (تَعَفَّدًا) for us a scale full of new bread.

46 Deut. 32:32.

47 HdCruc 5:9.

of Isaiah (11:1).⁴⁸ From the remnant of the vine and from the root of Jesse, a new shoot was expected, a descendant of David, and God would bring hope and salvation to his people.

The 'thirsty earth', with its connotation of drought and infertility, can refer to the virgin Mary, as Beck suggests.⁴⁹ However, in the context of the Psalms and the reference to David, the phrase may primarily point to him. In Psalm 143:6, David exclaims: “My soul thirsts for you like the earth (أُؤْكِلُ)!” And in Psalm 107⁵⁰ the author sings out: “You have made the thirsty earth into sources of water (أُؤْكِلُ حَقَّقْتَهُ حَقَّقْتَهُ)!” Isaiah continues prophetically, repeating exactly the same phrase in Is. 41:18, and building on it in 53:2: “He prospered as the firstborn child⁵¹ and like a root (حَقَّقُ) from the thirsty earth (أُؤْكِلُ).” And then Ephrem marvels:

48 *دَعْفَمَ مَهْلُهَا مَجَّ كَهَاتِهِ دُؤْمَعُ: مَهْلُهَا مَهْلُهَا مَجَّ حَقَّقُ.*

49 Edmund Beck, *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Fide*, CSCO 155 (Leuven: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1955), p. 42, note 9, where he refers to HdNat 11:4,4.

50 There is no indication of the author for this Psalm, though the previous and the following psalms with a note on the author refer to David.

51 An alternative reading is “like a shoot before him” (مَهْلُهَا مَهْلُهَا) <https://archive.org/stream/syriacible00lond#page/n415/mode/lup>, which reflects the Hebrew MS.

10. From a sweet root (حَمُّمًا حَمُّمًا) the son of David
 came forth
 and from the thirsty earth (أَرْضًا يَابِسَةً) the Source
 of Life (مَنْحَرًا مَحْيَاً⁵²) flowed for us.
 How could we deny that source
 which the Merciful (رَحِيمًا) poured out on my thirsty
 fields?

Psalm 80 looked back on a time when the people of Israel thrived like a tree whose branches reached out from the sea to the River, and laments its downfall. Ephrem experienced the grace to look back on the prophecies of hope which are fulfilled in the Son of David. The good news of his Life has spread like fresh water on thirsty fields and like a new vine reaching the ends of the world with its reviving clusters.⁵³

Asaf and his people sound downhearted: “You have fed them with bread in tears and given them to drink in tears (v. 6).” They yearn for life and desperately offer this request to the Lord of Hosts: “Give us life (v. 19)!” But out of the seemingly endless pain and misery and the thirsty earth comes forth the eternal Source of Life and mercy. The painful process of pruning bears life-giving fruit, a blessed bunch. What makes the hymn so joyful, is the realisation that Asaf’s desperate prayer has been heard and answered. When Asaf begs: “Let your right hand rest on the man and on the son of man you have exalted for yourself (v. 18),” Ephrem

52 Ms B,C and D have مَنْحَرًا مَحْيَاً.

53 Cf. HdCruc 5:9: “One tiny shoot sprouted and came forth – look! It overshadows the world with its bunches!”

jubilates: God did bless and exalt the Son of Man at His right hand. The Son of David triumphed over death and destruction and He has and is the Medicine of Life, the scale full of new bread, the sweet fruit, the Healer who heals all, the very Source of Life. How could we then withhold our thankfulness towards that Source which the Merciful God poured out on our thirsty fields?

These strophes also show a glimpse of Ephrem's feelings towards the Jews.⁵⁴ The people of Israel have been praying and waiting for such a long time – how could they now reject the answer to their supplications? Ephrem regards this as ungrateful and un-respectful towards the One who brought Himself so low for our sake.⁵⁵ Reason enough for himself to abound in thanksgiving. And he certainly tries to entice all to join.

So Ephrem bursts out in praise and glorification for the rest of the hymn – ten more strophes in an ode to the poet's

54 Note that the terminology he uses, makes perfect sense in a context of Pesach: the cup of wine becomes the cup of Life, the unleavened bread becomes the bread of Life, the bitter herbs become the bitter ones versus the sweet fruit who is Christ, and the Pesach lamb slaughtered reappears with the murderers as the Healer who heals all.

55 It is beyond the scope of this article to expand on Ephrem's stance against the Jews. See Christine Shepardson, *Anti-Judaism and Christian Orthodoxy: Ephrem's Hymns in Fourth-century Syria*, Patristic Monograph Series 20 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008). Cf. also my "Is Efreem de Syrier antisemitisch?" (Research paper Judaica, ETF, 2005), www.academia.edu/4625509/Is_Efreem_de_Syri%C3%ABr_antisemitisch.

Lord. At least half of the teaching song puts its words into practice through praise for humanity's generous Provider of Life:

11. Your key shows itself to the one who seeks it;
 your treasure rejoices in the thief who plunders
 it,⁵⁶
 for You rejoiced in the woman who stole from
 your hem,
 who took the medicine for her disease.

Now the poet's mouth overflows with images and stories – already three biblical images in four lines. The idea is the same: God likes to bless; He loves to give to the needy who boldly ask for and seek after Him. Jesus is the steward with the key of the Father's treasury full of mercy, and He wants it to be open for us.⁵⁷ As deep as Asaf's misery was, so bountiful is God in His disposal of His Son and Life. God likes his children to be confident and stretch out their hands to their Lord, like the woman in the crowd, in the Gospel of Matthew,⁵⁸ touched Jesus' clothes to become healed.

12. Your leaven, Lord, longs for the dough of sinners
 to transform and draw them to repentance.⁵⁹
 Your light levels the way of truth,
 removes the stumbling blocks and takes them
 away.⁶⁰

56 Cf. HdVir 31:7 and Mt. 13:44.

57 HdVir 31:2, cf. also Is. 22:22 and Rev. 3:7-8, and Mt. 7:7.

58 Mt. 9:20-22.

59 Cf. Mt. 13:33.

60 Cf. Is. 42:16 and Ps. 86:11 and 91:3-4,12.

Every image of daily life refers to God's divine truth. With enough kneading, pulling, patience, and experience, a scoop of leavened dough is enough to make a whole bread rise. This scene evokes wonder about God's patience and willingness towards a lump of human obstinateness. Just as He fashioned man at the time of creation, He rejoices in each of his children returning to him in repentance. He longs for them to come nearer and He lights their way with his inspiring truth. He reveals stumbling blocks, if they are open to his guidance, and levels their path. These lines remind the audience of the hymn's opening, when Ephrem prays God to enlighten them with his truth. At this point, however, it is turned into a prayer of praise. After the core poem on Christ as the vine, requests are scarce;⁶¹ the strophes overflow, though, with glorification.

Ephrem continues this praise with a wave of images, all bearing witness to God's open arms and supporting presence in a multitude of ways.

13. Your silver, Lord, loves the needy, for he may
gain with it;⁶²
your mina loves to come in tens to the lowly;⁶³
your talent is pleased to come in tens to the
slothful.⁶⁴
Glory to the One who enriches all!⁶⁵

61 Only two: 12:16.3; 12:17.3.

62 Cf. Mt. 25:18, Lk. 19:15.

63 Cf. Lk. 19:13.

64 Cf. Mt. 25:20, 28-29 (?).

65 Cf. Ps. 65:10(9)-14(13), 2 Cor. 8:9; 9:11.

14. Your armour, Lord, rejoices in the vanquished,
that he may win;⁶⁶
your vineyard rejoices in the idle, that he, along
with the diligent,
with open mouth and without shame, may claim
the wage.⁶⁷
Glory to the One who rewards all!

God rewards and enriches those who come to him in their distress and need. He wants his children to call on him and ask for his help and to acknowledge and honour him in all their ways.⁶⁸ It is as if Ephrem encourages all who are in the psalmist's state of mind.

15. Your yoke, Lord, loves to subdue the rebellious.⁶⁹
Your rod, Lord, rejoices in scattering the gathered
wolves⁷⁰
and your yoke in gathering the driven sheep into
the flock.⁷¹
Glory to the One who tends all!⁷²

The psalm called on the Shepherd of Israel to lead his people like a flock (v. 2). In Ephrem's song, he rejoices that God does: He protects and gathers those who are his. Unlike the hireling who leaves the flock when a wolf approaches, the Good Shepherd stays with his own and saves them,

66 Cf. Ps. 35:1-10, 22-23; 91:4; Rom. 13:12,14; 2 Cor. 10:4; Ef. 6:11,13.

67 Cf. Mt. 20:1-16.

68 Cf. Ps. 50:14-15; Prov. 3:5-7.

69 Cf. Ps. 2:3(2)-4(3); 66:7.

70 Cf. Ps. 23:4.

71 Cf. Ps. 119:176, Mt. 11:29-30.

72 Cf. Ps. 23:1.

leading them back home.⁷³ God longs to welcome his children home in his Paradise and to give his support on the difficult journey, as also the following strophe expresses, again embedded in the Psalms and inspired by its language:⁷⁴

16. Your harbour watches for our ship to arrive.⁷⁵
 Your spirit-wind leads it in love with the oars of
 your mercy;⁷⁶
 May it moor (مُؤَمِّمًا), Lord,⁷⁷ may You shut the
 mouth of the greedy sea!⁷⁸
 Glory for your support!

73 Cf. Jn. 10:7-17.

74 Cf. HdVir 31:15, HdPar 14:5 and also Is. 60:9 where God's children are gathered from afar in ships, which connects with the previous strophe as well.

75 Or : that You may lead it (to its arrival) (Russell: “so that You can bring it in.”), following Ms B. Would Ms B try to correct the missing syllable? The structure and syntax of the parallel strophes supports the present translation. For the imagery, see Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 249-253 and E. Hambye, “The Symbol of the 'Coming to the Harbour' in the Syriac Tradition,” OCA 197, 401-411.

76 Cf. Psalm 143:10: “May your gentle Spirit lead me on the way of Life.”

77 Cf. Psalm 51:12: “And may your glorious Spirit sustain me
 . . . أَمْسِكْ . . .”

78 Cf. Psalm 107:29-31: “He stilled the storm and it was silent and He hushed the waves of the sea [...] and He led them to the harbour they desired [...]” and 143:12 “Silence those that hate me.” NB: both Psalm 143 and 107 have been referred to before in the context of the 'thirsty earth.'

17. Look, your rock watches for the builders, that the foundations may be set on it and that all who see it may give [God the] glory. May their tower not become a disgrace,⁷⁹ Lord, may it be completed by You! Glory to the One who perfects all!
18. Look, your seed watches for the fields, that they may be tilled. In the little, your seed will return thirty-fold; in the average it will return sixty-fold; also in the mature it will return hundred-fold.⁸⁰

All of these strophes of glorification express God's longing for his children. Already from the time of the patriarchs and throughout the ages of psalmists and prophets He was known as the Rock of Israel.⁸¹ Ephrem reflects on the renewed invitation to build on God's everlasting foundations, to depend on him in everything and to persevere until completion.⁸² Similarly, the master Gardener looks out on the fields and hopes that they will be receptive of his seeds and may thrive with a bountiful harvest, each according to capacity.⁸³ Quite cunningly, the poet rewrites and weaves in strands of biblical images into a poem

79 Lc. 14:28-30.

80 Mt. 13:8.

81 Gen. 49:24; Deut. 32:4,15,31; Ps. 18:3,32,47; 31:3-4; 71:3 and many more Psalms; Is. 17:10; 30:29 a.o..

82 Mt. 7:24-25.

83 It is a recurring theme in Ephrem's hymns to speak about 'according to measure' or 'capacity'. Every person is at a different stage and accordingly has different needs and capacities. Eg.: HdF 7:3; 26:6; 48:5; 70:7; HdP 9:25-27.

enticing the auditors to join in the song, to respond to God's longing and be perfected in the process.

Everything in Ephrem's poem breathes a deep adoration of a generous, merciful and loving God who is both just and good. He tends to end the strophes with an exhortation to give God the glory for his generosity. How will the poet conclude this chain of glorification? The last two strophes are reminiscent of the first part of this hymn, in an inclusio of prayer and confirmation of God's refinement:

19. Your mirror⁸⁴ is clear and is totally turned towards
You.

Your beauty (مَهْجَبُور) incites the foul to be cleansed
in it,
for the dirty cannot adhere to You
unless he rubs off his stains.

20. Your hyssop watches to purge us in its generosity;
by your generous sprinkling, Lord, we are purified
again.

The Lord is not pleased with our foulness,
for while He is just, He adorns [us] with His
grace/beauty (حَمْدُجُور).

Again, the prayer for refinement of the first part, is here turned into praise for God's providence in purifying us. The Lord's mirror, His Word, presents a faithful reflection of who He is. The Scriptures show us His beauty and draw us

84 This is the Word, which can mean both Christ and the Scriptures. Cf. Odes of Solomon 13, HdVir 31:12, SdDN 5 and PrRef II 166,30ff.

towards it. In his hymn, Ephrem reflects the exemplary teaching of the Scriptures. The poet has created a beautiful pattern of biblical images to dance from symbol to symbol to pause now in wonder before its Source. All the images and stories Ephrem conjured up, breathe the spirit of God's character, enticing the audience to mirror Him. Human beings cannot but cleanse themselves before approaching the Highest King. His righteousness does not permit foulness in his presence, but in his grace, He cleanses his children and adorns them with his beauty and grace. His beauty has the power to wipe out all blemishes. The Mirror reveals the truth and seals those who cleanse themselves with the resemblance of Christ⁸⁵ and then the Father eagerly waits for the ship of his children to arrive at His harbour.

Conclusion

If Psalm 80 is an expression of despair and desolation and yearns for salvation, HdF 12 expresses fulfilled hope and the life-giving presence of God in a multitude of ways. The vine, the symbol of glory lost, becomes for Ephrem the symbol of the resurrected Christ and the Medicine of Life. If the Psalm is a struggle of a poet longing to be heard and listened to, the hymn is an ode of thanksgiving because God is longing to support his children and give them all they need in his bountiful mercy. Actually, Asaf seems desperately dependent, like a person drowning, groping for the saving Hand. Ephrem shows how to be boldly dependent, walking the Bridge of Christ in faith.⁸⁶ Asaf's song is a prayer, seemingly without answer. Ephrem's song jubilates because God did answer his yearning people, now in turn longing for

85 Cf. HdVir 31:12.

86 For Christ as the bridge, see for example HdF 6:17.

them to respond, to live day by day supported by his grace, dependent on his provisions, refined by his Word and adorned by his presence, which will lead into prayers of praise.

Both terminology and theme show a clear influence of Psalm 80 on Ephrem's hymn. In addition, it became clear that the Syriac poet turned around and transformed many of Asaf's images with his characteristic and creative antipoles. The Psalm's core theme of the vine and the branch in the context of despair invited the poet to broaden the perspective via Isaiah's prophecies of hope and restoration to the fulfilment through Christ. All of these lead to the conclusion that Ephrem composed a deliberate response to the old song of despair and desolation with a new song of confident dependence.

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COMPARING THE SYRIAC AND ARABIC CHRONICLES OF BARHEBRAEUS: THE QUESTION OF INTENDED AUDIENCES

Preliminaries

During the Middle-Ages, historiography was a significant literary genre in Syriac. The thirteenth century Syriac writer Barhebraeus composed, besides many other works, two sizeable chronicles: one in Syriac divided in two parts, one is dealing with secular and one with ecclesiastical history, and the second is on secular history in Arabic. In fact, the two parts of the Syriac Chronicle were often considered, since the early manuscripts until modern studies, as separated works. According to the testimony of his brother Barṣawmō, Barhebraeus composed his Arabic chronicle at the request of Muslim scholars of Maragheh, the capital of the Mongol Empire, where Barhebraeus spent his last days, to provide speakers of Arabic with an access to the historical information his Syriac work offered. A thorough review of the two chronicles reveals numerous differences concerning their informative contents.

Based on a comparative method of research, this study asks why Barhebraeus did not include more of the information of the Syriac chronicle in the Arabic one. Did he change his method because of the changes in intended audiences? No doubt, this question is vast, this study will therefore be based on a particular part of the last chapter of the chronicles, highlighting the contacts and sometimes “sensitive” relationships between those communities during the Mongolian invasion of the Middle-East, just after two centuries of Crusader wars. I shall select one specific historical period for allowing comparisons of content, method of redaction, and the of terminology used by the author. I shall also try to identify of the sources that Barhebraeus used for the selected texts. Budge estimates that Barhebraeus had initially intended to write the last eighty years starting from the end of the chronography of Michael the Great which stops in the year 1196. The exploitation of the Library of Maragheh, where he spent his last years, containing many manuscripts in Syriac, Arabic and Persian, pushed him to rewrite the historical periods that are already treated in the chronography of Michael the Great, with undoubtedly additional information¹. The Ecclesiastical Chronicle or the second part of Barhebraeus’ historical work consists of two parts: first, the sequence of the successive patriarchs of Antioch, which, after the schism of 5th century, concerns only his church, the Syriac Orthodox Church; second comes the sequence of the Catholici and Maphrians

¹ Budge, Ernest A. Wallis, (trans.), [Barhebraeus], *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj 1225-1286 the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus Being the First Part of his Political History of the World*, vol. i: English Translation, London: Oxford University Press, 1932 (Amsterdam: PHILO Press, reprinted 1976). p. vii.

of the Eastern Syrians. Barhebraeus recounts the church historical events under each successor.

This Chronicle was published in several editions: by Bruns and Kirsch (1789), by Bedjan (1890), by Budge with a complete English translation (1932), and the one by Çiçek (1987) that I shall use in my study. There is also a fragmentary translation into Arabic done by Isaac Armalet and published in Beirut (1986)². More recently, we have a French translation done by Philippe Talon (2013)³, which was based on the Syriac text established by Bedjan.

1. The Arabic Chronicle *Tarih Mūhtaşar Al-Dūwal*

1.1. Description

It is then the universal history in Arabic done by Barhebraeus just before his death, even the finishing touch was brought by his brother Barşawmō, the same as his other historical works. Barhebraeus follows the same methodology of his former *Chronicon Syriacum*, with a slight difference. We find several titles for this work in the manuscripts; most of the studies have translated these as “The Abridged History of the Dynasties”. I prefer to translate the title of this book as “The Abridged History of the States or Empires” and not “of Dynasties” and that for two main reasons: firstly, it is the literal meaning of the word “*Al-Dūwal*الدول”, which is the

² Armalet had published his partial Arabic translations of *Chronicon Syriacum* in the journal *Al-Machriq* (Beirut) in the following numbers: 43 (1949); 45 (1951); 46 (1952); 47 (1953); 48 (1954); 49, (1955); 50 (1956). And this edition is the collection of those partial translations in one volume.

³ Philippe Talon (trans.), *La Chronographie de Bar Hebraeus: L’histoire du monde d’Adam à Kubilai Khan*, vol. i-iii, Bruxelles: Ed. Modulaire européenne, 2013.

plural of “*Dawlā* دولة”, state or country; secondly, the word “Dynasties” which derives from “أنساب” *ansāb*” is the word which explains the method of the author and not the contents. Indeed, Barhebraeus clearly wants to organize human history in the greatest historical empires, and not by dynasties. The proof is that he reports on several different dynasties in the same chapter (covering a certain period/empire). So, the word “dynasties” rather characterized his way of telling the history. I therefore follow the translation proposed by Herman Teule: *Summary of the History of the Countries or of the Empires*⁴. The translation as “Dynasties” is most probably on account of the first edition and translation of the text into Latin by the English scholar Edward Pococke (Oxford 1663) as *Historia compendiosa dynastiarum*. Nevertheless, so as not to create confusion in this study I shall be using “Arabic Chronicle” or “*Mūhtaṣar*”.

1.2. The connection with the Syriac chronicle

The best way to give an overview of the contents of both chronicles is to have a look at their table of contents, which was provided by Barhebraeus himself who introduced the two chronicles with a kind of preface, explaining the aim of his work, his sources, and a list of the contents.

⁴ Herman Teule, “The Crusaders in Barhebraeus’ Syriac and Arabic Secular Chronicles: a Different Approach” in Krijnie Ciggaar, Adelbert Davids, and Herman Teule, *East and West in the Crusaders States: Context – Contacts - Confrontations*, OLA 75, Leuven: Peeters, 1996, pp. 39-49, here, p. 42.

1.2.1. A comparative table of contents

<i>Chronicon Syriacum</i>	<i>Mūhtaṣar</i>
1- The first section is from the Patriarchs which begins with Adam, the first human.	1- The first state is that of the Patriarchs from Adam, the first of the son of man ⁵ - that is to say men.
2- The second section is from the Patriarchs to the Judges.	2- The second state is from the Patriarchs to Judges of Israel.
3- The third section is from the Judges to the Kings of the Hebrews.	3- The third state is from the Judges of Israel to their Kings.
4- The fourth section is from the Kings of the Hebrews to the Chaldean Kings.	4- The fourth state is from the Kings of Israel to the Chaldean Kings.
5- The fifth section is from the Chaldean Kings to the Kings of the Medes.	5- The fifth state is from the Chaldean Kings to the Magi Kings
6- The sixth section is from the Kings of Medes to the Persian Kings.	
7- The seventh section is from the Persian Kings to the Pagan Greeks.	6- The sixth state is from the Magi Kings to the Pagan Greek Kings.
8- The eighth section is from the Pagan Greeks to the Roman Kings.	7- The seventh state is from the Pagan Greek Kings to the Frank Kings.
9- The ninth section is from the Roman Kings to the Greek Kings.	8- The eighth state is from the Frank Kings to the Christian Greek Kings.

⁵ Barhebraeus is using the Syriac word *ܒܪܢܫܐ* *barnōšō* (son of man) in an Arabic transcription *البرنيساء* *barnisa*'.

10- The tenth section is from the Greek Kings to the Arab Kings.	9- The ninth state is from the Christian Greek Kings to the Arab Muslim Kings.
11- The eleventh section is from the Arab Kings to the kings of the Huns.	10- The tenth state is from the Arab Muslim Kings to the Mongol Kings.

Analysis of the Table comparing the contents of the *Chronicon Syriacum* and the *Mūhtaşar*

- The *Chronicon Syriacum* is divided into eleven chapters, while the Arabic one is divided into ten. Barhebraeus has divided the period of Persian kings into two distinct dynasties: those of the Medes and those of the Persians. In the *Mūhtaşar* he used the name “Magi” to designate this empire. It should be noted that the Medes’ chapter in the Syriac text is a very small one, which covers less than one page.
- Barhebraeus calls the chapter “section” in the *Chronicon Syriacum*, while it is the word “state” that he uses in his Arabic review.
- We notice a difference for the title of the eighth chapter concerning the Roman Empire which is named “Franks” in the *Mūhtaşar*. A similar difference is in for the title for the eleventh chapter where we read “Huns” in Syriac and “Mongol” in Arabic.
- The ninth chapter of the *Chronicon Syriacum* does not contain the adjective “Christian” as in the Arabic text, for designating the Greeks *i.e.* the Byzantine Kings, and, in the tenth chapter, the adjective “Muslim” is used for the Arab kings.

A common element between the two chronicles is that the biggest chapter, the one dedicated to the Arabs. It counts 370 pages in the Syriac text and 323 pages in the Arabic text. Thus, we can conclude that the Arabic period had the greatest importance in Barhebraeus's historical work.

2. Status questionis

The important and differences between the two chronicles roused the interest of scholars. The same author composed two different works for the same historical periods. A substantial number of syriacists, among which Wright, Duval, Baumstark, Brockelman⁶, believed in three facts: that the *Mūhtaşar* was written by Barhebraeus at the request of Muslim scholars through the last years of his life in Maragheh; that Barhebraeus added or injected additional input concerning Arabic scholarship. The question of audience was addressed by many scholars:

Analiese Lüders

Although the study by Lüders was not devoted directly to the matter of leadership, she suggests in her dissertation devoted to opinions on the Crusaders as expressed by Syrian and Armenian sources, that the work of *Mūhtasar* is a historical work intended for a Muslim

⁶ William Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897; Ruben Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, 3rd ed., Paris: Libraire Victor Lecoffre, 1907; Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur: mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte*, Bonn, 1922; and, Carl Brockelman, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, 4th ed., Leiden: Brill, 1943-1949.

audience, based on the material of the *Chronicon Syriacum* which is for its part intended for a Christian audience⁷.

Susanne Todt

Todt published a short comparison between the final chapters of both chronicles, which is the period of the Mongols that Barhebraeus witnessed personally⁸. She also defends the idea that the author wanted to provide his Syriac work to Christian readers and this appears in the chapter on the Mongolians by omitting in the Arabic text the mention of, for example, Christian liturgical events, certain collaborations between Christians and the Mongolian conquerors, and some of the catastrophically setbacks which the Christians suffered at that time. She supposes that the reason for these was that Barhebraeus wanted his *Chronicon Syriacum* to strengthen his community during its ordeals and to bring attention to this kind of events. Todt also notes that the omissions do not only concern some information about Christians, but also other such events as the conquest of some cities and fortresses. However, this variance is applicable also to other chapters of the chronicles. After all, the usage of Islamic dating in the *Mūhtasar* is an indication that the work is oriented to a Muslim audience, according to Todt.

⁷ Cf. Anneliese Lüders, *Die Kreuzzüge im Urteilsyrischer und armenischer Quellen*, Berliner Byzantinistische Arbeiten 29, Berlin: Akademie-verlag, 1964, pp. 14-15.

⁸ Cf. Susanne Todt, "Die syrische und die arabische Weltgeschichte des Bar Hebraeus – ein Vergleich", *Der Islam* 65 (1988), pp. 70-75.

Lawrence Conrad

Lawrence Conrad was the first scholar to devote a special study to the role of audience in the *Mūhtasar* in his article *On the Arabic Chronicle of Barhebraeus: His Aims and Audience*, published in *Parole de l'Orient* in 1994. Conrad denies the claim that Barhebraeus wrote the *Mūhtasar* in Maragheh just before his death, because it is impossible to imagine that our author finished his huge work with this “remodeling” in just two weeks, or a month. Furthermore, the parallel transmission of Baršawmō that this labor was done merely at the request of Muslim scholars in Maragheh is, according to Conrad, also unacceptable, though not denying that the author must have received great interest or encouragement by them. In addition, it seems certain to Conrad that Barhebraeus started writing his Arabic review long before his moving to Maragheh. Conrad shows how difficult it is to assert that Barhebraeus had only the Muslim audience in mind, in other words, the audience the author had in mind is rather obviously that of his coreligionists, the Christians. Nevertheless, only for some passages, we can also observe the evident intention of Barhebraeus to address his work to a Muslim readership.

Herman Teule

Although Teule's st⁹ is not devoted principally to the question of audience, he discusses the theories previously expressed by Lüders and Conrad, by also comparing some

⁹ Herman Teule, “The Crusaders in Barhebraeus’ Syriac and Arabic Secular Chronicles: a Different Approach” in Krijnie Ciggaar, Adelbert Davids, and Herman Teule, *East and West in the Crusaders’ States: Context – Contacts – Confrontations*, OLA 75, Leuven: Peeters, 1996, pp. 39-49.

passages concerning the Crusader period in both chronicles, Syriac and Arabic. Teulerefutes Conrad's assertion, which is that Barhebraeus' coreligionists were already massively Arabic speaking in that period. This statement can be easily disproved by the several works which Barhebraeus had translated from Arabic into Syriac to give access of these works to his Syriac Christian community. Furthermore, Teule could prove that our author was obviously relying on a famous Arabic chronicler Ibn al-Athīr(1160-1233) in his work *al-Kāmil fi-l-Tarīkh* (The Complete History)¹⁰, for his recount of some stories during the Crusaders, even though Barhebraeus never mentions al-Athīr's name. Moreover, Teule pointed out the importance of the use of sources for the composing of each chronicle, and he concludes by refuting the reasoning of both Lüders and Conrad, and explaining the difference between the two chronicles as being due to the difference of audiences: Christian or Muslim.

Denise Aigle

Another investigation concerning the question of audience is by Denise Aigle in her article: *Barhebraeus et son public à travers ses chroniques en syriaque et en arabe* ("Barhebraeus and his public through his chronicles in Syriac and in Arabic"), published in *Le Muséon* in 2005. The big difference that Aigle notes is that almost all the information regarding the Christians in the Arabic version

¹⁰ Cf. Ibn El-Athiri, *Chronicon quod perfectissimum inscribitur* [الكامل في التاريخ *The Complete History*], ed. Tornberg, Carl Johan, 12 vol., Leiden, 1853-1867. (Reprinted, 13 vol., Beirut: DārṢādir, 1965-1967).

disappeared¹¹. The choice of events reported in the two books reveals such attention here to the Christians in the Syriac, and there to the Muslims in the Arabic. We can often notice the disappearance of the personalized comments of Barhebraeus on certain events in the Arabic version. She finally asks the question: Is the *Mūhtāṣar* destined to an Islamic readership? Aigle concludes by the acknowledgement of the difficulty to bring a definitive answer concerning the Arabic version; she states on the other hand that the destination of the *Chronicon Syriacum* is definitively Christian and it seems that Barhebraeus adapted his narrative story to the cultural references of his recipients. Her inquiry reveals various aspects according to the different chapters; but in general, she supports the theory of a “work of compromise” *unouvrage de compromis*, intended for a wide public, both Christian and Muslim, whence the neutrality of the *Mūhtāṣar* compared with the Syriac one.

Laila Zahra

Leila Zahra completed in 2013 a Master’s thesis on the Arabic Chronicle of Barhebraeus in the Institute of Eastern Christian Studies of the Radboud University in Nijmegen (Netherlands)¹². Zahra’s study paid an attention to those passages that concern Christianity as an identity and religion. She excludes the impact of the use of certain sources for the last chapter, since Barhebraeus often was an actual witness to the events in this period. She concludes that dissimilarities between the Syriac and the Arabic, such as the

¹¹ Denise Aigle, “Bar Hebraeus et son public à travers ses chroniques en syriaque et en arabe”, *Le Muséon* 118 (2005): 87-107 ; here, p. 94.

¹² Zahra, *De Arabische kroniek van Barhebraeus*, Nijmegen, 2013.

deliberate omission of certain stories and events, and the adjustments made in some passages prove that Barhebraeus took in consideration the difference of readership which is Muslim for the Arabic chronicle. Barhebraeus, according to Zahra, eliminated possible bones of contention “*stones of stumbling*” in his Arabic text, and thus adapted it for a Muslim readership. Moreover, she agrees with Aigle’s theory which proposes that the *Mūhtasar* is a compromise work intended for together a Christian and a Muslim readership. Zahra adds that Barhebraeus must have had, in writing the Arabic Chronicle, the intention of a *rapprochement* between his Christian community and the Muslims, which is in accordance with the ecumenical attitude of Barhebraeus and his strategy as a leader of his community during the tumultuous period in the Near-East he describes.

3. The chosen text

The text of this study is the first section of the tenth “dynasty” (chapter) of the Arabic Chronicle¹³, and its parallel in the eleventh chapter of the Syriac Chronicle¹⁴. This section covers the continuation of the reign of Hulagu. Information about the initial period of Hulagu is to be found in the ninth chapter, the Dynasty of the Arab Kings, starting from the citation of the progeny of Gengiz Khan, the dispatch of Hulagu to conquer the Islamic territories at the west of the young Mongolian Empire... and finally, in the last section of this chapter devoted to the Caliph Al-Musta‘sim¹⁵, who is the last Abbasid Caliph murdered by

¹³ *Arabic Chronicle*, pp. 482-500.

¹⁴ *Chronicon Syriacum*, pp. 458-475; Budge, pp. 433-448.

¹⁵ *Arabic Chronicle*, pp. 445-481.

Hulagu himself upon the invasion of Baghdad, the Abbasid capital, in 1258. By this date we mark the end of the Abbasids Caliphate. Both the Syriac and Arabic texts are subdivided under subtitles as follows:

<i>Chronicon Syriacum</i>	<i>Arabic Chronicle</i>
Hulagu, King of Kings and brother of Munga Khan the Great	Hulagu son of Toluy Khan
Concerning the seating of Kublai Khan on the throne of the kingdom of Mongols	The seating of Kublai Khan on the throne of the kingdom
After Hulagu, Abaqa was King of Kings	Abaqa Khan

There is no major difference in the subtitles for the selected text of this study. It is typically the methodology of Barhebraeus to recount the events under the name of the ruler (Hulagu, Kublai and Abaqa). Nevertheless, there are a few “non-ruler” subtitles, for example after Abaqa Khan, the subtitle is “Concerning the taking of Antioch ܩܘܢܝܢ ܕܥܢܬܝܘܨ”¹⁶ which has no duplicate in the Arabic chronicle where we have only the word “subchapter” (*fasl* فصل). We can notice – not only for the chosen text of this study – that the subtitles in the Syriac Chronicle are more detailed and developed, and in the Arabic Chronicle, the parallel subtitles are less detailed or a little bit ‘direct’. The characteristic of the last chapter in both chronicles compared to the other chapters is that Barhebraeus was a witness of this historical period; sometimes he relates the events that he personally lived, the persons whom he had personally met. That is why

¹⁶ *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 475; Budge, p. 448.

we have sometimes the use of the first-person pronouns (I, me) in this section.

4. The narrative of the Mongolian period in the historical works of Barhebraeus

Without any doubt, the narratives about Mongols take on an immense importance in the Chronicles of Barhebraeus. We can say that the information about Arabs together with that of Mongols form the major interest of our author in his historiographical works. In the Arabic, as far as the Syriac text, the event of the fall of Baghdad and the murder of the Caliph Al-Mustaʿsim indicates the end of “the Kings of Arabs” in the mind of the historian. Therefore, Barhebraeus stays, in his division of the historical sequence, to the succession of Abbasid dynasty, although this latter became dismantled in regional states and dynasties which were more powerful than the central Abbasid court of Baghdad; for example, the Fatimid of Egypt, the Hamdanid dynasty of Syria, or the Ayyubid of Syria and Egypt etc. Furthermore, the title of “Caliph” is preserved in the Arabic Chronicle only for the Abbasid Caliphs. While in the Syriac Chronicle, this title had been given to other dynasties, such as the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt.

Barhebraeus had no doubt benefited from his proximity to the services of Ilkhanate Chancellery during his stay in their capital. It is worthy of mention that many later Muslim historians relied on the Arabic Chronicle of Barhebraeus for information concerning the Mongols. Some studies, as that of Aigle, Zahra, or Lane¹⁷, claim that

¹⁷ George Lane, “An account of Gregory Bar Hebraeus Abu al-Faraj and His Relations with the Mongols of Persia” in *Hugoye*:

Barhebraeus is more neutral in the Arabic Chronicle than in the Syriac one for his transmission of information about the Mongol's rule. Nevertheless, either in Syriac or in Arabic, Lane observes that Barhebraeus rarely passes judgements on the Mongols' raids which are badly portrayed in the Arabic-Muslim accounts. Nevertheless, compared to other Christian historians of that time, especially Armenians, Barhebraeus seems to be the most neutral regarding the governance of Mongols in the Muslim territories, despite the fact that he had personally good relationship and even privilege as Maphrian under their authority. Anyway, in order to make a complete overview of this matter, we need to make a full comparison for all the information concerning the Mongols in the two Chronicles. This kind of study has not yet been carried out.

5. The study on the identification of sources

The character of the writings of Barhebraeus means that the examination of the sources used in his works is indispensable to any scientific approach to them. Up to a point many scholars portray him as a *skillful compiler, but hardly an original thinker*¹⁸. However, Barhebraeus informs us in the beginning of each of his Chronicles of his dependence on sources which were available to him. The preface of *Chronicon Syriacum* gives much information about the library and the language of the books that he consulted to compose his work. Barhebraeus gives us a clear role for his work: a synthesis of what has already been done. Hence, the importance of the examination of sources of work. Furthermore, many scholars observe the role of a

Journal of Syriac Studies, vol. 2.2 (1999): 209-233, here, pp. 230-231.

¹⁸ Herman Teule, "Gregory Barhebraeus and His Time: The Syrian Renaissance" in *JCSSS* 3 (2003), p. 21.

scientific popularizer¹⁹ in his writings. The sources that Barhebraeus used are in most cases imprecisely cited in an anonymous manner. But infrequently, the sources are cited. Therefore, the identification of his sources is a quite challenging work, and the studies in this field are almost absent. Nevertheless, we have some studies that are dedicated to the general question of sources' use in Barhebraeus's huge corpus. Hereafter is an overview of these studies.

For the general inquiry of Barhebraeus' sources, we have the study of Teule on Barhebraeus and his time which gives an outline for the questioning of Barhebraeus' handling of the sources in his books. Barhebraeus' knowledge of languages could be a key to determine his direct use of the sources circulating in his time. Following the conclusions of Teule's own analysis and other scholars' observations cited in his study, we can confirm the good knowledge of Barhebraeus of Syriac, Arabic, Persian, with possible elementary knowledge of Greek and Armenian. Regarding the historiographical works, it is widely known that the immense Chronicle of Michael the Great is an important source for his Syriac Chronicle in its two parts, civil and ecclesiastical. But the foregoing Chronicle cannot be a potential source for this study, since it stops around 1199, the year of the death of Michael the Great who did not know the Mongols' invasions. In addition, Barhebraeus' input concerning the Church of the East and her Catholicos

¹⁹ See for example: Jean-Baptiste Chabot, *La littérature syriaque*, Paris, 1934, p. 133 ; Jean-Maurice Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Mongols (II-Khanat de Perse, XIIIe-XIVe)*, CSCO 363, Subs. 44, (Leuven : Louvain Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1975), p. 101. Cited in footnote n°5: Herman Teule, "Gregory Barhebraeus and His Time, p. 38.

explains his handling of East-Syriac historiographical material. One of the factors that encouraged Barhebraeus to move to Maragheh, according to Teule, is the evolution of the city as a scientific place with rich libraries. Moreover, Teule observes the influence of Islamic sources in practically the entire corpus of Barhebraeus: Spirituality, Medicine, Astrology, Philosophy, Philology...and even in the Canon Law of his Church. This influence is more than a normal result, because at the time of Barhebraeus, scientific advancement was not preponderant among the Christian circles, but rather among the Muslim ones. Precisely in the historiographical works, Barhebraeus shows some creativity compared to his predecessor Christian writers in his use of Islamic sources by his description of their works. He compares several works and the quantity of those sources.

Another detailed investigation of this question is by Youssef Iṣḥāq who published two studies on the Barhebraeus' historiographical sources²⁰. Iṣḥāq defines at least twenty sources that Barhebraeus depended on in his Syriac Chronicle, which were all also used in the Arabic Chronicle; but the reliance on Muslim sources is more relevant in the Arabic text especially on the last two chapters dedicated to the Arab-Muslims and the Mongols. Nevertheless, the *Mūḥṭaṣar* has additional sources which were not applied in the Syriac text. These sources were

²⁰ Youssef M. Iṣḥāq, “مصادر أبي الفرج الملقب التاريخي و أثرها في مناهجها” [The Historical Sources of AbīlFaraḡ Al-Malaṭī and its Trace in His Methods]” in *Aram* 1,1 (Oxford, 1989): 149-172; Youssef M. Iṣḥāq, “خصائص تاريخ مختصر الدول للمؤرخ السرياني المشهور العلامة أبي الفرج يوحنا المعروف بابن العربي [The characteristics of MūḥṭaṣarTar’iḥ Al-Dūwal of the Famous Syriac Historiographer the Allamah Abīl Faraḡ Yūḥannā who was known as Barhebraeus]” in *Aram* 1,1 (Oxford 1989): 173-198.

specifically focused on the histories of scientists among Arabs, for example: *Tarīḥ al-ḥūkama'* (History of Wises) by *Ibn Al-Qūffī*²¹, and other works that are not necessary to mention here²². The tendency to give more detailed information about scientists is a distinct character of *Mūhtaṣarin* comparison to *Chronicon Syriacum*. It is important to mention the predominant source for the narratives related to the Mongols: the Persian work of 'Ata Malik Juvaini²³ "*Ta'rīḥi Johan-Guṣā* [The History of the World Conqueror]"²⁴. All scholars who examined the writings of Barhebraeus on the Mongols refer to this work which is considered as the main historiographic book on Mongols, especially regarding their domination in the

²¹ He is a mediaeval Muslim scholar (1128-1172) who was born in Qift (Egypt) and died in Aleppo (Syria) where he composed his works on Muslim scholars.

²² See: Youssef M. Iṣḥāq, *The Historical Sources of AbūFarağ*, pp. 166-167.

²³ Barhebraeus devoted a section for him in his Syriac Chronicle; Cf. Budge, pp. 471-492. There is no similar section in the Arabic Chronicle, nevertheless, Barhebraeus relates about him at the end of the book under the section of Arghoun Khan; Cf. *Arabic Chronicle*, pp. 520-522. Juvaini himself accompanied Hulagu in his capture of Baghdad where he became the governor appointed by Hulagu in 1259. See: John Andrew Boyle, "Djuwaynī" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Brosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015. Reference: K.U.Leuven – University Library.

²⁴ Boyle, John Andrew (trans.) [*'Ala' ad-Dīn 'Ata Malik Juvaini*], *The History of the World Conqueror: By 'Ala' ad-Dīn 'Ata Malik Juvaini translated from the Text of Mirza Muḥammad Qazvinī by J. A. Boyle with new introduction and bibliography by D. O. Morgan*, voli-ii, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, reprinted 1997).

Muslim World. However, the dependence of Barhebraeus on Juvaini's Chronicle is confessed by himself in the *Chronicon Syriacum* under the section consecrated to the murder of his brother Šams Al-Dīn, the Master of the Diwān²⁵.

Denise Aigle wrote another article devoted to the question of the input of Barhebraeus's Chronicles to the Mongolian period²⁶. Aigle is interested in analyzing how Barhebraeus handles his principal source for the Mongols' narratives. It is very evident that Juvaini's Chronicle is the principal source that Barhebraeus depended on in the penultimate chapter of the *Mūhtasar*, but it is more difficult to determine if he had also a main source for the last chapter. Furthermore, what makes the question more difficult is that Barhebraeus is a contemporary witness and he takes also an active part in this period as Maphrian of his community. Aigle looked at the contemporary Arabic historiographical works of Barhebraeus, but only for the texts that she could access²⁷, she found no coincidence of them with the text of Barhebraeus. Aigle cites a work of an Ayyubid chronicler Ibn Wāṣil²⁸ (1298) that she was not able to verify, so it could

²⁵ Budge, p. 473; *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 503.

²⁶ Denise Aigle, "L'œuvre historiographique de Barhebraeus : son apport à l'histoire de la période mongole", *Parole de l'Orient* 33 (2008): 25-61.

²⁷ For example the Chronicle of Abū Šamā (1268): كتاب الروضتين في أخبار الدولتين النورية والصلاحية *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fī ḥabār al-dawlatayn al-Nūrīyāwal-Ṣalāḥīya*; edited by Ibrāhīm Šamsal-Dīn, Beirut: Dār al-Kūtib al-‘ilmīya, 2002. For the other works mentioned by Aigle, see: Alige, "L'œuvre historiographique de Barhebraeus", p. 51-52.

²⁸ Ibn Wāṣil composed one of the most important sources of the Ayyubid state: مفرج الكروب في أخبار بني أيوب *Mufarriğ al-Kūrūb fī ḥabār Banī Ayūb*. Cf. Gamal el-Dīn Shayyal, "Ibn Wāṣil"

be that Barhebraeus had relied on this. This Chronicle is entitled: مفرج الكروب في أخبار بني أيوب *Mufarriğ al-KūrūbfīahbārbanīAyūb*. Even though Aigle says that this Chronicle is still in large part in manuscript condition, I found a full edition in five volumes done in Egypt in 1954-1961²⁹. However, Aigle affirms that we should not neglect the orally collected information and the personal notes of Barhebraeus in his last chapter. She speaks moreover about the possibility that Barhebraeus used Armenian contemporary historiographical works, even though this kind of reference is not mentioned in his preface. Anyway, Aigle did not try to examine this possibility in her study.

As for the connection between Juvaini's historiographical work and the Chronicles of Barhebraeus, it is worth mentioning the study of Borbone who compared a few passages of the Syriac Chronicle and Juvaini's book, but did not include the Arabic *Mūhtaṣar*³⁰. In general, The

in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Brosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015. Reference: K.U.Leuven – University Library.

²⁹ Ġamāl al-Dīn Šayyāl and Rabī' Ḥasanēn (ed.), [Ibn Wāšil], مفرج الكروب في أخبار بني أيوب *Mufarriğ al-KūrūbfīahbārbanīAyūb* [The History of Ayyubid], vol. i-v, Cairo: Ministry of Culture. Center for Editing and Publishing Arabic Manuscripts, 1954-1961. For a review of the third volume, see: Holt, Peter Malcolm, review of *Mufarrij al-kurūbfīahbārBanīAyyūb (History of the Ayyubids)*, by *Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Wāsil (d. 697 A. H./1298 A. D.). Vol. IV* by Rabī' Ḥasanēn in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, vol. 36(2) (1973): 515-516.

³⁰ Pier Giorgio Borbone, "Wooden Stirrups and Christian Khans: Bar 'Ebroyo's Use of Juwaynī's "History of the World

Syriac historiographer selects deliberately passages from Juvaini's book of varying length and leaves out others. As Borbone remarks in his study, digressions, remarks and anecdotes are usually neglected. Barhebraeus' use of Juvaini's Chronicle is, in the eyes of Borbone for the few passages that he had examined, a kind of 'reconstitution' which was motivated by an orientation for the Syriac Chronicle. Nonetheless, in his dependence on the work of Juvaini, Barhebraeus remains essentially true to his source with some nuances that reveal his excellent understanding for the original Persian. However, some partial omissions of the original text are not easily explained. Borbone emphasizes the importance of oral transmissions, personal reports and the assumptions of Barhebraeus to account for the variety, omissions, modifications that he applies to Juvaini's text.

Besides the work of Juvaini, and the possible sources mentioned above, I shall add another Islamic historiographical work to verify the eventual sources for the chosen text of this study. Naturally, the criterion of those works is that they are contemporary to Barhebraeus, consequently, they lived during the conquests of Hulagu and they had finished their work before the death of Barhebraeus in 1286. This work is the biographical dictionary of Ibn Khallīkān³¹: *وفيات الأعيان وأنباء أبناء الزمان* *wafīyāt al-a'yān wa'nbā'*

Conqueror" as a Source for his "Chronography" (Unpublished paper which is a revised version of: idem, "Barhebraeus e Juwaynī: Un cronistasiro et la sua fonte Persiana" in *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 27 (2004): 121-144.

³¹ His full name is Šams al-Dīn Abu al-'abbās. Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥallīkān. Born in Erbil (Iraq) in 1211 and died in Damascus (Syria) in 1282. He was appointed a judge (*qāḍī*) in Cairo and then Chief Judge Damascus by the Sultan Mamluk

abnā' al-zamān "Death of Eminent Men and History of the Sons of the Epoch". The work of Ibn Khallīkān was translated by Mac Guckin De Slane in 1842-1871³². The Arabic text was published by Iḥsān 'Abbās in eight volumes in 1972-1978³³.

Though the dependence of Barhebraeus on contemporary Armenian historiographical works is questionable, because of Barhebraeus' lack of knowledge of Armenian, I shall also suggest the possibility of dependence on those dealing with the same subject and were possibly available to Barhebraeus. Two potential historians would be examined compared to the section that I shall undertake thereafter. Firstly, is Kiarakos Ganjaketsi (1200/2-1271) who is one of the most important Armenian historiographer of the 13th century. Ganjaketsi had lived the Mongolian invasions of the region and was personally captivated by them. He composed a huge Chronicle on the History of Armenia (*Hayots Patmoutyouin*) which covers a millennium history of Armenians starting from the 4th century to his own time (13th

Baybars. His famous work is his biographical dictionary written in Arabic wherein he excluded the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, his Sahabah (companions), and all the Caliphs. Cf. J.W., Fück, "Ibn Khallīkān" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Brosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015. Reference: K.U. Leuven – University Library.

³² De Slane, Mac Guckin (trans.) [Ibn Khallikan], *كتاب وفيات الأعيان* [Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary: translated from the Arabic], vol. i-iv, Paris: Oriental Translation Fund for Great Britain and Ireland, 1842-1871.

³³ Iḥsān 'Abbās (ed.) [Ibn Khallikan], *كتاب وفيات الأعيان* [Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary], vol. i-viii, Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1972-1978.

century)³⁴. Another potential Armenian historiographer is VardanAreveltsi (1200-1271). Areveltsi has composed a huge corpus in Armenian, but he is known for his compilations and collections of material from previous authors. He composed a significant historical work known as Historical Compilation or Universal History (*HavakumPatrmoutyou*). This Chronicle starts from creation to 1267 and its most noticeable information in this book concerning the Mongols is the narrative of his visit to Hulagu's court and his personal conversations with him and with his wife Doquz Khatun³⁵.

6. Analytical comparison of the Syriac and the Arabic texts

The analytical study of our text proceeds in two domains: an attempt at the identification of the sources that Barhebraeus used, and a detailed comparison of the Syriac and Arabic chronicles. For the Arabic text, I am providing here my own translation; while for the Syriac text, I use the English translation of Budge, but the transmission of his

³⁴ See: Peter S. Crow, "Kirakos Ganjakec'I or Arwelec'I" in Thomas David, Alex Mallett, and others (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. iv, Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 438-442.

³⁵ See: Robert W. Thomson, "Vardan Arevelc'I" in Thomas David, Alex Mallett, and others (ed.), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. iv, Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 443-447; Edouard Dulaurier (trans.), "Les Mongols d'après des historiensarméniens : fragments traduits sur les textesoriginaux" in *Journal Asiatique*, 11 (1858): pp. 192-255, pp. 426-473, pp. 481-508 ; 16 (1860) : pp. 273-322; here 16 (1860), pp. 273-276. About the report of the personal visit of Areveltsti to Hulahu's court, see: Dulaurier, 16, pp. 300-306.

translation hereafter is according to a critical methodology comparing it with the Syriac original.

6.1. Textual comparing and source identification

In what follows, I try to realize a textual comparison for the selected section of both Chronicles. The compared text is divided into sequential parts to which I gave a title with a Latin alphabet letter from A to Z. The text is cited according the sequence of the original texts. I report only the entire texts of some passages:

A. Addition information about the name of the governor of Baghdad pointed out by Hulagu in the Syriac Chronicle.

Syriac	Arabic
And here begins the Eleventh Epoch ³⁶ [which passes] from the Arab kings to the kings of the Huns	The Tenth State is from the Arab Muslim Kings to the Mongol Kings
Hulagu, King of Kings and brother of Munga Khan the Great	Hulagu son of Tolui Khan
When the Caliph Musta'shim	When Hulagu had taken Baghdad and appointed Al-Şhani ³⁷ and the governors.

³⁶ Budge as far as Talon translates the word *Ḍabyūbōlōas* “dynasty”, I go for “epoch, period, or even succession”. Cf. *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 458; Budge, p. 433; Talon, p. 1.

³⁷ The “Şhani” are a sort of military police which ensure the control of a city on behalf of an authority. In certain periods, it may designate the commander of a group of soldiers. In the text of Barhebraeus, they are the special military commanders appointed by the Mongols in a city. Cf. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. viii, p. 416b; ix, p. 16a; ix, p. 454a. It is a Persian word in

was killed, the King of Kings
 appointed a certain man
 whose name was ‘AlīBaḥādūr
 to rule over Baghdad.

Comment: The beginning of this chapter is almost the same in both variants except for slight differences: the title of Hulagu “brother of Munga” in Syriac, “son of Toluy” in Arabic; besides that, his nickname is always “King of kings” in Syriac, “King of Earth” in Arabic. This latter is cited in Juvaini’s work as far as the Armenian sources. There is the citation of the Caliph Musta’sim in Syriac, and also the citation of the name of the governor of Baghdad appointed by Hulagu ‘AlīBaḥādūr, but not in Arabic. I did not find the name of this person appointed to govern Baghdad in any of the sources consulted for this study, whether Armenian or Arabic. The conquest of Baghdad and the murder of the Caliph Musta’sim is casually mentioned in the work of Ibn Wāṣil. He refers to this event briefly under a paragraph consecrated to relate the murder of the Zangid lord of Erbil, Mūẓaffar Al-DīnGökböru (1153-1232) by Badr Al-DīnLo’lo’³⁸ in 1232. At the end of this narrative Ibn Wāṣil reports this event as following:

“...he (the son of Mūẓaffar) reigned on behalf of the Caliph until that the King of Tatars [came] to Baghdad and killed

Payne-Smith’s dictionary, while it comes from an Arabic origin in Costaz’s one. Cf. Payne-Smith, p. 572; Costaz, p. 365.

