

# FROM TIGRIS TO JERUSALEM: EAST SYRIAC POETIC NOTES FROM THE OTTOMAN TIME<sup>1</sup>

ANTON PRITULA

HERMITAGE MUSEUM, ST. PETERSBURG

## ABSTRACT

*The poems published and studied here – most of them for the first time – represent literary tastes of East Syriac educated circles of the Ottoman period. These text collections appeared as later additions in the manuscripts written by ‘Abdāšō‘ of Gāzartā, the Uniate East Syriac Church poet and the second patriarch (1555-1570). These small texts, usually having very little or even nothing to do with the main manuscript text, represent a kind of verse notes made by different pilgrims, and reflect popular poetic tastes of the period. Short poems, especially quatrains, are an ideal form for such poetic activities. Judging from their great number, the spread of short poems was constantly increasing since the time the Syriac Renaissance, when they were first borrowed from Arabic and Persian poetry. Apparently, the multi-lingual poems of the Mongol period (second half of the 13<sup>th</sup>-early 14<sup>th</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> I would like to express gratitude to Sebastian Brock and Peter Zieme for their help in improving the text of this publication. I am also grateful to Father Columba Stewart, David Calabro, Julie Dietman, and all the HMML team for making the MS images available for this publication. The research was supported with the alumni fellowship of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

*century) – the heyday of the Syriac tradition in the Islamic period – were treated as appropriate models to portray contemporary cultural life of the multi-lingual Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire.*

In recent publications, primarily by Heleen Murre-van den Berg<sup>2</sup> and David Wilmshurst,<sup>3</sup> the East Syriac manuscript tradition of the Ottoman period has been researched and analyzed, which has enabled other scholars in the field to make judgments about the circulation of texts in this period. Both works accumulate a huge bulk of material that is contained in hundreds and even thousands of manuscripts in numerous collections around the world. As Murre-van den Berg pointed out, it was in the Ottoman period – starting with the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century that the Syriac manuscript production recovered after previous social catastrophes of late 14<sup>th</sup>-early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. As shown in her work, surviving manuscripts produced in the 16<sup>th</sup> century clearly outnumber any produced before.<sup>4</sup> The scholar explains this with the relative political and economic stability that was reached with the emergence of the Ottoman Empire that unified all the Near East.

This relatively stable situation also resulted in an intensification of travelling within the empire. It is from this period on that the East Syrian monastery in Jerusalem, with the church of Mart Maryam, is known to have been a popular visiting place for numerous pilgrims that made their way from the area of modern Iraq, Iran and South-East Turkey to the holy city.<sup>5</sup> The history of this cloister has been studied in a few

---

<sup>2</sup> Murre-van den Berg, H.L., *Scribes and Scriptures. The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces (1500-1850)*, Eastern Christian Studies 21 (Leuven: Peeters, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Wilmshurst, D., *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East, 1318-1913*, CSCO, Subsidia 104 (Louvain: Peeters, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, 81.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 30, 42, 47-48.

recent publications.<sup>6</sup> According to them, this East Syrian church that served as a monastery was located somewhere to the north of the Holy Sepulchre in the area of the present Christian quarter.<sup>7</sup> In the seventeenth century, it was more and more involved in the activities of the Catholic missionaries from different orders that were active in this city.<sup>8</sup> In 1718, the Nestorian Patriarch Eliyā (1700-1722) sent the priest Kanun of Telkepe to organize the repair of books and ritual objects kept in the “holy dwelling place of Mart Maryam, which is the church of us Nestorians.” The list formed by this priest counted one hundred manuscripts,<sup>9</sup> forty-nine of which are still in Jerusalem now. Most of them are kept in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate library;<sup>10</sup> the list, which had been incorporated into the manuscript Jer. Syr. 5, written in 1660 in Alqosh, was discovered and published by Adolf Rucker.<sup>11</sup> Another three are part of the Saint Mark’s Syriac Orthodox Monastery library,<sup>12</sup> and three more are located in the Vatican library.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 30, 42, 53-56, 63-64, 82, 91-92, 105, 133, 279, 286, 297, 311, 315.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 53; see also Meinardus, O., “The Nestorians in Egypt. A Note on the Nestorians in Jerusalem.”, *Oriens Christianus* 51 (1967): 112-129. The latter also gives a clear evidence of an earlier presence of the Nestorian community in Jerusalem, at least, since the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Ibid: 123-124).

<sup>8</sup> Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, 63.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>10</sup> Chabot, J. B., “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques conservés dans la bibliothèque du Patriarcat grec orthodoxe de Jérusalem.” *Journal asiatique* IX, 3 (1894): 92-134.

<sup>11</sup> Rucker, A., “Ein alter Handschriftenkatalog des ehemaligen nestorianischen Klosters in Jerusalem.” *Oriens Christianus* III, 6 [28] (1931): 90-96.

<sup>12</sup> Dolabani, F. Yu., and Ibrahim, G. Yo., *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in St. Mark’s Monastery (Dairo Dmor Margos)* (Damascus: Sidawi Printing House, 1994), 264-267, 339-344, 380-381.

<sup>13</sup> Vat. Syr. 90 and 151, Borg. Syr. 169. The latter is the famous illuminated lectionary scribed by ‘Aṭāyā b. Faraj in 1576 CE; see: Leroy, J., *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d’Europe et d’Orient. Contribution à l’étude de l’iconographie des églises de langue syriaque* (Paris:

The manuscripts existing in the above-mentioned collections, as well as those in other libraries contain precious information about the literary and social life of East Syriac communities in the Ottoman period. Sebastian Brock published an important article based on the East Syriac manuscripts donated or written in Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> He carefully registered and classified them, having translated a few colophons and records found in them. Pilgrims from different parts of the Ottoman Empire used to commission and donate manuscripts to the churches and monasteries they visited, leaving information concerning themselves in colophons and in records made in earlier manuscripts.<sup>15</sup>

Since the time those materials were published, numerous collections, including St. Mark's Monastery library, were digitized by the HMML team<sup>16</sup> and thus became available to the scholarly community. This has enabled scholars to edit, translate, and analyze the texts of this type. In the present paper, short versified texts are discussed that were written in this period by East Syriac clerics in different districts of the Ottoman Empire. Most of them are clearly written on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, whereas a few others might have been composed in a different place, but nevertheless reflect the spiritual life, manuscript circulation, and visits to religious places in that period.

The texts being discussed here are later additions in the manuscripts written by 'Abdišō' of Gāzartā, the Uniate East Syriac Church poet and the second patriarch (1555-1570). This

---

Geuthner, 1964), 404-408; Giamil, S., *Genuinae relationes inter sedem apostolicam et assyriorum orientalium seu chaldaeorum ecclesiam nunc major ex parte primum editae historicisque adnot. Illustratae* (Rome: Loescher, 1902), 519.

<sup>14</sup> Brock, S. P., "East Syriac Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Early Ottoman Period." *ARAM* 18-19 (2006-2007): 189-201.

<sup>15</sup> Wilmshurst, D., *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East, 1318-1913*, CSCO, Subsidia 104 (Louvain: Peeters, 2000): 67-72.

<sup>16</sup> Stewart, C. (OSB), "An Update on the Digitization and Cataloging Work of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML)." *Khristianskiy Vostok*, 2017: 153-171; on digitizing St. Mark's Monastery collection see *ibid*: 160.

outstanding author and scribe created a number of poems and manuscript copies that are the subject of a separate study I am currently working on and planning to publish them in a series of papers, which contain critical edition of his poems.<sup>17</sup> The current paper nevertheless concerns only two manuscripts copied by him, to which later verse notes were added. They are namely SMMJ 159 in Saint Mark's Monastery of Jerusalem,<sup>18</sup> and DCA 00065 in the Chaldean Archdiocese of Alqosh, both digitized by HMML. The latter, being the *Metrical grammar* by Bar ʿEbrōyō, was copied in 1553,<sup>19</sup> whereas the former, a collection of texts in Arabic, was produced in 1556.<sup>20</sup>

### ‘ABDĪŠŌʿ OF ĀTĒL: JERUSALEM, 1644 CE

ʿAbdīšōʿ, bishop of Ātēl is best known due to his numerous pilgrimages to Jerusalem, commissioning and donating manuscripts to the East Syrian monastery. He is known to have visited the holy city at least three times – in 1614, 1644, and 1651 CE, and he is mentioned in manuscript colophons and notes.<sup>21</sup> One such note, in a manuscript in the library of the Jerusalem Patriarchate (Jer. Patr. Syr. 19), written in 1660 CE, says that it was commissioned by ʿAbdīšōʿ, bishop of Ātēl at the request of our brethren in Jerusalem, while another note mentions his three visits to Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> One of them has already come out; see Pritula, A., “‘Abdīšōʿ of Gazarta, the First Literate of the Chaldean Church: Poems Dedicated to the Popes of Rome”, *Vsetnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta. Vostokovedenie i afrikanistika*, vol. 10, issue 3 (2018): 374-391; <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu13.2018.307>

<sup>18</sup> See Dolabani, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in St. Mark's Monastery*, 380-381.

