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Contents

Editorial

- 1 9th World Syriac Conference: A report.
- *Jacob Thekeparampil*
- 17 Assyrians and Chaldeans in Iraq
- *Harald Suermann*
- 39 St. Ephrem's Hymns on Paradise and the Human Psycho-spiritual Development
- *Thomas Kollamparampil*
- 53 The Mimre of Jacob of Serugh on St. Paul in the Syriac Liturgical Tradition
- *Raju P. J.*
- 65 Paradox and Prayer in Ephrem the Syrian
- *Emidio Vergani*
- 79 The Hexaemeron of Jacob of Edessa on Birds as Moral Examples
- *Alison Salvesen*
- 97 A Study on the Theology of Death in the West Syrian Tradition on the Basis of the Order of Service of Sunday of the Departed
- *James Thodathil*
- 111 How Much does a Metropolitan Cost? British Proposal for Financial Support for the Puthenkur Syrian Clergy in the early 19th century
- *John Fenwick*
- 121 Meditating with The 'Odes of Solomon': Abbot Francis Acharya's translation published in 2018
- *Bernard Kilroy*
- 143 Prayer in the Demonstrations of Aphrahat
- *Kuriakose Valavanolickal*
- 149 Significance of Syriac Tradition in the Syro-Malabar Church from the study of *Varthamanappusthakam*
- *Jose Valiamangalam*
- 159 The Major Influences on the Themes of the Feast of Epiphany
- *Varghese Varghese*

- 187 Early Witnesses to the Syriac Text of Acts Chapter Fifteen,
Verses 20 and 29
- *Daniel L. McConaughy*
- 201 Christological Thought of the Syriac Fathers
- *Ionita Apostolache*
- 232 About Recent Discoveries at Edessa: Church Mosaic
Pavements with Syriac Inscriptions
- *Alain J. Desreumaux*
- 243 Unpublished Syriac Inscriptions from the Ruins of Saint
Sergius' Church in Eneš (Turkey)
- *Simon Brelaud, Jimmy Daccache & Flavia Ruani*
- 271 The Sabbath Eternal and the Completion of Creation: the
Concept SLM and its meaning.
- *Jan M.F. Van Reeth*
- 287 Priority of the Month of Nissan in Syriac Tradition
- *Vinu Varghese*
- 305 Three Special Families in Oxford with Four Special Scholars
and the Old Bailey in London
- *Arne J Hobbel*
- 347 Jacob of Serugh and the Lord's Prayer
- *Siroli Francesca*
- 407 The 'Meditation' of GOD's Word in St Ephrem
God's Word: light for the life of everyone who put on Christ at Baptism
- *Buda Lorenzo*
- 453 A study of the Order of the Consecration of the Holy Muroon
in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church
- *George Mathew Kuttijil*
- 465 Institution of Baptism According to Jacob of Sarug
- *Joseph Kalariparampil*
- 493 Book Review
- *Arne J. Hobbel*
- 505 List of publications

Editorial

After release of Vol. 33 during 2018, we issued a special Volume of the Harp (Vol. 34) as a Festschrift in honour of Rev. Dr. Thomas Koonammakkal, Dean of Studies, SEERI. This caused a little delay in compilation and release of the present volume (Vol. 35 - 2019 issue).

The present issue of the Harp contains learned papers presented by Syriac scholars in the 9th World Syriac Conference conducted in SEERI during Sept. 2018. A comprehensive report of the Conference is also included. The balance papers will be published in the ensuing volumes of the Harp.

We hope that our esteemed readers, especially those who were not able to attend the conference, will be greatly benefitted by these presentations. Let this issue be a valuable addition to their collection!

Jacob Thekeparampil

9TH WORLD SYRIAC CONFERENCE IN SEERI: A REPORT

1. Inaugural function

9th World Syriac Conference was inaugurated in St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI), Kottayam on 8th Sept. 2018. Once again the Syriac scholars from all over the world assembled at SEERI. The function started at 14.30 hrs. with *To 'ba-Slom* by Rev. Dr. M.P. George and his *Zumoro* Choir. Rev. Fr. Cherian Thazhamon (Vicar General, Archdiocese of Tiruvalla) welcomed the gathering. His Grace Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church delivered the Presidential address.



His Grace Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma, Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church delivering the Presidential address in the inaugural function.

Prof. Dr. Sabu Thomas, Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, inaugurated the conference lighting up the traditional lamp along with other VIPs on the stage.



Prof. Dr. Sabu Thomas, Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, lighting up the lamp marking the inauguration of the conference.

Prof. Dr. Harald Suermann, Director, Institute of Missiology (MWI), Aachen, Germany delivered the Keynote lecture.

Prof. Dr. Daniel L. McConaughy, Prof. Emeritus California State University Northridge, Prof. Dr. Alison Salvesen of Oriental Institute, Oxford University, Prof. Dr. A.M. Thomas, Director, School of International Relations and Politics, M.G. University, Kottayam and Prof. Dr. Hidemi Takahashi, Dept. of Area Studies, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, University of Tokyo made felicitation speeches. Rev. Dr. Raju Parakkott bade vote of thanks and the function ended with blessing of Metropolitan & Bishops.

2. Daily programmes

Daily programmes began with Holy Qurbana of different Churches at 06.30 hrs. each day. The presentation of papers

began at 09.00 hrs. A total of 84 papers were presented in the different sessions of the conference. They are listed in Annexure I of this report.

3. Receptions to the foreign delegates

Foreign delegates attended *Ramsha* and receptions in different Churches/places on dates noted below.

(i). On Sunday, the 9th Sept. 2018, the delegates attended a reception & lunch arranged by Major Arch Bishop Cardinal Mar George Alencherry at St. Thomas Mount, Kakkanad, Kochi.

(ii). In the evening of Monday, the 10th Sept. 2018, the delegates visited St. George's Church at Puthuppally and attended *Ramsha* led by His Holiness Moran Mor Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan & Dr. Dioskoros, Metropolitan of the Diocese of Kottayam. The delegates were given a grand reception by the church authorities.

(iii). The delegates visited St. Mary's Cathedral of the Syrian Orthodox Church, Manarcad in the evening of Tuesday, the 11th Sept. 2018, and attended *Ramsha* led by **His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Themotheos** of the Diocese of Kottayam. The church authorities gave a warm reception to the delegates.

(iv). In the evening of Wednesday, the 12th Sept. 2018, the delegates attended a reception and dinner in the Marthoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam.

(v). On Thursday, the 13th Sept. 2018 evening, the delegates attended *Ramsha* at St. Mary's Syro-Malabar Major Archbishopial Church, Kuravilangad followed by reception and dinner.

(vi). On Friday, the 14th Sept. 2018 evening, the delegates attended *Ramsha* at SEERI Chapel led by Cardinal Moran Mor

Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

(vii). On Saturday, the 15th Sept. 2018 evening the delegates attended *Ramsha* at the St. Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, Changanacherry followed by reception and Dinner with His Grace Dr. Mar Joseph Perumthottam Arch bishop of Changanacherry and Auxiliary Bishop Mar Thomas Joseph Tharayil and Archbishop Emeritus Mar Joseph Powathil.



Cardinal Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church addressing the delegates on Friday, the 14th Sept. 2018.

4. Concluding Function

Concluding function started at 14.30 hrs. on the afternoon of Saturday, the 15th Sept. 2018. His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Koorilos Archbishop of Tiruvalla and President of SEERI presided over the function and delivered the Presidential address.



His Grace Dr. Thomas Mar Koorilos, Metropolitan Archbishop of Tiruvalla delivering the presidential address in the concluding session.

Justice Alexander Thomas and Metropolitan Dr. Mar Aprem gave concluding messages. Mr. Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan MLA, Kottayam & Ex. Minister delivered felicitation speech.



Justice Alexander Thomas giving message in the concluding function

Quadisha Choir from Lebanon presented *Tesbuhto* and M.A. students of SEERI recited the Prayer song. The function ended with recital of SEERI Anthem by M.A. students.

As a consequence of the flood disaster and epidemic threat, the excursion programmed on Sunday, the 16th Sept. was cancelled. The delegates spent the day as per their own personal programmes.

Annexure-1

List of papers presented in the conference

Name	Topic
Fr. Dr. Abdo Badwi OL	The Iconography of Virgin Mary in the Syriac miniatures.
Prof. Dr. Alain J. DESREUMAUX	About recent discoveries at Edessa: a church mosaic pavement with Syriac inscriptions
Alexandre Varela	A newly discovered chapel in Mor Yakub Church of Midden: Churches, Saints and Sacred Geography in the villages of Tur 'Adin
Prof. Dr. Alison Salvesen	Jacob of Edessa on birds as moral examples of humans
Prof. Amir Harrak	Is Narsai's Hymn on the Fiery Furnace (Daniel 3) a Metrical Martyrology?
Dr. Andreas Ellwardt	The Syriac Heritage in the Rumanian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch.

Andrei Macar	The Synod of Isho'yahb I from 585 and the Question of Monasticism
Anish K. Joy	Syriac Genocide: Past and Present Effect on our Faith
Fr. Antony Bungalowparampil	Liturgical manuscripts of the St. Joseph Monastery, Mannanam
Sr. Dr. Anu Kurisummoottil	Passover of Christ : Source of human salvation. A study based on Ephrem's commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron (Chapters XVIII-XXII)
H.G. Dr. Mar Aprem	Syriac Prayers found in the Malayalam Prayer book Prarthanakramam by Mar Abimalek Timotheus Metropolitan in 1917, translated to English in 2017.
Rev. Dr. Baby Varghese	A brief history of the liturgical year of the Syrian Orthodox Tradition
Dr. Bernard Kilroy	The 'Odes of Solomon' as devotion now: Francis Acharya of Kurisumala's translation published
Bert Jacobs	A tentative reconstruction of Dionysius of Tell-Mahre's account of the origins and

	teachings of Islam through his three dependants.
Fr. Bijo Varghese	Towards a Philosophical Convergence between Syriac and Vedic Thoughts: Advaita Vedanta's influence on Monistic Approach of Bar Hebraeus
Bruno Poizat	Modern Syriac in Comparison with Classical
Rev. Dr. Buda Lorenzo	The «meditation» of God's word in St. Ephrem
Prof. Dr. Daniel L. McConaughy	The Early Witnesses to the Text of Acts Chapter Fifteen.
-do- + Dr. Dominique Gonnet	The project of indexing of Scripture Quotations in the Works of Syriac Fathers
Rev. Dr. Devamitra Neelankavil	Gems of Eucharistic theology from Taksa d-Qudasha
Rev. Dr. Dominique Gonnet SJ	The Authority of the Fathers of the Church by Philoxenus of Mabbug
Prof. Dr. Emidio Vergani	Paradox and Prayer in Ephrem the Syrian
Rev. Dr. Francis Pittappillil	Eschatological vision of the East Syrian Qurbana

Prof. Dr. Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet Some considerations on the Church in Malabar up to the 15th century

Dr. Frederic Alpi

Severus of Antioch as a canonical reference in the making of the Syrian Orthodox Church (6th – 8th c.)

Fr.Dr. Gaby Abousamra OL

A Censer with a Syriac Inscription

Dr. des. Gabriel Rabo

Kyrillos Yuyoqim from Hbob/Tur ‘Abdin: The autobiography of the apostolic delegate in Malabar

Fr. Geevarghese Valiachangeveettil

Syriac Studies in Higher Secondary Schools and Universities in Kerala.

Fr. Dr. Geo Pallikunnel

Incarnation of Christ and the Human Elevation to the Divine in the Syriac Tradition.

Rev. Dr. M.P. George & Rev. Dr. Jacob Thekeparampil

The Hymnal Interpretation of the Parables in the West Syriac Tradition

Fr. George Kurisummoottil

The Element of Light in Iconography

Rev. Dr. George Mathew	A study of the liturgy of the consecration of Holy Muron in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church
Prof. George Menacherry	Similarities in the Christian Beliefs and Art of Celtic Christianity and St. Thomas Christianity of Malabar
Prof. Dr. Harald Suermann	Assyrians and Chaldeans in Iraq in the 20th century (Keynote address)
Dr. Hidemi Takahashi	The Chinese Manichaeen Prayer of St. George and other traces of the descendants of Syriac Christians in China
Ilja Jovic	Relations between the Indian Orthodox Church and the Serbian Orthodox Church
Rev. Dr. James Thodathil	A study on Theology of Death in the West Syrian Tradition on the basis of Order of Service of Sunday of the departed
Rev. Dr. Jameson Pallikunnel	Liturgical Space in the West Syrian Liturgical Tradition of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church
Prof. Dr. Jan Van Reeth	The Sabbath of Eternity and the completion of creation (St. Ephrem, In Gen.

- 2.1).:The concept shlm and its meaning.
- Dr. Jan J. van Ginkel Syriac Versions of Kalila and Dimna: On the Adaptation of Indian Literature in the Syriac Tradition
- Protodeacon Dr. Jean-Paul Deschler Appellations and Epithets of the Saints – Similarity and Diversity in Different Traditions.
- Fr. Jiji Joseph SJ What, if anything, is known about the origin of the Odes of Solomon?
- Rev. Dr. Jiphy Francis The Prayers of Epiclesis in the Syriac and the Greek Versions of the Acts of Thomas
- Jimmy Daccache +
(i).Simon Brelaud
(ii). Flavia Ruani Unpublished Syriac inscriptions from the Armenian Syriac Church ruins of Enesh (Turkey)
- Rt. Rev. Dr. John Fenwick How much does a Metropolitan cost? British proposals for Financial Support for the Puthenkur Syrian Clergy in the Early 19th Century
- Rev. Dr. John Kannanthanam The Homily on «Three dead people raised by Christ» by Jacob of Sarug

Rev. Dr. Johns Abraham Konat	Konat Research Library, Pampakuda, India
Rev. Dr. Jose Valiamangalam	The significance of Syriac tradition in the Syro- Malabar Church from the Study of Varthamanappusthakam
Fr. Dr. Joseph Obeid OL	Parole de l'Orient : its past and its future.
Rev. Dr. Jossi Jacob	Influence of Syriac tradition in Ethiopian Orthodox Monasticism
Karen Hamada	Love for Martyrs: The Armenian Translation of Syriac Martyrologies conducted by the Armenian Catholicos Grigor II the Martyrophile (1066-1072) and his successors
Corepiscopa V. Rev. Dr. Kuriakose Moolayil	Resurgence of Vicissitudes: The Syriac Orthodox Church in India
Dr. Kuriakose Valavanolickal	Prayer in the Demonstrations of Aphrahat
Dr. M. Kurian Thomas	Indian Adoption and Adaption of the West Syriac Taksa for the Consecration of the Holy Chrism
Lazarus Thomas	Philosophical Contributions in Syriac Literature

Lukas Pieper

Paulos Mar Gregorios (1922-1996): Between Syriac Heritage, Indian Inculturation and the Ecumenical Movement

Prof. Dr. Martin Tamcke

What Makes a Monk a Monk? Controversy Over the Monastic Ideal in the 6th and 7th Century Syriac Literature

Dr. Mary Hansbury

Path of the Church in Jacob's Revelation at Bethel according to Jacob of Serug

Rev. Dr. Mateusz Potoczny

Biblical Readings in the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Syriac Churches - Praxis and Theology

Fr. Dr. Michal Sadowski
(read by Fr. Dr. M. Potoczny)

Apologetics in Context: Arab Christians and their Approach to the Qur'ân in their Defense of the Trinity in Fi taolio Allâh al-wâhid

Prof. Dr. Muriel Debié

Alexandre le grand en syriaque [Alexander the Great in Syriac]

Fr. Paul Karamel Koyickal

“O Good One, open the door of Your mercy...”; Reflections on Divine Mercy in West Syriac Tradition

Rev. Dr. Pauly Maniyatt	The Theological Significance of the Syriac Term Shawtaputha in the East and West Syriac Liturgies of Eucharist and Marriage
Dr. Philip Michael Forness	Poetry and the transformation of Christological language in Jacob of Serugh's Homily on faith
Rev. Dr. Raju Parakkott	St. Paul in the Homilies of Jacob of Sarug and in Syriac Liturgical Tradition
Roberto Bertozzi	The Patriarch of Tur 'Abdin, Aziz Bar Sobto Abu'l-Ma'ani, the sources about his life, his literary work and some first philological data from the manuscript tradition
Fr. Saju K. Mathai + Lillykutty Saju	The Verb Ethgasam in the Nicene Creed
Dr. Shinichi Muto	Turkicisation of Syriac Christianity as seen in the Khara-Khoto Syro-Turkic documents
Simon Brelaud	The emergence of a Christian identity in a gentile empire: The Christians of the Sasanian Period (3rd-7th centuries)

Simon Burke	Unpublished Syriac Text of Yohannan bar Zobi's Questions and Answers against Heretics and Ishmaelites
Rev. Dr. Stephen Olikal	Assimilation of various cultures in the works of Mar Jacob of Sarug
Rev. Dr. Stephen Plathottathil	Bhaktimarga (Worship) in the Mahabharatha and Syriac Spiritual Tradition
Rev. Dr. Thomas Kollamparampil	St. Ephrem's Hymns on Paradise and the Human P s y c h o - S p i r i t u a l Development
Rev. Dr. Thomas Koonammakkal	Aphrahat and Syriac Didascalia: A connection
Rev. Dr. Thomas Mannooramparampil	The Anaphora of Theodore
Dr. Susan Thomas	Syrian Christian Life World in the 19th century: Gleanings from the Palm Leaves
Varghese George	Jacob of Sarug's Eighth Mimre d-'al Tesbuhto d-Poturo
Fr. Varghese Joseph Kizhakeparambil	Influence of Syriac Literature on Ethiopian Literature
Rev. Dr. Varghese Varghese	The major influences on the themes of the feast of

	Epiphany in the West Syriac Tradition
Fr. Dr. Vibin Bernad	Hymnal Tradition on Mary in Penkito Editions of Mossul and Pampakuda
Fr. Vinu Varghese	Priority of the Month of Nisan in the Patristic and West Syriac Liturgical Tradition
H.E. Dr. Mar Yohannan Yoseph	Contributions to the Syriac Language and Literature by 20th century Metropolitans (Mar Abimalek Timotheus, Mar Thoma Dharmo, Mar Aprem) based on the Church of the East in India
Fr. Dr. Youssef Tannous	L'interprétation du chant syriaque
H.G. Dr. Yuhanon Mar Dioscoros	Ecumenical Dimensions on Bar Ebraya's Christology

Harald Suermann

ASSYRIANS AND CHALDEANS IN IRAQ*

Introduction: Central Question of this Essay

In my essay, I will confine myself to a focus on the Assyrians and Chaldeans in the young Iraqi state. There is a close correlation between the flight and expulsion of the Assyrians on the one hand and the massacre of them on the other hand. Those events should be seen in the context of the political developments and the church structures. Also, the integration of the Chaldeans in the young Iraqi state has to be considered in its political and ecclesiastic context. I will start this paper with an outline of the history of the Assyrians and Chaldeans in Iraq. Afterwards, I will provide a short analysis.

Who are the Assyrians?

Who are the Assyrians, and who are the Chaldeans? It is not easy to give a simple answer to this question. For one thing, the concept of “ethnic identity” in itself is ambiguous. Apart from that, the concept is subject to constant changes in the course of history, and it is instrumentalized for political ends. Later on, this paper will

* This article is based on my communication at the symposium of the Görres-Institut für interdisziplinäre Forschung with the theme “Migration – Flucht – Vertreibung” 2017 in Munich.

address the question to which extent the terms “Assyrians” and “Chaldeans” have been used in the political sphere for the purpose of differentiation and as a means of political debate.

Nowadays, there seems to be a consensus that Assyrians as well as Chaldeans count among the Syrian-speaking Christians. However, this has not always been the case during the past 100 years. After the end of World War I, a delegation of different Assyrian religious communities attended the peace conference in Paris that took place in 1919. According to the definition of this delegation, the Assyrians comprised the following groups: Nestorians, Chaldeans, Jacobites, a Maronite element, Persian Assyrians, Assyrians in Russia, a Muslim Assyrian group, as well as the Shekak and the Yazidis.¹ The Shekak are a Kurdish tribe of the Sunni faith. The Yazidis form a separate religious community of non-Muslim faith. They are often counted among the Kurds. Sometimes, they are also perceived as a separate ethno-religious group. Nowadays, none of the two groups would consider themselves as Assyrians.

Both the Chaldeans and the Assyrians belong to the group of Syrian-speaking Christians and have a common origin in ecclesiastical history. However, their mutual relationship remains problematic, and it is often characterized by demarcation tendencies. This is also reflected in the following statements:

The former Chaldean Patriarch Raphael I. Bidawid (1922-2003) is reported to have said: “Before I became a priest, I was an Assyrian, before I became a bishop, I was an Assyrian. I am an Assyrian today and will remain an Assyrian tomorrow and for all times, and I am proud of it.” Before his death in 2003, he is reported to have pointed out that the term “Chaldean” is just a name for Catholics that belonged to the Churches of the East and is not of

1 Sargon Donabed, „Rethinking Nationalism and an Appellative Conundrum: Historiography and Politics in Iraq”, *National Identities* 14, Nr. 4 (Dezember 2012): 410, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2012.733208>.

any ethnic significance. His successor is Emmanuel III. Delly (1927-2014), however, is reported to have stated in an interview in the year 2006 that every Chaldean who refers to himself as an Assyrian is a traitor and that every Assyrian who refers to himself as a Chaldean is also a traitor.²

In this difference in views, it becomes apparent that the use of the terms “Chaldeans” and “Assyrians”, that are alternately used to refer to either the ethnic or the ecclesial identity of a person, is problematic. Also, the idea that each the Assyrians as well as the Chaldeans form their own separate ethnic churches rather adds to the vagueness of the term, and it is especially this vagueness that opens the door to political instrumentalisation.

The History of Flight, Violent Displacement and Migration in Iraq

In this paper I will not expand on the events that led to the flight, expulsion and migration of Assyrians and Chaldeans into the Iraqi area.

The persecution and expulsion of the Assyrians began between 1915 and 1918 during World War I³ — this paper will not address the expulsions that took place prior to this period. The events of

2 Donabed, 411.

3 For example Jacques Rhétoré, *Les chrétiens aux bêtes: souvenirs de la guerre sainte proclamée par les Turcs contre les chrétiens en 1915*, Histoire (Paris: Les Éd. du Cerf, 2005), passim; Suha Rassam, *Christianity in Iraq: its origins and development to the present day* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2005), 105–32; F. Kristian Girling, „The Chaldean Catholic Church: A Study in Modern History, Ecclesiology and Church-State Relations (2003–2013)” (Diss. Thesis, University of London, 2015), 19–83, <http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/sites/default/files/docs/publications/theses/Girling,%20K,%20Thesis.pdf>; Florence Hellot-Bellier, *Chroniques de massacres annoncés: les Assyro-Chaldéens d’Iran et du Hakkari face aux ambitions des empires: 1896-1920*, Cahiers d’études syriaques 2 (Paris: Geuthner, 2014), passim.

that period are recognized as Genocide, and it all happened at the same time as the Armenian Genocide and the persecution of the Greek under the regime of the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire, whose accession to power had taken place in 1908.

Search for a new habitat for the Assyrians

The British had enticed the Assyrians to take their side in the war with the promise to grant them the full reign of a territory of their own. In this context, the term “Assyrians”, mainly refers to the group of Christians for whom the Patriarch of the Apostolic Church of the East assumes a leading role on the ecclesiastical as well as political level. At the beginning, the promise of the concession of a territory of their own remained valid through the intervention of the League of Nations or the Permanent Mandates Commission, even at a time when there were no longer any prospects of success for the Assyrians to get their own territory. The vague position of the Mandates Commission has certainly contributed to the fact that the Assyrians still cherished their illusions for a long time.

When all hope was lost for the Assyrians to get their own territory or to gain autonomy one day, the British and the League of Nations requested the Assyrians to become Iraqi citizens. At the same time, however, the British mandate powers built Levies — troops — from Assyrians in order to secure their position of power in Iraq.

Independence of Iraq and the Levies

When the British Mandate in Iraq slowly approached its end, this marked the beginning of difficult times for the Assyrians who lived in this region. After the hope for a territory of their own became futile, Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII. (1908-1975), the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Apostolic Church of the East, called for greater autonomy of the Assyrians on Iraqi territory and asked the United Kingdom and the League of Nations for their support in this matter.

His followers, who made up the group of the British Levies, were all concentrated in the North of the country. Thus, de facto, there would have been the possibility for them to form an Assyrian enclave.⁴ However, the Assyrians learned that they were unwelcome in the region. For this reason, several tribal people had tried to return to their home region of Hakkari between 1925 and 1932. However, the Turkish state prevented those attempts.⁵

In October 1931, the Assyrians had presented a petition to the League of Nations in which they proposed the mass emigration to Syria and several European countries. Their intention was to draw the attention of the League of Nations to the unsolved problem once more. The League of Nations considered this petition in the autumn of the following year. However, an Assyrian Levies officer submitted a manifesto to the British commander of the Assyrian Levies on June 1, 1932, according to which all Assyrians wanted to leave the Levies on July 1 in order to gather with all Assyrians in the region of Dohuk-Amadiya at the behest of Mar Eshai Shimun. The aim was likely to gain autonomy with a coup de main.⁶

When Iraq became independent on October 3, 1932, a new plan for the settlement of the Assyrians was in place. After the League of Nations had considered the different aspects brought forward by the independent Iraqi government, it adopted a resolution. This resolution envisaged, to the extent possible, homogeneous units for the settlement of the Assyrians instead of following the Mandates Commission's recommendation to have a single coherent settlement area. The Patriarch, who requested a coherent settlement area and full autonomy, protested in vain against the establishment of several

4 Girling, „The Chaldean Catholic Church”, 93.

5 Donabed, „Rethinking Nationalism and an Appellative Conundrum”; Annemasse, „The Assyrian Tragedy”, Februar 1934, 19, <http://www.aina.org/books/tat.pdf>.

6 Khaldun S. Husry, „The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, Nr. 02 (April 1974): 167–68, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074380002780X>.

homogeneous settlement units.⁷ Some Assyrian leaders still believed or hoped that the League of Nations would offer them an enclosed settlement area.⁸

The fear of the Assyrians was significantly increased by acts of violence committed by Iraqis against the Assyrians in places such as Mosul where the two ethnic groups lived together.⁹

The majority society in Iraq perceived the non-Arabic Assyrian Christians as nothing more than British protégés and henchmen.¹⁰ From the Iraqi nationalists' perspective, the Assyrians were refugees from Turkey who should show more gratitude to the Iraq and who were not entitled to claim any special rights for themselves. At that time, the Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa'id warned the Assyrians against any actions that might embarrass the Iraqi government or that might provoke feelings of envy in other elements of the Iraqi nation.¹¹ In the Arabic political circles, the opinion arose that the British government wanted to incite the minorities to revolt in order to destabilize the state and in order to prevent the Iraq to join the League of Nations.¹²

After the country had gained independence in October 1932, the government asked the Patriarch of the Apostolic Church of the East to refrain from getting involved in the politics of his people in the future. However, the Patriarch held the opinion that his position bestowed him with religious and worldly power. In order to weaken the political power of the Patriarch, the government had incited his opponents to a rebellion against him behind his

7 John Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East: encounters with Western Christian missions, archaeologists, and colonial power*, Studies in Christian mission, v. 26 (Leiden/; Boston, MA: Brill, 2000), 189.

8 Joseph, 190.

9 Joseph, 190.

10 Joseph, 190.

11 Joseph, 191; Husry, „The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)”, 166.

12 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 191–92.

back and had appointed the archenemy of the Patriarch as president of the committee for the Assyrian settlement.¹³ The conflicts within the Assyrian population increased. One group wanted to embrace their life in Iraq. Another group, however, was adamant that the Assyrian community should be accorded special rights, and this group claimed the recognition as millet and not only as religious minority.¹⁴

The Patriarch blatantly ignored the group that wanted to integrate. He spoke of a violent submission that disregarded the minority rights that the League of Nations had promised to the Assyrians. He utterly refused any cooperation with the government, which hampered the successful implementation of the human settlement scheme that the council of the League of Nations had recommended. On the strength of this, the government summoned the Patriarch to Bagdad for consultations. They informed him that, while they recognized his spiritual authority over the Assyrians, they refused to grant the Patriarch, as well as any other spiritual leaders of any ethnic group in the Iraq, any temporal power. They wanted to the Patriarch to sign a written obligation not to hamper the settlement schemes of the government in any way and to be a loyal subject of the king at all times.¹⁵ The Patriarch answered he readily agreed with a settlement of the Assyrians as loyal Iraqi. However, he refused to sign the guarantee that, in his opinion, would have been tantamount to abandoning his people. According to him, his temporal power as a Patriarch was inextricably linked with the historical tradition of his country.¹⁶ The ensuing arrest of the Patriarch in Baghdad further incited the defiance towards the government among his adherents in the north. The situation was further exacerbated when the Iraqi parliament and the press poisoned the

13 Joseph, 192.

14 Joseph, 192; Husry, „The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)”, 168.

15 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 193.

16 Joseph, 193–94.

atmosphere by voicing hostile remarks on the Patriarch and his people.¹⁷

In the spring of 1933, Malik Yaqu, a former official of the Levies, took a stand against assuming the Iraqi nationality and against the settlement as offered by the central government on behalf of the Assyrian Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun. Two hundred armed men accompanied him on a propaganda trip. The Iraqi government sent its army to the region of Dohuk in order to intimidate Yaqu and to prevent the Assyrians from joining him.¹⁸

Flight to Syria and the Simele Massacre

In these times of massive tensions, an assembly was convened in the residence of the governor of Mosul, to which also several important Assyrian leaders had been invited. This was the first time that they were officially informed that the League of Nations had rejected their petition for autonomy and their settlement as a homogeneous group. They advised the Assyrians to accept the piece of land that the Iraqi government had benevolently offered them and to become Iraqi citizens with equal rights. At the same time, it was made clear that the Patriarch was expected to limit his engagement to spiritual concerns. They were also given the option to leave the country. However, they were warned against an emigration to Syria, which was a French mandated territory.¹⁹

After the meeting, there were violent conflicts between the two Assyrian fractions. The fraction that supported the Patriarch decided to flee to Syria as the French were still seen as guardians of the Christians in the Middle East. Around 700 armed men led by Malik Yaqu, together with other tribal leaders who were loyal to the

17 Joseph, 194.

18 Husry, „The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)”, 172–73.

19 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 194–95; Husry, „The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)”, 173.

Patriarch, crossed the Tigris to Syria. Their wives and children were left behind.²⁰

After this group had taken refuge in Syria, the Iraqi government sent a troop to the border to prevent their eventual return unless they voluntarily surrendered their guns. The French administrative authorities fell short of the expectations of the mountain population. Therefore, the group decided to return to Iraq after only ten days. The majority of people understood that their leaders had deceived them.²¹

Conflicts in Dairabun

In Dairabun, the Iraqi Assyrians, approximately 600 men led by Malik Yaku, were faced with the Iraqi armed forces. Previously, the French had disarmed the Assyrians and equipped them with light weapons. Most of the men wanted to lay down these arms, but a group of hard-liners was bracing itself against this approach. This led to a battle. After the Assyrians had realized that their efforts to win this battle were futile, some of them retreated to Syria, others tried to reach their villages in groups of eight or nine persons.²² These conflicts increased feelings of hostility, and there were rumours that 1500 armed Assyrians were roaming around the country.²³ Indeed, the Iraqi army prosecuted the Assyrians that returned to their villages and shot many of these Assyrians immediately.²⁴

The Simele Massacre

One week later, there was a massacre of 600 Assyrian village inhabitants by the Iraqi army under the anti-Assyrian general Bakra Sidqi, with the support of police forces and irregular Kurdish forces.

20 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 195.

21 Joseph, 196; Husry, „The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)”, 175.

22 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 196.

23 Joseph, 196.

24 Husry, „The Assyrian Affair of 1933 (I)”, 173–76.

On August 11, 1933, 305 men, four women and six children were executed with machine guns in Simele after they had duly surrendered their guns to the police station. They had before obtained the official promise of a life in safety under the Iraqi government. Arabic tribal people pillaged all the surrounding villages, 60 in this case, after having been encouraged to do this. The inhabitants of the district of Sheikhan who had always been loyal to the government and who had always opposed the Patriarch suffered the most.²⁵

The Christians remained in their homes for the whole month for fear of further violence against them. After the massacre, people welcomed the Iraqi troops as heroes in Baghdad because they were said to have defended their home country. Bakr Sidqi received the welcome of a hero in Baghdad. He had achieved to defeat the undefeatable Assyrians.²⁶

In mid-August 1933, the Patriarch was exiled to Cyprus, and his Iraqi citizenship was withdrawn. From Cyprus, the Patriarch was flown to the USA in 1940, where he stayed until 2015.²⁷ When a meeting between the Patriarch Mar Eshai Shimun and

25 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 196–97; Khaldun S. Husry, „The Assyrian Affair Of 1933 (II)”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5, Nr. 03 (Juni 1974): 344–48, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002074380003498X>.

26 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 197; Husry, „The Assyrian Affair Of 1933 (II)”, 352–56; Mariam Georgis, „Nation and Identity Construction in Modern Iraq: (Re)Inserting the Assyrians”, in *Unsettling Colonial Modernity in Islamicate Contexts*, hg. von Siavash Saffari u. a. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 79, [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WnXXDgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=%22Path+in+the+Middle+East+\(Boston:+Beacon+Press,+2010\)%3B+Keith%22+%22and+the+Roots+of+Terror+\(New+York:+Three+Leaves+Press,%22+%22projects,+has+attempted+to+construct+a+homogeneous%22+%22&ots=hnK6a84a_d&sig=uwMSh5dsl3FNOP1Bvu9NfZ0xIjw](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=WnXXDgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=%22Path+in+the+Middle+East+(Boston:+Beacon+Press,+2010)%3B+Keith%22+%22and+the+Roots+of+Terror+(New+York:+Three+Leaves+Press,%22+%22projects,+has+attempted+to+construct+a+homogeneous%22+%22&ots=hnK6a84a_d&sig=uwMSh5dsl3FNOP1Bvu9NfZ0xIjw).

27 Donabed, „Rethinking Nationalism and an Appellative Conundrum”, 415.

representatives of Iraq, Syria and Iran took place in Washington in 1948, the Patriarch relinquished all claims regarding his temporal power and advised his adherents to live as loyal citizens in all the countries belonging to the Middle East. In 1968, the Assyrian Universal Alliance filled the political power vacuum that was thus created.²⁸

The Chaldeans under Patriarch Joseph Emmanuel II. Thoma (1900-1947)

The Chaldean Patriarch Joseph Emmanuel II. Thoma pursued different goals for the Chaldean Church than the Patriarch of the Apostolic Church of the East. His policy was based on the following three principles: 1. Acceptance of the ruling government as long as there was no interference with the religious concerns of the Chaldeans. 2. Separation between the church and the state. 3. Commitment to the Arabic national identity.²⁹ With this basic attitude, he accepted the political circumstances and did not adopt a hostile stance vis-à-vis the young Iraqi state. His successors also adopted this political approach.

His membership in the Iraqi Senate and his personal relationship with King Faisal I had a beneficial effect on his relationship with the Iraqi state. Both these facts facilitated the integration in new social realities.

On August 20, 1933, after the massacres and perhaps under the pressure of the Iraqi government, the Chaldean Patriarch Joseph Emmanuel II Thoma, the Chaldean priest Wadisho of Alqosh, as well as Athanasius Thoma Kassir, the Syrian-Orthodox Bishop of

28 Robert DeKelaita, „The origins and development of Assyrian nationalism” (University of Chicago, (submitted to the Committee on International Relations), 2006), 11, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/db7f/b11bc84bc320e2822b873f0b66c13676cb7f.pdf>.

29 Girling, „The Chaldean Catholic Church”, 95.

Mosul, sent letters to the government in which they expressed their support for the Iraqi regime. The Assyrians were now increasingly identified with the followers of the Apostolic Church of the East, which was also due to the political interference of Mar Eshai Shimun.³⁰

The Chaldean population rapidly grew in the important cities of Baghdad, Basra and Kirkuk. In these cities, also new churches were built. The focus of the Chaldean Church moved from Mosul to Baghdad. This also changed the Chaldean society that developed from an agrarian community into an urban community.³¹ However, notwithstanding the high level of integration, many Chaldeans emigrated to so-called Christian countries that offered even greater freedom in religious matters.³²

The new home of the Assyrians in Syria

According to the information provided by the League of Nations, 6.200 Assyrians have left the Nineveh plains and headed towards Syria in the direct aftermath of the Simele massacres. In the following years, another 15.000 have followed their example. The majority of these people have settled in the region of Dschazira.

After the events of the year 1933, the Iraqi government urged the Council of the League of Nations to find a new home for those Assyrians who wanted to leave the country or who were incapable to integrate themselves in the Iraqi state. Brazil and British Guyana were identified as possible countries for the settlement. After the idea of a settlement in those countries had been abandoned, the swampy Ghab lowlands in Syria were chosen as an alternative settlement area. However, also this plan was abandoned as Syrian nationalists considered the settlement of new Christian minorities in

30 Donabed, „Rethinking Nationalism and an Appellative Conundrum”, 414; Sargon Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century*, 2016, 230–34.

31 Girling, „The Chaldean Catholic Church”, 95–97.

32 Girling, 98.

their country as a dangerous experiment.³³ After four years of intense but fruitless search, the Council of the League of Nations gave up.³⁴ Instead, the Council called for turning the refuge in Syria that had temporarily been granted to the Assyrians who had fled in 1933 into a permanent residence for these people. The Council invoked those Assyrians who wanted to leave the country to stay with their brothers who wanted to remain in the country. The Iraqi foreign minister promised that the Assyrian community should have the status of a regular minority.³⁵

The French mandate power allowed the families of the men who had temporarily sought refuge in Syria in 1933 to come to Syria. This involved about 2,100 persons. There were several more expansions of the settlement schemes. The settlement took place at the banks of the Khabur River in 32 villages. The region at the border with Turkey attracted other minorities: Syrian-Orthodox, Syrian-Catholic, Chaldeans, Armenians, Kurds, and several Jews.

Return to the old homeland of Persia

In addition, Christians from Persia were brought to Iraq by the British in 1918. However, those people refused to agree to any settlement schemes that did not involve their homeland of Persia. After the closure of the refugee camps, they just wanted to return to their beloved city of Urmia. Although concerns were expressed, and they were warned of impending difficulties, nearly all of them returned to Persia via Baghdad. However, those who had the option — and this concerned about 1,000 persons — went to Europe or America to move in with relatives or friends in those countries. Approximately 2,000 people stayed in Baghdad. Of those who returned to Persia, about 5,000 went to Hamadan, 1,000 to Kermanshah, and 4,000 went to Tabriz and Maragah.³⁶

33 Joseph, *The modern Assyrians of the Middle East*, 199.

34 Joseph, 199–200.

35 Joseph, 200.

36 Joseph, 207.

Finally, the Persian government allowed the Assyrians to return to Urmia.³⁷

Differentiation from other Assyrian Groups

The former Syrian-Orthodox metropolitan Afrem Barsaum had been part of the Assyrian delegation that had been sent to the Peace Conference in Paris in 1919. He considered himself as an Assyrian, and also the others regarded him as an Assyrian. In 1932, he became the Patriarch of the Syrian-Orthodox Church, and he moved the residence from Dair Zafaran in Mardin, Turkey, to Homs in Syria. After the Simele massacre of the year 1933, the new Patriarch adopted a strong anti-Assyrian attitude that had an influence on his whole community. The name component “Assyrian” that had been widely used until then was replaced by the term “Syrian”. Until the very end, there were Syrian-Orthodox communities — particularly in the United States of America — that referred to themselves as Assyrian-Apostolic Churches. In 1952, the Patriarch published a brochure that was entitled “The Syrian Church of Antioch, its Name and History”³⁸. In this brochure, he strictly rejected the use of the term “Assyrian” in the context of the Syrian-Orthodox Church and its members³⁹.

The reason for this change of name was that armed Assyrians, more precisely adherents of the Apostolic Church of the East, came to Syria and settled in the same region as the Syrian-Orthodox population. In order to avoid a possible confrontation with the Syrian authorities that were still under French mandate, the differentiation had to be visible also in the choice of name⁴⁰.

37 Joseph, 207.

38 *Ignatius Afrem I. Barsum, The Syrian Church of Antioch: its name and history* (Hackensack, N.J.: Archdiocese of the Syrian Church of Antioch in the United States and Canada, 1952).

39 Sargon Donabed und Shamiran Mako, „Ethno-Cultural and Religious Identity of Syrian Orthodox Christians”, *Chronos* 19 (2009): 80–81.

40 Donabed und Mako, 94.

Analysis of the reasons for flight and violent displacement

From a Multi-Ethnic State to a Nation State

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, that had been a multi-ethnic state, nation states were established. The multi-ethnic state hardly faced any problems to unite different ethnic groups in one state. A peaceful coexistence of the different groups in a central state was more or less successful. However, already toward the end of the 19th century nationalistic tendencies arose in the Ottoman Empire that led to the persecution and suppression of minorities. The term “nation” was also coined by the political entity of the millet. The membership in a millet depended on the respective religious or confessional affiliation of a person. The spiritual leader of a millet possessed temporal as well as spiritual power. The newly founded national states perceived themselves as states of a dominant ethnic group that became a nation and to which all other ethnic groups had to adjust themselves.

Among others, Iraq that became Arabic and Turkey that became Turkish developed after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The dominant ethnic groups (ethnos) became constitutive people or nations (demos). In Turkey, there was a violent displacement of minorities in the following years. The ethnic groups that had been displaced by World War I were denied the return to their home area that was now on Turkish soil. This also applied to the Assyrians from Hakkari. In Turkey as well as in Iraq, only the Kurds, who were numerous enough, could defy the dominant ethnic group and the exerted pressure to conform. The number of Assyrians, however, was too small. They incurred the hostilities of the ultra-nationalists during the process of state and nation building in Iraq. Among the important components of nation building processes in Iraq were the denial of events and their concealment with the aim to safeguard the interests of the region.⁴¹

41 Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History*, 222.

The military was considered as the training place of the nation where different parts of the nation should grow closer together. The military was supposed to develop into dominant power elite next to the royal house that should watch over the nation building processes. The Assyrians were regarded as a foreign, rivalling power that served British interests. Through their involvement in the levies, they were a component of this foreign power in Iraq, and they had their own ecclesiastic power elite. The Iraqi army had commenced its rise to political power with the massacre of the Assyrians, and it became a tool to gain political control also in the following coups⁴².

Otherization

The term “otherization” was introduced by Kathleen Taylor, a neuro-scientist. This term was coined to describe the mechanisms at work when people are excluded from their own tribe. It is possible to transfer the term and the procedure also to other contexts. The term refers to a process of turning a person into someone different and of drawing a clear line between “us” and “them”. In this process, the others are devalued as inhuman or as beasts. Those processes contributed to the exclusion of the Assyrians from the Iraqi nation and the ensuing massacres, flight and expulsion.

Mariam Georgis presents the marginalization from a different perspective. In her work, she departs from the prerequisite that one ethnic group occupies the territory during the process of nation building. In the case of the Iraq, this was the case with the Arabs. The Assyrians did not intend to become Arabs. For this reason, they were classified as foreigners. They were considered as refugees from Turkey. Mariam Georgis focusses on a selection of scientific contributions to illustrate that the marginalization is standard praxis in scientific literature until the present day⁴³.

42 Donabed, 228.

43 Georgis, „Nation and Identity Construction in Modern Iraq: (Re)Inserting the Assyrians”, passim.

Both perspectives complement one another. In the process of nation building, the aim is to integrate and assimilate the population into the nation that is marked by prevailing conceptions and symbols. Those groups that are unwilling to assimilate are subjected to otherization processes. This provides a welcome pretext to fight them as inhuman creatures and to destroy them in their foreignness.

People stylized the Assyrians as puppets of the British. There were reproached to be tools used by the British in their efforts to destroy the newly founded Iraq. Rumours were spread in order to discredit the Assyrians even more. It was reported that they had desecrated the corpses of Iraqi soldiers or had marauded through the country in armed groups. Those rumours spread although the French had disarmed the Assyrians and had duly passed the information on the disarmament to the Iraqi government. The accusations served the interests of the national brotherhood (Ia al-Wam anî) that called for the destruction of all foreign elements⁴⁴.

The Assyrians are considered as an opponent of the Iraqi nation, and they are stylized as beasts and fiends in order to find justifications for fighting and massacring them. The main responsible parties for the massacres were later hailed as heroes and promoted in Baghdad.

However, the Assyrians themselves played no small part in the process of otherization. They had distanced themselves from the Iraqi and claimed their own state territory or rather their autonomy that was to be obtained by the temporal power the Patriarch possessed. This in turn collided with the idea of national identity of the Iraqi and the state formation. They refused to be integrated into the nation and claimed their own parallel power.

It was also due to the size of the group of the Assyrians that these people had to suffer from massacres, flight and violent displacement. The Kurds, who also demanded autonomy, were

44 Donabed, *Reforging a Forgotten History*, 229.

enough to defend themselves against the consequences of processes of otherization.

The situation of the Chaldeans was different. Their Patriarch did not insist on possessing temporal power, and he did not resist the process of Arabization. On the contrary, the Chaldeans integrated in the new state and differentiated themselves from the “foreign” and revolting Assyrians like the Syrian-Orthodox Christians, although they came from the same cultural and linguistic background. They also participated in the nation building processes or, at least, did not reject them. Through this attitude, they could become an integral part of the new nation and participate in the social development.

Assimilation or Inculturation

If the sole reason for the prosecution of the Assyrians was their being Assyrians, the solution was to stop being Assyrians. Therefore, many Assyrians denied their ethnic affiliation. This development was fostered by the long-standing conflicts between the Chaldean Church and the Church of the East. It had repeatedly been emphasized that 40.000 Assyrians had fled from Turkey, and the Assyrians had therefore been considered more and more as foreigners. Due to this, there were attempts at demarcation during the years 1920-50, especially after the Simele massacres, among those Assyrians who did not stand in any direct relationship with the Assyrians of the massacre. They severed all ties to them in the private and public spheres and henceforth referred to themselves as Arab Christians⁴⁵.

The Chaldean Church began to see itself more and more as a merely religious community without any political ambitions. Later on, it referred to its members as Iraqi, Iraqi Christians or Arab Christians. They no longer considered themselves as a part of a larger Assyrian community. Similar considerations applied to the Syrian-Orthodox Church.

45 Donabed, 246.

On the whole, the Chaldeans entertained positive relationships with the different Iraqi regimes after their demarcation from the Assyrians/followers of the Apostolic Church of the East. The majority of the members of the Chaldean community lived in close vicinity of Arab-dominated cities or in the cities themselves. The voluntary migration from the villages to the bigger cities of Southern or central Iraq was part of their attempts to show their desire for integration. Through this strategy, the Chaldean Church survived much better than the Apostolic Church of the East and even achieved a certain level of economic and socio-political prosperity. The situation was quite similar for the Syrian-Orthodox who demarcated from the armed Assyrians⁴⁶.

The assimilation policy pursued by the Iraqi government was initially sparked by the question of the power structures. This involved the integration of the different ethnic and other groups in the new state. A less high priority was attached to the cultural assimilation. However, there must also have been a cultural assimilation when the Assyrians and other minorities were settled in areas that were marked by the dominant majority of the Iraqi population. The Chaldeans had not resisted the assimilation policy and had accepted the new power structures. They successfully integrated in the new state structures. However, a cultural assimilation could only be realized to a certain extent. The Chaldeans increasingly moved to the cities, especially to Baghdad, and they adjusted to the respective ways of life. They considered themselves as Arab or Iraqi Christians. This suggests that they had largely assimilated. However, they could never get past their minority status. They remained a minority that followed a religion that was different from the religion of the majority. The distinguishing mark of religion never receded so much into the background that the Chaldeans were considered as citizens and no longer as minorities. The more emphasis was put on the

46 Donabed, 231–32.

religious identity, the more the minority status of the Christians became evident.

Inculturation in the theological sense is the implementation of the Church and the Christian values in another culture. It implies a conscious act that is executed by the Church. Has the Chaldean Church inculturated in the nascent Iraqi culture? Has it implemented the Church and the Christian values in this new culture without losing its own identity? This question requires a detailed answer and further investigation. This essay can only provide certain elements of a possible answer.

The Chaldean Church has better survived in Iraq in its role as a church organization than the Assyrian Church. At least, this is valid for the decades before the American invasion. The Chaldean church has achieved to build on its expertise in the spheres of teaching and charity work, if only to a limited degree under an authoritarian regime. To this extent, the inculturation of the Chaldean Church has succeeded. Unlike the Assyrian Church, the Chaldean Church was not endangered in its very existence. Another important issue is whether the Chaldean Church has lost its identity through the inculturation and assimilation process. The Assyrian Church has resisted all assimilation politics in order not to jeopardize its old traditions and its own identity. The situation was different for the Chaldean Church. For them, the temporal power that their Patriarch had possessed during the period of the millet system was of no significant importance, and the Chaldean Church was thus ready to abandon this power. For the Chaldean Church, this did not mean the loss of a key marker of identity. As a part of the worldwide Catholic Church, it had come to realize that it is not bound to any specific culture. The Church lives and becomes a reality in a certain cultural context. If this culture is subject to change, the Church has to adapt to the respective new culture. Although the Catholic Church had not yet formulated a proper theology of inculturation, people could already draw on

practical experiences of a Church in different cultural contexts. This might have shaped the thought of the Chaldean Patriarch Joseph Emmanuel Thoma who had completed his theological training with the Jesuits in Beirut.

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JOHN THE SOLITARY (Letter to Hesychius)

Be a proclaimer of the Gospel at all times. You will become a proclaimer of the Gospel when you lay upon yourself the Gospel's way of life. Show to the world that the other world exists. You will show that the other world exists when you despise this world.

My brother Hesychius, we should realize that we live in a world of deception. If we recognize that we are going astray, error will not surreptitiously get the better of us. It is like the case of those who see a dream. If they realize in their dream that they are just seeing a dream and not reality, then they will not be led astray by what they see. The same applies to the person who is held worthy to be aware that he lives in this world in a state of deception. Such a person is not perturbed by love of material objects.

So my beloved, let us perfect ourselves before we depart from the body. Each day of our lives we should imagine to be our last day. Like someone who is seeking for the merchandise of salvation you should daily take stock of your own merchandise, to see wherein there lies loss for you, and wherein profit.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp 93-94).

Thomas Kollamparampil

ST. EPHREM'S HYMNS ON PARADISE AND THE HUMAN PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Why the human psycho-spiritual development envisaged by St. Ephrem is so important and inspiring? Ephrem's vision is so resourceful and inspiring so as to provide theological solutions to many present day questions. First of all in the development of Christian theology, in connection with the Greek dualism and analytical mentality, much aversion to the material world and world developments crept in and that is called the 'neo-Gnosticism'¹ in many cultures. This needs to be rectified. Secondly, theological

1 cf. Placuit Deo , n.14 teaches: «The salvific economy is also opposed to trends that propose a merely interior salvation. Gnosticism, indeed, associates itself with a negative view of the created order, which is understood as a limitation on the absolute freedom of the human spirit. Consequently, salvation is understood as freedom from the body and from the concrete relationships in

traditions happened to deviate from the basic biblical and salvation historical foundations to more rationalistic and logical approaches that are more empirical than theological, ignoring almost totally, the mystical paths of theology. This needs rectification. Thirdly Ephrem's vision of human psycho-spiritual development for salvation is a synchronic vision, founded on the authentic ways of the scriptural revelations and, as practically spelt out in the salvation historical vision, as depicted in the Old and New Testaments. Ephrem's vision, rooted in the patrimony of the Syriac Christianity, shows far more rectified visions deeply rooted in the Scriptures, with the proper holistic vision of human development in body and soul.

1. Mystery of Paradise and Ephrem's Mode of Theological Reflections

The Hymns on Paradise and *The Commentary on Genesis* by St. Ephrem are rich resources for a dynamic understanding of the divine-human engagements in the aspects of divine mercy and human salvation attained through human discernment and spiritual combat. Ephrem works out his rich theological synthesis, based on the biblical narratives on the Adamic story in the book of Genesis onwards. He shows the ways of going beyond the letter of the biblical narratives so as to bring out the inner dynamics of the economy of divine-human relationships underlying the salvific history of humankind. Ephrem's symbolic, poetical abstractions, based on the biblical vision of salvation history, have much analogical implications that are applicable to human cultural, social and religious developments of different peoples and varied times of history. Thus, Ephrem's views have deep fluidity and meaningful applicability to the emerging human cultures and new behavioural patterns of all times.

The present theological reflection is based on Ephrem's exposition of the Genesis story of Adam in the *Hymns on Paradise* and some passages in the *Commentary on Genesis*.

Even if Paradise is described in terrestrial and anthropomorphic terms, it is spiritual in essence (*HPara* XI, 4).² The creator of Paradise himself has clothed himself in visible and experiential terms so as to redeem all. Then by all means Paradise that is spiritually dominant can be described in analogical terrestrial terms (*HPara* XI, 5). One has to go beyond the metaphors used to describe Paradise; then only the bond of divine mercy that clothed itself in human terms for all, would be made clear (*HPara* XI, 6-7).

2. Human Dignity and the Divine Economy

In Ephrem's vision, of the beauty and splendor of Paradise provide only a sign of the superior glory and splendor of Adam/humanity, the real inheritor of Paradise (*HPara* VI, 6). Basically, it was for Adam alone Paradise was created. Adam's heart is superior to the buds of Paradise; his words are superior to its fruits. Rational speech of Adam remains more tastier than all produces of Paradise. Truthfulness and love in the human

which a person lives. In as much as we are saved «by means of offering the body of Jesus Christ» (Heb 10:10; cf. Col 1:22), true salvation, contrary to being a liberation from the body, also includes its sanctification (cf. Rom 12:1). The human body was shaped by God, who inscribed within it a language that invites the human person to recognize the gifts of the Creator and to live in communion with one's brothers and sisters (cf. *Laudato si*, n. 155). The Savior re-established and renewed this original language by his Incarnation and his paschal mystery and communicated it in the economy of the sacraments. Thanks to the sacraments, Christians are able to live faithful to the flesh of Christ and, as a result, in fidelity to the kind of relationships that he gave us. This type of relationality particularly calls for the care of all suffering humanity through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy» (cf. *Misericordia et misera*, n. 20).

- 2 *HPara* = Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise (For an English translation, see Sebastian Brock, *St Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise*, Vladimir's Seminary Press, New York, 1990).

community surpasses the fruitful plants and the sweetening scents of Paradise (*HPara VI*, 6). There is an active correspondence between the created Paradise and each human individual in person as well as the community of the whole humanity. The virtuous life of humans on earth is, in reality, the Paradisiacal life and a fulfillment. Hence, Ephrem calls the virtuous people ‘saints’. The ‘assembly of saints’ of this world echoes Paradise on earth and it is the Church in reality (*HPara VI*, 8).

The breeze of Paradise is full of life-giving nourishments, on derived terms, from that ‘breath of life’ breathed into Adam (*Gen 2:7*). As natural breeze nourishes wheat and corn, the spiritual breeze nourishes the rational and spiritual spheres of human beings (*HPara IX*, 9-10). This is the mode of spiritual nourishment, given to the spiritual beings, as etherial food and drink. Even in the material world the natural air is needed for all plants and vegetative life as well as for the fire to get itself burning; so also in the spiritual sphere the air of Paradise is the principle of life (*HPara IX*, 14-15). Thus, in a sense, air is the ‘bread of our bread’ (*HPara IX*, 16), the nourishment for our body and soul, as implied in the infusion of the ‘breath of life’ in the nostrils of Adam (*Gen 2:7*).

The breath of life infused into Adam needs to function abundantly for the fuller realization of the ‘image and likeness of God’ in humanity. This image and likeness is of the Trinitarian God. Ephrem has clear teachings on the functions and correlations between the Triune God in the human triad of body, soul/person and spirit. The divine economy in Adam is for an upward integration, in the mode of human body putting on the beauty of the soul, and the soul in turn the beauty of the spirit and the spirit would then put on the very likeness of God’s majesty. It is a psycho-spiritual progression, as Ephrem explains:

At the end the body will put on
the beauty of the soul, the soul will put on that of the spirit,

while the spirit shall put on the very likeness of God's majesty.³
(*Hymns on Paradise IX, 20*).

Body and soul are complementary and co-essential in the created humanity. Body gets its ordered life by the soul and soul expresses itself through the body (*HPara VIII, 4*). In Ephrem's metaphor, body is the lyre of the soul (*HPara VIII, 2*). Soul is like an embryo that needs word and thought to express itself; moreover, soul needs senses and the body to shine out and act out in the world (*HPara VIII, 5-6*). Into the fashioned human body the soul was breathed into for life. So, both became active by mutual enhancement as in the mode of co-essentiality between them (*HPara VIII, 8*). Ephrem was convinced of the dignity of human body on par with the soul.⁴ The union of body and soul are needed, both, in life and resurrection. Thus, 'entering' and 'going out' of Paradise are tantamount to attaining fuller life in resurrection or failing to attain it (*HPara VIII, 9*).

Adam was given the status of a priest so as to function in the outer area of the tabernacle of the given Paradise and thus attain the eligibility to enter into the holy of holies of Paradise where the Tree of Life has been set (*HPara III, 16-17*). Obedience to the commandments is the sacrifice Adam-priest has to do (*HPara III, 9-14*). But for obeying the commandments Adam is helped by the divine instructions (*Gen 2:16-17*) and the given faculties of perception and discernment. Through the divine image in him, Adam is empowered to understand the mind and the plan of God, and thus to be a true prophet of God among the creatures. He perceives

3 Tr. Sebastian Brock, *St Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise*, 143.

4 Here Ephrem's *Hymns on Faith, XIV.5*, is quite powerful, stressing the glory of the body (as rendered in English by Sebastian Brock, *St. Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise, 28*): "The soul is Your bride, the body Your bridal chamber, Your guests are the senses and the thoughts. And if a single body is a wedding feast for You, how great is Your banquet for the whole Church!"

the created world with his senses of the body and governs the same with the power of discernment infused in him. This governing power established Adam as a King/Shepherd in the world-order of management (*HPara* XIII, 3-4; III, 14). The divine instruction from the side of the spirit and the sensorial perception from the side of the body empower his soul/person to arrive at a balanced decision. This is the field of his free will, the unique power given only to human beings, among the creatures for psycho-spiritual development (*HPara* VI:10, 13, 15; VII, 31; XII,18).

Ephrem's poetic logic finds insightful relationships between the fair Garden of Eden with its Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, and the pure Church with its implanted Word. The fair Garden and the pure Church are implicating the whole humanity, both, old and new. While in the fair Garden of Eden the Tree of Knowledge gave joyful delights and admonitions,⁵ the implanted Word gave delightful promises and fearful warnings in the pure Church (*HPara* VI, 7, 10). In both cases those who give heed to the admonitions and warnings in the face of delightful promises attain victory. Those who do not give heed end up in fall.⁶ In the initial Paradise Adam had to exercise his free will correctly. All divine instructions and the power of perception were given to him for a well balanced exercise of his free will with discernment (*HPara* VI, 9-11). Adam's status is not inferior to that of the Angels, as the promised crown by the proper exercise of free will would be a glorified status. It is based on the God-given graces for the just and eligible acquisition of glory by the human obedience of Adam (*HPara* XII, 18).

In the narratives of Ephrem the dignity of human person has been well confirmed through various factors of the human existential life. The main factors are body-soul complementality, the dynamism of the breath of life, the dynamic role of the human free-will, human powers of perception and discernment in the context of the prophetic,

5 cf. Gen 2:16,17.

6 cf. Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:47-49; Lk 16:27-31.

priestly and shepherding faculties of humans, and the Eden-Church correspondence. Added to all these Adam/humanity has an essential indebtedness to the paradisiacal environment which is reflective of the many aspects of ecological indebtedness of human life on earth.

3. Divine Providence and Pedagogy for Salvation

Nature and Scriptures are two witnesses given to humanity for perceiving and understanding the divinity and divine realities that are working around humanity and in the created world (*HPara V*, 2). The created nature carries all types of objective knowledge of the world. The Scriptures carry the story of the subjective divine-human engagement, as witness to the divine economy that leads to salvation and success and equally a warning to the disobedient ones, providing the examples of the failures of some biblical personalities.

The knowledge and perceptions from the external world are glimpses that can lead one to the mystical world of realities (*HPara I*, 2-3). Adam was able to pursue with his enquiry into all that is in the given universe. But regarding the hidden realities he was bound to make some effort as the divinity guides him. Adam had to exercise his power of perception and discernment, in the given Paradise, to understand the mercy and justice of God. Meditation on Paradise gives fruits according to one's grade of personal life and deeds (*HPara V*, 6). One is received into Paradise not by one's own right and works, but by grace and mercy (*HPara V*, 12). By perception and discernment one has to involve in the participation of the mysteries of the divine plan that is active in the world, as the divine economy of salvation.

According to the given instruction, Adam had to deal with the two trees. From the 'Tree of Knowledge' he had to restrain himself as the Lord instructed him. If he had respected the divine plan and followed the divine pedagogy, he would have eaten from the first tree and gained wisdom that is unshakable and also eaten from the other tree to have eternal life (*HPara XII*, 16-17). God provides

every creature its due from a single table. We need to acknowledge that divine providence everyday (*HPara XIII, 2*). But quite often we fail to acknowledge the divine providence and protection and, as a result, we become expelled from the Paradisiacal sphere of life and end up in fall, into disintegration. But the Lord is giving everyone the chances to repent and return to the Paradise. This is the Lord's pedagogy for all (*HPara XIII, 6*). It is the disciplining of the expelled ones from Paradise for a worthy return (*HPara XIII, 10*).

Human bodies are nourished by air, analogous to the 'breath of life', the soul. On parallel terms, souls are nourished and refined by the spirit from the glory of the divine majesty. Thus there is a progressive integration of the body by the soul and the soul by the spirit and the spirit in turn gets integrated from the height of God's majesty (*HPara IX, 21*). Such human spiritual growth is similar to the ascent of Moses to the mountain. Moses' hunger and thirst were for the spiritual growth and he was nourished by divine glory when he ascended on the mountain. Divine glory was reflected in the shining face of Moses (*Ex 34:33-35; HPara IX, 22*).

In a communitarian sense, in the history of salvation there is a progression from the Synagogue to the Church and then to the Kingdom. So Ephrem writes:

For the sake of the fruit he laid the Way
 which runs from the Tree right to the Cross;
 it extended from the Wood to the Wood
 and from Eden to Zion,
 from Zion to Holy Church
 and from the Church to the Kingdom

(*Against Heresies 26:4*).⁷

7 Tr. R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, Cambridge University Press, 1975, 247.

This journey from the Tree to the Cross and from Eden to Zion and then to the Church and to the Kingdom involves a communitarian psycho-spiritual progression in the totality of humanity as progressive covenantal communion at all levels.

Experience of Sheol is the failed life on earth (*HPara* VIII, 10-11). Those who do not live well on earth are like Adam expelled from Paradise (*HPara* VII, 24). Those who live well are crowned in Paradise and those outside the Paradise are rebuked and the punishment of the sinners outside Paradise teach us how merciful is the Lord (*HPara* VII, 28). Insiders and outsiders of Paradise are teachings and warnings to all (*HPara* VII, 29). If forgiveness is received by one, then praise the Lord's grace/mercy; if punishment is received, praise the Lord's justice (*HPara* XII, 12). The Lord rebukes so many as his teaching for discernment (*HPara* XII, 13-14), so as to attain repentance and return to Paradise.

4. Human Faith and Combat for the Crown

While settling Adam and Eve in the garden the divine mercy/grace and justice worked together:

“Now because God had given to Adam everything inside and outside Paradise through Grace, requiring nothing in return, either for his creation, or for the glory in which He had clothed him, nevertheless out of Justice He held back one tree from him to whom He had given, in Grace, everything in Paradise and on earth, in the air and in the seas. For when God created Adam, he did not make him mortal, nor did he fashion him as immortal; this was so that Adam himself, either through keeping the commandment, or by transgressing it, might acquire from this one of the trees whichever outcome he wanted.”

(Ephrem, *The Commentary on Genesis*, Section II, 17).⁸

8 Tr. Sebastian Brock, *St Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise*, 208/9.

Both divine grace and justice were working together so that Adam might inherit the garden and its bliss from God as a gift of divine grace on the one hand and equally as a deserving and eligible inheritance by Adam through his responsible behaviour in the garden, as justice. So humanity is placed in the garden neither as mortal nor as immortal, but as a free human being provided with instructions and support from the Lord (Gen 2:15-17; *HPara* XII,18). On the whole, the success of Adam would depend on the responsible and discerning behaviour in the light of the given gifts of the garden and the divine instructions. He would either inherit the bliss promised or lose the same out of self responsibility or self negligence respectively. Divine justice demands that Adam behave responsibly under the divine instructions or commandments, and meritoriously gain the bliss of the garden towards his personal fulfillment and that of the whole humanity. It is a real challenging situation which issues out a combat situation for Adam in which he should fight against all deviant tendencies that might make him fail to attain the goal of final bliss.

Moreover, the Lord had hidden both, the glory that Adam would attain if he obeys the commandments and the ignominy he would suffer if he disobeys the commandments. It is because the Lord wants Adam to be faithful to the divine instructions purely out of his love towards the Lord who created him and not either by any attraction to the expected reward or out of the fear of the punishment he would suffer. Both, Adam and king Uzziah behaved wrongly and suffered punishment (*HPara* III, 10-14). Adam's overstepping and disobedience are reflected in Uzziah who being king wanted to exercise the role of a priest as well. Such double roles are legally prohibited. Yet Uzziah vehemently overstepped the regulations and arrogantly behaved like a priest and he was punished by leprosy (2 Chron 26:16).

Adam by his faith and obedience to the instruction of the Lord in the earthly life should 'forge a key' to open the door to Paradise. The 'key' is the eligibility through holiness to enter into Paradise

which is by nature holy. So, Adam needs to attain holiness by his pattern of life (*HPara II, 2*). It amounts to purifying oneself and prepare by himself 'a receptacle' in the Kingdom (*HPara IX, 26*), making oneself as part of the Kingdom under construction. As life on earth needs air, *ruha* (wind/Spirit) is needed for spiritual combat and refinement of oneself. It becomes real by way of standing with the Lord and fighting against the evil one's snares. The combat is on earth and the crown is in heavenly Eden (*HPara IX, 1-2*). There are many models of combat in the scriptures who by their combat attained the Kingdom and crown, such as, Job (*HPara XII, 11*; Job 1:9-11); Jonah (*HPara XIII, 14*; Jonah 2); Joseph the Patriarch (*HPara XIII, 15*; Gen 41:14), and so on.

The fruit of the tree, 'knowledge' is meant for Adam. But that fruit of knowledge has to be properly plucked at the proper time and used as a blessing. If it is used in an improper manner, it would turn to be a curse instead (*HPara XII, 3*). This improper use of knowledge is seen in king Uzziah who is a reflection of the fallen Adam. King Uzziah assumed the power of the priest and carried the censer to the sanctuary and as a punishment he became leprous. Thus both Adam and Uzziah got curse instead of blessing (*HPara XII, 4*). In disobedience Adam lost what he desired and what he dreaded, the disgrace was thrust upon him (*HPara XII, 5*). Sin brings double failure; one loses what one potentially possesses and finds what one never expected (*HPara II, 4*). One loses what is given to him by divine grace and fails to get what is due to him by justice as one fails to obey the commandments. What is God-given by grace falls down and what could be attained by justice in obedience is lost. This is the double failure.

By a life of mourning in repentance and penance one can wash and perfume oneself to become eligible to the Kingdom (*HPara VII, 3*). In the first covenant, Joseph and Samson were able to make combat and control themselves (*HPara VII, 7*); so they became victorious.

By his disobedience Adam became like a dead body in the sea and the sea naturally expels any dead body from its midst to the shore. So, Adam was pushed out of Paradise as he became dead to the holy nature of Paradise (*HPara IV, 2*). Adam became a leper by his deeds (*HPara IV, 3-4*) and had to go out of the given house. As the OT priests were active in cleansing the lepers, Christ, the High Priest, is active in cleaning the lepers of the NT people.

Both knowledges (of glory and ignominy based on obedience or disobedience) were withheld from Adam (*HPara III, 4-5*) so that Adam might acquire true knowledge through progressive levels of human maturity. Adam had to work hard in combat to attain salvific knowledge.

5. Human Entry into the Eschatological Kingdom

Scripture and divine teachings are like stones (cf. Ex 17:6; 1Cor 10:4; *HPara V, 1*). But they are also the source of ‘living water’. To the people of Israel that stone provided ‘living water’ (Ex 17:6). So also, to the believing people, Christ the ‘living stone’ provides living water in the form of ‘miracles’ for life. But to the unbeliever Christ remained as a hard stone. The reproached Moses believed and then water came from the rock (Ex 17:6; Num 20). Thus deepening of one’s faith with repentance is the source of life.

Through the mystery of incarnation, the bodily presence of Christ with all became an assurance of human resurrection beyond death (*HPara VII, 2*). Radiance from the Father is flown to all through the Son and the seers (saints), the small and perfect, gather that radiance according to their receptivity. The fragrance of Paradise is the embodied grace and as a Physician it heals all from the sickness from the serpent. Like the water that was made holy by the salt at Mara (Ex 15:23-25), the blessings of Paradise are mingled with humanity to irrigate the whole world (*HPara XI, 11*).

The Lord nourishes each one according to one's needs (*HPara IX*, 25-27). By the resurrection of Christ, people have become resplendent in body and tranquil in their souls and that is the Paradisiacal spiritual experience (*HPara VII*, 10-12). Virginity rejoices, youth exults and all those who enter into Paradise become young and shining (*HPara VII*, 6-10). Adam wrongly touched the tree and had to go to the fig tree, as he lost glory, but the 'Second Adam' embraced the cross and restored glory for the return of all to Paradise (*HPara XII*, 10).

On the day of resurrection (in the state of resurrection) body joins with the soul and consciousness increases so as to enter into the bliss (*HPara VIII*, 7). Even in the life on earth one has to integrate one's body and soul dynamically to attain the proper consciousness that can lead one with proper perception and discernment as a son of resurrection, and of the Kingdom. The 'good thief' attained such a level of consciousness for proper discernment. Hence, he was made to enter Paradise with body and soul (*HPara VIII*, 2).

Repentance and home-coming is a constant factor in the scriptures and stand as common factors for all in the history of salvation. Repentance and home-coming of Nebuchednezzar (*HPara 13:4-8*; *2Kings 24-25*), Samson's repentance (*HPara XIII*, 12-13; *Judges 16*), are models of repentant reentry into the promised Paradise.

High priest's death and the return of all prisoners to their inheritance is a strong symbol and reality of the reentry into the Kingdom (*Num 35:25, 28*; *Josh 20:6*; *HPara XIII*, 13). Adam became expelled from Paradise (as a dead body from the sea, *HPara IV*, 2), a leper is also rejected from the community and the priests were to reinstate the cured lepers (*HPara IV*, 3-4) and the role of the High Priest, Christ, has been portrayed. Moses and the good thief were reinstated in the Kingdom as the representatives of the expelled Adam (*HPara IV*, 5-6), by the incarnate Son.

Conclusion

It is to be remembered that St. Ephrem had been teaching and writing about the human person and salvation when Gnosticism and Marcionism were denigrating and condemning this world of matter and human bodily factors as evil that are to be abrogated. In fact, even at that time, Ephrem highly upheld the dignity of human body on par with the soul. At present the Church is highly valuing the holistic development of each person and the whole humanity, and stresses the bodily, social and psychological needs of the human person. All forms of neo-Gnostic, mere spiritualizing tendencies, as if salvation is only for the soul, are to be avoided. The Church stands for a well balanced material and spiritual development of the whole human race as a substratum of human salvation. Present day theological reflections are deeply incorporating the findings of sociology, psychology, demographic sciences, etc., in an unprecedented rate, so as to deepen the vision on the mystery of humanity that is yearning for salvation. Moreover, the Church is keen on resourcing from the ancient Christian teachings and traditions for proper updating in the present age. In the context of this sort of resourcing from the ancient Christian teachings as well as the modern social and psychological sciences, the insightful teachings of St. Ephrem present a great source and inspiration regarding theological Anthropology.

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THE *MIMRE* OF JACOB OF SERUGH ON ST. PAUL IN THE SYRIAC LITURGICAL TRADITION

Introduction

There are two *mimre* on St. Paul the Apostle by Jacob of Serugh in the second volume of Paul Bedjan's *Homiliae Selectate Mar Jacobi Sarugensis. Mimre* 61 & 62. The first *Mimro* that is 61 is about the conversion episode of St Paul and the second one that is *Mimro* 62 is an encomium on St Paul. The aim of this paper is to examine whether or not the two *mimre* of Jacob of Serugh on St Paul have exerted any influence on the liturgical texts of the Syriac tradition in both its East and West manifestations. For this purpose, the main liturgical books of both traditions will be examined. These include from the West Syriac liturgical tradition the *Penqito*¹ (the prayer book for Sundays and feast days), the *Šhimo*² (the prayer book of ordinary week days or Book of Common Prayer) and the *Ṭakso*³ (the order of

1 Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, P.451. *Penqito* literally means a writing tablet or a volume. It is originally a Greek word.

2 *Ibid*, p.571. *šhimo* literally means common or ordinary.

3 *Ibid* p.173. *-akso* is originally a Greek word which literally means order.

celebration of Holy *Qurbono*); and from the East Syriac liturgical tradition the *Hudra*⁴ (the prayer book for Sundays and feast days). The *Penqito* exists in two printed versions, one published in Mosul in Iraq in 1886-96,⁵ and a later edition published in Pampakuda in India in 1962-1963.⁶ The *Hudra*⁷ also exists in two printed versions, one published in Rome in 1938⁸ and another in Trichur in India in 1960-1962.⁹ An English translation of select portions of the Mosul *Penqito* entitled *The Crown of the Year* was prepared by Francis Acharya of Kurisumula Ashram and forms volumes II, III and IV of the series *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, volume I being his rendition of the *Šhimo*.¹⁰ There is also an abridged English version of the *Penqito* that was prepared by the Maronite church.¹¹ I draw on the latter for texts from the Maronite *Penqito*. Titles used by Jacob of Serugh in his *mimre* to designate St Paul the Apostle are found in the various liturgical texts of both Syriac traditions. The most prominent of these are:

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- 4 Ibid p.130. *hudra* literally means a circle.
 - 5 *Breviarum Juxta Ritum Ecclesiae Antiochenae*, 7 volumes (Mosul, 1886-96).
 - 6 Konat Abraham (ed.) *Penqito d hudro šantonoyo*, 3 volumes, Mar Julios Press, (Pampakuda, 1962-1963).
 - 7 Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford 1979), p.130. *Hòudra* literally means a circle.
 - 8 *Breviarium Iuxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium Id Est Chaldaeorum* - 3 Volumes, Apud S. Congregationem Pro Ecclesia Orientali, Rome, 1938.
 - 9 Thoma Darmo (ed), *Hòudra* - 3 Volumes, Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, 196-62.
 - 10 Francis Acharya, *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit*, vol. 1: A Weekly Celebration of the Economy of Salvation (1980; 2nd revised ed. 1983; 3rd revised ed. 1996); vol. II: *The Crown of the Year*, part 1 (1982; revised ed. 2000); vol. III, part 3 (1985; 2nd revised ed. 2009); vol. IV, part 3 (1986). Published by Kurisumula Ashram, Vagamon - 685 503, Kerala. Also see Robert J Taft SJ, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and its meaning for Today*, The Liturgical Press, St John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN 56321, pp. 244-6.
 - 11 *Fenqitho A Treasury of Feasts According to the Syriac-Maronite Church of Antioch*, (New York 1980) P.85

Architect (*'ardiklo*), Elect (*gabyo*), Chosen vessel (*Mo'nogabyo*), Harp of the Apostleship (*kenorodašlħuto*), Wolf that was made Lamb (*dibod'bido 'emro*), Persecutor who became the persecuted (*rodupo d 'abido 'emro*)

1. Architect (*'ardiklo*)

In chapter 3 of his first letter to the Corinthians Paul addresses the thorny problem of divisions in the church. Attempting to articulate and resolve a crisis that had arisen over rival factions centred on personalities, Paul draws on imagery taken from the world of building and he compares his role in the community to that of a skilled *'ardiklo* i.e. an architect or master builder who laid a foundation.¹² The foundation that he laid of course was none other than Christ. Jacob of Serugh takes up this self-designation of Paul as architect in his first *mimro* on the Apostle.

He made the demolisher the architect (*'ardiklo*) of his building.

He laid the foundation upon which all true ones will construct. (61:14)¹³

In the text of the *Qurbono* of the West Syriac tradition this same title of architect (*'ardiklo*) used in reference to Paul is found in the silent prayer recited by the priest before the readings from the Holy apostles and the Apostle Paul:

Our Lord, accept the prayers and supplications, which we offer You at this time. Make us worthy so that we may, with purity and holiness, observe Your commandments and those of Your divine apostles and of Paul, the architect (*'ardiklo*) and builder (*mbanyono*) of Your holy church; our Lord and our God, forever.¹⁴

12 Cf. 1 Cor3:10.

13 Jacob of Serugh, *Mimro 61 on Pawlosšliħo*, in Paul Bedjan's *Homiliae Selectate Mar Jacobi Sarugensis*. vol 2, lines13-14, p. 718.

14 *-akso d qurobo*, p.19.

In the *Šhimo* we also find the term 'ardiklo used of Paul in the *qolo*¹⁵ of *Sapro* (Morning Prayer) on Fridays:

At your doors, o church watchers stand by night and by day, and guard you from the evil one; Simon, the foundation (*šete 'sto*) and Paul, the architect ('ardiklo), and John, who was the friend of the bridegroom (*šawšbino*), halleluia, and David, the harp of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶

Here, each apostle has a separate title. Paul is the architect, John the friend of the bridegroom, while Simon is called the foundation, a title reserved solely to Christ in Paul's letter to the Corinthians.¹⁷ In the *Qolo* of *Sapron* Monday Sts. Peter and Paul are jointly termed 'ardikle, builders:

Glory to the Son of God who has power on sea and land and chose simple men to be preachers; from the sea he chose Peter and from the road Paul, and made them builders ('ardikle) of the holy church.¹⁸

In the Mosul *Penqito* two feasts are dedicated to St Paul the Apostle: the commemoration of Peter and Paul on 29 June¹⁹ and the Vocation of Paul on January 25.²⁰ In the Pampakkuda *Penqito* there is only one feast, that of St Peter and St Paul which is commemorated on 29 June.²¹ In the *qolo* of *Ramšo* (Evening Prayer) of the feast of St Peter and St Paul in the Pampakkuda *Penqito* the title architect ('ardiklo) is used to address St Paul the Apostle:

15 *qolo* is a hymn in strophe with a prefixed versicle. Cfr. Dr. Baby Varghese, Daily offices in the west Syrian tradition. Cfr. Deepthi Annual Publication of the Orthodox Theological Seminary (Kottayam 1997) p.57.

16 *sapro* on Friday *qolo*, Awšaršlawoto-1, The Book of Common Prayer, p.819.

17 1 Cor 3: 10.

18 The Book of the Common Prayer (Kottayam 2006) pp.289, 291.

19 *Breviarum Juxta Ritum Ecclesiae Antiochena*, vol.6, pp.572-600.

20 Ibid, vol.3, pp.384-388.

21 Konat Abraham (ed.), *Penqito dħudro šantonoyo*, vol.3, pp.200-211.

The architect of faith, builder of the Holy church in whom what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ is fulfilled and who converted the gentiles from error and betrothed in spirit and truth.²²

Eventhough the word ‘architect’ is not specifically stated in relation to Paul in the Maronite English version of the *Penqito*, nevertheless the function designated by that term is contained in the following verse, where it is said of the Apostle that he raised the building i.e., the Church. Note here again Peter is called the foundation:

On the rock of faith Our Lord built His Holy Church. On Peter He laid the foundation, and Paul raised the building²³

In the *Sedro of Lilio* (Night Prayer) for the feast of St Peter and St Paul in the Mosul *Penqito* the name ‘architect’ is given to St Paul the Apostle:

Wise architect of the church of Christ (’*ardikloḥakimo*) great and elected among the Apostles come in Peace.²⁴

In the East Syriac liturgical tradition one can also find this title ’*ardiklo* applied to Paul. In the commemoration of Ss Peter and Paul which is on the 2nd Friday after Epiphany²⁵ as given in the *Hudra*,²⁶ some prayers employ titles that apply to both saints

22 *Penqito d ḥudrošantonoyo*, vol.3,p.201

23 *Fenqitho* A Treasury of Feasts According to the Syriac-Maronite Church of Antioch,(New York 1980) p.87

24 *Mosul Penqito*, Vol. p.579

25 Thoma Darmo (ed), *Hòudra* -vol.1, P.176.

26 Means a circle, course, series, the book of proper anthems and other variable parts of the service for the festivals of the year; cf. J. Payne Smith A Compendious Syriac Dictionary (Oxford 1979), p.130. It refers to the liturgical book that contains the prayers and propria for all Sundays of the Liturgical year. It also includes the text of the three Anaphorae and in some manuscripts the baptismal office and other liturgical services.

together, while others use distinct titles for each. In *Ramšoo* of the feast St Peter the Apostle and St Paul the Apostle we find the following prayer:

Peter is the head of the Apostles upon whose truth our saviour built his church; and the chosen Apostle Paul is also an architect (*'ardiklo*) of the Churches of Christ. So we take refuge in your prayers in order to have mercy and pity on our souls.²⁷

2. Elect (*gabyo*)

In the conversion episode of Paul as related in the Acts of the Apostles, the epithet 'elect' or 'chosen' (*gabyo*) is one of the words used by Jesus Christ when He speaks to Ananias about St Paul and the major role he will play. This title is unique to St Paul:

Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen (*gabyo*) to bring my name before the gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel;²⁸

Jacob of Serugh mirrors Acts in his poetic description of Paul's conversion in his first *mimro*, and has Jesus' address Ananias about Paul as his 'elect' (*gabyo*):

He is my chosen vessel (*mo'nogabyo*) in whom I will pour the gospel

He will comprehend it as his heart is enlarged with understanding. (61: 234)

This chosen one is my vessel (*mo'nogabyo*) and he is very fitting for me;

He will carry my name among the gentiles and among kings. (61:241)

In the *qolo* of *Ramsho* on Mondays of Ordinary Time, Paul is called 'the elect' (*gabyo*):

27 Mar Thoma Darmo (ed), *Hòudra* - vol. I, P.670.

28 Acts 9: 15

Simon the head of the apostles, and Paul the elect (*gabyo*) and John who baptized you Lord, be intercessors on behalf of the flock which you fed by the waters of faith, *halleluia*, and lead it to pasture.²⁹

Likewise, in the *qolo* of *sapro* on Thursdays, Paul is named as ‘the elect (*gabyo*) for the churches’:

Simon, the head of Apostles and Paul, the elect (*gabyo*) for the churches and Thomas who went to India and martyrs who were victorious and crowned, pray and beseech to Messiah so that he may grant mercy upon all of us.³⁰

In the *Hudra* also the epithet elect (*gabyo*) is a special one for St Paul the Apostle:

Peter, head of the Apostles and Paul the Elect, pray for us to Christ the Son so that He may show mercy upon us.³¹

Peter is designated by one of his traditional titles, ‘head of the Apostles’ while Paul is named ‘the Elect’. Each title is specific to each Apostle. Again, we find the same title ‘*gabyo*’ for St Paul the Apostle in the *hudra* in *Lilio* (night prayer) of the feast St Peter the Apostle and St Paul the Apostle. Our Lord called him, the chosen (*gabyo*) Paul (and) the apostle of people, from heaven and (said that) “cease your way and journey on the way which is full of life.”³²

3. Chosen vessel (*Mo’nogabyo*)

Paul, in the Acts of the Apostles, is described by Jesus not only as ‘the elect’ (*gabyo*) but also as ‘the chosen vessel’ (*mo’nogabyo*).³³ Jacob of Serugh adopts this title too.

29 *Ramšo* on Monday *qolo*, *Awšaršlawoto-1*, The Book of Common Prayer, p.193.

30 *šlawoto d yawmotošhimošabto*, (Mosul 1937) pp.316-317.

31 Thoma Darmo (ed), *Hòudra* Vol. 1, p. 679.

32 Jincy O.U. A study on the commemoration of Sts. Peter and Paul Based on *Hòudra* Ms. TCR.27, (Harp, vol. XXIX), p.345.

33 Acts 9:15

See! By His preaching He made the persecutor into a persecuted one

And the insolent one in to the chosen vessel (*mo'nogabyo*) for His proclamation.

(61:12)³⁴

In the *madrošo* of the second watch of *Lilio* on the feast of St Peter the Apostle and St Paul the Apostle in the Pampakuda *Penqito* the term *mo'nogabyo* is used in addressing St Paul directly:

Blessed are you Paul, son of Hebrew, chosen vessel (*mo'nogabyo*) that is full of victories because of the love of the Son of God chose you and made you a lamb instead of the wolf.³⁵

It is interesting to note that this text quoted above is the same as that used in the *ħudra* for the feast of the commemoration of St. Peter the Apostle and St Paul the Apostle.³⁶

4. Harp of the Apostleship (*kenorodašliħuto*)

Jacob of Serugh in his first *mimro* on Paul, wondering how he could adequately and appropriately address this great saint, provides himself with a list of possible names or descriptions. One of the options he considers is the sobriquet 'harp':

Or harp, resonant with the music of apostleship? (61:35)³⁷

This title of Paul taken from Jacob, has found its way into the liturgical texts and in the *madrošo* of the first watch of *Lilio* for the feast of Ss Peter of Paul we read:

34 Jacob of Serugh, *Mimro* 61 on Pawlosšliħo, in Paul Bedjan's *Homiliae Selectate Mar Jacobi Sarugensis*. vol 2, lines 9-10, p. 718.

35 *Pampakuda Penqito*, vol.3, p.204 and *Mosul Penqito*, vol.6, p.583.

36 Jincy O.U. A study on the commemoration of Sts. Peter and Paul Based on *Houdra* Ms. TCR.27, p.342.

37 Jacob of Serugh, *Mimro* 61 on Pawlosšliħo, in Paul Bedjan's *Homiliae Selectate Mar Jacobi Sarugensis*. vol 2, line 15, p. 720.

You are blessed because you have become like harp to the apostleship in the four quarters.³⁸

Peter chief of the apostles whom the keys of height and depth were given and Paul chosen apostle of the gentiles, preacher of the spirit may your prayers be fortress for us.³⁹

5. Wolf that was made Lamb (*dibod'bido 'emro*)

The metaphors that Jacob of Serugh creates to try and comprehend the enormous change that occurred in Paul's life as a result of his encounter with the Risen Lord are many. Some of these include 'the lion was made to bull eat straw' (61:232),⁴⁰ 'the hawk was turned into a dove' (61:19),⁴¹ and 'the wolf behaves like lamb'.

I have bound the wolf and it now stays with the lambs tame and serene;

The cruel one has been subjugated and he will not harm you. (61:230)⁴²

This image of Paul as a wolf dwelling quietly among the lambs can be found in the *madrošo* of the second watch of *Lilio* for the feast of St Peter the Apostle and St Paul the Apostle in the Pampakkuda *Penqito*:

Blessed are you Paul, son of Hebrew, chosen vessel filled with victories, you were persuaded by the love of son of God, and instead a wolf (*dibo*), he made you a lamb ('*emro*).⁴³

The same prayer is found in the East Syriac liturgical tradition in *Madraše* (doctrinal hymns) of the evening prayer on the feast

38 *Mosul Penqito*, p.584

39 Thoma Darmo (ed), *Hòudra* Vol. 1, p. 678.

40 Jacob of Serugh, *Mimro* 61 on Pawlosšliho, line 6, p.740.

41 *Ibid*, line 3, p.719.

42 *Ibid*, line 2-3, p.740.

43 *Pampakuda Penqito*, volume -3,p.204 and *Mosul Penqito*, volume-6, p.583

of the commemoration of the Apostles St Peter and St Paul.⁴⁴ In the ‘*Onitha d-Qanke*’ of the evening of this same feast day also St Paul the Apostle is designated as a lamb (‘*emro*’) changed from a wolf (*dibo*).

‘Stand up’ (and) go’, the Lord said to Hanania (Ananias), ‘for he is not a wolf as you considered, but he is a lamb.’⁴⁵

6. Persecutor who became the persecuted (*rodupo d ‘abido ‘emro*)

In the *Sedro* of *Sapro* for the feast of the Vocation of the Apostle Paul, the dramatic change and turnaround of Paul from persecutor to a persecuted one is narrated.

Come in peace Chose Paul because the light of Christ met you on the way and made you persecutor (*rodupo*) from a persecuted one (*rdipo*).⁴⁶

Jacob of Serugh in his first *mimro* says:

See! By his teaching He made the persecutor (*rodupo*) a persecuted one (*rdipo*). (61:12)⁴⁷

In the *Hudro* also this idea is expressed.

Wolf he is clothed, and not in reality: even if he persecutes, he is not the persecutor, but the persecuted one.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The liturgical texts of the West and East Syriac traditions have very elaborate descriptions of St Paul the Apostle. I have

44 Jincy O.U. A study on the commemoration of Sts. Peter and Paul Based on Hòudra Ms. TCR.27, p.342.

45 Ibid, p.303.

46 *Mosul Penqito*, volume, p.384.

47 Jacob of Serugh, *Mimro* 61 on Pawlosšliho, line 9, p.718.

48 Jincy O.U. A study on the commemoration of Sts. Peter and Paul Based on Hòudra Ms. TCR.27, p.303

tried here to depict only those specific expressions used by Jacob of Serugh that can be found in the liturgical texts. Since Jacob of Serugh drew his inspiration and indeed some of his titles for Paul from both the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul, one cannot be sure whether the primary source used by the composers of the liturgical texts in their treatment of Paul was the poetry of Jacob of Serugh or the Biblical text itself. Perhaps it may have been the Biblical accounts meditated through Jacob's inspired poetry. One should note however that there are no direct quotations from Jacob of Serugh to be found in these liturgical texts.

