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MÖRĀN 'ETHŌ

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SEBASTIAN P. BROCK

BURIAL SERVICE FOR NUNS



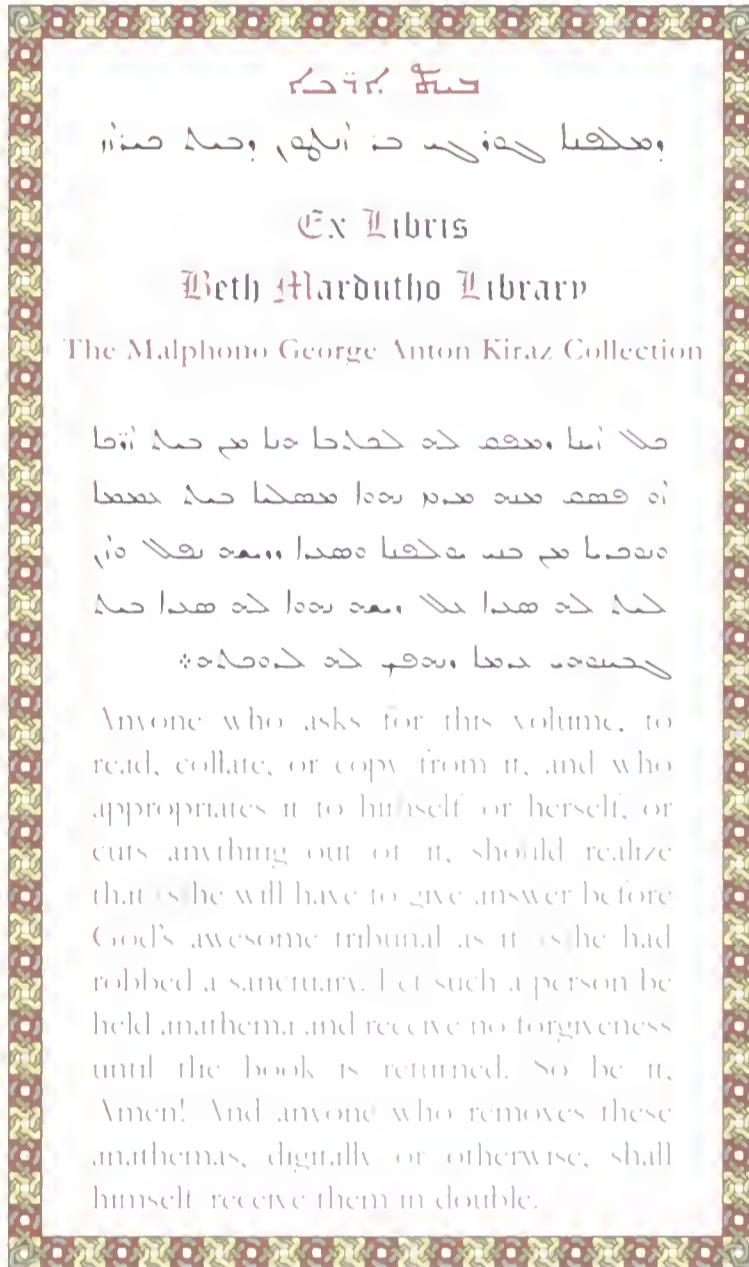
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1992





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BURIAL SERVICE FOR NUNS

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Syriac Text with Translation

Sebastian P. Brock
(Oxford)

St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI)
Baker Hill, Kottayam - 686 001
Kerala, India
1992

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(Syriac text with translation)

By

Sebastian P. Brock (Oxford)

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1911

BURIAL SERVICE FOR NUNS

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1980

The West Syrian Burial Service for Nuns

A search through the various Catalogues of Syriac manuscripts in libraries throughout the world reveals the existence of several old manuscripts, and many more recent ones, which contain the West Syrian funeral rites for the various ranks of clergy, for monks, and for both lay men and lay women. None of these manuscripts, however, preserves any special funeral service for nuns. When I enquired of Malfono Isa Gülten, of the Monastery of Mar Gabriel in Tur Abdin (SE Turkey), whether he knew of any manuscript in Tur 'Abdin containing the funeral service for nuns, he at first replied that he was unable to locate any manuscript. Some months later, however, Malfono Isa informed me that he had at last been able to discover a manuscript, and he most kindly sent me a xerox copy of the text. The manuscript in question had been copied in 1980 by the priest Joseph, presumably in Tur Abdin.