³⁸ He is the last Zangid (one of Seljuk dynasties) Ruler of Mosul who could stay on his throne as a vassal to Hulagu. He died in 1259. See: Cahen, L., “Lu’lu’” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Brosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Brill Online, 2015. Reference: K.U.Leuven – University Library.

the Caliph Musta‘šim Aba Aḥmad ‘Abd Allah ibn Al-Mustansir Billāh, and the Tatars captured the countries”³⁹

- B.** Omission in the Arabic Chronicle of a whole story which concerns the Christians of Tikrit.

Syriac

And in this time of the war the Christians of Tikrit sent to the Catholicos and asked for a ruler to protect them, and a man who would take care of them was sent to them. And when the Tatars had gone, they⁴⁰ had killed the nobles of the Arabs⁴¹ and had plundered their rich possessions, all the Christians who were in the Green Church, which was dedicated in the name of Mar Aḥūdemēh, and which the Arabs had seized, had been concealed⁴², and they remained unharmed from the beginning of the [Lenten] Fast to the Sunday of Hosanna (Palm

Arabic

Omission

Omission

³⁹ Ibn Wāṣil, vol. v, p. 50.

⁴⁰ Budge added the adverb “now” before this sentence, which does not exist in the original Syriac.

⁴¹ Budge and Talon translate always ܐܪܒܝܝܢ *araboyē* by “Arabs”; it may have both meanings, “Arabs” and “Muslims”. Cf. Payne-Smith, p. 172. I prefer nevertheless the designation of “Muslims” by this word, as Barhebraeus uses also the word ܐܪܒܝܝܢ *araboyē* which means explicitly “Arabs”. However, the designation of Arabs or Muslims in the text of Barhebraeus is nearly synonymous.

⁴² Budge: had asylum; Cf. Budge, p. 433. Talon had neglected that translation of this verb; Cf. Talon, p. 1.

Sunday), which was the seventeen day of the month of March of the year fifteen hundred and sixty-nine of the Greeks (A.D. 1258). Then a certain wicked man, a Muslim, whose name was Bar Dūrī, calumniated the Christians to their governor, [saying]: “They have hidden away much treasure of the Muslims, the owners thereof having been killed, and they have given nothing to thee”. And when the governor questioned the Christians concerning this matter, they were unable to deny it, but they admitted it and brought everything before him, and he sent and made the matter known to the King of Kings. And the sentence of death went forth against the wretched people of Tikrit, according to the Law of Mongols. And a certain great chief was sent, together with an army of Tatars, and they began to take the Christians, twenty at a time, and they led them up to the citadel as if they would destroy it⁴³, and [there] they killed them. And this they continued to do [so] until they had made an end of all of them. None escaped except some old

⁴³ Budge: *pretending that they were going to demolish it*. Cf. Budge, p. 433.

man or some old women. The sons and daughters⁴⁴ were carried off into captivity. And the Arabs took the great Church again. Only two priests⁴⁵ from the village of Karmaḥ [near Tikrit] with a very few men who lived there, remained to pray in the rest of the churches. As for Bar Dūrī, the calumniator, a certain Christian whose name was Bihnām, and who had been governor of Tikrit, killed him.

Comment: This detailed story is completely omitted in the *Mūhtaṣar*. It is information concerning the Christians of Tikrit, tensions between them and the Muslims, and the attitude of the Mongolian authorities towards both of them. We can conclude from this tale that the Mongols were, at least at the time of this story, fiercely opposed to the Muslims and the Christians had a kind of privilege. Barhebraeus recounts that the Tatars killed the Arabs and plundered their possessions, and it seems that the Christians took the treasures of Muslims. This latter act was a reason to anger the Mongolian authorities against the Christians and finally they were also exterminated cruelly. In my opinion, the main idea of the forgoing passage can be ‘tensions and jealousy between Christians and Muslims in Tikrit during the Mongolian conquest’. As we can understand in the end of this tale, a Christian was appointed as a governor of Tikrit and he then revenged the killed Christians because of the gossip of Bar Dūrī, the Muslim, and he killed him.

⁴⁴ Budge: [their] sons and [their] daughters. Cf. Budge, p. 433.

⁴⁵ Budge: and two aged men. Cf. Budge, p. 433.

Barhebraeus intended presumably by this omission to accommodate Muslim ears.

- C. Parallel narrative of the first contact of Badr Al-Dīn, Ruler of Mossul with Hulagu, including more detailed information in the Arabic Chronicle

Comment: The information about the submission of Badr Al-DīnLo'lo' to Hulagu is almost the same in both Chronicles, but the story is much more detailed in the Arabic text with metaphors and description. Even though the significance of the oral message of Hulagu to Al-Malik Al-Šāliḥ is the same, the variant of the *Mūhtašaris* different and contains other details. The act of allegiance of Badr Al-DīnLo'lo' to Hulagu is mentioned casually in the work of Ibn Wāšil directly after his information about the conquest of Baghdad and the murder of its Abbasid Caliph:

*“And their King Al-ŠarīfTāğ Al-Dīn together with Badr Al-DīnLo'lo', lord of Mosul, went to Hulagu. Then the King of Tatars killed Al-Šarīf Ibn Šalāyā, because the lord of Mosul had advised him to do that. He said to him that Al-Šarīf desired the Caliphate. Then Badr Al-Dīn returned to Mosul, as we shall mention that later, God willing.”*⁴⁶

Badr Al-DīnLo'lo' is mentioned not less than ten narratives in Ibn Khallikan's Biographical Dictionary, but none thereof corresponds to the Barhebraeus' narrative⁴⁷.

- D. Two variants for the conquest of Miyafarqīn

⁴⁶ Ibn Wāšil, vol. v, pp.50-51.

⁴⁷ Cf. IbnKhallikan, vol. i, pp.181-184, 194, 409; vol. v., p. 92, 208, 391; vol. vii, p. 326, 335, 338.

Syriac

And at the time when Baghdad was taken, the Lord of Miyafarqīn, that is 'Ašraf, the son of the King Al-Ġāzī son of the King Al-'Ādel the Great, was meditating (or, was resolved on) rebellion in his heart. Now he had crucified a Syriac priest from the country of Beldīs, who had come to him from the Great Khan with Yarlīkh (i.e. a royal Mongolian permit) and had driven away the governors of Mongols from his Court. And he rose up and went to Damascus to Malik Nāšir and asked him for help, so that he might confront the Tatars⁴⁸, and might prevent them from making a descent on Syria, and, if possible, to kick them far away from Baghdad. But Malik Nāšir dismissed him with empty promises, and he returned to his city Miyafarqīn. And once he arrived, the armies of the Tatars surrounded him⁴⁹ encompassed his round about, and the bulls of Baishšan⁵⁰, 'Ašmūt, the son of

Arabic

[In the same year] Al-'Ašraf Ibn Al-Malik Al-Ġāzī Ibn Al-Malik Al-'Ādel, the Ruler of Miyafarqīn went to the King Al-Nāšir, the Ruler of Aleppo, asking him help to prevent the Mongols from entering to Syria. But he did not take his proposal seriously and did not listen to his suggestion. He rather put him off with words and dismissed him from his place in peace. And when he arrived in his town Miyafarqīn, he expelled the Mongol Šhanī from the city, and crucified a priest who had arrived to him on behalf of the Khan with a Bilyarlig⁵² and Al-Bawāiz⁵³. This being the situation, he was overtaken by the Mongol armies that encircled his city; Yešmūt, the son of Hulagu was at the head of the army. Within one day and night, the Mongols built a wall around his city and dug a deep trench; they then directed catapults against it and started to fight. On both sides,

⁴⁸ Budge: *so that he might engage the Tatars in battle*. This phrase is mistranslated by Budge according to me. Cf. Budge, 433; *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 459.

⁴⁹ Budge: *the armies of the Tatars encompassed his round about*. Cf. Budge, p. 434.

⁵⁰ Non-identified Mongol military name.

the King of Kings, being their captain. And they built a wall around the city, and they set up siege-engines⁵¹, and they began to make fierce war upon it from the outside, and those who were inside made war against them even more fiercely. And thus it (i.e. the city) remained unconquered for a space of two years. Then, after Baghdad was taken, the troops invested Miyafarqīn.

the fighting was very fierce. But when the Mongols perceived that they were not able to take the city by fighting, they stopped fighting, but encircled the [city] prohibiting the people to enter or to go out.

Comment: Our author reports in the text above, the fall of Miyafarqīn into the hands of Mongols. The narrative is almost the same in both of the Chronicles with some variations: the place of meeting between 'Ašraf, lord of

⁵² Bilyarlig: a royal Mongol order. Barhebraeus quoted this word identically as in his Syriac Chronicle and grammatically in accordance with Syriac and not Arabic. Cf. *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 459; *Arabic Chronicle*, p. 483.

⁵³ This word cannot be identified in the Arabic text, but it can take one of the two meanings: First, in accordance with the Syriac text, it may be the name of the village from which the murdered priest comes. It is Bitlis (ܒܝܬܠܝܫ) which is a town in south-eastern actual Turkey, south of Lake Van. However, the place of the name of the city in the Arabic text is grammatically inappropriate. Second, in accordance to the Chronicle of Ganjaketsi, it may designate the Christian fighter under the direction of a Christian prince named "Br'oš". Cf. *Dulaurier*, pp. 494-495.

⁵¹ Budge: *they set up strong towers in which to fight*. The Syriac word *ܩܠܩܘܡܘܬܐ* *qalqūmō* (siege-engines, entrenchments) derives from a Greek origin *κάλκωμα*. Cf. Costaz, p. 321; Payne-Smith, p. 508.

Miyafarqīn, and King Al-Nāšir was in Damascus in the Syriac, while we suppose that it was in Aleppo in the Arabic; the Syriac story ends with the entry of Mongol conquerors to Miyafarqīn after their siege and several battles, but the Arabic story does not include this information. Both of the two variants inform us that a Syriac priest was a delegate of Hulagu and had been sent to Al-'Ašraf. We may conclude from this notification the existence of a kind of collaboration between Christians and Hulagu. This collaboration is however obviously confirmed by the narrative of the conquest of Miyafarqīn in the work of Ganjaketsi, History of Armenia (*Hayots Patmoutyoun*). The facts mentioned in Barhebraeus' Chronicles are in conformity with that of Ganjaketsi, but the variant of this latter contains more details, but it does not mention the contact between 'Ašraf and King Al-Nāšir. However, it is difficult to determine if one of the two writers were relied on the other:

“...Après le sac de Bagdad, le grand Houlagou au retour du printemps convoqua ses troupes et les confia à son fils cadet, nommé Dchiachmouth...Il les envoya vers l'Euphrate comme partie de plaisir pour dévaster et piller ses contrées et les réduire. Comme ils passaient auprès de la ville des Martyres, autrement appelé Meīafarékīn, les habitants les appelèrent pour leur offrir leur soumission, leur proposer des troupes et le payement d'un tribut sous la condition qu'ils vivraient tranquilles. Le sultan auquel appartenait cette ville, et qui était de la famille des Adéliens, refusa de ratifier cette convention et ayant rassemblé ses troupes... ils envoyèrent annoncer à Houlagou la résistance de Martyropolis. Ce prince fit partir des forces considérables, qu'il confia à un grand général nommé Djagatai, arrivé précédemment avec des troupes Tatars et avec le prince chrétien Br'osch, surnommé Haçan, tous deux braves et illustres guerriers... la défense ne fut pas moins opiniâtre ;

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un grand nombre de Tatars et de chrétiens qui combattaient
avec eux furent tués... »⁵⁴

Moreover, Ibn Wāṣil had also casually mentioned the long-term siege of Miyafarqīn by the Mongols and then their conquest of this city. The transmission of Ibn Wāṣil reveals the opinion of a Muslim historiographer on the Mongols' invasion of a Muslim city and the defense of its leader against them. As far as the Armenian account, there is no mention for the appeal of the Lord of Miyafarqīn to King Al-Nāṣir to help him in this fight:

“... And then the rule of Miyafarqīn had been moved to the King Al-KāmilNāṣr Al-Dīn Mūḥammad son of the King MūẓaffarŠihāb Al-Dīn. He remained its ruler till that the Mongols captured it after that they had sieged it for a long time. He bore patiently and hardly and he did a great Jihad with God's support. No king did a similar jihad ever. May God have mercy upon him! Then the Mongols captured the city and he died as martyr. May God have mercy upon him! May God be pleased with him!”⁵⁵

E. Contact between Hulagu and the King Al-Nāṣir and additional elements in the Arabic Chronicle.

Syriac

And ambassadors from the King of Kings began to come frequently to Malik Nāṣir demanding that he should go to

Arabic

In the year 657, Hulagu had sent Iliġbia⁵⁶ to the King Al-Nāṣir, Ruler of Aleppo with a letter saying: “Let the King Al-

⁵⁴ *Dulaurier*, pp.493-495.

⁵⁵ Ibn Wāṣil, vol. v, pp.345-346.

⁵⁶ Non-identified Mongolian word, but according to the Syriac text, *Iliġbia* signifies most probably “ambassador”, similar to the word mentioned in Syriac ܐܠܝܓܒܝܐ *īzġādō*. Cf. *Chronicon Syriacum*, p. 459; *Arabic Chronicle*, p. 484.

his service (i.e. acknowledge his lordship).

Nought

Nāsir know that we have entered Baghdad in the year 656 and we have conquered it with the sword of God Almighty and we brought its ruler [before us] and asked him two questions, but he did not reply to our request. Therefore, he deserved the torture from us; as it is said in your Koran that *God do not change something in a nation until this latter changes itself*⁵⁷.

He saved the money, but he had this fate

He replaced the precious spirits by villainous metallic coins.

And this was evident by the

Nought

⁵⁷ It is a quotation from a verse in the Quran: Chapter 13: 11 (سورة له معقبات من بين يديه Al-Ra‘d). The whole verse is the following: *ومن خلفه يحفظونه من أمر الله إن الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بأنفسهم وإذا أراد الله بقوم سوءًا فلا مرد له وما لهم من دونه من وال* (For him [the Messenger] is a succession of angels before him and behind him; they guard him by the command of Allah. Surely, Allah will not change not the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah wishes to punish a people, there is no repelling it, nor have they any helper beside him). It is worth to mention that the body of text contains also other koranic citations, although these are not explicitly mentioned as the case of this verse. Cf. Denise Aigle, “Les correspondances adressées par Hülegü au prince ayyoubide de Syrie, al-Malik al-Nāsir Yūsuf : La construction d’un modèle” in M.-A. Moezzi and J.-D. Dubois (ed.), *Pensée grecque et sagesse d’Orient. Hommage à Michel Tardieu*, Bibliothèque de l’École pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sciences religieuses 142, Turnhout : Brepols, 2009, pp. 25-45, here, pp. 36-37.

word of the almighty God:
 They found what they did,
 present [in front of them]
 Because we have reached, by
 God's force, the volition⁵⁸
 We are becoming more
 numerous by his support
 We are without doubts the
 soldiers of God in his earth
 He created us and gave us
 mastery over those God's wrath
 have descended.
 Let what happened to you in the
 past be a warning to you
 And what we are mentioning
 and telling [you here] be a
 rebuke for you.
 The fortresses do not resist in
 our hands
 The soldiers are null in front of
 us
 Your invocations [to God]
 against us will never be granted
 or heard
 Learn lessons from others and
 surrender (your affairs) to us
 Before the cover be uncovered
 and God's wrath descend on
 you
 Because we have no mercy
 upon who make complaints and
 we are not tender toward who
 weep
 We have already ruined the
 countries and executed the
 people

Nought

⁵⁸ Or "Determination".

We have orphaned the children
 and devastated the earth
 You must escape and we have
 to ask [you to do so]
 You have no salvation from our
 swords
 No escape from our arrows
 Our horses are advancing and
 our arrows are tearing
 Our swords are [as] bolts and
 our minds are as mountains
 Our number is like the sand
 Who gave up, was saved and
 who wanted the war with us,
 regretted it.
 If you obey our order and
 accept our condition you may
 have your rights and we may
 have our duties
 If you ignore our order and
 exceed your transgression
 Don't reproach us, but reproach
 yourself
 Oh unjust ones, God is against
 you!
 Prepare the *jilbabs* for your
 mischance, and soils for your
 miserable ones!
 Because whosoever forewarns
 [in advance a misfortune] is
 excusable⁵⁹
 And he does justice whosoever
 caution
 Because you ate the unlawful
 and forsook the faith
 You showed the fads and you

⁵⁹ Arabic proverb.

And because his nobles did not approve of his going, he made an arrangement, and sent his son Malik ‘Azīz with treasures, and offerings, and large gifts in the autumn of the year fifteen hundred and seventy of the Greeks (A.D. 1259), and he remained there the whole winter. And in the spring, he came back to Aleppo after the Feast of Resurrection, and said to his father: “The King of Kings commanded me and said: We have not asked for thee, but thy father. Therefore, if it is to be peace, let him come [to me], and if not, we will come to him”. And Malik Nāṣir continued to be unable to move through two obstacles: it came to him that he could not sit still because of [his] fear of the Tatars, and he could not move lest his nobles and slaves should revolt against him and kill him. And he became terror-stricken and stupefied.

liked the pedophilia⁶⁰

Therefore, you will be humiliated and despised

You will find today what you have expected

The unjust ones know what kind of punishment they will receive

You considered us as infidels and we consider you as licentious

We will impose on you those who have the determination and firmness

Your noble is as servile for us, and your rich is as poor for us

We are the Rulers of the earth from the east to the west

We are the owners of booties by pillage and sack

We took every ship by force

Therefore, reflect in your minds the right ways [you should take]

Before that the fire of disbelief catches [you] and throws its sparks [on you]

It will accordingly let no one of you alive

And will empty the earth from your [race]

We are warning you by sending you this letter

So, hurry to answer us

⁶⁰ Or “homosexuality”. It may have the two interpretations: فسق *fisq* بالصبیان *bilṣūbiān* «the bawdiness with guys or kids». Cf. *Arabic Chronicle*, p. 485.

Before that torment comes unexpectedly
 And you are certain of that
 And [Hulagu] asked him to come to [his court]. After he consulted his princes, they don't let him to go to Hulagu, and he remained perplexed, afraid and terrified without knowing what he should do. Nevertheless, he asked God for guidance and sent his son the King Al-'Azīz taking with him a great quantity of money, gifts and presents. The latter has stayed there (at the court of Hulagu) from the beginning of the winter to the spring, then he came back to his father, saying: "The King of the earth said: "we asked the King Al-Nāṣir [to come], not his son; now, if his heart is right with us, he should come to us, otherwise, we shall come to him". When the King Al-Nāṣir heard that, he remained hesitating because the princes did not let him go to Hulagu; fear and dread befell him and he did not calm down.

Comment: The Syriac account of the contact between Hulagu and the King Al-Nāṣir is substantially shorter than the Arabic one, and this latter contains additional elements, especially the letter sent by Hulagu and his ambassadors to Al-Nāṣir, the Lord of Aleppo. At the end of the Syriac text, Barhebraeus details more reasons why Al-Nāṣir could not go

personally to the court of Hulagu in Baghdad. The letter is quite long and the Arabic text is related in a poetic form, using metaphors, proverbs and symbols, besides of its rhythmic style. But what is extraordinary in the letter of Hulagu is that he quoted from the Quran. Evident from the language of this letter is the Islamic terminology and the hand of a Muslim believer: God is omnipresent in the text, e.g., God is often mentioned in the usual form found in Islamic texts: الله تعالى *Allahūta'ālā* "Almighty God"; and the terms: "God's force", "God's wrath", "sword of God", "soldiers of God" etc., and the author warns about the punishment of God against the unjust: "*Oh unjust ones, God is against you!*", "*The unjust ones know what kind of punishment they will receive*". Furthermore, God is the reference for the acts and the victories of Hulagu; if this latter won his wars and conquered such territories, it was by the support of God. Depending on this letter attributed to Hulagu, he above all warns Al-Nāṣir and threatens him with a ferocious attack in case this latter does not submit to his authority and Hulagu puts a condition that Al-Nāṣir should make this act of allegiance personally.

I wonder if we can spot a late formulation in this letter regarding the conquest of Hulagu, because this conquest was seen mostly in the letter as 'God's wrath or punishment' and deemed a result of moral and religious decay. The author cites the religious "disbelief" of Al-Nāṣir and other moral sins. This conclusion is often observed in the post-conquest historical works in Middle-East, also in the Christian historiographies of the post-Islamic conquests. We may also conclude comprehensively from the description of Mongols' wars and conquests in the letter that it was clearly done after those wars were perpetuated, and they were already a matter of fact, e.g., "*Our number is like the sand*"

“Who gave up, was saved and who wanted the war with us, regretted it” “We are the Rulers of the earth from the east to the west” and so on.

We dispose a special study on this correspondence between Hulagu and Al-Nāṣir done by Denise Aigle not long ago⁶¹. This letter had been transmitted in at least eleven sources, but according to Aigle, Barhebraeus, in his transmission in the Arabic Chronicle, is to be the first one and the only the facts contemporary, the other ten are posterior, which leads to suppose that Barhebraeus did not rely on other source to transmit this letter, he did it probably by his direct access to the Ilkhanate’s administration in Maragheh. According to later Persian historiographers who had also transmitted this letter, it would be the famous Muslim Persian scholar Naṣīr Al-Dīn Al-Ṭūṣī who was the redactor of this letter on behalf of Hulagu. This information approves the observation above of Islamic character which is quite clear in the text. The later transmission by Persian historiographers contains additional paragraphs and addition koranic citations.

- F.** Parallel narrative of the submission of Sultan of Seljuk Rums ‘Īzz Al-Dīn and his brother Rūkn Al-Dīn with slight variety and additional information.

Comment: Both stories relate the same information which is the submission of the Seljuk rulers in Minor Asia to Hulagu.

⁶¹ Denise Aigle, “Les correspondances adressées par Hülegü au prince ayyoubide de Syrie, al-Malik al-NāṣirYūsuf: La construction d’un modèle” in M.-A. Moezzi and J.-D. Dubois (ed.), *Pensée grecque et sagesse d’Orient. Hommage à Michel Tardieu*, Bibliothèque de l’École pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sciences religieuses 142, Turnhout : Brepols, 2009, pp. 25-45.

This submission was peacefully. The Syriac text has more details about the seats of the two brothers ‘Īzz Al-Dīn and Rūkn Al-Dīn. But what is noticeable is that there is an inversion of the distribution of territories between the two Chronicles: ‘Īzz Al-Dīn was appointed for the territories of Rūkn Al-Dīn in the Arabic text and vice versa. Information concerning the Christians is omitted in the Arabic text, namely, the visit of the Sultan ‘Īzz Al-Dīn to the Monastery of Barṣāwmō and his promises to the Patriarch Mar Dionysius of benefactions. We are not able to determine the nature of these benefactions and to which they are linked. It is worthy to mention that the word ܐܘܪܘܟܝܢ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢ can be also interpreted as “goods, incomes, or rewards”.

G. Identical mention of the death of Badr Al-DīnLo’lo’ and his succession

Comment: we have here identical citation of the death of the lord of Mosul Lo’lo’ and the inheritance of his kingdom into his three sons, but in the Arabic variant, there is the adjective “merciful” for Badr Al-DīnLo’lo’.

H. Two variants of the conquest of Hulagu in Syria and Upper-Mesopotamia with some omissions

Syriac

And in the year six hundred and fifty-eight of the Arabs (A.D. 1259), which is the year fifteen hundred and seventy-one of the Greeks (A.D. 1260), in the autumn season, the King of Kings came down with troops, four hundred thousand horsemen, to the countries of Mesopotamia. He encamped first of all against Harran, and

Arabic

In the year 658, the IlkhānHulagu entered Syria with four hundred thousand of soldiers and he descended upon Harran himself and conquered it safely, as well as Edessa where nobody had any harm.

But the people of Sūrūḡ were

[the citizens] surrendered it peacefully and remained unharmed. The citizens of Edessa did the same. The citizens of Serūgh did not send a safe-conduct asking⁶² a pledge of security for their lives, so they were all killed. And the King of Kings commanded, and bridges were tied together over the Euphrates at Malatya, at Qal'at al-Rūm, at Birah, and at Circesium (Oshoene), and the troops crossed over into Syria, together with the King of Kings himself, with whom was Doquz Khatun, the believing queen and lover of Christ. And a great slaughter took place in the city of Mabbugh (Manbij), and fighting troops were posted against the fortress of Birāh, against the forteress of Qal'at Najm, against Qal'at Ja'bar, and Calonicus, and Balesh⁶³, and all the people who were in them were killed. And the first troops few in number came to the neighborhood of Aleppo, and Malik Mu'azam, an old man, the son of Saladin the Great, sallied out and to attack them;

killed totally because they had disobeyed the orders of Mongols. Hulagu continued his progress and built a bridge on the Euphrates near Malatya and other one near the Qal'at al-Rūm, and third one by Circesium.

Omission

All the soldiers crossed [the river] and killed a lot of people in Manbij. Then the soldiers were parted, [some appointed for] the cities and [others for] the castles. Some of them went to take Aleppo. Malik Mu'azam, the son of the Great Saladin went out to meet with them, and he submitted himself to the Mongols and entered the city defeated. Some of them arrived to Al-Ma'arrat and destroyed it. [But] they took Hama and Homs safely.

⁶² Budge: *who did not send [ambassadors], demanded a pledge of security for their lives.*

⁶³ I could not identify these places except Qal'atNajm and Qal'atJa'bar which are fortresses on the Euphrates.

but he was broken and fled into Aleppo. And the Tatars passed on and to ravage city of Ma'arrat. Then, they went against Hama and [the citizens] surrendered it in peace, as well as [the citizens] of Homs did.

Comment: Barhebraeus gives more military details, as far as names of cities and fortresses, in the Syriac text. But the most noticeable is the omission in the Arabic text of a mention concerning the Christian wife of Hulagu Doquz Khatun “*the believing queen and lover of Christ*”; he describes favorably her Christian faith. Furthermore, the dating is double in Syriac variant: according to Greek calendar and according to Hijri calendar, while it is only according to Hijri in Arabic.

I. Continuation of the conquest of Syria in Damascus and Aleppo and the fortress of Harem with additional information in the Syriac Chronicle

Syriac

And Malik Nāṣir took his wives, his sons and his slaves, and went forth from Damascus, and he fled to the desert of Karak and Shoubak. And the Tatars went against Damascus, and the lords thereof surrendered it in peace and no evil thing happened to them. But the King of Kings in person encamped against Aleppo. And he commanded and walls were built outside all-

Arabic

When this [news] was reached the King Al-Nāṣir, he took his children, wives, and everything precious to him and went to the desert of Al-Karak and Shoubak⁶⁷. When the Mongols arrived in Damascus, the notables went out and they handed it over (to them) safely. So, no one had any harm. But Hulagu himself descended upon Aleppo, built

around of the great wall⁶⁴ of Aleppo. And the Tatars began to make fierce war and in a few days, they were masters over all walls from the side of Iraq Gate. And they entered Aleppo on the first day of the week which introduces the Fast of Nineveh in the month of January of the year above mentioned. And there took place in Aleppo a slaughter like unto that of Baghdad, only more [terrible]. And because they had destroyed the upper portions of the walls of our church in which were the citizens of Baalbek, I, the feeble one, who was Metropolitan thereof, by fear for these [citizens], sallied forth to go to offer fealty to the King of Kings, and I was shut up in Qal'atNajm. Our believers who were among the population of Aleppo remained without a head. And the greater number of them assembled in the church of the Greeks. And the Tatars attacked them and killed them and made captives of their families. And finally, Tōrōs, the Armenian priest, the son of the brother of the Catholicos⁶⁵ Mor

a trench [around it], erected catapults, weakened a place in its wall, precisely at the Iraq Gate and intensified fighting and marching against it. Within a few days, [the Mongols] could enter and took over power; [and that was] on Sunday 23rd of December of the same year. In Aleppo, more people were killed than Baghdad.

Omission

After that, they took the Citadel [of Aleppo] very quickly.

Then, Hulagu left Aleppo and

⁶⁷ These are two castles in west-central of actual Jordan.

⁶⁴ Budge: the whole of the great circuit.

⁶⁵ Budge had neglected this word.

Constantine⁶⁶, and the monk Kūrāk, went in and liberated all those whom they found alive, and they collected them in our church. Having taken the city, the Tatars rose up and made war on the Citadel and they took it also in peace.

And from there the King of Kings went against Harem, and he asked [the citizens] to surrender, and [said that] he would swear to them that he would not harm them. But these fools replied: "Though you are King, your religion (or, Confession) is not known. By what are we to make you swear? If FaḥrAl-Dīn, the governor of the fortress of Aleppo, will swear to us that you will not harm us, then we will come down." And the King of Kings commanded FaḥrAl-Dīn, who went and swore to them. And they opened the gates of the fortress and came down. And the King of Kings commanded, and they were all killed, men and women, sons, daughters, also sucking children; and none escaped except a blacksmith Armenian. And they also killed that FaḥrAl-Dīn who had sworn to them, because Walī Al-Dīn,

besieged the fortress of Harem, suggesting [at first] that they hand it over to him, so as to spare their lives; but they did not trust his words and asked that a Muslim person would commit himself to them, that he would be a follower of the Shari'a, who could be trusted, so that he could swear on the Koran that no evil would affect them, so, they would come down and deliver the castle to them. Hulagu asked them: who do you want to swear for you? They replied: FaḥrAl-Dīn, the Walī of the Citadel of Aleppo, because he is an honest, faithful, and a good [man]. Then, Hulagu asked this person [to do that], indeed, he entered near to them and swore by all they wanted. At that time, they opened the gates and a lot of people got out [from the castle], and the Mongols took possession of it. [Despite that], Hulagu proceeded to kill firstly the Walī FaḥrAl-Dīn, then everybody who was in the castle, young people, old men, men, women, even the babies in cradles!

⁶⁶ He is Constantine 1st, Catholicos of the Apostolic Armenian Church from 1221-1267.

the son of Ṣāfī Al-Dīn, a nobleman from Aleppo, made an accusation against him, saying, “It was he who killed my father and my brothers, and who said to them: Surrender the city so that you may not die by the sword”.

Comment: Barhebraeus recounted here his personal testimony of this event. He lived it as Bishop of his Church in Aleppo. Therefore, the possibility of dependence on another source is diminished. The content of this narrative is mainly the same, but the author omitted, once again, a detail concerning the Christians: they were having taken refuge in the Church, his exit to offer fealty to Hulagu in order to save the life of those who were in the Church, his captivity by Mongols into Qal’atNajm, and finally the liberation of the people by the intervention of two Armenian religious-men. The dating of this event is not the same: 23rd December in Arabic; while in Syriac, it was around mid-January. The presence of people from Baalbek in the Church is incomprehensible; why were they in Aleppo at this moment? Baalbek is far at almost 300 km from Aleppo. Barhebraeus refers about two kinds of people in this story: the people of Baalbek and the followers of Syriac Orthodox Church. The intervention of Armenians confirms one more time their collaboration with the Mongols and their privileged status. After this omission, the narrative goes on to relate the conquest of the fortress of Harem. The main information is the same in both chronicles, but we can observe that the Arabic variant is more adapted to an Islamic language: the use of the adjective “Muslim”, the word “Shari’a”, and by specifying the oath on the Koran. The Syriac variant gives us

the reason why the intermediate person FaḥrAl-Dīn was also killed together with the rest of the people.

The conquest of Aleppo and other cities in Syria was mentioned in Ganjaketsi's Chronicle. But, it is more probable that the dependence was from Ganjaketsi on Barhebraeus's narrative. The information mentioned in the Armenian Chronicle is very close to that of Barhebraeus, but it is less detailed. Furthermore, the intervention of the Armenian male religious to save the life of the fugitive people in the Syriac Orthodox church is not mentioned.

J. The returning of Hulagu to the East and the fall of Miyaḥarqīn and the murder of Al-Nāṣir, its ruler.

Comment: there is no important difference between the two variants. Both inform the fall of Miyaḥarqīn and the murder of Al-'Aṣraf by Hulagu. We observe also in this account the personal statement of Barhebraeus where he inserts a story that he had personally heard. We have also repeated quotation about the siege of that city which caused a great famine among its inhabitants. The Syriac text relates a story of this famine that Barhebraeus heard it personally. Perhaps, this story seemed to be unimportant to Barhebraeus to write it down in his Arabic Chronicle. Furthermore, Barhebraeus related an additional information in the Arabic text, that is the regret of Hulagu of having killed Al-'Aṣraf.

K. Similar narrative of the conquest of Mardin

Comment: There is no important variation to mention between the two texts. Both relate the narrative of the conquest of Mardin. Barhebraeus mentions the ruler of Mardin, but without his name, while his son is mentioned by

his name. The ruler of Mardin had neglected the request – transmitted by his son - of Hulagu to do the act of allegiance personally, which caused the dispatch of Mongolian troops to conquer Mardin. This conquest was not to be possible without the epidemic that had been occurred during the siege of Mardin. Barhebraeus accounted God for this epidemic in the Syriac text.

L. Parallel citation of the Captivation of King Al-Nāṣir and the defeat of Mongols in the famous battle of ‘Ayn Jālūt with an omission concerning Christians

Syriac

Now Kitbuga searched diligently and found the place where Malik Nāṣir was hidden in the desert and he sent a force against him and it captured him, and took him and brought him to him, and with very great care Kitbuga sent him to the King of Kings. And when he Malik Nāṣir went to him, he received him gladly, and honored him, and promised to send him back again to his kingdom.

And in those days Rabān Simeon, the priest and physician and the son of the deceased priest RabānYēšū‘, who was a native of Qal‘at al-Rūm⁶⁸, was

Arabic

Kitbuga, the leader of Mongol soldiers in Damascus, had never stopped enquiring for news about the King Al-Nāṣir, who got away in the desert, till he knew his place; so, he sent some soldiers to catch him and bring him to Hulagu. When he stood in front of Hulagu, the latter received him gladly and promised him all what is good and beautiful, and that he will reappoint him for his kingdom; that was when he was in the mountains of Taq (?).

⁶⁸ Budge: *And in those days RABBAN SIMEON the Elder and physician, the son of RABBAN ISHO' the Elder, deceased, who was a native of KAL'AH RHOMAITA.*

taken into the service of the King of Kings, Hulagu. He flourished and prospered greatly, and he was beloved by all the sons of the kings and by the queens. And he possessed royal dwellings⁶⁹, gardens, plantations, towers in Maragheh, and his income yearly was five thousand dinars, from Babil (Baghdad), 'Athor (Assyria), Cappadocia, and from Maragheh. The remnant of our people obtained through his help, great lifting up of the head⁷⁰, and honour. And our Church⁷¹ acquired stability and protection in every place.

Then when Qutuz the Turk, who reigned in Egypt, heard that the King of Kings had gone away, and that Malik Nāṣir had been taken and sent to him, and that Kitbuga alone with ten thousand men remained in Palestine. He collected the armies of Egypt and sallied forth and met the Tatars in battle in the plain of Baishan, before Mount Tabor. And the Tatars were broken and Kitbuga himself was killed in the battle, and his sons were carried away

Omission

(While they were doing that), the news arrived that Qutuz⁷² the Turkoman, who reigned in Egypt, had heard that Hulagu had returned to the East, whereas Kitbuga remained in Syria with ten thousand horsemen, he enfeebled him by bringing together many soldiers; and he went forth to defeat and kill him and captivated his sons. That happened on twenty-seven of Ramadan of the year 658.

⁶⁹ Budge: *he possessed dwellings like those of kings.*

⁷⁰ A term to express "a lot of respect and honour".

⁷¹ Budge: the Church.

⁷² He is the third Mamluk Sultan of Egypt from the Bahri dynasty. His reign lasted one year from 1259 to 1260.

prisoners on the twenty-seventh day of the ninth month of the Arabs, in the year six hundred and fifty-eight of their reckoning (A.D. 1259).

Comment: Both texts concern the Mongolian pursuit of Malik Nāṣir who fled to the desert of Karak and Shoubak. Kitbuga, the commander appointed by Hulagu in Damascus, had caught him and sent him to Hulagu. Despite the fact that Malik Nāṣir did not fulfill the demand of Hulagu to go and submit personally, Hulagu had gladly received him and promised him to be returned to his throne. Furthermore, Barhebraeus did not inform us why Hulagu returned to the East after his victories in Syria, but other sources inform us that this was because of the death of the Great Khan Möngeke. The Mamluk Sultan of Egypt Qutuz had taken advantage of this occasion to defeat the Mongol's army under the leadership of Kitbuga in the Battle of 'Ayn Jālūt in 1260⁷³. This battle had stopped the Mongol's extension into Muslim lands. Furthermore, this battle is mentioned in Ibn Khalikan's *Bibliographical Dictionary*, but it is evident that there is no correspondence between his work and that of Barhebraeus. In addition, this event is also mentioned in Ganjaketsi's *Chronicle*. Similarly, we cannot observe a transmission between him and Barhebraeus. He gives a different number of soldiers remaining with Kitbuga in Damascus (20 thousands), and he informs us that Armenian and Georgian troops had fought side by side with Mongols against Qutuz's forces, and they had been perished in this famous battle⁷⁴. In addition, we can observe the same account in Vardan Areveltsi's *Chronicle*. It seems that

⁷³ The date is miscalculated in Budge's translation.

⁷⁴ Cf. Dulaurier, 11, pp. 498-499.

Areveltsi had relied on Ganjaketsi's Chronicle for the narrative of this battle, because their text is quite similar⁷⁵.

Our author had inserted, in the middle of the Syriac narrative, information concerning a Christian priest and physician. This information was totally omitted in the Arabic text. The Syriac doctor, Rabān Simeon, was in the service of the Palace of Hulagu; this latter was very satisfied with his service. Therefore, the Syriac priest had obtained a lot of privileges which brought favor upon his community and his Church. This information is a clue to the good relationships between the Mongolian authority and the Syriac Christians.

M. The murder of Malik Nāṣir through a personal transmission of Barhebraeus

Comment: The main information is the same in the two variants, but what is remarkable in the preceding extract is that Barhebraeus relates the narrative of the murder of Malik Nāṣir and his companions as being based on a testimony that he had heard personally from a survivor of this murder MūḥyīAl-Dīn Al-Maḡrībī, who would be later a scientist in Maragheh astronomical observatory founded by Naṣīr Al-Dīn Al-Ṭūṣī under the patronage of Hulagu. Although the event is very well dated in the two Chronicles, Barhebraeus gives a very detailed dating with astronomical data in the Syriac text (*when the moon was in the tetragonal of Hermes*). This is a proof that this oral transmission had really occurred between the astronomer and our author. This transmission can be also a proof of the frequenting by Barhebraeus of this Mongolian scientific center as he had declared in the beginning of *Chronicon Syriacum*.

⁷⁵ Cf. Dulaurier, 16, pp. 294.

Moreover, we cannot discern, according to the narrative of Barhebraeus, the link between the defeat of Kitbuga facing the Sultan Mamluk Qutuz and the decision of Hulagu to exterminate the Ayyubid Ruler Malik Nāšir. In fact, many Ayyubid sources report that Malik Nāšir had several times sought an alliance with the Mamluk Qutuz, nevertheless, Hulagu had forgiven this ‘treason’ when Malik Nāšir was delivered to him. But when Hulagu learned about the disastrous battle, his entourage accused Nāšir of being a traitor and this was the reason for putting him to death⁷⁶.

The murder of Malik Nāšir is related in Ibn Khallikan’s work, but the narrative of Barhebraeus, based on a personal transmission, is much longer and more detailed compared to Ibn Khallikan’s transmission. The date of the murder is slightly different, Barhebraeus: 20th of Šawwāl, Ibn Khalik: 23rd of Šawwāl:

“...And the Tatars wanted to attack him and they conquered Syria, therefore, he went out from Damascus in Šafar in the year 658, and he was killed on the twenty-third of Šawwāl in the year 658 near Maragheh in Azerbaijan according to someone who informed me this, Allah knows best! this story is very known”⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See: Stephen R. Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260*, New York: State University of New York Press. 1977, pp. 345-346, 357-358.

⁷⁷ Ibn Khallikan, vol. iv, p. 10.

N. Some different nuances regarding Kublai Khan in the narrative of his seating

Syriac
**Concerning the seating of
Kublai Khan on the throne of
the Kingdom of Mongols**

At this time a certain great king among the kings of the Šīnēyē (Chinese), or Ḥaṭā, who are also called Manzōyē, rebelled against the Mongols etc.

...And the kingdom remained the peculiar possession of Kublai Khan, the just and wise king and lover of the Christians; and he honored the men of books, and the learned men, and the physicians of all nations.

Arabic
**The seating of Kublai Khan
on the throne of the kingdom**

From this date, some kings of Ḥaṭā⁷⁸ rebelled and revolted against the Mongols etc.

...on the other side, Kublai Khan increased in power, and he was just, wise, sage, and a good manager. He also loved the wise, the scholars and religious people from all confessions and nations. It was said about him that he has few sexual relations with women, and he was moderate and balanced in his desires, in his drinking, pleasures and entertainment. Apart from the more refined (portions) he did not eat meat, unlike the other Mongol communities.

Comment: Here we have the next section in this chapter dedicated to Kublai Khan, the successor of the Great Khan Möngeke. The narrative concerning the succession is identical in the two Chronicles. This succession was marked by conflict between the two brothers, Kublai and AriqBöke concerning taking the throne of the Great Khan Möngeke

⁷⁸ From Ḥaṭā which is a geographical name in Syriac designating China.

who was killed during the fighting against the rebellious Chinese. This conflict lasted for seventeen years, and finally Kublai won and became the Emperor. At the end of the narrative, Barhebraeus praises Kublai for a set of good qualities. Although the praise in Arabic is longer with more qualities, one of his values, mentioned in Syriac, is missing: “Lover of Christians”. Kublai is rather lover of “religious people from all confessions and nations” in Arabic. Apart from his consideration given to the sciences and scientists, Barhebraeus notes further moral qualities concerning his sexual relations, drinking and meat eating. Moreover, the report of the death of Hulagu and his wife Doquz Khatun is more revealing later in this section. Barhebraeus was clearly more neutral in the Arabic text, while he expressed his admiration of these two Mongol rulers in the Syriac text where he makes mention of such good qualities. The good qualities of Hulagu are incomparable and the death of Doquz Khatun caused great sadness for the Christians all over the world. Hulagu and Doquz were “two great lights” and they made Christianity triumphant. On the other hand, the qualities of those two persons summed up by their love and encouragement of science and scientists:

Syriac

And in the year fifteen hundred and seventy-six of the Greeks (A.D. 1265), in the days which introduced the Fast of Nineveh, Hulagu, King of Kings, departed from this world. The wisdom of this man, his greatness of soul, and his wonderful actions are incomparable. And in the days of summer Doquz Khatun, the believing queen, departed, and

Arabic

In the year 664, Hulagu died. He was aged and patient and a person of knowledge and wisdom who loved the wise and the learned. A little later, his wife Doquz Khatun died. She too was great in knowledge and experience.

great sorrow came to all the Christians throughout the world because of the departure of these two great lights, who made the Christian religion triumphant.

This admiration of Hulagu and Doquz Khatun is largely observed among the Armenian historiographers, having treated the Mongols, whether they are contemporary to Barhebraeus or posterior to him. As for the Armenian sources, contemporary to Barhebraeus, one only needs to examine the work of Arevtisi's Chronicle to discover this attitude⁷⁹.

- O.** Similar information about the murder of Qutuz and the rise of the Mamluk Baybars with missing information concerning the Christians

Syriac

Qutuz, having killed Kitbuga ruled over Damascus, and over Aleppo, and over all Syria, and he appointed a governor over every town and jurists. And he moved his camp that he might invade Egypt, and prepare armies, and go forth again to meet in battle the whole force of the Tatars. And whilst he was on the road, and had arrived in the neighborhood of Gaza, Baybars, that is Bindiqdār the Younger, the slave of BBindiqdār the Elder,

Arabic

As to Qutuz the Turkman, the ruler of Egypt, after having killed Kitbuga and seized Damascus, he established Šhanīand commanders in Aleppo, Damascus, and every town all over Syria. Then, he went back to Egypt that to gather armies there and to make himself valiant and strong for the encounter with the Mongols. And when he arrived in the neighborhood of Gaza, Baybars, who was known as the Younger Bindiqdār, the slave of

⁷⁹ See for example: Dulaurier, 16, pp. 291-293 and so on.

rose up against him and killed him. And he went into Egypt and made himself governor thereof, and he was called Malik ZāhirRūkn Al-DīnAnd at [that] time the lord of Sinjar, that is ‘Ala’ Al-Dīn, the son of BadrAl-Dīn, the lord of Mosul, fled to him and he gave him Aleppo. And the Christians of the sea-coast suffered great tribulation from Bindiqdār, and continue to do so to this day, for he was master of all their fortresses, only Acre and Tripoli and Tyre were left to them.

the Elder Bindiqdār, rose up against him (Qutuz), killed him and took a group [of soldiers] with him and entered Egypt, took it and established himself firmly (there). The called him Rūkn Al-Dīn the King Al-Zāhir. He increased in power and reigned over all the cities and castles in the coast which were under the control of the Franks.

Comment: there is no extraordinary remark to observe about the narrative concerning the murder of Qutuz by the Mamluk Baybars and the rise in power of this latter. Nevertheless, Barhebraeus does not relate his persecutions against Christians in the Arabic text, as it was included in the Syriac one. But what is outstanding to say is that those concerned Christians are in fact the Crusaders states along the Eastern sea-coast of the Mediterranean. They were mentioned as “Franks” in Arabic. Accordingly, Barhebraeus does not distinguish the Crusaders from other local Christians; he just mentioned them as “Christians” in Syriac.

This murder is mentioned in the work of Ibn Khallikan, but it is clear that there is no close similarity with the Chronicles of Barhebraeus:

“And the mentioned Al-Malik Al-Zāhir [Baybars] is one of the Mamluk of Al-Malik Al-ṢaliḥNağm Al-Dīn..., he took the

Comparing The Syriac and Arabic Chronicles of 261
kingdom after the murder of Al-Malik Al-Muẓaffar Sayf Al-Dīb Qutuz Ibn ‘Abd Allah Al-Ma‘zī in the year 658. He had killed Al-Muẓaffar [Qutuz] when he was returning after his victory against the disheartened Tatars, which was the famous victory in ‘Ayn Jālūt near Baysān... the princes agreed that Al-Zāhir [Baybars] become the ruler... He was an energetic and determined king, we had never seen in our days a similar king in his force. He conquered, during his reign, the fortresses of the Franks that all his predecessor Muslim kings were not able to do it. He defeated the Tatars in many battles... ”⁸⁰

- P.** Identical narrative concerning a fierce return of Mongols to Syria under the leadership of Kukalkī
- Q.** Identical narrative concerning the tentative of Al-Šāliḥ, lord of Mosul, to rejoin his brother ‘Ala’ Al-Dīn, lord of Sinjar, who escaped to Egypt. Parallel information about the persecutions against Christians

Comment: The text is recounted as following; all the information below is identical:

- ‘Ala’ Al-Dīn son of Badr Al-Dīn Lo’lo’, the lord of Sinjar, sends a letter to his brother, Al-Šāliḥ Isma‘īl advising him to come and ally with the Bindīqdār of Egypt Baybars.
- Šams Al-Dīn Ibn Yūnes, who is one of the notables, takes this letter stealthily and flees to his village Ba‘shīqa.

⁸⁰ Ibn Khallikan, vol. iv, p. 155.

- Al-Şāliḥ tries to arrest Šams Al-Dīn Ibn Yūnes and to take the letter back.
- Ibn Yūnes succeeds in deceiving the servants of Al-Şāliḥ and escapes to Barṭella which is a Christian village.
- He informs the governor of Barṭella ‘Abd Allah that Al-Şāliḥ was planning to kill the Christians.
- Al-Şāliḥ escapes to Syria with his family and a group of his companions, but during the journey, a dispute occurs among them and some of them go back to Mosul.
- A conflict arises between those who remained in the city and those who came back.
- A wave of persecutions against Christians took place and the Kurds played a role in these persecutions.

What is worthy of observation here is that Barhebraeus did not omit the information concerning the Christians unlike the previous narratives. Nevertheless, the information about a wave of persecutions against Christians is greatly abbreviated in the Arabic Chronicle, and thus the Syriac text contains much more details, mostly being omitted in the Arabic Chronicle : the pillage of the monastery of the sister of Beth kūdida and the murder of the people who were inside, the siege of the Monastery of Mar Mattai by the Kurds and their looting and fight against its monks and other inhabitants during several months, and that finally the Kurds left the monastery taking gold, jewelry and other collectibles of the monastery. The narrative ends with the return of Mongols’ forces to Mosul and the killing of prince ‘Alam Al-Dīn Sanjar and his Kurdish allies. This paragraph contains also information about the murder of some Christians which were besieged in the Monastery of ḥabšūšyōthō. All in all, the tale of the *Mūhtaşar* about these persecutions of Christians is a kind of short abstract compared to the Syriac version. I did not find

a mention of these narratives in the Arabic sources that I consulted for this study.

7. Concluding remarks

- The link with other sources

Juvaini

Even though the dependence of Barhebraeus on Juvaini's historical work in the penultimate chapter of each Chronicle is well established, this was not the case for the examined texts of the last chapter. More precisely, Juvaini's huge Chronicle did not mention any of the events mentioned in this study.

Ibn Wāṣil

In response to Denise Aigle's conjecture of a possible correspondence between the Ayyubid Chronicle of Ibn Wāṣil and the historical works of Barhebraeus, this dependence is seemingly not evident. Therefore, the work of Ibn Wāṣil can be added to her list of Arabic sources that did not have any connection with Barhebraeus's Chronicles. This statement can be supported by the fact that Ibn Wāṣil stopped his narratives in the year 645 Hijri (1247 A.D.), and the last chapter of Barhebraeus's Chronicles starts from the year of the fall of Baghdad and the murder of the Caliph Al-Musta'ṣim in 1258. Nevertheless, as we have seen in this study, Ibn Wāṣil had related some events in our texts which are posterior to 1247, for example: the murder of the Caliph Al-Musta'ṣim, the act of allegiance of Badr Al-Dīn Lo'lo' to Hulagu, the siege of Miyafarqīn etc. But all these narratives were casually mentioned under the subchapters dedicated to the figures before the year 645 Hijri. Thus, it is clear that the

parallel mentions of Ibn Wāṣil in our narratives were not the main focus of his historical attention.

Ibn Khallikan

As for the previous chroniclers, we can claim the non-dependence of Barhebraeus on the Biographical Dictionary of Ibn Khallikan. Like Ibn Wāṣil, he had also no great interest in relating in a detailed manner the events related to Mongols in the Middle-East, while this focus of interest is incontestable in Barhebraeus's work. In addition, unlike our author, Ibn Khallikan had, like many Arab-Muslim historians, a negative attitude towards the Mongols; he often mentions a kind of 'curse' after the word of "Tatars": أبادهم الله تعالى "May God exterminate them"⁸¹.

Kiarakos Ganjaketsi and Vardan Areveltsi

Although being aware of the meager possibility of a dependence of Barhebraeus on Armenian Chronicles, I tried to examine it, but this possibility may remain potential for the following of the last chapter of Barhebraeus's Chronicle where he reports events related to the Armenian King Hethoum I of Cilicia (1215-1270), inasmuch as Ganjaketsi and Areveltsi had reported lot of events concerning the reign of this King who had many contacts with Mongolian authorities. Furthermore, we can observe that these Armenian historiographers related the events concerning the Mongols only on basis of their link to the Armenian dynasties and Armenian Church, with one exception in Ganjaketsi's Chronicle in a subchapter titled "Events that took places in Mesopotamia and Coele-Syria" where he

⁸¹ See for example: Ibn Khallikan, vol. vi, p. 130.

relates Hulagu's conquests of the cities of Syria.⁸² As to Areveltsi, he mentions most of the events but in a brief manner. His principal input about this period is his transmission of his personal visit to Hulagu's court and his multiple contacts with Doqoz Khatun.