<sup>19</sup> vHMML link: <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/500565>

<sup>20</sup> See the description in Dolabani, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in St. Mark's Monastery*, 339-344; vHMML link: <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/501291>

<sup>21</sup> Brock, “East Syriac Pilgrims”: 193.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid: 193.

Another manuscript, containing collections of Palladius, written by monk Hōrmīzd, currently in the library of St. Mark's Monastery (SMMJ 200), has a colophon (fol. 258v) saying that the former was written in Jerusalem in the Nestorian monastery of the blessed Mary (Mart Maryam) in either 1644 or 1651 CE.<sup>23</sup> It also mentions the name of the bishop being discussed here:

ܬܡܬ ܬܠܬ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ . ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ  
 ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ  
 ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ  
 ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܥܝܬܐ .

*In the same year I wrote this book two bishops were staying in our Nestorian cloister: one of them Mār ‘Abdišō‘ of the town of Ātēl, and another one is Mār Athanasius from the region of Ūrmī, from the village of Gūgtāpā.*

Gūgtāpā, like most of the Ūrmī district, was a part of the Qūdshānīs patriarchate, as mentioned by Wilmshurst. According to him, the bishops of this region were better educated than the rest of the same patriarchate.<sup>24</sup> A traditionalist hierarch named Eliyā is reported to have lived there even in 1856.<sup>25</sup> He is recorded as a rival of any contacts with Catholics and was supporting the American mission instead; he died in 1863.<sup>26</sup> The diocese seems to have lapsed there by late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid: 191; see also Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 70, 313.

<sup>24</sup> Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 276.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 314.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 365.

### Stanzas on exile (SMMJ 159, fol. 130v-131r)

The stanzas ascribed to ‘Abdīšō‘, bishop of Ātēl published here are written on the blank leaves that are found between the main texts. They are continued on the following leaf (fol. 131r), where they are rubricated in red ink, unlike the initial ones that are entitled in black (fol. 130v). Both parts seem to be written in the same hand or in very similar ones. They are clearly a later addition to the manuscript written by ‘Abdīšō‘ of Gāzartā in 1566. Thematically, stanzas on both folia concern the motif of exile, and have similar imagery. No less important is that in the title it is mentioned that the author composed them while he was visiting Jerusalem in 1643/4 (fol. 130v; see also here below). Thus, one can be sure that these short pieces were copied in association with pilgrimage.

The motif of exile was rather common for the late Syriac poetry and is well-known since the time of the Syriac Renaissance. Thus, Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē (active late 13<sup>th</sup> century) composed a poem full of nostalgia for Arbela, his native city. Another piece, a long mēmṛā on the same subject was composed by Dāwīd Pūnīqāyā (active late 15<sup>th</sup> century), a West Syriac poet.<sup>28</sup>

It is quite possible that the biographic events of the author’s life, namely, his pilgrimages to Jerusalem made him write these stanzas. In all likelihood, it is for that reason that wandering and living in exile are treated not merely negatively (see below, poem 1, 2, 3), as is usual for such type of poetry, but also as useful and even necessary for the personal development. Thus, one may point out that this small set of texts exemplifies a reflection of a pilgrim’s experience, where a common complaint motif alternates with admitting a great significance of pilgrimage or any kind of travel (see below, poem 4, 5, 6). It is also noteworthy that the attitude towards the subject – wandering and exile – changes in this small text

---

<sup>28</sup> See A. M. Butts, “The Afflictions of Exile: A Syriac Memṛā by David Puniqāyā.” *Le Muséon* 122: 1-2 (2009): 53-80.

collection, starting from its second half (see below, poem 4). One can only guess whether it is a result of the author's concept, coincidence or just a reflection of the chronological sequence the pieces were composed.

The poems contain a number of Persian loan-words (poem 1 **يَخَذُ** 'sugar'; poem 1 **فَرْسَابُ** 'farsab'). As in the vocalization of the stanzas by Talyā of Qūrānā published here (see below), these lines demonstrate absence of clear quantitative opposition of a-ā (poem 1 **يَخَذُ** 'sugar' for Persian *šakar*).

[1]

**أَدْبِي دَبْدَبَعْدُ يُفَسِّهْ دَنْدِيك** [fol. 130v]  
**دَبْدَبُ يَفْءُ دَهْدَعْلِي خَعِي دَقْدَقْ كَتَمْ** ❖  
**تَجَمِ دَهْ قَدَمُ يَكَمْ حَلْ ...**

[1] **أَجَبْ هِيَدَهْ مَبْهَتِي دَبْدَبْ هَخَذَهْ:**  
**دَبْدَبْ دَجْ حِيَهْ لَسْتَهْ هَدَسْمَهْ 29 قَدَبْ هِيَهْ خُفَدَ.**  
**مَبْهَتْ تَجَلَمْ هَلْ هِيَهْ هِيَهْ لِيَهْ لِيَقْدَ:**  
**هَخَذَهْ يَسْجِيَهْ لِيَهْ يَزَجَلْ دَبْدَبْ هَخَذَ** ❖  
**[2] هَجْ لَمَبْ جِيَهْ دَبْدَبْ دَلْ تَلِيَهْ دَلَبْ:**  
**هَلْ يَفَرْسَابْ دَلْ يَسْتَبْ جِيَهْ هَجْ هَدَبْ.**  
**مَلْ دَبْدَبْ لِيَهْ هَدَبْ مَلْ يَفَرْسَابْ سَجَبْ:**  
**مَسْدَبْ دَسْمَهْ مَدْمَهْ هِيَهْ هِيَهْ هِيَهْ هِيَهْ هِيَهْ** ❖

Stanzas by 'Abdišō', bishop of Ātēl he composed in Jerusalem in year 1955 of Greece<sup>30</sup>

*"Oh, my lords, pray for me!"*<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> **هَدَسْمَهْ** added above the line in the same hand.

<sup>30</sup> I.e. 1643/4 CE.

<sup>31</sup> Most likely, an invocation addressed to the readers; an indication of tune is also possible.



1. As all the experienced witnessed, who investigated and confirmed,  
anyone in the flesh who is separated from his neighbors and friends,  
suffers every day, and his heart doesn't rejoice at all.  
And his palate is bitter even if he eats honey and sugar.
2. It is told by the earlier ones that a heart feels [another] heart,  
even when one is separated from his friend by endless *farsakhs*.<sup>32</sup>  
When in the chamber of the heart, the mind, the king of the soul, is confined,  
all at once his friend would be felt as soon as he is depicted before him.

[2]

٨٥٦ تَجِدُ لَكَ هَٰذَا مَكِيدَ [fol. 131r]

هذه تسمى "ك" بضمهم

١. حَلِّ اَمْرٍ بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا اَوْ اَمْرًا بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا.  
 ٢. اَمْرًا بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا اَوْ اَمْرًا بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا.  
 ٣. اَمْرًا بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا اَوْ اَمْرًا بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا.  
 ٤. اَمْرًا بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا اَوْ اَمْرًا بِمَنْ يَحْكُمُ فِيهِ اَمْرًا.

Then, with God's help we are writing a few  
metrical strophes on exile

Everyone who is in a place of exile  
and finishes his days in wandering,  
his heart, sore and full of sorrow, never rejoices,  
even if he possesses and obtains the power over the  
whole of creation.

<sup>32</sup> فرسخ *farsah* - unit of length in medieval Iran equal to 6 km.

[3]

سَدَّ

مُذَبِّذٌ يُذَذُّ دِمُوحَهُمْ بِكٍ مَوْجَذٌ.  
 هَذَا مَبِّ حَمِيْقٌ لَقَعَهُ تَلَجْهَتُهُ يُجْهَتُ.  
 هَذَا مَبِّ دِمُوحَهُ يُذَذُّ هَذَا لَقَعَهُ نَكَلٌ تَجْهَتُ.  
 هَذَا مَبِّ لَسِيْبٍ دِمُوحَهُ تَجْهَتُ مَبِّ دَقْلٍ ❖

### Another one

Bitter is the place of exile for an exile.  
 And continually sad is the wanderer's face while  
 wandering.  
 And when his land and people are mentioned, he falls  
 in sobbing.  
 And tears flow down, resembling water streams.

[4]

سَدَّ

يُتَذُّ دِمُوحَهُ لَقَعَهُ حَمِيْقٌ مُذَبِّذٌ.  
 لَقَعَهُ هَذَا دِمُوحَهُ مَبِّ هَذَا هَبِّهِمْ دِمُوحَهُ.  
 دَلَّتْ تَلَجْهَتُهُ دِمُوحَهُ حَمِيْقٌ تَجْهَتُ.  
 دَلَّتْ لَقَعَتُهُ مَبِّ هَذَا هَبِّهِمْ هَذَا ❖

### Another one

My brothers, how bitter is the place of exile,  
 [but] is the one who lives in it indigent?  
 His heart becomes hard like a diamond  
 that would bear any hardships, never losing hope.