The rite has the title "Order for the burial of *bnāt qyāmā'*, or, the burial of nuns", and it contains six 'services' (*teshmshata*), followed by biblical lections and a further *madrāshā* and prayers.

1. In modern usage a *bnat qyama* is the wife or widow of a priest.

The text of this unique manuscript of the burial service for nuns is translated below in full, apart from the biblical lections, for which only the references have been given; (an exception has been made for the passage from Bensira, since this is a mosaic of different verses). For convenience of reference, section numbers for each service have been added. Words in square brackets have been added to some rubrics by way of explanation.

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First Service

Order for the burial of *bnāt qyāmā*, or the burial of nuns [FIRST SERVICE]

1. Initial Prayer

Grant and vouchsafe, O Lord, a bridal chamber that does not pass away, a banquet of delights, and a dwelling place of joys, to this soul of your handmaid who has departed from this world and travelled to you. And when you come in glory to judge the world in justice, rewarding each in accord with their deserts, hold her worthy mingle with the lambs on your right hand, and to sing glory and thanksgiving to you along with them, O Father, Son (and Holy Spirit).

2. Response I [*enyana*] for 'Have mercy..' Psalm [51].
To the tune 'O Christ who promised the resurrection'.

3. Give joy in your bridal chamber, O Lord,
to your handmaid who has reposed in your hope,
raise her up on your right hand
on the day when your majesty shines forth.

Depart in peace, O sister,
be not sad that you have reposed:
Christ your Lord, whom you love,
will give you joy in his bridal chamber.

Give thanks, O sister, to Christ,
 for it is through his mercies that you have been
 led away;
 it is he who has granted you
 to pass over the sea of sins in purity

With a fair and pure name,
 and with works to please him,
 you have departed in the power
 of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

The Royal Son has prepared for you
 the bridal chamber on high:
 enter it, sister, and find joy,
 give thanks to him who has held you worthy
 to behold him.

Because you saw the world as transient
 like a dream or like a shadow,
 you spurned its pleasures,
 desiring instead the love of Christ.

You have held as a shield
 the true faith,
 and with it you have quenched
 the fiery arrows of the Evil One your Enemy.

4. *Quqlion*. First tone.

May my prayer enter before you,
 halleluiah and halleluiah,
 Incline your ear to my request.
 I have been reckoned among those
 who go down to the pit,
 halleluiah and halleluiah,
 I have become like a man who has no help.
 Glory...

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5. *'Eqba*

to the tune 'Heaven, the city of angels'.

God went down to the abode of the dead
but was not corrupted by death.

Let the departed who have consumed him
in communion rejoice,
for they will arise without corruption.

6. *Prooimion*

Glory to the wondrous Raiser of the dead
who sends the Spirit at his manifestation to renew the
face of the earth when he comes to resurrect the
departed at his utterance, raising at his command those
buried, clothing them in glory through his wish, wrapping
them in immortality in his grace, as he raises up those
who fear him to the lofty place of his kingdom, bringing
them into his resplendent bridal chamber, causing his
beauteous radiance to shine forth for them, and giving
them joy with the light of his countenance: for to him
is befitting...

7. *Sedro*

O Head of the living and Lord of the dead,
Christ our God, who has promised with a promise that
fails not, and said 'Everyone who believes in me, even
if he dies, he shall live, and I will raise him up; for
I am the Resurrection

and the Life, the Saviour of every soul who takes refuge in me; receive now, O Lord, in your kindness, the soul of this your handmaid who has reposed in your hope, having escaped from this temporal life; rescue her, as she travels on the road to you, from those bands which, in their eagerness for the destruction of the wicked, lay ambush to capture our souls as they pass through the air; lead her by the hand of the peaceful angels to the blessed abodes of your saints. Yes, O holy God, manifest your compassion to your handmaid; O merciful God, save your handmaid who has had faith in you; O God most gracious, do not deny her and those who have acknowledged you, worshipping your Cross and partaking of your Body and your Blood, the pledge of the New Life. O gentle God, do not strip away from your handmaid the Robe of Light and the seal of the Myron which you gave to her at baptism; do not let her hear that fearsome utterance which would hold her at a distance from dwelling in your Kingdom; do not let her die a second death, or hear that voice which says 'Depart, for I do not know you'. For this death is but a sleep for those who believe. But now, Lord, forgive her failings, voluntary and involuntary, set her in the haven of your salvation along with all the souls of wise virgins;

and as for us sinners who supplicate you on her behalf, strengthen and assist us to attain modest conduct and a holy way of life; prepare for us a blameless departure and a beautiful end of life; save us from all harmful occurrences, protect us under the wings of your grace, and bring us to the treasure stores of joys which are far removed from grief and sorrow. And on that great day of yours, the last and the first, when you effect the end of this world and the beginning of your eternal world, cause us all to experience your salvation; give us all the joy of your countenance, set us all at your right hand, shepherd us all in the pastures of your might, feed us off the rich things of your household along with all the save who are ranked together on your festive day, in your grace and loving kindness, and in that of your Father and of the Holy Spirit, now...