- The omissions of the information concerning the Christians

An essential element pertaining to the question of readership is the systematic omission of information concerning the Christians in the Arabic text. Almost all this information cited in the Syriac Chronicle about the Christians was completely disappeared except for one citation (point Q), but this citation was incomparable to the content, length and details of the Syriac text. Even if the information about Christians was marginal, or let us say 'not shocking' to the Muslims (for example, a collaboration of Christians with the Mongol conquerors or a privilege done to Christians by the Mongolian authorities), it was also neglected in the *Mūhtaşar* (point F). Moreover, we can observe that Barhebraeus had abandoned some 'sensitive information' in the Arabic Chronicle. The omission sometimes of only one word, for example, "lover of Christians" concerning Kublai Khan (point N) is quite significant. The omission of this word cannot be because of dependence on a different source, it is rather a clear intention by the author to omit this information which might not be acceptable for a Muslim readership. However, the element of omitting information concerning Christians is a major indicator of the importance of audience in Barhebraeus's Chronicles.

⁸² See : "Événements qui eurent lieu dans la Mésopotamie et la Céléryrie" in Dulaurier, 11, pp. 497-498.

- **The language of Barhebraeus**

I would like to point out a further observation on the Arabic Chronicle of Barhebraeus, that is of his 'special' language in Arabic. It is noticeable that his compositions in Arabic were drafted by non-native Arabic writer. His way of formulating the sentence, the structure of his phrases and his vocabulary sometimes borrowed from Syriac provide a clear as sound basis for of this statement.

General conclusion

Returning to the main issue of this study, the consideration of the readership of Barhebraeus's historical works, it is worthy giving some conclusions. Before everything else, it is important to reaffirm the difficulty of giving a whole judgement on the entire Arabic Chronicle on this matter and the need of making a full comparison and identification of sources for the Chronicles as whole to be able to give a hypothesis on this question. Nonetheless, the comparison and identification of sources that I applied on the chosen text of this study allows us to make the following presumptions. It is important to underline that my statements are especially valid for the examined texts of this study, thus their validity is partial:

- The question of readership is subject of evolution and is related to each chapter in both Chronicles. Therefore, Conrad's assertion of a Christian orientation of the Arabic Chronicle cannot be valid; as well the statement of other scholars of a rather only Muslim orientation of the whole Chronicle cannot equally be valid. We cannot give a judgement on this matter for the whole Chronicle.

- Until our days, the previous studies and this one were not able to identify a predominating source that Barhebraeus relied on for his last chapter. But, at least for the chosen paragraphs of this study, the importance of the personal testimony, the personal notes and the oral transmissions of Barhebraeus for the events that he related on this last chapter cannot be underestimated. Therefore, the processing of the problematic of readership in the last chapter can have a particular importance taking into account that Barhebraeus relies on his own testimony and the information that he collected orally. He was witness of events, as for example, the case of the conquest of Aleppo (point I).

- Although we did not find an obvious dependence of Barhebraeus on other sources in his last chapter, the role of sources is far from being negligible in the other chapters. The reproduction of narratives that he took from other sources was crucial for the content of his own Chronicles. In addition, we do not exclude the possibility of textual critique for certain transmissions. This possibility needs the application of a profound analysis of those transmissions compared to their sources that Barhebraeus had depended on.

Furthermore, I would like to express my agreement with Borbone to qualify the Syriac Chronicle of Barhebraeus as a work “addressed and adapted to his community”, mainly the Syriac-speaking Christians. In addition, if the *Chronicon Syriacum* is an adapted work for the Christian community of Barhebraeus, we can also suggest that the *Mūhtaşar* would be, for the passages that were studied here, an adapted work

for Arab-Muslim readership. For example, there is an exclusive use of Hijri calendar in the Arabic Chronicle, while he used often the Greek one in the Syriac, or even when the date is mentioned in Hijri, it is also always mentioned according to the Greek calendar in the Syriac Chronicle. Another example is the comparison of the narrative of point “I” where we had observed Barhebraeus’ use of Islamic terminology for the Arabic variant of the same narrative.

Similarly, I can also be in accordance with Aigle’s qualification of *Mūhtaṣar*, at least for the last chapter, as a compromise work “*ouvrage de compromis*” where Barhebraeus had deliberately omitted certain information taking into account his Arab-Muslim readership. Moreover, as other scholars had observed, the neutral character of Barhebraeus in his Arabic Chronicle is very evident: the omissions of his personalized comments about certain events and his different attitude when he described the death of Hulagu, Doquz Khatun and Kublai Khan (point N) can clearly confirm this statement.

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RELIGION AND DIVINE MUSIC IN NATURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EPHREM THE POET

Introduction

The world of nature plays an important role in the history of religion. Many religious pilgrim centres are also places of natural beauty and attraction. Mountain ranges relate with fountains and rivers, lonely deserts with all their charm, the planes and meadows with all kinds of vegetation and the meadows and forests full of animal and vegetative life supply the religions the background of a holy, idyllic pilgrimage. God's goodness, beauty, generosity and love find expression in the canvas of Nature. Nature is the portrait of all that is associated with deity.

The Himalayas with an otherworldly brilliance of serenity, the Ganges with a never-ending flow of life-eternal and Sabarimala with its harmonious blend of green forests, mountains, rivers and the communion of wild animals and human beings these are only select examples from thousands of Indian pilgrim centres. Who can avoid the mountains full of green vegetation at Malayattoor hills and still honour the Lord of St. Thomas? Pilgrims to Malayattoor take a ritual bath in Periyar before they approach the foot hills there. Pilgrims

of Sabarimala do the same in river Pampa. *Aluva Sivarathri* is on the river bed of Periyar and there also we see a sacred ritual bath. How can we forget John the Baptist preaching in the desert of Judea and leading Jews to river Jordan for a ritual bath? Christians took up baptism in rivers, ponds and founts as a sacrament of purification and redemption.

No sacred site is complete without a holy hill, holy fountain, and holy forest. The temple of Apollo in Delphi is upon a hillside. The rocky hills supply the pilgrims with a holy stream whose source remains hidden even today. Oracle-seekers and pilgrims flocked to this fountain of life giving water. Moses went up the hilly rocks of Mount Sinai to meet God. The people of Israel wandering in the desert for forty years drank from the miraculous flow of water from a rocky hill. Any traveller to Qadisha Valley in North Lebanon will be led closer to Paradise as he sees the astonishing waterfall from the rocky cliffs. The sound of life, the surge of love and the music of water from the middle of the rocks in to the deep abyss of valley supply us with a faint glimpse of God the Creator and Provider of all. Every pilgrim centre is a gift of natural beauty for a seeker of truth with a thirsty heart. Paradise is presented as a well-irrigated garden planted in the East upon a mountain.

Miraculous fountains provide water, the sign of life, in Mylapur and at Malayattoor. Kuravilangad in Kerala has a fountain of water from the rock associated with the Marian apparitions. Many miracles are associated with that source of living water-ever fresh, ever flowing since its discovery in the 1st century A.D. according to the popular belief.

Ephrem speaks on the Epiphany of the Divine

The fourth century Syrian poet-theologian Ephrem (ca. 306 - 373) speaks of God's self-revelation through two books: The Book of Nature and the Book of Scripture. The first revelation is through the Book of Nature. It is not the private property of any religion or

particular group. Instead it is given as a common light to the whole world excepting no single person. Whatever we find in the God-created world is common for all inhabitants of the universe, hundreds of animals, birds, fishes, insects, worms etc. We all belong together in the house of Nature. The trees, leaves, flowers and fruits sing of divine love and invite the humanity to share the love and care of God for all creatures. Ephrem speaks of that day on which light was created and tore away the darkness spread over the beauty of creation.¹ The darkness engulfing the heart of mankind is torn away at the dawn of the day a type of the divine outbreak in human history. From the thirsty earth flowers and blossoms come up like a crown to adorn the head of the victorious ones. Source of water, God formed into the seas, but He carefully set up many fountains and rivers to supply the water of life to every animal and every plant on earth. Many luminaries He established in the skies to enlighten the blind and unseeing world. Victory of heavenly light over earthly darkness has made the Sun a symbol of the Divine. The victory of the sun is a victory of light over every kind of darkness. Winter and summer proclaim the glories of God in Nature. The creator «distributes light without a fee».² The created world around us is the Harp of the Creator.³ The Divine music is audible to us from every side. We hear about Jesus Christ:

You mixed pigments for your portrait.
 You saw Yourself and You depict Yourself.
 O painter who also depicted His father in Himself!
 Both depict each other.⁴

God is depicted as the Artist who painted the visible Nature all around us. Nature is set as an Icon for our help. God is also the Musician who plays on the Harp of Nature and the Harp of Scripture:

1 McVey, Hymns on Nativity, 26: 3.

2 McVey, Hymns on Virginity, 51: 3.

3 McVey, Hymns on Virginity, 27: 30

4 Hymns on Virginity, 28:1.

Who has ever seen two harps?
 One silent and the other eloquent,
 But the silent one, its preaching,
 Was not heard by the rational ones.
 For the silent one persuaded by deed,
 Whereas the eloquent one by sound.
 Both by words and deeds
 They proclaimed the Lord of all.⁵

God's Icon of Nature

In our generation all over the world there is an ever growing awareness about the importance of Nature, exploitation of natural resources which eventually threaten the survival of humanity, animal and the whole vegetation that makes possible the sustenance of life on earth. Pollution of earth, air and water is the greatest threat against our own survival on earth. The animal world has lost many of its original and earlier members; the earth has lost ten thousands of various plants. The lost items might be crucial for food or medicine for the animal and human world. Ever greedy and ever hungry world is devouring itself. He forgets the Creator and foolishly deviates from the plan of God, providence of divine love, mercy and care with which the *mdabranutha* has arranged everything for the wellbeing of everything else.

God created the whole world in order to help and nourish humanity who is gifted with the image and likeness of God. But Adam/Eve eats up the earth with ease, speed, greed, often revealing devilish cruelty and sinful perversion. It is an intemperate and every hungry man who is never happy and satisfied. The disharmony in nature is a manmade addition and is against the harmonious music of the Creator. Harmonious blending of human lives is possible in a Garden like Eden. If he goes out he is lost with hunger and thirst. So a new Cain is born! A new killer of a new Abel! He has become

5 Hymns on Virginity, 29:9.

a hungry and thirsty wanderer who seeks for ever but never becomes a finder. Lost Paradise haunts him and is angry with him.

Issues on the environment have become the most terrifying threat and poor Jonah is still sleeping in his ignorance and idleness. Decades ago Sebastian Brock indicated the importance of Ephrem (306-373) in the context of ecology. The relationship of humanity with the natural world around him is well ordained by the plan of the Creator. Sebastian Brock suggests Ephrem as the most appropriate patron saint for ecologically minded people.⁶ Ephrem had an extraordinary positive approach to all what is in Nature. The created world was most fascinating for him. Man and his destiny are intimately connected with the whole world around him. All his senses come to life at contacts with the nature. He too is part and parcel of a God-created world. A childlike fascination for the created nature constantly electrified the theological observation of this poetical genius. His theological thinking is sprouting like seed when fresh rain wets the womb of the thirsty earth. His unconventional imagination sprang like a beautiful flower from the very mother earth.

Revelation and creation go together and they never move apart. So Scripture and Nature explain each other and point towards a climax and focal point: incarnation of the Word, Voice, Speech, etc. Ephrem's poetical imagination jumps from one to the other without being dictated or determined by intellectual boundaries, logical categories fixed by any classical education of his multi-cultural world of Amid, Nisibis and Edessa. Semitic, Arabic, Persian and Jewish ideas and influences added colour to his lifelong encounter with his Christian existence. He was unique in comparison with the Cappadocian and Alexandrian Fathers whose expertise in Hellenistic ideas he lacks or disinterested. Unlike many of the early Christian writers, Ephrem is very positive towards the created world around him. The Gnostic authors of the early Christian era used to propagate

6 Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: the Spiritual World Vision of St. Ephrem* (Rome 1985), p. 136.

that the material world is not created by God, and hence evil. Human body was seen as the nest of sin and *fuga mundi* motto of the monastic world often had a similar view. But Syriac Christianity represented by Ephrem had a better depiction of matter, body, etc. For him creation is revelation of divine love; incarnation is only the natural climax of the same outpouring of love.

Earth and heaven join together to sing praises to the Creator in silence (HdN 22); the Creator dwelt in the vast wombs of all creation (HdN 21; 6-7). Evidently earth and heaven knows the presence of the Creator and they are ever ready to move according to the divine design and plan. The silent nature becomes eloquent as it sees the wandering away of Adam from the divinely ordained path. When humanity goes astray nature becomes sad and angry. Then and there nature reacts with great feeling and commotion. The earth refuses to produce food for wicked Jezebel. Seeds do not sprout anymore and farmer gets nothing from tilling and toiling. The angry earth chocks the seed; famine and pestilence await the country ruled by Jezebels who does evil by falsifying the truth. Earth cannot be silent at the cruel bloodshed by Cain. So she cries out on behalf of innocent Abel for justice to the Creator (HdV 7:3). When men remained silent the stones began to cry out for justice (CDiat. 21:5).

‘Mother Earth’ is eagerly awaiting this liberating re-creation of the whole world. Adam the sinner was placed upon the earth with a curse. ‘This nursing mother’ too will inherit the blessings of rebirth, revival of her children (HdP 9:1; HdN 23:5, HdN 3:1 etc.). The entire created world rejoices at the birth of Jesus (HdN 4) for she knows that it is the beginning of the cosmic restoration and recreation. Unlike many of the early Christian authors Ephrem had a very positive view about the created world, material universe, human body, etc. The *fuga mundi* theology of some monastic circles was indirectly supported by many Christian writers tainted with a negative approach towards the visible created world. Even the incarnation is clouded by the dark background of the fall of Adam. Ephrem

sees creation as divine revelation of divine love. Incarnation is the natural climax of divine plan, *mdabranutha*. Human body is equally important like the human soul.

The world around us is filled with images and symbols of the Creator who is manifest and hidden, near and far away at the same time. Poetry and music of Nature we come across has an iconic character. Glory of God we observe as traces implanted in each and every creature. Nothing is devoid of this sacramental character. The whole world is the sacrament or icon of the Divine.⁷

Earth as a Nursing Mother in Ephrem's Poetry

According to Ephrem earth is our dear mother and we are her beloved children. We are all nourished by this nursing mother.⁸ Thus all creatures belong to the same family which has a common mother and common unity. The dust of the earth makes all creatures close relatives to each other.⁹ None of us is a stranger. Everything in Nature is able to educate humanity in religious terms.

The earth provides all living creatures with food. It is made treasurer for the birds and like a steward for the animals. It is a great storehouse feeding all, animals, reptiles and mankind.¹⁰ The earth is a treasury of various kinds of nourishments for all her children whether plants, birds, animals and mankind. The depiction of earth as a nursing mother to all is a beautiful imagery we come across in Ephrem's poetical world.

How many breasts the earth has
That its drink may give suck to all.
A wonder it is, yea, her breasts
Are many like her roots.
That to the bitter and to the sweet,

7 Koonammakkal: 357-364.

8 Hymns on Paradise 9:1; 12; Discourses on Faith, 1:205-212.

9 Letter to Publius, 6:13; Discourses on Faith, I: 141-44.

10 Beck, Discourses on Faith, 229-232.

To each one it gives suck accordingly
 A wonder it is, yea.
 A single breast that nourishes all fruits
 From it the roots suck Fruits sweet and bitter
 In one it breeds sweetness
 And in another bitterness.¹¹

The visible world around us is actually the symbol of God whose glory, power, mercy, love and goodness waft to us all by the gentle breeze of divine epiphany.

«My Lord, Your symbols are everywhere,
 But You are hidden from every place.»¹²

The divine portrait is visible to us in Nature that is eloquent about God the master artist:

He depicted hidden things upon things manifest
 To show the invisible
 Through the visible
 And He imprinted His symbols on the trees
 To explain the incomprehensible
 Through the comprehensible.¹³

God put on human language, images, terms, names, symbols, icons from Nature whose children human beings are. The material, physical, visible things of nature – plants, trees, birds, water-lakes, sea, hills, valleys, grass, animals, fishes and the whole universe form the sacrament of God's love, concern, plan and providence. According to Ephrem, creation is revelation of the Divine reality. God's imprints and icons are everywhere in Nature and they serve to teach us, though idiots seek only physical nourishment therein. The eyes and the ears of our mind are able to see and hear more than the physical eyes and the physical ears can. Ephrem would

11 Beck, Discourses on Faith, 262 - 272.

12 Beck, Hymns on Faith 4: 9.

13 Hymns on Faith 76:11-12.

speak of the “eye of our thought”. With great awe and wonder he looks at Nature like a little child exploring and appreciating hidden treasures and mysteries.

Agricultural imagery is found often in Ephrem’s works. The healthy breeze of Paradise occurs in this context:

The breezes of Paradise hasten to attend to the just
 In seedlings you can observe symbols clearly marked.
 When the wind gives suck to wheat and to the ears of corn,
 * ‘It nourishes them as it blows, by its force it fattens them up.
 How much more should those winds full of blessing
 Give suck to the seedlings of Paradise, which are both rational
 and spiritual?
 For that which is spiritual has the spirit’s breath as its nourishment. ¹³

The spikes of wheat become the cradles of new born grains, because of the gentle wind: “the breeze suckles them, like a mother’s breast it nurtures them”.¹⁴ Ephrem is convinced of the sacramental character of the natural world. For him the created world is a pointer to its creator. But the cosmic harmony is often disrupted by the misuse of human free will. The world order is upset and set right by the same free will. Naturally this is an indication to the responsibility of mankind towards the whole universe.

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*CSCO- *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*

13 S. Brock, St. Ephrem: Hymns on Paradise, (New York 1990), 9: 8-10.

14 S. Brock, St. Ephrem: Hymns on Paradise, (New York 1990), 9:12.

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*CSCO = *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*.

Meledath Kurian Thomas

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ORTHODOXY: THE CHENGANNOOR SYNOD OF 1686 CE

Indian Christianity is one of the oldest Christianities in the world claiming its origin with St. Thomas, the apostle. It is sharing the privilege with the Ethiopian Church as the only two Christian traditions without Hellenic origin. They are known as the Malankara Nazranis, a tag clearly indicating its Indian and Semitic origin.

Though originated and developed in the early centuries indigenously, the Indian Christianity affiliated with the East Syriac Church of Persia in the first millennium CE. This was due their maritime trade relations and successive Persian migrations. By the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 CE, the Nazranis derived their own form of Christianity by amalgamating Brahmanic rituals, Kerala culture, Persian rituals, East Syrian ecclesiology and the Nestorian theology. They used East Syriac as their liturgical language. They named it as the way and lineage of St. Thomas.

It was a wonder for the Portuguese invaders to notice Christians in Kerala unexpectedly. Soon they realised both the Christianities were different in all sense. However, it was essential for the

Portuguese to subject the Nazranis to their obedience for protecting their colonial and commercial interests. The solution they found was the formation of a mono-cultural society with same religion, hierarchy and the rituals. But the Nazranis refused to surrender to the Pope of Rome or to accept Roman Catholic doctrines and ecclesiology as the Portuguese suggested.

After the attempts of one century became futile, the Roman Catholics invoked a Synod of the Nazranis at gun-point in 1599 CE at Udayamparoor. This infamous meeting, known as the Synod of Diamper, made the Nazranis to accept the predetermined canons without discussion or consensus created by Alexis De Menazis, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Goa and the pro-time Portuguese Viceroy of India. The essence of those lengthy canons may summarised as follows.

1. Accept the Pope of Rome as the *Vedathalavan*¹ instead of the Catholicos of Baghdad.
2. Declare the way of St. Thomas and the way of St. Peter as one and same.²
3. The Roman Catholic theology and ecclesiology was enforced.

1 The old Malayalam phrase Vedathalavan is too complicated to translate without losing its real meaning in Nazrani phraseology. Gurupeedom is the apt conversion to modern Malayalam/Sanskrit. But difficult to translated to any European language. Seat, SEE (Sedes in Latin) should not suit since the Nazrani concept on Vedathalavan means any virtual authority. The actual definition according to the Nazrani concept of this phrase is from where the Episcopal lineage derives only.

2 The declaration of the Nazranis during the visit of Archbishop Menazis as the way of St. Thomas and that of St. Peter are different highly distressed the Roman Catholics since the Nazranis declared that the Roman Catholic Church had nothing in common with the Nazranis through this notation.

The oath of Coonen Cross Necessity

By the oath of Coonen Cross, virtually only two changes were effected to the Nazranis. First they denounced the Pope of Rome and slashed the Roman Catholic regime by elevating the ruling Archdeacon as a bishop. In all other matter, they were practicing the Latinized East Syriac rituals prescribed by the Roman Catholics in between 1599 and 1652 CE. Even though they plunged the Roman Catholic bondage, no alternative was adopted to replace its theology and ecclesiology. Moreover, the Nazranis declared their Archdeacon as their *Vedathalavan*. It also indicated that they were not ready to return to the pre-colonial folds of the Church of the East any more.

Even the arrival of Mar Gregorius Abduel Jaleel in 1665 CE, and the regularisation of the consecration of Mar Thoma I changed nothing. A virtual theological vacuum existed among the Nazranis. After the betrayal of Fr. Parambil Chandy and the establishment of the Syro - Malabar Roman Catholic Church in 1663 CE, urges the Nazranis to structure a theology and ecclesiology. But it was too difficult to form one then due to several reasons especially the lack of a reasonable model.

Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah

To avail the proper ordination, the Nazranis were trying to contact the primates of all oriental Churches from around 1653 CE. It was answered for the first time by the arrival of Mar Gregorius Abdul Jaleel, The West Syrian primate of Jerusalem in 1665 CE. In 1685 CE, Iggnatius Abduel Missiah I, Patriarch of Antioch sent Mafrian Mar Baselius Yeldho to India just to validate the Consecration of the indigenous bishop. He survived only 13 days in India. Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was an Episcopa escorting him. He stayed in India for ten years till his demise in 1695 CE.

The Synod

After the sudden demise of Mar Thoma II in 1686CE without living a successor, Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, the only non- Roman Catholic bishop in India then summoned a *Malankara Pally Yogam*. There is no proof about the exact date of the synod except that it was held in 1686 CE. However, the circumstantial evidences suggest that it was held around the end of May. This synod consists of priests and lay representatives from the parish churches in the customary way of *Malankara Pally Yogam*. Nothing would be effected without the decision of A *Malankara Pally Yogam* in Malankara.

The decrees

The Chengannor Synod accepted five theological doctrines according to the three universal councils Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus and on the basis of West Syrian Ecclesiology. They are:

1. Definition of the Holy Universal Church – The Chengannoor synod declared that the Roman Catholic Church is not the universal Church. It defined the universal Church as the apostolic congregation of those who following the true faith and obeying the apostolic canons irrespective of their strength.
2. Person of Christ – Rejected both Roman Catholic and Nestorian dogmas about the person of Christ and accepted the formula of Cyril of Alexandria.
3. Procession of the Holy Spirit – Declared that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. Rejected the Roman Catholic addition (*Philocia*). i.e., proceeds from the Father and the Son.
4. Holy Eucharist – Refused the Roman Catholic introduction of the unleavened bread for the holy Eucharist and directed to use leavened bread only.

5. Lent – There are three changes made in Lent structure.
 - a. The weekly lent are Wednesdays and Fridays.
 - b. Five canonical Lents, (50, 25, 15, 13 & 3) were fixed according to the West Syriac format.
 - c. The great Lent must begin on Monday instead on Ash Wednesday.

Minor decrees

The following minor decrees were also come into effect after the Chengannoor Synod.³

1. Fixed the day cycle as evening to evening in the oriental mode.
2. The Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory (*Besburkkana*) rejected.
3. Prohibited to celebrate holy Eucharist during the great lent except on Saturdays and Sundays.
4. Directed to pray in standing posture and prohibited that on kneeling position.
5. Priests were permitted to marry.
6. Idols were prohibited but pictures were permitted.
7. Positioned the bride at the right side of the groom.
8. Introduced the West Syrian *kapa* instead of Latin Chuseble.⁴
9. Prohibited meat from beasts killed by suffocation.⁵

3 According to Fr. Paulinas of St Bartholomew OCD and Niranam Grandhavari, the first written history in Malayalam language.

4 It was commonly come in practice only after the Malankara Pally Yogam held at Mavalikkara in 1769 CE

5 This Jewish practice is still in effect among the Nazranis.

Implementation

Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah, the greatest scholar among all the West Syrians come to India ever since, was not hurried to impalement the basic dogmas decreed at the Chengannoor Synod. Instead, he tried to propagate them through his writings and teachings.⁶ He wrote a long bull to all churches after the synod to explain its decisions, especially about the use of leavened bread for the holy Eucharist.⁷ However, they were got implemented slowly. The leavened bread and the West Syrian anaphora were formally accepted only in 1771 CE by the Malankara Pally Yogam held at Mavalikkara.⁸ In between, attempts were made to correct the East Syrian Anaphora according to the West Syrian formula. The Malankara Pally Yogam held at Kandandu in 1809 CE formally accepted all Taksas according to the West Syrian rite for the feast days and sacraments by prohibited all other orders. However, its practical implementation was completed only by the end of the nineteenth century CE. Perhaps the implementation was delayed by the negligence of the ordinary people since the dogmas were just a matter of clerics and the academics and no practical impacts over the common Nazranis.

The some of the decisions such as the marriage of the clergy, beginning of the day cycle from evening, lent, write-side position of the bride etc. of Chengannoor Synod were swiftly implemented for two reasons. 1. They had a practical side in the day to day life of the Nazranis. 2. The East Syrian tradition also followed the same practice which they practiced prior to the Synod of Udayamperoor. But the removal of the idols planted during the Roman Catholic period was completed only by the end of the nineteenth century CE.

6 Several of his writings, in Syriac and as translated to Malayalam language in the 18th and 19th centuries, are unearthed recently.

7 It was translated by Fr. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat and published with this author's note in 2002 CE

8 Yakoob III , History of the Syrian Church in India

Impacts

Even though no significant change transpired immediately, the Chengannoor Synod succeeded in defending the Roman Catholic indictment about the Nazranis sticking on with the oath of Coonen Cross as tradition less and non-canonical. The newly established West Syrian connection affiliated the Nazranis to the Oriental Orthodox family that followed the non-Chalcedon theology. Hence, the theological vacuum faced by the Nazranis since 1653 CE was filled. It brings to an end of the rapid proselytism of the Roman Catholics.

Secondary results

As mentioned earlier, Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah was soft in approach. He recognised and respected the local traditions. This gentle behaviour created a long standing impression about the West Syrian prelates among the Nazranis.

Although there was no decision at the Chengannoor Synod in favour, the Nazranis accepted the West Syriac ecclesiology at least in principle. This positions the Patriarch of Antioch as their *Vedathalavan*.⁹

Mar Ivanios Hadiatallah profoundly depended on the Nomo Canon of Mar Gregarious Bar Hebraus to defend the decrees of the Chengannoor Synod. Thus the Nazranis were introduced to Nomo Canon of Mar Gregarious Bar Hebraus and later it was recognized as the official code of canons for them.

9 The Catholicos of Baghdad was replaced by the Pope of Rome in 1599 CE at Udayamperoor synod as the Vedathalavan of the Nazranis. The Malankara Pally Yogam held at Mattanchery, Kochi on 3 January 1653 following the oath of Coonen Cross expelled him. Another Malankara Pally Yogam held at Edappally, Kochi, during the lent of the Ninvites (February) of the same year appointed Archdeacon Thoma as their Vedathalavan. He was later consecrated as bishop Mar Thoma I, the great.

Conclusion

As the decision of a legally held Malankara Pally Yogam, all the Nazranis were obliged to obey them unless amended. But the foundation laid at the Chengannoor synod was so strong that the Nazranis never amended or altered it later. Even, no further profession of faith was made later except that about the intercession of Theotokos and the saints and the prayers for the departed souls. Since both the Roman Catholic and the Nestorian theologies are in favour of them, it never came under consideration in the Chengannoor decrees. Both were mentioned in the *Mavalikkara Padiyola* (decrees) of 1836 CE since the Nazranis commenced an intercourse with the British Protestants in the first quarter of the nineteenth century CE.

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TOWARDS A COMMON LIST OF MARTYRS: SYRIAC PERSPECTIVE

Since the apostolic times, the Church honored those who bore witness to the faith. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of ‘the cloud of witness’ (*Heb. 12:1*), which is the assembly of the heroes of faith who endured sufferings for the sake of their faith (*Heb. ch. 11*). The death of the martyrs is a powerful witness to the reality of Christ’s resurrection. They are one with the crucified and risen Christ and are examples of the same testimony of fidelity. Thus, Antipas is called “my witness, my faithful one” (*Rev. 2:13*). The Church believed that those who were slain “for the word of God and for the witness they had borne” enjoy the company of the risen Lord, and are present in every liturgical celebration. Thus, John saw “under the altar the souls of those who had been slain” (*Rev. 6:9; cfr. 17:6*). This is obviously an allusion to the special homage that the early Church paid to the memory of the martyrs.

However, the earliest explicit reference to the cult of the martyrs is found in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*. The author writes that the ‘Evil One’ prevented the authorities to hand over the mortal remains of Polycarp to the Christians:

“He therefore proceeded to do his best to arrange that at least we should not get possession of his mortal remains, although number

of us was anxious to do this and to claim our share in this hallowed relics”.

The leader of the persecutors requested the Governor not to release the body: “in case, he said, they should forsake the Crucified and take to worshipping this fellow instead”. The author clarifies the Church’s attitude towards the relics- Christians do not worship it; but express their love towards the martyrs:

“Little do they know that it could never be possible for us to abandon Christ who died for the salvation of every soul that is to be saved in all the world – the Sinless One dying for sinners- or to worship any other. It is to Him, as the Son of God, that we give our adoration; while to the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, we give the love they have earned by their matchless devotion to their King and Teacher. Pray God we too may come to share their company and their discipleship”

As the Jews were protesting against handing over the body of Polycarp, it was burnt. The author writes:

“So, after all, we did gather up his bones - more precious to us than jewels, and finer than pure gold - and we laid them to rest in a spot suitable for the purpose. Thus, we shall assemble, as occasions allows, with glad rejoicing; and with the Lord’s permission, we shall celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom. It will serve both as a commemoration of all who have triumphed before, and as a training and a preparation for any whose crown may be still to come”.

The cult of a martyr was limited to his tomb on the anniversary of his death and was commonly known as the martyr’s *natalia*, day of birth to eternal life. Such commemorations were essentially local in character, and therefore Church’s earliest calendars of saints differed from one Church to another. In the pre-Constantine era, the lists were quite modest. The essential ceremony of the day consisted of the celebration of the Eucharist at the grave or at a

place close to it. Later as relics were transferred to other Churches, the cult of the martyrs spread.

New Concept of Martyrdom

During the persecutions, the veneration of the martyrs was extended to those who did not laid down their life for the sake of faith, but did suffer torture, imprisonment or forced labour in mines. Once the confessors of the faith were honoured as martyrs, ascetics and then bishops soon came to be honoured as ‘confessors’¹. *Didascalia of the Apostles* provides example for this understanding of martyrdom. Martyrdom is supreme way of imitating Christ². According to this third century document, martyrdom is the vocation of every Christian, and encourages the faithful to receive it with joy:

“Yet if we are called to martyrdom, let us confess when we are interrogated, and when we suffer let us endure, and when we are afflicted let us rejoice, and when we are persecuted let us not be wearied. For by acting thus, not only shall we save ourselves from the Gehenna, but we shall also teach those who are young in the faith and the hearers to act thus – and they shall live before God”³.

A martyr becomes ‘an icon of Christ’, for he has achieved perfection:

“Indeed, let him that is condemned for the name of the Lord God be considered by you as a holy martyr, an angel of God, or God upon earth, one who is spiritually clothed with the Holy Spirit of God. Indeed, through him you see the Lord our Savior,

1 Cfr. H.Delahaye, *Sanctus. Essai sur le culte des saints dans l’antiquité*, (Subsidia hagiographia 17, Brussels, 1927), p. 109-121.

2 A.Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac*, [Ch.19] CSCO 408, ch.19, pp. 169-171.

3 *ibid*, p.172-173 (tr).

as he has been found worthy of the incorruptible crown, and has renewed again the witness of the passion”⁴.

A martyr has ‘renewed again the witness of the passion’ means, his baptismal grace is renewed. In fact, in the early Church martyrdom was regarded as baptism. If baptism is the witnessing Christ, martyrdom means imitating Christ:

“Let us be diligent now to commit ourselves to the Lord God. And if any man be found worthy of martyrdom, let him receive it with joy, that he may deserve this so great a crown, and that his departure from this world is by martyrdom. Indeed, the Lord our Savior has said: ‘There is no disciple better than his master (*Math. 10:24*), but everyone shall be perfected as his master (*Lk. 6:40*). Now our Lord was willing (to endure) all these His sufferings in order that He might save us. And He took it upon Himself to be beaten, and that men should blaspheme Him and spit in His face, and to drink vinegar and gall – and at last He endured even to be hung upon the cross. Let us therefore, who are His disciples, also be His imitators”⁵.

The sins of a martyr are forgiven and he has become worthy of the kingdom of God:

“If when we are called to martyrdom for His name, and depart from the world through confession, and shall be found pure. For He has said through David about the martyrs thus: ‘Blessed are those whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute his sins’ (*Ps. 32:1f*). Therefore, blessed are the martyrs, and pure from all offences. For they have been raised and carried away from all iniquity...”⁶.

4 Ibid. p.167-68.

5 Ibid. p.174.

6 Didascalia Ch.20, p. 182-83(tr.)

Those who visit the confessors in the prison or help them, ‘become sharers in their martyrdom’. After having spoken of the glory of martyrdom, Didascalia continues:

“On this account to those who are bearing witness, it is an obligation of all you the faithful, to serve diligently, and to refresh them out of your passion through your bishop.

But if a man who has nothing, let him fast, and something of that which would have been spent by him that day let him give for his brethren.

But if you are rich, it is required of you to serve them according to your power, or even that you give your whole possession and redeem them from bonds. For it is (such as) these who are worthy of God, and the sons who fulfill His will, as the Lord has said: ‘Everyone who shall confess me before man, I also will confess him before my Father’ (*Math. 10:32*). And you shall not be ashamed to go to them when they are in prison. And when you do these things, you shall inherit everlasting life, for you become sharers in their martyrdom’⁷.

Philocalian Calendar

The first known Christian calendar is an almanac of civic and religious feasts together with the lists of bishops and consuls. The so-called Chronograph of 354 was a manuscript written by Furius Dionysius Philocalus, a Greek artist and calligrapher, and dedicated to Valentinus, a rich Christian. (The original manuscript was lost in the 17th century, but very faithful copies are extant, reproducing the illustrations and even the lay out of the original). One of the lists is called a *depositio martyrium*, or the list of the burial of the martyrs. There are 24 days marked in the list and most of them are local Roman saints. The name of the cemetery in which they are buried is also given. The feasts of two North African martyrs are included:

⁷ Ibid. ch. 19, p. 168. Then Didascalia quotes Math. 25:34-40.

Perpetua and Felicity (7 March) and Cyprian (14 Sept.)⁸. The feast of Cyprian is celebrated at the Cemetery of Callistus, no doubt because of his cordial relations with St Cornelius, who is buried in the same cemetery. Thus we have an example of celebrating a feast without relics, for the North African martyrs were popular in Rome.

There were no entries for biblical saints, not even for St John Baptist or the Virgin Mary, except for the apostles Peter and Paul, who were honoured because they were Roman martyrs. [*June 29 Peter and Paul; Feb 22 Natali Petri de cathedra*].

Early Syriac Calendars and Martyriologies

In the earliest known calendars, the feasts of individual saints are not always mentioned. Obviously, the feasts of the martyrs, confessors, bishops or monastic fathers were celebrated locally. However, the most widely attested feasts are those of St Stephen, the proto-martyr and St John the Baptist. Thus BL Add 14525 (6th cent.)⁹ assigns the Monday of the ‘Week of the Rest’ (the week that follows the Easter) for the feast of St John the Baptist. The feast of St Stephen is celebrated on the Saturday of the same week. In addition to these two feasts, two sets of readings are given for ‘the Commemoration of the martyrs’. According to this document, on the Tuesday of the Week of the Rest, there is the commemoration of Peter and Paul; Wednesday (?): Holy Apostles; Thursday: Bishops. On the Saturday of the first and the middle week of the Holy Lent, there is a ‘commemoration of all our fathers, bishops and all those who have been baptized in Christ’.

8 For the full list, Noele M. Denis-Boulet, *The Christian Calendar*, London, 1960, pp. 53-55.

9 E. F.C. Burkitt, “The Early Syriac Lectionary System”, in *The Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol 10 (1921-23), pp. 301-339 [Extracts, p. 38]

Sixth century Antioch: Severus of Antioch

According to the *Cathedral Homilies* of Severus of Antioch (+ 536), the feasts of the saints and martyrs were celebrated in Antioch and its adjacent provinces with due importance. Severus' list includes the Old Testament Saints as well (Maccabees on August 1). The patriarch was present in some of these feasts or he might have delivered homilies, when he visited the tombs or the shrines of the martyrs. The following are the important feasts attested in the homilies of Severus [*the dates of the delivery are given*].

January: Basil and Gregory (Jan 1); St Antony (Jan 17); Martyr Babylas (Jan 23 r 24);

Theodore (?).

March: Forty Martyrs (Mar. 8: 2nd Sat. in Lent);

April: Memory of the Just (Wed. after the New Sunday).

May: St Athanasius (May 1); Martyr Thallessios in Egia (May 20); Sergius and Bachus (?).

June: Deposition of the relics of Procopus and Phocas (June 1); Martyr Leontius (June 18); Martyr Julian (June 21);

July: Martyr Domelios (July 5); Simon the Stylite (July 27 or Sept 2); Martyr Bar Laha (July 29).

August: Maccabees (Aug 1).

September: Martyr Tarachos, Probos and Andronicos (Sept 6); John the Baptist (Sept 23 or 14 Oct.); Martyr Thecla (Sept 24).

December: Holy Martyr Drosis (Dec. 14); St Stephen (Dec. 27 or 28); Holy Innocents ("Holy Martyrs": Dec. 29).

Most of the feasts attested by Severus do not appear in the later Syrian Orthodox calendars, probably because they were celebrated locally. The difference between the sixth century lectionary and the liturgical year attested by Severus, also can be

explained in the same way. The first one represents the tradition of the Greek speaking area and the latter that of the Syriac speaking communities. However, we shall note that there was no strict uniformity in the Syrian Orthodox liturgy since the earliest times.

Ninth Century Lectionary from Harran

Odilo Heiming has published a series of four lessons attested by BL add. 14485 to 14487 (A.D. 824)¹⁰. The series I & II begin with the ‘*Sundays after the feast of Epiphany*’ and III & IV with ‘*the Annunciation to Zachariah*’. In the series I & II, Friday of the Easter week celebrates the memory of the “Confessors”. They give lessons for the commemoration of the bishops (in the week that follows Easter) and the reading for the commemorations of bishops, priests, sub-deacons, nuns, children, men and women.

The series III & IV give a much detailed lectionary system. Thus, they contain readings for the commemoration of the Mother of God, Holy Innocents (both between Christmas and Epiphany); feast of St John the Baptist (after Epiphany), Confessors (Friday after the Easter Week). At the end of the series, the readings for the following celebrations are given: Holy Martyrs, fathers, priests, sub-deacons, children, nuns and lay people.

It is to be noted that the Harran Lectionary system is silent on the widely celebrated feasts of St Stephen and the apostles¹¹.

10 Odilo Heiming, “Ein jakobitisches Doppellektionar des Jahres 824 aus Harran in den Handschriften British Museum Add. 14485 bis 14487”, in Patrick Granfield & Joseph A. Jungmann (ed), *Kyriakon. Festschrift Johannes Quasten* (2 Vols). Vol. II (Münster Westf., 1970), 768-799.

11 The same system is attested in a number of ancient collections of the Syrian Orthodox Sedre (Husoye): BL. Add. 14494 (9/10th cent); 14518 (9/10th cent); 14493 (10th century). Cfr. Stephen Plathottathil, *Themes of Incarnation in the Sedre for the Period of Suboro- Yaldo according to the Mosul Fenqitho*, [Moran ‘Eth’o 30, Kottayam, 2009], pp. 105-107.

An 'Ecumenical' Calendar of the fourteenth century

The flexibility of the Syrian Orthodox Calendars is attested by the so called *Martyrology of Rabban Saliba* (+ 1340) composed in Hah in Tur 'Abdin, which according to its editor P. Peeters represents the liturgical practice of the Monastery of Mar Gabriel¹². The author has certainly used several Melkite sources and thus he has included the feasts of Syrian Orthodox, Byzantine and Persian martyrs and saints. Apparently, his intention was to produce a calendar for the entire liturgical year and he attributed it to Jacob of Edessa. Thus, the calendar bears the following title:

“Again, the index (*lit. Codex*) which shows the dominical feasts and the commemoration of the saints for the whole course of the year (in) the arrangement of Jacob of Edessa. May his prayer be with us”.

It is not sure that the churches in Hah or in Tur 'Abdin had ever followed the calendar as arranged by Rabban Saliba. However, its significance is that it provides an example of making a 'common list'. We ignore whether Rabban Saliba was aware of the confessional background of all the martyrs and saints that he had included in his list.

In fact, the Penqitho (festal Breviary) of Mor Gabriel (A.D.1830), published by S.P.Brock is different and it contains much smaller number of the feasts of the saints¹³. This list has retained the local character of the celebration and most of the traditional Syrian Orthodox feasts are absent. Some of the earlier feasts (attested by the menologies published by F.Nau) appear in the Penqitho.

12 P. Peeters, “Le Martyrologie de Rabban Sliba”, *Analecta Bollandiana* 27(1908), 129-200. Syriac text and Latin translation. Syriac text is given by Assemani, *Catalogue of the manuscript of the Vatican Library*, Vol. II., 250-272.

13 S.P. Brock, “The Fenqitho of the Monastery of Mar Gabriel in Tur 'Abdin”, *Ostkirchliche Studien* 28 (1979), 168-182. Contains 35 feasts.

Syriac Menologies published by F.Nau

A century ago F.Nau had published twelve Syriac menologia and a martyrology, which still await a proper study¹⁴.

I : BL Add. 12150 (Nov. 411) : *PO* X, 7-26.

II : Add. 17134 (end of 7th cent) : pp.29; 31-35.

III: Add. 14504 (9-10th cent) : pp. 29-30; 35-48.

IV : Add. 14519 (11-12th cent) : pp. 30; 48-53.

V: Add. 14503 (11-12th cent) : pp. 30; 53-56.

VI: Paris Syr. 146 (= ms. A) (17th cent) : pp.59-87.

Vatican Syr. 69 (ms. B) (A.D. 1547) : pp. 59-87.

VII : Add. 17246 (A.D. 1239) : pp. 91; 93-97.

Add. 14708 (14th cent) : pp. 91; 93-97.

VIII : Add. 14719 (A.D. 1184) : pp. 91; 97-101.

IX : 14713 (12-13th cent) : pp. 91; 101-107.

X : Add. 17261 (13-14th cent) : pp. 91; 107-112.

XI : Add. 17232 (10-11th cent) : p. 92.

XII: Paris Syr. 68 (A.D. 1465) : pp. 91-92; 127-131.

XIII : Borgio Siro 1214 (18th cent) : pp. 92; 132-133

XIII is a fragment. The fuller text is published by: S.P. Brock¹⁵. Among the thirteen lists, we shall give a special attention to the oldest five (I, II, III, IV & V).

14 F.Nau (ed), *Un Martyrologue et douze Menologues Syriaques*, *Patrologia Orientalis*, Vol.X(1912) ; Reprint 1974.

15 S.P. Brock, "A Calendar attributed to Jacob of Edessa", *Parole de l'Orient* I-2 (1970), 415-427.

1. **The first one** (*I : Add. 12150 : 411 A.D.*) is a ‘bad translation of a Greek Original’, composed after 360 A.D., in Antioch or in Nicomedia. It has very few feasts in common with the other four of this group (i.e. II-V). It begins with the following feasts:

Dec. 26 : St Stephen;

Dec. 27 : John and James;

Dec. 28: Paul and Simon Peter chief of the apostles of our Lord.

Dec. 30: Hermes;

Jan. 6 : Epiphany.

The feasts of other months are not attested by II-V.

As F. Nau has qualified it is a ‘Martyrology’ and it does not give any dominical feast except Epiphany. The universally celebrated feasts such as Christmas, Easter, Ascension/Pentecost are also not mentioned. Apparently the martyrology represents a local tradition.

2. The four menologies beginning with 1st December

The Menologia II –V represent an earlier order of the calendar in which the liturgical year began with first December. BLAdd 17134 (=II) is a manuscript written at the monastery of Qenneshre, the famous Greek Study centre.

Add. 14504(= II) mentions the feasts of several abbots of the monastery of Qenneshre. So it was probably written at the monastery. Add. 14519 (=III) begins with the feast of Barlaha, abbot of Qenneshre.

3. The 8 remaining menologia begin with 1st October.

	I	II	III	IV	V
Month	Add 12150	Add 17134	Add 14504	Add 14519	Add 14503
Dec 25	-	Peter of Alexandria	Nativity	Nativity	Nativity
Dec 26	St Stephen	Theotokos	Theotokos	Theotokos	Theotokos
Dec 27	John & James	St Stephen	St Stephen	Innocents	Innocents
Dec 28	Paul & Peter	H. Apostles	H. Apostles; St James br. Of our Lord & David	Stephen	Stephen
Dec 29	-	Innocents	Innocents	Apostles	Apostles; Evangelists; saints; Theologians.
Dec 30	Hermes	Himyarite martyrs	Sergius & Himyarite martyrs	Hymyarite martyrs	-
Jan 1	-	Ignatius, Basil, Gregory etc.	Ignatius, Basil & Orthodox fathers	Ignatius, Basil, Gregory etc.	Basil & Gregory.
Jan 2	-	John bar Ganne	-	-	-
Jan 6	Epiphany; Lucien	-	Epiphany	Epiphany	Baptism of Christ
Jan 7	Ploeutes; Quodinos	John the Baptist	John the Baptist	John the Baptist	Beheading of John the Baptist
Jan 8	Philorome	-	Theotokos	-	

In the early calendar system, the feast of St Stephen was celebrated on the days that followed Nativity. This is based on an early tradition according to which the feasts of Theotokos, St Stephen, Holy Innocents and the Apostles were given special importance and were placed closer to Nativity. In the next stage the feast of St Stephen was placed on 7 January probably to underscore the significance of the feast of St John the Baptist. But the feast of Theotokos on 26 December (“Praises of the Mother of God”) is retained in almost all calendars (VI-XIII) as that of the Holy Innocents (27 December).

In the course of liturgical developments some feasts were given new themes. Thus originally February 2, seems to be the feast of St Simeon (II-IV). But in Add 14503 (=V) it is the feast of the *Entry of our Lord to the Temple and St Simeon*. But in all the later calendars, it is the feast of the Entry into the Temple.

Often the dates of some of the feasts of the Apostles, saints or martyrs differ from one calendar to another. This implies the differences in local customs. The accommodation of various local customs might be the reason for the multiplication of the feasts of the Theotokos. Probably the only feast of Theotokos was celebrated on 26th December (II to V: absent in add. 12150 =I). IV and V give a feast of the Theotokos on 15 January (Jan 8 in III). In the later calendars it became a universal feast sometimes known as *Theotokos on the seeds* ('al zar 'e) or *Theotokos on the ears of the corns* ('al shbile) or simply as (*the feast of*) *Theotokos*.

The most important feasts of the Theotokos, Annunciation (*March 25*) (absent in I & III), and Assumption (*August 15*) (absent in I and II) are attested by most of the early calendars. Assumption is sometimes called *Memory of the Theotokos upon the vine* ('al guphne) (e.g. add 17261; Vat. Syr. 68) or *upon the grapes* ('al 'enbe) (Add.17232). Likewise the feast of the Theotokos on May 15 (absent in I & II) is regularly known as *upon the ears of the corn* ('al shbile).

There is a feast of *the Nativity of the Theotokos* (Absent in early calendars, except add. 14504. In later calendars it is regularly attested (VI –XIII), sometimes under the title: *Nativity of Theotokos- Memory of her parents (or Joachim and Anna* (e.g. Add. 14713; 17232; Vat.Syr. 68; 69; Par. Syr. 146). Apparently this was a feast of Joachim and Anna and was given a new colour as in the case of the feast of Feb.2.

According to three menologia, there is a feast of Theotokos on 30 August with a curious title; *Theotokos, when her parents girded*

her loins (add. 14713; Par. Syr. 146; Vat. Syr. 69 cfr. Add. 17232: *Mary Theotokos*). This seems to be a feast celebrated in the regions that were under the Greek influence. Thus add. 14713 says: ‘*The Greeks celebrate when her loins were girded*’.

Though the calendars show agreement on the Dominical feasts, feasts of the Theotokos, Apostles and leading martyrs and Church fathers, there is considerable differences in the case of other feasts (martyrs, fathers, leading monks, theologians), reflecting various local practices. Thus we can observe the calendar is not yet closed. It is legitimate to include new feasts. But the question becomes difficult when we discuss the possibility of preparing ‘an ecumenical martyrology’ or an ‘ecumenical liturgical calendar’. But it should be underlined that as in the case of doctrines, there are several common elements in the calendars of the East and of the Latin West.

Conclusion: Towards a common list of martyrs

In the Christian tradition, the place of the martyrs is understood in terms of the mystery of Christ. A martyr is an ‘alter Christus’, a ‘second Christ’. Christ is the ‘Proto-martyr’, who endured voluntary passion and death. Those who had laid down their life for Christ and become ‘fellow martyrs with Christ’. It is significant that the title ‘Proto-martyr’ is given to St Stephen and his feast was celebrated in the early Church in the days that follow the Nativity. Martyrs are ‘wounded friends of Bridegroom’ (cfr. *Song 5:7*) and they became a living image of Christ. Their life is an eloquent witness to the reality of the mystery of resurrection. The baptism of the blood of the martyrs gave way to the ‘baptism by asceticism’ of the monks. Those who have endured persecution for the sake of their faith in Christ during the fifth and the sixth century Christological controversies are regarded as martyrs by the Syriac Churches. Thus East Syriac and West Syriac Churches have their own lists of martyrs of this period. The Byzantines included Maximus the Confessor (+662), an ardent opponent of Monothelism. In the Syrian Orthodox Church, the fifth diptych,

fathers such as Philoxenus of Mabbugh, Severus of Antioch and Jacob Baradaeus are commemorated. It is significant that the Eastern Catholic Churches have omitted the names of such figures from their liturgical commemorations.

Therefore without solving the issues related to Christology, it is not a wise step to announce a common list of martyrs. A consensus among the Oriental Orthodox Churches is pre-requisite for such a common list. An important agreement with good intention should not jeopardize the unity among the members of the Oriental Orthodox family.

A common list of martyrs acceptable to both the Catholics and the Oriental Orthodox Churches is problematical mainly because the anathemas of some of the leading Church fathers are still found in the liturgical texts (e.g. *Amalugia* or the confession of faith at ordination).

Can we justify such a common list theologically? Following the tradition of the undivided Church, both the Catholics and the Orthodox commemorate only the names of the martyrs who have died as the believing members of the Church. Commemoration is an act of communion. When a saint or a martyr is commemorated in the diptychs, his or her name is incorporated into the act of offering. In the early Church those who had deviated from the Catholic faith or the discipline of the Church were excommunicated, i.e. excluded from the Eucharistic Communion, for they do not confess the faith of the Eucharistic community.

On the other hand, most of the heretical groups of the first centuries also exalted the ideal of martyrdom. But the Catholic Church never accepted the martyrdom of a heretic a witness to the mystery of Christ¹⁶.

