BOOK REVIEWS

Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay, eds., *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press & Beth Mardutho, The Syriac Institute, 2011). Pp. xl + 539 including 20 plates and 5 maps; $160 for Institutions, $98 for individuals.

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The Gorgias Encyclopedia of the Syriac Heritage (GEDSH) is a landmark in Syriac scholarship. It provides greater coverage of the Syriac heritage than any other modern reference work.[1] A copy should be within arm's reach of every scholar and student working in the field of Syriac studies, and it certainly belongs in the library of every person interested in the Syriac heritage.

So, what is in it? GEDSH offers 622 articles that fall into the following broad categories: Syriac authors and texts (271 articles, spanning the 2nd–20th centuries); modern Syriac scholars and scribes (103 articles); thematic and topical entries (99 articles); Syriac clerics (75 articles); and places (74 articles). The volume is further enriched by the inclusion of five especially prepared maps, patriarchal lists, and a general index. An introductory note by George Kiraz explains the evolution of the project and promises its continuation in both print and electronic forms.[2] The editors' preface is a model of modest and succinct clarity, and nicely anticipates many of the questions of potential readers (and reviewers).

Despite its abundance of articles GEDSH is not comprehensive, either in depth or coverage. Nor did it aspire to be. Instead, the editors made the pragmatic decision to produce a useful refer-

[1] This review should be read in conjunction with, Kristian S. Heal, "The GEDSH and Related Resources" (available at http://byu.academia.edu/KristianHeal/Resources). This spreadsheet provides a sortable list of authors and articles, together with cross references to related resources. Entries can also be sorted by category and date. A notes section includes additional bibliography and comments.

[2] The electronic version will be prepared in collaboration with the Syriac Reference Portal (www.syriaca.org). In that form GEDSH will become part of a growing number of linked ancient world resources, and be even more useful and useable.

ence work in a timely way, hoping that in doing so it would also "lay at least the ground work" for a comprehensive encyclopedia of the Syriac tradition (ix). For this all-important first step the editors decided to limit the focus of GEDSH to "the Classical Syriac expression of Syriac Christianity" (x). In other words, GEDSH is primarily about Syriac authors, the texts they wrote, the places they lived in and wrote about, and the scholars who have studied them.

With the outline and disclaimers out the way, the reader should now ask, how do I make the most of GEDSH? This may seem a silly question. Surely a newly purchased encyclopedia or dictionary should be put straight on the shelf, to wait patiently until needed. Well, yes and no. Certainly this reference work will be most frequently consulted in response to a particular query. However, one of the most valuable features of GEDSH is the proliferation of generous thematic articles that brilliantly orient the curious reader to broader issues and provide context for many individual entries. These serve as extremely useful entry points for anyone interested in exploring the richness of GEDSH and broadening their horizons in Syriac studies.

Where to start? There is unfortunately no general article on Syriac Literature.[3] However, this lacuna is abundantly compensated for by the extended surveys of particular genres (Apocalypses; Arabic, Syriac Translations from; Bible; Chronicles; Exegesis (separate articles for Old and New Testament); Greek, Syriac Translation from; Hagiography; Historiography; Inscriptions; Juridical literature; Liturgy; Medicine; Melkite Literature; and Poetry).

Those interested in linguistic matters can turn to the articles on Syriac Language and Syriac Lexicography, with cross-references to both ancient and modern practitioners.

For those interested in cross-cultural contacts, there is an extremely interesting series of articles on Syriac contacts with Armenian Christianity, Coptic Christianity, Ethiopic Christianity, Georgian Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

Many scholars are turning to the manuscripts in their research. Those interested in doing so will be well rewarded by reviewing the

[3] The most recent extended encyclopedia article on the topic in English is by Arthur Vööbus in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th ed., published in 1968.

articles on Bible Manuscripts; Colophons; Manuscripts; Palimpsests; Papyri, Syriac; Scribes; and Script, Syriac.

Lastly, few Syriac scholars feel entirely comfortable explaining the origins of and relationships between the various Syriac churches. For the curious, and those who want to impress their guests at dinner parties, the series of articles on the Syriac Churches are the perfect primer (British Orthodox Church; Chaldean Catholic Church; Chaldean Syrian Church; Chaldeans; Church of the East; Malabar Catholic Church; Malabar Independent Syrian Church; Malankara Catholic Church; Malankara Syriac Orthodox Church; Mar Thoma Syrian Church (Malankara); Maronite Church; Syriac Catholic Church; Syriac Orthodox Church; Thomas Christians).

A striking feature of GEDSH, at least when looked at by the numbers, is the considerable attention given to modern scholars of the Syriac tradition. This is more than a vestige of the original plan of the Encyclopedia, with its biographical focus. Rather, it is a sign of the maturing of the field of Syriac studies. As the field has grown and developed, there has been a commensurate increase of interest in tracing the intellectual genealogy of its modern practitioners, which takes the form both of biographical research and history of scholarship.[4] Of course, this observation may well apply to GEDSH as a whole. It takes a critical mass of scholars (in this case 76) to produce a dictionary of this magnitude and scope.[5]

Finally, one cannot spend time with GEDSH without wanting to give thanks to the editors and publisher of this volume. To bring consistency to and rid error from such a large and complex volume is a stakanovian feat. But that is not the limit of the editors' contribution. Between them, the four editors also authored or co-authored 363 of GEDSH's 622 articles. Certainly each of the 76 contributors deserves a portion of our thanks for their work, but the editors deserve a five-fold portion! Likewise, Gorgias Press is to be thanked for producing this beautifully typeset and richly illustrated volume, and for publishing it at such a reasonable price.

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[4] This latter area is less developed, with a few exceptions (e.g. William Peterson, *Tatian's Diatessaron: Its Creation, Dissemination, Significance & History in Scholarship* [Leiden: Brill, 1994]).

[5] And of course, it will take an even larger group to replicate for Syriac studies the exemplary *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, prepared under the editorship of Prof. Dr. Dr. Siegbert Uhlig.

Sebastian P. Brock, *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Veil on Moses' Face: Translation and Introduction*, Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 20: The Metrical Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Fascicle 1 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009). Pp. x + 70; $35.00.

Aaron Michael Butts, *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Tower of Babel: Translation and Introduction*, Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 21: The Metrical Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug, Fascicle 15 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009). Pp. vii + 64; $35.00.

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Translating into English all the metrical homilies by Jacob of Sarug is a task that obviously ought to be done, beneficial not only for students of Syriac literature, but for the wider church so that the wealth of Jacob's poetic exegesis may become finally accessible. However, obvious tasks are seldom easy and credit goes to the vision of George Kiraz and Gorgias Press to have endeavored to unveil this previously not-so-accessible corpus of knowledge and beauty.

The starting point was the digitization and republication of Paul Bedjan's massive five-volume set of Jacob's metrical homilies.[1] These were not critical editions *per se*, and no translation was provided, but the basic sources are there, 195 homilies in all, stretching out to 4452 pages in the original five volumes. A handful of scholars have edited and translated a number of the *mēmrē*, but all too many of the homilies have sat forlorn and unexamined on Bedjan's pages. Jacob of Sarug is reputed to have written 763 *mēmrē*, of which Sebastian Brock estimates about 380 are extant.[2] If either number is close to being accurate, there are many reams of translations to go before we sleep.

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[1] *Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug. Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, edited by Paul Bedjan and Sebastian P. Brock, 6 vol. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2006). The added sixth volume contains Jacob's poems on the Virgin Mary, a comprehensive index of incipits to Jacob's published and unpublished poems by Sebastian P. Brock, a detailed biography of Bedjan by Heleen Murre van den Berg, and other resources.

[2] "Ya'qub of Serugh," by S. P. Brock, *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2011), 433–435.

Kiraz sent out a call to numerous scholars and students to take on a homily or two and many responded. The procedure is practical and simple: translators generally work from Bedjan's text, proofreading the digitized Syriac text, then translating and annotating a single or several commonly-themed *mēmrē*, and adding a brief introduction to the manuscript history and argument of the text. Nineteen volumes have been published in the series so far, a total of 30 *mēmrē* translated by ten different scholars.

Those readers familiar with Jacob of Sarug know that no matter what the principal subject of his *mēmrā* is intended to be, Jacob will eventually find his way to a deft and imaginative Christological detour. The particular departure points for such detours induce a sense of anticipation in the reader, especially in Old Testament-oriented poems, and this phenomenon can be seen in both of the *mēmrē* reviewed here.

1. The Veil on Moses' Face

The first volume published in the series, Fascicle 1, is the translation of the "Homily on the Veil on Moses' Face," by Sebastian P. Brock, a homily of median length, 460 lines.

The veil is where Jacob begins, and after a few tangents and detours where he returns. His prologue commences with the question asked by an acquaintance to explain the meaning of the veil. The symbolic meaning of Moses' veil points to God's employment of prophecy; the advent of Christ is the final lifting of the veil so that all may understand the nature of God.

Now that Christ is center stage, the image of the Bridegroom and Bride is introduced in the fulfillment of another prophecy as they are united through baptism and eucharist, water and blood. A number of other typologies come to mind for Jacob, returning full circle to Moses' speech impediment or stammer as a symbol of prophecy.

Jacob goes back to the cause and source of the radiance on Moses' face, the reason for the veil, and then on to a comparison of the Bridegroom's side and Adam's side. All these symbols culminate with the crucifixion, where Christ's cry on the cross overthrows Sheol. The personifications of Prophecy in Moses and Virginity in Mary rejoice that the veil is now lifted.