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PHILOXENUS

(On the indwelling of the Holy Spirit)

Neither does Satan lead us towards evil by force, nor does the Spirit of God draw us to good by compulsion. Rather, they are both spectators, each urging us on in the direction our own will inclines. Just as the grace of the Holy Spirit, which we have received from the water, is within us when we sin-and however much a baptized person sins, he is still baptized- this grace does not restrain our will from sin by using any compulsion, but is simply angered against us and secretly rebukes us when it sees that we are inclined towards sin. And if the mind knows how to receive that rebuke, and if our deliberation consents to accept the warning, then it is restrained from sin, and grace immediately shines out and illuminates it, filling the mind straightaway with joy and happiness.

This is what normally happens to those who overcome sin at the time of their struggle with it. But if one's deliberation does not listen to the Spirit within, but brings the sin into effect, immediately the house of the soul becomes dark, and grows murky with the smoke of distress, and is filled with sorrow and compunction, and the soul's face is covered with shame, as it is written: 'and the Holy Spirit is grieved and turns his face from the soul'.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp 117).

Emidio Vergani

PARADOX AND PRAYER IN EPHREM THE SYRIAN*

1. A teaching for friends and enemies

In this paper my purpose is to exemplify one feature, among many, of the more ancient Syriac spirituality. In particular, I wish to present an aspect that inserts prayer in an intimately historical and redeeming dimension. Perhaps that is the reason, albeit surprisingly, that an Indian scholar, such as Mathai Kadavil, placed Ephrem¹, our great Syriac father, and the author of the brief texts that I will quote now, in relation with the Liberation theology of Leonardo Boff².

* I read the first Italian draft of this paper at a meeting on *La preghiera nei Padri delle Chiese sire. Ricchezze spirituali per il nostro tempo*, held in Italy (Milan, 29th May 2018), and organized by don Paolo Andrea Natta, “Assistente spirituale” of the University “Vita-Salute” San Raffaele, and Gianni Cappelletto, “Direttore editoriale” of the Centro Ambrosiano.

1 On Ephrem, see my Introduction in EFREM IL SIRO, *Le Arpe del Signore*, Magnano 1996, pp. 3-9; see also, among others: S. BROCK, *L'occhio luminoso. La visione spirituale di sant'Efrem* (Pubblicazioni del Centro Aletti, 23), Roma 1999 (Roma 1985); *Saint Éphrem. Un poète pour notre temps* (Patrimoine Syriaque. Actes du Collège XI, Alep 2006), Antélias (Liban) 2007; Thomas KOONAMMAKKAL, *The Theology of Divine Names in the Genuine Works of Ephrem* (Môrân Ethô, 40), Kottayam (Kerala) 2015.

2 *The world as sacrament: Sacramentality of Creation from the Perspectives of Leonardo Boff; Alexander Schmemmann and Saint Ephrem* (Textes et études liturgiques, 20 / Studies in Liturgy, 20), Leuven 2005.

Actually, when we read the Ephremian texts³ carefully, it is possible to perceive the spiritual strength of the Church that spoke through the voice of these hymns. Ephrem lets us know how much the ancient Syriac communities shared the sufferings and the joys of their faithful and of the men of their time; Ephrem understood, right in the heart of his message, the cry of pain caused by violence and war, as he likewise exulted on the occasion of the liberation of his city, Nisibis, three times besieged (338, 346 and 350) by an “unclean” enemy⁴. And yet also the Persian, much as he was terrible and to be feared, was not for this reason removed *in toto* from the process of coeducation that, according to these ancient teaching songs (*madraše*), Divine Providence offered to all humanity:

Through the breaches (on the walls) – You increased the victories.

Glory, to the *Triduanus*⁵, - ascended by the three breaches; because He descended and closed them - with mercy, which stopped wrath.

3 The critical edition of the *Hymns on the Church* and of the *Hymns on Nisibis*, about which I speak in this presentation, is due, like the rest of the major part of authentic Ephremian work, to Edmund Beck: *Id.*, *Des hl. Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Ecclesia (= HEccI)* (CSCO 198/199, Syr 84/85), Louvain 1960; *Id.*, *Des hl. Ephraem Carmina Nisibena: I.* (= *HNis* 1-34) (CSCO 218/219, Syr 92/93), Louvain 1961.

4 *HNis* 1,5,3.

5 *Tlitaya*, lit.: “third, triple, of three (days)”; cf. *HNis* 1,11: “He listens and weighs my comparison with Moses; / although my pain is less than his, / may your mercy make all our liberations equal! / In fact, behold, my children stand like him / among the angry and the voracious (assassins). / Pacify, my Lord, my neighbours near me / and humiliate, before me, the outsiders! / And (thus) may my victory be doubled! / And since the assassin has tripled his anger, / may your *Triduanus* triple his compassion! / May the Evil One not defeat your mercy! / Since (the enemy) repeated and tripled (the siege), You must overcome him! / May my victory fly into the oecumene, / so that it acquires glory for you in the oecumene. / Oh You who were resurrected (in) three days / do not let me die in the third (danger)!”.

He struck the one who did not receive the teaching⁶, - to instruct us:
 He taught those inside (the besieged) – that the Righteous One
 opened (the breaches);
 He taught those outside (the besiegers) – that the Good One
 closed them again⁷.

In the term “Triduanus” we have to recognize a Christological title which is certainly very archaic; it indicates Christ in reference to the three days of his stay in the Sheol, from which the power of His action in redeeming and liberating is shown. In this way Ephrem displays his firm conviction that the resurrection of Christ played a decisive role in history. God leads humanity to salvation, including in His plan, in a paradoxical way, both those who received the teaching, as well as those who did not. Therefore, history does not compose, so to speak, an inexplicable musical score, but God creates a pedagogical framework for friends and enemies, for those within and those without the Church and the city. The one and only creator of everything is God, creator of the former and of the latter, Good and Righteous with the former and with the latter, and He demonstrates his loving care to all, with teachings that reveal His immeasurable grace.

The theologian-poet of Nisibis is aware of pursuing a tradition with its origin in Moses himself, or that goes even further back, descending directly from Adam⁸. The words of the Bible thus constitute, for him, the limit within which he places the terms of all his teachings, because the Bible is the source from which Man can

6 That is to say, the Persian enemy, as explained in Beck’s translation, (CSCO 219, Syr 93), p. 7.

7 *HNis* 2, 5.

8 See my *L’arpa di Mosè. Esempi di ricezione dell’Antico Testamento nel cristianesimo siriano*, in F. ASPESI -V. BRUGNATELLI - A.L. CALLOW - C. ROSENZWEIG (edd.), *Il mio cuore è a Oriente. Studi di linguistica storica, filologia e cultura ebraica dedicati a Maria Luisa Mayer* Modena (Quaderni di Acme 101 - Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell’Università di Milano), Milano 2008, pp. 67-90 (especially 82-83).

tap and have every opportunity for conversion. And the changing of the heart is the condition for the entering Paradise itself, as the inhabited earth can appear also now to the limpid and luminous eyes of the faith. As we said before, however, this redemptive and providential theology is not in fact less severe, because, if men do not obey the invitation that they can read clearly in the Scriptures, to be awakened to the divine call, God can then kindle warnings that are even more wrathful than those found in the Old and the New Testament. So, according to Ephrem, in the three sieges suffered by the city because of the sins of their inhabitants, Nisibis can discern its punishments⁹. This kind of language is obsolete today, but, if it is intended in its paradoxical sense and dynamism, as I attempted to point out briefly, it can now become also instrumental in shaping a very useful disposition of the soul. And this disposition of the heart is certainly necessary to share the one land that we inhabit.

2. The paradoxes of prayer

In some texts of the *Hymns on the Church*, it is possible to point out how important the rhetorical figure of paradox is in the thought and in the meditation of Ephrem. Some of these hymns focus, among other things, on prayer, in particular on supplication and pleading, a simple and popular feature of prayer, sometimes depreciated as a symptom of a hard and selfish heart. However, also in this case Ephrem is able to present prayer in harmony with an image of a God who gives even before Man can ask: indeed, He created the organs themselves for prayer (the mouth for praising, the knees for genuflecting) even before Man actually used his body

9 “May your anxieties – be books to warn you! / May the three sieges, in fact, - become for you / books, so that you may meditate – on every moment of the events. / Since you despised – reading / about your salvation in the two Testaments – for this very reason (He) wrote for you three hard books, - so that you would read about your punishments in them” (*HNis* 3, 11).

for these spiritual actions¹⁰. Consequently, Man does not need then to be afraid to ask God: His treasure has the most profound and sincere need to give, to share His wealth among all who need His intervention¹¹. God values the perseverance in the supplication itself and He wants to try us so that, if we raise our voice, we may obtain at the same time His confidence and His favour¹². Moreover, when He refrains from granting our requests, God conceals a more profound teaching: “Learn what is reprehensible in what He rejects, / what is virtuous in what He donates”¹³. If it seems naive to think that the rejected request is harmful, and that the satisfied one is beneficial¹⁴, it certainly means that before the Good One the guilty will go out forgiven and the needy one provided with the requested help¹⁵. And who is not, before God, in one of these two categories? Ephrem writes:

The Giver that donates gratuitously (what is necessary) – to my poverty, without my asking!

His free will shaped me in the (maternal) womb, - but I and the (womb) itself were not aware.

He formed the (living) organism silently; - He calmly knitted (it) together with nerves;

He shaped the ears delicately; - and He breathed the soul (into it).

10 *HEccl* 22.4.

11 *HEccl* 22.2.

12 *HEccl* 23,10.

13 *HEccl* 23,7.

14 *HEccl* 23, 8. Cf., furthermore, *HEccl* 25, 13 (“All the petitions flow towards the One and Only. – And the only invisible ear from above / hears and understands our requests: - the one that is of help is chosen, / the one that harms is rejected”) and 16 (“The Giver is good: he considers – the requests and their timing, / since the fruit that is not (harvested) at the right time means death. – Thus there is also a gift, / which at a certain time brings harm – and, after that time, help. / And if the supplicant presses in haste, so the Giver will procrastinate”).

15 *HEccl* 23, 2. And how advantageous is the refusal that avoids damage (*HEccl* 23, 3).

The food entered from where it was given; - the breath entered as ordained.

Labour pains pushed up and opened the door: - and a sinner entered the created world¹⁶.

In these Ephremian texts a detailed analysis on the relation between the Donor and the supplicant is developed; and they point out the wisdom and the prudence of the Former, who evaluates times and occasions¹⁷: then He accepts the rightful demands and submerges those that are unsuitable as if in the sea¹⁸. He acts as a wet nurse, expert in the weaning of a baby¹⁹; He approaches everyone with the love of One who gives and holds back in accordance to the different cases; He knows, in His discernment, what is good for the petitioner²⁰. God is the Donor *par excellence*, and at the same time He is able, through his giving, to change the one who receives into a donor, as happened to the mother of the prophet Samuel, Hannah. She was barren, but then offered her

16 *HEccl* 22,5. Cf. *HNis* 2, 20, in which Ephrem again confesses he is a sinner in the first person, or, if not thus, identifies himself with his city: "May the benediction in divine grace grow also for me, within you; / since in you my sins grew (in number), - (now), in you, my fruits increase (in number). / And since my youth sinned in you, - may my old age find leniency. / Through the mouth of your children pray – for your son! / Since I have sinned beyond my strength – and I did penance beneath my strength: / I scattered without measure and I gathered below measure".

17 *HEccl* 25, 17: "The wise Giver, then, - considers the request and the timing of its (presentation). / If he sees that a request (made at a certain) time is in contrast with the help (necessary) at that time, / he then saves it for another occasion – And if the supplicant becomes angry / at having asked for a favour at the wrong time – he will find consolation in the help (received) at the proper time".

18 *HEccl* 25,19.

19 *HEccl* 25,18.

20 *HEccl* 23, 1: "O Giver (rich) in judgment, - who looks towards the benefit of he who asks".

newborn son as a blessed gift to God²¹. The ability of Ephrem is astonishing; in every aspect of reality, nature, agricultural life or daily work, he collects symbols, *raze* - but *raza* also signifies “Sacrament, (Eucharistic) Mystery” -, of salvation. The created world itself is a sacrament (*raza*), and for this reason takes part, in all its manifestations, in the praising of the Creator in a virtuous exchange with men. When Ephrem recalls the episode of the sedated storm (Matt. 8:23-27), and the command of the Lord who, awakened by the frightened disciples, calms the raging waves, the theologian-poet of Nisibis notes that Christ silences the song of glory to God elevated by the sea waves and, at the same time, our Lord urges the disciples to continue their interrupted song²². In the image of the boat and of the sailors it is possible for Ephrem to see the dynamism of the whole economy of salvation: as the merchants face up to the perils of sea commerce in order to become rich, so the disciples must commercialize themselves, in order to acquire spiritual riches²³.

All the Syriac traditions offer, as we know, very interesting and original suggestions on prayer. As a brief example, the anonymous *Book of Steps*, dealing with the prayer of tears, describes a way of repentance from sins that leads to the maturity of faith and to the weeping of joy before the Lord, as when we shed tears of happiness

21 *HEccl* 30, 2-3: “Anna in Hannah asked (a favour) of you and also made an offering to you *ex voto* (1Samuel 1:11). / That which she asked of you she then made of it an offering to you. / She received it from you and gave it back to you. / He who has taken has thanked and he who has given is blessed. * Who does not lose himself in the depths of your wisdom! / The gift which, through grace, the Giver has given, / he who has received it and taken it as a gift has given it back / and made an offering of it to his Giver”.

22 *HEccl* 42, 6: “Since the waves became calm – the mouths spoke: / a chant (*qala*) of thanksgiving. – Melodies upon melodies (*qale*) / were repeated: - the glory of the mouth / instead of the voice (*qala*) of the sea. – The boat began / to make known (lit.: “to trade, to do business”) – the hidden symbols (*raze*) (cf. Matt. 8:26)”.

23 *HEccl* 42, 9-10.

embracing a friend²⁴. On the other hand, in the narrative exegesis of Jacob of Sarug, when prayer speaks in the heart, it finds direct hearing in God, and it is a more rapid way than all the angelic troops to arrive at the heart of the Divinity and to obtain His favours. The prayer of two or of three persons offers access to the treasure chamber where the supplicant, in this case Daniel, can receive the description of Nabucodonosor's dream. On the contrary, Magi, diviners, Chaldeans were not able to interpret (Dan. 2) it. Prayer offered to Daniel not only the interpretation of the dream, but also the dream itself that the king has forgotten and, with great and delighted irony towards the Magi - who were supposed to know the date of their death in advance -, also the thoughts of king Nabucodonosor before falling asleep²⁵.

3. A consistently nonviolent action

Turning now to the siege conducted by Shabur II against Nisibis, without sparing any means, it is necessary to recall that this permitted Ephrem to conceive an admirable biblical comparison between the besieged city and Noah's Ark. The Generals of the Persian army, indeed, after they had built embankments all around Nisibis, diverted the water of the Migdonius, the river of the city, into the land between the city walls and the ramparts the besiegers had constructed there. Thus, completely surrounded by water, it appears that the besiegers

24 *Liber Gaduum* XVIII,2, ed. M. Kmosko, (Patrologia Syriaca, I,3), Parisii 1926, cc. 433-436; Italian translation in M. Nin – E. Vergani, “La preghiera è il nostro ornamento”. *Una scelta di testi siriaci (IV-VII secolo)*, Milano 2017, pp. 56-57; see also R.A. Kitchen – M.F.G. Parmentier (English translation), *The Book of Steps. The Syriac Liber Graduum* (Cistercian Studies Series, 196), Kalamazoo (Michigan) 2004, pp. 178-179.

25 JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homily 123 On the dream of Nabucodonosor*, ed. P. Bedjan, *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, IV, Parisii-Lipsiae 1908, pp. 491-516 (Reprint, Piscataway, NJ, 2006), see, especially, pp. 491-501 (Italian translation in Nin – Vergani, “La preghiera è il nostro ornamento”, pp. 64-75.

made their attacks from small boats (we have allusions to this fact in the hymns of Ephrem, who was inside the city in those dramatic days, and in the information Julian the Apostate inserted in his panegyric of Emperor Constantius)²⁶. For this reason, all surrounded by water, Nisibis could surely assume the image of a new Noah's Ark. Like Noah in the midst of perils, Nisibis, personified, laments in the first person:

Behold, I was agitated by all (the fury) of the waves
and I said blessed the Ark,
because the waves only surrounded it:
embankments, arrows and waves surrounded me!²⁷

If the sacrifices offered by Noah could prevent the divine wrath and the Flood, then Ephrem can imagine the implorations of Nisibis. The city, personified, asks God that the blood spared by the Only-Begotten “might withhold our inundation”²⁸. In fact, for him, the offers of the Noahic covenant actually acquired their power through the intercession of the *raza* (“symbol, Sacrament”) of Christ, that, so to speak, was able to act also in retrospective manner. For this reason the altar of the Church of Nisibis received an offering capable to placate all the anger and to preserve the life of men under a terrible threat. The cross and the rainbow are interwoven in a unique redemptive yoke, the former so it might open the sea of water collected for the siege²⁹, as the latter was the sign given to Noah for withholding the flood of rain (Gen. 9:11). The sight of the waves of water channeled around the walls instigated fear in the people of Nisibis, so they could awaken to prayer and to repentance, to make

26 See my *Giustizia e grazia di Dio per la città assediata. Le raffigurazioni del nemico negli inni su Nisibi (1-12) di Efreim il Siro*, in G. RUGGIERI (ed.), *I nemici della cristianità* (Testi e ricerche di Scienze religiose, n.s. 19), Bologna 1997, pp. 21-58.

27 *HNis* 1,3

28 *HNis* 1,2.

29 *Ibid.* *tra' yamma* is the expression of Psalm 78:13 to indicate the crossing of the Red Sea.

amends, to purify themselves from their sins and to be submerged as in a baptism³⁰.

That is how I have paraphrased the style and some images of a hymn by Ephrem probably written in the year 350, possibly composed during the siege itself. The song of victory actually appears in the *Hymn on Nisibis* 2³¹, but it is possible to perceive also there how much the Christian community of Nisibis still remembered the fear, the perils, and the most terrible and difficult situations of the war and of the assault by the enemy³². It was then possible to celebrate the Christ who had descended to liberate the elderly and the young, the women and the children, from death, deportation and rape³³. The power “that bears all” withstood the assault on the city which had built its faith not on sand, like Jericho (Joshua 6:20, *Pešitta* Joshua 6:19), but on the rock of the teaching of Christ

30 *HNis* 1,5, 3-10.

31 Cf. *HNis* 2, 17: “Who (ever) saw a breach – that became like a mirror! / Two (opposite) sides looked at each other through it: - it served within and without. / They saw in it as with eyes – the power that lacerated and that bound. / They saw He who opened (the breach) and then closed (it). / The (besiegers) outside saw his strength: - they departed and did not wait for night to descend. / The (besieged) inside saw his help: - they gave praise but their praise was not enough!”.

32 *HNis* 2, 18: “The day of your liberation – awake from your lethargy! / When the wall was opened (by the breach), - and when the elephants pressed on, / when the arrows rained down, - and when men were fearless (in the assault), / (there was) - a spectacle for the heavens: / iniquity fought there, - clemency triumphed there. / Mercy won below (upon earth), – the Watchers acclaimed from above (in the heavens)!”.

33 *HNis* 2, 6: “Proclaim and praise, - my (sons) freed, on that day: / the old and the young, - young men and maidens, / young and innocent boys, - and (you) the church, mother of the citadel! / The old people in fact were saved from deportation, / young people were saved from torture, - and the new-born babies were saved from being beaten to death (Psalm 136:9), / women were saved from being denuded, - and the church was saved from derision”.

(Matt. 7:25-27)³⁴. Yet the people of Nisibis did not appear to make as much effort to raise their voice in prayer, as their enemies had struggled to build their weapons and tools of war³⁵. Neither did the citizens of Nisibis break “the easy fetters” within our hearts, while the besiegers were able at a crucial point to break the walls with their efforts and to open a breach in them. But God did not reward the besiegers for that. On the contrary: “He treated the hard-working ones (*kaššire*: the workers of the first hour of Matt. 20:1-16) badly, - because of the lazy ones. / He treated in an ungrateful way the labour of (those) outside - even if He was treated in an ungrateful way by those who were inside”³⁶.

I am very surprised to discover Ephrem’s ability to show the ever-merciful countenance of God, in spite of collecting these all

34 *HNis* 1, 8: “The flood dared to attack our wall: / may the power that supports everything sustain it! / It did not crumble like a building on the sand (Matt. 7:25-27), / since I did not build my teaching on the sand. / May rock be for me the foundations (Matt. 7:25-27), / since on your rock (Matt. 7:25-27) I built my faith. / May the invisible foundation of my faith /support my wall! / Verily did the walls of Jericho fall (Joshua 6:20, *Pešitta* Joshua 6:19), / since its faith was built on the sand. / Moses built a wall in the sea (cf. Exodus 14:22), / since he had built his thought on rock. / The foundations of Noah on the rock / supported the wooden houses on water!”

35 *HNis* 2, 19: “Your enemy took it upon himself - to cause damage, with his scheming, / to the wall that surrounds you, - the shelter of your inhabitants. / He tried but did not succeed (in penetrating it); – and so he would not believe / that, if he had opened (a breach), he would have been able to enter (the city) - and would have taken us prisoner; / he opened (the wall) and not with a single (breach). – And he was ashamed and (once) was not enough: / (but) up to three times, - for him to be ashamed for three times in the three (breaches)”.

36 *HNis* 2, 15; thus the first part: “Yet not like the outside (besiegers) - we worked in favour of ourselves. / They raised embankments, - we, instead, not even voices. / They broke through the wall, - we, instead, did not break even the easy bonds / (the term used by di Luke 18:25 e Matt. 19:24), which are inside our hearts”.

paradoxical aspects of God's action. This continuous and inextricable web of faith and history that emerges leaves me amazed. Maybe, on the basis of these liturgical hymns, it is very difficult to reconstruct the exact role played by the Christians during those dramatic events. In any case, the remaining texts - I quote Ephrem again -, continue to document a rigorous and consistent nonviolent teaching. I should like to remember this today in the very country of Gandhi:

In the sea that, my Lord, was created to submerge me, - that Mercy could drown my guilt!

In the sea full of reeds³⁷ You submerged the bodies, - in this one drown the guilt instead of the bodies!³⁸.

He avoided (men) provided with speech, - and He struck (the walls) that were without voice.

The wall was struck – and the people were taught.

He spared (those who could) suffer, - He struck the wall that does not suffer.

In fact, instead of the souls, - that can feel (pain),

He struck the stone without perception, - to chastise us.

With love He left aside our body, - and rushed to strike our wall!³⁹

Elsewhere, in certain dialogue hymns, while the personification of Death speaks in the Sheol, Ephrem compares Joshua, the son of Nun, and Jesus, the former because he delighted Death in a considerable way by filling the graves with corpses, the latter because He afflicted Death, by coming to claim back even Lazarus alone. Death, very sadly, laments the goodness of the “Son of the Righteous One”: He blunted the sword definitely, while the king of Moab

37 *yamma d-sup* = Red Sea; *sup*: from a word of Egyptian origin that means *papyrus*.

38 *HNis* 1, 5.

39 *HNis* 2, 16.

sacrificed his firstborn son on the walls of his city (2Kings 3:27)⁴⁰. Levites and prophets, Moses himself, provided Death⁴¹ with food, while on the contrary “Our Lord was the Firstborn (*bukra*) in the Sheol”⁴².

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40 *HNis* 39, 15.

41 *HNis* 41, 14.

42 *HNis* 38, 7,2.

JOHN THE SOLITARY (Letter to Hesychius)

When evening comes, collect your thoughts and ponder over the entire course of the day: observe God's providential care for you; consider the grace he has wrought in you throughout the whole span of the day; consider the rising of the moon, the joy of daylight, all the hours and moments, the divisions of time, the sight of different colours, the beautiful adornment of creation, the course of the sun, the growth of your own stature, how your own person has been protected; consider the blowing of winds, the ripe and varied fruits, how the elements minister to your comfort, how you have been preserved from accidents, and all the other activities of grace. When you have pondered on all this, wonder of God's love towards you will well up within you, and gratitude for his acts of grace will bubble up inside you.

Take thought too, in case you have done something that is contrary to those acts of grace: say to yourself 'Have I done anything to anger God today? Have I said or thought anything that does not benefit that will which created me? And if you become aware that you have done something to displease him, stand up for a short while in prayer and give thanks for the graces you have received throughout the entire day's ministry, and make supplication for what you have done wrong. In this way you will sleep peacefully and without sin.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp 94-95).

Alison Salvesen

THE *HEXAEMERON* OF JACOB OF EDESSA ON BIRDS AS MORAL EXAMPLES

Introduction

Jacob of Edessa is a revered figure in Syriac Orthodox tradition. Born in a village near Antioch in the early 630s, he received his early education locally. He then moved to higher studies in Alexandria, and then at the monastery of Qenneshe where Severus Sebokht (d. c. 666), the renowned mathematician and astronomer, taught Greek science and philosophy. Jacob's own interests tended to the more exegetical, but he also ranged more widely. Although he was briefly bishop of Edessa in the 680s, Jacob resigned his see in exasperation over clerical misbehaviour, and retreated into monastic and intellectual life for the next two decades. Evidently fully conversant in Greek as well as Syriac, he drew on a wide range of sources for his own work, much of which was either solicited by correspondents or aimed at students within the monasteries where he taught: Mor Jacob near Kayshum (close to Samosata),

Mor Eusebona near Antioch, and the Great Monastery of Tell ‘Adda near Aleppo.¹

Jacob’s Hexaemeron and earlier hexaemeral tradition

Jacob of Edessa’s *Hexaemeron* marks the culmination of his life’s scholarly work and teaching. It is composed of a series of seven treatises (*memre*) on the Six Days of Creation in Genesis. He must have started writing it around 705. He had not quite completed the final *memra* on the creation of humanity when he died unexpectedly in June 708 AD after returning to collect his library from the monastery of Tell ‘Adda, having resumed the episcopate of Edessa a few months earlier. His younger friend George, bishop of the Arab tribes, finished the last few pages of the work.

Hexaemeral works were far from a new genre in Christianity by Jacob’s time.² Their origin lies with the Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria in the early first century AD.³ Philo had tried to connect the biblical narrative of the six days of Creation with God as the active cause of Creation to philosophical and scientific ideas from classical Greek antiquity. Several Greek Christian writers then developed the genre in different ways. These include the highly influential *Homilies on the Creation* by Basil of

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- 1 For Michael the Syrian’s biographical information on Jacob, see J.-B. Chabot, ed., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d’Antioche (1166–1199), Éditée pour la première fois et traduite en français I-IV*. Vol. 5, 445–446; 448–449 (Syriac); vol. 2, 471–472, 476 (French translation). Paris: E. Leroux, 1963; repr. 1963.
 - 2 See F. Robbins, *The Hexaemeral Literature: A Study of the Greek and Latin Commentaries on Genesis*. Chicago, 1912.
 - 3 D. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria. On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses. Translation and Commentary*. Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 1. Leiden etc.: Brill, 2001.

Caesarea (d. 379),⁴ the philosophic-scientific treatise *On the Creation of the World* by John Philoponus (d. c. 570),⁵ and the allegorizing *Hexaemeron* of Anastasius of Sinai (d. after 700).⁶ In the Syriac world, though Ephrem the Syrian had tackled aspects of the Creation story exegetically in his *Commentary on Genesis* and poetically in his *Hymns on Paradise*,⁷ it was the early fifth century Syriac translation of St Basil's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* that introduced to the Syriac world the concept of a discrete work on the Six Days that dealt in detail with each day as described in Genesis ch. 1, rather than focusing mostly on questions of creation ex nihilo and the story of Adam and Eve in chs. 2-3.⁸ Hence, in all probability, the appearance of the

4 S. Giet, ed., *Basile de Césarée: Homélie sur l'Hexaéméron. Texte grec, introduction et traduction*. Sources Chrétiennes 26. 2nd edition. Paris: Cerf, 1968. English translation by Sister Agnes Clare Way, *Saint Basil: Exegetic Homilies*. Fathers of the Church 46. Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1963, pp. 3–150.

5 C. Scholten, ed., *Johannes Philoponos. De Opificio Mundi. Über die Erschaffung der Welt*. 3 vols. Fontes Christiani, 23/2. Freiburg etc.: Herder, 1997.

6 The creation account is also addressed in Greek works by Theophilus of Antioch, Gregory of Nyssa, Severian of Gabala, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, Procopius of Gaza, though these are not hexaemeral in form.

7 R. M. Tonneau, *Sancti Ephraemi Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii*. CSCO 152–153. Louvain: Peeters, 1955, Section 1; English translation in E. Mathews and J. P. Amar, *St Ephrem the Syrian: Selected prose works*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1994, pp. 74–97. E. Beck, ed., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Paradiso und contra Julianum*. CSCO 174–175. Louvain: Peeters, 1957; English translation by S. P. Brock, *St Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns on Paradise*. Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Press, 1990.

8 R. W. Thomson, ed., *The Syriac Version of the Hexaemeron by Basil of Caesarea*. CSCO 550–551, Syr. 222–223. Leuven: Peeters, 1995; and R. W. Thomson, "The Syriac and Armenian Versions of the Hexaemeron by Basil of Caesarea", *Studia Patristica* 27 (1993),

very long memra of Jacob of Sarug (d. 521) on the Six Days of Creation.⁹

So by the early eighth century there was a range of choices for the form a hexaemeral work could take, as well as an abundance of material. Jacob of Edessa being a notable polymath (rather than a poet like his namesake of Sarug), it is not surprising that his *Hexaemeron* takes the form of a kind of exegetical encyclopaedia, apparently written as his intellectual legacy for his students at Tell ‘Adda.¹⁰ The work is divided into seven *memre* and is preserved in four manuscripts. The earliest, dating from 837 CE, forms the basis for Chabot’s facsimile edition.¹¹

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- 113–117. For the genre of hexaemeral literature in Syriac, see E. ten Napel, «Some remarks on the Hexaemeral Literature in Syriac», in *IV Symposium Syriacum. Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, ed. H. J. W. Drijvers et al.. OCA 229. Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987, pp. 57–69. Narsai (d. 502) wrote six homilies on the Creation, but these mostly deal with theological themes and do not follow the order of Genesis ch. 1 (Ph. Gignoux, ed., «Homélies de Narsai sur la Création», *Patrologia Orientalis* 34: 3–4 (1968)).
- 9 P. Bedjan, *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, vol. 3 (Paris/Leipzig, 1907; re-published by S. P. Brock, *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug/Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis* (Piscataway, NJ, 2006)), §71, pp. 1–151; Behnam M. Boulos Sony, *L’Homélie de Jacques de Saroug sur l’Hexaemeron*. Rome, 2000; French translation (via German) and parallels with earlier Greek and Syriac writers noted by T. Jansma, «L’Hexaméron de Jacques de Sarûg», *L’Orient Syrien* 4 (1959): 3–42, 129–162, 253–284; E. J. Mathews, *Jacob of Sarug’s Homilies on the Six Days of Creation* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2009, 2016), especially p. 1 of his translation of the First Day, where he notes the lack of influence from Eusebius of Emesa and Basil.
- 10 See the beginning of the first Memra of Jacob’s *Hexaemeron*: J.-B. Chabot, ed., *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron, seu in opus creationis libri septem*. CSCO 92, Syr. 44. Paris: L. Durbecq, 1928, p. 2b.
- 11 Chabot, ed. *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron...*

It is a considerable task to trace all the sources of the work and investigate what Jacob did with them. Sections have been analysed and translated by Hjelt (Memra III on geography, and plants);¹² Schlimme (Memra I; zoology);¹³ and Greatrex (Memra I, II, IV, on respectively the creation of angels, earth and heaven, and the luminaries).¹⁴ However, as yet there is no translation of the whole *Hexaemeron* apart from Vaschalde's rather literal Latin translation.¹⁵

The fifth Memra of Jacob's *Hexaemeron* expounds the creation of the fifth day, namely fish, swarming things, and flying creatures including birds. To date it has not been much studied.¹⁶ Its zoological observations would not pass muster today since, like many other works in antiquity, it is heavily dependent on

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- 12 A. L. M. Hjelt, *Études sur l'Hexaméron de Jacques d'Edesse, notamment sur ses notions géographiques contenues dans le 3ième traité*. Helsingfors: J.C. Frenckell, 1892; A. L. M. Hjelt, «Pflanzennamen aus dem Hexaëmeron Jacob's von Edessa», in *Orientalische Studien: Theodor Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag (2. März 1906) gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern*, C. Bezold, ed. Gieszen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1906, pp. 571–579.
- 13 L. Schlimme, «Synkretismus in der syrischen Hexaemeron-Literatur (exemplarisch dargestellt an der Rezeption der antiken Zoologie)», in *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen I, G. Wiessner*, ed. Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 3. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973, pp. 164–188.
- 14 Marina Greatrex, «Memra One, Two, and Four of the Hexaemeron of Jacob of Edessa: Introduction, Translation, and Text». Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wales, 2000; M. Greatrex, «The Angelology in the Hexaemeron of Jacob of Edessa», *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 4 (2004), 33–46.
- 15 A. A. Vaschalde, ed., *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron, seu in opus creationis libri septem*. CSCO 97, Syr. 48. Louvain: L. Durbecq, 1932.
- 16 See the general remarks on Memra V by J. P. P. Martin in his overview of the *Hexaemeron* in «L'Hexaméron de Jacques d'Edesse», *Journal Asiatique* 8e série Tome XI (1888), 462–467 (mentioning in particular the sections on the silk worm and the parrot).

the legacy of the Greek philosopher and scientist Aristotle (d. 322), whose compendious *History of Animals* was an influential work.¹⁷ Aristotle's categorizations of living creatures were based on careful observation and employed points of difference and similarity to classify types and species. However, scientific developments in the modern period, including the invention of binoculars and microscopes, mean that our classifications are frequently very different from Aristotle's, and therefore from those of the writers who depended on him. Also, the sheer amount of material Aristotle wrote meant that scholars in antiquity accessed his *History of Animals* in greatly condensed versions that focused on the more interesting species. As time went on there was a tendency to garble the information even further, and also make it serve a moral rather than a scientific purpose. So we find influential works like the *Physiologus*, a Greek Christian text of the third to fourth century AD, that briefly describes animal and bird behaviour accompanied by a moral commentary. (The genre of moralizing zoology lasted well into the medieval period, in the form of 'bestiaries'.) More than one Syriac form of the *Physiologus* was in existence and it seems likely that Jacob had some knowledge of a much excerpted version of Aristotle on animals along the same lines. Of his Christian predecessors the greatest influences on Memra V of the *Hexaemeron* were the hexaemeral works of Basil of Caesarea and Jacob of Sarug.¹⁸

17 Aristotle, *Historia Animalium = History of Animals*, with an English translation by A.L. Peck and D. M. Balme. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library 437–439. London / Cambridge, MA : Heinemann / Harvard University Press, 1965–1991.

18 In some of its more theological preoccupations Jacob of Edessa's Memra V displays the influence of the section of Jacob of Sarug's *Memra on the Hexaemeron* that covers the fifth day, but this is a matter for another study.

This does not mean that Jacob merely copied traditions verbatim. Usually he shaped them to fit the new context, and this can sometimes make it difficult to tell which version(s) of a tradition he was familiar with, and whether he knew of but rejected other versions. A good example of this would be his treatment of the kingfisher or halcyon:

“There are some other birds that have their permanent habitat on the coasts of the sea. Sometimes they swim about and behave as they do on land even on the waves, since this was the habitat granted to them by Nature. They make nests, breed and raise young near to the coasts out of caution and timidity. For people say of that defenceless little bird that the Greeks call ‘halcyon’ that when it lays eggs during the winter rainy season, it places them on the sandy sea shore. And while the rain falls and the winds blow on it, it sits on them and keeps them warm, hatching out the chicks and raising them. People who have investigated and recorded the tales told about them say that the kingfisher lays eggs and hatches out the chicks, rearing them and enabling them to fly away within a two week period. During those days God who takes care of all his creation does not allow the winds to disturb the sea, no tempest rises on it, or waves agitate it or dash against the shore, so that the kingfisher’s young may be kept safe. Acknowledging the reason, sailors call these days when the sea is calm ‘halcyon days’.”

(*Hexaemeron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 210b-211a)

Aristotle had given a more or less scientific description of the kingfisher’s breeding season, during a period of relative calm in the Mediterranean winter.¹⁹ The later Greek writer Plutarch (46-120 AD) picks up some of Aristotle’s account, but relates the calm period to the providence of the sea god Poseidon.

19 Aristotle, *History of Animals* V. 542b. (Loeb, ed. Peck), II, pp. 118–119.

Another non-Christian writer, Aelian (early third century AD), takes details from Aristotle, but turns his account of the kingfisher into a brief anecdote about the weather.²⁰ In his series of *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* for his congregation in Caesarea, St Basil speaks about the kingfisher at some length.²¹ He shows dependence on some abridged version of Aristotle,²² and like Plutarch, Basil stresses that it is divine intervention in the weather that allows the kingfisher to nest in peace. However, for Basil it is God, not Poseidon, who shows his care in this, and Basil uses the example as an encouragement to his congregation to trust in God, adding,

“These things have been ordained to encourage you to ask God for what will contribute to your salvation, because of God’s Providence regarding dumb creatures. What marvellous thing will not be done for your sake, since you have been made according to God’s image, when the great and terrible sea is held back in mid-winter because it has been commanded to be calm for the sake of a little bird?”

(*Hom. Hex. VIII* 177B, ed. Giet, pp. 456-458; tr. Salvesen)

In contrast to Basil, in his hexaemeral work the Greek Christian philosopher John Philoponus only mentions kingfishers in a list of water birds that do not breed underwater and does not repeat the fable found in other sources.²³ Jacob’s treatment of the kingfisher more than three centuries later shows his solid dependence on Basil, especially the theme of God’s providential

20 Aelian, *On the Nature of Animals* (Loeb, ed. Scholfield), vol. I, I.36.

21 Basil, *Homilies on the Hexaemeron VIII* (ed. Giet), 177B, pp. 456–458; Eng. trn. Way, p. 127.

22 See J. Levie, ‘Les sources de la septième et de la huitième Homélie de Saint Basile sur l’Hexaméron’, *Le Musée belge* 19–24 (1920), p. 140.

23 *Creation of the World*, 5.2 (ed. Scholten), II, p. 462.

care for small creatures.²⁴ Yet Jacob introduces new features such as rain, absent in the accounts of his predecessors; unlike Basil, he does not divide up the period into two separate periods of seven days; he appears unaware that all this takes place specifically at the winter solstice. Despite God's providential care, in Jacob's account the poor kingfisher still has to sit out in the rain on her nest.

This example of Jacob's use and reshaping of earlier traditions also introduces his use of creatures as moral exemplars, the focus of the rest of this article. This feature is hardly surprising given his frequent dependence on Basil in Memra V. What is more striking is that it seems to be the only section in his entire *Hexaemeron* where Jacob employs this approach. There is no similar treatment of the land animals in Memra VI, in contrast to Basil, who in his 9th *Homily on the Hexaemeron* frequently exhorts his congregation to imitate or reject the example of certain land animals.

Jewish antecedents for the use of birds as moral examples

As well as Aristotle and Basil, there are other influences on Jacob's Memra V that are of relevance to the question of using creatures as moral exemplars for humans. One was the tradition of interpretation of the lists of clean and unclean animals in the Old Testament. Like hexaemeral literature, this starts with Jewish thinkers writing in Greek. Living among pagans in Egypt and the diaspora, they often felt the need to justify the dietary laws

24 This is closer to Basil in Greek than to the Syriac translation of Basil's *Homilies* (ed. Thomson, pp. 143–144; found in identical form in the Leiden Physiologus, ed. J. P. N. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, §45, Leiden: Brill, 1862–75, p.68). For instance the Syriac version of Basil omits to specify that it is sailors who give the period its name, but Basil's Greek text and Jacob include this detail.

in the Law of Moses from a philosophical point of view: it was not enough to say that God had commanded these restrictions, they needed to say *why* he had done so. Though the biblical text does not make this explicit, most of the ‘unclean’ birds in the list in Leviticus chapter 11 (and Deuteronomy chapter 14) are carnivorous, being either birds of prey or scavengers. So these birds were to be avoided on two counts: firstly, because of what they consumed (especially carcasses), which is a point of hygiene; and second, because of their cruel nature, which suggests a moral aspect. This kind of argument is given to the figure of the high priest in the work known as the *Letter of Aristeeas* (c. 150 BC, §§145-150), and similarly by Philo of Alexandria two centuries later (*Special Laws* I. XXXIII: 162-164). Thus these Jewish writers effectively added a moral dimension to the laws of ritual purity.

Though Christians rejected the Jewish dietary laws as having been superseded with the coming of Christ, they often had to justify why God had ever set down such rules. So, early Christian writers such as Origen give similar allegorical and moralizing interpretations of the lists of unclean creatures (an approach that Jacob of Edessa also pursues in his treatment of the list of unclean birds in Leviticus ch. 11 in Memra V of his *Hexaemeron*).²⁵

The blending of pagan Greek moralistic fable coupled with Jewish and Christian allegorization led to the use of animals and birds as moral examples in treatises on Creation. Basil does this for good pastoral reasons in his *Homilies on the Six Days of Creation*. He tells his congregation that if birds, insects, and beasts can display a kind of wisdom and morality, so should his hearers. Jacob follows suit, though for him his audience consists of students at the monastery of Tell ‘Adda, and his *Hexaemeron* is primarily a scholarly work. Since Basil’s *Homilies on the Six*

25 Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus*, 7.7 (2); Jacob of Edessa, *Hexaemeron* Memra V (ed. Chabot), 213–214.

Days existed in Syriac translation, these same students may have had independent access to them apart from Jacob's *Hexaemeron*. This may explain why Jacob apparently brings in new examples as well as developing and adapting some of Basil's.

In Jacob's extensive discussion of storks the moral aspect is prominent. First of all Jacob brings up a well-known tradition about storks' supposed care for their elderly parents.

"Now concerning what naturalists have recorded about storks, how should their knowledge, discernment, and sense of justice not be cause for praise and admiration? How could it not act as a reproach and condemnation of those who treat their parents with disrespect and neglect?"

(*Hexaemeron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 216a-b)

Jacob goes on to describe how the offspring of the storks look after their parents' bodily needs, keep them warm, and help them to fly, as repayment for their upbringing. His account is close to Basil's, who says that the example of such care from the stupidest birds should shame the most senseless human into behaving virtuously.²⁶ Basil in turn had drawn on traditions found in Aristotle and Aelian.²⁷

Another feature of stork behaviour that Jacob holds up as an example for imitation is the mutual solidarity, vigilance, and orderly conduct that storks display in their annual migration.²⁸ He says that such conduct is equal to that of rational human beings. In this instance we can detect some confusion in the transmission of sources. Orderliness, *eutaxia* in Greek, is a trait of cranes (Greek *geranoi*) that Basil praises,²⁹ but the term *geranoi*

26 Basil, *Hom Hex.* VIII, ed. Giet, 176C-D, pp. 454–456. Eng. trn. Way, pp. 125–126.

27 Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.* VIII(IX) (Loeb, ed. Balme) 615b 23; Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* (Loeb, ed. Scholfield), II.23.

28 *Hexaemeron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 217a–218a.

29 *Hom. Hex.* VIII.5, ed. Giet, 176B, pp. 452–453. Eng. trn. Way, p. 125.

occurs just before Basil turns to speak of storks (Greek *pelargoi*). Basil describes the cranes taking turns to guard the group at night, and this also seems to have influenced Jacob's portrayal of storks as vigilant. (Separately elsewhere Jacob speaks of cranes being on guard duty for each other.) So Jacob may have confused the accounts that derive from Basil.³⁰ He does not make an explicit moral point about the storks, though he clearly admires their behaviour. Now Basil includes a rhetorical address here: who has given crows the laws of hospitality that they display towards the storks? Who has threatened the cranes with prosecution for deserting the storks? Let those who hate strangers and shut their doors to them, pay attention to the example of the crows' protective alliance with the storks! In contrast, Jacob focuses on the storks, and only mentions the crows' quasi-military escort at the end of the passage.

The third example of Jacob's use of traditions about storks as moral examples makes for uncomfortable reading.³¹ He gives an anecdote in which a human places a crow's egg in a stork's nest, and then the eggs hatch out. One of the chicks develops dark feathers. The putative stork father suspects his mate of adultery, calls together the other storks, who condemn the female stork and kill her and the crow chick. Jacob praises storks for this attitude and presents it as a paradigm of justice, superior to that of many human judges. The story is deeply problematic, of course: even if death was an acceptable punishment for adultery (which in Christian communities it was not), the female stork is

30 The early Syriac translation of Basil's *Homilies on the Hexaemeron* is also confused in this section, but in rendering 'storks' as 'crows' at this point (ed. Thomson, p. 141, line 23), and also further on, in the tradition about caring for elderly parents (ed. Thomson, p. 142, lines 15-29). Evidently Jacob must have gone back to the Greek of Basil (ed. Giet, 176C, p. 454), for his treatment of stork piety towards their elders (*Hexaemeron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 216a-b).

not guilty anyway, since the crow's egg was "planted" in her nest by a third party, and the crow chick certainly does not deserve to die.

Jacob's apparent approval of stork justice conflicts with his own approach elsewhere. He produced his own version of the story of Susanna – an addition to the canonical book of Daniel which was not in the original corpus of the Syriac churches – in which a virtuous married woman is falsely accused of adultery by two malicious elders and is vindicated by the young Daniel. Moreover, in his own canonical pronouncements Jacob tells his correspondent that a mere accusation of adultery against someone without firm evidence or a confession is not enough for a priest to ban them from taking the Eucharist.³² Perhaps Jacob's point about stork justice is that some semblance of a "court" has been convened in the community – the male stork does not merely take justice into his own hands.

The origin of this horrible story is unclear. Aristotle has nothing like it. Aelian says that storks are jealous but gives a completely different anecdote,³³ and his story about the mob justice of ring doves and doves regarding sexual chastity is also not comparable to Jacob's story. Basil does not say anything similar, nor does Plutarch. There are similar accounts in collections of Aesop's fables, but these are not easily dated. The most similar account to Jacob's is found in medieval European literature, especially from Spain. Yet the form of the tale with the motif of outside interference, meaning that the female stork is punished in spite of her total innocence, seems to be much later than Jacob's time. I have not yet discovered his probable

31 *Hexaemeron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 216b–217a.

32 Harvard MS 93, in answer to question §8 from John the Stylite. This corresponds to Question 9 in Vööbus's edition of the *Synodicon*.

33 Aelian, *Nat. Anim.* (Loeb, ed. Scholfield), VIII.20.

source and he seems to be the earliest dated witness to the story in this form.³⁴

A more attractive moral example adduced by Jacob is that of the bearded vulture as an example of compassion reflecting God's own merciful nature, in which Jacob also condemns cruelty towards children:

“What can one say when considering the tender compassion of the bird the Greeks call *phene*? They say that she takes in eagle chicks that have been driven out by their father's cruelty and thrown out of their nest. She acts with compassion towards them and brings them up on an equal basis with her own chicks. What should we think about this bird, and what about the cruelty of the other? It is obvious to all that compassion is the likeness of God and a gift from him. Whereas cruelty and hatred of children is the likeness of the wickedness of murderers that is sown in humanity by the Accuser who from the beginning slays people, as Christ our Saviour, He who is merciful God and lover of mankind, taught us in the gospel [John 8:44].”

(*Hexaemeron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 220b-221a)

This is essentially a version of Basil's description of how an eagle drives one of its two chicks from the nest because it only has enough food for one of them, yet the bearded vulture saves the rejected chick and brings it up with its own offspring.³⁵ The origin of the tradition seems to be Aristotle, who describes how the bearded vulture fosters the chicks jealously expelled by the eagle.³⁶

Jacob's treatment diverges from Basil's to make a general theological point about the nature of God, while implying that

34 My thanks to David Taylor who helped me investigate this.

35 Basil, *Hom. Hex.* VIII.6, ed. Giet, 177C-180A, pp. 458-460. Eng. trn. Way, pp. 127-128.

36 Aristotle, *Hist. Anim.* (Loeb, ed. Balme) VIII(IX) XXXIV 619b23-35.

humans should imitate the compassion of God and of the bearded vulture. In contrast, Basil used the example of the eagle and the bearded vulture to protest against the contemporary practice of the exposure of infants owing to poverty, and in rich families, due to the unfair distribution of inheritance among the children. Exposure of infants was banned in the Roman Empire a few years after Basil had written his homilies. For Jacob's society this was no longer an issue, though neglect of children evidently still was.

The final example is the heron (or egret – the two types of bird are related). Jacob has an extended description of the heron's quiet enjoyment of choral singing. This may hint at how Christians should behave correctly during church services!

“People say that the heron takes the greatest pleasure in hearing and being close to people singing hymns. The heron enters of its own accord and stands between the two choirs of singers and turns towards them, facing west. Sometimes it even falls asleep among them, tucking its head under its wings and standing on only one leg. However, in my opinion, although they say that it is sleeping between the singers, it isn't actually asleep, but recollecting itself in silence in order to enjoy the sound of the voices of the people chanting praise. They say that it stands steadfastly immobile until they have finished the hymn that they are singing. When they have finished and move to depart, the heron immediately calls out joyfully in praise. It flies above the ground, leaping and flapping his wings as it leaves the house with all those going out. It is also said of the heron that whenever it hears the sound of a mallet tapping on a sounding-board summoning the singers to gather, the bird jumps and leaps up and down enthusiastically with loud cries. It is heard more clearly than the sounding-board! In my opinion this ought to act as a rebuke to indolent and lazy people who do not react with joy when they hear the sound of the semantron summoning them.”

(*Hexaemeron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 221b-222a)

There are no parallels to this anecdote in any other writer. Land's *Leiden Physiologus* does not overlap with Jacob's except for the last part, where its *theoria* on the heron envisages a monastic setting by advocating staying in a single monastery and not moving around from place to place.³⁷ However, Jacob's reference to sleeping in the same place may also hint at the latter interpretation.

The moralising section in Jacob's *Memra V* is not confined to birds but also uses the example of bees to inspire his readers to work hard and to glorify God for the wonderful knowledge he has given bees. Crickets or grasshoppers are an example of "asceticism and self-denial... renunciation, poverty, chastity, lack of acquisitiveness", because they endure the summer without eating and yet sing all day. Following Basil, Jacob also cites the silkworm as a "type" of the resurrection.

However, whereas Basil is quite explicit at several points in his 9th *Homily on the Hexaemeron* about the need for humans to take lessons from dumb beasts,³⁸ Jacob's *Memra VI* on the creation of land animals does not cite any of the marvellous creatures and their outstanding qualities as examples for Christians to imitate. It is unclear why Jacob used birds and insects as moral exemplars in his *Memra V* and then dropped this approach in *Memra VI*. Instead, in *Memra VI* his debt to Basil of Caesarea's *Homilies* can be seen in his frequent emphasis on the way in which certain types of animal are of practical use

37 Syriac text(ed. Land), pp. 62–63.

38 E.g. Basil, *Hom. Hex. IX*, ed. Giet, 193A, C; 196 B; 197 A, C. Eng. trn. Way, pp. 138 (humans may behave as irrational beasts); p. 139 (comparing ourselves with animals, to improve our behaviour or condemn it), p. 140 (what humans learn from cattle, hedgehogs, and ants about preparing for the imminent future); pp. 141–42 (the care of lionesses and wolves for their offspring, compared with human neglect of parents or children); pp. 141–143 (canine gratitude and loyalty).

to humans and serve their needs, thus fulfilling the divine command to be subject to man.³⁹ Thus in describing the nature of dogs,⁴⁰ like Basil he stresses canine loyalty but ignores Basil's rhetorical question about the way such loyalty puts to shame the human who is ungrateful to his benefactors.⁴¹ And in speaking of ants Jacob cites the whole of Proverbs 6:6-8 which exhorts the lazy to 'go to the ant', but he does not himself direct his readers to imitate the ant's industry.⁴² Thus in Memra VI, compared with Basil, he is much more interested in the zoological descriptions and the biblical references to particular animals.⁴³

Conclusion

At the end of the "moralising" section of Memra V, Jacob sums up his purpose in its inclusion:

"In its love of virtue, this investigative treatise has selected these examples and others like them that excite praise and emulation in industrious and studious people by the laudable ways and habits that Nature, the Creator bestowed on a few species of bird. *This was so that they might both act as a reproof and inspire zeal in the freewill of human reason and thought whose choice has not been what is good and commendable - whether that is chastity, or knowledge, or docility and calmness,*

39 E.g. *Hexaemeron*, Memra VI, ed. Chabot, 249b, 250a-b, 252b-253a, 256a, 257b, 258a.

40 *Hexaemeron*, Memra VI, ed. Chabot, 256b-257a.

41 Basil, *Hom. Hex. IX*, ed. Giet, 197 B-C.

42 *Hexaemeron*, Memra VI, ed. Chabot, 273a. Compare Basil, who exhorts humans to imitate the ant in industry (*Hom. Hex. IX*, ed. Giet, 193 C; Eng. trn Way, p. 140).

43 Jacob is even more fascinated by the elephant than Basil was, though he is unlikely to have ever seen one (*Hexaemeron*, Memra VI, ed. Chabot, 245-247; Basil, *Hom. Hex. IX* 201A-B; Eng. trn. Way pp. 144-146; following Aristotle, *Part. Anim.* (Loeb, ed. Peck, 1955) 658b34; *Hist. Anim.* (Loeb, ed. Peck), II, 1 497b26).

or discipline, or any of the virtues - even though [these people] are like these birds that lack reason and thought. This discussion has now dealt with the commendable habits among birds that are worthy of emulation.”

(*Hexaameron*, Memra V, ed. Chabot, 222 a-b)

Jacob’s use of examples of admirable behaviour in birds (and certain insects) to provoke his readers to aspire to more virtuous behaviour is a little unexpected in what is essentially an exegetical and encyclopaedic series of treatises on Genesis chapter 1. This moralising tone is clearly due to the influence of Basil of Caesarea’s famous *Homilies on the Six Days* which were much admired in antiquity. However, Jacob composed the *Hexaameron* as a written legacy for his most advanced students, rather than as a series of sermons for a congregation of mixed gender, age, and educational level as Basil had done. So although Jacob preserves the rhetorical tone that Basil used, he makes his moral points more obliquely and generally rather than directing them pointedly at his students, and subsequently drops this feature in the next Memra. Although much of the material cited above can be traced to Basil and to collections of animal lore, the source of the passage about the superiority of stork justice towards a supposed adulterous female is unclear, and at present, Jacob seems to be the earliest surviving attestation of it.

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A STUDY ON THE THEOLOGY OF DEATH IN THE WEST SYRIAN TRADITION ON THE BASIS OF *THE ORDER OF SERVICE OF SUNDAY OF THE DEPARTED*

The *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed* is a part of the Canonical Prayers of the WST. Since the Syriac text of this Service is not yet translated into English or Malayalam, this text is not widely used by the common people of the Churches of the WST in Malankara and therefore, it is not familiar to them. Only those priests well versed in Syriac are using this text on 'Anide Sunday or Sunday of the Departed.

Manuscript of the Text

The text of the *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed* is taken from manuscripts, which are kept in Pampakuda Library, Kerala, India. This manuscript is copied by eight deacons in 1888 from an anonymous manuscript for their Malphono (teacher) Konat Yuhanon malphono. These manuscripts are preserved in three

volumes and the *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed* is in Volume 1 of the *Penqitho*. *Penqitho* literally means ‘writing board’ in the Syriac world, and it means here canonical prayers for non-ferial days i.e., for Sundays and feast days of the year. Vol. 1 of the *Penqitho* contains the prayers from *Qudoš`Edto* (Day of the Dedication of Church) up to *Anide* (Special Sunday for the departed), Vol. 2 contains Prayers of the Sundays of the Great Lent and Vol. 3 contains the prayers from *Qyomto* (Day of Resurrection) up to *Qudoš`Edtho*.

Theology of Death in the West Syrian Tradition on the basis of *the Order of service of Sunday of the Departed*

The West Syrian Tradition is quite convinced of life after death, and need of prayer for the help of the departed faithful. The theology of death is manifested in the various prayers of this tradition. The prayers of the Sunday of the Departed are indeed rich sources of the theology of death in the WST.. This Order of Service expresses the concern of the Church regarding death, life after death and the significance of the prayer for the departed. The Church holds the view that there is no death for a true believer and that he is living forever with God after his earthly life.

Prayer for the remission of sins, resurrection and new life, heavenly bridal chamber, robe of glory, placing at the right side of the Lord, Kingdom of God, bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, dwelling with the righteous and saints, heavenly Jerusalem, fire of Gehano etc in this Order of Service speak about the life after death and significance of the prayer for the departed.

I. Meaning and Relevance of Christian Death

Death is the outward expression of love of God in the act of plan of salvation Death is beyond the logical understanding of human beings. Knowledge about the death leads a faithful to the perfect

dedication of human beings before God.¹ Death is not the renunciation and abandonment of our history, rather our life comes to fulfillment in the transition through death into eternity.² The term death has two concepts. One is the result of sinful life and denial of divine presence that is spiritual death. Another one is physical death. A sinner has two deaths; i.e.; physical death and spiritual death. Nevertheless, the righteous has only one death; i.e; physical death. Those who lead sinful life are dead even when they are physically alive

Death: Dying with Christ

The Christian perspective on death is derived from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. “Therefore we have been buried with him baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His” (Rom 6, 4-5). The creative power of God stands against physical death as a promise for the fullness of life. The Lord may open the gate of Paradise for the departed faithful, where there is no death and where He fills with endless sweetness of joy. Jesus replied to the thief who confessed Christ that: “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23, 43).

Death: Door to Eternal Life

Death is not only the separation of human spirit from the physical body but also an entrance into eternal life.³ Death is an event in human life, which is the apparent evidence of divine

1 B. PUTHOOR, ed., *Maranavum Maranananthara Jeevithavum* (Mal) (Alwaye, 1996) 51. Hereafter PUTHOOR, *Maranananharajeevitham*.

2 O. HENTZ, *The Hope of the Christian* (Collgeville, Minnesota, 1997) 44.

3 AUGEN MOR THIMOTHEOS, *Marananantharavastha* (Mal) (Pampakuda, 1952) 16. Hereafter AUGEN, *Marananantharavastha*.

providence. Death puts an end to the sufferings and afflictions of human beings in earthly life. It leads to eternal life with God and His righteous. “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life” (Jn 5, 24). Both these verses highlight the significance of death, which is an essential event for achieving eternal life. For a true Christian, death is a door to eternal life, where he finds joy and peace with the righteous and the spiritual beings.

II. Major Theological Themes in connection with Theology of Death in this Order of Service

Following are the major theological themes in the realm of Theology of Death which are discussed in the *Order of Service of Sunday of the Departed*

1. Prayer for the Remission of Sins of the Departed

The main concern of the prayer for the departed is the remission of their sins by the mercy of Almighty God. Kadavil Paul Ramban interprets the prayer for the departed as follows:

In the canonical prayers and in the Holy Eucharist, the Syrians remember the departed and pray for their remission. It is believed that the Holy Mass which is mystically identified with the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, is capable of giving pardon to the souls of the departed.⁴

The significance of this theme is elaborated through the various references in the *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed*. The Church holds the view that the remission of sins of the departed is the gift of God because of His mercy towards them.⁵ The believers hope that Christ who rose from the dead, and on the same merit,

4 KADAVIL PAUL RAMBAN, *The Orthodox Syrian Church*, 40.

5 The second stanzas of the hymn MšihōDamlakNuḥomo of the Ramšo, *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed*, 1.

will raise the departed by forgiving their sins.⁶ The WST teaches that most of the prayers for the departed beings are for their renewal and resurrection through the absolution of their sins.⁷

2. Resurrection and New Life

The petition for granting resurrection and new life to the departed ones is one of the main themes of the prayer of the *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed*. The burial of the Christians is interpreted not merely as a return to the dust, but as the planting of a seed which will germinate into the fullness of life in eternity. The *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed* presents several times the theological theme “resurrection and new life”. Lord gave his own body as a pledge of new life and granted resurrection to the departed faithful. Lord guaranteed resurrection and new life to those who believed in him and died in his hope. Lord grants resurrection to those who wait for Christ and his life-giving voice in tombs.⁸

3. Standing at the Right Side of the Lord

The general concept of the WST regarding the departed faithful ones is that Lord will place them at His right side. Lord will place the lambs at the right side and goats at the left side. “. . . You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mk 14, 62). Besides the *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed*, all other liturgical services in the WST announce that Lord will make the departed faithful stand at His right side. The Church declares that the departed faithful

6 The second stanza of the QoloLokMoryoQorenan of the second Qawmo of the Lilyo, Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed, 13.

7 The fourth stanza of the Madrošo: Slek Lac libo of the second Qawmo of the Lilyo, 14; and the second stanza of hymn I ubayhun Mo dhothoath of the b aphro, 22 of Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed.

8 The third stanza of the ‘Enyono of the first Qawmo of the Lilyo on Sunday, Šħimo, 53.

will be placed at the right side of the Lord on the day of His magnificent manifestation⁹ and further, holds the view that, the departed who received the body and blood of Christ will be placed at the right side of the Lord.¹⁰

4. Inheriting the Kingdom of God

The WST holds the view that those who died in the hope of Christ will inherit the Kingdom of God. All those who believe in Christ and receive his body and blood will be heirs of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God here on earth, is identical with the Church, that is, the assembly of those who form the new Israel, the people of the New Covenant. Happiness is promised in this world to the humble and to the pure hearts, to the gentle souls, to all who hunger and thirst after justice, or suffer abuse and persecution. Jesus bids them rejoice for their reward will be great in the Kingdom of God.¹¹

5. Heavenly Bridal Chamber

One of the main theological concepts related to the theology of death of the WST is the permanent dwelling of the departed faithful in the illuminated heavenly bridal chamber. In the parable of ten virgins Christ said: “And when they went to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut” (Mt 25, 10). It means those who prepared themselves will be get into bridal chamber with the Lord. It proves the significance of bridal chamber for the bride and groom. The bridegroom brings the bride to the bridal chamber. Thus God leads the departed faithful to the bridal chamber. The

9 The first stanza of the B'outhoof MorAprem of the second Qawmoof the Liliyo, Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed, 16;

10 The last stanza of the I ubayhun: Modthoath of the b aphro, Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed, 23;

11 M. BECQUE- L. BECQUE, Life after Death, 68.

Church teaches that those who die in the hope of Christ will be placed in the illuminated bridal chamber.

6. Dwelling on the Bosom of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob

The Church believes that all the departed faithful ones are taking rest by dwelling on the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The departed faithful are on the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and are enriched with heavenly joy and blessings. Jesus said in the parable of the rich and Lazarus, the rich who was tormented in Hades, saw Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham (Lk 16, 19-31). Here Christ substantiated the state of good and wicked after death. The righteous will be in the bosom of Abraham.

Bosom of Abraham is another usage of the paradise where righteous takes rest after their physical death and before the final judgment. Paradise is an intermediate state between earthly life and heavenly life. Paradise is the place, to which the souls of the patriarchs, the chosen and for righteous were taken.¹²

7. Robe of Glory

Concept of the robe of glory is a significant theme in the theology of death in WST. The interpretation of Gen 3, 21 in terms of the “Robe of Glory”, in which Adam was clothed before the fall, is a common heritage of the Jewish and Christian interpretations and was prominent in the early Syriac tradition. This robe is not of skin but of glory, referring to the state before the fall. The first Adam loses the robe of glory at the fall. The second Adam (Christ) puts the robe of glory on the body of the first Adam in order to renew mankind in baptism and to put on the ‘new man’ or Christ on to the Christians at the baptism, putting on the robe of glory. “They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer” (Rev 6, 11).

12 DOUGLAS, *New Bible Dictionary*, 879.

The Fathers of the Church in the Syrian Tradition also teach the theme of the “Robe of Glory”. The image of ‘putting on and putting off clothing’ is widely used by the early Syriac Fathers like St. Ephrem and St. Jacob of Serugh.¹³ According to Mor Aprem, “at the fall Adam and Eve are stripped of the ‘robe of glory’, God ‘puts on names’ in the Scriptures, Christ ‘puts on the body’ at the incarnation, He ‘puts on our weaknesses’.”¹⁴ In *Hymns on Paradise*, Mor Aprem views the robe of glory as an inevitable factor for entering the paradise.

8. Heaven for the Righteous

The Christian conception of heaven is essentially that of the eschatological realization of the presence and power of God, and the final elimination of sin. The most helpful way of considering it is to regard it as a consummation of the Christian doctrine of salvation, in which the presence, penalty and power of sin have all been finally eliminated and the total presence of God in individuals and in the community of faith have been achieved.¹⁵ From the beginning, the Church has used this term to mean the state of happiness constituted by the possession of God. To give us the chance of reaching this state Jesus Christ has suffered and died for us. Paradise is a place where the men will have their bodies of the resurrection.¹⁶ Rising into heaven does not mean a moment in any spatial sense, but a special mode of fulfilled life, the life with God. Christ creates that life through His resurrection.¹⁷

13 T. KOLLAMPARAMPIL, *Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh* (Bangalore, 2001) 396. Hereafter KOLLAMPARAMPIL, *Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh*.

14 S.P. BROCK, *St .EPHREM the Syrian Hymns on Paradise* (New York, 1990) 66. Hereafter BROCK, *St EPHREM Hymns on Paradise*.

15 A. E. McGRATH, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1994) 476. Hereafter ALISTER, *Christian Theology*, 477.

16 PIOLANTI ed., *Problems of the Future*, 133.

17 M. SCHMAUS, *Dogma 6: Justification and the Last Things* (London). 261.

9. Fire of *Gehano* for Sinners

The word *Gehano* in Syriac is derived from *Gehanna* in Greek. The root of *Gehanna* is *Ge-Hinnom* in Hebrew means Valley of Hinnom. *Gehano* was an Old Testament concept associated with chastisement. It is a place of torment for the wicked in later Jewish concept. Early Christian community also follows this concept. *Gehano* is different from *Sheol*. *Sheol* is the resting place of departed souls until the final judgment. But *Gehano* is the place of eternal punishment for the wicked after the final judgment.¹⁸

Gehano is the metaphorical name for hell, an underground region of fire where the damned are punished after death.¹⁹ *Gehano* is a place where the sinners suffer and they have lost all hope of sharing in beauty and happiness. The worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched in hell (Mk 9, 48). A great ‘gulf’ separates the sinners in *Sheol* from Paradise as in the parable of the Rich and Lazarus (Lk 16, 19-31) but since they can see the joy of their loved ones in Paradise, their torments are doubled.²⁰ The chief elements which go to build up the idea that hell or the underworld is like a place and a state, are drawn from the contemporary view of the nature of the underworld, and from the way in which late Judaism regarded the survival of the soul.²¹

III. Relevance Of Christian Liturgy For The Departed

The Church teaches that the souls of departed faithful enjoy rest, peace, joy and freedom along with the righteous and the saints. Therefore, the Church calls them fortunate and we pray for them. “Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord” (Rev 14,

18 MOR GREGORIOS, Malankara Orthodox Sabha VinganaKosham, 299.

19 MALONEY, The Everlasting Now, 49.

20 DALEY, The Hope of the Early Church, 76.

21 B. JOHANNES, ed., Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology, Vol.1 (London, 1970) 202.

13). Prayer for the departed beings is one of the prominent sources of the theology of death in the WST.

Remembrance of the departed and petitions requesting God's favor for them are very common in the West Syrian Liturgy. It would not be an exaggeration to say that there is no West Syriac Liturgical Service that does not mention the departed at least once.²² Through the prayers of the faithful, the departed beings benefit after their earthly life. Moses prayed for Reuben because he was cursed by Jacob his father (Gen 49, 4 and Dt 33, 6). St. Paul prayed for Onesiphorus after his death (2 Tim 1: 18).

St. John Chrysostom speaks on the need of prayer for the departed ones:

Let us commemorate our departed together with the martyrs, the confessors, and the priests. For we all the faithful are one spiritual body... Let us ask forgiveness for them from everywhere from the petitions, from the gifts offered for them and from the saints who are commemorated with them at the time of the Divine Liturgy.²³

Therefore, when we pray for our brothers who have departed unprepared for eternity, we do a sacred task pleasing to God.²⁴ The souls of the sinners receive a certain benefit from the bloodless sacrifice. Only our God who has authority over the living and the dead knows and ordains.²⁵

22 J. THEKEPARAMPIL, "The Prayer for the departed in the West Syriac Liturgy" in *The Harp* Vol. 5 (Kottayam, 1992) 203. Hereafter THEKEPARAMPIL, "The Prayer for the Departed".

23 JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, "Homily 41, 5 On 1 Corinthians" in PHILIP SCHAFF ed., *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers (NPNF), Vo. XII* (Massachusetts, 1994) 254.

24 VASSILIADIS, *The Mystery of Death*, 430.

25 ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *To Antichos the Ruler*, Question 34, as cited in VASSILIADIS, *The Mystery of Death*, 434.

1. Liturgical Commemoration of the departed on the Third, the Ninth, the Thirtieth, the Fortieth days and on the Death Anniversary

The West Syrian Church has the practice of conducting services on the third, ninth, thirtieth, fortieth days and on the death anniversary after the death of the departed. These commemorations have their roots in the ancient commemorations of the departed with lamentations and communal meals on such days in Jewish tradition. These services consist of prayers for the departed.

The West Syrian Church, like a concerned mother, daily, at every divine service, offers up prayers for all her children, who have departed for the land of eternity. On the third day, in remembrance of resurrection of Christ on the third day, the Holy *Qurbono* is celebrated for the departed beings. On the ninth day, the soul of the deceased is conjoined to the nine ranks of angels; and the ninth day is considered the day of living and dead. On the thirtieth day, the Holy *Qurbono* is conducted in resemblance of Jewish tradition that is the practice of lamentation on the departed beings for thirty days in Israel. “The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days” (Dt 34, 8). On the fortieth day, the Holy *Qurbono* is conducted in memory of the departed in accordance with the ascension of Christ on the fortieth day. From antiquity, the Holy Church has correctly and devoutly made it a rule to commemorate the departed in the course of forty days and on the fortieth day in particular.

2. Eucharist: Guarantee of New Life in Heaven

The prayers of the living faithful benefit the departed who are in the presence of God. St. John Chrysostom states: “Prayers for the dead offer them a certain consolation. Such prayers provide much profit and much benefit to the departed”.²⁶ The West Syrian

26 JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, “Homily 3, 4 On Philipians” in PHILIP SCHAFF ed., NPNF, Vol. XIII, 197.

Church offers up prayers for all her children who have departed for the land of eternity. Since the beginning of the church, there has been a tradition of commemorating the departed and praying for them. Celebrating Holy Communion and giving alms to the poor on this day have also been part of this tradition.

The *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed* declares that Eucharist is a guarantee of new life in heaven.

All who confessed you, O Word, the Only Begotten, the Most High! and received through your holy body and living and vivifying blood the pledge of life and died in your hope and trust, may rise up through you from tomb on the great day of your second coming at the last horn and may stand up and be heirs of your kingdom.²⁷

In the Eucharistic Liturgy of the WST, the believers remember the prayer and sacrifice of Moses which are mentioned in the *Eqbo* of the concluding hymn of the Post Communion Service. “If Moses gave life to Rueben who sinned, by the blood of animals, how much more shall the departed faithful be absolved by the living sacrifice offered in their behalf?”²⁸

CONCLUSION

The West Syrian Tradition is quite convinced of life after death, and need of prayer for the help of the departed faithful. The theology of death is manifested in the various prayers of this tradition. The prayers of the Sunday of the Departed are indeed rich sources of the theology of death in the WST. This Order of Service expresses the concern of the Church regarding death, life after death and the

27 The first stanza of the Ṭubayk ‘Edtoof of the Ramšo of Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed, 5.

28 Service Book of the Holy Qurbono (trans. Kadavil Paulose Mor Athanasius, 1951) 70. Cf. Service Book of the Holy Qurbono, Bombay Mor Ignatius Orthodox Fellowship, 1995) 89. See Dt 33,6.

significance of the prayer for the departed. The Church holds the view that there is no death for a true believer and that he is living forever with God after his earthly life. True believers have eternal life; and we pray for our departed faithful to make them enter the Kingdom of God. Death is only one of the different dimensions of resurrection. In order to participate in the resurrection and in the eternal life with Christ, we must share his death and hence go through physical death. Transition from temporal world to heavenly world takes place during the death of a Christian.

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HOW MUCH DOES A METROPOLITAN COST? BRITISH PROPOSALS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PUTHENKUR SYRIAN CLERGY IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

[Note: the following article contains references to attitudes and assumptions that many today might find offensive. No endorsement of them is intended.]

On 30th March 1818 Colonel John Munro, British Resident of the East India Company in the Princely States of Travancore and Cochin, wrote to the Chief Secretary to the Governor in Fort St George (later Madras, today Chennai). His letter is preserved in the India Office archives, now housed in the British Library in London.¹ That letter forms the basis of this paper.

Munro was a Scot, born 1778 in Teaninich, county Ross, on the eastern side of the highlands of Scotland, north of Inverness.²

1 IOR/F/4/616, P.3ff.

2 See Phillip Tovey, *Colonel John Munro, Evangelical Christian*, online at https://www.academia.edu/15029987/Colonel_John_Munro_Evangelical_Christian?auto=download

As a younger son he came out to India to serve in the East India Company. He was talented and linguistically gifted, serving on the staff of several Commanders-in-Chief. He fought at the Battle of Seringapatam. In 1811 he was appointed the Company's Resident in the Princely States of Travancore and Cochin. More unusually, he also became the *Dewan* (the chief minister), a position which gave him immense authority (and which occasioned some local resistance). Generally, however, by the time he left office he was widely respected and indeed loved by those whom he had governed.

Munro's opening statement in his 1818 letter was that 'The state of Christianity in Travancore and Cochin appears to merit the consideration of the British Government'. His reason for asserting this, he told his superiors, was that 'the support of a respectable body of Christian subjects would contribute to strengthen the British power' especially in times of unrest. The 'respectable body' of Christians whom Munro wished to encourage were the Puthenkur Syrians under the oversight of a succession of Indian Metropolitans, the current Metropolitan in 1818 being Punnathra Mar Dionysios III. These, however, comprised only about a third of the Syrian community. The majority – the Pazhayakuttukar – were those Syrians who had been in communion with Rome since the Synod of Diamper in 1599. Their liturgical heritage was East Syrian, but considerably latinised, and they were governed at this stage by European bishops. They were the ancestors of the present-day Syro-Malabar Church.

There were, in Munro's eyes, several problems with this Romo-Syrian community.

Firstly, they were not 'proper Syrians' or 'real Syrians' (he uses both those terms). This designation arises from a misunderstanding by the British of the community's history. The first British to encounter the St Thomas Christians assumed that the non-Roman Syrians were the original community, whose forebears had escaped at the *Coonen* Cross incident of 1653 from the Roman

yoke imposed by the Portuguese, and that their liturgy, though contaminated by Rome, was the original rite of the pre-European community. In fact, of course, it was the *Puthenkuttukar* whose West Syrian rites were recent introductions to India, having only been gradually introduced from the second half of the 17th century onwards by an intermittent succession of Syrian Orthodox bishops who had survived the journey to India. The very name *Puthenkuttukar* - New party – should have alerted Munro to this. Instead, however, the first British missionaries and others assumed the reverse, that the Romo-Syrians had been enticed away from pure Syrian ways as most faithfully represented by the contemporary usage of the *Puthenkur* Syrians. That then, to Munro and his missionary collaborators, was the first problem with the Romo-Syrians; they weren't the proper Syrians at all.

The second problem was one that the authorities in Fort St George were more likely to take seriously. The Roman Catholics, asserted Munro, 'are far from being really attached to the British interests and power' and should 'a European Enemy professing the Roman Catholic religion invade the country' they would join him against the British. To understand this concern it is only necessary to remind ourselves of the date of this letter. March 1818 was rather less than three years after the Battle of Waterloo.³ The French had been defeated and Napoleon was in exile on St Helena, but he had returned from exile before. Moreover, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 had been precisely to further capture by the French of British possessions in India. That danger has only been removed by the defeat and death of Tippu Sultan, whom the French had aided, by Arthur Wellesley (later the first Duke of Wellington) in 1799, bringing to an end the Fourth Mysorean War. It was precisely those wars that had brought the British into this part of India in the first place. With hindsight we know that the British presence here was now secure, but it obviously did not feel like that in 1818. It was

3 The date of the battle was 18th June 1815.

therefore necessary, argued Munro, to build up a body of *loyal* native Christians, since the Romo-Syrians could not be relied on.

A third reason why Munro favoured the *Puthenkur* Syrians over their brethren in communion with Rome was that he didn't believe that the latter's version of Christianity was likely to appeal to the non-Christian population. These were far more likely to be won over by the simple truths of the Protestant religion, whereas '... the pageantry, idolatrous appearances and extraordinary mysteries of the Roman Catholic faith are calculated to revolt a mind already disgusted and disposed to change by the idolatries and incongruities of Hindu worship'.

As evidence that the indigenous population would be amenable to conversion to Christianity, Munro cites the 'extraordinary progress of the Mahomedan religion especially in the former domains of the Zamorin [of Calicut]'. The terrors inflicted by Tippu Sultan had only created a 'temporary animosity' against Islam. Its subsequent spread, believed Munro, 'demonstrates the toleration or rather the marked indifference manifested by the Hindus to the quiet and peaceable diffusion of religious opinions and practices different to their own'.

Moreover, Munro and the missionaries believed that, with a little encouragement, the non-Roman Syrians, could be induced to adopt the English Ritual and to be received into union with the Church of England. From this happy condition they would be able to attract their non-Christian neighbours. A further benefit would be that the Roman Catholics would be induced to join the Syrians 'and in the course of a few years conversion to the Protestant Religion of the greatest portion of the Roman Catholics in this country would take place'. Slightly ominously, Munro suggests that the Resident should resort to 'a mild exercise of his influence' to get them to rejoin 'the proper Syrians'. In fact, he ends his entire letter with a plea that there should be 'a moderate degree of encouragement by the Government' to this end.

For all this to happen there needed to be not just encouragement, but some ‘moderate *assistance*... from the British Government’ as well. What did that mean in practice? Or, to get to the heart of the matter, what might it cost? To support his case, Munro had asked Benjamin Bailey, the senior CMS missionary, based at Kottayam, to supply him with some facts and figures. Bailey had written to Munro on 10th February 1818 and Munro appended Bailey’s letter to his report to Fort St George.

Regarding the financial situation of the Syrian *Cattanars*, Bailey reported that ‘Their resources are very small indeed. Most of their supply arises from customs imbibed from the Roman Catholics, particularly what they call the *Chitam*, or the commemoration of the Death of a relative. Nothing can be more unscriptural in my opinion, yet it is their chief resource’.⁴ *Chattums* are held at specified intervals following a death. At their heart is a celebration of the Qurbana, often involving several priests. A meal and distribution of food usually follows. According to Bailey, the *Cattanars* would be willing to ‘lay it aside’ but cannot do so because the people would not be willing to support them by any other means. There would also be resentment from the poor as they benefit from the rice customarily distributed at *chattum* feasts. In the smaller churches the *Cattanars* also ‘have to engage in merchandize [presumably some sort of trading] to get a little support’.

Here, then, was a dilemma for the Missionaries, a dilemma which Munro tried to get the British authorities to resolve. The main income of the Syrian clergy derived from a practice which the Protestant missionaries abhorred. The whole Western European Reformation had been triggered by Martin Luther’s protest against practices connected with prayer and the departed; and here was an equivalent, flourishing in the Syrian Churches! In order to stamp out the practice of *chattums*, they would have to find an alternative source.

4 P. 30.

How much would be needed? To try and arrive at a figure, Bailey drew up a table showing the fees charged for particular rites, entitled *Revenues from different Services for the support of the Syrian cattanars*. Some of these were fairly straightforward:

Baptism	6 ⁵
Anointing a sick person	4
Confession	1
House blessing	4

For a funeral there was no fee, but the priest received rice.

For weddings and *chattums* there were complicated formulae. In the case of weddings this was linked to the size of the dowry: the larger the dowry, the greater the fee given to the priest. Even if there was no dowry the priest was entitled to 6 chuckrams. For wealthier families Bailey gives figures of over 300 chuckrams.⁶

The calculation of *chattum* fees was even more complicated, depending on how many *cattanars* were to celebrate Qurbanas and for how many days. The wealth of the family or friends seems also to have been taken into account. Bailey gives figures for the poor (6 chuckrams) and for ‘the middling sort’ (20 chuckrams).

Finally (in relation to the parish clergy) Bailey works out how much income a parish of 300 families (which he says is typical of Kottayam) might bring in. On the assumption of 150 baptisms, 30 marriages, 40 deaths (plus the lesser rites) he estimates a total parish income of 7,515 chuckrams per annum. Supposing the parish is served by three *cattanars*, that means an annual income of almost

5 The figures here are chuckrams. The currency at this period seems to have been: 1 Travancore Rupee = 7 Fanam; 1 Fanam = 4 Chuckrams; 1 Chuckram = 16 Cash (Wikipedia article ‘Travancore Fanam’).

6 Bailey notes that ‘No Syrian gives his daughter more than 1,000 chugrams as dowry’ (p.34).

2,505 chuckrams each. From all these, Bailey recommended to Munro that 15 to 20 rupees per church per month would be needed. Munro passed this on to his superiors: 'If the liberality of the British Government should supply an allowance of 20 rupees per month for every Syrian church, the expense would little exceed 1,000 rupees, a sum considerably less than the salaries of two Military Chaplains'. A little bit more each month would enable the founding and maintenance of a school in each parish.

Over and above these costs, Bailey also provided Munro with figures relating to the Metropolitan himself, which were also passed on to Fort St George:

*An estimate of the annual expenses requisite for the support of the Metropolitan of the Syrian Churches*⁷

Daily expenses, including victuals, tobacco, etc.

10 ch's per diem	152 “ 2
6 servants including Palakun boys	
4 rupees each per month	228 “ “
12 Suetes of white clothes calculated at 50 ches each set	25 “ “
12 White Cloths or Pocket handkerchiefs 10chs each	5 “ “
3 Red silk Robes or Outer garments	50 “ “
3 Silk Caps 2 rupees each	6 “ “
Shoes	2 “ “
Washing	12 “ “
Shaving	4 “ “
Oil for washing 4 Gold fans per Month	6 “ “
Total	560 “ “

This list gives a fascinating insight into the domestic life of a Metropolitan. He has 6 servants, including those who carry his palanquin. He chews tobacco! The suits of white clothes are presumably sets of kamiss and pyjamas, as still worn by clergy

7 P.33.

today. This seems to be his basic dress with the red silk robes worn over the top. There are photographs which support this, showing what seems to be the collar of the kamiss pulled out from under the coloured cassock. The white cloths or pocket handkerchiefs may simply be that or may be the cloth often carried on the shoulder, as seen in early photographs, presumably to wipe the face with. The silk caps are no doubt the monastic *schema*, called *masnapsa* here in Kerala, though that properly refers to the amice-like hood worn by bishops in Eucharistic vestments. If a similar list were being drawn up today it would include the loose black gown worn by bishops over their purple cassocks. It is striking that no such garment is included here. This is probably because the black gown derives from Syrian Orthodox usage in West Asia and only becomes used and established in India as contact and exchanges increase throughout the 19th century. The same seems to be true of the wearing of black cassocks by the priests.

Munro and Bailey were nothing if not thorough. In addition to funding the parish clergy, it would be necessary to make additional provision for the household of the Metropolitan, a crucial figure in the *Puthenkur* community.

Here, then, was the challenge: for about the same amount that it would expend on two military chaplains, the British authorities (i.e. the East India Company) could support all the non-Roman Syrian parishes. The religious outcome would be that the Syrians would be weaned off their dependence on *chattums* and be disposed to become Protestants. The *political* outcome would be a substantial proportion of the population grateful and attached to the British, ready to support them should a crisis arise. To further increase British influence in Malayalee society, Munro suggested that the English missionaries should be appointed judges in the local courts.

What was Munro's motivation? Munro makes his case substantially in terms that would appeal to the senior officials of the East India Company: the consolidation of British power and influence.

However, it is certain that he personally was committed to the *Christian* goals set out in his report. There is some evidence that, on arriving here in India, Munro took a *bibi* and had children by her. At some point, however, he seems to have had a genuine conversion experience of some sort and eventually married the daughter of an Irish Anglican clergyman who lived with him out here. There is no doubt that his desire to see the Bible translated into Malayalam, the clergy well educated (hence his support of the Syrian College, now the Old Seminary), and the Gospel propagated (hence his invitation to the Church Missionary Society to send missionaries here) was genuine. This was a project to which he was personally as well as politically committed.

What was the outcome? The archives contain the response from the Governor in Council, dated 26th January 1819. Munro's letter of 30th March is acknowledged and he is informed that 'we have deemed it inexpedient and improper to adopt a suggestion which the Resident in Travancore has submitted, that the Missionaries should be appointed Judges in the Courts of the State. We are of the opinion that their labors [*sic*] ought strictly to be confined to the spiritual object for which they are sent out to India'.⁸ Of Munro's proposal for funding the clergy there is no mention at all. It may be that the matter was addressed in a document that has not survived in the archives, but the tone of the Governor's response to the suggestion about the missionaries, suggests that the idea that the East India Company should fund native clergy was deemed so preposterous as not to deserve comment. It certainly did not happen and Munro himself resigned from the Company's service in 1819 and returned to Scotland.

There is a strange postscript to this story. In 1843 there was a major schism in the Church of Scotland, with about one third of its clergy and congregations breaking away to form the *Free Church* of Scotland. The dominant issue was 'patronage', the right of a

8 Pp.1, 168.

wealthy patron to install a minister of his choice into a parish. This right was challenged by those who argued for the Church's spiritual independence against interference from secular figures and powers. The irony is that Munro, who as Resident and *Dewan* had virtually appointed bishops for the Syrian church and sought to bring its life under British financial and doctrinal control, was one of those who left the Church of Scotland in protest against state interference in the church. He actually appears in a portrait of the founders of the Free Church of Scotland.⁹ One wonders whether, as he sat for his likeness, he reflected on how different things had been in India.

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9 *The Disruption Assembly* by David Octavius Hill (<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/specialcollections/collectionsa-z/hilladamson/disruptionpicture/>).

Bernard Kilroy

MEDITATING WITH THE 'ODES OF SOLOMON': Abbot Francis Acharya's translation published in 2018

‘... By 1992, his use of the *Odes* for his monastic *lectio divina* (or meditative reading) led to his idea of translating them, along with a sort of spiritual commentary. Every now and then he would ask my opinion about his rendering ... I would always encourage him; there are plenty of academic studies of the *Odes*, but translation and commentaries more oriented to the *spiritual* insights of these beautiful poems would be very desirable. After all, he was not only a sensitive translator from Syriac, but this Acharya was also an experienced spiritual teacher, in an excellent position to fulfill that need’.

From the Preface by Sebastian Brock¹ to *Psalmic Odes from Apostolic Times – the ‘Odes of Solomon’, an Indian monk’s*

1 Dr Sebastian Brock, Emeritus Reader in Syriac Studies, University of Oxford, has been guide to both Fr Francis Acharya for his translation during 1991 and also for their 2018 publication, edited by Bernard Kilroy, published by ATC Publications, Bangalore, India (copies obtainable online direct) in two editions: prayer-book presentation (with *Illuminations* by theologian-painter Jyoti Sahi) and concise paperback without pictures or their commentaries. A second international edition is planned.

meditation, Translation and Commentaries by Abbot Francis Acharya, ocsso, 2018.

It's tempting for an academic newcomer like myself to caricature the bizarrely named *Odes of Solomon* as the 'Moon rock' of Syriac studies. They seem to have been probed and dissected in an endless stream of articles for what they tell us about the early Church, much the same as happened with mineral treasures brought back by the Apollo first lunar missions.

How the translation grew in the 1990's

By contrast, when in 1991 Abbot Francis of Kurisumala Ashram - in the Kerala tea mountains just 60 km east from here in Kottayam - was given the Charlesworth 1977 critical edition of the *Odes* during his convalescence from a second heart attack, he gradually decided to make them his *lectio divina*, his required monastic meditative reading. Every Monday, in his 80th year, he would limp off alone for the day, to a tiny hermitage in the woods nearby. There, he would take out the text from his faded cloth knapsack, made from a worn-out saffron-coloured tunic. However, he found this translation and notes (and others later) too academic and too specialist for devotion. Eventually, his ambition became to share the banquet as widely as possible. The 2018 publication is at last the realization of his wish. It is the result of his ruminative 'chewing' (his term) of the sense of each of the Odes - keeping their multiple Biblical allusions and word play in suspense—a chewing like (as he would say, grinning with a twinkle) his Ashram's cows.

I first visited Fr Francis in 2001, a year before he died, his brain still crystal clear in spite of physical health crises. Knowing my theological studies had focused on early Christianity, he asked me to check the English text of his compendious daily menology, which is read to his monks every lunch time. His intention was to publish it, although it never has been, alas. And, after his death in 2002, I returned the compliment by making all his writings, published

and unpublished, the subject of my doctoral research - pursued in my retirement with many interruptions almost ever since, under the inspiring supervision of Michael Amaladoss sj of Vidyajyoti Jesuit Faculty, Delhi.

Initial Appreciation by a Catholicos and Six Pastoral Theologians

The cluster of appreciative credits is a witness to both the quality of Fr Francis' work and, more in tune with what he looked forward to, *the value of the Odes themselves as a fresh source of spirituality*. At the head of the list is a commendation by Cardinal Mar Baselios Cleemis. He is both present Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Church to which Kurisumala belongs – the Church's Orthodox tradition was guaranteed at the 1930 Vatican reunion – and also Past President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). The CBCI links the three Catholic Churches of India, the other two being Roman (or 'Latin'), the majority Church of India, and Syro-Malabar (the majority Church of Kerala state). The Cardinal says:

“... [I] commend for prayer and meditation this ‘pearl of great price’ ... lost and found in the course of the last nineteen hundred years ...”.