[5]

ܠܫܢܢ ܝܬܝܢ ܫܠܡܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܚܕܝܢܐ  
 ܠܡܢ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܝܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
 ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
 ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
 ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

### Another one, in praise of exile

One who wants to be really amiable to mankind,  
 Would leave his place and live in wandering.  
 As a pearl has been taken from its shell,  
 It is well honored by people of the whole creation.

[6]

ܠܫܢܢ ܝܬܝܢ ܫܠܡܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
 ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
 ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
 ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

### Another one, that it is not appropriate for anyone to delay traveling

Water that stays in a pool for long  
 and does not pour out, a smell of stench comes from  
 it.

Thus, one who remains at the same place,  
 much degrades, even if he is proficient in wisdom.

## ṬALYĀ OF ḤAKMĪYĀ, AND HERMEZ: JERUSALEM, 1654/5 CE

Unlike all other texts that are being published and translated here for the first time, this one was rendered in the article by Sebastian Brock.<sup>33</sup> Since the original has not yet been reproduced, and also because of the poor condition and handwriting of the text (see fig. 1) and uncertainty of some names, it makes sense to publish it in both Syriac and English. Besides, the text is a rather important document on pilgrimage and the church history of East Syrians of the Ottoman period.

This pilgrim note found in manuscript SMMJ 159 (front flyleaf ii') was composed and written by a priest named Hermez, which is apparently, a Turkicised version of the popular Iranian name Hōrmēzd - as follows from the final invocation to pray God for him (see below, stanza 5). The note relates that three persons visited Jerusalem: one of them, a priest named Ṭalyā from the village of Ḥakmīyā, near Gāzartā returned to his place, while the author of the verses remained in the Holy City together with his deacon to serve Lord and His mother until they obtained the sacred fire (stanza 4). Despite the corruption of the first line one can see the digits that seem to be a date in the Seleucid era as is usual in Syriac manuscripts (see below, stanza 2).<sup>34</sup> Then we see 1966 AG as the dating of the described event, which corresponds to 1654/5 CE, as read by Brock.<sup>35</sup> According to Wilmshurst,<sup>36</sup> among East Syrian priests mentioned in the manuscript records or notes that survived from the Ottoman period there are two or three priests named Ṭalyā. If the dating of this note is read correctly, here one faces the earliest mentioned among them.<sup>37</sup> Most problematic is the correct reading of the deacon's name. Brock and Wilmshurst assume that 'Abdeh d-Māryā

<sup>33</sup> Brock, "East Syriac Pilgrims": 195.

<sup>34</sup> Or "era of Greece", Anno Graecorum, abridged as AG.

<sup>35</sup> Brock, "East Syriac Pilgrims": 195.

<sup>36</sup> Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 58, 71, 124, 220, 308.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 71, 124.

(“servant of the Lord”) mentioned in the same line with the word ‘deacon’ is his name (see below, stanza 3; see also fig. 1).<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, as is seen from the picture, *kezym* is found in the same verse right before the words *ܫܡܗ* *šmeh* (“his name”). I would assume that it is the name of the deacon. In the book by Wilmschurst, a person named Kāzūm, son of Nīsān from Tel Asqōf is mentioned.<sup>39</sup> Most likely, they were two persons with the same name rather than the same one, as the second is reported to live much later than the deacon mentioned in the note being discussed, namely in early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The name on the note in SMMJ 159 is vocalized with the first *rūkkākāhā*, so that the correct phonetic image might be Khāzūm (Hāzūm), while *‘Abdeh d-Maryā* is most likely just his epithet, “servant of the Lord”:

And a deacon with them  
 from the district of Thūmā,  
 whose name is Khāzūm (?), servant of the Lord,  
 deacon and Jerusalem pilgrim<sup>40</sup> (see below, stanza 3).

Most likely, the text has a poetic character, and strophic form. In fact, some of the asterisks – or to be precise, crosses in this case – that are used for stanza division might have been omitted in some places here, given the poor condition and the character of the text that was added as an impromptu note to an earlier manuscript. Since the very top of the folio is missing, one can assume that the initial line was completely lost, whereas the first one present that was following after it is heavily corrupted now. In this case the first stanza might have consisted originally of four lines, like in most similar poems, and just like the rest of this piece. With some exceptions, each

---

<sup>38</sup> Brock, “East Syriac Pilgrims”: 195; Wilmschurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 71.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 235.

<sup>40</sup> For this term see Kaufhold, H., “Der Ehrentitel ‘Jerusalem-pilger’ (syrisch maqdšāyā, arabisch maqdisī, armenisch mahtesi).” *Oriens Christianus* 75 (1991): 44-61.

stanza has a common rhyme at the end of each verse; all lines have seven syllables, which is quite typical for simple strophic poems.

The places mentioned in the note are located in the Ṭhūmā in Hakkari region, one of the tribes of that district, with its central village named Ṭhūmā Gawāyā.<sup>41</sup> This whole region is well known to have belonged to the Church line founded by Yōḥannān Sūlāqā in the mid-sixteenth century, and whose patriarchal seat was located in the village of Qūdšānīs in the same district by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> The village of Ḥakmīyā (or rather Ḥakamyā, following the vocalization in the poem) near Gāzartā, from where the priest Ṭalyā originates cannot be precisely located.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, it is not known for sure whether these persons belonged to the same patriarchate, or if they communicated and made a pilgrimage, belonging to the two rival East Syriac Church lines, which is also theoretically possible. This fact is not amazing though, but rather proves that the split within the Church did not necessarily mean much for ordinary believers.

From the standpoint of spelling, the text does not display the initial *alaph*, when a particle precedes the word: ܠܗܕܝܢ ܕܕܝܢܝܢܐ “in the region of Gāzartā” (stanza 2); ܠܡܝܬܝܗ “to His mother” (stanza 5).

[1] ... [In year] 1966 [of Greeks] <sup>44</sup> .... priest (?) of Jazira, to Jerusalem, the city of the Lord. His name is Hermez, a sinner, [2] and a noble one came with him, whose name is priest Ṭalyā, from the village of Ḥakamyā, <sup>45</sup>	... [1] ܠܗܕܝܢ ܕܕܝܢܝܢܐ / ܠܡܝܬܝܗ ... ܠܗܕܝܢ ܕܕܝܢܝܢܐ ܠܡܝܬܝܗ ܠܗܕܝܢ ܕܕܝܢܝܢܐ ܠܡܝܬܝܗ [2] ܠܗܕܝܢ ܕܕܝܢܝܢܐ ܠܡܝܬܝܗ ܠܗܕܝܢ ܕܕܝܢܝܢܐ ܠܡܝܬܝܗ
--	---

<sup>41</sup> Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 285, 297.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 295.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>44</sup> = 1654/5 CE.

<sup>45</sup> Or Ḥakmīyā (?).

ṬALYĀ OF QŪRĀNĀ (?): MONASTERY OF YA'QŌB ḤBĪŠĀ  
(JACOB THE RECLUSE) NEAR SEERT, BEFORE 1736 CE

<sup>46</sup> For the term **ܡܫܝܚܐ** see Kaufhold, “Der Ehrentitel ‘Jerusalem-pilger’: 44-61. Most interesting, the Syriac term seems to be constructed following the Arabic model (maqdisī) no earlier than in 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries (see Ibid: 47).

<sup>48</sup> Here, the stanza division sign – a cross – has almost completely disappeared, and is seen just as a couple of strokes at the very end of the line, after the words **ਸ੍ਰੀਗੁਰ**. The end of the stanza is also confirmed by the rhyme changing that follows immediately thereafter, and marks a new stanza.

<sup>49</sup> **فَهَانَت** (contemptible) is a marginal correction in the same hand after the original **سَيِّئَت** (sinner) that had been erased.

(fol. 129v, 144r; see figs. 2a-b, 3), none of which have published so far. Furthermore, two quatrains on his death are written on the flyleaves of the same manuscript in a different hand. They mention 1736 CE as the date of his passing away, which might mean he was a different person from Ṭalyā of Ḥakamyā (or Ḥakmīyā) mentioned in SMMJ 159 (see above), who visited Jerusalem in 1654/5 CE. From the standpoint of chronology, he could be the same Ṭalyā that visited the church of Mart Barbara in Karamlish in 1735 and commissioned a manuscript for it.<sup>50</sup>

### Poems on the death of the piest Ṭalyā (DCA 00065, fol. 2r)

تختي بعله ديم لـ قهنگدس ديمد مدد:  
 ههذ مج بللغ بللم مسبد مدد بلبل.  
 تبتن سوبد له مدد بلسه ب ميمتد مبلت:  
 مدد ميمه ب بلم بدمه ب تملخومد مدد ❖

Thus, in the year 1736 after the Nativity of Jesus Christ, priest Ṭalyā, a skillful teacher, passed away from this world

in the month of Ḥzīrān inside [the monastery of] Mār Ya'qōb, the famous and elevated.

May our Lord give him delight in the Kingdom of heaven with His saints.