The last section rhetorically addresses a Jewish reader who believes that the veil is still in place, that God's word is unclear and

hidden. Jacob invites him to remove the veil because it is no longer needed.

Imaginative in his images and typologies, Jacob does not necessarily make them all up himself. Brock translates the first six verses of Ephrem's *Madroshe on Faith*, Number 8, showing this work to be the main source on the veil of Moses for Jacob. He notes how Jacob seems to borrow a number of passing allusions, words and concepts, and suggests that he had absorbed some of Ephrem's images and then recreated them in his *mēmrā*.[3]

Brock identifies two other sections which are borrowed from or by other Jacob *mēmrē*: lines 89–106 from Homily 80, "On Mysteries and Types of Christ";[4] and lines 389–460 in "Against the Jews."[5] Brock, however, does not imply that "The Veil on Moses' Face" is not an original composition by Jacob.

Brock also sets apart the treatment by Ephrem and Jacob of the piercing of Jesus' side on the cross (John 19:34). Jacob points back to the 'birth' of Eve from the side of Adam (Gen 2:21) as a prefiguration of the Church, the Bride, which is born in blood and water (now the mysteries or sacraments of eucharist and baptism) issuing from the pierced side of Christ. A short section of the *mēmrā* of Jacob (53.7) on the Passion is also included by Brock to point to a similar treatment of the same themes elsewhere in Jacob's work.[6]

Bedjan used Vat. Syr. 114 (6th c.) and Vat. Syr. 117 (12/13th c.), the only manuscripts known to contain the text, but not consistently. Brock followed Bedjan's printed text for this translation, but sometimes utilized preferable readings from Bedjan's footnotes (p. 9).

Below is a sampler from the translation.

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[3] *Jacob of Sarug's Homily on the Veil on Moses' Face*, transl. & intro. by Sebastian P. Brock (*TeCLA* 20: *The Metrical Homilies of Mar Jacob of Sarug*, Fascicle 1; Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2009), 4-7.

[4] *The Veil on Moses' Face*, Bedjan, vol. III, pp. 309-310.

[5] M. Albert, *Homélies contre les Juifs*, Patrologia Orientalis 38.1, 1976, VII, lines 431–508.

[6] *The Veil on Moses' Face*, 8; Bedjan, vol. 2, 589.

a. The many facets of *rāzā*

A good place to begin is with an important term in Syriac literature in line 2 (p. 12–13).

ܘܡܢܘ ܪܙܐ ܗܘ ܟܣܝܐ ܕܡܫܐ ܥܠ ܦܢܝܗ

What was the symbolic meaning of the veil upon Moses' face?

The critical and enigmatic concept of *rāzā* – ܪܙܐ – often rendered as "mystery," "secret," can also be "symbol." Brock expands the range of its English translations with the more colloquial concept of "symbolic meaning."

A further nuance of *rāzā* concludes a couplet which Brock translates in a form of dynamic equivalence (lines 25–26).

ܚܙܐ ܐܒܐ ܒܪܐ ܟܡܐ ܠܐܝܟܐ ܕܟܬܡ ܘܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܝܕܥ ܒܗ
ܐܠܐ ܒܨܠܬܐ ܕܨܒ ܠܡܬܟܠ ܥܠ ܗܢܐ ܪܙܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ׃

The Father kept the Son in concealment without anyone being aware,
but He wished to reveal this matter to the world *in symbolic terms*.

Brock employs the verb "kept" to intensify the sense of the idiom "the Father had a son," governed by the phrase "in secret/in concealment," and also inserts "without anyone" to broaden the scope of the prosaic phrase "and no one knew." In the second line "*his* matter" is rendered "*this* matter" specifying the reference to the concealment of the Son. "In symbolic terms" translates freely the sense of the not very common adverb of *rāzā*, retaining the 'symbolic' rather than 'mysterious' connotation. This adverb occurs again in line 86 with the same translation.

A few lines below, line 32, Brock treats an even rarer use of *rāzā* in a difficult sentence which offers insight into the dynamic flow of Jacob's ideas.

ܕܡܬܬ ܪܙܐ ܕܡܐ ܡܠܝܗ ܕܦ ܡܫܡܥܐ

And for his words to be understood, it requires an awareness of what they symbolize.

The key term is the idiom "sons of the mystery/symbol" which Brocks shifts to a communal characteristic, "those who have an

awareness…" He footnotes the idiom as "lit. 'sons of (= sharers in) the mystery'" (p. 14, n. 13).[7]

b. References

ܟܠܗ ܫܦܝܗ ܟܠܗ ܒܙܝܗ ܚܙܗ ܥܡܥܐ:
ܘܠܐ ܫܚܦܐ ܗܘ ܐ ܐܗܦܕܗ ܘܦܥܡܐ ܙܐ:

They [the prophets] covered over *their references* to Him [Christ], spreading over a veil as they spoke,
so as not to deviate from the example of the great Moses (lines 67–68).

"Their references" is literally "[they] speaking or telling his story." "References" is a modern term, but certainly replicates the sense of frequent instances of "telling his story."

c. Profundity

A less complex, but interesting translation comes in line 129 referring to the authority of the Apostle Paul.

ܩܟܝܗ ܙܐ ܗܘܥܐ ܙܐ ܒܥܟܫܗܐ

The mighty Paul, the great *profundity* among the Apostles.

Brock intends to transmit Jacob's emphasis on Paul as not only the chief of the Apostles, but also the most theologically adept of those who acquired the title. The literal phrase "the great depth of the apostolate" is awkward and not clear in its meaning. "Profundity" subtly indicates the intellectual depth of this Apostle, about which few would argue. "Among the apostles" moves from an abstract institutionalization—the apostolate—back to Paul's standing within a specific group of people.

d. Epiphany

The latter half of line 212 employs one of the more distinctive Syriac terms.

ܥܕܐ ܚܒܫܗ ܒܣܒܐ

…until the epiphany of the Only-Begotten.

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[7] The term is recorded in Payne Smith (p. 54b) as "sharer of a secret," hence "admitted to counsels or purposes, counsellor; partaker of Holy Communion."

Note that "epiphany" is not capitalized as the Feast, but indicates the appearance of Christ the Son. Jacob here employs the unique Syriac term *īḥīdāyā* for the Greek *monogenēs*, an expression which can designate also the "solitaries, singles, monks."

e. Moses stammered

An excellent instance of alliteration and word-play is found in lines 283–286, in which Brock deftly retains as much as possible of the rhythm of Jacob, but alas, not his alliteration.

ܡܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܦܫܩܬܗ̇ܘܢ ܀
ܘܩܐܡ ܗܘ ܟܝ ܠܐ ܡܓܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܟܡܦܫܩܗ̇ ܀
ܐܝ ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܗܘ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܟܕ ܗܘ ܩܐܡ ܀
ܘܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܡܓܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܢܫܬܩ ܒܗ ܦܫܩܗ̇ ܀

He spoke in symbols, but did not provide their explanations,
for he was a stammerer, and not able to speak clearly.
It was for this reason that his stammer was kept,
so that all he spoke might be kept unexplained.

In these four lines, Jacob employs several strategies, both in terms of meaning and in the use of key words and alliteration. In meaning the quatrain is a classic A:B:B:A structure. The first and fourth lines describe the speech of Moses as symbolic, yet intentionally unexplained (*pūšāqā*). The second and third lines explain that the method of keeping things unexplained is Moses' stammer (note the alliteration – *pīqā*, *pīqūtā*), a style of speech that is basically unclear. Two roots govern respectively the first two and last two lines. The root *p-š-q* ends the first two lines: in the first instance as "[no] explanations," in the second, "[not] speaking clearly"—a lack of understanding resulting for the listener in both cases. The third and fourth lines center around *n-ṭ-r*, in both occurrences rendered as "kept." Moses' stammer was retained in order that all of his words and prophecies might remain unclear and unexplained. His physical impediment is therefore symbolic of God's desire to render revelation in a form not completely understandable.

Brock is not able to replicate all these moves and wordplays to the English reader, although he transmits the meaning clearly. One needs to remember the format in which we are reading Jacob's Syriac homily and Brock's English translation: text and translation function complementarily for the reader. The readers who will

benefit the most are those who read both versions in order to learn more about Jacob's theology and poetic use of language.

f. Tabernacling and leaping with joy

Two more translation choices of Brock are worth indicating. In line 311, Jacob returns to the need for the veil on Moses' face and describes the phenomenon.

ܙܥܝܬܗ ܕܐܒܐ ܫܪܐ ܥܠ ܟܠ ܦܢܝܗ

The brightness of the Father *tabernacled* there on the face (of that Levite).

Brock has previously examined this particular verb (*'aggēn*) in a well-known article[8] and devotes to it here a thorough footnote. This verb is used both in Luke 1:35 and John 1:14 (Peshīṭṭā), although in the Greek two different words are used, ἐπισκιάσει ("overshadow") and ἐσκήνωσεν ("dwelt"), respectively. He shifts from a prosaic translation, "dwelt" to the more evocative "tabernacled," perhaps building upon John's use of the root *skēnē*, "tent," "tabernacle."

The last observation refers to line 377 in which the unveiling of Christ through Mary is compared with the unveiling of prophecy through Moses.

ܘܐܬܪ ܡܫܐ ܒܚܕܘܬܐ ܕܓܠܝ ܣܬܝܪܘܬܗ

Moses *leaps with joy*, for He has revealed his beauty that had been veiled.

Brock offers an explanation for his translation: "Jacob perhaps deliberately reflects Luke 1:41, where the verb is used of John the Baptist in his mother's womb, when she meets Mary, pregnant with Christ" (p. 52, n. 49). The translation could have been simply "exults," but Brock knew that the choice of the verb was intended to direct the reader's memory straight to the meeting between Elizabeth and Mary.