8. *Qala*

To the *Quqlion* tune

With grievous utterances
did Jephtha's daughter weep
as she spoke to her father
amidst her heart-felt ailments:

'Let me go and weep for myself,
forging tears as an adornment to my virginity;
let me cry out to the Lord
and he will answer me and bring me into
his bridal chamber,
holding me worthy, along with chaste virgins,
of his Kingdom.

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Halleluiah. Glory...

9. Sarah died, as it is written, in the land of Canaan, and Abraham and Issac buried her in fair old age.

The two just men wept for the just woman who had
been separated from them
as she travelled to the Kingdom at her death.

Let us too, my brethren, pray always for our sister,
so that she may be held worthy, along with Sarah,
of the place of life, and mercy.

Halleluiah. Grant rest to your handmaid.

10. *Madrasha*

to the tune 'Descend, my brethren who have
received the baptismal mark'

Response: 'May your resurrection renew her'.

O God who gave strength to the just in their contest,
give strength to my thoughts
so that I may praise your handmaid
who has reposed in your hope.

May we behold you, O our sister,
of the day of resurrection
in the assemblies of chaste women,
in the bands of those made perfect,
standing among the women martyrs.

The five virgins stand there
clothed and resplendent in glory
amidst the blessed state of Paradise.

In the Garden of joys Christ the Bridegroom
will give you delight:
It is he whom you have loved
and whose commandments you have kept,
performing his will.

11. Another [*madrasha*]

to the tune 'Adam sinned and acquired..'

O Son, whose will it was to shine forth from
Mary the Virgin
 whom you overshadowed in purity,
 give rest in the mercies of your grace
 to the soul of the virgin who has reposed in you,
 along with the just who have loved and pleased you.

O Lord, hold your handmaid worthy to rejoice,
 along with the angels, at your coming on high;
 you have preserved her here in purity,
 may she be worthy beyond to rejoice in your
bridal chamber,
 may she have her abode there for ever.

Sarah has depicted a type for you,
 and from Rebecca you have received an example,
 for though they never beheld the Messiah,
 yet love for him was fervent in their hearts.
 Blessed is she who has loved Christ.

May the Lord, who has separated you from
our company,
 give you joy in the bands of chaste virgins there,
 and may he cause the grief of your sisters
to pass away,
 and may they rejoice along with you at
the resurrection.

12. Another [*madrasha*]

to the tune 'A temporal abode'

Response: 'Give rest, O Lord, to the spirit of your
handmaid who has reposed in your hope,
 along with all the just who have loved you and
kept your commandments'.

The journey is ended, the road is close to the city,
 the water jar has been broken,

the well's spring has run dry,
 the windows have grown dark
 and the glorious house has been brought low.
 Renew, O Lord, our images
 and raise us up in your grace.

May the soul which your bidding has led off
 enter in and worship you, Lord;
 may she find compassion, mercy and forgiveness
 on that last day when you judge all peoples;
 may she be protected at your right hand from
 burning.

13. *Ba'uta* of Mar Ephrem

In the middle of the night the Bridegroom
 shone forth
 and the virgins awoke to meet him:
 the wise and the foolish
 prepared their lamps;
 the wise were proud
 of the great light their lamps gave forth,
 whereas the foolish asked for oil,
 but there was none who sold it there.
 The wise entered in to the bridal chamber
 of Christ the Bridegroom
 and were leaping in joy along with him in glory.
 finding delight at the sight of him.

Praise to you, and upon us be mercy,
 O God One who has delivered us in your love.
 Through your abundant and gracious mercies
 may we enter the bridal chamber along with you,
 with our lamps illumined
 as we go to meet your great Epiphany;
 and may we raise up voices full of praise
 to you, and your Father and to the Holy Spirit.