16 On this question see: Antony Hilhorst, "Christian Martyrs outside the Catholic Church", in Joseph Verheyden & Herman Teule (eds), *Heretics and Heresies in the Ancient Church and in Eastern Christianity*, [Studies in Honour of Adelbert Davids], Peeters, Louvain, 2011, pp. 23-36.

But can we think of local common lists? E.g. A common list of the Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic Church and the Syro-Malabar Church or a list of the Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholics, both in the Middle East and in India. This needs to be studied and discussed among the members of these Churches, as well as at the local level. Sometimes such lists can be problematical. For example, the founding fathers or the leading figures of the Eastern Catholic Churches are not always acceptable to the non-Catholics and vice versa.

But at the practical side, the tombs of some of the local saints are visited by people from different Churches (e.g. In Kerala tomb of Mar Gregorios of Parumala or Sr. Alphonsa at Bharanganam). Here we can find the emergence of a 'common cult or veneration of a saint', even though there is no official promulgation. It shows the signs of the works of the Holy Spirit who inspires Christians towards a visible unity.

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Gnostics exalted martyrdom: E.g. The Testimony of Truth, Nag Hamadi Library IX,3: "If we deliver ourselves over to death for the sake of the Name we will be saved". Quoted by Hilhorst, p. 33.

Martin Tamcke

THE “WORLD” AND ITS ESCHATOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN EAST-SYRIAN SYNODICAL RECORDS

It is clear that the texts, which comprise the collection of East-Syrian synodical records beginning in 410 CE and ending with a synod in the early Islamic period, in 775/76 CE, do not reveal a uniform understanding of what the concept “world” stands for.¹ The world as the entirety of everything that exists can be understood in the texts as positive, negative, or neutral. However, in the early texts, the driving force of belief is understood in contrast with the world; and the world is understood as that which culturally, socially, and religiously determined the Iranian homeland of the East-Syrian Christians.

1 Until a comprehensive critical edition of the Synodicon orientale is available, students of this text have to use the editions of Chabot (who offers an edition on the basis of several manuscripts with French translation) and Braun (who gives only a German translation, but based on a different manuscript and thus valuable for comparison).

According to the writings of Catholicos Mar Abâ (540-552), which were recorded in the synodical records, the good path begins with the fear of God. The wealth of this ephemeral world could never equal the fear of God and, without this, the beauty of man and the orders of angels would be “infinitely abhorrent.”² Only he who is open to imagine the perfection amidst all imperfections creates a standard that allows everything to be questioned since the present world does not guarantee satisfactory wealth or beauty in the end. Human beings attain their splendor only through a splendor that exists outside them by keeping a higher or, so to speak, more forward-looking perspective in mind. It is by this perspective that human actions and behavior are judged.

The idea that even the hierarchy of angels receives their splendor and beauty only through the fear of God may have originated in the *vita angelica*. It is, moreover, also a substantial declaration about the core and the scope of what the fear of God means with regard to the world.

The fear of God alone is set apart from all of the interconnectedness in our present lives and actions. It bears witness to the eternal world in so far as it does not subject human beings to the laws of the ephemeral, but rather, on the contrary, immunizes them against them. This occurs with a proper dash of morality, and two ways and realities are set in contrast:

And each desire that does not focus its ambition on this [fear of God] is completely disgraceful and the man condemned to hell is the one who did so and thereby caused his own pain. All wisdom and science that is not rooted in it [the fear of God] and whose aim is not guided by it is vain and tasteless and causes all sorts of harm to its possessor. All powers that are not supported by it and solidified by it are irrelevant. But, whoever focuses on it, lends it his ‘mental ear,’ and guides his

2 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 80 (Syriac text)/333 (French translation); Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 128.

will and his speech towards its community, plans nothing without it and regulates his entire behavior in the course of his temporal life according to it, in which there is space for everyone who wants to perform good deeds.³

The difference between a human being of this ephemeral world and a human being who lives in the fear of God – that is, a human being in the sphere of influence of the eternal world – is thus a difference in behavior and in the inner rationale behind human acts. In place of an undisguised desire that establishes itself, the act of a human being who fears God is not simply contrived from mechanisms in the world and used for its own establishment, but rather formed by an ethical purpose and related to an immovable, ethical standard. He who does good in this manner and is filled with the fear of God is, according to the explanations of Mar Abâ, “living in truth in the house of Christ.”⁴ This world and the present life, however, are the only places in which justice and proper behavior and acts are practiced.

The idea which Mar Abâ epitomizes in the metaphors of the ephemeral and eternal worlds is characterized by Catholicos Ezekiel (570-582) by using the image of successive temporal appearances, as can be seen when he speaks of the “future world” as opposed to the present world. To sell priesthood titles for payment, i.e. positions generally described as “noble” or as “the world and everything that is in it,” means for those willing to be involved in such dealings that they are buying “the hell and the pain that is reserved for the godless in the future world.”⁵ Furthermore, this reflection about the future world as opposed to this present world serves to give special

3 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 80 / 333; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 128.

4 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 80 / 333; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 128.

5 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 122-3 / 381; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 181; cf. also the statements of Catholicos shôġ`yahb I, who speaks of God as the wise regent “of this and the future world,” Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 193 / 452; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 274.

importance to ethically demanded behavior. Priesthood, always in danger of becoming estranged from its orientation towards things to come, must therefore be regarded as “noble” in order to prevent it from being seen exclusively from a financial perspective. And, this is precisely because an opposite reality attempts to turn it away from this orientation.

A third way in which the opposite poles of human existence can be understood is through reference to an higher and lower world (heaven and hell), both created by God. The good and the just, then, are associated with both the present and the future world. In this way of speaking about human existence, both the horizontal and vertical characterize the intellectual coordinates of the world.⁶ This idea is found in the statements of Catholicos Ishō'yahb I (582-596). In his introduction to the synodical records, he professes God as the founder and regulator of both worlds, the mortal world that was created with a beginning and has a temporal end, and the eternal world that is above the measurement of time, was created with a beginning (as though it were ephemeral) but that continues without end according to the will of the grand regulator who adorned man with the light of reason, which is supported, strengthened, and enlightened by the use of appropriate rules.⁷

The Church of the East does not recognize original sin as it is taught by the Western churches. The prominent place of reason (not only in this text) has consistently led to discussions regarding to what end church rules and regulations are needed. Their necessity is seen, for the most part, as due to the limitations of human reason with regard to responsible behavior. God created both worlds, but in the ephemeral world eternity is permitted to exist in the light of reason and its ancillary rules.

6 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 193 / 452; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 273-4.

7 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 130 / 390; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 192.

These rules are brought to life in the Bible, as Biblical books serve the world by providing guidance.⁸ The prophets wrote of their affliction “so that the memory [about them] would not disappear from the world.”⁹ The canons of the church, which claim the power to regulate, in the wake of the Biblical laws, the lives of those that are consolidated here (in this world) as well as the lives of those who live for the future world and who thereby allow these rules to become actual in the present world, “are high walls and impregnable castles that protect their observer from all harm.”¹⁰ Catholicos George I (661-680) says similarly that God gave the world “helpful laws” to test the volition of his creatures, indeed “so that we and the angels would like to prove our free will.”¹¹ Monks comply with the orders given by those above them and do not act without their knowledge, “which would be not only inappropriate for monks and hermits but also for those that simply live in the world.”¹² Even if this applies primarily to monks, in the end it applies to all human beings as well.

The stance towards monasticism in the Church of the East expressly documents how the policy of the church changed over the course of time. Originating from a proto-monastic tradition in which all members of the congregation lived like monks, the church’s policy began to change in the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century until monasticism was relegated to the periphery of the church and

8 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 230 / 494; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 352 (letter from Catholicos George to Mina).

9 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 204/466-7; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 292 (letter from Catholicos Sabrishō^c I to the hermits from Barkitai).

10 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 97 / 355; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 148 (synod of the Catholicos Joseph).

11 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 231/495-6; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 353-4 (letter from Catholicos George to Mina).

12 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 206/468-9; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 295 (letter from Catholicos Sabrishō^c I to the hermits from Barkitai).

it became a requirement that all representatives of the episcopate, even the catholicoi, had to be married. Then, in the beginning of the 7th century, monasticism regained its dominant position and bishops and catholicoi were once more required to be celibate. These changes in the policy of the church are reflected in the synodical records, and they are explained by historical changes that demanded appropriate reactions from the church.

In the end, the only function of the world is to serve as a laboratory for man's reason, thereby making it possible for him to learn. The good Lord "created this world, rich in variety, change, and ordeals and full of contradictions in wisdom," for instruction, testing, differentiation, as well as a step by step proof "of the spiritual and physical beings of reason of this world, so that the autonomy and freedom of the will of all rational creatures would be recognized."¹³ This strict division between the worlds implies that the present world must be overcome through means found in the present world, namely reason in autonomy and freedom of will. Belief is not the loss of free will nor of autonomy, it is rather what the will utilizes and what autonomy requires.

He who has knowledge of the other world sees to the material requirements of the church in this world with, for instance, donations for the construction and upkeep of the church. One lives symbolically in anticipation of the future world, and all deeds in this world will affect the future life. The theological rationale for such sponsoring is ambitious, direct, and deliberate.

Because the true believers know that there is a world of eternal reward for them, they give God gifts to construct, furnish, and preserve the holy temples, churches, convents, hospices, schools, and Episcopal residences, so that they may conceal their sins, purify their souls, and preserve their race.¹⁴

13 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 230 / 494; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 353 (letter from Catholicos George to Mina).

14 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 143/405; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 209 (Synod of Ishō ° yahb I, Canon 7).

Such benevolence transforms the seemingly lost possession into an eternal possession, or as Catholicos Ishō'yahb I said, "it makes, so to speak, the ephemeral possession into an eternal possession."¹⁵

In this way, from a certain perspective, belonging to the other world decreases one's margin of profit, because of the voluntary donation of gifts as a symbolic obtaining of (God's) love; it contains, however, a shockingly far-reaching soteriological message regarding the purposefulness of such behavior. With respect to the behavior that results from belonging to the eternal world there are two types of people: the man of the world (*Weltmensch*) and the man of spirit (*Geistmensch*). Affiliation with the future (eternal) world does not lead only to the willingness to donate, it also leads to behavior that establish boundaries with respect to the rest of society. Thus, Canon 37 of the synods of Catholicos Ezekiel expressly commands "that, from now on, Christians should no longer send their daughters away to learn worldly music."¹⁶ Clergymen were urged to stop educating 'worldly people' because this would belittle the dignity of the church.¹⁷ Ethical behavior in the spirit of the future world was considered noble. The church's dignity is vulnerable to interactions in which those involved are not able to account for the motivation of the believers, especially the priests, because they, in their steadfast connection to this world, are blind to the fact that the others belong to a different, opposing world.

The synod of Catholicos Joseph (552-567, d. 576) describes the death of his predecessor Mar Abâ in 551/2 with the words "[he] departed from this world."¹⁸ One leaves this world and, thus,

15 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 143/405; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 209 (Synod of Ishō ° yahb I, Canon 7).

16 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 127 / 386; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 187.

17 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 127 / 386; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 187 (Canon 36).

18 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 96 / 353; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 146.

belonging to the future world becomes the only important goal. To what degree acknowledging the resurrection of the dead and the new life in the future world is presumed in the symbols of Catholicos Ishôî`yahb I as self-contained theologies of the Church of the East may be questioned due to the fact that the cited formulation is given as a quote from the west-Nicene tradition. However, it is now believed that this acknowledgement comes from the east-Syriac understanding of the world. From this understanding the ephemeral is differentiated from the eternal, the spiritual from the material, above from below, and that which belongs to the ‘now’ from that which belongs to the future. Non-Christian courts are to be avoided¹⁹ and the same goes for the holidays of other religions: “no Christian is permitted to attend a non-Christian celebration or accept anything that is given to him as a result of it.”²⁰ Pubs and picnics are also to be avoided altogether.²¹ Instead, one is to practice a spiritual transformation for which the priests serve as examples. Consequently, priests are not allowed “to wear elegant clothing, lead a carnal lifestyle, live with a childish mentality capricious as the weather, or act like worldly people, but rather they must try to live as far as possible in accordance with the future life.”²²

Thus, ‘world’ can be understood horizontally or vertically with concept pairs such as above and below, ephemeral and eternal, temporal and non-temporal, present and future. To perceive responsibility in the world therefore means to distance oneself from the established societal, cultural, religious, and social life and instead dedicate oneself to the parallel church-society that in the form of the church is a stepping stone to the future, eternal, or higher world.

19 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 155 / 415; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 225.

20 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 158 / 417-8; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 228.

21 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 158-9 / 418; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 229; cf. Braun’snote 142.

22 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 176 / 435-6; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 252 (*Synod of Ishô`yahb I, Canon 7*).

Thus, the future world is the guiding principle for the conduct of life in the present world. Human beings are, as it were, without splendor if they do not bear the splendor of the future world towards which they strive. In this way the future world influences the acts and behavior of human beings in the present. The future world contains the perfection that, because it is only *there* and can be experienced *here* only in the intention of reaching the future world, makes all life here a field of ethical probation and simultaneously frees the present world from attributions of “permanent” religious meaning and exaltation. Here, nothing equals that which becomes visible *there*; but there exists rather, in the best case, as a potential, completely free from religious attributions, which corresponds either to the claim of belief, or is simply filth, a non-thing, which is, with respect to this world, obsolete, ephemeral, lackluster, and low.

The separation of the worlds that is introduced from belief in the present world can originally be traced back to the experience of Christ:

The entire world requires the appearance of our savior, but humankind requires this especially in that he lifts us from the guilt of sin, delivers us from the bondage of death, saves us from the indignation found in the slow decomposition we call death, and gives us the most splendid, eternal life, the complete knowledge of his divinity and the lasting attachment of being in the glory of his majesty born out of grace toward human beings and the spirits.²³

In this way life in the world is determined as a life outside of the above, future, and unending world. Paul Tillich’s primary claim – “The divine life participates in every life as its ground and aim”²⁴ – is actually taken up by the Church of the East but only as an entirely Christological claim that the divine life is, when it comes to acts grounded in reason, an internal driving force that allows human beings

23 Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* 234 / 499; Braun, *Buch der Synhados* 357.

24 Tillich, *Systematic Theology* i, 245.

to remain human beings without allowing them to receive any amount of divinity. And so it naturally makes sense that the separation characterized by the Church of the East between the divine and human in Christology, in which the divine only exists in human beings as it exists in a temple, as it were, has a parallel in the separation from the divine world and this ephemeral world. Even if the ephemeral world is thought of as finite, even if it is only filth, the world here is still nothing other than the world here and in it nothing other than the laws of reason apply; these laws of reason, which indeed remain the medium for shaping the world, are taken from another world, as it were, and utilized in this one.

The synods of the Church of the East assume an already disenchanting world and make this disenchanting world into a test area, so to speak, where the present and future worlds of Christ find one another but do not unite nor simply remain separate, but rather exist in the acts and life that originate in the mind and aim towards the life ahead. This is not fleeing from the world in a modern sense – even the disempowerment and relativization of the claim of this world aims at something else: life in this world as a representation of an alternative, eternal, intrinsically spiritual world in the material, economic, political, religious and cultural world here. Further to this, the deliberate disempowerment of this world from the beginning facilitates its role as a place of ethical probation and makes the way of life of the believers a permanent declaration of war against a world that follows rules that differ from the ethics established in the Bible. This alternative view scrutinizes the world so that it is seen as something temporary in which the final thing – the true “abode” or goal – is reflected in anticipation.

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JOHN THE SOLITARY
(Letter to Hesychius)

Do not lay down a law for yourself, otherwise you may become enslaved to these laws of yours. Be a free person, one who is in a position to do what he likes. Do not become like those who have their own law, and are unable to turn aside from it, either out of fear in their own minds, or because of the wish to please others; in this way they have enslaved themselves to the coercion of their law, with their necks yoked to their own law, seeing that they have decreed for themselves their own special law—just when Christ had released them from the yoke of the Law!

Do not make hard and fast decisions over anything in the future, for you are a created being and your will is subject to changes. Decide in whatever matters you have to reach a decision, but without fixing in your mind that you will not be moved to other things. For it is not by small changes in what you eat that your faithfulness is altered: your service to the Lord of all is performed in the mind, in your inner person; that is where the ministry to Christ takes place. Do not be tied down to anything; or let anything enslave you. Release yourself from the yoke of the world by means of the freedom of the new life. There are ninety-nine commandments which have been dissolved and annulled by God, and do you want to establish your own law? There are many people who are more careful not to let their own law be broken, rather than all other laws.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp. 88-89)

Rainer Voigt

ON BARHEBRAEUS THE GRAMMARIAN

Grigor bar-^oEbrāyā (Barhebraeus) was the greatest grammarian of the Syriac grammatical tradition, and is likewise the greatest Syrian scholar. He was born in Melitene (today's Eski Malatya) at the time of the Sultanate of Rum, i.e. the Anatolian Seljuk State in 1225/6 and was baptized with the name Yoḥannān. It is quite possible that he stemmed from a Jewish family – his father was called Ahron. However, the name could also be derived from a place called ^oAbrā. He liked to call himself Arabicised 'abū l-Faraġ 'Father of Joy' and added his father's name bar-Ahron to it. He studied in his hometown and later in Tripolis on the Syrian coast. When he was 17 years old (1243) the Mongolian commander Bayju Noyon vanquished the Rum-Seljuks in the battle at Köşedağ(1) in Eastern Anatolia.

Because his father had to heal a wounded general the family could not move away immediately to Antiochia but only a year later. In Antiochia (today's Antakya) Bar Hebraeus lived at first as a monk; later he renewed his studies in Tripolis. Already at the early age of 20 (1246) he was made bishop of Gubos near Melitene, which did not quite conform to the canonical rules. On the occasion of his episcopal consecration he adopted the name Gregorios. A little later he was transferred to Laqabin. In the years that followed, a dispute arose between two metropolitan bishops, i.e. concerning the settlement of a schism. Bar Hebraeus participated in

this dispute and sided with Dionysius and consequently was given the bishopric of Aleppo for his support. But in the end he changed sides and joined Dionysius' political opponent Johannes, who earlier had been Maphrian (Mapryån). Said Johannes wanted Bar Hebraeus to be his successor and this wish came true in 1264, when Bar Hebraeus was elected 'Maphrian of Takrit and the East'. The ceremony was attended by the Armenian king Hethum I, because at that time the area was part of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia.

Bar Hebraeus' hope that the conquest by the Mongols (capture, and sacking of Bagdad in 1258) would change the Christians' situation for the better seemed at first to be justified. He liked to stay in Maraga in Azerbaijan, the Mongol rulers' residence. There he visited Ilĥan Hulāgü.

In spite of his pastoral activities and his many journeys he managed to write 30 books and treatises in Syriac and in Arabic. In these he wrote about the entire knowledge of his time beginning with the *Summa theologiae* (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܡܢܪܐܬ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ *Ktābā da-mnārat qudšē*),¹ the collection of ecclesiastical law (the *Nomocanon*, ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܗܘܕܕܐܝܬܐ ܡܝܬܘܠ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܝܬܝܝܐ ܘܢܐܡܘܫܐ *Ktābā d-huddāyē meṭṭol qānone 'ityāyē w-nāmosē 'ālmānāyē*), also Bible commentaries (like ܐܘܨܪܐ ܕܪܐܝܫܐ *'Aṣṣar rāzē* 'Liber horrei mysteriorum'), books on

1. In this paper I would like to introduce a new transcription symbol, i.e. the symbol for the juncture between a status constructus and the dependent noun following it, e.g. ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ *ktābat_ 'idā* 'handwriting' (st. abs. ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ *ktābtā*), ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ *quddāš hayklā* 'consecration of the temple' (st. abs. ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ *quddāšā*). This symbol will then be applied to signal the relationship between a preposition that is separate and its dependent substantive as in ܡܝܬܘܠ ܩܢܘܢܐ *meṭṭol_šmā* 'on the noun'.

history, the great Church History, and many more.²

His greatest work was *Butyrum sapientiae* ('The Cream of Wisdom'), ܟܬܒܐ ܕܗܝܘܬܐ ܕܗܝܟܡܐ *Ktâbâ d-ḥe'wat_ḥek^emtâ* or ܟܬܒܐ ܕܗܝܟܡܐ ܕܗܝܘܬܐ *Ktâbâ d-ḥekmat_ḥekmâtâ*. Let us first stay with the title. Latin *butyrum* as well as Syriac ܗܝܘܬܐ *he'wtâ* are both rare and foreign words in their respective languages. Latin *butyrum* stems from a Greek word of presumed foreign origin although Greek folk-etymology interpreted it as meaning 'curd cheese from cow's milk'. Latin *butyrum* is the source of English *butter* and German *Butter*, and many other European languages show reflexes of it, e.g. French *beurre*, Italian *burro*. Syriac *ḥe'wtâ* already stands out due to its unusual spelling: An 'âlap in word-interior context is only attested in a few words like ܗܝܘܬܐ *ḥe'râ* (WS *ḥi'ro*) 'free', ܗܝܘܬܐ *ḥe'pâ* (WS *ḥi'po*) 'compulsion', ܗܝܘܬܐ *ke'pâ* (WS *ki'po*) 'stone', ܗܝܘܬܐ *ke'nâ* (WS *ki'no*) 'just, fair'. This kind of spelling points to a foreign origin. In the case of *ḥe'wtâ* "butter", which goes back to **ḥew'tâ* < **ḥem'tâ*, one must mention Akkadian / Babylonian *ḥimētu* (Assyrian *ḥimātu*) 'butter' and Hebrew *ḥem'â^h* 'soured, set milk'. So much concerning the title of this most important work of Syriac literature and science.

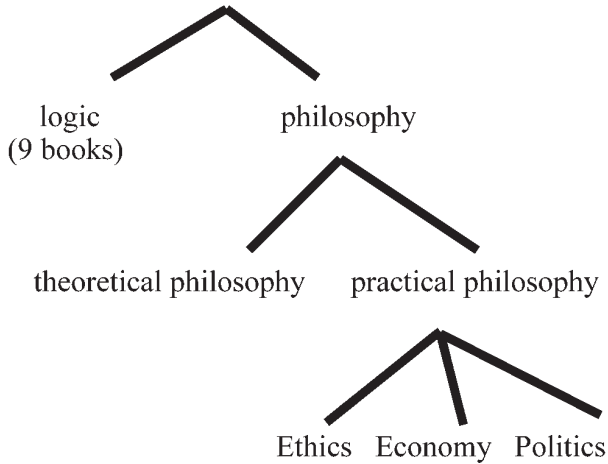
Let me bring in at this moment a brief comment concerning the Latin version of authors' names and works as they are customarily quoted in the scholarly literature. Although this way of naming has decreased in the last decades it can still be found in many a publication. Thus, e.g. Jacob of Serugh who died in 521 was formerly often called *Jacobus episcopus Sarugensis* (lit. *Jacob, bishop of Sarug*). With the name *Bar-^cEbrâya* the

2. See H. Takahashi: *Barhebraeus - a bio-bibliography*, Piscataway: Gorgias, 2005, 2013.

Latin version Barhebraeus has now been widely accepted, which is a mixture of Syriac *bar* ‘son (of)’ and Latin *Hebraeus* ‘Hebrew’ - his Latin name ought to be Bar-Hebraei in close accordance with Syriac Bar-[°]Ebrāyā (i.e. *bar*-[°]Ebrāyā), lit. ‘son of a Hebrew’, if this etymology is correct, or on the other hand it could be: ‘son of someone from (a place called) [°]Ebrā’. This is as much as I would like to say concerning the name Barhebraeus.

Anton Baumstark in his *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn 1922) has called the *Ktābā d-ḥe’wat-ḥek[°]mtā* „das großartigste in syrischer Sprache entworfene Gesamtsystem der aristotelischen Philosophie“ [i.e. the greatest comprehensive system of Aristotelian philosophy drafted in Syriac language”] (p. 316). It contains in four main sections, in sequence, writings on logic (ܟܬܒܐ ܡܠܝܠܘܬܐ *mlilutā* with 9 books), physics, metaphysics and practical philosophy (altogether with 22 books).

This results in the following division of this great opus:



Concerning the *Butyrum sapientiae*, the years 2003-2005 saw also the publication of three different parts of the *Ktâbâ d-ḥe'wat_ḥek'etâ*.

I will point first to the work by Hidemi Takahashi on *Aristotelian meteorology in Syriac*,³ which contains an edition of the books on mineralogy and meteorology (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܝܢܪܐܠܘܓܝܐ ܘܡܝܬܝܘܪܘܠܘܓܝܐ *ktâbâ d-me^hta'liqo* < μεταλλικοί). This Japanese scholar, who has also published an important volume on the life and works of Barhebraeus (see below), read a paper as recently as at the 7th World Syriac Conference which was organised in the St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI) in Kottayam (Kerala, India). I would like to turn the spotlight on this scholar in particular, who studied in Germany and now teaches in Tokyo. He bears witness to the fact that interest in the Syrian Middle East has by now reached as far as Japan.

N. Pieter Joosse published the *Books of ethics, economy and politics* (Leiden 2003)⁴ as part of the *Butyrum sapientiae*.

Two years later (2005) saw the publication of the *Book of Rhetoric* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܪܝܬܘܪܝܩܐ *Ktâbâ d-riṭoriqē*) edited, translated and with a comment by John W. Watt et al.⁵

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3. *Aristotelian meteorology in Syriac: Barhebraeus, "Butyrum sapientiae", Books of Mineralogy and meteorology*, Leiden: Brill, 2004 (Series Aristoteles Semitico-latinus 15).
 4. *A Syriac encyclopaedia of Aristotelian philosophy: Barhebraeus (13th c.), Butyrum sapientiae, Books of ethics, economy, and politics*, Leiden 2004 (Aristoteles Semitico-latinus, 16).
 5. *Aristotelian rhetoric in Syriac, Barhebraeus, Butyrum sapientiae, Book of rhetoric*, by John W. Watt with assistance

Finally Yousef Kouriyhe has edited and translated *Das Buch der Ersten Philosophie* (ܕܩܘܪܝܗܝܗ ܕܩܘܪܝܗܝܗ ܕܩܘܪܝܗܝܗ ܕܩܘܪܝܗܝܗ ܕܩܘܪܝܗܝܗ) *Ktābā d-pilosopyā qadmāytā*.⁶

For any research concerning Barhebraeus the comprehensive bibliography by Hidemi Takahashi: *Barhebraeus - a bio-bibliography* is indispensable.⁷

Bar Hebraeus travelled frequently within his jurisdiction area, consecrating bishops and dedicating church buildings, and he tried to settle theological and ecclesiastical disputes. He died in 1286, sixty years after his birth, forty years after he was consecrated a bishop and twenty years after his elevation to Mapryān. He believed that his death was predestined by the existing planetary conjunction at the time – a belief he held against the opinion he expressed in his *Nomocanon*, that astrology was unChristian. His final resting place is Mārⁱ Mattai near Mossul.

The grammatical treatises

I shall now be dealing with his grammatical treatises. In this subject too he achieved the highest accomplishment. Before I talk about his major work on grammar (*Ktābā d-ṣemḥē*) let me briefly mention some of his other grammatical treatises. The most important is his so-called *Minor Grammar*, published, edited and

of Daniel Isaac, Julian Faultless and Ayman Shihadeh, Leiden: Brill, 2005 (Aristoteles Semitico-latinus, 18).

6. *Das Buch der Ersten Philosophie aus dem Kompendium Rahm der Weisheit „Butyrum Sapientiae“ des Bar Hebräus*, Online-Ressource Berlin Freie Universität 2011.

7. See footnote 2.

translated into Latin in 1843 by Ernst Bertheau.⁸ It was republished by Martin in 1872⁹ in a different version – without translation. *Ktābā da-grammaṭiqe* is composed in large parts **ܐܦܪܝܡܝܘܬܐ ܒܫܒܥܐܘܬܐ** *ba-mšuhṭā 'Aprēmāytā* ‘in metro Ephraemeo, sc. heptasyllabo’,¹⁰ i.e. in verses of seven syllables. Another important book is **ܕܕܡܝܘܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܒܘܠܐ** *Ktābā d-dāmyāyātā* ‘De vocibus aequivocis / aequiliteris’.¹¹

The four chapters in the *Liber splendorum* correspond to the classic division of grammar into noun (**ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ** *meṭṭol hālēn da-šmā* ‘de iis quae nomini accidunt’), verb (**ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ** *meṭṭol hālēn d-mellā* ‘de iis quae verbo accidunt’), particle (**ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ** *meṭṭol_essāre w-sukkālē d-kol haḏḏhad menhon* ,de conjunctionibus et de significatione uniuscuiusque earum’) and syntax (**ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ** *meṭṭol rukkābā d-memrā* ‘de oratione composita’). This is an exemplary division. In the syntactic section, which is unfortunately less voluminous, Bar Hebraeus deals e.g. with the kind of relationship between agent (the causer or initiator) and patient (the undergoer or sufferer of an action): **ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ ܕܝܝܫܘܩܐ** *meṭṭol_aykannāyut znā d-ābodā w-meʿabdānā*. I do not know of any other publication whose author has done any research on this important treatise.

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8. Gregorius Bar Hebraeus: *Grammatica linguae syriacae in metro Ephraemeo*, ed. (et) vertit Ernestus Bertheau, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1843.
9. Gregorius Bar Hebraeus: *La petite grammaire en vers de sept syllabes* et le traité “de vocibus aequivocis”, ed. par M. Martin, Paris: Maisonneuve, 1872 (*Œuvres grammaticales d’Abou’Ifaradj dit Bar Hebreus*, ed. par M. Martin, 2.).
10. E. Bertheau (ed.): *op. cit.* (footnote 8), S. 1.
11. Published in E. Martin: *Œuvres grammaticales*, vol. II, 1872; see Takahashi: *Barhebraeus* 2005, p. 372.

In an appendix to Martin's text edition, a further voluminous treatise by Bar Hebraeus is published entitled: **ܡܘܬܘܠ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܩܪܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܢܐܬ ܩܠܐ ܕܕܡܝܐܬܐ ܘܡܡܩܪܝܢ ܕܡܡܩܪܝܢ** *meṭṭol mēmṛā d-metrakbin men bnāt qālē dāmyātā w-metpašškānyātā* 'Treatise concerning the words that are similar and (therefore) doubtful (i.e. difficult), i.e. that are similar but have different meanings'.

Bar Hebraeus is the author of the major grammar, of the "amplissimum et profundissimum opus grammaticum" as Merx has called it: the **ܟܬܒܐ ܕܫܡܗܐ** *Ktābā d-šemḥē*, the 'Book of Rays', i.e. sections. This book was – following the preliminary work by (l'abbé) Paulin Martin (1872) - admirably edited (Leipzig 1922)¹² and translated (Leipzig 1907–1913)¹³ by Axel Moberg.¹⁴ This master piece divides into four treatises (*mēmṛā*):

1. On the noun (**ܡܘܬܘܠ ܡܘܬܐ** *meṭṭol šmā*),
2. On the verb (**ܡܘܬܘܠ ܡܡܩܪܝܢ** *meṭṭol melltā*),
3. On the particles (**ܡܘܬܘܠ ܡܡܩܪܝܢ** *meṭṭol 'essārā*),
4. On general phenomena (**ܡܘܬܘܠ ܡܡܩܪܝܢ** *meṭṭol mšāwtpā*, i.e. participation in the other domains).

The first three treatises correspond to the classic division of grammar into the nominal domain, the verbal domain and the domain that does not belong to the previous two.

12. *Le livre des splendeurs: la grande grammaire de Grégoire Barhebraeus*, ed. par Axel Moberg, Lund (et al.): 1922.

13. *Buch der Strahlen: die größere Grammatik des Barhebräus*, Teil 1-2, übers. v. Axel Moberg, Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1907-1913.

14. V. Takahashi: *Barhebraeus* 2005, pp. 374ff.

In a short preface (ܘܬܬܕܐܘܬܐ *uttâdâ*) he refers to St. Jacob of Edessa as the main representative of the Western tradition and Mâr^l 'Eliyâ of Şobâ as the main representative of the Eastern tradition, and he says that it is his intention to take both into consideration but his main accent will be on the Western tradition (*al_dumşę ma'rbâyę*) and by doing so he will be paying partly (*mnâtâ 'it*) regard to the Eastern tradition too:

ܘܬܬܕܐܘܬܐ ܕܒܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ
ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ
l-benyâneh da-ktâbâ hânâ al_dumşę ma'rbâyę
mešt'es-'nâ w-kar d-'âlşâ wa-l-madhñâyta mnâtâ 'it
sâ'ar-'nâ.

N.B. The difference between Eastern and Western traditions does here in no way relate to eastern and western pronunciations of Syriac.

In the prologue (*prâlâgiyâ*) that follows Bar Hebraeus states: “Grammar is a science from which one learns rules, and the observation of these rules enables you to avoid speech errors in (reading) the meticulous written language”:

ܘܬܬܕܐܘܬܐ ܕܒܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ
ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ
grammaṭiqi 'iteh idâ tâ d-mennâh metyalpin qânonę
da-b-nâtoruṭhon pâwdâ le'zânâyâ men_mamllâ
ktâbâyâ da-bñir mar'ah.

The aim of grammar is to achieve “exact language correctness when reading but not when speaking”:

ܘܬܬܕܐܘܬܐ ܕܒܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ
ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܝܫܐ
w-men_mamllâ ktâbâyâ tub 'amir:
b-da-b-qeryânâ lâ ba-swâdâ metişep tur'âşâ ḥattitâ.

We are learning from that, that Syriac in its classical

form was no longer spoken, rather that the *leššānā swādāyā* (the modern dialects) or Arabic had taken over.

Metrical analysis

According to the account by Anton Baumstark (1922:317),¹⁵ the major grammar is supposed to be a “comprehensive account in prose”, while the minor grammar, the *Ktābā da-grammatīqē*, is composed in verses of seven syllables.

But an extensive study of the text of the major grammar does suggest that a verse structure is also present. In several articles I have established a metric structure in the different sections from different parts of the grammar. In doing so I followed the substantive requirements of the articles in question rather than choosing those passages suitable to confirm my views:

Das Vokalsystem des Syrischen nach Barhebraeus. In: *Oriens Christianus*, 81 (1997), pp. 36-72.

Die metrische Struktur im „Buch der Strahlen“. In: *Annäherung an das Fremde: XXVI. Deutscher Orientalistentag 1995 in Leipzig*, hrsg. von H. Preißler und H. Stein, Stuttgart: 1998 (ZDMG - Suppl. 11.), pp. 132-144.

Das emphatische *p* des Syrischen. In: *Symposium Syriacum VII (Uppsala 1996)*, ed. by R. Lavenant, Rom: 1998 (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 256), pp. 527-537.

Zu Barhebraeus' syrischer Metrik im *Buch der Strahlen*. In: *Aktendes 5. Symposiums zur Sprache, Geschichte, Theologie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen (V. Deutsche Syrologentagung), Berlin 14. bis 15. Juli 2006*, hrsg. v. Rainer Voigt, Aachen: 2010 (Semitica et Semitoamitica Berolinensia, 9), pp. 267-297.

In all these contributions I have metrically analysed

¹⁵ A. Baumstark: *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 1922.

hundreds of verses and found that the “Book of Rays” is arranged in stanzas of preferably four verses and in verses of eight syllables each. According to Hölscher (1932: 88ff.)¹⁶ the tetrameter verse (i.e. four metrical feet) of eight syllables is der „am häufigsten verwendete Vers der gesamten syrischen Dichtung“ (the “most frequently used verse of the entire Syriac poetry”):

$$| x \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } |$$

The verses of eight syllables are „im allgemeinen und mit großer Regelmäßigkeit durch eine Mittelzäsur in zwei viersilbige Hälften geteilt“ (“in general and with great regularity divided into two halves by a central caesura”):

$$| x \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } | x \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } |$$

buh^h ānē man | šalmē d-hālēn
‘more complete analyses’

In the case of emphasis, the first unstressed syllable can be missing (marked in the text with ⁰) and one speaks of a seven syllable tetrameter.

$$| (x) \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } | x \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } |$$

⁰*kol mellā | ’āw lā mšannyā*
‘every verb either does not impact’

On occasion the unstressed syllable of the second half of the verse can be missed:

$$| x \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } | (x) \text{ } \acute{ } x \text{ } \acute{ } |$$

In the case of special emphasis both verse halves are frequently shortened:

16. G. Hölscher: *Syrische Verskunst*, Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1932.

their marks to give.’

Remarkably in this verse we find only one shortening of the first half of the verse, but three enjambments. I have added the word *kolhon* to make the text more easy to be understood. The metrical structure of the verse can only be maintained with the addition of this word.

On intransitivity and transitivity of verbs

The passage I would finally like to analyse with you is from the second chapter of the second part of the *Ktābā d-šemḥē* (Moberg: *Livre* 1922:92, *Buch* I. 1913: 197). It deals with intransitivity and transitivity of verbs (ܡܬܬܘܠ ܕܒܝܩܘܬ ܡܠܠܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ *mettol_dabbiquṭ_melleṭ w-šunnayḥen*). The four paragraphs of this chapter were already metrically analysed in Voigt (Zu Barhebraeus 2010:270-290). In the following I shall only take up the first paragraph and examine it in greater depth.

The first of the four paragraphs (ܩܘܕܡܝܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ *pāsoqā qadmāyā*) contains statements concerning intransitive and transitive verbs (ܐܬܝܘܢܐ ܕܡܠܠܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ *taḥwyātā d-melleṭ dabbiquṭā wa-mšannyānyātā*)

The section at the beginning of the paragraph contains 3 x 4 verses. In the first four verses, which introduce the theme, the first syllable is dropped.

ܠܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܠܠܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ	0kol_mellṭā 'āw lā mšannyā
ܡܢ ܐܒܘܕܐ ܕܠܗܫܘܫܐ	0men_ābodā 0l-hāšošā ¹⁷
ܕܠܐ ܒܗ ܡܝܢ ܕܡܠܠܐ	0'ellā bāh me'ddall' lā ¹⁸

¹⁷ The reading *men_ābodā l-hāšošā* is conceivable, too. This would avoid emphasis on the preposition *men*.

¹⁸ Observe that in this transcription *t* is not spirantised since it is assimilated to the *d* that follows. Therefore the transcription

ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	⁰ w- <u>dabbīqtā</u> ⁰ metqaryā
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	'd'k_ "'etā Petros" "'ezal
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	Pāwlos"
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	⁰ "npal Yudā" "qām
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	Mattayā"
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	'āw mšannyā men_ ḥad
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	la- 'ḥrēnā
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	wa-mšannyāni tā meštamyā
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	'd'k_ "'aqim" "'ah ^h et"
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	"'appeq" "'a ^(c) el"
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	w- 'nāsīn man l-dab biqtā
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	'd'k_ "bāt"
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	pšittā qarēn
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	w-la-mšannyānitā
ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ܘܡܬܩܪܝܘܬܐ	⁰ 'd'k_ "'abit" ⁰ mrakkabtā

‘Every verb either does not impact from the agent (ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ^cābodā) onto the patient (ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ ḥāšošā) (i.e. acts upon it), but rather relates to itself and is (therefore) called intransitive (ܘܕܒܒܝܩܬܐ *dabbīqtā*),

me'ddall^olā would be more precise. In this verse the usually unmarked Shwā' is metrically upvalued. In a different context - and without taking account of the assimilation - *me'ddalllā* would have to be transcribed simply as *metdalllā*. For cases such as these it would be useful to introduce “:” as a symbol of morphological lengthening, e.g. *mrak:bā* ‘composite, derived’, *šam:āšā* ‘servant, deacon’ in contrast to e.g. *nessab* ‘he takes’, where consonantal lengthening is the result of assimilation (< ns) and *qaššā* ‘priest’, where the second and third vowels are not separated by a vowel (cf. *qaš:išā* ‘old, elder’). This differentiation would also prove to be helpful in other languages, e.g. Arabic *tamma* ‘to be complete’ vs. *tam:ama* ‘to complete’.

e.g. 'etā Petros 'Peter came', 'ezal Polos 'Paul went', npal Judā 'Judas fell', qām Mattāyā 'Matthew stood up', or it impacts from the one onto the other, and then it is called transitive (ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ *mšannyānitā*),

e.g. 'aqim 'he erected', 'ah^het 'he took down', 'appeq 'he brought out, 'a^{c(c)}el 'he introduced'. Some people call the intransitive (verb) (like bāt 'he stayed overnight') 'simple' (*pšittā*) and the transitive verb (like 'abit 'he let stay overnight') 'composite' (ܡܪܟܩܒܐ *mrakkabtā*).

The next ray (*šemhā*):

ܟܠ ܡܠܠܐ ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ	⁰ kol_melltā ⁰ mšannitā ¹⁹
ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܟܠܡܢ	men_ċābodā ⁰ 'āw lwāt
ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	had
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	⁰ hāšošā ċābrā ⁰ 'dċ
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	hāy da-
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	⁰ "mhā mārāyā ⁰ l-Mešrāyē"
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	⁰ 'āw lwāt trēn 'dċ
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	"qaddemtā ^{hi}
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	burktā tābtā" 'āw lwāt
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	tlātā
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	('dċ)"mkartkon gēr
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	l-gab rā had btultā
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	dkitā d-'eqqar reb la-Msihā"
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	(wa-)b-qadmāyā had- ^h u
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ	hāšošā (šem "Mešrāyē")
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ	w-ba-trayyānā (hāšošā)
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ	qadmāyā smā
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܢܚܝܢܐ	huššābāyā d-yod w-ḥabrātāh
ܡܫܢܢܝܢܐ	wa-trayyānā- ^{hi}

19. In the Syriac text the 'ālap is not written.

ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ

“burktā ṭābtā”

ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ

w-ba-tlitāyā | ^ohāšōšā
qadmāyā šmā | ḥuššābāyā
d-[’ātutā] kāp | w-ḥabrātāh
wa-trayyānā | ^o“gabrā ḥad”

ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
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wa-tlitāyā | “btultā dkitā”
w-“’eqqarreḥ la- | Mšihā”
lā hwā
(hāšōšā) ^o rbi’āyā | ’ellā
puššāq
(hāšōšā) ^o trayyānā | d-hu“
gabrā ḥad”

ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ
ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ

w-hākannā b-(petgām-)
sagḡi’ē ḥaymen” beh”
^oḥad-^hu ḥā|šōšā wa-b-hāw d-
“hu dḡen’Išo” | lā
mḥaymen-^hwā
^olhon nafṣeh” | trḡen
hāšōšīn

‘Every transitive verb impacts from the agent (ܩܘܪܒܐ *‘ābodā*) either onto one patient (ܩܘܪܒܐ *hāšōšā*), as (in) *mḥā māryā l-Mešrāyē* (‘the Lord has struck the Egyptians’), or onto two (patients), as (in) *qaddemtay^{hj} burktā ṭābtā* (‘For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness’, Ps 21:4), or unto three (patients), as (in) *mḡartkon gēr l-gabrā ḥad btultā dkitā d-’eqqarreḥ la-Mšihā* (‘I have betrothed thee to one husband, that I may present thee as a chaste virgin to Christ’, 2. Cor. 11:2).

In the first (example) there is one patient (the noun Egyptians); in the second (example) the first (patient) is the (suffixed) personal pronoun (ܩܘܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܐ *šmā ḥuššābāyā* ‘lit.: noun understood’) *y* and the letters belonging to it (i.e. in the 3.m.sg. object pronoun ܩܘܪܒܐ -*y^{hj}*).

In the third (example) the first patient is the personal pronoun *-k* and letters belonging to it (i.e. the 2nd pl. object pronoun *-kon*), the second (patient) is *gabrâ had* ('one man'), and the third (patient) *btultâ dkitâ* ('a chaste virgin'); but *'eqqarreb la-Mšihâ* ('I present to Christ') is not the fourth (patient) but the explication of the second which is *gabrâ had*. In the same way in (the phrase) *saggi'ê haymen^w beh* ('many people believed in him', Joh 2:23) there is one patient, and in this (phrase) *hu dēn 'Išo^c lâ mhaymen^{-h}wâ lthon nafšeh* ('But Jesus would not entrust himself to them', Joh 2:24) there are two patients.'

This *šemhâ* consists of 24 verses arranged in six stanzas. I have already mentioned before that eight-syllable verses are easily converted into four-syllable stanzas. Be also aware that shortened semi-verses (7 out of 8) occur quite frequently in the first stanza, and it is similar at the beginning of the first paragraph (*pâsoqâ*), v.s. One could now assume when citing biblical texts - which can of course no longer be changed - that shortenings of this kind are common. But this is not the case as the numerous quotes in the text clearly prove. Therefore this means that citations were deliberately chosen to fit the metre. In a longer citation we find two enjambments, i.e. run-on lines, which is acceptable in such a case:

| x ' x ' | x ' x ' |
 “*m^kkar^kon gēr l-gab|râ had btultâ*
dkitâ d-'eqqar|reb la-Mšihâ”

However with the first verse the *'d^k* ‘as in, for example’ that precedes can metrically be ignored because this particular Bible quote fills two verses completely. This means that this particle was inserted by a later copyist because in many cases one finds *'d^k* at the beginning of the Biblical quote.

In some places textual corrections became necessary. I assume that in the scribal transmission process some words were added to the text. In the verse (*wa-*)*b-qadmāyā ḥad-^hu ḥāšošā* (*šem* “*Mešrāyē*”) I have disregarded *wa-* just as I disregarded the expression *šem* “*Mešrāyē*” ‘the word ‘Egyptian’.

One could be tempted to split this verse into two; but this is in contrast to the pervasive division into stanzas with four verses. I assume that at the first occurrence of a patient (*b-qadmāyā* ‘in the first example’) this item (“*Mešrāyē*”) was not mentioned but was only inserted by a later scribe.

In three cases a copyist added the substantive *ḥāšošā* (‘patient’) which is expendable because immediately afterwards *qadmāyā* ‘first’, *rbī^cāyā* ‘forth’, and *trayyānā* ‘second’ occur in a context that deals with the number of the patient.

The six Bible quotations are introduced on the one hand by *’d’k ḥāy d-* ‘like this ...’ and twice by *’d’k* ‘as’ alone (of which one must metrically be ignored, v.s.) and on the other hand twice by *b-* in a construction that requires a preposition. Next to *b-ḥāw d-* we find *b-petgam*. I see in *petgam* (‘word ...’) a later addition; and *b-ḥāw d-* was not chosen, because it already occurs in the next verse. The addition of the phrase *ḥāw d-* would create a better expression but without it this results in a perfect verse because of the preceding *b-*:

w-ḥākannā b- “*sag|gi’ē ḥaymen^w beh*”
 ‘and in the same way in (the phrase)
 “Many people believed in him”’

Concerning *saggi’ē* one must assume it was pronounced [*sag:ye*], the glottal stop had by then disappeared and was merely an orthographic convention. Here *’ālap* serves to indicate the syllable-final vowel.

Whereas the Bible quotations are integrated into the sentence with the help of prepositions (*'a*k and *b-*), the substantives which occur in the examples as agent or patient need no introductory elements, e.g. *wa-tlitâyâ* "*btultâ dkitâ*" 'and the third (patient) is *btultâ dkitâ* ('a chaste virgin'.

In one case a word must be added. In our text two letter names are introduced, *yod* and *kâp*; they stand for the object suffixes with *-ây^{hj}* (after the perfect 2.m.sg.) and *-kon*, of which they are the first letters. The two expressions are entirely structured in parallel:

šmâ huššâbâyâ d-yod w-ḥabrâtâh
šmâ huššâbâyâ d-[] kâp w-ḥabrâtâh
 'the personal pronoun *y / k* and its (lit.: her)
 corresponding letters'

In this case the copyist has deleted the word *'atutâ* needed in this context, because the more simple expression *d-yod* occurred before. Without this substantive, which is expendable here, the result is a perfect verse:

d-['atutâ] kâp | w-ḥabrâtâh

By metrically structuring the text it allows us to detect writing errors and small omissions or additions. This new additional method can help when attempting to establish the original wording of a text. What is now required is the application of this method to text passages longer than the ones analyzed here.²⁰

After the discovery of the metric structure of the "Book of Rays" (*Ktâbâ d-šemḥe*) it is crucial to critically analyse other grammatical works that are marked in the

²⁰. See my contributions given above.

literature as written in prose. It is well known that metric texts can more easily be memorized. Furthermore they are relatively safe from corruptions since these generate disturbances in the metre and the build-up of the stanza. Grammars written in didactic poetry exist in many languages starting from Sanskrit up to Arabic (*'alfiyyat al-Malik*) and medieval Latin.

What is necessary is a complete edition of the “Book of Rays” in verse. Another important task would be to trace the development of linguistic concepts from the Greeks to the Syrians and to the Arabs. Also the influence of Arabic grammatical theory on its Syriac counterpart needs investigating, perhaps this influence was not as profound as is generally assumed. These are all themes for dozens of doctoral theses.

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THE BRIDE-BRIDE GROOM IMAGERY IN THE WEST SYRIAC MARRIAGE LITURGY

Introduction

The Fathers of the Church and the modern scholars have studied and interpreted the bride-bridegroom imagery in relation to Christ and the Church. But, from the available information, the extent of its depth in the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy, uses in India, is not unwrapped yet. This study is an exploration of the extent of the biblical imagery of the bride and bridegroom in relation between Christ and the faithful, depicted in the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy, to show the importance of holistic relation in the family relationship as well as the God-human relationship.

1.1. The West Syriac Marriage Liturgy: An Introduction

A detailed study of the origin and development of the marriage liturgy is beyond the scope of this paper. From the available sources, it can be traced that the marriage liturgy of the West Syriac Church is believed to be compiled and arranged

by Jacob of Edessa (c708).¹ According to Robert Murray, the East Syriac Rite may have been established in or around fourth century. He said: “Doubtless, marriage was not yet regarded theologically as a sacrament, but it is more than likely that the beautiful East Syriac marriage service extremely ‘primitive’ as it is in its tone, and abounding in the symbolism ...”² So also the West Syriac marriage liturgy is rich in its theological and symbolical expressions. The Liturgy comprises of two sections: the betrothal service and the crowning. In the betrothal service the celebrant puts the ring on the fingers of bridegroom and bride and thus the Church officially confirms the agreement that was entered into between the families of the bridegroom and the bride. In the crowning part, firstly, the celebrant blesses the chains with crosses, hovers it over the heads of bride and bridegroom and adorns them with the same. Following this the celebrant blesses the minnu³ and gives it to the bridegroom who ties it on the neck of the bride. Finally the celebrant blesses the wedding robe (manthrakodi) and places on the head of the bride.

1.2. Jewish Influence

Recent studies observe that the Jewish religion and tradition made significant influence in the development of Syriac Christian theology and liturgy.⁴ During the spread

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- 1 Yohanna Ibrahim, Gregorios. “The Sacrament of Marriage in the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch”, *Syriac Dialogue: Fifth Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition*. Peter Hofrichter and Gerhard Wiflinger (eds.), Vienna: Pro Oriente, 2003, 26. Cf. Aerath. Chacko, *Liturgy and Ethos: A Study Based on the Malankara Liturgy of Marriage*, Roma: Mar Thoma Yogam, 1995, 110.
 - 2 Murray, Robert, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition*, New York: T & T Clark, 2006, 155.
 - 3 This is an Indian custom in which the bridegroom ties a string with a small golden ornament, which has a cross on it with nine small beads, on the neck of the bride.
 - 4 Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 4.

of Christianity, a strong presence of the Jewish Diaspora was visible in Syria and Armenia.⁵ And the early Christian communities in these areas comprise the Jewish converts. Thus the Jewish effect can be seen in the liturgical formulations of the Syriac Church. Modern scholarship affirms the influence of Jewish tradition in the Liturgy of Marriage.⁶ In the Jewish tradition marriage has an important role in the society. To them marriage is a means of participation in the act of God's creation. Also, marriage is the ideal human state and is considered a basic social institution established by God at the time of creation. The purposes of marriage are companionship and pro-creation.⁷ In the Jewish custom marriage is 'taking' the woman (Deut 24:1; Ex 2:1). It was accompanied by a feast of seven days (Gen 29:27; Jud 14:12); it included the processions of the bride and the groom and also the playing of music (Ps 78:63; 1 Mac 9:39). Wearing the bridal robe, by both the bride and the bridegroom, is also a Jewish custom.