[8] Sebastian P. Brock, "Passover, Annunciation and Epiclesis: Some Remarks on the Term *aggen* in the Syriac Versions of Lk. 1:35," *Novum Testamentum* 24.3 (1982), 222–233.

2. The Tower of Babel

The second volume under review here, Fascicle 15, is "Homily on the Tower of Babel," translated and introduced by Aaron Michael Butts, a slightly longer *mēmrā* of 550 lines. Butts translates the title given by Bedjan as "On the Construction of the Tower of Babel,"[9] based on Vat. Syr. 115, ff. 13–22.

Butts immediately draws attention to the dominating themes and word-plays of rebellion (*mārūdūtā* – ܡܪܘܕܘܬܐ) and discipline (*mardūtā* – ܡܪܕܘܬܐ) which are threaded throughout the entire *mēmrā*. This dichotomy begins with the opening proem in which Jacob declares his inadequacy to properly interpret this story of the Tower of Babel, and then turns to the example of the teacher who must use corporal punishment, specifically beating, in order to mercifully discipline his students so that they may learn. This section may seem harsh to modern readers, but later on Jacob will apply the concepts of resistance, discipline and mercy to the builders of the Tower of Babel and God's response to them.

Jacob generally follows the story in canonical order, describing the initial motives of the people who wish to prevent the devastation of the Flood happening again. This practical motive evolves into the arrogance of challenging the authority and dominion of God. God observes what is going on and decides the best tactic is to confuse (ܒܠܠ) their languages. The tactic works well, and Jacob shows shrewd insight into the kinds of conflicts and blaming that arise from the confusion, which presumably Jacob himself had heard in his own parochial situation.

The climactic moment of the story comes when God decides to confuse their languages. "Now let us descend…," is the departure point for Jacob's excursus on the presence and role of Christ. Jacob's explanation of this enigmatic statement removes the enigma, delving in several passages on contemporary language and issues regarding the hypostases or *qnōmē* of Christ and the Spirit. Butts indicates that in his argument for the identity of "us" Jacob is refuting contemporary Jewish interpretations and charges (3–4).

Despite the switch from the Old to New Testament contexts, Jacob never wanders far from Babel and returns to the story in the

[9] *Homiliae Selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis*, *mēmrā* 33, ed. Bedjan, vol. 2 (Paris/Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1906), 1–27.

final three sections. The discipline of the teacher in the proem of the first section is now revealed to be God's, for in his harsh punishment of the people of the Tower, God has mercifully saved them and, in fact, has recreated the world by pushing them to move away and inhabit the other regions of the world.

Butts' translation is lucid and contemporary, succeeding in a dynamic equivalence that still maintains the character and integrity of the original text. A selection from his translation will show how he creatively handles a number of difficult technical phrases.

a. Rejecting

The opening line of the *mēmrā* (line 1) begins with the traditional apology of the author for his weakness and inadequacy.

ܐܸܡܲܟ ܐܲܚܕ̈ܐ ܘܟܸܝ ܢܣܒ̈ܢ ܒ ܠܟ̈ܡ ܐܝ̈ܠܐ

How should I seek? For I have received abundantly, while rejecting.

Butts notes that the root *ṭ-l-m* (ܛܠܡ) is used throughout the *mēmrā* to give the sense of "to deny or reject the grace of God" (p. 8, n. 10).

b. Co-workers

ܗܘ̈ܐ ܗܘ ܟܚܒ̈ܐ ܐ̈ܟ ܐܦ̈ܘܗ̈ܝ ܐ̈ܟ ܥܓ̈ܕܐ

Both the speaker and the listeners are coworkers (line 71).

Here is a concise instance of effective dynamic equivalent translation, the "speaker" being Jacob and the "listeners" being "the discerning ones" (ܦ̈ܩ̈ܢ̈ܗ̈ܐ, line 69) who are reading and hearing the lessons of this *mēmrā*.

c. Another Second Adam

ܗܘ̈ܐ ܙܕ̈ܝܩܐ ܢ̈ܘܚ ܗ̈ܘ ܒ̈ܪ̈ܫ̈ܝܬ̈ܐ ܬ̈ܢ̈ܝܢ ܐ̈ܕ̈ܡ

The righteous Noah became a new beginning, a second Adam (line 85).

The real beginning of the story of the Tower is the end of the Flood and the resettlement of the earth by Noah and his family. This section is prior to Jacob's main christological move in Section 7, but while it is clear that emerging from the Ark, Noah is playing

the role of Adam as first man in a new creation, is Jacob not hinting at a larger role christologically with the expression "second Adam" (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15:45)?

d. Citadel

ܢܒܢܐ ܡܓܕܠܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܡܛܠ ܡܝ ܠܡܗܘܠܐ

Let us make a citadel that is able to provide safety from a deluge (line 106).

Butts points to the strong play on words used here, *mērdā* meaning both 'citadel' and 'rebellion.' The term is used as well in lines 135 and 235.

e. Rebellion out of freedom

ܡܪܕܘܬܐ ܗܘܬ ܡܢ ܪܫܘܬܐ
ܘܒܗ ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܕܡܬܟܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܗܘܐ܀
ܗܢܘܢ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܐܝܟܝܢ ܗܘ ܡܪܕܢܐ
ܘܡܢ ܡܫܐܠ ܥܠ ܗܘ ܕܟܠ ܗܘ ܒܚܝܪܘܬܐ

It was a rebellion that had been born out of freewill,
So when someone was beaten, he could not say anything.
They were severely beaten on their own account.
Who questions that beating which was the result of free-choice? (lines 171–174)

In the fourth section, "The Weariness and Suffering that resulted from the Rebellion," Jacob's themes of rebellion and discipline and beatings are attributed ironically to freewill and free choice without constraints. Regarding the word play, Butts translates in line 171 *mardūtā* (ܡܪܕܘܬܐ) not as 'discipline' as the word is rendered in the rest of the *mēmrā*, but as its homonym 'rebellion' to fit the context.

f. Qnōmē and Hypostases

ܗܢܘ ܕܒܪܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܗܘܘ
ܕܐܡܪ ܢܬܬܟܠ ܒܟܝܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܢܚܬ ܘܢܪܕ܀

The hypostases of the Son and the Holy Spirit were signified in the revelation of that expression 'Come let us descend' (lines 275–276).

The Tower of Babel is not the location where one would expect to hear about the *qnōmē* or hypostases of the Trinity, but Jacob embarks seamlessly upon his transition from this Old Testament saga to the uniqueness of the Christian interpretation of God at the critical juncture of the story. This jarring disjuncture from a compelling narrative to a virtual academic proposition—albeit quite familiar to Jacob's contemporary listeners in the late fifth to early sixth centuries—is interpreted clearly by Butts. A few lines later, a more difficult quatrain involving *qnōmē* is rendered lucid by Butts without great resort to dynamic equivalent interpretations.

ܩܢܘܡܐ ܣܓܝܐ ܘܟܬܝܡܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܕܡܫܬܥܐ
ܠܡܕܒܪ ܗܘ ܠܫܡܥ ܒܥܩܠ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܀
ܗܘ ܕܡܫܬܥ ܡܢ ܩܕܡܝ ܒܡܠܐ ܕܡܫܬܡܥ ܠܢ ܚ
ܡܥܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܘ ܟܬܬܐ ܥܡ ܟܘܬܗ ܀

The revered hypostases of inscrutable divinity
were signified for the one who hears discerningly,
but the one who flees from the interpretation that has been
spoken by us
introduces companions or gods with God (lines 283–286).

Butts' translation makes it clear that Jacob is addressing the reading public and explaining or apologizing for his use of the language of hypostases targeted towards those who have the ears to hear and understand the subtleties of those difficult concepts. Those who do not comprehend erroneously perceive only the mumbling of lesser gods huddling around God.

g. Spiritual sense

In the ninth section, Butts negotiates Jacob's conclusion about the spiritual purpose of the story. In the simplest and briefest of terms, Jacob is saying that one can only understand the story in a spiritual, not literal manner.

ܥܡ ܗܘ ܡܢܗ ܕܡ ܩܕܡܠܐ ܩܝܢܐ
ܐܠܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܥܡܝܐ ܠܐ ܡܠܐ ܀

The story is higher than literal (lit. corporeal) understanding,
and it was said only in spiritual rational (lines 365–366).

It is the second line that is problematic. Butts' translation of "and not…not" as "only" is an agile rendering. The term "spiritual ratio-

nal (sic)" is still a tad obscure, for which I would suggest "in spiritual reasoning" or "in a spiritual sense." None of these suggestions quite capture the idiom, but do direct one to Jacob's conclusion.

Both volumes are very satisfying to work through slowly and deliberately, not only in format and presentation, but in the satisfaction of seeing exactly how master translators interpret one of the greatest of Syriac exegetes and poets, the Flute of the Holy Spirit. Brock and Butts do not tell the reader too much, but give us all the material we need to engage our minds and imagination in conversation with Jacob. A good type (ܒܪ̈ܝܫܐ) to follow.

Daniel King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria: A Study in Translation Technique*, CSCO 626 / Sub. 123 (Louvain: Peeters, 2008). Pp. xxviii + 614; €120.