Six enthusiastic Appreciations by pastoral theologians averaging some 600 words are printed inside the book, with core judgements as these:

“... a new treasure of images ... will refresh and revive one's spiritual horizon ... commentaries by Fr Francis Acharya are learned ... yet don't intrude from outside, as ... too often ...”
Fr Dr Lucien Legrand, mep Professor Emeritus, St Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore;

“... inspiring ... [for] Christian life ... pre-Greco-Roman, more oriental ... nature oriented, human, motherly ... mystic vision rising from the depths ... with the rising Christ ... the Cross ...

a tree of victory ...” *Fr Dr Michael Amaladoss, sj*, sometime General Assistant, Jesuit Superior General, Rome;

“... with a deep ... reverence ... I commend ... this labor of love ... treasures from the Church’s early life ... call us back ... to drink deep from ... inexhaustible wells of unvarnished spirituality... refresh... transfigure our ongoing faith-journey.”

Rev Dr J Jayakiran Sebastian (Church of South India), Dean, United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia, USA;

“... This celebrated poetic-mystical work ... from the second century CE has received a fresh aura through its personal use for meditation by the translator monk ... [and] assiduous research and editing in all creative fidelity ...”

Fr Dr K M George (Orthodox Syrian) Paulos Mar Gregorios Chair, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam;

“... vision of Christian faith in poetic, liturgical idiom ... [they] unveil God’s Word in personal revelation of verbal icons ... lift mind and heart to God in knowing beauty... enlighten faith ... [without the] dry idiom of rationalised theology.”

Fr Dr Sidney H Griffith, s.t., Catholic University of America, Washington DC;

“... language ... both ordinary and exotic, they bring the Incarnation home to us, yet with deep reverence for its everlasting mystery ... as if the author ... seen by Jesus ... under a fig tree ... had composed them ... after the Resurrection.”

V Rev Dr John Behr, Orthodox Church of America, St Vladimir’s Seminary, New York.

The spiritual impact of the *Odes* for all these six theologians has evidently been profound. They already knew them well as scholars, but for each of them the new translation and commentaries have brought to life something personal:

- namely, that they feel *touched* by the spirituality of the *Odes*, for instance one being ‘revived and refreshed’ by them, others

finding them an oriental and mystical antidote to dry or rationalised spirituality;

- although four of the six were from outside the Syrian tradition, they felt them to be part of *our shared faith heritage*; and the two Orthodox theologians considered them as part of *our common heritage* (no one suggesting they might be in some way marginal ... Gnostic ... or whatever);

- that the Odes provided *something too often neglected* which we have forgotten or are not aware of, one theologian being reminded of his long spiritual journey back to the original wellsprings.

These fulsome testimonies are all the more significant because originally I asked each of these Readers for 'a sentence or two' which I could quote on the back cover of the book. So, the need to demonstrate how devotional the Odes could be had been proved through the warmth of the scholars; the Moon rock had melted!

Traditional hesitations about the Odes

There was other rocky terrain I had needed to traverse, however - perhaps a cautionary tale to scholars to keep out of spiritual territory; this is not Islam! Does it say something much more profound about the way we appreciate the past - *our* past in which *our* Faith was born, and in which our studies are grounded?

To illustrate: readers may notice that, among the six theologians, *there is not a single mainstream Indian Catholic theologian*; Amaladoss can hardly be thus described, however respected his huge output. Indeed until recently he was under Vatican 'investigation' for several years. Was my search difficult because I was a Church outsider? Maybe, but during my 20 years since first coming regularly to India, I have even without trying built up a considerable network of invariably generous priest and bishop contacts and these I begged one by one, asking for suggestions of names. These names all gave polite apologies. Could this be an

intellectual, or spiritual, or religious hesitation? Or could it be explained by hidden institutional factors, like a different emphasis within seminary syllabuses? Or just overwork? Yet my six generous Appreciation respondents each epitomise the maxim, ‘if you need something done, ask a busy person’. Was there another reason?

One possible explanation emerges from my experience with a Biblical scholar in Rome, whom I did not know and whom I was recommended to ask to be a Reader. In April, he seemed to say Yes. Our subsequent email exchanges were cordial, but by June I had already become anxious when, without prior warning, a U-turn refusal arrived in my Inbox. My scholar explained that my (original) book title *Psalms from Apostolic Times* could mislead the faithful because they might assume they were within the Biblical canon. My plea reply was that ‘psalm’ was a generic term and the alternative ‘ode’ was out-of-date and now had a non-sacred association, through well-known poems like John Keats’ 19th century *Ode to a Nightingale* or ... *on a Grecian Urn*. Meanwhile I sent an S.O.S to Sebastian Brock. As always, he replied without delay, that I should suggest the compromise title, which I gladly accepted, of *Psalmic Odes from Apostolic Times*. But Rome never replied to that; after two weeks, I realized the previous email was a Farewell, *whatever*. What was his two months of hesitation about? I can only speculate.

A comparable shock had already occurred over the nine stunning black and white woodcut-type pictures I had commissioned from the Anglo-Indian theologian-painter Dr Jyoti Sahi – described in a classic text as ‘the most important [Indian] Catholic Christian artist still alive’². Jyoti whom I had known since the year 2000 had long before in 1964 become an artist associate of Kurisumala (a kind of extra-mural monk), through the encouragement of the

2 Amaladass, Anand sj, & Löwner, Gudrun, *Christian Themes in Indian Art: From the Mogul Times till Today*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2012, 428pp

English Benedictine Fr Bede Griffiths, osb, then Kurisumala's sub-Prior.

A more apt or prophetic artist than Jyoti it would be hard to find. He had discovered the *Odes* several years ago, asking me to send him Fr Francis' notes on them. Long before, he had worked with Fr Francis, the Prior and superior, to paint a canvas of a Jain faith Tirthankara image, applied to Christ, whose design has affinities to the Biblical *Tree of Jesse*, a strong Cistercian Congregation theme. Later, he worked with Fr Francis to produce painted illustrations for the *Song of Songs* (now in Nuremberg, Germany). That biblical Book Fr Francis cherished because of its devotional use by St Bernard, the 12C Cistercian tower of spiritual inspiration. Fr Francis later returned to it with equal fervour when he saw parallels with the *Odes of Solomon*.

Kurisumala is not the only link which Jyoti has with Kerala or the Syrian Churches. He has collaborated with Fr Dr K M George, one of the book's Readers and previously Principal of the Old Orthodox Seminary (OTS) in Kottayam, where Jyoti had worked on artistic programmes. He was also a close friend of Laurie Baker, the Kerala 'vernacular-method' architect, who designed the spectacular yet simple first Syro-Malankara cathedral of Tiruvalla, now sadly replaced by a grander structure. Elsewhere in Kerala, Jyoti had executed an important sacred picture for the Bible Tower in Thrissur. He also loved painting the iconic Kerala saint, St George, otherwise Varghese, along with that saint's linguistically linked and farming motifs of the slaughtered dragon's mythical rebirth. In addition, with his architect daughter Lavanya, Jyoti had studied and published on traditional Syrian church architecture³. Accordingly, Jyoti immersed himself in the *Odes* to produce what he fittingly called nine *Illuminations*, the result of his own meditative rumination, amplified with notes.

3 Sahi, Jyoti *Holy Ground: A New Approach to the Mission of the Church in India*, Pace Publishing, New Zealand, 1998, 200pp

All this record of commitment was challenged when, during the text preparation, I proudly shared these pictures with one of the book's 'authority' mentors. After a long pause he leant back to ask me the astonishing question "*Bernard, are you committed to including them in the book? ... You need to understand that Jyoti's work is not appreciated by the majority of Indian Catholics*". My mentor then explained the fate of a recent *New Community Bible*, published by St Paul's, the international Catholic media Congregation, whose *imprimatur* (he said) the then CBCI President Cardinal Gracias had had to withdraw, causing it to be revised, "after protests from conservative Indian Catholics who had remonstrated against illustrations of St Joseph wearing a turban and Mary in a saree". Presumably they would have been shocked to hear that Jesus was a Palestinian who was *not* blessed with white skin - as so many of their western-style holy pictures and statues show Him to have had.

Culture Dancing to the Mystery of time?

The challenge I faced with Jyoti's 'Illuminations' reflects more than the perennial tussles about 'inculturation' and '*aggiornamento*' [the Italian term used at the Second Vatican Council of the 1960's for bringing into the present day], which have split the Indian Catholic (and other?) Churches. The challenge here is *how in the present do we immerse ourselves authentically in a work like the Odes, which has to be felt as a product of its time*. We no longer have that challenge with the Old Testament psalms; their passion, pain and violence we have appropriated and tamed, even 'cooked', through repetition and allegory into 'our' devotion of the present day. However, when we engage with a fresh ancient work of devotion like the *Odes*, it is shockingly 'raw'; it is not 'ours', but 'other'. To try to immerse myself in the *Odes*' world, I had absorbed the analysis of the 3C house-church of Dura-Europos, Syria⁴. Yet I had to be honest with myself; secretly I felt uncomfortable and 'not

belonging' there. This malaise doesn't happen with the *Psalms* or even the *Gospels*, since we hear and see them through the prism of our own developed spirituality, an amalgam of theology, doctrine, liturgy, prayer processes, and cultural norms.

When in the 1960's I was tutored in Oxford by the now eponymous Peter Brown, Emeritus at Princeton today, he kept reminding me that the challenge of understanding the past from the perspective of today was that it was *not* somehow a child of the present; it was its own different and self-contained and foreign world. To bring back my allegory of Outer Space and lunar rock, the *Odes* are like a distant satellite through which we pass radio signals to and from different locations in time. On the night mountainside at Kurisumala I can share the full moon with my wife in England five and a half hours behind me: yes, same moon, different times, different environments. Indeed, many of us are old enough to remember the eureka bi-location perspective we got in 1969 from those first breath-gulping photos of Earthrise taken from the moon. Alas, we cannot speak to the unknown Odist! But wait! Caution! *Would* we understand him, or his concerns, or his yearnings and doubts, let alone sympathize. For instance, how explain his desperate need to break free from the stranglehold of demons? Yet demons are still at large in India; I recall a young Indian male classical *Bharatanatyam* dancer I once employed, who quivered with fear at the thought of returning to his native village because he was certain that the spite of local lads had put a spell on his legs.

Portraying the *Odes* in art faces us with a core question: how can they be authentic for *us*, *now*? Does authentic mean getting the precise details correct according to *their* own time, like performing Mozart's music with 18th century instruments, as we tend to nowadays? Or playing Shakespeare in modern

4 Peppard, Michael *The World's Oldest Church: Bible, Art, and Ritual at Dura-Europos, Syria*, Yale University Press, USA, 2016, 288pp

dress, just as Renaissance painters showed the Nativity or Crucifixion with Venetians or Florentines from their own palaces, churches, and streets? So, perhaps Indian Catholics who cling to a white-skinned Madonna are not clinging to *skin colour*, but a westernism in their faith, which frees them from the oppressive caste-ism of their East! They may have emotional aversions towards Hinduism which are stronger than any affinity through skin pigment. We need to remember that as recently as 1858, outcaste women in Kerala organized into the *Channar Lahala* riot for the right to wear the ‘upper cloth’ over their otherwise conventionally-required naked upper bodies. And Catholics’ fears and resentments, correct or otherwise, about Hindu “superstitions” or taboos of uncleanness, say, about menstruation persist⁵. Societal convictions are shaping their faith attitudes. Thus, being ‘authentic’ is not simple.

Interplay between imagery, devotion and theology

As with the challenge of any good art – whether painting, music, drama, or poetry – others’ discomfort with Jyoti’s pictures obliged me to work through my own spiritual response to the *Odes*. In *practical* terms I surrendered to prejudice - by producing *two* published editions: a full version with his pictures and commentary notes on them, and a concise paperback without. In *editing* terms, I confronted my own and others’ discomfort within the symbolism of the *Odes* by researching to amplify the Artist’s notes. I drew on both the biblical typology and the cultural roots of the *Odes*’ symbolism, starting with the same source works as Fr Francis had himself used for his own Commentaries. Apart from scholarly works by Charlesworth and Brock, the insights of Murray⁶ and Daniélou⁷

5 Kilroy, Bernard ‘Melting The Glass Walls in Spirituality: challenging set attitudes in inculturation and prayer - a mini survey’ in *Indian Journal of Spirituality* Vol XVI, No. 4 (Oct-Dec 2003) pp. 534-547.

were invaluable - Daniélou being the most relevant for the context of inculturation and *aggiornamento*.

Inculturation in the Indian Churches is generally considered to be a question of integration *with*, or *alongside*, or *within*, Indian culture, whatever that is. As the previous Syro-Malankara Catholicos, Mar Cyril Baselios, told me in private conversation “we don’t need to *be* inculturated; we are *already* inculturated”. A further development of inculturation - within the spirit of *Nostra Aetate*, Vatican II’s *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions* - is the deepening of one’s own Faith *through* another Faith, by dialogue which is *intra*-faith, not merely *inter*-faith. This was not fully developed by *Nostra Aetate*, because that document began life by re-framing the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, other Faiths being added to the discussions only later. The issues are still live. For instance, it has been argued that Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI has recently re-kindled tensions in Christian-Jewish relations by re-opening debate on the ‘substitution theory’, that is that Israel has been substituted by the Church⁸.

The sensitivity still of this area of debate makes one look again at the watershed fourth century. How much did the Church’s sense of its own identity change the developing Faith once the Roman

6 Murray, Robert, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A study in early Syriac tradition*, London, Cambridge University Press 1975, 395pp [now revised edition, Gorgias Press, New Jersey, USA, 2004].

7 Daniélou, Jean, *Primitive Christian Symbols*, London, Burns & Oates, 1964, now available on: <https://ia801301.us.archive.org/13/items/PrimitiveChristianSymbols/Primitive%20Christian%20Symbols.pdf> (originally in French, Paris, Seuil, 1961, and also online). Also, ‘Odes de Salomon’ [as spelt] entry in *Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément*, VI, 1960 [ISBN 9782706301612] Cols 677-684, Letouzey & Ané, Paris.

8 See 2018 website references of *The Tablet* and *Communio*

Emperor Constantine legitimised it? Could this help explain why we now have so few writings from the second century, the time of the *Odes*? Was it as if an establishment Church could now afford to turn its back on, or even suppress, its Jewish-Christian past? One of our Readers, Fr Dr Lucien Legrand, writes in his Appreciation how we need to cherish that neglected part of our heritage, rather than ignore it or relegate it.

What Daniélou's researches show is how even the earliest Christians had no qualms about using symbolism and motifs which were pagan; it was something which Judaism had always done - Judaism was not as exclusive as one might assume. At first this cultural eclecticism might seem shocking. However, we may be forgetting that classical Renaissance religious painting, which so many people consider the Christian norm, draws as much on Romano-Greek mythology as on Christian sources. Indeed, a Florentine painter like Botticelli might use the same model, Simonetta Vespucci, for the Virgin Mary as he had used for Venus Aphrodite! Gone is the prayerful meditation of the icon painter! Yet now we reproduce Simonetta's face and poses in holy pictures and Christmas cards by the million. Could an icon painter *ever* contemplate using a human model for a sacred face?

Key imagery examples: *Odes 24, 38 and 19*

My editing of *Ode 24* 'The Dove fluttered over the Head of the Lord Messiah ...' ('*Depths*' in Vleugels and Webber⁹) gave me some surprises about our traditional iconography of the Baptism of Christ at the Jordan; that iconography can reflect a subtle shift in theology. At least from the time of the Byzantine 5C mosaic ceiling

9 Vleugels, Gie & Webber, Martin, *The Odes of Solomon: Syriac Text and English translation with text critical and explanatory notes*, Mòràn 'Eth'ó Series no.41, SEERI, St Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, Kottayam, Kerala, India, 2016, 216pp [which I reference here as probably the most generally accessible translation to readers of *The Harp*]

of the Neonian Baptistery at Ravenna, Italy, until the painting by Giotto in 1305 at Padua, Italy - 900 years but only 136km apart - Christ is shown being baptized *in the flowing water* of the river. That reflects early practice, as the design of the 4C Ravenna font itself shows, or indeed at the 5C processional font at Qalaat Semaan (Simeon Stylites), in Syria. Yet I cannot find a single classical European painter after 1305 - there are dozens who painted the scene - who showed Christ with more than His feet in the water. Was this to shift the emphasis to Christ's missionary preaching? Or was it bending to Renaissance fascination with portrayals of the human body? Or because total immersion was associated with 'puritan' Reforming sects of the time?

Whatever the reason, the line of *Ode 24:7*,

The depths [of Sheol] were submerged in the submersion of the Lord...

more accurately reflects the Gospels. Both *Matthew (3:16)* and *Mark (1:5, 9-10)* and, by allusion, *Paul (Rom 6:4)* are explicit that the Baptism of Jesus was *in the water*, from which He '... *came up out of...*'. They match the recurrent theme of John's Gospel of Jesus as the *living water (7:37-39)*, linking the Books of *Genesis 2:10-14*, through *Ezekiel 47* and *Revelation 22:1-2, 17*, unlike the still water purification used by Qumran's Community, not 20 km distant from the Baptist's baptismal site on the Jordan¹⁰.

Daniélou's challenging message could equally be illustrated from a number of the Odes, but *Ode 38* will serve. One might, as Vleugels and Webber have, label it *Truth* from the first line,

I went up into the light of Truth as on a chariot ...

This is quite likely to conjure up the image of Elijah's chariot being carried to heaven, from *2Kings 2:11*, but Daniélou very convincingly argues that the vehicle, not necessarily a chariot, alludes

10 Pagola, José Antonio, *Jesus: An Historical Approximation*, Theological publications of India, Bangalore, 2013 (authorised Indian reprint of earlier western edition), p82

also to the non-object in the strange vision with which the Book of the prophet Ezekiel opens (*Ezk 1:15-21*).

Jyoti Sahi's *Illumination* for this Ode very helpfully explores Ezekiel's vision – not as some might expect by a painting of a Hindu temple chariot, no doubt distantly related to the Old Testament chariots – but by portraying the four loose wheels from Ezekiel's vision, each going its own way, and all with their rims full of eyes (*Ezk 1:15-18*). Through Daniélou, one can open up the mystery of this Ode, as the baptised soul wings through the swirling waters (the Underworld?) and garden of life (the Church?), holding fast to Truth, the Messiah. Thus, the Odist is proclaiming Baptism as a winged vehicle, possibly a kind of boat, or a flying ship, or like Elijah's heavenly transport. Ezekiel says that before he saw the four wheels he had seen four angelic creatures (*Ezk 1:5-14*). Each had four wings, and each had a second face with one of the attributes of the man, lion, ox, or eagle, which in other contexts are the four cosmic elements of earth, fire, water, air.

These creatures and their attributes were developed in Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian and Greek mythology, and later used regularly all over the world for the four Christian evangelists. Each was positioned beside one of the wheels (*Ezk 1:15*). The eyes are said to reveal the all-seeing divine presence, repeating a feature of Assyrian crowns¹¹. Presumably they are a distant source of the charms against the Evil Eye, which one still today sees everywhere for sale in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Such indirect allusions may seem bizarre, or even occult, but this Old Testament imagery would have been familiar to Jewish converts, like the Odist and his community. However, even if the

11 Brown, Raymond E s.s.; Fitzmyer, Joseph A, sj; Murphy Roland E, o.carm, *The New Jerome Bible Commentary*, Theological Publications in India, Bangalore, 2000 (Prentice Hall, USA), p310b20

Odist's hearers were gentiles - previously worshippers of Romano-Greek gods or local deities or spirits – they too would probably have recognised such themes in their mythology. The heavenly chariot occurs famously in the Greek philosopher Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*, written about 370 BCE. Christians had even adapted such themes, including a word association between the chariot of Helios, the sun, and of Elijah (Daniélou, p87). Ode 38 then morphs the visionary vehicle into fresh themes of wedding feast and the Odist within the tree of life.

Changes in culture will have helped to make the symbolism of the exceptional *Ode 19* not only more acceptable but indeed more creative. A range of scholar experts from Rendel-Harris in 1909 to Chadwick in 1970 had found its imagery 'grotesque':

1 A cup of milk was offered to me,
And I drank it in the sweetness of delight in the Lord.

2 The Son is the cup,
And the Father is He who is milked;
And the Holy Spirit is She who milked Him;

3 Because His breasts were full,
And it was undesirable that His milk should be ineffectually
released.

4 The Holy Spirit uncovered her bosom,
And mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father.

5 Then She gave the mixture to the world without their knowing,
And those who received (it) found a place at the right hand.

6 The womb of the Virgin caught it,
And she received conception and gave birth ... *etc*

However, Fr Francis and Drijvers¹² each independently find the text meaningful and sacred. And two of our Readers single out

12 Drijvers, Han J W, 'The 19th Ode of Solomon: Its Interpretation and Place in Syrian Christianity', *Journal of Theological Studies*, (New Series) Vol. XXXI, Oxford, 1980, pp357-355

the femininity of God in the *Odes*, especially of the Spirit, as a quality which brings God nearer to us nowadays, especially in the East.

Process not product

I concluded my brief SEERI presentation by sharing my hope that the publication of Fr Francis' translation could begin a *process*, as the book becomes used, perhaps in ways which neither he nor his Community nor I could have foreseen - all depending on how it was engaged with, understood, and prayed with. I explained that my presentation was only the first of some 40 seminars throughout India, from Pune to Shillong to Bangalore and Chennai, as well through Kerala – almost always with communities of Religious. So, I was keen to have feedback, positive or negative, via my email printed in the book. To do this, wherever I went I reduced the book's selling price to its average printing cost, forgetting overheads, or well under one Indian rupee a page. I am more interested in getting the book widely known and accepted, than making any surplus, even to re-invest in an expanded second international edition.

Among the SEERI Conference scholar attenders, my presentation was quite well attended and received; but to judge by the few books purchased – equivalent to less than one in four of the 70 or so attenders - not of substantive interest to Syriac academics, in spite of a purchase price of some 5 USD, so cheap for an international audience. Without intrusive questioning, I could only speculate why. Could it be that the idea of reading the *Odes* in translation is somehow inadequate? One attender told me that he was anxious to keep within the checked-in baggage limits. Yet the book is only 12 x 18 X 2 cm and some 300g in weight.

Or maybe scholars simply do not see the question of using the *Odes* for devotion now as of academic concern? One could venture to suggest that this lack matches the relatively low attendance at the

daily Eucharist during the Conference, even though a different Rite is celebrated every morning, so heightening the potential interest. For these reasons, one might assume that the majority of scholars are interested only in devotion within its historical context. That surprises me. Even if one is not interested in participating spiritually, doesn't one gain some understanding from a bi-focal image of the past seen from through the lens of the present? As if (again) the Earth seen from the Moon? And in the matter of language, doesn't one gain a fresh perspective of the Syriac of the past through an English rendering in the present? Or, to put it another way, using an example of translating the French love poetry of Baudelaire: of course, an English translation can never do justice to the original. Yet doesn't an English version – the result often of a translator wrestling with nuance and overtones – often open up a fresh insight into the original French?

The book has been far more warmly received by Religious communities; within the first five weeks after publication I completed 27 seminars and sold some 800 hardbacks and 250 paperbacks. I have concentrated mainly on Roman, that is 'Latin' non-Syrian, Catholic institutions, like seminaries or regional groupings of Religious, with Sisters predominating in these. I have been especially keen to ensure that the book is seen as part of *our* general Christian heritage, rather than 'theirs', that is Syrian, because the text happens to be in Syriac; it might just as well have been in Greek or Aramaic. Also, my style has been interactive: I have tried to emphasise to my audiences that the purpose is for them to *sample* and *experience* the *Odes* and share their *feelings* among themselves; I am not inputting *information* about them. In summary, my impressions so far are:

- the *Odes* are indeed seen as a fresh source of prayer, and the book has sold well, although some of that benefit may result from my influence because I have communicated my enthusiasm and my audiences have wanted to cooperate;

- they have found my unpacking of the language useful in order to get at the poetry's richness. And they have appreciated the need to allow the poetry to 'float' mentally, so allowing for a range of interpretations according to the perspective of the hearer. I say 'hearer' in order to create a mental image of the Odes being chanted at the early sharings mentioned in *1Cor14:26*, or sung to the accompaniment of harps and flutes in the baptismal song processions, as painted in the house church of Dura-Europos¹³; hence I have discouraged the idea that the Odes were originally composed as silent *reading* material;

- generally the audiences have warmed to the imagery of *Odes 6, 7, and 13* and appreciated the richness of the paradoxes and puns, and the depth of scriptural knowledge of the Odes' original hearers, probably Jewish converts, in the insistent echoes of both the Old and New Testaments;

- my sense is that, when confronted with *Odes 24 and 42*, they have generally found it hard to grasp the idea of theology developing, for instance that the West and East have gradually adopted different emphases in their understanding of the Baptism of the Lord - the Latin Church apparently highlighting through its iconography the proclamation of Christ's mission, but the Eastern Churches retaining the Johannine link with the living waters of *Genesis, Ezekiel and Revelation*;

- *Ode 19* has proved not nearly so strange as I expected, even with men seminarians. Indeed, the majority of women, both Sisters and lay, found it a "natural" and unsurprising way of describing God as well as affirming their womanhood - one remarking that the virginal conception of *Ode 19* affirmed her celibacy; her own barren womb was now fruitful, having conceived through the milk of the Spirit's ministry of love. No one has yet

13 Peppard, Michael *The World's Oldest Church: Bible, Art, and Ritual at Dura-Europos*, Syria, Yale University Press, USA, 2016, 288pp ISBN 18-154258076-669-2

connected the seminal words in *Ode 7:4* 'that I might receive him' with that 'conception' but I will lose no time in doing so now; I will rejoice in being male midwife for the virgin birth of this daughter of celibacy, so vitally needing a spiritual parent;

- my list by chance included three English-speaking parishes in Pune and Bangalore where the book was well received by lay people, with relatively little explanation; maybe there is a lay appetite for fresh sources of spirituality;

- I was also advised to select three enclosed communities of Carmelite Sisters where, through their customary grille, they each encouraged me to exchange long beyond their allotted time;

However, two kinds of significant negatives deserve mention;

- among the Catholic male institutions it was not uncommon for many staff to stay away, presumably assuming that the seminar was for students. Why I never discovered, but I could not avoid speculating that they felt they had little to learn, or that their familiar spirituality was sufficient. Perhaps it wasn't a coincidence that the seminary where I sensed the strongest togetherness among the staff team was the one where the majority of staff attended. When I discussed absences with those who understood the situation, they felt sure that that the demands of active ministry could become an excuse for side-lining prayer and meditation. So, I countered by recalling the long hours timetabled for seminarians in communal or private prayer or meditation, exposition, rosary and shared *lectio divina*. I was told that this was no guarantee for lifelong habits if they had been imposed;

- one seminar failed significantly, sadly at my only engagement within the Reformed tradition. This I had looked forward to eagerly because the most passionate of all the six theologians' Appreciations (printed in the book) came from within the Church of South India (CSI). My failure stemmed primarily from a huge delay caused by technical problems in the projector. However, with hindsight I can

see that the audience would have preferred me to concentrate the reduced time on contextual theology, arising from their social concerns, rather than on meditation within a personal pilgrimage, as with the CSI theologian.

Lastly, my plea for suggestions on how the Odes might be used began to bear fruit. There were four different choral arrangements of the ‘wonderful exchange’ lines of *Ode 7:3-4*. One seminary persuaded me to compose their Compline using only the *Odes*. Another seminary staff team used the whole of *Ode 7* for its communal *lectio divina* one morning. One musical Sister suggested she could translate some of the Odes into Tamil and set them to music. And one priest suggested incorporating selections within the *Office of Readings* in the Breviary. No doubt, readers will think of other possibilities. Interestingly, all the suggestions are for communal use – as they most likely were originally.

To sum up

Publishing the *Odes* at last for devotion - their original purpose which Abbot Francis has rescued through his meditative translation and commentaries - has proved to be revealing and rewarding, just as Dr Brock his original guide was confident would happen. This is attested by six pastoral theologians, who are also scholars of the Syrian world, who have each written substantial Appreciations of the *Odes* as offering an experience which touched them personally. In addition the book contains nine meditative *Illuminations* by the theologian-painter Jyoti Sahi. And since the SEERI conference, there have been some 40 seminars with Religious communities in different parts of India in order to introduce the *Odes* for devotion. All this process has opened up the possibility of bringing the Odes to life through a creative and ‘bi-focal’ tension between past and present.

And I myself? Have I personally, in unpacking the *Odes*, got nearer their real world? Or, under the guise of delving into their original identity, actually over-grounded them? Or perhaps packaged

them with my own projections? At least I have begun to engage personally with the whole of myself, and that surely is on the Way to prayer. Having struggled too long with semi-colons and other minutiae of the publishing ordeal, I have now started to make an Ode every morning my *lectio divina*. In that way, it was verse 7: 3-4 which my wife and I sent last Christmas to our family and friends during our Orthodox monastery stays in Cyprus. I've read it dozens of times, but it still makes the hairs on the back of my neck tingle,

Out of gentleness. He brought low His greatness,
He became like me, that I might receive Him
He appeared like me in form, that I might put Him on.

It has made me ask if every day I too re-live my own coming up out of my own river Jordan.

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JOHN THE SOLITARY (Letter to Hesychius)

When you stand in prayer before God, take care that your mind is recollected. Push aside any distracting thoughts. Feel in your soul the true weightiness of God. Purify the movements of your thoughts; if you have to struggle with them, be persistent in your struggle and do not give up. When God sees your persistence, then all of a sudden grace will dawn in you, and your mind will find strength as your heart burns with fervour and your soul's thoughts shine out. It may even be that wonderful intuitions of God's majesty will burst forth in you: this comes as a result of such supplication and luminous understanding; for just as we do not put choice perfumes in a foul-smelling container, neither does God stir up intuitions of his true majesty in minds that are still ugly.

At the beginning of your prayer have it in mind to say in God's presence, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord Almighty, with whose glory both heaven and earth are filled. Then be mindful of whatever is appropriate in your prayer, which should always include remembering God's Church, petitions for the weak and afflicted, entreaty for those who have gone astray, compassion for sinners, forgiveness of those who have done wrong.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, p 96).

Kuriakose Valavanolickal

PRAYER IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS OF APHRAHAT

Aphrahat is the earliest Syriac author who dedicated a complete work on prayer. According to him purity of heart is prayer, that is more than all the prayers prayed in loud voice. Silence and luminous mind are more important in prayer than the loud voice.

Prayer is an Offering

Today prayer from the pure heart takes the place of the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Purity of heart is the pre-requisite for prayer. Also purity of heart itself constitutes prayer. Prayer from the pure heart is a pure offering. It is a sacrifice, a concept seen in Psalm 141:2. Just as the sacrifices of the Old Testament such prayers from the pure heart perform miracles. He presents the examples from the Old Testament in order to show that fire descending from heaven consumes those sacrifices which are acceptable to God and on the other hand the fire does not touch those sacrifices which are rejected by God. The examples for the acceptable offerings are those sacrifices of Abel (Gen. 4:3) Abraham (Gen. 15:17), Manoah, the father of Samson (Jud. 13:20), the

sacrifice of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:38) and that of Solomon (2 Chr. 7:1).¹ Let Aphrahat speak for himself:

And (how) was the matter known to us that the offering of Abel was accepted and that of Cain was rejected? My beloved, you know that if an offering was acceptable before God, (then) it was distinguished by the fact that fire would descend from heaven and the offering was consumed by it. For when Abel and Cain offered their offerings together, living fire that was ministering before God (Ps. 104:4) came down and licked up the pure offering of Abel, and (since) that of Cain was not pure it did not touch it. From there Abel understood that his offering was accepted, on the other hand Cain also realized that his own was rejected.²

Aphrahat goes beyond the original meaning of the Scripture and says God looks at the interior disposition of the offerer rather than the offering.

When those people with an impure heart make an offering, the fire from heaven will come down and devour the offerer rather than the offering. He gives the examples of Nadab and Abihu, the two sons of Aaron who despised the administering of the offering. When they found that their offering was not consumed by the fire from heaven, they brought strange fire to consume it. The strange fire consumed their offering, but the fire from heaven devoured both of them (Lev. 10:2; Num. 3:4, 26:61).³

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- 1 The biblical texts do not refer the descent of fire from heaven on the sacrifices of Abraham and Manoah. It may be borrowed from the sacrifices of David (1 Chr. 7:1) and the sacrifice of Solomon.
 - 2 Dem. IV:2 (PS I, 140:5-20). Hereafter Dem refers to Demonstration and PS refers to Patrologia Syriaca.
 - 3 Another example is Numbers 16:35 where two hundred and fifty were devoured by the fire from heaven because they offered incense without authority Dem. IV:3 (PS I, 144:1-5).

Heart is the Altar for the Offering

While giving the interpretation of Mathew 6:6, “Pray to your Father in secret with the door closed”, he mentions that heart is the altar where prayer is an offering; heart is the inner chamber.

What is the door that he said to close? If not your mouth, which is (the door to) the temple in which Christ dwells, as the Apostle said, «You are the temple of the Lord» (1Cor.3:16), for him to enter into your inner man, to this house, cleanse it from everything that is unclean, while the door, that is your mouth is to be closed.⁴

When you pray, you should raise your heart above and your eyes below; you should enter into your inner chamber (heart) and pray to the Father who is in heaven (Mt. 6:6). If your heart is not pure, even though you multiply the prayers, make long intercessions, bow down and spread out your hands (Isa. 1:15) the works of prayer are far away from you. When he gives the exegesis of Mathew 18:20, «Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them» he says when a man purifies himself in the name of Christ, Christ dwells in him, God dwells in Christ; therefore that man becomes one of the three. There are places where instead of two or three, more than a thousand are gathered in the name of Christ but Christ is not with them. On the other hand there is a man who is all alone but God is with him. He illustrates it through the examples of our righteous Fathers who took upon themselves the ‘armour of prayer’⁵ at the time of affliction. They were not alone but God was with them. Some of those Fathers are Moses who prayed in the mountain (Ex. 32:31-33), Elijah on the Mount Carmel (1Kgs 18:42), Elisha who prayed and caused a dead person to return from Sheol (2 Kgs 4:33-37) etc.

4 This concept is found in the Greek, Latin and Syriac tradition. The examples are Origen, **On Prayer** XX:2; Ambrose, **On the Sacraments** VI:12-13 and Ephrem, **Fid.** XX:6.

5 The theme ‘armour of prayer’ may be derived from Wisdom 18:21. It occupies an important place in the Syriac Fathers.

Forgiveness is necessary for Prayer

Lack of willingness to forgive the debtor from the part of the one who prays, puts a blemish on the prayer. «When you bring an offering and you remember that you have some grudge against your brother, leave your offering before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother and then come and bring your offering» (Mt. 5:23-24).⁶ It is Gabriel who is taking the prayers from the earth and places it before the Holy Throne. Gabriel strengthened Daniel and took his prayers before God (Dan. 10:11-12). Again he brought the prayers of Zechariah before the Most High and announced the birth of John (Lk. 1:11, 13). In the case of Mary, he took the prayer of Mary before God and announced the birth of Christ (Lk. 1:30).⁷ If Gabriel finds blemish in the offering, he will not take up such an offering. Gabriel says to the person who prays “Forgive me and I do forgive others”:

First of all, forgive your debtor, and then I will raise up your (prayer) to the Lord, your Creditor. You forgive the hundred denarii according to your poor condition and the Lord, your Creditor, will forgive you the ten thousand talents according to His greatness. He will not reckon with you for any payment or interest ...⁸

If Gabriel has inspected and found blemish in the offering he will say:

6 The reading of Old Syriac and Peshitta is “When you are presenting your offering upon the altar and there you remember that your brother has some grievance against you, leave your offering there upon the altar, first go and make peace with your brother, and then come and present your offering”. The reading of Diatessaron is not available.

7 Dem. III:14 (PS I, 129: 15-26).

8 Dem. IV:13 (PS I, 168:18-23). He mentions the need for forgiveness in Dem. VI:1 (PS I, 249:24-249:1), “Whoever seeks forgiveness from his Lord should himself also forgive the person in debt to him”..

I will not bring an unclean offering before the holy throne. But, see, you go there to give an account to your creditor, taking your offering with you; and he leaves your offering and goes off.⁹

People speak with God by means of prayer, when it is without blemish. For He said, “Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear because your hands are full of blood” (Isa. 1:15).

Prayer involves perfecting the Rest of God

Sometimes prayer through action takes precedence over verbal prayer. Giving rest to the needy, visiting the sick, making provision for the poor are prayers. By these works of mercy one does the will of God and gives rest to God (Isa. 28:12). By means of two practical examples he remarks that a person should do the will of God and that is excellent prayer.

If you happen to go on a long journey and you happen to be thirsty in the heat and you come upon one of the brothers unexpectedly and say to him, ‘satisfy me from the weariness of thirst’ and he tells you, ‘It is time for prayer, I will pray and then I will come to you’. While he prays and (before) coming to you, you die out of thirst; what seems better to you, that he should go and pray, or that he should satisfy your exhaustion?

And if again you go on a journey during the season of winter, rain and snow come upon you and you become exhausted from your cold, again you chance upon your friend during the time of prayer and he answers you in the same manner, and you die out of cold. What profit will his prayer has.¹⁰

Only a person with a pure heart knows whether the prayer through action or the prayer through words is appropriate at a particular time and contest. When Zimri committed fornication with

9 Dem. IV:13 (PS I, 169:1-6).

10 Dem. IV:15 (PS I, 172:18-173:4).

a Midianite woman, Phinhas, the son of Eleazar killed both of them (Num. 25:6-8; Sir. 45:23-26). Their killing was considered as prayer for him (Ps. 106:30-31), because Phinhas was accomplishing the will of God and giving Him the rest. Even though prayer through action is excellent, at the same time he should be eager in verbal prayer.

Different Occasions of Prayer

The three seasons of prayer according to him are petition, thanksgiving and praise. At the time of distress, a person offers up petition and seeks mercy for his sins. In thanksgiving a person gives thanks to God his Father, for the good things He has provided for us. At the time the mind rejoices he should praise Him for His good works. He is the earliest Syriac Father who asks that all our prayers should begin with the prayer of our Lord.¹¹

Conclusion

Prayer has taken the place of offerings and sacrifices of the Old Testament. Prayer is the offering that takes place in the heart, that is the altar. Silence mingled with the luminous mind is far better than the loud voice. If prayer is from the pure heart fire will come down from heaven and consume it, otherwise it will consume the offerer rather than the offering. A person should be eager both in the prayer through action and in the prayer through words.

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¹¹ Dem. IV:19 (PS 181:19-21).

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SIGNIFICANCE OF SYRIAC TRADITION IN THE SYRO- MALABAR CHURCH FROM THE STUDY OF *VARTHAMANAPPUSTHAKAM*¹

1.0. Introduction

This paper discusses the importance of the Syriac tradition and heritage which already existed among the Thomas Christians from the first century in Kerala in the southern part of India. This paper intends to bring awareness among the faithful of the need of restoring the Syriac tradition in Syro- Malabar Church taking lessons from

1 The book *Varthamanappusthakam* (VP) is a travelogue written in Malayalam language by Cathanar (Priest) Thomman (Thomas) Paremakkal in 1785. In this book an account of the history of the Church of Thomas Christians given between 1773 and 1786 with special narration on the events connected with the journey made by Malpan (teacher) Fr Joseph Cariattil and Fr Thomas Paremakkal from Kerala(Malabar) to Rome via Lisbon and their return journey. They made this long and risky journey by ship in 1778.

the study of *VP*. Why Syriac tradition is so important and significant today? The only Church of Thomas Christians in India till the 16th century shared the Syriac tradition with the Church of the East. It is clearly evident from the study of *Varthamanappusthakam* (VP). The teachings of the Church especially the decree *OE* art.1 of Vatican II says that the Catholic Church values highly the heritage of all the Eastern Churches such as their liturgical rites and traditions and they form part of the undivided heritage of the Universal Church. The *Varthamanappusthakam* gives an eyewitness account of the history of the Thomas Christians and their ecclesial traditions between the years 1773 and 1786 by two prominent leaders of the community *Malpan* (Teacher) Joseph Cariattil² and *Cathanar* (Priest) *Thomman* (Thomas) Paremmakkal³. This (travelogue) book discloses the age old Syriac heritage of the Thomas Christians and their affection for the Syriac language for they always celebrated Holy Qurbana in Syriac language. The Church of Thomas Christians was in hierarchical communion with the Church of the East since both these Churches shared the same liturgical, theological, spiritual and ecclesial patrimony. Thanks to the liturgical, linguistic and apostolic affinity, these Churches used Syriac language in their liturgical and sacramental life.

The Syriac language is a dialect of Aramaic that emerged in Edessa and in Upper Mesopotamia in the early first century A.D. Syriac Christianity is today spread mainly in the middle East by the Church of the East (Chaldean Catholic Church), Syrian Catholic Church, Maronite Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Assyrian Church of the East as well as by the St. Thomas Christians of respective communities centred in Kerala, India.

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- 2 Malpan Cariattil was born at Alangad on 5th May in 1742. He taught Syriac and Moral Theology in Alangad seminary. He was appointed as archbishop of Kodungalloor by Rome in 1783.
 - 3 Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal was born on 10th September 1736 in Kadanadu near Pala. He became the administrator of Kodungalloor after the death of archbishop Mar Joseph Cariattil.

1.1. Church of Thomas Christians- Malabar Church: Its Individuality

St. Thomas the Apostle is the founder of the Church of Thomas Christians. The Malabarians were known as St Thomas Christians until 1887 the year of the establishment of two vicariates for them as vicariates of Malabar Church. There was only one community or Church till the arrival of the Western missionaries in 1500. The individuality of the Church in Malabar was exhibited in her heritage which was genuinely called Indo-Oriental with its specific characteristics till 16th century.⁴ From the early period onwards the Church in Malabar established contacts with East Syrian Church- which was known by different names such as Persian Church, Babylonian Church, Church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, etc. Therefore bishops were coming to Malabar from Persia. Although the East Syrian liturgy in Syriac was used in the Malabar Church, some of the local customs were adapted and Christianized. According to Fr Placid Podipara “*the St Thomas Christians were known as Hindu in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship.*”⁵ The above expression highlights the individuality of the Church in Malabar (Kerala).

According to Fr Jacob Kollaparambil the formation of Malabar Church’s individuality underlies two distinct factors namely: the Malabarian milieu and the ecclesiastical life of the Thomas Christians.⁶ From very early time onwards the Malabar Coast had trade relations with the countries on Persian Gulf and the Red Sea and the language of communication in this international trade was Aramaic. Actually it might have helped for St Thomas the Apostle to take this trade route to reach Malabar and must have made hospitality with first among the Jewish brethren engaged in trade

4 Podipara, *The Malabar Christians*, 1-2.

5 Podipara, *The Malabar Christians*, 27. See also Podipara, *Thomas Christians*, 79-90.

6 Kollaparambil, *The Thomas Christians’ Revolution in 1653*, 1-2.

route at the Malabar ports.⁷ Concerned to Liturgical and canonical matters there was Chaldean connections. Although there were Chaldean bishops in Malabar, the administration of the Malabar Church was effectively organized by Archdeacon of All-India and *Yogam* (Church assembly including adult laymen).

1.2. Law of Thomas

The Law of Thomas actually means the sum total of their Christian heritage which distinctively expressed among the St. Thomas Christians and in Syro Malabar Church. *Mar Thoma Margam* is an indigenous Ecclesiology of the Church of Thomas Christians. It is implied in their theological, liturgical, ecclesiastical, ascetical and socio-cultural life style.⁸ This traditional phrase has several implications like communion of Churches, equality, unity in diversity etc. It is the sum total of the Thomistic experience of Christ as expressed in the Liturgical celebrations. It is the faith experience of the Thomas Christians. It is said that the whole identity of an individual Church. It had its own ecclesial administrative style of governance and nomenclature, such as, the Metropolitan and the Gate of All India and the Archdeacon of All India. And the whole individuality of the Malabar Church is summed up and expressed as Law of Thomas- *Mar Thoma Margam*.⁹

1.3. Syriac Identity

The Thomas Christians were keeping the Syriac identity. They considered Syriac as sacred language with deep devotion that they

7 Kollaparambil, *The Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 2-3. There is a tradition telling in A.D. 345 Malabar Church was strengthened by the arrival Thomas of Cana and 72 Christian families from Edesa settled in Cranganore. Further in 9th cent. the Malabar Church was reinforced by the arrival of two bishops: Mar Sapor and Mar Prodh.

8 Vazheeparampil, *The Toma Marga: Icon of the Thomas Christians of India*, 5-6.

9 See Valiamangalam, *Ecclesial Vision of Thomas Christians in the light of Varthamana-ppusthakam*, 192.

were very particular in celebrating the Holy Qurbana in Syriac. It was clearly evident from the lives of Malpan Cariattil and Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal who celebrated H. Qurbana in Syriac during their journey to Lisbon and Rome. When Cariattil and Paremmakkal spent the days at *Chinnapattanam* Church before boarding the ship they celebrated the Holy Qurbana in Syriac. So Syriac tradition and liturgy were very dear to them and they were preserved as part of their identity.¹⁰ Cathanar Paremmakkal comments: “Many TAMILIAN faithful and the Armenians of the place assisted at our Syriac Qurbana which they had not seen before.”¹¹

During their journey to Rome via Lisbon when Fr Joseph Cariattil and Fr Thomas Paremmakkal reached Bahia part of Latin America, they spent some days at the Archbishop’s house in Bahia. When they celebrated Qurbana the people participated and it is said: “The people of the place wondered at the Syriac Qurbana they had never seen before.”¹² The Archbishop of Bahia in Latin America also participated one day in the Qurbana after which the bishop said to them that this rite of Qurbana was not in use in Europe. So he was ready to give them permission to celebrate Qurbana in Latin rite. But they said to him: “It was not proper for us to change our rite in which we were born and which was in use in our country.”¹³ From this statement it is very obvious that the St. Thomas Christians were very faithful to their liturgical tradition and that they loved to keep the Syriac identity always. They were very much convinced of their duty to preserve their ecclesial heritage and Syriac language.

When Cariattil and Paremmakkal were in Lisbon, in the name of the Pope, Cardinal Antonelli asked the then bishop of Cochín to make inquiries about bishop Mar Thomas who was ready to come

10 Valiamangalam, *Ecclesial Vision of Thomas Christians in the light of Varthamana-ppusthakam*, 204.

11 Paremmakkal, *VP*, 87.

12 Paremmakkal, *VP*, 96.

13 Paremmakkal, *VP*, 96.

into Catholic communion. In the reply Padre Joseph de Soledade gave his views which were partially true and partially false. There were about ten complaints against Malpan Cariattil and Cathanar Paremakkal and against the Church of Thomas Christians. Among those complaints, the second was like this: Why they were sent to Rome for getting a Syrian bishop? The answer given by Cathanar Paremakkal to the complaint reveals the consciousness of the Syriac identity of the Thomas Christians. *“We are Syrians. From the time the Apostle St Thomas was in our country and gave us the treasure of the holy faith, we have been, until today, without any break, performing our ecclesiastical ceremonies and practices in the Syriac rite. Your predecessors tried their best to change this ancient rite of ours. But they realized they could not. What then is your aim? Is it better than that of your predecessors?”*¹⁴ It indicates that how much they were faithful in keeping the Syriac identity as a treasure. The study of *VP*, therefore, reminds every member of the Syro Malabar Church to be faithful and restore the Syriac tradition and Syriac language.

There are still many in Syro Malabar Church who are really unaware of the richness of the East Syrian ecclesial heritage. According to Fr Dr Lonappan Arangassery the main reason of the ignorance of this tradition is that some people do not own up these traditions.¹⁵ If we want to strengthen our ecclesial sense and identity and make progress in its theology and spirituality we have to admit and confess that East Syrian tradition as our own.¹⁶ Besides, the faithful of Malabar Church should build up an attitude of love and friendship with this East Syrian tradition. The decree on Ecumenism (*UR 15*) of Vatican II exhorts everyone to realize the importance of eastern ecclesial heritage by venerating, fostering and preserving the rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches.

14 Paremakkal, *VP*, 247. See Nedungatt, “The Syriac Language: A Gift of St Thomas to India?,” 59.

15 Arangassery, *Subsidiary Mysteries in the East*, xi.

16 See also Arangassery, *Subsidiary Mysteries in the East*, xi.

1.4. Affinity with Syriac Language

The Thomas Christians which shares the ecclesial heritage with the Church of East had a special affinity and attachment with the Syriac language and Syriac tradition. We have already seen from the above paragraphs that they always celebrated Holy Qurbana in Syriac and esteemed the Syriac language and traditions. The *VP* shows how much they were devoted to the Syriac language. The Thomas Christians considered Syriac as sacred and the language of revelation just as Sanscrit is for Hindus, Hebrew for Jews, Arabic for Muslims and as Latin is valued by the Roman (Western Church) Church. The author of *VP Cathanar Paremakkal* even puts his signature in Syriac at the end of the introduction of *VP*.¹⁷ This shows how much he was attached to the Syriac language. The Thomas Christians knew by heart the liturgical songs in Syriac for they participated in liturgy actively and since Syriac was considered the language of Jesus Himself. Even in seminaries the theological subjects were taught in Syriac until 1960. Today, Syro-Malankara, Orthodox and the Assyrian Church of the East of Trichur use more Syriac words in their Liturgical prayers than Syro-Malabar Church.

1.5. Conclusion

In the present scenario in the Catholic Church there is a vivid and growing openness to Syriac heritage compared to the past and a growing ecumenical sense that leads to dialogue with other non Catholic Churches. This openness has helped the members of every Church to learn and respect other traditions too. Christian theology becomes complete only when we incorporate all the three dimensions of theological growth and traditions such as Latin West, Greek Orient and Syriac East. All of them have their roots in Bible, Liturgy, Tradition and teachings of Church Fathers. In this paper I have been trying to highlight the importance of Syriac tradition which

17 See Valiamangalam, *Ecclesial Vision of Thomas Christians in the Light of VP*, in Appendix VII, 302.

is very evident in *VP*. It is hoped that this paper will be an incentive for many to know and learn more about the Ecclesial Traditions of the Syriac East which is shared also by Syro Malabar Church. The *VP* is an 18th century book which transmits the treasure of Syriac tradition and the character of East Syrian identity and its theology kept alive by the Thomas Christian Communities. The Law of Thomas (*Mar Thomayude margam*) is the identity of the Malabar Church. We get lot of insights on the Law of Thomas in every page of *VP* written by Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal. As we know the Liturgy makes the Church unique. So if one celebrates Liturgy in a meaningful way following the tradition prescribed by the Church then only one will grow into it. It is heartening to observe today that the new generation shows great interest in the Syriac tradition and love to learn Syriac language.

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JOHN THE SOLITARY (Letter to Hesychius)

Make supplication before God that in the thoughts of your soul you may continuously say the following: 'O God, make me worthy in your grace of that greatness which you will give in the world to come in return for labours, and may your justice not judge me on the great day of your coming. O God, in your compassion, make me worthy of true knowledge of you, and of participation in your perfect love.' And when you have come to the end of your supplication, seal your prayer with that prayer which Christ our Lord gave to his disciples. Be assiduous in all this, meditate on it, and thereby you will be able to make prayers before God and men.

My brother, you should not be confident that the end of your life will be adorned with the divine beauty that is now depicted in you; such an idea will give rise to relaxing your concentration, resulting in negligence before you have succeeded in bringing this to effect. Just as there is no assurance that a ship's voyage will end up safely in harbor, so with each of us, there is no assurance that our life's journey will end up without stumbling.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp 96-97).

Varghese Varghese

THE MAJOR INFLUENCES ON THE THEMES OF THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY

The feast of Epiphany is called, *Denh'o* or “shining forth,” in the Syriac tradition,¹ on the basis of the prophecy of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist about the birth of Messiah.² The main focus of this study is to expose the major influences on the Themes of the Feast of Epiphany in the West Syriac tradition, which has been used in the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church since the end of 18th century.

At the time of the origin of this Feast, it contained at least two important themes, namely, the birth of Christ and the baptism of Christ, especially in Eastern Christendom. By the introduction of Christmas, the feast of Epiphany naturally lost its character as the day of Christ's birth, even in those parts of the Church where it had originally been regarded as such.³

The main event commemorated in this Feast in the West Syriac tradition is the baptism of Christ in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, but in Western Latin tradition and in Greek Eastern tradition

1 JACOB OF SERUGH, *Festal Homilies*, “Baptism of our Redeemer”, (Trans.), KOLLAMPARAMPIL, lines 443-444, p. 183

2 Lk 1:78-79

3 TALLEY, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, pp. 134-140

two other events, namely the arrival of Magi and the miracle of changing water into wine at Cana were added to it⁴. However, the Latin west, Greek east and Syriac oriental traditions share a thematic unity of the celebrations of this Feast in the present time. The Armenian Orthodox Church still celebrates this Feast on 6th January as the nativity of Christ.⁵

The Syriac tradition sees the event of Christ's baptism as the inauguration of Christian Baptism.⁶ Even though the main event commemorating in the Feast is the event of Christ's baptism, the Feast gives more importance to Christian Baptism and the Christian way of life and is liturgically expressed through the 'order' of the blessing of the water. Also the event of Jesus' baptism is considered as the time of Divine manifestation of the Holy Trinity and as the time of the selection of the Church as the bride to Son of God, the Divine Bridegroom. It denotes the salvation opened by Son of God through His incarnation to the whole universe. Thus Church celebrates the baptism of Jesus as its Bridal Feast in the New Kingdom. This Feast is the liturgical expression of the ideas of redemption, renewal and restoration of all creation, by the purification of the Jordan water through Jesus' descent and baptism into it. The lessons read in the order as well as the Epiphany season depict this idea of restoration and redemption and thus the Feast, in its liturgical frame work seems to be a catechesis of Christian baptism on the image of Living Water in the West Syriac tradition.

The roots of the Liturgy of the feast of Epiphany in the Syriac tradition can be traced to the second century itself, reflecting the Syriac tradition from the original Jewish Christian tradition along

4 DUCHESNE, *Worship*, pp. 259-260; TALLEY, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, p. 142; ADAM, *Liturgical Year*, p. 145

5 DUCHESNE, *Worship*, p. 259; TALLEY, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, p. 131

6 SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH, "Hymn on the Epiphany", E.W. BROOKS, (Ed. & Tran.), pp. 56-67

with developments in Christianity from that time. From these origins by investigating the theology of the Feast itself, it is clear that the themes and practices of the Feast developed in such a way as they could be used by the Church for the education of the people, particularly in response to the heresies of the day. It is by returning to this spirit of relevance in the lives of Christians that the appreciation of the significance of the Feast itself can be restored to the prominence it enjoyed in the early Church, when it was one of the three main Feasts, along with Easter and Pentecost.

Introduction

This study is arranged as a prologue on the analysis of the major theological themes of the feast of Epiphany. All the cardinal themes of the feast of Epiphany have their precursors in both Jewish and Biblical New Testament tradition, which can be seen in the Jewish tradition around the feast of Tabernacles and especially in the exposition of St. John (attributed to Christ Himself) during the feast of Tabernacles in his Gospel.

Moreover the Syriac Fathers consider the Feast and rituals of the Christian Church as the eschatological fulfillment of the observations and rituals of the ‘Former Nation’, meaning the people of Israel.⁷ They considered the Old Testament as a type which will be fulfilled in the life of the ‘New Nation’, i.e., the Church, selected by God in the place of the people of Israel.⁸ St. Ephrem says:

7 “The Jews performed their services for the heavenly things as in signs and shadows, because the law only contained the shadow of the good things to come...” THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA, *On the Lord’s Prayer, Baptism and the Eucharist*, pp. 17-18; E. BECK, *Hymnen contra Haereses*, XXV:3; quoted by S. H. GRIFFITH, “Syriac/Antiochene Exegesis in Saint Ephrem’s teaching Songs *De Paradiso*; The ‘Types of Paradise’ in the ‘Treasury of Revelations’”, p. 32

8 MURRAY, *Symbols*, pp. 222-224

“All these former things were likenesses and figures of this ministry of the Church, which in comparison with it is spiritual and heavenly”.⁹

Ephrem echoes the same idea in his commentary on Exodus, where he interprets ‘*zabna*’ as indicating that the Tabernacle was only for a time and then destined to pass away:

“In saying *whatever likeness of the Tabernacle I show you, so shall you make it* [Exodus 25:9], he first called it a likeness and a ‘temporary dwelling’, to show that it was to pass away and give place to the Church, which, as the prototype [*tapnka*] is to last forever: and that it should be precious in their eyes, because it was a likeness of the Tabernacle in heaven”.¹⁰

According to Marutha, the Old Testament events, specially the events remembered through the lections read in the feast of Epiphany are all types in order to teach the greatness of baptism, which God desired to bring mankind to the end of time for the salvation of the whole human race.¹¹ He quotes different Old Testament passages like ‘the crossing of the red sea’¹²; bitter waters of Morah;¹³ the twelve springs of Elim¹⁴ and interprets them on the basis of Christian Baptism. Moreover, he quotes the words of St. Paul to affirm his idea that these Old Testament events are all types that help to narrate the real meaning of the sacraments of the Christian Church. He says:

9 *In Paulum*, Ephrem Arm. lii, 214; tr. p. 221 Cf. *APHRAHAT Demonstrations II*, (Ed. & Trans.), VALAVANOLICKAL, *Dem.*XII,1-4, pp. 19-22

10 In Ex 25-31, (CSCO 152, Syr. 71, p.152): quoted by MURRAY, *Symbols*, p. 222

11 MARUTHA, “The Homily on the Blessing of the Water at Epiphany”, (Ed. & Trans.), BROCK, p. 63

12 Ex 14:22-31

13 Ex 15:22-26

14 Ex 15:27

“What are we to understand from all this? Everything that took place with reference to these people was a type, as the Apostle confirms when he says ‘*All this took place and was written down as a type for us, for our education, seeing that the end of time has arrived for us*’ (1 Cor. 10:11)”.¹⁵

Hence the themes of the feast of Tabernacles might be considered as types which would be fulfilled in their meaning in the feast of Epiphany of the Church, the new bride selected by the Heavenly Bridegroom instead of the old one, the people of Israel.

The New Testament writers had different approaches to the life and person of Christ.¹⁶ Jesus was portrayed as the Messiah of God, in accordance with the Jewish tradition by the parallel gospels;¹⁷ however, the Johannine approach is somewhat different. John the Evangelist portrays Jesus (John 1: 1-18) as the Word of God incarnated to the world ‘at the fulfillment of time’ and He lived with man.¹⁸ The seven ‘I am’ statements that Jesus says about Himself in His discourses are the core ideas of Johannine portrait of the ‘life and person’ of Jesus Christ. Among these descriptions, Jesus as the ‘Living Water’¹⁹ and ‘the Light of the World’²⁰ and the narrations of His relationship with His Father on the background of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles²¹ are important to this study of the themes of the feast of Epiphany. It is a probable hypothesis that the Church Fathers developed the themes of the feast of Epiphany on the basis

15 MARUTHA, “The Homily on the Blessing of the Water at Epiphany”, (Ed. & Trans.), BROCK, p. 64

16 JOHNSON, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, pp. 12-13

17 Mt 1:1, 21:19; Lk 5:14, 9:21, Mk 10:46-52, etc

18 DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 345-354

19 Jn 7:37-39

20 Jn 8:12

21 DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 349-351; LINDARS, “The Gospel of John”, *The New Century Bible Commentary*, pp. 296-298

of the Johannine descriptions of Jesus Christ on the background of the feast of Tabernacles.

The development of this, or any liturgy, does not end there, however. As the context of a time dictates new challenges for the Church to face, the liturgy is a key tool that the Church uses to combat these challenges in the hearts of her children. With the growth of the Arian heresy at the beginning of the fourth century, the Church had a need to reinforce the stand it took at Nicea in 325 AD. Seeing that the theme of the revelation of Christ as one of the persons of the Holy Trinity was already found in the feast of Epiphany, it is possible to believe that it was at that time when this theme was brought into more prominence. At the very least, the Church recognized the riches that the 'Order' of this Feast already contained and promoted its observance, a fact that is seen through the spread of the feast of Epiphany to the West and more documentation of its celebration in the East beginning to appear in the middle of the fourth century.

Given the main influences on the development of the themes of this Feast outlined above, the first section discusses how the themes of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles illuminate the Christian feast of Epiphany, the second section describes how the Johannine narrations of Jesus Christ become the antecedents of the themes of the feast of Epiphany and the third section describes the development of the themes expounded upon in this Feast as a response to the Arian heresy.

1. The Feast of Tabernacles Illuminates the Themes of the Feast of Epiphany

An understanding of the themes of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles is critical to the understanding of the themes of the Christian Epiphany in a better way. The Christian rituals of the feast of Epiphany, like the drawing of the water from the nearest well, river or pool, its consecration, the reading of the lessons, and the

procession, all have parallels in the rituals of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles.²² As described earlier, the drawing of water from the pool of Siloam, the reading of the Law, the procession, the lighting of the fire, the torch-dance and finally the singing of the great Hallel are the main Jewish rituals of the feast of Tabernacles.²³ These similarities of the rituals and the themes of these two Feasts are discussed in detail.

1.1. The Manifestation of the *Doxa* of Yahweh to the People of Israel in the Wilderness

While the feast of Tabernacles remembers the moments of the manifestation of God's Glory (*doxa*) in Jewish history, the feast of Epiphany expresses the importance of the manifestation of the Holy Trinity in the event of Christ's baptism in the river Jordan. Both Feasts illuminate the idea of divine manifestation in human history.²⁴

The manifestation of the glory of Yahweh at first happened in the history of Israel in their sojourn in the wilderness. God's *shekina* or *kabod* manifested to them in the pillar of cloud in day time and a pillar of fire in night time during their journey to the Promised Land through wilderness.²⁵ Also, their life in the wilderness was centered in the tabernacles, where they witnessed the *kabod* of Yahweh every day.²⁶ Whenever they faced obstacles in their journey the leaders of the people, Moses and Aaron came to the tabernacle to receive God's direction to lead the people. The glory descending onto the mountain of Sinai was the most important event in the religious history of the people of Israel.²⁷ When Solomon dedicated the Temple, the same glory of Yahweh descended into the Holy of Holies and the

22 SELWYN, "The Feast of Tabernacles..." pp. 230-235

23 SELWYN, "The Feast of Tabernacles..." p. 225

24 MERRAS, *Epiphany*, pp. 30-35

25 Ex 13:17-22.

26 Ex 24:15-18; 33:18-23; 40:34-35

27 Ex 20:18-21

Temple was filled with the presence of Yahweh.²⁸ Hence, the presence of God's *doxa* is an important religious idea among the Jews. The feast of Tabernacles liturgically presents this idea through the rituals of the Feast that involve light, like the illumination of the Temple, the bonfire and the torch dance.²⁹

In the feast of Epiphany, the theme of the manifestation of the glory of the Son of God is also seen in the event of Jesus' baptism. The descent of the Son into the waters of the river Jordan is depicted in the liturgy of the Feast as the descent of the 'Divine Fire' from Heaven in order to purify the whole creation, which was distorted by the fall of man. The Hymn for the procession of the Feast describes this:

"They gave space and He gave them rays of light and descended and sanctified them".³⁰

The Hymn *al yurednon* describes the manifestation of the glory of the Son in this way:

"The sprout that springs forth from the Father and came to the Jordan to sanctify everything, blessed is Your manifestation. The light which shone forth lightens everything. The children of light wait for Him and will take delight in His light".³¹

In the Litany the Arch deacon proclaims this manifestation of the glory of the Son and the salvation gained to the creation through His baptism as this:

"Christ our God, Who enlightened the world with the brightness of Your divinity, Who by the Holy water drowned the mob of demons and blotted out our sins, we beseech you".³²

28 1Kgs 8:11

29 DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 349

30 PAMPAKUDA, p. 133. . ܡܫܚܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ . . ܡܫܚܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ

. ܡܫܚܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ . ܡܫܚܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ

31 PAMPAKUDA, p. 136.

32 PAMPAKUDA, p. 172

One of the prayers of the blessing of the waters, begins with the words, “O Lord, You are great and how marvelous are Your works...” is fully dedicate to describe the glory and greatness of the Son of God as God the creator of all things visible and invisible. And the incarnation of the Son of God, especially His baptism in the river Jordan is depicted in the prayer as the manifestation of His glory in order to save the creation and restored it in its primordial condition.³³

While narrating the reasons of the temptations faced by Jesus in the wilderness

St. Ephrem cited the pomp and glory appeared in the river Jordan at the time of Jesus’ baptism. He says:

“When he (Satan) saw, from the splendour of the light which appeared on the water, and the voice which came from heaven, that He who fulfils every need had gone down into the water, and that He had not come there to baptism as though He were someone in need, (Satan) reflected and said to himself, ‘As long as I have not tested Him by combat through temptation I will not be able to identify Him’”.³⁴

Jesus is declared as the Son of God at the time of His baptism in the river Jordan by the Words of His Father in Heaven and that is attested to by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove.³⁵ In the feast of Epiphany, the Church remembers the manifestation of the Holy Trinity into history at the event of Christ’s baptism in the river Jordan.

33 PAMPAKUDA, p. 189. *هَذَا الْمَسْرُوحِينَ هُوَ لَعْنَتُكَ بِخُصْرَتِكَ. هَلَا أُنَا خَدُّهُ لَا*
...وَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَحْتَجِّجْهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَحْتَجِّجْهُ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَحْتَجِّجْهُ, This is one among the ancient
 prayers, seen in all the oriental rites. See TALLEY, *The Origins of*
the Liturgical Year, p. 125 for details

34 Mc CARTHY CARMEL, *Saint Ephraim’s Commentary On Tatian’s*
Diatessaron, pp. 85-86

35 Jn 1:29-34; Mk 1:10-11; Lk 3:21-22; Mt 3:13-17

1.2. The Time of Renewal of the Covenant with God

The reading of the Law was one among the main rituals of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles. Through this reading, the Jews recollected the past events in which Yahweh made a covenant with their Fathers and thus they became a part of the covenant people of God Almighty.³⁶ Moreover, they used the time of the Feast to offer thanksgiving to Yahweh by remembering the miraculous ways in which God led their Fathers through the wilderness. As described earlier, to depict this attitude of worship, they drew water from the healing fount of Siloam with humility and shouted the words of thanksgiving in order to praise the mighty deeds of Yahweh, especially during the procession of the water to the Temple.³⁷

In the feast of Epiphany, through the consecration of water, the Church also commemorates the covenant that each member made with God through baptism.³⁸ According to the Syriac Fathers, the position of the Church in history is considered as that of the chosen people who made a covenant with God through baptism in place of the old people.³⁹ The types depicted in the Laws of the Old Nation should be fulfilled in reality through the Heavenly Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ.⁴⁰

Through the consecration of the water in the feast of Epiphany, the Church not only remembers the event of Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan, but the prayers and rituals of the Feast also give an austere moment for the believers to remember their own baptism in which they made their covenant with God and became the children of the Heavenly Father.⁴¹ Thus the Feast becomes an offering of thanksgiving to God for His abundant love towards humankind, not

36 SELWYN, "The Feast of Tabernacles...", p. 229

37 SELWYN, "The Feast of Tabernacles...", p. 226

38 TAFT, *Beyond East and West*, p. 28

39 MURRAY, *Symbols*, pp. 222-224

40 BOUYER, *Life and Liturgy*, p. 23

41 MERRAS, *Epiphany*, pp. 171-177

only as an event to institute the Baptism but also as a moment of receiving all humankind as the Children of God even though they are unworthy.

1.3. The Universal Salvific Activity of Yahweh through the Nation of Israel

Salvation of the universe through the selected people was God's plan from the very beginning of the Biblical history. When God called Abraham, He called him 'the Father of the Nations'. The feast of Tabernacles expresses this purpose of universal salvation by the large admission of Gentiles to this Feast in the city of Jerusalem. Lightening by fire was one among the important rituals of the feast of Tabernacles in Jewish tradition. During the feast of Tabernacles, 'the night is turned into day due to great lightening and the city is made a blaze of light, an 'eternal splendour' (Isaiah 60:15)'. The gate of the city is opened to everyone. There is no fear of attack. This exposes the great theme of the Feast 'the abundant access of the Gentiles',⁴² as Prophet Isaiah said: "Kings shall come to your light and the Gentiles to your brightness" (Isaiah 60:3).

Here, the feast of Tabernacles brought out a cosmic dimension of salvation in its theme. All other Feasts and festivals of the Jewish religion express the deliverance of the people of Israel, whereas the feast of Tabernacles never limits the doors of salvation exclusively to the chosen people, instead it opens the door of salvation to all the nations. The crowds assembled there sing the great *Hallel* (Psalm 118:19), 'open the gates of righteousness to me', 'the *fearers* of Yahweh' (Psalm 115:13); 'praise ye Yahweh, *ye nations*' (Psalm 117:1); 'let the *fearers* of Yahweh now say, for His mercy endures forever' (Psalm 118:4); 'open to me the gates of *righteousness*' (Psalm 118:19); and 'He maketh the barren to keep house as the children's joyful mother' (Psalm 113:9).⁴³ The great *Hallel* of the

42 SELWYN, "The Feast of Tabernacles..." p. 229

43 SELWYN, "The Feast of Tabernacles..." p. 229

Feast also emphasizes the presence of the Gentiles at this great feast of Tabernacles.

The feast of Epiphany commemorates the event of Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan as the betrothal between Christ, the Heavenly bridegroom, and the Church, the new Bride selected as the 'Nations' instead of the 'Nation'.⁴⁴ In the readings from Isaiah,⁴⁵ there is a splendid vision of the entry of the 'Nations' into the Church. The prophet foretells the return of the exiles to Jerusalem. The city is represented as a mother who mourned the dispersal of her children and will soon rejoice at their return. In the liturgy, this prophecy is seen fulfilled in the Church. She is also a mother and she rejoices to see her children coming from afar. This is a vision of universality, like a great procession of people from all parts of the world converging on the holy city, the Church. Therefore, the Feast is a time of rejoicing as a commemoration time of the selection of the Gentile's daughter as the Bride of the Heavenly Bridegroom. At the event of His baptism, Christ initiated the salvation of mankind.⁴⁶

1.4. Restoration of the Cosmic Order through the Purification of the People

It is important to note that the universality of the salvation offered in the feast of Tabernacles does not end with mankind. Sanctification of all the waters through blessing of the water was an idea which had already existed among the Jewish people.⁴⁷ The important ritual of the feast of Tabernacles of the drawing of water from the healing fount of Siloam was considered as an action of sanctification by the Jewish people. A priest drew the water from the fount of Siloam on each day of the Feast and he was received by other priests at the outer gate of the Temple. All the people assembled there uttered

44 JACOB OF SERUGH, *Festal Homilies*, "Baptism of our Redeemer", (Trans.) KOLLAMPARAMPIL, pp. 162-163

45 Isa 60:1-6

46 BERTAINA, "Christmas with Mar Ephrem" Hp. Vol. XXII-(2007), p. 56

47 MAERTENS, A Feast in Honour of Yahweh, pp. 75-77

jubilantly the words of Prophet Isaiah (12:3) ‘You will draw water with gladness from the wells of salvation’ and continued together in a procession to the Temple. There the water was mixed with wine and poured into the altar and from the altar it flowed to Kedron through a pipe and thus at last reached to the river Jordan.⁴⁸ While narrating the reason for the drawing of water in the feast of Tabernacles, Selwyn E.C. quotes R. Akibah and R. Levi:

“R.Akibah gave the reason thus: ‘Bring the libation of water at the Feast of Tabernacles, that the showers may be blessed to thee. And accordingly it is said, that whosoever will not come up to the Feast of Tabernacles shall have no rain’ ... On the other hand R.Levi (*Jerusalem Talmud*) says; ‘Why is it called the drawing of water? Because of the drawing or pouring out of the Holy Ghost, according as it is said, With joy ye shall draw water from the wells of salvation’ (Isaiah 12:3)”⁴⁹

The feast of Tabernacles had the traces of the theme of sanctification of the whole waters by the pouring out of the Holy Ghost. Thus through this ritualistic action of drawing the water from the pool of Siloam and then pouring it back into all the waters (represented by the river Jordan), the feast of Tabernacles emphasizes the ability to use waters, drawn for the salvation of people, to similarly restore all life when reintroduced to the rest of the world’s water supply, due its ability to mix without distinction into other water and the integral role of water in all life on earth.⁵⁰

The purpose of Jesus’ descent into the waters of the river Jordan is interpreted by most Fathers of both the Eastern and the Western traditions as being for the purification of the nature of water in order to receive salvation through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.⁵¹ Through the fall of Adam and Eve, all of creation lost its primitive

48 SELWYN, “The Feast of Tabernacles...”, p. 226

49 SELWYN, “The Feast of Tabernacles...” p. 226

50 MAERTENS, A Feast in Honour of Yahweh, pp. 68-69

51 BROCK, *Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition*, pp. 61-77

state of purity. The incarnation of the Son of God thus not only restored the fallen nature of human being, but also that of the whole cosmos. The ‘order’ of the blessing of the waters in the feast of Epiphany re-enacts this purification of the water and the restoration of the cosmic order which happened at the time of Jesus’ baptism in the river Jordan.

2. Johannine Narrations of Jesus Christ, the Antecedents of the Themes of the Feast of Epiphany

Within the narration of the event of Jesus’ baptism in the Synoptic Gospels, it is clear that Matthew (3:3-17), Mark (1:9-11), and Luke (3:21-22) each have their own distinctive emphases and point of view. They are not simply narrating an event in the life of Jesus but are interpreting this event of Jesus’ baptism for their own respective communities.⁵² The event of Jesus’ baptism in the river Jordan at the beginning of His public ministry is one of those few events in the life of the historical Jesus of Nazareth on which modern scholars tend to agree.⁵³

But unlike the Synoptic Gospels, the fourth Gospel nowhere indicates that Jesus is baptized at all and has the ministry of both John and Jesus taking place at the same time.⁵⁴ However it is

52 JOHNSON, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, p. 12

53 MCDONNELL, “Jesus’ Baptism in the Jordan”, *Theological Studies* 56, (1995), p. 209.

54 In the fourth Gospel three times, Jesus himself is reported to have baptized others as a part of his public ministry. (Jn. 3:22; 3:26; 4:1-4). Through these narrations of baptizing practices on the part of the historical Jesus John the Gospel writer underscores the fact that the roots of Christian baptism among his community do go back to Jesus’ own practice, instead of John the baptizer. Moreover Johannine community understands Christian baptism as a divine and pneumatic birth from above. (Jn.3:1-11). See details in COLLINS A. Y, “The Origin of Christian Baptism”, pp. 28-46; On the nature

noteworthy that as in the Synoptic Gospels, the fourth Gospel also made reference to the coming of Holy Spirit at the time of Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan and the identity of Jesus as the sacrificial "lamb" and Son of God is proclaimed through John the baptizer's own testimony, rather than by means of a divine voice. This way of narration in the fourth Gospel underscores the purpose of the writer to portrait John the baptizer as completely subordinated to Jesus as the one whose purpose it is to testify the true light of the world (John 1: 6-9).⁵⁵

The feast of Epiphany liturgically expresses the ideas that Jesus is the Light of the world and the source of the Living Water which satisfies the thirst of the world. Moreover, the Feast commemorates the event of Jesus' baptism as the manifestation of His divine personality as the Son of God and the Saviour of the whole world. John the Apostle describes these ideas about the 'person' and 'work' of Jesus Christ in his Gospel narrations especially on the background of the celebration of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles.⁵⁶ Thus the antecedents of the themes of the feast of Epiphany are found in the Gospel narratives of St. John the Evangelist.

2.1. Jesus as the Source of Living Water

There are mainly two occasions in which John the Evangelist portrayed Jesus as the source of Living Water. The occasion that is most important for this purpose is that found in Chapter 7, on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles.⁵⁷ In this instance, Jesus declared

and identity of these "Johannine" communities see RAYMOND BROWN, *The Community of the Beloved disciple: The Life, Loves, Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979)

55 JOHNSON, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, p. 17

56 DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 347-354; LINDARS, "The Gospel of John", *The New Century Bible Commentary*, pp. 296-298; MERRAS, *Epiphany*, pp. 42-44

57 LINDARS, "The Gospel of John", *The New Century Bible Commentary*, pp. 278-279

himself as the source of the Living Water. The reference to ‘living water’ here is in rabbinic exposition applied to the libation ceremony of Tabernacles, together with Zechariah 13:1, Ezekiel 47:1ff, and Isaiah 12:3.⁵⁸ The Gospel of John reads thus:

“On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink’. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”.⁵⁹ (John 7:37-38).

The evangelist himself gives the interpretation that the living water that Jesus said is the Holy Spirit (John 7:39).

Jesus not only introduces Himself as the source of Living water, but He says that those who believe in Him also become the source of the ‘living water’. This idea is same in Jesus’ teachings about Himself by using salt and light imageries. When He says, ‘I am the Light of the World’, (John 8:12) He also says that His disciples are also the light and the salt of the world. He says, “You are the salt of the earth. . . You are the light of the World” (Matthew 5:13-14). The reason behind this is that Jesus abides in those who abide in Him. (‘Abide in Me, and I in you’; John 15:4). Hence Jesus is the source of ‘living water’ and one who abides in him also becomes the source of the ‘living water’ in the world. In one of the *memre* of Ephrem,⁶⁰ ‘On Holy Week’, he described Peter as the fountain-head of living water:

“By thee I will give drink to all nations;
Thou hast the sweetness of Life which I will give”.⁶¹

58 DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 330

59 There are differences of opinion among the scholars (allowed by different punctuation) about this passage whether the source of the ‘rivers of living waters’ is Jesus or the believers. For details see MURRAY, *Symbols*, p. 213, note no. 1

60 MURRAY, *Symbols*, p. 217; which Dom Beck at least judges to be probably not by Ephrem himself

61 Lamy 1, 411: quoted by MURRAY, *Symbols*, p. 218

He goes on to illustrate to her the qualities of the water that He gives to the people who asks of him:

...but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life”.⁶⁵

It is interesting that Jesus as the source of ‘living water’ is a critical theme of the feast of Epiphany and a function of the celebration of the Feast in the Church itself is to instruct the believers on this theme. Thus the Feast becomes a catechesis to the believers about the baptism that they received in their life.⁶⁶

2.2. Jesus as the Light of the World

Another main idea that is brought out of the words of Christ during the feast of Tabernacles, as recorded in the Gospel narratives of John the evangelist is Jesus as the true light that came to the world.⁶⁷ About John the Baptist, John the evangelist says, “He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light”.⁶⁸ But about Jesus, the evangelist says:

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of the men... That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world”.⁶⁹

According to Johannine Gospel narration, Jesus introduced Himself as the light of the world which eradicates darkness from the world. Jesus says:

“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”.⁷⁰

65 Jn 4:14

66 LINDARS, “The Gospel of John”, *The New Century Bible Commentary*, p. 298

67 DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 348-349

68 Jn 1:8

69 DODD, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 207-209; Jn 1:4,9

70 Jn 8:12

As in the words of Severus of Antioch, the Baptism of Christ in the river Jordan was not for the sake of Christ but for the manifestation of the true light which only can liberate the creation from the darkness of sin and enslavement to the satanic power. He writes: “in thy light shall we see light”.⁷⁶ Being the light of the world, Jesus leads the whole creation to the real light of the Triune God.

2.3. Jesus as the Universal Saviour and the Eternal Son of God

According to the Johannine narrations, Jesus reveals Himself to the Jews in response to their enquiry into His personal identity.⁷⁷ The Jews ask Jesus:

“Are you greater than our Father Abraham, who is dead”. And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?”⁷⁸

Jesus said to them:

“If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing. It is My Father who honours Me, of whom you say that He is your God... Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad”⁷⁹ Then Jesus says frankly to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was I AM”.⁸⁰

The feast of Epiphany celebrates the calling of all people to the Salvation of God. Through his speech⁸¹ on the background of the feast of Tabernacles,⁸² Jesus proclaimed this universal salvation of God to all.⁸³ He says,

76 SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH, “Hymn on the Epiphany”, p. 65

77 LINDARS, “The Gospel of John”, *The New Century Bible Commentary*, pp. 313-314.

78 Jn 8:53

79 Jn 8:54, 56

80 Jn 8:57

81 Jn 7:17, 37; 8:12, 24, 31-32, 34-36, 51

82 HOWARD, “The Gospel according to St. John,” *The Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol.8, pp, 594-595

“If any one thirsts, let him come to Me and drink”.⁸⁴

The people of Israel limited the universal salvation of God, as a promise only to Abraham and his ethnic descendants. When God set apart Abraham and blessed him, the purpose of selecting ‘a people’ for Him was not to limit that nation to the nation of Israel, but all Nations through Abraham. Thus he selected Abraham not as the father of a Nation but for many Nations;

“No longer shall your name be called Abraham, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations”.⁸⁵

Even though the literal meaning of the passage exposes the idea that God has given a promise to multiply Abraham’s descendants into many tribes; but, as in the line of St. Paul, described in the Epistle to Romans,⁸⁶ Aphrahat developed the idea for the ‘priority of faith to circumcision’ and thus justifies the election of the Gentiles as the people of God in the place of the people of Israel. Also St. Ephrem, in line with St. Paul, gives a literal interpretation on Genesis 22:18 and proves the election of the Gentiles is biblical and was a promise given by God to Abraham.⁸⁷

83 LINDARS, “The Gospel of John”, *The New Century Bible Commentary*, pp. 298-299; HOWARD, “The Gospel according to St. John,” *The Interpreter’s Bible*, Vol.8, pp. 588-589

84 Jn 7:37

85 Gen 17:5

86 Rom 4:16-18; “Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. (as it is written, “*I have made you a father of many nations*”) in the presence of Him whom he believed-God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “*So shall your descendants be*”.

87 MURRAY, *Symbols*, p. 44, (Gen. 22:18) “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice”

Jesus narrates God's plan of universal salvation through describing his relationship with God the Father. He says:

“I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your Father... Most assuredly, I say, If any one keeps My word he shall never see death”.⁸⁸

Also through these words Jesus foretells His role in the Salvation Economy as the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the whole world.⁸⁹

3. The Development of the Themes of the Feast of Epiphany as a Response to Arianism

The above mentioned background of the feast of Tabernacles in Judaism and the writings of St. John constitute the themes of the Christian feast of Epiphany; however, the spreading of heresies, particularly Arianism, led the Church to use this Feast to give extra emphasis to the themes related to the person of the Son, particularly His manifestation as part of the Trinity, and which describe the nature of the Son as the incarnate God and His relationship with other persons of the Triune Godhead.⁹⁰ Moreover while analyzing the 'order' of the festal liturgy one can easily understand the arrangements of the liturgy that the Fathers of the Church were so careful to avoid the overemphasis of the event of Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan in order to avoid the misinterpretation of the event by the heretics. Instead the Church gave emphasis to the Christian Baptism through the imagery of 'living water' and made the festal liturgy as a catechesis of the Christian baptism based on the imagery of the 'living water'.

88 Jn 8:37, 38, 51

89 HOWARD, "The Gospel according to St. John," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol.8, pp. 608-610

90 MERRAS, *Epiphany*, pp. 143-144

3.1. Liturgical and Thematic Response to Arianism

Boldly anti-Trinitarian, Arianism struck at the foundations of Orthodox Christianity by reducing the Incarnation – the union of Divinity with humanity in Christ – to a figure of speech. If the Logos was created and not divine, God did not become man nor redeem the World and all the consequent mysteries of the faith are dissolved. In being challenged by this heresy, the Church further clarified its views on the divinity of Christ and it is liturgically expressed through the celebration of the Feasts of the nativity, namely the feast of Epiphany and the feast of Christmas. The prayers and hymns of the feast of Epiphany give emphasis to the divinity of the Son God, who is baptized in the river Jordan for the salvation of the whole creation. The idea of the divine manifestation that the Feast expressed through its prayers and hymns firmly states the doctrine of the Church about the life and person of Christ.

For instance, the first *sedro* of the Pampakuda ‘order’ of the Feast includes a prayer that addresses the Father and the Son without distinction:

“You created man in Your own image and in Your own likeness; making him the crown of Your creation. When he fell down from his great office, through his negligence, You brought him back to his divine rank by Your coming the flesh, washing away, by the second birth, the impurity which had defiled him”.⁹¹

In this prayer, the same God who created man also came down in the flesh, demonstrating the clarity in the Church about the equality and unity of the Godhead, in this case, the Father and the Son.

Also, in the processional hymn with the tune *taw’ahay* the same idea is clearly stated poetically in a representation of a scene between St. John the Baptist and Christ and the baptism of Christ:

91 PAMPAKUDA, pp. 151-152

He asked His servant, John, to place his hand upon Him. The servant came near and placed his right hand on the head of his creator, saying,

“My Lord I do not know in whose name I will baptize. If I say in the name of the Father, You are in Your Father. If I say in the name of the Son, you are the only Son. If I say in the name of the Spirit, He is One in the Triune Mystery, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Praise to you, Lord of all”.⁹²

Here, the unity of the Trinity is acknowledged exposing a paradox in blessing one person of the Trinity in the name of any of the other two, a paradox which leads to only an acceptance of the Great Mystery and praising the Lord.

This is consistent with the teachings of the earlier Church Fathers about the Feast, as they also give emphasis to the Nicene doctrine about the teaching of the divinity of Christ and clearly give answers to the heretical explanations of Arianism. Jacob of Serugh discussed this issue in his homily on the feast of Epiphany and explained the Orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity, especially the relationship of Son of God with that of the Father and the Holy Spirit through the following lines, which are an expansion of the dialog expressed in the processional song quoted above:

[John the Baptist to Christ]

“... And now how shall I change my word and change my saying,
And baptize You, O Baptizer of all, with water as to others?
I will turn out to be (guilty of) falsehood and You will be belittled
And the bride will think that there is deficiency in her betrothed.
What shall I say when I baptize the Forgiver of Debts,
And with what expressions shall I observe the rite of baptism?
Shall I baptize the Son in the in the name of the Father!

92 PAMPAKUDA, p. 133. . . .
.. . .
.. . .
.. . .

Behold, You are in His bosom,
 And there is not a breath of slightest gesture between You and Him.
 Shall I invoke the Son, the sanctifier of Waters, You only are here,
 And while being holy, why should You wash Your holiness in
 baptism?

If You are baptized in the name of the Spirit, how is it possible
 That I shall sign the water separately because You are with the
 Spirit?

The Father is in His Son and the Son is wholly in His Father,
 And the Spirit who is from Him is one power without confusion.
 And how shall I, the poor one, perform this,
 And set a division in that undivided harmony?"

[Christ to John the Baptist]

“John, pass over from questions and be silent.
 Now let there be to you no disputation here on account of
 these matters.

I have come to baptism, not because it should sanctify me,
 Nor is it necessary that you should say something when I am
 baptized.

Come silently; just place your hand on my head
 And it belongs to the Father what to say about His Son
 Stretch out your right hand so that in appearance it may come
 to me,

And without any of your word the Spirit will bear witness about
 the truth”⁹³.

Here the influence of the thinking of the Fathers of the Church
 on the development of the liturgy is seen direction as the ideas,
 even the scene itself; from this homily is directly what is incorporated
 into the prayers themselves for the education of the people. Jacob
 of Serugh clearly explains for all his listeners that there is no difference

93 JACOB OF SERUGH, *Festal Homilies*, “Baptism of our Redeemer”,
 (Trans.), KOLLAMPARAMPIL, lines 303-326, pp. 177-178

between the Father and the Son (“And there is not a breath of slightest gesture between You and Him”) and the same for the Son and the Holy Spirit (“because you are with the Spirit”) and that the Trinity itself is “one power without confusion”. Lest they should be confused by his figurative presentation, however, he makes it explicit that this paradox cannot be solved simply as the Arians have suggested. According to the Arian’s heretical teaching, one can resolve this paradox by believing that the Son is not equal to the Father and the Spirit and hence was able to be baptized by man, but Jacob of Serugh left no doubt that this simplification was not the Truth by affirming the Divine Mystery that this unexplainable event represents, as it is for John the Baptist to do as he is told, without asking questions, and the Father will say what He has to say and the Holy Spirit will bear witness to the Truth it reveals.

Even in the modern day, the importance of affirming the equality and unity of the Triune Godhead in the face of those who would doubt it is not diminished in the Church. As such, even a ritualistic affirmation of the Trinity has been added to the modern order of the feast of Epiphany in the blessing of the censor, which is not found in any of the other festal orders of the West Syriac rite. In the blessing of the censor, the first praise is addressed to the Father; the second to the Son, with two chains of the censor held together symbolizing the unity of the divine and human natures of Christ; and the third praise is addressed to the Holy Spirit, showing all three of these Holy Persons to be one in the faith of the Church.

Conclusion

While approaching a complex text, like a festal liturgy, from a theological perspective, one finds a number of themes and messages within it. It could be a daunting task to understand what the main themes are and decide which investigations into that topic will prove to be fruitful. By looking into the feast of Tabernacles, a few main themes are clearly developed. These themes include the manifestation

of the *doxa* of God, the acceptance of the covenant with God by the current generation of His people and the universal nature of salvation, not limited to just all mankind but all creation as well.

When applying these themes to the feast of Epiphany, very important themes are exposed in it that parallel the themes from the feast of Tabernacles, including the manifestation of the Holy Trinity, the covenant with God made through the Holy Baptism that Christ instituted in His own, and the universal nature of the salvation offered by Christ, not just the salvation of man but the restoration of all of creation as well.

Writers in the early Church understood these themes and expounded upon them in their writing to help explain how Christians should understand such age old themes in the context of the Incarnation and Salvific work of the Messiah Jesus Christ. This type of effort being taken by St. John the Evangelist in his narrative of Christ at the feast of Tabernacles found in the Gospel according to St. John chapters 7-8. On the background of this Feast, St. John's focus is showing the role of this Feast in the Salvation economy and does so through the images of Christ as the Light, the Light that attracts all people and who removes darkness from those who believe in Him; Christ as the Living Water, that all who believe in Him will have the rivers of living water flowing out of their hearts; and Christ as the Son of God, not just the son of Abraham, extending the salvation He brings to all mankind.

Whereas the focus of St. John's Gospel is on the universal salvation brought to humanity by the Incarnation of God, to the point where he did not even record the event of Christ's baptism in his Gospel account, the Church had a need in the fourth century to stress the Incarnation of God itself in the manifestation of the Trinity in response to the Arian heresy. Lessons regarding the divinity of Christ and His equality and unity with the other persons of the Divine Godhead abound in the prayers and hymns of the feast of Epiphany. Whether those themes were already so prominent in the 'order' of

this Feast prior to the spread of Arianism or whether that extra emphasis in response to the influence of Arian thought, it is impossible to say now, since 'orders' of the Feast from before and after that period are not currently available for comparison. However, what can be said is that due to the growth of the celebration of the Feast in the West and as the documentation of the celebration of in the East increased in the middle of the fourth century, there is a strong likelihood that this correspondence with the period after the arrival of the Arian heresy and the Council of Nicea is not a coincidence.