Second Service

1. *Quqlion*

second tone.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, halleluiah;
I will praise the Lord during my life.
For there is no salvation in mankind, halleluiah,
their spirit goes forth
and they return to the earth.

2. *Prooimion*

Praise to the wise Creator, the true Renewer who raises up incorrupt the dead who were sown in corruption, and those who reposed in a dishonourable state he resurrects in glory, clothing the scattered and feeble bones in strength, and granting a spiritual state to bodies endowed with a soul: to whom belongs....

3. *Sedro*

O God who are immortal, who never comes to dissolution, Lord and Maker of our mortal nature subject to dissolution; O Confidence of the upright and Hope of the just, through whom the souls and spirits exist of all those who are in the body and of those who depart from the body; you look ahead to the benefit and salvation of all;

you devise what is profitable for each person in this present life, and when they depart thither; in accordance with the inaccessible judgements of your providence and the immeasurable deep of your justice, in your foreknowledge which encompasses all you have caused this soul to pass from this life, receive it in accordance with the abundance of your compassionate and kind mercies, leading it by the hand of the peaceful angels who accompany it, rescuing it from all the adverse things that may encounter it on its fearsome passage yonder. Forgive, pardon and remit this your handmaid all that she has done wrong and sinned, voluntarily or involuntarily, knowingly or unknowingly, in accordance with your compassion which knows no measure, remembering that we are but dust and we are entangled in sins, there being none born of woman who is innocent before you, even though he live and dwell on earth just for a single moment. Rather, O Lord who are merciful and compassionate to all, manifest towards her your grace and loving kindness, as we cry out with heartfelt grief to you. Cause her to dwell in the abodes of light, in the heavenly resting places in the Church, which is the true Jerusalem of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven. And when, in accordance with your unfailing utterance, you come on the clouds of heaven in strength and great glory, gathering, by means of your holy angels, your elect from the four points of heaven,

when those in the grave will rise up at the sound of your life-giving voice, remember in mercy, O Lord, this your handmaid who has departed and separated from our midst today, and may your mercy cover over her and our deeds of shame, at the disclosure of our hateful actions before that fearful tribunal of yours. You created us in your image and likeness, Lord, fashioning us with your holy hands, and when we had got lost, you saved us by your holy Passion, mingling in us your Body and your Blood. If you should judge our words and deeds, then woe is us and all who are born. Forgive, O Good One, pardon O Compassionate, have pity, O merciful, save and deliver us from utter shame and ignominy before you, and from torments to come. Comfort those who mourn, give courage to those who grieve; and to those who are stained with sins and wrongdoings, grant an end that is without reproach, and confidence before you on that last day when you come; for you are the God who is compassionate and merciful to all, and to you we lift up praise and thanksgiving, now...

4. *Qala*

To the tune 'Lord, with wrongdoings and sins'.

O Lord, receive the prayer and supplication of
the hour of my death,
for like the thief I have approached you:
in your compassion, receive

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the spirit of your handmaid in peace,
for she has committed it into your merciful hands.
Forgive me all that I have sinned,
save me, O Lover of humanity.

5. Glory

All the spirits of the just who have preserved
your truth
look to the day of your manifestation, Lord,
for at the sound of the horn and trumpet
they will be resurrected from their graves
in your presence.
Forgive me all that I have sinned against you.

6. *Madrasha*

To the tune 'Grant us, Lord, that at the resurrection we may see our sister in the Kingdom'.

Blessed are the pure, cried the Holy one,
for they shall inherit life in the Kingdom on high.
Blessed is your chaste purity, O sister,
for you will inherit the blessing on the day of
resurrection.

You rejected and spurned the temporary bridal
chamber,
you despised the joys of the evil world
in order to inherit in Eden the bridal chamber of life
in exchange for pleasures that cannot be retained.

7. Another *madrasha*

To the tune 'Paradise'.

Response: On the day of the resurrection may our sister be mingled amongst the virgins who await your manifestation.

[addressed to Satan]

I have entered the fight against you,
I have hope to win.
Through your delights
you enticed me to draw close,
you sprinkled upon me your pleasures,
you wearied me with your battles

so that I might be utterly defeated in every way.
 you took the victory,
 whereas I, broken hearted, await for mercy,
 so that I may defeat you through receiving
 forgiveness,

Cunningly and cleverly
 you laid your snares
 in order to make humanity captive
 easily in your zeal.
 Although I could see
 your snares in my mind,
 I was quite unable to escape them:
 your bait is deceptive and cunning,
 whereas your catch is feeble and weak.
 Your impudence is ever ready and persistent,
 Whoever hates you shall rejoice!