Adam McCollum, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library

Translations from Greek have endowed Syriac literature with a plethora of texts from different genres in which translators plied their varying methods of rendering a text in one language into another. The New Testament itself, the Gospels in particular, are a showcase in these different methods because we often have one text in more than one version translated at different times and with apparently different goals in mind, and in addition to biblical texts, there are translated works in philosophy and theology, again sometimes with more than one version extant. The materials for investigating Syriac translation technique from Greek are not newly available. Editions of the Gospels have been around, unsurprisingly, for centuries, and other texts came into scholars' hands especially beginning in the nineteenth century, thanks to Lagarde, Land, and other editors. In some cases, we know the names of the translators, such as Sergius of Reš῾aynā (d. 536), known for his translations of Galen, the Dionysian corpus, and the *De Mundo*, but often they are anonymous. Hitherto, much discussion of Greek-Syriac translation technique has centered on the Bible, due both to the long available texts in more than one version and to the expected interest in the Bible because it is the Bible, and the working scheme for Greek-Syriac translation technique has especially, but not exclusively, been based on studies of Syriac biblical texts. Following in the next steps, Daniel King has now added a detailed study to the growing number of investigations of extrabiblical Syriac works translated from Greek, his material being the corpus of Cyril of Alexandria.

The book under review began life as a dissertation written at Cardiff under the supervision of John Watt. It is divided into four parts, which are followed by two appendices. Part I (pp. 1–33), divided into two chapters, lays out for the reader some groundwork on translation, particularly of patristic Greek exegetical works into Syriac, and more specifically, the works of Cyril. Here we also find a clear statement of the author's task in the book (pp. 25–26):

> We shall attempt to analyse the variety of techniques used in these texts and to describe them as fully as possible. From this, we then hope to be able to relate them to each

> other on a typological scale. It may further be possible to calibrate this scale, or spectrum, against the historical background, largely by means of bringing in for comparison other texts of known date and provenance, both other translations from the Greek, and indigenous Syriac writings.

Readers not previously versed in the textual witnesses and historical background of Greek-Syriac translations, or in the works of Cyril with the theological interest surrounding them, find ample initiation in these two chapters.

Part II (pp. 35–62), also divided into two chapters, covers external evidence of the history of Cyril's christological works in Syriac. This amounts to a presentation of data on the manuscripts of these works, divided into three categories ("main witnesses" [BL Add. 12156 and 14557], other witnesses, and citations in florilegia) and also evidence from citations of Cyril in writings of Philoxenus and in another florilegium. The main works of Cyril included are the following:

De Recta Fide
Quod Unus sit Christus
Scholia de Incarnatione Unigeniti
Explanatio Duodecim Capitulorum
Epistles 39, 40, 44, 45, 46, 50, 55
Apologia Duodecim Capitulorum contra Theodoretum
Apologia Duodecim Capitulorum contra Orientales
Responsiones ad Tiberium Diaconum

The well-known *Commentary on Luke*, available in Greek only fragmentarily but long known in Syriac translation, was excluded, except for the question of biblical citations, due to insufficient space to treat "this difficult text" (p. 35).

Part III ranges across six chapters and logically follows part II by treating internal evidence of the aforementioned works of Cyril. Not surprisingly, this part spans the greatest bulk of the book (pp. 63–360), and it contains the meat of the analysis. The superficial opposition of literal vs. free (or loose) naturally falls flat in so detailed an investigation as this one, and King expands on earlier studies of translation technique, chiefly those of Sebastian Brock and James Barr, to allow for a more precise probe into these translated texts. The means of that examination, that is, the particular phenomena of translation studied, consists of the following: editing techniques, larger translation units ("sentences and upwards"),

smaller translation units ("below the level of the sentence" but greater than "individual lexical units"), word order, formal equivalence of verbal constructions, formal equivalence of other syntactical constructions, the lexical unit, lexical equivalence, loanwords, neologisms. Full descriptions of these cannot be given here, but even from this list we can see a sophistication that much improves any basic distinction of literal and free. King's investigation of these phenomena, which span from individual lexical units to longer units of discourse, across these texts, his examples generally given in Greek and Syriac with English translations, serves not only his own purpose that focuses on Cyril, but also provides much material for other scholars studying Greek-Syriac translations, and the future of studies in this field, where there are many more textual analyses to be completed, looks the brighter for it.

Part IV (pp. 361–388) offers the study's conclusions along the scheme of "motivations and models." As throughout the book, King shows thorough familiarity with previous work on translation technique, the most well-known of which for Greek-Syriac are Brock's series of articles on the subject, but here he also turns for comparison to other areas of translation activity, namely translations into Latin and Old English, and he employs these side-looks fruitfully to question further what the reasons were that the Greek-Syriac translation movement played out as it did. (In addition to Latin and Old English, another productive arena of comparison might be that of translations into Armenian, which are mentioned only briefly.) King finds the potential analogies with Latin and Old English translation activity ultimately not so similar to Greek-Syriac translation activity, but in the next section, on models of translation, he finds an appropriate parallel in "the world of official documents, military inscriptions, and law-school texts, with their distinctive treatment of specific and technical jargon" (p. 386), where translators with a certain theological vision were able to find some success in textually carrying out that vision.

Adding to the bulk of the book are two appendices, the latter of which is almost 150 pages long. The first is a statistical look at and presentation of how this or that Greek phenomenon is rendered in a particular text, the results given in graph form. Rather than making up a major part of the book, this approach is here cast merely as an experiment. The second appendix, the long one, called "The evidence of the Scriptural citations," is the data on which a

section of Part III is based, and readers, especially those interested in Syriac biblical translations, will appreciate such a full offering of the data in question, both Greek and Syriac (with Hebrew in addition for the Old Testament citations). The texts here are not only juxtaposed in this appendix: the author has also offered several remarks on their interpretation from the point of view of translation technique. The book ends with *indices nominum et rerum*, Greek terms, Syriac terms, and biblical and other texts (pp. 587–614).

I noted only a few errors: p. 10, n. 33, *The Desert City* should be *The Desert a City*; n. 42 on p. 33 is missing; the Latin quote from Gregory on p. 366 has been garbled; and on p. 371, "Mastoc" should be Maštoc' or the like.

The dimensions of translation technique may include features of lexicon, possibilities of rendering morphosyntactic categories, etc., but what is the value of studying translation technique? For those who love philology, the value is intrinsic. Linguists may find in a study of translation technique certain features worthy of their attention from the perspective of, among others, language contact, translations being a kind of lab-book for experiments in language contact. Further, once some idea of how the translator of a particular text works has been established, textual critics have a greater likelihood of making sound textual observations on the basis of a translation, something of undisputed value in the case of translated texts that bear witness to a text the original of which is unavailable. In the case of Cyril's theological œuvre in Syriac, theologically-minded researchers garner another specific benefit, that of now having at their disposal a more sophisticated lens through which to evaluate not only certain theologically significant terms, but even the whole scene of theological discussion in Syriac from the fifth century onward. King's book thus will find a welcome audience among students and scholars of literary translation in Late Antiquity (whatever the languages with which they are concerned), Syriac philologists, and at least some theologians who study the period concerned.

Thomas Laurie, *Dr. Grant and the Mountain Nestorians* (Boston 1853; reprint Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005). Pp. xii + 418; $106.25.

Andrew Palmer, University of Muenster

Asahel Grant seems to have enjoyed his mission to the Nestorians of Kurdistan more than he was always prepared to admit.[1] The mountains were as good for his health as the wilderness was for his faith. Critics were all too ready to say that he ought not to have left the sons of his first marriage with a guardian after their mother's death; exposed his second wife and the three children of his second marriage to the malarial climate of Urmia, where the twin girls and the mother lie buried; and put his own life and those of his associates at risk in a region where human life was cheap; all in the cause of reviving the Gospel – without seeking to make converts – among Christians he judged to be 'benighted', as an agent of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Grant (1807–44) came from a farming family in Connecticut; but an accident made him unfit for work on the farm, so he studied medicine instead. This made him an asset to the American mission-station at Urmia, founded by Justin Perkins in 1834, the year before Grant's arrival, and saved his life more than once in the wild Hakkâri region. His ability to 'work wonders', by medical practice, based on science not on faith, opened doors even among the 'churlish' Kurds, the 'inhuman' Arabs, the 'ferocious' Nestorians and the 'oppressive' Turks (adjectives from the Table of Contents), not to mention the Yezidees, 'devoted to the prince of darkness' (p. 122). The only patient who showed no gratitude at all was George Percy Badger, a High-Church Anglican missionary, who considered it his duty to undo the 'dissident' Grant's work.

Badger's work on the *Nestorians and their Rituals* is more informative than this hagiography, full of self-righteousness and complaints about other Christians which (one supposes) were lapped up by the American Protestant public for whom the book

[1] For a readable introduction to the subject, see David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church: A History of the Church of the East* (London 2011), Ch. 9: The age of the European missions. The book under review contains no evidence that the missionaries were the instruments of colonialism and bore some responsibility for provoking the massacres of 1843–6, a suggestion which Wilmshurst examines and finds implausible.

was intended; for the self-deprecating Laurie (who was associated with Grant in his dangerous work from 1844 and continued it after the doctor's death), while he has a chapter (IV) on the history of the Nestorians, makes no pretence to learning. But Grant had a romantic attachment to the people he regarded as the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel;[2] an admiration for the past heroism of the 'Martyred Church', for its former Syriac divines and its intrepid missionaries (see the first footnote to this review); and a love for the independence of these survivors, who had yielded neither to the Qur'an, nor to tribute, nor even to the sword. It seems fitting that he died with that independence.