تبتن

مدد مدد سوبد بل بلسه<sup>51</sup> دتتد مبللم:  
 مج بلسه مسمدس ت تفتد ليه هلم.  
 ميم ميمه ب تملخومد دهذد يسوم ب ميم:  
 مد بلم بدمه ب تملخومد تلم دتتد مسمد. ❖

<sup>50</sup> Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 220.

<sup>51</sup> Correction above the line in the same hand: مسمه.



Lord, pity the spirit<sup>52</sup> of the priest and teacher!  
Relieve him and us from gehenna and the gnashing of  
teeth!  
So that we may see him there, in the kingdom on high,  
among Your saints.  
Glory to Your name, for You listen to the voice of the  
pauper and trash.

The stanzas are finished, and pray for 'Īsā, who composed and wrote them.

[illegible]

In Arabic:

<sup>53</sup> Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 94.

هذا كتاب الغماطيق هو مال مَرِيعقوب الحبيس الذي هو كرسي

عظيم لمطرنية الكلدانية علي جانب مدينة اسعد

This book of grammar is a property of the monastery of Mar Jacob the Recluse, the great See of the Chaldean metropolis, near Seert.

These notes might have been made no earlier than the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when this monastery became a residence of a Chaldean metropolitan.<sup>54</sup> Then, in 1895, its library was transferred to Seert, and might have perished there during the massacre of 1915.<sup>55</sup> The manuscript under discussion apparently left this collection earlier, merged with the library of the Chaldean diocese of Alqosh under unknown circumstances, and so has reached us.

Thus, the author of the verses published below, named Ṭalyā, might have been a priest who visited the monastery of Jacob the Recluse near Seert and died there. Although there is no evidence of their connection to Jerusalem, they were added to the earlier manuscript as the poet visited the monastery near Seert, apparently, for a pilgrimage.

### **Madrašā (DCA 00065, fol.129v-130r)**

The piece is a typical sample of a mourning (or funeral) *madrašā* addressed on the death of the poet's brother (see fig. 2a-b). As it is usual for this genre, it has a refrain of short lines (*ʿumayā*), and several stanzas (*bātē*) of a rather complex and variable metrical structure. The evolution of the *madrašē* was recently discussed in detail by Murre-van den Berg.<sup>56</sup> The genre itself, which previously included a broad range of strophic hymns, was reused by the Syriac Renaissance authors for funeral services. Such poets as patriarch Elīyā III (1176-1190) and

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 96.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 96-97.

<sup>56</sup> Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, 176-181.

Īšōʿyahb bar Malkōn, metropolitan of Nisibis (active late 12<sup>th</sup>-early 13<sup>th</sup> century), are known to have contributed to this development. Numerous *madrāšē* were composed not only in Syriac, but also in Arabic and Neo-Aramaic.<sup>57</sup> Most of these hymns have a marking for what kind of persons they are meant to be performed: priests, deacons or laymen, male or female.

Later on, in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, this new use of this type of poems was employed by numerous authors, among whom are Īšōʿyahb bar Mqaddam, a 15<sup>th</sup>-century metropolitan of Arbela,<sup>58</sup> ʿAbdīšōʿ of Gāzartā, the second patriarch of the East Syrian Uniate Church, and Israel of Alqosh (active 1575-1630).<sup>59</sup> The former composed a number of funeral *madrāšā* on different persons, which might have been the further development of using this genre. Although mourning poems on the death of a precise person are not unknown to earlier Syriac tradition, and such a famous poet as Khāmīs bar Qardāhē (active late 13<sup>th</sup> century) addressed one to his dead son,<sup>60</sup> they usually belong to a different type of poem in terms of form and structure. The present piece is rather close to the poems composed by ʿAbdīšōʿ of Gāzartā, and in all likelihood, was impacted by his works. Among the Chaldean patriarch's *madrāšē*, is the one on the death of Yōhannān Sūlāqā, the first Chaldean patriarch, who died in 1553, as well as a funeral hymn on the 'martyrs of Union with Rome'.<sup>61</sup>

Since the poem is a later addition to the manuscript – an autograph of ʿAbdīšōʿ of Gāzartā – the space on the folio was not enough for it, and the last lines of the text (see stanza 9)

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 177.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 177.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>60</sup> See Manna, J. E., ed. *Morceaux choisis de littérature araméenne* (Mosul: Imprimerie des pères dominicains, 1901), vol. 2, 340; Hōšabbā, Š. Ī., ed. *Kāmīs bar Qardāhē. Mīmre w-mūšḥātā* (Iraq, 2002), 329-330; Pritula, A. D., "Khamis bar Qardahe (kon. XIII v.) i arbelskiy literaturniy krug." *Khristianskiy Vostok* 6 (12) (2012): 233-236.

<sup>61</sup> Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures*, 178.

were written in the right and upper margins with a few glosses inserted there from outside, in the same hand as the rest of the text.

The text consists of nine six-line stanzas, making a variable rhythmic pattern. Thus, each verse within the stanza has nine to twelve syllables. Each stanza has its own rhyme at the end of each line that uniting all the lines within it. The poem's content is rather typical for its genre that combines a lamentation and a prayer for the deceased person.

**מִדְּבַר דְּכִתְּבִי לְהַחֲיוֹת בְּכִתְּבִי** [fol.129v]

**חַל לְשׁוֹמֵר חַתָּתְךָ:**

**אֵה סִתְּבִיד תְּהַלְּלִי: יִשְׁכְּבֶנּוּ לִי לְמַדְּנָה:**

**וּמִתְּבִיד לִי לְחַבְּלֶנּוּ. דְּשׁוּבָה דְּשׁוּבָה:**

**תָּא:**

[1] **בְּחַיִּי הָיִיתְּ מִיָּאָדָם תִּדְבַּר סִתְּבִיד.**

**בְּכִתְּבִי דְּכִתְּבִי לְמַדְּנָה תְּחַלְּסִי וְלִתְּבִיד.**

**דְּבִידָה מְהֵרָה מְהֵרָה מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד סִתְּבִיד מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

**וּמִתְּבִיד תְּחַלְּסִי מְהֵרָה לְשׁוֹמֵר.**

<sup>62</sup> Added above the line in the same hand.

[illegible]

*Come, brothers, properly, worship our Lord, and glorify Him  
with a double strength, for He is our boast!*

[1] Let us cry, sob and weep with sorrowful tears  
about a servant that pleased his Lord in all appropriate  
ways.

For death has robbed him from brotherhood  
and imprisoned him in a grave according to human  
custom.

<sup>63</sup> Starting with this line, the text of the poem continues in the margins with the insertion of some extra words. For this reason, the line division is not quite clear here, which also follows from meter and rhyme problems.

And it dressed me in bitter sufferings and sad  
mourning.<sup>64</sup>

And there is no power in me left so to escape weakness.

[2] Your family and aunts<sup>65</sup> are weeping with me about  
you.

And all the friends are dressed in grief and passion,  
since you were the boast of all your kinsmen

and a glory of all your family members.

That is why Justus<sup>66</sup> pleases you in the chamber of  
delights,

and there He gives you a share with Enoch and Elijah.

[3] I ask you, oh Lord of the heights,

and plead also the friends of yours,<sup>67</sup> Jesus,

when you come to resurrect the rational ones,

and to judge all the earthly ones,

may that servant, who died in Your name, not be seen  
in sorrows.

And may he hear You say to him: "Come and enter the  
life!"

[4] On the day streams cease on the inhabitable earth,

[fol. 130r] And the water in the seas dries up, as well as  
in rivers,

and the earth stays deserted,

and gets rolled together as a parchment scroll,

on that day be clement, oh the Clement one, to this son  
of the soil,

and be absolver of his transgressions through your  
mercy and grace.

[5] On the day this world is disturbed and the creatures  
terrified,

and the slanderer, the hater of the humankind is scared,  
and falls into shame and shivering,

---

<sup>64</sup> Literally: mourning of sadness.

<sup>65</sup> On the father's side.

<sup>66</sup> I.e. Jesus; cf. Colossians 4:11.

<sup>67</sup> Or: mercies of yours.

beats his breast and he stays ashamed,  
 may this servant of yours enter the banquet with you  
 and rejoice at this feast for the sons of the Kingdom.  
 [6] On the day when all the orbs fall down, like leaves,  
 from the sky at the order of our Lord, and go down to  
     the earth,  
 the good ones will arise to heaven at your command,  
 and the evil ones will gnash with their teeth on the  
     earth.  
 On that day be clement, oh the clement one, to this  
     son of humans,  
 and elevate him above the Pleiades and the Zodiac.  
 [7] On the day, when the four elements that were  
     forming support  
 come to non-existence, and villages are ruined,  
 mountains are destroyed by the device  
 of the justice, and people fly up,  
 and the spirits sing before you like Sirens,  
 may this servant sing an ode and doxology with them.  
 [8] On the day you set the twelve thrones,  
 and You will seat the Apostles, the sons of the  
     teaching, there.  
 And you will enfeeble the Jews' ears,  
 so that they demand the revenge for you to them, and  
     you judge them.  
 On this day, be clement, our Lord, as you are  
     accustomed,  
 and have mercy on this servant of Yours, as you  
     (better) know.  
 [9] On that day, when it never becomes evening or  
     dusks,  
 and none is like it among other days.  
 And it won't fall down to be dried by drought,<sup>68</sup>  
 Hold your servant worthy of reward out of grace, and  
     may he take it from your hand.