8. *Ba'uta* of Mar Ephrem

May your handmaid who has reposed in your hope
 find joy in the bridal chamber of light,

[the departed sister speaks]
 'Farewell, my companions,
 may the Lord preserve pure your monastic habit,
 for I have left your company.
 May Christ be in your midst'.

[the sisters reply]
 'Go and sing 'glory'
 to him who mediates divinity,
 so that when he shines forth on the last day
 he may mingle you among the choirs of spiritual
 beings'.



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Third Service

1. *Quqlion*. Third tone

How long shall there be sorrow in my soul,
halleluiah
and grief in my heart all day long.

Lighten my eyes lest I sleep unto death,
halleluiah
and let not the Enemy say 'I have vanquished him'.

2. Glory, and '*Eqba*

To him who called to Lazarus his friend in the tomb and so raised him, come, let us sing glory.

3. *Prooimion*

Glory to the King of kings and Lord of Lords, to him who resurrects from the dead and raises from the tomb, to the Hope of those without hope, and the Confidence of those lying in the dust, to him who brings to death and brings to life, who takes down to Sheol and raises up again, to him in whose hands are the souls of all flesh; for in him is fitting....

4. *Sedro*

O God, who in your grace created us in your image and likeness, and prepared for us delight in Paradise so that we might live well and keep your commandments; when we transgressed your law through the deception and envy of Satan and the Devil,

and were condemned by a just sentence to banishment from Paradise, and to dissolution from the body in order that our frame, so beautifully fashioned by the wisdom of your creative power, should return again to the dust from which we were taken; and as a result of all this the power of death took hold of us through the document of sin. Nevertheless you, O Lord, are good and compassionate, and your eternal mercies were stirred at our plight and in your love you became a human being for Our salvation: in your pity you endured the cross of shame, and you descended in search of us into the chasm of Sheol the Devourer; you broke its mighty gates and shattered its bars, releasing the souls that were held bound in captivity and destructive despair; and when you had rescued us from our captor Satan, and returned us to the state of freedom and association with you, bringing back your flock to worship your Majesty, you brought us, who were without hope, back to hope, and when we were without any defence you gave us access to your grace so that we might supplicate you; accordingly, having this sure source of confidence, we offer up prayers and supplication on behalf of all our parents and brothers and sisters everywhere, both bodily and spiritual, who have already reposed in true faith in your hope, asking that you will forgive their faults in your mercies and give rest to the spirit of your handmaid in your compassion, bringing her

in your grace to the blessed abodes of your Father;
and on the great day of the resurrection hold us all
worthy with open face to praise you and your father, now...

5. *Qala*

To the tune 'martyrs, supplicate him'

Blessed is he who has acquired from the world
provisions for that journey,
preparing for himself glorious raiment
suitable for that day,
so that when the Bridegroom shines forth in glory
to survey the guests
we may enter and recline at his banquet
and sing his glory.

6. *Glory*

For I have received your gentle yoke
in the perfect love of the apostles,
and death has deprived me of life,
silencing me from the praise of you;
amid the Watchers and Angels
may I go out to meet you
when you come amidst the chaste virgins.

7. *Madrasha*

To the tune 'Paradise'.

Response: Praise to him who magnified his saints in
honour, giving joy at their festivals to both heaven and
earth'.

The virgin who rejected
the marriage crown which is subject to corruption
has gained the bridal chamber of the just
which the children of light yearn for.
Thanks to that radiant brightness which shone out
when she rejected the works of darkness,
and now that her solitary abode lies abandoned
she is held worthy of the marriage feast,
for the Watchers rejoice at her,
the apostles glory at her,
as do all men and women.

Once naked, they are clothed in the garment of glory,
swallowed up in light;

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The Evil One has stolen it from you
and filled you with hateful darkness.

At that moment lett both sides give praise
to the judge who judges the worlds in uprightness;
at that moment, hold me worthy to behold
you in the Kingdom,
O Bridegroom who delivered us with your
own blood. Praise to you!



Fourth Service

1. To the fourth tone, *Quqlion*

Unto you, Lord, have I lifted up my soul,
 halleluiah,
 my God in you have I hoped, may I not be
 ashamed,
 Let the wicked be ashamed at their emptiness;
 halleluiah,
 show me your ways, O Lord.