The book paints an interesting picture of the unlikely encounter of two Christian exotica, a Presbyterian from Connecticut and the Nestorians of Kurdistan. We also learn from it such facts that the Jacobites of Mosul accorded to Nestorian refugees of the massacres of 1843–6 the burial which the Chaldeans had refused them in churchyards which, until recently, had been theirs.

At this price one might expect the reprint to be a perfect reproduction of a crisply printed, pristine exemplar, not a ghostly photocopy with 'hairs', resembling crossings-out, on many pages. As for the map, 'prepared mostly from original materials collected by Dr. Grant and his associates', of which Laurie writes: 'Great pains have been taken, and no expense spared, to render it an important addition to our geographical knowledge of that region' (p. vi), Gorgias Press, less painstaking, has spared the expense of reproducing it.

[2] In 1853 the word 'Assyrian' had not yet been applied to the Nestorians, let alone extended across confessional boundaries in the name of a 'nation' united by a modern myth. Grant, inspired by Nestorians who told him they were 'the sons of Israel' and had no pagan ancestors (p. 186), clothed in historical plausibility a tradition which is today forgotten, though it is far more attractive – unless it is brute power that attracts you – than the implausible fiction that the Christians with a Syriac liturgy are the descendants of the pagan Assyrians, who boasted of the slaughter and enslavement of Aramaic-speaking peoples.

Adolph Edwin Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas: An Inquiry with a Critical Analysis of the* Acta Thomae (London 1905; reprint Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005). Pp. xviii + 303; $95.00.

Andrew Palmer, University of Muenster

Medlycott was born in 1838 in what is now Bangladesh; educated in British India and in Rome (PhD from the present Urban Papal University); served as priest from 1861 in Bengal and Punjab, then as professor of rhetoric in Rome; and was consecrated as the first bishop of the Syro-Malabar Church in Thrissur, Kerala, where he sat from 1887 to 1896, dying in Bangalore, his place of retirement, in 1918. His book on Thomas is sufficiently scholarly to merit reprinting, though professionally optimistic as to the possibility of proving the ancient tradition that one of the twelve original disciples of Jesus brought his master's teaching to India, where it still flourishes among the Thomas Christians. Ch. 1, for example, is entitled 'The Apostle Thomas and Gondophares the Indian King – *connection proved* from coins and inscription' (reviewer's italics). For while Gondophares was indeed the name of a first-century king of what is now Afghanistan, the connection with Thomas lies through the unhistorical *Acts*. All Medlycott's learning (he sometimes forgets that we may not read Greek and Latin) cannot masque this weakness; nor is the report that two Christians from Persia were arrested as spies on their arrival at Antioch in the year 139 (p. 18) sufficient evidence that the reputation of King Gondophares could not have reached the author of those *Acts* in any other way but by a tradition deriving from Thomas himself. After all, we know of Gondophares from coins and an inscription; and his coins, at least, might have reached the Roman Empire.

It is not difficult for Medlycott to prove, on the other hand, that there is a widespread tradition in the Christian Church that the field of Thomas' mission was India, where he was martyred, and that his body was reinterred 'in the West' (Ch. 2); but the earliest witnesses to this tradition date back to the fourth century (these say his bones were reinterred at Edessa in Mesopotamia), with the sole exception of the fictional *Acts of Thomas*. One can see why Medlycott felt obliged to argue, in a long appendix, that this novel is embroidered upon an historical core. Stripped of learned obscurity, the appendix claims that this core must have existed and been

accepted in the Church, for otherwise 'heretics' (Manichaeans and Gnostics, according to Augustine and Epiphanius) would not have chosen it as a vessel for the propagation of their ideas. This argument appears rather dated: the modern editors of the *Acts of Thomas* mention only the encratism prominent in the second part of the text, in which Thomas is martyred for convincing certain prominent married women to refuse to have sexual intercourse with their husbands; nor do they claim that the original *Acts of Thomas* were 'orthodox' (*Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, ed. F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain, vol. 1, Paris 1997, 1324f.).

The tradition of the Church is the reason why western Christians visited India and asked to see the place where Thomas was killed and buried; and the fact that they did so is sufficient reason for that place to have been pointed out by the local Christians (Ch. 3). (The first pilgrims to the Holy Land, as Robin Lane Fox has pointed out, asked in vain where they might see Lot's wife, transformed into a column of salt: enterprising tour-guides showed her to later pilgrims, who went home satisfied.) Medlycott goes on to follow the relics of Thomas from India to Edessa in the third century, from Edessa to Chios in the twelfth, and from Chios to Ortona, where they are now alleged to rest, in 1258 (Ch. 4); and in this same chapter he explores further traditions concerning Thomas' martyrdom, which he calls 'historical records'.

There follows a catalogue of the other alleged apostles of 'India,' meaning anywhere from Yemen and Ethiopia to Malabar (Ch. 5): Pantaenus, attested by Eusebius; Frumentius, attested by Rufinus; and the Theophilus, attested by 'Philostorgius.' Medlycott believes this last, a native of the Maldives and a convert to Arianism, visited Malabar *c.* 354 and found Christianity well established there. Finally, Medlycott shows that 'there are no grounds for the supposition' that a disciple of Mani named Thomas 'ever went to India' (p. 203); and that this Thomas cannot, therefore, have been mistaken for the disciple of Jesus (Ch. 6).

The reprint is legible and relatively free of 'hairs', though not as crisp and black as one might wish; but the illustrations are of poor quality and the inscription of the year 103 (AD 46?), a copy of which Medlycott – p. 10 – published with his book, has regrettably been omitted altogether. As usual, with Gorgias Press, one must protest at the price.

Claudia Rammelt, *Ibas von Edessa: Rekonstruktion einer Biographie und dogmatischen Position zwischen den Fronten,* Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 106 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008). Pp. x + 344; €125.95.

Andrew Palmer, University of Muenster

Hiba – the original Syriac form of the name Ibas – was a Mesopotamian bishop who tried (according to Rammelt) to safeguard the unity of the Christian Church in a period when others were pulling it apart. During his lifetime, we read, he was the victim of calumny and injustice and long after his death his writings – particularly his *Letter to Mari the Persian* – were wilfully distorted. In her rather perfunctory introduction (Chapter 1), Rammelt deals with the sources for Hiba's life and dogma in under three pages and devotes a mere eight lines to the only other book with the name of Hiba in its title, Robert Doran's *Stewards of the Poor: The Man of God, Rabbula, and Hiba in fifth-century Edessa* (Kalamazoo 2006). Instead of a chapter on Christ in the Syriac tradition up to Hiba, which this reviewer misses (see below), she surveys the history of Edessa (Chapter 2), without making it clear how this is necessary to a deep understanding of Hiba's life (Chapter 3). She pays special attention to the *Letter to Mari* (Chapter 4), showing that the Syriac version in the *Acts of Ephesus 449* hardly differs from the Greek translation.[1] She reveals the full complexity of the process which brought about the deposition of Hiba by explaining how the Roman legal system worked in his case. This (Chapter 5) is perhaps the most successful part of her enterprise. She also considers how Hiba was received by posterity (Chapter 6), missing the opportunity to evaluate the *Chronicle of Edessa* as a voice from the established Church of the Roman Empire raised in Hiba's favour before the condemnation of 553 (see below). The summing-up at the end (Chapter 7) collects, without alteration or addition, the helpful summaries scattered throughout the book. Rammelt's monograph is welcome and she deserves praise for making the *Chronicle of*

[1] Hoffmann's note on p. 49, line 14, of the Syriac *Acts* of Ephesus 449 (ed. Flemming, p. 172f.) argues that the letter has been translated back into Syriac from the Greek, because it is incomplete, just as the Greek is incomplete; but the relevant excerpt might have been taken from the Syriac original. Rammelt assumes the original was lost; but she does not prove it.

Edessa's approval of Hiba comprehensible (as J. B. Segal signally fails to do); but there is enough to criticise in the execution and especially in the presentation of this excellent project.

To begin with, the author has not been well served by her copy-editor. Here are some corrigenda, of which this reviewer has found over seventy, many of them trivial, yet nevertheless annoying, especially in a luxury volume with a price which invites complaint:

p. 2, a passive participle is needed after the word 'Parteien'; p. 12, for ὑβασίλευτον, read ἀ-; p. 15, for 'Orientem', read 'Oriens' and for '*civitates vectigales*', read '*civitas vectigalis*'; p. 17, for ܚܒܫ, read ܚܒܫܐ; p. 23, for ܫܚܒܫ, read the plural; p. 39, for 'syrische Übersetzung', read 'persische Übersetzung', and for ܒܥܐܕ, read ܒܥܐܕ; p. 40, *īhīḇīšō'* means 'Jesus is given', not 'given by Jesus'; pp. 63 and 75, for ἑρμενεία, read ἑρμηνεία; p. 72, for γίνομαι and ἀνατίθεμαι, read γίγνομαι and ἀνατίθεναι; p. 76, n. 54, the preposition ܠ is good Syriac for 'to' in the address of a letter (*cf.* Ezra 5.7 and the *Doctrina Addai*); p. 84, a word (Anstoß?) is missing after the name Sergius; p. 90, for ὕιω, read υἵῳ; p. 104, for 'war' (n. 166), read 'was'; p. 105, for κάπωθεν, read κάτωθεν; p. 127, for *redivivius*, read *redivivus*; p. 129, for 'reliorum', read 'reliquorum' and for 'proucinciae', read 'prouinciae'; p. 141, for 'Armenien', read 'Armeniern'; p. 187, for 'Bericht einen', read 'einen Bericht'; p. 193, for ܡܢܗܣ, read ܡܢܗܣ; and for 'die Konsuln Protogenes', read 'die Konsuln und Protogenes'; p. 204, for 'Mari der lohnt', read 'Mari lohnt'; p. 206, for 'Martialus', read 'Martialis'; p. 216, for 'Valentian', read 'Valentinian'. In addition, it would be better to refer to Barṣaumā as an influential ascetic from the mountains between Samosata and Melitene (p. 172); the famous mountain-top Monastery of Mor Barṣaumā, of which 'Basmul' is a modern deformation, had not yet been founded.