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EARLY WITNESSES TO THE SYRIAC TEXT OF ACTS CHAPTER FIFTEEN, VERSES 20 AND 29

Introduction

Research on the early Syriac Text of Acts has focused mostly on the first two chapters, and with good reason. This is due to the richness of the Patristic literature that is concerned with the first two chapters. Chapter One provides the records of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus and his Ascension. Chapter Two is the record of the Day of Pentecost, with fire and wind from heaven, speaking in tongues and Peter's first sermon. These two chapters attracted much patristic attention and in some ways, provide the 'cream' of the patristic evidence due to citations by many Syriac authors. This article extends the literature by providing a sample of the evidence for Chapter Fifteen of Acts. This Chapter deals with the first Church Council in Jerusalem. Specifically, it will focus on Acts 15:20 and 29.

Unlike for the Syriac Gospels, there are no Old Syriac Biblical manuscripts for Acts or the Epistles. Thus, the patristic literature is the primary way to ascertain an Old Syriac text of Acts. When one speaks of an Old Syriac text of Acts, it refers to a hypothetical text of The Acts of the Apostles, analogous to the Old Syriac Gospels, and one that pre-dates the Peshitta version. It is ‘hypothetical’ because no Old Syriac Acts manuscript has been found. It is well known that the many of the early Syriac-speaking fathers quoted from the Old Syriac Gospels by comparing their citations with the Curetonian and Sinai Palimpsest manuscripts. Thus, it is reasonable to make the assumption that they similarly would have quoted from an Old Syriac version of Acts. Consistent with this hypothesis, the evidence points us in that direction based on their citations of Acts that contain variant readings that appear to be echoes of an Old Syriac text of Acts. Kerschensteiner (1964), McConaughy (1985, 1986), Vööbus (1987), and Symonet (1998, 2001) have provided evidence for the Old Syriac text of Acts. The primary source of this material comes from the patristics, though McConaughy (1985) and Vööbus (1987) have found some support for patristic variant readings in the Biblical and Lectionary MSS of Acts One and Two.

Reliance on patristic quotations to recover the Old Syriac text of Acts is challenging. Brock (2013) comments on the difficulties of using patristic citations to establish an Old Syriac Text reading without a corroborating Biblical manuscript. An excellent example of this is the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19ff. This section is not included in the Curetonian Gospel manuscript in the British Museum or in the Sinai Palimpsest in the library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. Aphrahat quoted it extensively, and at first blush, due to its many

differences from the Peshitta, one would wonder whether Aphrahat's text is a paraphrase or whether he was actually quoting from an Old Syriac text. Since this parable is not contained in the Sinai Palimpsest or the Curetonian text, one could not know for sure. My discovery [McConaughy (1987)] of a missing folio from the Curetonian Gospels made it clear that Aphrahat was quoting from his Old Syriac Gospel text. However, without this additional manuscript evidence from the Monastery of the Syrians in Wadi Natrun, any discussion whether Aphrahat's text of the Rich Man and Lazarus was a paraphrase or a quote from the Old Syriac text would not have been easily resolved. Likewise, for Acts, without actual Old Syriac manuscripts, we view the archaic Syriac text of Acts through a glass darkly. Nevertheless, viewing darkly is better than no view at all. The collations presented here provide new evidence regarding the early Syriac text of Acts.

Because of the importance of Acts Chapters One and Two for the Church, the Syriac patristic writers often dealt with these two chapters. This interest by the early Syriac fathers provides multiple citations and allows for cross checking. Unfortunately, patristic interest did not continue at the same level for much of the rest of Acts. My research on the early Syriac text of Acts included all of Acts, but as the work progressed, I focused on Acts Chapters One and Two because a large proportion of the citations of Acts were for the first two chapters. Though Acts is a long book, having 28 chapters, after Chapter Two, the citations become much less frequent per chapter or verse. Because of this, I continued to collate all the patristic citations for all of Acts as there wasn't that much more work involved for recording the patristic citations for all of Acts, and it would save time later when I deal with all of the text of Acts. After deciding to focus on the first two chapters, I did not continue

complete collations of Biblical MSS for the obvious reason that it would increase the collation work by thirteen times over collating two chapters((28 – 2 chapters) / 2 chapters). Nevertheless, I have some collations from Biblical and Lectionary MSS for Chapter 15, which almost completely follows the standard Peshitta text of Acts. Variants will be noted in the analysis below.

Character of the Old Syriac Text

The Syriac text of the Gospels can be viewed as one that developed over time, where the standard Peshitta text is the conclusion of what may be considered a revision of the Old Syriac Text. Some Syriac Gospel manuscript's texts lay between the Old Syriac and the Peshitta, for instance Bibl. Nationale Syr. 30 and Codex Phillips 1388. Andreas Juckel (2009, 2003) collated and analyzed these MSS in great detail. His work significantly extends the earlier work of Vööbus (1951, 1986) and others. These two manuscripts of the Gospels, when compared with the two Old Syriac MSS, illustrate an intermediate phase in the development of the Peshitta from the Old Syriac text. The Peshitta is not a complete revision of the Old Syriac – that came later with the Harklean version.

The Old Syriac text is a representative of what New Testament textual criticism calls the 'Western Text'. Ropes' (1979 reprint) work on the text of Acts provides a detailed analysis of the Peshitta text of Acts collated against Codex Vaticanus. This collation was prepared by H.J. Cadbury and is given on pages 291ff. Cadbury identifies many variants in the Peshitta that agree with Codex Bezae and the Old Latin against Codex Vaticanus. These variants may be remnants of the Old Syriac where the Peshitta text was not completely revised, as was the later Harklean version. This version was

completed about 616AD and generally does not contain the Western Text elements of the Peshitta. The Harklean version closely follows the Greek text, resulting in a Syriac text that is not idiomatic Syriac.

Since the textual profile of the Syriac text of Acts Chapters One and Two is more researched and provides a benchmark of sorts, I used Cadbury's detailed collations of Acts to determine whether the textual profile of the standard Peshitta text of Chapter Fifteen differs from Chapters One and Two. This would serve as a way to calibrate expectations regarding the text of Chapter Fifteen. If it happens that Chapter Fifteen of the Peshitta has significantly more Western Text readings, then an analysis of Syriac patristic citations of Chapter Fifteen may not yield as many potential Old Syriac readings as the first two chapters since it may be less revised. Likewise if Chapter Fifteen has fewer Western Text Readings, being more revised, then an analysis of patristic citations may yield more potential Old Syriac readings.

In Chapters One and Two of Acts, Cadbury identified 57 variants that he determined were not due to translation. Of these 57 variants, 45, i.e., 79%, are 'Western': 30 agree with Codex Bezae (D); 11 agree with the Old Latin; and 4 agree with the Vulgate where it agrees with the Old Latin. For Chapter Fifteen, Cadbury finds 30 variants that are not due to translation. Of these 30 variants, 22, i.e., 73% are 'Western': 11 agree with Codex Bezae; 8 agree with the Old Latin; and 3 agree with the Vulgate where it agrees with the Old Latin.¹

¹ The statistics are the present author's analysis of Cadbury's collations, not Professor Cadbury's statistics.

Peshitta Text of Acts	Ch. 1, 2		Ch. 15	
Total Variant Readings	57	100%	30	100%
Agree with D	30	53%	11	37%
Agree with Old Latin	11	19%	8	27%
Agree with Vulgate/OL	4	7%	3	10%
Total Western Variants	45	79%	22	73%

Source: Ropes (1987 reprint), pp.291ff

Since 73% of the Peshitta variants against Codex Vaticanus in Chapter Fifteen are Western compared to 79% of the variants in Chapters One and Two, one might conclude that Chapter Fifteen of the Peshitta is more revised than Chapters One and Two. To test this hypothesis, I employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test² for the equality of two samples. In applying this statistical test, I implicitly assume that Cadbury's collation methodology and analysis for Chapter Fifteen was applied in a manner consistent with his collations and analysis of the first two chapters. This non-parametric statistical test shows that the percentage differences between Chapters One and Two are not statistically different from Chapter Fifteen. Thus, we would not expect to find more or fewer Western Text / Old Syriac variants in Chapter Fifteen than in Chapters One and Two.

² The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Goodness of Fit Test (K-S test) compares your data with a known distribution and lets you know if they have the same distribution. ...More specifically, the test compares a known hypothetical probability distribution to the distribution generated by your data... (<http://www.statisticshowto.com/kolmogorov-smirnov-test/>)

Patristic Witnesses to Acts Fifteen

Acts Chapter Fifteen is composed of 41 verses, and 27 verses are quoted by various Syriac patristic sources. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* (“DA”), Chapter 24, “On the Stability of the Church Showing Also that the Apostles Came Together for the Rectification of Deviations,” extensively quotes from 18 verses. Dionysius bar Salibi cites 10 verses from Chapter Fifteen in his commentary on Acts. Ishodad’s commentary on Acts (“IshA”) only cites it twice with another two allusions to this chapter. Verse 20 attracted the attention of four patristic writers and verse 29 three writers. The other cited verses attracted the attention of one writer and occasionally two. This paper examines the evidence for Acts 15:20 and 29 due to their having more citations.

Acts 15:20 – ‘Abstain’

The evidence from the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (“DA”) is the most extensive -- Verses 20 and 29 are quoted essentially in full. The first variant from DA, from the root *RHQ*, ܪܫܘܩܐ (keep your selves far from, abstain) instead of *PRQ*, ܦܪܩܐ (be away from, abstain), has some support from George of Arbela and Bar Hebraeus. The evidence for verse 20 is:

VARIANT	PESHITTA	WITNESS
ܪܫܘܩܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ	ܦܪܩܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ	DA.236
ܪܫܘܩܐ	ܦܪܩܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ	GeoOff II.84; BarhadHist.7

Page numbers are given after patristic abbreviation.

DA = *Didascalia Apostolorum*, ed. Vööbus (1979)

Geo Off II = Georgio Arbelensi, ed. Connolly (1960 reprint)

Barhad Hist = Barhadbeshabba ‘Arbaia, Histoire Ecclastique, ed. Nau, F. (1932)

However, it is difficult to determine whether this indicates an Old Syriac reading or a reflection of the Peshitta text of verse 29, which also uses RHQ: ܠܘܥܘܝܢܗܘܢ.

Connolly (1929) noted the frequent agreements of the DA with the Old Syriac Gospels and used this as support for an early date of translation of the text into Syriac. Vööbus (1979) likewise notes that the DA contains many Gospel readings that agree with the Old Syriac text. A review of the footnotes in his text and translations shows frequent agreement with “Syr-Cur” and “Syr-Sin”. However, in Chapter 24 of the DA, there are no Gospel quotations to help us calibrate our expectations regarding the DA’s text of Acts Chapter Fifteen. Since the DA’s chapter 24 is a single literary unit, the Biblical text may have been treated differently from other chapters and sections of the DA. Further, there is no help in profiling the text of Acts in the DA from my analysis of Acts Chapters One and Two, as there is only a brief allusion to Acts 1:18 from the DA that is of no assistance.³ More clarity on this text may be forthcoming pursuant to more extensive collations of Biblical and Lectionary MSS.

The evidence for Acts 15:20 and 29 is not conclusive. One cannot conclude whether the variant ܠܘܥܘܝܢ in verse 20 comes from an Old Syriac text because of the use of ܠܘܥܘܝܢ in verse 29 may have influenced the quotation of the text of verse 20. Furthermore, we cannot form any expectation regarding DA’s handling of the text of Acts by calibrating against Gospel quotations since there are none.

³ McConaughy (1985)

Unfortunately, unraveling this variant reading is not clear-cut.

Verse 20– List of things from which to abstain

Metzger (1971), in his *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, devotes a considerable discussion to the list of things to avoid in the Apostolic Decree on pages 429-435. The next subject of interest is the list of things from which to abstain. Below are the various readings:

VARIANT	PESHITTA	WITNESS
	ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ. ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ	IshOT III.115 = Peshitta
ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ		DA. 236
ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ		GeoOff II.84
ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ		DionEpp.92, 93
ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ		BarhadHist.7
ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ	ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ	BarhadHist.7

Page numbers are given after patristic abbreviation.
Ish OT III = Ishodad's Commentary on the Old
Testament, ed. Ceslas van den Ende, vol.3
DA = Didascalia Apostolorum, ed. Vööbus (1979)

GeoOff II = Georgio Arbelensi, ed. Connolly (1960 reprint)

DionEpp = Dionysius bar Salibi's commentaries, ed. Sedlacek (1909)

BarhadHist = Barhadbeshabba 'Arbaia, Histoire Ecclastique, ed. Nau, F. (1932)

Both the DA and Barbadbeshabba mention “idols”, ܩܘܕܘܫܐ , more in line with the Greek, εἰδωλόν. In verse 20, Barhadbeshabba omits “strangled”, which omission is a feature of the Western Text. However, Barhadbeshabba's evidence may be a paraphrase, “from the worship of idols and from sacrifices and from blood.” Likewise, his use of ܠܚܘܒܐ for the Peshitta's ܠܫܘܒܐ suggests he may be paraphrasing or perhaps thinking along the line of DA's ܠܫܘܒܐ. Thus, his omission cannot be given much weight, considering his late date and considering that the older patristic witnesses include “strangled” and none omit “strangled.” One thing to note is that none of the Syriac patristic variant readings support the other notable Western Text reading which adds a negative form of the Golden Rule.⁴

Lists – Verse 29

VARIANT	PESHITTA	WITNESS
ܩܘܕܘܫܐ ܠܫܘܒܐ ܠܫܘܒܐ ܠܫܘܒܐ ܠܫܘܒܐ	ܠܫܘܒܐ	DA.237

⁴ Metzger (1971), p. 430.

ܐܝܠܗ ܠܡܢ ܩܪܢ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	DA.237
ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	DA.237; M42
ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	Geo Off II.84
ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	Geo Off II.84
ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	MC.20
ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	ܐܘܪܘܟܐ ܐܘܪܘܟܐ	MC.20

Page numbers are given after patristic abbreviation

M42 = ADD 14472

DA = Didascalia Apostolorum, ed. Voobus (1979)

GeoOff II = Georgio Arbelensi, ed. Connolly (1960 reprint)

MC = Marutha of Maipherqat, ed. Voobus (1982)

The DA prefers the plural form of ܐܘܪܘܟܐ as does ADD 14472, a 6th/7th century Biblical manuscript.⁵ However the plural second person suffix on the singular form provides the same sense. Both reflect the plural of the Greek ‘ὄμνιν verse 28.

George of Arbella and Marutha reverse the Peshitta’s “blood and strangled.” This may reflect the wording of verse 20; so nothing conclusive can be determined regarding whether it reflects an older text.

⁵ Wright (1870), volume 1, pp. 81, 82.

Conclusion

This analysis of Acts 15:20 and 29 provides a good cross section of the textual data available and illustrates the challenges facing the textual critic who is interested in the Old Syriac Text of Acts. Because of potential harmonization between verses 20 and 29, the task was rendered more difficult. We cannot make any conclusive statement, or even offer a reasonable probability regarding whether the variant reading RHQ in verse 20 or the reversal of blood and strangled reflect possible Old Syriac texts. At best we see through a glass darkly. More textual research and data may better illumine the way.

References

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CHRISTOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF THE SYRIAC FATHERS

Syriac theology had a very interesting kind of development. The Syriac language was the principal element in the foundation of the theological symbols, terminology and dogmas and in the understanding of the Holy Scripture. Crafted on the ancient Aramaic tradition, the Syriac theological heritage was considered from its very beginning a veritable vehicle for Christianity.¹ In this regard, the Semitic context and also the relationship with the Greek world are very important to understand the evolution of the Christological dogma.²

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- 1 “Christianity used Syriac as the vehicle for its message and doctrine and monopolized this language for its exclusive use” – see: HENDRIK JAN WILLEM DRIJVERS, “Syrian Christianity and Judaism”, in J. LIEU – J. NORTH – T. RAJAK (ed.), *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians. In the Roman Empire* (London – New York 1992) p. 126; cf also LUCAS VAN ROMPAY, “The East (3): Syria and Mesopotamia,” in S. ASHBROOK HARVEY – D. G. HUNTER (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford 2008), p. 366; BAWAI SORO, *The Church of the East. Apostolic & Orthodox*, San Jose, CA 2007, p. 100.
 - 2 “From the fifth century onwards” – says LESLIE WILLIAM BARNARD – “Syriac-speaking Christianity became, in the main, secondary to Greek Christendom. But that it had an original existence with a theological approach of its own should not be forgotten in the study of the origins of the Church” - *The Origins and Emergence of the Church in Edessa during the First Two Centuries A.D.*, in “Vigiliae Christianae”, no. 22/1968, p. 175.

The interaction between Greek and Syriac theology was activated in the fourth Christian century. This was the start of a very important theological communication. The Syriac tradition, largely symbolic, was in contact with the Greek conceptual approach. This context is confirmed and described by the English professor Sebastian Brock, who speaks about the theological confluence: “*Syriac into Greek and Greek into Syriac*”. “In the late fourth and early fourth centuries” – says professor Brock – “there was a considerable amount of direct exchange between the two languages in the form of translations in both directions. ... The Greek translations of Ephrem’s narrative verses reproduce the seven-syllable meter of the original. ... Further witness to the very considerable prestige enjoyed by Greek poetry in the late fourth and early fifth centuries even in the Greek world is provided by Theodore of Mopsuestia, who mentions that Flavian of Antioch and Diodore of Tarsus translated various Syriac liturgical texts in verse into Greek”.³

In this framework, it is important to analyze the history of the Schools in Edessa and Antioch, two of the most important Syriac theological centers, and their specific place in the context of a Christological overview.

The Theological School in Edessa

The city of Edessa, situated not far from Antioch, was, according to an ancient tradition, the place from where comes for the first time the Apostle Addai. He was sent here by Thomas at the promise of our Lord Jesus Christ to Abgar, the king of Edessa.⁴ In this context,

3 Sebastian Brock believes that this exchange started from the time of Tatian, although the process of theological interaction is visible at the start of the fourth century – see: SEBASTIAN P. BROCK, *Syriac Culture, 337-425*, in “Cambridge Ancient History” (CAH) XIII, p. 717.

4 According to an ancient tradition, Abgar V. Uchama, the fifteen king of Edessa, being sick, demanded Jesus to cure him. Before

this tradition claims the origins of Christianity in Edessa to be as early as the post-resurrection time. This very account will appear in an elaborated form a couple of centuries later, in the *Doctrina Addai*.⁵ According to this legend we can talk about an apostolic succession in Edessa. The theological writings also share this character. Therefore, in the *kerygma* of the *Doctrina Addai* we can find the first step for the foundation of the Church in Edessa.

Later, we see Edessa like a binder between the Roman and the Parthian Empires.⁶ It was a city where various peoples and civilizations met, located on the intersection of roads of the silk route that linked the great cities of the West with Iran, India and China in the East. And it is presumably along these roads that Christianity became known through merchants and travelers. Therefore, in virtue of its location at the borderline, Edessa was not an isolated corner: it was just as Hellenized as all the rest of the Roman Empire and “Christianity in this Syriac-speaking region was not an isolated phenomenon different from Antioch and other main centres”.⁷ Indeed, the Syrian area was thoroughly bilingual: Greek

His elevation, Our Lord has sent Tadeu, one of His twelve Apostles, to heal Abgar. Tadeu came in Edessa with Addai and fulfilled the command of Our Lord. Eusebius from Caesarea had copied this legend from the archives of Edessa - N. CARTOJEAN, *Cărpile populare în literatura română*, Bucureşti, 1947, vol. II, pp. 167 – 174, în EUSEBIU DE CEZAREEA, *Scrieri. Partea I. Istoria Bisericească. Martirii din Palestina*, Traducere, studiu, note şi comentarii de Pr. prof. T. Bodogae, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucureşti, 1987, p. 60; J. Tixeront, *Les Origines de l'Église d'Edesse et la Légende d'Abgar. Étude critique suivie de deux textes orientaux inédites*, Paris, 1888, p. 20.

- 5 Syriac text with English translation and notes: GEORGE PHILLIPS, *The Doctrine of Addai, the Apostle*, Now First Edited in a Complete Form in the Original Syriac with an English Translation and Notes, London, 1876.
- 6 VAN ROMPAY, *The East ...*, p. 366.
- 7 DRIJVERS, *Syrian Christianity ...*, 139.

and Aramaic were spoken and written as well.⁸ The interaction between these two cultures gave rise to an extraordinary artistic and literary activity in the Syria of late antiquity. This aspect is crucial for our understanding of the early Syriac Fathers: with the exception of Aphrahat, who lived and worked in the Persian Empire, the majority of Edessa's theologians were in contact with the Greek literature.⁹ From this point of view, we can see the theological school in Edessa like a bridge from the Semitic character of the Syriac theology to the Greek influence through ideas and concepts.

In his study, *The Rise of Christian Thought. II – The Theological Schools of Antioch, Edessa, and Nisibis*, Sebastian Brock offers a very interesting description of the theological heritage of the school of Edessa: “It is not until the fourth century that a clearer picture of Christianity in Edessa begins to emerge: to the middle of the century belongs an important biblical scholar, Eusebius of Emesa (Homs), who originally studied in Edessa. Like Bardaisan, Eusebius was evidently bicultural, being at home in both Greek and Syriac; unlike Bardaisan, however, he wrote in Greek. Much more famous is Eusebius' younger contemporary, the poet and theologian Ephrem of Nisibis, who came in 363 as a refugee to Edessa, where he spent the last ten years of his life. . . . an earlier and more reliable memory of his time in Edessa is preserved by the poet Jacob of Serugh (who died in 521): Jacob devotes a whole verse homily to Ephrem, and there he gives great prominence to Ephrem as an instructor of women, writing hymns specially for them to sing, thus proving himself to be ‘a second Moses, for women’. Ephrem certainly ranks as one of the greatest poets of the early church in any language”.¹⁰

8 IBIDEM, p. 125.

9 SEBASTIAN BROCK, *Greek and Syriac in Late Antique Syria*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994, p. 157.

10 IDEM, *The Rise of Christian Thought. II – The Theological Schools of Antioch, Edessa, and Nisibis*, in H. BADR (ed.), “Christianity: A History in the Middle East”, Beirut 2005, p. 151.

The Theological School in Antioch and its Christological heritage

The origin of the theological school in Antioch came dawn in time until 300 century BC, in the time of Seleucus I, one of the immediate successors of Alexander the Great. He was related to the Greek culture, although the majority of his members were naturally from the Syrian people and certainly speakers of a dialect of Aramaic.¹¹ In the Christian period, the school was related by one of the most famous name in the Syriac tradition: Diodorus of Tharsus, Theodore from Mopsuestia, Saint John Chrysostom, Theodoret from Cyrus etc.

The Christological tradition of this school has a literary character. In this context, the Antiochean writers emphasized the biblical and historical part of Christ's humanity, leaving in the background the problem of His Godhead. This way of working was used like an answer to the Apollinarian heresy.¹² On the contrary, the theological School in Alexandria offers another perspective on the divine-human constitution of the Incarnated Logos, highlighting His Godhead. "Both Diodore and Theodore" – writes Professor Brock – "were

11 About this aspect, Sebastian Brock says that "it was the Aramaic dialect of another Hellenistic foundation, Edessa, to the East of the river Euphrates, which provided Aramaic-speaking Christians with their own literary language, better known as Syriac. Once adopted as a literary language, the use of Syriac rapidly spread eastwards, across the borders of the Roman Empire and into the Persian Empire (under the Parthians until A.D. 226, and then under the Sassanians until 651, when the last Sassanian king was defeated by an Arab army)" – see: S.P. BROCK, *The Rise of Christian Thought*, p. 143.

12 Trying to combat the heresies from his time, Apollinarius thought that can defend the patristic teaching. Nevertheless, his attempts give birth to another heresy, connected to the presence of Logos in the human nature by Incarnation. Apollinarius thought that God is a composite unity in human shape. His ideas are in contrast with the Antiochean Christology. This results from the elimination of the Christological formulas "God was incarnated" (*Θεός ενσαρκωτός*),

very much involved in combating various heresies of the time, in particular that of Apollinarius, who denied that Christ had a human mind or soul. In countering Apollinarius' view, both Diodore and Theodore laid great emphasis on the complete and perfect humanity of Christ, and it is this concern that lies behind the Antiochean Christological tradition with its strict distinction between the divine and human natures of Christ, while at the same time stressing his essential oneness. The Alexandrine Christological tradition (which is basically that of Cyril of Alexandria) looked at the incarnation from a different perspective; for them, the emphasis is on the oneness of Christ, the divine Logos having 'become' fully human. Thus it could be said that the Antiochean and Alexandrine traditions have two different starting points: the Antiochean begins from the historical Jesus (that is, Christ's humanity), while the Alexandrine starts from the divine Word, or Logos (that is, with His divinity). Due to these two different starting points each side provides a different set of emphasis".¹³

"God – body bearer" (Θεός σαρκοφορός) or "God was born from a woman", meaning the contradiction of *Ibeð pagrâ* Christology. In his thinking "body isn't something added to Divinity to make the good, but together with the Divinity is one reality and one nature". More than that, being convinced that the human soul is weak and vulnerable before temptation; Apollinarius said that "Christ wasn't a real man, but He was like a man. He carried the name of "man", but did not have the human reality for real". In this way, according to his thinking, the place of the human soul or the rational power of Christ was replaced in the act of Incarnation by Logos. Apollinarius oppose also to Diodor of Tharsus. In the process of defending the belief against the heresy of Julian the Apostate, the Syrian doctor separated the Logos Godhead from the humanity of Jesus Christ. Although, he believe that the most appropriate way of define the Christ nature was the formula: "one nature (*iðá õðóðò*) of Incarnated Logos" – see: Prof. univ. dr. IRINEU POPA, *Iisus Hristos este Acela'oi, ieri 'oi azi 'oi în veac*, Ed. Mitropolia Olteniei, Craiova, 2010, p. 207-208; HENRY CHADWRIK, *The Church in Ancient Society. From Galilee to Gregory the Great*, Oxford University Press, New Zork, 2001, pp. 518-519.

13 S.P. BROCK, *The Rise of Christian Thought*, p. 148.

Using an ironic tone, the Indian Professor Geevarghese Chediath speaks about the Antiochean Christology like an ascending Christology that climbs from human to divine in the definition of the two nature of our Savior Jesus Christ. He shows that the “authentic” part of the Antiochean tradition is totally different from the Nestorian heresy. He mentions also the relation between divine and human in Jesus Christ, the Incarnated Son of God that is shown and explained by the *Prosopon of Union*. Therefore, in just a few lines, G. Chediath offers a veritable synthesis on the Christology of the School in Antioch. “Antioch always had Aristotle as its philosophical basis. It preferred rationalism to mysticism. In Biblical exegesis, it adopted the literal and historical method of interpretation. Its interpretation is known as typological. In Christology, Antioch started with the historical and biblical Jesus Christ and from there it ascends to the divinity of the Lord. Hence it is called ascending Christology. It is a Christology from below. It insisted equally on the divine and human natures of the Lord. It is known as *Word-man (Logos-anthropos)* Christology. It is clarified the distinction between the divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ. The authentic Antiochean Christology did not divide Jesus Christ in two persons. On the contrary, it gives sufficient emphasis on the humanity also. Unity of Christ was a matter taken for granted by them. Their chief concern was to explain the duality in Jesus Christ. They stressed the operation of the Word through the man Jesus or through His humanity. They found the unity of the level of *Person (prosopon)*. It became the Christology of the Council of Calcedon. Nestorianism is a heresy, which divided Jesus Christ into two personalities, one divine and one human. It is a deviate outgrowth of the Antiochean Christology. But, in its authentic form, Antiochean Christology is not heresy. When the Antiocheans speak of Logos, they are primarily referring to the divinity of the Lord. Although they can say, with St. John, that “the Word became flesh”, they would no predicate all the attributes to the Word as

such, but to the *Prosopon of Union*, namely Son, Lord, Jesus Christ and our Savior”.¹⁴

Therefore, in contrast with the Alexandrine Christological tradition, which starts from the divine Word, or Logos (that is, with his divinity), the Antiochean Christology begins from the historical Jesus (that is, Christ’s humanity). The two rival schools explained Christology with differing emphasis.¹⁵ “Because the Antiocheans spoke of two complete natures of Christ, they were called *Dyophysites* (from the Greek ‘dyo’ and ‘physis’, two and natures); the Alexandrians, on the other hand, were called *Mono-physites* (‘one’ and ‘nature’) or *Miaphysites*, since they taught a union of the two natures.”¹⁶ In Antioch the Christology, preaching, exegesis or theology in general starts from Diodore and Theodore. On the foundation of their theological ideas and concepts appeared the “Nestorianism”, understood as a belief in two sons, the son of Mary and the Son of God.¹⁷

14 G. CHEDIATH, *Christology*, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies, Kottayam, 2002, p. 120-121.

15 Cf. NORMAN TANNER, *The Church in Council: Conciliar Movements, Religious Practice and the Papacy from Nicaea to Vatican II*, International Library of Historical Studies 72, London – New York 2011, p. 12-14; A. NICHOLS, *Rome and the Eastern Churches. A Study in Schism*, San Francisco 20102 rev. ed., p. 56; CHRISTOPH BAUMER, *The Church of the East. An Illustrated History of Assyrian Church*, London – New York 2006, p. 40-41; SAMUEL HUGH MOFFETT, *A History of Christianity in Asia. I. Beginnings to 1500*, New York 1992, p. 170-171.

16 BAUMER, *The Church of the East ...*, p. 40.

17 In one of his study, Sebastian Brock describes the context of the appearance and development of this heresy: “While it is true that Nestorius was a disciple of Theodore, and his Christology was strictly dyophysite, it is extremely unlikely that he actually held the views that were condemned as representing ‘Nestorianism’; furthermore, it is absolutely certain that the Church of the East, which hold Nestorius in honor as an Antiochean theologian who was unfairly victimized, has never held any such views. In the

The biggest opponent of Nestorian heresy was Saint Cyril of Alexandria. In the next lines, we will try to describe his Christological controversy with Nestorius, the sparks of the 3rd Ecumenical Council.¹⁸

sixth century Theodore himself came to be condemned posthumously at the Council of Constantinople in 553; as a result, his writings have almost entirely disappear in Greek, and it is largely thanks to Syriac translations that at least some of his works have survived. Antiochean exegesis, including specifically Theodore's exegesis, in fact continued to exert wide influence, despite Theodore's condemnation in 553. In the Syrian Orthodox Church the influence of his exegesis continued to be felt in the writings of Jacob of Serugh and (to a lesser extent) Philoxenus, both of whom had been students of Edessa, where Theodore's Commentaries were standard texts. ... In modern times, since the rise of biblical scholarship, the historicizing approach of Antiochean exegetes has come to be more widely appreciated, and Theodore in particular has sometimes been regarded as a forerunner of modern critical scholarship. A wider appreciation of the Antiochean Christological tradition has also had to wait until modern times, and here the dispassionate approach of modern scholarship to the ancient controversies has an important role to play in ecumenical relations between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chalcedonian and Oriental Orthodox Churches" - see: S.P. BROCK, *The Rise of Christian Thought*, p. 150.

- 18 About this important moment from the history of the Oriental Church, the Jesuit professor Normand Tanner makes some interesting remarks: "The Council of Ephesus may appear a defeat for Asian theology (Antioch) at the hands of Africa (Alexandria). Nestorius was condemned and deposed as bishop of Constantinople; Cyril of Alexandria and Mary's title of *Theotokos* were vindicated. But this is an over simplification. First, Antiochean theology recovered the initiative, notably at the subsequent councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople III. Secondly, there was the rapid and extensive spread of Christianity eastwards through the Nestorian churches, though sadly they lost communion with the main body of the Church. And, thirdly, because Alexandria must be seen as a city of the eastern Empire in close contact with the world of Asia" – see: NORMAN TANNER, *Church in Council* ..., p. 14.

Syriac poetry, a vehicle in the discovery of Christ

From the structural point of view, Syrian poetry is divided into two categories: homilies or poetic discourses (*memre*) and hymns as stanzas (*madrashé*).¹⁹ Homilies are compositions of narrative and epic genre, carried on a considerable extent, built on a regular direction and composed the lyrics of the same metric, undivided in stanzas. During Ephrem the Syrian period, the lyric consisted of double hepta-syllables. From the sixth century, Jacob of Sarugh introduced two triple quadric-syllables, managing to impose them in the Syriac Church.²⁰ The tradition has been carried on by Mar Balai who wrote homilies in five syllables lyrics, by compressing two measures of two and three syllables respectively. Homilies of Jacob of Sarugh (451-521) were using twelve syllables versification, divided into three measures of four syllables each.²¹

19 Taking the example of Ephrem the Syrian poetry, Sebastian Brock speaks about homilies pattern with 7+ 7 syllables lyrics and about *madrashé* built after a single syllabic pattern. In this context, the great syrologue remembers about the early Syriac metrical poetry: "Syriac Poetry was from the beginning based on syllabic principles and this applies both to fragment quoted by Mara, son of Serapion, probably a pagan writer from the end of the century and two archaic poems, both six -syllables couplets, incorporated in the *Acts of Thomas*, "Marriage Song" and "Song of the pearl". We know from the hymns of St. Ephrem that both Bardaisan (222) and Mani (226) have already written *madrashé* but even without this information, the use of highly sophisticated *madrasha* poetic form, exemplified in the poetry of Saint Ephrem, requires a long prehistory of this kind" - see : S. BROCK, *The luminous Eye. The spiritual world vision of Saint Efreem*, Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1992, pp. 42-43.

20 Diac. IOAN I. ICĂ jr., *O teologie poetică a misterului pascal*, Introductory study to the translation of St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Imnele Păresimilor, Azimelor, Răstignirii și Învierii*, 2nd Edition, Ed. Deisis, Sibiu, 2010, p. 8.

21 R. DUVAL, *Anciennes literatures cretienne II, La litterature syriaque*, Troisieme edition, Paris, Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1907, p. 13.

Homilies in lyrics are used most often in worship, at feasts or celebration of saints and martyrs, being recited during the liturgical rite. During the catechumenate period they had a very important role, helping to strengthen the spiritual, moral and doctrinal newcomers to the faith. Relevant in this regard, homilies of Isaac of Antioch, the first about repentance in 1928 lyrics and the second about “a parrot” who was pronouncing the Trisagion adding “He who had suffered for us”, in 2136 lyrics.²²

The hymn or poem (*madrashé*) is the second category of Syrian lyricism. It consists of equal stanzas that succeed in alphabetical order and often are linked by an acrostic (chorus). In the cult, the Syrian hymn was sung by the choir or soloist, as indicated by idiomela voice (*rish - quala*),²³ the rest of the believers singing the chorus in unison.²⁴ St. Ephrem the Syrian settled the institution of choir in Syrian Church specialized in the interpretation of liturgical hymns. Thus, the maidens were gathering on Sundays to celebrate or commemorate the martyrs singing alternatively such hymns in harp accompaniment. This new form of theological expression was imposed due to the dogmatic complexity and special persuasion gradually of the transmitted truths. The functionality of this genuine theological vehicle is due undoubtedly to St. Ephrem: “He put in these hymns deep feelings and valuable dogmatic lessons about Birth and Baptism of God, about His childhood and His acts, about Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, as well as Confession, Penance or Death”.²⁵

22 R. RUS, *Dicționar explicativ de literatură creștină din primul mileniu*, Ed. Lidia, Bucharest, 2003, p. 452.

23 Diac. ION I. ICĂ jr., *O teologie poetică a misterului pascal*, p. 8.

24 These rules are found today in the liturgy of our Church. Thus, following the typical ordinances, every song (from Mina, Triod or Othoih) is accompanied by an indication of the voice and similarity that have to be interpreted. We also remember the importance that homophone songs, especially in the Liturgy, have.

25 R. DUVAL, *op. cit.*, p. 14-15.

Besides its apologetic capacity to counter various heretical currents, the Syriac lyrics have dressed also a moralizing, parenthetical character, supported by a mystical theology, sprinkled with biblical symbols and images. With these qualities, Syriac poetry is received in the Church's liturgical dimension.

The first poems entered into Syrian liturgical use from 2nd century, from the time of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch who sees a close connection between mystical experience and liturgical life.²⁶ He introduced antiphonal singing in worship.²⁷ A legend, drawn from the history of the great philosopher of antiquity, Socrates and taken by Salomon of Bassora and Barhebraeus, says St. Ignatius learned the art of antiphonic singing after an angelic vision.²⁸

The Apologetic Specific of Jacob's of Serugh Theology in the Context of the Syriac Tradition

After the Constantine **peace**, the Roman side of Syria is more opened to the dialogue with the Greek area, developing a dynamic theology based on the writings of Saint Ephrem, Saint John Chrysostom and also of the Syrian doctors. Unfortunately, the Persian side of the Syrian territory still remained on the oppression

26 R. RUS, *Dicționarul ...*, p. 381.

27 *Antiphon*, old biblical song is placed at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, composed of psalm fragments (antiphonal) sung alternatively by the two pews. Once, the antiphonal psalms (91 - "It is good we confess to the Lord," 82 - "The Lord has reigned" and 94 - "Come, let us rejoice in the Lord") were sung entirely. With time, to the antiphons were given an abbreviated form, being performed selectively only certain lyrics. Today, antiphons content is taken from Psalms 120 (only the first verse, "Bless the Lord, O my soul") and 145 (the last verse "your kingdom Lord forever", as an introduction to the "Only Begotten"). See: Pr. Prof. Dr. ENE BRANI^aTE, *Liturgica Generală* (with notions of religious art, architecture and painting), 4th Edition, Ed Partner, Galați, 2008, pp.460 - 461, 479.

28 R. DUVAL, *op. cit.* p. 15.

of pagan persecutions,²⁹ generating a martyr apologetic based on a mystic and symbolic expression. From the fifth until the seventh century the two geographic parts from the Syrian Church (Roman and Persian), separated until then by political differences, were now divided by the doctrinal disagreements. So it makes, analyzing these problematic from a doctrinal point of view, specially related to the two natures and wills of our Lord Jesus Christ, the divinity and the humanity, we reach the true reason of splitting in the western Christianity.³⁰ Starting from Chalcedon (451), the Christological problematic had generated the three old Syrian Churches: the

29 We must mention here the persecutions of Sapur II, that slathered all the Christian who denied the Zoroastrism (Robert R. Phenix jr. and Cornelia B. Horn, *Syriac Speaking Churches: Their Origin and History to the Eighteen Century*, in "Bulletin of Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies 7, no. 2/2005, p. 12). "Dezvoltarea majoră a Bisericii Creștine în Imperiul Roman după Edictul de la Mediolanum, notează Winkler, la fel și controversa ariană soluționată la Nicea (325) nu au avut ecou în Biserica Sirocică din Imperiul Persan. Dimpotrivă, sub parșii atitudinea față de creștini a fost una de toleranță, sub sasanizi persecuțiile izolate pe motiv de apostazie de la yoroastrism, pe când în vremea împăratului Sapur al II-lea acestea au atins apogeul" (D. W. Winkler, *The Church of the East. A concise history*, London – New York, 2003, p. 11; Bawai Soro, *The Church of the East. Apostolic and Orthodox*, Adiabene Publications, San Jose (SUA), 2007, p. 146).

30 "Unfortunately, says the Metropolitan Irineu Popa, with all the precautions taken by the council of Chalcedon it did not bring peace within the Church. If the West generally remains faithful to the dogmatic definition, very soon in the East there was a hostile reaction that will last until today. Therefore, those who interpreted the formula of St. Cyril in the opposite direction of the two natures, considered the dogmatic judgments of Pope Leo as a victory, which meant for them a victory of Nestorianism. Consequently, this party did not recognize either the Council of Chalcedon or the local bishops, who received its definition, creating a beginning for the heterodox monophysite Churches" (IPS prof. univ. dr. Irineu Popa, *Iisus Hristos este Acelasi, ieri si azi, si in veac*, Ed. Mitropolia Olteniei, Craiova, 2010, p. 288).

Western Church, the Orthodox Syrian Church and the Maronite Church. On this background, “the frequently lethal conflicts between the Greek Church of the Byzantine Empire and the Syriac Churches over such issues only ceased with the incorporation of most Syriac Christians into the Arab Muslim Caliphate during the 630s. As a result of these theological disagreements, opposing churches excommunicated each other, that is, they denied members of the other communions the opportunity to receive the Eucharist during the Divine Liturgy on Sundays”.³¹

The post-Chalcedonian period had generated therefore the crucial moment from the history of the Syriac Church. In this way, the Syriac Christianity from the Roman Empire was split into two factions: one faction accepted the teachings of Chalcedon Council (*Chalcedonians*) and the other faction rejected it (non-Chalcedonians). Both sides invoked the orthodox spirit: the first of them became known like “Greek Orthodox” or “Melchite”, while the latter came to be called “Syrian Orthodox”.³² We didn’t forget here the reconciliation attempts between these two Syriac churches. In this way, the byzantine emperors have made significant efforts to “draw the Miaphysites at the orthodox faith, obligating for many times the orthodox people to accept some doctrinal concessions. Between these emperors the name of Zenon is well known, with his famous *Honoticon*, in which he declared that our Lord Jesus Christ is one, anathematizing Nestorius and also Eutihus, but breaking the

31 Robert R. Phenix jr. and Cornelia B. Horn, *Syriac Speaking Churches ...*, p. 12-13.

32 “For the sixth century the term ‘Syrian Orthodox’ does not imply an ethnic affiliation, as most non-Chalcedonian bishops were bilingual, and there was hardly anything exclusively Syrian about the church. The term ‘Nestorian’ was used by non-Chalcedonians in order to disqualify the Chalcedonians and attach them to a dyophysite doctrine that at this time was generally regarded as heretical” (Volker L. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, Oxford Early Christian Studies, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 3).

good relationships between West and West.³³ The generated Schism lasted from 484, until the time of the emperor Justinian, who reactivated the teaching from the Chalcedon Council”.³⁴

Beyond these attempts, in the non-Chalcedonian side of the Syriac Church highlighting two representative personalities for the miaphysite Christology: Philoxene of Maboug, who represented the Syriac speaking side from the patriarchate of Antioch and Sever of Antioch, who was the Greek speaker leader from the Miaphysite Church.³⁵ Besides them, some orientalist researchers placed the figure of Jacob of Serugh, bishop of great theological subtlety, famous hymnologist of the Syriac Church. Although he studied with Philoxene at Edessa, this seems to be the only thing that they have in commune. Therefore, since the bishop of Maboug always posted a very evident miaphysite attitude revealed especially in his writings; Jacob had always tried to avoid the Christological problems, preferring to develop a symbolic and mystical theology.

Having in mind his scales and linking also the multiple and meanings of his work, we will analyze, starting from his biographical coordinates, the apologetic part of his confessions.

Life and work of the Syrian bishop

Jacob of Serugh is one of the most known hymnologists and theologians from the Syriac area. His identity and also his theological activity are mentioned in at least three important biographies, all of

33 “The *Henotikon* advises the reception of the councils of Nicaea, Constantinople I, and Ephesus I. It maintains that both Nestorius and Eutyches were justly condemned. It accepts the *Twelve Anathemas* as true doctrine” (Andrian Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, p. 95).

34 IPS Prof. Univ. Dr. Irineu Popa, *Iisus Hristos este Acelaºi, ieri ºi azi, si ºn veac*, pp. 288-289.

35 Andrian Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches. A Study in Schism*, Revised edition, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2010, p. 96.

them in the Syriac language.³⁶ He was born in 451, at Kumran, a village on the River Euphrates, as the only son of his parents. Some details about the coordinates of his life we can find in the notes of his biography, who was also bishop in Batna from the region Serugh.³⁷ From him we know that his father was priest and his mother could have babies. Therefore, his birth was received like a miracle from God, the fruit of the prayers of his parents. At the age of three, he drew the attention of the assembly during the liturgy: “at the moment in the Anaphora of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Mysteries, the holy child got down from his mother’s arms pushed his way through the people and went to the Holy Table where he partook of three drafts of the Holy Spirit. From then on he began to pour forth *mimre* and teachings.”³⁸ Between A.D. 466-473, Jacob was initiated in the exegesis of the Holy Scriptures at the School of Edessa. Under the coordination of the bishop Ibas, the leader of this theological school, he had translated from Greek into Syriac the works of Diodors from Tarsus, Theodor of Mopsuestia or Theodoret of Cyrus.³⁹ Also here, Jacob learned the art of theology in verse, inherited from Saint Ephrem the Syrus. This kind preoccupation denoted a stylistic proximity between the future bishop of Serugh and “the Syrians’ Prophet”. In Pseudo-Joshua’s Chronicle

36 More about the Syrian bishop we can find in a manuscript series from the 12th and 17th century. The English scholar Sebastian Brock offers a complete list with this documents where he mention also the names of Jacob’s bibliographers (vezi: “Jacob of Serugh: A Select Bibliographical guide” (2010), p. 237-239). Therefore, the most important biographic documents concerning the Syriac father are on the signature of Abbeloos, *De vita et scriptis D. Jacobi* (1867), p. 311-314 and Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* (1719) I, p. 206-209.

37 Cf Assemani, I, 286-289. Chapter XXVII is dedicated to the life and work of Jacob of Serugh (see: pp. 283-340).

38 S. Brock, *Select Bibliography*, 2010, p. 238.

39 Khalil Awan, Introduction a Jaques de Saroug, Quatre Homilies Metriques sur la Craign, CSCO, vol. 509, Scriptoros Syri, Tomus 215, Lovani, 1989, p. XVI.

the person of Jacob of Serugh is presented in the context of the events from 494-506.⁴⁰ Here we find out that the Syrian bishop took attitude towards the Christians who wanted to leave the Syrian cities in the time of the Persian war. He urged them to be steadfast in the Christian belief and to overcome together the social attempts. In this way, the most enlightened evidence where his hymns and letters of encouragement which we witted in the purpose of strengthening the people in the hope of salvation in God.⁴¹ The attitude of the Syriac father was also generated by practical reasons. He knew very well that the Syrian Christian cities will become pagans if his believers had fled, triggering the imminent dissolution of the ecclesiastical community. For this purpose, in 519 the Syriac Church inverted Jacob in the dignity of bishop for the Christians of Serugh. He passed away in 521.⁴²

Because of the notoriety that he enjoyed in the theological and pastoral fields, the personality of Jacob of Serugh is until today very popular in the Oriental Church.⁴³ In this meaning, the English professor Sebastian Brock shows that Jacob “has the distinction of being a saint in both the Maronite Church (Chalcedonian) and the Syrian Orthodox Church (non-Chalcedonian), despite the fact that he lived at a time when the doctrinal controversies were at their fiercest!”⁴⁴ His reception in the two sides of the Syriac ecclesiastical life must have been due to his irenic character. His feast is celebrated by the Maronites on April 5, by the Jacobites on October 29, June

40 It refers to the plague of locusts, the starvation and the epidemic that held from 494 until 502 and also about the Roman – Persian, from 502-506, that started in Edessa and splatted on Amid and Mesopotamia (*The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, translated with notes and introduction by Frank R. Trombley and John W. Watt, translated texts for Historians 32, Liverpool 2000).

41 *Chronicle*, 2000, p. 63-64.

42 Assemani, I, 286.

43 REMUS RUS, *Dicționar enciclopedic de literatură creștină din primul mileniu*, Ed. Lidia, București, 2003, pp. 373-374.

44 Sebastian P. Brock, *Mary in Syriac Tradition*, 2010, p. 5.

29 and July 29. In the eastern liturgy⁴⁵ his writings are the most widely used next to those of Saint Ephrem.⁴⁶

Because of the beauty of his hymns, Jacob received the name of “*Flute of the Spirit and Lyre of the Church*”. His work contains poetry and literature. The literary side is very small compared to the one in the lyric. Therefore, Jacob wrote: **a liturgy, a liturgical ritual on the Mystery of Baptism, 43 epistles, six homilies and some funeral songs**. The style that he promoted and also the theological content of his works were generally analyzed by the orientalist Professor Arthur Vööbus.⁴⁷ From his research results that Jacob started the hymnographic work by presenting his first exegetic commentary in verses before an Episcopal college. At their special request he wrote in the short time another exegetic homily about “*The Prophet Ezekiel and about the symbolism of chariot of fire from his vision*”. This work consists of over 3000 verses. After this last test he obtained the official acceptance from apart the Syriac bishops, being confirmed like “*Interpreter of the Holy Scriptures*”. Therefore, besides his great lyrical work, which was mentioned above, the Syriac bishop has left tens of letters and more than 760 *memre*.⁴⁸ Concerning his lyrical style, Jacob is the first Syriac poet from whom we have inherited the *dodecasyllabic* metric, lyrical style which received his name. According to Bar Hebraeus, in the process of writing and copying his homilies Jacob was helped by at least 70 scribes.⁴⁹

45 Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, 257: „In the morning, in the Syriac churches is interpreted a passage from one of the most beautiful of his *memre*, in the honor of the Creator. Therefore, these kind of creations carry on the memory of their compositor”.

Dimineața o seara, în bisericile siriene se cântă un buchet din cele mai frumoase *memre* ale sale, închinat Ziditorului a toate. Ele duc mai departe astfel pomenirea autorului lor”.

46 Cf Assemani, I, 283.

47 Arthur Vööbus, *Memre-Dichtung*, I, CSCO, vol. 344, pp. 17-34.

48 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronique*, t. 1, col. 189-190.

49 Khalil Awan, *Introduction*, pp. XVI-XVII.

We will examine here his *Mariological Homilies*. Included in the *Bejan edition*, these writings are in the number of eight, being conceived in verses.⁵⁰ Regarding their content, we mention that are treating the most important moments from the life of the Holy Virgin. Therefore, two of them are witted on the Annunciation, one on the Visitation, one on the Perpetual Virginity of Mary, one concerning the death and burial of the Blessed Virgin Mother and three on the Nativity of Our Lord.

The *First Homily* is “*Concerning the Blessed Virgin Mother of God*”. It begins with a long introduction, which comprises an address to Christ and another to Mary; two parts, which are complementary: the first part explains God’s choice of Mary, the second part is Jacob’s interpretation of the Annunciation; and a conclusion, speaking of the beatitudes of Mary, serves as a resumption and invocation.

The *Second Homily – Concerning the Annunciation of the Mother of God* – is a sort of development of the first homily, and structured thus: introduction; first part, on the Annunciation; second part, on the kinship of Elizabeth and Mary; third part, on the Visitation; fourth part, on Mary and Joseph.

The *Third Homily – Concerning the Holy Mother of God when she went to Elizabeth*, describes the moment when the Holy Mother hears from Gabriel about the late pregnancy of her kinswoman. The Homily has an introduction and two parts: the first part is on the two generations of the Son; the second part is on the Visitation or encounters of mothers and babies in their womb.

50 Following Brock’s writing we can observe the period of Jacob writings from the original text to the modern version. Abbeoos provides the Syriac text with a Latin translation of Homily I, 202-253 and Homily IV, 256-301. Vona translated in Italian all eight verse homilies. Some of these are translated in English by Hansbury (Homilies I, II, III, V), Puthuparampil (Homily IV) and Kollamparampil (Homilies VI, VII, VIII) – see: Sebastian Brock, “Jacob of Serugh: A Select Bibliographical Guide”, 2010, pp. 219-239.

The *Fourth Homily – On the Perpetual Virginity of Mary* – is an apologetic writing in which the author answers to the calumnies circulating about the virginity of the Blessed Mother, and opens with an invocation to the Son. In an unsmooth way, it passes from addressing Christ and Mary to addressing the calumniators and adversary, and thus explains the grounds of the belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary.

In the *Fifth Homily – Concerning the Burial and Death of the Holy Virgin Mother of God* – Jacob uses some apocryphal writings and tradition, because this event is not found in the bible.

In the *Sixth Homily – On the Nativity of Our Redeemer According to the Flesh* – Jacob describes, using a Christological manner, the story of the incarnation, mentioning: the Annunciation to Mary, the Visitation, the disputation between Mary and Joseph, Mary supplicating the Son in her womb, the Annunciation to Joseph, Joseph taking Mary to his home, the Nativity, the angels announcing to the shepherds, and Mary’s supplication with adoration and praise.⁵¹

In the *Seventh Homily– The Second Homily on the Nativity* – Jacob speaks for the second time about the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, describing the moment of the Fest.

The *Eight Homily – On the Nativity of Our Lord* – represents a synthesis of the event of Incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of the Holy Virgin.⁵²

51 Also here, Jacob uses theological and historical information from the apocryphal writings.

52 Beside the “Mariological Homilies”, Jacob composed also: 7 memre “Against the Jews”, memre “on the dominical Feasts”, 4 memre “on Creation”, Memra “on the veil of Moses”, Memra “on Ephrem”, Memra “on Simeon the Stylite”, prose homilies, various letters and other memre. (Sebastian Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, SEERI, Kottayam, 1997, p. 38).

Apologetic ideas in the theology of Jacob of Serugh

The content and the value of his entire theological work, with many apologetic, homiletic or exegetic valences, shows that Jacob of Serugh is the image of the good shepherd. Through his hymnography, he develops a rich ecclesiological perspective. In this way it is presented the role of bishop in the Church and also is proclaimed above all the greatness of the Almighty God.⁵³ Although he lived in the first period of Christianity when the Church benefitted from the freedom of Saint Constantine, the bishop of Serugh defended the rights of his Christians, speaking on their behalf before the state authorities. Firstly he defended the right to participate in the liturgical program. In this way, the devotion to Churches tradition became an essential thing for the life of Syriac people. This truth was defended and confessed by Jacob.⁵⁴ Moreover, his homilies were targeted towards “the complacency and temptations were grinding the monastic life in his time”.⁵⁵

His lyrical work has a very important role in the Syriac Christianity from the fifth century. Therefore, through the power of his poetry the entire monastic congregation lived in the beauty of chanted prayer fulfilling the entire work that it must be accomplished.⁵⁶ From this point of view we can say that Jacob of Serugh is really “a poet, an inspiration to read; a teacher who fathomed his subject, the entire Bible, and appreciated its deep mysteries. He expressed these mysteries in a language full of eloquence, yet one we could understand. He was an illuminator

53 Amir Harrak, *The Syriac Orthodox Celebration of the Eucharist in Light of Jacob of Serugh's Mimro 95*, Series Analecta Gorgiana, 1046, Georgias Press, 2010, p. 113.

54 Ashbrook Harvey, “To Whom did Jacob Preach?” in *Jacob of Serugh and His Times: Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity*, ed. George Anton Kiraz, Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010, pp. 117-118.

55 Ibid, p. 124.

56 Ibid, p. 129.

who shed new light on the Biblical narratives and clothed them in robes that we could recognize, using his unique brand of artistry of images and symbols. But while he negotiates his way through all this, he also comes across as a man who is genuinely ready to share with his audience his inner feelings of anxiety, inadequacy and self reproach; he was never aloof. Last but not least, what distinctly comes across is a man who is passionately devoted to one single vocation in life, namely that of revealing the wonders of creation, the *ihidoyutho* (the Oneness) of the Son with the Father”.⁵⁷

The apologetic character of the work of Jacob of Serugh is very popular in his homilies. The themes that he develops here aims especially the revelation, the doctrine about the Holy Trinity, the Christology, the teaching about the Mother of God and also the interreligious elements like the position of the Church toward the Judaism. We will analyze all these characteristics in the following part of the study.

About the act of creation, Jacob shows that it cannot be disassociated by his divine character. He presents the creation as an act of divine wisdom, concretized through the work of the Holy Trinity. The reason for which is underlined the role of the Son in the creator act is charged with many polemical grounds though the Syrian writer trays to fight against the Arian tendencies from his time.⁵⁸ In the content of the fourth “*Lyrical Homilies at Genesis*”,⁵⁹ the Syrian bishop underlines the Christological character of the creative act using many analogies and enlightens symbolisms. He shows that “The Book of great Moses is permeated by the Mystery of the Son of God”. Our incarnated Lord is present in each word

57 Khalid Dinno, *Jacob of Serugh, the Man Behind the Mimre*, in “*Analecta Gorgiana*”, no. 1044/2010, p. 69.

58 Tanios Bou Mansour, *La Théologie de Jacques de Saroug*, Bibliothèque de l’Université Saint-Esprit 40; Kaslik 2000, p. 12.

59 Folosim aici traducerea franþuzeascã a lui Khalil Alwan: Jaques de Saroug, *Quatres Homilies Metriques sur la Creation* (HMC), CSCO, vol. 509, Scriptoris Syri, Tomus 215, Louvanii, 1989.

and each edifying fulfillment of the Father makes even clarified His role and implication in the process of creation. “Where I can find a fragment where You will not be present?/ And where I can read in this writings without confession Your name?/ Father, in the moment of creation, said: “let’s make the man after Our image . . .”/ And so. He learned the entire world to love the One that was His most pleasing/ because the love for people incline Him up to dust,/ To which He give His image and modeled it to the mark of the One who is One.& because for the same love, God raised His Son on the Cross,/ Humbling Himself towards receiving the image of His creation”.⁶⁰

Having in mind the reality of the primordial existence, Jacob asks himself if *Adam was created mortal of immortal in the beginning*. “If Adam was predestinated by his Creator to be mortal/ Then why God will relate the cause of his death to this tree?/ If he will be created from the beginning immortal in his nature,/ Who could then Adam die and in what way the death has overcome the immortality that he received from God?”⁶¹ Following a long line of questions and syllogisms, Jacob underlines the importance of the ontological freedom in which the first man was created. Another type of understanding, in the meaning of predestination towards death or immortality represents in the thinking of Jacob “*a blasphemy*”.⁶² “Remember that all the commandments mentioned here/ Proves the real freedom of Adam./ If you are thinking truly at his creation, you will learn/ That he was created also in the same time mortal and immortal./ Therefore, the Creator with His craftsmanship has juxtaposed the natures,/ Creating the same man for two directions: for life and for death./ God created an icon half alive, half death,/ Before it can be subjected to independent conditions./ He put the soul into a clay pot made of dust,/ Uniting both of the them with the wisdom”.⁶³

60 *HMC I*, 25-34.

61 *HMC II*, 39-44.

62 *HMC II*, 119.

63 *HMC II*, 129-138.

Regarding *the creation of the seen world*, Jacob affirms, like the other Fathers of the Church, that it was brought into existence by God from “nothing” (*ex nihilo*). In the same way, he takes attitude against the Gnostic heresies. He affirms that God summarized in Himself all created existence. Therefore, He has no need to receive any help in His creative work. In this way, the words of Genesis confirmed to be true: “In the beginning God made the heaven and the Earth”,⁶⁴ **sowing** it the divine origin of the created existence. “The divine being, says Jacob, had only a single name “*Who it is*”.⁶⁵ And since He descended to create from nothing these things,/ Was named Creator because He created it all”.⁶⁶ In the creation act, the Heavenly Father, Who is eternal, has beside the Son and the Holy Spirit, completing in Trinity of Persons the external reality of creation. In this situation, Jacob shows that the matter certainly cannot be understood as the concept of “*ab-aeternuo*”, because the theories of the neo-platonic philosophy aren’t enough justified. Moreover, he understands and confesses that “*existed a moment when the world didn’t exist,/ And all the creatures had a beginning*”.⁶⁷ Unlike the Alexandrians and especially Origen, Jacob rejected the theory of “*the parallel worlds*” (terrestrial and noetic), thinking that “*it exist a single world, ours, and a single finality that realizes it in heavens for us and on earth for the angels*”.⁶⁸

The apologetic note of Jacob’s Christology is reflected in *the presentation of the new Christian perspective towards the pagan beliefs*. The incarnation of Logos means for him the moment of “collapse for the idols through the freedom of the Groom of the

64 Cf. Genesis, 1, 1.

65 Cf. Exodus 3, 14.

66 *Hom sur L’Hexod* apud P. Khalil Alwan, M.L., *Antropologie de Jaques de Saroug. L’homme “Mictocosme” avec une bibliographie generale Raisonnee*, Juniech, Liban, 1988, p. 19-20.

67 *Hom sur L’Hexod I*, 168-169.

68 Khalil Alwan, M.L., *Antropologie de Jaques de Saroug ...*, p. 21.

Light”.⁶⁹ In this way, the majority of Jacob’s arguments are gathered in the “*Homilies against the Jews*”.⁷⁰ In this writings the Syrian poet shows that, according to the divine economy, the Son came into the world to liberate “*the people that walked in darkness and into the shadow of death*”.⁷¹ In this way, he demonstrates that the seed of falsehood was put by the devil into the ear of Eve in Heaven. There, through illusion, he promoted the first form of idolatry. Starting from heaven, after the intervention, for these he made Adam and Eve to think that “they can be like God, knowing the god and the bad”.⁷² “God muses all the ages, as He has knowledge about all the things,/ He saw the days when on the earth the idols had entered./ He kept His Son because, passing the period of idolatry,/ Wanted to revel Him immediately to dissipate the imagination from the face or the earth./ Satan sowed the lie in Eve’s ear:/ “You cannot be in the image of God?”, had said./ through his ear the devil speeded the seed, since he believed that will be good;/ And for fifteen generation⁷³ this seed has germinated!”/ In the days of Peleg and Reu, the gods had multiplied./ The error had entered and multiplied the idols on the earth./ In that times, from the beginning,

69 Thomas Kollamparampil, *Salvation in Christ according to Jacob of Serugh. An Exegetico-theological Study on the Homilies of Jacob of Serugh (451-521) on the Fest of our Lord*, Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore, 2001, p. 245.

70 Jaques de Saroug, *Homélie contre les juifs* (HCJ), édition critique du texte syriaque inedit, traduction français, introduction et notes par Micheline Albert, en F. Graffin, *Patrologia Orientalis* (PO), tome XXXVIII, fas. 1, No. 174, Brepols, Turnhout/Belgique, 1976.

71 Isaiah 9, 1; Matthew 4, 16.

72 Genesis 3, 4-5: The serpent said to the woman, “You won’t really die, for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”.

73 We thinks here at the teen generation from Adam up to Noah (cf. Genesis 5, 1-29), up to the ones from the proximity of the divine descending (cf. Genesis 11, 10-16). Jacob is speaking here about the revelation that God offers to the chosen people through Abraham as a beginning of the separation from idolatry (PO, p. 115, note 8).

God has allowed all these,/ Keeping in secret the mystery of the Only Begotten./ In the world, He had learned that in One and in unity is the perfection;/ Therefore, He is the One, who is, it is said, from the beginning./ That, as the Word and the Holy Spirit existed as persons, they didn't want yet to reveal themselves".⁷⁴

In other context, **mar** Jacob of Serugh analyses *the coordinates of fulfilling the holy promises in our Savior Jesus Christ*, describing the prophetic reality of the chosen people and also the reality of his decadence. In this way, the great Syrian poet describes the most important aspects and principles from the Old Testament, developed in the Jewish tradition, through which the Jewish people were guided towards salvation. Nevertheless, being in a stage higher than the pagans like partakers of the divine Revelation the chosen people cannot drink from the Spring of Salvation which is the Incarnated Son of God. The attitude of Jacob is apologetically entitled. "In each moment your Lord and God was beside you/ Until the day when you crucified His Only Begotten Son; then He abandoned and left you./ Because you raised your hand on His Son, He ignored hour spirit;/ And behold all the people of the earth will stay against you./ The innocent blood was spilled by you; from this reason/ Behold that you tremble, behold that you wander from all over the earth./ Where is now the greatness of your acts from the beginning of the world;/ The sounds of the trumpets of the sons of Levi? / Where is the priest and his liturgical garments".⁷⁵

In other passages Jacob explains very clearly the theological details about the Saint Trinity dogma. In this concern, he underlines very often the equivalence of essence between God the Father and God the Son. Therefore, Jesus Christ is our Lord and Word and living and wise Word.⁷⁶ In the same way it is presented *the theology*

74 HCJ IV, 27-40.

75 HCJ V, 11-19.

76 Sebastian Paul Brock, *The Published Verse Homilies of Isaac of Antioch, Jacob of Serugh, and Narsai: Index of Incipits*, in "Journal of Syriac Studies" (JSS), no. 32/1987, Section XIV, 614, 13.

of the Mother of God. Therefore, Jacob defends the person of the Holy Virgin against the old Nestorian tendencies, saying in each moment that at the Annunciation he made a cosmic choice, in the purpose of the salvation of the entire world. According to the Syrian father the Holy Virgin was chosen by the Logos of God to become the Mother of the entire human race. “*A daughter of man was sought among women;/ she, who was the fairest of all, was chosen./ The Holy Father wanted to make a mother for his Son,/ and He did not allow that she, whom He has chosen, become His mother./ Maiden, full of beauty, hidden from her yet upon her,/ and her heart was pure, that she might see the mysteries that had taken place in her*”.⁷⁷ Further, Jacob names the Mother of God “the second paradise” to clarify this choice. He is beyond all through the good think and humbleness.⁷⁸ At the command of his Son, says Jacob, the archangel Gabriel was sent to the Holy Virgin to bring her the good news of annunciation. Including this, the whole works of the Holy Trinity, mar Jacob of Serugh speaks about the abolition of the original disobedience in Adam and also about the healing of the original sin through the obedience of Mari. “*He greeted her, implanted life in her, proclaimed peace to her,/ With love he met her and brought to end all the former things./ That wall of iniquity which the serpent had built then,/ By His descent, the Son pulled down so that it may not be restored again./ When He descended, he broke down the hedge which was placed between the sides,/ So that there may be peace between the earthly and the heavenly beings./ On this account the Watcher greeted Mary/ As a pledge of the great peace for the whole world*”.⁷⁹

Last but not least; we must observe the polemical attitude of Jacob in his Christological apologies. In this regard, he speaks about

77 Section VI, 622, 4-11.

78 Section VII, 623, 10-15.

79 Section X, 629, 4-11.

the relationship between wisdom and faith, sowing when it is necessary to use it and when is its end. According to him, the rationality has no incidence on the real seen things. Therefore, the people who try to explain the divine existence using this method are characterized in pejorative sense “*wisdoms*”. Amongst one of them, Jacob includes the Greek philosophers that are named “*sons of Satan*”. Moreover, in his conception, only the faith and love can approach man to the real knowledge of God. This method is accessible especially to the simple people alone that are “pure in heart”, like the Savior says.⁸⁰ Only one of them “is able to pray to God and to see his miracles in Christ, understand it without questions and without trying to spy out the glory of God”.⁸¹

Jacob’s position toward Chalcedon or wrote from the symbol to mystery

The most delicate problem in relation with the personality of the Syrian poet was the one of his monophysite origins and of course that of his orthodoxy, if he was orthodox of monophysit. About this problem the opinions are divided. So it makes that, on the one side Assemani and later Abbeloos sustained the orthodoxy of his belief. On the other side, “after the publication of two of his epistles, addressed to the monks from Mar Bassus from Harim, together with their answer and with the epistle send to Paul, bishop of Edessa, emerged that Jacob was from the beginning a monophysit and never renounced at his opinion. This theory is sustained in majority by the east researchers from XX century (Baumstark, Bardenhewer, Tissarant, Jugie etc)”.⁸²

80 Mathew 5, 8.

81 Roberta C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysites Christologies. Severus of Antioch, Philoxenus of Mabbug and Jacob of Sarug*, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 140-141.

82 Remus Rus, *Dicționar enciclopedic al literaturii creștine din primul mileniu*, p. 374.

In a very passionate apology, written in 1948 by P. Peeters, the monophysite ideas, partially identified in the work of Jacob of Serugh, were rejected due to the lack of authenticity. From 1956, Dr. Kruger has generated the hypothesis of a real monophysitic specific in the thinking of the Syrian author; although he recognizes that a portion from his homilies had been included in the liturgical use.⁸³ In this debate, the patristic scholar Ortiz of Urbina moderated, using arguments from both sides. However, he affirms that “Jacob has remained orthodox until his death”. This is clear from the style that he adopts, staying far away from any kind of “dogmatic polarization”.⁸⁴

In the contemporary period, the English scholar Sebastian Brock supports the orthodox position of the thinking of Jacob. In this way, he says that Jacob “evidently disliked and tried to keep out of the contemporary Christological controversies and it is only from one of his Letters that (under pressure on this correspondents) he openly expresses his disapproval of the doctrinal formula of Chalcedon (451)”.⁸⁵ Therefore, unlike his contemporaries, Philoxene and Sever, that were clearly against the doctrine of Chalcedon, Jacob adopted “an irenic attitude, preferring to avoid the formulas and controversial terms and to express his faith in Incarnation, using the Syriac specific phraseology”.⁸⁶ The approach of the monophysit

83 As the hymns of Saint Ephrem, many of Jacob’s poems were assimilated in the liturgical use of the Syriac Churches of the orthodox rite and also in the Maronite. (R. Phenix jr. - Cornelia B. Horn, *Syriac Speaking Churches ...*, p. 19).

84 Dr. T. Jansma, *The Credo of Jacob of Serugh: a Return to Nicaea and Constantinople*, in “Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History”, Nieuwe Serie, Vol. 44 (1961), p. 18.

85 Sebastian Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 37.

86 Sebastian Brock, “The Rise of Christian Thought. II – The Theological Schools of Antioch, Edessa, and Nisibis,” in H. Badr (ed), *Christianity. A History in the Middle East*, Beirut, 2005, p. 150.

heresy is therefore circumspect. The Christology that he develops has a proper specificity using the symbolic and mystical message, unlike the Gnostic influence from that time.⁸⁷ Moreover, Jacob has harnessed the exegetical tradition of Theodor of Mopsuestia and also the symbolism inherited from Saint Ephrem the Syrus, leading to the specific Syriac theology.⁸⁸

The apologetic heritage is related to the authentic part of Syriac theology. Like Saint Ephrem, Jacob of Serugh exceeds the limitation of concepts and goes beyond the liturgical reality from symbol towards the mystery. Although he is very little known in the Romanian theology, the Syrian writer offers many important apologetic arguments in the Christian work of confession. His homilies, majority in verses, exemplify an authentic manner of thinking in the doctrine of the Church. In this way, the Syrian bishop “elaborates a series of doctrinal structures very important in the act of revelation and prophecy: the works of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God as a confession of the divine love toward man, the foundation of the Church which expands the salvation work of Christ in our time”.⁸⁹

To sum up, he understands that the written heritage of Syrian bishop represents a concrete example of promotion of the path

87 “His theory of knowledge has distinct Gnosticizing tendencies which produce a very different picture of Christ. Where Philoxenus to a certain extent, and Severus to a large extent, can be characterized as belonging to a school of thought deeply affected by Christian Platonism, Jacobs thought is far more mythological and symbolic, far closer that the thought world in which Gnosticism flourish that to the world of Greek philosophy and theology” (Roberta C. Chesnut, *Three Monophysites Christologies*, p. 113).

88 Sebastian Brock, *The Rise of Christian Thought ...*, p. 150.

89 Remus Rus, “Iacob de Serugh. Omilia 79: *Despre vâmul de pe fața lui Moise*”, în *Filocalia Siriacă. Iubirea de frumos și înțelepciune – calea spre desăvârșire*, traducere, selecție de texte, cuvânt introductiv, note și comentarii de Remus Rus, Ed. Univers Enciclopedic Gold, București, 2014, p. 279.

between symbol to mystery, in the spirit and letter of the Holy Scripture. Therefore, besides Aphrahat and Saint Ephrem, Jacob of Serugh offers today an authentic example of a confession theology.

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PHILOXENUS **(On the indwelling of the Holy Spirit)**

At the time of our baptism through God's grace we received the Holy Spirit from the baptismal waters, but the purpose of our receiving him was not that he should sometimes remain with us and sometimes leave us, but that we should be temples for him, and that he should dwell within us continually; as Paul said: You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells within you; and again, Do you not recognize that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells within you, whom you received from God. For, you were bought for a great price, and consequently you should be praising God with your bodies and with your spirit, which all belong to God.

If then you are temples and shrines of God by reason of the Spirit of God dwelling within us, then no sin, whether it be by deed or by thought, can destroy the temple of God. For sin that is committed by some action is quite different from the denial of God. If then we sin through something we do, our faith in God remains unshaken, and we do not thereby lose our son-ship to God. Just as in the case of a natural son, however, much he wrongs and sins against his father, the fact of his having sinned against his father does not stop him being called his son, for however much a son sins and does wrong, he does not destroy his honourable title of 'son', provided his father does not want to disinherit him.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp 107-109)

Alain J. Desreumaux

ABOUT RECENT DISCOVERIES AT EDESSA: CHURCH MOSAIC PAVEMENTS WITH SYRIAC INSCRIPTIONS

History of Edessa ‘the blessed city’ as the beginning of history of Syriac Christianity is peculiarly important, not only by its beginning, but remains so all along two thousand years till today Urfa, more exactly Panlyurfa now situated on the East of Turkey.

Much information is at hand with epigraphic evidences and ancient literary documents which have given way to remarkable modern historical books that everybody knows and consult, I mean *Histoire d'Édesse* from 132 BC to 1144 AD by Rubens Duval, published in 1892, *Edessa the blessed City* from the Babylonian-Assyrian period to 1146 AD by J. B. Segal, published in 1970 and *Le comté d'Édesse 1098-1150* by Monique Amouroux-Mourad published in 1988. Moreover, since the first publication by Badger in 1852 of the ancient Edessene inscription on the castle column a large amount of articles and studies on various matters have investigated history and culture of Edessa.

The number of literary documents, that-is-to-say chronicles and hagiographic texts, from eastern and western origins on one

hand and material evidences that is to say inscriptions, coins and archaeological remains, on the other hand, all that of great value is large and has been widely explored, commented and discussed.

But, strangely enough, when looking at all this amount of investigations and publications, if we recognize the high level of linguistic, philological and historical research into the field of Edessa studies, one is obliged to observe that the city of Urfa itself into its environment and the history of its evolution and development are poorly documented and badly known. On that matter; historians are knowing a little more than tourists looking at the impressive citadel, adding the actual monuments around the famous fish pool and some mosaic and stone carved remains some of them being scattered in fragments even in private collections.

Great efforts have been made to place the memory of ancient buildings on the city map. Duval and Segal have led subtle investigations into the texts to propose wise hypothesis worth of consideration and very useful for knowing the history of the city. Segal has drawn a historical map where he situates 39 monuments and a second map where he indicates the areas of 26 caves-tombs or funerary mosaics containing old Syriac inscriptions.

However neither the precise spots and the topographical positions of all the tombs nor the exact lay-out of the inscriptions are placed on a map. The splendid book on old Syriac inscriptions by Han Drijvers and John Healey¹ offers in its introduction a general sketch for overlooking the situation of the inscriptions presented in the corpus. But nobody never gave detailed archaeological plans of the caves, mosaics and inscriptions.

The case is worst for the buildings -palaces and churches- whose exact location of most of them remains uncertain. One understands why at the end of the International Edessa-Symposium in Halle on July 2005 people came to the agreement that it was of the highest

1 DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999.

necessity to undertake archaeological excavations at Edessa and obtain precise drawings and maps.

As a matter of fact, no ancient church remains have been preserved in Urfa due to the growing of the town and the integration of all ancient remnants into houses or mosques during the centuries. Only few Christian inscriptions have been published. In 1959 Segal published the 2 inscriptions of a sarcophagus found near the crusader church Saint-Theodorus,² whose one is dated 1159/60 AD. In 1972, Segal published 2 inscriptions from Saint-Georges church, one in the city museum, dated 1557/8 and the other in the Circis Peygamber mosk, dated 1844/5.³ In 2011 Selahattin Eyyubi Güler published the inscriptions of foundation, of restauration and the inscriptions of the stelae in Saint-Peter-and-Saint-Paul church constructed during the Ottoman period⁴; in 2011 also, Bülent Üçdağ & Erman Bediz published fragments of mosaic pavements found in the saving excavations for a motorway works site; among them are remnants of a Christian basilica dating from the 5th cent. In 2014, Selahattin Eyyubi Güler published a corpus of different Syriac inscriptions from Urfa and vicinity; among them is a lintel maybe from Kýrk Maðara, on south-west of the citadel, now in the museum, bearing an inscription commemorating the building of a door dated 896 AG (= 584/5 AD); to the date is added a byzantine indiction.⁵

Quite recently, public works in Urfa have brought to light unexpected ancient remains, surprisingly important by their dimensions and their contribution to the history of Urfa and of Syriac culture.

First of all, numerous Roman villae decorated with splendid mosaic pavement, mostly with mythological motives.

2 SEGAL 1959, p. 27-30, no 2A and B and pl. I-II.

3 SEGAL 1972 ; he published in 1973 a new corrected reading of the museum inscription.

4 GÜLER 2011 ; see also GÜLER 2014, p. 82-96.

5 GÜLER 2014, p. 143.

Then, two very large necropolis near the citadel containing around 80 tombs dated from the Roman period, 1st to 3rd century, the period to which belong all the cave-tombs with old Syriac inscriptions discovered till now. But as a remarkable contribution to the history of Christianity in Edessa, two of these tombs are paved with mosaics with Christian inscriptions written according to the old Syriac formulas and script and which should be dated from the 3rd and 4th century.

In and around Urfa, small finds of Christian ancient Syriac have been made, but till now, discoveries of ancient Christian buildings were few.

Fortunately, besides the big and wide Roman monuments, scattered finds have recently revealed remnants of ancient Christian churches. Archaeological reports are still not been published, but coloured pictures of their mosaic pavements from the Byzantine period are now visible in a nice book by Mehmet Önal. ⁶ The pity is that we do not know exactly the places of the finds in and around Urfa. As I said, the archaeological reports are still to be published.

Near SURUÇ, a town situated to the west of Urfa, in the place named Mýcýt-the-Low, the date in the inscription is partly destroyed, but one can reconstruct it by measuring the space to be restored.

+ Year [...] hundred
and eighty and seven
I pave in mosaic
this basilica
in the days of Sargis
and Yuḥʿanon presbyters
and Yuḥʿanon and Nuno
and Georgis and Sergis
deacons whoever
reads may he pray for us
I Andreas

6 ÖNAL 2017.

If one accept my proposed restoration of the year, it is one of the most ancient Christian Syriac inscription, dated from 475/6.

The formula is already that which remained classical for centuries.

The building is clearly designated by the denomination «basilica», a word which will no more be used afterwards. The priests are designated by the vocable *qašišana*, the old designation of the ancient of the community, the *presbyter*.

The script is a well designed formal estrangela.

A second important discovery has been made in the village of Sabuncu near SIVEREK, a town situated on the north-east of Urfa.

The carpet into 3 borders is decorated with animals and men. The 15 lines Syriac inscription give the date of the mosaic pavement of the martyrium called bet shade, on the 5th kanun qadim 862 that is to say the 5th of December 550 AD; it refers to a chief of the monastery, to a deacon, to a priest and to 3 other people.

The fifth day
of the month kanun
first, the year [eight]
hundred sixty two
has been made in mosaic
this martyrium
[... ..]
[...] God
[...] chief of the monastery
[...] barḥabšaba
[... ..]
deacon and Abra
ham priest
and Išo and George
and Sergi bar Euseb

An other inscription, very badly written and difficult to decipher is situated outside the carpet on the border ; it is drawn in 6 black and 10 red lines ; it gives the destroyed names of the mosaicists and an interesting mention which is a testimony of the deposit of offering in the martyrrium.

this
 martyrrium, may
 his memory before
 God and of
 George bar Tho
 ma [...]]
 [... ...]
 whoever deposits
 an offering
 (in) this
 martyrrium
 his memory be
 before
 God

In 2010, Elif Keser-Kayalap published the photograph of a Christian mosaic pavement found in the village of Yolbilen on the south of VIRAN^aEHIR which contains a 8 lines Syriac inscription dated 873 AG (= 562 AD). ⁷

The inscription indicates that the room called by the name *bayta*— probably a church or a chapel — is that of a monastery whose chief is called mar Šemun and gives names of presbyters, ancient designation for priests.

The year
 eight hundred seventy
 three has been made in mosaic
 this house in the days of

7 KESER-KAYALAP 2010, p. 328; fig. 8b, p. 342; GÜLER 2014, p. 159.

mar Šem^un chief of the monastery
 and Helfid and Yu%~anon Eliša^
 and Thoma presbyters
 of this monastery

In Urfa, fragment of mosaics not dated have been discovered by the archaeologists.

One is the signature of the makers; interesting enough, it indicates that the mosaic has been worked by the association of one Moše and his son Bose which, by the way bears the name of his grandfather. Moreover, the name of the author of the inscription Andres, is given. The designation of the room can be easily reconstructed as *basahde*, the short form for «martyrium». From the writing, I suggest to date it from the 6th century.

I Moše
 bar Bose
 and Bose my son
 I have paved again in mosaic
 this bet sahde
 by our work and association
 whoever reads may he pray
 for me + I
 Andres I have written

The last recent find has been made in the center of Urfa, in a place called A°ađýba°ak (the name means low spike). The inscription occupies the center of the carpet and is surrounded by foliated scroll of vine leafs decorated with animals, mainly birds. The text calls for prayer for the 2 mosaicists Gurya and his brother Saba. There again, the work has been realised by an association. The name Za^ura is given as that of the director and the room is designated as a *bayta*, probably a church or a chapel. The date is not given; it could be from the 7th century.

Gurya the mosaist
 and Saba his brother
 Whoever reads these names
 may he pray for us
 I Za^ura [bar ...]
 I have made the mosaic
 of this house. [Ō]Ä[É]CÉÏŌ

Outside the carpet, a short 4 lines inscription on the joining band seems to give the name of the one who has offered the mosaic.

[.....]
 šaba
 the offering of
 the mosaic

As a short conclusion, I would like to lay stress on the novelty of these finds which have brought evidences in Urfa and its area of 5th to 7th century Christian monuments. There are probably much more still under the ground. These are from chapels and monasteries. They have preserved interesting historical details. It is hoped that precised archaeological records be published and that more finds be brought to light.

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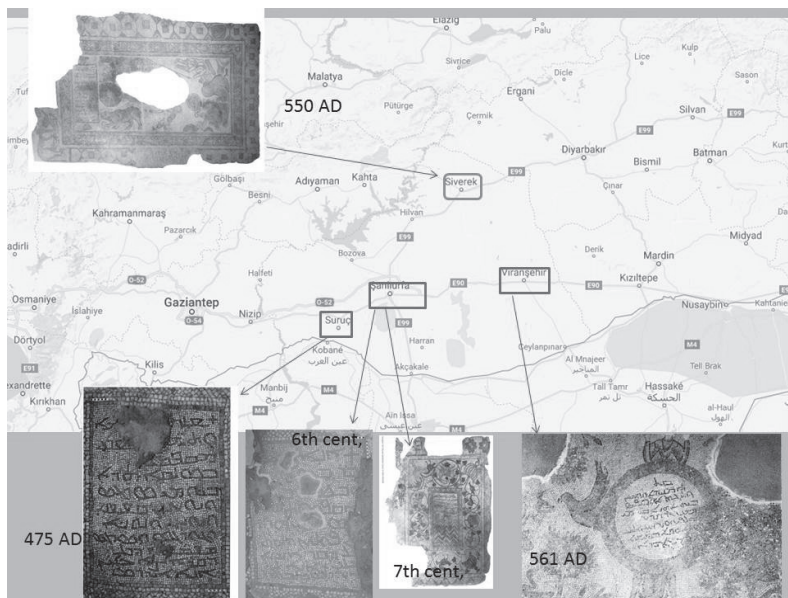
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Simon Brelaud, Jimmy Daccache & Flavia Ruani

UNPUBLISHED SYRIAC INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE RUINS OF SAINT SERGIUS' CHURCH IN ENEŠ (TURKEY)

This paper is part of a larger ongoing RIS project (“Recueil des Inscriptions Syriaques”), which aims at gathering Christian Syriac inscriptions from Turkey¹. The outcome of the project will be a volume in the series on Syriac inscriptions published by the “Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres”².

In this article, we will discuss the results of one case study, namely the unpublished inscriptions from the ruins of the church of Saint Sergius in Eneš, also written Ehneš, modern Gümüşgün. The village is located on the western

¹ We are grateful to Alain Desreumaux (CNRS, Paris) who entrusted us with the epigraphic material coming from Turkey he collected in the past, and we thank Andrew Palmer for his fruitful remarks.

² Volumes already published deal with the inscriptions from Kerala (Jacob Thekeparampil, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet and Alain Desreumaux, *Inscriptions du Kérala* [Recueil des inscriptions syriaques 1], Paris, De Boccard, 2008) and from Iraq (Amir Harrak, *Syriac and Garshuni inscriptions of Iraq* [Recueil des inscriptions syriaques 2], Paris, De Boccard, 2010).

bank of the Euphrates, 16 km North of Zeugma, modern Belkıs, a well-known city on the main road connecting to Mesopotamia (Fig. 1).

The church of Saint Sergius is located slightly outside the village of Eneš. It originally belonged to the Syrian Orthodox community; at an unknown date, probably near the beginning of the second millennium, before the period of the Crusades, it became an Armenian church, as evidenced by a large number of Armenian graffiti left on the walls. About five kilometers to the North, Rumkale was the headquarters of the Armenian *catholicos* during the 13th century³. Since the site was never excavated, it is uncertain whether the church was part of a monastery or of a pilgrimage station. Hansgerd Hellenkemper reconstructed the plan of the church in 1978 which was adapted by Andrew Palmer in 1993⁴. It is a one-nave church, flanked on

³ For more information, see Andrew Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi: History Presented as the Writing on the Wall”, in H. Hokwerda *et al.* (eds), *Polyphonia Byzantina: Studies in Honour of Willem J. Aerts*, Göttingen, Egbert Fortsten, 1993, p. 45-84. See also “Eneš” and “Erenköy” in Justine Gaborit, *La Vallée engloutie : géographie historique du Moyen-Euphrate (du IV^e s. av. J.-C. au VII^e s. ap. J.-C.)* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 199), vol. 1, Beyrouth, Presses de l’IFPO, 2015, p. 121, 130 (Map of F. Cumont’s journey in 1905), 137-138.

⁴ Hansgerd Hellenkemper, “Kirchen und Klöster in der Nördlichen Euphratesia”, in S. Şahin *et al.* (eds), *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasien*, vol. 1 (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain 66/1), Leiden, Brill, 1978,

the South by a narthex. A room is adjacent to the sanctuary on the South (Fig. 2 & Fig. 3).

Eneš was first visited by Jean-Baptiste Chabot, then by Henri Pognon at the end of the 19th century, for epigraphic purposes⁵. They both published the long Syriac inscription engraved on the South wall of the church⁶. More recently, Andrew Palmer re-edited the same inscription and published the one on the East wall⁷. In 1998, Alain Desreumaux visited the site and found two other Syriac inscriptions and three graffiti. Since one of these is too damaged, only the two inscriptions and two of the graffiti will be presented here; they are published on the basis of Alain Desreumaux's photographs and drawings.

Inscription 1 - West Wall

The first inscription contains nine fragmentary lines (most probably ten lines originally) with deeply engraved letters written in Estrangela on a limestone block found inside the church among the debris collapsed from the

p. 389-414; Andrew Palmer, "The Messiah and the Mahdi ...", p. 49.

⁵ With regard to other journeys and visitors along the Euphrates river, see Justine Gaborit, *La Vallée engloutie ...*, p. 120-121, 137-138.

⁶ Jean-Baptiste Chabot, "Notes d'épigraphie et d'archéologie orientale", *Journal Asiatique* IX.16, 1900, p. 249-288 (in part. p. 283-288); Henri Pognon, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1907, p. 148-151, n° 84, pl. XXXIV.

⁷ Andrew Palmer, "The Messiah and the Mahdi ...".

western wall. Therefore, the orientation of the text, i.e. horizontal or vertical, is hard to determine. It is likely that it was written vertically, since the inscription is engraved on a boss carved on one of the stone's short-sides, recalling vertical inscriptions engraved in a sort of cartouche in a *tabula ansata*.⁸ There is no way of knowing whether the boss was made specifically in order to bear the inscription – this hypothesis is probable, since, to our knowledge, it is the only rusticated stone in the building –, or whether it is a pre-existing boss. In both cases, the boss was deliberately used to highlight the inscription (Fig. 4).

Only the ending of each line is preserved, which makes it hard to understand the context. The remaining words or fragments of words do not suffice for a reliable reconstruction of the text:

[...] this	ܠܡ[
[...] and Passion	ܠܡܘܩ[
[...] the Father	ܠܡܦ[
[...] of the Son	ܠܡܒ[
[...] who/of those	ܠܡܘܟ[
[...] rejoice	ܠܡܘܝܢ[
[...] ?	ܠܡܘܝܢ[
[... of the Gre]eks in	ܠܡܘܝܢ[
Octob[er]/Novemb[er]	ܠܡܘܝܢ[
[...] on the day	ܠܡܘܝܢ[

⁸ For example, the inscription of Baṣūfān in Jabal Sem‘ān in Syria. See Françoise Briquel Chatonnet & Jimmy Daccache, “Researches on Syriac Writing in the Hinterland of Antioch”, *The Harp* 30, 2016, p. 417-436 (in part. Fig. 7).

Yūḥannon in Ḥāḥ (Ṭūr‘Abdīn), dated to 739/40¹¹, and of some inscriptions from Quṣūr al-Banāt in the Tektek Dağları region, also datable to the 8th century.¹² These paleographic indicators show that this inscription cannot be dated to a period after the middle of the 8th century.

Inscription 2 - Chancel

The second unpublished inscription is a graffito carved on the first course of the South jamb of the chancel-arch (Fig. 5). The inscription has five lines written in an Estrangela script displaying some cursive features. The fourth line was not very easy to read, because unfortunately a fallen stone hides the inscribed block. It reads:

Abrohom	ܐܒܪܘܗܡ
the sinner. Let everyone	ܫܘܠܡܢ ܗܘܐ
who reads (this) pray	ܕܡܢ ܕܩܝܠ ܕܗܘܐ
on behalf of	ܕܗܘܐ
our Lord	ܕܗܘܐ

¹¹ See Andrew Palmer, “A Corpus of Inscriptions from Ṭūr‘Abdīn and Environs”, *Oriens Christianus* 71, 1987, p. 53-139 (in part. p. 60-61, n° A.2).

¹² Andrew Palmer, “Syriac Inscriptions of Quṣūr al-Banāt in the Tektek Dağları, Turkey”, in M. Tamcke & S. Grebenstein (eds.), *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums. Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011* (Göttinger Orientforschungen. I. Reihe: Syriaca 46), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014 p. 209-289 (in part. inscriptions n° QB4, 6 and 16, and p. 277).