2. *Qala*

To the tune 'Open to me the door of your mercy'

Josiah reposed in peace,
 he entered the bosom of the just and found rest.
 Jeremiah saw that upon his throne
 wicked judgement was now being carried out,
 so he cried out and said,
 'Let all the upright and just
 compose laments
 in that glory has departed from Israel'.
 He poured forth tears of suffering
 over the bed of the faithful king
 when he perceived that death was at hand
 and the end of his life;
 he soaked his cheeks in tears,
 and the Lord saw his deep sorrow
 and lengthened his days,
 so that he become a companion to the penitent.

3. *Madrasha*

To the tune 'Arise, Paul'.

The mother of seven resplendent sons
 is depicted with seven crowns:
 all that she possessed she offered up to God

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Fifth Service

1. *Quqlion*. Fifth [tone]

What shall they give you, O deceitful tongues,
what shall they add for you?

2. Glory, and '*Eqba*

Then *Qala*, to the tune 'The boundary of faith'.

For our sister who has reposed in Christ,
he shall be her comforter and source of encouragement
in the dark region of death.

At the gate of mercy, through his compassion
and grace,
a candelabra of light shall shine brightly for her
in the depths of destruction;
he will give rest to her soul
and cause her to dwell among the spirits of the
righteous,

halleluiah,
who have done his will.

Glory. O God who summoned and removed her
from the bands of the chaste virgins, her sisters,
in the mercies of your kindness
hold her worthy of the blessed state of Eden
and of that banquet full of joy;
along with those virgins who received praise,
may she find joy and exultation in their company,
halleluiah,
for ever and ever.

3. *Madrasha*

To the tune 'The royal bride'.

Response: 'May your handmaid, Lord, who has reposed
rejoice with you in the Kingdom'.

Depart, sister, to that place of meeting

with the Bridegroom, Christ whom you have loved.
 Because you have preserved his truth here,
 he will give you delight there in bliss;
 in place of your garments of mourning
 he will provide resplendent raiment to adorn you;
 the mouth which sung songs of praise here
 shall join the throngs of Watchers in their acclamation.

I have not other Lord and no other God apart
from you,
 I am your handmaid, Lord, both when alive,
and now that I am dead.
 You are the source of hope, both in my life
and at my death,
 you are my confidence, and now that I have reposed,
 do not abandon me in Sheol.

O Hope of the departed,
 may your voice give me comfort in the house of
the dead.

4. [Another *madrasha*. To the tune]

‘To Father wrote’

Response: May your handmaid who worships you find
 her place in the bridal chamber of light, full of joys.

Give delight to your handmaid, O Lord,
 in the tabernacles of glorious light,
 remove sins and wash away her wrongdoing;
 set her at your right hand
 and may her tongue resound with your praise.

May Christ the Sun with His abundant rays
 illumine the darkness of your weeping,
 may he sprinkle the dew of his grace upon your body
 and in his compassion may he place your soul
 among the thronging bands of the saints.

O compassionate Lord, have pity upon your handmaid
 who has reposed in your hope;

she carried the cross and gone forth in your hope.
 Today, now that she has departed,
 be her refuge and guide.

She wove a garland and offered it up to you;
 reward her firm endurance
 once she had received your yoke;
 in return for her labours
 and the weariness of her struggle,
 grant her a good reward in the Kingdom,
 (O Lord), for you never defraud justice.

5. [Another *madrasha*. To the tune]

‘Slain in Egypt’.

Response: Give rest, Lord, to your handmaid in the
 bridal chamber of light, along with the upright and
 the priests who have acted pleasingly before you.

How hard is this path, my sisters,
 upon which I am travelling,
 as I set out to reach that abode
 which is deprived of any brightness.
 O Christ, Sun of all creation, illumine my face!

Let not your door be closed in the face of your
handmaid,
 for your mercies are poured abundantly upon many:
 let not her mouth wail in bitter weeping,
 but may she shout out in praise to your name.

Sprinkle upon your handmaid the dew of delights,
 for your Body has been mingled with hers as a pledge.
 See how your sheep are saved by your holy Blood,
 deliver those who worship you from burning.

O Hope of all, let her hope not perish,
 for you are her confidence
 ever since she was in the womb:
 rescue her from dread on the journey,
 and from Satan that ruler who watches the air.

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6. *Ba'uta* of Mar Ephrem

May she go at the hands of the angels
in peace before your tribunal,
and wheresoever you will it
may she reside until resurrection day.