The Jewish marriage ceremony also comprises of two parts: betrothal or sanctification (Kiddushin or erusin) and the marriage ceremony (nissu) in proper. This division can be seen at least from the Talmudic period or even before that. In the betrothal, in the presence of the two witnesses, the bridegroom hands over any object of value to the bride and utter a marriage formula.⁸ On this occasion, two benedictions are recited, one

5 Vööbus, Arthur. *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient: A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East* Vol. 1, Louvain: CSCO, 1958, 19-20.

6 Chrysostom, XIX = Roth, Catherine P., and David Anderson, ET. *ST John Chrysostom on Marriage and Family Life*, Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2003, 8.

7 *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 11, Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971, 1026.

8 *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1032.

over the wine, and another specifically for the betrothal. The proper marriage will occur only after a year.⁹

In the Scripture, nuptial imagery was one of the major tools to remind the covenantal relationship between God and the people of Israel. The same is reminded in one of the benedictions in the Jewish marriage. “Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hallowest Thy people Israel by the rite of the nuptial canopy and the sacred covenant of wedlock.”¹⁰ According to the Jewish tradition wedding is considered as a sacrament. And this sacramental relationship also affirms the divinity of a marriage relationship. In short, the wedding in Jewish understanding is a divine plan; its main object is to have companionship and begetting children; the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and Israel is also shown through the wedding imagery.

1.3. Biblical Influence

In the OT, marriage and family life aims at the establishment of the Kingdom of God and procreation. The divine plan and the sacramentality of marriage and family life are visible in the creation stories (Gen 1:27, 2:18, 24).¹¹ God blesses the couples, including the patriarchs; God blessed Abraham, the father of the faithful, and promised that his children will be like the sand on the sea-shore. Through the marriage imagery, Israelite prophets interpreted the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and His

9 The second part took place at a later date and was ‘taking’ or marriage proper. Originally this ceremony was effected by the bride’s entering the groom’s house and cohabiting with him. A series of further benedictions were recited. After this the couple was completely married and liable to all the privileges and responsibilities of the married state (Encyclopedia Judaica 1032).

10 Encyclopedia Judaica 1032.

11 Chrysostom, *On Marriage and Family Life*, 9.T. B. Segal, “The Jewish Sacrament of Marriage,” *Crown, Veil, Cross: Marriage Rites*. Syriac Church Series, vol. 9, Ed. Jacob Vellian, Poona: 1990, 1.

people (Isa 54:5; Jer 1:16, 2:2; Hos1:2-9, 4:10).¹² Adornment of elaborate robes and jewels (Isa 49:18, Jer 2:12) as well as the act of couple wearing crowns (Isa 61:10) are part of the marriage custom in OT Israel.

The New Testament also discusses the marriage imagery to show the relationship between Christ and Church, the new Israel, His bride. On most of the occasions it is described in an eschatological setting (Mt 22:1-14, 25:1-13; Jn 3:29, Rev 19:7-9). On other occasions, Jesus tries to explain His Lordship and authority (Mt 9:15, Mk 2:19, Lk 5:34). Mathew 22 talks about the attire in a marriage feast; the guests should wear the marriage robe. St. Paul says that people who are engaged in marriage must remain together except for prayer (1Cor 7:5). Marriage is a mystery and therefore the relationship between the bride and the bridegroom should be like the relation between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:31-32).

Thus both the OT and the NT uphold the institution of marriage and it mainly aims at enabling human participation in God's creation as well as for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It underlines that the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy in its entirety- theology, custom, and various rituals- is of biblical in its essence.

1.4. Theological Understanding of the Church in the First Four Centuries

The theology of the early Church is very fluid in its nature. A clear picture is formed only after fourth or fifth centuries. Till then it is very difficult to say what is orthodox or what is heretical or official or unofficial. The same can be seen in the case of marriage and its theology. Generally speaking, though the Syriac church fathers accepted marriage and its bond, they

¹² The Anchor Bible Dictionary 6 vols. Noel Freedman (Ed.), New York: Doubleday, 1992, 568.

considered celibacy as superior to family life. They found it is better to remain as a virgin to receive the heavenly and eternal Bridegroom for a lasting relationship rather than be an earthly bridegroom or a bride. In either case, they used the bride-bridegroom imagery very effectively.

Ignatius of Antioch says; “it is right for men and women who marry to be united with the consent of the bishop, that marriage be according to the Lord and not according to lust.”¹³ In his gospel harmony Diatessaron Tatian made several modifications in the gospels where marriage and family life is described. His text makes it clear that marriage with its carnal union has no place in Christian life. In that sense, he cared very much to avoid any words relating to marriage in his gospel composition. He considered Marriage as a force of corruption.¹⁴ Heironymus says that, Tatian was rigid against marriage, conjugal union, and procreation. He quotes Tatian: “if one seeds on flesh, he will reap perdition from the flesh.”¹⁵ That means, the one who do intercourse with a woman will reap perdition.

The second century Odes of Solomon describes the bride-bridegroom relationship with God and the faithful in the baptismal settings. The Christian baptism represents the betrothal of Christ to the individual Christians. In this writing various aspects of nuptial connotations like “Bridegroom”¹⁶,

13 Ignatius, The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, (Retrieved on August 26, 2011) \http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0110.htm (Online), 5.2.

14 Tatian, “Address of Tatian to the Greeks,” in ANF Vol. 2, Alexander Roberts & James Donald (eds.), Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing Inc., 1994, XI, 69, XX. 74.

15 Cited by Vööbus, History of Asceticism 1, 36.

16 The Odes of Solomon: The Syriac Texts, James H. Charlesworth (Ed. & E.T.), Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1977, 38.9; 42.8 (Ed. & E.T.), Charlesworth, 132, 143.

“Bride,”¹⁷ “Wedding feast,”¹⁸ “Wedding chamber”¹⁹, “Wedding robe” etc are discussed. The precondition for the eternal marriage is the incorrupt faith in the Bridegroom and the reward for this faith is eternal joy²⁰ and immortality of soul²¹. The Odes of Solomon says about the true bride and Bridegroom and deceiver bride and bridegroom. “And I asked the Truth, who are these? And He said to me: This is the deceiver and the error. And they imitate the Beloved and His bride, and they cause the world to err and corrupt it.”²² Though it does not go to the depth of theological implication, Didascalia also compared the Church with the bride adorned.²³

The author of The Acts of Judas Thomas placed virginity at the top of his concept of virtues. He said everybody should prepare with abstention from marriage relation to receive the heavenly Bridegroom. According to this document earthly marriage is a “deed of shame and corruption,”²⁴ and “dirty and polluted pleasure.”²⁵ This is a union that has no divine origin and will in heaven but on earth.²⁶ The author again says, “the

17 Odes of Solomon, 42.8; 38.9 (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth, 143, 132.

18 Odes of Solomon, 38.12 (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth, 132.

19 Odes of Solomon, 42.9 (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth, 143.

20 Odes of Solomon, 9. 5, 19, 11. 16, 22; 15.10 (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth, 48, 83, 55, 68

21 Odes of Solomon, 15. 8; 28.7; 31.7; 38.3; 40.6. (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth, 63, 109, 117, 132, 138.

22 Odes of Solomon, 38.11-12 (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth, 132.

23 Didascalia Apostolorum, (CSCO 401-2), Louvain Washington DC: Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1979, IX. 26. CSCO 402-3.

24 Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles (AAA), Vol. I, Wright, W., (ed.), London, 1871, 124, 144, Cf. The Acts of Thomas: Introduction, Text, Commentary, A. F. Klijn, (E.T.), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962, 132, 142.

25 AAA, 117, 120, 124 The Acts of Thomas, (E. T.), Klijn, 129, 132.

26 AAA, 124, The Acts of Thomas, (E. T.), Klijn, 132.

sexual intercourse blinds the intellect, darkens the eyes of the soul and makes the body sick; that covetousness agitates the soul and that the service of the belly causes the soul to live in care.”²⁷ The pleasure through the marriage and procreation of children are merely a fiction and there will be a bitter reaction later. But the author widely describes different aspects of spiritual marriage with heavenly Bridegroom. In it he discusses the eschatological marriage chamber, robe of glory, etc.

For *Liber Graduum*, marriage and child-bearing are the outcome of sin.²⁸ Nonetheless, *Liber Graduum* was not against marriage. But the author considered celibacy as holiness.²⁹ Aphrahat used this imagery in an eschatological perspective. Here, the Bridegroom is Jesus Christ and the bride is the virgin monks, and not the Church.³⁰ It says, “The wedding-feast of Eve’s daughters lasts seven days; but in the case of these women, their Bridegroom never departs.”³¹

All these texts prove that the early Church used the bride-bridegroom imagery to interpret God-man relationship in a simple and holistic way. Our Liturgy also uses this imagery to teach the faithful a healthy relationship between couples and mankind as a whole to Christ Jesus.

2.0 CHRIST THE HEAVNELY BRIDEGROOM

The biblical imagery of the Bridegroom (ܘܠܘܘܬܐ) is efficiently used in the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy. Both OT and NT

27 AAA, 28, *The Acts of Thomas*, (E. T.), Klijn, 78.

28 *Patrologia Syriaca*, (PS), in 3 Volumes, R. Graffin (ed.) Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, III, 20, c.542, *Book of Steps the Syriac Liber Gradum*, Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F. G. Parmentier (E.T.), Kalmazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2004, 215, 242.

29 See the footnote⁵ in Kitchen *Memre* 15, 140.

30 *Aphraatis Sapientis Persae Demonstrationes*, ed. Parisot, in PO I, II, Paris, 1894, 1907, VI.1,6.7, (E.T.) Valavanolickal, Aphrahat,

interpret Yahweh and Christ as the heavenly husband of the earthly wife Israel and Church respectively, to narrate the salvation history of the Nation and the nations. The OT delineates the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel. According to the modern scholarship, “It was Hosea who was the first Israelite prophet to interpret the covenant by means of the analogy of the relation between husband and wife.”³² But, before the later prophets, Torah interprets this in the form of covenantal relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel.³³ Interpreting the Genesis account, Jacob of Serugh says it can be seen even at the time of creation. He said:

He put in his writings that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife so that the two of them

27 AAA, 28, *The Acts of Thomas*, (E. T.), Klijn, 78.

28 *Patrologia Syriaca*, (PS), in 3 Volumes, R. Graffin (ed.) Rome: Pont. Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, III, 20, c.542, *Book of Steps the Syriac Liber Gradum*, Robert A. Kitchen and Martien F. G. Parmentier (E.T.), Kalmazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2004, 215, 242.

29 See the footnote⁵ in *Kitchen Memre* 15, 140.

30 *Aphraatis Sapiientis Persae Demonstrationes*, ed. Parisot, in PO I, II, Paris, 1894, 1907, VI.1,6.7, (E.T.) Valavanolickal, Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 1, VI. 1,6,7. 138-143.

31 ASPD, ed., Parisot, VI.6, (E.T.), Valavanolickal, Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 1, VI. 6. 142.

32 Anderson, B. W. *Understanding the Old Testament*. New Jersey: Prentice-hall, 1986, 307. “... and went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the Lord. Therefore I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her (Hos 2:13-14).

33 Exodus 20: 5 says the commandment that urges anionic worship of the deity finds in the motivation in the affirmation that Yahweh is ‘jealous’ God. Hebrew for the adjective jealous is *quanna* (see also Ex. 34:14). The related noun *qin’a* and verb *qinne* describe the agitation of a husband suspicious of his wife’s infidelity (Num. 5: 14, 30; Prov. 6: 34). The Torah also uses the verb *Zana* (go whoring) to express apostasy of Israel from Yahweh (Ex. 34:15,16)

might be one completely.

The prophet Moses introduced the account of the man and his wife since through them Christ and his Church are spoken of.³⁴

In the NT Jesus called Himself as the Bridegroom (Mt 9; 15, Mk 2:19, Lk 5:34). Mathew 25: 1-14 portrays the eschatological expectation through the bride-bridegroom imagery. Whereas in the letter to Ephesians, Saint Paul explicitly says the bride-bridegroom relation is a model of Christ- Church relationship (Eph 5:31-32).

This is a favorite imagery for the fathers of the Church. The author of the Acts of Thomas discourages the earthly temporal marriage and advocates for the marriage with heavenly bridegroom. "...that was a bridal chamber which was taken down, this is a bridal-chamber which remaineth forever. ... Thou art a bridegroom who passeth away and is changed; Jesus is the true bridegroom who enduredth forever. ..."³⁵ Mar Ephrem also uses this imagery to sketch the whole Incarnation achievements of the heavenly Bridegroom.³⁶

34. Serugh, "On the Veil of Moses' Face", HS III, 91-94, (E. T.), Brock, Studies in Syriac Spirituality, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2008, 184-5.

35 AAA, 124, The Acts of Thomas, (E. T.), Klijn, 132.

36 Cana herself may speak; I am grateful to be found worthy to invite him among my guests- That Heavenly Bridegroom Who descended and invited all. To enter His pure feast I am invited. Among the generations I shall confess that He is the Bridegroom and there is no other, And His bridal chamber is prior to the ages, and His feast is rich and not wanting - unlike my banquet that was lacking and He filled it. (Ephraem Des Yrese Hymnen De Virginitae, Edmond Beck (ed.), CSCO 223-4, 33.4. (E.T.), Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, Kathleen McVey (E.T.), New York: Paulist Press, 1989, 408).

The Liturgy uses different titles for the Bridegroom: ‘True Bridegroom (ܡܪܝܢܐ ܩܝܡܐܘܢܐ),’ ‘Heavenly Bridegroom’ (ܡܪܝܢܐ ܫܡܝܢܐ), ‘true and faithful Bridegroom’³⁹, etc. All these titles point to the divine nature of the Jesus the heavenly Bridegroom. Through the imagery of heavenly bridegroom the marriage liturgy explains that in order to regain the human race, out of His love, God the Father sent His only begotten Son to earth and, instead of the disobedient Israel, by His glorious sacrifice, on Golgotha, He betrothed the Church from nations.⁴⁰ The promium of betrothal service starts with the following prayer: “Glory be to the Heavenly Bridegroom (ܡܪܝܢܐ ܫܡܝܢܐ), who has chosen the daughter of the gentiles as Church (ܩܝܣܩܝܢܐ ܕܗܝܘܢܐ) for Himself and has, by His victorious blood, cleansed her from all sins and iniquities, and has betrothed (ܩܝܡܐܘܢܐ) Himself to her and has redeemed (ܩܝܡܐܘܢܐ) her from the slavery of Satan and has set her free from all her debts and sins.⁴¹” Here the liturgist reminds the Church fathers’ interpretation of “Christ betrothed the Church at Golgotha” through the shedding of His blood. Throughout the liturgy the same and related interpretation is visible. The same is described in the Maronite liturgy; “In his love, He has acquired the Church of the Nations and by his cross, has washed and purified her, and made her his glorious

37 Koodasha Kramangal, 72.

38 Koodasha Kramangal, 64, 78, 112; Murray Symbols of Church and Kingdom 131-142, Vööbus History of Asceticism 1 78-79, Badger, The Nestorians and Their Rituals II, 266.

39 Koodasha Kramangal, 72, “O True and Faithful Bridegroom, who was invited to Cana of Galilee for the marriage feast, and who did change water into good wine” 96, 116, Badger, George Percy, The Nestorians and Their Rituals: With Narrative of A Mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842-1844 and Late Visit to Those Countries in 1850 II, London: Joseph Masters & Co. No Year, 252.

40 Koodasha Kramangal, 62.

41 Koodasha Kramangal, 62.

spouse.”⁴² After the wedding, the Groom (Christ) distributed different responsibilities to His groomsmen (disciples) to continue His saving act and went to His Father’s house to send Holy Spirit.⁴³ Now the bride should live in chastity and purity until the Groom comes again. When He comes He will take the bride to His eternal bridal chamber.

He gave His body and blood as a ring of pledge or a seal of His betrothal.⁴⁴ The fathers of the Church described this act of sacrifice as wedding.⁴⁵

From the outset itself the liturgy describes this: With the ring the Holy Church was married to Messiah; *حَمَمْنَا لَنَا حَمَمًا* ⁴⁶ *حَبْلًا مَبْمُولًا*.

2.1. Sacrificial Love of the Bridegroom

The sacrificial love and the saving act of Jesus Christ is an unambiguously important theme of the bible.⁴⁷ St. Paul, in his household advice, instructs the Church of Ephesus that: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, ... blemish.” (Eph. 5: 25-27). The words “gave himself up for her” remind us of the sacrificial love of Jesus. The Fathers of the Church give utmost importance to the theme.⁴⁸ The West Syriac Marriage

42 Beggiany, *Early Syriac Theology*, 83.

43 Koodasha Kramangal, 84.

44 Bedjan, *HS III*, 290.16-17; ET. Brock, “On the Veil of Moses,” in *Studies in Syriac Spirituality*, 78.143-144.

45 The Maronite Wedding liturgy says “hallelujah, there was not in this world and there would never be a spouse as the one who was acquired by the Christ Groom. Her beauty surpasses all beauty and the spouse who has married her is unable to die. From the blood which came from his side, He wrote her dowry.” Cited in, Beggiany, *Early Syriac Theology*, 83.

46 Koodasha Kramangal, 60.

47 See Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8; Col 1: 20-22.

48 The Odes of Solomon says; “I am putting on the love of the Lord.”

Liturgy also emphasizes the sacrificial love of the Son of God, the heavenly Bridegroom. In one of the hymns Christ calls His disciples and entrusts them by saying: “This Church,- that I bought (ܕܟܪܝܬܝ ܟܢܝܢܐ) with all, Mine own Precious,- Blood, thou keep safe.”⁴⁹ This hymn points out that the Church is priceless because the heavenly Bridegroom, out of His love,

(Odes of Solomon, III.1, (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth 19). Again, through this love, the Odist says, “I am united to Him, the Son and so that I shall become son and shall be joined to the immortality of the immortal.” (Odes of Solomon, III. 1-8, (Ed. & E.T.), Charleseworth 19). The Odes also used the term beloved (habiba) (III. 7). Ephrem said: This pure love, which was ordained from Adam down to our Lord, was symbol of our Lord’s perfect love. Therefore the Church has left idols and possessions, like father and mother; and Christ himself left his Father on high and his mother below, and died for his Church, so that by his death he might give life to the Church which he loved, and might raise her up and bring her to that kingdom of his (Ephrem, Arm. III. 22-29. in PO XXX, Cf., Murray, Symbols of Church and Kingdom, 138).

- 49 Koodasha Kramangal 68. The sacrifice of the Bridegroom for the sake of the bride is a prophetic fulfillment (Isa 53:7; Ps 22:12-18). In many occasions Jesus reminded about His own passion and death to His disciples (Mt 17:22; Mk 8:31, 9:31, 10:33). The fathers of the Church are eloquent on this theme. They said the Bridegroom became a sacrifice and saved the bride from the slavery of Satan and sin. By His death He defeated Satan. No other bridegroom ever committed this kind of sacrifice for his bride (Bedjan, HS III, 290.11-12; ET. Brock, “On the Veil of Moses,” in Studies in Syriac Spirituality, 78.141-142). When His human body tasted death the Immortal One killed the death which imprisoned humanity from the time of their leader of the clan and liberated them from Sheol (Bedjan, HS II, 626.2-627.7; ET. FH XIV, 309.39-310.64). Love of the bridegroom cannot be explained by words; and the love of the bride cannot be written by the books. The love of the bridegroom towards the bride is his erection of the wood; and love of the bride urged her to seek after the crucified bridegroom, who is the bridegroom that for the sake of the bride endured the cross? If not Christ, whose great love cannot be explained? (Narsai, Dedication of the Church, 29-30).

bought the Church with His blood.⁵⁰ This sacrifice pacified the Father and brought salvation: “may your peace which has reconciled heaven and earth, unite (مَجِّدْ) your children who have come close to each other so that they may accept each other in love all the days of their lives.”⁵¹ It reminds us of the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ regarding the peace between God and human beings (Eph 2:11-22). Through this sacrifice the Bridegroom not only cleansed the bride but also He defeated the enemy of human race; “... by His victorious blood, cleansed (مَطَّأَ) her from all sins and iniquities, and has betrothed (مَخَّضَ) Himself to Her and has redeemed (فَدَى) Her from the slavery of Satan and has set Her free (مَسَّ) from all Her debts and sins.”⁵² In some cultures the bridegroom offers bride-money to the father of the bride. Here the Bridegroom offered His own blood as bride-money and body and blood as ring; it is an exceptional thing: “You gave her the pure gift of your victorious body and blood which is your ring (كَلِمَةُ مَحْسُودِ... كَلِمَةُ مَحْسُودِ), ...”⁵³ The following are the two other examples that express the sacrificial love of the Bridegroom on Golgotha.

This virgin's groom lies thither, Crucified on Golgotha
O fair one, welcome-to thee, By the cross I betrothed
(حَدَّ أَنْفَصًا كَرَمًا)

To my Father do I go, And Holy Spirit shall send.⁵⁴

50 Bedjan, SMS, 686.7-18; ET. Puthuparampil, “On Perpetual Virginity,” in Marilogical Thought of Mar Jacob of Serugh, i.15-ii.24. Bedjan, HS III, 290.12-13; ET. Brock, “On the Veil of Moses,” in Studies in Syriac Spirituality, 78.141. Chaldean Breviary III, 397= Hudra III, 569. Kashtanubhavazhcha Namaskaram, 77.

51 Koodasha Kramangal 60, 116, “For in the will of the Lord is your life, and His purpose is eternal life, and your perfection is incorruptible.” Odes of Solomon, 9.4, (Ed. & E.T.), Charleworth, 45.

52 Koodasha Kramangal, 62.

53 Koodasha Kramangal, 66.

54 Koodasha Kramangal, 80.

See another hymn:

On the cross adorable, Church unblemished, did Thee see
 Thou sun of Righteousness, great! Moon-like she stood,
 in order
 and Thy greatness, Lord of all! She did proclaim as is meet.
 By Thy cross Thou sealed my share, Thy passion did set
 me free ...
 free of bondage, to Heaven's, Tables, Thou did lead me,
 Lord.⁵⁵

In all these examples, the Church teaches her faithful regarding the selfless sacrifice of the eternal Bridegroom for the Church, His earthly bride. Through the sacrifice on Golgotha and the presentation of His body and blood for the bride, the Bridegroom cleansed the tainted earthly bride. After this cleansing, the ugly became beautiful, the dark and dim became bright and glorious, and the odorous became sweet smelling. In short the heavenly Bridegroom, through His sacrifice, saved the Church of nations from her defilement and betrothed her. The Bridegroom is jubilant; and it is a privilege for the bride, to be the wife of the heavenly Bridegroom. Now the sacrifice of the Groom demands devoted love and purity of the bride also. To put it differently, human beings should grow beyond the filthiness and shortcomings of earthly life and should be perfected, as God is perfect (Mt 5:48; Eph 5:26-27) because Christ came to make man God, and to betroth pure and virgin souls.⁵⁶ Moreover, the earthly bride and the bridegroom must imitate the heavenly Bridegroom who became a sacrifice for the life of His bride. In the final benediction the Church reminds the need of sacrificial love to the newly wedded couple.

55 Koodasha Kramangal, 116.

56 Koodasha Kramangal 68.

2.2. Christ the Celebrant and Mediator

The West Syriac Marriage Liturgy often ascribes that Christ as the chief celebrant of the marriage. One of the prayers says:

The true and faithful Bridegroom, who does betroth to Yourself the pure and virgin souls, behold these Your servants who have been betrothed to each other and have accepted You as the mediator (مُتَوَكِّلًا) of their matrimony, through us Your imperfect ministers who stand before the greatness of Your Majesty. Give them Your grace that the sweet fragrance of virtuous action may rise up from them.⁵⁷

Here the prayer uses the biblical reference of ‘Christ the high priest’ (Heb 4:14). The fathers of the Church, of course, firmly believed and taught that Christ is the High Priest of the Levitical as well as the Malchizadech traditions; He is a mediator between God the Father and His people; and He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of His sheep. Jacob of Serugh says about the priestly rights and duties and he mentions that all these are sprung from the above:

If it is pardon, it proceeds from you for mankind;
 And if it is forgiveness, the forgiveness of debts too is yours.
 If it is priesthood, the whole of it is in you because you are the High Priest;
 and if it is kingship, you are the one who fastens the crowns for the kings.
 Holiness proceeds from you to mankind:
 And if it is priesthood, behold the world exists by your right hand.
 And seeing that the fullness of divinity is with you,
 What is there for the small river to accomplish in you?⁵⁸

57 Koodasha Kramangal, 72.

58 Bedjan, HS I, 177.2-9; ET. Kollamparampil, FH VI, “On Baptism of our Redeemer in the Jordan,” 172.193-200.

The Liturgy utilized the aspect of Christ's authority in this respect and emphasizes that Christ is the chief celebrant and fulfiller of the sacrament. By this notion the Liturgy is emphasizing four important observations. First of all, it underlines that Jesus is the Savior of the bride. Jesus the Bridegroom, through the betrothal (His atoning sacrifice), sanctified and saved the Church, His bride. Thus the Church believes in His authority over her. Secondly, it proclaims the sacramentality of the marriage. By ascribing Christ as the celebrant of the marriage the Church proclaims the holiness of marriage. Or they found the betrothal as a *كف، ماما*, Qudošo, means sanctification⁵⁹, where Jesus is the chief celebrant.⁶⁰

Thirdly, for Christ is the celebrant of the marriage and it is a sacrament, it proclaims the indissolubility of marriage. Jesus during His public ministry says the same (Mt 19:3-9). By the end of the Liturgy the priest admonishes the bride and the bridegroom about the indissolubility of marriage relationship.⁶¹ Fourthly, the liturgy aims at the prosperity of the bride in the earthly life. The Church asks: "O Lord God bless (*كبر*) now these rings with joy which we Your humble servants have blessed. Bless these rings so that, that which is accursed, may by Your mercy become a blessing. O Lord, bless these rings with Your heavenly blessings, as You have blessed the ring of Your Holy Church."⁶² It is more intelligible in the following prayer that is offered at the crowning service; where, while adorning the crown, the celebrant says, "the crown descends from heaven

59 Smith, *Compendium Dictionary*, 491.

60 On this Mar Ephrem says:

For it is Christ who perfects its symbols by His Cross,
its types by His body, its adornments by His beauty, and all of it
by all of Him (Ephrem, "Hymns on Virginity" CSCO 223-4, 9.15,
(E.T.), McVey, *Ephrem the Syrian Hymns*, 303).

61 Koodasha Kramangal, 120.

62 Koodasha Kramangal, 66.

through the hand of the Lord and adorns the bride/groom by the hands of priest (مَحَلًّا حَاطُّوْهُ، مَحْيَ مَحَلًّا أُنْسَ هُنْشَ حَسْبُنَا نَا مَحَلًّا مَهْنَا) (كَلَامَ حُنْمَه).⁶³ On both occasions the priest invokes Christ to officiate the sacrament. All these excerpts undoubtedly confirm that it is Christ who fulfills the sacrament. Thus Christ is the chief celebrant of the liturgy.⁶⁴ Throughout this ceremony God's sovereign authority on this world can be seen, especially as the giver and the fulfiller (مَحْمُودًا) of all the blessings as well as an unseen celebrant of the mystery.⁶⁵

The Bridegroom, by His sacrificial death, life-giving resurrection, and through the bequeathal of His body and blood for the salvation of the children of the Church, fulfilled His first mission through the betrothal of His new bride, the Church. Furthermore, now, by acting mysteriously in the sacraments He perfects the sacrament and thereby, the lives of the children of His Church. The liturgy says, "May the invisible right hand of our Lord Jesus Christ which is full of blessing be stretched out upon you."⁶⁶ Jacob of Serugh found the Bridegroom fulfils the mystery by the hands of the priests in this world:

O perfect One, who came so that he might perfect the insufficient by the waters;⁶⁷

63 Koodasha Kramangal, 108; In a different ways "A Hymn on Mary" says; "Blessed are you, Mary, whose womb became the palace of the King, wherein He dwelt- He who gives crowns to potentates. Who accords to rulers their position." Anonymous, "Hymns on Mary" 9:2. In, Brock, Sebastian, P., Bride of Light, Moran Etho 6, Kottayam: SEERI, 1994, 47.

64 In the West Syriac understanding all the mysteries are fulfilled by Holy Spirit but in some cases it is the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus the Messiah. The ministers are only a mediator and tool in the hands of God.

65 Koodasha Kramangal 66.

66 Koodasha Kramangal, 74.

67 Bedjan, HS I, 529,530; ET. Kollampampil, FH VI, "On Baptism of our Redeemer in the Jordan", 186.

Let your great mercy overflow from you upon my insufficiency.

In the East Syriac tradition the priest hold the hands of the Bride and Bridegroom and says; “The Lord Jesus perfect your deed and bring it to pass, and make you rejoice in undivided love ...”⁶⁸ All these references show that the liturgy places Jesus as the chief celebrant of the ceremony.

2.3. Apostles as the Groomsmen

The fathers of the Church, when they typify Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church, have always pictured the apostles as groomsmen or the friends of the bridegroom. The West Syriac Marriage Liturgy is not an exception in this regard. In a sugito the friends of the Bridegroom ask to the bride, Church, whom are you searching for? Your bridegroom went to the desert.⁶⁹ In another prayer it is clearly said; “Apostles are the friends of bridegroom.”⁷⁰

68 Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals* II, 245.

69 Koodasha Kramangal 82.

70 Koodasha Kramangal, 64. Aphrahat also picturing the apostles as the friends of the bridegroom: “He is the bridegroom and the apostles are the (friends) betrothers, and we are the bride; let us prepare our dowry.” (ASPD, ed., Parisot, XIV.26, (E.T.) Valavanolickal, Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* XIV. 26. Cf. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 131). Shortly before this Aphrahat addressed his reader (presumably bishops and the clergy), “You are the apostles, betrothers of the bride adorned” (ASPD, ed., Parisot, XIV.10-11, (E.T.) Valavanolickal Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* XIV. 10-11). But Ephrem and Narsai would like to call John the Baptist as friend of the bridegroom:

John the betrother became aware
That the bride of his Lord was looking to him
As if he- a mere servant- was himself that Lord,
So he revealed that he was but the servant;
He showed his mortal nature,
He showed his humble role,

Protection of the bride from enemies is another duty of the groomsmen. The liturgy says that the Bridegroom appointed Simon and John to look after the Church. While Simon was entrusted as a general overseer and governs the Church, John is to teach the Church with the Word of God.⁷¹ Narsai introduced John the Baptist as the friend of the bridegroom, who conducted the marriage ceremonies and led the bride to the husband's house.⁷²

Church as the bride of Christ in the liturgy

The 'bride' (كَلْبَا) imagery is one of imageries that St. Paul used to interpret the Church. The West Syriac Church uses this imagery to teach the divine relationship between Christ and the faithful, as well as Christ and His Church. See an example where the Church⁷³ proudly says that she is the bride of the heavenly Bridegroom and when she was betrothed to Him she became rich with His blessings:

Church am I, the Church, And Bride of Heavenly كَلْبَا
(كَلْبَا),

Holy Church thus speaketh, I am blessed "who is my groom!

And I adored him, The groom who come for betroth me"

In the day she was betrothed to him(كَلْبَا كَلْبَا), all creations marveled,

He showed her both the glory and his own lowly estate,
To loosen the strap of the Bridegroom's sandal.

Blessed is He who instructed John thus to teach her (Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen contra Haereses (CH), E. Beck, (ed.) CSCO 169-70, Syr. 76-77. Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1957, 24: 6, (E.T.), Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Ephraim the Syrian*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian), 1992, 121).

71 Koodasha Kramangal 68.

72 Narsai, "Metrical homilies," PO 40. 95.

73 Koodasha Kramangal 64, 68,78, 116.

All on a sudden she became rich from poverty.

I am blessed to how much I am exalted ⁷⁴

Aphrahat calls the monks as virgins and says; the virgins should be ready for the call of the heavenly Bridegroom and they should remain spotless. “Let us observe the appointed time of the glorious bridegroom ⁷⁵ that we may enter with Him into His bride-chamber.”⁷⁶ Ephrem uses the imagery for both individual Christians, especially about the covenant people—“(Christ) has come to be betrothed to souls,”⁷⁷ — and the Church collectively.

The Fathers of the Church used the conceptual backgrounds of Nation and the nations for the origin of the Church. They saw the Church as the second bride, the bride from nations; as the first bride, Israel, rejected her Bridegroom. Sebastian Brock says this conceptual model is predominant in Syriac theology.⁷⁸ The Marriage Liturgy deals with different aspects of marriage imagery. The bride from the nations was under the slavery of idols, but the Bridegroom purified her with His own blood and redeemed her from slavery of evil and from sin.⁷⁹ Though she was black with sin (Song. 1:5);⁸⁰ now she (Church) is faithful to her Groom;⁸¹ so that she is beautiful, pure like day,⁸² and a

74 Koodasha Kramangal, 78.

75 Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals* II, 266.

76 ASPD, ed., Parisot, VI.1, (E.T.) Valavanolickal, Aphrahat Demonstrations VI. 1. He was against the marriage and said, “Whosoever is expectant of the marriage-feast of the Bridegroom, let him not love the feast of this present time.”

77 Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Hymnen de Virginitate (HVir), (ed.) E. Beck, CSCO 223-224, Syr. 94-95. Louvain: Secretariat du CorpusSCO, 1962, 25:16, (E.T.), McVey, Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, 203.

78 Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 117.

79 Koodasha Kramangal, 80.

80 Koodasha Kramangal 96, 118.

81 Koodasha Kramangal 70.

82 Koodasha Kramangal, 80, 98

gloriously adorned bride.⁸³ Her rank is higher than the angels;⁸⁴ the pledge of body and blood of the Groom is in her; His cross is on her forehead and the Trinity protects her from the attacks of the enemies;⁸⁵ and she is waiting for the glorious bridal feast.

2.4. The Church Betrothed

Christ's betrothal (محدد) to the Church is well influenced theme in the Syriac Church Fathers' interpretation of the economy of salvation. According to the Jewish tradition, after the betrothal, even though the marriage has not taken place, the bride will be of the bridegroom. The fathers of the Church, through the concept of betrothal, intended to say that the Church belongs to Christ. Christ, the Bridegroom, betrothed the Church through His sacrificial life. By this the Groom made her of His own and thus she is eligible for the eternal bridal chamber or in other words she is saved to the eternal life. But, all the pure virgins who are betrothed to Christ shall ready to receive the Bridegroom by lighting their lamps (Mat 25:10) and shall enter the marriage chamber with the Bridegroom.⁸⁶

The liturgy witnesses the betrothal took place at two occasions: at the time of the baptism of Christ⁸⁷ by the hands of His friend John the Baptist and at the time of His crucifixion.⁸⁸ At Jordan the Bridegroom cleansed the bride and adorned her

83 Koodasha Kramangal, 78.

84 Koodasha Kramangal, 90.

85 Koodasha Kramangal 96, 98.

86 All those who are betrothed to Christ are far removed from the curse of the Law, and are redeemed from the condemnation of the daughters of Eve; for they are not wedded to men so as to receive the curses and come into the pains. They take no thought of death, because they do not deliver children to him. And in place of a mortal husband, they are betrothed to Christ. (ASPD, ed., Parisot, VI.6ff, (E.T.) Valavanolickal, Aphrahat, Demonstrations VI.6ff).

87 Koodasha Kramangal 64.

88 Koodasha Kramangal 60.

wedding robe.⁸⁹ At the time of the betrothal on Golgotha the Groom gave her a ring,⁹⁰ his own body and blood as a pledge⁹¹ and as bride-money.⁹²

Armor spiritual put on

Me, by holy baptism

أَمَلًا وَيُؤَمِّلُهُ الْكَرِيمُ فَخَ صَنَلَا صَخَصَفَؤَمَلًا ۝ كَرَمَلًا

His sacred Body and blood

Adorn my finger as ring

صُورَ حَتَّىٰ جَرَّحُدَلَا ۝ قَلْبِي ۝ رَوَيْتَهُ كَبُؤَمَلًا

Both of these theories are theologically sound and unique.

2.4.1. Betrothal at Jordan

The theory of betrothal at Jordan says that, through His baptism, Christ betrothed the Church at Jordan. Though Christ did not need to be baptized—baptism of water or baptism of the Spirit for the absolution of sins—yet He received it for the salvation of the world. In one of the prayers of the Marriage Liturgy, it is written that: “You clothed her with a glorious garment, and betrothed her with water and the spirit(صَخَصَفَؤَمَلًا ۝ كَرَمَلًا). You made her your bride by crushing the head of the enemy.”⁹⁴ Here, the Church reminds us that the Bridegroom

89 See more 4.2

90 Koodasha Kramangal 60, 61.

91 Koodasha Kramangal, 60.

92 Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals II*, 247.

93 Koodasha Kramangal 80.

94 Koodasha Kramangal, 64. Odes of Solomon employs marriage imagery for the baptism of the faithful. When faithful became baptized he/she is betrothed or married to Christ the heavenly bridegroom. A beautiful picture of this interpretation can be seen in the Epiphany Hymn of Ephrem where there is no direct hint who is the bride. My thought bore me to Jordan, and I saw a marvel when there was revealed the glorious Bridegroom who to the Bride shall bring freedom and holiness. I saw John filled with wonder and the multitudes standing about him and the glorious

redeemed His bride from the slavery of sin and made her resplendent and His own. By His descend into the water of Jordan He purified entire waters of world. Moreover, He crushed the head of Satan who lived under the water and installed the robe of glory in the water.⁹⁵ If the above statement mentions about the Church as a whole, the following statement refers to the individual as the bride: “O Lord, the true and faithful Bridegroom, who does betroth to Yourself the pure and virgin souls,⁹⁶ ... (ܡܠܟܐ ܘܡܥܠܐ ܘܡܘܨܝܘܢܐ ܘܡܠܟܐ ܘܡܥܠܐ ܘܡܘܨܝܘܢܐ ܘܡܠܟܐ ܘܡܥܠܐ ܘܡܘܨܝܘܢܐ)” It may say about the soul that is purified through the baptismal anointing. Thus, through each baptism, each individual is joining to the

Bridegroom bowed down to the Son of the barren that he might baptize Him. At the Word and the Voice my thought marveled: for lo! John was the Voice; our Lord was manifested as the Word, that what was hidden should become revealed. The Bride was espoused but knew not who was the Bridegroom on whom she gazed: the guests were assembled, the desert was filled and our Lord was hidden among them. Then the Bridegroom revealed Himself and to John at the voice He drew near: and the Forerunner was moved and said of Him: This is the Bridegroom Whom I proclaimed (Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrer's Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania) (Epiph) (ed.) E. Beck, CSCO 186-187, (Syr. 82-83), Louvain: Secretariat du Corpus SCO, 1959, XIV. 1-5, Cf. NPNF, Vol. 13, 284). Narsai says: He (John the Baptist) compared him (Jesus) to a bridegroom because of his love for men; and he called the bride, the members of his race who adhered to him. (This one) fulfilled (the role) of the bridegroom at the marriage feast of faith and took to himself the Church of the gentiles (as) his betrothed of holiness. Instead of purple, he covered her with the garment of baptism and placed on her (head) a crown wholly plaited with the seals of the spirit (Narsai, “Metrical Homilies”, PO 40, 95). East Syriac Marriage Liturgy prays: “O Thou heavenly Bridegroom, Who espousedst Thy Church through the priest, the son of the priests, John Thy bride man and messenger; we pray Thee to have mercy upon us” (Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals* II, 266).

95 Koodasha Kramangal, 64.

96 Koodasha Kramangal 72.

flock of the bride, the Church. Therefore, the bride means the Church as well as an individual.

The Fathers of the Church observe many OT incidents are prefiguring the betrothal event of Jordan. Ephrem in his Commentary on Diatessaron describes several OT types for the baptism of our Lord at Jordan. Eliazar had given Rebecca as a bride at the well of water, Jacob [did likewise] for Rachel at the well of water, and Moses [too] for Zippora at the well of water. All of them, therefore, were types of our Lord, who betrothed his Church through John's baptism.⁹⁷ The East Syriac Marriage Liturgy also refers to the same.⁹⁸

2.4.2. Betrothal at Golgotha

The second betrothal theory says that Christ the Bridegroom betrothed the Church, the bride, on Golgotha. The Fathers constantly allegorize this theme to articulate the salvation process and the birth of the Church.⁹⁹ According to this theory, when Jesus died on the cross He gave Himself as a ransom to His Father and saved the Church from the slavery of sin and death and entrusted the disciples to keep her from transgression. "While the heavenly bridegroom was betrothed to (ܡܘܨܘܒܐ) the holy and faithful Church called Simon and John and entrusted it to both of them. He called them and commanded them: Simon to be the head of the house and John to be the herald. Keep vigilantly the one who is bright that I bought with my precious blood¹⁰⁰ (ܕܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܡܝܘܨܘܒܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ)." This idea might be borrowed

97 Ephrem, Diatessaron Commentary, CSCO 137, 3. 17, (E.T.), McCarthy, Saint Ephrem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron, 81.

98 Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals II*, 409.

99 Serugh in his Homily on the Veil of Moses' Face says from the pierced side of Christ the Church the new babe born. Bedjan, HS III, 331ff. (E.T.), Brock, *Syriac Spirituality*, 199.

100 Koodasha Kramangal 68. There is an interpretation in Syriac tradition that Jesus through his baptism broke the head of the Satan and redeemed the human being from his custody.

from the Pauline atonement theory of ‘ransom’ to build up the theology. Jesus became a ransom for the sin of Adam and he bought the Church by giving His blood. Through the death of her Bridegroom, the Church received remission of debts and absolution of sins.¹⁰¹ This idea can be seen in another hymn which says that the bride is beautiful after the wedding; “O fair one, welcome-to thee By the cross I betrothed ...”¹⁰²

The liturgy depicts the blood which the Bridegroom as the dowry as well as wedding ring. The liturgy characterized the sacrifice of the Bridegroom as a feast: The Church, the bride, proclaims that God has made the feast for her sake.¹⁰³ Not only that, He had given His body and blood as a pledge for the trial in the last judgment.¹⁰⁴

Sometimes the reader can have a question as to how one can support these two theories simultaneously. According to the modern scholarship, especially in the Syriac spirituality, these are series of events which lead to salvation.¹⁰⁵ The Syriac church fathers often found time through a liturgical view point or in a sacred realm. Unlike those theologians who use empirical

101 Koodasha Kramangal, 126. The king’s daughter has risen up in glory. O Church, the spouse of Christ, whom He redeemed from error by His blood, and gave unto thee His body as living food, (whom the wicked slew on Golgotha,) and hath placed in thy hands the cup of salvation in the precious blood which flowed from His side through the wound of the spear, give ear and hearken to the voice of the Bridegroom, cease to wonder, and cry aloud to the savior with the voice of thanksgiving, Glory be Thee, O Lord (Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals II*, 260).

102 Koodasha Kramangal, 84.

103 Koodasha Kramangal 68. We will discuss more on this in the eschatological event of wedding feast.

104 This will be explained below in the Tamar typology.

105 Kollamparampil. Thomas, *Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh: An Exegetico- theological Study on the Homilies of Jacob of Serugh (451-521) on the Feast of Our Lord*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications. 2001, 222-223.

knowledge and linear time as their tool for interpreting the salvation history, the Syriac fathers use cyclic or sacred time. They believe that the salvation is not an outcome of a single act of Christ; rather, each event of Christ's life is unique and related to each other in the process of salvation. Murray says that the betrothal at Calvary is the fulfillment of the espousal.¹⁰⁶ Sebastian Brock also observes the same when he says:

For with the Syriac writers (and above all Jacob) the twin fountain heads of Christian baptism are provided by Christ's own baptism and His pierced side on the Christ: these two salvific events, separate in historical time, come together as a single unit in sacred time. Furthermore, when speaking in universal terms, it is the Church who is the Bride whose betrothal takes place at Christ's baptism and crucifixion, while at each Christian baptism it is the individual member of the Church who in turn becomes Christ's particular 'bride'.¹⁰⁷

In short, His betrothal was took place at two salvific events in His ministry, namely His baptism and crucifixion.

2.5. Church, the Bride from Nations

The Bridegroom elected the bride from the nations¹⁰⁸ (كَبَأُ كَبَا كَتَفَعَلَا) and redeemed her from the bondage of sin.¹⁰⁹ This is another important aspect discussed in the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy. This is a favorite theme for the fathers of the Church, especially the Syriac fathers. They used this theme to attack Jews vigorously.¹¹⁰ They portrayed the Church as

106 Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, 138.

107 Brock, "The Mysteries Hidden in the Side of Christ" *Sobornost*, 7, 6.(Winter 1978), 466.

108 Koodasha *Kramangal* 62, 70,72, 80, 96,98, 116.

109 Koodasha *Kramangal* 64.

110 Aphrahat, Ephrem, and Jacob of Serugh were apologists against the Jews. See ASPD, ed., Parisot, XIX, (E.T.) "Against Jews" Valavanolickal, 164-183.

the second Israel, the bride from Nations (كِنَاةُ الْكُفْلَا) . Israel, the Nation, the first bride was unfaithful to the Bridegroom and she betrayed Him.¹¹¹ The Bridegroom tried to bring back her through His messengers, the prophets, and finally the Bridegroom Himself; but she rejected even the Bridegroom.¹¹² Then the Bridegroom elected a new wife, the Church, the people from nations, and betrothed her on Golgotha.¹¹³ One of the prayers of the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy says:

Glory be to the Heavenly Bridegroom, who has chosen the daughter of the gentiles as a Church for Himself and has, by His victorious blood, cleansed her from all sins and iniquities, and has betrothed Himself to Her and has redeemed Her from the slavery of Satan and has set Her free from all Her debts and sins. Blessed be the Lord who has invited to the marriage feast of his Church, the gentiles and his own people, and the Prophets and Apostles and all races.¹¹⁴

111 Bedjan, HS I, 176.4; ET. FH VI, 171.174. Bedjan, HS II, 369.2-7; ET. FH VIII, 225.456-457; cf. Kashtanubhavazhcha Namaskaram, 95.

112 Bedjan, HS III, 707.1-4; cf. Sony, "La Methode Exegetique de Jaques de Sarugh," 73. Rilliet, SHF IV, 594.13-596.9; ET. FH XI, 268-269.22.

113 Bedjan, HS III, 331ff., (E.T.), Brock, Syriac Spirituality, 199. Bedjan, HS III, 299.11-300.2.

114 Koodasha Kramangal 62,64. Ephrem in one of his Hymns on Virginity says about Jesus' initiation to call Gentiles to the Church in the Cana event: Blessed are you, Cana, for it was the Bridegroom from on high
Whom your bridegroom invited, whose wine ran out;
He invited the Guest who himself invited the Nations
To a wedding feast of joy and life in Eden (HVir, CSCO 223-4, 16.2, (E.T.), McVey, Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, 330). Again he says regarding the rejection of Israel and faithfulness of the Gentiles: The gentiles were gleaned and purified and cleansed,
But the [Jewish] people were blackened and defiled by that blood... the lamb put on light (HVir, CSCO 223-4, 26 :15, (E.T.), McVey, Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, 381). The Odes of Solomon

The above prayer clearly states that, formerly the bride from the nations was filthy, corrupt, and stinky with odor of sacrifice. By instituting the sacrament of baptism and through the death of her Bridegroom on the cross, she became pure and holy and she received the white robe of glory and was eligible to attend the feast of the Bridegroom. Eschatological life and celebration with the Bridegroom is often compared with the life in Eden. Regarding the idolatry, besides the former statement, the Liturgy says the following: “He took me from among the idols, (قَدَّسَ مَعِيَ مَتَّ حَمَّ رَحْمَتًا) showed the mysteries, and told me, “I will be with you until the end of the world. Curse to the wicked who trapped me through idolatry. Praise to the savior Jesus and I am grateful because I am protected.”¹¹⁵ With regard to the gentile origin of the Church, the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy mainly focuses on the redemption of the Church from

beautifully says the faith of Gentiles in Jesus and how they became his own:

I took courage and became strong and captured the world, and the captivity became mine for the glory of the Most High, and of God my Father. And the Gentiles who had been dispersed were gathered together, but I was not defiled by my love for them, because they had praised me in high places. And the traces of light were set upon their heart, and they walked according to my life and were saved, and they became my people forever and ever (Odes of Solomon, 10.2.6, (Ed. & E.T.), Charleworth, 47). The fathers also found several types in Old Testament, like Tamar, Joseph, David etc, to support their argument. Aphrahat found Joseph and David as types of Jesus. Joseph's marriage to the Gentile Egyptian lady as type of the Church and David's marriage to Israelite and Gentile ladies are types of Israel and the Church: “Joseph married the daughter of an unclean priest. And Jesus brought himself the Church from the unclean gentiles” (ASPD, ed., Parisot, XXI. 9, (E.T.), Valavanolickal, Aphrahat, Demonstrations. XXI. 9). “David wedded two daughters of the king; and Jesus wedded two daughters of kings, the congregation of the People and the congregation of the Peoples” (ASPD, ed., Parisot, XXI. 13, (E.T.), Valavanolickal, Aphrahat Demonstrations. XXI.13).

115 Koodasha Kramangal 80.

the sinfulness due to the idolatry and the special privilege after the redemption. Though, before she was abominable one, now she is the committed spouse of the true Bridegroom. Thus the Marriage Liturgy calls the Church as faithful: “O faithful Church do not have fear and worry in you. Since you did not long for others I would not forsake you.”¹¹⁶

In connection with the privilege of the Church, after the betrothal—redemption through baptism and suffering death of the Bridegroom,—the Liturgy mainly uses the Song of Songs’ imagery of the fairness of the bride. Solomon says, “I am very dark, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem” (1:5). Regarding the fairness of the Church the bride the Liturgy sings:

How beautiful daughter of gentiles how beautiful art thou

((كُلُّا مَعْتَبَرًا كِنَا حَقَّقَرُ كُلَّا مَعْتَبَرًا))

O holy Church the king Solomon extolling thou

Thou lips dropping honey comb

And fragrance of which you like rose in the Nisan

Church you are full of beauty and no spots in you

(كُلُّكُ حَبَابًا مَعْتَبَرًا مَعْتَبَرًا لَأَنْ كُصَّ)

And king the Christ protecting thee, thou adored to his cross

Beautiful daughter of gentiles oh! Beautiful.

How beautiful daughter of gentiles how beautiful art thou¹¹⁷

Thus, by His sacrifice, the Bridegroom betrothed the bride of nations from defilement and saved her.

4.0 ESCHATOLOGICAL ASPECTS IN THE LITURGY

The bride-bridegroom imagery basically depicts the saving act of Christ. The saving act of Christ is not a onetime process

116 Koodasha Kramangal 70.

117 Koodasha Kramangal, 96. After the baptism she left her former character of idolatry. The fume of idolatry made the bride black and stinky. The fathers of the church found idolatry also as adultery. Bedjan HS I, 167.7-168.7; ET. FH VI, 162.7-163.14.

but it continues through the life of the faithful. It begins with the act of baptism or betrothal where the faithful put his/her faith in Christ the Bridegroom and it ends with the blissful life in the bridal chamber. The Marriage liturgy puts forth many of the eschatological allusions. They are: bridal chamber, robe of glory, bridal feast etc. The following is a discussion on the eschatological aspects mentioned in the marriage liturgy.

4.1. Bridal Chamber

The bride's life with the Bridegroom in the eschatological bridal chamber is an important theme in the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy. And this might be the theme that is repeated more than any other themes within this imagery. As presented above, all events including marriage life are dedicated to this goal.¹¹⁸ Several NT passages support this eschatological expectation. For example, the parable of the wise virgins who vigilantly wait for the bridegroom with oil, describes this eschatological life (Mt 25:1-13). While the Fathers of the Church, who have a Greek background prefer to explain the eschatological life or salvation experience through the term Theosis or Deification experience, the Syriac fathers teach it through the life with the Bridegroom in the heavenly bridal chamber. Odes of Solomon, The Acts of the Judas Thomas, Aphrahat, Ephrem, Jacob of Serugh and almost all other early Syriac writings and fathers of the Church vividly describe this event.