The words ܘܢܘܢܘܢ are often found in a similar context¹³. We suspect that the word ܘܢܘܢܘܢ or its abbreviation ܘܢܘܢ stood before it (or stands there, but is hidden by the fallen stone). However, in order to be certain, an autoptic examination of the graffito is required.

Inscription 3 - South Wall

Another small graffito is engraved on the third course counting upwards of the South wall, under the long inscription (Fig. 6). It is written vertically in Estrangela script, except for the last two letters, *he* and *olaf*, which display the cursive forms. The inscription is partially damaged, but one can read:

ʿAbbās son of Ġabr
and Ġubayr son of
Sabīl
SB[--] Hʿ

ܘܢܘܢܘܢ ܘܢܘܢ
ܘܢܘܢܘܢ ܘܢܘܢ
ܘܢܘܢ[--] ܘܢܘܢ

The graffito consists of at least two names and their patronymics. The first one, ʿAbbās, is an Arabic name meaning either “austere” or “the lion from which other lions run away”¹⁴. This name is already attested in a West-Syrian context, as it is shown by the manuscript BL Add. 12,160, fol. 107, copied in A.D. 584 in the monastery of Gubba

¹³ Andrew Palmer, “The Epigraphic Diction of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn and Environs”, *Oriens Christianus* 72, 1988, p. 114-123 (in part. p. 116).

¹⁴ Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 5, Beirut, Librairie du Liban, 1968, p. 1939.

Barraya, between Aleppo and Mabbug¹⁵: it is borne by a Syrian Orthodox from Takrit, ‘Abbās son of Ṭubana¹⁶. In the present graffito, Ğabr, ‘Abbās’ patronymic, is an Arabic name referring to “strength”, influenced by the Syriac Gabrā¹⁷. The second line contains the well-known Arabic diminutive anthroponym Ğubayr¹⁸, which is the diminutive of Ğabr, and the patronymic Sabīl, which means “the way.”

Inscription 4 - North Wall

The last inscription we publish here is outstanding. It is a one-line horizontal inscription of 10.26 m covering 16 blocks (Fig. 7) of the North wall measuring around 11.5 m (Fig. 8). The ninth block bears a very interesting Arabic graffito that begins with لعن الله “May god curse”; although the rest of this graffito is damaged, we may at least read من “from” at the beginning of the second line (Fig. 9). Moreover, a single word, ٱلثَلَاثَة “trinity”, is carved vertically on the last-but-one block. The engraver omitted the third *taw* and added it above the line. This word was certainly written by the engraver of the long inscription, as the letter-forms suggest (Fig. 10).

¹⁵ William Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the year 1838*, 3 vols, London, British Museum, 1870-72, vol. 2, p. 472-3 (n^o dxc).

¹⁶ See Amir Harrak, “L’influence du syriaque sur l’onomastique arabe chrétienne”, *Parole de l’Orient* 18, 1993, p. 275-289 (in part. p. 289).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹⁸ *Lisān al-‘Arab*, p. 537.

The long inscription is in general well preserved, although some inscribed blocks are missing, leaving two gaps, one of 40 cm between the third and the fourth blocks and another of 47 cm after the sixth block¹⁹. These stones could have fallen down or would have been removed intentionally, in order to create openings in the wall after the inscription was made.

The inscription, including the word ܠܫܘܠܘܠܐ, is written in large Estrangela letters that share certain distinctive features with the inscriptions engraved on the East and South walls.²⁰ Firstly, the *he*, the *waw*, and the *taw* are joined to the following letters (Fig. 11). This phenomenon occurs in some inscriptions from the Limestone Massif in Syria, for example the Dār Qīta inscription²¹— which in fact also contains the word ܠܫܘܠܘܠܐ —, and from the Osrhoene region, such as the inscription mentioning the bishop Rabbula²². Secondly, the letter *he* has an atypical shape in Saint Sergius' inscriptions, unattested elsewhere. It is

¹⁹ See the drawing in Fig. 7.

²⁰ See above n. 6 & 7.

²¹ See Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, Alain Desreumaux & Widad Khoury, “Inscriptions syriaques de Syrie: premiers résultats”, *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes (AAAS)* 47-48, 2004-2005, p. 187-195 (in part. p. 190).

²² See Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, Alain Desreumaux & Joseph Moukarzel, “Découverte d’une inscription syriaque mentionnant l’évêque Rabbula”, in G. Kiraz (ed.), *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone. Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock* (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 3), Piscataway, Gorgias Press, p. 19-27.

characterized by its middle leg that has the shape of a wedge rather than a vertical line. As for the only final *he* in the word ܗܗܠ, its left leg joins the wedged one, unlike those attested in the two other inscriptions (South and East wall). Thirdly, the engraver made in all three inscriptions drill-holes resembling dots, as Andrew Palmer called them²³ (Fig. 12). These dots are not diacritical points. They could be decorative elements, some kind of a distinctive and characteristic mark of the engraver. We might also consider the possibility that they were outlines set to facilitate the drawing of the strokes. To our knowledge, the use of pricking such as we find in Syriac manuscripts – though in manuscripts it is used to trace the lines for the layout of the page – is unique in the Syriac epigraphic tradition. Since the inscription is very long, the engraver probably needed to prepare its layout, by “pricking” each letter, so that the lines would be straight and the letters regular. A parallel can be found in other epigraphic corpora, such as Phoenician, though not with drill-holes: a 4th-century BCE inscription from Cyprus shows the use of ruling technique to trace two parallel lines indicating the inscription baselines.²⁴

As for the minor differences between the North wall inscription and the South and East wall ones, the former is

²³ Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi ...”, p. 58.

²⁴ Jimmy Daccache, “La ‘mise en pierre’ des inscriptions phéniciennes dans un milieu hellénistique : travail de scribes et de lapicides”, in S. Celestino Pérez & E. Rodríguez González (eds.), *A Journey between East and West in the Mediterranean. Proceedings of the IXth International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies vol. 1* (Mytra 5), Mérida, Instituto de Arqueología, 2020, p. 293-304 (in part. p. 296 and fig. 1b).

“Whoever does not [] that God [] in truth []
and for this reason Mary in [] bore
him/is his Mother, let him be
anathematized!”

It is thus a polemical inscription containing a theological anathema. Therefore, a fascinating and challenging part of the work was to identify this sentence.

Firstly, we were struck by the word *ܡܝܫܝܚܐ*, so we explored the presence of anathemas in epigraphy as a potential direction for a solution. We could find only one parallel: it is an inscription engraved on two blocks of stone, probably belonging to a sanctuary, found near Bīr al-Ganṭarī, in the Upper Jezireh, between Raqqah and Rās al-‘Ayn²⁶. It could be dated to the 6th or 7th century, since it is directed against the “Phantasiasts”, a polemical label used to designate the followers of Julian of Halicarnassus, the 6th-century Miaphysite theologian who denied that Jesus suffered in the flesh (l. 22-26)²⁷:

And whoever does not confess	ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ
that the Word who (comes) from	ܘܠܠܘܘܐ ܘܠܠܘܐ
God	ܫܠܡܐ
suffered in the flesh and was	ܘܥܘܕ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܠܠܘܘܐ
crucified	

²⁶ Paul Mouterde, “Une inscription syriaque récemment trouvée en Haute Jéziré”, *AAAS* 10, 1960, p. 87-92; Briquel Chatonnet, Desreumaux & Khoury, “Inscriptions syriaques de Syrie...”, p. 188.

²⁷ Mouterde, “Une inscription...”, p. 89 (text), 90 (French trans.).

in the flesh and raised from the	ܕܒܫܪܝܢ ܘܡܪܝܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܗܘܢܝܢ
place of the	ܡܘܬܘܢ
[dead], let him be anathema	ܕܢܘܨܐ ܕܡܘܬܘܢ
	ܘܝܘܒ

According to this passage, anathemas appear to have a formulaic beginning and ending, with a changing content in between. The beginning, in particular, ܕܢܘܨܐ allows us to reconstruct the first damaged word in our inscription as the active participle ܢܘܨܐ “confess”.

Secondly, the presence of the word ܡܠܝܬܐ referring to Mary as begetter of God allowed us to identify the passage. This verbal expression brings us to the Christological controversy and to the debate between Syrian Orthodox who profess the *theotokos* and East-Syrians who profess the *christotokos*. Within the corpus of anti-Nestorian literature available in Syriac, there are the famous twelve anathemas originally composed in Greek by Cyril of Alexandria in the early 5th century, translated later into Syriac. The inscription corresponds partly to the first anathema against Nestorius, as follows:

North Wall Inscription, Eneš

ܗܘܢܝܢ ܕܢܘܨܐ ܕܡܘܬܘܢ
ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܕܝܢ ܕܡܘܬܘܢ
ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܕܝܢ ܕܡܘܬܘܢ

Cyril of Alexandria, 1st Anathema²⁸

ܗܘܢܝܢ ܕܢܘܨܐ ܕܡܘܬܘܢ
ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܕܝܢ ܕܡܘܬܘܢ
ܕܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܕܝܢ ܕܡܘܬܘܢ

²⁸ Daniel King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria. A Study in Translation Technique* (CSCO 626, Sub. 123), Leuven, Peeters, 2008, p. 319-320.

ܡܗܘܢ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ

: ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ

ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ
ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ

ܐܘܪܝܢܐ

ܐܘܪܝܢܐ

Whoever does not c[onfess] that
the [Emman]uel i[s] in truth
God, and for this reason the
[hol]y V[irgin] Mary bore
him/is his Mother,

Whoever does not confess that
the Emmanuel is in truth God,
and for this reason that the holy
Virgin is Mother of God,

For she hath borne after the
flesh the Word which is from
God when he became flesh,

Let him be anathematized!

Let him be anathema!

This identification allows us to fill in the *lacunae* of our inscription. The reconstructed letters of ܐܘܪܝܢܐ and ܐܘܪܝܢܐ could perfectly fit in the two missing blocks. As for the reconstruction of ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ, the block allows it in terms of space.

We notice that the original anathema is not quoted in full in our inscription; one sentence is not retained. Moreover, we can observe some differences in the parallel parts: instead of “Mother of God” ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ, “Maryam” ܡܝܪܝܡ is used; and instead of the absolute state of the noun, “anathema” ܐܘܪܝܢܐ, the passive participle of the verb, “anathematized” ܐܘܪܝܢܐ, is used.

Cyril's twelve anathemas are found in Syriac manuscripts both as an independent text, for example in anti-Nestorian anthologies, and as part of the various works which include them, such as the *Contra Orientales* and the *Contra Theodoretum*. Daniel King studied the variants of the Syriac version of Cyril's anathemas as transmitted in six manuscripts dated between the 7th and the 10th centuries.²⁹ We can notice that these two words, ܘܢܝܘܪ and ܘܢܝܘܪ, are not attested as variants of the first anathema.³⁰ Our inscription is thus a further witness to this text and the first in epigraphy.

Cyril's anathemas were a reference for Syrian Orthodox identity³¹. Nevertheless, the question of how exactly they were circulated in the Syriac-speaking areas is

²⁹ King, *The Syriac Versions...*, p. 318-319 (see also p. 36-43 for a detailed presentation of the manuscripts).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 319-320. These variants are not attested for the original Greek text either. See Eduard Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Tomus primus. Pars prima, Concilium inuniversale ephesenum. Volumen primum, Acta graeca. Pars prima. Collectio Vaticana 1-32*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1927, p. 40-42.

³¹ Cyril of Alexandria's works began to be translated into Syriac at the request of Rabbula, the Miaphysite bishop of Edessa between 411 and 435, in order to counteract the translation process of the Antiochene, Dyophysite, Greek theologians (Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia) and to provide the Miaphysites with an authorial reference in Christological matters. See Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, Marcus und Webers Verlag, 1922, p. 71-72, King, *The Syriac Versions...*, p. 12-15.

still to be elucidated. Were, for example, Cyril's anathemas quoted in the liturgy? Is it possible that there was a library attached to Saint Sergius' Church – for which we have no evidence for the time being – containing manuscripts that the engraver, probably a monk, could have consulted?

In any event, this inscription is unique, since there are no other known Syriac inscriptions mentioning a theological identity in this way³². It quotes the herald of the Miaphysite faith, Cyril of Alexandria, thus defining this church unmistakably as belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church. And even if the anathema itself is originally anti-Nestorian, it is unlikely that this polemical dimension was still of primary importance in 8th-century Eneš. The presence

³² It is worth mentioning an exception in the Coptic tradition: the Synodical letter of Damian, Miaphysite Patriarch of Alexandria from 578 to 607, which is another evidence from outside the manuscript tradition. The letter, painted probably in the 7th century on the wall of the vestibule inside the Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes in Egypt, promotes the Miaphysite faith. See Walter E. Crum and Hugh G. Evelyn White (eds), *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, Part II. Coptic Ostraca and Papyri; Greek Ostraca and Papyri* (Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 4), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926, Appendix I, p. 331-341 and pl. XV. Damian's letter is also quoted in Syriac by the Syrian-Orthodox Patriarch Michael the Great in his *Chronicle*, see Jean-Baptiste Chabot (ed.), *French Translation of the Syriac Text of the Chronicle of Michael the Great*, Part II, Texts and Translations of the Chronicle of Michael the Great 3, Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2011, p. 325-334.

of East Syrians in the region at that time is not well attested. On the contrary, the controversy with the Chalcedonians seems to be a more current issue. Indeed, when we take into account the other inscriptions carved by the same mason on the South and East wall of the church, we uncover a unitary theological program: the inscription of the South wall contains a list of meaningful events in chronological order (Fig. 6). One of them recalls the invasion of the Vale of Mar‘aš, Northwest of Eneš, by the Byzantine Chalcedonian army who deported Miaphysites to Thrace in the year 777³³.

Moreover, the single-word “Trinity” written vertically above the long inscription (see Fig. 10) – upon which all Christian confessions agreed at that time – suggests that the polemical context was even larger and could include the non-Christians, namely the Muslims. Indeed, the concepts of Trinity and of Incarnation too as a matter of fact were part of the debates opposing Christians and Muslims known in Syriac literature, notably in the 8th century³⁴. The mention of “Mary bore him/is his Mother”

³³ Pognon n° 84; Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi ...”, p. 64 (“In the year 1088 [=A.D. 777] the Vale of Mar‘aš entered into captivity in the territory of the Romans on account of our sins”) and p. 70.

³⁴ Sidney H. Griffith, “Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts: from Patriarch John (d. 648) to Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286)”, in B. Lewis and F. Niewöhner (eds), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter* (Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 4), Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1992, p. 251-273 (in part. p. 254); David Bertaina, *Christian and Muslim Dialogues. The Religious Uses of Literary Form in the Early Islamic East* (Gorgias Eastern

in the inscription, instead of “Mother of God” attested in the original anathema, supports the idea that the text is no longer anti-Nestorian, but rather a sort of response to Muslim criticisms towards Christians³⁵. Incidentally, with the modification of the original “Mother of God” into “Mary bore him/is his Mother,” the logical connection between the two sentences, guaranteed by “and for this reason,” is much weaker and does not make sense any more. Another event recorded in the South wall inscription is in fact the invasion of Mesopotamia led by the caliph al-Mahdi in 779/780.³⁶

Put differently, more than a polemical inscription, we have here a profession of faith engraved in the stone, which could serve as a defensive weapon against political opponents with different religious beliefs. Since the inscription covers the entire length of the nave, it should be interpreted as the Syrian Orthodox signature with which the engraver sealed the very building of the Church.

Christian Studies 29), Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2011, p. 145-159, 243.

³⁵ This is probably the case of another Syriac inscription from Quṣūr al-Banāt dated paleographically to the 8th century, which Andrew Palmer reconstructed as follows: “the Ex[alted One] gave birth [to a Son]”. Palmer, “Syriac Inscriptions of Quṣūr al-Banāt”, p. 265-266 n° QB26 and p. 281-282 for historical considerations.

³⁶ “In the year 1091 (=A.D. 779/80) the Commander of the Faithful came and entered as far as Giḥon and he returned and ordered the churches to be torn down and the Tanukhids to adopt Islam”. Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi ...”. p. 64.

This makes of Eneš probably not just a small village with no importance, but rather one of the strongholds of the Syrian Orthodox faith in the age of Muslim caliphate.

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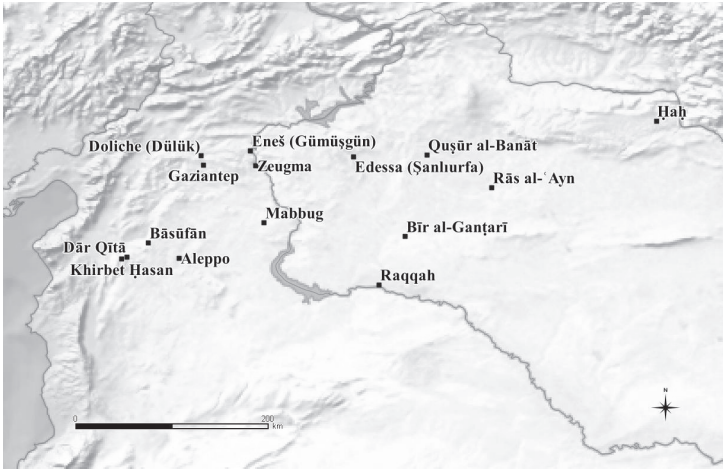


Fig. 1: Sites mentioned in the text (© Simon Brelaud).



Fig. 2: View to the southeast of the site
(© Hellenkemper 1978, plate cxxx).

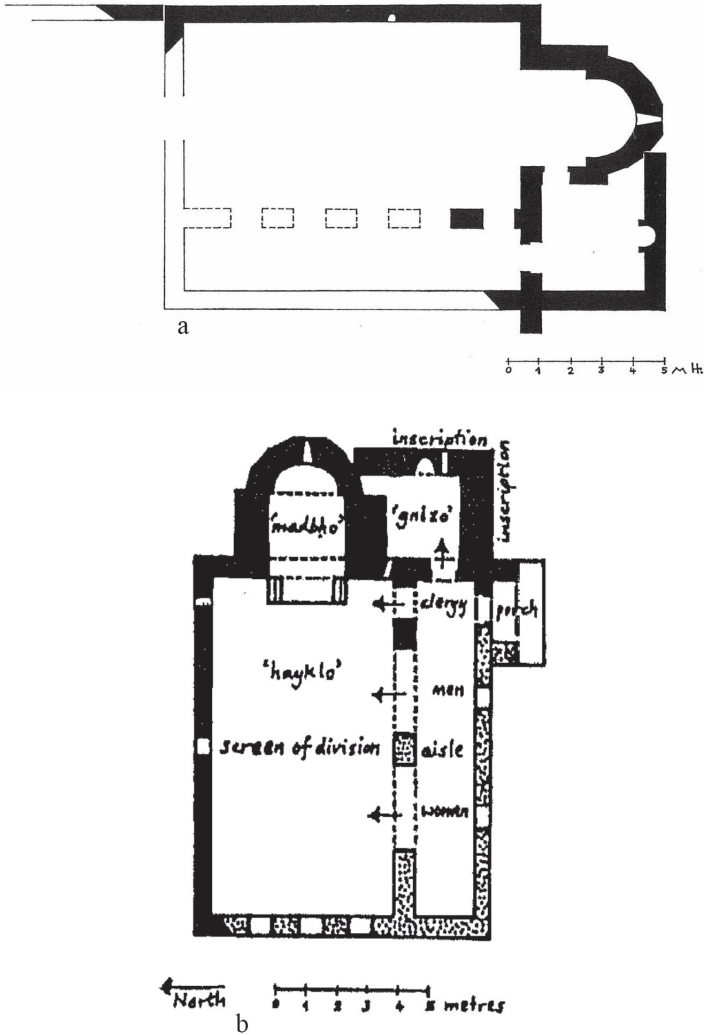


Fig. 3: Plans of the church:
a) Hellenkemper 1978, p. 410; b) Palmer 1993, p. 49.



Fig. 4: Inscription 1 (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux) and drawing (© Jimmy Daccache).



Fig. 5: Inscription 2 on the South jamb of the chancel
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).

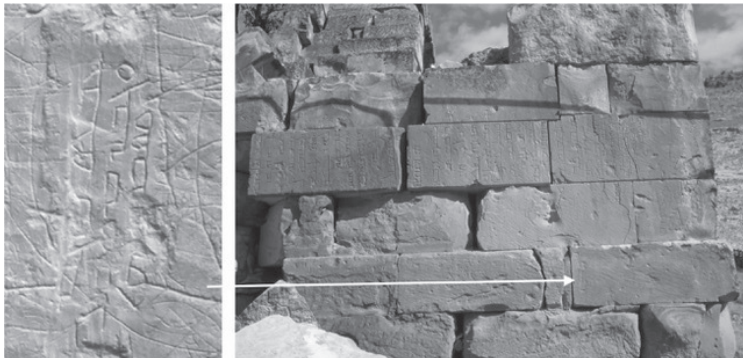


Fig. 6: Graffito on the South wall (Inscription 3)
below the South wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).

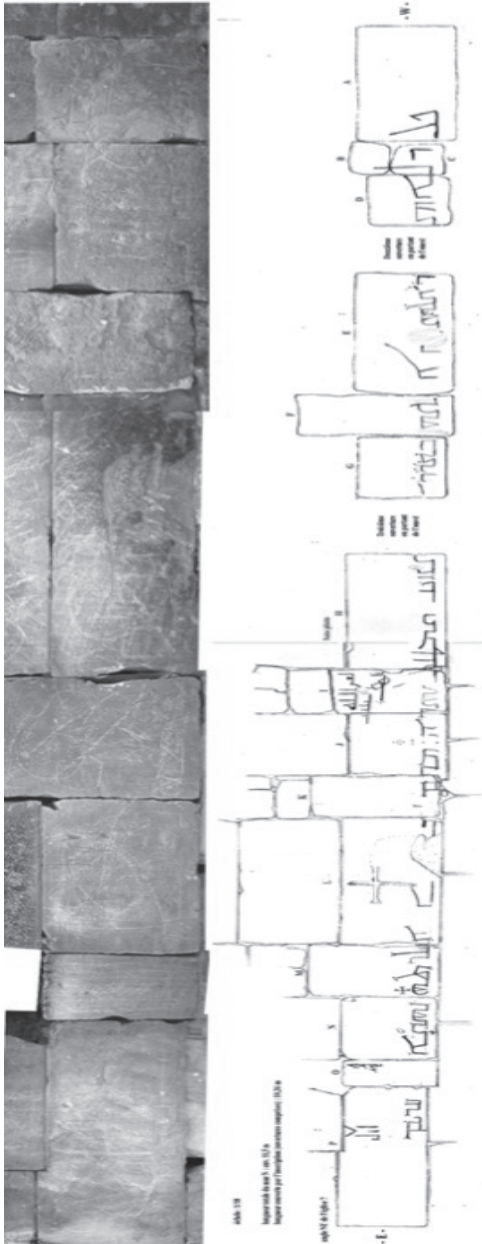


Fig. 7: Western part of inscription 4 on the North wall
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux) and drawing of the inscription (© Simon Brelaud).



Fig. 8: Northeast side of the church
(© Hellenkemper 1978, plate cxxx) and the
location of inscription 4.



Fig. 9: Arabic graffito above the North wall inscription
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).



Fig. 10: Block bearing the single-word “trinity”
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).



Fig. 11: Close-up of the letters *he*, *waw* and *taw* of: a) the North wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux); b) the South wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux); c) the East wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).

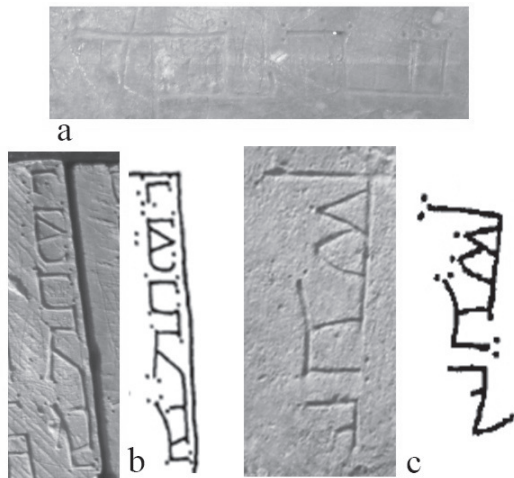


Fig. 12: Close-up of the drill-holes of: a) the North wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux); b) the South wall inscription (photograph: Alain Desreumaux; drawing: Palmer 1993, Fig. 4); c) the East wall inscription (photograph: Alain Desreumaux; drawing: Palmer 1993, Fig. 8).

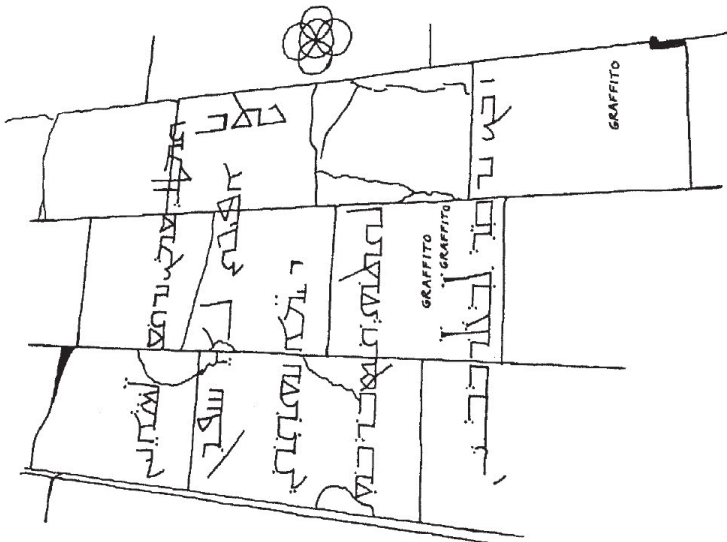


Fig. 13: Drawing of the East Wall inscription
(Palmer 1993, Fig. 4).

Jan M.F. Van Reeth

THE SABBATH ETERNAL AND THE COMPLETION OF CREATION THE CONCEPT ŠLM AND ITS MEANING

At the beginning of the second chapter of the Book of *Genesis*, we read the following phrase:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

[2] *And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.*

[3] *So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation.*

In his commentary on the book of *Genesis*, Saint Ephrem has about these verses a peculiar remark, not to be found in any other ancient commentary:

It was not because that He was resting, the One who is indefatigable, that He blessed and hallowed it [= the Sabbath], nor to give it to the people, or as having been freed from slavery they did not for it allow their servants and handmaids to rest, that He gave this day for them, to grant them even though under some pressure to rest. No, it was given in order to give them as a sign (a symbol — da-nṣūrīa ܕܢܣܘܪܝܐ), a temporary Sabbath for a temporary people: the mystery (ܐܝܘܒܐ) of the veritable Sabbath that shall be given to the generation of eternity for the world of eternity¹.

There is but one similar text to be found in Tertullian's *Adversus Iudaeos*, as Janson and Van Rompay remark in a note to their Dutch translation of the work of Saint Ephrem²:

“We (Christians) understand that we still more ought to observe a Sabbath from all “servile work” always, and not only every seventh day, but through all time. (...) For the Scriptures point to a Sabbath eternal and a Sabbath temporal. For Isaiah the prophet says, “Your Sabbaths my soul hateth”; and in another place he says, “My Sabbaths ye have profaned.” Whence we discern that the temporal Sabbath is human, and the eternal Sabbath is accounted divine; (...) which we understand to have been fulfilled in the times of Christ, Thus, therefore, before this temporal Sabbath, there was withal an eternal Sabbath foreshown and foretold.”³

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1. R.M. Tonneau, *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodo commentarii* (CSCO 152 — Syr. 71), Louvain 1955, p. 25 § 33.
 2. A.G.P. Janson & L. Van Rompay, *Efrem de Syriër, uitleg van het boek Genesis*, Kampen 1993, p. 54 note 2.
 3. Tertullian, *Adv. Iudaeos* 4; cf. Kenneth A. Strand, Tertullian and the Sabbath, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 9.2, 1971, p. 131.

We have here a similar idea about the *Sabbath eternal* and the *Sabbath temporal*, but the context is different, as Tertullian is not commenting on the text of *Genesis*. Saint Clement of Alexandria also establishes a close relationship between the commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ as «the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep» (1 *Cor* 15 : 20) and the first Day of Creation, because «this day is the Logos, illustrating all hidden things through whom every creature has come to light and existence»⁴. As Daniélou remarked, there is some danger of subordinatianism in this statement, as it could seem that the Logos had been created and generated together with the creation of the first Day. But anyway, as another text by Eusebius is showing, commenting *Psalms* 92/91: 4 («For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work» — ὅτι εὐφρανάς με, Κύριε, ἐν τῷ ποιήματί σου), the first day on which light was created is in fact Sunday, the first day of the week, which shall be at the same time the day of the second creation, *a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth will have passed away*⁵. This brings us already somewhat closer to Saint Ephrem's text, but in order to understand him thoroughly, we should have a closer look at the text which he is commenting - and this is of course not the Greek version, but the Syriac (*Pešītā*) of *Genesis* ⁶.

In the verse of *Genesis*, the reference to creation is

4. Clement, *Strom.* 6: 16; J. Daniélou, *Bible et Liturgie: la théologie biblique des sacrements et des fêtes d'après les Pères de l'Eglise*, Paris 1962, p. 342 (Janson and Van Rompay are also giving this reference).

5. *Revelation* 21 : 1; Eusebius, PG 23: 1173b-1176a; cf. Daniélou, *Bible et Liturgie*, p. 343-345.

6. See already our article, but with a different approach : Jezus' laatste woord, *Communio* (Dutch edition) 42.1, 2017, p. 23-38.

essential for our purpose. Two times it is said that it was *finished: the heavens and the earth were finished* [MT *wa ykhullū* — LXX : *συντετέλεσθησαν*] (...) *on the seventh day God finished* [*wā khāl* — *συντέλεσεν*] *his work*. Two times the *Pešīttā* uses here a form of the verb *šlem* (ܫܠܡ): ܘܫܠܡܐ — *wašlem(w)* [“they were finished”] and ܫܠܡܐ — *wā shālem* [“He finished”].

Subsequently, this verse of the Bible became part of a prayer, known as the *Šabbath Qīddūš*. This prayer was said, after the closing of the evening service in the Temple, after the meat of the offerings had been distributed. Each father of the household, and after an eventual *tôdāh*-offering, pronounced it standing at the table over a cup of wine. It has already been remarked that Jesus on the Cross, while hearing the appropriate signal from the Temple, also recited this *Šabbath Qīddūš*, a few moments before dying. These were at least his last words: “*It is finished*” - *τετέλεσται* (John 19: 30). Now when we look at the Syriac version of the Gospel, we find here to our surprise the same verb ܫܠܡܐ (*māšalam*). But this is not all. The text of the Gospel of John continues: «*and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit*». The Greek text is making use here of a rather strange, unusual word in this context⁷: *παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα*. This seems to be an indication for a literal translation of an original Aramaic expression. And indeed, this last sentence is translated in the *Pešīttā*-version by making use of the same verb, this time in the *af’el*: ܘܫܠܡܐ ܪܘܗܗ (*w ašlem rūheh*). Luke 23 : 46 also sites some last words of the Lord, which are in fact the first words of the *Evening Prayer*, that used to be pronounced after the *Šabbath Qīddūš*: “*Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!*”

7. As justly remarked by R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*3. Kap. 13-21 (HThK 4.3) Freiburg 1975 (2000) p. 332 note 68.

(εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθεμαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου). Παρατίθεμαι is translated in the Syriac version with the verb ܫܐܡܝܢ (*sá'em*), but the following words: And having said this he breathed his last (τοῦτο δὲ εἰπὼν ἐξέπνευσεν) are rendered once more by using the same verb: ܫܠܡܐ (*wa-šlem*). A similar reading is already to be found in the 'Separate' version of the Gospels⁸. This cannot be accidental any more.

Among others Stauffer has remarked that *in articulo mortis* Jesus is reciting this prayer in the form that was used by children, with the trustful and intimate address *πάτερ, abba*⁹. However, what is meant by the evangelist when citing these first words is, that Jesus has been praying the entire prayer, which is beginning with verse 6 of *Psalms* 31: "*Into thy hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God*", followed by the words: "*In the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, to my right Michel, to my left Gabriel, in front of me Uriel, behind me Raphael and above my head the Presence of God*"¹⁰.

Thus a question has arisen and has to be retained from the foregoing analysis: what does this constant use of the verb ܫܠܡ (*šlm*) indicate? At first sight, the meaning of the words of Jesus, "*It is finished*" (ܫܠܡܐ) would be very simple and self-evident: *I have accomplished it, my mission is completed*. But

8. A. Smith Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospels or Evangelion da-Mepharreshê*, London 1910, p. 204 reads ܫܠܡܐ; the Cureton-Bible reads ܫܠܡܐܢܐ. The text of the gospel of John (19 : 30) is lost in the manuscripts of this version.

9. E. Stauffer, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geschichte*, Bern 1957, p. 108.

10. H.L. Strack & P. Billerbeck, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, Lukas und Johannes und die Apostelgeschichte erläutert aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch 2), München 1924 (1974) p. 269; Stauffer, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geschichte*, p. 107-108 + note 93.

is this the real meaning¹¹? Here Saint Ephrem gives us another important hint. He seems to develop an idea that also was proposed, probably independently, by saint Augustin: *Jesus mortuus est quando voluit*—”Jesus died at the moment He himself intended”¹² (and here we think of course about Pilate who “*wondered if he were already dead*” (Marc 15 : 44). Something similar is to be found with Chrysostomus, Ambrosius (CSEL32, 503) and much more close to Saint Ephrem, Dionysius bar Šalībī, stating that Jesus expired spontaneously and willingly¹³. Saint Ephrem wrote:

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11. For J. Ratzinger, *Jesus von Nazareth*2. *Vom Einzug in Jerusalem bis zur Auferstehung*, Freiburg 2010, p. 246-247, the word is referring to the Last Supper, where it is said that Jesus shall extend his Love till the end (*telos*— John 13 : 1); the term, which is ‘mysteriensprachlich’, would refer to an initiation, as an ordination, pursued by Jesus to the end (John 17: 19); cf. Stauffer, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geschichte*, p. 105, 107: “Was Gott durch den Logos begonnen hat in den Tagen der Schöpfung, das hat Gott durch den Logos vollendet in den Tagen der Erlösung (J 1,3; 19, 28)”.
 12. Augustine, PL 35, 1952, cf. F.-M. Braun, *Évangile selon Saint Jean*, Paris 1935, p. 471.
 13. A. Vaschalde (ed.), *Dionysii bar Salibi, Commentarii in Evangelia*(CSCO 113 Syr. 60), p. 138 ; Id., *Dionysii bar Salibi, Commentarii in Evangelia*(CSCO 98 Syr. 40), p. 110-111. Cf. U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 4 (EKK 1/4) Neukirchen-Vluyn 2002, p. 345-346; Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium*3. Kap. 13-21, p. 332; J. Swetnam, Psalm 22, the faith of Jesus and Christian justification, published online: http://jameswetnamsclosereadings.com/James_Swetnam_Close_Readings/Entries_files/Entry%2055.pdf, p. 1: “Jesus has died on the cross and is risen from the dead by a signal act of God’s free choice in response to the faith-trust placed in such an act by Jesus”.

*Those people might have killed him
 But in fact he killed himself by his own hands
 It is a dead man, killed by his own hands
 whom those idiots have crucified at Golgotha
 If he had not killed himself mysteriously
 they could not have done so in reality.
 The night before he killed himself symbolically
 then, the day after, they killed him.¹⁴*

The close relationship Ephrem is this way establishing between the Eucharist and its fulfilment on the Cross is striking and shall further on have its importance for our argument. In order to explain it and to answer the questions we have just been inferring, we have to adduce another element. And, as we shall see, our solution will at the same time explain the theme of the two Sabbaths of Saint Ephrem.

The first introducing words of the *Šabbath Qīddūš* — “It is finished” — *τετέλεσται* — MT *ykhullū* — *Peš ašlem(w)*, happen to be at the same time the closing words of *Psalms 22* (30-31): *Posterity shall serve him; men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation / and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, that he has wrought it*. Many commentators think that Jesus has been reciting this entire Psalm¹⁵ (just as he has been praying the complete *Šabbath*

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14. Louis Mariès, Une antiphone de saint Éphrem sur l’Eucharistie, *Recherches de Science religieuse* 42, 1954, p. 394-403; F. Graffin, L’Eucharistie chez saint Éphrem, *Parole de l’Orient*, 4 (1973), p. 95. The text of this poem is only preserved in Armenian translation.
15. Stauffer, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geschichte*, p. 106; H. Gese, Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament. Der älteste Bericht vom Tode Jesu und die Entstehung des Herrenmahles, *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 65, 1968, p. 1-22; Id., *Die Herkunft des*

Qiddūš and *Evening Prayer* after it), because shortly before are cited in the Gospels the introducing words of this Psalm, misunderstood by the attendance¹⁶: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?*

Yet, in the form the closing words of the psalm are cited by Jesus on the cross, the meaning of the last words of the psalm are slightly altered: in the psalm they are told about the future: *men shall tell of the Lord to the coming generation / and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn.* Therefore, the verb of the Hebrew MT *‘eśah*, “what he has wrought out” is a proleptic perfect and its meaning is

Herrenmahls, Zur biblischen Theologie, München 1977, p. 107-127; R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium 2* (HThK 2.2), Freiburg 1977, p. 494; X. Léon-Dufour, *Le dernier cri de Jésus, Etudes* 348/5, 1978, p. 666-682; Swetnam, *Psalm 22, the faith of Jesus and Christian justification*, 1. Contra : U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus 4* (EKK 1/4) Neukirchen-Vluyn 2002, p. 343; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus 2* (EKK 2/2) Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979, p. 322. In this paper, we do not go into this matter any further. Evangelists remark several times that Jesus was *speaking/calling out with a loud voice* ; it is not impossible that the raising of the voice was meant to emphasize that the wordings were a citation. That the whole psalm was intended is further indicated by some allusions on the remaining part of the psalm, as for example the dividing of the clothes and the words “I thirst” (John 19 : 28), probably also referring to *Psalm 69: 22*, cf. Ratzinger, *Jesus von Nazareth* 2, p. 242.

16. Cf. “This man is calling *Eli’jah*”; cf. Gese, *Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament*, p. 6. H.L. Strack & P. Billerbeck, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus erläutert aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch 1), München 1926 (1978), p. 1042, remarking that *El* usually indicates the mercifull God (“nicht den strengen Richter”); this is in accordance with the objective of the *tôdāh*, cf. *infra*.

eschatological. To Jesus, what was predicted by the psalm is what has justly been perpetrated and realised by him: *τετέλεσται*. But at the same time it is still eschatological: his suffering on the Cross has also an eschatological dimension, pertaining to the “*deliverance to a people yet unborn*”, just as the psalm text says.

Psalm 22 has still another important function: it is a so-called *tôdāh*-psalm ; verse 27 is even referring directly to such a *tôdāh*-offering ¹⁷. A *tôdāh* is an offering of thanksgiving (and this is the meaning of the Greek term *Eucharist* !), during which the divine *economy* (Οικονομία) is remembered. This commemoration (Hebr. *zakher*— Gr *anamnēsis*, cf. τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, «*Do this in remembrance of me*», 1 Cor. 11 : 24 and Luke 22 : 19) is followed by a meal for the family and the community, thanking the Lord for some deliverance from a crisis. This deliverance is depicted as the beginning of a new life, in a state of salvation and prosperity - the religious peace (*šālōm*), stemming from God and for which He is cheered (in the so-called *təhillā*)¹⁸. Originally this *tôdāh* - in what Gese has named a *Bekennnis - opfergottesdienst* - was a sanguinary offering on the altar in the Temple, followed by a breaking of bread and a cultic meal, closed by the blessing of a cup of wine, but eventually it became only this last part - bread and wine - and

17. Gese's identification of *Psalm 22* as a *tôdāh*-psalm is to be considered according to J. Ratzinger, *Das Fest des Glaubens*, Einsiedeln 1981², p. 53-54, as definite.

18. Gese, *Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament*, p. 11: “Die *tôdā* stiftet ein neues Sein, sie begründet den *šālōm*-Zustand zwischen Gott und der Gemeinde, der der Errettete als neu Seiender wiedergegeben wird”; Id., *Herkunft des Herrenmahls*, p. 110, 117-119. For *šālōm* as religious peace, see our art. : *Paix spirituelle et Pax Romana*, *Acta Orientalia Belgica*9, 1994, p. 79-82.

sometimes even the thanksgiving psalm only - in the sense of *Psalm 116 : 12-14*¹⁹:

*What shall I render to the LORD
for all his bounty to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.*

The German exegete Hartmut Gese, in his innovative article *Die Herkunft des Herrenmahls* has tried to demonstrate that the Eucharist is originally such a *tôdāh*-offering. His analysis was cited and continued by (at that time) Cardinal Ratzinger (who would become later Pope Benedict), in his book *Das Fest des Glaubens. Versuche über die kirchliche Liturgie* (translated into English as: *The Feast of Faith. Approaches to a theology of Liturgy*, San Francisco 1986). Hartmut Gese being a Protestant Old Testament scholar, this could have interesting consequences for an œcumenical understanding of the Eucharist²⁰. In view of this debate²¹, it

19. Cf. B. Kranemann, Kommentar zu Kapitel 3: Die drei österlichen Tage, in: J. Wohlmuth (ed.), *Jesu Weg – Unser Weg: Kommentierte Neuausgabe der “kleinen mystagogischen Christologie”*, Paderborn 2018, p. 139. The Eucharist as “*Bekennnisopfergottesdienst*” has its importance for the œcumenical discussion about the validity of Eucharistic prayers, such as Eastern Syriac Anaphora, as shown by D. Heringer, *Die Anaphora der Apostel Addai und Mari: Ausdrucksform einer eucharistischen Ekklesiologie*, Bonn-Göttingen 2013, p. 116-119.

20. See the foregoing footnote.

21. Inaugurated by Pope Benedict himself : Ratzinger, *Das Fest des Glaubens*, p. 54 note 1 — a remark that was so to speak already anticipated by Gese, *Herkunft des Herrenmahls*, p. 125 : « Die Einsetzung des Herrenmahls will verstanden werden als dem Tod vorausgehende Opferweihe Jesu ». In the following lines, we shall discuss this proleptic aspect of the Eucharist in more

may be worth noting that the Syriac exegetical tradition seems to put forward a similar interpretation.

Just as the Old, Jewish Covenant was confirmed by a *zəḅaḥ* (a bloody sacrifice) by shedding the blood of an animal²², thus the blood of the Crucified Jesus is confirming the new *zəḅaḥ tōdāḥ* as the *new covenant in his blood*: τούτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματι μου²³, a *cup which is poured out for you* (Luke 22 : 20). The blessings pronounced over the Bread and the elevation of the Cup is inaugurating the state of divine peace — *šālōm*. The suffering of the Lord *ist ὁdāḥ*, executing into reality what *Psalm 22* is announcing²⁴. While suffering, Christ is taking up for himself the role of the *zəḅaḥ tōdāḥ* of the Old Covenant and is becoming himself this offering: “das Opfer ist *sein* Opfer, seine irdisch-leibliche Existenz, die geopfert wurde”²⁵. By Jesus however, the real order of things has been inverted into the historical order: the offering of the Last Supper is pertaining at the offering on the Cross in a proleptic way, and therefore Swetnam suggested that this is in fact the first Eucharist (and not so much the Last Supper !): “Jesus (...) is celebrating the first Mass, which He does from the right hand of His Father in heaven, His rightful place as High Priest, (...) both Priest and Victim, and by implication this death is

detail.

22. Gese, *Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament*, p. 11; 18; B. Lang, *zbḥ*, in: *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament 2*, Stuttgart 1977, p. 526; Ratzinger, *Das Fest des Glaubens*, p. 50.
23. Luke 22:20; Gese, *Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament*, p. 21.
24. Ratzinger, *Das Fest des Glaubens*, p. 50: “Jesu Passion und Auferweckung ist Toda”.
25. Gese, *Herkunft des Herrenmahls*, p. 123; Ratzinger, *Das Fest des Glaubens*, p. 52.

expiatory”²⁶. This is remarkably what Saint Ephrem had already been saying, in his poem about Abel:

*Abel was shepherd and victim all in one,
our Shepherd and our Victim figured in him
his task as a shepherd and immolation*²⁷.

Apparently Saint Ephrem came indeed very close to the real, original meaning of the tradition. This is also why so many old icons of the Syriac and Palestinian tradition are representing Christ on the Cross wearing liturgical garments²⁸, because the suffering of the Lord is for instance a liturgical act. This undoubtedly is also why Īshô‘dad of Merv has written in his commentary about Luke 23 : 46, that after death, the body of Christ was committed to the earth and his soul went to Paradise, while both were forming the Temple of God (ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ), which is the universe, remote and nearby at the same time²⁹. By praying *Psalm22* on the Cross,

26. Swetnam, *Psalm 22, the faith of Jesus and Christian justification*, p. 3.

27. Ephrem, *De Crucifixione*(CSCO 248-249) 2: 8-9, F. Graffin, *L’Eucharistie chez saint Éphrem, Parole de l’Orient* 4, 1973, p.98

28. So beautifully analysed by Aloys Cardinal Grillmeier s.j., in his study *Der Logos am Kreuz. Zur christologischen Symbolik der älteren Kreuzigungsdarstellung*, München 1956. See for example the famous *Rabbula-codex* and the wooden relic box of the chapel of *Sancta Sanctorum* from Palestinian origin (6th century), now in the Vatican Museum (Cat. 61883.2.1-2 — cf. <http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/cappella-di-san-pietro-martire/reliquiario-in-legno-dipinto-con-scene-della-vita-di-cristo.html>).

29. M.D. Gibson, *The commentaries of Isho‘dad of Merv* (Horae Semiticae 7), Vol 3: *Luke and John in Syriac*, Cambridge 1911, p. 95; Id., *The commentaries of Isho‘dad of Merv* (Horae Semiticae 5), Vol 1: translation, Cambridge 1911, p. 206. The

Jesus is giving the *tôdāh*-offering cosmic dimensions: the range of vision is widened to the primordial city of eternal beatitude and the final deliverance, in order to instore the Kingdom of the Lord — βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ.³⁰ It shall encompass all earth and not only the offspring of Jacob and the seed of Israel (verse 24) but “*All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him*” (verse 27): this is the ultimate fulfilment of the *tôdāh*. Everyone shall relate about the LORD, *what he has wrought* (verse 31).³¹ So we have to conclude: in the wordings of the *tôdāh*-prayer of *Psalm 22*, Jesus was celebrating his ultimate thanksgiving sacrifice, reciting a Eucharistic prayer on the Cross.

And so we eventually are coming to our conclusion. From all that has been said, because of the repetition in the Syriac New Testament of the verb *šalem*, we are inclined to infer that the translator may have recovered for once the original Aramaic wordings intended by the authors of the Gospels, or, if you wish, the original wordings of Jesus himself. The first meaning of the *Pešittā* translation of “*It is finished*” — τετέλεσται (John 19: 30), *māšalam*, passive participle *pa‘el* of the verb *šalem* is of course ‘*to come to an end*’, ‘*to be completed, perfect*’, but *šalem* in the *pa‘el* may

text has clearly a Christological scope; therefore we are missing in Gibson’s translation («at that time did our Lord give Himself to three; to the heart of the earth, to Paradise and to the hands of the Father») the translation of the word hypostasis, substance, person (ܡܫܠܡܐ): ««at that time did our Lord give his Person to three (ܡܫܠܡܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܠܡܐ ܕܡܫܠܡܐ); to the heart of the earth, to Paradise and to the hands of the Father». It is this ‘Temple’, being the universe which is his creation, that is now according to Īshô‘dad committed into the hands of the Father.

30. Psalm 22 : 29, Gese, Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament, p. 13.

31. Gese, Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament, p. 12-13.

also mean ‘to finish one’s life, to die’. It may indicate that someone is *fulfilling his religious duty*, to *act according to a divine instruction*, to *realise a prophecy*. The verb can also indicate to *repair* something, to *give compensation*, to *entrust* and to *surrender*, to *give* or to *wish peace* (here we meet with the well-known Hebrew equivalent *šalôm* of the Aramaic and Syriac word *šalām* used to wish someone peace). When *Psalm 22* ends with the words that «*my spirit shall live for Him*» (LXX — ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἀντὶ ζῆ — verse 30) in order to proclaim the justice of God to all coming generations and to tell what the Lord YHWH *has accomplished*, then this proposition is meaning into the mouth of Jesus that this announcement *is* now fulfilled. While praying the *Šabbath Qīddūš* and especially the description in *Genesis* of the completion of creation, the divine pontiff on the Cross is placing the crown on his work of creation. He restores by his *tôdāh*, by his Eucharistic high prayer the condition of peace (*šalôm / šalām*) of the original creation — which is precisely the basic function of a *tôdāh*, thus linking the Old Covenant to the New. The disturbance in the order of things through sin and death, is from now on deleted, so that He can deliver his perfected creation into the hands of the Father. Offering himself, He offers himself along with the redeemed creation to the Father³², blessing and praising Him and announcing with the words of the *Šabbath Qīddūš* the coming day of his resurrection, the day of the completion of creation — *wāykhullū* in Hebrew — *ܡܫܠܡ* (*māshalam*) in the Syriac version. This is what Saint Ephrem meant with his *mystery* (ܡܝܫܬܪܝܢ) of the *second veritable Sabbath*, just as (Pseudo-) Ephrem explained it once more in his *commentary on the Diatessaron* in a somewhat different form, stating that Jesus *perfected the imperfection of nature and creation*.³³ Indeed, this is the new

32. Cf. the view of Īshô‘dad, as exposed in note 27.

33. Chr. Lange (ed.), *Ephraem der Syrer, Kommentar zum*

meaning of what was written: *God rested from all He had created through his Word.*³⁴ This is also why Jesus the Word of God wishes peace to his pupils after his resurrection: it is the peace of completion, the peace of redemption that is at the same time a Eucharistic peace.

Thus from now on peace may reign on earth to all pious men forever.

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Diatessaron 2 (Fontes Christiani, Turnhout 2008, p. 484.

34. Cf. Stauffer, *Jesus, Gestalt und Geschichte*, p. 105 + note 78, referring to the witnesses for this *prayer: Pes5.2-3* and *Genesis Rabbah*10.8, to 2: 2. Cf. H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah*1, London 1939 (1961), p. 76-77.

PHILOXENUS **(On the indwelling of the Holy Spirit)**

Neither does Satan lead us towards evil by force, nor does the Spirit of God draw us to good by compulsion. Rather, they are both spectators, each urging us on in the direction our own will inclines. Just as the grace of the Holy Spirit, which we have received from the water, is within us when we sin-and however much a baptized person sins, he is still baptized- this grace does not restrain our will from sin by using any compulsion, but is simply angered against us and secretly rebukes us when it sees that we are inclined towards sin. And if the mind knows how to receive that rebuke, and if our deliberation consents to accept the warning, then it is restrained from sin, and grace immediately shines out and illuminates it, filling the mind straightaway with joy and happiness.

This is what normally happens to those who overcome sin at the time of their struggle with it. But if one's deliberation does not listen to the Spirit within, but brings the sin into effect, immediately the house of the soul becomes dark, and grows murky with the smoke of distress, and is filled with sorrow and compunction, and the soul's face is covered with shame, as it is written: 'and the Holy Spirit is grieved and turns his face from the soul'.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp 117).

Vinu Varghese

PRIORITY OF THE MONTH OF *NISAN* IN SYRIAC TRADITION

Introduction

The Syriac liturgical and literary tradition gives prominence to the month of *Nisan*. *Nisan* is the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. It has thirty days, and its zodiac sign is Aries (which rabbis connected with the paschal lamb). In the earlier biblical books, its name is given as Abib or Aviv. Aviv was a Canaanite term. After the settlement of Israel in Canaan, they applied Canaanite names to denote the months (Exod.13, 4; 23, 15; Deut.16, 1).¹ *Nisan* is derived from the Assyrian tradition. During the Babylonian exile, Babylonian or Assyrian names were adopted to denote the months, and they still govern usage.²

The month of *Nisan* generally falls in April-May, begins the cycle of the Jewish festivals, so in the Scripture, *Nisan* is «the first month» (Exod. 12, 2).³ According to Jewish tradition the main events

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- 1 In the early biblical period, the months were known by their numbered sequences: the first month (of the year), the seventh month etc. for Eg. Lev. 23, 4; 23, 34; Exod.16, 1.
 - 2 Cf. E. ZUESSE, "Calendar of Judaism", 33.
 - 3 Nevertheless, presently the Jewish year is reckoned from *Rosh Hashanah* "the head of the year" the first day of the seventh month; *Tishre* is the Sabbath of the months of the year.

in salvation history such as God's creation,⁴ the birth and death of Patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt, and the erection of tabernacle took place in the month of *Nisan*. They also considered it as the month of redemption.⁵

Following the Jewish tradition, Syriac fathers especially Ephrem the Syrian and Jacob of Serugh gave some more prominence to the month of *Nisan* in comparison with the rest of months. In their understanding, all the salvific works of God were happened in the month of *Nisan*. Their thoughts reflected in the *Sedra* of the first *Qaumo* of the night vigil in the feast of Resurrection.

In the first month of *Nisan*, the beginning of creation happened. Adam and Eve were created and placed in Paradise. As they had broken the Divine commandment, they were expelled from there. In the month of *Nisan* itself, the glory of God they had worn was taken away. They were ruined and had met with several atrocities. In the month of *Nisan*, the lethal poison of basilisk was poured out to them. In the same month, it was killed by the death of Savior, and its poison was taken away. In the month of *Nisan*, the virgin bride was adorned. In this month itself, the gentile woman was glorified with divine beauty and adornments. In the month of *Nisan* the Jewish church who became harlot was released from the slavery of Pharaoh of Egypt. In the month of *Nisan*, the sons of gentiles were freed from the bondage of Satan, which is worse than Egyptian slavery. Israelites were redeemed from Satan and they were adorned in the Mount Sinai by Moses and Passover in the month of *Nisan*. In the month of *Nisan*, by the services of Passover, that give all the joy and happiness, they were liberated from the Satan who destroys the souls became free.⁶

4 There are some contradictions and debates among the Talmudic sages on whether to date the creation of the universe from *Nisan* or *Tishre*.

5 Cf. C. PEARL, "Nisan", 503-504.

6 *Proumioun-Sedro (From the Feast of Resurrection to Koodosh Etho)*, Malayalam trans. Baselius Augen I, tr. 19.

Creation of God takes place in *Nisan*

In the Syriac tradition and belief, creation of the universe took place in the month of *Nisan*. Ambrose of Milan is the first to bring into *Hexameral* tradition⁷ the notion that creation took place in the spring.⁸ This was the opinion of the Hebrews and Latins.⁹ The legends of Jews also gave importance to the month of *Nisan*. According to the Jewish legends, goodness of God ordained the month of *Nisan*.¹⁰

In addition to Jewish influence,¹¹ there was a Mesopotamian background behind the relation between Creation and the month of *Nisan*. In ancient Babylonia, one of the most important festivals in Mesopotamian religion was *Akitu* festival, which eventually came to be viewed as a New Year's festival, although its origins are obscure. Each city god seems to have had his or her own *Akitu* festival, and at varying times of the year. The New Year spring festival (*Akitu*) at Babylon in honour of Marduk took place in the month of *Nisan*. In the festival there was a custom that on the evening of the fourth day of *Nisan*, the priest of Marduk stood in an inner room

7 "Hexameron" the term derived from the Greek word "ἑξάημερον" composed with ἕξ (means six) and ἡμέρα (means day). "Hexameron" can be defined as certain theological treaties or series of homilies by church fathers commenting on the descriptions of the events of six days, based on the data provided by in the first two chapters of the book of Genesis. In other words, these are a literary genre which comments on creation narratives in the book of Genesis. Cf. E. Mangenot "HexameAron", 2335.

8 Cf. F.E. ROBBINS, *The Hexameral Literature*, 59.

9 Cf. F.E. ROBBINS, *The Hexameral Literature*, 59.

10 Cf. L. GINZBERG, *The Legends of the Jews* I, 4.

11 Many scholars mentioned about the presence of the Jewish community in the city of Edessa in the first few centuries. So, Jewish thoughts and beliefs may have influenced the Edessan culture. Cf. D.V. ARBEL, "Junction of Traditions in Edessa", 340-341.

alone in front of the figure of the god, to chant entire creation epic.¹² Somehow this custom attested the relation between creation and Month of *Nisan*. In the opinion of Behnam Sony, there was a tradition that existed in Edessa, which affirmed the creation happened in the month of *Nisan*. Ephrem and Jacob of Serugh followed that tradition in their hymns and homilies.¹³ Probably this tradition originated in the Mesopotamian culture and influenced in the region of Edessa later.

Jacob of Serugh following that tradition and argues the world was created in the month of *Nisan*.¹⁴ According to Jacob of Serugh God's creation began on the first day of *Nisan*.¹⁵ It was a Sunday. In the sixth day of *Nisan* God created man in His likeness and image.¹⁶

12 Cf. T. M. GREEN, *The City of Moon God*, 30; A. YOUNAN, *The Mesopotamian School & Theodore of Mopsuestia*, 12; D.V. ARBEL, *Ibid*, 342. For the detailed description of Harranian pagan religion in Islamic period and their calendar, feast, fasts and rituals in the month *Nisan* see T. M. GREEN, *The City of Moon God*, 144-154.

13 Cf. D. B. SONY, *L'omelia dell'Esamerone: I sei giorni della creazione*, 338.

14 Cf. T. JANSMA, "L' Hexameiron de Jacques de Saru'g", 22.

15 "The day became day-times that was filled with all sorts of joys, the first born of its brothers was the beloved head of its companions. The Sunday came to be full of mysteries and laden with types, dawn to coming into existence in the world though it did not [yet] exist." "The first day [Sunday], the head of the world, is a great beauty, the beginning of the cycle that beckons the onset of creation.", *Homily on the First Day of Creation*, 487- 490; 495-496; P. BEDJAN ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis* III, 2518-21; 265-6; English trans. E. G. MATHEWS, ed. – tr., *The First Day*, 60-61. "It is the first day in which the creation took beginning And behold, again from it life began to be transmitted On this day the world began to be established and now behold, on it again it [the world] began to be renewed." JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homily on the Great Sunday of the Resurrection*, 67-68, English trans. T. KOLLAMPARAMPIL, tr., *Selected Festal Homilies*, 294.

16 This fact is clearly describes in the *Prumioun – Sedra* of the ninth hour of Good Friday. "On Friday, the sixth of the month of *Nisan*,

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¹⁷ ܘܢܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ

On the sixth (day) of *Nisan*, that head of the races entered the world, a new born babe, child, young man and immediately man.

In the *Homily on the third day of creation* Jacob of Serugh repeated this thought.

The Lord made a banquet for the earth in the month of Nisan, and He brought her to the world, and her infants increased so that the world is established.

A year began, while without being sown but it was full of good things (fruits of the earth), the new Nisan the head of the world, and it completed with fairness.¹⁸

Jacob's spiritual predecessor Ephrem the Syrian also has the same notion on the month of *Nisan*. In his spiritual vision, God's creation and redemption of creatures through the crucifixion and death of Christ happened in the month of *Nisan*.¹⁹ According to him, *Nisan* is the month of victory.²⁰ In the *Hymns on Church* he chanted thus;

You did create Adam the first man to be king of these things on earth... On Friday, Adam was created and on Friday the 14th *Nisan* our Lord and God Jesus Christ suffered in the flesh for us and redeemed us." *Promiouns (for the Holy week)* Malayalam trans. Malphono Alexandrayos Mattackal, tr., 166; English trans. *Promioun Sedro of the Holy Week*, B. Varghese, tr., 151-152.

17 P. BEDJAN ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis* III, 12815-16.

18 *Homily on the Third Day of Creation*, 233-236; P. BEDJAN ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis* III, 556-9. (Translation is mine)

19 "And the people, by eating that unleavened bread stabbed the son with a lance in Nisan" *HAzym*, XVIII, 4; J. E. WALTERS, ed. – tr., *Hymns on the Unleavened Bread*, 80-81.

20 Cf. *HRes* III, 1; E. BECK, ed., *De Resurrectione*, 85. For the significance of allusions to *Nisan* in the writings of Ephrem, see ROUWHORST, G., "L'eivocation du mois de Nisan dans les hymnes *sur la Resurrection* d'Ephrem de Nisibe", *OCA* 229 (1984), 100-110.

In the month of *Nisan* our Lord repaid
 the debts of that first Adam:
 He gave His sweat in *Nisan* in exchange for Adam's sweat,
 the Cross, in exchange for Adam's tree.
 The sixth day of the week corresponded to the sixth day of
 creation,
 and it was at 'the turn of the day'
 that He returned the thief to Eden.²¹

Nisan is the month of spring, in which, due to the vernal equinox
 the number of the hours of day and night is equal.²² In everywhere
 trees and plants sporting and flowering and fairness of flowers fills
 the entire corner.²³ Jacob of Serugh mentioned about the fairness
 of flowers in the month of *Nisan* in his homily on *Hexameron*.

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On the sixth [day] of *Nisan* the month rejoice with all flowers,
 the creative power was established [in] the house which built.

Aphrahat, the Persian sage also attested the beauty of *Nisan*.
 For him, *Nisan* is the month of flowers and the first month of the
 year.²⁵ The West Syrian liturgical texts such as service of matrimony

21 *HEccI* LI, 8; E. BECK, ed., *De Ecclesia*, 132-133. English trans.
 quoted from S. BROCK, *Luminous Eye*, 33

22 In the *Commentary on Genesis* Ephrem mentioned this scientific
 fact. "For *Nisan* was the first month; in it the number of hours of day
 and night were equal." *CGen* I, 81; English trans. E. G. MATHEWS –
 J. P. AMAR, tr., *St. Ephrem the Syrian Selected Prose works*, 74.

23 EPHREM, *CEx* V, 31. English trans. E. G. MATHEWS – J. P. AMAR, tr.,
St. Ephrem the Syrian Selected Prose works, 237. "In *Nisan*, hidden
 flowers sprang forth, and children came forth from the inner
 chambers." *HAzym*, 8, 9; English trans. J. E. WALTERS, ed. – tr.,
Hymns on the Unleavened Bread, 46-47.

24 P. BEDJAN ed., *Homiliae Selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis* III, 12813-14.

25 "The children of Israel did so; they at the Passover in the fourteenth
 of the first month, which is *Nisan*, in the month of flowers, the first

and daily offices praise and compare the fairness of flowers of *Nisan*.

How beautiful are you, O daughter of gentiles and how fair to look upon.

King Solomon sings your praise – O Holy Church.

Your lips drop honey; the fragrance of your garment is like – roses in *Nisan*,

and you are altogether beautiful and spotless.

Christ the King guards you as – you worship His Cross.

Halleluiah and Halleluiah.²⁶

In the Book of Common Prayer, *Qolo* of the fourth service of night vigil of the Thursday remembrance of the saints compared to the fairness of flowers in the month of *Nisan*.

How lovely is the day of remembrance, O Mar (Thomas); it is like *Nisan* which is all adorned with flowers: *Nisan* gladdens the earth with its flowers, and your remembrance gives joy to all of us; may your prayer be with us.²⁷

All the Salvific work of God happened in the month of *Nisan*

According to Syriac fathers especially Aphrahat and Ephrem all the Salvific incidents such as creation, Passover of Israel,²⁸ giving of covenant on Mount Sinai (betrothal of Israel)²⁹, entry into the

month of the year." APHRAHAT, *The Demonstration on Passover*, 1; English trans. K. VALAVANOLICKAL, tr., *Aphrahat Demonstrations II*, 19-24.

26 Cf. *Qolo* of Blessings of the Crowns in the Service of Matrimony, Syriac text and Malayalam trans. *Koodasa Kramangal*, 96; English trans. B. VARGHESE, *Order of the Sacraments*, 46.

27 *Awsa~r Slawo~t'o*, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 653.

2 "The month of flowers, the sea became a trap and refuge, for it saved and Killed." *Hazym*, 8, 4; English trans. J. E. WALTERS, ed. – tr., *Hymns on the Unleavened Bread*, 42-43. Here Ephrem mentioned on the Israelites crossing over the red sea and the destruction of Pharaoh and his army.

29 Cf. *HRes III*, 2; E. BECK, ed., *De Resurrectione*, 85.

promised land,³⁰ incarnation, crucifixion³¹ and resurrection of Christ were happened in the month of *Nisan*.

In the *Commentary on Diatessaron* Ephrem wrote the Passover of Israel happened in *Nisan*. He writes thus “God was victorious over the Egyptians in [the month of] *Nisan*, and he lit up [the way for] the Hebrews with the pillar [of fire] in *Nisan*.”³² Ephrem summed up the whole salvation incidents that happened in the month of *Nisan* in a single paragraph. In the *Commentary on Exodus* he narrated thus:

The Passover lamb is a symbol of our Lord who came to the womb on the tenth of *Nisan*. From the tenth of the seventh month (Tishri), when Zachariah received the announcement of the birth of John, up to the first month (*Nisan*), when the announcement was made to Mary by the angel, constitutes six months. That was why the *angel said to her* ‘*This is the sixth month for her who had been called barren*’. On the tenth of *Nisan*, therefore, when the Passover lamb was confined, our Lord was conceived, and on the fourteenth, when it was slaughtered, He whom the lamb symbolizes was crucified.³³

For Ephrem, the Christ, the real paschal lamb, enters Mary’s womb on the tenth of *Nisan*. Thus he confirmed the prominence of *Nisan*. According to Brock the feast of Annunciation of Mary on

30 “The month of flowers, the Jordan river split apart its waves in the presence of the symbol of its Lord.” *Hazym*, 8, 16; English trans. J. E. WALTERS, ed. – tr., *Hymns on the Unleavened Bread*, 44-45.

31 “Come, my brethrens, let us celebrate in the month of *Nisan* the feast of the victories of the true lamb *Resp*. Our congregation gives thanks to the Paschal lamb who slaughtered the ravenous wolves in *Nisan*.” *Hazym*, 13, 1; English trans. J. E. WALTERS, ed. – tr., *Hymns on the Unleavened Bread*, 52-53.

32 *CDiat*, 21, 5; English trans. *Saint Ephrem’s Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron*, C. McCarthy, tr., 319.

33 Ephrem, *CEx* XII, 2-3. English trans. E. G. MATHEWS – J. P. AMAR, tr., *St. Ephrem the Syrian Selected Prose works*, 246-247.

March 25 does not appear to have become prominent at all until the sixth century; it is obviously linked with the feast of the Nativity December 25, a date which was certainly not yet known to Ephrem.³⁴ In the *Hymns on Nativity* he clearly mentioned this.

The lord of the months chose, two months for His actions:
His conception took place in *Nisan*, and His birth in *Conun*
(January)

In *Nisan* he sanctified those conceived, and those born He
freed in *Conun*.

Blessed is He who gladdens with His months.

Three months plaited [a crown] and with victories they
crowned Him.

The blessed [month] served His birth, the desirable His
resurrection,

the joyful His ascension. The months carried His crowns.

Blessed is the One Who triumphed in His months!³⁵

Ephrem's *Hymns on Resurrection* is the climax of the month of *Nisan*. In the third, fourth and fifth hymns in the *Ma~dros~e on Resurrection* more focused on the priority of *Nisan*.

Primarily he connected with the whole paschal events such as the institution of Holy Eucharist, Crucifixion, and Resurrection with the month of *Nisan*.

In the [month] of *Nisan*, our Lord descended from the height,
and Mary received him.

Again in the Same *Nisan*, he resurrected and ascended [into
heaven]

Again Mary saw him, when he descended she touched
him.....

34 Cf. S. BROCK, *Luminous Eye*, 108-110.

35 *HNat*, XXII: 6, 8. E. BECK, ed., *De Nativitate (Epiphania)*, 110-111. English trans. K. E. McVEY, tr., *Ephrem the Syrian Hymns*, 180-181.

Nisan, the blessed [month] you saw the conception, end [death] and resurrection of your Lord.³⁶

Like the house of mysteries *Nisan* had run towards our Lord, because Moses entrusted the hidden mysteries to *Nisan* at Egypt.

Nisan carrying its own mysteries,

Blessed *Nisan* you saw two Passovers, Passover of Moses and Passover of Our Lord.³⁷

Secondly he narrated on peculiarities of *Nisan* in a comparison with other months.

O *Nisan*, the victorious month, the all days circulating him, all the months surrounding him on the right and left.

Half of the months on its one side and the other half on the other side,

Tishri, the month of abundance stands against a far and offer an offering.

Blessed is the power who ordering all.³⁸

***Nisan* is the type of Christ and His love**

In the literary works of Syriac Fathers they used *Nisan* as a type of Christ. They spiritually envisioned and connected the fairness and climate in the month of *Nisan* to the salvific deeds of Christ. According to Ephrem *Nisan* is described as covering with mysteries and carrying types.³⁹ The feast of Resurrection falls in *Nisan*, so he attributed the theological significance of Christ's Resurrection to the quality of the month of *Nisan*.

36 Cf. *HRes* IV, 13; E. BECK, ed., *De Resurrectione*, 92. (Translation in mine).

37 Cf. *HRes* IV, 15; E. BECK, ed., *De Resurrectione*, 92. (Translation in mine).

38 Cf. *HRes* III, 14; E. BECK, ed., *De Resurrectione*, 87. (Translation in mine).

39 *HRes*, IV, 6.

For Ephrem, the sense of the renewal and re-establishment of the creation which Christ has inaugurated by his Resurrection grows strongest, of course, in the Paschal month of *Nisan*, which he chanted in a series of hymns.⁴⁰ It relieved and took away the burden over the creatures and crowned everyone. Resurrection liberated all the captives from death and sin. Ephrem narrated all these results of Resurrection to the quality of the month of *Nisan*. For Ephrem, *Nisan* is the type of Resurrection of Christ and symbol of God's love for humanity.⁴¹

Nisan that restores all roots was not able to restore that aged people.⁴²

In Ephrem's epoch, the baptism was preceded by a period of fasting (a penitential discipline) and was administered with the Paschal celebration.⁴³ In his *Hymns on Virginity*, he mentioned on the acts of baptism in early churchindicted THAT. In the hymn, Ephrem described the process of initiation such as Pre-baptismal anointing, triple immersion into water and clothing of white garment.

Tishri (October) revives the weary from the dust and dirt of summer;
its rain bathes and its dew anoints even the trees and their fruits.
Nisan revives fasters, anoints, dips and whitens;

40 Cf. R. MURRAY, "The Ephremic Tradition and the Theology of the Environment", 77.

41 *HRes*, IV, 82. "Thick tunic of darkness is torn in [the month of] *Nisan*,

The lightning sparkling in the darkness, its rays breaks it,
Feast celebrated in *Nisan* breaks the tombs by the voice.

The death which kills all, heard the voice of which lives all,
get up and abandon its treasures. Glory to you Son, who lives all.
HRes, IV, 10.

42 *HAzym* XVII, 1; E. BECK, ed., *De Azzymis*, 31. English trans. J. E. WALTERS, ed. – tr., *Hymns on the Unleavened Bread*, 76.

43 Cf. E. FERGUSON, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 506-508.

its scours the dirt of sin from our souls.

Tishri tramples the oil for us; Nisan increases mercy for us.

In Tishri fruits are harvested; in Nisan debts are forgiven.⁴⁴

He also pointed to the gifts of baptism. The remission of debts and forgiveness of sin are considered as the gifts of holy Baptism. Though, here Ephrem described those gifts and attributed to the excellence of month of *Nisan*.

Ephrem also connected the climatic conditions of *Nisan* to the theological significance of Resurrection. During the month of *Nisan* thunderstorms are common in the climate of the Middle East. So Ephrem chanted thus:

After the desolation of winter, the deaf and dumb,
Nisan has thundered;
 it is the sound of the universe which he has calmed;
 he has calmed the sea by the voice of oarsman,
 he has calmed the desert by the voice of folks,
 the air by the voice of birds.

In *Nisan* the desolation of Sheol is calmed
 for the Living voice has entered.⁴⁵

The earth thunders out below,
 heaven above roars with thunder:
Nisan has mingled together the two sounds-
 of those above and those below.⁴⁶

In *Nisan*, the eloquent one brought forth voices
 so that they were not afraid like children.⁴⁷

44 *HVirg*, VII, 2; E. BECK, ed., *De virginitate*, 25. English trans. K. E. McVEY, tr., *Ephrem the Syrian Hymns*, 293.

45 *HRes* V, 41-7; E. BECK, ed., *De Resurrectione*, 93-94. English trans. in R. MURRAY, "The Ephremic Tradition and the Theology of the Environment", 77.

46 *HRes* II, 31-4; E. BECK, ed., *De Resurrectione*, 83. English trans. S. BROCK, tr., *The Harp of the Spirit*, 73.

47 *HAzym*, VIII, 13; English trans. J. E. WALTERS, ed. – tr., *Hymns on the Unleavened Bread*, 46-47.

Following the Ephrem, Jacob of Serugh also saw *Nisan* as the type of Christ. In the homily *on the Ascension of Our Lord*, Jacob narrates *Nisan* is a symbol of Christ.

He became a great *Nisan* that is full of glory for the earth,
and as blossoms, he set forth healings for the afflicted.⁴⁸

Nisan is the spring month after winter (which is the sign of death, captivity, and lack of fruits etc.) in which the whole creation rejoices with flowers and fruits; it signifies new life and salvation in the Resurrection of Christ.⁴⁹ For Jacob of Serugh the third day of *Nisan* is a symbol of the Resurrection of Christ.⁵⁰

48 JACOB OF SERUGH, *Homily on the Ascension of Our Lord*, 67-68, English trans. T. KOLLAMPARAMPIL, tr., *Selected Festal Homilies*, 334.

49 Cf. T. KOLLAMPARAMPIL, tr., *Selected Festal Homilies*, 334. Ephrem have the same opinion on the month of *Nisan*. *HAzym* XVII, 1

50 In New Testament understanding 'the third day' signifies the resurrection of Christ. Act. 10, 40. The establishment of Eden on the third day of creation is a prominent factor in the Syriac understanding. Resurrection too came about on the third day. It was on the month of *Nisan* the world was created. Cf. T. JANSMA, "L'Hexameiron de Jacques of Sarou'g", 22. According to Ephrem Paradise planted on the third day of creation. He Said "Eden is a land of Paradise and [Moses] said previously because God had [already] planted it on the third day." *CGen* II, 52; English trans. E. G. Mathews – J. P. Amar, tr., *St. Ephrem the Syrian Selected Prose works*, 75; *HNat*, 26, 6. Ephrem also gave importance to the numeral three. In the *Nisibean hymns* he used an expression "ܐܠܗܝܬܐ" to denote the Christ. EPHREM, *HNis*, 1, 116-16; E. BECK, ed., *De Caramina Nisiben*, 6. Jacob followed this thought and repeated in his homily on *Hexameron*. According to him the third day of creation is like the resurrection (ܪܥܘܘܬܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ) for the earth. He writes thus:

"The third (day) was the resurrection for the sea,
in fact the fifth day was become the third (day) for the seas.
On the third day the waters gathered and became seas,
and this fifth (day) was the third day for them."

"And the fourth day was the third (day) for the firmament,
and in it fairness of all the luminaries was resurrected and restored."

P. BEDJAN ed., *Homiliae selectae Mar Jacobi Sarugensis* III, 877-10,

Conclusion

Due to the Jewish influence and Mesopotamian background Syriac fathers gave a prominence to the month of *Nisan*. They envisioned creation and all the redemptive work of God happened in the month of *Nisan*. Additional to the Mesopotamian and Jewish understanding on *Nisan*, Syriac fathers added the main events of Christ's incarnation to the excellence of *Nisan*. They connected the fairness and freshness of spring season in *Nisan* to the redemptive deed of God. In the month of *Nisan* all the nature renews and rejoices with flowers and fairness. Like this through the incarnation of Christ especially His resurrection renews the whole creatures. So according to Syriac patristic tradition Christ and his Resurrection became great *Nisan* for us.

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THREE SPECIAL FAMILIES IN OXFORD WITH FOUR SPECIAL SCHOLARS AND THE OLD BAILEY IN LONDON*

**Due to an error in the final printing process the text which should have appeared instead of the pages 66-87 in the Festschrift in honour of Rev. Dr. Thomas Koonammakkal in The Harp 34 (2018), has unfortunately not been printed in the correct complete form and wording. Here the text that should have been printed, is presented in the complete and proper version as a corrigenda to the Festschrift in the form of a separate article. Since this text must now stand alone by itself in this subsequent volume of the Harp and be printed as an article by itself separated from the text of the Festschrift in the previous volume of the Harp, it has been necessary to provide the footnotes in this part with new numbering. The complete text presented here must therefore naturally be read together with the article of mine on Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar already printed in the Festschrift in the Harp 34 (2018), pp. 15-161, where also this text in the present volume of the Harp belongs as an integral part.*

1. The Mayers

During our years in Oxford I brought you, Fr. Thomas¹, along to Dr. Philip Mayer and his wife Iona in Woodstock Rd 112. They were both anthropologists. One of the first days of mine in Oxford I was standing at my pigeon hole in porter's loge in college to collect my mail. Suddenly I heard somebody there mentioning my name "Arne." I did not reach to turn around before somebody said loudly: "There he is!" I turned around and there stood Iona right in front of me greeting me, a person I had never seen before, but only heard about. She found me! From relatives in Jerusalem she had heard rumours that I would come up to Oxford.

Philip Mayer (1910-1995) was son of Gustav Jacoby Mayer (1871-1948) who was born in Prenzlau Landkreis Uckermark, Brandenburg, Germany, and wife Flora *Wolff* Mayer (1882 Berlin – 1962 Eastern Cape, South Africa). Jacoby Mayer was a social democratic historian who wrote a biography of Frederick Engels and attended the Zimmerwald conference of anti-war socialists in 1915. He was a professor at the University of Berlin and a leading historian of the German labour movement. He was a Jewish non-Zionist.

Philip Mayer (Ulrich Philip Mayer) was born in Zehlendorf, Berlin, on 21 May 1910 and a distinguished social anthropologist.

Gustav Mayer (the father) and Philip Mayer (the son) must be understood also on the background of Philip's father's friendship with Karl Jaspers through the marriage of the latter with Gertrud *Mayer* Jaspers, the sister of Gustav Mayer. Philip Mayer married his wife Iona in 1946.

Gustav Jacoby Mayer (Prenzlau 4 Oct 1871 – London 21 Febr 1948) was born of the parents David Mayer (1834-1929) and Clara Devora Gottschalk Mayer (1845-1912). He grew up in a long established merchant family in Prenzlau, studied economics

1 Koonammakkal Thoma Kathanar.

1890-93 and took a doctorate on Ferdinand Lassalle (Ferdinand Johann Gottlieb Lassal 1825-1864). Lasalle was a journalist and socialist politician of the German Federation and one of the leading spokespersons of the German labour movement.

Between 1896-1906 Gustav Mayer worked for the newspaper *Frankfurter Zeitung* as a trade, business and foreign correspondent covering the Netherlands, Belgium and France. In 1905 or 1906 Gustav married Henriette Flora Wolff (1882–1963) who came from a wealthy family. They got the two sons Peter Mayer (1907-1941) and Ulrich Philip Mayer (1910-1995). His marriage with Henriette allowed him the economic freedom to occupy himself with a career of work as a private tutor and freelance journalist. Soon he engaged himself in full time research of the German Labour Movement, first in Heidelberg and later in Berlin. His studies were, however, halted when World War I broke out in 1914, a war which lasted from 28 July 1914 till 11 November 1918. He was conscribed for service in Belgium. He submitted a dissertation to the Philosophy Faculty of Berlin University in 1918, but failed in earning the qualification of the habilitation he had hoped for. In 1919 he got a teaching position on the History of Democracy, which was extended in 1922 to a full professorship on the History of Political Parties, first at the University of Berlin, afterwards at Frankfurt am Main.

Already in 1920 he had published the first volume of his *Friedrich Engels in seiner Frühzeit (The early years of Friedrich Engels): 1820 bis 1851*. Springer, Berlin 1920. He had planned it as the first volume of a two-volume biography, but in 1933 when the second volume was printed and ready for distribution (*Friedrich Engels in seiner Frühzeit*. Ullstein. Berlin 1933), the distribution was banned already at the beginning of the year following a change in government in Germany. Instead it was produced in the Netherlands by the publisher Martinus Nijhoff of Leiden.

Gustav Mayer left Germany between 1933 and 1936. The date is not clear. According to some sources he seems to have

been based in the Netherlands, while another says that it took him three years to arrange his family's emigration. The reason was difficulties over the size of his pension. Eventually a ban on transferring pension abroad was introduced so the question proved irrelevant. Another impoverishment was the demands from the authorities of an Emigration Tax ("*Reichsfluchtsteuer*") which in the end amounted to as much as 65,000 German mark.

In London he became a staff member of the International Institute of Social History (IISH) and by 1936 he had managed to obtain an unpaid / honorary fellowship with the London School of Economics. With his poor English he had no hope of obtaining an academic teaching post. World War II broke out in 1939. The family was evacuated to the countryside. There were no research libraries in the vicinity so the situation for writing and research was difficult. In 1940 he was, with the help of a relative, secured an annual stipend of £ 300 from the Rockefeller Foundation. Other sources of income were gone. Early in 1941 the son Peter (Peter Mayer 1907-1941) committed suicide and added to the already greatly felt and experienced ongoing family tragedy of losing also so many friends and relatives in the slaughters that were in progress and took place by the Holocaust (Shoa) in Germany. Philip Ulrich Mayer, their younger son, settled in England. He abandoned his first name Ulrich and became known as Philip Mayer.

Gustav Mayer has written among others:

Friedrich Engels. Eine Biographie Bd. 1: *Friedrich Engels in seiner Frühzeit* Ullstein. Frankf. a. M.; Berling 1975. Bd. 2: *Engels und der Aufstieg der Arbeiterbewegung in Europa*. Martinus Nijhoff, Haag ²1934/1934 (1st ed. 1920; 1933 pulped / German: "eingestampft"); *Ferdinand Lassalle: Nachgelassene Briefe und Schriften*. Hrsg. von Gustav Mayer. 6 Bde., Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart 1921–1925; *Bismarck und Lassalle. Ihr Briefwechsel und ihre Gespräche*. J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., Berlin 1928; *Erinnerungen. Vom Journalisten zum Historiker der*

deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Europaverlag, Zürich 1949; *Radikalismus, Sozialismus und bürgerliche Demokratie*, hrsg. und mit einem Nachwort versehen von Hans-Ulrich Wehler. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1969.

Gustav Mayer had a sister whose name was Gertrud Mayer Jaspers (1879-1974) and who was married to Karl Theodor Jaspers (23 Febr 1883 Oldenburg – 26 Febr 1969 Basel, Switzerland). In order to understand the life and thought of Gustav Mayer and his son Philip Mayer and the society and environment into which they were born and by which they were more profoundly influenced, let us take a look on Karl Jaspers (the spouse of the sister of Gustav Mayer), his philosophy and writings.

Karl Jaspers was a German philosopher keenly interested in psychiatry from his early days.² He was a volunteer research assistant at the University of Heidelberg psychiatric clinic 1909-1915 and completed his textbook on psychopathology *Allgemeine Psychopathologie (General Psychopathology)*, Springer, Berlin)

2 To Karl Jaspers, see e.g. Hans Saner: *Karl Jaspers in der Diskussion*, hrsg. von Hans Saner. Mit Beiträgen von Hannah Arendt et al. Piper. München [1973]; For studies on *Karl Jaspers*, consult further e.g. Arthur Schilpp (ed.): *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*. W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 1957. Augmented ed. Open Court Pub. La Salle 1981, containing 24 critical contributions on different aspects of Jaspers' work—the most important publication in English; Charles F. Wallraff: *Karl Jaspers: An Introduction to His Philosophy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton 2015 (including a bibliography of Jaspers' writings); Adolph Lichtigfeld: *Aspects of Jaspers' Philosophy*, 2nd enlarged ed. Pretoria 1971; Oswald O. Schrag: *Existence, Existenz, and Transcendence: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*. Duquesne University Press. Pittsburgh, Pa. [1971]; Sebastian Samay: *Reason Revisited: The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*. Notre Dame, Ind, 1971; Leonard H. Ehrlich: *Karl Jaspers: Philosophy as Faith*. The University of Massachusetts Press. Amherst 1975; Elisabeth Young-Bruehl: *Freedom and Karl Jaspers's Philosophy*. Yale University Press, New Haven [etc.] 1981.

in 1913. In 1913 Jaspers joined The Faculty of philosophy of the University of Heidelberg. He was appointed assistant professor in psychology in 1916; assistant professor in philosophy in 1920; professor in philosophy in 1921; and he took over the second chair in that field in 1922. In 1919 came his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen (Psychology of World Views)* where he intended to set the limits of a psychological understanding of man. Here he foreshadows the basic themes to be fully developed later in his major philosophical works. Jasper attempts to clarify the relationship of philosophy to science by investigating the legitimate boundaries of philosophical knowledge. For Jaspers the idea of being oneself signified “the potentiality to realize one’s freedom of being in the world. Thus, the task of philosophy was to appeal to the freedom of the individual as the subject who thinks and exists and to focus on man’s existence as the centre of all reality.”³ He worked on these ideas from 1920-1930 during which years he also became a friend of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) who is best known for his contributions to phenomenology, hermeneutics and existentialism. Later this friendship broke up because of Heidegger joining the National Socialist German Workers’ (Nazi) Party in 1933 and the latter’s enthusiastic support of the Nazis. Among Gustav Mayer’s and Karl Jasper’s acquaintances among contemporary German intellectuals were also Martin Buber (1878-1965) and Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954).

The intellectual work of Karl Jaspers manifested itself soon in several publications: *Die geistige Situation der Zeit (Man in the Modern Age)*, de Gruyter, Berlin 1933; *Philosophie 1: Philosophische Weltorientierung*. Springer, Berlin 1932 and *Philosophie 2: Existenzerhellung*. Springer 1932; *Max Weber*. Stalling, Oldenburg 1932.

3 Hans Saner: “Karl Jaspers: German philosopher”, Britannica online Feb 22, 2020.

Because of his Jewish wife Gertrud *Mayer* Jaspers, he was considered as an enemy of the German state. In 1933 he was excluded from the higher councils of the University of Heidelberg, but was allowed to continue to teach and publish. He wrote *Vernunft und Existenz (Reason and Existence)*. J.B. Wolters, Groningen 1935; *Nietzsche*. Berlin & Leipzig 1936; *Descartes und die Philosophie (Descartes and the Philosophy)*. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1937; *Existenzphilosophie (Philosophy of Existence)*. De Gruyter. Berlin & Leipzig 1938.

Jaspers “was not prepared to make any concessions to the doctrines of National Socialism. Consequently, a series of decrees were promulgated against him, including removal from his professorship and a total ban on any further publication. These measures effectively barred him from carrying on his work in Germany.”⁴ He was in 1942 offered leave to Switzerland on the condition by the Nazis that his wife remained in Germany. He refused and stayed with his wife. He became disillusioned of what happened in Germany and withdrew more and more. Science had betrayed man. In his revision of *General Psychopathology* he tries distinctively to let it demonstrate “the high point of a free but responsible search for knowledge of man,” and in his *Von der Wahrheit (Of Truth)*, Piper, München 1947, he attempts to “throw the light of reason on the irrational teachings of the times”⁵

After World War II Jaspers met the challenge of rebuilding the university. A moral and political rebirth of the people was necessary. In his *Die Idee der Universität (The Idea of the University)*, Springer. Berlin & Heidelberg 1946) he presents his thoughts on how the universities could best be rebuilt: the teaching staff had to be completely de-nazified. It proved, however, not possible. The number of professors who had not compromised with the Nazi regime was too small. To the rebuilding of Germany and the rebirth

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

of its moral and politics belonged also an acknowledgment of national guilt.

In one of his best political works, *Die Schuldfrage* 1946 (*The Question of German Guilt* 1947), he stated that whoever had participated actively in the preparation or execution of war crimes and crimes against humanity was *morally guilty*. Those, however, who passively tolerated these happenings because they did not want to become victims of Nazism were only *politically responsible*. In this respect, all survivors of this era bore the same responsibility and shared a *collective guilt*. He felt that the fact that no one could escape this collective guilt and responsibility might enable the German people to transform their society from its state of collapse into a more highly developed and morally responsible democracy. The fact that these ideas attracted hardly any attention was a further disappointment to Jaspers.⁶

In spring of 1948 he departed for Basel, Switzerland, having accepted a professorship in philosophy. Many Germans considered this as a betrayal. He wanted to revise again his whole approach to philosophy. He was convinced that “modern technology in the sphere of communication and warfare had made it imperative for mankind to strive for world unity. This new development in his thinking was defined by him as *world philosophy*, and its primary task was the creation of a mode of thinking that could contribute to the possibility of a free world order.”⁷ The transition *from existence philosophy to world philosophy* was based on his belief that a different kind of logic would make it possible for free communication to exist among all mankind. His *Der philosophische Glaube* (*The Philosophical Belief*), Piper, Munchen 1948; *The Perennial Scope of Philosophy*. Philosophical Library. New York 1949, and *Der philosophische Glaube angesichts der Offenbarung* (*The Philosophical meeting the Revelation*). Piper, Munchen 1962; and *Philosophical Faith and Revelation*. Harper & Row, New York 1967) describe this further.

6 *Ibid.* Italics by the undersigned.

7 *Ibid.*

Jasper argued that since all thought in its essence rests on beliefs, he reasoned, the task confronting man is to free philosophical thinking from all attachments to the transient objects of this world. To replace previous objectifications of all metaphysical and religious systems, Jaspers introduced the concept of the *cipher*. This was a philosophical abstraction that could represent all systems, provided that they entered into communication with one another by means of the cipher. In other words, the concept of the cipher enabled a common ground to be shared by all of the various systems of thought, thus leading to a far greater tolerance than had ever before been possible⁸.

To what degree all past thought could become communicable, is the topic Jasper deals with in his world history of philosophy: *Die grossen Philosophen*. Piper, Munchen 1957; and *The Great Philosophers*. Vol. 1-2, 1962 and 1966.