Praise to the merciful Father
who fashioned our race out of dust;
worship to the compassionate Son,
who depicted us in his image and likeness;
exaltation to the Holy Spirit,
who raises us up out of the dust.



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Sixth Service

1. *Quqlion*. Sixth [tone]

As a father has compassion upon his children,
halleluiah,
the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

As for mankind, his days are like grass,
halleluiah,
and like the flower of the field, so he sprouts forth

2. Glory, and '*Eqba*. and *Qala* to the tune 'To you, Lord, we offer up'.

To you, Lord, we offer up, amid sorrow and tears,
prayer and supplication, as we say
O Lord God, have pity upon her in your grace,
upon your handmaid who has departed and reposed
in the hope of your name;
forgive her her sins, remit her her shortcomings,
and on the day of your judgement, O just Judge,
call out and set her on the right hand side,
and may she sing out to you praise.

Glory. How grievous for the soul
as it goes off and leaves the body:
it sees it lying there without any sensation,
it groans out in sorrow and cries out in grief
as it separates itself and crosses over
to the abode which the Lord, the giver of wisdom,
has prepared for it;
it awaits there for the resurrection
and for the hidden hope
that when it returns to the body its companion
our Lord will be its helper
on that great day of resurrection.

3. *Madrasha*. To the tune
‘The supernal band’

Response: May your handmaid rejoice, Lord, in the heavenly assemblies, now that she has departed from life and reposed in your hope.

She heard your commandment
when you called out and said
‘Learn from me, that I am restful
and lowly in heart;
for my yoke is gentle and my burden light.
Come to me all who are weary and I will give
your rest’,
See how she carried your yoke on her shoulders,
abandoning all the world for your name’s sake;
comfort her at the resurrection, O our Saviour.

He who does not leave behind parents and brothers.
family and neighbours,
shall not inherit life.

See, Lord, how your handmaid has left behind
in accordance with your word
everything in the world
and has cleaved to you,
do not abandon her in Sheol
where there is no hope for her,
let her hope not perish
because she has no hope there
apart from you, the Hope of all flesh.

4. Another [*madrasha*]

To the tune ‘Give thanks O peoples’.

Response: May the memory of your handmaid who has reposed exist on high in heaven.

Our virgin sister has departed
from this world of sickness
travelling to another world
that is far removed from sickness and illness;
Because her body grew weak from fasting
it will shine out on the day of resurrection

in the radiance with which it will be adorned.
 The Royal Son to whom you are betrothed, O soul,
 calls out to you, 'Come, O weary soul
 who are so tired for my name's sake;
 come and find delight in my joys
 along with all who have done my will,
 for you have kept my commandments.

O virgin and handmaid of the Lord,
 do not be sorrowful that you have reposed,
 for whoever has conversed with the Lord
 shall pass over from death to life:
 death in the body is not death, but life.
 Blessed is the Living One who gives life to all!

Summara

May her virgin companions follow her and enter the
 King's temple.

Readings from the Prophets.

From Job the Just. Job 42 : 9-17.

Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and
 Sophar the Na'mathite went and did as the Lord had
 told them.....and he died in good old age.

From the Book of Judges. Judges 13 : 2-7

There was a man from Sed'a, from the tribe of
 Dan whose name was Manoah...wine and strong drink
 he shall not drink.

From Elisha' the Prophet. 2 Kings 4 : 1-7, 19-21, 32-6.

A woman from among the wives of the sons of
 the prophets...and the boy opened his eyes and revived,
 and he gave him to his mother.

From the Book of Qohelet: Qohelet 7:27-8:3 , 8:8-10, 9:2a

See what I have discovered, says Qohelet... There
 is a single lot for the just and wicked, for the good and
 pure and for the impure, and all that they have received
 is vanity, says Qohelet.

From Jesus bar Asira. Ben Sira 26 : 14-18, 236,
 256-266 + 36 : 22-26.

Lection from Jesus Bar Asira (Ecclesiasticus)

A good woman is a gift, given by the Lord. Nothing
 is comparable to the absence of garrulousness. A chaste

(The Syriac scripture text of Jesus Bar Asira is not given in Syriac, but only in the English Translation of the Burial Service)

woman is grace piled on grace. Nothing outweighs paucity of words. Like the sun which shines out in the firmament of heaven, so is the beauty of a woman at her seat in her house; like the lamp giving light on the Sanctuary candelstick, so is the beauty of the woman whose house is in order. Her footsteps as she sets her house in order are fair, like a seal of gold placed on a silver stand. A righteous woman shall be given to one who loves the Lord; the woman who reverse the Lord has no shame.