Rammelt roundly blames the 'Monophysites' for the separation of the Churches (Chapter 5). She says that the second synod of Ephesus in 449 was not interested in coming to an objective judgement (p. 216). She calls it 'the Robber Council,' an emotive term coined by Pope Leo which ought at least to have been placed

between quotation-marks. Rammelt is far from being the only historian of the Church to use this judgmental term, but in her case it is particularly unfortunate, as it lays her open to the charge of taking the part of Hiba against his opponents. On p. 218 she expresses her dismay that the bishops should have shouted out: "Kill Hiba!" Yet the Council of Chalcedon, where equally savage words were shouted at Hiba's opponents, fails to shock her. Instead, she writes: 'With Chalcedon the situation changed. Forces ready to mediate in the conflict asserted themselves. Hiba was rehabilitated and was allowed to return to his office as bishop' (p. 229). G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom and Orthodoxy* (Oxford 2006) no doubt appeared too late for Rammelt to assimilate; but the author, who died in 2000, had long argued that Chalcedon was tightly controlled by the emperor and his agents and that its main decision was divisive. Both Rammelt's disqualification of Ephesus II and her approval of Chalcedon suggest that, in spite of her own warning against eurocentric ecclesiastical history (p. 8), she has not yet escaped the gravitational pull of traditional European opinion, based ultimately on the judgment of Rome.

The *Chronicle of Edessa* does indeed contain 'important data' (p. 4), so why is it mistakenly classified with the writers of the Church of the East (p. 260)? Rammelt draws upon the individual entries in this source (for example with reference to Hiba's building of churches), but without discussing their context, or the intention of the chronicler; nor does she discuss Hallier's interpretation of the Syriac original. This review will show that more can be squeezed out of it by doing these things.

> A.G. 746 [A.D. 435] Rabbula, the bishop of Edessa, departed from the world on 8 August (according to the *Vita*, 7 August – he was buried on 8 August) and was succeeded by the Teacher[2] Hiba (ܪܒܐ ܗܒܐ; Hallier, p. 110: 'der erhabene Hîbâ'; ܗܒܐ arguably requires translation as a noun here). This man built the new church which today [*sc.* A.D. 540] is called the House of the Apostles.

[2] With the implication – based on the use of this word to designate the teacher in a master-disciple relationship – that Hiba could be trusted implicitly in matters of religion and theology. See Robert Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford 1879–1901), col. 3784. (The *Thesaurus* is not cited among the lexica used by Rammelt on p. 339.)

A.G. 749 [A.D. 437/8], during the reign of the irreproachable Hiba (ܗܝܒܐ ܙܝܟܐ; Hallier, p. 111: 'des trefflichen Hîbâ'),[3] Senator brought a great silver altar weighing 720 pounds and it was placed in the ancient church of Edessa.

A.G. 753 [A.D. 441/2] the general Anatolius made a silver shrine in honour of the bones of the holy apostle Thomas.

A.G. 756 [A.D. 444/5] Dioscorus became bishop of the patriarchal see of Alexandria (lit. 'Alexandria the great').

And (August A.D. 449) a second synod assembled at Ephesus. This synod excommunicated the Teacher Flavian (ܦܠܒܝܢܘܣ ܪܒܝ; Hallier, p. 112: 'den erhabenen Flavian', though, here again, ܪܒܝ requires translation as a noun), the bishop of Constantinople, Domnus of Antioch, Irenaeus of Tyre, Hiba of Edessa, Eusebius of Dorylaeum, Daniel of Ḥarran, Sophronius of Tella and Theodoret of Cyrrhus.

A.G. 759 [A.D. 448] Bishop Hiba departed from Edessa on 1 January and on 21 July Nonnus entered to succeed him (these two events should be redated to A.D. 450) and remained for two years (*i.e.* until 452) and built the holy of holies in the church.

A.G. 760 [A.D. 448/9] Leo became bishop of Rome (actually A.D. 440).

A.G. 762 [A.D. 450/1] a synod assembled in the city of Chalcedon (A.G. 763).

A.G. 763 [A.D. 451/2] Mar Isaac, the archimandrite, acquired fame as an author.

A.G. 769 [A.D. 457] Hiba, the bishop of Edessa, went to his (blessed) rest (ܫܟܒ; Hallier, p. 114: 'entschlief') on 28 October.

The chronicle from which this excerpt is taken was probably written shortly after 540, the year in which the city bought off an invading army from Persia, as the chronicler (probably Bishop Addai of Edessa) tells. If he does not go on to tell of Edessa's

[3] The morality of Hiba (ܙܝܟܐ is cognate with ܙܟܘܬܐ, 'virtues') is emphasized by placing the adjective before his name; see Theodor Nöldeke, *Kurzgefasste syrische Grammatik*, 2nd edition with appendix (Darmstadt 1977), §211.

successful resistance in 544, this may be because that siege had not yet taken place. The chronicle must, in any case, antedate the council of 553, at which Hiba's *Letter to Mari* was condemned, for the chronicler – a demonstratively loyal subject of the emperor Justinian, whom he calls 'glorious' and 'god-loving' – was still sympathetic to Hiba. Indeed, he may have hoped to dissuade Justinian from sacrificing Hiba's reputation to the Severans.[4] For there is much to be said for the idea that this chronicle was meant to reach the emperor's ears in a Greek translation.[5]

Rammelt alleges that the compiler of the *Chronicle of Edessa* 'leans towards Nestorianism' (p. 260). This idea, derived from Hallier, is based entirely on the chronicler's approval of Hiba, whose enemies called him a Nestorian. But Rammelt herself shows that Hiba had no qualms about anathematizing Nestorius (p. 175) and calling Mary the *Theotokos* (p. 98), so she ought to be the last to see approval of Hiba as a symptom of Nestorianism. The positive description of Hiba stands out all the more for the habitual restraint of the *Chronicle of Edessa*, in which there is neither praise for Theodore, nor blame for Eutyches. It shows that the reputation of Hiba was already threatened in 540, but that it was still possible, at that date, for an admiring subject of Justinian to call Hiba *Rabbā* – 'teacher'. Hiba and Flavian are the only two people who are given this title in the *Chronicle of Edessa*, but the chronicler also singles out Ephraim for praise, calling him ܡܪܢ ܐܦܪܝܡ ܕܒܚܟܡܬܐ ܘܒܣܦܪܐ "My lord Ephraim, known for the wisdom and sophistication of his writings." If he thought Hiba, too, a good teacher, he may have considered him a writer in the tradition of Ephraim.

In the *Letter to Mari* Hiba sums up what he says the Church Fathers have taught 'since the beginning', that Christ, though a single person with a single 'force' – or perhaps 'meaning' (ܣܘܠܡ δύναμις) – had 'two natures'. Like Ephraim (*Diatessaron Commentary*, ed. Leloir, Chester Beatty Monographs 8, 250f.; *Madrāshē on Faith*,

[4] S. Brock, "The conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47 (1981), 116 (7), referred to by Rammelt on p. 252.

[5] A. Palmer, "Procopius and Edessa," *Antiquité tardive* 8 (2000): 127–136.

ed. Beck, CSCO 154, 87:13),[6] Hiba considers it a mistake to say, as Cyril did, 'that God, the Word, himself became a human being' (*Acts of Ephesus 449*, ed. Flemming, 48, line 24). Unlike Hiba, Ephraim never uses the word *ḳyānā* ('nature') of Christ's body, though he speaks of Christ as twice born, the first womb being that of God the Father, which brought forth the eternal Word, the second, that of Mary, who brought forth the 'pearl' – or, to use Jesus' own image – the 'temple' (John 2:21)[7] – of his body. The Semitic way of speaking in images, though it is vulnerable in the 'cut and thrust' of the Greek philosophical arena, has strengths of its own which are more akin to the language of Jesus himself. Hiba was one of those who promoted the translation of Theodore's Greek writings into Syriac, so that they could be studied alongside those of Ephraim. While Rammelt is surely right to see Hiba's christology as Theodoran, the influence of the Syriac tradition can also be discerned; this reviewer would welcome a supplementary article in which Rammelt might work out the specific relevance of what she herself states, in general terms, on p. 115: 'Ephraim's writings and his thought had deep roots at the School of the Persians, as in Edessa generally.'

[6] The editors agree in expanding this to '(only) a human being' in translation; but both interpret the texts in the light of their belief that Ephraim would not have wished to contradict an article of Catholic belief.

[7] Not referred to by Rammelt, who begins her commentary on the image of the temple with Paul (p. 90).

Thomas Kollamparampil, *Salvation in Christ according to Jacob of Serugh: An Exegetico-theological Study on the Homilies of Jacob of Serugh on the Feasts of Our Lord* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010). Pp. xx + 535; $175.00.