In his *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*. Artemis-Verlag, Zurich 1949 (*The Origin and Goal of History*, Routledge K. Paul, London 1953) Jaspers writes a universal history of the world. The axial period (from 800 to 200 BC) is at the centre of history. All the fundamental creations that underlie man's current civilization came into being during this period. In his *Die Atombombe und die Zukunft des Menschen: politisches Bewusstsein in unserer Zeit*. Piper, München 1958 (*The Future of Mankind*. University of Chicago Press, Chicalgo 1961) he realized the possibility of a political unity of the world with the aim not being absolute sovereignty, but rather a world confederation. Within this world confederation the various entities could live and communicate in freedom and peace.

Jasper felt that the effort of building a democracy in Germany moved more and more in the direction of a national oligarchy of parties where a small group of people had control of the country. In his *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* Piper. Munchen 1966 (*The Future of Germany*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago 1967) Jaspers vehemently cirtzises and attacks this tendency.

8 *Ibid.* Italics by the undersigned.

“This book caused much annoyance among West German politicians of all shades. Jaspers, in turn, reacted to their unfair reception by returning his German passport in 1967 and taking out Swiss citizenship.”⁹

Philip Mayer went to Heidelberg in 1928 to study law having the aim of serving his own country by entering the civil service of the Weimar Republic. At the beginning of his final oral examination in 1933, however, he told me, that he experienced a mob of the “Assault Division” (German “Sturmabteilung” or abbreviated SA), also called the “Storm Troopers” or “Brownshirts” (German “Sturmtruppen” or “Braunhemden”) of the German Nazi Party bursting into the court buildings dragging him down the stairs and out. He hardly escaped. As a Jew, socialist and Weimar supporter, he was accused of acting against and undermining the true interest of the Fatherland. The Brownshirts were a paramilitary organization whose methods of violent intimidation played a key role in Adolf Hitler’s rise to power. He passed his exam later and started on his doctoral dissertation. It became clear, however, for Philip that he could not continue with his career plans in Germany. It contradicted his self understanding, his identity and view of being himself and his family fully assimilated German citizens and fully assimilated to German culture. So he moved to Switzerland to complete his doctorate in 1934.

Philip Mayer was awarded the degree of Dr. Jur. on his thesis “Die ungeschriebene Tatbestandsmerkmale der unechten Unterlassungsdelikte in deutschen Strafrecht (The unwritten Distinguishing Features of Non-genuine Crimes of Omission in German Criminal Law)” at the University of Heidelberg on 9 August 1934.¹⁰ Then he still bore the name Ulrich Mayer.

9 *Ibid.*

10 The Heidelberg library index card, however, has the following information about title and details: “Die besonderen Tatbestandsmerkmale der unechten Unterlassungsdelikte” - (Berlin 1933: Bkic) vi, 89 S. 8° Heidelberg, Jur. Diss. v. 9. Aug. 1934.

Because of his experiences with the Nazis he was eager to go to Palestine, but was convinced by his father to try to settle in a European country. He moved to London in 1935 to study accountancy at the London School of Economics. At that time he contacted the Jewish Agency.

Pinhas Rutenberg (1879-1942) was a former activist in the revolutionary movement in Russia born in Ukraine who had turned Zionist. He was forced to immigrate to Italy in 1907. He was the head of the Palestine Electric Company and offered Philip a job. The condition was, however, that Philip spoke Hebrew before Pinhas' next visit to London. Philip left for Haifa in 1936 after having learned Hebrew without any delay. Philip, a strong Zionist and a member of the Haganah, became aware of the huge gulf that separated the Jews and the Arabs. In his will Rutenberg wrote few weeks before he died in 1942: "The split in our people to sects, ethnic groups and political parties had always worked against us. This war between brothers had led us to trouble, and if we won't cease it will destroy us... whether we like it or not, we are in the same boat - let's understand each other and be brothers for creation, operation and building."¹¹

War was declared in 1939 on the day after his return to England to visit his parents in 1939. This meant that he was unable to return to Palestine, and under his terms of entry he was forbidden to work. Philip could not practice law in England since he was educated in the system of law in Germany, which was very different from that in Britain. In this situation he started studies again completing his second doctoral thesis. So in 1944 he was awarded the degree of D.Phil. from Oxford University on his thesis on "The Agrarian Problems of Iraq."

Philip met his future wife Iona Simon (2 June 1923 -) in Oxford.¹² They got married in 1946 and started to work together.

11 World Zionist Organization, The Zentral Zionist Archive online version 21.02.2020; see also Tidhar, D. In: Encyclopedia of the Founders and Builders of Israel, Vol. 2, 1947, pp. 866-868.

12 On Iona Simon, see below.

“By the end of the war, he was lecturing on the Middle East to British Army staff for the Oxford external studies department. His work interlinked with the Colonial Office.”¹³ Being offered a job as government sociologist in Kenya in 1946, he went to Kenya for three years doing research on the Gusii people. Iona was with him as paid assistant. She caught interest in it from a more feministic perspective and did a PhD related to that. In 1949 he returned to England and was appointed a Lecturer in Social Anthropology at Birbeck College, London, and part-time Lecturer in the Faculty of Archeology and Anthropology at Cambridge University. In 1951 he was awarded the degree of B.Sc. in Social Anthropology by the University of Oxford.

After this period in Britain Philip Mayer went to Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa in 1952 (another source says 1953) to be Professor of Social Anthropology and Head of the Department of African Studies between 1953 and 1964. His work together with his wife on *Townsmen and Tribesmen* from 1961 is part of a trilogy edited by him on the subject of the Bantu speaking people of East London, Cape Province (*Xhosa in Town: Studies of the Bantu-speaking population of East London, Cape Province*, by Rhodes University, Institute of Social and Economic Research. Oxford University Press. Cape Town & New York 1961-1963) and is “a major study of African interaction with Western industrialised society.”¹⁴ Archie Mafeje (1936-2007) argued in an essay published in 1996 “that Philip Mayer’s Jewish identity explained the empathy with which he wrote about the conservative ‘Reds’ of East London in *Townsmen and Tribesmen*. Mafeje contrasted this with his former mentor Monica Wilson’s sympathy for the schooled Christian township elite ...”¹⁵

13 “Philip Mayer.” Jewish Chronicle 17 March 1995.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Andrew Bank: “Family, Friends and Mentors: Monica Hunter at Lovedale and Cambridge, 1908-1930.” in *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and her Interpreters*, edited by

In 1964 Philip Mayer was appointed Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, doing further research. He was back in England being appointed a newly established Readership in Anthropology at Durham University from 1 October 1965¹⁶ and promoted Professor in 1968.¹⁷ During 1967-68 he was appointed Chairman of the Board of Studies in Anthropology. He was appointed to a Chair of Anthropology, personal to himself, on 1 October 1968. He was on study leave during Michaelmas Term to conduct fieldwork among urban youth in South Africa, with a grant from the Social Science Research Council and was awarded the Rivers Memorial Medal for Anthropological Research by the Royal Anthropological Institute.¹⁸

The Department of Anthropology had come into being in October 1967 and had taken Iranian Studies as a focus of interest. It was reported that Dr. Mayer, Head of the Department, would be visiting Iran in the near future.¹⁹ Philip Mayer received a grant from Middle Eastern Centre to visit Persia to report on research priorities in the field of Social Anthropology.²⁰

In Epiphany Term (the second term at Durham) the University agreed to his taking leave of absence in 1970 and 1971 for continued research on youth problems in Africa and on African Urbanism.²¹ In January 1970 he went on leave for two years from

Andrew Bank (Univ. of Western Cape, South Africa) and Leslie J. Bank (Univ. of Fort Harare, South Africa). International African Institute, London and Cambridge University Press. Cambridge 2013, p. 37.

16 "Appointments" U.D.G., N.S. 12 (26 June 1965) 5 [U.D.G. = University of Durham Gazette].

17 "Appointments" U.D.G., N.S. 16 (31 December 1968) 3.

18 University of Durham: Report of the Vice-Chancellor and Warden for the year 1967-68, p. 11.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 57f.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

21 University of Durham: Report of the Vice-Chancellor and Warden for the year 1968-69, p. 82.

which he does not seem to have returned. In 1969-70 he and his wife were back in South Africa again doing field work on migrant labour. He was director of a major project on migrant labour which was published in 1980 (*Black Villagers in an Industrial Society*. Cape Town 1980).

Iona's interests were more formed by feministic perspectives. She was quite involved in Black Sash, a radical women's advice organization serving black South Africans. Both Philip Mayer and his wife Iona were concerned about the system in South Africa, as they had always been. Although they had a circle of politically active friends, and their research was clearly critical, Philip Mayer always remained cautious, perhaps because of his experiences in Germany.

Till around the early 80s they stayed on in South Africa. Then they retired to Oxford where they remained academically active with friends and colleagues in the South African History Department. Philip Mayer died in Oxford on 2 January 1995 at the age of 84 years.

Philip Mayer became Dr. Jur. on his thesis "Die ungeschriebene Tatbestandsmerkmale der unechten Unterlassungsdelikte in deutschen Strafrecht (The unwritten Distinguishing Features of Non-genuine Crimes of Omission in German Criminal Law)" at the University of Heidelberg in 1934. Then he bore the name Ulrich Mayer. In 1944 he took his doctorate in Oxford University on "The Agrarian Problems of Iraq."

Philip Mayer has also written among others *Britain and Arab nationalism in Iraq* (1941 also then under the name Ulrich Mayer); *A Bibliography on Land Tenure in the British Colonies* (London 1946); *Reading List on Rural Conditions and Betterment in the British Colonies*, London (Oxford Univ. Press) 1947; on the Gusii society [*The Lineage Principle in Gusii Society*, London / New York (Oxford Univ. Press) 1949]; "Privileged obstruction of marriage rites among the Gusii" *Africa* 20 (1950) 113-125; "The joking of

‘pals’ in Gusii age-sets”, *African Studies* 9 (1950) 27-41; *Gusii Bridewealth Law and Custom*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers 18. London (Oxford Univ. Press) 1951 and Manchester (Manchester Univ. Press) (on behalf of the Institute for African Studies, University of Zambia) 1975; “Gusii initiation ceremonies”, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Society* 83,1 (1953); *Ekeigoroigoro: A Gusii rite of passage*, *Man* 53,2:3-6 (1953)]; *Two Studies in Applied Anthropology in Kenya*. His Majesty’s Stationary Office for the Colonial Office. London 1951; *Witches*. Inaugural Lecture delivered at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, 1954; repr. in: M. Marwick (ed.), *Witchcraft and Sorcery*, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1970; “Migrancy and the study of Africans in towns”, *American Anthropologist* 64/2 (1962) 576-592; *Xhosa in town: Studies of the Bantu-speaking Population of East London, Cape Province*. A series of three monographs edited by Philip Mayer: I. *The Black Man’s Portion*, by D. H. Reader (1961); II. *Townsmen and Tribesmen*, by Philip Mayer (and Iona Mayer) (1961); III. *The Second Generation*, by B.A. Pauw (1963). Oxford University Press. Cape Town 1961-63; “Some forms of Religious Organization in a South African City”, in: *Urbanization in African Social Change*. Proceedings of the inaugural seminar held at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh 5-7 January 1963. Edinburgh Univ. Press (1963) 113-126; “Labour Migrancy and the Social Network.” in: J. F. Holleman (ed.), *Problems of Transition*. Natal University Press. Pietersmaritzburg 1964; “The Tribal Elite and the Transkeian Elections of 1966.” in: P.C. Lloyd (ed.), *The New Elites of Tropical Africa*. Oxford University Press. London 1966; *Socialization: the Approach from Social Anthropology*, edited by Philip Mayer. Association of Social Anthropologists Monographs 8, Tavistock. London / New York 1970; “Religion and Social Control in a South African Township.” in: H. Adam (ed.), *South Africa: A Sociological Perspective*. Oxford University Press. London 1971; “‘Traditional’ Manhood Initiation in an Industrial City: The African View.” in: E.J. De Jager

(ed.), *Man: Anthropological Essays Presented to O.F. Raum*. Struik. Cape Town 1971; *Urban Africans and the Bantustans*. Alfred and Winifred Hoernlé Memorial Lecture. South African Institute of Race Relations. Johannesburg 1972; "Class, Status and Ethnicity as Perceived by Johannesburg Africans." in: L. Thompson and J. Butler (eds.), *Change in Contemporary South Africa*. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles 1975; *Migrant Labour: Some Perspectives from Anthropology*. A series of studies directed and edited by Philip Mayer, vols. I-VII. Typescript. Migrant Labour Project. Rhodes University 1978; "Introduction: Subcultures, Moralities and Migrant Labour", in: P. Mayer (ed.), Vol. I, 1978; "Modderdam.", in: P. Mayer (ed.) Vol. 5 (1978); "Wives of Migrant Workers.", in: P. Mayer (ed.) Vol. 3 (1978); "Soweto People and their Universes." Typescript. Migrant Labour Project. Rhodes University 1979; *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society: Anthropological Perspectives on Migrant Labour in South Africa*. Ed. Philip Mayer. Oxford University Press. Cape Town 1980; "The Origin and Decline of Two Rural Resistance Idologies.", in: P. Mayer (ed.) 1980: 1-80; *The Mature Spirit: religion without supernatural hopes*. Northampton, MA (Pittenbruach Press) 1987.

Philip Mayer married his wife Iona in 1946. Iona Mayer (2 June 1923 -) was daughter of *Sir Leon Simon* [Sir Aryeh (Leon) Simon] (Southampton 11 July 1881 - London 27 April 1965), son of Rabbi Isadore or Isidor (Ozer) Simon (1849-1922) of the South Manchester Synagogue and Kitty Avner or Cziska ("Kitty") Levene (1848-1932), daughter of Mortchel Zelvsky Levin (1828-1906) and Khaye Levene (Avner) (ca. 1827-1907). Both had moved to Britain from Lithuania in the late 19th Cent. Sir Leon Simon studied at Manchester Grammar School and read Greats at Balliol College at the University of Oxford. A group of young anglicised Jewish intellectuals congregated around Chaim Weizmann in Manchester. Simon became a core part of this group which included the journalist Harry Sacher, Samuel Landman, Israel Sieff and Simon Marks of

Marks & Spencer. They had all studied at Manchester Grammar School, and the group were members of the Manchester Zionist Association. Both Simon and his brother Maurice Simon held discussions in Hebrew there. Weizmann's employer in Manchester, Charles Dreyfus, was President of the Society. Together with Sacher Simon edited the newspaper "The Zionist Banner" as well as the monthly journal "Palestine."

Together with the first generation of leading British Jews Simon preferred Zionism to conventional religiosity and argued that Hebrew should supplant Yiddish at the main language of the diaspora.

Aḥad Ha'Am (Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg, b. Aug. 18, 1856, Skvira, near Kiev, Russian Empire [now in Ukraine] - d. Jan. 2, 1927, Tel Aviv-Yafo) was a leading figure of cultural Zionism. His concepts of Hebrew culture had a definitive influence on the objectives of the early Jewish settlement in Palestine.

His first essay, "Lo ze ha-derekh" ("This Is Not the Way") he published in 1889. Here he emphasized the spiritual basis of Zionism. After visiting Palestine twice he founded in 1897 the periodical *Ha-Shiloah*. Here he severely criticized the political Zionism of Theodor Herzl who was the foremost contemporary Jewish nationalist leader. While spending his last years in Palestine, he edited his *Iggerot Aḥad Ha'am*, 6 vol. (1923-25; "Letters of *Aḥad Ha'am*"). Further letters (principally from the last phase of his life) and his memoirs were published in *Aḥad Ha'am: Pirqe zikhronot we-iggerot* ("Collected Memoirs and Letters" 1931). His essays comprise four volumes (1895, 1903, 1904, and 1913).

"*Aḥad Ha'am* was an intimate adviser to the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann during the time that Weizmann was playing a leading role in eliciting from the British government its Balfour Declaration of 1917, a document supporting a Jewish homeland in Palestine."²²

22 Encyclopaedia Britannica, - online version, last updated: Jan 1, 2021.

He “remained outside the Zionist organization, believing that a Jewish state would be the end result of a Jewish spiritual renaissance rather than the beginning. He called for a renaissance of Hebrew-language culture, and to that end he did urge the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine as the centre and model for Jewish life in the Diaspora (*i.e.*, the settlements of Jews outside Palestine).²³

While stressing the rational and moral character of Judaism, Aḥad Ha‘am believed that the goal of re-creating Jewish nationhood could not be achieved by purely political means but rather required spiritual rebirth. The clarity and precision of his essays made him a major Hebrew-language stylist and an influential force in modern Hebrew literature.²⁴

He influenced Simon, who translated many of his works into English. Simon also wrote his biography as well as several works on Zionism (e.g. *Zionism and the Jewish Problem*, 1917; “Studies in Jewish Nationalism,” 1920), the first translations of John Stuart Mill’s *Essay on Liberty* and of several of Plato’s dialogues.

As a member of the Zionist Commission Simon accompanied Weizmann together with Israel Sieff, M. D. Elder in 1918 and others to start talks with the government of David Lloyd George²⁵ on the possibility of establishing a Jewish State in Palestine. On July 17, 1917 Simon had written a draft of *the Balfour Declaration* on paper of London’s Imperial Hotel. It reads:

H(is) M(ajesty’s) G(overnment) accepts the principle that P(alestine) should be reconstituted as the Nat(ional) Home of the J(ewish) P(eople). HMG will use its best efforts to secure the achievement of this object, and will discuss the necessary methods and means with the Z(ionist) O(rganization).²⁶

23 *Ibid.*

24 *Ibid.*

25 David Lloyd George was prime minister of the United Kingdom 6 December 1916– 19 October 1922.

26 To the two drafts (with photos of them) to come out of the meeting of the Zionist Political Committee meeting at Imperial Hotel in London on July 17, 1917, from the collection of attendee Leon

Through Sotheby's it was auctioned off in 2005 for US \$ 888,000 in New York.²⁷ It represents the only known surviving handwritten draft of the declaration.

After graduation from Oxford in 1904, he entered the British Civil Service. He joined the General Post Office and became Director of Telegraphs and Telephones (1931-35) and later Director of the Savings (1935-44). He retired from the Post Office in 1944 with the rank of Director. In 1944 he was knighted for his services.

Simon lived in Jerusalem 1946-1953. There he served as Chair of the Executive Council of the Hebrew University and as its President 1949-50. He was also President of Israel Post Office Bank. A collection of Leon Simon letters can be found at Duke University.²⁸

Sir Leon Simon was a leading British Zionist intellectual and civil servant. As seen he took part in the drafting of the Balfour declaration of 1917 and served on the Zionist Commission with Chaim Weizmann. He advocated cultural Zionism and that Hebrew should replace Yiddish as the main language of the diaspora. His main interest was in the cultural aspect of Jewish nationalism, and particularly in the Hebrew revival.

Among the works of Sir Leon Simon are:

Aspects of The Hebrew Genius: Essays on Jewish Literature and Thought. G. Routledge & Sons, London 1910 (an anthology edited by Leon Simon); *Moses Leib Lilienblum*. Cambridge

Simon and included in the NMAJH exhibition, see Lily Rothman: "These Two Drafts Show How the Balfour Declaration Evolved", *Time* March 17, 2017 10:00AM EDT (online version). The one draft is handwritten by Simon on hotel stationery ("The IMPERIAL HOTEL Russel Square, London, w.c.") and the other is a typed draft with his notes.

27 Donald Macintyre: "A scrap of paper that changed history", *The Independent* 26.05.2005, pp. 28f.

28 William B. Hamilton Collection of British Manuscripts: <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE005688987>.

University Press, Cambridge 1912; *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha-Am (Asher Ginzberg)*. Transl. from the Hebrew by Leon Simon. Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia 1912; *Zionism and the Jewish Problem*. Zionist, London 1915; *Letters 1915-1916, 1918*. William B. Hamilton Collection of British Manuscripts (131 letters Simon wrote to Esther Ellen «Nellie» Umanski before and immediately following their marriage). In these letters Simon among others also discusses his Zionist activities and philosophy as well as the work and ideas of other leading figures in the movement, including Chaim Weizmann, Nahum Sokolow, Israel Sieff, Simon Marks, Shmuel Tolkowsky, Harry Sacher, and Ahad Ha'Am: <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE005688987> ; *Hebrew education in Palestine*. The Zionist, London 1916; *The Case of the Anti-Zionists: A Reply*. World Zionist Organization, London 1917; *Zionism and the Jewish Problem*. The Zionist, London 1918; *Out of bondage*, edited by Leon Simon. Hendersons, London 1919; *Studies in Jewish Nationalism* (a collection of some of his essays). Longmans, London 1920; *Ten essays on Zionism and Judaism*, by Ahad Ha'Am: Translated from the Hebrew by Leon Simon. G. Routledge & Sons, London 1922; *Awakening Palestine* (edited together with Leonard Stein). Murray, London 1923; *Ahad Ha'Am. English Zionist Federation*, London 1927 (Biography); Simon Leon's *Translation of Ahad Ha'Am's writings*, which were first published in journals and later in books (a list of translations and their editions is to be found in Goell, Bibliography, 83–84) represents his main work in English; *About Zionism: speeches and letters*, by Albert Einstein. The Macmillan Co., New York 1931; *A history of modern Hebrew literature (1785-1930)*. Ed. By Leon Simon. M.L. Cailingold, London 1932; *Synopsis of the Haskalah Movement (c. 1780-1880)*, Liverpool 1934 (*the Haskalah* often termed the Jewish Enlightenment); *The Elements of Zionism*. Association of Young Zionist Societies, London 1934; *Essays, letters, memoirs by*

Aḥad Ha'Am (Leon Ginzberg). Transl. and ed. by Leon Simon. East & West Library, Oxford 1946; *The Hebrew University Jerusalem: its history and development*. Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem 1948; *Chaim Weizmann: translation of an address delivered at the memorial meeting held by the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 22nd 1953*. Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem [1953]; *Aḥad Ha'Am* (אחד העם : האיש, פסקו ותורתו), together with J. Heller. Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1955 (Hebr.). East and West Library. London 1960 (Eng.); *Letters of Aḥad Ha'Am* (לצורת אדם העם) edited together with I. Pogranski. 2nd ed. 6 Vols. Devir, Tel Aviv 1956-1960 (Hebr.).

A series of essays in Hebrew on Greek literature (the first of their kind in Hebrew) he published from 1910 in *Ha-Shilo'ah*. These were later collected in his book *Perakim be-Sifrut Yavan ha-Attikah* (*Chapters on Ancient Greek Literature*), Hebrew University 1951; Leon Simon also translated into Hebrew seven of Plato's *Dialogues*, the *Memoirs* of Xenophon (*Zikhronot*. Magnes, Jerusalem 1960) and *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill ('*Al-ha-herut*. Magnes, Hebrew University 1965); Among his translations into Hebrew of Plato are *Thaetetus*, edited by Leon Roth. University Press, Jerusalem 1934 and *Protagoras*, University Press, Jerusalem 1935.

On Sir Leon Simon, consult further also among others: Leon Simon; Debra Kimmel; USC Shoah Foundation: *Leon Simon oral history (interview code: 6093)*, 30 Aug 1995 (USC Shoah Foundation collection in USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, 1994-2017 - an audiovisual testimony of a Holocaust survivor. Includes pre-war, wartime, and post-war experiences).

The brother of Leon Simon, *Maurice Simon* (1874-1955) became associated with the work of the Soncino Press, founded in London by his relative Jacob Davidson. He was co-translator (into English) of the *Zohar* (Soncino Press, London 1931-34) and *Midrash Rabbah* (Soncino Press, London 1939) and cooperated also in the Soncino translation of the *Talmud* (Soncino Press,

London 1935–52) and its *Minor Tractates* (The Soncino Press, London 1965).²⁹

Iona Mayer has written among others:

“From Kinship to Common Descent: Four-generation genealogies among the Gusii.” *Africa* 35/4 (1963) 366-384; *Studies in Gusii Kinship*. Doctoral thesis. Rhodes University 1966; *The Nature of Kinship Relations: The Significance of the Use of Kinship Terms among the Gusii*. Rhodes-Livingstone Papers 37. Manchester University Press, Manchester 1966 (repr. Institute of African Studies. Lusaka 1974 (published on behalf of the Institute for African Studies, Univ. of Zambia, Manchester Univ. Press. Manchester 1975); “Together and Apart: The Sexes and Generations in Gusii Society.” Typescript. Rhodes University 1970; “The Patriarchal Image: Routine dissociation in Gusii families.” *African Studies* 34/4 (1975) 259-281; Special number, eds. D. Webster and W.D. Hammond-Tooke, *Agnates and Affines: Studies in African Marriage, Manners and Land Allocation*. Witwatersrand University Press. Johannesburg 1975; “Grahamstown: Migrant Labour in a Platteland Town” in: P. Mayer (ed.), *Migrant Labour: Some Perspectives from Anthropology* 5. Typescript. Migrant Labour Project. Rhodes University 1978; “Grahamstown is the Last Place. Black Women’s Life and Lives in a South African Country Town.”

Together with her husband Philip Mayer she has written among others:

Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City, 1961, Vol. 2 of P. Mayer (ed.), 1961-63 (Cape Town 1974; Johannesburg, Witwatersrand Univ. Press 1991); “Land and Law in the Making.”, in: H. Kuper and L. Kuper (eds.), *African Law*,

29 Cf. Encyclopedia.com (updated Feb 16 2021) in an article on “Simon, Sir Leon.”

Adaptation and Development. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles 1965; “Socialization by Peers: The Youth Organization of the Red Xhosa”, in P. Mayer (ed.): *Socialization: The Approach from Social Anthropology*. Association of Social Anthropologists Monographs 8. Tavistock Publications. London 1970; *Report of Research on Self-organization by Youth among the Xhosa-speaking Peoples of the Ciskei and Transkei*. Vol 1-2: *The Red Xhosa*, by Philip Mayer (with assistance of Iona Mayer); Vol. 2 by Iona Mayer (untitled). Unpublished typescript. Institute of Social and Economic Research. Rhodes University. Grahamstown 1972; “A Dangerous Age: From Boy to Young Man in Red Xhosa Youth Organizations.”, in: P. Spencer (ed.), *Anthropology and Riddle of the Sphinx*. Association of Social Anthropologists Monograph 27. Routledge. London 1990; *Tradition and Transition in Southern Africa: Festschrift for Philip and Iona Mayer*; by Philip Mayer; Iona Mayer; Andrew Spiegel; P.A. MacAllister. New Brunswick, U.S.A. Transaction Publishers 1992 (by Philip Mayer and Andrew D. Spiegel. Johannesburg, Witwatersrand Univ. Press., 1991).

To further on Philip and Iona Mayer, see William Beinart, ‘Speaking for Themselves’ in: Andrew D. Spiegel and Patrick A. McAllister, eds, *Tradition and Transition in South Africa: Festschrift for Philip and Iona Mayer*. Witwatersrand University Press. Johannesburg 1991 : 11-15, 37-38.

2. The Popes

Not far from Philip and Iona lived Maurice Pope and his wife Johanna in their home Elmwood in Lathbury Rd 26. The house had been designed by the known architect Morley Horder just before the 1914 war and commissioned for Ulrich Vernon Herford (1866-1938), a Unitarian minister from Iffley who went to India in 1902 and became consecrated as bishop Mar Jacobus.

Maurice Pope, his full name being Maurice Wildon Montague Pope (17 February 1926 - 1 August 2019) was born in London, as the only son of Philip Montague Pope (1892-1968) and Violet Elizabeth Carr (1898-1966). He was a linguist specializing in Classical studies being one of the leading researchers and experts of the Cretan script Linear A. Being interested in archeology he also participated in archeological expeditions.

Maurice Pope was educated at preparatory school, Rottingdean, East Sussex; and then at Sherborne School, North West Dorset (1939-1944) where he was School Prefect, Head of House, XV 1942 and 1943.³⁰ In his essay 'The Air Raid' he tells about how he as a fourteen year old boy experienced the bombing of his school Sherborne on 30 September 1940:

It was September 30th, in the most pleasant season of the most pleasant term of the year. For the first few weeks of the term are always the best; we are all fresh, both to ourselves and to our work. I was especially fresh to mine since I had just passed the school certificate and was able to do what I wanted. Thus I was looking forward to a settled term when the Germans came.

We heard the siren on Monday afternoon while I was doing 'English'. It was a sound to which I was fully accustomed, having lived in London where the sirens take up the cry, one after the other, like the mournful lions in the zoo. At Sherborne, however, there is only one siren, and I always find the sound satisfying from its very fullness; but in September 1940 it was all the more satisfying since we were bringing down German planes by scores. Now the Lower Library, where I was, being considered a safe room, we continued working, peacefully, without a thought of air raids. Suddenly like a frightened dog straining at its leash, the glass in the windows strove for freedom;

30 The Old Shirburnian Society: "School House boys' accounts of the bombing of Sherborne on 30 September 1940, on Maurice Wilden Montague POPE" (b.1926) [<https://oldshirburnian.org.uk/school-house-boys-accounts-of-the-bombing-of-sherborne-on-30-september-1940/>]

it rattled for a second, then became quiet; the leash was taut. I shall never forget that ominous silence, that lasted but a split second before we realised what was happening. I was the last under the table since I am always slow in circumstances that require quickness of thought. Although I felt secure under the very firm tables, I gave myself additional moral support by pressing on the underside of the table with my back, for I have always had a horror of being squashed; I opened my mouth and put my hands over my ears, just as if I had been a model citizen in the Government posters. I do not suppose that it took more than two seconds for us to be in position under the tables but it seemed longer, and then we could hear the bombs falling – s-s-swish-bang! S-s-swish-bang! I thought as if in a dream; you don't hear the one that this you; you either get hit or you don't; it doesn't last long; don't worry, it won't do any good. Then, just as abruptly as it had begun, it finished. Although I did not know it, I had formed and maintained a philosophy during that air raid; and some weeks after, by a strange coincidence (or was it not? I wonder), Christian Fatalism was the subject of an excellent sermon we had preached to us. I, for one, attended fully to it.³¹

In 1944 he went to Magdalene College, Cambridge, having received a scholarship. After some time in the Navy, he returned to Cambridge in January 1947 as an undergraduate being awarded a Degree of Bachelor of Arts (BA). After graduating from the University of Cambridge Maurice Pope soon afterwards joined with his parents touring South Africa in 1947. The parents were already there. At that time he got his intellectual awakening.

He writes:

While touring South Africa with my parents, I saw in a bookshop in the Transkei of all places a complete text of Francis Bacon's *Novum Organon* with introduction and notes (this was not the original version from 1620, but that done by Thomas Fowler, 2nd ed. 1899).

31 M.W.M. Pope: 'The Air Raid' School House boys' accounts of the bombing of Sherborne on 30 September 1940. The Old Shirburnian Society – website. (<https://oldshirburnian.org.uk/school-house-boys-accounts-of-the-bombing-of-sherborne-on-30-september-1940/>).

There was no translation and the whole extended to over 600 pages. It was therefore something to get my teeth into. Indeed, it proved to be my intellectual awakening, or conscienticisation, as it is sometimes called.³²

He explains further:

It could not have been more eye-opening. What Bacon provided for me was self-confidence. I had never seen the use of logic or metaphysics. I now had authority behind me. To read that Greek philosophy as a whole, and Plato in particular, was not only wrong, but wrong-headed and destructive, was unorthodox enough for a fully-paid up and conforming classicist. But to read it written in vigorous Latin and ably argued, not by a politician with a grudge, but by a man of evidently vast learning and who as Lord Chancellor had been at the very pinnacle of the Establishment, was highly exciting. It was not exactly a U-turn or a road-to-Damascus experience – one did not have to renounce anything – but I felt like I had climbed above the cloud-layer.³³

Maurice Pope became a temporary Teaching Assistant at the chair of classical studies, the University of Cape Town (UCT), on 1 February 1949. He soon advanced to become temporary Lecturer in the Department of Classics from 1 February 1950 till the end of 1951 and Lecturer in the Department of Classics from January 1952.

After having applied for a permanent lectureship in the Classics Department in 1950, having been rejected due to a more highly qualified candidate who was a Lecturer in Bloemfontein and whose name was Anton Paap, he finally got the job without re-advertisement of it when this successful candidate unexpectedly declined the appointment.³⁴

32 Maurice W. M. Pope: *Amateur*. Mexico City – Brussels, 2nd ed. 2018, pp. 58f.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

34 *Ibid.*

Having been granted a leave of absence for one year he went to Cambridge at the end of 1952 in order to build more qualifications than his only BA till now.³⁵

In 1952 he went with his friend Ronald Segal from Cape Town, then a student at Cambridge, to Greece for the Easter vacation. His interest in archeology brought him to Greece. During the year 1953-54 he spent the time at the British School of Athens working together with Sinclair Hood at Emborio on Chios (underwater and land archeology) and in 1957 and 1964 he was also in Greece working on Linear A together with Jacques Raison.

In 1957 he had got full paid one year's leave (sabbatical). In the beginning he lived at the 'Taberna' at Knossos at the foot of the garden belonging to the Villa Ariadne. It had been built by Sir Arthur Evans on the Knossos estate after he had discovered the Minoan palace. The house was then empty. He undertook copying Linear A tablets. These had only been published from photographs before. He and Christopher Lowe went on a tour of the Greek islands, to Patmos spending Easter there, to Leros, Naxos and Santorini (Thera). Maurice Pope then left for Rome staying at the British School to do some work on Linear A. Some inscribed object, mainly sealings, could be found in the Museo Pigorini, and he did an excursion to Pompeii.

At the end of the year he was back in South Africa being appointed to the Chair (professorship) of the Department of Classics from 1 October 1957 replacing professor George P. Goold after he had resigned from his job. Together with him he published several articles on Minoan Linear A script. He held this appointment 1957-1968.

In 1964 he was back in Crete, again at Villa Ariadne. It had been given to the Greeks on the condition that British scholars could

35 *Ibid.*, p.76f.

stay there when the occasion permitted. He was working in the Heraklion Museum on the Linear A Index.

Howard Phillips writes about the teaching of Maurice Pope at University of Cape Town in the years 1957-68:

... the Cambridge-trained Pope wore his enthusiasm on his sleeve. 'I have always tried to maintain a lively and humane attitude [in teaching]', he averred, a fact borne out by student recollections of him as a lecturer. He 'imbued in me a lifelong ambition ... to visit the walls of windy Troy and tread in Schliemann's footsteps', testified one, while colleagues spoke of his sharp intellect and his 'always [being] ready to initiate discussion'. One product of his fertile mind was the compilation of a novel anthology of Latin texts for undergraduate teaching, its novelty lying in the fact that it included extracts not only from Classical-era authors, but also from writings well beyond the Classical period.

Even more path-breaking was his work on the decipherment of Bronze Age Cretan script, a cutting-edge project in Classical studies in the 1950s and 1960s. Characteristically, his ardour for this research often spilled over into his lectures. A student recalled how his lecture on Homer easily shifted into an account of his sheer thrill 'at the discovery of Hector's name in Linear B tablets'. The class was enthralled.³⁶

In 1965 Maurice Pope became Dean of the Faculty (two year post) lasting till July 1967 immediately followed by a half year's sabbatical where the family was back in Oxford for a short time at the end of the year renting a room in Lathbury Rd. 22 before their last return voyage to South Africa. This stay in South Africa should turn out quite differently than expected.

Maurice Pope himself tells about his own considerations:

36 Howard Phillips: UCT Under Apartheid Part I: 1948-1968: From Onset to Sit-in. Fanele, Auckland Park, South Africa: Fanele, an imprint of Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd., ABC Printers. Cape Town, South Africa 2019, p. 205.

In May 1968 the University Senate “had been informed of an act of interference by the government. We had made an appointment to a senior lectureship in the Department of African Languages and were now being told by the government that we were not to proceed with it on the grounds that our chosen candidate was a black man. Since there was nothing illegal in what we had done this was a gross and arbitrary infringement of our independence. The first I heard of it was at a cocktail party the next evening. It seemed to me that this meant that the University of Cape Town could no longer claim to be a free international institution. Had I been a South African citizen the right thing would have been for me to stay and try to fight it, but as an immigrant British subject (which is what I was) I did not feel entitled to do this. On the other hand, to stay would mean accepting and therefore giving my tacit agreement to this new racist condition. So it seemed to me that my only proper course was to leave. I rapidly consulted Johanna [the wife], who agreed, and went across to my successor in the Deanship, who was also at the party, to tell him that if the news was true, I intended to resign my chair.

But it was not as simple as I thought it would be. My successor-dean came to me the next morning to say that I had obviously been speaking in the heat of the moment and might not have been completely sober. He understood this and would therefore say no more about it!

My first hurdle was to persuade him that I meant it. My second was much more of a problem. I wrote a letter of resignation to the Principal of the University, Richard Luyt, and handed it myself to his office. So I knew it had been received.³⁷

He tells further:

Then there was a rather sinister sequence of letters, allegedly from the pensions department of the government, asking for biographical details of a senior lecturer in the English Department. What made them sinister was that though he had a perfectly normal

³⁷ *Amateur*, p. 63. Words in brackets by the undersigned.

Afrikaans name, John van der Westhuisen, he was nonwhite, a Cape Coloured in fact. Finally, Luyt [the Principal of the University, Richard Luyt] had seen the Prime Minister, Dr. Vorster, who pointed out that were the University to proceed with its planned new appointment it would force the government to introduce new legislation. This would mean, alas, that any existing Lecturers or Senior Lecturers who happened to be non-white would have to lose their jobs. Furthermore, such legislation would harm South Africa's new 'outward-looking image' that the Government was trying to cultivate.³⁸

Maurice Pope resigned from his chair (professorship) at the University of Cape Town on 13 January 1969 as a protest against the actions of the the University of Cape Town (UCT) in the case of Archie Mafeje (Archibald, also known as 'Archie', Mafeje). It was too much. It had gone too far. The appointment of Archie Mafeje (1936-2007), a black significant African scholar, to a a senior lectureship in social anthropology had been unanimously approved by the UCT Council in May 1968, but due to pressure from the apartheid government, the Council withdrew the appointment. His removal sparked protest by students leaders and some academic staff members of the University of Cape Town:

Academic freedom remained severely under threat during the 60s. UCT objected to banning orders and the detention of students and staff who protested against apartheid, but at the same time was involved [in] the Mafeje Affair. In May 1968, UCT Council unanimously approved the appointment of Archie Mafeje, a significant African scholar, as a senior lecturer in social anthropology. A month later, after pressure from the apartheid government, Council withdrew the appointment, and made known "its future inability to appoint non-white persons to academic posts, unless allowed to do so in special circumstances". In August 1968, between 200 and 600 UCT students began an occupation of Bremner Building, lasting for nine days, demanding that the UCT Council reconsider its

38 *Ibid.*, p. 164. Brackets by the undersigned.

decision to withdraw Mafeje's appointment. Protests were also held on Jameson Plaza.³⁹

Instead of acceding to the demands, the institution established an Academic Freedom Research Award in honour of Mafeje. UTC put a disclaimer noting that the government had taken away its right to appoint lecturers. As a result Mafeje left UTC and enrolled at Cambridge University in England in 1966. He was also an assistant lecturer at this university.⁴⁰

After his resignation from the University of Cape Town on 13 January 1969 in a protest against the rescinding the lecturship of Archie Mafeje, Maurice Pope returned to the UK. Settling in Oxford he took students sent from a number of colleges, but was never himself a fellow at any Oxford college.

As a classicist Maurice Pope was of the opinion that Western Culture did not have its roots in Christianity, but from the Romans and the Greeks. He used to cite for us from the main components of his "Classicist's Creed": *It is not Christianity which has made the Western world what it is, but a distinct set of features or values that arose in Greece and were perpetuated by Rome, namely: no sacred book or caste; public law; unrestricted literacy; unrestricted secular literature; the idea that citizens should be free and participate in government; the idea that truth is to be found by open argument.* As a classicist he felt both honoured and bound to defend the relevance of these values

39 Excerpt from: University of Cape Town News. Timeline: "UCT during the apartheid years." 23 April 2015, Story by Newsroom (read online).

40 South African History Online (SAHO): "Archie Mafeje", available at www.sahistory.org.za (accessed 20 August 2013); Fred Hendricks (Rhodes University. Grahamstown): "The Mafeje Affair: the University of Cape Town and Apartheid". *African Studies* 67/3 (December 2008): To Archie Mafeje, see also: Nabudere, D. Wadada: "Archie Mafeje: Scholar, Activist and Thinker" Africa Institute of South Africa. Pretoria 2011, pp. 1-8.

and virtues and to propagate the absolute necessity of both Greek and Latin.

Maurice Pope married Johanna Garle on 1 July 1958. He and his wife Johanna moved to Normandie in France in 2004. He died on 1 August 2019.

Maurice Pope has written among others: *Aegean Writing and Linear A*. Lund/C. Blom, Cape Town, 1964; “Cretan Aze-Heads with Linear A Inscriptions”, *British Society of Archeology* 1956; ‘*My Kingdom for a Horse*’. Notes & Queries, Shakespeare Survey, Cambridge University Press, 1994; Aeschylus: *Oresteia*. Cambridge 1952 [unpublished]; *Saecula Latina: from the beginnings of Latin literature to Sir Isaac Newton, an anthology*. University of Cape Town, 1962; *Shakespeare’s Falconry*. Shakespeare Survey 44, Cambridge University Press, 2002; *Shakespeare’s Medical Imagination*. Shakespeare Survey, Cambridge University Press, 1986; *The Ancient Greeks: How They Lived and Worked*. David & Charles, London, 1976; The “Cretulae” and the Linear A Accounting System. *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 1960; “The Minoan Goddess ‘Asasara’ – an Obituary.” *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 1961; *The Right Way of Speaking Latin and Greek: a Dialogue*. Annotated translation in *The Collected Works of Erasmus*. University of Toronto, 1985; *The Story of Decipherment: from Egyptian Hieroglyphic to Linear B*. Thames & Hudson, London, 1975 (probably the most widely known work by him); *The Story of Decipherment: from Egyptian Hieroglyphs to Maya Script*, Thames & Hudson. London 1999 (as an update of the previous mentioned *The Story of Decipherment ...*); *Upon the Country – Juries and the Principle of Random Selection*. Social Science Information, London & New Delhi 1989.

Together with others he has written the following: *Corpus transnuméré du linéaire A*. Louvain La-Neuve 1980, together with Jacques Raison; *Griekse vase in Kaapstad*, deur John

Boardman & Maurice Pope. Vertaal deur André Hugo. Kaapstad (Kuratore van die Suid-Afrikaanse Museum) 1961; Menander: *The Angry Old Man (Dyskolos)*. Translation together with W. H. Hewitt. Balkema. Cape Town / Amsterdam 1960; Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus): ‘The Ars Poetica of Horace’, rendered into English verse, by W.R.G. Branford and M.W.M. Pope. *Theoria* 5 (1953) 85-97. University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg; *Index du linéaire A*, with Jacques Raison. Edizioni dell’Ateneo, Roma, 1971; *Preliminary Investigations into the Cretan Linear A Script*, with G.P. Goold. University of Cape Town, 1955; *The Non-Stop Reader: and A Complete Guide to Reading for both Parent and Child*, with Helen Morrison and Selena Codd. Private publication, [Oxford] 1997.

To further on Maurice Pope, see his memoir: “Amateur_07.09.18.pdf”, 2nd ed., edited by Hugh Pope and Quentin Pope. Mexico City – Brussels 2018 (<http://bit.ly/AmateurByMWMPope>).

3. The Kilpatricks

George Kilpatrick (George Dunbar Kilpatrick 15 September 1910 – 14 January 1989) and wife Marion were friends of the Popes and did not live far away from them in North Oxford. I got to know them through the Popes and was in steadily contact with them till he (George Kilpatrick) unfortunately died in 1989 and then afterwards with his wife Marion, who was also a very lovely person. They became my personal friends as well.

Rev. George Kilpatrick was an Anglican priest born in Coal Creek, Fernie, British Columbia, Canada. He had his background of education among others from University College, London, and Oriel College, Oxford. He was Grinfield Lecturer on the Septuagint at University of Oxford 1945-1949, and obtained his Doctor of Divinity in 1948. He was Dean Ireland’s Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford 1949-1977 holding

his chair at Queen's College, Oxford, and being also a fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. He succeeded Robert Lightfoot (1934-49). George's successors in the chair were George Caird (1977-84), E. P. Sanders (1984-89) and then Christopher Rowland (1991-2014). George Kilpatrick has been characterized as "one of the outstanding textual critics of the twentieth century."⁴¹

He "pioneered the eclectic method in New Testament textual criticism", and his "special emphasis on the style of the New Testament writers ... and his study of the influence of Atticism on the early transmission of the New Testament have made a vital contribution to our understanding of the text."⁴²

Among his publications are:

A Textus receptus redivivus?: Protocol of the thirty-second colloquy, 12 March 1978. Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture. Berkeley, CA 1978; *Acts 23:3 "dextolaboi"*. Oxford Clarendon Press. Oxford 1963; *Acts VII.52 Eleusis. JTS* Oxford 1945; *A fragment of Ps. XLIII, 20-23; A "tongue to understand" and an incentive to study.* London 1970; *A new papyrus of the Shepherd of Hermas.* Oxford 1947; *An eclectic study of the texts of Acts.* Herder. Freiburg [1963]; *Atticisme and the text of the Greek New Testament.* Pustet. Regensburg 1963; *Blackwell's theological texts.* B. Blackwell [year of publication not indicated]; *"Blepete" Philippians 3,2.* Töpelmann. Berlin [year not indicated]; *"Codex Bezae and Mill."* *JTS* 6/2 (1955) 235 – 238; *Codex 565 of the Gospels.* Reinhardt.

41 J. Neville Birdsall: Book review of 'The Principles and Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism: collected Essays', by George Dunbar Kilpatrick, ed. by James Keith Elliot. *The Classical Review.* N.S. 42/2 (1992) 435-436 (Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Classical Association).

42 Peter R. Rodgers: "The New Eclecticism: An Essay in Appreciation of the Work of Professor George D. Kilpatrick". *Novum Testamentum* 34/4 (1992) 388.

Basel 1969; *Dura-Europos: the parchments and the papyri*. [London 1964?], and in: Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 5/3 (2002) 215-225; *Durch Dynamik beeindruckt Besuch eines englischen Theologen in Deutschland 1966*. Verband der Evangelischen Pfarrervereine in Deutschland. Essen [1966]; *Gal 2,14 orthopodousin*. [German] Alfred Töpelmann. Berlin [publication date not indicated]; *He Kaine Diatheke*. British and Foreign Bible Society. 2nd ed., London 1965; *Jesus in the Gospels and the Early Church*. Christian Evidence Society. London 1971; *John 4,9*. Philadelphia Press of M. Jacobs. Philadelphia 1968; *Literary fashions and the transmission of texts in the Graeco-Roman world*. Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture. Conference publication. Berkeley, CA, 1976; *Liturgical Reform, the Anglican heritage and ecumenical development*. Augsburg Pub. House. Neuchatel, Switzerland. Edition Delachaux et Niestle. Minneapolis, Minn. 1968; “Luke XXII. 19b-20.” *JTS* Oxford 1946; “Mark IV.29; John I.3-4 and Jerome.” *JTS* Oxford 1945; *Marc XIII.9-10*. Oxford Clarendon Press. Oxford 1958; *Professor J. Schmid on the Greek text of the Apocalypse*. North-Holland Publ. Co. Amsterdam 1959; *Remaking the Liturgy*. Collins. London 1967; *Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Zum Text des 2. und 3. Makkabäerbuches*. Göttingen 1963; *Some notes on Marcan usage*. United Bible Societies. London 1956; “Some thoughts on modern textual criticism and the Synoptic Gospels.” *Novum Testamentum* 19 (1977) [275] – 292; *Some problems in New Testament text and language*. T. & T. Clark. Edinburgh cop. 1969; *The Bodmer and Mississippi Collection of Biblical and Christian Texts*. [German] W. Clowes. London 1963 and in: Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 4/1 (2002) 33-47 [English]; *The Euchharist in Bible and Liturgy*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge 1984; “The meaning of “*thuein*” in the New Testament.” *Bible Translator* 12/3 (1961) 3 p.; *The order of some nouns and adjective phrases in the New Testament*. Brill. Leiden 1962; *The*

Origins of the Gospel according to St Matthew. Oxford 1946; *The Principles and Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism*, by George Dunbar Kilpatrick and James K. Elliot. Univ. Press. Leuven 1990; *The Text of the Epistles: the contribution of Western witnesses*. Article 1980; *The Transmission of the New Testament and its reliability*. The Victoria Institute. Croydon 1957; *The Trial of Jesus*. Oxford University Press, Oxford 1953; *Three recent editions of the Greek New Testament: [a review]*. *JTS* 1949.

Among his publications together with others are:

A new Psalms fragment. By John W. B. Barns and George D. Kilpatrick. London 1957; *A textus receptus redivivus?*, by George Dunbar Kilpatrick and Edward C. Hobbs. Center for Hermeneutical Studies in Hellenistic and Modern Culture. Berkeley, Calif. ©1978; *Biblical Studies – present and future*. Audiobook. Dept. of Studies in Religion, University of Queensland. Brisbane 1975; *Brieven van George Dunbar Kilpatrick (1910-1989) aan Willem Cornelis van Unnik (1910-1978)*, Archief Van Unnik II.1.470, by G. D. Kilpatrick and W. C. van Unnik. Oxford 1963-1964; *John: a Greek-English diglot for the use of translators*. by George Dunbar Kilpatrick; Wilfred J. Bradnock; George D. Reynolds; H. K. Moulton; British and Foreign Bible Society. London 1961; *Luke: a Greek-English diglot for the use of translators*, by George Dunbar Kilpatrick; Wilfred J. Bradnock; George D. Reynolds and H. K. Moulton; British and Foreign Bible Society. London 1962; *Mark: a Greek-English diglot for the use of translators*, by George Dunbar Kilpatrick; Wilfred J. Bradnock and George D. Reynolds. British and Foreign Bible Society. London 1961; *Prayers*. By George Alfred Macdonald and George G. D. Kilpatrick, United Church Pub. House. Toronto 1941; *Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians: a Greek-English diglot for the use of translators*, by George Dunbar Kilpatrick; Wilfred J. Bradnock; George D. Reynolds and H. K. Moulton. British and

Foreign Bible Society. London 1964; *The British and Foreign Bible Society's text of the Greek New Testament*, by Erwin Nestle and George Dunbar Kilpatrick. British and Foreign Bible Society. London 1958; *The Pastoral Letters and Hebrews: a Greek-English diglot for the use of translators*, by George Dunbar Kilpatrick; Wilfred J. Bradnock; George D. Reynolds and H. K. Moulton. British and Foreign Bible Society. London 1963.

Common interests

We had common interests (with the Mayers, the Popes and the Kilpatrics), - all became personal friends as my “families” in Oxford. The Mayers had background from Israel and Germany and knew Hebrew, Jewish culture and history from inside. You had background from visit to Israel and Germany. I had background from universities in both Israel and Germany, both of us had Hebrew and Syriac from the university, I had written among others about Jewish hermeneutics, Talmud, Midrash and Targum, as well as on Jewish Mysticism, the Hekhalot literature and on the Hebrew text of Exod 24, 1-18 and the Onkelos Targum to Gen 1, 1-2. The Mayers’ perspectives on anthropology, however, were new to me.

Maurice Pope was a classicist with teaching experience especially of classical Greek and Latin. I had studied classical Greek at the university, had taught Greek (New Testament Greek or koiné) and had written about the Homeric dialect, the Odyssey of Homeros, the concept of the underworld by Homeros as well as on Thucydides and on the morphology and syntax of the Greek optative and subjunctive down to (including) koiné. In addition we both had Latin, and I had written among others on Seneca’s narrative on Lucius Cinna’s plot against Augustus.

My interest in Classical Greek and the New Testament, its text criticism and koiné (New Testament Greek) built a natural bridge to George Kilpatrick.

Both the Mayers and the Popes had background from South Africa. The first time I met somebody from South Africa and got in direct touch with them, was when my grandparents got visits of Christian church leaders and missionaries from South Africa when I was quite young, and I was with them there. Other times I remember well was when Desmond Mpilo Tutu, Bishop of Johannesburg, former Secretary General, South African Council of Churches (S.A.C.C.), came to Oslo to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his opposition to South Africa's brutal apartheid regime; when a colleague of him, Rev. Dr. T. S. Gqubule and the son of this colleague later came to Norway in connection with the 40th Annual Meeting of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas (SNTS) in Trondheim in 1985 where I was member of the staff; when academic visitors, among whom were Dr. Johann Cook from the University of Stellenbosh, South Africa, came to Hengel's Institut für Antikes Judentum, Evang.-Theol. Seminar, Univ. of Tübingen, during my visiting fellowships there; as well as when Archbishop Desmond Tutu came to Oxford to be awarded the honorary degree of DD (Doctor of Divinity) at the University of Oxford in 1990, to mention only a few occasions.

Prof. George Claassen, Head of Journalism Department, Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa, also visited the University of Tübingen during my time there. He made among others a lecture on "Hypertext" in "Forschungsschwerpunkt 08 Wissenschaftliche Textverarbeitung, Abteilung Literarische und Dokumentarische Datenverarbeitung, Zentrum für Datenverarbeitung" at the university, of which I was also a member. He has become known as "father of science communication in Africa" since he was the first academic in the field of journalism to develop a course in science and technology in Africa.

Knowing these families - the Mayers, the Popes and the Kilpatrics – in such a way in Oxford, gave rich opportunities to exchange views and deliberate upon various subjects of scholarly

interest. You were included and participated in the conversations not least with the Mayers.

The Old Bailey in London⁴³

The first time I met John H. Constable (d. 18 November 1999) and his wife Karin was at the memorial service for King Olav V in Westminster Abbey on 17 January 1991. John Constable had served three years at Nato Kolsås near Oslo and had married Karin in the chapel of the Akershus Castle, Oslo. John came to Kolsås twenty five years old as adjutant (aide-de-camp) in the North Europe Nato Group. He was also head of Territorial Army, London. He was in the Secretarial Branch of the the RAF (the Royal Air Force). In 1966 Sqn Ldr John Constable attended the Royal Air Force Staff College, Andover, Course No 24 (January 1966 – December 1966) where the students came from eighteen different nations. Among these were the UK, USA, Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, Italy, Norway,

43 To the Old Bailey, see e.g.: F. Raymond Coulson; George Astor Singer: *Darwin on trial at the Old Bailey*. Univ. Press. London 1900; Albert Crew: *The Old Bailey: history: constitution; functions: notable trials*. I. Nicholson & Watson. London 1933; Clive Emsley; Tim Hitchcock; Robert Brink Shoemaker: *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, London 1674 to 1913. University of Sheffield. Humanities Research Institute. University of Hertfordshire. Higher Education Digitisation Service. Old Bailey Proceedings Online Project. University of Sheffield, Humanities Research Institute, Sheffield, Old Bailey Proceedings Online [<https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/index.jsp>]; Gerald Howsen: *Thief-Taker General: The Rise and Fall of Jonathan Wild*. St. Martin's Press. New York 1971 [©1970]; Stanley Jackson: *The Old Bailey*. London 1978; Charles Kingston: *Dramatic days at the Old Bailey*. Holmes Beach, Fla. 1996; John Morecroft;: *The Old Bailey*. City of London (England). Corporation. Central Criminal Court Journalists' Association. Corp. of London in association with the Central Criminal Court Journalists' Association. London 1984; Theresa Murphy: *The Old Bailey: Eight Centuries of Crime, Cruelty and Corruption*. Edinburg 2003 Mainstream Digital (eBook) London 2011; Donald Rumbelow: *The Triple Tree: Newgate, Tyburn, and the Old Bailey*. Harrap. London 1982.

Ghana and Saudi Arabia. His colleague from Norway was Capt. Olav Frithjof Aamoth (1934 -), who later became Inspector General of the Norwegian Air Defence Forces (1985-1991), Defence Attaché at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington DC (1991) and at the same time national representative at Nato's Atlantic Command. Their fellow student from Sri Lanka was Sqn Ldr Vivekananthan.

John Constable had his own livery company. In 1999 he was elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, a company founded twenty years earlier. He had a particular interest and taste for English culture and tradition.

As long as I knew John (till he unfortunately died much too early in 1999) he was Group Captain, Secondary of London and Under Sheriff, High Bailiff of Southwark and had the responsibility of running the Central Criminal Court or Old Bailey in the City. Among his tasks were the opening and closing of the Court. At official functions of the court I remember him dressed in his garb of an elaborate white lace bib over a specially tailored black suit with silver buttons wearing white gloves and with a silver sword at his left side.

The Central Criminal Court has eighteen court rooms. It is the most important criminal court in the land and represents one of the most famous courts in the world. The City of London is the only local authority that owns and runs its own Crown Court.

The name of *Old Bailey* it has required after the street on which it stands. Part of the present building stands on the site of the medieval Newgate gaol, on a road named Old Bailey. It follows the line of the City of London's fortified wall (or *ballei*). This runs from Ludgate Hill to the junction of Newgate Street and Holborn Viaduct. The present building of the Old Bailey is from 1902 and was designed by Edward William Mountford. It was opened by King Edward VII in 1907. On the top of the building thrones the Lady Justice with her crown on the head, her sword in the one hand and the weight or scale in the other. The entrance to the original block of

the Old Bailey is now only used for ceremonial purposes. There is also a south block extension. The Great Hall outside the main courts has a magnificent marbled floor with beautiful designs, wooden dark brown doors with glass windows and a lit cupola or dome. Its domed ceilings are decorated with painted allegories of justice by the artist Gerald Moira.

Numerous were the times John Constable invited me to lunch in the Old Bailey in the *City* of London as well as to dinners with them. John and Karin had their own house in Cambridge.

He showed me around in the City and its buildings, took me along to Queen Elizabeth II's yearly Horse Guards Parade and Birthday Parade in Westminster and to other major occasions / events in the City. After his closing of the Court we often took walks in the City, along the river Thames and visited the *St. Paul's Cathedral*,⁴⁴ not least for the quietness and peace of mind it could bring after being present at court cases involving all kinds of gruesome crimes and witnessing so many tears shed by members of families. I also visited some of the court cases.

St. Paul's Cathedral belongs to the Anglican Church and is the seat of the Bishop of London and the mother church of the Diocese of London. It is situated on Ludgate Hill at the highest point of the City of London. The original church on the site was founded in AD 604 being dedicated to Paul the Apostle. The present cathedral dates from the late 17th century and was designed in the English Baroque

44 To St. Paul's Cathedral, see e.g. William Maynard Atkins; Ernest Barker; W. R. Matthews: *A History of St. Paul's Cathedral and the men associated with it: with 57 illustr.* Phoenix House. London 1957; Michelle Brown: *Saint Paul's Cathedral*. Jarrold Publishing, Norwich 2006; Peter Burman; Malcolm Crowthers: *Saint Paul's Cathedral*, Bell & Hyman, London 1987; Rebecca Pierce: *National Identity and the British Empire: the image of Saint Paul's Cathedral*. Thesis/dissertation. [Marshall University Libraries], Huntington, WV, 2004.

style by Sir Christopher Wren.⁴⁵ It was reconstructed as part of a major rebuilding programme in the City after the Great Fire of London which hit its central parts from Sunday 2 September to Thursday 6 September 1666. For more than 300 years its dome, framed by the spires of Wren's City churches, has dominated the skyline of London. The dome is among the highest in the world. The Cathedral is one of the most famous and most recognizable sights of London.

John Constable and his wife Karin were among my best friends in Britain at our time in Oxford and afterwards.

The bishops of London at our time in Oxford were Graham Leonard (1981-1991), David Hope (1991-1995) and Richard Chartres (1995-2017).

You certainly met several of these people with me as well.

I took you along to my friends in North Oxford, and when you wanted to go to Jerusalem, I think it was in 1988, I gave you an address of a professor at the Hebrew University and his family whom I knew and whom you could visit, and you did so. We also went to London to meet friends and friends came up from London to visit.

 Rev. Prof. Arne J. Hobbel
 Guest Professor,
 St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI),
 Research Centre for Ph.D. Syriac,
 Mahatma Gandhi University,
 Kerala, India.
 E Mail:- ah2000white@yahoo.com

45 To the original Wren drawings, see Christopher Wren; Arthur T. Bolton; Wren Society: *Saint Paul's Cathedral*; Original Wren drawings from ... 1 From the collection at All Souls College. Univ. Press. Oxford 1924; Christopher Wren; Arthur T. Bolton; Wren Society: *Saint Paul's Cathedral*; Original Wren drawings from ... 2 From the collection in the Library of St. Paul's Cathedral. Univ. Press. Oxford 1925; Christopher Wren; Arthur T. Bolton; Wren Society: *Saint Paul's Cathedral*; Original Wren drawings from ... 3 From the collection of the St. Paul's Cathedral. Univ. Press. Oxford 1926.

Siroli Francesca

JACOB OF SERUGH AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

No one else in the Syriac tradition or for that matter in the whole history of Church traditions – before him or after him – left a **complete commentary on the Lord's Prayer in verses**, the new and appropriate vehicle for theology, to speak of God. The love for the Verb made flesh stirred Jacob who poetically disclosed the mystery of this prayer *par excellence* in his *mêmrà* 10¹ on *Abun d-bašmaya*. The true Son of Abba

¹ The Syriac text of this homily was edited by Paul Bedjan in his *Homiliae Selectae*, Mar Jacobi Sarugensis, Vol. 1, Paris 1905, 212-248. Its complete title, as we find it in P. Bedjan's edition is, *Mêmrà 'al thlutha d-aleph Maran l-talmidaw(hy): Abun d-bašmaya*, "on the Prayer which our Lord taught His disciples: Our Father Who art in Heaven." 2nd ed. (Gorgias Press, 2006) Vol. I, 212-248.

It was partially translated by THEKEPARAMPIL, J.: Lord's Prayer: Concern for 'Father's Matters' according to Jacob of Saroug, *The Harp XXIV* (Kottayam, 2009). A complete translation was edited by M. REED, Gorgias Press (2016). The English translation used here is by the author of the article. Our *mêmrà* 10 as listed in Bedjan's edition, consists 750 lines having

willed that we – who became His brothers and sisters through the new birth by Baptism – may enjoy His Abba’s fatherhood, teaching us to invoke His own Abba, *our Abba*: a revelation and *theosis* indeed!

The Lord’s Prayer in Jacob’s wording

The Lord’s Prayer in Jacob’s *mêmra* 10 manifests his knowledge of the several Syriac versions of the Gospels existing in his time and also of the Apocryphal text of the *Acts of Thomas*.²

1 אבנא דבבנתא נטמיה צמא אבא האב מהב
 2 דמזמא למאן אב תלחמאן תן ביהאעמא
 3 אב קבא נטמיה נטמיה כוזא אבא דבבנתא
 4 מהב למ לטמא אמתא דמטמא תן בטא למ
 5 מטמא נטמיה נטמיה נטמיה אבא דבבנתא
 6 נטמיה נטמיה נטמיה נטמיה
 7 אבא אבא אבא תן בטמא דבבנתא מהב
 8 תלחמא דבבנתא נטמיה נטמיה
 9 אב דבבנתא נטמיה נטמיה נטמיה

*Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy
 Name as it is truly holy;
 May also your Kingdom come to us from where it is;
 also thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
 Give us the lasting daily bread from Your treasury,*

375 stanzas. The *mêmra* is divided into two-line couplets of 12 syllables each.

² To know more on Jacob’s biblical sources in his *mêmra*, see an interesting discussion on it in J. A.

KONAT, *The OT Types of Christ as Reflected in the Selected Metrical Homilies of Jacob of Serugh* (Louvain, 1999), 111 ff., where he sums up the opinion of other scholars as J. Zingerle, B. Sony, T. Jansma and others.

*and remit our debts and have pity on our sins as we
have forgiven.*

*And do not let us enter into temptation for we are weak
but you, free us from the Evil One because great is
your power,*

*For Yours is the Kingdom and the might,
also the power with the glory, for ever and ever.*

Amen.

Jacob, rooted in the Scriptures and tradition, added words – of profound insight and dear to Syriac tradition – to the Prayer uttered by the Lord, conditioned by the *metre*.

An analysis of the ‘petitions’

Our Father who art in heaven (ܐܘܪܐܒܘܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܫܡܝܐ)

ܐܘܪܐܒܘܢܐ [Our Abba, Our Father] is the very word uttered by Jesus, in this very language! It gives the title to the unique Prayer that the only-begotten Son *ihîdāyâ* of the Father, taught to his disciples for all humankind of all ages.

ܐܘܪܐܒܘܢܐ (and in its compositions) is the word most recurrent of *mêmrâ* 10. It is the key word Jesus used to address God, His Father by essence and who became *our Father* through Him, His Son. This word is **manifestation/epiphany** of God the Father. With this first word – Jacob states – Satan, the enemy is overpowered,

*The first word which He [the Son of God] taught to invoke
[in the Prayer] is ‘Our Father’;*

with it all the power of the enemy is subdued (73).³

*Therefore at the first (word) of the prayer,
which our Lord has taught, He allowed His apostles to
invoke “Our Father” (101).*

As soon as you draw near to pray, say: “Our Father”

³ The numbers in brackets refer to the Stanzas of *mêmrâ* 10.

173, 368); it is the **Father** of the **Son** (279, 232); He is *hidden* (233).⁸

Thus God putting on *names* manifests himself to humanity.⁹ He reveals His love and plan for salvation. Humanity's attitude towards the *Father* is that of a child, a weak child who calls for his Father's help,

you are like a weak baby (ܐܘܠܘܕ) who has a mighty Father (ܐܘܘܪܝܘܬܐ) when he struggles, he calls his Father to the conflict (107). And as soon as his enemy hears (the child) calling his Father, he becomes weak and flees because he is weaker than the mighty One (108).

To cry out 'Our Father' in order to escape the enemy's attack, is not an option. It is instead the only chance given in order not

And the name of the Father accompanied the apostles by the word of the Son (JSH, 'Ascension'; ET, T. KOLLAMPARAMPIL, FH, St. 204, p. 340).

⁸ About the term *hidden* see S. BROCK, *The Luminous Eye*, 27-28.

⁹ T. KOONAMMAKKAL summing up Ephrem's vision of God and his creatures says: "There is an ontological chasm between Creator and creature whenever we start speaking about God. [...] Prying into the Divine Being is absolutely impossible as it is reducing the Creator to the level of creatures. [...] God has taken the initiative [...] God has erected a royal highway – Nature, Scripture and the key of interpretation, the incarnate Son. [...] The Divine pedagogy unfolds itself in our language, using titles and names which become bridges for our understanding and safe port for our ship of faith" (*The Theology of Divine Names* [Kottayam, 2015] 103-104). Again regarding chasm between Creator and creation see S. BROCK, *The Luminous Eye*, 27.

to succumb to the Evil One. Jacob stresses this fact using an unexpected word of command,

*So thus you too are commanded (ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ) to call “Our Father”,
so that the Evil One may flee immediately on hearing
who your Father is (109).*

You are commanded because it is the very Son of the Father who taught his disciples – and through them humanity – to invoke God, ܐܘܕܘܗܝܘܬܘܢ

Jacob’s view on *Abba* – being adherent to the biblical revelation – is majestic. It discloses – in the limits of human language – the mystery of God the Father. His Son teaches us to call Him *Abba* as children call trustfully for their dad. He is our *Abba* because He has created us in His own image (153); in Baptism we became His Son’s brothers; He is not enraged with Adam (150); He longs that His children may return to Him (170).

Your Name be sanctified as it is truly holy (ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ 110-174)

Jacob continues to deal with the *Father* adding the reality of *His name* for the two aspects are one.

*“Our father who art in heaven, may your name be sanctified (ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ)”
you say to him: may we be sanctified for your name is in us, Lord make us holy (110).
Your name is invoked upon us, may it be sanctified in us because of You,
You are holy (ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ), may Your name be sanctified in us who are weak (ܘܢܗܝܘܬܘܢ) (111).*

To *hallow* God's name is to acknowledge that **He is indeed holy**. For this reason Jacob added to the sacred text of this petition, *as it is truly (indeed) holy* (ܐܝܢܐ ܚܘܠܐ).

According to Jacob the invocation 'hallowed be Thy name' teaches us to be holy because of the Father's Holiness,

*When you say 'hallowed be thy name' He teaches you to be holy
because of Your Father who is full of holiness (172).*

The Son of God – teaching the disciples how to pray – discloses the mystery of Adam created in God's image and that He Himself, the very Son of the Father put on Adam in order to divinize him. Adam (humanity) calls God Father in truth, being he the work of His hands at creation. But all the more he can call God *Abba* because the Only-Begotten Son, the *ihîdāyâ* (ܝܗܝܕܝܐ) of the Father taking flesh became Adam's brother. Adam (humanity), brother of the true Son through the baptismal rebirth, is taught to sanctify the great Name of the Father dwelling in him. In this paramount vision let us consider the single connected parts,

*The prayer which the Son of God has taught is full of riches,
and from it you may know whom you are and how great you are (112);
It teaches you that you have a Father who is a great king,
that your soul is exalted: 'what a rank your dust has reached!' (113).*

Jacob explains that the Lord's Prayer reveals also who Adam is and his state: *From it [i.e. the Lord's Prayer] we may know who we are and how great we are (112).*

Jacob's vision of Adam includes the whole history from the creation to his divinization. On considering Adam, the mystery of the incarnation opens up: God descended in order to make Adam ascend to the rank of a son to God,

*The Son of God **descended** from on high (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܠܝܐ) and became man, and from within the abyss he made you **ascend** (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) so that you might become a son to God (114).*

The aim of God's incarnation in its first scope is to bring Adam to enjoy God himself. God, out of love for Adam, makes Adam partaker of Him,

*For you He became man (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) while being God,¹⁰ So that you may become **with Him** a son to God (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) while being a man (116).
For you, He made himself poor while being rich, so that you, though poor, may possess wealth (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) because of Him (117).*

The second part of the stanza 128 highlights even more this mystery of God's love towards Adam, his humanity,

He was pleased to become your Father because He knows you (128).

Man's new generation as a son of God – which allows us to call God, *our Father* – takes place in two ways: one through God's incarnation in Jesus the *only begotten Son*¹¹ (ܩܕܝܫܐ) who became our brother, and the other through our immersion in the water i.e. the Baptism. In both cases Jacob speaks of a

¹⁰ Cf. Ph 2,5ff.

¹¹ His first generation was from eternity.

*second birth from different wombs: that of the Son of God of Virgin Mary's womb and ours from water, called the womb of Baptism,*¹²

He was a brother to you from the womb (ܐܘܢ ܕܥܡܢ ܚܘܡܢܐ) filled with holiness, and made you his brother from the womb (ܐܘܢ ܕܥܡܢ ܚܘܡܢܐ) of Baptism (115).

For you he became man while being God,¹³ so that you may become with him a son of God while being a man (116).

*He made you a son to God **with Himself** from the depth of the water (ܐܘܢ ܕܥܡܢ ܚܘܡܢܐ)*

*so that being the **only begotten Son** (ܐܘܢ ܕܥܡܢ ܚܘܡܢܐ), he might possess brothers through the second birth (ܐܘܢ ܕܥܡܢ ܚܘܡܢܐ 118).*

While the second birth made God a man, that of man (Adam-humanity) made him a son to God raising him to the *great race*. And not to forget that we have thus *a valiant Father*, His Son taught us to invoke *Our Father who art in heaven*, at the beginning of our prayer,

Because He also became man in the second birth, in that second birth he made you a son of God (119).

And so that you may not forget who your Father is when you pray,

He taught you to invoke "Our Father (who art) in heaven", at the beginning of your prayer (120).

According to Jacob also through the invocation *hallowed be Thy name* Our Lord reminds us of our *great origin* and teaches us to be holy because of the Father's holiness and to please

¹² See S. BROCK, *The Holy Spirit in The Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, 84-85.

¹³ Cf. Ph 2,5ff.

Him as His Son pleased Him on doing His Father's will always,

When you say 'hallowed be Thy name' He teaches you to be holy because of your Father who is full of holiness (172).

Jacob had attested some stanzas before,

Since you call God, 'Our Father,' be eager to please Him (ܘܥܠܝܢ) as you are a son to God (133).

We couple this last stanza to a previous one: **He took delight** (ܘܥܠܝܢ) *to become your Father for He knows you* (128) in order to highlight the reciprocal attitude of God the Father towards us and that of Adam-humanity towards Him. The verb ܘܥܠܝܢ means: a) *to be fair, bright, beautiful.* b) *to be exhilarated.* c) *to please, to be pleasing* etc.¹⁴ It seems to me a key word in Jacob's works of great insight. In our *mêmra* this root recurs 21 times. It is a word drawn from the *Peshitta*. Jacob wants to express, through this word, God's love towards Adam-humanity (128). God also was pleased to take flesh¹⁵ and he is delighted in Adam-humanity when he-it performs virtuous deeds. The Father shows how to please Him through His Son who walked on the royal way of the obedience. He pleased Him in everything: He totally accomplished the Father's will, just the contrary of what Adam worked misusing the freedom

¹⁴ J. PAYNE-SMITH, 590.

¹⁵ *And, to suffer, since it pleased Him, He was despised, stripped and was hung naked and it is according to His will He suffers pains and not by compulsion* (Homily on 'Transfiguration', ET, T. KOLLAMPARAMPIL, *FH, cit.*, 210).

that God had given him. What most pleases God is the loving request,

*The disciples asked Him: “teach us to pray”
and their loving request delighted (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ) and pleased the
Son of God (54).*

Adam’s fall, as seen above, was caused by misusing God’s gift, the freedom (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ) he had received at creation. Adam – through his free will – was made a slave, he who was *free-born* (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ ܒܢܐ),

*Sin bought me and I fell from freedom (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ)
they[the sins] led me far from you and I became a slave of
vanity (140).*

*I am in bondage Lord! How can I return to freedom
(ܐܘܨܚܘܢ)*

*for willingly (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ) I went with him who is the evil master
(142).*

*I <opened> my mouth and became a slave, I who was
free-born (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ ܒܢܐ),*

*and the enemy who bought me imprisoned me in his vanity
(144).*

But when Satan’s trick came into the open, Jacob comments,

*you were a child and were sold without your Father,
the contract <of sale> is invalid and **you are set free** (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ
ܐܘܨܚܘܢ 168).*

Once the contract of sale is declared invalid, Jacob exclaims – addressed to Adam – *you are set free* (ܐܘܨܚܘܢ ܐܘܨܚܘܢ 168), meaning that Adam regains the gift he had received from God in the beginning, the *freedom*.

Since Adam was created by God and according to His image (*I had Your name* (ܐܝܡܢܐ) which is *Your image* (ܐܝܡܢܐ) and it was defiled 153), he belongs to God, he is the Father's possession. But Adam could not stand before Satan who took him far from God. Then the loving-merciful Father sent His Word (ܐܠܗܐ), "and the Word became flesh"¹⁶ to stand against Satan's abuses and regain Adam to God's possession,

Everything that is <done> without You will not stand; because You are the Father, Your Word (ܐܠܗܐ) will stand and take possession (ܐܝܡܢܐ) of Yours (155).

Jacob affirms that to hallow the Father's name is within a dynamic process of the Father's condescendence towards Adam-humanity through His Son and of Adam-humanity's attitude to please Him, likewise the Son,

When you say "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name"; you enclose all these thought (ܐܝܡܢܐ)¹⁷ while praying this Prayer (164). For this Our Lord taught you to call 'Our Father'; so that every benefit (ܐܝܡܢܐ) may be found by you in <this> supplication (165).

The result of such benefits ends in 'theosis',¹⁸

¹⁶ Jn1,14.

¹⁷ ܐܝܡܢܐ, root (ܐܝܡܢܐ) moving, shaking, quaking: a) physical, an earthquake etc. b) mental, motion, movement, impulse (PAYNE-SMITH J., 113).

¹⁸ A Greek word (θεώσις) which means "divinization" but intended by Jacob not with the Greek philosophic connotations. On divinization in Jacob see BOU MANSOUR, *Theologie de Jacques*, Vol. II, 49-52.

*Then you will be **resplendent**¹⁹ because you have a great Father,
and the Evil One will fear His majesty, for great is your Father (166).*

The ontological gap between Creator and created is fully preserved but the divinity has been made accessible for humanity: “He gave us divinity, we gave Him humanity.”²⁰ He transfigures us into glorious beings, makes us shine forth!

Through the name of the Father the new creation takes place and Adam is restored to the original goodness (*God saw and all was good Gn 1,10*),

*The Son of God taught you to call on “Our Father”,
so that by the name of the Father all goodness (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܥܕܐ) may be found by you (171).*

Jacob concludes that the invocation *hallowed be Your name* regards Adam-humanity which is called to be holy. Because solely through a state of purity and holiness within a soul where the Most Holy Trinity resides, the great name of the Father, All Holy, can be hallowed,

*When you say “hallowed be Your name” he teaches you,
to be holy because of your Father who is full of holiness (172).
And the sin which is not holy may give place in the soul
to the mighty fame and great name of the Fatherhood (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܥܕܐ) 173)²¹.*

¹⁹ *ܐܘܪܝܢܐ*, its root *ܐܘܪܝܢܐ*, means *shining, splendid, glorious* etc. Here is in Ethpaal conjugation *ܐܘܪܝܢܐ*, which means, *to shine, glow; to be purified, shining, resplendent* (J. PAYNE-SMITH, 111).

²⁰ Ephrem, *HdF* 5,17.

²¹ *Fatherhood* involves Father and Son, See, T. KOONAMMAKKAL, *The Theology of Divine Names*, 174.

Summarizing, the hidden, holy Father is our Father. His holy, great name is hallowed in us. We address him as a child would do towards his father in order to be freed from attacks. Satan wanted to deprive the Father of His possession i.e. Adam-humanity. Adam having misused the gift of freedom, he had at creation, fell from his glorious rank. God, in order to restore His own disfigured image, descended from on high becoming man. Thus Adam – redeemed by the descent of the Son of God – was raised up to the great rank through Baptism: he became anew the Father’s possession, a son to God. The Son was delighted to fulfill His Father’s will and He is delighted in those who act accordingly. Adam regained his lost state and splendor, thanks to his great Father’s name, thus in truth he can invoke Him: *Abun* (ܐܒܘܢ).

‘May your Kingdom come to us from where it is’ (ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ 174-211)

The Kingdom of this second petition of the Lord’s Prayer is specified as the ‘Kingdom of the Father’ (ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ 181), ‘the house of God’ (ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ 179.188); ‘filled with light’ (ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ ܘܢܘܨܘܢܝܢ 189). The demons are subdued, cannot withstand and flee, when the Kingdom is invoked,

*[...] The Lord taught you when you pray,
to call on the kingdom of God and behold, the rebellion
will be subdued (180).
<When> the Evil One hears that you invoke the kingdom
of the Father,
he will understand that he cannot withstand His Kingdom
(181).*

This kingdom is not human²² it is beyond creation and should be invoked by prayer,

*It is not to a just man that you ask for help in prayer,
and not to a prophet, to come to your aid when you pray
(182 ff).*

*[...] You invoke the kingdom itself that it may come
against the rebels (186).*

And,

*As soon as the demons hear that you invoke, 'let the
kingdom come',
they will not remain until He comes and finds them (190).
At the news of Him they flee;
who indeed can wage war against the great King while He
is coming to help them? (191).*

Thus the coming of the kingdom is intended as *the great King's* coming, before whom the power of the enemy cannot stand and flee. Jacob plainly acknowledges the kingdom of God as a Person:²³ this Kingdom of the Father and the King are the same reality.

²² Cyprian says: "We do well to ask for the kingdom, because there is an earthly kingdom but whoever now renounces the world is greater than its honour and its kingdom alike. And therefore whoever commends himself to God and Christ is seeking not after earthly kingdoms but heavenly" (*On the Lord's Prayer*, ET, A. STEWART-SYKES, *cit.*, 13).

²³ Jacob says about the Kingdom,
*The Kingdom of God, it is said, "is like unto leaven,
which a woman took and hid
in three measures of meal, and all the dough was leavend. [...]
The leaven is our Lord, the Word, the Son of God,
and she that took it, the Godhead, the mistress of the House.[...]*

In the following verses Jacob employs constantly the word ܕܡܝܫܚܐ ²⁴ and not ܕܡܝܫܚܐ (as for Jn 1,14 and Lk 1, 35),

Spread incense (fragrance): the good deeds from all sides, in the soul, which is the court of the house of the King who is coming (199).

The one who was ready to wage war with you, behold is fleeing;

the King comes to you in order to dwell (ܕܡܝܫܚܐ) where He stays (ܕܡܝܫܚܐ 202)²⁵.

If these things (i.e. the passions) are in you, send them out for the King is coming;

if He comes and finds them, He will not dwell (ܕܡܝܫܚܐ) in you (206).

The place worthy of the dwelling (ܕܡܝܫܚܐ) of the King, is the soul,

He will come and dwell (ܕܡܝܫܚܐ) as you called for Him, He will come to you (208)

Brock helps us to understand this choice of Jacob, disciple of Ephrem: “Ephrem, is not particularly interested in the term ܕܡܝܫܚܐ which in later Syriac tradition, from the fifth century onwards, becomes a technical one to denote the activity of the Holy Spirit, among other places at the epiclesis during the Eucharistic Liturgy – yet a further link between Incarnation

she kneaded Her Son into the dough of mankind as if He were leaven,

and in the Son of God the whole race was sweetened.

*The Heavenly One descended and was mixed in with the earthly, that all the earthly might become like to the heavenly. (ET, Anon., ‘The Kingdom of Heaven as Leaven’, *The True Vine* 3 [1989] 48-49).*

²⁴ ܕܡܝܫܚܐ to dwell, lodge, stay, to reside, to be situated. Cf.

PAYNE-SMITH J., 595.

²⁵ Lit: *He dwells where He dwells*. In both case there is ܕܡܝܫܚܐ .

and Eucharist. With reference to Christ's presence both in Mary's womb and in the Eucharistic Bread and Wine, Ephrem uses the verb *shrâ* (ܫܪܐ), a word with a rich sacral background in Jewish Aramaic, where the term is employed especially in connection with the *shekkina*, the divine presence, and the *iqârâ*, divine glory."²⁶

Then all becomes opened: Jacob, following Ephrem, uses the word ܫܪܐ with this particular implication for the indwelling of the Kingdom into us. Jacob does not focus his attention on the place from where the Kingdom comes, but saying *from where it is*, he points out to the **hidden place** is set up for the **hidden Father**,²⁷

It is according to the mind of the hidden Father that He [the Son] composed the Prayer, and placed it in your mouth so that you may pray to Him [the Father] according to His mind (233).

When **the Kingdom** comes, it requires **a place, a cleansed house completely filled with holiness** (196). **This place, the**

²⁶ S. BROCK, *The Luminous Eye*, 110-111.

²⁷ According to T. Koonammakkal in every religion there is a tension between God as beyond and God as here and now, 'the Hidden One manifested Himself in revelation'; see T. KOONAMMAKKAL, 'The self-Revealing God and Man in Ephrem'. See his 'Divine Names and Theological Language in Ephrem.' And see NOUJAÏM, 'Anthropologie et économie de salut chez S. Éphrem', which deals with hiddenness (*kasyûtâ*) and manifestation (*galyûtâ*) in depth. See also R. MURRAY, 'The Paradox of God's hiddenness and accessibility in St. Ephrem'.

house for the Kingdom **is our being**:²⁸ *the door of the house is the **mouth** (197); its centre the **heart** (198); its court the **soul** (199); on the floor lays the carpet of sincere love because where **the King moves**, there **He wants to see love** (200). The heart must sprinkle purity and love the virtues. The soul must spread the fragrance of the good deeds. The place must be **prepared, cleansed** (201, 209) from all kind of passions: *angry, love for money, falsehood, fornication, deceit, calumny* (201-206),²⁹ *for if He comes and finds these things, **He will not dwell in you** (206). **Repentance makes the Kingdom come to us** (207) then Jacob concludes, *you will shine* and receive it with holiness (210).**

Another aspect to highlight is the verb *ἔρχομαι* in Ethpaal conjugation – already encountered at the conclusion of the first petition – which is used by Jacob in these two following stanzas drawn from the two sections,

²⁸ Elsewhere Jacob writes, commenting the following biblical text, ‘The Kingdom of God is within you’ (Lk 17,21), ‘The one who looks for the Kingdom let him enter into his own soul and look for it there, for there he will find it when the interior man searches for Him with love.’ (G. OLINDER, *Epistulae* 5, 26; ET, my translation).

²⁹ Same insight of Cyprian who quotes 1Cor 6,9: ‘Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor sodomaizers, nor thieves, nor cheats, nor drunkards, nor wizards, nor the rapacious, shall attain to the Kingdom of God.’ (*De Oratione Dominica*; ET, by R.J. DEFERRARI, in *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 36 [New York, 1958] 69).

Section on: 'Hallowed be Thy Name'	Section on: 'May Your Kingdom come'
<p>Then <i>you will be resplendent</i> (ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ) <i>because you have an eminent Father,</i></p> <p><i>and the Evil One will fear His majesty, for eminent is your Father (166).</i></p>	<p><i>As soon as it [the Kingdom] stirs to come, the enemy will flee</i></p> <p><i>and you will be resplendent</i> (ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ) <i>and receive it with holiness (210).</i></p>

An obvious parallelism characterizes the two stanzas: the flight from and the fear of the enemy (the Evil One) and the state of a transfigured-resplendent (ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ) creature. Adam-humanity is divinized by the indwelling of the Kingdom (the King), of the great Father in him/her. We consider these features to be not a mere coincidence but an equivalent conclusion of Jacob's deep insight on the same mystery: the holiness of the Name hallowed in us, and the reception of the Kingdom in us – with all the implications seen – is the process which leads Adam-humanity to *theosis*, to be divinised. Adam, purified from evil, becomes luminous of God's light in the *house of light*, being the dwelling where the Father and the great King reside.

'*May also your will be done on earth as in Heaven*' (ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐܘܬܐ 211-235)

In this petition, Jacob alludes to Jesus' agony in Gethsemane since Jesus adhered His will to that of His Father, '*Not my will but Yours*'³⁰ (214). On this ground Jacob says,

*He [i.e. the Son of God] taught you to ask in your prayers,
Lord, Your will be done on earth as in heaven* (215).

He leads his hearers to perceive a bridal relationship between the two wills, human and divine which become one, that of the Father,

*Pray, 'be Your will on our will that it may be Yours,
and to Your will, our will may be fulfilled [perfected]*³¹
(218).

This language of love is a characteristic of Jacob in his mystical understanding of the godliness of the relationship between the Son and the Father,³² and as a direct consequence of the believers with God.

³⁰ Mt 26,39; Mk 10,38; Lk 22,42; Jn18,11.

³¹ **ⲛⲓⲗ** in Pael conjugation means: a) *to end, finish, conclude*; c) *to fulfill, perform a vow, promise, etc.* Its past participle **ⲛⲓⲗⲉ** means *perfected, finished*; **ⲛⲓⲗⲉ ⲛⲁⲕⲁ** *it is finished (or fulfilled)* (J

PAYNE-SMITH, 581). This last meaning is found in John's Gospel which records the last word of Jesus on the cross (cf. Jn 19,30), after having fulfilled all the Father's will.

³² J. RATZINGER in his *Jesus of Nazareth* says: "The oneness with the Father's will is the foundation of Jesus' life. The unity of His will with the Father's will is the core of His very being [...]. Jesus himself is 'heaven' in the deepest and truest sense of the word – He in whom and through whom God's will is wholly done. In communion with Him we too learn God's will (ET, A.J. WALKER, *cit.*, 149-150).

In Gethsemane Jesus crucified His own will before He might have been crucified in the body. Thus what Jacob wants to highlight is that like Jesus our free will has to adhere fully to God's will in order to please the Father.³³

The power to reach this quota is given by the prayer itself: 'the Son of man taught us to pray, '[Lord], may your will be done',

*Will! so that we may will in You
and everything you will, we may also will (219).*

A question is arising: What is the Father's will?³⁴ Jacob enumerates a good number of instances to explain in what

³³ Tertullian in his treatise *On Prayer* says that, "flesh and Spirit, heaven and earth indicate ourselves, there is nothing of evil in the will of God, Jesus himself was the will and the power of the Father" (ET, A. STEWART-SYKES, 45). And Cyprian in his *On the Lord's Prayer*, "Since we are opposed by the Devil, and our thoughts and deeds are so prevented from complete submission to God, we pray requesting that the will of God might be done in us" (*Idem*, 75).

³⁴ In *Letter 20* Jacob writes that it is more necessary for man to know the thought of the Book than to learn to read it, for from the thought of the Book one learns God's will (ܩܘܠܘܬܐ ܕܐܘܪܝܬܐ). G. OLINDER, *cit.*, 130). ET, my translation.

God's will consists. It consists in behaving on earth likewise the *spiritual watchers*³⁵ (ܘܬܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܝܢܐ) in heaven (212).³⁶

The Father's will is perfectly done on heaven by all the *angels, the heavenly crowd, the orders of Archangels, the Seraphim*. Likewise, the *whole earth* is requested to perform all His will as heaven never transgress His commands. Even though not expressly, Jacob points out that praying, *May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, is to request that earth may become heaven.³⁷

³⁵ The Syriac tradition frequently designates angels as Watchers (ܘܬܘܪܝܢܐ). S. BROCK in his *Spirituality in the Syriac Tradition*, 57, notes: "There are two words for 'angel' in Syriac, *malâ'kâ* (ܘܬܘܪܝܢܐ) and *'ira* (ܘܬܘܪܝܢܐ). *Malâ'kâ* is related to *mal'ak*, 'messenger', which is the normal word for angel in the Hebrew Bible; *'irâ*, on the other hand, is found in the Old Testament only in the sense of angel in the book of Daniel, but it came to be the normal term for angel in many Syriac writers: *'irâ* literally means 'wakeful', which provides a connection with Christ's words at the end of the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins in Mt 25, 13: 'Therefore be wakeful, for you do not know the day and the hour' (i.e. when the Bridegroom will come)".

Watchers figure prominently also in pseudepigraphic and later Jewish mystical literature. In Merkabah texts such as 3 Enoch, they are a separate order: "Above all these are four great princes called Watchers [...] their abode is opposite the throne of Glory [...] they receive glory from the glory of the Almighty and are praised with the praise." See 3Enoch 28,1-3.

³⁶ St. Ephrem, explaining the term 'in heaven', says that, "the things which are on earth are corporeal, and those in heaven are spiritual" (L. LELOIR, *CDiat vi, 16a, cit.*, 72).