The Syriac term *gnuno*, used for the bridal chamber occurs five times in the Liturgy. *Gnuno* is an important term in Ephrem's religious vocabulary; it may refer to the kingdom in its eschatological dimensions, or it may refer to the Kingdom as realized, or realizable, here on earth by individuals.¹¹⁹ The fathers of the Church and the Liturgy perceive bridal chamber

118 Koodasha Kramangal, 94.

119 Brock, *The Luminous Eye*. 93.

as an eschatological reward for those who live in purity and chastity in this world. As opposed to the ephemeral and passing character of worldly adornment and bridal chamber, the characteristic feature of the heavenly bridal chamber is eternal, joyful, and happy.¹²⁰ The liturgy sees the marriage life, especially the marriage chamber in this world, as a pre-figuration as well as a preparation for the eternal bridal chamber. The following passages in the liturgy constitute the same. “O Lord God, make us worthy of your ever-lasting joy (حَمْدُهُ أَلَا) (فَعَمَلًا وَمُسْتَأْمَرًا) . May the source and the fullness of our happiness be with You and in You. May our souls and spirits rejoice in You. By Your mercy, wipe away all our sorrows.”¹²¹ “O Lord God, make us worthy of the endless feast and the imperishable bridal chamber (أَعْمَدًا حَيْثُ حَمْدُهُ أَلَا) (وَأَلَا فُلْهُنَا حَمْدُكَ أَلَا) . Invite us, O Lord, to Your eternal joy along with the companions of the bridegroom who are invited to that feast.”¹²² Again, yet another passage says:

O Lord God, perfect this bridegroom and this bride that they may be filled with heavenly wisdom. O Lord, by Thy grace, may their life together be free from all blemishes. Make them happy in this world and in the everlasting world to come. Bless them in this transient bridal chamber (حَمْدُكَ أَلَا) here below and guide and lead them to your heavenly bridal chamber where the angels and seraphim rejoice eternally (حَمْدُكَ أَلَا) (مَعْمَدًا حَمْدُكَ أَلَا) .¹²³

The Liturgy does not say much about Adamic sin, regeneration from the fall and admittance into the eternal kingdom. But it wishes the bride and the bridegroom, or sometimes the congregation, to pass this temporal world and to

120 Koodasha Kramangal, 80.

121 Koodasha Kramangal 58.

122 Koodasha Kramangal 88.

123 Koodasha Kramangal 68.

enter into the eternal kingdom.¹²⁴ On the other hand the fathers of the Church use this theme along with the fall of Adam.¹²⁵

In short, the Liturgy frequently uses the bride's life with the Bridegroom in the eternal bridal chamber to describe the salvation event. The life in this world is a preparation time as well as a pre-taste of the world to come.

4.2. Robe of Glory

Without the wedding robe no one can enter into the bridal chamber and to the wedding banquet. This biblical concept is aptly utilized in the West Syriac Theology and Liturgy. See an

124 Koodasha Kramangal 76; Odes of Solomon, 7. 11, (Ed. & E.T.), Charleworth, sees the Lord as incorruptible and the one who perfects the world. 38.

125 Adam by means of the fruit, God cast forth in sorrow:
 but you He makes glad, in the bride-chamber of joy.
 Who would not rejoice, in your bride chamber, my brethren?
 for the Father with His Son, and the Spirit rejoice in you (Epiph., CSCO 186-7, XIII.12,13, Cf. NPNF, Vol.13, 283).
 I have revealed to You My Will; what do you question?
 Draw near, baptize Me, and you shall not be burned.
 The bride-chamber is ready; keep Me not back from the wedding-feast that has been made ready (Epiph., CSCO 186-7, XIV. 12, Cf. NPNF, Vol.13, 284).
 But in the Hymns on Paradise Ephrem clearly says about the virgins who rejected the earthly marriage chamber may enjoy in the eternal marriage chamber.
 Virgin who rejected the marriage crown that fades
 Now has the radiant marriage chamber that cherishes the children of light,
 Shining out because she rejected the works of darkness.
 Blessed are you, O bride, espoused to the Living One,
 You who do not long for a mortal man.
 Foolish is the bride who is proud
 Of the ephemeral crown that will be gone tomorrow...
 You have exchanged the transitory bridal couch
 for the bridal couch whose blessings are unceasing (Hvir," CSCO 223-4, 24:5, (E.T.), McVey, Ephrem the Syrian Hymns, 366).

example: “May this bridegroom rejoice with joy in His Great Salvation and may this bride be adorned with imperishable, incorruptible, and beautiful apparel.”¹²⁶

Robe of Glory is a pledge and reward in NT. Mathew 22:12-13 shows that the one who does not have the robe (wedding garment) will be cast away into the darkness. On many occasions, the book of Revelations and the gospels witness that the robe of glory is a reward to those who win the race of righteous life. The Syriac term used for robe of glory in the Liturgy is *ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܡܚܘܒܐ* “estal subaho.” The same term is used for both the eschatological and the worldly wedding garment.

First of all, to the Church fathers, the robe of glory is a symbol of the lost glory of Adam. Adam lost this robe through the disobedience and the second Adam, Christ, retained this glory through His obedience (Rom 5:18-19). In His baptism at Jordan, the Bridegroom placed the robe of glory in the waters and when a person is baptized in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and of the Holy Spirit, he receives it.¹²⁷ Now the faithful should keep this robe without blemish through their righteous life.

Glory to them that are robed, glory to Adam's house!
 In the birth that is from the water, let them rejoice and be blessed!
 Praise to Him Who has robed, His Churches in glory!
 Glory to Him Who has magnified, the race of Adam's house.¹²⁸

Through this the faithful receives his lost glory in Eden. This glory is often found as the glorious light, the splendor of God, which was visible to Moses at Mount Sinai and Moses, Elijah, and to Peter and his friends at Tabor (Lk 9:28-36;

126 Kodasha Kramangal, 76.

127 Bedjan, HS I, 173.15-174.4; ET. FH VI, 168.127-169.134.

128 Epiph CSCO 186-7, XIII. 21, 22, Cf. NPNF, 283.

2Pet1:16). Often the Church fathers refer the Church as the daughter of light.¹²⁹

Secondly, thobe of Glory is a reward. The Fathers of the Church taught that the lost robe can be retained through baptism and good work. In the ancient Church, faithful got baptized on Easter Sunday and the baptized used to wear white dress in the following week so that it was called as hevore (white) week. Also the robe of glory can be achieved through the righteous life. “And let us put away and cast from us all uncleanness, and put on wedding garments. The putting on of the robe is a self act through righteous life”¹³⁰ In order to achieve the robe the faithful should please God through their good deeds. Odes of Solomon says: “Bless them in this transient bridal chamber here below and guide and lead them to your heavenly bridal chamber where the angels and seraphim rejoice eternally.”¹³¹

Thirdly, the Robe of Glory is imperishable. The regular robe will perish but this robe is imperishable, incorruptible, and eternal. “The adornment of the daughters of Eve is wool that wears out and perishes, but the garments of these wear not out. Old age withers the beauty of the daughters of Eve, but the beauty of these shall be renewed at the time of the Resurrection.”¹³²

In the marriage ceremony the priest adorns the bride with a garment called mathrakoti which symbolizes the robe of glory. The wedding liturgy holds all the above-mentioned spiritual meanings. The Bridegroom, out of His mercy, saved

129 AAA, 6-7, Acts of Thomas, (E.T.), Klijn, 67-68, Jn 12:36, Eph 5:8, 1Thes 5:5, Is 60:1, Mt 5:14).

130 ASPD, ed., Parisot, VI.1, (E.T.), Valavanolickal, Aphrahat, Demonstrations. VI.1.

131 Odes of Solomon, 21:3, 64-66, (Ed. & E.T.), Charleworth, 78.

132 ASPD, ed., Parisot, VI.6, (E.T.), Valavanolickal, Aphrahat, Demonstrations. VI. 6.

the bride from transgression and offered her an incorruptible gift (salvation)¹³³ and adorned her with the glorious garment through baptism.

The Liturgy urges purity in life to attain holiness and the garment of glory: “May this bridegroom rejoice with joy in His Great Salvation and may this bride be adorned with imperishable, incorruptible and beautiful apparel. May the beauty of their apparel with the seal of purity exceed the beauty of gold. May God make their union and their coming together pleasing to Him and for the growth of worthy character in them.”¹³⁴ Again the Liturgy says: “May the Lord crown you with the crown of righteousness, and adorn you with incorruptible ornaments. May He clothe you with the victorious armor that withstands all the power of the enemy.”¹³⁵ Thus the liturgy reminds us that this is a sacrament which sanctifies the believers and admonishes them to retain the imperishable garment of glory.

4.3. CROWN

The crown is another biblical symbol that is referred in the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy in an eschatological setting. In the bible, the crown is portrayed as a reward for the winners of the race. St. Paul says, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown righteousness” (2 Tim 4:8, 9). The author of the Book of Revelations claims the same argument of the reward of crown to the faithful in different Churches (Rev 2:10, 3:11). In the baptismal Liturgy and in the Marriage Liturgy the West Syriac Church symbolically puts a crown on the heads of the candidates. And this crown pre-figures the crown that is set for the believers in the second coming.

133 Koodasha Kramangal, 76.

134 Koodasha Kramangal, 76.

135 Koodasha Kramangal 110.

In the Liturgy, instead of crown, the priest blesses two separate chains with crosses on it and adorns it over the neck of the bride and the groom. The cross is a symbol of protection; protection from the enemies, including Satan. While the celebrant adorns the crown the prayer says like this: “May the Lord crown you with the crown of righteousness (مَکْرَمًا بِرِّيَّةً) , and adorn you with incorruptible garments. May he clothe you with the victorious armor that withstands all the power of the enemy.”¹³⁶ Here the crown protects the groom from unrighteousness and the power of the enemies and thus the crown will help them to gain the eternal crown.

4.4. Wedding Banquet

Banquet has an important place in the religious history of Israelites.¹³⁷ To them almost all meals represented the Messianic banquet feast or eschatological banquet with Messiah. The adaptation of this Messianic banquet in the religious spectrum of the Israelites can be traced to several mythological heritages. Smith rightly says that, “The messianic banquet in Jewish and early Christian literature is almost entirely a mythological/literary motif.”¹³⁸ He uses two scales to expound the background of the messianic banquet feast: the motif of sacred food in the early West Asia that imparts divine blessings of immortality and this would be turned into the concept of eternal life in the eschatological life. The other motif of the banquet feast, he considers, is a thanksgiving meal after the victory of a great battle. Many of the Jewish feasts include a meal, which is a symbol of joy; moreover it has an eschatological character. Jewish tradition has lots of communion meals according to the occasion. Even the festival meals of Jesus with his disciples

136 Koodasha Kramangal, 110.

137 Lieber, “I Set a Table Before You,” 66.

138 Smith, “Messianic Banquet Reconsidered,” 65.

139 Smith, “Messianic Banquet Reconsidered,” 65.

are part of a long series of communion meal which began at Mount Sinai (Ex 24:11).¹⁴⁰

The marriage banquet has an important place in the West Syriac eschatological interpretation. Participation in the eternal banquet with the Bridegroom is a special privilege. The Liturgy often discusses this eschatological marriage feast. The aim of the marriage itself is to enter into the eschatological marriage and its banquet. Two words used to denote the marriage banquet are *meštuto* (ܡܝܫܘܬܘܬܐ) and *ḥlulo* (ܚܠܘܠܐ). The term *meštuto* (five occurrences) is used to denote both an eschatological and a worldly marriage feast whereas the term *ḥlulo* (four occurrences) is used only for the eschatological marriage feast.

The concept is purely biblical. The fathers of the Church see Eucharist as the pre-figuration of this eschatological banquet. The Liturgy sees Eucharist as a prefiguration of the eternal marriage feast.¹⁴¹ As of the bridal chamber and robe of glory the feast is also eternal.¹⁴²

Conclusion

The Syriac fathers are masters of Biblical interpretation. The Bible is a sea of mysteries and the Fathers of the Church are blessed fishers in the deep sea. Their knowledge in the Bible helps them to go down into the deep mysteries of the Bible, grab and provide the precious pearls of the Bible to their common readers. They used to depend on symbols and types to explore and present the mysteries of Bible to their poor faithful. They found types of New Testament themes and figures in the Old

140 Deiss, Lucien, (ed.), *Spring time of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979, 23. Philo sees this as a meal of immortality (Marcus, *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, 82).

141 Koodasha Kramangal, 64.

142 Koodasha Kramangal, 88.

Testament and delivered the mysteries of the Bible through the symbolic language. This caused their poor readers and audience to be educated in the mysteries and thereby become staunch followers of Christ Jesus. Bride-Bridegroom imagery is such an imagery through which the fathers of the Church instructed their believers about the mystery of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, His and His Father's love towards human kind, His sacrificial death and redemption of mankind from sin and death, and glorious Second Coming and Eternal life with the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

In the Syriac Churches, along with the aim of worship, the liturgy is used to impart good theological lessons. The marriage liturgy of the West Syriac tradition is also a good theological text. It is more than a petition or prayer rather it teaches how a couple should live in this world by pleasing God their Creator and Eternal Husband. Through the imagery of bride and bridegroom the liturgy teaches how Jesus became the Bridegroom, how he selected and betrothed the Church as the new bride instead of the old one the Nation, how the bride should behave as a faithful wife of the Eternal Bridegroom and what the reward of a faithful bride?

It is believed that the West Syriac Marriage Liturgy was modified and compiled in the seventh century by Jacob of Edessa. Jewish theology and the Bible might have influenced a lot in the making of such an elegant liturgy, both in its structural and theological areas. Both Jewish and the West Syriac liturgy have two sections. Both of them emphasize the sacramentality and the covenantal relationship with God in their theme. At the same time, while the main aim of Jewish marriage is companionship and procreation, the West Syriac marriage liturgy emphasizes on the covenantal relationship between God and the Church.

In the Biblical understanding marriage is a divine office; the creation itself has a purpose. More than a companionship, family is considered as the little Kingdom of God and the family life is counted like the relationship between Christ and His Church. Jesus acknowledged the divine institution of marriage through different parables. St. Paul affirms the conjugal relationship by saying “Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer.” (1Cor 7:5) He again says that it is a mystery (Eph 5:32). Most of the early Church fathers treated marriage with its full dignity; however, they considered virginity as superior. Thus, they liked to interpret the marriage imagery to delineate the virginity and dedication of monks for the eternal bridegroom.

The liturgy delineates Christ as the heavenly Bridegroom who saved the Church from death through his different saving acts during his Incarnation. The liturgy gives more emphasis to the sacrificial love of the Bridegroom. He gave himself as ransom to the Father to redeem the earthly bride. Through this imagery the liturgy very effectively uses the bridegroom imagery to show the necessity of sacrificial love between the husband and wife of the world and also how this loyalty and faith will help them to enter into the eternal bridal chamber.

The liturgy again teaches that Christ is the mediator and celebrant of the sacrament as He did in the Incarnation to build up the peace and reconciliation between the Father and humankind. As Christ is the celebrant, the Church teaches that the marriage in this world also indissoluble. Again, the liturgy says the marriage is a blessing both spiritually and materially. Through marriage the Church entrusts the bride and bridegroom to live according to the commandments of God and make the eternal bridal chamber as their inheritance. In order to live in the world peacefully the liturgy offers material prosperity and

ancestral blessing like the patriarchs of the Old Testament. Also the liturgy utilizes the partnership of John the Baptist and the holy disciple of Jesus Christ in the marriage ceremony as the friends of the bridegroom. It might be a reminder to the clergy who are present in the marriage ceremony that they have the duty to look after the newly married couple during their errands in the earthly life so that they will be in the eternal bridal chamber with the eternal Bridegroom. During the liturgy, the Bridegroom asks the friends to keep the bride that he bought with his precious blood.

Jesus, the eternal Bridegroom emptied Himself and came down to the earth and redeemed the lost one from eternal perdition through His precious body and blood. He called the saved one as the Church and the bride of the heavenly Bridegroom. Through the prophets the Old Testament typified this bride-bridegroom imagery in several ways; mainly through the covenantal relationship with Yahweh and the People of Israel. But the Nation, Israel, rejected the Bridegroom and killed Him. Now the Bridegroom has selected the new Israel from the Nations, who lived in the filth of idolatry. Earlier this bride was adulterous but after the redemption through the blood of the Bridegroom she became purified and became the partaker of the eternal bridal chamber.

According to the liturgy the betrothal took place at Jordan and at Golgotha. Like the patriarchs of the Old Testament, who betrothed their spouses at the well, the heavenly Bridegroom betrothed the Church at the river of Jordan. Through the washing at Jordan the bride received the robe of glory. Again, in the betrothal at Golgotha, the Bridegroom washed the sins of the bride through his blood and gave his body and blood as a pledge, like Tamar, who escaped from death with the pledge, staff, scarf, and seal. So Tamar was type of the Church. Again, the liturgy brings another interpretation of the bride through a

typology, where like Eve, who was taken from the side of Adam, the Church, the new bride, was taken from the side of Christ.

In the New Testament Christ drew the eschatological events through different nuptial imageries. The liturgy uses the same imagery to teach the splendor of the marriage chamber and the eternal marriage feast. The family life in this world is a pre-taste of the eternal marriage chamber. The entrance into the bridal chamber is restricted to those who have the marriage dress, the robe of glory that was lost in Eden. The robe can be inherited only by those who are baptized and are free from the filth of the world. In the marriage the priest adorns a robe to the bride, which represents this robe. Good works and virtues are the ornaments. The liturgy again amazes us through the description of the banquet. The liturgy says that the Holy Communion is the foretaste of the eternal banquet. The banquet of the earth will be depleted but this banquet is eternal. Here the body and blood of the bridegroom itself is the banquet feast.

Thus through the bride-bridegroom imagery the Church teaches a great mystery. It utilizes every aspect of the marriage to teach us the salvific act of Jesus Christ the bridegroom, the status of the bride and her duty, and about the eschatological bridal feast.

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LITURGY AS AN ELEMENT OF COMMUNION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CHURCHES

Recent researches have brought to light the detailed picture of the contacts among the Oriental Orthodox Churches, especially between the Coptic, Syrian, Ethiopian and Armenian Churches.¹ In this paper we shall discuss the exchanges in the field of liturgy. Exchanges of visits, translations of the patristic, canonical and

1 Florence Jullien (ed), *Eastern Christianity: A Crossroads of Cultures*, Peeters, Leuven, 2012 (Eastern Christian Studies 16) has reproduced several articles on this subject: See Jean Maurice Fiey, "Coptes et syriaques: contacts et échanges", In Jullien, pp. 49-123. Originally published in : *Studia Orientalia Christiana. Collectanea*, 15, *Etudes-Documents-Bibliographie* (1972-1973), pp. 295-365, [=Fiey] ; Witold Witakowski, "Syrian Influences in Ethiopian Culture ", in Jullien , pp. 201-225. Originally published in: *Orientalia Suecana* 38/39 (1989-1990), pp. 191-220 [= Witakowski, 1989-1990] ; ID, " Syrian Influence in Ethiopia ", in Jullien, pp.227-232. Originally published in *Encyclopedia Aethiopica* 4 (2010), col. 782a- 784b [=Witakowski, EA]; Robert

liturgical texts of one Church into the language of the other was a natural consequence of the fact that these communities belong to the same theological tradition that opposed the Christology of the Council of Chalcedon. Following the persecution of the non-Chalcedonians in Syria, large number of monks and leading bishops took refuge in Egypt (e.g. Severus of Antioch). Often the leadership of the anti-Chalcedonian movement was assumed by the Egyptian fathers like Patriarchs Timothy (d.477) or Theodore (who was a Syrian and became patriarch of Alexandria in 575). Over the centuries the contacts could take place in Jerusalem or in Egypt (where there was a Syrian Monastery, Dayras-Suryani). Though I was asked to concentrate on the period up to mid sixth century, I shall discuss the influences of later period as well.

Contacts between Coptic and Syriac Churches

From the earliest period, contacts and exchanges existed between Egypt and Syriac world. Some of the Coptic writings of Nag Hammadi Library, such as Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Philip were probably translated from Syriac originals. It is not clear whether the Coptic translation was made from Syriac or from a Greek intermediary. A Coptic version of five Odes of Solomon is incorporated in the Gnostic collection known as ‘Pistis Sophia’ (2nd

W. Thomson, “Syrian Christianity and the Conversion of Armenia,” in Jullien, pp. 233-253. Originally published in *Die Christianisierung des Kaukasus. The Christianization of Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Albania), Referat des internationalen Symposions (Wien 9-12 Dez. 1999)*, ed. W.Seibt, *Denkschriften der phil.-hist. Klasse, 296. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Byzantinistik, IX (Wien, 2002)*, pp. 159-169 . [= Thomson, 2002]. Also see: L. Van Rompay, “Coptic Christianity, Syriac Contacts with”, in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage (=GEDSH)*, ed. S.Brock et als. (2011), 103b-106b. L.Van Rompay, “Armenian Christianity, Syriac contacts with”, *GEDSH*, pp. 33b-37a.; A.M.Butts, “Ethiopic Christianity, Syriac Contacts with”, *GEDSH*, pp.148a-153a.[All the above articles give detailed Bibliography].

or 3rd century AD). Here the Odes were almost certainly first translated into Greek and then into Coptic. Some of the Manichaean texts were also translated from Syriac into Greek. Similar intense exchanges certainly existed between the Orthodox communities in the two regions.

Within the Christian Roman Empire, contacts between the Christians in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia intensified. Egyptian monasticism attracted interest and visits from Syrian monks and several writings about the Desert fathers became known in Syriac as early as the 5th century. According to a later version of the Life of St Ephrem (d.373), the Syriac poet theologian visited Egypt and spent several years in Scetis, where he met with Bishoi, one of the founders of the Coptic Monasticism. [However, the relics of St Ephrem were transferred to the monastery of Anba Bishoi and the Coptic Synaxery celebrates the feast of St Ephrem on 7 *Tôbi* and the Ethiopian Synaxery on 15 Hamle (22 July).

Syriac monastic historians proudly spoke Mar Augen (4th/5th cent), an Egyptian monk from Qulsum-Suez as the founder father of Mesopotamian monasticism. According to a widely circulated tradition, Augen settled down on Mount Izla with 28 disciples. Later tradition increased the number to 70, corresponding to the number of Evangelists of Christ, found in eastern sources². However, Egyptian sources are silent on the mission of Mar Augen.

In the following centuries, several famous Syrian monks, both from the Syrian Orthodox and East Syrian tradition, visited Egypt. The most noted among them is Isaac of Nineveh (7th century) whose relics are kept in the monastery of Anba Maqar.

A few years after Mar Augen's visit, another Egyptian monk Jacob the Egyptian (or Recluse), who died as a martyr in 421, settled down in Tur 'Abdin. The monastery of Mar Jacob in Salah, near Midiyat is dedicated to his memory.⁸⁰ Egyptians are venerated

2 Fiey, p. 50-55.

in the monastery of Mar Gabriel (Qartamin). [The author had visited these three monasteries in April 2012]. Several monastic writings were translated into Syriac. Thus the *Lausiac History of Palladius* (written before 420) was translated into Syriac in the 5th century and later in the 7th century, a new Syriac version was made by ‘Anan Isho, who himself visited Scetis.

The feasts of the Egyptian saints were included in the Syriac calendar and vice versa³. Thus their memory became part of the liturgical traditions of both Churches. For the exchange of liturgical elements, Fr. Ishaq Armalet had made a rather exhaustive study in Arabic⁴.

Now the Coptic Church has three anaphoras: St. Cyril (based on the ancient anaphora of St Mark, which is rarely used today), St Basil and St Gregory of Naziansus. Basil and Gregory are not Egyptian type of anaphoras, but Syrian. In the words of Aelred Cody, St Basil is «fundamentally Syrian in both composition and structure, with some Egyptian retouching»⁵. In fact Basil and Gregory are the most commonly used anaphoras in the Coptic Church. Their Coptic original was made by the 6th century at the latest. Manuscript discoveries attest that Greek version was used as late as the 14th century⁶.

In the Coptic Eucharistic liturgy one of the prayers of fraction (*qisma*) (said before the Lord’s Prayer) is called *al-qisma al-suryaniyya*⁷. In fact this is a translation of the Syriac «Prayer of

3 For the details, see, Fiey, pp 56-61

4 In *Al-Machriq* 23 (1925), pp. 282-292; 384-389; 448-458; 536-544; 574-580; 741-755 & 810-817. (I owe this reference to Fr. Fiey. Fiey gives a summary: op.cit. pp. 93-96. See also I Rahmani, *Liturgies orientales et occidentales*, (Beyrouth, 1929), pp. 173-184.

5 Aelred Cody, “Anaphora of St Basil”, in *Coptic Encyclopedia* Vol. I (New York, 1991), pp. 121-123.

6 See J.H.Crehan, “ Egyptian Liturgy”, in *A Catholic Dictionary of Theology*, Vol. II, (London, 1967), pp. 210-213, here. p. 213.-

7 For the English translation of this prayer: *Coptic Liturgies and hymns*, Hayward, Ca. 1995, pp. 425-427.

Fraction» attributed to Dionysius Bar Salibi (12th cent). Another prayer of Syriac origin is ‘a prayer over the veil’ taken from the anaphora of St James. In St James, this prayer is placed at the beginning of the anaphora, that is, the second prayer after the prayer of the kiss of peace. But in Coptic liturgy it is placed after the reading of the Gospel.

The Coptic version is as follows: « O God, who in Your unutterable love toward mankind (sent Your Only) Begotten Son into the world, that He might bring the lost sheep home unto You, we ask You, O our Lord, do not turn us back when we lay hands on this awesome and bloodless sacrifice. For we put no trust in our righteousness but in Your mercy, with which You have given life to our race. We pray and entreat Your goodness, O Lover of Mankind, that this mystery which You have appointed for our salvation may not be unto condemnation unto us or unto all Your people, but unto the washing away of our sins and the forgiveness of our negligence and glory and honour to Your holy name, O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen»⁸.

If we compare it with the same prayer in the Syriac St James, at the first sight we can note that the Coptic version is a translation of the same prayer in St James:

«O God the Father, Who by thy great and indescribable love towards mankind didst send Thy Son into the world to bring back the sheep that had gone astray, reject not Thou, my Lord, this bloodless sacrifice; for we rely not on our own righteousness but on Thy mercy. And grant that this sacrifice, which was instituted for our salvation, be not for our condemnation but that we thereby receive remission of our sins and may render due

8 Ibid. pp. 148-149.

praise and thanksgiving unto Thee and unto Thy
Only-Begotten Son and unto Thy Holy Spirit...»⁹.

In the dialogue at the anaphora of Gregory of Naziansus (in which all prayers are addressed to the Son), there is a mixture of Syrian elements with the Egyptian. There are two introductions to the triple Holy, the first is characteristically Egyptian, in stressing the 'Holy' sung by the believers, and the second is characteristically Syrian in its emphasis on the 'Holy' sung by the angelic choirs.

Ethiopian- Syriac relations

Scholars have pointed out Syriac influences in various spheres of Ethiopia's religion and cultural life. We have an extensive list of loanwords from Syriac, but also from Jewish Aramaic dialects, that are similar to Syriac. Several Ethiopian liturgical vocabularies are of Syriac origin¹⁰. We shall give a few examples.

Eg. *Haimanot* (= faith) – *haimonutho* (Syriac);

Qeddase (= liturgy) - *qudosho* (Syr).

qwerban (= offer; Eucharist) – *qurbana* (Syr);

qasis (= priest) - *qasisa* (Syr);

sallaya, salot (to pray; prayer) – *Sali ; Slutho* (Syr);

som (fasting) – *sawmo* (Syr);

sagada (to prostrate oneself) – *sged* (Syr);

qob' (priestly headgear) - *qub'o* (Syr = hood; cap).

Märäweh (flabellum = liturgical fan) – *marwahto* (Syr).

9 Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel (publisher), *Anaphora . The Divine Liturgy of St James the First bishop of Jerusalem*, (1967), p.36.

10 See Witakowski (1989-1900), pp. 202-204. See the bibliography also.

These Syriac vocabulary bears witness to the exchanges in liturgical matters since the beginning of Ge'ez. In fact we have Ethiopian version of the Anaphora of St James, which was almost certainly translated from an early Syriac version of St James (which is usually known as *Old Syriac Version*)¹¹. The Institution narrative of the Ethiopian anaphora attributed to Jacob of Serugh (different from the three anaphoras in Syriac that bear his name), show traces of Syriac influence. It has been suggested that the liturgical fans (flabella) reached Ethiopia from Syria. As we have noted above the Ge'ez word *märäweh* is derived from the Syriac *marwahto*.

It had been widely believed that the so-called «nine saints» were Syrian Orthodox monks, which was recently challenged by P. Marrassini¹². However, there must have been many other Syriac speaking monks who worked in Ethiopia. The participation of Syrians, including Nine saints, in Ge'ez Bible translation is probable, because several New Testament names have clearly Syriac forms, suggesting a translation from Syriac [e.g. *wal da Yona* in Math. 16:17, corresponds to Syriac *breh d'yona* (son of Jonah), where as the Greek has Bar Iona]. However, several other names have clearly Greek forms. (E.g. Bartolomewos). In the translation of Pseudepigrapha and apocrypha, also we have traces of the use of Syriac *Vorlage* aside the Greek version. Later, several works of the Syriac

11 See S. Euringer, "Die Anaphora des hl. Jacobus des Bruders der Herr", in *Oriens Christianus* II, 4 (1915), 1-19 (Ethiopian text with German translation). On the History of the Syriac anaphora of St James, see, Baby Varghese, *The Syriac Version of the Liturgy of St James. A Brief History for Students*, Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies-49, Cambridge 2001.

12 P. Marrassini, "Some considerations on the Problem of the 'Syriac Influences' on Aksumite Ethiopia", *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, 23 (1990), pp 35-46; ID, "Ancora sul problema degli influssi siriaci in età aksumita" in *Biblica et semitica. Studi in onore di Francesco Vattioni*, ed. L.CVagni (Napoli, 1999), pp.325-337. (I owe these references to W.Witakowski).

authors were translated into Ethiopic, either directly from Syriac or sometimes from Arabic.

The Architecture of the early Ethiopian church building types was possibly derived from the Syrian pattern, whilst the influence may have been mediated via Egypt. The patterns of basilicas excavated in Adulis and Mātāra come from northern Syria¹³.

The contacts that had begun in the fifth and sixth centuries were later continued and intensified. In the 13th century, Syrians officiated as metropolitans of Ethiopia, during the reign of *ase* Yekunno Amlak, most probably because no metropolitan was sent from Egypt at that time. His son *ase* Yagbe'ā Seyon regarded the situation as highly irregular, and sent letters both to the Patriarch of Alexandria, John VII, and to Sultan Baybars requesting that a new metropolitan be sent. On the other hand, it happened that Ethiopians themselves were actively seeking consecration at the hands of the patriarch of Antioch. An Ethiopian monk Thomas is known to have requested Patriarch Ignatius II David (1222-1252) to be consecrated during latter's visit to Jerusalem. According to the Syriac historian Bar 'Ebroyo (d.1286), this would be in violation of the rights of the Patriarch of Alexandria¹⁴.

Armenian-Syrian relations

The geographical proximity made the contacts between Armenian and Syrian churches a natural phenomenon. Early Armenian Chronicles bear witness to the contacts and influence of Syriac on Armenian language and liturgy in early stages¹⁵. The main

13 Witakowski (1989-1990), p. 230.

14 J.B. Abbeloos and T.J.Lamy, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon ecclesiasticum* (Louvain, 1874), II, pp. 656 ff.

15 See Robert W. Thomson. We have two important studies on this subject: *Ervant Ter-Minaseanc'*, *Die armenische Kirche in ihren Beziehungen zu den syrischen Kirchen, Texte und Untersuchungen*, NF XI/4, Leipzig, 1904. Armenian Version was published in 1908, and reprinted in 1998. N.Garsoian, *L'Eglise arménienne et le grande schisme d'Orient*, Paris, 1999.

cities of Syriac Christianity, Edessa (Armenian *Urhay*) and Nisibis (Armenian *Mcbin*) had a mixed population, which included Syrians and Armenians. There must have been a significant amount of bilingualism, reflecting a ‘veritable interpenetration’ between the two communities. It has been observed that Mastoc⁷ (Mesrop) who invented the Armenian script (around 407), made several travel through Syria and Edessa before he gave shape to the new script. This was followed by a period of intense translation activity, from both Greek and Syriac. Prior to the invention of their own script, Armenians used Greek and Syriac as their literary and liturgical languages. In the first half of the 5th century, several Syriac texts were translated into Armenian, which included the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat (d.345), transmitted in Armenian under the name of Yaqub of Nisibis. Several works of St Ephrem (Armenian: Ephrem Asori ‘the Assyrian or Syrian’). Some of the works are surviving only in Armenian translation, as the Syriac original was lost.

In liturgy, the Armenians developed a unique tradition, drawing from both Greek and Syriac practices and influenced by the ritual of Jerusalem. Gabriele Winkler has shown that the early Armenian baptismal liturgy is based on Syriac models¹⁶. Some of the earliest formulations of Armenian Credo statements also follow Syriac wording¹⁷.

A landmark in liturgical exchanges between the two traditions is the translation of the Anaphora of St James. Like the Ethiopian version, the Armenian version was also probably translated from a Syriac original, a few centuries older than the *Textus receptus*¹⁸.

16 G.Winkler, *Das armenische Initiation rituale*, OCA 217, (Rome, 1982), pp. 106-129. See the baptismal rite at Trdat’s baptism.

17 G.Winkler, “Armenian Anaphoras and Creeds: a Brief Overview of Work in Progress”, in *The Armenian Christian Tradition*, ed. R. Taft, OCA 254, (Rome, 1997), pp. 41-55.

18 See A.Baumstark, “Denkmäler altarmenischer Messliturgie. 3. Die armenische Rezension der Jakobusliturgie”, in *Oriens Christianus* II, 7/8 (1918), 1-32. See also, G.Winkler, „On the

On the other hand, recent scholarly researches by Gabriele Winkler and H. J. Feulner have brought to light the Syriac influences in the Armenian anaphoras of St Basil and St Athanasius (both are employed today).

The contacts on all levels took place in the period of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (From the late 12th cent. to 1375). Many Syrians had settled in the relative safety of Cilicia. A line of Syrian Orthodox Patriarchs lived in Sis between 1292 and the early 15th century. During the Ottoman period, the Armenian patriarch in Constantinople represented the Armenian interests, and often other Christian interests as well, including those of the Syrians at the Imperial court. The Armenian genocide of the early 20th century largely coincided with the *Sayfo* (massacre of the Syrian Orthodox in Turkey), in which about 96,000 Syrians lost their life. The two communities jointly participated in the sufferings and death of Christ and thus in *martyria*, the true witness to the reality of the cross.

Conclusion

In spite of the linguistic and structural differences, the Oriental Orthodox Churches share a common liturgical tradition, which was the main reason for adopting liturgical elements from tradition to another. These exchanges were never the subject of a detailed scholarly study. Similarly, the Oriental Orthodox Churches share several elements with the Catholic and the Byzantine Churches. We have rediscovered our common Christological tradition, which is duly and regularly repeated in our common declarations. We have to rediscover our common liturgical heritage, the liturgical *ordo* and liturgical theology that unite us, which are in fact the most important expressions of our common theological traditions.

Formation of the Armenian Anaphoras: A Preliminary Overview", in Roberta R. Ervine (ed), *Worship Traditions in Armenia and the Neighbouring Christian East. An International Symposium in Honor of the 40th Anniversary of St Nerses Armenian Seminary*, (New York, 2006), pp.59-86.

The Oriental Orthodox liturgical theology was almost never the subject of a scholarly presentation. My own contribution, *West Syrian Liturgical Theology* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004) was limited to the Syrian Orthodox liturgy, because of my imperfect knowledge of other Oriental Orthodox liturgical traditions. I have limited this presentation to the exchanges between the Syrian Orthodox and other Oriental Orthodox traditions, because basic researches have been done on this subject, which need to be further investigated and developed. Similar exchanges existed between the Syrians and the Byzantines and also between the Armenians and the Byzantines, which got momentum during the Byzantine occupation of Northern Syria (969-1084).

Similarly Latin elements also entered Oriental Orthodox liturgy, by one reason or other. [e.g. the last Gospel in the Armenian liturgy and the service of the non-ordained lay people in liturgical celebrations in the Malankara Orthodox Church and also the simultaneous celebration of the Eucharist on three, five or even more altars).

The common liturgical elements of the first six centuries are still preserved by our Churches in the form of basic elements of the liturgical *ordo* (or the structure of the celebration), and common feasts and canonical fasts, daily offices, canons related to liturgical celebrations and the administration of the sacraments. In fact *ordo* implies the inter-connectedness of various elements. The violation and unwarranted modifications of these elements have serious theological implications. The official dialogues between our Churches need to give sufficient attention to this problem.

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JOHN THE SOLITARY
(Letter to Hesychius)

Be fully aware in all your activities. As you walk, do not let your eyes wander this way and that; rather, your eyes should look modestly straight ahead.

Be modest and chaste in your clothing; let your gaze be downwards, but your mind directed upwards towards your Lord. As far as possible you should not sate your eyes on the faces of other people; rather, let your gaze be modest, and do not stare at anything in a domineering way, but, like a pure virgin, guard yourself for Christ.

Be friendly to everyone, but do not seek for attachment to your loved ones [i.e. family], for your way of life does not require that. You are a solitary, and you should not be tied down by anything. In your mind you should hold in special love those who give you helpful advice, or the person who rebukes you for a good purpose. Do not be annoyed in such cases; otherwise you may become a hater of the word of God.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp. 89-90)

Rifaat Ebied

The Syriac Version of the Treatise on the Origin and History of the Thirty Pieces of Silver which Judas received from the Jews*

Introduction

The rich collection of the Mingana Syriac, Arabic and Garshūni manuscripts, preserved in the University of Birmingham Library (England)¹ contains numerous valuable, and in some cases unique, works. Volume I of the *Catalogue* in particular contains a

* An updated and expanded version of a paper by the present writer published in *Graeco-Latina et Orientalia: Studies in honorem Angeli Urbani heptagenarii* [Series Syro-Arabica, 2], edited by Samir Khalil Samir & Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (Cordoba, 2013), pp. 123-131.

¹ A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, Vol. I: *Syriac and Garshūni Manuscripts*, Cambridge, 1933; Vol. II: *Christian Arabic Manuscripts and Additional Syriac*, Cambridge, 1936; Vol. III: *Additional Christian Arabic and Syriac Manuscripts*, Cambridge, 1939.

number of seminal works on a variety of Patristic and Christian subject matters in Syriac and Arabic (Garshūni). At least three of these manuscripts, Mingana Syriac MS 71, Mingana Syriac MS 369 and Mingana Syriac MS 480, contain, *inter alia*, the Syriac text of an interesting short piece dealing with the origin and history of the thirty pieces of silver which Judas Iscariot received from the Jews for betraying Jesus. The purpose of this paper is to draw the attention of scholars and colleagues to the existence of this hitherto unpublished work as well as to present its text, translation, and provide an analysis of its contents, linguistic features and likely authenticity.

The Biblical Narrative of the 30 Pieces of Silver

According to the Gospel accounts, Judas Iscariot was a disciple of Jesus. Before the Last Supper, Judas went to the chief priests and agreed to hand over Jesus in exchange for 30 silver coins.² Jesus is then arrested in Gethsemane, where Judas reveals Jesus' identity to the soldiers by giving him a kiss.³ According to Chapter 27 of Matthew's Gospel, Judas was filled with remorse and he subsequently returned the money to the chief priests before hanging himself. The chief priests then decided that they could not put it into the Temple treasury, and so with it they bought the

² Matthew 26: 14-16. Cf. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, 2007), pp. 976-979.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1012.

Potter's Field.⁴ In the Book of Zechariah, "30 pieces of silver" was the price Zechariah receives for his labour. He took the coins and cast them "to the Potter".⁵ In the Book of Exodus, "30 pieces of silver" was the price of a slave.⁶ Klaas Schilder notes that Zechariah's payment indicates "an assessment of his worth, as well as his dismissal"⁷ He further suggests that these 30 pieces of silver then get "bandied back and forth by the Spirit of Prophecy".⁸ When the chief priests decided to buy a field with the returned money, Matthew says that this fulfilled "what was spoken by Jeremiah the Prophet, viz. "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me".⁹

The "30 Pieces" are used in Christian literature on the betrayal of Jesus, as in the poem, *Thirty Pieces of Silver* by William Blane:

⁴ Matthew 27: 9-10. Cf. Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Minnesota, 1991), pp. 384-387.

⁵ Cf. Zechariah 11:12-13.

⁶ Exodus 21:32. See France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 978. Cf. the same sum given as the "value" of an adult woman in Leviticus 27:4; a man is worth *fifty* shekels.

⁷ Klaas Schilder, *Christ in His Suffering* (Grand Rapids, 1938), p. 74.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁹ Matthew 27:9-10. For a motif of the thirty pieces of silver, see Erica Reiner, "Thirty Pieces of Silver" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 88 (1968), pp. 186f.

*Thirty pieces of silver for the Lord of life they gave:
 Thirty pieces of silver—only the price of a slave,
 But it was the priestly value of the holy One of God:
 They weighed it out in the temple, the price of the Saviour's
 blood.*

*Thirty pieces of silver laid in Iscariot's hand: —
 Thirty pieces of silver, and the aid of an armed band,
 Like a lamb that is brought to the slaughter, led the Holy Son
 of God
 At midnight from the garden where His sweat had been as
 blood.*

*Thirty pieces of silver burned in the traitor's brain:
 Thirty pieces of silver! but oh! it is hellish gain:
 'I have sinned and betrayed the guiltless,' he cried with a
 fevered breath
 And he cast them down in the temple and rushed to a
 madman's death.*

*Thirty pieces of silver lay in the House of God:
 Thirty pieces of silver, but oh! 'twas the price of blood.
 And so, for a place to bury the stranger in, they gave
 The price of their own Messiah Who lay in a borrowed grave.
 It may not be for silver; it may not be for gold;
 But still by tens of thousands is this precious Saviour sold.—*

*Sold for a godless friendship, sold for a selfish aim,
 Sold for a fleeting trifle, sold for an empty name!
 Sold in the mart of science! sold in the seat of power!
 Sold at the Shrine of Fortune! sold in Pleasure's bower!
 Sold, where the awful bargain none but God's eye can see:
 Ponder, my soul, the question, 'Shall He be sold by thee?'
 Sold! O God, what a moment! stifled is conscience' voice:
 Sold! and a weeping angel records the awful choice:
 Sold! but the price of the Saviour to a living coal shall turn,
 With the pangs of remorse for ever deep in the soul to burn.¹⁰*

The Syriac Version of the Treatise

The text of the treatise on the 30 Pieces of Silver seems to have enjoyed a considerable popularity, as is attested by the fact that it is known in Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian etc. Versions in these languages are preserved in numerous manuscripts.¹¹

The Syriac text of this piece, which was included in *The Book of the Bee* of Solomon, Metropolitan of Basrah in Iraq (13th

¹⁰ William Blane, "Thirty Pieces of Silver," in *The Silent Land and other Poems* (London, 1906), p. 149. I am grateful to my colleague, Barry Spurr, Professor of Poetry and Poetics, University of Sydney, for making this poem available to me.

¹¹ See Florence Jullien, "Édesse, un creuset de traditions sur les Mages Évangéliques" in *Le Muséon*, vol. 127, 1-2 (2014), p. 81.

century)¹², also survived in three further Mingana manuscripts viz. MS Syriac 369 (dated A.D. 1481), MS Syriac 71 (dated ca. A.D. 1600) and MS Syriac 480 (dated A.D. 1712). This version was edited and translated by the present writer in *Series Syro-Arabica*, 2.¹³

The Syriac text of this piece has also survived in the following three Mingana manuscripts:

- (i) MS Mingana Syriac 369 [hereafter = A].¹⁴ The part of the manuscript which comprises our Syriac text consists of folios 130a – 131a. This manuscript contains a number of different works in Syriac and Garshūni, bound together from four different manuscripts, and written by four different hands. It consists of 159 folios and is dated (fol. 130a) 16th November, A.G. 1792 (= A.D. 1481). Our piece is written in a clear West Syrian hand.

¹² Solomon became Metropolitan of Basrah about A.D. 1222. The Syriac text of the *Book of the Bee* was edited from four MSS preserved in London (2 MSS), Oxford and Munich by Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Bee: The Syriac Text* (Oxford, 1866) [chapter XLIV: On the Passion of Our Lord], Syr. text, pp. 107-110 [Appendix I below]; Eng. trans., pp.95-97 [Appendix II below]. Butrus Haddād provided an Arabic rendition of this Syriac text in his *Kitāb al-Nahlah* [*Manshurāt Markaz Gibrāil Danbu al-Thaqaāfi*, 40], Baghdad (2006), pp. 128-130.

¹³ See Rifaat Ebied, “The Syriac Version of the Treatise on the Origin and History of the Thirty Pieces of Silver which Judas received from the Jews” in *Graeco-Latina et Orientalia: Studia in honorem Angeli Urbani heptagenarii* [*Series Syro-Arabica*, 2], ed. Samir Khalil Samir and Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (Cordoba, 2013), pp. 123-131.

¹⁴ See A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, Vol. I: *Syriac and Garshūni Manuscripts*, Cambridge, 1933, pp. 669f.

- (ii) MS Mingana Syriac 71 [hereafter = B].¹⁵ The part of the manuscript which comprises our Syriac text consists of folios 134b – 136b. This manuscript, which is not dated, consists of 154 folios, and is written in a clear West Syrian script by two contemporary hands of about A.D. 1600. It comprises a number of pieces of varying content written in Syriac – Lives of various saints, hagiography, sayings by Fathers of the Desert, a collection of pious stories, etc. It contains, *inter alia*, a short treatise attributed to St. Ephrem on how he believed in one nature in three persons, and three persons in one nature, being a comparison with the sun, its light and its heat.¹⁶ Also contained in this manuscript is another interesting short piece in Syriac attributed to St. Ephrem, being a collection of admonitions/advice to monks.¹⁷
- (iii) MS Mingana Syriac 480 [hereafter = C]. The part of the manuscript which comprises our Syriac text consists of folios 240b – 241a. This handsome and sumptuous manuscript contains, *inter alia*, copies of the New Testament and many other treatises on a variety of subjects. The Gospels are in the Harklean Version and

¹⁵ For a description of the contents of this manuscript, see Mingana, *Op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 180f.

¹⁶ The text of this piece, together with an English translation, is edited by Rifaat Ebied and Lionel Wickham, “A Short Treatise on the Trinity in Syriac attributed to St. Ephrem the Syrian” in *The Harp*, vol. xxvii (2011), pp. 343-351.

¹⁷ The text of this piece, together with an English translation, has been edited by Rifaat Ebied and Lionel Wickham, “A Collection of Acrostic Admonitions in Syriac attributed to St. Ephrem the Syrian” in *The Harp*, vol. xxix (2014), pp. 41-53.

have an extensive commentary on the margins.¹⁸ A colophon on fol. 303b gives the date of the manuscript as 16th August, A.G. 2023 (= A.D. 1712). It reads as follows:

لذات وبع حاتب لآ سفتا سمحلتا؛ طال حبص
 سفلا سول سع وحم صمصملا حدلا اذلا
 واملا ص صعد وحبلا؛ اوحب هة؛ حنبا اذ
 عفا ده ملل حبى وسنتا.

The Arabic (Garshūni) Version of the Treatise

The Arabic text of this piece has survived in at least six manuscripts.¹⁹ These are:²⁰

- (i) MS Cambridge Add.2881, fols. 136b-139a. This manuscript is dated A.G. 1795 = A.D. 1484.²¹
- (ii) MS Mingana Syriac 22, fols. 134b-136b. This manuscript is dated A.D. 1527.²²

¹⁸ For a description of the contents of this manuscript, see Mingana, *Op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 863ff.

¹⁹ The text and translation of the Arabic version of this treatise will be the subject of a separate publication by the present writer.

²⁰ For a list of these manuscripts, see Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, vol. I [Studi e Testi, 118] (The Vatican, 19440, p. 243.

²¹ See William Wright, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1901), p. 715.

²² In Garshūni. See Mingana, *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 64.

- (iii) MS Mingana Syriac 48, fols. 146a-147a. This manuscript is dated A.G. 2068 = A.D. 1757.²³
- (iv) MS Mingana Syriac 514, fols. 140a-142b. This manuscript is dated A.G. 2061 = A.D. 1750.²⁴
- (v) MS Mingana Syriac 479, fols. 123b-125a. This manuscript is dated A.G. 2130 = A.D. 1819.²⁵
- (vi) MS Cairo 139. This manuscript was written in the 18th century.²⁶

The Present Piece

A collation of the Arabic version with the published Syriac version shows that on the whole it stands in a closer relation with it. This is also augmented by internal evidence of the contents of the piece²⁷ as well as the fact that the Arabic text exhibits a number of features in vocabulary, grammar and style which indicate an underlying Syriac origin.²⁸

²³ In Garshūni. See *ibid.*, p.136.

²⁴ In Garshūni. See *ibid.*, p.947.

²⁵ In Garshūni. See *ibid.*, p.863.

²⁶ See Graf, *Catalogue de manuscrits arabes chrétiens conservés au Caire [Studi e Testi, 63]; Geschichte*, Op. Cit., p. 243. I have not yet been able to consult this manuscript.

²⁷ E.g. the frequent mention of the City of Edessa which played an essential and pioneer role in the spread of Christianity as well as the reference to King Abgar's well known Syriac correspondence with Jesus. Cf. Florence Jullien, *op. cit.*, p.82, 93.

²⁸ E.g. the use of the letter *Lāmad* in Syriac after transitive verbs as the sign of the accusative/direct object (e.g. "وأكرم بهم لفرعون" (Version A, MS A); "وأخذوا لتلك" (Version II, MS D); "لما رأى أبجر الملك لتلك القميص" (Version III, MS E).

This anonymous treatise most likely falls into the category of apocryphal / pseudepigraphal biblical literature.²⁹ It traces the origin of the thirty pieces of silver to the biblical figure, Terah, who allegedly minted them before passing them onto his son, the patriarch Abraham. The latter gave them to his son Isaac, and they subsequently changed hands on numerous occasions, before finally entering into the possession of King Abgar of Edessa, who gave them to Christ in return for the favours He rendered to him, having healed him from his illness. The treatise does contain, however, some erroneous historical information. For example, Nebuchadnezzar is described as, “King of the Persians” (*sic*) in both the Syriac and Arabic versions.³⁰

²⁹ Cf. Graf, *Geschichte*, *op. cit.*, p. 243.

³⁰ In all the extant Arabic and Syriac manuscripts of this treatise Nebuchadnezzar is described as: ملك الفرس

52
 53
 54
 55
 56
 57
 58

52 B: *ⲁⲛⲧⲉⲗⲁ*

53 C add: *ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲁ*

54 B: *ⲕⲁⲛⲁ*

55 AB: *ⲟⲩⲁⲛⲁ*

56 C add: *ⲙⲉⲛⲁⲗⲁ*

57 C: *ⲕⲁ*

58 C: *ⲕⲁⲕⲁ*

Fol. 136^a/ صح حكا: صح سا احي: حة- صلسا وحلسا اصةا:
 اجن حة- صح انا حة- وا صلسا: احنح حة اناج حبا
 حلسا وحتا⁵⁹ حكا لاجا⁶⁰ وحبلسا هاجن⁶¹ حة وحصلا⁶² انا
 حص صلسا ولا سها صح حكا: احن⁶³ / A, Fol. 131^a / * حة:
 مسس حصلسا ولا سها ححصلا اصةا: انا سها حص لاجا
 انا رلحا وحقا: مسح ححصلا وحصلا حة وا صلسا:
 هة⁶⁴ انا مسس ححصلا وحصلا. صح هجج احي: حة حة
 وحصلا انا وحصلا⁶⁵ حة حة.

هة احي: حة حة⁶⁶ حصلسا ححصلا حة وحصلا
 حص: حصلا حة وحصلا وانا سها حة وحصلا: حصلا حة سا⁶⁷
 حصلسا حة حة حصلسا حصلا: حة حة حة حة حة

⁵⁹ C om.

⁶⁰ C: لاجا

⁶¹ AB: هاجن

⁶² This word is repeated in C.