Paul S. Russell, St. Joseph of Arimathea Anglican Theological College

This volume, originally the author's doctoral dissertation at the Augustinianum in Rome, was published in India by Dharmaram Publications in Bangalore in 2001, where the author is currently teaching. It followed Kollamparampil's *Jacob of Serugh: Select Festal Homilies*, which was a joint publication of the Centre for Indian and Inter-religious Studies (CIIS) in Rome and Dharmaram Publications in Bangalore in 1997. This very useful volume, which has been difficult to obtain in the West, is being replaced by fascicles of the Gorgias Press edition of *The Metrical Homilies of Jacob of Serugh*, edited by Sebastian P. Brock and George A. Kiraz. Already ten of these have appeared so that the majority of the seventeen homilies contained in the 1997 volume are in print in North America, which must be glad news for anyone who teaches Theology, Patristics or Church History in areas that lie close to the early Syriac Church. *Salvation in Christ* will be useful for teaching and study and will provide another entry into close engagement with the thought of the Syriac Christian tradition.

This work is dense and detailed. It is divided into three main parts: the first offering an overview of Jacob's life and thought, the second and longest working its way through the various images Jacob uses in his Festal Homilies to describe Jesus Christ and His work, and the third covering the scriptural basis of Jacob's thought and its roots in earlier Syriac writers. A clear and useful 15-page summary concludes the work. I would suggest using the first part (about 100 pages) and the final conclusion of 15 pages as reading for students before they begin working through some of Jacob's work. The very methodical and extensive treatment of the way Jacob frames and expresses his thought will be more useful as a resource to be dipped into rather than as a treatment to be read through in one pass. The very detailed Table of Contents, the full Index and the charts of what Kollamparampil calls Jacob's "typological networks" (13 pages listing his use of Old Testament passages in reference to Jesus Christ) and his list of the Titles of Christ

(6 pages, 194 titles with references for where they appear in the Festal Homilies) will guide the students of Jacob to whatever passages and material they might desire.

Kollamparampil begins by situating Jacob in his place and time, with a description of the range of his writing and of his symbolic thought and his convictions about the nature of revelation and approach to interpreting Scripture. This draws connections between Jacob and his predecessors, mostly Aphrahat and Ephraem, of course, but also points out areas in which Jacob built on their offerings or extended his own thought in uncharted directions. The contrast between Jacob's pacific and pastoral nature and the fraught times in which he lived is well drawn and serves to highlight his purpose in writing. It is refreshing to read such an extended treatment of a Christian thinker from these decades (Jacob lived from 451–521) that approaches him as an expounder of Christian doctrine rather than a theological pugilist. 50 pages of general treatment of his theological method close out the first part of the study.

The second part of the work marches through the material in Jacob's festal homilies, treating it in the order of Christ's gospel life, from Nativity to Ascension. This is followed by two chapters, one treating of soteriology and the second covering theological thought patterns. This is the heart of Kollamparampil's exposition and, while difficult when gulped down whole, will serve as a mine of information and citations for future students of Jacob. Virtually every paragraph in this part of the volume has a reference to a specific passage, and for a paragraph to have ten or more is not unusual. These are centered on the Festal Homilies, of course, but are not limited to them. Students of Jacob will want a copy of this work on their shelves to direct them to passages relevant to their study and to provide them with syntheses that had escaped their notice.

Part Three is more synthetic than analytic and delineates Jacob's thought in its over-all shape, treating his ideas of the meaning and purpose of Incarnation as a part of Divine Self-Revelation and of Jacob's placing of Jesus Christ at the center of the History of Salvation, as well as of the history of Creation itself. These 140 pages provide the reader with the clearest sense of Jacob's religious understanding. They offer food for class discussions on him as a thinker among thinkers and can do much to bring him into the

theological conversation to which students are exposed in seminaries or "Early Christianity" classes.

If I were still teaching undergraduates, I might use Kollamparampil's translation of a homily and parts of this volume to insert Jacob into a class on "The Development of Christian Thought," which has not hitherto been manageable. He could also find a home in a course on Christology. The pedagogical opportunities that Dr. Kollamparampil has provided us will bring more students into contact with this giant of the Syrian Orthodox tradition as well as help scholars find their way through the ocean of works that Jacob left behind to instruct and bemuse us. I will keep this volume on a shelf close to my desk and expect to refer to it frequently when consulting Jacob or wondering if I ought to consult him. Perhaps Dr. Kollamparampil will someday offer us a handbook on Jacob and his works. The scholarly world is in sore need of that kind of help. Still, he has moved us along the path to easier engagement with Mar Jacob already, for which this reviewer is most grateful.

Zeki Joseph, *Mor Gabriel aus Beth Qustan: Leben und Legende eines syrischen Abtbischofs aus dem 7. Jahrhundert.* Theologische Texte und Studien 15 (Hildesheim: George Olms Verlag, 2010). Pp. 148; €29.80

JEANNE-NICOLE M. SAINT-LAURENT, MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

Mor Gabriel aus Beth Qustan: Leben und Legende eines syrischen Abtbischofs aus dem 7. Jahrhundert by Zeki Joseph makes an important contribution to the study of Syriac hagiography and the cult of the saints in the Syriac-speaking milieu. This book presents a translation and commentary of the *Vita* of Mar Gabriel of Beth Qustan (b. 593), patron of Saint Gabriel's Monastery of Qartmin in Tur Abdin. Zeki Joseph himself is a native of Beth Qustan, and his intimate knowledge of the area enriches his discussion of the traditions connected to Mar Gabriel. His book's examination of the textual traditions and material culture connected to Mar Gabriel is a welcome addition for scholars and students interested in the religious landscape and indigenous saints of Tur Abdin.

The *Vita* of Mar Gabriel presents an idealized picture of the practices of the Syrian Orthodox monks of Qartmin in the seventh century, and it illustrates how the monks assisted the villagers who were living in proximity to them. Although the story is embroidered with hagiographic embellishments meant to elevate the monks and their patron saint, it is an important source for both the religious and social history of Tur Abdin. The anonymous hagiographer describes the devotions and liturgical practices of the community of Mar Gabriel (*Vita* 1, p. 27–29) and traces the construction of the church. The narrative discusses the persecution of the Non-Chalcedonians by the Chalcedonian Patriarch Ephrem of Antioch (*Vita* 4, p. 32–33) and mentions an incursion of the Persians that damaged the monastery (*Vita* 5, p. 33). The story underscores how the monks of Qartmin were oppressed for the sake of orthodoxy. The hagiography celebrates the founders and friends of the monastery while also marking out its rivals and adversaries.

The hagiographer highlights Mar Gabriel's kinship to the region, naming him a saint "from the region of Tur Abdin, from a village called Beth Qustan, which lies close to the city of Hah" (*Vita* 7, p. 34). He discusses Gabriel's training and discipline in the ascetic life, his arrival at Qartmin, "the Abbey of the House of Mor

Simeon" (*Vita* 9, p. 38), and his ordination to become the bishop of the Abbey (*Vita* 11, p. 42). The text shows how Gabriel performed miracles that encouraged Arabs to convert to Christianity. One hagiographic invention describes an imagined treaty between Gabriel and 'Umar ibn-Khattab (d. 644), (*Vita* 12, p. 42–43). The narrative also shows how the monks ate, prayed, and regulated their day with a strict ascetic rule. This harshness contrasted with the compassion that the monks displayed to the poor in their midst.

The saint's presence transformed the mundane times of daily life into moments for the miraculous. Gabriel raised the dead and performed wondrous deeds during communal meals (*Vita* 25, p. 44–46). He directed monastic building projects and gave orders to regulate communal life. The *Vita* thus shows us how monks of Tur Abdin projected onto Gabriel the qualities of an ideal abbot: a governor and miracle-worker, an ascetic and a friend of the poor.

The text depicts the death of the saint and his burial (*Vita* 22–23, p. 54-56). It links the protagonist to other heroes of the area as well, and it imagines a relationship between Gabriel and Simeon of the Olives, another wonderworker of Tur Abdin (*Vita* 25, p. 57). The narrative ends with a discussion of the exhuming of Gabriel's corpse. His arm is severed from his body so that his relics could benefit his monastic family (*Vita* 27–28, p. 58–59).

This hagiography has stimulating material on the practices of the monks, and it shows how the Syrian Orthodox viewed their past and idealized their patron saint. Scholars of Syriac asceticism and historians interested in Christianity during the early decades of Islam will benefit from this text. It contains fascinating tidbits about the practices of the monks themselves within the walls of the monastery (*Vita* 13, p. 43). The story discusses the monks' interaction with the poor in their midst (*Vita* 15, p. 44–45) and is particularly rich in its descriptions of the topography around the villages of Mar Gabriel.

In his introduction, Joseph discusses the manuscripts that he used to produce his translation of the *Vita* of Mar Gabriel. He is careful to distinguish "history" from "hagiography," acknowledging that much of the story must be attributed to the imagination of the hagiographer. The book includes a thorough analysis of the manuscripts that contain the *Vita* of Mar Gabriel from Tur Abdin, Berlin, London, Paris, Birmingham, and Chicago. Joseph used

Br. Library Add. 17,265, a 13th-century manuscript, as the base text for his translation. He consulted other manuscripts for his translation, including ones from Paris (syr. 421, P. 36–60) and Istanbul (Meryem Ana 7, B. 99a–113 a). It is regrettable that this book does not have a critical edition of the Syriac text; a reader would need to find these manuscripts in order to read the Syriac. The reviewer did not have access to the Syriac text.

Joseph analyzes historical issues in the later chapters of this book and explains the transmission of the text and the development of written legends about the saint. In chapter four, the author presents an analysis of the Syriac sources that the hagiographer used to shape the narrative. The author outlines the text's relationship to the Syriac *Chronicle of 819*, the *Chronicle of 846*, the *Qartmin Trilogy*, and the Calendar of Tur Abdin. Joseph points out the hagiography's marked kinship to John of Ephesus' *Lives of the Eastern Saints*. Joseph should be commended for his thoroughness in elucidating how scholars of hagiography should consider multiple sources for understanding the interplay between material and literary evidence for the development of a saint's cult, such as historical chronicles, descriptions of liturgical practices, and hagiographic legends, both in their ancient form and modern retellings.