³⁷ Origen states that the earth will remain earth no longer doing the Father's will. (ET, A. STEWART-SYKES, 175). And Theodore of Mopsuestia comments: "He wished to invite us to imitate the world to come in which when we dwell, we shall always be high

The heavenly watchers' 'duties,' seen above, are so enumerated, *to praise, serve, sing praises, make joyful noise, sing 'Holy', bless the Lord, serve with holiness, obeying in all forms, types and manner* (228): all activities highlighted especially by the book of Psalms.³⁸

Jacob describes the way to sanctify God on earth with the above numerous forms of service and worship because in heaven there will be the total immersion in God's love which makes angels and human beings to sing, praise, bless, serve.

The Church on earth must serve God as the angels in heaven i.e. in unity, harmony, *without dispute*,

*As the orders of the house of Gabriel serve,
so also the Church on earth may serve **without dispute***
(ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ 221).

This is the foremost aspect to perform God's will on earth as it is in heaven but since it is not in human power, the Son of God taught us to beseech it through prayer.

An ultimate theme of this section on the Lord's Prayer is worthy of note. Let us recall the stanza 222,

*As the choirs of the house of Michael make joyful noise,
may we move in pure love (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ), with shouts of joy
in the assemblies.*

We encountered the expression: *pure love* (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ) in stanza 200 concerning the King's coming to reside in the soul: *there He requests to see the pure love*. The love requested by the King bears a peculiar connotation, ܩܕܝܫܐ (pure). This Syriac

above the earthly things and shall never be in need of anything”
(A. MINGANA, *Theodore of Mopsuestia, on the Lord's Prayer*,
11).

³⁸ Jacob wrote a *mêmra* (106) 'On Psalms,' *HS* III, 892.

word has no single translation in English, but it includes ‘clear, pure, limpid, lucid, luminous’.³⁹ It is one of the words most dear to Ephrem and to the Syriac tradition especially to the monastic milieu. A pure, limpid eye, heart, love in this case, become mirrors of the divinity. The purity of a human being is the condition, *sine qua non*, for God to reside in him/her. Since God is love and all that He has done and He is doing is stirred by love, He requests love from His creatures that belong to Him. He requests a pure, limpid love, willed, not forced as was that of the Son of God who performed all His Father’s will out of love towards Him and towards us. And as it is proper of the lovers to sing,⁴⁰ thus Jacob invites to *sing with shouts of joy in the assemblies on earth as the choirs of the house of Michael make joyful noise in heaven*: this is to perform the Father’s will, especially expressed in a great number of Psalms which Jacob was daily singing.

‘Give us the lasting daily bread from your treasury’ (ܘܥܘܒܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܦܢܐܢܐ ܕܝܘܡܝܢ ܘܥܘܒܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܦܢܐܢܐ ܕܝܘܡܝܢ ܘܥܘܒܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܦܢܐܢܐ ܕܝܘܡܝܢ ܘܥܘܒܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܦܢܐܢܐ ܕܝܘܡܝܢ 236-275)

Like Ephrem, Jacob intends for *daily bread*, the bread of necessity for nourishment. Both, Ephrem and Jacob, qualify the bread as ܘܥܘܒܘܢܐ. Its root, ܘܥܘܒܘܢܐ connotes steadfastness, *to make firm*; ܘܥܘܒܘܢܐ means, *true, lasting, never ending, eternal, perpetual, continual* and also *constant*.⁴¹ In our translation we have preferred the term, *lasting*.⁴²

³⁹ For an analysis of this word see S. BROCK, *The Luminous Eye*, 73-74 and ‘The Prayer of the Heart in Syriac Tradition’, *Sobornost*, 4 (1982) 135-136.

⁴⁰ St Augustine (+454) says: “Cantare amantis est” (*Sermo*, 336,1).

⁴¹ J. PAYNE-SMITH, 19.

⁴² Finding difficult to chose the fittest word for *amina*, I retorted my doubt to Brock who kindly replied:

Jacob's exposition on the matter, developed in stanzas 236-275, consists of two opposing aspects:

1. The body requests the necessary daily bread in order to have life: *asks for bread* (238), *lives with nothing else (but bread)* (240).
2. The body does not draw life from richness: *riches are not greater than life* (238), *The body does not eat gold, jacinth, precious stones* (241), *What is precious is neither eaten nor drunk by the body* (242).

Herewith the list of the precious stones or pearl and dresses, mentioned in these stanzas, considered as *superfluties* (ܦܪܘܘܬܘܬܐ 240, 261, 262); they are opposed to the only necessity (ܦܪܘܘܬܘܬܐ 245) for life, the bread: *Gold, silver, beryl, stones of Ephod* (237), *white fine spun linen, fine long outer garment; pearl from Ethiopia and India* (239). Jacob asserts that *gold* is of *no profit to the King* (248) or to *the rich ones*, (250) for *bread and bread are the elements through which one can live* (249). Furthermore he qualifies the pearls, *precious for the vain and futile world* which is *void of knowledge and anxious for superfluties*⁴³ (243). On the basis of this truth, the poor and

“It is indeed quite difficult to know how best to translate *amina* in this context. It should properly mean 'continuous', and so 'lasting' and 'constant'. Personally I feel that 'true' is a bit too free, and I would probably prefer something like 'lasting'. It is interesting that in the Peshitta Pentateuch it renders Hebrew *tamid* (e.g. Num 4:7), and this may have been in the background of the Old Syriac translator's mind. There could well also be an association (especially in the exegetical tradition) with the Johannine 'Bread of Life'. I always find it very difficult to know what best to do in such cases!”

⁴³ The *world* in Jacob bears a negative connotation, it is dark, opposite to light; it is filled with every evil, it is a great burden,

rich are placed on the same level: it is the need for bread that makes them equal, Jacob affirms.

The constant, necessary bread *is given to us by God for each day, and it must not be eaten out of gluttony* (252). These

an agitated sea in tempest at any moment, for those who enter it. (Cf. Jn 15,19, and G. OLINDER, *cit.*, 5, 24-25). In another occasion JS says,

*The world is dark, but You, O Son of God, art light;
in thy light may I walk with Thee towards your Father.
The way of the world is full of all stumbling-stones and
snares
be a clear way for me, my Lord, and I shall walk in You.*
(ET, 'Prodigal Son', *cit.*, 12- 13).

And again,

*The way of the world is full of snares and obstacles;
the devils are standing on guard at the cross-roads of the
earth;
and they threaten the soul with rage to destroy it,
and they thirst for her blood because of the virtues which
are held within her*

(ET, A. MINGANA, 'On the Holy

Mysteries', *cit.*, 4).

Nevertheless Jacob also highlights God's love towards the world,

*The Son of God dawned upon the world like the day,
and the darkness vanished [...],
He came openly and was not received.
He loved the world because it was the work of his hand,
and he came to his own to renew it and to rebuild what was
overthrown*

(ET, Anon., 'The Lord Abode on the Earth' *The True Vine* 4 (1990) 37-38).

assertions are highlighted by the event of manna in the desert and by the parable of the lost son in the NT.

The bread eaten out of gluttony, in *mêmrâ* 10, can be also an allusion to the OT incident of Eve who ate of the prohibited fruit and gave it to Adam, too. They ate out of gluttony and greed,

*I gave my mouth and became a slave, I who were a son of freedom.
And the enemy who brought me, imprisoned me in his vanity*
(144).

Thus through their disobedience to the command of God – ‘do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’⁴⁴ – they lost their glory and the drama of humanity had a beginning.

Jacob’s *mêmrâ* on the Lord’s Prayer, bears connotations to the Eucharistic bread since God is the *Giver* (263), the bread is *lasting* given for *each day* and aimed for the *joyful life* (258).

Especially the following stanza seems to point to that:

*The Lord taught us to pray,
give us the lasting daily bread in order to have life from it*
ܕܡܢ ܠܗܝܟܢ (259).

A similar expression is found in Jesus’ discourse on the bread of Life. Jacob says that the bread gives life, *the life is from it* (i.e. *from the bread*), which echoes Jesus’ words, “I am the bread of life, [...] who eats from it has eternal life.”⁴⁵ Also the term ܕܡܢ related to the *bread* could point to the Eucharistic bread. Jacob has evoked the daily manna for the Israelites, “the

⁴⁴ Gen 2,17.

⁴⁵ Jn 6,33.35.48.51.

bread from heaven to eat”⁴⁶ and about which Jesus says, “in all truth I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, it is My Father who gives you the bread from heaven, the true bread.”⁴⁷ Jacob’s conclusion manifestly intends that the *lasting daily bread* points primarily to the necessary thing, the bodily nourishment, to live on daily,

By it (i.e. by the Lord’s Prayer) man asks for the daily bread without avarice, abandoning all superficialities which are not necessary (371).

Nevertheless Jacob being so immersed in the Holy Scripture, when he preaches on the *lasting daily bread*, he cannot but have in mind also the Eucharistic bread, whose icon the bread for the bodily nourishment is.

So it seems manifest that, in his *mêmra* On the Lord’s Prayer, our father employs terms which may allude also of the Eucharistic bread, even though he thinks first of all to the bread for the body.

‘Remit us, Lord, our debts and forgive our sins as we have forgiven’ (אֲנִי מְסַלֵּחַ לְכָל אֲדָמָה וְכָל בְּרִיאַת אֲדָמָה 276-311)

Three basic points come to light in the first part of his argumentation,

1. The Father wills to forgive, if does not forgive, His justice takes place (282. 283).
2. The plea for forgiveness should be insistent, determined (284-289).
3. The Father pours out His merciful love on the sinners who ask for mercy (286.287.290).

⁴⁶ Cf. Jn 6,31.

⁴⁷ Jn 6,32.

Jacob at the outset of his exposition highlights why the Son of God taught the apostles to ask for forgiveness,

*Because He wants to forgive the sinners,
He taught them to ask for forgiveness (278).*

*He exhorted them for He wills (wants) to forgive sinners,
and due to that <will> He taught <them> to ask for
forgiveness (280).*

Our author contemplates the loving Father's heart when he says,

*Who will not rejoice with the **Creditor**⁴⁸ who teaches him,
what to say when he enters and sees his face?
He [the Father] wants to hear from the debtors, 'Forgive us
our debts',
so that He may give a chance to His justice for forgiveness
(281. 282).*

And,

*He wills to forgive and we may ask for His mercy,
so that with the fulfilled prayer you may also enjoy the
benefit (286).*

The Father's heart is stirred by love: since Jacob had experience of it, all his writings reflect his mystical understanding of God's love.⁴⁹ Being imbued with God's love and His Word, he can deeply express it,

⁴⁸ An allusion to Jesus himself as He is the one who teaches this prayer and to the Father too whose petitions are addressed.

⁴⁹ Cf. M. HANSBURY, *Love as an Exegetical Principle in Jacob of Serug*, Harp Vol. XXVII, (2011) 2-16.

*So that also His justice when immediately it hears you asking for <forgiveness>, may fervently **stir in love** (ܐܘܪܘܫܐܝܡܐ) and pour out mercies on sinners (290).*

Jacob asserts that our plea for forgiveness should be done with determination,⁵⁰

*He asks for determination from them when they pray, lest He may be senseless **in his love** (287).*

And,

Behold your debt lay before God beside His justice and without intercession none can escape from His hand (288).

Thus the God's twofold facets – His merciful love and His Justice – have been impressively drawn down. God, who is love, wants that his children may avoid His justice and live,⁵¹

[...] the Son of God, who every day seeks that all may live, has taught this Prayer to all mankind (302).

⁵⁰ With a similar instance we recall another Jacob's *mêmra*, *On Samson, Samson prayed and because he prayed with contrition, God heard him and granted his request. [...] the man was moved to make supplication with a broken heart.*

*The Lord who seeks to heal those who are broken in heart, hearkened to Samson and, stretching out his hand, gave him strength (JSH, 'On Samson', ET, Anon., *The True Vine*, 11 [1992] 70).*

⁵¹ Cf. Ez 18, 23: 'I am not pleased at the death of sinners rather they may convert and live.'

Jacob alludes to the parable of the unforgiving debtor when he says,

And if he is not forgiven by you, with what courage do you ask Him <for forgiveness>?

He will forgive you on condition that you may forgive (299).

Forgive your companion (الحظي), abundantly forgive him as much as he is guilty',

then come and ask for forgiveness to God and you will receive it⁵² (300).

He develops the subject in a catechetical tone offering a good number of instances. He gives two lists of things that one should remit: one for the rich, *gold, big amount, accounts* (303-305). The other especially for the poor because,

*The one who is poor, however, who has no deeds nor accounts,
and no debts nor rights, he should also forgive (306).*

Hence the poor must cancel away: *Misdeeds, persecutions, beatings, afflictions, oppressions, words* etc. (306-311), from their mind and forgive (309).

The words of this Lord's Prayer petition are pertinent to the rich and the poor equally; he excludes none, rich or poor, with

⁵² About debts with the same idea expressed in *mêmra* 10, Jacob says,

Toutes les dettes que tu dois à Dieu,

acquittes-en toi envers ton frère et par lui le Seigneur remettra toutes tes dettes.

Honore et embrasse et aime son image et réconcilie-toi avec elle,

et le roi, qui na pas besoin de ton honneur, remettra tes dettes

(JSH, 'Divine Love' I, 606; FT, E. KHALIFE-HACHEM, *cit.*, 299).

the clairvoyance that God's word is equally true for everyone and each one.

'Lord, do not let us enter into temptation because we are weak' (ܐܠܗܝܢܐ ܠܗܝܠܘܢ ܠܗܝܠܘܢ ܠܗܝܠܘܢ ܠܗܝܠܘܢ 317-350)

According to our author the petition, "Lord do not let us enter into temptation," bears a different connotation from the other kind of temptations we have seen through the *mêmra* i. e. all the tricks, attacks, actions of the devil on mankind. The nature of this temptation requires an appropriate understanding, affirms Jacob, 'it being lofty' (ܐܝܬܝܗ ܥܠܝܘܬܐ),

Here the word (i.e. temptation) calls for an understanding not of customary things, because it is the most lofty among the discerning persons. This temptation which people pray in order not to enter into it, the learned people understand it with a great mind (318.319).

Jacob explains this kind of *temptation* even if it can displease the hearers for its content,

And if it does not displease those who hear, I will also explain which kind of temptation the Son of God speaks about in the Prayer (320).

The presence of a special – manifest or hidden – divine help, specifies this combat,

When the Adversary fights with humankind, there is a help for them from God (321).

This kind of help in time of struggle is expressed as a help from a *Guardian* (322.330), an *angel* (323.324.325.326.328), a *godly man* (331), a *hidden power* (322.344), a *divine power*

(349) a *hidden help* (353), for the fight is against Satan himself.

Jacob, to elucidate the kind of struggle this temptation points out, mentions two incidents: the first of the high priest Joshua accused by Satan,⁵³ the other of the just Job,⁵⁴

*As it happened to Joshua, son of Jozadak,
the high priest who was helped by an angel;
while he was not aware, the angel rebuked the Adversary,
the prophet saw what was happening while the priest did
not see (324. 325).*

The temptation, about which the Lord taught us to pray for, in order to be spared, attacks everybody – states our holy father – but especially those who want to please the Lord, the *athletes* (353),

*In the same way every day there are angels beside
everyone,
who keep back from him the orders of devils so that they
may not hurt him.
When a person wants to please the Lord by his conduct,
the Adversary⁵⁵ sets upon him to wage war with him
(326.327).
And as long as one stands in prayer before God,
Satan also will stand to **mock him** (329).*

Our author progressively elucidates these statements recounting the other episode of the just Job. Firstly he moves on to highlight the deepest consequence of the kind of temptation. Satan asked God to put Job to the test and it was

⁵³ Ezra 3,2-13; Zech 3,1.

⁵⁴ Job 1,6-12.

⁵⁵ *ܐܘܪܝܘܬܐ*.

permitted to strip him of every possession, even children, leaving him without help and,

He brought him down to fight alone with the Evil One without any assistance and support in the midst of the agony (334).

The Lord said to his Enemy: "he is entrusted into your hands"

for He knew the wrestler would not have succumbed (345).

Thus God gives Satan to prove the *righteous Job*; He gives Satan the freedom to test him; God allows man to be tried but He does not abandon him till the end. Before this evidence, Jacob exclaims,

This is the < kind of> temptation which our Lord taught, because of it the people pray that they may not enter into (335),⁵⁶

since this is the temptation of the one who is left *without assistance and support (334); without divine help (338, 340); without Your help (352)*. Thus this temptation consists in a battle, in first line, against the powers of the enemy, Satan himself. It is portrayed as *a bloody agony (336), a battle of blood (337,347) a dreadful fight (338), very dreadful (342), a battle with Satan (346), a great bloody battle (347), a hard fight (348)*: in short, a real description of a conflict in war time. On this subject Jacob quotes by name Saint Paul⁵⁷ who was very familiar with this kind of language; he says,

This is the great, bloody agony

⁵⁶ See also St.339.343.348.351.

⁵⁷ Jacob had a great appreciation of the Apostle Paul. He wrote two *mêmre* about him and often cited him in his writings. See T. BOU MANSOUR, *Saint Paul dans la Patristique Syriaca* (Kaslik, 2010).

about which Paul says: "Up to this you did not come" (336).

The quotation is from the letter to the Hebrews⁵⁸ where Paul speaks of Jesus as a model for us; it runs, "Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus [...] He endured the cross, disregarding the shame of it. [...] think of the way He persevered against such opposition from sinners then you will not lose heart and come to grief. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of bloodshed."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Eastern Christianity believed that the Apostle Paul authored this letter to the Hebrews. Either in the strict sense that he wrote it himself (Pantaenus, St. John Chrysostom), or the broad sense that someone else – a secretary or disciple – either translated the work from a Semitic original, or expressed the substance of Paul's theology in his own personal way (St. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. John of Damascus). The Western Church, by contrast, did not initially accept the letter as the work of Paul (Muratorian Canon, St. Cyprian, Tertullian). But by the fourth century several Fathers and theologians, including St. Augustine and St. Jerome, came to embrace the Eastern tradition (See, *ICSBNT*, 413).

⁵⁹ Heb 12,2-4.

There are only two possibilities for the soul⁶⁰ involved in this bloody fight⁶¹: to win or to be defeated,

*In this battle the soul conquers or is being conquered,
as it is a battle of blood, in it the soul either kills or is
being killed.*

*For <the soul> descends to battle against Satan without
help,*

*thus it is a dreadful fight because <the soul> is without
help (337.338).*

And Jacob states in the following stanza,

This is that temptation which one prays

*not to enter into as he/she learned from the **One who
knows all** (339).*

This last detail focuses on the Son of man, the One who taught to pray thus, the One *who knows all*. He knows this kind of temptation out of experience. For that Jacob states, *none can win without the divine power* (349). Satan⁶² had asked God to take away His help from Job (344), and God delivered him into

⁶⁰ The soul is the attacked one because,
*when she is moved in love towards God,
she despises the evil world and its affairs,
and comes in (the church) and mingles with the godly
meditations,*

and she cleaves to and loves those spiritual conversations.

She contemns the world and its affairs and its doing,

and she is steeped in these voices of holiness [...]

*And the soul contemns the love of the world and its pleasures,
and thoughts of wantonness and remissness.*

*And when she hears these voices that are sung to her,
she is chaste and lowly and full of hope and moderation*

(JSH, 'On the Holy Mysteries', A, MINGANA *cit.*, 2).

⁶¹ About 'the enemy who thirsts for blood' see also,

*Your enemy is watching, and is athirst for your blood, and as far
he is able he will cut you off from profitable things (Idem, 3).*

⁶² Satan who asks God to put to the test mankind see Lk 22, 28.31.

his hands for *He knew the wrestler would not have succumbed* (345) and that *from the great bloody battle he would receive the trophy* (347).

Jacob notes the positive turn of this bloody fight: *the trophy!* Job purified as in a furnace by the test is now restored definitely in a better condition. A. Cruden explains the word *temptation* thus: “When spoken of God, *temptation* means to try or test with the idea of proving man’s faith and certainly that man will not fail.”⁶³

When Jacob states that, *Because of the very hard fight, our Lord taught that one should pray so that he may not be tempted* (348) he does not mean that one may be fully spared from the fight. But Jacob shows a royal way to fight the temptation: humility. The tempted one acknowledging his own weakness, feebleness⁶⁴ (352.354), does not boast in his victory (349); he entrusts all the fight to God who fights in him (352) for *of the Victorious One are all the victories*; Jesus humiliated till death

⁶³ A. CRUDEN, *Cruden’s Complete Concordance* (Bombay ed.) 662. A. Cruden offers the incident of Gen 22,1 when God put to the test Abraham, asking him to offer in sacrifice his only begotten son Isaac. The same episode is recalled in Heb 11,17, “It was by faith that Abraham, when **put to the test**, offered up Isaac. He offered to sacrifice his only son.”

⁶⁴ We interpret Jacob’s insight through J. RATZINGER’s words on this matter: “When we pray the sixth petition of the Our Father we are saying to God: ‘I know that I need trial so that my nature can be purified. [...] When you give evil some room to manoeuvre, as you did with **Job**, then please remember that my strength goes only so far. Don’t overestimate my capacity. Don’t set the boundaries too wide within which I may be tempted, and be close to me with your protecting hand when it becomes too much for me’” (*Jesus of Nazareth, cit.*, 163).

and death on a cross rises up with the best of the triumphs: the resurrection, the greatest of all the victories over Satan,

*He who flees from temptation humbles himself,
because he entrusts the battle to the Victorious One who
triumphs (350).*

And,

*Do not let me enter the test for You acknowledge that I am
weak,
may the whole battle be Yours and You will be victorious.
Yours are the victories of all the victorious ones;
win, for it befits You and do not let me enter into
temptation (354.355).⁶⁵*

This temptation, which causes an agony to the extent of shedding blood, wants to detach the creature – whose nature is weak – from God, from the fear of God. Satan knows that if he succeeds in this aim, he will win the great fight.

Nevertheless Jesus stands victorious till the end, even when he will experience, in His humanity, that God has abandoned Him. From the height of the cross He cries out in a loud voice, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?” (ܡܝ ܡܝܘܬܝܢ ܡܝܘܬܝܢ ܡܝܘܬܝܢ).⁶⁶ And at the point of death, “Father, into Your

⁶⁵ Similarly Cyprian (+ 258) interprets the sixth petition, “When we pray ‘and lead us not into temptation’ we are expressing our awareness that the enemy can do nothing against us unless God has allowed it beforehand, so that our fear, our devotion and our worship may be directed to God – because the Evil One is not permitted to do anything unless he is given authorization”

(*De Dominica oratione, cit.*, 25; CSEL III, 25, 285f.).

⁶⁶ Mt 27,46; Mk 15,34.

hand I commit **My spirit** (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ).”⁶⁷ This is the victory of the *Victorious One who triumphs* (350).

Jacob’s numerous allusions to Jesus are evident. They allude to the temptations the Lord had to endure in His life on earth. When our father, imbued by Scripture, wrote about the angels’ help in time of struggle – *when Satan rouses a struggle in man, there is an angel to help him* (323) or *there are angels beside everyone* (326) – he had before his eyes the episode of Jesus tempted in the desert for forty days and forty nights, and in Gethsemane. Furthermore he quoted St. Paul who said to keep our eyes on Jesus our high priest. Job especially, in his combat, points to Jesus. For Jacob the whole OT speaks of Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah.

Ultimately, a further detail is to be highlighted: **the allusion to the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit clearly is mentioned especially when Jacob states,

*None can win without the **divine power** (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ) so it is right he may pray and not boast of the victory* (349).

And especially when he moves his exposition into a personal prayer,

*Do not take away from me that **hidden help** which is **the Power**⁶⁸ that descends on the athletes⁶⁹ in their battles⁷⁰ (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ ܕܘܚܪܝܢܐ 353).⁷¹*

⁶⁷ Lk 23,46.

⁶⁸ For *power*, Jacob intends the Holy Spirit: Cf. also “Together with the priest the whole people beseeches the Father that He will send His Son, that he may come down and the Holy Spirit, His **power**, lights down in the bread and wine [...]” (ET, A. MINGANA, ‘On the Holy Mysteries’, *cit.*, 2).

⁶⁹ ܐܘܪܝܢܐ from Greek ἁθλητής.

⁷⁰ Also with the meaning of ‘a martyr’.

⁷¹ See also St 351,352.

This last stanza recalls the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles, the *athletes*.⁷² Thus with the hidden, divine Power, Jacob concludes his exegesis on the sixth petition with the most Holy Trinity at work,

*Yours are the victories of all (victors), the victorious ones;
win, for it befits You and do not let me enter into
temptation (355).*

And,

*By it, (i.e. by the Lord's Prayer) mankind calls for the
Helper in order He may draw near them
and deliver them from the one who hates mankind because
he wages war on them (374).*

Jacob has frequently made allusions to Jesus' temptations in his *mêmrâ* 10, but he has never taken Jesus' example openly while dealing with *temptation*. It seems that the biblical text of Mt 6,13 has guided our author in this way, since Jesus himself, teaching his disciples how to pray, focuses the attention of His listeners on the same disciples' temptations which – of course – can be overcome by only looking at their Master and how He could be victorious in His contest against the Evil One.

*'But You, deliver us from the Evil One, for great is
your power'*

(ܐܘܢܝܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ ܕܝܗܘܐ 356-364)

The seventh and last petition of the Lord's Prayer, but *deliver us from evil* occurs only in the version of Mathew. It is probably best understood as referring to the *Evil One*, since the

⁷² Act 2, 1ff.

definite article is used with *πονηρός* ('evil') in the original Greek.⁷³

In stanza 351 Jacob anticipates the link of the last two petitions,

He (the one who humbles himself) says to Him: "do not make me enter into temptation, but You, deliver me from the Evil One for great is Your power" (351).

Jacob joins together the two petitions, because to be freed from temptations is to be freed from the tempter who causes the temptations. Then Jacob has added to the biblical text, *You, deliver us from the Evil One* (ܐܢܬܘܢ ܩܘܠܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܥܝܠܘܢ ܐܠܘܗܝܢ) the following words, *for great is your power* (ܠܗܘܢ ܩܘܠܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܥܝܠܘܢ ܐܠܘܗܝܢ), which points to the Holy Spirit as seen above. Jacob keeps also in mind the text of the Divine Liturgy when the priest, recalling the last petitions stresses them with an intense pleading, "Yea, Lord our God, let us **not enter into temptation**, but **deliver us from the Evil One**, making a way of escaping from temptation; and to You we raise glory and thanks and to Your Only-begotten Son and to Your Holy Spirit, all Holy, good, adorable and life-giving, Who is of one substance with You, now, always and forever."⁷⁴

This insistent pleading as a cry, *Deliver me* (ܐܢܬܘܢ ܩܘܠܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܥܝܠܘܢ ܐܠܘܗܝܢ) springs forth from acknowledging that one is unable to win (356), he has no hope to be victorious in the great fight of blood (357), and confesses that he is guilty (360) together with the confession that the victory pertains only to the Winner (359), He is the Victorious One for,

⁷³ Cf. Mt 13,19.

⁷⁴ A. Y. SAMUEL, *Anaphoras*, 130.

kingdom, power, glory, authority, might, magnificence and even all victories over Satan and his army, are all 'Yours' (364)."⁷⁷

Jacob uses the pronoun 'Yours' without specifying to whom he alludes,

Deliver me from him (Satan) because Yours is the power, the Kingdom, the might and the glory (363).

Also when he who wins, wins, it is through You that he wins,

in fact all the power and magnificence is Yours (364).

We would expect a doxology referred to the Father since the Prayer is addressed to Him but the last stanza of the whole homily surprises us,

This <Prayer> teaches you that all the power and glory, and authority is of the Lord Jesus: to Him be glory (375).

Hence Jacob attributes *power, authority and glory* to *Jesus*. Throughout the homily Jesus was addressed with the exclusive titles of *Son of God* and *Lord*. Solely at this ultimate point He is called, *Jesus*. The doxology addressed to Jesus is due to the Father and the Holy Spirit as well, being the three in one. But in our context it is addressed explicitly to Jesus because He taught us the divine Prayer, *Our Father*, which discloses the *treasure-house* of the Father.

To conclude, the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer regarding the sanctification of the Father's name, the coming of the Kingdom and the accomplishment of the Father's will on earth as it is in heaven are considered by Jacob as a whole,

⁷⁷ J. THEKEPARAMPIL, "Lord's Prayer: Concern for 'Father's Matters' according to Jacob of Saroug." *The Harp* XXIV (2009) 347.

being woven one to another. These petitions concern God: His name is sanctified in us; His Kingdom comes to reside in us; His will is to be performed in us. The three stages go through a path of an interior purification and of victory achieved in the fight against Satan through the invocation of the Father's Name and of His Kingdom. This path leads us to a state of transfiguration, divinization (*theosis*): God descends to Adam/humanity and Adam/humanity ascends to God.

The 'we' petitions on the daily bread, the forgiveness of sins, the great temptation to be spared of and the freedom from the Evil One are seen within the ark of the human existence in its necessities. The *power, might, honour and glory* is due to the Lord Jesus because He revealed the Father's mind to His apostles, and showed that this Prayer on earth was His own prayer He was addressing to His Father. The Verb made flesh, truly man, taught to address these petitions to His Father – and *Our Father* – petitions concerned with the primary human needs.

Jacob taught the Apostle the Lord's Prayer so that they might go to teach it to humanity in the world and they might profit from this teaching.

Our author highlighted the content of the Lord's Prayer with the highest expressions one can articulate in human terms. He stated that this Prayer is perfect in itself for it includes all the supplications a creature would pray; it brings immense wealth, makes us aware of our status of children of the heavenly Father who is the great King. His children need not think what to ask for because this Prayer includes all petitions, all that humans are in need of, and especially it has the power to defeat the Evil One. The nature of this Prayer is sublime, being according to the mind of the Father who is hidden. In our mouth His own divine words are set by the Son of God's teaching. Those who want to reach perfection should pray it in the assembly and

pray it wisely, that is, not uttering empty words due to distraction. This prayer purifies the one who prays it, grants all graces from the treasury-house of the Most Holy Trinity.

Whoever wants to be perfect in the house of God (i.e. the Church)

should stand wisely with this Prayer (230).

Blessed is the one who sets himself in it and is purified by it (272).

By it are granted all graces from the treasury of the divinity (275).

Our holy father praised this divine Prayer, attributing to it the fullness of the beauties and graces,

How beautiful is the Prayer which the Son of God has taught (272)!

The prayer, which the Son of God taught [his disciples] is glorious

and great and full of the beauties of justice (315).

Abun d-bašmaya in other mêmre of Jacob of Serugh

Our holy father was very fond of the Lord's Prayer. We can perceive it also through the light he sheds on it in several other occasions of his writings. We quote first the *mêmra* which includes the largest number of verses on this topic, *The Vision of Jacob in Bethel*.

On The Vision of Jacob in Bethel⁷⁸

⁷⁸ P. BEDJAN, *HS*, 'The Vision of Jacob at Bethel' Vol. III (1907) 192-207; ET, D. MILLER, unpublished; GT, G. BICKELL, *Ausgewählte Gedichte*, Kempten 1872, 247-258, and LANDERSDORFER, 332-343; FT, F. GRAFFIN, *l'OrSyr* 5 (1960) 227-246.

Jacob's *mêmrà* on *The Vision of Jacob in Bethel* deals with the narrative of *Genesis*⁷⁹ on the vision the patriarch Jacob had in Bethel where he spent the night during his journey, fleeing his brother Esau. Here he prayed God and made a vow, *if God gives me bread to eat* (ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ), [...] *the Lord shall be my God*.⁸⁰ Our holy father perceived in Jacob's request an anticipation of the Lord's Prayer. He states that Jacob, the patriarch, recited in Bethel the Prayer that the Lord taught and commanded to be prayed by the apostles. We quote the whole section which touches also several other themes dealt with in the *Homily* 10th,

*Therefore let the world learn from me that which even I
knew not! (270)*

*As soon as Jacob received the **revelation** (ܐܝܢܐ) from God,
He began in the world the work of truth like an industrious
man.*

*He traced the image of the **great house** (ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ) by the
rock which he set up,*

*And he sealed the mystery by the oil, so that it would
brightly shine.*

*He completed his work and began to offer the vows of
righteousness;*

*He traced out the church and set to making her steadfast
through his prayers.*

*If, said he, 'God shall be with me wheresoever I am going,
and will give into my hands raiment to put on and bread to
eat' (ܐܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ)...*

***Here also does the doctrine of the Son brightly shine
forth,***

*280 for with the thinking of a poor man he began to wend
his way.*

He asked from God his food and raiment only,

⁷⁹ Gn 28,10-22.

⁸⁰ Gn 28,20-21.

That in him there might be depicted the perfect path of apostleship.

*If wealth were not superfluous to the prudent man,
He would not have sought for bread and raiment only.
If he sought for riches, he would not have fled away
nor would he have abandoned Abraham's possessions.
When he received the blessing, he ran off in pursuit of
righteousness,
and his daily bread sufficed him to take his every pleasure.
In the Church, which in a mystery Jacob built when
fleeing,*

*290 lo, even that time he prayed the prayer which our
Lord has taught us.*

***Give me always my daily bread, he entreated,⁸¹
and for the same our Lord also bade the Apostles to pray.***
*This prayer was also fitting for this path of Jacob's,
so that herein all the sayings of apostleship should be
uttered.*

***It is great wealth for a man to possess his daily bread
together with his God,⁸²***
*and if there be anything outside of this, it is superfluous to
him.*

*Jacob took no thought for the marrow on the path which
he undertook,
for sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof and the care
concerning it.*

*300 The path of the crucifixion shone forth before the
righteous man
and he gazes upon it and so his daily bread alone would
suffice him.*

*Until his soul had received enlightenment from the
revelation,⁸³*

81 *ܕܠܡܢܗܘܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ*

ܕܠܡܢܗܘܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ

82 *ܕܠܡܢܗܘܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ*

83 *ܕܠܡܢܗܘܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ*

*He did not have the power of his prayer.
 He prayed not thus as he left his father's house,
 nor throughout the day while on the road did he learn it.
**In the evening he lay down to sleep without uttering this
 prayer,
 but when the revelation shone upon him during the
 night, his soul was illumined.**
 He began to repeat this prayer commanded to the Lord's
 apostles,
 so that they would never seek more than for **their daily
 bread.**⁸⁴
 He beheld how rich is the poverty of the Son
 310. and went forth in pursuit of him, so that through him
 he might grow exceedingly rich.
 The vision replete with mystery was to Jacob like a
 <teacher>,
 for it instructed him on what to say when he stood in
 prayer.⁸⁵
 He asked not for wealth, which is nothing for the
 discerning men,
 But henceforth he sought for raiment and for bread
 according to his need.
 The intellect of the righteous yearns not for excesses,
 nor do they fill their souls with anxieties over vanities.
 Only that which is needful do they keep for a possession,
 only bread and raiment, and they are not made captive by
 concupiscence.
 A simple life is rest for them, full of blessings,
 320 and through its toil they magnify their wisdom.
 The covetous man is slain by his daily care for many
 things,*

84 חבה ללמך הוּמַת בַּח בַּלִּילָה בְּפִתּוֹת לַמַּח
 הָיָה וְהָיָה לְךָ הַחַד הַחֲלִישִׁי אֲחֵרֵי־הַמַּח
 הַיְמָנִיתָּךְ בְּלֵיל לַמַּח אֲחֵרֵי־הַמַּח בַּלֵּיל

85 מִמַּחֲרָת הַיָּמִים הַזֵּה הָיָה לְךָ לְמַחֲרָת אֲחֵרֵי־הַמַּח
 חֲסֵד מְבֹרָכָה הַחֲסֵד הַזֶּה בִּי לְךָ חֲסֵד

although he is able during one day to live for the one to come.

*Tomorrow's bread is superfluous to thee throughout today,
Even as that of yesterday is of no use to thee at all.*

*But if each day thou wilt seek to accomplish only what
belongs thereto,*

*thou wilt not during one day wrap the cares of many days
round thy throat.*

*Sufficient unto the day, he says, is the evil thereof and the
care concerning it,*

and this without a doubt suffices a man for his entire life.

*Hence fore for this reason, Jacob asked for raiment and
bread alone,*

even so as to be a witness to the new doctrine of our Lord.

*330 All whatsoever though shall be given me, he said, I
will give the tithe for thee,*

for he took not pleasure in acquiring, but in tithing.

*On this place the righteous **Jacob built a house** replete
with **mysteries**,*

and with tithes and vows he gave it strong support.

A good will, indeed, urged him to make these offerings;

*Blessed be he who gave him to pay the vows of his
discerning choice!⁸⁶*

Jacob highlights a great newness indeed in this *mêmra* dealing with the Lord's Prayer. Our author points out that the Lord's Prayer is fruit of a nocturne revelation. A revelation granted to the patriarch Jacob who had his soul illumined (306) in time of test. He began to pray the Lord's Prayer, commanded by the Lord to His Apostles asking for the lasting daily bread. Our author was unaware of the hidden meaning of the patriarch's request but he received a revelation, *let the world learn from me that which even I knew not* (270).

⁸⁶ JSH, 'The Vision of Jacob in Bethel'; ET, D. MILLER, unpublished, St 270-335.

What did Jacob come to know? He says that the *lasting daily bread* (ܐܘܬܘܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ) – same terms we find in the Lord's Prayer of *mêmra* 10 – is the very petition for the daily bread taught by Jesus to His apostles and commanded to pray thus. We recall that Jacob is dealing with an incident of the OT, a revelation great indeed! But not so much for our father who believed that every word of the OT points to Jesus. According to our author, all the words of Jesus are already expressed in the OT, affirming his faith in the Scriptures that speaks of Christ, and that Christ is present in the Scriptures, unifying them in Him.

This Prayer is revealed together with another great mystery: *the rock*, which Jacob set up. It traces the image of *the great house and seals the mysteries* (ܐܘܬܘܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ 274) *by the oil, so that it would brightly shine. He traced out the church and set to making her steadfast through his prayers* (272-274). In this place the righteous Jacob built *a house replete with mysteries* (ܐܘܬܘܪܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ 332). Hence the bond between church, prayers and mysteries is evident: the church is the place where the vows and prayer (especially the Lord's Prayer) are offered and the divine Mysteries of the Divine Eucharist are performed.

This bread is bound to the spiritual bread by the fact that *it is not consumed but possessed together with God. This achievement is great wealth, such that anything else is superfluous* (295) because who beheld it knows *how rich is the poverty of the Son* (309), and that going forth in pursuit of Him, and through Him, *he may grow exceeding rich* (310).

Another evidence of the *daily bread* as pinpoint for something more than simple nourishment of the body is given by the patriarch's gaze *upon the path of the crucifixion* which shone forth before him so that *the daily bread alone sufficed him* (300). The bond between Jesus' body on the cross and the daily

Eucharistic bread is evident. Moreover this daily bread brings every delight; *his daily bread sufficed him for his every pleasure* (288).

The grandeur of our author lays in his spiritual perspicacity to see Christ in each word of the OT. Hence the *Lord's Prayer* put on the patriarch's mouth – father of the twelve tribes of Israel – already centuries before Christ, is highly worthy of note. This interpretation seems unique in the Syrian Church Fathers and in the Church Fathers of other Christian denominations.⁸⁷

Jacob's *mêmrà*, *On The Reception of the Holy Mysteries*

In the *mêmrà*, 'On the Reception of the Holy Mysteries',⁸⁸ Jacob speaks about the gift of Baptism. The Lord's Prayer is to be recited uniquely by the 'signed ones.' The rebirth with Baptism makes them brothers of the Son of God the Only-begotten. Being brothers of Him, they can, like Him, call God *Our Father*. Those who are not signed with the second birth are not allowed to call the heavenly One, *Our Father*, it would be a lie. Jacob recalls the custom that those who had not received the Baptism were not allowed to share the time of Consecration but were invited by the deacon to leave the church, "who has not received the sign, let him depart." Jacob laments that also Christians among them at this very time were going out to do their own business. He invites them to welcome the Bridegroom coming to meet His Bride. The Bridegroom may see them in the bridal chamber (i.e. the church). The new sons *sanctify and bless His name*; they become one with Him. They sing 'Holy, holy' but Satan hinders those who sanctify Him in many ways because he is

⁸⁷ Neither found in the *Commentary to Genesis* of Ephrem.

⁸⁸ P. BEDJAN, *HS*, 'Reception of the Holy Mysteries', Vol. III (1907) 646; ET, R. H. CONNOLLY, *The Downside Review* 27 (1908) 278-287.

distressed by the voices of holiness and thus wants to cut them off from the Bridegroom. He also would drive the whole world forth so that no one may remain in the holy place to cry, *Our Father* because in that hour of reciting the Lord's Prayer, the bride cries out, "Forgive me my debts." Satan knows that the Bridegroom, the King, is full of mercy, and that He hears her (the bride), and He who died for her forgives her. We quote the full text,

*The sign of life has made thee a brother of the Only-Begotten
and a son of His Father;
and thou art in the household: thou shouldst not go forth.
Remain within the door, and cry, "Abba, our Father";
for thou, being a son, it is permitted to thee to cry, "Our
Father."
"Whoso is not baptized" for this reason do they drive him
out when the consecration is (begun), that it is not permitted
to him to call the Heavenly One "Our Father."
And "whoever is not baptized," his number is not set among
the sons;
and if he should call the Father "**our Father**" it is a lie.
And for this cause they say, "Whoever has not received the
sign, let him depart,"
that a lie may not be uttered among them that are true.
They drive him forth if he is not born of the second birth,
lest he should dare to cry, "**Our Father**," with the many,
and make use of a word that is full of lying in the pure
congregation,
which daily sings those things that are true.
Wherefore, when they drive out that unbaptized one,
do thou enter in, for it is easy for thee to cry, "Our Father."
Thou art born of the second, the spiritual birth: it is fitting
for thee to cry,
"**Our Father**": stay and cry it.
The Bridegroom is coming down to see the bride betrothed
to Him;*

abide, O soul, in the midst of the bride-chamber, that He may see thee here.

Go not forth from the chamber of the Bridegroom, the King is coming down to see thee, bearing riches from the house of His Father.

The priest, whom thou hast sent, has called Him: wait for Him;

for if He come and see thee not, He will be angry.

Together with the priest the whole people beseeches the Father that He

will send His Son, that He may come down (and dwell upon the oblation).

And the Holy Spirit, His Power, alights on in the bread and wine, and sanctifies it, yea, makes it the Body and the Blood.

*And every one who is in the house bestirs himself, that he may cry, "**Our Father**";*

and the new sons sanctify and bless Him.

And by His brooding He mingles them holily,

and they become one with Him, as it is written, mystically.

*But he who goes forth with the hearers, what will he do when they petition Him in the house, and he is not (there) to cry, "**Our Father**."*

He has cut Himself off; no one (else) has cut him off from the brooding.

What then has he found in the market-places whither he is roaming?

Despise business, and despise profits which cannot be held fast,

and at the hour of the Mysteries abide in the house of God.

Your enemy is

watching, and is athirst for your blood, and so far as he is able he will cut

you off from things profitable. When these Mysteries full of life are administered,

he fabricates apprehensions of all sorts of losses,

and with all manner of devices he, by his subtlety, drives thee forth,

*that thou mayest be removed from that congregation which is crying "**Holy.**"*

Satan is distressed by these voices of holiness; and if he could he would

drive the whole world forth. There would not remain one man in the holy

*place to cry, "**Our Father.**" ... In that hour when the bride cries out,*

*"**Forgive me my debts**" he knows that the Bridegroom, the King, is full of mercy,*

and that He hears her (the bride), and He forgives her, He who died for her.

Wherefore Satan is concerned and uses much pains

to drive men out of the holy place at the time of the Mysteries,

*lest when the whole congregation cries out, "**Forgive me my debts,**"*

the sinner also present himself be justified.

For when the Gift comes forth from God,

He gives it to him who is worthy and to him who is unworthy.

His grace, when He pours it forth, is like to the sun and the rain,

and He has mercy for sinners and for the righteous.

And when the congregation asks mercy of God

the sinners also who are therein are enriched by His Gift.

The new features brought to light about the Lord's Prayer are that this Prayer was allowed to be recited by the baptized ones solely, and was preceding the time of Communion. It introduces the welcoming of the Bridegroom in His Body and Blood, coming to unite Himself to the Bride (the souls of the Christians) in the bridal chamber, the physical church. With the Lord's Prayer the bride asks for forgiveness and the Bridegroom, the King full of mercy, forgives her and becomes one with her.

On that which Our Lord said in the Gospel, that the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto Leaven, which a woman took and hid in Three Measures of Meal, till the Whole was Leavened⁸⁹

In this Homily, we have an allusion to the Lord's Prayer when our author – bringing up the theme of the birth from Baptism – says that the living Leaven, i.e. Jesus, became one with the sons of men healing them, making them sons of His Father. Kneading them with Himself, they became Jesus' brothers, sharers of His glory. Therefore those who went astray – after Adam's fall – entered and began to call His Father "**Our Father**" being, through the second birth, the brethren of the Only-Begotten,

*The Living Leaven kneaded Himself into the sons of men
and healed them;
they acquired His taste, and became one with Him.
He brought all men and made them sons of His Father,
For by the birth of Baptism they became His brethren.
205 He brought them forth from the followers of idolatry's
images,
and kneaded them with Himself in glory to become His
brethren.
The straying entered and began to call His Father "Our
Father",
and were kneaded with Him, becoming brethren of the
Only-Begotten.⁹⁰*

Some stanzas after – Jacob bringing up once more this same topic – employs the expression present in the *mêmra* 10, *He became a brother to the servants*,⁹¹

⁸⁹ P. BEDJAN, *HS*, 'The Kingdom of Heaven as Leaven', Vol. III, (1907) 411; ET, Anon., *The True Vine* 3 (1989) 44-57.

⁹⁰ *HS*, 'The Kingdom of Heaven as Leaven', ET, Anon., *The True Vine* 3 (1989) 54.

⁹¹ The stanza 2 of *mêmra* 10 says,

*For as much He willed to become the Son of man from Mary,
He made all the race of man to be sons of God.
And behold, they are become brethren of the Son and heirs of the Father,
for He Himself became a brother to the servants of His Father.*⁹²

On Love⁹³

In the homily ‘On Love’ Jacob draws a significant consequence from reciting this sublime Prayer. He says that it is inadmissible to recite this prayer if there is no brotherly love in those who pray it. If a brother insults or mocks; the one hurt should endure, saying – with the words of the good thief on the cross – *rightly we have received that*.⁹⁴ In fact the Son of God has endured all bad treatment and in Him there was no hatred. The Father made us Jesus’ brothers hence we should resemble His Son, His Only-Begotten, and in his likeness to behave like his Son,⁹⁵ that is to forgive. But it is not a mere matter of forgiveness and reconciliation, says our holy father, there is need of love in order to accomplish Jesus’ new command from the Gospel, “Love one another as I have loved you.”⁹⁶ Only on this condition one can pray the *Our Father*,

*You call the Father on high ‘Our Father’
resembling His Only Begotten Son.*

The Lord has come to be a brother to the servants whom He has ransomed.

⁹² HS, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven as Leaven’; ET, Anon. *cit.*, 57.

⁹³ P. BEDJAN, HS ‘On Love’, Vol. I, 606-627; ET, Anon., (Aide-Inter-Monastère, 1992); FT, E. KHALIFE- HACHEM, *PdO* 1 (1970) 281-299.

⁹⁴ Lk 23,41.

⁹⁵ Who pardoned all from the cross (Lk 23,34).

⁹⁶ Jn 13,34.

Your brother has insulted you, jeered at you: you rightly have received that because the Son of God has endured the cross without hatred.

If then you do not love him you cannot say 'Our Father,' being you the brother of His Only Begotten Son.

Pardon him because he sinned against you and run to be reconciled with him,

for this is what the Gospel you listen to commands you (Mt 6,14).⁹⁷

Indeed these other *mêmrê* of Jacob highlight and complete his understanding on the Lord's Prayer. In 'On the Vision of Jacob in Bethel' we have seen the Lord's Prayer prophesied by the patriarch Jacob thanks to a nocturne revelation. It is recited in figure in the *house of the mysteries*, i.e. the Church, where the Divine Mysteries are celebrated. Extremely impressive is the poetical description of the patriarch's *gaze upon the path of the crucifixion* which leads him to say, *the daily bread alone sufficed him* (300) – a manifest link between the daily bread and the Eucharistic bread, through the cross.

In his *mêmrâ* 'On the Leaven', Jacob deals again with the theme of the birth from Baptism. The new born are those who after Adam's fall entered and began to call His Father "Our Father". Here the bridal image is even more impressive because Jacob says that He kneads the new born by Baptism with Himself, making them His brothers, sharers of His glory.

In the homily 'On Love' Jacob reaches the peak of his 'vision'. The love alone allows people to recite this Prayer, *it is inadmissible to recite this prayer if there is no brotherly love in those who pray it*. The Father made humanity Jesus' brothers – Jacob says – thus we should resemble His Son, His

⁹⁷ ET, Anon., 'On Love' (Aide-Inter-Monastère, 1992), lines 181-186.

Only-Begotten, and in his likeness to behave like his Son who forgave us all from the cross. Our holy father concludes that only those who perform *Jesus' new command from the Gospel*, i.e., “Love one another as I have loved you”⁹⁸ can pray the *Our Father*. The Lord’s Prayer brings to completion the greatest of the commands the Lord left to His own, to love.

Conclusion

Our father from the Syriac Orient testify us that the Heavenly Bridegroom by teaching his disciples *Abun d-bašmaya*, shows them – His bride – the way to enter the inner bridal chamber of Paradise with purity of heart, love and forgiveness.

Fully aware of this luminous way which discloses to Adam-humanity the doors of Paradise, Jacob – as “flute of the Holy Spirit” – chanted the *beautiful prayer* which the Son of God taught: *blessed is the one who is purified by it. Whoever learns to pray it will acquire all graces of righteousness and perfection*. Moreover, Jacob highlighted that *Abun d-bašmaya* is the prayer which teaches us to face the great combat of faith in the great temptation with the Power of God on *our side*. *Abun d-bašmaya* asks for deliverance from the Evil One, Satan, with a definitive victory over him. Thus Jacob acknowledged that, *everything a person needs to receive from God is placed in this Prayer, and the Son of God gave it to the Apostles so that the world may learn it*.

Mêmra 10 on *Abun d-bašmaya* – together with Jacob’s insights on this Prayer drawn from the above quoted Homilies – manifests that Jacob was awestruck by the mystery of this Prayer which recapitulates the entire revelation of the Old and

⁹⁸ Jn13,34.

New Testaments. *Mêmrâ* 10 reflects the delight of a heart that – having kept the prayer our Lord taught – was imbued with the Father's love as witnessed by the beloved Apostle of the Lord, "Anyone who loves me will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him."⁹⁹ Jacob – like all our holy fathers and mothers¹⁰⁰ – did not want to keep for himself alone this delight. Thus he toiled like a true apostle so that we too, people of the present generation, may learn *Abun d-bašmaya* and recite it as children of God, ending our state of orphans in exile.

Abun d-bašmaya according to Jacob is the Prayer which makes us re-enter Paradise, or to put it in a better way, Paradise, i.e. *Abun*, re-enters in us. There is no more practical and effective way to solve the dramatic problems humanity nowadays has to face, than the way above outlined by Jacob. Very often the Fathers, and especially the Syriac Fathers, have been accused of not being helpful in the matter of withstanding the many challenges of the present globalized world. Nevertheless they – the disciples of the only Begotten Son (*Īhidāyā*, ܐܝܕܝܐ) of the Father – having drunk from the blessed source of His side, i.e. the Holy Scripture, are relevant indeed and are quite able to touch the hearts and to build up bridges, in order to foster unity and peace among cultures and

⁹⁹ Jn 14,23.

¹⁰⁰ Martyrius in his, *Book of Perfection*, tells us how his early spiritual development was influenced by two women, one his mother and the other a holy woman called Shirin. (See, S. BROCK & S. A. HARVEY, 'Holy Women of the Syrian Orient' (1987) 177-181).

religions, and to help every human being to find rest in the love of *Abun d-bařmaya*.

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THE “MEDITATION” OF GOD’S WORD IN ST. EPHREM

**God’s Word: light for the life of everyone
who puts on Christ at Baptism**

Barhadbšabbâ, Bishop of Halwan (to the north of Seleucia-Ctesiphon), in the early seventh century described the history of the world as an interrupted series of academic foundations preceded by the eternal generation of the divine Wisdom.¹“La suggestiva immagine rende bene l’alta stima di cui era circondata l’istruzione religiosa in questa area della cristianità.”²

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- 1 BARHADBŠABBÂ 'A., *Cause de la foundation des écoles*, PO 4, 327-397.
 - 2 Introduction by I. de FRANCESCO to *Efrem il Siro, InniPasquali*, 35.

This movement of schools within Syriac Christianity that aimed at the transmission of the divine Wisdom and *Logos* has its origins at Nisibis, since the first Christian school properly so called seems to have been there. Mar Barhadbšabbâ in his history called *The Cause of the Founding of Schools* tells how Bishop Jacob of Nisibis founded a school in his city and appointed ‘Mar Ephrem’ as its *mpašqānâ* (interpreter or exegete), the title given to the chief teacher, who was usually also Head of the school.³ “What the course of studies was like in the fourth century, we can doubtless imagine best from Ephrem’s ‘Exegetical Commentary’ (*pûššāqâ*, what is produced by a *mpašqānâ*) on Genesis, his ‘Interpretation’ (*tûrgāmâ*, targum) of Exodus, and his commentaries on the Diatessaron and ‘the Apostolos’.”⁴

After the fall of Nisibis, Ephrem moved to Edessa, “opened a school there and had many disciples”.⁵ The new centre of studies had been surnamed by the local people as “school of the Persians” or “Christian *didaskaleion* of the Persians”.⁶

By the time of Ephrem, then, the course of studies was concentrated essentially on the Scripture (memorization of the Psalter, biblical exegesis, etc.) and oriented towards catechetical and liturgical purposes. Later it was integrated

3 *Cause de la fondation des écoles*, PO 4, 377.

4 R. MURRAY, *Symbols*, 23.

5 BARHADBŠABBÂ 'A., *ibidem*, 381-382.

6 Theodoros Anagnostes, *Extracts of Ecclesiastical History*, 2,5 (PG 86,185B).

with secular disciplines like philosophy, geography and astronomy.⁷

With Narsai (399-502) the school moved back to Nisibis, now under Persian rule. The Statutes of the school are extant, under the name of both Narsai and Hnana (fl. 600).⁸ “The members of the Christian school formed ‘the community’ (*knûšyâ*) and had an organized liturgical life as well as strict discipline. The Head (*rêšâ*) was called ‘Our Master’ (*Rabban*), just as in the Jewish schools; he also occupied the exegete’s Chair (*kûršyâ da-mpaşqānâ*).”⁹ Also J. Neusner suggests that this Christian school was probably still very like the Jewish Accademies.¹⁰ Given the conservatism of Syriac Christianity, it is likely that the organization of the school in Ephrem’s time was not much different from the school of Nisibis as depicted in the Statutes under the names of Narsai and Hanna.

The school of Nisibis – “punto di riferimento vitale per tutti i cristiani della Chiesa di Persia, laboratorio che modellò in profondità gran parte della vita spirituale e

7 I. de FRANCESCO writes: “A questa evoluzione non era forse estraneo il processo di allontanamento dalla linea ‘tradizionale’ efremiana e l’assunzione progressiva di materiali e orientamenti provenienti dalla scuola di Antiochia: a Efrem subentrava (o si affiancava) Teodoro di Mopsuestia” (*Efrem il Siro, Inni Pasquali*, 35).

8 See A. VÖÖBUS, *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis*.

9 R. MURRAY, *Symbols*, 23

10A *History of the Jews in Babylonia*, vol. 3, pp. 195-200.

intellettuale della cristianità siriana orientale”¹¹ – with its semi-monastic framework, served as a model for the other schools within the Syriac Orient. But besides the great-schools, which were “véritable facultés de théologie”¹², there existed innumerable local schools: “De nombreux bourgs et villages avaient leur école locale, probablement gérée par un seul ‘interprète’. L’institution était ancienne, bien qu’aucun nom n’y soit attaché, et avait été imitée, au milieu du VII^e-siècle, par les Syriens Occidentaux, sous l’impulsion du catholicos Maroutha de Tagrât.¹³ Aux milieux du VIII^e siècle Bâwāi le Musicien fonda et restaura soixante écoles dans les villages de Marga et d’Adiabène”.¹⁴ This net of local schools, a peculiarity of the ancient Eastern Syriac Christianity, was covering – we may surmise – almost all the suburbs and villages inhabited by Christians, enabling them “to be instructed in the reading of the Holy Books”.¹⁵

11 Introduction by I. de FRANCESCO to *Efrem il Siro, Inni Pasquali*, 37.

12 J.M. FIEY, ‘Les Églises syriaques et la lecture de l’Écriture’, 35.

13 *Histoire de Maroutha*, F. Nau, *PO* (1905) 66.

14 J.M. FIEY, ‘Les Églises syriaques et la lecture de l’Écriture’, *Bible et vie chrétienne*, 67 (1966) 36.

15 Can. XIX, Synod of the Patriarch Joseph held in 554 (*Synodicon Orientale ou Recueil de Synodes Nestoriens*, by J.B. CHABOT (Paris, 1902) 363. Regarding this canon XIX, FIEY writes: “Évoquant l’éminent dignité des laïcs chrétiens, le synode du patriarche Joseph, en 554, définissait ceux-ci: <des hommes qui ont reçu le don de l’Esprit Saint par le saint baptême, qui ont participé aux saints mystères, qui ont été accrédités comme familiers de la fraternité chrétienne, qui ont été instruits dans la lecture des Livres Saints>” (‘Les Églises syriaques et la lecture de l’Écriture’, 35).

In an age when only rich people could have books (hand-written codex), the bread of God’s Word was broken and given to every baptized one both through the liturgical services and the schools. Ephrem who was immersed in this ecclesial atmosphere, devoted his entire life to nourish the people of God – especially through his *madrāšē*¹⁶ – with the Holy Scripture. “The fact that so much of Ephrem’s writing had a pastoral setting, a good portion of it even being produced as choral responses to the Scripture lessons in the liturgy, reminds one of the centrality of the Bible in all of his work.”¹⁷

Our poet, aware of the eminent dignity and holiness of every human being who put on Christ at Baptism, as a true ‘Harp of the Spirit’ consumed himself so that God’s word may be, for everybody, the “Tree of Life which proffers on all sides blessed fruits” and the “Rock” from which to drink the Spirit. That the Bible is for everyone is stressed by Ephrem also in the *Commentary to the Diatessaron* 1,18-19 already quoted:¹⁸

God depicted His word with many beauties, so that each of those who learnt from it can examine that aspect of it which he likes. And God has hidden within

16 In this connection one should recall that the Syriac term *madrāšā* is cognate with the Hebrew word for the well known genre of biblical interpretation, ‘midrash’.

17 S. GRIFFITH, ‘Faith Adoring the Mystery’, *Reading the Bible with St. Ephraem the Syrian*, 13.

18 The underlining is mine.

His word all sorts of treasures, so that each of us can be enriched by it from whatever aspect he meditates on. For God's word is the Tree of Life which proffers to you on all sides blessed fruits; it is like the Rock which was struck in the wilderness, which became a spiritual drink for everyone on all sides: 'They ate the food of the Spirit and they drunk the draft of the Spirit'.

Anyone who encounters Scripture should not suppose that the single one of its riches that he has found is the only one to exist; rather, he should realize that he himself is only capable of discovering that one out of the many riches which exist in it.

Also in the very opening of the hymns *On Paradise*, Ephrem affirms that Moses, with his "celestial writings", makes "all men his disciples":

*Moses who instructs all men
with his celestial writings,
He, the master¹⁹ of the Hebrews,
has instructed us in his teaching –
the Law,²⁰ which constitutes*

19 BROCK notes: "Master or 'teacher' (*rabbā*), perhaps reflecting Jewish usage, *Mōshērabbēnū*, 'Moses our teacher' (*Hymns on Paradise*, 189).

20 The same BROCK remarks: "Ephrem uses the archaic term *urāytā*, of Jewish Aramaic origin, rather than the more usual *nāmōsā*, from Greek *nomos*. The term *urāytā* deliberately associates the Hebrew

*a very treasure house of revelations,
 wherein is revealed
 the tale of the Garden—
 described by things visible,
 but glorious for what lies hidden,
 spoken of in few words,
 yet wondrous with its many plants.[HdP1,1]*

It is through the “celestial writings” of Moses that Ephrem entered Paradise and traveled there:

3. *I read the opening of this book
 and was filled with joy,
 for its verses and lines
 spread out their arms to welcome me;
 the first rushed out and kissed me
 and led me on to its companion;
 and when I reached that verse
 wherein is written
 the story of Paradise,
 it lifted me up and transported me
 from the bosom of the book
 to the very bosom of Paradise.*

5. *Both the bridge and the gate of Paradise
 did I find in this book.
 I crossed over and entered; [...].[HdP 5,3.5]*

word *Torah*, Law, with the root ‘wr, ‘light’” (*Hymns on Paradise*, 189).

Ephrem, then, stating that Moses “instructs all men with his celestial writings”, implicitly affirms that the same “Book”, which made him enter into Paradise and travel there, being in the hands of the Church, can enable every believer who holds it to enter and explore Paradise. Our author, on the basis of the Old and New Testament, affirms that all are called to become disciples of Moses, disciples of the Holy Scripture.

“Moses who instructs all men”: this discipleship opened to all makes us breathe the atmosphere of the first Christian community in Jerusalem as depicted in the Acts of the Apostles 2,37-47 and 4,32-35. If “all the believers were together and had all things in common,²¹ this was the fruit of their perseverance “in the teaching of the Apostles and in the communion, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers”.²² In this text of Acts 2,42 the perseverance “in the communion, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers” comes only after the perseverance “in the teaching of the Apostles”: the Word of God announced to all by the Apostles is the foundation of the community life of the new converts in Jerusalem.

Ephrem aware of the Power hidden in the Scripture, which makes Adam reenter Paradise, devoted his whole life to being a harbinger, singer, teacher and exegete of the divine Word. Our father, conscious that God’s word is “a lamp

²¹ Acts 2,44.

²² Acts 2,42.

to my feet and a light to my path”,²³ thus exhorts every Christian who daily has to face problems in his pilgrimage towards the heavenly Jerusalem:

Let us labour then in the reading [of Scripture] so that through it we may find the solution to what we seek. [CDiat16,4]

In truth the divine Scriptures are God’s light for the pilgrimage of every believer, they are for the mind what light is for our eyes:

*Scripture and light will make you wise:
light is fitting for the eye and truth for the mind.
Choose light for your eye and the Scriptures for your mind. [HdF 45,1]*

In one of the hymns *On Fasting*, Ephrem with firmness urges the flock of the First-born to nourish its spirit “with living words” and to “busy itself with the Scriptures, the highly praised meadow”:

*Take away from the stomach the service rendered to it
and serve the spirit with living words!
Your lap is then full of the teaching,
the nourishment of the soul!
Let us offer praise to the First Born whose flock
busies itself with the Scriptures,²⁴
the highly praised meadow. [HdI4,3]*

23 Ps 119,105.

24 Literally: “the Books”.

In the last *mêmrâ On Praise at table*, our poet sings:

*Honour the priests
according to their rank,
and the deacons
according to their orders.
And to every son of the Church,
assign honour at all times:
they are ministers of God
and readers of the Book of Life .[MPT 11,3]*

To priests and to deacons honour is due according to their rank and order, but to every son of the Church honour should be assigned “at all times”. Ephrem beholds the incomparable glory of those who have put on Christ at Baptism: “they are ministers of God and readers of the Book of Life”. The Holy Scripture is the Book of Life because it contains sacramentally the *Logos*, the Life.²⁵ Ephrem qualifies every baptized one as a “reader of the Book of Life”, and he exhorts them to “labour in the reading of Scripture”,²⁶ so that every believer may have light for his pilgrimage and be transformed in the same light from glory to glory.²⁷

The Word of God is in truth the life and the light of the Church. When Ephrem, soon after the destruction of Nicomedia by the violent earthquake of 24 August 358, com-

25 Cf. Jn 1,1,4: “In the beginning was the Word... in him was life, and the life was the light of all people”.

26 See *CDiat* 16,4 quoted above.

27 Cf. 2Cor 3,18.

posed his *Mêmrê on Nicomedia* to mourn the utterly ruined city and to invite all for repentance, he thus expressed the consequences of the desolation in which lay the Christian community of the famous city:²⁸

- 611 *The reading of the Scriptures
and the ‘alleluia’ of the Psalms have ceased.
There are no more readings in their assemblies,
no more Psalms in their solemnities.[...]*
- 637 *For the ear there is no more homily,
and from the mouth no more comes out praise[...]*
- 651 *The pastors no more spur their flock
– as they were accustomed
to feed themselves on spiritual meadows:
the prayer filled with delight.
They nibbled various kinds of nourishment:
assorted canticles born from the Psalms,
parables and figures born from the canticles,
and, in the homily, the treasures of the Scriptures.
[MNic8, 611-614.637-638.651-658]*

²⁸Nicomedia “choisie pour résidence par Dioclétien en 285, elle fut la capitale de l’empire jusqu’en 330, année où Constantinople lui ravit son titre. Métropole ecclésiastique de la province de Bithynie, célèbre en raison de ses nombreux martyrs lors de la dernière persécution, ornée depuis longtemps de splendides édifices, elle jouissait dans tout l’Orient d’une immense prestige. Aussi sa destruction eut un grand retentissement dans l’empire” (C. RENOUX, Introduction à *Éphrem de Nisibe, Mêmrê sur Nicomédie*, PO 37 [1975] XX-XXI).

The apocalyptic disaster of the earthquake of 358 (when the magnificent city of Nicomedia with its palaces, forums and churches had been razed to the ground in just a few minutes), inspired Ephrem to gaze, once more, at the mystery of God's word, which resounding in the liturgical assemblies, was the treasure, joy and light for the First-born's flock in Nicomedia. The mourning and grief of our poet in his *mêmrê On Nicomedia* is in fact an invitation – for all Christians and especially for his fellow-citizens of Nisibis – to repentance, an invitation to cling to God's word through prayer, fasting, fraternal charity, etc.²⁹ Ephrem knows by experience that, when everything seems lost in the tragedies of human history, the memory of the “reading of the Scriptures” and of the “alleluia of the Psalms” makes again present – within the community of the baptized ones – the same *Logos* who infuses into the dead bones³⁰ of those who believe in Him the Life of the Resurrection by His Holy Spirit.³¹ But, in order to receive this Life, the human creature needs to accept the labour of conversion, the labour to go back to God, adhering to His word with loving obedience:

*The uprooted city became
an admonition for every creature.³²
Because if they convert themselves, they shall live.
[MNic 11,19-21]*

29 *Mêmrê* 14, 43-122.

30 Cf. Ez 37,1ff.

31 *MNic* 8,727-728; 9,25-26; 14, 132ff.

32 *MNic* 11,153-154; 13,77-78.85-86.

In the eleventh *mêmrâ* *On Nicomedia*, Ephrem – through several Old Testament passages – reminds all Christians that “the [divine] wrath arrived unexpectedly [on the city] because of sin,”³³ the same “sin which has devoured the creation”.³⁴ For our holy father is clear that – according to the Bible – the refusal to listen to God’s word, “the transgression of the commandment, is the first of all our sins”.³⁵ Before the transgression of the commandment, there existed “peace” not only between God and Adam, but also between Adam and the animals:

It says: “He [God] brought them [the animals] to Adam”³⁶ in order to indicate his wisdom, and also the peaceful state which existed between the animals and Adam prior to his transgressing the commandment. For they came to him as though to a loving shepherd, passing in front of him without any fear, flock after flock according to their species and varieties. [CGen 2,9]

Ephrem in the same second section of his *Commentary on Genesis* returns frequently to the mystery of glory in which God wrapped Adam and Eve at the time of the first “commandment”:

33 *MNic* 11,277. See also *MNic* 8,373-374: *The angel of wrath came on the peaceful and magnificent city.*

34 *MNic* 13,47.

35 *HdE* 32,1. See also *HdE* 45,10.

36 *Gen* 2,19.

If God gave Adam authority, made him share in the act of creation, wrapped him in glory, and gave him the Garden, what else should He have done for him so that he might keep the commandment, but did not do?[CGen 2,10]

It was because of the glory in which they were wrapped that they were not ashamed. Once this had been taken away from them, after the transgression of the commandment, they were ashamed because they had been stripped of it. [CGen 2,14]

Adam and Eve were fair up to the time they transgressed the commandment. [CGen 2,32]

After the tragedy of the “transgression of the commandment” by Adam and Eve, and after all the tragedies that followed in the history of humankind, there is only one way to escape from the darkness of sin and to reenter Paradise: it is the way which Ephrem points out also at the end of his *mêmrê On Nicomedia*:

*Therefore, as it was in the darkness
that I witnessed what I have narrated,
now I will rise up, I will leave the darkness
to go and encounter the light of the Scriptures.
[MNic16,135-138]*

C. Renoux remarks: “Dans la catastrophe de Nicomédie, Éphrem témoigne de la valeur qu’il attribue aux Écritures: elles sont la référence dernière, sagesse et lumière pour la vie: <je sortirai des ténèbres à la rencontre de la lumière des Écritures>”.³⁷

Ephrem is in truth the ‘martyr’ who – intoxicated by the Spirit of Love – testifies to every creature³⁸ the ‘great light’³⁹ of the *Logos* shining, through the Sacred Scriptures, in the darkness of this world.

The “meditation” of the Scriptures

The book of Genesis is a text to which Ephrem returns frequently; he draws and drinks from this source not only in his *Commentary on Genesis* and in the *Hymns on Paradise*, but throughout his writings, realizing that “the

37 Introduction a Éphrem de Nisibe, *Mêmrê sur Nicomédie*, PO 37 (1975) L.

38 Not only to Christians: in the *mêmrê* of *The Repentance of Niniveh*, a metrical homily on the mission of Jonah, which is considered to be genuinely Ephrem’s by BECK, our poet sings the saving power of God’s word announced to the pagan Niniveh by “a single Hebrew preacher” (*The Repentance of Niniveh*, First part, 3; ET by H. BURGESS, 6).

39 Cf. Isaia 9, 1: “The people that walked in the darkness have seen a great light”.

book of creation is the treasure house of the Ark, the crown of the Law”.⁴⁰ In the *Sermo III* he writes:

*By means of the serpent the Evil one poured out
Hispoison in the ear of Eve;
the Good one brought low his mercy
and entered through Mary’s ear.*⁴¹

Ephrem perceives that – according to the Scripture – the womb of the ear is crucial for the destiny of humankind:

*From the little womb of the ear
death entered and spread out,
likewise through a new ear
which was from Mary
life entered and spread out. [HdE 49,7]*⁴²

The glory of God which departed with Eve came back because “through the ear Mary perceived the One who, hidden, was coming by the voice: she conceived in her womb the Power who put on a body”.⁴³ The *Logos*, the Power of the Father, rejected by Eve, came, hidden, by the

40 *HdP* 6,1.

41 *Sermo III* (ed. ASSEMANI, vol. VI) 607E. Translated and quoted by S.P. BROCK in his *Ephrem’s Letter to Publius*, 296.

42 See also *CDiat* 20,32: *Death entered through Eve’s ear, consequently life entered through Mary’s ear.* And *SdDN* 3: *Eve, who had been ‘mother of all living’ (Gen 3,20) became a fountain of death for all the living. But Mary, the new shoot, sprouted from Eve, the old vine, and new life dwelt in her.*

43 *HdE* 35,18.

voice of the angel Gabriel and was welcomed in the “little womb” of Mary’s ear and then was conceived in her womb. The Word of Life that Mary heard and received annulled the word of death that Eve had previously heard and accepted.⁴⁴

Mary is “the thirsty land of Nazareth who conceived our Lord by her ear”⁴⁵ and the blessed woman in whose heart and mind the King’s Son dwells,⁴⁶ according to the Gospel’s testimony: “Mary treasured all these words/events and pondered them in her heart”.⁴⁷

For our author, the Word of the Father became flesh through Mary in order to bestow on every human creature the same beatitude enjoyed by the “the thirsty land of Nazareth”:

44 This operation of God, in Mary and through Mary, makes dance the virgin Bride of the Lamb in Paradise:

*There [in Paradise] virginity dances
because the serpent
who secretly poured venom into her ears
is now destroyed. (HdP 7,6)*

45HdV 23,5.

46HdN 17,5.

47 Lk 2,19. This text of Luke might have inspired Ephrem in HdN 28,7:

*The glorious Conception stamped itself,
as if by a signet, upon your spirit,
and also after your delivery indeed He was with you,
since from your limbs appeared perfectly
His splendour, and upon your beauty was spread
His love, and upon all of you
He was poured as an ointment.
See also HdN 16,2.*

*Let us worship the One who enlightened
our intellect by His teaching
and prepared in our hearing
a path for His words.*

*Let us thank the One who grafted
His Fruit on our tree.*

*Thanks be to the One who sent
His Heir⁴⁸
to draw us toward Himself by Him
and to make us heirs with Him.⁴⁹*

*Thanks be to the Gracious One, the cause of all our
good.[HdN3,12]*

*The Word of the Father came from his womb,
and put on a body in another womb:
the Word proceeded from one womb to another
and chaste wombs are filled with the Word.
blessed is He who has resided in us!
[HdR1,7]⁵⁰*

Ephrem, in the above stanza, may have in mind these or similar words of Jesus: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it”.⁵¹ The chaste bo-

48 Cf. Mt 21,37-38.

49 Cf. Rom 8,17.

50 As found in S. P. BROCK, *The Luminous Eye*, 171.

51 Lk 8,21. See also Mt 12,49-50 and Mk 3,35.

soms filled with Him are, then, those who, like the Virgin Mary, receive the Word in the “little womb” of the ear and, treasuring it in their heart, do it. Indeed the Word became flesh to dwell among us and in us!⁵² The last verse of *HdR* 1,7 (“blessed is He who has resided in us!”) is inspired by several NT texts, especially by Jn 14,23: “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them”.

The inhabitation of the *Logos* in Adam and of Adam in the *Logos* is the aim of the incarnation of the *Logos* Himself and the heart of the whole economy of God towards humankind. The soul and spirit of Ephrem, moved by the Holy Spirit, vibrates profoundly on beholding the immense and incredible love of the Triune God for Adam, in whom he wants to dwell. In the same Spirit of truth, our father – through both his writings and praxis of life – stands as a “tree planted by streams of water, that brings forth its fruits in its season”,⁵³ since “his delight is in the *Torah* of the LORD, and on his *Torah* he meditates day and night”.⁵⁴

The deacon of Nisibis and Edessa, filled with the beatitude of the inhabitation of the *Logos* in his heart by the “meditation” of God’s word, consumes himself in order to enable his brothers and sisters – his Church – to share in the

52 Cf. Jn 1,14.

53 Ps 1,3.

54 Ps 1,2. English translation as found in *The Holy Scriptures*, Koren Publishers (Jerusalem, 1992) 728.

same beatitude, the beatitude of the New Eve.⁵⁵ Ephrem immersed in the same Semitic atmosphere of the Virgin of Nazareth is a *malpana* (teacher) able to teach – and show by his own experience – the way of “meditation” which the Bible itself displays in its pages.

It is especially in the hymns *On Paradise* that the ‘Harp of the Spirit’ instructs us how to become the dwelling of God through the “meditation” of His word. In the ‘response’ of the 4th hymn Ephrem sings:

*Deem me worthy that through Your grace
we may enter Your Paradise.*

Then in the hymn 15 our author affirms that it is only through “the gate of knowledge” that one is able to enter Paradise:

*The tree that is called
the Tree of Knowledge
symbolizes the gate
of Paradise:
it is through the gate of knowledge
that one is able to enter in;
it is the likeness
of its glorious Creator,
in whose hidden abode
through the gate of knowledge
all who are perceptive
may approach His hiddenness. [HdP 15,2]*

⁵⁵ Lk 2,19.

The entrance through “the gate of knowledge” is given – according to the biblical text of Gen 2,17 – through the obedience to the ‘commandment’. But Adam, made filthy by listening to the voice of the serpent, dared to enter the Holy of Holies of Paradise:

*Adam in all his filth
sought to enter
that Holy of Holies
which loves only those who resemble it;
and because he made bold to enter
that inner tabernacle,
God did not allow him to enter
the outer one either.
[HdP 4,2]*

In the fifth hymn *On Paradise*, Ephrem, who declares himself a sinner, a dog unworthy to enter Paradise,⁵⁶ ac-

56 See *HdP* 5,15:

*Have pity on me,
O Lord of Paradise,
and if it is not possible for me
to enter Your Paradise,
grant that I may graze
outside, by its enclosure;
within, let there be spread
the table for the ‘diligent’ (Lk 19,15-27)
but nay the fruits within its enclosure
drop outside like the crumbs (Mt 15,27pp)
for sinners, so that, through Your grace,
they may live!*

And *HdP*7,26:

knowledges to have repeatedly entered there through the gate of the ‘meditation’ (or *lectio divina*, as it is called in the western tradition)⁵⁷ of the sacred text:

3. *I read the opening of this book
and was filled with joy,
for its verses and lines
spread out their arms to welcome me;
the first rushed out and kissed me
and led me on to its companion;
and when I reached that verse
wherein is written
the story of paradise,
it lifted me up and transported me
from the bosom of the book
to the very bosom of Paradise.*
4. *The eye and the mind
traveled over the lines
as over a bridge, and entered together*

*And if none who is defiled
can enter that place,
then allow me to live by its enclosure,
residing in its shade. Since Paradise resembles
that table,
let me, through Your grace,
eat of the ‘crumbs’ of its fruit
which fall outside,
so that I too may join
those dogs who had their fill
from the crumbs of their masters’ tables (Mt 15,27pp).*

57 See I. de FRANCESCO, *Inni sul Paradiso*, 172, no. 3.

the story of Paradise.
 The eye as it read transported the mind;⁵⁸
 in return the mind, too,
 gave the eye rest
 from its reading,
 for when the book had been read
 the eye had rest,
 but the mind was engaged.

5. Both the bridge and the gate
 of Paradise
 did I find in this book.
 I crossed over and entered;
 my eye indeed remained outside
 but my mind entered within.
 I began to wander
 amid things not described.
 This is a luminous height,
 clear, lofty and fair:
 Scripture named it Eden,⁵⁹
 the summit of all blessings.[HdP5,3-5]

In the above stanzas, Ephrem – who allows us to have free access to his intimate relation with the *Logos* through the ‘Book’ – invites us to embrace the fatigue of *lectio divina*, so that we may find in the ‘Book’ “both the bridge

58 BROCK notes: “According to Semitic anthropology, the heart was the seat of the intellectual faculties as well as of the emotions” (*Hymns on Paradise*, 192, note V.10).

59 Gen 2,8.

and the gate of Paradise” and we may be transported, like him, “from the bosom of the book to the very bosom of Paradise”.

Let us listen again to our poet on the praxis of ‘meditation’:

2. *I took my stand halfway
between awe and love;
a yearning for Paradise
invited me to explore it,
but awe at its majesty
restrained me from my search.
With wisdom, however,
I reconciled the two;
I revered what lay hidden
and meditated on what was revealed.
The aim of my search was to gain profit,
the aim of my silence was to find succor.*
3. *Joyfully did I embark
on the tale of Paradise –
a tale that is short to read
but rich to explore.
My tongue read the story’s
outward narrative,
while my intellect took wing
and soared upward in awe
as it perceived the splendour of Paradise –
not indeed as it really is,*

*but insofar as humanity
is granted to comprehend it.
[HdP1,2-3]*

The “story’s outward narrative” of the above stanza 3 is the holy text in its literal dimension. Here Ephrem imparts to us a very precious advice: if the tongue⁶⁰ does not read the “story’s outward narrative”, the mind or the intellect⁶¹ cannot “take wing and soar upward in awe as it perceived the splendour of Paradise”.

In this same 3rd stanza our poet sings of *lectio divina* as of a reality into which “joyfully” did he embark. This joy is again emphasized in *HdP* 8,1 when “a word from the Scripture” caused Ephrem joy because of the compassionate love God had on the Thief.⁶²

*There came to my ear
from the Scripture which had been read
a word that caused me joy
on the subject of the Thief;
it gave comfort to my soul
amidst the multitude of its vices,*

60 It is the tongue reading the divine text and not only the eyes, since according to the Semitic/biblical way of meditation, the normal way of reading the text is to murmur it.

61 Whose seat are in the heart, according to Semitic anthropology (see page 394, note 60).

62 Of Lk 23,39-43.

*telling how He had compassion on the Thief.
O may He bring me too
into that Garden at the sound of whose name
I am overwhelmed by joy;
my mind bursts its reins
as it goes forth to contemplate Him.*

The ‘meditation’ of the divine word immerses our father in “amazement and wonder”⁶³:

*Scripture brought me
to the gate of Paradise,
and the mind, which is spiritual,
stood in amazement and wonder as it entered,
the intellect grew dizzy and weak
as the senses were no longer able
to contain its treasures –
so magnificent they were –
or to discern its savours
and find any comparison for its colours,
or take in its beauties so as to describe them in
words.[HdP6,2]*

Joy, amazement, wonder and delight beyond the senses are the fruits of ‘meditation’ on the Scripture. In *Hd-P6,4* Ephrem speaks also of “inebriation”, such an inebriation that he forgot all his sins there:

Paradise raised me up as I perceived it,

63 We have already noticed that a sense of wonder and awe is all pervasive in Ephrem’s writings.

*it enriched me as I meditated upon it;
 I forgot my poor estate,
 for it had me drunk with its fragrance.
 I became as though no longer my old self,
 for it renewed me with all its varied nature.
 I swam around
 in its magnificent waves;
 and in the place that, burning like a furnace,
 had made Adam naked,
 I became so inebriated
 that I forgot all my sins there.*

Adam and Eve had been created to experience the delight and inebriation of treasuring and 'meditating' their Creator's Word, but "they took no delight" in it and, instead, despised the Word:

*God planted the fair Garden,
 He built the pure Church;⁶⁴
 upon the Tree of Knowledge
 He established the injunction⁶⁵.
 He gave joy, but they took no delight,
 He gave admonition, but they were unafraid.
 In the Church He implanted the Word
 which causes rejoicing with its promises,
 which causes fear with its warnings:
 he who despises the Word, perishes,
 he who takes warning, lives. [HdP 6,7]*

64 Cf. Eph 5,27.

65 Literally 'commandment'.

Now through the incarnation of the *Logos*, God, once more, has implanted in the Church the Word which causes rejoicing to those who, meditating on it, receive its promises. This implantation of the Word makes the Church – “the assembly of saints” – a Paradise:

*The assembly of saints
bears resemblance to Paradise:
in it each day is plucked
the fruit of Him who gives life to all;
in it, my brethren, is trodden
the cluster of grapes, to be the medicine of Life.
[HdP 6,8]*

The “fruit of Him who gives life to all” and “each day is plucked in the Church” is certainly the Eucharist, but, due also to the context of stanza 7 and other texts of Ephrem,⁶⁶ it is the Word of Life as well, since both Word and

66 Especially HdP 9,22 where Moses is depicted as a “famished man” who “devour a vision” and “imbibes a voice”:

*But if you are greedy
Moses will reproach you;
he took no provisions
as he ascended to the mountain summit (Ex 34);
he was richly sustained because he hungered,
he shone with much beauty because he thirsted.
Who has ever beheld
a famished man
devour a vision and grow beautiful,
imbibe a voice and be sustained?
Nourished with the divine glory
he grew and shone forth.*

Eucharist are the same incarnate *Logos* who offers himself as the Bread of Life to his Bride.⁶⁷

In the writings of our author numerous are the texts – especially in the *madrāšê* – in which he unveils his communion with the *Logos* through the ‘meditation’ of the Scripture. In one of the hymns *On Nativity* Ephrem sings:

*The prophetess Anna embraced Him
and put her mouth
to His lips.
The Spirit rested on her lips,
as on Isaiah’s;
His mouth was silent,
but the Coal of Fire
opened up his mouth
by touching his lips.⁶⁸
Anna’s mouth too became fervent
with the Spirit (or breath) from His mouth
and she sang to Him:
‘O royal Son,
o lowly Son,
You listen in stillness,
You see, but You are hidden,*

67 See Jn 6,26-58. According to the Church’s Fathers we drink the blood of Christ not only from the chalice of the Eucharist, but also when we listen to His words, where there is Life, as it is said: “The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and Life” (Jn 6,63). Among the Fathers see especially Origene, *Hom XVI in Numeros* (SC 29 [Paris 1951]).

68 Is 6,6f.

*You know but are unknown;
O God and Human,
praise to Your Name. [HdN6,13-14]⁶⁹*

The prophetess Anna embracing the incarnate *Logos* and placing her mouth upon his lips received the power – from the Spirit who rested upon her lips – to prophesy, like Isaiah. Anna enjoyed the embrace and the kisses of the *Logos* when Mary and Joseph brought into the temple the child Jesus, because – according to the witness of the Gospel – she labored all her life, worshipping God with fasting and prayer night and day,⁷⁰ ardently longing for the kisses of the Word of the Father with the same intense thirst of the Bride of the Canticle: “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth”.⁷¹ As a matter of fact Anna, by her hidden life in the temple, was already enjoying, mystically, the kisses of the *Logos* through her service, with fasting and prayer, in the house of God.

69 As found in S.P. BROCK, *The Luminous Eye*, 103.

70 Cf. Lk 2,37.

71 Ct 1,2. The commentary of Origen on Ct 1,2 expresses perfectly what Ephrem has in mind composing *HdN* 6,13: “The kisses are Christ’s, which He bestowed on His Church when at His coming, being present in the flesh, He in His own person spoke to her the words of faith and love and peace, according to the promise of Isaiah who, when sent beforehand to the Bride, had said: *Not a messenger, nor an angel, but the Lord Himself shall save us* (Cf. Is 33,22). [...] For, when her mind is filled with divine perception and understanding without the agency of human or angelic ministration, then she may believe she has received the kisses of the Word of God Himself” (*The Song of Songs, Commentary and Homilies*, by R.P. LAWSON [New York, 1956] 60-61).

Ephrem, ‘meditating’ on the biblical text, looks at the “Lord of Symbols” with penetrating faith, thus receiving from the sacred pages – through the kisses of the Logos – the Life which the Lord himself promised.⁷² He invites all to “look with faith on Him, the Lord of Symbols, so that He can give you life”:

*Snakes bit the people in the desert.
[Moses] fastened up another snake
so that they could look at it and live.
The sight gave the people life⁷³
and the nations⁷⁴ faith.
Behold, the symbol of the First-Born!
It was enquiry into it that healed them;
it was the sight of it alone that revived them.
Look with faith on Him,
the Lord of Symbols, so that He can give you life.
[HdF 9,11]*

When our Father in the same hymns *On Faith* repeats: “The Scriptures are full of peace”,⁷⁵ are we not allowed to see again Ephrem’s heart immersed in the ocean of

72 “My words are Spirit and Life” (Jn 6,63); “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life” (Jn 5,24); “Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life” (Jn 6,47); “Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death” (Jn 8,51); etc.

73 Num 21,4-9.

74 I.e. the Gentiles in the Church.

75 HdF 53,7; 56,8; 68,1. See these texts in chapter 6 of the present work, 263-264.

Scripture, swimming in the peace of the *Logos*, by meditating, murmuring and pondering the same Word of the Father?

Immersed in the ocean of Scripture filled with peace, Ephrem, as a *Onplm Obr* in the Spirit, does not miss to exhort every baptized person to endure the labour of the heart, to have “the commandments implanted in it” by meditating on and treasuring the divine word:

*Let our neck, O Lord, accept the load of your easy yoke:*⁷⁶
let your visible cross be hidden in us!
*Let the heart*⁷⁷ *patiently endure to be crucified every day:*
instead of nails let the commandments be implanted in it!
 [HdE29,8]

Together with the heart all the senses have to collaborate in order to portray the Lord in them:

76Cf. Mt 11,30.

77 Ephrem in his *Commentary on Diatessaron*, founding himself on Scriptural texts, remarks that the kingdom of God – Christ himself – is established in the heart “through His testimonies”, by listening and treasuring his words: *Wherethe king is, there too is the kingdom. This is why he said: ‘The Kingdom of God is in your heart (Lk 17,21)’* [CDiat 18,5].

See how [the kingdom] is ‘within your heart’ (Lk 17,21), not in a hidden way, but through his testimonies [CDiat 18,6].

The scribes and the Pharisees did not want to enter through this door of life, in keeping with what He had said: ‘See, the Kingdom is in your heart (Lk 17,21)’. He was referring to himself, for he was standing in their midst [CDiat 18,8].

*Let chastity be portrayed in your eyes and in your ears
 the sound of truth.
 Imprint your tongue with the Word of Life⁷⁸
 and upon your hands [imprint] all alms.
 Stamp your footsteps with visiting the sick,
 and let the image of your Lord be portrayed in your heart.
 Tablets are honoured because of the image of kings.
 How much [more will] one [be honoured] who portrayed his Lord
 in all his senses.[HdV2,15]*

Also in the *Letter to Publius*⁷⁹ Ephrem reveals his experience of *lectio divina* and the fruits of his assiduous and loving “meditation” of the biblical pages. As father in the Spirit he invites – in Publius – every Christian to share in the same sacramental experience, in order to enter the “bridal chamber”⁸⁰ and to be transformed into the “beauty that is above”:⁸¹

78 D. CERBELAUD here translates: “impose à ta langue le sceau de la parole de vie” (*Éphrem le Syrien, Le Christ en ses symboles, Hymnes de Virginité*, 30).

79 “The letter is essentially a meditation on the last judgment” (S.P. BROCK, *Ephrem’s Letter to Publius*, p. 262). The same Brock states that “the Latin name of Ephrem’s correspondent may suggest that the letter belongs to the last ten years of Ephrem’s life, when he was settled in Edessa” (*ibidem*).

80 LP 12.

81 LP 2.

You do well not to let drop from your hands the polished mirror of the holy Gospel⁸² of your Lord, for it provides the likeness of everyone who looks into it, and it shows the resemblance of all who peer into it.
[LP 1]

82 We have already seen that for Ephrem the Old Testament “not only is in accord and harmony with the New Testament, but, forming one body with it, is the only Holy Scripture where dwells sacramentally the Word of the Father” (See chapter 6.2 of the present thesis, p. 278). Then in this *Letter to Publius* when our author uses the term ‘Gospel’, he certainly points out first of all to the four Gospels, but, at the same time, he quotes several passages of the Old Testament as voice of the divine “mirror”: Gen 2,7; Ps 120,4; Is 40,12.15; 42,5.7; 44,24; 59,12; Joel 2,6; Nahum 2,10; etc. In this regard we may compare – within the writings of Ephrem – “the Gospel is your mirror” of *HdF* 41,10 with the “mirror of the Scriptures” of *HdF* 67,8; *HdI* 1,7 and *Serm* I.vii.118.