⁶³ This word is repeated in A; C add: انا

⁶⁴ B: هة

⁶⁵ BC: وحصلا

⁶⁶ C: انا حة حة

⁶⁷ C: حة سا حصلا

68 : ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 69 ܕܥܘܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 70 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 71 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 72 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 73 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 74 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 75 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 76 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 77 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 78 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 79 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 80 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ.

ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ

68 C: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 69 C add: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ
 70 B: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ
 71 C om.
 72 AB om: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 73 C: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ
 74 A om.
 75 C: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ
 76 C om.
 77 C: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ
 78 C om.
 79 C: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ
 80 C add: ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܥܠܡܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
 81 C om.

TRANSLATION

**/* A, Fol. 130^a/ Again, a Demonstration of the Origin of the
Coins, being the Price of Christ, which Judas Iscariot Received**

/* A, Fol. 130^b/ Those coins, which Judas received from the Jewish priests, were minted by Terah, Abraham's father. Then Abraham gave /* B, Fol. 135^a/ them to his son Isaac, and Isaac purchased a village with them. The owners of the village subsequently delivered them to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh dispatched them to Solomon, David's son, for the Temple which he had built. Then Solomon took them and placed them around the door of the altar. But when Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Persians [*sic*], came and carried away the booty of the Israelites, he entered Solomon's Temple and saw that these coins were beautiful. So he took them and carried them off to Babylon with the Israelite captives.

There were Persian hostages there (i.e. in Babylon), and, when Nebuchadnezzar came from Jerusalem, they sent to him everything that befits kings. Nebuchadnezzar, having seen that they had dispatched to him all that is fair, released their children and bestowed upon them many gifts. He also gave them those coins, which the Persians duly presented to their parents. Then when Jesus Christ was born and they (i.e. the Magi) saw the star, they arose [and] carried those coins, as well as gold, myrrh and frankincense [with them]. So they brought those coins as they travelled on the road, until they reached the neighbourhood of Edessa. Then, when it

became dark, they slept on the side of that road and, having risen in the morning to continue the journey, they unknowingly forgot those coins /* B, Fol. 135^b/ where they had slept.

Certain merchants then arrived [there] after them, /* C, Fol. 241^a/ found the coins, and then came by a certain spring of water in the neighbourhood of Edessa. On that same day, an angel appeared to the shepherds of that land and presented them with a seamless tunic from on high. He then said to them: “Take the tunic in which there is life for mankind.” The shepherds thus took the tunic, arrived at the spring of water, and found the merchants who had discovered the coins by it. So they said to the merchants: “Would you buy a seamless tunic from on high?” The merchants replied: “Bring it here.” Having seen that tunic, the merchants were exceedingly amazed, so they said to the shepherds: “We possess beautiful coins, which befit kings. Take them and give us this tunic.”

The merchants, having taken the tunic, entered the city and lodged at an inn. King Abgar dispatched [a message] to the merchants and said to them: “Do you have anything befitting a king that I could purchase from you?” The merchants answered: “We have a seamless tunic /* B, Fol. 136^a/ from on high.” Having seen the matchless tunic, King Abgar asked them: “From where did you obtain this tunic?” They replied: “We arrived at a certain spring of water by the gate of your city, and some shepherds said to us: ‘We have a seamless tunic from on high. Would you like to buy /* A, Fol. 131^a/ it?’ Then we saw the tunic, of which there is none like it in the

world. We had thirty coins bearing kingly images, so we gave them to the shepherds and took this tunic, but those coins are befitting of kings such as you.” Having heard [this], Abgar sent after those shepherds and took the coins from them.

Then Abgar sent the coins and the tunic to Christ in return for the good deed which He did for him, for he had an illness, and [Christ] healed him. Having seen the tunic and the coins, Christ took the tunic and dispatched the coins to the Treasury of the Jews. Since He was our Lord, who knows hidden secrets, he sent the coins in order to sell Himself with them. When the Jews came to Judas Iscariot, and said to him, “Hand Jesus, son of Joseph, over to us,” he replied to them: “What will you give me that I may deliver Him to you?” So they arose /* B, Fol. 136^b/ and brought forth those thirty coins, giving them to Judas Iscariot, who subsequently returned them to the Jews. The Jews then purchased with them a burial ground for foreigners. Thereafter they brought the [coins] into Solomon’s Temple, cast them into the cistern inside the Temple, and concealed them.

The End.

ܠܦܢ ܘܢܩܘܚܐ ܕܢܝܚܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ

Appendix II

Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of The Bee: The Syriac Text edited from the Manuscripts in London, Oxford and Munich with an English translation* (Oxford, 1886), pp. 95 – 97:

The thirty pieces of silver (zûzê) which Judas received, and for which he sold his Lord, were thirty pieces according to the weight of the sanctuary, and were equal to six hundred pieces according to the weight of our country. Terah made these pieces for Abraham his son; Abraham gave them to Isaac; Isaac bought a village with them; the owner of the village carried them to Pharaoh; Pharaoh sent them to Solomon the son of David for the building of his temple; and Solomon took them and placed them round about the door of the altar. When Nebuchadnezzar came and took captive the children of Israel, and went into Solomon's temple and saw that these pieces were beautiful, he took them, and brought them to Babylon with the captives of the children of Israel. There were some Persian youths there as hostages, and when Nebuchadnezzar came from Jerusalem, they sent to him everything that was meet for kings and rulers. And since gifts and presents had been sent by the Persians, he released their sons and gave them gifts and presents, among which were those pieces of silver about which we have spoken; and they carried them to their parents. When Christ was born and

they saw the star, they arose and took those pieces of silver and gold and myrrh and frankincense, and set out on the journey; and they came to the neighbourhood of Edessa, and these kings fell asleep by the roadside. And they arose and left the pieces behind them, and did not remember them, but forgot that anything of theirs remained behind. And certain merchants came and found them, and took these pieces, and came to the neighbourhood of Edessa, and sat down by a well of water. On that very day an angel came to the shepherds, and gave them the garment without seam at the upper end, woven throughout. And he said to them, 'Take this garment, in which is the life of mankind.' And the shepherds took the garment, and came to the well of water by the side of which were those merchants. They said to them, 'We have a garment without seam at the upper end; will ye buy it?' The merchants said to them, 'Bring it here.' When they saw the garment, they marvelled and said to the shepherds: 'We have thirty pieces of silver which are meet for kings; take them and give us this garment.' When the merchants had taken the garment, and had gone into the city of Edessa, Abgar the king sent to them and said, 'Have ye anything meet for kings, that I may buy it from you?' The merchants said to him, 'We have a garment without seam at the upper end.' When the king saw the garment, he said to them, 'Whence have ye this garment?' They said to him, 'We came to a well by the gate of thy city, and we saw it in the hands of some shepherds, and we bought from them for thirty pieces of stamped silver, which were also meet for kings like yourself.' The

king sent for the shepherds, and took the pieces from them, and sent them together with the garment to Christ for the good that He had done him in healing his sickness. When Christ saw the garment and the pieces, He kept the garment by Him, but He sent the pieces to the Jewish treasury. When Judas Iscariot came to the chief priests and said to them, ‘What will ye give me that I may deliver Him to you?’ the priests arose and brought those pieces, and gave them to Judas Iscariot; and when he repented, he returned them to the Jews, and went and hanged himself. And the priests took them and bought with them a field for a burial-place for strangers.

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SYRIAC PRAYER-AMULETS FROM TURFAN

More than 500 Syriac fragments were discovered at the monastery site of Bulayiq, near Turfan [Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Province, western China] by the Second and Third *German Turfan Expeditions* between 1904 and 1907. All of the fragments were brought to Berlin where they have been preserved under glass plates and are now housed in three separate repositories: the *Staatsbibliothek*, the headquarters of the *Turfanforschung* in the Berlin-Brandenburg Akademie der Wissenschaften and the *Museum für Asiatische Kunst* in Dahlem, Berlin. These fragments have recently been catalogued, exposing a wealth of material and opening new horizons in our understanding of Syriac Christianity and especially the Church of the East in Central Asia and China.¹ An estimated 75-80% of the Syriac fragments pertain to liturgical and biblical material, as might be expected from a monastery, providing invaluable information about the liturgy of the medieval Church of the East. A number of prayer-amulets were also found amongst the Syriac material forming a small, but important category, and giving rare insight into the private devotions of Christians at Turfan.

This paper presents a selection of the Syriac prayer-amulets. SyrHT 152, SyrHT 99 & SyrHT 330, SyrHT 102 are held in the *Staatsbibliothek*, whilst n364-365 is part of the collection of the *Turfanforschung* headquarters in the Berlin-

¹ Erica C D Hunter and Mark Dickens (ed.), *Syrische Handschriften, Teil 2. Texte der Berliner Turfansammlung. Syriac texts from the Berlin Turfan collection* (Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland 5,2) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2014).

Brandenburg Akademie der Wissenschaften. These prayer-amulets augment our knowledge of the Church of the East, particularly its presence in Central Asia and China, by shedding light upon aspects of private devotion as well as the monastic repertoire. The drawings of the cross and other physical features that delineate particular formats associated with personal prayer-amulets give instructive insight into their preparation about which very little is otherwise known. Since most of the hagiographies from Turfan were Sogdian (written in Syriac script), the language spoken by the monks,² the prayer-amulets add a further dimension to our knowledge of the commemoration of saints. As precious examples of the transmission that continued down the centuries in northern Mesopotamia, the prayer-amulets upheld this heritage, alongside the Hudra and other great works of the Church of the East.

(1) SYR HT³ 152 (TII B⁴ 64 No. 3 = 1731)⁵

Repository: *Staatsbibliothek*, Potsdamer Platz, Berlin.

Dimensions: 4.5 cm (height), 3.9 cm (width)

Material: paper

Text: 2 Syriac words, written vertically, on the *recto*

² Nicholas Sims-Williams, "Sogdian and Turkish Christians in the Turfan and Tun-huang manuscripts" in Alfredo Cadonna (ed.), *Turfan and Tun-huang, the Texts Encounter of Civilizations on the Silk Route* (Firenze, Leo S. Olschki: 1992) 43-58.

³ SyrHT means that the manuscript (Handschrift = H) is Syriac and comes from Turfan (T).

⁴ T II B means that the fragment was found at the monastery site of Bulayiq (B) near Turfan, during the second campaign of the German Turfan Expedition in 1904-1905.

⁵ See *Plate 1* SyrHT 152 *recto*.

Two words, ܐܘܡܢܐ “for your handmaid, servant girl” and [ܐܘܡܢܐ] “healing”, flank a well-executed cross of the Church of the East that occupies the centre part of the fragment’s *recto*. The two words are written in an East Syriac Estrangelo script (typical of the fragments from Turfan) and extend vertically the full length of the cross. Whilst the fragment’s edges are ragged, ܐܘܡܢܐ can be read clearly, although the top parts of the initial character *lamedh* and the penultimate character *tau* are missing. Tears to the fragment have meant that the initial and final character *aleph* of [ܐܘܡܢܐ] have been reconstructed. In the case of the final *aleph*, the initial part of medial stroke can be seen. The *verso* is blank, but the black ink of the *recto* has blotted through. SyrHT 152 was clearly addressed to a woman who may have worn or carried it as an item of personal apparel or it may have been hung in a dwelling.

(2a) Syr HT 99 (TII B 53 = 1687)⁶

Repository: *Staatsbibliothek*, Potsdamer Platz, Berlin.

Dimensions: 7.9 cm (height), 5.0 cm (width)

Material: paper

Text: 10 horizontal lines written on the *recto*

Palæographic comparison with Syr HT 330 confirms that both fragments are the product of the same distinctive hand. The *verso* is blank save for the drawing of a Church of the East cross.⁷

The 10 horizontal lines of text, distinguished by a thin, spidery hand, are written in an East Syriac Estrangelo. The average spacing between the lines is 0.7-0.8 cm. The upper and

⁶ See *Plate 2A SyrHT 99 recto*.

⁷ See *Plate 2B SyrHT 99 verso*.

right-hand margins of the fragment are missing, but the lower and left-hand margins are intact. A typical cross of the Church of the East has been drawn in the centre of the *verso* that is otherwise blank.

(2b) Syr HT 330 = 1863. This fragment has no TII number.⁸

Repository: *Staatsbibliothek*, Potsdamer Platz, Berlin.

Dimensions: 2.3 cm (height) x 8.8 cm (width)

Material: paper

Text: 3 horizontal lines, with traces of a fourth line visible on the *recto*.

Palæographic comparison of the three lines with Syr HT 99 confirms that both fragments are the product of the same distinctive hand. The *verso* is blank.

SyrHT 99 ll.1-3 and SyrHT 330 ll. 1-3, quote John 1 v.1-4 v.2 which precedes a prayer by the martyr, Mār Tamsis at the point of his crowning. The two fragments were part of a larger folio, of which substantial, intermediate portions have now been lost.

- Line 1: John 1:1/8-12 can be inserted between Syr HT 330 and Syr HT 99.
- John 1:2/2 – 3/3 [eight words] precedes Line 2 Syr HT 330
- Line 2: John 1:4/2-5 can be inserted between Syr HT 330 l.2 and Syr HT 99 l.2.

Whilst the martyrdom prayer forms the contents of SyrHT 99 ll.4-10,⁹ Syr HT 330 l. 3 ܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ “by

⁸ See *Plate 3* SyrHT 330.

⁹ For a full discussion of the prayer-amulet to Mār Tamsis see, Erica C.D. Hunter, “Traversing Time and Location: A Prayer-Amulet to Mar Tamsis from Turfan” in *From the Oxus River to the Chinese*

the prayer of Mār Tamsis” identifies the saint and also provides the biographical detail that [ܘܕܡܘܠ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢܐ] “[he dwelt] on the mountain forty years”. Due to the fragment being torn, the text of SyrHT 330 breaks off at this point, and the remaining text of the Mār Tamsis prayer is found on SyrHT 99 ll.4-10.

SyrHT 99 ll.4-10:

1.4	... d 'lh' ḥyltn' hbly š'tl[']	ܕܠܗ ܗܝܠܬܢ ܗܒܠܝ ܫܘܬܠܐ ... [ܐ]ܫܠܐ
1.5	... [kwrh]n' 'w mwr'n' . wntdkr	ܕܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܘܕܩܘܪܝܢܐ ... ܘܢܬܘܕܩܪ
1.6	... ' dḥršwt' ṣlwt' hd'	ܕܗܪܫܘܬܐ ܫܠܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ...
1.7	... wn' d't'hd wbmrḥmwt'	ܕܗܘܢܐ ܕܬܗܘܕܐ ܘܕܗܘܢܐ ... ܘܒܡܪܚܡܘܬܐ
1.8	... yb' 'myl' wqdyš' wbrk	ܘܝܒܐ ܘܡܝܠܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܒܪܟܐ ...
1.9	... ld/h wmrwtk ttyqr rbwtk	ܘܠܗܐ ܘܕܘܡܝܢܐ ܘܕܘܡܝܢܐ ... ܘܕܘܡܝܢܐ
1.10	... wl'im 'lmyn 'myn	ܘܠܐܝܡܐ ܘܠܐܝܡܐ ...

Translation:

- 1.4 ... [Lord] God Almighty, grant me the request
 1.5 ... [diseases] or illnesses. And may it be commemorated
 1.6 ... of sorceries/magic this prayer
 1.7 ... that is recalled and by mercy/alms
 1.8 ... [crucifixion] suffering and holy. And bless
 1.9 ... to it⁹ and your dominion. Your greatness shall be increased.

Shores. Studies on East Syriac Christianity in Central Asia and China, ed. Dietmar Winkler and Li Tang [Orientalia-patristica-ocumenica v. 5] (Lit. Verlag: Salzburg, 2013) 23-41.

l. 10 ... and forever and ever. Amen.¹⁰

Commentary:

SyrHT 99 was clearly cut down from a much longer folio, which likewise had a blank *verso* and to which SyrHT 330 was once also a part. The straight right-hand margin of SyrHT 99 has meant that the words commencing many of the lines (cf. ll. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) are often incomplete and frequently consist of only one or two characters. The lower margin appears to be intact, but SyrHT 99 has no upper margin; again as a result of the trimming process. The cutting down of the larger folio has meant that the name of the martyr, Mār Tamsis, which is given on SyrHT 330 and whose prayer forms the text of SyrHT 99 is not cited in the latter fragment as its contents are incomplete.

The circumstances that prompted this recycling of SyrHT 99 are unknown, but it might have been salvaged from the larger folio that had deteriorated. As the discovery of SyrHT 330 does indicate, recycling appears to have taken place at Turfan. The identity of the person for whom SyrHT 99 was prepared remains unknown, but crease-marks that are still visible indicate that the fragment was folded into three. A rudimentary cross, a typical example of the Church of the East, mounted on a lotus, has been drawn free-hand in the central

¹⁰ The Johannine prolegomenon introducing the prayer-amulet is a traditional format that was still reproduced in the early decades of the nineteenth centuries in the codex handbooks of amulets which were used amongst the Syriac Christian communities of northern Mesopotamia. See Herman Gollancz, *The Book of Protection being a collection of Syriac charms* (Gollancz, London: 1912) xxvi.

panel of the *verso*.¹¹ It may have acted as an indicator as to how to carry the prayer-amulet; a necessary precaution if the intended recipient was illiterate or unable to read Syriac, as one might expect of the laity at Turfan.

SyrHT 99 and SyrHT 330 appear to have been originally part of a much larger folio dedicated to ‘The anathema for Mār Tamsis’. Little is known about this saint, but the Church of the East still commemorates Mār Tamsis on the 8th Wednesday after Epiphany.¹² B.L. 14653, a 9th century manuscript from northern Mesopotamia, also includes a prayer to Mār Tamsis.¹³ The saint was also cited in various handbooks of amulets dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,¹⁴ the earliest being Mingana Ms. Syr 316, with a colophon dating, ‘the year 2088 of the Greeks’ i.e. between October of 1776 and September of 1777, in an amulet, “Of the daughter of the moon”, that was specifically dedicated to Mār Tamsis and was accompanied by a graphic illustration of the mounted saint, lancing the demoness.¹⁵ “Of the daughter of the

¹¹ Cf. the cross at the apex of the Xian Fu stele, see Ian Gillman and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (Curzon, London: 1999) Plate 34b for a line drawing.

¹² See ܡܪܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ (Surgada Mbašla), published at Urmi by the Press of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Mission, 1894, 8. This commemoration occurs only occasionally since there are usually only seven Wednesdays after Epiphany. The author thanks Rev. Giwargis Malco Khoshaba (Ancient Assyrian Church of the East, London) for this information.

¹³ See Hunter, *op. cit.*, 34-35 for the text and translation of this prayer-amulet.

¹⁴ For details of the other handbooks of amulets, dating from 1779-1817 that include “The anathema of Mar Tamsis which is suitable for the daughter of the moon” see Hunter, *op. cit.*, 30.

¹⁵ Mingana Ms.Syr. 316, fol. 61a l.10-62a l.4. fol. 61a l.10 ܡܪܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ “the request of Mar Tamsis, the celebrated

celebrated martyr” includes particular phraseology that is found in SyrHT 99, notably the biographical details: 1.3 [ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ] “[on the mountain] forty years”.¹⁶

(3a) SYR HT 102 = TII B53 no.3 = 1689¹⁷

Repository: *Staatsbibliothek*, Potsdamer Platz, Berlin.

Dimensions: 11.00 cm (height) x 9.9 cm (width)

Material: paper

Text: *recto*: 11 horizontal lines 9.0 cm long, *verso*: 10 horizontal lines 9.0 cm long

East Syriac Estrangelo

Recto:¹⁸

1.2	[h]rm' d ... mry qwpryn' qdyš'	ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ
1.3	d'ykn 'tnšh b'lm' hn' [š]'l mn	ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ
1.4	'lh' wyhb lh š'lh kd 'mr hkn'	ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ
1.5	bywm' dyn ^{qdyš} dhd b[šb'] dbh mštryn mbry[n]	ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ
1.6	wbtlyn klhwn [g]br' byš' wškyr' wsny'	ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ
1.7	br w ... mryk' hwdyn qnyn'	ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ ܥܘܪܝܢ

martyr”. For the illustration, see *Fig. 4*: Mingana Syr. Ms. 316 folio 61, *verso*.

¹⁶ Mingana Syr. Ms. 316 fol. 62a 1.2 ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ “who dwelt” + fol. 62a ll.3-4 ܘܢ ܥܠ ܩܘܒܬܐ ܕܥܘܪܝܢ “in/on the mountain for forty years”.

¹⁷ See *Plate 4A* SyrHT 102 *recto* and *Plate 4B* SyrHT 102 *verso*.

¹⁸ Rubrics are indicated in the Syriac text and the translation by bold.

1.8	mry qwpryn' mth hwn/'h ܡܪܝܡ ܩܘܦܪܝܢ ܡܬܗ ܗܘܢ/ܗ
1.9	'lh' ... wb' ... 't ܐܠܗ ... ܘܒ' ... ܐܬ ...
1.10	' ... ✦ šwbḥ' lh ܡܠ ܫܘܒܚܐ ✦ ... ܐܠܗ

Translation:

- 1.2 The anathema of ... the holy Mār Cyprian,
- 1.3 when he was celebrated in this world, he requested from
- 1.4 God and He granted him his request. Whilst he said thus:
- 1.5 On the holy day, Sunday in it are loosened MBRYN
- 1.6 and all those wicked, vile and hateful men come to naught.
- 1.7 ... Then the saint
- 1.8. Mār Cyprian stretched ??? ...
- 1.9. God ... and sought ...
- 1.10 ... **praise to Him** ...

*Verso:*¹⁹

1.1	['l[h]' ✦ šwbḥ' lk 'lh' ✦ wb['r '']	ܐܠ ܫܘܒܚܐ ✦ ܐܠ[ܡ]ܠ[ܐ] ܐܠ[ܐ]ܝܪ[ܐ] ܘܐܠܡܐ
1.2	'ḥyd kl wmdbr kl bḥyl' dš[m]h qdyš'	ܐܠܝܢ ܕܠ ܘܡܕܒܪ ܕܠ ܒܚܝܠ' ܕܫ[ܡ]ܗ ܩܕܝܫ'
1.3	mšbḥ' mlk' dmlk' wmr' dmrwt' d'mr	ܐܠܝܢ ܡܠܝܩܐ ܡܠܝܩܐ ܘܡܪ' ܕܡܪܘܬ' ܕܡܪ
1.4	bnwḥr' g'y' ksy' wgnyz' hw d'nš mn	ܒܢܘܚܪ' ܕܕܝܘܢܝܘܫܝܢ ܘܕܕܝܘܢܝܘܫܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܢܫ ܡܢ
1.5	bnynš' l' ḥzyhy w'pl' mš' lmḥzyhy	ܒܢܝܢܫ' ܠ' ܚܝܝܗܝ ܘܘܦܠ' ܡܫ' ܠܡܚܝܝܗܝ
1.6	'nt mry yd' 'nt ksyth d'bdk 'n'	ܐܢܬ ܡܪܝܝܢ ܝܕ' ܐܢܬ ܕܝܝܬܝ ܕܒܕܝܚܝܢ

¹⁹ Rubrics are indicated in the Syriac text and the translation by bold.

1.8	[qpryn'] mth r'yn' lwt 'lh' hš'	ܩܦܪܝܢ ܡܬܗ ܪܝܢ ܠܘܬ ܠܗ ܗܫܐ
1.9	[]'yn mry'	ܪܝܢ ܩܦܪ ... [n365]

Translation:

1. **The anathema of the holy ... [Mār] Cyp[ria]n**
2. [In the name] of the Father [Son and Holy Spirit] forever.
Amen.
3. By the prayer of [Mār Cyprian] the saint ... who as he was
celebrated
4. in this world ... requested from our Lord Jesus Christ and He
gave
5. him his request ... Praise to you God in heaven
6. and on [earth] ... that He might reach? him, your servant
7. ... God Most High. Mār [Cyprian]
8. offered <his> mind to God. Now
9. ... Yea, Lord

Commentary:

SyrHT 102 and n364-365 present the only examples at Turfan amongst the Syriac material where a saint is commemorated twice. The dislocated fragments n364 and n365 are clearly distinguished by each word having been separated by a red dot. This distinctive feature (extremely helpful in reading the text) is unique amongst the Syriac fragments. A red dot also concludes the end of each line, producing an aligned left-hand margin. The right-hand margin has been almost completely lost, but the opening words of

n.364-365 ll.2-5 do appear to be aligned.²³ The anathema of Mār Cyprian only covered the upper half of the *recto*. Two lines of text in Sogdian (written in Syriac script) and 4 lines of Syriac, in a different hand, whose contents are unrelated to the anathema of Mār Cyprian, that appear to be later additions, complete the *recto* of n364. The *verso* side also has a Sogdian text, again written in Syriac script.

The circumstances surrounding the writing of n364-365 remain unknown, but the two fragments appear to have belonged to a prayer-amulet. Certain physical characteristics suggest a particular preparation, although the individual for whom it was intended is not divulged. The initial character *heth* of ܗܝܘ “anathema” has been lost due to deterioration of n365, but the rubricated title clearly indicates the genre of the prayer-amulet and names the saint, Mār Cyprian. The distinctive demarcation of each word by the rubric dot suggests a particular preparation, as does the originally blank *verso* – also a feature of SyrHT 152 and SyrHT 99 & SyrHT 330. Diagonal creasing in the top left hand corner, extending across the anathema (n364 ll.1-8) could suggest folding, but this may also be due to the later recycling of the fragment which is evidenced by the additional Syriac and Sogdian texts.

Addressed to Mār Cyprian, SyrHT 102 and n364-5 are distinguished by similar phraseology in the preludes to the saint’s prayer that forms the bulk of their texts. Both employ the technical term, ܗܝܘ ‘anathema’, signifying a prayer that was always used in conjunction with a named saint who

²³ Regrettably, it is not possible to discern whether each line was also differentiated by a single red dot which would have added a particular symmetry to the prayer-amulet.

uttered it at the point of martyrdom.²⁴ n364-365 augments the opening formula with the additional [ܡܪ ܥܝܦܪܝܢ] ܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ “by the prayer of [Mār Cyprian], the holy one”.²⁵ Both SyrHT 102 and n364-365 also specify the specific time when Mār Cyprian ܥܝܠܝܢܐ “requested” his prayer, namely ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ “when he was celebrated in this world”.²⁶ Whilst SyrHT 102 addresses his prayer solely to God,²⁷ n364-365 (despite textual lacunae that interrupt the text) extends this with the addition of ܡܪ ܝܫܘܥ ܥܝܠܝܢܐ “our Lord Jesus Christ”.²⁸ SyrHT 102 and n364-365 then express the granting of Mār Cyprian’s wish by the specific clause: ܡܪ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܥܝܠܝܢܐ “and He gave him his request”.²⁹

The contents of Mār Cyprian’s actual prayer differ in SyrHT 102 and n364-365, with the former being a much longer text than the latter which includes several references to the dissipation of magic and divination, *viz*: ܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܐ “the dung of their (magical) practice ... and the execrable ones, that you dissolved all divinations ... augurers”.³⁰ The contents of n364-365 are disrupted due to textual lacunae; however, both n364 and SyrHT 102 in the concluding parts of the prayer include a clause that makes direct reference to Mār Cyprian,

²⁴ SyrHT 102 *recto*, l.2; n364-365 l.1. For a discussion of the ‘anathema’ genre, see Erica C.D. Hunter, “Saints in Syriac Anathemas: A Form-Critical Analysis of Role”, *Journal Semitic Studies*, 37: 1 (1987) 83-104.

²⁵ n364-365 l.2.

²⁶ SyrHT 102 *recto* l.3, n364-365 ll.3-4.

²⁷ SyrHT 102 *recto* l.4.

²⁸ n364-365 l.4.

²⁹ SyrHT 102 *recto* l.4, n364-365 l.4.

³⁰ SyrHT 102 *verso* ll.7-9.

viz: ܟܠܟܘܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܟܠܟܘܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ “he directed <his> mind to God”.³¹ The proper name ܟܘܦܪܝܢܐ “Cyprian” can be confidently restored in n364 where a textual hiatus in n365 follows, ܘܚܘܐ, but also from SyrHT 102 ܟܠܟܘܢܐ ... ܗܘܐ ܟܠܟܘܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ, ܘܚܘܐ “Mār Cyprian directed ... God”.³² Likewise, the reconstruction of ܟܠܟܘܢܐ “mind’ in SyrHT 102, where the fragment is broken at this point, can also be proposed from the reading in n364-365.

Unlike n364-365, which appears to have been prepared for personal usage as a prayer-amulet, there is no indication that the anathema of Mār Cyprian in SyrHT 102 was thus written. There is no identifying rubric; instead the prayer-amulet follows immediately after the rubricated formula: ܕܘܢܐ ܕܠܠܗܘܐ ܕܠܠܗܘܐ that concludes the previous section.³³ This, together with the physical format, suggests that the anathema may have been part of a ‘handbook’, which also contained other prayer-amulets, in the same way that ‘handbooks of charms’ were still being written for usage amongst the ‘Nestorian’ communities in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in northern Mesopotamia. The anathema of Mār Cyprian continued to be written down the centuries, appearing in various handbooks, the earliest extant being Mingana Syr. Ms. 316, under the rubricated heading ܘܚܘܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܟܠܟܘܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܟܠܟܘܢܐ.³⁴ The text of Mingana Syr. Ms. 316 is much longer,³⁵ but shows substantial parallels with SyrHT 102³⁶

³¹ SyrHT 102 recto l.8 and n365 l. 8.

³² n364-365 l.8. The clause is incomplete in SyrHT 102 l.8 since the fragment is broken at this point.

³³ SyrHT 102 recto l.1. The contents of the previous section, which was written on the preceding folio to SyrHT 102, have not survived.

³⁴ Plate 6 Mingana Syr. Ms. 316 fol. 61a ‘Mār Tamsis and the daughter of the moon’.

³⁵ See Erica C D Hunter, *op.cit.* (1987) 100-3 for the text and translation of this anathema in Mingana Syr. Ms. 316, fol. 21r-26r.

notably including the distinctive clause ܡܪܝܢܘܫܝܬܝܢ ܡܪܝܢܘܫܝܬܝܢ ܡܪܝܢܘܫܝܬܝܢ ܡܪܝܢܘܫܝܬܝܢ “Mār Cyprian, the saint, directed (his) mind to the Lord of All ”.³⁷

Concluding Comments:

The prayer-amulets from Turfan are early examples in a transmission that spanned the centuries. The dislocated fragments, Syr HT99 & SyrHT 330 that are dedicated to Mār Tamsis, together with n364-365 (also dislocated fragments) and SyrHT 102, which are dedicated to Mār Cyprian, supply textual precedents to similarly dedicated anathemas that were being written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the ‘Nestorian’ communities in northern Mesopotamia. Anathemas to Mār Tamsis and Mār Cyprian are included in Mingana Syr. Ms 316 whose colophon details date it to ‘the year 2088 of the Greeks’ i.e. between October of 1776 and September of 1777 and names the village of Marshanis in the Atel district, in the diocese of Buhtan which was in the Seert region, as the place of its production.³⁸ This confirms not only

³⁶ See *Table I*: SyrHT 102 and Mingana Syr. Ms. 316: Mār Cyprian parallel text.

³⁷ Hunter, *loc. cit.*, 100 (text), 102 (translation), with the small change of ܡܪܝܢܝܢ for ܡܪܝܢܝܢ.

³⁸ For further information about Marshanis, see David Wilmshurst, *The ecclesiastical organisation of the Church of the East, 1318-1913* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 90, 98 and Map 2: west of Deh and east of Tal. See also, the on-line entry by Thomas A. Carlson, “Mārshānīs — ܡܪܝܢܝܢ” in *TheSyriac Gazetteer*, eds. Thomas A. Carlson and David A. Michelson, entry published May 10, 2014, Syriaca.org: The Syriac Reference Portal, ed. David A. Michelson. J. Shiel, “Notes on a journey from Tabriz through Kurdistan via Van, Bitlis, Se’ert and Erbil through Suleimaniyeh in July and August 1836”, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 8 (1838) 67

the longevity of the prayer-amulet tradition, which stretched back to the medieval period, but also augments the robust northern Mesopotamian heritage that was maintained at Turfan.

The prayer-amulets may have been written at the monastery or may have been imported from northern Mesopotamia –the prayer to Mār Tamsis in the 9th century manuscript BL 14653 provides contemporaneous evidence. As small items, prayer-amulets were eminently portable and could have been carried easily along the long journey to Turfan, stretching thousands of miles. Given the many hazards that would have accompanied such travels, protection from various saints conceivably would have been sought – a role admirably fulfilled by the prayer-amulets. At Turfan, the monks may have copied the texts from such specimens that were brought from Mesopotamia; in doing so they preserved and applied the tradition. Whilst the hagiographical literature at Turfan has, almost without exception, been written in Sogdian (in Syriac script), the writing of the prayer amulets in Syriac, indicates that it had acquired an especial ‘sanctified’ status and potency. As with the liturgical fragments, the prayer-amulets steadfastly maintained the Syriac trajectory from northern Mesopotamia.

The drawings of the crosses that occur on SyrHT 99 and SyrHT 152 supply valuable additions to the iconographic repertoire of the Church of the East, especially in Central Asia and China.³⁹ The limited usage of the cross –only found in these two fragments amongst the entire Syriac collection at Turfan, indicates that it functioned in a visual and apotropaic

cites the towns of Amadiyeh and Se’ert as the eastern and western boundaries of Buhtan.

³⁹ See *Plate 1* SyrHT 152 and *Plate 2B* SyrHT 99 *verso* for the crosses.

capacity for the monks and the faithful alike. SyrHT 152, a fragment distinguished by its striking example of the cross of the Church of the East, was clearly intended for a woman from the laity (ܩܘܪܝܢܐ “for your handmaid, servant girl”). The positioning of the rudimentary drawing on SyrHT 99 *verso* confirms that the cross was clearly visible when the fragment was folded. The recipient remains undisclosed, and may it have been the personal possession of a monk. It is also possible that SyrHT 99 was produced at Turfan for a member of the laity, especially since that in the cutting down of the much larger fragment, many words were incomplete, rendering a considerable proportion of the text unintelligible.

Via the prayer-amulets, the monastery maintained a tradition that was imported from northern Mesopotamia. One cannot speculate as to the precise functions fulfilled by these items of personal devotion, but the monks’ repertoire is also suggested by the handful of pharmacopaeic texts which have been found at Turfan.⁴⁰ SyrHT 99 mentions [ܐܪ ܠܡܪܝܥܐ ܠܡܝܥܐ “[diseases] or illnesses”. SyrHT 152 consists of only two words, one being [ܐܪ]ܩܘܪܝܢܐ[ܐܪ] “healing” – this presumably was the item’s objective. It is significant for not only does it show that the monks did write for the laity (and female ones at that), but it endorses the monastery as a place of therapy and healing. Whilst we have but little insight into what actually

⁴⁰ Miklós Maróth, “Ein Fragment eines syrischen pharmazeutischen Rezeptbuches aus Turfan”, *Altorientalische Forschungen* 11 (1984) 115-25 has published SyrHT 1, to which can now be joined SyrHT 388. See also Nicholas Sims Williams, “Medical texts from Turfan in Syriac and New Persian” in *The History behind the Languages. Essays of Turfan Forum on Old Languages of the Silk Road* Xinjiang Tulufanxue yanjiuyuan, ed. Academia Turfanica, Yuyan beihou de lishi: xiyu gudian yuyanxue gaofeng luntan lunwenji, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2012, 12-19.

took place, one might surmise that practices, as witnessed by James Fletcher, during his visit to the monastery of Mār Behnam, near Nimrud in the mid-nineteenth century, where pilgrims took away from the martyrs' graves parcels of dust that were reputedly efficacious in curing all sorts of diseases, also happened at Turfan.⁴¹

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⁴¹ J. Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh and Travels in Mesopotamia, Assyria and Syria*, 2 vols (London: 1850) I: 79.

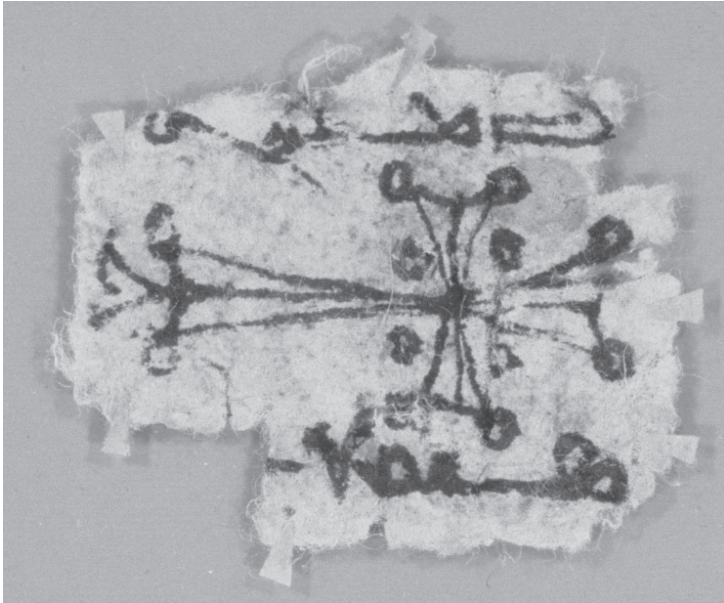


Plate 1 SyrHT 152

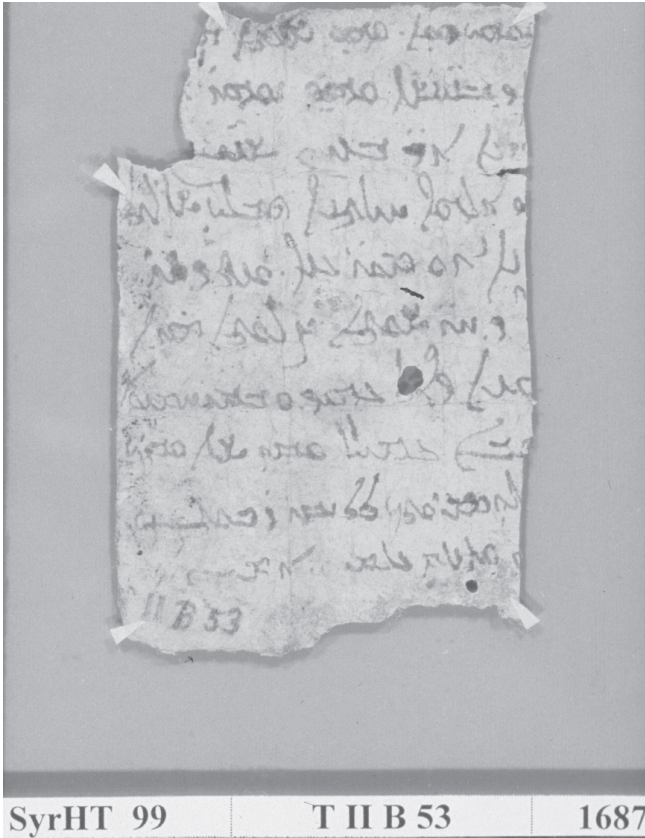


Plate 2A SyrHT 99 recto

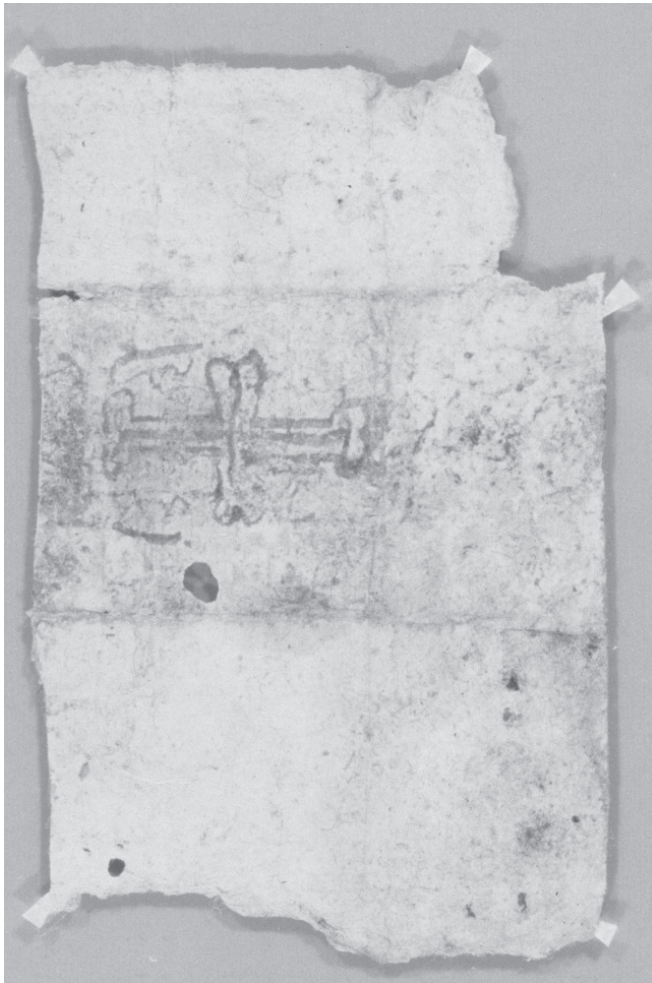


Plate 2B SyrHT 99 verso

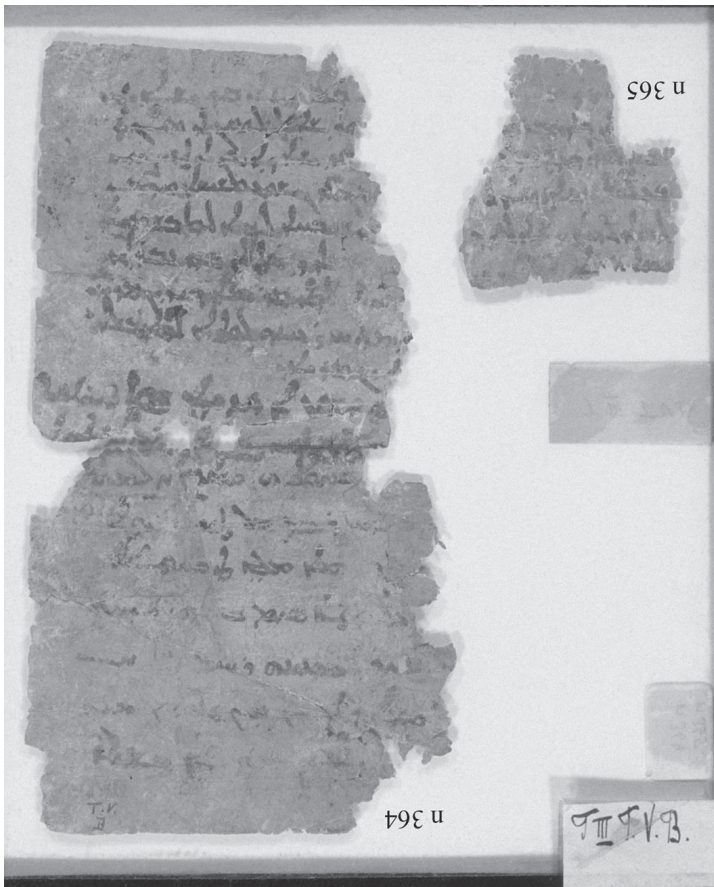


Plate 5 n364-5 verso (with the label n364 having been inserted upside down)



Plate 6 Mingana Syr Ms 316 fol 61

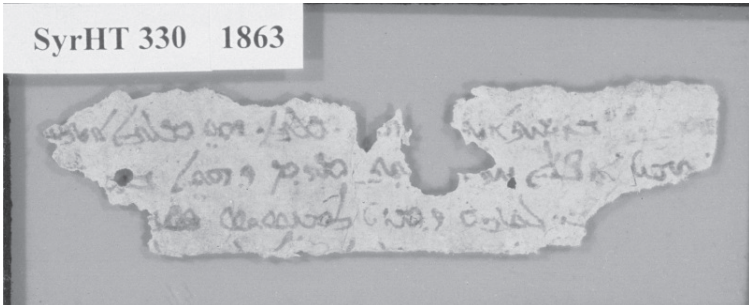


Plate 3 SyrHT 330

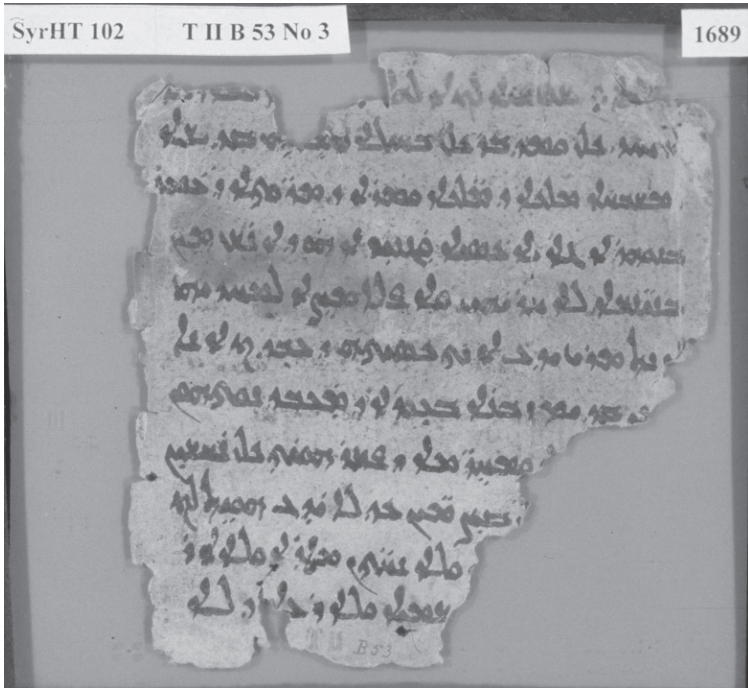


Plate 4B SyrHT 102 verso

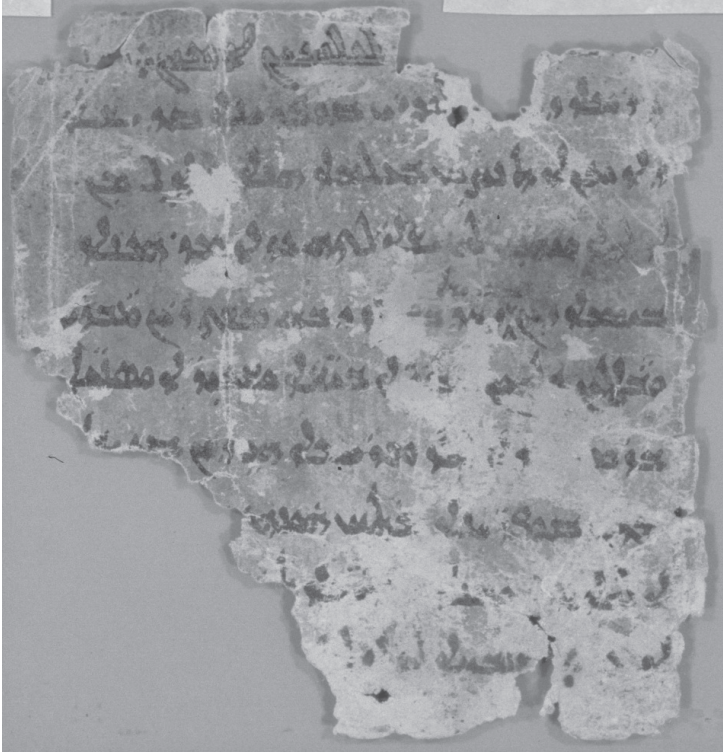


Plate 4A SyrHT 102 recto

Stephen Plathottathil

SPIRITUALITY OF ST. EPHREM

The Eastern Church is well acclaimed and accepted for its deep rooted spirituality and this spirituality owes greatly to the Church Fathers who through their lives and liturgical writings have brought its glory. The Eastern tradition has never made a sharp distinction between liturgy and theology, between personal experience of the divine mysteries and the dogma affirmed by the Church. Some of the eastern liturgies also expressed in the milieu of Hellenistic approach, specifically Neo-Platonism, so that this perspective colours all Eastern liturgy and liturgical spirituality.

The following words spoken a century ago by a great Orthodox theologian, the Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow express this attitude perfectly: “None of the mysteries of the most secret wisdom of God ought to appear alien or altogether transcendent to us, but in all humility we must apply our spirit to the contemplation of divine things”. To put it in another way, we must live through the liturgical celebrations expressing the revealed truth, which appears to us as an unfathomable mystery, in such a fashion that instead of assimilating the mystery to our mode of understanding, we should on the contrary, look for a profound change, an inner transformation of spirit, enabling us to experience it mystically.

Ephrem, the crown of the Syriac Christianity, is the best example for this mystical, spiritual, liturgical life personally, and

contributed this not only to the Syriac churches but to all the Orientals. Though it is impossible to assimilate fully the spirituality of St. Ephrem ‘the harp of the Holy Spirit’, this article is an attempt to express a partial glimpse of his deep spiritual life.

Ephrem (c.306-9 to 373). The date and place of his birth are unknown. His parents were probably both Christian, and most of his life was spent in Nisibis where he served as a deacon under its bishops, beginning with Jacob. In 363, when Nisibis was handed over to the Persian Empire, the Christian population had to leave and so Ephrem spent the last ten years of his life in Edessa. It should be noted that Ephrem wrote in both prose and poetry, and in both these mediums he made use of two separate forms: some of his prose works are in straight forward prose, while others are in a highly artistic form of prose. In his poetry he makes use of both the *memra* and the *madrasha*, the *memra* is employed for narrative poetry, and is written in couplets consisting of 7+7 syllables (later known as the Metre of Mar Ephrem). The *madrasha* is used for lyric poetry written in stanzas, which can be in a variety of different syllabic metres. Ephrem’s great reputation rests primarily upon his poetry, and he is undoubtedly to be classed as the finest and greatest of all Syriac poets.

Literary Contributions

His works are mainly: (i). Prose which includes commentaries, expositions, refutations and discourses and (ii). Poems which include *mimre* and *madrashas*.

Ordinary Prose

The available prose writings are:

- (1). Commentary (*pushaqa*) on Genesis.
- (2). Exposition (*turgama*) on Exodus. A set of commentaries on most of the Old Testaments is attributed to Ephrem, but it is only

these two that are likely to be genuine (or if not, at least to come from his circle). The biblical text is commented on in sequence, but unevenly; in the Commentary on Genesis a great deal of attention is paid to the early chapters (especially 1-6), while only intermittent comment is made on the rest of the book, with the exception of Gen.49, for which he offers two different sets of comment. The Interpretation on Exodus is much shorter and incomplete, ending with ch.32. Both works are remarkable for the large number of Jewish traditions, to which they allude, and at times Ephrem quotes phrases which coincide with one or other of the Jewish *Targums*; it is not at all likely, however, that he had direct access to these, and his knowledge of Jewish traditions probably came to him orally.

(3). Commentary on the Diatessaron: The Syriac original of most of this work has only come to light within the last few decades; before that, the work was only known from an Armenian translation (which is still the only complete text). In this work Ephrem comments on the harmonized text of the Gospel known as the Diatessaron, rather than on a single Evangelist; besides being a very important witness to the text of the Diatessaron, the Commentary is of particular interest as an extensive fourth-century source for early Syriac exegesis of the Gospel text.

(4). Commentary on the Acts: This short work survives only in Armenian translation.

(5). Commentary on the Pauline Epistles: This too survives only in Armenian. It includes also a commentary on III Corinthians, an apocryphal letter of Paul which had quite wide circulation in the early Syriac Church, but which no longer survives in Syriac.

Prose Refutations

Under this modern general title the following works are included: Five Discourses addressed to Hypatius, against false doctrines: (a) Against Bardaisan's Discourse entitled 'Dominus' (the work is also known as against the Platonists); (b) Against false teaching of

Marcion I; (c-d) Two Discourses against false teaching of Marcion (II-III); (e) Discourse against Mani.

Prose: Artistic Prose

(a) **Discourses on our Lord** [English Translation (ET)];

(b) **Letter to Publius** [ET]. These Two extensive extracts survive from this letter which consists in a meditation on the Last Judgement;

(c) **Discourse on the Signs which Moses performed in Egypt** [FT] belongs to a group of discourses under Ephrem's name. And this one alone has been judged to be genuine.