---

<sup>68</sup> The verse seems to be rather obscure.



Since he drank Your Blood from the chalice and  
 approached the mystery of your Body,  
 may he enter the chamber with you, and may his name  
 be written there.

***Quatrains (DCA 00065, fol. 144r-144v)***

On the rear flyleaves of the same manuscript, five quatrains ascribed to the same author, the priest ʿTalyā, are written in the same hand (see fig. 3a-b). They represent the clear influence or even an imitation of the Syriac Renaissance poetic models. First of all, it is at that time that this form was first exploited by this literary tradition. Such renowned authors of the 13<sup>th</sup> century as Yūḥannōn bar Maʿdanī (died 1263), Grīgoriūs bar ʿEbrōyō (1226-1286) in the West Syrian Church and Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē (active late 13<sup>th</sup> century) in the East Syrian tradition contributed to its development, and the first of the three seems to have been the inventor of this new poetic style.

By the time this small set of texts was written in the earlier manuscript, the quatrain form became very popular and widely circulated, in particular being very suitable for poetic additions on various subjects due to its brevity. The five short poems under discussion, nevertheless, are close the Syriac Renaissance not just in its formal features, but also in its style. They all are addressed to a beloved, in a physical or mystical understanding or, more likely, using both these semantic layers, that were the contents of the quatrains by Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē, carefully studied by Mengozzi.<sup>69</sup> This East Syriac author is also known

---

<sup>69</sup> A. Mengozzi, “Persische Lyrik in syrischem Gewand: Vierzeiler aus dem Buch des Khamis bar Qardahe (Ende 13. Jh.).” *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums: Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011*. Ed. by Tamcke, M. and Grebenstein, S. Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 46 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014): 155-176; Mengozzi, A., “Quatrains on Love by Khamis bar Qardahe: Syriac Sufi Poetry.” *Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum 60. Geburtstag*. Ed. by Griffith, S. H. and Grebenstein, S. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015): 331-344; see also an edition of the

to have composed a wine ode of mystical character in the summer residence of the Ilkhans – a Mongol dynasty that established its power over Iraq and West Iran after 1258.<sup>70</sup>

It is well-known that two bilingual poems – a Syro-Persian<sup>71</sup> and a Syro-Turkish one<sup>72</sup> that were recently studied and edited – are also ascribed to Khāmīs. In the quatrains published below Persian, Arabic, Turkic and Kurdish words are used, and all of them are often met in a same short poem. In contents and style, the group of the poems being discussed here is very close to the Syro-Persian poem ascribed to Khāmīs. The latter is also present in the earliest manuscript of his poems (CCM 419, olim Diyarbakir 91) dated 1394/5, and was published by Mengozzi.<sup>73</sup> It is obviously an imitation of popular Persian poetry focusing on wine and love topics. The

whole poem collection ascribed to Khāmīs: Hōšabbā, Š. Ī., ed. *Khāmīs bar Qardāhē. Mēmre w-mušhātā* (Iraq, 2002).

<sup>70</sup> See Taylor, D. G. K., “Your Sweet Saliva is the Living Wine’: Drink, Desire, and Devotion in the Syriac Wine Songs of Khāmīs Bar Qardāhē.” *The Syriac Renaissance*. Ed. Teule, H., Tauwinkl, C. F., et al., *Eastern Christian Studies* (Leuven / Paris / Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010): 46-47; Pritula, A., “Zwei Gedichte des Hāmīs bar Qardāhē: Ein Hochgesang zu Ehren von Bar ‘Ebrōyō und ein Wein-Gedicht für die Khan-Residenz.” *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums: Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011*. Ed. Tamcke, M. and Grebenstein, S., *Göttinger Orientforschungen*, I. Reihe: Syriaca 46 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014): 424-426.

<sup>71</sup> See Mengozzi, “Persische Lyrik in syrischem Gewand”: 173-174.

<sup>72</sup> See Pritula, A., “Syroturcica: A Bilingual Poem from the Mongol Time.” *Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum 60. Geburtstag*. Ed. Griffith, S. H. and Grebenstein, S. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015): 345-357; a critical edition of the text with a detailed commentary on the Syriac and Turkic stanzas is planned to be published by myself in co-authorship with Peter Zieme.

<sup>73</sup> Mengozzi, “Persische Lyrik in syrischem Gewand”: 173-174; see also W. Heffening, “Liturgische Texte der Nestorianer und Jakobiten in Süd-Türkischen Mundarten.” *Oriens Christianus* 11 [33] (1936): 232-235; Mingana, A., “The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East: A New Document”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 9, no. 2 (1925): 338.

influence of this Syriac Persianized poetry that developed in the Mongol period is even emphasized in the quatrains by priest ʿTalyā. Thus, in the first one published here, ܕܢܒܝܢ ܕܬܬܐܪܝܐ (‘khan of the Tatars’) is mentioned, as an expression of extreme beauty. Grammatically, this is a typical Persian collocation using two glosses of this language connected with *izāfe* (classical Pers. *-i*, modern Pers. *-e*), a particle used in the Persian language to link two words together. It is met in these pieces a few times (quatrain 1, ܕܠܝܠܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ‘full moon’; quatrain 4, ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ‘the greatest shah’), as well as *lar*, Turkic plural formant, is used here for Turkish loanwords. Obviously, this small group of texts was meant to reflect and demonstrate the multilingual and multicultural interaction in the Near East of the Ottoman period, but exploiting the parallelism with the similar situation in the Mongol empire in late 13<sup>th</sup> century. This also confirms an observation that the Syriac Renaissance literary style was treated as a model for imitation by numerous writers using this language in the later centuries.

In the poems under discussion, both the *madrāšā* and the quatrains, the instability of opposition of *a/ā* is clearly seen in the vocalization. Thus, *zqāpā* is used even in cases when one normally assumes short *a* (*madrāšā*, stanza 1 ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ‘brotherhood’), while *ptāḥā* is met even in some words with *ā* (quatrain 1 ܕܡܠܝܚܐ; here: ‘very’). This uncertainty is valid for the Persian and Arabic loanwords as well (quatrain 1 ܕܬܬܐܪܝܐ ‘Tatars’, cf. *Pers.* *tātār*; quatrain 3 ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ‘sick’; cf. *Pers.* *bīmār*). The same may be noted about the opposition of *e/ē* (*madrāšā*, stanza 1 ܕܡܠܝܚܐ ‘we will cry’). The reason for such a drift in rendering vowels in the text might be the spread of Neo-Aramaic, where the phonematic significance of the quantitative opposition disappeared, and

[fol.144r] אָדאַר דעם עטעם דאָס געבן אַלעס.  
 געבן: דעם דעם דאָס געבן אַלעס.

[1]

تَبَقُّعًا وَلِلنَّاسِ هَوًى مُجْتَمِعًا فَجَلَّ لَكَ الْكَذِبُ ۖ يُجِذُّونَ  
بِأَلْسِنَتِهِم مَّجْهَدًا لِّكَ لَوْ كُنَّا فَذُكِّرُوا هَذَا مُصَدِّقًا  
لِّمَا فِي سُلُوكِهِمْ ۖ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ أَجْتَبَا فَسُكِّنَا  
فِي الْمَدِينَةِ ۚ وَوَدَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْيَحْيَىٰ ۚ وَتَمَّ لَهُ الْوُفُوقُ ۚ

Behold, a shah and a sovereign bow their heads and  
necks before you.

**قَمَرٌ** *Ar.* qamar 'moon'

<sup>77</sup> Or: your believer.

𐤏𐤍𐤔 𐤊𐤏𐤔 *Pers.* ḥān-i tātār ‘Khan of the Tatars’

ܒܐܣܬ *Turk.* bāš ‘head’; with the Syriac post-positive article –ā (displaying St. Emph.) attached

ܫܬ *Pers.* šah ‘shah, king’

ܚܘܢܕܟܐ *Pers.* hūndkār ‘lord, sovereign’ (<ḥudāvandgār)

[2]

ܐܕܡ ܐܕܡ

ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ  
 ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ  
 ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ  
 ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܬܬ ܕܐܕܡ

#### Another stanza

And all sons of Adam are connected with you (?)  
 When they stand to ... your statue very much (?).  
 Your mouth resembles a vessel full of gold, oh, king  
 of horsemen.  
 How long will you hate me, and your heart will be  
 grieved because of me?

#### Loanwords

ܩܪܐܫܘܬ *Turk.* qarāšūḥ ‘mixed, mingled’

ܒܝܫܐ *Pers.* besyār ‘very much’ (?)