The wife who holds her husband in honour will be considered wise by everyone, whereas one who is abusive in her luxurious ways will be recognised as such by everyone. Happy is the husband with a good wife: the number of his years is doubled; and he shall praise the beauty of his wife to her face, and she shall overcome any lust of the eyes.

At the head of your possessions acquire a good wife, for she is your helper, like you, and a pillar alongside you.

Vineyards which lack fences will get destroyed, and a place without any woman is bare and open.

For who will have faith in an unmarried young man: who resembles a gazelle leaping from one town to another for such is a man who has no wife; wherever he be found, he will die.

A good friend is better than a fortified town.

From the prophet Daniel. Susanna 42-63.

Susanna groaned loudly and said, O God who knows what is hidden....Hekqia and his wife rejoiced in their daughter Susanna and praised God for her husband and his relatives.

Acts of the twelve holy Apostles. Acts 9:36-43.

Beloved, there was a woman disciple in the city of Joppa named Tabitha.... he was in Joppa for no small time residing in the house of Simeon the tanner.

Gospel of Matthew. Matt. 25:1-13.

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened unto ten virgins....you do not know that day or that hour.

Karozutha after the Gospel

O Christ our God, at your Gospel utterance these people have left this mighty world, and you have called them to the Kingdom; we supplicate for our own entry into this world and for our departure from it.

In eagerness let us beseech the Lord for the repose and rest of this our sister N, who has departed from this world, asking that God, who has taken her from this temporal life, make hold her worthy of the Kingdom which does not pass away or dissolve.

Madrasha

To the tune 'Go down, my brethren who
have been marked'.

Respons: Renew at your resurrection your handmaid who has worshipped you, for she has reposed in your hope

O Christ full of grace, you promised to those who love you a recompense and reward, grant reward to this our sister on the day of resurrection.

Pray earnestly for me who have laboured in composing this, so that I may be held worthy of forgiveness and give thanks to God's grace

Praise to the Father, thanksgiving to the Son and to the Holy Spirit exaltation and worship, and my God's mercy be upon us all.

Another [*madrasha*]

To the tune, O Gardener who guards'

Farewell, O world, for I have left you in sorrow;

Farewell, O world, For I have left you in sorrow;
 May the Good One who fashioned me at the beginning
 bring me with him into the Kingdom.

Farewell, friends and brethren,
 may our Lord reward your love,
 and when you stand in the Sanctuary
 remember me in your prayers

Remember me, my beloved,
 as I travel on the path of death,
 pray for me that I may be held worthy of mercy
 on the day when the Son of God is made manifest.

That body which laboured with prayers
 shall fly through the air on the day of resurrection;
 it shall behold with open face its Lord,
 and shall enter into the Kingdom.

Qala said at the grave. To the tune 'Our Lord is
 coming'.

[the departed speaks]

The Time of separation is close at hand;
 pray for me, that I may depart and be accepted.

In your prayers may you all remember me
 as you gather together in the holy church.

[the remaining sisters]

Farewell in Christ, O our sister,
 may the place of Spiritual beings be your delight.

The sign of the living cross marked on your forehead
 shall convey you along the road to the Kingdom.

[the departed sister]

Close the doors, and farewell.
 Christ shall come and will open them for me.

I have descended to the grave and I remain all alone;
beseech our Lord that I may behold him and be
comforted.

[the remaining sisters]

We have accompanied you thus far, O our sister,
from here on let the Watchers accompany you.

[the departed sister]

Cease weeping, my beloved sisters,
Christ will come to arouse us from our state of sleep.

Praise to the Father, thanksgiving to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit exaltation and worship.

They say the Quqlion to the second [tone].

You send forth your Spirit and they are created,
halleluiah.

Then the *Sedro* and *Ma'nito*, to the fifth [tone].

Awake, my soul, for the Bridgroom's manifestation
is close at hand, he is coming in glory. You have failed
to prepare the oil in your vessel, and you do not have
raiment for the wedding; awake before you hear that
voice which says 'Depart, accursed, into the harsh fire'
Come to repentance, and with tears, fasting and prayers,
cleanse your stains, and cry out saying 'Forgive and have
mercy upon us'.

End of the order of burial for nuns and *bnat qyama*.

Pray for the priest Joseph (who wrote out the text)

in 1980.



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