Also in the New Testament and in the early Church Fathers the word *euaggelion* does not mean only the four Gospels, but comprehends the whole divine revelation, the “good news” contained in the entire Scripture. See, e.g., St. Ignatius of Antioch: “If the things be so, how then shall we be able to live without him of whom even the prophets were disciples in the Spirit and to whom they looked forward as their teacher?” (*Ad Magn* 9,1 in *The Apostolic Fathers*, ET by K. LAKE, I [Cambridge & London 1985] 205-7); “And the prophets also do we love, because they also have announced the Gospel, and are hoping in him and waiting for him, by faith in whom they also obtain salvation, being united with Jesus Christ, for they are worthy of love and saints worthy of admiration, approved by Jesus Christ, and numbered together in the Gospel of the common hope” (*Ad Philad* 5,2; *ibidem*, 243-245).

For this mirror is a figure (lit. shadow) of the holy preaching of the outward Gospel. Within itself is depicted the beauty of the beautiful who look into it, and again in it the defects of the ugly who despise it are rebuked. And just as this natural mirror is but a figure (lit. shadow) of the Gospel, so too the Gospel is but a figure (lit. shadow) of the beauty that is above which does not fade and at which all the sins of the created world are rebuked. For in it reward is given to all who have kept their beauty from being defiled with mud. For to everyone who peers into this mirror his sins are visible, and everyone who considers it, sees there the lot which is reserved for him, whether good or bad. There the kingdom of heaven is depicted, visible to those who have a clear eye.

[LP 2]

Take hold therefore, of that smooth mirror of the divine Gospel in your two hands and gaze with pure eye that can make you see that divine mirror – for not everyone is able to see in it his soul (or himself), only the person who has a heart that can distinguish, a mind that can feel, and eye that is desirous of beholding what can help it. Look into it, then, and see all the reflections of creation, the delineation of mankind – of both the good and the wicked. [LP 10].

Ephrem as an icon of the divine paternity tirelessly invites Publius to look at the mirror of the Gospel:

Look carefully and gaze with the eye of your mind on that mirror (...) Look at the twelve thrones⁸³ in it, place ready for judgment; (...). [LP 5]

Look at the judge of righteousness, ready seated; look at the Word of his Father, (...) the gate⁸⁴ of salvation, the way⁸⁵ of truth, the propitiatory lamb,⁸⁶ (...). [LP 6]

Look then on that divine child (...) who is spoken of in the prophets,⁸⁷ the sender of the Spirit, who sanctifies through the Spirit every soul, (...). Look at him on that day, sitting at the right hand of his begetter, setting the sheep to his right at that hour, and the goats to his left at that moment, calling to his blessed ones, “Come, inherit the kingdom”— that was prepared for them from of old in his knowledge, and was made ready for them from the beginning of creation.⁸⁸ He thanks them for having fed him when he was hungry – in the person of the poor; for having given him to drink when he was thirsty – in the person of the ill-treated; (...). [LP 8]

83 Mt 19,28; Lk 22,30.

84 Jn 10,9.

85 Jn 14,6.

86 Cf. Jn 1,29.

87 Or “speaks in the prophets” (Brock’s textual note).

88 Mt 25,33-34.

By the middle of the letter, Ephrem stops exhorting his “beloved brother” Publius and starts a series of “I saw”, placing himself in front of the mirror of the Gospel:

For I saw there beautiful people, and I was desirous of their beauty, and the places of the good where they were standing, and I was eager for their position. I saw their bridal chamber opposite, which no one who has not a lamp may enter;⁸⁹ I saw their joy, and I myself sat down in mourning, not possessing works worthy of that bridal chamber. I saw them clothed with the robe of light, and I was grieved that (I) had prepared no virtuous raiment.⁹⁰ I saw their crowns adorned with victory, and I was pained that I had no victorious deeds with which to be crowned. I saw there the virgins knocking, and no one opening for them,⁹¹ and I groaned that I was empty of the works of the blessed oil.

I saw great crowds, crying out at the gate,⁹² and no one answering them, and I was disturbed that I had not that way of life which authorized the opening of the gate of the kingdom. I heard a clamour of many voices saying “Lord, Lord, open for us”,⁹³ and a voice from thence fell on my ears, which swore by itself

89 Mt 25,1ff.

90 Mt 22,12.

91 Mt 25,11.

92 Mt 25,10; Lk 13,25.

93 Mt 25,11; Lk 13,25.

that “I do not recognize you⁹⁴ as being worthy of salvation”. I saw there those who were clamouring “we have eaten and drunken in your presence”,⁹⁵ but he answered and told them “it was not me you were wanting, but simply because you ate bread and had your fill”.⁹⁶ [LP 12-13]

Then Ephrem – after having heard a “clamour of many voices saying: *Lord, Lord, open for us*” and gazing at the “pure virgins whose virginity had been rejected because it had not been adorned with the good oil of excellent works”⁹⁷ – is seized with fear:

Then I, who like them, had always taken shelter in his name, and had benefited from the honours given to it, having always spread his name, like a covering, over my secret faults, – then I was seized with fear, and trembling shook me, and a great trepidation counselled me to turn back and see if there might meet me any of the provisions required for that narrow road⁹⁸ which leads to the land of salvation (or life). [LP 14]

94 Mt 25,12; Lk 13,25.

95 Lk 13,26.

96 Jn 6,26.

97LP 15.

98 Mt 7,14.

This fear and great trepidation counselled our Father to “turn back” to the “voice from the mirror’s mouth” in order to be led “to the land of salvation”:

And while I was chastened by the fearful sight of the tortures of others, I heard another voice from the mirror’s mouth, which called out, be careful, sluggish one, of your poor soul, for it is something very fearful to fall into the hands of the living God.⁹⁹ Have you not heard the children crying out to you that if a man gain the entire world, but lose his soul, what profit has he? Or again, what can a man give in exchange for his soul?¹⁰⁰ Do you not see what happened to the man whose land brought in vast crops, and because he said to his soul, my soul, eat drink and take your rest and pleasure, for you have vast crops stored up for you for many years,¹⁰¹ have you not heard that while the word was still sweet in his mouth, a bitter message was poured out into his inmost ear (lit. womb of his ear), crying out to him as he was all faint, and saying, this night they will require your beloved soul. Who will have all this that you have prepared?¹⁰² [LP 16]

[...] Wake yourself from this slumber which makes you lax, and which is spread like the shadow of death over all your limbs. [LP 17]

99 Heb 10,31.

100 Mt 16,26.

101 Lk 12,19.

102 Lk 12,20.

[...] Come, I will take you out to the dark graveyards and descend with me in your mind to lowest Sheol, and I will show you there kings lying prostrate on their faces, with their crowns buried in the ground with them. Come, look at the nobles, who luxuriated in silks, how worms have become their bed and vermin their covering.¹⁰³ [LP 19]

The sight which the eyes of the condemned ones look at in Sheol “gives them pain, stretching to the boundary of the chasm and passing quickly over it and flying to the garden of Eden, hovering over God’s Paradise, it beholds the blessed resting place, and is envious of the tables of the kingdom [...]. And maybe it is that the Gehenna of the wicked consists in what they see, and it is their very separation that burns them, and their mind acts as the flame. The hidden judge who is seated in the discerning mind has spoken, and has become for them the righteous judge, who beats them without mercy with the torments of contrition”.¹⁰⁴

At the sight of the torments that burn the wicked ones in Gehenna – torments which Ephrem sees in “that clear mirror of the holy Gospel of my Lord” – our author takes refuge in “tears”, “weeping”, “penitence”, “repentance” and “humility”:

103 Cf. James 5,1ff (Is 66,24; Mk 9,48).

104 LP 21 & 22.

When I saw all this in that clear mirror of the holy Gospel of my Lord, my soul grew feeble, and my spirit was quenched, and my stature bent down to the dust. My heart was filled with bitter groans, in the hope that somehow my stains might be washed white in my tears. I remembered the good Lord and gentle God, who wipes out the bond¹⁰⁵ of the debtors’ debt through tears, who accept weeping in place of burnt sacrifices. And whence I reached this point I took refuge in penitence, and sheltered under the wings of repentance, and I took cover in the shade of humility, saying “what else do I need henceforth to offer him who has no need of burnt sacrifices except a meek spirit,¹⁰⁶ for this constitutes the perfect sacrifice that can make propitiation for shortcomings; and a broken heart¹⁰⁷ in place of burnt offerings is something that God will not reject. Instead of a libation of wine (I will offer) tears that propitiate”. [LP 24]

Ephrem thus concludes the letter to his “beloved brother” Publius:

And what I heard from that blessed voice which was audible from inside the mirror I have recorded in this letter, my beloved brother. [LP 24]

105 Col 2,14.

106 Ps 51,17.

107 Ps 51,17.

No doubt, “that blessed voice” which was audible from inside the mirror is the voice of the “Word of the Father”¹⁰⁸ who through the Scriptures reveals the beauty of the Kingdom of heaven, the darkness and torments of Gehenna and the “judge of righteousness”¹⁰⁹ “sitting at the right hand of his Begetter”.¹¹⁰

It is through the labour¹¹¹ of the ‘meditation’ on the Bible – received from the hand of mother Church – that Ephrem listens to this “blessed voice”. This patient and loving fatigue of *lectio divina* – together with the divine Liturgy and the practice of God’s word (above all of the ‘new commandment’¹¹²) – helps our father to escape from the torments of Gehenna and to take refuge in “tears”, “weeping”, “penitence”, “repentance”, “humility”; and thus attain salvation in the bridal chamber of “God’s Paradise”.¹¹³

Ephrem throughout his writings invites every baptized one to embrace this same blessed labour which makes Adam reenter the Paradise of delight, and divinizes him.

108 LP 6.

109 LP 6.

110 LP 8.

111 The Dives of Lk 16,19-31 refused to embrace this labour. Ephrem in his *Letter to Publius* writes of *that deaf ear of the man [the Dives] who never opened the gate of his ear for any holy message to enter* (LP 4).

112 Cf. Jn 13,34; 15,12f.17; 1Jn 2,7.10; 3,11.23; 4,11.19; etc.

113 LP 21.

In the *Commentary on Diatessaron* he asserts that God has hidden his treasures within his word: “each of us” is invited to find out these treasures by the labour of ‘meditation’:

God has hidden within His word all sorts of treasures, so that each of us can be enriched by it from whatever aspect he meditates on.

[CDiat1,18]

In his *madrāšê* Ephrem sings the beatitude of the Church who in her labour to listen to and follow the *Logos*, is compared to the bee:

*You blessed, O Church-bee,
who has many sweet blossoms.[...]
From holy flowers you cull,
from all of them you gather all benefit.
You blessed, O Church, from the blossoms of your
temple you gather sweetness.*

[HdN28,9]

In the hymns *On Resurrection*, our author compares once more the bee – the feeble flying insect whose labour is a cause of wonder for Ephrem¹¹⁴ – to the Church:

¹¹⁴Really wonderful is the description of bee’s activity in *HdR* 4,6 (I quote from the IT of I. de FRANCESCO, *Inni Pasquali*, 363):

*Anche il debole alato nel mese dei fiori esce zelante.
Guardatelo, è il più fragile di tutti, e siate zelanti a sua somiglianza.*

*É rivestito di simboli e portatore di tipi.
Da tutti i fiori raduna risorse;
e il suo tesoro, nascosto e disprezzato,*

*She [the bee] is a mirror of the Church,
who gather from the Scriptures the sweetness of the
Holy Spirit.
[HdR 4,7]*

In one of the hymns *On Virginity* our poet invites us to imitate also the labour of Mary sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to his word,¹¹⁵ in order that we too may portray Christ in our heart and love him in our mind:

*Blessed are you if you will be a daughter to Mary
whose eye scorned all persons.
She turned her face away from everything
to gaze on one beauty alone.
Blessed is her love that was intoxicated,
without restraint,
so that she sat at His feet to gaze at Him.
Let you also portray the Messiah in your heart
and love Him in your mind. [HdV 24,7]*

All the extant works of the 'Harp of the Spirit' are a reflection of this man who murmured God's word day and night and had his delight in it. His commentaries, *mêmrê* and *madrâšê* are in fact a marvelous fruit of his *lectio divina*, they are a *lectio divina* itself, as affirms S.H. Griffith: "For Ephraem reading the Bible is really a *lectio divina* that carries the contemplative eye of the mind well beyond the limits of knowledge and leads it to the brink of faith and prayer.

*quando viene aperto è una meraviglia vedere come esso abbia
faticato,
costruito e riempito. Benedetto il suo Creatore!*

115 Cf. Lk 10,38-42.

[...] In reading the Bible with St. Ephraem the Syrian, one engages not so much in theology, in the Augustinian sense of *fides quarens intellectum*, but in a contemplative *lectio divina* which is more like *fides adorans mysterium*”.¹¹⁶

The faith of our holy father Ephrem – this bee who toiled so much to gather, for us, from the Scriptures the sweetness of the Holy Spirit – is a faith that, adoring the mystery, illumines the heart and the mind (the *intellectum*), filling them with wonder and *gaudium*, a foretaste of Paradise.

He who patiently reads and rereads Ephrem receives the grace to enjoy his luminous faith, the faith of a man lost in the Word of the Father, the faith of the ‘Harp of the Spirit’ who shows us how to have “chaste wombs filled with the Word”¹¹⁷ and how, through the *lectio divina*, to be “transported from the bosom of the Book to the very bosom of Paradise.”¹¹⁸

This is what happened to me – notwithstanding my sins, wounds and limits – as a student/disciple here at SEERI, under the loving direction of its founder Fr. Jacob Thekeparampil, of Fr. Thomas Koonammakkal my blessed guide, and my brother and father Sebastian Brock. May the Holy Trinity be more and more glorified in them!

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116 ‘Faith Adoring the Mystery’, 35.37.

117 HdR 1,7.

118 HdP 5.3.

PHILOXENUS (On the indwelling of the Holy Spirit)

Before baptism, one is called the old person, but after baptism the new person. Now the Holy Spirit is the abiding Soul of the new person, and he remains, not only during the body's life, but also after its death, and in the case of the saints he performs miracles and works signs. For the bones of the just, that is to say, of the apostles and martyrs and all the saints, while they do not have any natural soul in them – for that left them at their death – still have the Holy Spirit abiding with and in them, and it is He who effects signs and wonders in them; and demonic spirits cry out bitterly at his power within them, for sicknesses are driven off and illness chased away.

At the time of the resurrection when the souls return to their bodies they find the Holy Spirit in them, for he has not departed from them – and never will do so – from the time when they received him from the water. And our resurrection too will take place by the power of the Holy Spirit who is within us, and because the Holy Spirit is in the faithful when they die, their death cannot be called 'death', but only 'sleep'. *Brethren, I want you to know, says Paul, about those who sleep you must not grieve, lie the rest of humanity, who have lost all hope.*

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, pp 122-123).

George Mathew Kuttiyil

A STUDY OF THE ORDER OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE HOLY *MUROON* IN THE MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH

Introduction

Mar Thoma Syrian Church is an Eastern Reformed Church which follows the West Syrian(Antiochene) Liturgical Tradition.¹ The Church has the long tradition of using the Holy *Muroon* for the Consecration of Baptismal water, Post Baptismal Anointing , Consecration of the Church and Consecration of the *Tableetha*.² The Order of the Consecration of Holy *Muroon* is not studied in a scholarly manner because of various reasons. The text is not translated into English and other languages and there was no easy access to the text. In this study an attempt is being made to translate

1 For a detailed history of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church see: Juhanon Mar Thoma , Christianity in India and a brief history of the Mar Thoma Church(Madras 1968)

2 It is a consecrated rectangular wooden plank (15x8x0.5 inches) which is placed in the specially made pouch at the Centre of the virikootu (spread cloth) and is placed on the altar. The paten and chalice are placed on that during holy Qurbana.

the text into English³ from the vernacular Malayalam and a textual analysis is made to elucidate the theology of the Consecration of Holy *Muroon* and the practice of anointing with the holy oil.

The Tradition of the Consecration

In the West Syrian Liturgical tradition, two types of Oil are applied for baptism. Olive oil is applied for baptismal anointing, and holy *Muroon* is used for the consecration of the baptismal water and Post baptismal anointing. The Greek word *Muroon* denotes the Perfumed oil, Incense, scent etc. Similar meaning is given in the New Testament(Luke; 7 37,38, Mark:14:3, Mat.26:7, John:112, 12:3) The Practice of anointing with Holy Oil during and after baptism were prevailed in the Syrian church(2Cor.1; 21-22. Eph.1:14, 4:30, 1John 2:20, 27, Titus:3:6-7, Rev.7:3)The Consecration of the holy *Muroon* during the time of baptismal service itself was the practice of the Syrian Church before A.D 400 . There were references about the Consecration of the Holy *Muroon* during the time of baptism, in the Syriac Documents like the Acts of Thomas and Apostolic Constitutions.⁴

When special importance was received for the Consecrating Oil, the Consecration took place separately. From the fifth century onwards, it was the practice of the Syrian Churches to consecrate the holy *Muroon* during the Passover Thursday. It is continued during the period of Bar Hebraeus the Catholicos of the East (1286). By this, the Holy Oil was made available to the Baptism conducted during the Easter Sunday. It is believed that the of the present Text for the Consecration is composed by Michael the Great (1199),

3 The Order of the Consecration of the Holy Muroon in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church (An independent translation by the author) (Here after The Order of the Consecration)

4 Baby Varghese, "Consecration of Holy Muroon in the Syriac Tradition" (Malayalam) in NUHARO Vol.1.No.1, pp.71-78

the Patriarch of Antioch. The detailed description of the Consecration of the Holy *Muroon* was given by Diyanasius Arayopagite According to him, it is the *Muroon* which gives perfection to all hierarchical consecration. He further comments that *Muroon* is used for the Post baptismal Anointing, Consecration of the Baptismal water, Consecration of the Church/Altar. *Muroon* is consecrated by the head of the Church along with the assistance of all the bishops. It can be consecrated according to the need of the Church, says Jacob of Edessa.⁵

The Text and Practice of consecration

The text used in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church is very ancient which follows the West Syrian Liturgical Tradition. There is a printed version in Malayalam Known as *Muroon Koodasha* (Consecration of Holy *Muroon*).⁶

Structure of the Text

The service begins with the traditional adoration or *Kauma*⁷. The container of the holy oil which has to be consecrated placed on the *Tabaleetha*. There are two prayers in which Christ is addressed as the true fragrance who surrendered himself for the salvation of humankind. It also beseeches God to accept the members of the holy Church as a spiritual sacrifice.

Then Psalm 84 is read out where the beauty of the temple of God is depicted. The next two prayers are addressed to Christ the true Messiah and beseech to make the faithful holy, righteous and enable them to stand at his presence in the end,

5 Baby Varghese, "Consecration of Holy Muroon, pp.71-78"

6 The Order of the Consecration of the Holy Muroon in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church

7 Meaning of the Syriac word is(prayer) in standing posture

Lections (Readings)

Psalm 45: 1 - 8 ; Ps. 23

Exodus 30: 22 - 31

1 John 2: 20 - 3: 1

Gospel: St. Matthew 26: 6 – 13

In these texts various anointing in the Old and New Testament and how to prepare the Oil of Anointing (in OT) is elaborated which shows the Scriptural foundation of the Consecration of the Holy Oil. The Nicene Creed is recited by the Congregation and in the following prayers, the gift of the Holy Spirit is sought to sanctify and consecrate the Holy oil. The second prayer is titled as the Prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the *Promeon* and *Sedra*, the divine act of God through Christ is well narrated. The final prayer is a prayer of Consecration and all the Bishops Lay their hands on the Container and beseech God to sanctify the Holy Oil. The invocation is in the name of the Holy Trinity. The service ends with the adoration of the Trinity, Lord's Prayer and Benediction by the Metropolitan.

The Preparation of Holy *Muroon*⁸

Ingredients for *Muroon* preparation

Olive oil	30 Ltrs
Sandal wood oil	3 bottle
Sandalwood	500 gm
Joss sticks (incense)	18 Packets
Saffron	100 Gm
Camphor	20 Packets

8 The detailed description of the Consecration service was taken from a Monograph written by Rev. Saju. C. Pappachen, the professor of Syriac in the Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Kottayam and former Secretary to the Metropolitan Joseph Mar Thoma. He personally attended the service held in 2009 at St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Thiruvalla.

Clove	200 Grams
Cinnamon	200 Grams
Shellac	300 Grams
Tender leaves of teak	some

Two days before the consecration of *Muroon*, it is prepared under the leadership of the Metropolitan. Senior Vicar General, Sabha Secretary, Priests, Deacons, and laypeople also attend at that time. When olive oil is boiled in a large vessel all other ingredients which were powdered added and mixed with that oil one after other. Camphor and Tender leaves of teak are added at a later stage. The whole process of preparation takes about 5-6 hrs. During the whole time the mixture is stirred by somebody. After it becomes cold, *Muroon* for consecration is poured out into 6 large glass jars

On the day of consecration of *Muroon* all these 6 glass bottles (Jars) are put on the *Thabaleetha* on the *Thronos*. There is another Jar of *Muroon* which was brought from Mardin by Mathews Mar Athanasius.⁹ That jar s kept in the middle. During the service Metropolitan pour out some *Muroon* from the bottle from Mardin to all these 6 bottles and refill it from the 6 bottle after consecration.

The service is led by the Metropolitan and all other bishops , participate in the service of consecration of *Muroon*. Metropolitan is in His ‘Kappa’ with ‘mitre’. All other bishops wear their black “puramloha” (Robe). Metropolitan’s staff was taken by Vicar General. Censer with incense is waved by a Priest/Deacon. Lessons from Old and New Testaments are read out by priests. Metropolitan

9 Mathews Mar Athanasius was the XIII Mar Thoma of the undivided Malankara Church and was the pioneer of Reformation in the Malankara Syrian church. He was consecrated by Elias II Patriarch of Antioch at Mardin and came back to Malankara in 1843. He also brought the Holy Muroon with him for the use in the Malankara Church. A portion of the holy Muroon is still kept in the container brought from Mardin kept at the Poolatheen, the head quarters of Mar Thoma Metropolitan .

read out the Gospel. Reading of Prayers is shared by all the bishops. When the sanctification prayer is proclaimed all bishops lay their right hand on these bottles. A large number of priests and lay people also attend in the service.

Metropolitan gives a Homily during the service. According to the Metropolitan “in the Mar Thoma Church there is not a service for consecration of new *Muroon*. But we are only multiplying the *Muroon* which was brought from Mardin in 1843 by Mathews Mar Athanasius after his consecration as Metropolitan by the Patriarch.”¹⁰

The Theology of Consecration

In the initial prayer, Jesus Christ himself is considered as the true fragrance to God the father for the sake of the human kind. By the anointing of the oil of gladness, the children of the church, receive the anointing and the seal of the holy Spirit. Praise the Triune God. The believers may become acceptable offering as fragrance to the Lord.¹¹

Jesus Christ is the true Messiah (the Anointed one). By this anointing, the believers may become mature, holy and spiritual beings.

In the following prayer for the consecration of the Oil, the intention and purpose of the anointing of the oil is well explained as follows:

10 In this service, the Holy Muroon is multiplied and added to the new oil according to the need. There were services in 2007 and 2009. The present writer attended the service of the Consecration held on 2nd October 2007 at St. Thomas Mar Thoma church, Tiruvalla, immediately after the enthronement of Joseph Mar Thoma, as the 21st Mar Thoma Metropolitan. Holy Muroon is supplied to Churches through the Headquarters and Dioceses of the Church.

11 Order of the Consecration of Holy Muroon, p. 1

- Send us the grace of your Holy Spirit
- Sanctify and perfect this Oil presented before God
- Make it for the sacramental anointing
- Fulfillment of the God's Divine gifts,
- Sanctification of the anointed for the glory of God's precious name.

In the first part of the Prayer for the Holy Spirit, all the attributes of the Holy Spirit or a strong pneumatology is narrated:

Send us your Holy Spirit who is comforter, great and life giving, spoke through the law, prophets and apostles, one who stands nearby, perfects everything, who bestows holiness to whom you pleases by your goodwill, not as a servant but like a master source of divine gifts, diverse in the operation of the gifts equal to you in essence, who proceeds from you being one with you and your only begotten Son in the royal throne.¹²

In the second part of this prayer, the effects of the Anointing with *holy Muroon* is well explained as follows:

Lord bless and sanctify us and this oil presented before you. Bless all those who will be anointed and sealed by this oil. This holy oil is according to priestly order. This is royal Muroon. May this be the oil of gladness, cloth of splendor, robe of salvation, protection of life, spiritual gift, holiness of body mind and spirit, gladness of the world, imperishable joy, unfading seal, weapon of faith, shield against all the deeds of the evil one to those who are sealed by this oil. May those who be sanctified with this oil and those who are anointed by this be not caught by the enemies. When they stand before you at the Day of Judgment let them shine like the stars of the sky in the greatness of your saints. May they be received in the eternal dwelling place of the righteous ones according to your genuine promise. They may be counted with the first born whose

12 Order of the Consecration of Holy Muroon, p.2

names are written in heaven. You are worthy of glory praise and reverence and dominion with your only begotten Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.¹³

The *Promion* (Introductory Prayer) is very rich in Christology and the nature of Jesus Christ is profoundly affirmed in the following manner:

Glory to the Lord who is self-existent, eternal, self illuminating and make shining all nature, one who turns everything to you out of your love, towards nature of life, source of all blessings, great and mighty, rule everything by the power of your word, inexplicable by anyone, king of kings, Lord of lords, ruler of rulers, one who makes the crown, known as one in essence, you are worthy of praise, thanksgiving reverence and adoration at the time of the consecration of the Holy *Muroon* and all the days of our life, now and forever. Amen¹⁴

The first part of the *Sedra* (Series of prayer) is a detailed explanation of the economy of salvation of Lord Jesus Christ as given below:

Lord Jesus Christ who is the king of all, you be to us the son of righteousness, incomprehensible by our minds, illuminating all of creation, you after completing all the creation created human being from the earth. You honored human by your image. You adorned your creation with your greatness. You appoint human for spiritual service. You united them with the heavenly host, you adorned them with the shining priestly crown and clothes royal attire. You adorned them with all beauty and prospered with your honor and splendor.¹⁵

In the second part of the long series of prayer, the effect of the Anointing with the Holy *Muroon* and sound soteriology are

13 Order of the Consecration of Holy Muroon, p.3

14 Order of the Consecration of Holy Muroon, p.3

15 Order of the Consecration of Holy Muroon, p.4

elaborated in the following manner:

O Lord we the unworthy servants beseech before you. Have compassion on your worshipping community and have mercy on us. Sanctify this oil by the operation of your Holy Spirit. Make it complete and perfect. Lord, you be the robe of light, perfection of knowledge, freedom from all curse, liberation from slavery, forgiveness of sin, support in weakness, greatness of the spirit, seal of watchfulness, unfailing weapons, way to the paradise, bridge laying to the place of gladness, ladder to heaven, door to the heavenly kingdom. Lord make us the children of your heavenly Father, the inheritors of the mystery and your brethren, confirm us in our love towards you. Fill us with the devotion towards you. Establish your truth in us confirm our faith in you. Adorn us with the upright deeds. Clothe us with the un-blamable deeds. Enrobe us with girdle of maturity, the shoes of the readiness of your gospel. We ascribe unceasing praise and thanksgiving to you and to your Father and to your Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.¹⁶

Prayer of Consecration

In the prayer of Consecration the Metropolitan lays his hand on the jar and prays as follows:

God our savior, have mercy on us. Shine your merciful face towards us and this oil. Sanctify this oil O Lord by your power (+) and the grace of your only begotten son (+) and by the operation of your Holy Spirit (+), because you are holy and giver of all good gifts we ascribe praise and thanksgiving to you and to your only begotten Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen¹⁷.

¹⁶ Order of the Consecration of Holy Muroon, p.4

¹⁷ Order of the Consecration of Holy Muroon, p.4

In the name of the Father (+) and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit (+) Amen.

Here the prayer for the consecration of the holy oil is addressed to the Trinity and the invocation of formula for consecration is in the name of the Triune God. It is the practice of the Syrian Church that all proclamations and formula of sacramental consecration is in the name of Trinity. It affirms the Trinitarian faith of the Church.

Conclusion

Anointing with Holy *Muroon* is a sacrament established in the Church to keep the believers firmly in faith with the help of the Holy Spirit. In the Churches with West Syrian Liturgical tradition *Muroon* is applied after the baptism, on the forehead and other parts of the body of the candidate.¹⁸ *Muroon* is also poured out into the Baptismal water as a sign of the sanctification of the water. The holy *Muroon* is applied to consecrate the Church and the altar and *Tabaleetho*

The Formula given in the post Baptismal anointing of the Candidate is as follows:

Name ... is anointed with the Holy Oil (*Muroon*) as a sign of the gift given to true believers. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

According to Sebastian Brock:

Olive oil is very closely associated with the Holy Spirit in the Syriac literature. But this is because oil was understood as the

18 For the Biblical basis of the anointing, See, George Mathew Kuttijil, The Faith and Sacrament of the Mar Thoma Church CSS, (Tiruvalla, 2011) P.47-48

19 The Order of Thanksgiving after child birth, Baptism and Chrismation, in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church (Tiruvalla, 1988), p.25

ideal conductor for the power of the Holy Spirit' to St. Ephrem 'this oil is the dear friend of the Holy Spirit, it serves him following him like a disciple'.²⁰

'*Muroon* is the perfecter of the gift of the Holy Spirit and typifies the Holy Spirit, says Severius.²¹

Syriac Commentators also point out that *Muroon* symbolises Christ the Messiah (the Anointed One). The oil is one of the more important symbol of the Holy Spirit, according to the early Syriac tradition. It confers on the baptismal Candidate the royal priesthood as practiced in the Old Testament anointing the priest and king. Pouring out of the Oil/*Muroon* on the Baptismal water and anointing after the Baptism combines both as sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit.²²

Athanasius says "the *Muroon* makes the baptised a sharer in the anointing Christ himself received on His body, and as a result he becomes a sharer in Christ's body (Eph.3:6).²³

Dedication of the church with Holy *Muroon* takes place in the following order; the altar, sanctuary, the nave and the Baptistry. The purpose of dedication or anointing is sanctification, renewal, cleansing from all transgressions and un-cleanliness. The baptistry is anointed for the holiness and renewal of the believers²⁴.

The anointing of the *Muroon* is done by the priest represent the Church. It is the Church who has sanctified the *Muroon*. The authority of consecrating the Holy *Muroon* is vested with the Bishops

20 Brock. S, P, The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition,(J.Vellian. Ed.) Syrian Church Series 9 (Pune 1979) p.16.

21 Brock. S.P, The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition,p.39 -40

22 Brock. S.P, The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition,p. 106,7

23 Cited above

24 George Mathew , Rite for the Dedication of the Church in West Syrian Tradition, HARP Vol.VII, X, P.390

in the respective areas. This is a sacrament of the unity of the church²⁵. The ecumenical nature of the sacrament is reflected in the fact that, *Muroon* used is the same, as the fellowship evolved also is the same.

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25 George Mathew Kuttiyil, *The Faith and Sacrament of the Mar Thoma Church' CSS*, (Tiruvalla, 2011) P.47-48

Joseph Kalariparampil

INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM ACCORDING TO JACOB OF SARUG

Christ instituted the sacrament of baptism in order to provide us with a share in His own divinity, to make us His brothers and sisters and the sons and daughters of the Father. There is no doubt about who instituted the sacrament. But the question is, when did Christ institute the sacrament of baptism. There were different occasions which kept baptismal resonance in the life of Jesus, such as His own baptism, when He spoke with Nicodemus (Jn 3:-21), when the water and blood flowed from His side (Jn 19:34), at the time of His Ascension when He commanded the apostles to baptise the people (Mt 28:16-20), and at the Pentecost, when the apostles were baptised in the fire and Spirit (Acts 2:1-13).

It is self-evident that Christian baptism can be traced back to Christ's own baptism. It is the 're-presentation' of Jesus' baptism. It is through suffering and crucifixion that Christ saved the humanity. What He initiated at the Jordan has its fulfilment at Golgotha. That is why the Church Fathers always pictured the water and blood that gushed out from the side of Christ as the source for the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. It is apt to quote Brock, who sees in Jacob only two occasions which together constitute the source of baptism: "To Jacob, the twin sources of Christian

baptism are Christ's own baptism in the Jordan (which he sees as the betrothal of the Church to Christ) and the piercing of Christ's side on the cross" (Jn 19:34).¹

But a note of dissent is very much important here. After going through the published homilies of Jacob, I come to the conclusion that there are a minimum of four instances in the economy of salvation, which caused the institution of baptism. But we should see all these different historical events as one under the concept of sacred time.² They are: 1. The baptism of Jesus serves as the locus of Christian baptism. 2. The water and blood, which flowed from the side of Christ, is the source from where all baptismal waters flow. 3. On the Mount of Olives, Christ presented His apostles with both oil and Trinitarian formula to sign the people into baptism. 4. It is in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, when the apostles were baptised in the fire and Spirit, the promise of baptism is fulfilled. There is not one single moment, we cannot pinpoint from the perspective of Jacob, that in which baptism was instituted, but there are many instances which are seen together from the notion of sacred time as an instance of the institution of baptism.

Jesus' Baptism – Jordan

Christ's baptism is the perfect model of Christian baptism. He instituted it as a sacrament for all to imitate His baptism, sharing in

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- 1 S. Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, J. Vellian (Ed.), The Syrian Churches Series, Vol. IX (Pune: 1979), 30.
 - 2 Brock explains well what sacred time is: "All moments in ordinary linear time, whose salvific content is the same, converge to a single point in sacred time. This rather compact statement is best illustrated by a practical example: a liturgical feast and the particular salvific event that it commemorates, though far separate in historical time, can, in sacred time, come together. This helps explain why liturgical poetry so often starts 'Today is Christ born, etc.'" (S. P. Brock, "The Poet as Theologian," in *Sobornost: Eastern Churches Review* 7:4 London:1977), 246.

the interior substance of His baptism, a way of sharing in the divine life.³ “The baptism of Jesus is the *Urbild* of Christian baptism.”⁴ That means Christ’s baptism is the prototype of Christian baptism. The efficacy of Christian baptism is found in the baptism of Christ. Even though there were washings of the OT (Ex 40:12-15; Lev 6:27; 11:24-28; 13:6, 58; 14:43-47; 15:4-13; 16-18, 26-28; 17:15; 22:6-7; Num 8:5-7; 19:7-10; Deut 21:6; Ruth 3:3; 1 Sam 25:41; 2 Sam 11:8; 2 Kings 5:10-13; Is 1:16; Jer 2:22, 4:14; Ezek 16:9) and baptism of John before Christ, they were deficient of forgiveness. The baptism given by John has special importance since Jesus received baptism from him. Baptism of Christ should be seen in the light of the OT and that of John, because Jacob always presented the OT as prefiguration of Christ’s economy of salvation. There were different types of cleansing and purificatory services during the OT period. All these washings are to a certain extent have had baptismal resonance. Jacob characteristically categorises the washings of the OT and the baptism of John as insufficient and incapable of transmitting the Holy Spirit to the candidates. Even the baptism, which Christ received, is devoid of forgiveness. Christ was not in need of forgiveness and John’s baptism was not geared for forgiveness, but Christ’s baptism was a necessity for the salvation of humanity.

The great distinguishing feature between Christ’s baptism and the former baptisms or washings is the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jacob acknowledges the Holy Spirit as the main source for Christian baptism, which was instituted by Christ.⁵ Christ’s baptism, for Jacob, is a mystery revealed by God the Father. It is at the baptism of

3 K. McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 127.

4 McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 176.

5 See S. Saliba, “Baptism in the Homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Jacob of Serugh,” in *Parole de l’Orient*, 40 (Kasilik:2015), 341-342.

Christ, the Trinity revealed and rendered baptism the efficacy.⁶ If the OT washings and John's baptisms were the prototypes of Jesus' baptism, then Christian baptism, which is in practice today, is the antitype of Jesus' baptism. They are only shadows and types of Christian baptism (HS I.7: 160, 5-10; 161, 8-19).⁷ Christ brought fulfilment and consummation to all the types of baptism in the OT. In an allusive way, Jacob connects the Exodus of the Israelites through the Red Sea (which is the greatest saving act in the history of Israel) with John's baptism at the Jordan, and Christ's gift of baptism. In the following passage, we see how Jacob brings forward his idea of three baptisms:

Thus, you should understand that there are three different categories

Of baptism for those who have been baptised as we have described:

One is of the Law, another is of John,

While this third one was opened up by the Son of God.

The baptisms in the Law are a shadow,

While the baptism of John is of repentance,

Whereas the baptism of the Son of God gives birth to the 'first born,'

Providing children to be brothers and sisters to the Only Begotten (HS I.7: 161, 8-15).⁸

6 McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 195-196.

7 T. Kollamparampil, *Salvation in Christ According to Jacob of Serugh* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2001), 126.P. Bedjan, *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug* (Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis), 5 Vols (Leipzig: 1905-1910, reprinted by Gorgias Press, 2006) [References to these volumes are indicated with the abbreviation HS vol. no. in Roman numerals. number of the homily according to Bedjan's version: page no., line(s)].

8 T. M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: West and East Syria, Message of the Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 5 (Collegetown MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 25.

To Jacob, John opened baptism for the people of Israel, so that it might be for repentance (HS I.7: 159, 10-11; 161, 17; 162, 1-2). Jacob in his homily on ‘Three Baptisms’ expounds the peculiarities of the baptism of John:

John did not baptise in the ‘Spirit and Fire,’

Nor did his baptism give the Holy Spirit.

He baptised in water for repentance, as it is written,

And his baptism was straightforward for those who went down to it (HS I.7: 160, 5-8).⁹

Since John’s baptism was deficient of forgiveness, no one had received the Holy Spirit (HS I.8:173, 14-174, 4). As Jesus approached for baptism, He appreciated John the Baptist and affirmed his baptism.¹⁰

Christ’s baptism was an inevitable necessity for the salvation of humanity. He incarnated in order to tread the path of humiliation and crucifixion. Christ descended as an ordinary man and maintained equality with humanity except for sin. He was a man from the very beginning of His incarnation. His three descents,¹¹ as Jacob expounds, into three wombs: of Mary, of Jordan and of Sheol, indicate that He was always ready to come down from His divine stature for saving Adam, the lost Image of God. Even though He was not in need of any sanctification, He was ready to bow down

9 I would like to thank Prof. Dr.S. P. Brock for providing his translation of the homily on the Baptism of the Law, the baptism of John, and the baptism, which our Lord gave to the apostles. Wherever the translation of this homily is used, it is from Brock’s. Excerpts of this homily are published in T. M. Finn, *Early Christian Baptism and the Catechumenate: West and East Syria, Message of the Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 5 (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 189 ff.

10 McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 4.

11 ‘Baptism, Mary and Sheol as homes;He wished for Him in the way of life to reside in three (of them)’ (HS III.94: 593, 4-5).

His head to receive baptism from His own creation, John the Baptist (HS I.8: 183, 7-12).

In Jacob's prose homily on 'the Epiphany,' Jesus explains to John, how He is the mediator between the Old and the New Law. By accomplishing the OT law, Jesus envisages the activities of the Church through priesthood in this world:

It is by the door of the Law I entered the enclosure of the sheep and in this way it is right for me to accomplish all the justice of Moses. Afterwards, I shall begin to enlighten in the world the perfection of Melchizedek, the great priest who prefigured my mysteries; I shall accomplish justice and then I shall show perfection; I shall conclude the service of the Law, and then I shall begin the great path of the cross (SFH II: 18).¹²

Christ, who was without blemish, was not in need of baptism, but He descended to become a human, then He went down into the water in order to bring forgiveness. If Christ was not ready to be baptised, there would not have been any use for baptism, for it had no effect of forgiving sins and did not provide the Holy Spirit (HS I.7: 162, 7-16). Jacob was judicious in his reasoning to draw this conclusion, why Christ came for baptism:

This is clear: although He had no need He came to baptism
So that the justice in the Law might be fulfilled in Him;
He came travelling along the path of birth, according to the
Law,
And in the midst of His course baptism met Him.
Had he turned aside and not gone down as He passed by,
He would have brought confusion upon the ordered path on
which He had commenced:

12 T. Kollamparampil, Jacob of Serugh. *Select Festal Homilies* (Rome: Centre for Indian and Inter-Religious Studies / Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1997), 195. Hereafter the translation from this book is referred as FH.

It would not have been ‘just’ not to finish what He had begun. And so our Lord was baptised to repay to justice what belonged to her.

He was baptised in the water – not to gain anything or to be sanctified,

But to fulfil that justice which was in the Law (HS I.7: 159, 16-160, 4).¹³

In the homily on ‘Theological Investigation, and the Consecration of the Church’ Jacob speaks about the completion of righteousness of the OT and the consecration of waters:

Lest He was not in need of atonement, He came to be baptised; But in order to accomplish the legal righteousness.

He was baptised in the river, and He was not sanctified from it as it was considered;

And He poured out His holiness into the bosom of waters so that whole (waters) may be sanctified (HS IV.134: 780, 17-20).

Christ was there before the very beginning of creation. He had to accomplish the path of righteousness and bring back what is due to Adam. That is why He was ready to descend to the level of His own creatures and travelled the path of crucifixion (HS III.81: 321-334).¹⁴ Jesus fulfilled all the OT prophecies in His acts of salvation. When John hesitated to baptise the sinless Son of God, Jesus replied that it was proper to “fulfil all righteousness” (Mt 3:15). According to Jacob of Sarug, Christ explained to John the Baptist why he sought baptism at his hands: ‘I am trying to find the lost Adam; let me go down and look for Adam, the fair image’ (Gen 1:26) (HS I.8: 177, 10-179, 2). In the prose homily on ‘the Epiphany,’ Jacob puts his reasoning in the mouth of Jesus while He is talking to John:

Our Lord said to him: ‘*allow it now*. Do not prevent me from being baptised in the Jordan, because you have not prevented

¹³ Tr. Brock.

¹⁴ Kollamparampil, *Salvation*, 131.

me from dwelling in a Virgin. I wished, and I have come to birth. And it pleased me again to come to baptism. The belly is smaller than the river, and the womb narrower than the Crossing over of the Jordan; since the Father has willed that the womb contained me, and because it pleased him, the river suffices for me. I shall be baptised since I was born' (SFH II: 17).¹⁵

Jesus convinced doubting John that He is not making any addition to Him. Christ enters the waters, for they are in need of sanctification. Further Jacob puts explanations in the mouth of Jesus about His purpose for this baptism. Christ wanted to forge armour for the warriors (HS I.8: 180, 10-19).¹⁶

While I do not need the furnace of the waters,¹⁷ behold, I am entering,

So that humanity that is worn out should be recast with that stamp of mine (HS I.8: 181, 6-7).¹⁸

According to Jacob of Sarug, the person of Jesus as the eternal Son of God in the Triune God Head is revealed at the time of His baptism in the river Jordan through the profound voice of the Father and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove.¹⁹ The baptism of Jesus was an irreversible step, marking the beginning of His 'public ministry.' This baptism is a unique event, since it is only here, the Trinity revealed itself for the first time.

Another reason for Jesus' baptism is to sanctify the water, so that through His baptism all waters for the future baptisms can be

15 *FH*, 194-195.

16 *FH*, 175.

17 S. Brock, "Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh," in *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 205 (Rome: 1978), 337.

18 *FH*, 176; Brock, "Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh," 337-338.

19 *FH*, 200; V. Varghese, *Teksod'Denho in the West Syrian Tradition: A Study of the Feast of Epiphany in the Malankara Orthodox Church*, Unpublished Dissertation (Kottayam: SEERI, 2011), 130.

sanctified.²⁰ Jacob demonstrates Jesus as a Live Coal (Is 6:6) going down into the Jordan, thus inflaming and sanctifying the waters. Jacob likened it to the effects of fire. Jacob recalls the vision of Isaiah in which he experienced the live-coal cleansed and sanctified Isaiah's tongue. So, the waters are sanctified by the Live Coal, Jesus Christ.²¹ This fire imagery in turn gives rise to descriptions of the Jordan as a 'furnace.'²²

In the homily on 'the Baptism of Our Lord,' Jacob muses the sanctifying power of the fiery Live Coal. This Live Coal inflamed the waters of the Jordan. By this purification, the Live Coal transferred the holiness to the fountain:

The Holy One came, and reached the waters to descend to be baptised,
 And His fire kindled among the waves and inflamed them.
 The river leaped for joy in the pure womb of baptism,
 Just as John in Elizabeth towards his Lord.
 The waters were inflamed by the lightening of flames
 Because the Living Fire had come for baptism to be washed
 by them.
 It [Living Fire] sets the ages on fire and casts its flame into the
 fountain
 And glow from it kindled the river in holiness (HS I.8: 183,
 13-20).²³

20 McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 31.

21 T. H. Robinson, "Sanctified Waters: Toward a Baptismal Ethic of Creation Care," in *Leaven* 21 (2013), 162. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol21/iss3/10>

22 Brock, "Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh," 327; McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 107-108; McDonnell, "Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan," in *Theological Studies* 56 (1995), 231; Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, 12; HS I: 184.

23 *FH*, 178.

By His descent into the Jordan, Christ placed fire in the waters of baptism. Because of this, fire and water mingled together to purify the catechumen. Jacob explains further:

The ordinary water was mixed with the splendour of holiness
Because from the Holy One mercy had gone out and kindled them.

Coal of Fire came down to be washed among the rushing streams

And sprinkled there the fieriness of its holiness.

The Flame came and took off the garments that it was wearing

And descended to place fire in the waters of baptism.

The heavenly beings marvelled at that ablution of the Flame

When its glorious body was rinsed to sanctify the waters.

The rushing streams of water were mingled with rays of light

And the river had been set on fire with the brightness that dwelt in it (HS I.8: 183, 21-184, 9).²⁴

According to Brock, for Jacob, 'Christ's descent into the Jordan affects not only the water of the Jordan, but all waters: that means, it sanctifies, in sacred time, all baptismal waters (HS I.8: 188):²⁵

The waters have truly seen you, God, and they feared;

The abysses too trembled and the clouds of the air sprinkled water.

The whole nature of the waters perceived that you have visited them:

Seas, abysses, rivers, springs and pools.

They thronged each other to be blessed by your foot steps

Because your great manifestation that came upon them caused them tremble.

You stepped upon Jordan as upon the summit of all seas;

²⁴ FH, 178-179.

And the extremities of the abysses and of the floods trembled at your power.

The whole nature of the waters was stirred by your hovering, Because by your baptism you made everyone worthy of pardon.

The waters of seas, although distant, are not distant Because the power of your holiness has stirred mystically and visited them (HS I.8: 187, 19-188, 10).²⁶

In the West Syriac Liturgy of the Epiphany of our Lord, the priest prays that Christ sanctified all waters in the world by His baptism: ‘O Lord, who sanctified the waters of all fountains and rivers through Your baptism, fill us with Your holiness on this day of Your manifestation.’²⁷

Pierced side of Christ - Golgotha

The pierced side of Christ is a central point in the theology of Jacob. What took place in the Jordan was completely unfolded only at Calvary. Or, in other words, the events of Calvary are only to be understood as the full realisation of what began at His baptism in Jordan. Syriac writers explored the manifold symbolism of Jn 19:34, the piercing of Christ’s side with the lance. Jacob of Sarug also inherits rich typological associations for Jn 19:34 from Ephrem. The flowing out of water and blood from the side of the Saviour on the cross is a symbolic expression of the mystery of baptism through which the Church gives birth to her children, and the mystery of communion through which the Church becomes the body of Christ and every faithful soul becomes a bride. Jacob is much fond of this image. According to Jacob, piercing the side of Christ reminds us

25 Brock, “Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh,” 327; McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 61; McDonnell, “Jesus’ Baptism in the Jordan,” 217.

26 *FH*, 182.

27 *Anduthaksa— Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandrum*, 82-83.

of the birth of first Adam and Eve. Baptism is the new Eve, new mother, and the source of new creation. Baptism is born of the blood and water flowing from the side of Christ. So baptism is a mother who gives life to men (HS II.53: 589; III.79: 299, 11-300, 4; 80: 320, 10-19).²⁸ The pierced side of Christ points both backward and forward, with the theme of birth giving as the common factor. Jacob explains this:

The spear pierced the well of life on Golgotha,
 And rivers went out from it to the whole world.
 Blessed streams went out and watered the entire earth
 That will give for a great long time fruits of slain (HS II.66:
 825, 20-826, 1).

Piercing the side of Christ harkened back to Gen 2:21-22 and the birth of Eve, the mother of all life, from the side of Adam, and to the sealing of Eden by the Cherub with the lance upon the expulsion of Adam and Eve after the fall (Gen 3:24). Jacob of Sarug based his exegesis of the pierced side of Christ on the imagery of ‘fountain.’²⁹ By the issuing forth of ‘water and blood’ baptismal and Eucharistic symbols are introduced. The pierced side and the ‘water and blood’ signify the fountain of the Paradise, symbols of baptism, Eucharist and the Church, of the opening of the Paradise and the re-entry of the exiled Adam by removing the lance that had barred humanity’s return to the Paradise.³⁰ Jacob makes a comparison between the deep sleep of Adam, during which a rib was taken from his side to form Eve, and the death of Christ on the cross, a death that is for Jacob a kind of sleep. From the side of sleeping Christ flows the water and blood,

28 Kollamparampil, *Salvation*, 422.

29 Brock, “Mysteries Hidden in the Side of Christ,” in Sobornost 7:6 (1978), 46-72.

30 FH, 22; S. A. Harvey, “Bride of Blood, Bride of Light: Biblical Women as Images of Church in Jacob of Serug,” in G. A. Kiraz (ed.), *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock* (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008), 177-178.

which constitute ‘the second mother,’ that is, ‘baptism’ (HS I.7: 162, 3-6).³¹ His conception of the pierced side of Christ is essentially ecclesiological. The Church flows from the pierced side.³² In the homily on the Veil of Moses, Jacob vividly explains this image:

The wedding takes place, and the bride enters the chamber:
 Between her and the Groom the veil is no longer required.
 The Groom’s side has been pierced, and from it the bride has
 come out,
 Fulfilling the type provided by Adam and Eve,
 For from the first He knew and depicted
 Adam and Eve in the likeness of the image of His Only Begotten:
 He slept on the Cross as Adam had slept his deep sleep,
 His side was pierced and from it there came forth the daughter
 of light
 Water and blood as an image of divine children
 To the heirs to the Father who loves His Only Begotten.
 Eve in prophecy is the mother of all that lives,
 And what, if not baptism, is the mother of life?
 Adam’s wife bore human bodies subject to death,
 But this virgin bears spiritual beings who live for ever.
 Adam’s side gave birth to a woman who gives birth to mortals,
 While our Lord’s to the Church who gives birth to immortals
 (HS III.79: 299, 9-300, 1).³³

Jacob brings another imagery in comparing Adam and Christ. “And on the sixth day, Adam’s side was split, and Eve came forth. On the sixth day, the side of Christ was rent on the cross, and baptism the new mother of all the living, flowed forth” (HS III.71.7:

31 McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 211.

32 McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan*, 212-213.

33 S. P. Brock (tr.), *Jacob of Sarug’s Homily on the Veil on Moses’ Face* (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press), 48.

147, 19-148, 20).³⁴ Here Jacob gives importance to the sixth day. By comparing both instances, he clarifies that both instances took place on the same day.

Jacob offers three explanations for the flowing out of water and blood from the side of Christ (HS II.53.7: 588, 18-19). According to Guinan,³⁵ (1) John, the apostle who watched the crucifixion of Christ, did not say 'blood and water', but 'water and blood.' Brock notices this in the homilies of Jacob.³⁶ Jacob's use of terms *ܡܝܘܨܘܪܐ* is interesting.³⁷ In most occasions he first used water and then blood in order to show that water which is for baptism, came before the blood which represents the Eucharist. The reversing of the order, with water coming before blood, is more in keeping with the sacramental sequence of baptism and Eucharist. But the text may have been influenced by 1 Jn 5:6: 'This is the one who came by the water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and blood.' The water flowing from Christ showed, first, that He was really dead, while the blood was a sign of life flowing through Him. Together they indicate that our Lord, while being truly dead, kept His life within Him. If he had not died, He could not have entered into Sheol; if He were not still living, He could not have freed Adam. Jacob speaks of this in the homily on 'the Passion.' Here he expounds the death of Christ because He

34 M. D. Guinan, *The Eschatology of James of Sarug*, Unpublished Dissertation (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America, 1972), 116.

35 Guinan, *The Eschatology of James*, 116-120.

36 Brock, "Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh," 330; Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, 88.

37 John Chrysostom, for instance, insists that the water came out first and then blood, since, in the order of things, baptism comes first and then the Eucharist; he then adds, 'It was the soldier, then, who opened Christ's side and dug through the rampart of the holy temple, but I am the one who has found the treasure and gotten the wealth' (Baptism Homily 3:16).

slept on the cross and water flowed from Him, and Christ as alive because blood flowed from Him:

The heavenly Second Adam came forth from the House of Father;

‘(Christ) slept on the Cross, and baptism came forth from Him. The Bridegroom slept, and His side was pierced in His sleep; He gave birth to the Bride, as happened with Eve, in Adam His type.

The stillness of the sleep of death fell upon Him on the Cross, And from Him came forth the mother who gives birth to all spiritual beings:

The Lord of Adam produced the new Eve in His sleep, To serve as mother of the children of Adam, in Eve’s place. Water and blood for the fashioning of spiritual babes Flowed from the side of that Living One who died, in order to bring life to Adam.

That Dead One who was alive showed forth a marvel after His death:

There flowed from Him blood, to indicate that He was alive; There flowed from Him water, to show that He was dead; And blood flowed too, to teach that He was alive, though dead’ (HS II.53.7: 589, 8-590, 1).

Adam slept in the garden, and without intercourse begot Eve, the mother of the living (Gen 3:20), from his side. The pace of the sleep of death fell upon Christ at His crucifixion and the mother who will bear all who are spiritual proceeded from Him. The Lord of Adam produced a new Eve, baptism, in His sleep to take the place of Eve as the mother of the sons of Adam. The mixture of water and blood shows that, through His crucifixion, Christ made the world fruitful, forming new spiritual children for His Father in the waters of baptism (HS II 53.7: 589, 8-17; III.71.6: 120, 3-124, 3). It is the presence of blood that justifies the gift of salvation given to men on earth. Jacob states clearly: it is for this reason that

water is mixed with the blood so that the impure one is purified (HS V.177: 670, 11-12). The proof is that the good thief is baptised in the ‘mixed baptism of blood’ (HS V.177: 670, 13-14). The blood shed on the cross is the source that can erase the sins that have abounded (HS III.76: 239, 18-19).³⁸ In the homily on ‘Three Baptisms,’ Jacob chants:

Christ came and opened up baptism on His Cross
 So that it might be, in the place of Eve, a ‘mother of living beings’ for the world;
 Water and blood, for the fashioning of spiritual children,
 Flowed forth and so baptism became the mother of life
 No previous baptism (i.e. of Moses or of John) ever gave the Holy Spirit,
 Only the baptism which was opened up by the Son of God on the Cross;
 It gives birth to children spiritually with ‘the water and the blood,’
 And, instead of a soul, the Holy Spirit is breathed into them (HS I.7: 162, 3-10).³⁹

In Num 20:1-11 we read Moses had smitten the rock in the desert with his staff and provided flowing water to countless hosts according to the great mystery. On Golgotha, the soldier struck the side of Christ with his spear, and a spring flowed out, giving life to all (HS II.48: 336, 3-6; 53.7: 588, 20-589, 7). The spear made a new well (Num 21:16-18) (HS I.18: 445, 5), which became a Gihon, a fountain of Eden sending rivers of life out into the four quarters of the world (HS II.46: 302, 14-15; 66: 823, 16f; III.91: 532, 2-3). By drinking water from this source, the dead receive life. It also frees them from the captivity and washes away the dust of their captivity (HS I.17: 425, 12; II.35: 93, 3-6; 44: 259, 22; III.87: 429, 12-16, 430, 2-3; 91: 531, 17-18; IV.130: 686, 5-6). That is to say, Christ is

38 T. Bou Mansour, *La Théologie de Jacques de Saroug*, Vol. 2 (Kaslik-Libanon: L’Université Saint-Esprit, 2000), 92.

39 Tr. Brock.

the fountain which issues forth life. For by the staff and lance He was torn open and watered the earth. On Golgotha, new children were generated for the Father without sexual intercourse, but by the passion of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ In the homily on ‘the Vigil of Passion Week,’ Jacob speaks about piercing the side of Christ:

The crucifiers stood and cast the spear upon the beautiful one;
And the water and blood flushed out and flowed from the side
of Him.

A new well was opened on Golgotha;
This is that blessed fountain of Eden,
Which divided itself up as a great river (flowing) towards the
four quarters,
So that the whole of afflicted creation might drink from it (HS
II.53.7: 588, 18-589, 3).

Church’s origin from Christ is well explained by Jacob, which is remembered at the ninth hour of the Good Friday liturgical celebration of Antiochene tradition: ‘The heavenly Second Adam came from the dwelling place of His Father, and died on the cross. Out of Him baptism came. The bridegroom lay down and slept. His side was opened and the bride was born as was Eve from Adam. The serenity of the sleep of death came upon Him through the cross, and out of Him came out the mother of all spirits. Through His death, the master of Adam begot new Eve to be the parent of all men instead of Eve who was bitten by the serpent.’⁴¹ Jacob is convinced that the death of Christ on the cross is required in order to erase the document signed by Eve in Eden. The divine grace, which can be achieved through the baptism, was recovered by the cross (HS II.53: 562, 12 ff).⁴²

40 T. Jansma, “L’Hexaméron de Jacques de Sarûg,” in *L’Orient Syrien* 4 (Paris:1959), 36.

41 See *Hashaganangal – Syro-Malankara Catholic Church*, Trivandrum.

42 *T. Bou Mansour, La Théologie de Jacques de Saroug*, Vol. 1 (Kaslik-Libanon: L’Université Saint-Esprit, 1993), 105.

Jesus' Ascension – Mount of Olives

On the fortieth day after His resurrection, Christ came to the Mount of Olives with His apostles, the sons of the mystery, the Church. In the Syriac tradition, Mount of Olives is considered to be the symbol of anointing and the source of olive oil. Here too we can discern a mystery(ܐܘܢܝܘܬܐ). The Mount of Olives was a sign of abundant oil for anointing.⁴³ The oil is produced from the olives for anointing. Here the oil comes from Christ who is the *Messiah* (ܡܫܝܚܐ). Jacob uses a Syriac word-play, which has an important role here. Christ (ܡܫܝܚܐ) supplied the oil (ܝܠܐ) for baptism. From ܡܫܝܚܐ comes ܡܫܝܚܐ. That means, Christ is the source of oil for anointing.⁴⁴

And to the Mountain of Olives He gathered the sons of His mercy,
 Because the Mountain of Olives too is a symbol of anointing,
 For from the Mountain of Olives there shall be oil for Baptism;
 And from it Christ was to be raised up to the place of His Father.
 The treasure of oil is on the Mountain of Olives for anointing;
 Because Christ too ascended from it towards His Father.
 And on account of this, towards that mountain itself He gathered them
 To supply them with the oil for the signing of the whole earth.
 To the Mountain of Olives He gathered the Church for which He had died
 So that she might see Him there as He was taken up to His exalted place.
 The great Saviour effected His way and completed His deed,
 And He set off to go, to send the riches to the bride whom He had brought (there) (HSBr VI.9: 204, 9-20).⁴⁵

43 See Guinan, *The Eschatology of James*, 146.

44 See Kollamparampil, *Salvation*, 188.

45 FH, 338. S.P. Brock, *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug* (Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis), Vol. 6 (Piscataway

Christ commanded the apostles before His ascension: “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Jacob introduces this Matthean formula:

He taught them to baptise the peoples in the name of the Father;
And His Son and the Holy Spirit without divisions (HS V.173:
603, 13-14).

Jesus then sent them out into the world as the sun sends out its rays.⁴⁶ From the very moment of creation, the world existed through the Trinity. Christ’s last commandment to the apostles was to baptise the people in the name of the Trinity. It was through the Trinity that the world came into being and now the Father guards and the Son makes atonement and the Holy Spirit sanctifies. The ministry of the apostles starts from Christ, who is the haven of mysteries and treasures. The risen Lord continues His work through the apostles. At the Mount of Olives Christ gave the apostles the great sign of the Trinity for redemption and the oil for signing (HSBr VI.9: 206, 1-8; 207, 4-7). Thus He made them capable to execute His mission. Jacob puts this as follows in his homily on ‘the Ascension.’⁴⁷

He commanded them; proceed forth, go, make disciples and
baptise the peoples,
In the name of the Father and in the name of the Son and in the
name of the Spirit.
The great sign of the Trinity which has no pass-over
He gave to the apostles, so that by it the peoples of the earth
might be signed.
From the Mount of Olives He gave the Trinity and the oil;

NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006) [References to these volumes are indicated with the abbreviation HSB r VI number of the homily in this volume: page no., line(s)].

46 See Guinan, *The Eschatology of James*, 147.

47 See Kollamparampil, *Salvation*, 189.

Oil for the signing and the Trinity for redemption (HSBr VI.9: 207, 2-7).⁴⁸

In another homily, Jacob puts words in the mouth of the apostles showing how Jesus commanded them to baptise:

And He gave us peace and enlightened our eyes which were dark;

He gave authority to the apostleship while saying,

‘Go, set out, turn the peoples of the earth to repentance.

Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’ (HSBr VI.13: 279, 1-4).

In the homily on the ‘Sinful Woman’ Jacob clarifies that the oil comes from the ‘Great Tree of Life.’ The oil takes its power from and acquires its fragrance and intensity from it (HS II.51: 423). Jacob recalls Isaiah’s prophecy of calling Messiah the root (Is 53:2). It is upon this Root of Life, the oil receives the excellent fragrance. The Son of God from the Virgin is the Root of Life from the dry land. Jacob makes it clear that without the oil and the Trinity, the baptism cannot be conferred. If the baptism was instituted only on the occasions of baptism of Christ and crucifixion, then what would be the purpose of oil, ‘in the name of Trinity’ and ‘the commandment to baptise all the people’, which were given by Christ Himself, the Second One in the Trinity!

Pentecost – Upper Room

According to Brock, ‘if the event of Jesus’ baptism in the river Jordan is considered as the institution of Christian baptism, the feast of Pentecost, in which the Church remembers the descent of the Holy Spirit to the whole Church, is celebrated as the baptism of the Church.’⁴⁹ As Kollamparampil points, the institution of baptism has its culmination in sacred time at the event of Pentecost. With regard

48 *FH*, 341.

49 See Varghese, *Teksod’Denho in the West Syrian Tradition*, 250.

to the institution of baptism Jacob finds a network of events in Christ's life which infuse meaning into each other. "These start with His conception in the womb of the virgin Mary and goes on till the coming of the promised Holy Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost where the baptism in Fire and Spirit came into full manifestation."⁵⁰ The Paschal mystery of passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus culminates in the sending of the Holy Spirit by the Father at the request of His Son on the apostles. The Acts of the Apostles witness that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place on the day of Pentecost as He came upon the apostles. The apostles received baptism of the fire and Spirit. Jacob in his homily on 'the Pentecost' speaks about the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles:

You [Upper Room] became like an armoury to the Apostles
and they clothed from you

The power of the Spirit to tread under foot the wild beings.

From you the whole earth which was darkness shone forth;

For like flashes of light the Apostles filled the earth.

You, Upper Room, became a possessor of treasures for the
peoples,

And the regions that were in need became enriched by you.

The riches of the Father were distributed in you to the whole
world:

Who were lacking had their needs filled by you.

That promise of Baptism was fulfilled in you,

Because all the disciples were baptised in you in the Holy Spirit
and fire (HS II.58: 679, 3-12).⁵¹

Jacob teaches us that the promise of baptism was fulfilled in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost (ܐܘܪܫܠܝܡ ܘܡܫܝܚܝܢ ܘܡܫܝܚܝܢ ܘܡܫܝܚܝܢ) (HS II.58: 679, 11). The root of the verb *eštaphel* ܐܫܬܦܗܠ. Here this term has the meaning to be

50 Kollamparampil, *Salvation*, 433.

51 *FH*, 361-362.

fulfilled, to be fully formed, and to be perfected in baptism.⁵² From Jacob' use of this term, it is evident that Jacob demonstrates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost as one of different occasions of the institution of baptism. After a few lines, Jacob again asserts that the baptism is fulfilled in the Upper Room:

The river Jordan is incomparable to your baptism,
 Because yours is of fire, whereas it was of water: How should
 I call you?
 John the Baptist baptised in water, it was said.
 But indeed you shall be baptised in the Holy Spirit.
 That promise of baptism was fulfilled in you,
 Because fire and Spirit were given to the sons of light in you
 (HS II.58: 679, 19-680, 3).⁵³

In the above text, Jacob uses the verb *ethpaal* ܥܬܦܐܠ to denote that the institution of baptism was fulfilled in the Upper Room. The root verb is ܦܐܠ. In its *paal* form, the verb has the meaning to make an end, to finish, to fulfil a promise and to conclude. And in its *ethpaal* form, this verb has the meaning to be brought to an end, to be completed and to be finished.⁵⁴ Thus, according to Jacob, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost is also an instance of the institution of baptism and the culmination.

When explaining the feast of Pentecost, Jacob relates the new wine with the blood which flowed from the side of the Son of God, and it is this wine which caused the disciples to appear as though drunk at Pentecost. Jacob is very keen in portraying his themes. He does not want to leave any subject unattended. Thus, he goes back to the OT to bring together the scattered people with different languages at Babel (Gen 11:6-9) and that of the divided tongues and the gift of the languages conferred on in the Upper Room at the

52 See J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1979), 274.

53 *FH*, 362.

54 See Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 581.

coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). The promise of the baptism in Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11) became fulfilled by providing the apostolic group with the armour of the Spirit (HS II.58: 679, 11-680, 3; 687, 7-688, 5).

The Holy Spirit was given in the form of fire to His disciples,
 The sound of the Spirit that taught sounds in all tongues.
 The skilled Master granted a teaching to His disciples
 In the fire and Spirit and perfected them since they were
 imperfect
 He clothed them with the armour of fire with the Spirit who
 descended
 And taught them a new speech with great wonder (HS II.58:
 687, 7-12).⁵⁵

After the disciples received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their baptism became perfect. Thus they received the light:

They became lamps that were set up to (give) light:
 They had not yet received light from the heights,
 But when they were gathered in the Upper Room the fire blazed
 forth
 And it kindled in them and the world was illumined by their
 rays of light.
 Tongues of flames reached to each one of them
 And they were kindled like lamps by the light from him.
 Fire kindled as in lamps of choice gold
 And the peoples enkindled and enlightened by their rays (HS
 II.58: 687, 17-688, 3).⁵⁶

Pentecost is indeed itself a 'baptism in the Holy Spirit and in the fire' for the disciples.⁵⁷ The confusion at Babel was overcome

⁵⁵ FH,368.

⁵⁶ FH,368.

⁵⁷ See Brock, "Baptismal Themes in the Writings of Jacob of Serugh," 331.

and the promise at the Jordan too became realized on the day of Pentecost in the Upper Room by the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Fire. In the Upper Room, the Son was also in action together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.⁵⁸ Tongues of living fire went forth from the Father and settled on the apostles. They were not burned by the flames but enlightened, and began to speak in all different languages.⁵⁹ The term 'fountain' is frequently used by Jacob to describe the baptismal water. Jacob explains how the Upper Room became a fountain gushing forth living waters:⁶⁰

Twelve streams were distributed from the Upper Room
 And they made the earth an Eden of spiritual trees.
 A boundless fountain had descended from the Father,
 And they partook of it and went out to give drink to the whole
 world.

The Upper Room became a spring that sheds forth rivers
 And it bursts forth in strong currents abundantly to all regions.
 The Upper Room became like an armoury of the great king
 And from it all his labourers who were naked clothed themselves.
 The Upper Room became the great Babel of all tongues
 And all peoples heard from it (in) their own tongues.

The Upper Room became the depth that pours forth all fountains
 And it made pools in the regions of dry places (HS II.58: 688,
 6-17).⁶¹

Conclusion

What Christ began at Jordan, and continued through Golgotha and Mount Olives, reached its culmination in the Upper Room with the coming of the Holy Spirit. According to Jacob of Sarug, Christian baptism has its origin in different instances such as baptism of Christ,

58 See Kollamparampil, *Salvation*, 356-357.

59 See Guinan, *The Eschatology of James*, 149.

60 See Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, 136.

61 *FH*, 369.

piercing the side of Christ, ascension of Christ on Mount Olives and the coming of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room. The sacrament of baptism was instituted by Christ on four stages by bringing together them into one sacrament. 1. At Jordan, the natural water is sanctified for the baptism and it is open for everyone, but not given to anybody. 2. On the cross, when the side of Christ is opened, the Living Water flowed from there and it mingled with the natural water which was sanctified at Jordan. And the good thief is baptised in this living water. 3. Jesus gave the apostles both the commandment and the oil to baptise everyone on the Mount of Olives. 4. Baptism is first given to the apostles in the fire and Spirit in the Upper Room on the advent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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PHILOXENUS **(Excerpt on Prayer)**

Anyone who prays should pray having his heart in touch with his mouth and his mind with his lips. If, however, he bows down and stretches out his hands in prayer while his heart is day-dreaming somewhere else, then he is like the cedars which storms bend down and flatten out. Or if his lips are eagerly murmuring but his mind is somewhere outside the monastery, then this resembles the case of doors being buffeted by the winds, which no one can open or shut.

For anyone who stands in prayer a discerning compassion is required. Tears of compunction are also beneficial. He also requires a recollected mind. If he has any grudge against any of his fellows, he should wash this away from his heart. And he should pray in silence, his lips murmuring with awareness. And when he puts the seal on his prayer, let him stop and remain still in silence. He should not occupy himself with empty talk or with unedifying chatter; rather, he should remain in silence and awareness. Then his prayer will be fully accepted by him who receives prayers and pure thoughts.

(The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life, p 1128).

BOOK REVIEW

I

Johannes von Dalyatha: Geistliche Reden. Einleitung und Übersetzung von Matthias Binder. Paradies der Väter - Schriften syrischer Mystiker, hrsg. von S'chi-Archimandrit Gabriel Bunge, Grigory Kessel und Gerd Vatter. Beuron Kunstverlag. Beuron 2019. ISBN 978-3-87071-369-0. 174 pp.

Matthias Binder explains his choice of translating Syriac mamla in his title of the book with "Rede" and provides us at the same time with the various nuances of this word. (pp. 10f.). In English we have chosen the rendering "treatise" (Spiritual Treatises) since we deal here not only with what can be characterized as topics of conversation, narratives and sermons, but with topics of concern for the author that he wants to present in a shorter or longer way.

The title of the work, as it appears in the MSS, is "Buch eines Alten, eines Grossen, Vollkommenen und Vollandeten, mit geistlicher Rede über überirdische Dinge. Geeignet für Mönche, die enthaltsam und in Ruhe leben und in Praxis und Mühsal der Einsamkeit erfahren und von allen menschlichen Geschäften und Begegnungen zurückgezogen sind, und von fleischlicher Bindung." (p. 28). ["The book of an elder, a great one, perfect and completed, with spiritual treatise of super terrestrial things. Suited for monks who live in abstinence (moderation) and quietness and in the praxis and trouble (pains) of solitude learn and find their experiences and who have retreated from all human businesses and meetings, and from corporal

binding"]. The author is here mentioned anonymously. He is, however, revealed at the end of the collection. (p. 168).

In the foreword also the following second title is mentioned: "Rede eines der Heiligen, der auf dem Berg wohnte und an seinen Bruder im Kloster schrieb" ("Treatise of one of the holy men who lived on the mountain and who wrote to his brother in the monastery") (p. 30). From this it is clear that the treatises originally were meant for his brother. "Ein Bruder bat ihn, zu den Fragen des mystischen Wegs seine Erfahrungen weiterzugeben. Aus seinen Antworten entstand dieses Buch, das vielen Menschen Anleitung gab für ihren eigenen Weg, und immer noch kann. Es geht darin um Stillwerden und Freiwerden, um Sehen und Staunen, und das Einswerden mit Gott." (book cover). This brother has then gathered them, kept them and later distributed them (p. 10f).

The mystic John of Dalyatha was an eremite of the 8th Cent. living in the mountains of Qardu in the border region of Iraq and Turkey (p. 9 and p. 174). We do not know the exact dates of his life (p. 13). He was, however, highly esteemed as an "Elder", as a learned and experienced person and as a mentor in spiritual things. Everywhere in Eastern Christianity we meet these elders who are called Saba in Syriac, Geron in Greek and Starez in Russian. Such a spiritual guide or companion recommended others to follow his own praxis. One sought a companion who was trustworthy and recognized him by that he had found peace with himself and thereby did not trouble others (p. 11).

In the MSS we find two forewords and two epilogues to the treatises. This demonstrates that the author found the need of justifying the contents of his writings. (p. 4). The mystic John of Dalyatha was controversial. At times he was forbidden by his own church, and his church did not belong to the churches that accepted the council of Chalcedon (p. 23). He belonged to the Church of the East, the church that originated in the Persian Empire, i.e. outside the Roman and Byzantine Empires. His teachings were condemned

by a synod under the Catholicos - Patriarch Timotheos I (786 or 790). By then he was probably already dead. Later he was rehabilitated under the new head of the church Ischo' Bar Nun (823) (p. 13). Matthias Binder finds that his choice to become abbot, the collection of his writings and their transmission in spite of being prohibited and even the theological controversy about his person prove his importance already at his own time (p. 13 = *ibid*).

The Spiritual Treatises of John of Dalyatha deal generally with a specific theme or topic, e.g. the power of the angels, the conduct of particular demons or criticism of other scholars (p. 12) and we find many reports on mystical experiences (pp. 11f). He provides surveys or outlines of information on the stages of the practices or exercises and the experiences of the body, soul and spirit (Treatise 6), and he distinguishes between the five outer and inner "Sinne" (Treatise 12). (p. 18). We hear about the two forms of love and the development from the one to the other (Treatise 28) (p. 16f). "Er gibt besonders detailliert die geistigen und psychischen, ja manchmal leiblichen Vorgänge während des mystischen Schauens wieder, die Schwierigkeiten und die Glückerlebnisse." (p. 9). He presents instructions and advices for preparation and meditation. He describes the experiences with the divine mystery by means of images, always new images, such as images of diving into the sea and the play of the waves, of the shining face in front of light, of the taste of honey and the fragrance or odour of Moschus, of Mary's family in which he snuggles or creeps to snatch the child Jesus (p.9). He gives often account of or refers to what he has heard from other mystics. Only in the Spiritual Treatises there are about forty different statements from monks he has talked to. These are often short messages, but three of them are longer reports or advices (Treatise 6, 31-42 = pp. 65-71; 21, 27-34 = pp. 125-128; 26,1-5 = pp. 144-146). Binder comments that it is possible that he cites himself, but the multitude of these points to that they must be accounts from others (p. 9 = *ibid*).

This monograph by Matthias Binder with introduction and translation of the spiritual treatises of Johannes von Dalyatha has a simple structure: Table of contents (p. 5); Contents where the titles of the various twenty nine treatises are given: "Inhalt - Titel der Geistlichen Reden" (pp. 6f); Keeping silent or talking - "Hinführung: Schweigen und Reden" (pp.9-13); Concepts and world of thought by John - "Zu Begrifflichkeit und Gedankenwelt des Johannes" (pp. 13-26); The basis of this translation (p. 26f); German translation of the 29 treatises (pp. 32-165) with the two forewords (p. 28f and 30f) and two epilogues of the collection (p. 166 and pp. 167f).

These texts of the spiritual treatises of Johannes von Dalyatha have partly never been edited before.

In another monograph Matthias Binder provides us with an introduction and German translation of the letters of John of Dalyatha [Matthias Binder (transl.): Briefe. Einleitung und Übersetzung von Matthias Binder. Hrsg. von Gabriel Bunge, Grigory Kessel, Gerd Vatter. Beuronener Kunstverlag. Beuron 2019. ISBN 978-3-87071-368-3. 144 pp.]. This monograph by Binder on the letters of John of Dalyatha with its introduction and translation represents the first German translation of these writings. "In diesen erstmals ins Deutsche übersetzte Schriften lässt er uns an seinem Alltag teilhaben, an der Landschaft, die ihn umgab, an den Fragen, die ihn bewegten. Welche Hoffnung hatte er, wie ging er mit Rückschlägen um? Was für ein Verhältnis hatte er zu seinen Meistern und zu seinen Schülern? Und vor allem: Wie gestaltete er seinen mystischen Weg zu Gott? Hier finden sich Einsichten für Menschen auf der Suche, auch dann, wenn sie nicht selbst den Weg des Eremit gehen." (Johannes von Dalyatha: Geistliche Reden. Einleitung und Übersetzung von Matthias Binder, p. 174).

II

Manolis Papoutsakis: *Vicarious Kingship: A Theme in Syriac Political Theology in Late Antiquity*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 100. Eds.: Christoph Marksches (Berlin), Martin Wallraff (München) and Christian Wildberg (Princeton). Mohr Siebeck. Tübingen 2017. ISBN 978-3-16-153929-9. ISSN 1436-3003. 227 pp.

The publisher Mohr Siebeck presents us here for a monograph in *Syriac Studies*. This is one of the very few books published by this firm in the field of *Syriac Studies* till now, as far as I can see. Mohr Siebeck wants to expand also into the region of Asia and South East Asia.

As he explains in the acknowledgements, Manolis Papoutsakis, started his work on this monograph while being a research member at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 2008-2009. He continued intensively during a sabbatical in Athens (2010-2011). It evolved as a subsidiary piece of research while he was working on a book on Jacob of Serugh and a monograph on syriani^te of Romanos the Melode.

The author Manolis Papoutsakis has his background with a BA in Classics from Athens 1990, BA in Hebrew from University College of London 1994 and a DPhil from Oxford in 2000 (Wolfson College). He was lecturer (2002, 2003-2008) and Assistant Professor in Syriac and Classical Armenian, Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University 2009-2016. He was Fellow, Dumbarton Oaks 2002-2003 and Member of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton 2008-2009. He was Visiting Student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, 1992-1993. Currently he is a Research Fellow in the Manuscripts Department, National Library of Greece, Athens. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on Jacob of Serugh, *The Homily on the Deluge (11,1-210): Introduction, Translation and detailed Commentary* (Oxon 2000).

With his monograph on *Vicarious Kingship* the author wants to deliberate on the idea "that the ruler on earth functions as the administrative representative of God in heaven" (Introduction, p. 1). Although this "is hardly an invention of Syriac writers in Late Antiquity. It appears, however, that, within the Christian tradition, Syriac poets and homilists between the fourth and sixth centuries - the period covered in this study - are the first to introduce the concept of "vicarious kingship" into a carefully thought-out and consistent eschatological pattern." (Ibid.).

The author divides his work into three main chapters: I. The vicarious kingship of David (pp. 7-69); II. Towards a historicization of biblical exegesis (pp. 71-137); III. The vicarious kingship of Adam (pp. 139-189). He provides us with an introduction (pp. 1-6) as well as a Conclusion (pp. 191-195). At the end we find an Appendix on "Jacob of Serugh, Homily on Daniel 4: JSB 4:538: 14-541:21." (pp. 197-201) as well as a section on "Bibliography and Abbreviations" (pp. 203-220).

In Chapter I (pp. 7-69) the author starts "his exploration from the latter end of the designated period" with Jacob of Serugh (d. 521) "introducing the theme of the vicarious kingship of Adam when he elaborates on Gen 1:26-27 in his verse-homily on Tamar (Gen 38), II. 41-46." The author asks: "Why should this fifth / sixth century homilist dwell upon the creation and appointment of Adam specifically as "vicarious king" in a composition on a distinctly messianic theme" (Introduction, p. 1). In his monograph the author attempts to "to answer this basic question, working his way back to the fourth-century masters Ephrem (died 373) and Aphrahat (mid fourth century), and even to the Peshitta Old Testament." (Ibid.).

The author presents his argument through the three main chapters mentioned above. His aim with Chapter I, Section 1 on "Messianic language in JSTamar 45-46?? (pp. 7-13), "is to demonstrate that Ephrem's interpretation of Gen 49:10a-b, a key

segment of the eschatological oracle concerning Judah (Ge 49:8-12), provides the basic framework according to which JSTamar 45-46 is formulated. In this couplet, Jacob [Jacob of Serugh] carefully models the motif of the creation of Adam that he might serve as a vicarious king until Christ the King comes on the sharp contrast between David (and the Davidic kings), on the one hand, and Christ the King, on the other, which Ephrem reads into Gen 49:10a-b. [n 1: "Throughout this study, I use the Christianizing rendering "Christ the King" for the phrase *malk? mši??*, discussed in Chapter 1. However, one should not lose sight of the Jewish background of this title ("The King Messiah"), where the author refers to Sebastian Brock: "Two Editions of a New Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel: A Review Article," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 48/49 (2005/2006), pp. 7-18, at 16.] Indeed, the Jacobean conception is satisfactorily explained only against the backdrop of a set of ideas regarding the Davidic kingship as developed in the 360s with continual reference to Gen 49:10a-b.?? (Ibid. The full name of Jacob of Serugh is added by the undersigned.) Here "the sharp polarity which Ephrem reads into Gen 49:10a-b is clearly brought out." In Chapter I, Section 2 on "Peshitta Jer 33:14-26: The drawing of a contrast and the promise of a covenant (pp. 14-18) "the contrast between David (and the Davidic kingship), on the one hand, and Christ the King, on the other, is illuminated through comparison with Peshitta Jer 33:14-26, where a similar tension, already present in the Hebrew text, is heightened by the Syriac translator." (Ibid., p. 2.).

In Chapter I, Section 3 on "Gen 49:8b. The grant of land and the diction of its interpretation" (pp. 18-29) the author explains how Jer 33:14-26 "is systematically piled upon Gen 49:10a-b both in Jewish and in Christian exegesis." (Ibid.). In Chapter I, Section 2, 3 and 4 [on "Peshitta Jer 33:14-26: The drawing of a contrast and the promise of a covenant" (Section 2, pp. 14-18), "Gen 49:8b: The grant of land and the diction of

the its interpretation" (Section 3, pp. 18-20), and "Gen 49:10a: The grant of dynasty and the diction of its interpretation" (Section 4, pp. 20-24], the author argues that comparing the two passages Jer 33:14-26 and Gen 49:10a-b "proves especially fruitful for, in the process, Peshitta Gen 49:10a-b emerges as a covenantal statement whose unconditionality Ephrem tries to mitigate." (Ibid.).

"In Ephrem's thinking, the "vicarious kings" (n??ray dukkt?) who made up the dynasty which God promised to David (cf. Peshitta Gen 49:10a) relate to Christ the King, according to the exegetically augmented form of Peshitta Gen 49:10b, in exactly the same manner as that in which the "promised land" (cf. Hebrews 11:9) relates to "heavenly Jerusalem (cf. Hebrews 11:16 and 12:22). In both well-balanced and contrastive pairs, i. e. the one of "promised land" versus "heavenly Jerusalem" and the other of "vicarious kings" versus "Christ the King", we are dealing, in Ephrem's own word, with the relationship between an "image," or "likeness" (dumy?), and its "prototype," or "reality" (qušt?)." (Ibid. p. 2.). In Chapter I, Section 5 and 6, the author explores the "the iconology" of the latter pair by explaining "how Ephrem weaves Hebrews 11:8-16 into his interpretation of Gen 15. The Abrahamic covenant regarding "land" is of the same type as the Davidic covenant regarding "dynasty", and Ephrem meticulously brings out its promissory character in his exposition of Gen 15 in Comm Gen." (Ibid.).

In Chapter I, Section 7, the author continues by translating, annotating and discussing Aphrahat's Demonstrations V, 23-24 ("On the Wars"), "a notoriously difficult text, where Aphrahat uses the term n??ar malkut? ("keeper of the Kingdom") and related diction as he weaves Gen 49:10 into his argument about the invincibility of the Constantinian empire in the face of an impending Sassanian assault." (Ibid pp. 2f.)

The author writes: "It is my contention that Ephrem is aware

of the argument in Dem V, 23-24 and that he ingeniously adapts details of it so that they might fit his own purpose." (Ibid., p.3.). He continues: "In Dem V, 23-24, Aphrahat presupposes a tradition of apologetics which goes back to the second century and discovers, in the narrative of the census (cf. Luke 2:1-7), the beginning of a harmonious co-existence between the Roman empire and the Kingdom of God. However, he does not present that relationship with reference to iconology, surely implicit in the apologetics built on the Lukan account. Rather than working with the prototype-versus-image scheme, which Ephrem adopts in HNat XVIII, 1-3, Aphrahat seeks to describe the polarity between the Kingdom of God and the Roman empire in terms of contemporary international relations, which would have made perfect sense to his immediate readership (in Dem V, it is the impending military confrontation between the Romans and the Sassanians that the controversialist attempts to place in salvation history). The shift from the representation of that polarity as attested in Dem V to an advanced iconology in the writings of Ephrem leads to the sharpening and adaptation of *nʿar malkutʿ* ("keeper of the Kingdom"), a quasi-mythological conception, to *nʿar dukktʿ* (cf. ??????????), surely evoking technical administrative language, in elaborations on Gen 49:10a-b. Again, this development is linked to the change of meaning which *malkutʿ* apparently undergoes in those contexts which Gen 49:10b, especially in its expanded version ("until there comes He to whom *malkutʿ* belongs), determines exegetically. In such contexts, *malkutʿ* for Aphrahat appears primarily to mean "kingdom," the actual realm, be it heavenly or earthly. For Ephrem, by contrast, it primarily denotes "kingship," the imperial office, either that of Christ the King or that of the Roman emperors, His vicarii. Although I do not deny the occasional ambiguity of *malkutʿ*, there is, I believe, a difference in the manner in which these two authors use the term in this particular context." (Ibid.).

From his dealings in Chapter I, Section 1-7 (pp. 7-55), the author draws the following conclusions: "a.) that the Jacobean motif of Adam's creation and appointment as "vicarious king" is satisfactorily explained only against the background of Ephrem's thinking on the Davidic kingship with reference to Gen 49:10a-b; b.) that the piling of Jer 33:14-26 upon Gen 49:10a-b has not only sharpened the contrast inherent in the oracular formulation of the latter passage, but it has also revealed its character, in the Peshitta, as a statement of "grant" ideology; c.) that the "vicarious kings" (n??ray dukk??) who made up the dynasty which God promised to David (cf. Gen 49:10a) relate to Christ the King (cf. Gen 49:10b) in exactly the same manner as that in which the "promised land" (cf. Hebrews 11:9) relates to "heavenly Jerusalem" (cf. Hebrews 12:22); and d) that Dem V, 23-24 is at the back of Ephrem's mind as he works out his own pattern according to which human kingship relates for the Kingship of Christ." (Ibid.).

In Chapter I, Section 8 (pp. 56-69), the author returns to Ephrem's Commentary on Genesis 111:29-114:11 on Gen 49:8-11 as "a major source with reference to which the argument has been shaped in the previous sections." (Ibid.) and provides us with a full translation as well as annotation and discussion. What interests the author most "is the manner in which Ephrem segments the Blessing of Judah in such a way as to create a sense of "historical" depth, or development, which should prove useful when ultimately he proceeds to invest Peshitta Gen 49:10a-b with the tension present at Peshitta Jer 33:14-21." (Ibid., p. 4).

In Chapter II (pp. 71-137) on "Towards a historicization of biblical exegesis" the author attempts "to explain how in the 360s, during and after the short reign of emperor Julian "the Apostate" (died 363), Ephrem piles the Davidic dynasty upon the Constantine's and systematically reinforces the covenantal character of Peshitta Gen 49:10a-b at the same time as he mitigates its unconditionality." The author claims that Ephrem is able to do so by using: a.) "language

of "succession" (yubb? l? = äéääĩ÷Ð), by which the implications of the formula l? ne?nad ("[the sceptre] will not depart") at Gen 49:10a are reaffirmed; b.) the concept of vicarious kingship (cf. n??ar dukkt?, a calque of ôiðîðçñçðò = vicarious), already discussed in Chapter I, but here explored in greater detail; c.) the theme of the fealty of the "vassal" to the "suzerain," who contracts the promissory covenant with him in reward for that proven virtue, as well as the concurrent theme of the contrast between fealty (characteristic of the exemplary "vassal") and lack thereof (characteristic of an adversary of that "vassal"). (Ibid., p. 4.).

Here the author suggests that "Ephrem puts together such an enriched version of Gen 49:10a-b for highly polemical purposes, exploiting it in his writings against Julian "the Apostate," an epithet, first used by Gregory of Nazianus, which has been only vaguely understood and is here clarified."(Ibid.).

In the final Chapter III (pp. 139-189) on "The vicarious kingship of Adam" the author builds on the discussion in the previous two chapters. He returns to the passage by which he opened his study: JSTamar 45-46. He attempts "to explain how, in his verse-homily On Tamar (Gen 38), a composition on a distinctly messianic theme, Jacob of Serugh comes to adopt fourth-century use of the technical administrative term n??ar dukkt?, incorporated by Ephrem into multiple recasting of Gen 49:10a-b and long treated as a close synonym of dymy? (// dmut?, "likeness" = ?alm?, "image"), in order to describe Adam upon his creation in the "image" and "likeness" of God". (Ibid.).

Manolis Papoutsakis presents us for a detailed description of the exegetical steps by which early Syriac scholars such as Ephrem, Aphrahat and Jacob of Serugh reached their thoughts and conclusions about political power. The fundamental source was the Bible. The monograph of Manolis Papoutsakis on Vicarious Kingship contains a lot of valuable information on a central theme, especially

from the times of early Syriac Christianity. It is well structured [in spite of the comment above] and appears elegant with the chosen layout, typeface and paper - as always with productions from the Publisher Mohr Siebeck. It is recommended for a wider readership.

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