ܫܬ ܫܘܒܐ *Pers.* šah suvār ‘king of horsemen’

ܫܐ *Pers.* sār ‘grief, sorrow’

[3]

سَدَّ

نَبِيٍّ وَهَيْبَةٍ مُّجِيدَةٍ تَهْتَفُ بِعِزِّهِ  
 دُجْجَةً يَخْتَضُّ فِيهِ لَيْثٌ فِي مَبْهَةِ حَقِّهِ  
 هَبَّ ذَيْبٌ قَهْقَرٍ مِّمَّسِلٍ فَجَدَّ دُجْجَةً تَبْجَدُ  
 ٢٥ كَ سَوِيحٍ مِّمَّسِلٍ لَيْثٌ حَلَمٌ قَدْ كَدَّ

## Another one

Your brightness is honorable, your stature is high like  
a pine tree.

And your taste is pleasant and sweet for palate, like  
water of Kawther.<sup>78</sup>

And from the scent of your breath, a body that is sick  
obtains healing.

And if I don't see you, my heart would fail one  
hundred [and] four [times] (?) a day.

Loanwords

نَبِيٍّ *Ar.*, *Pers.* šanawbar 'pine tree'

دُجْجَةً *Ar.* kawṭar 'Kawther' (sacred stream; Qur'an 108:1);  
rendering *t* of the Arabic word as *s* apparently speaks for its  
borrowing in the Persian pronunciation.

تَبْجَدُ *Pers.* bīmār 'sick'

قَدْ كَدَّ Apparently, *Pers.* šad 'hundred' + čār 'four' = one  
hundred [and] four; or four hundred, which would be an  
inversion though.

---

<sup>78</sup> Apparently, the Quranic sacred stream is meant (Qur'an, 108:1), one of the most popular subjects in Islamic exegetic and poetic tradition.

[4]

ܠܫܢܐ

ܐܝܬܐ ܩܠܬܐ ܡܢ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܦܪܫܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
 ܡܫܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
 ܡܫܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ  
 ܡܫܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ

## Another one

Your brightness is beautiful and more precious than a  
 turquoise necklace.

Your syllogism is better than a ruby of the greatest  
 shah.<sup>79</sup>

And your image is mixed with pearls, diamonds and  
 gems.

Your scent is pleasant, like the scent of musk and  
 ambergris.

Loanwords

ܦܪܫܐ *Pers.* p(/f)īrōze ‘turquoise’

ܠܫܢܐ *Ar.* la‘l ‘ruby’

ܡܫܠܡܐ *Pers.* šāh ‘shah, king’

ܕܡܝܬܐ *Ar.* akbar ‘the greatest’

ܠܡܠܟܐ *Ar.* lu‘lu’ ‘pearl’

ܕܡܝܬܐ *Turk., Pers.* almās ‘diamond’

ܕܡܝܬܐ *Ar.* durr ‘pearl’

ܕܡܝܬܐ *Ar.* jawhar ‘gem’

ܡܝܬܐ *Ar., Pers.* misk ‘musk’

ܡܝܬܐ *Ar., Pers.* ‘anbar ‘ambergris’

<sup>79</sup> Or, rather: ‘Shah Akbar’. The latter was the famous emperor (1542-1605) of the Great Moghuls’ dynasty in India, which was famous for its precious stones, especially rubies.

١٤٤ [fol. 144v]

١٥ ————— تَدَّ يَتَدُّ ذِي تَدَدٍ  
 دَسَدٌ دَسَدٌ ذِي دَسَدٍ  
 دَعَتِ دَعَاتٍ ذِي دَعَاتٍ  
 دَلَّتْ دَلَلَاتٍ ذِي دَلَلَاتٍ

Come, my beloved ones, my companions and  
brothers,  
to rejoice and take pleasure in the sugar lips.  
The teeth of his mouth resemble pearls of the sultans.  
So my heart is boiled from the desire of him, and the  
liver has burnt.

**قارداش** *Turk.* qardaş ‘brother’

ﻻ *Kurd.* lēv 'lip'

**شکر** *Pers., Turk.* šakar 'sugar'

لؤلؤ *Ar.* lu'lu' 'pearl'

سولتان (sic!) = سولتان *Ar., Pers., Turk.* sūlṭān ‘sultan’

جِجَر *Pers. jegar* 'liver'

The poems published here represent literary tastes of East Syriac educated circles of the Ottoman period. These text collections appeared as later additions in the manuscripts written by ‘Abdišō’ of Gāzartā, the first poet and the second patriarch (1555-1570) of the East Syriac Uniate Church. Thanks to the information found in the poems and other manuscript notes, one can date those pieces rather precisely:



1644 CE for the poems by ‘Abdīšō‘ of Ātēl, and no later than 1736 CE for ones composed by priest Ṭalyā, since that is the date of death given in the poem on his decease. The latter should be definitely distinguished from the priest with the same name from the village of Ḥakamyā (or Ḥakmīyā), who is known as a pilgrim to Jerusalem in mid-seventeenth century, and as a donor of a number of manuscripts to Nestorian monastery of Virgin Mary in this city. Both seem to be clerics of the Qūdshānīs line, founded by Yōhannān Sūlāqā in the mid-sixteenth century. One may come to such a conclusion based on indirect historical information and the ownership notes in the manuscript DCA 00065, which belonged to the monastery of Jacob the Recluse near Seert, the residence of the patriarchs and then – after their moving to Qūdshānīs – a residence of the metropolitans of the above-mentioned patriarchate line. That is rather substantial information for the understanding of the manuscript transmission within the two existing East Syriac patriarchates at that period. And then it seems also quite natural that both manuscripts used for the versed notes were originally copied by ‘Abdīšō‘ of Gāzartā, a hierarch of this line, which means they circulated within the same patriarchate.

These small texts, usually having very little or even nothing to do with the main manuscript text, represent a kind of verse notes made by different persons, and might reflect popular poetic tastes of the period. Short poems, especially quatrains, are an ideal form for such poetic activities. Judging from their great number, the spread of short poems was constantly increasing since the time the Syriac Renaissance, when they were first borrowed from Persian poetry. Such short poems were definitely associated with the Islamic poetic tradition, and therefore their authors intentionally imitated the latter both in imagery and in numerous loan-words that are met here much more often than in longer versified texts. Apparently, the multi-lingual poems of the Mongol period (second half of the 13<sup>th</sup>-early 14<sup>th</sup> century) – the heyday of the Syriac literary

tradition in Islamic period – were treated as appropriate models to portray contemporary cultural life of the multi-lingual Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire.

The popularity of this type of text by itself was obviously a result of a long coexistence in Muslim surroundings. Interestingly enough, there is a certain category of such pilgrim poems written by the visitors of Islamic sanctuaries at about the same time. The latter are found as graffiti in numerous architectural monuments in Central Asia and the Near East.<sup>80</sup> The subject of such verses may vary from love topics with a possible mystical subtext to autobiographical notes on the pilgrimage. Unlike the latter, the Syriac pieces discussed here – at least some of them – seem to have been written not by their composers themselves, but rather by other persons, which follows from the rubrics. Apparently, such pieces had a relatively wide circulation among educated East Syriac Christians of both Uniate and non-Uniate Churches.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brock, S. P., “East Syriac Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Early Ottoman Period.” *ARAM* 18-19 (2006-2007): 189-201.
- Butts, A. M., “The Afflictions of Exile: A Syriac Memrā by David Puniqāyā.” *Le Muséon* 122:1-2 (2009): 53-80.
- Chabot, J. B., “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques conservés dans la bibliothèque du Patriarcat grec orthodoxe de Jérusalem.” *Journal asiatique* IX, 3 (1894): 92-134.
- Dolabani, F. Yu. and Ibrahim, G. Yo., *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in St. Mark's Monastery (Dairo Dmor Marqos)* (Damascus: Sidawi Printing House, 1994).

---

<sup>80</sup> Yastrebova, O., and Pritula, A., “Muhammad Bashshara: The Saint's Image in Historical Sources, Folklore, Literature and Epigrpahs.” *Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha. Bukharskii oasis i ego sosedi v drevnosti i srednevekovje*, LXXV (2015): 397-398.