Poetry:

1. **Narrative verses** (*memre*) 1. Six *memre* on Faith [ET]. Usually it is thought to be an early work;

2. **Memre on Nicomedia** [FT]. This extensive cycle takes as its topic the devastation by earthquake of Nicomedia in 358. The work survives in Syriac only in a few quotations, but is available almost completely in an early Armenian translation;

3. **Memre against Bardaisan** [ET]. A large number of *memre* are transmitted under Ephrem's name, only a few of which are likely to be genuine. In the four volumes of Sermons (*memre*) in E. Beck's critical edition the following are considered by him as probably genuine: I.(1-3), on Reproof—II.1;

4. **On Jonah and the Repentance of Nineveh** [ET]. This long narrative poem was translated into Greek, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopic; many excerpts from it are to be found both in the Syriac Orthodox Fenqitho and in the Church of the East's *Hudra*. —II.4;

5. **On the Sinful Women** (Luke 7) [ET]. The core of this influential poem is considered by Beck to be genuine. The narrative introduces the Seller of Unguents and Satan (posing as one of the Woman's former lovers), and these motifs are taken up by many

later writers. This is a Greek adaptation, through which these motifs ultimately reached the medieval west.

6. **On Solitaries** [ET]. This alone of the texts in Beck's Sermons III and IV might possibly be genuine. The *memre* edited by him in his Nachtrage zu Ephrem are not likely to be genuine, and the same applies to the many *memre* published elsewhere under Ephrem's name.

Poetry (II) Lyrical poems (*madrashe*, or prayer songs; conventionally translated 'hymns')

These constitute Ephrem's most important writings; they come down to us in collections of varying sizes preserved with the poems in their complete form only in a small number of manuscripts of the fifth to seventh century (later manuscripts and the liturgical tradition provide only excerpts). It is uncertain whether these collections go back to Ephrem himself, or to some later editor/collector of his works; in any case, they were already in existence by 485, when Philoxenus refers to several of them (he also mentions some collections which no longer survive):

(1). ***Madrashe on faith*** [ET]. This is the largest collection (87 stanzas), and it includes the famous group of five poems on the Pearl and its symbolism (81-85).

(2). ***Madrashe on Nisibis*** [ET for 1-21, 35-43, 52-68]. This collection of 77 poems is usually known under the Latin title given it by its first editor (Bickell); only the first 34 concern Nisibis and its bishops, while the remainder are for the most part concerned with the theme of the Descent of Christ into the Underworld (Sheol). In a small group of the second half (nos 52-54) Ephrem employs the ancient Mesopotamian genre of the precedence dispute, where two characters (in this case Satan and Death) dispute in alternating verses over which of the two has superior power over human beings; this genre was subsequently taken up and adapted by the authors of the later Dialogue poems between pairs of biblical characters (see 17,

below, for these).

(3). **Madrashē** against Heresies. Most of the poems in this group of 56 *madrashē* are directed against the teaching of Marcion, Bardaisan and Mani; they probably belong to Ephrem's last ten years when he was in Edessa.

(4). **Madrashē** on Virginity [ET]. This collection of 52 poems (a few are lost or damaged) covers many other topics as well (e.g. 47 are entitled 'On oil, the olive, and the mysteries of our Lord').

(5). **Madrashē** on the Church [GT]. This collection, also of 52 poems, covers a variety of topics; there are several gaps where the manuscript is defective.

(6). **Madrashē** on the Nativity [ET]. This collection was probably originally much larger than the 28 poems in Beck's edition, and is likely to have included a small number of perhaps genuine poems in the collection now entitled 'On Epiphany' (in Ephrem's day the Nativity and Epiphany (Baptism) of Christ were celebrated on the same day, 6th Jan.). Excerpts from a number of them feature in the liturgical texts for the period of Subbara and Nativity in both the *Fenqitho* and the *Hudra*.

(7). **Madrashē** on Unleavened Bread (21).

(8). On the Crucifixion;

(9). On the Resurrection [FT]. Here the first group of this Paschal cycle is missing several poems in the middle. A number of stanzas from these *madrashē* also feature in the *Fenqitho* and *Hudra*.

(10). **Madrashē on Paradise** [ET]. This group of 15 poems probably belongs to his time in Nisibis.

(11). **Madrashē** on the Fast;

(12). **Madrashē** against Julian [ET]. This small collection of four *madrashē* is concerned with the death of the emperor Julian on campaign in the Persian Empire in 363; this was seen by Ephrem

(and by Christian writers in general) as a punishment for his reversion to paganism and his various actions taken against Christianity. Three further collections,

(13). On the ascetics Abraham of Qidun

(14) and (15). Julian the Elder (Saba), and

(16). On the Confessors are attributed to Ephrem, but most of these *madrashe* cannot be by him for various reasons; those which may be genuine are: On Abraham of Qidun 1-5; on Julian Saba 1-4, -A collection of 51 hymns [LT] is preserved only in Armenian translation. Some at least of these could well be genuine and represent material belonging to some of the lost collection of *madrashe*.

Ephrem – The Theologian

In his writings, Ephrem, a theologian of great insight, deliberately preferred to express his theology through the medium of poetry rather than prose. He gained a wide reputation as a holy man, not only in his own Syriac-speaking community but throughout the Byzantine world, and later in the medieval west and Russia. Many Greek-speaking admirers, particularly in the monastic communities' of late antique and early medieval times, both translated his spiritual counsels and themselves composed treatises in Greek in his name.¹ In this guise Ephrem has often been listed among the fathers of monasticism, and icons of him often portray him in a monk's garb. Even the standard Vita of Ephrem in Syriac reflects this

1 The long list of them, with further bibliography, can be found in M. Geerard, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (Vol. II; Turnhout: Brepols, 1974), pp. 366-468. A reprinting of the Greek works, together with a translation into modern Greek, is available in Konstantinou G. Phrantzolas (ed. & trans.), *Osiou Ephraim tou Surou Erga* (7 vols.; Thessaloniki: Ekdoseis 'To Periboli tes Panagias', 1988-1998). See also the Web site of Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, "Saint Ephrem the Syrian; Ascetical and Other Writings Extant Only in Greek," at <http://web.ukonline.co.uk/ephrem/ephrem.htm>.

development.² But Ephrem was never in fact a recluse or a hermit, or even a monk in any conventional sense of the term.³ He was all his life long a busy pastoral minister, whose main business was the composition of ‘teaching songs’ (*madrashé*) in Syriac, most of them to be presented at the divine liturgy. This was the portrait that Ephrem himself penned in the final stanzas of one of his memorable ‘teaching songs’ at the end of his Hymns against Heresies.

Ephrem – A Representation of Syrian Asceticism

Lamy comments about St. Ephrem “From the time he began to lead a monastic life till his death, he ate nothing but barley bread and dried herbs and sometimes green herbs. He drank nothing but water: his flesh had dried up in his bones until he resembled backed clay. His clothing was a mass of patches of the colour of mud. He was of small stature; his face always grave that he never laughed, he was bald, no wore, no beard”⁴.

Spiritual Dimension of Ephrem

The writings of Ephrem reflect the inner spirituality of himself. A Sugita text of Ephrem⁵ shows his main interest in the sphere of the inner life. More accurately the author in relentless vivisection of his inner life, castigates himself, beats his breasts and urges his brothers to weep over him⁶.

2 See Joseph P. Amar, “Byzantine Ascetic Monasticism and Greek Bias in the Vita Tradition of Ephrem the Syrian,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 5B (1992). pp. 123-156.

3 On the relevant terminology in Syriac see Sidney H. Griffith, “Asceticism in the Church of Syria: the Hermeneutics of Early Syrian Monasticism,” in Vincent L. Wimbush & Richard Vatantasis (eds.), *Asceticism* (New York: Oxford University).

4 Mani Rajan K, *Queen of the Sacraments*, Kottayam, (2008), pp. 122-123.

5 Ms. Min.syr,190, fol. 126 a ff.

6 Ms.Min.syr,190, fol. 127 a .

An analysis of these texts leads to the conclusion that the spiritual climate, as found at every step in the documents, reminds us of the spiritual climate in Ephrem's writings. Indeed, everything in this text characteristics Ephremic ring. The thought-world, reflections on sinfulness, fear, mourning⁷, reveal themselves as a preoccupation of Ephrem whenever he descends from the sphere of theology to the sphere of personality. This is corroborated by the deep humiliation, ruthless and crude, which is anything but that which later fabrication, would have created. A confession such as we have in our text is best explained as coming from Ephrem himself. Finally, just as the thought-work bears the genuine stamp of Ephremic origin, so also the terminology harmonizes with that which we know of Ephrem.

Prominent Themes in the Writings of Ephrem

Here we shall explore certain themes of his particular interest; some of these represent expansions of themes already encountered in the early period, while others are new developments.

The Luminous Eye

The inner eye of faith which alone is capable of perceiving the types and symbols of God, is hidden in both the Scriptures and in the natural world around us. This inner eye of the soul (or mind, or heart) has two essential features. Firstly, it functions with the help of faith, just as the physical eye functions with the help of light; and secondly, it is darkened by the presence of sin. Accordingly if this inner eye is to function well, it needs to be kept lucid and clear, that is pure from sin; Ephrem describes the inner eye when it is in this state as 'the luminous eye' (Syriac, *'ayna shafiyutha*), and its quality as 'luminosity' (Syriac, *shafiyutha*). Both these terms are of great importance in the subsequent history of Syriac spirituality, as well as in the writings of Ephrem.

7 V•bus, *Literary Critical Studies*, p. 17ff.

It is only when this inner eye is luminous that it is able to see the types and symbols, the pointers to God, present everywhere, in nature and in Scripture:

The Scriptures are placed there like a mirror: The person whose eye is luminous beholds their image of reality. (Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith* 67.8)

Moreover, this inner faculty of vision grows stronger as faith grows stronger; indeed, they feed each other and so help each other to grow. And as the inner eye becomes more luminous, it will behold more and more of the divine reality. Looked at from a different perspective, one could say that more and more will be revealed to this inner eye as its capacity for spiritual vision becomes the greater.

No mortal being has had a more luminous eye than Mary had. Ephrem speaks of Eve and Mary as the two inner eyes of the world; one is darkened and cannot see clearly, while the other is luminous and so able to operate fully.⁸

The term ‘luminous’ is also used in connection with mirrors. In antiquity these were made of bronze, and not of glass; this meant that they had to be kept in a state of high polish if they were to function properly. In a passage quoted above, Ephrem speaks of the Scriptures as mirror; this mirror is of course polished, but in order to see ‘truth’ or spiritual reality, reflected in them, the inner eye needs to be luminous. Elsewhere he speaks of the mirror of the self, which needs to be kept highly polished, is to reflect the divine image in which humanity is created. (Gen 1:26). Our prayer too is a mirror, and if it is ‘luminous’ it will reflect Christ’s beauty.⁹

Divine Fire

Fire is a frequent image of divine action or act of the Divinity. Thus Ephrem addresses Christ: “See, Fire and Spirit are in the womb

8 Ephrem, *Hymns on the Church*, 37 .4-7

9 Brock, *The Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition*, kottayam, (2005), pp. 44-46.

of her who bore you, Fire and spirit are within the river in which you were baptized, Fire and Spirit are in our baptismal font, in the Bread and Cup are Fire and Holy Spirit” (Hymns on Faith X.17). The image of divine fire has a double aspect: On the one hand this fire may consume and burn up (the fate of a number of sinners in the Old Testament), or it may purify and sanctify.

In the Old Testament there are several passages where the descent of divine fire indicates the acceptance by God of a sacrifice (see, for example, 2 Chron. 7:7, Solomon’s dedication of Temple). Jewish and early Christian tradition (especially among Syriac writers) sometimes extended this idea by analogy to other sacrifices known to have been accepted: thus Aphrahat speaks of fire descending on Abel’s sacrifice, but not on Cain’s (Gen 4; in his Demonstration IV).

In the New Testament the image of divine fire appears in the Acts 2:3, in the account of Pentecost. Early Syriac tradition also speaks of divine fire in two other places, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and in the River Jordan at the baptism of Christ. Thus Ephrem addresses Christ:

“See, Fire and Spirit are in the womb of her who bore you; Fire and Spirit are in the river in which you were baptized” (*Hymns on Faith* 10.17).

The presence of Fire in Mary’s womb and in the Jordan is paralleled by the presence of divine Fire in the Sacraments (Syriac, *raza*) of Baptism and the Eucharist. Thus Ephrem’s tenth hymn on Faith quoted above goes on:

“Fire and Spirit are in our baptismal font, in the Bread & Cup are Fire and Holy Spirit”.

The same link between Christ as Fire in Mary’s womb and Christ as Fire in the Qurbana (Holy Mass) is brought out in the poem on Mary by the use of the phrase ‘the Burning Coal’, derived

from Isaiah 6:6, for this term is very frequently used of the consecrated Qurbana.¹⁰

The recovery of Paradise

In recounting the course of the history of salvation the early Syriac writers make great use of the themes of Genesis chapters 1, 3,- the creation of Adam and Eve, their time in Paradise, their disobedience and their expulsion from Paradise etc. Adam is understood as both the individual of the Genesis narrative, and as the representative of humanity in general; at the same time he is also the representative of each individual human being.

For St. Ephrem, Christ, the Second Adam, is described as having ‘put on the body of Adam’, which is also ‘our body’; by so doing he reserves the effects of the first Adam’s disobedience, and brings about the possibility for Adam/humanity to re-enter Paradise. In Ephrem and later writers this is often described, using the typological themes suggested by the piercing of the side of Christ on the cross (Jn 19:34), as in the following passages:

Blessed is the Merciful One who saw the sword. Beside Paradise, barring the way to the Tree of life (Gen 3:24): He came and took to himself a body which was wounded so that, by the opening of his side (Jn 19:34). He might open up the way into Paradise (Hymns on Nativity VIII. 4).

When Adam sinned and was stripped of the glory with which he had been clothed, he covered his nakedness with fig leaves (Gen 3:7). Our Saviour came and underwent suffering in order to heal Adam’s wounds and to provide a garment of glory for his nakedness. He dried up the fig tree (Matt 21:20-21) to show that there would no longer be any need of fig leaves to serve as Adam’s garment, since Adam had returned to his former glory, and so no longer had any need for leaves or garments of skin (Gen 3:21).¹¹

¹⁰ Brock, *The Spirituality In The Syriac Tradition*. Pp 77-83

¹¹ Ephrem, *Commentary on the Diatessaron*, ch. XVI. 10)

In this passage of the Commentary on the Diatessaron, Ephrem introduces the theme of the ‘garment of glory’ with which Adam and Eve had been clothed before the fall (the concept is of Jewish origin). Ephrem and other Syriac writers use this theme as a means of linking all the different points in the course of salvation history, starting with the creation narrative in Genesis 1-3, then applying it in turn to Christ (who came to find Adam who had gone astray and to return him to Eden in the garment of light’), to the individual Christian (who puts on the garment of light’), to the individual Christian (who puts on the garment of glory at baptism), and to the saints on the day of judgment (they have preserved their wedding garment of glory in a state of purity. cf. Matt 22.1-14). The early Syriac writers made use of the imagery of putting on and taking off clothing as a very effective means for showing how the different stages in salvation history are intimately interconnected, and how each individual Christian is directly involved in this history.

Christ the Heavenly Bridegroom

In Jn 3:29 John the Baptist identifies himself as ‘the friend of the Bridegroom’. This, and some other New Testament passages (e.g., Matt 9:15), lie behind the frequent references to Christ the Heavenly Bridegroom in early Syriac writers. The role of John the Baptist at Christ’s baptism is to reveal the Bridegroom to the Bride (the Church). As each individual soul is betrothed to Christ the Bridegroom at Christian baptism, each celebration of the Qurbana itself is a wedding feast-Ephrem exclaims (addressing Christ):

The soul is your bride, the body your bridal chamber. Your guests are the senses and thoughts.

And if a single body is a wedding feast for you, how great is your banquet for the whole Church! (*Hymns on Faith* XIV.5). In a similar way we often find the kingdom of heaven described as ‘bridal chamber’ (*gnona*): in this connection we should note an interesting alteration which many Syriac writers make to the biblical text in the

Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins at Matt.25:10: the Greek text has the wise Virgins going in with the Bridegroom to the 'wedding feast'. But in Syriac writers they are often described as entering the actual 'bridal chamber'. The important theme is for a proper understanding of the ideal of Virginity¹².

Salvation as Healing

Early Syriac writers frequently speak of sin as a wound which requires healing: Christ is 'the good Doctor' who comes to bind up the wounds of fallen Adam/humanity. Thus Ephrem writes: 'When Adam sinned and was stripped of the glory in which he had been clothed, he covered his nakedness, with fig leaves. Our Saviour came and underwent suffering in order to heal Adam's wounds, and to provide a garment of glory for his nakedness' (*Commentary on Diatessaron*, XVI, 10)

Let Eve today rejoice in Sheol, for her daughter's son has come down as the medicine of life to revive His mother's mother (Ephrem, *Hymns on the Nativity* 13.2). It is at the Last Supper that 'the Life giver of all, blessed the food and it became the Medicine of Life for those who ate it' (*Hymns on Unleavened Bread* 14.16). From that moment on, this healing Medicine of Life is available to every Christian at each celebration of the Qurbana.

Christology of Ephrem

Ephrem entered the Trinitarian controversies of his day pointing to the names of God one finds in the Scriptures. He did not engage in debate about the definitions and the implications of the several Greek philosophical and/or logical terms which his Greek-speaking contemporaries were using to clarify the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Rather, he went straightaway to the Syriac text of the Scriptures. In the Homilies on Faith he said:

12 Isacc of Antioch, (ed) Bedjan, p.676

“Sufficient for our infirmity is the truth (*shrara*) that has come in revelation. Acknowledge that there is the Father and the Son, in truth (*ba-shrara*) as in the names (*ba-shmahe*)”. The roots of the names are the thing itself (*qnoma*) to their names is attached. For who would give a name to something which itself (*qnomeh*) did not exist?¹³

It is a different matter with the names St. Ephrem considers to be ‘real’, or proper names, as one might say. They bespeak reality. St. Ephraim says: The root of the name is the thing itself (*qnoma*), to it names are attached. For who would give a name to something which itself (*qnomeh*) does not exist?¹⁴

The Syriac equivalent for the English noun ‘self’ is *qnoma*. As in English, the noun is used in conjunction with the personal pronoun in Syriac to serve as a reflexive pronoun. And in this way one might say that the noun *qnoma*/self means an independently existing, individual reality: the technical equivalent for all practical purposes of the Greek term hypostasis, as the Cappadocia fathers were using it to designate one of the persons of the Trinity.¹⁵

Ephrem composed his ‘reaching songs’ (*madrashé*) for the liturgy. St. Jerome says that in some churches they were recited after the scripture lessons in the Divine Liturgy.¹⁶ And they have had a place in the liturgy of the hours in the Syriac-speaking churches from the earliest periods for which textual witness remain.¹⁷ In his

13 Edmund Beck, Des Heiligen Ephrem des Syres Sermones de Fide, (CSCO, vol. 212&213; Louvain: Peeters, 1961) II, 587-588.

14 Edmund Beck, Sermones de Fide, II, 587-588.

15 See G. L. Prestige, God in Patristic Thought (2nd ed.; London, 1952), pp. 157-178. See also A. De Halleux, “Hypostase et personne dans la formation du dogme trinitaire”, Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique 79 (1983), pp. 313-369; 625-670.

16 See E.C Richardson, Heronymus, Liber de viris Illustribus (Leipzig, 1896), p. 51.

17 See Robert Taft, The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West; the Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1986), pp. 225-247.

lifetime, Ephrem himself reportedly spent time and energy rehearsing the groups who would perform the ‘teaching songs’ in the church. What is more, according to one early witness, he insisted that women take their rightful place in the church’s choirs. For this reason Jacob of Sarug (d.521) called Ephrem the “Second Moses for Women.”¹⁸ What he meant was that because of their role in the public performance of Ephrem’s ‘teaching songs’, women effectively became teachers in the churches. Jacob of Sarug made the point especially. Rhetorically addressing Ephrem, he said:

“Your teaching opened the closed mouth of the daughters of eve, and now the congregations of the glorious [church] resound with their voices. It is a new insight that women would proclaim the Gospel, and now be called teachers in the churches.”¹⁹

The point not to be missed here is that the ‘teaching songs’, which the women teachers were reciting, were the effective instruments of catechesis in the Syriac-speaking congregations. And this catechesis consisted in poetic meditations on the symbols and types which god distributed in nature and scripture to lead people across the chasm separating creatures from their Creator. For Ephrem’s theology is not propositional but typological and symbolic. The symbols and types are not esoteric but commonplace. While they come from both nature and the scriptures, it is the Bible that provides the horizon for their interpretation. And within the Bible, the Gospel is the exegetical focal point; all the figures ultimately point to Christ. For Ephrem, the symbols and types are so many verbal icons, and his thought is really not so much theology as it is a sacramental iconology. Indeed, the image of the image maker is

18 Joseph P. Amar, “A Metrical Homily on Holy Mar Ephrem by Mar Jacob of Sarug: Critical Edition of the Syriac Tet, Translation and Introduction”, *Patrologia Orientalis* (tome 47, fasc. 1, no. 209; Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), #48, p. 37.

19 Amar, “A Metrical Homily on Holy Mar Ephrem,” verses 40-44, pp. 34-35.

one of Ephrem's favourite figures of speech to refer to the ways in which God has communicated with people in the Bible.²⁰ In this way Ephrem's thought is Semitic rather than Hellenic, following almost directly from the discourse of the scriptures rather than commenting on them.²¹

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20 See Sidney H. Griffith, "The Image Maker in the Poetry of St. Ephrem the Syrian," in E. A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica* (vol. XXV; Leuven: Peeter, 1993), pp.258-269.

21 See Sidney H. Griffith, "Faith Adorning the Mystery", *Reading the Bible with St.Ephrem the Syrian (The Pere Marquette Lecture in Theology, 1997; Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1997).*

EVAGRIUS
(Letter to Hesychius)

Let your soul be vigilant to divine worship. If possible, do not be aware of who is standing next to you, so that your mind may be fully concentrated on your Lord. It is not up to you to make investigations, you have not been put in a position of authority or leadership. You are someone who is given orders, and you do not even have authority over yourself.

Do not look at those whose attention wanders to their compassions, otherwise your mind will be disturbed by anger, and so your own part in the service will be without profit.

Do not press for your own needs in anything, for your discipleship was not of the kind that your needs should richly be met in everything. No, your discipleship was to a state of need, to poverty in Christ. If your needs are made good, then consider this as something extra. If you consider the meeting of your needs in this light, then you will give thanks, and you will not complain about your state of need.

Be constant in the reading of the prophets. From them you will learn about God's greatness, about his kindness, about justice and grace.

Ponder on the sufferings of the martyrs so that you may become aware of how great is the love for God. Concern yourself with the teachings of the wise; whatever teaching you find helpful to yourself, persevere in reading this. Do not take delight in the outward sounds, as children do, but like a wise person discern those words in which power is hidden - for it is by means of words of power that our Saviour's Gospel has been proclaimed to us.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp. 90-91)

Jonathon Wright

THE SYRIAC TRANSLATION OF *JOSEPH AND ASENETH*

Genesis 41.45 narrates that after Pharaoh placed Joseph over the land of Egypt, «he gave him Aseneth daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, as his wife.» The story *Joseph and Aseneth* expands this and a few other verses into a work about the length of the Gospel of Mark. Briefly, the story tells how Aseneth, the beautiful daughter of Potiphera lusted after even by Pharaoh's son, has lived secluded in a tower with seven maidens for 18 years. When her father receives word that Joseph is coming to his house, he suggests to Aseneth that Joseph would be a good husband. Aseneth disagrees and has what sounds like a teenage tantrum. Aseneth flees to her tower but when she sees Joseph enter the house, she is filled with regret. Joseph sees Aseneth and, only after he is reassured that Aseneth is a virgin and like his sister, Joseph invites Aseneth to join them.

Aseneth goes to kiss Joseph. But Joseph rejects her as an idol worshipper, saying it is not proper for a God worshipper to have contact with them. Distressed, Aseneth flees to her tower where she laments and repents of her idolatrous life.

A week later, an angel appears who tells her that her repentance has been accepted by God and is to have a new name:

‘City of Refuge’. There is then a curious episode with some honey comb and bees before the angel departs. Joseph then arrives and is unable to recognize the revived Aseneth, but has also had a visit from an angel who tells him Aseneth is his destined bride. Pharaoh marries the couple and there is a note that Aseneth gave birth to Manasseh and Ephraim. Then begins a second part to the story. Aseneth goes with Joseph and her sons and meets Jacob, but not all of Joseph’s brothers are happy to see her. An adventure follows where the four of Joseph’s brothers born to Rachel and Leah’s maid-servants scheme with Pharaoh’s son to capture Aseneth to be his wife, and to kill Joseph and his children. This plan is miraculously thwarted by God answering Aseneth’s prayer and the actions of Leah’s and Rachel’s sons.

Joseph & Aseneth is found in koinē Greek, its original language, as well as 8 ancient translations. The textual witness is broadly arranged into four families. A critical edition was published by Christoph Burchard in 2003. The Syriac version is an important witness as one manuscript predates the next witness by over 400 years. Also, with the Armenian and one of the two Latin versions, it supports the Greek family that is the basis of the critical edition. However, aside from text-critical consideration, little attention has been paid to the Syriac version.

Two incomplete manuscripts of the Syriac version are extant today, both in the British Library. The first, Additional 17,202 dates from about 600CE,¹ and is the sole extant copy of a large work, the Miscellaneous Chronicle of so-called Pseudo-Zachariah. The second manuscript witness is a collection of excerpted works of Church Fathers and stories dating from the twelfth century, apparently copied from 17,202. Both manuscripts contain lacunae and consequently much of Aseneth’s encounter with the angel is not extant in Syriac. In this paper I shall argue for two positions: first, that the Syriac version is a reader-orientated translation of its Greek

1 Wright 1872:1046

exemplar that should be taken seriously in its own right; and secondly, that the letters that precede it, as well as its position in the oldest manuscript, suggest it was read as more than a good story. I shall conclude by considering the peculiarity of the Syriac witness.

Any translation is a compromise. Translators can try to make the translation as faithful to the source language as possible, bringing the reader to the source text, here Greek. Alternatively, the translator can try to make the text as readable as possible in the target language, here Syriac, bringing the text to the reader. We can refer to these as text-orientated or reader-orientated approaches. Sebastian Brock has shown that the approach of translators from Greek into Syriac changed radically between the fifth and seventh century. In developing his model, Brock placed the approximately datable Joseph and Aseneth and Moshe's other extant translation, that of Cyril of Alexandria's *Glaphyra*, in an intermediary period in the sixth century where aim of the translation was still reader-orientated. Whilst text-critical scholars will find a text-orientated translation most useful for producing a critical edition of the story, reader-orientated translations can help us understand how the work was perceived in other ways.

The translator has, in general, been conservative rather than free in rendering the story, without being slavish to either word order or utilizing a word-for-word gloss translation technique. Few Greek words were transliterated into Syriac, which is particularly noticeable when compared with other translations in the opening books of Pseudo-Zachariah's work.

I think the translator read the whole Greek text prior to commencing translation. The narrative arc of the story is even strengthened, highlighted in a few alterations in comparison to the Greek. For example, early on, the translator changed Aseneth's statement «let my father give me to Joseph for a maidservant and slave» to «for a wife». This points forward to Aseneth's destiny, though could also be seen as avoiding uncomfortable implications:

could the mother of two tribes of Israel be a slave? Should a role model for the Church be a slave?

In general the unit of translation is a sentence, though it depends on the type of material being dealt with. The longest units come in the psalmic or prayer passages, which differ considerably in content and even order to other versions of the story.² Speech was also likely to be translated as one complete unit.³ The translator did not feel it necessary to translate all items in the story's many lists. Indeed, at 4.2 the Syriac summarizes the Greek list of gifts to simply 'all sorts of good things'.

There are very few instances of scribal mistakes that can be reasonably postulated.⁴ Whilst there are a few verses omitted,⁵ there are many repetitions⁶ and short phrases omitted,⁷ as well as a plethora of details.⁸ Sometimes these omissions relate to a theme. For instance, the translator appears to lack interest in preparing for or waging battle. Censorship is only apparent in the omission of the erotic imagery and in removing certain unfavourable character

2 Chapters 11-13 and 21.10-end are the most textually uncertain units in the whole textual tradition.

3 E.g., the 'bad brothers' statement to Pharaoh's son in 24.8-9

4 Three possibilities are 7.7 where the Syriac is difficult and some text appears to have been omitted; 27.10 where a line of Greek text is omitted from translation; and 28.8 where the name 'Gad' drops out from the doublet 'Dan and Gad'.

5 11.19; 13.10; 21.14, 18; 25.8; 28.5,6. These can in general be accounted for as giving information that is a repetition in the context.

6 It is not always the second part of a repeat that was omitted. E.g., 5.6 concerning who is shut out of the courtyard.

7 E.g., in 7.2 Joseph's question to Pentephres about the identity of the woman (Aseneth) he sees at the window is omitted. The thrust of the narrative is maintained in the narration. Conversely, at 6.3 Aseneth's implication that Joseph is God's son is omitted, removing a clear identifier about Joseph's perceived identity.

8 These stretch from the virgins being described as 'serving' Aseneth in 17.4, to the fifty men with Pharaoh being 'mounted' in 24.19 and 25.4.

actions, such as Aseneth spitting. But a passage reflecting pre-Socratic cosmology is assiduously translated.

There are almost no additions longer than a few words. Often they clarify the meaning of a Greek word through using a double translation or a short explanation. Details that are added to the Syriac version generally add little to the narrative, but sometimes change the reader's perception of the character.⁹ Occasional explanations interpret what has just happened. For example, at 11.1 the reasoning for why Aseneth cannot get up is extended to include repentance, fasting and remorse.

When comparing the Greek and Syriac, the most obvious feature is that the Syriac often finds a natural way to render the events in Syriac. Sometimes this results in a simplification of the description,¹⁰ but can also bring a change of emphasis in some passages. A good example of this comes with the tantrum in chapter 4 where the narrator describes Aseneth's response to her father's marriage proposal. The Greek narrator says that «plenty of red sweat poured over her face, and she became furious with great anger, and looked out of the corner of her eyes at her father...» In Syriac this is toned down: «she fell on her face in modesty and in rage and anger she looked at her father». The reasoning seems to be to moderate Aseneth's behaviour.

I have found little evidence that the translator sought to harmonise the text with references in the Peshitta. A small number of short passages suggests biblical influence in their allusions. For example, at 17.3 the Greek says that the heavenly man stretches out his hand over the damaged part of the honeycomb, «and at once fire went up from the table and consumed the comb, but the table it did not

9 E.g., at 2.8 the reader is told that Aseneth's bed sheets are 'Egyptian'. E.g., at 6.2 the reader is told that Aseneth was led astray in thinking Joseph was not worthy by 'strange counsellors'.

10 E.g., the description of Aseneth's lips in 18.9, the Greek describes them as 'like a rose coming out of its bud', whereas the Syriac describes them as 'like a rose gathered from the bush'.

injure.» The Syriac adds: ‘because it did not have authority over it’ (ܐܘܬܘܪܝܬܐ ܠܗ ܥܠ ܗܘܢܐ). This is the same phrase as used in Daniel 3.27 to describe why the bodies of those in the furnace were not harmed. The addition provides an explanation for why the table, or perhaps altar, was not burned.

There are seemingly only two words in the text which the translator did not understand in the Greek.¹¹

I have also examined a short section of Moshe’s translation of Cyril of Alexandria’s *Glaphyra*, a much more complicated work, and little seems to have troubled him, so it is not surprising that *Joseph and Aseneth* was straight forward for Moshe.

The most interesting elements of the translation are the changes in emphasis between the Greek and the Syriac and I want to touch on three of these:

First, there is a heightened portrayal of asceticism in the story. I think that the translator saw in the repentance scenes an image of ascetic renunciation. This is explicit in chapter 13 where the translator has Aseneth state that in ‘ascetic’ sackcloth and ashes she has abandoned her previous life. The whole passage changes focus from her symbolic change of clothing to a discussion of her present state. Secondly, and related to the first, there is a particular emphasis on repentance in the Syriac. The Syriac version makes more of Aseneth’s personal repentance through the reoccurring inclusion of repentance in summary passages. 10, 17 changes the ‘seven days of her humiliation’ to ‘with repentance and suffering of soul and in her subjection.’ This reasoning is again picked up in 11.1. In 13.4-6, the reasoning for Aseneth’s abstinence is particularly highlighted and whilst the specific connection is not made with repentance, the mention of being ‘ascetic’ (ܐܘܬܘܪܝܬܐ) in these practices certainly sharpens the impression. Finally at 18.3, the reason for Aseneth’s change in appearance is from distress and weeping in Greek, to sadness and repentance in Syriac.

¹¹ ܐܘܬܘܪܝܬܐ (3.6; 18.6) and ܐܘܬܘܪܝܬܐ (28.7)

Thirdly, the description of the characters. Aseneth, Joseph and the ‘bad brothers’ all benefit from the translator’s amendment of the narrative to remove what appears to be critical comment. For example, with Joseph the narrator removes his excesses in dealing with the women who trouble him. The negative reasoning for the ‘bad brothers’ not going with Joseph and Aseneth in chapter 22 is omitted as well as some of their negative description in chapter 24. However their plan to kill Joseph and his children is unchanged. The underlying intention of the translator seems to be to protect the characters of these biblical figures without actually interfering with the overall narrative of the story.

In summary, the Syriac translation is reader-orientated whilst sticking closely to the original story. It included sections often omitted by different Greek versions. However, it also shows some subtle changes in emphasis which can be satisfactorily explained by the Christian culture of the time. Rather than seeing it as a less than useful, loose version of the text, the Syriac version serves to show how little adaption the work had to receive to enter a specifically Christian context.

II

I now want to turn to the context of the story and consider what implications this has for understanding how it was read. Pseudo-Zachariah devotes a large amount of space to Joseph and Aseneth relative to the whole manuscript, without a clearly expressed reason for this. Its inclusion indicates that he saw it as both important and worth the considerable expense of translation and copying.

The most ancient manuscript that includes Joseph and Aseneth is a work often described as of composite genre, written by someone who appears to have been a moderately anti-Chalcedonian, educated and well-read monk, probably living in Amida. Books i and ii of Pseudo-Zachariah’s twelve book work have long been viewed as something of an oddity containing a variety of materials

and several works regarded as pseudepigraphal. The intention in the opening books seems to be to retell history piecemeal up to the start of the narrative of the Ecclesiastical History covered by means of stories from an assortment of sources. Very few works in Antiquity can be cited as a comparison to this structure and we are left to utilize internal clues to understand its compilation.

In his introduction, Pseudo-Zachariah explains why some stories were included. For example, he says that Eusebius and Socrates gave a less than accurate and truthful account of Constantine's baptism by Sylvester and consequently Pseudo-Zachariah is correcting the account. However, the introduction gives no such reason for Joseph and Aseneth. But, there are two edited letters preceding the translation which are informative. The first is from an anonymous writer, possibly Pseudo-Zachariah himself, to Moshç of Aggel. The second is Moshe's reply.

The first letter includes three particular points of interest: first, the work came to the writer from a bishop's library - a reliable source; secondly, that the writer appears to view Joseph and Aseneth as a beneficial apocryphal text when he writes: «For a wise man does not leave counsel that is hidden, but shall search carefully,..». Thirdly, the letter writer says that he understands the *historia* in the story, but not the *theoria* and asks Moshç to explain this.

We can be reasonably certain that *historia* referred to the narrative meaning of the text, and it is something that Moshe does not comment on. Moshç's reply is frustratingly cut off in the manuscript at the point where he will explain the *theoria*. Broadly, I think there are four explanations of what the *theoria*, a term that is difficult to interpret, may be. First, an allegorical meaning as Rivka Nir has recently argued for; secondly, an Evagrius influenced notion meaning mental contemplation; thirdly, the exegetical process of typology. This is a technique for bringing out the correspondence between the Old and New Testaments. It considers that the events and characters in the Old Testament prefigured and anticipated,

that is, were ‘types’, of the events and characters of the New Testament. It was used in very different ways by St Cyril of Alexandria and many Antiochene exegetes.

The problem with an allegorical interpretation is that the story itself seems important to the Chronicler, and the size of the letter’s lacuna suggests a short explanation rather than the complex one that Rivka Nir has argued for in a recent book. Translation of Evagrius did much to spread the use of the term *thoria*, but the context there suggests that the correspondent wanted something broader than Evagrius’ notion of *theoria*. Whilst Moshe cites Evagrius by name, this relates to the ascetical nature of the work, rather than his contemplative exegetical method.

My final suggestion is that Moshe presented a typology and there is a parallel to cite. In the letters preceding Glaphyra, a certain Paphnutios writes to the same Moshe and says that through reading works of the Fathers, faithful Christians become lofty in wisdom through their *theoria*. He explicitly refers to Cyril’s first Pentateuch commentary which heavily uses typological exegesis. It seems a reasonable speculation to me that the *theoria* requested about Joseph and Aseneth, is a request for a typological exegesis.

Two recent suggestions have been made for the inclusion of Joseph and Aseneth in Pseudo-Zachariah’s work. Witold Witakowski argued that it should be seen as filling in or correcting information in Eusebius’ *Chronicon*. Geoffrey Greatrex has suggested in different publications that the work probably had good entertainment value and showed Pseudo-Zachariah’s depth of research. Neither of these suggestions are mutually exclusive and there is probably truth in both of them.

Moshe’s *theoria* clearly impressed Pseudo-Zachariah and confirmed for him Joseph and Aseneth’s hidden value. But more than that, I think that Joseph and Aseneth was presented to suggest the proper way that the characters of Aseneth and Joseph should be read. Having read through this typological prism pointing to Christ

and highlighting the renunciation of past life as the way to Christian faith, helps explain its prominent position. Moshç's quotation of 'Evagrius the Ascete' certainly fits with this reading, and it perhaps explains why the monks at Deires-Suryân enjoyed reading it sufficiently to copy it.

III

By way of a conclusion, it is worth noting that the earliest Syriac manuscript containing Joseph and Aseneth survives due to particular circumstances. The manuscript came to the British Museum in 1845 among the manuscripts purchased by Auguste Pacho from the Monastery at Deires-Suryân.¹² Because of the exceptional age of the manuscript it is likely that it came to the Monastery through the collecting work of another Moshe, Moshç of Nisibis. This tenth century Abbot of the joint Syrian Orthodox / Coptic Orthodox Monastery went to Baghdad to represent the monks in Egypt following the imposition of taxes on them. He eventually returned in 932 CE with around 250 manuscripts, some of which were very old. The only known copy of the Syriac version was transmitted without the prefacing letters. Perhaps the monk compiling the later manuscript thought his readers needed some light relief as a reward for their reading, or perhaps this shows the continued way in which Joseph and Aseneth was read. Either way, this copy took place after copying patterns appear to have changed, when Patristic works were excerpted and this story could easily have been turned into an epitome, but was not. Consequently we are left with two manuscripts of a beautiful Syriac translation of a popular Antique Greek story.

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IN MEMORIAM



Robert F. Taft, S.J. (1932-2018)

Robert Taft was before anything else a good priest and a faithful and faith-filled Jesuit. He was unfailingly prayerful both in private and in public, practicing liturgically what he spent most of his life writing and speaking about. He never failed to send a condolence to a Jesuit or any other friend who had a close relative die and he often sent a note on the anniversaries of those passings. His more popular theological writings reveal a man passionately devoted to Jesus Christ. I believe these are the first things he would want most to be remembered for.

Born in Providence, RI on January 9, 1932 and raised in nearby Cranston, Taft was educated by the Christian Brothers before he entered the Society of Jesus in 1949 at Shadowbrook in Lenox, MA. He spent four years there as a novice and junior (early college studies) before moving on to Weston College in Weston, MA for his philosophy studies. In 1956 he was sent to the Jesuit Baghdad Mission to teach English at Baghdad College, the Jesuit high school there. This was followed by one year of studying Russian at Fordham University and three years of theology back at Weston.

During his theology years Taft was able to realize a dream he'd had since his novitiate, transfer to the Byzantine Rite in the Greek Catholic (Ruthenian) Church. He was ordained in 1963 and spent the next year in the last phase of Jesuit formation, tertianship, in Drongen, Belgium. In 1965 he was able to realize another dream, studying Oriental Liturgy, which he did under the famous scholar, Juan Mateos, S.J., at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. After receiving his doctorate with a thesis entitled "The Great Entrance" on the preparation, procession and other rites associated with the gifts in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Taft studied oriental languages in Leuven for two years. He returned to the Oriental Institute in 1971 to take up a professorship in Oriental Liturgy, Coptic and Armenian. He was also for a many years editor of *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, the institute's scholarly journal. After stints as visiting professor in the liturgy program in the Theology Department of the University of Notre Dame and as a senior fellow at the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Research Center of Harvard University in Washington, DC, he returned to full time teaching at the Oriental Institute until his retirement in 2003.

During his time in Rome Taft also served as a consultant to the Vatican Congregation for the Eastern Churches. Perhaps

his greatest contribution in that capacity was his assistance in the 2003 decision of the Pontifical Council on Christian Unity to recognize the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari of the Assyrian Church of the East, a Eucharistic prayer which contains no literal words of institution. Taft was also honored as a Fellow of the British Academy and made a mitred Archimandrite of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in 1998. He often boasted of his privilege of wearing two pectoral crosses!

Taft was also very active in the promotion of liturgical scholarship worldwide. He was especially proud of his support of women in scholarship and ministry. He was a founding member of the North American Academy of Liturgy from which he received the prestigious Berakah Award in 1985, president of the international ecumenical Societas Liturgica, and also a founder of the Society for Oriental Liturgy.

Taft is of course best known as a prodigious scholar. His oeuvre contains over 800 titles. Although painstakingly exact in his scholarship he had the gift of being able to communicate in very readable English. He may be best known among North Americans for his magisterial study of the Divine Office in *The Liturgy of the Hours: East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, (2nd ed. Liturgical Press, 1993) and *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (2nd.ed. Pontifical Oriental Press, 1997), the latter a collection of brilliant essays that any aspiring student of the liturgy should digest thoroughly. The final volume of his monumental five-volume history of the Byzantine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom on the anaphora or Eucharistic prayer is in preparation. The first volume of that history on the Entrance Rites and Liturgy of the Word, which had been published in French by Mateos, is now being re-written by his last student and good friend, Sr. Vassa Larin.

Taft was known not only as scholar and master teacher, but also as a great wit and raconteur. His language was often salty and he could be acerbic with those he considered to be lacking in intelligence, learning, or good judgment. He was pleased when I often reminded him that underneath his gruff exterior lay a heart of stone! In fact he was really a generous, kind, and gentle soul, but didn't want too many people to know it. He was indeed a very good friend to me and to many, many others who studied with him or came to know him through his work as a scholar and as a Jesuit priest.

Robert Taft retired to Campion Jesuit Health Center in Weston, MA, where he formerly studied philosophy and theology in 2012. He continued to write and speak until his health failed. In the summer of 2017 he received his final honorary doctorate (of many such honors) from the Ukrainian Catholic University of Lviv, which he helped to found.

Fr. Taft (or Taftie as he was known to Jesuits and many friends) died peacefully at Campion Center on November 2, 2018, appropriately the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls). May this good man, priest and Jesuit rest in the peace of the Lord he loved and served so well.

John F. Baldovin, S.J.
Boston College

BOOK REVIEW

Preaching Christology in the Roman Near East: A study of Jacob of Serugh by Philip Michael Forness. Oxford University Press (2018); ISBN 978-0-19-882645-3

Preaching formed one of the primary, regular avenues of communication between ecclesiastical elites and a wide range of society. Clergy used homilies to spread knowledge of complex theological debates prevalent in late antique Christian discourse. Some sermons even offer glimpses into the locations in which communities gathered to hear orators preach. Although homilies survive in greater number than most other types of literature, most do not specify the setting of their initial delivery, dating, and authorship. *Preaching Christology in the Roman Near East* thus addresses how we can best contextualize sermons devoid of such information. The first chapter develops a methodology for approaching homilies that draws on a broader understanding of audience as both the physical audience and the readership of sermons. The remainder of the monograph offers a case study on the renowned Syriac preacher Jacob of Serugh (c. 451–521) whose metrical homilies form one of the largest sermon collections in any language from late antiquity. His letters connect him to a previously little-known Christological debate over the language of the miracles and sufferings of Christ through his correspondence with a monastery, a Roman military officer, and a Christian community in South Arabia. He uses this language in homilies on the Council of

Chalcedon, on Christian doctrine, and on biblical exegesis. An analysis of these sermons demonstrates that he communicated miaphysite Christology to both elite reading communities as well as ordinary audiences. This monograph thus demonstrates a new methodology for working with late antique sermons and discloses the range of society that received complex theological teachings through preaching.

The introduction identifies the central questions of the book and provides a basic orientation to the major figures and time period. The Christological controversies have long held an important place in the history of early Christianity, and strong evidence suggests that these quarrels affected all levels of society. This work argues that preaching served as a means of communicating Christological concepts to broad audiences in late antiquity. The homilies of Jacob of Serugh have long resisted efforts of historical contextualization and serve here as a case study for the role of sermons in spreading Christological doctrine. A brief account of Jacob's life drawn from contemporaneous works establishes the basic characteristics of his time. A summary of the long debate over Jacob's Christological perspective follows and leads into the structure of the monograph.

The first chapter offers a new approach to the audience of late antique homilies and reconstructs the process by which they went from spoken word to circulating text. Recent studies have exposed the potential of sermons as sources for social history by focusing on the setting in which preachers delivered their sermons. Yet most sermons from late antiquity—and especially metrical Syriac homilies—do not offer such information. This chapter reframes the question of the audience of late antique sermons to include both the individuals gathered physically before the preacher and the communities that read the homilies after delivery. A summary of the evidence for the setting of delivery reveals the challenge of working with certain homilies. But practices associated with the transmission of homilies—delivering, recording, redacting, collecting, and

circulating—help reconstruct the types of individuals who formed the readership of late antique homilies.

The second chapter traces the history of the Christological language of the miracles and sufferings of Christ from the fourth through sixth centuries. Armenian, Coptic, Latin, Greek, and Syriac texts pair the miracles of Christ with the sufferings of Christ to express the relationship between his divinity and humanity. This pairing first appeared in Cappadocia in the late fourth century, but it became a source of controversy especially through Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorios of Constantinople's disagreements around the time of the Council of Ephesus in 431. The presence of this phrase in Pope Leo I's *Tome* led to further disagreements at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The Emperor Zeno used this phrase in an imperial decree issued in 482, known as the *Henotikon*, and it would later be codified in Roman law through the Emperor Justinian I. Miaphysite leaders, including Jacob of Serugh, debated the proper understanding of Christology in reference to this phrase in the early sixth century.

The third chapter demonstrates that Jacob of Serugh engaged directly in debates over Christology through his letters. The pairing of miracles and sufferings explored in the previous chapter serves as a link between his letters and the activities of his peers. Three sets of correspondence reveal his use of this phrase in concrete situations. His exchanges with the monastery of Mar Bassus feature his direct engagement in the debate over the use of the *Henotikon* for expressing Christology. His letter to the military leader Bessas shows his advocacy for fellow non-Chalcedonians experiencing persecution after the rise of Emperor Justin I. Finally, his letter to the Christian community in Najran of the Himyarite Kingdom in South Arabia coordinates miaphysite Christology with the experience of persecution. Jacob saw miaphysite Christology as expressed through the language of miracles and sufferings as an answer to the challenges that non-Chalcedonian communities faced

in the aftermath of Chalcedon.

The fourth chapter addresses the most controversial homily in Jacob of Serugh's corpus, the *Homily on the Council of Chalcedon*. Recently discovered manuscripts provide a solid basis for viewing this homily as an integral part of his corpus, despite the long debate over its authenticity. The close correspondence of his Christological thought here with that examined in his letters provides an even firmer basis for asserting its authenticity. Although the physical context in which Jacob delivered this homily remains elusive, this chapter demonstrates how scholars can productively interpret it as a text that circulated among reading communities in late antiquity. Two periods of Jacob's life, known from his letters, would have made ideal contexts in which he circulated this homily as part of a dossier of texts for elite reading communities.

The fifth chapter analyzes how Jacob of Serugh communicates Christology within the poetic restraints and oral context of his homilies. He preached his *Homily on the Faith* in an educational setting and emphasized a correct understanding of Christology. Three known phrases from the Christological controversies reveal the subtle ways that he weaves miaphysite Christology into his homilies. He quotes a phrase attributed to Nestorios of Constantinople in order to liken his opponents to the defamed archbishop. He draws on an even earlier phrase from the fourth-century Trinitarian controversies in accusing his opponents of worshipping a human. Finally, he uses the pairing of miracles and sufferings to criticize the Christology of his opponents and to promote his own views on Christology. Jacob's transformation of these three phrases reveals how he modifies his expression of Christology to teach his theological perspective within the poetic and stylistic expectations of metrical homilies.

The sixth chapter examines two of Jacob of Serugh's exegetical homilies that use the pairing of miracles and sufferings to defend a miaphysite view of Christology. A homily on the promise of a future

prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15–18 features typological exegesis that explores similarities between Moses and Christ. Homilists in late antiquity regularly used typological exegesis to express their views on Christology through familiar biblical stories. In another homily, Jacob offers a Christological interpretation of Peter's confession of Christ in Matthew 16:13–20 and encourages his audience to imitate Peter in confessing Christ in a way that agrees with the miaphysite view of Christology. Jacob's contemporaries Philoxenos of Mabbug and Severos of Antioch had similarly used this passage to support miaphysite Christology. The examination of these two homilies solidifies Jacob's participation in debates over Christology through preaching and his use of homilies to communicate these ideas to broad audiences.

The conclusion highlights the central arguments of the monograph and identifies future directions for research. The difficulty of contextualizing Jacob of Serugh's sermons necessitates attention not only to the physical audience that gathered for his sermons but also to the individuals and communities that read his homilies after delivery. It is possible to connect both Jacob's letters and his homilies to a historical debate related to the pairing of miracles and sufferings of Christ as found in Zeno's *Henotikon*. The four homilies at the center of this work form a spectrum from sermons best interpreted as texts that circulated to those seemingly preached on ordinary liturgical occasions. Future studies could profitably explore the diverse audiences that preachers sought to address in their preaching as well as differences in language, themes, and rhetoric between homilies dictated for circulation and those recorded during oral delivery.

Rev. Dr. Jacob Thekeparampil

SEERI - LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

I. THE HARP (English): A review of Syriac, Ecumenical and Oriental Studies (contains articles of renowned writers from all over the world.)

The HARP Volumes

Vol. No	Year	Remarks
I (Nos.1,2,3)	1987-88	-
II (Nos.1,2,3)	1989	-
III (Nos.1,2,3)	1990	-
IV (Nos.1,2,3)	1991	-
V (Nos.1,2,3)	1992	-
VI (Nos.1,2,3)	1993	-
VII (Nos.1,2,3)	1994	-
VIII & IX	1995-96	Out of stock
X (1,2&3)	1997	1&2 -do-
XI & XII	1998-99	Out of stock
XIII	2000	Out of stock
XIV	2001	-
XV	2002	-
XVI	2003	-
XVII	2004	-
XVIII	2005	-
XIX	2006	-
XX (Part-I)	2006	-
XX (Part -II)	2006	-
XXI	2006	-
XXII	2007	-
XXIII	2008	-
XXIV	2009	-

XXV	2010	-
XXVI	2012	Index volume
XXVII	2011	-
XXVIII	2013	-
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XXX	2016	-
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XXXII	2017	-
XXXIII	2018	-
XXXIV	2018	-

II. 'MORAN ETHO' (English): Monograph Series

Vol.	Author	Name of book	Remarks.
I.	Prof. Wolfgang Hage	Syriac Christianity in the East.	
II	Prof. Sebastian Brock	Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition.	
III	J.P.M. van der Ploeg	The Book of Judith, Syriac Text and English Translation.	
IV	Prof. Sebastian Brock	Burial service for Nuns (West Syrian Liturgy), Syriac Text with translation.	
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