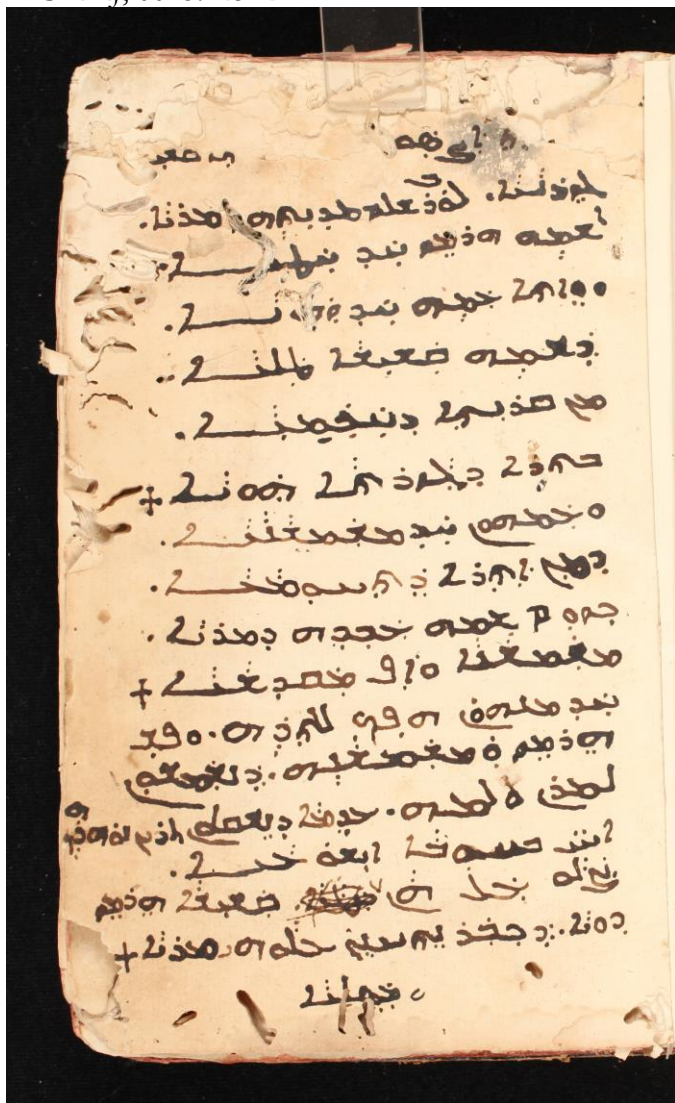
- Giamil, S., *Genuinae relationes inter sedem apostolicam et assyriorum orientalium seu chaldaeorum ecclesiam nunc major ex parte primum editae historicisque adnot. Illustratae* (Rome: Loescher, 1902).
- Ḥōšabbā, Š. Ī., ed. *Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē. Mēmre w-mušḥatā* (Iraq, 2002).
- Heffening, W., “Liturgische Texte der Nestorianer und Jakobiten in Süd-Türkischen Mundarten.” *Oriens Christianus* 11 [33] (1936): 232–235.
- Kaufhold, H., “Der Ehrentitel “JerusalemPilger” (syrisch maqdšāyā, arabisch maqdisī, armenisch mahtesi).” *Oriens Christianus* 75 (1991): 44–61.
- Leroy, J., *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient. Contribution à l'étude de l'iconographie des églises de langue syriaque* (Paris: Geuthner, 1964).
- Manna, J. E., ed. *Morceaux choisis de littérature araméenne* (Mosul: Imprimerie des pères dominicains, 1901).
- Meinardus, O., “The Nestorians in Egypt. A Note on the Nestorians in Jerusalem.” *Oriens Christianus* 51 (1967): 112–129.
- Mengozzi, A., “Persische Lyrik in syrischem Gewand: Vierzeiler aus dem Buch des Khamis bar Qardaḥe (Ende 13. Jh.).” *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums: Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011*. Ed. by Tamcke, M. and Grebenstein, S. *Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca* 46 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014): 155–176.
- Mengozzi, A., “Quatrains on Love by Khamis bar Qardaḥe: Syriac Sufi Poetry.” *Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum 60. Geburtstag*. Edited by

- Griffith, Sidney Harrison and Grebenstein, Sven (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015): 331-344.
- Mingana, A., "The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East: A New Document." *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 9, no. 2 (1925): 297-371.
- Murre-van den Berg, H.L., *Scribes and Scriptures. The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces (1500-1850)*, Eastern Christian Studies 21 (Leuven: Peeters, 2015).
- Pritula, A. D., "Khamis bar Qardahe (kon. XIII v.) i arbelskiy literaturniy krug." *Khristianskiy Vostok* 6 (12) (2012): 216-243.
- Pritula, A., "Zwei Gedichte des Ḥāmīs bar Qardāḥē: Ein Hochgesang zu Ehren von Bar ʿEbrōyō und ein Wein-Gedicht für die Khan-Residenz." *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums: Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011*. Ed. Tamcke, M. and Grebenstein, S., Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 46 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014): 315-328.
- Pritula, A., "Syroturcica: A Bilingual Poem from the Mongol Time." *Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum 60. Geburtstag*. Ed. Griffith, S. H. and Grebenstein, S. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015): 345-357.
- Pritula, A., "'Abdišō' of Gazarta, the First Literate of the Chaldean Church: Poems Dedicated to the Popes of Rome", *Vsetnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta. Vostokovedenie i afrikanistika*, vol. 10, issue 3 (2018): 374-391.
- Rücker, A., "Ein alter Handschriftenkatalog des ehemaligen nestorianischen Klosters in Jerusalem." *Oriens Christianus* III, 6 [28] (1931): 90-96.

- Stewart, C., OSB, "An Update on the Digitization and Cataloging Work of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML)." *Khristianskiy Vostok* 8 (XIV) (2017): 153-171.
- Taylor, D. G. K., "Your Sweet Saliva is the Living Wine': Drink, Desire, and Devotion in the Syriac Wine Songs of Khāmīs Bar Qardāhē." *The Syriac Renaissance*. Ed. Teule, H., Tauwinkl, C. F, et al., *Eastern Christian Studies (Leuven / Paris / Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010): 31-52.*
- Tsereteli, K. G., *Sovremennyi assiriiskii jazyk*. Jazyki narodov Azii i Afriki (Moscow: Nauka, 1964).
- Wilmshurst, D. , *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East, 1318-1913*, CSCO, Subsidia 104 (Louvain: Peeters, 2000).
- Yastrebova, O., and Pritula, A., "Muhammad Bashshara: The Saint's Image in Historical Sources, Folklore, Literature and Epigrpahs." *Trudy Gosugarstvennogo Ermitazha. Bukharskii oasis i ego sosedi v drevnosti i srednevekovje*, LXXV (2015): 392-399.

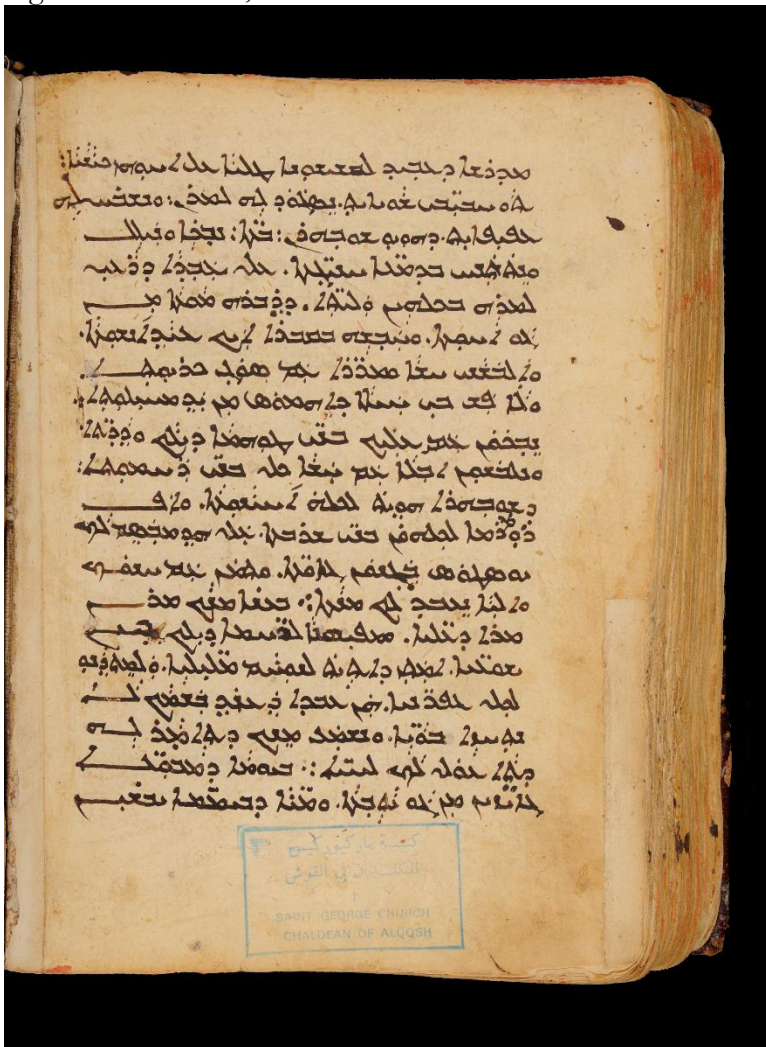
## IMAGES

Fig. 1: SMMJ, 00159 fol. 2r



Saint Mark's Monastery, Jerusalem, MS SMMJ 00159 fol. 2r. Photos courtesy of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's University, Minnesota, USA. Published with permission of the Saint Mark Monastery, Jerusalem. All rights reserved.

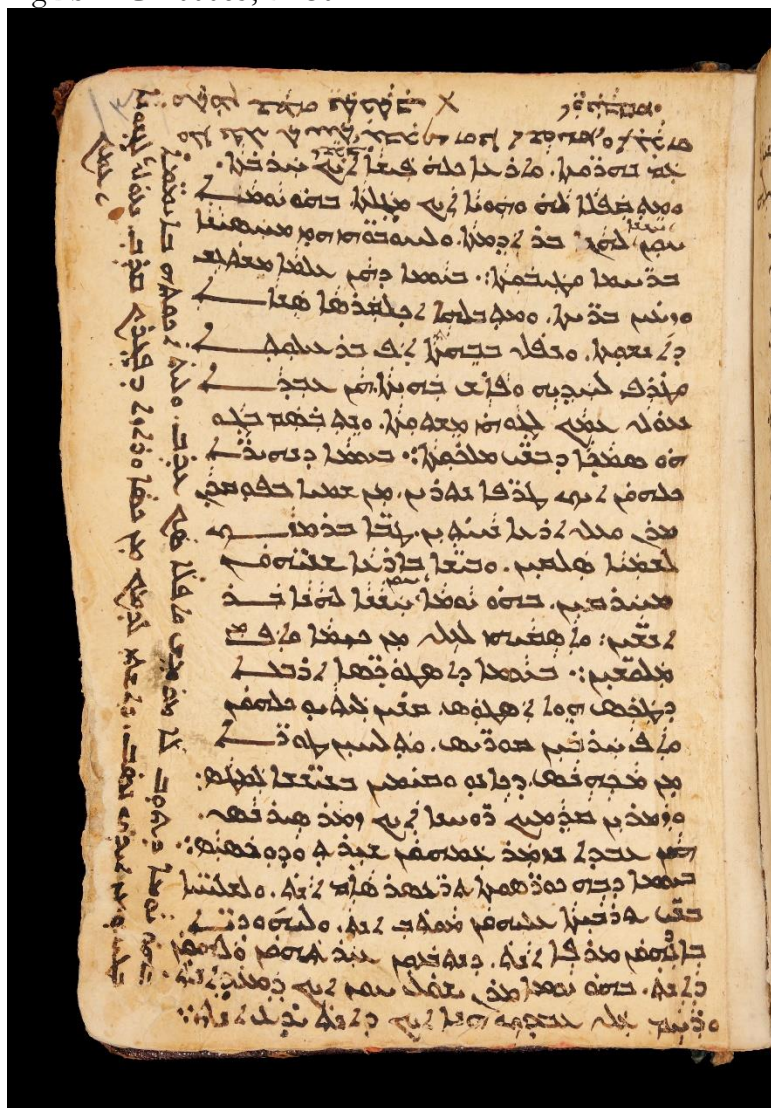
Fig 2a: DCA 00065, f. 129v



Chaldean Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq, MS DCA 00065 fols. 129v, 130r, 144rv. Photos courtesy of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's University, Minnesota, USA. Published with permission of the Chaldean Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq. All rights reserved.



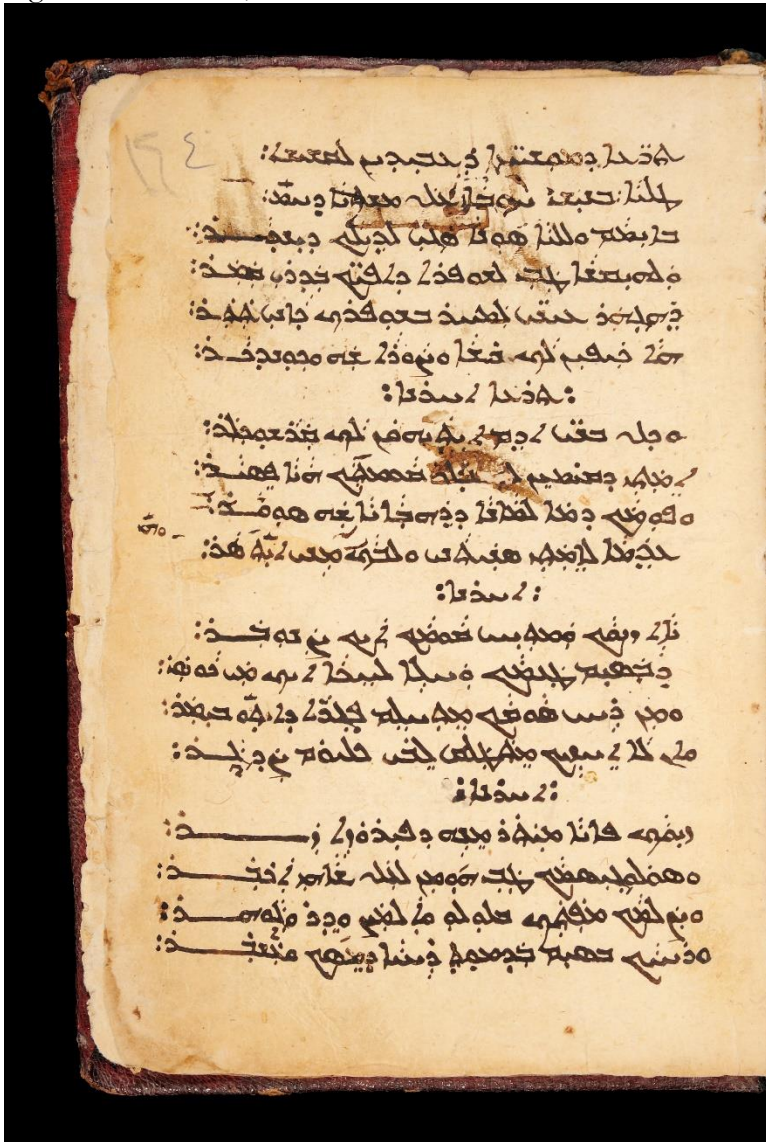
Fig 2b: DCA 00065, f. 130r



Chaldean Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq, MS DCA 00065 fols. 129v, 130r, 144rv.  
 Photos courtesy of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's  
 University, Minnesota, USA. Published with permission of the Chaldean  
 Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq. All rights reserved.

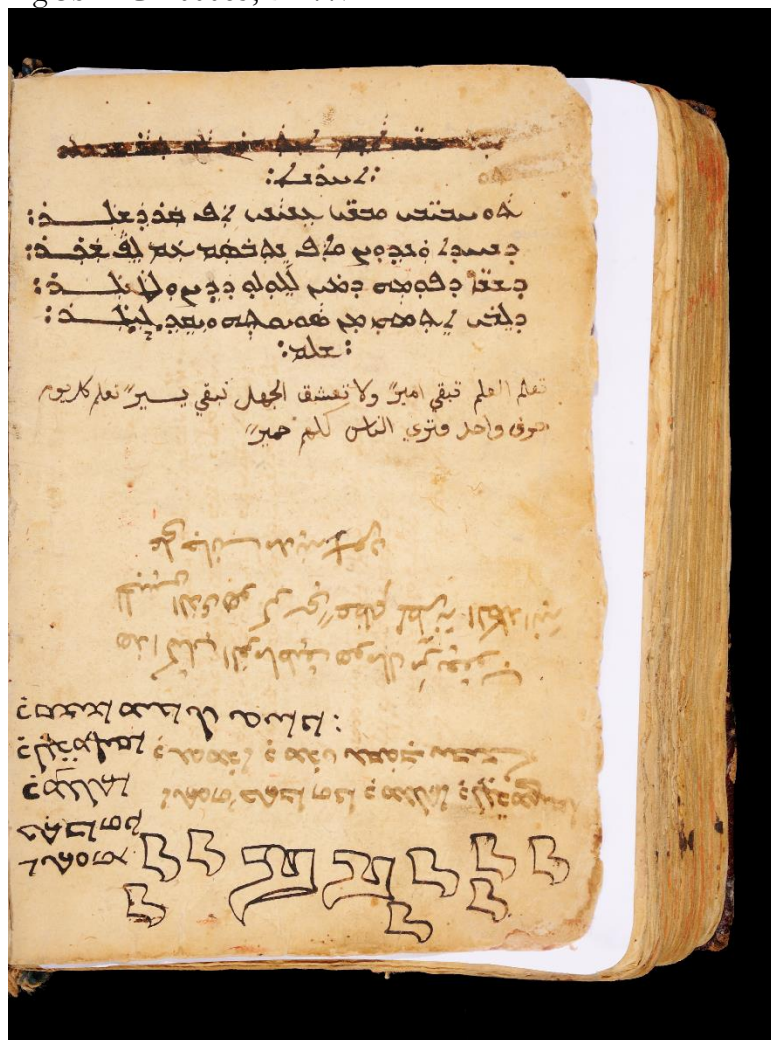


Fig 3a: DCA 00065, f. 144r



Chaldean Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq, MS DCA 00065 fols. 129v, 130r, 144rv. Photos courtesy of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's University, Minnesota, USA. Published with permission of the Chaldean Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq. All rights reserved.

Fig 3b: DCA 00065, f. 144v



Chaldean Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq, MS DCA 00065 fols. 129v, 130r, 144rv.  
 Photos courtesy of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's  
 University, Minnesota, USA. Published with permission of the Chaldean  
 Diocese of Alqūsh, Iraq. All rights reserved.