Joseph also connects *loci* mentioned in the hagiography with their possible counterparts in actual churches and monastic sites, and the text's photographic illustrations enrich this presentation. He offers an interpretative lens for understanding the miracles of the story, showing how the monks of Mar Gabriel composed these scenes to join their patron to other famous luminaries of the Syrian Orthodox ascetic tradition, like Simeon of the Olives (p. 100). The author cautions against reading this story as a purely historical source, yet his work shows how the text can be used to gain insights into the life of the late ancient Syrian monks: "Das *Leben des Gabriel* ist eine problematische Quelle, aber ein Teil davon könnte für das 7. Jahrhundert gültig sein, und alles, ausser dem, was Johannes von Ephesus entlehnt ist, wurde vor dem Hintergrund des klösterlichen Lebens in Tur Abdin verfasst" (p. 101).

The final chapter contains what is perhaps the most important original scholarly contribution of this book. Here he traces the expansion of the cult of Mar Gabriel in the villages around Tur Abdin. The author discusses the reverence shown to the relics of Gabriel's right arm and the fingers of the right hand: objects

viewed as sources of divine energy and power (p. 107). Joseph summarizes narratives on the relics of Mar Gabriel and illustrates the long history of devotion to the saint. He includes a commentary on festivals dedicated to Mar Gabriel and various depictions of the saint in art. Especially entertaining is the narrative that the hagiographer incorporates into the book on "Das Wunder der Geschlechtsumwandlung"(p. 109).

Joseph's research builds upon Andrew Palmer's scholarship on the history of Tur Abdin, and his book is a wonderful contribution to our understanding of the cult of the local saints of that area. This book's study of Mar Gabriel's *Vita* and cult balances historical commentary and literary analysis with attention to religious geography and the construction of space. His work provides an explanation for the popularity of Mar Gabriel in the Syrian Orthodox monastic tradition and has presented an explanation for the longevity of the saint's cult into the present day.

Liv Ingeborg Lied, *The Other Lands of Israel: Imaginations of the Land in* 2 Baruch (Leiden: Brill, 2008). Pp. xix + 375; $172.00.

Shayna Sheinfeld, McGill University

2 Baruch is a Jewish apocalypse written between 70 and 132 C.E. in response to the destruction of the Second Temple. The oldest extant manuscript of the entire apocalypse is contained in a Syriac version, which itself claims to be translated from the Greek. The discussion of original language is still under debate; Lied argues for a Greek original (23). The present volume, based on the author's 2006 doctoral dissertation at the University of Bergen, argues that the Land of Israel is a redemptive category in *2 Baruch,* contrary to the view of the Land in *2 Baruch* in previous scholarship. Lied's argument breaks out of traditional concepts of Land that are based around spatial epistemology and instead approaches Land through a more flexible and mobile praxis epistemology. In the case of *2 Baruch*, this means that the Land does not just equal physical/geographic locations as found around the inscribed Jerusalem/Judah/Palestine, but that Land as a redemptive category is located wherever the remnant community observes the laws, regardless of their physical location.

Lied's book moves in a logical, chronological progression through the temporal categories in *2 Baruch*. Chapter one considers the nature of the question, examining spatial theory and the *status quaestionis* of *2 Baruch.* This research is built upon the work of H. Lefebvre and E. W. Soja, who "propose a change of spatial epistemology" by studying space "as a cultural and social construct" (14). Using spatial epistemology, Lied uses the following chapters to consider space used in *2 Baruch* not in a one-to-one correlation to actual geography in the Land, but to consider how space is imagined through *2 Baruch*'s eschatology.

Chapters two and three focus on the First Temple in *2 Baruch*. Chapter two considers Baruch's concern for the role of the Land with the imminent destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, as well as the results of what will happen to the remnant community upon their relocation outside of Jerusalem. Lied's interpretation is supported by the Syriac: for instance, when the remnant leaves Jerusalem, Jerusalem itself becomes wilderness—this can be seen through, for example, the Aphʿel form of *arpe*, which means "'to leave' in the sense of deserting or renouncing something" (55).

Chapter three explores how *2 Baruch* constructs the Land of the past, specifically through an analysis of the importance of kingships as told in the Apocalypse of the Cloud (*2 Bar* 53–74). In this chapter Lied shows how praxis shapes Israel's Land, that is, Israel's actions must comply with the covenant in order to define Land, and the definition of the Land changes depending on righteous praxis.

Chapters four and five consider spaces of the end-time. Chapter four moves away from the history of the Land to the present narrative time, when the temple has been destroyed, and the righteous remnant, with Baruch at its head, has moved to the Kidron valley. Lied argues that the movement of the remnant, even just to the nearby Kidron valley, places the remnant in a type of exile (115). The movement also supports an eschatological reversal from the holy temple locale—which is no longer holy—to the Kidron valley which is known as a place of punishment and as a graveyard, and ultimately as wilderness (122). Chapter five considers Baruch's move to Hebron, which is, like the Kidron valley, a wilderness location that has numerous biblical references associated with it, especially in relation to Abraham, but also with Moses. The period of time in chapter four and five constitutes the "end time" space, since the time of the Messiah and ultimate redemption do not come immediately (111).

Chapters six and seven move on to the time of the redemption. Chapter six studies the Land in the messianic era. During this time the remnant must survive the end of the corruptible world while preparing for the incorruptible world. The Land during the messianic era is thus a period of transition for Israel and includes both the corruptible and incorruptible world. Chapter seven considers how Israel as well as the temple vessels move from the corruptible, imperfect world into heaven. Lied emphasizes that the two worlds are connected through Israel and the artifacts, and that "as spatial constructions and outcome of Israel's practices, [the two worlds] overlap" (303). Thus, the Land in the incorruptible world is connected to the Land in the corruptible world, and it is in the heavenly Land that the righteous will receive their reward.

Lied's analysis is well written and concise. The exegetical analysis of *2 Baruch* is clear and convincing, and each section builds steadily upon the previous ones, creating by the end of the book a solid argument that gives credence to the idea that redemptive

space in *2 Baruch* is created through praxis. One example of this can be seen in chapter five, where the focus is on *2 Baruch* 77:5-6. Lied argues that the 'here' (Syriac *hārkā*) location in this passage is explicitly tied to the location of Baruch and/or the righteous remnant. Thus future redemptive space is tied to Baruch/the remnant—that is, the *hārkā* is wherever Baruch/the remnant are located, regardless of whether or not it happens to be in the physical Land. Lied proposes that allowing the "territorial aspect to determine our interpretations" is problematic because a specific location of the remnant is never mentioned (176–177). True though this point is, Lied herself points out that the idea of return to the promised Land *as a physical location* is a common trope in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature (176, n.113), and thus to dismiss concrete location as part of the interpretation simply because it is not stated outright is problematic. This is not to say that Lied's interpretation is incorrect, only that this interpretation perhaps needs to be expanded to include the possibility that the readership of *2 Baruch* would also have connected the extensive traditions associated with physical Land, as well as the remnant, to redemptive space.

The above example also serves as an illustration for Lied's use of Syriac throughout the book: the arguments found therein do not focus on the language of the extant text except when they hinge on the specific words, such as in *2 Baruch* 77:5-6 (mentioned above) where *hārkā* (here) appears. This word again appears in 80:5, where it refers to "the area [of] 'the inhabitants of Zion"' (175) and supports, according to Lied, the argument that *hārkā* serves as an indication of the presence of the remnant rather than physical location. Lied's use of Syriac examples is thus sparse but placed with skill, making the book accessible to both lay readers and scholars of Syriac alike.

Lied's book is a very strong analysis of *2 Baruch*. Even with the exclusion of the geographic possibilities, to argue that *2 Baruch* transforms the "convenantal space to address the crisis caused by the fall of the Jerusalem temple and the dispossession of Palestine in 70 C.E. and to argue for Israel's survival and ultimate redemption in the other world" (318) via the praxis and location of the remnant is effective and convincing. *The Other Lands of Israel* offers an innovative and convincing analysis of *2 Baruch*.

J. Edward Walters, ed., *Ephrem the Syrian's Hymns on the Unleavened Bread*, Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 30 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012). Pp. xiii + 103; $48.82.

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Gorgias Press continues to make the field of Syriac studies more accessible to students and scholars of all levels, and Walters' translation of the "Hymns on the Unleavened Bread" by the fourth-century Syriac author Ephrem is no exception. This hymn cycle is of critical importance to scholars' understanding of the relationship in Ephrem's community between practices, places, and people that we sometimes too easily label simply "Christian" or "Jewish." The hymns demonstrate Ephrem's strong desire to draw a sharp distinction between the Jewish Passover and the Christian Pascha, and the superiority of the latter over the former, and hence of Christianity over Judaism and "the peoples" over "the [Jewish] people." The anti-Judaism of these hymns is couched in Ephrem's famously beautiful alliterative poetry, but the symbolism carries a weighty message about Jesus' fulfillment of earlier promises, his sacrifice's replacement of Levitical practices, and the blindness and potential violence of the Jews. Beyond a theological supersessionism, however, Ephrem's warning in Hymn 19, for example, that his audience flee and remove themselves from the dangers associated with the Jewish Passover, the synagogue, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread suggests that these hymns also attempt to clarify "correct" Christian praxis to an audience who did not yet share Ephrem's definition of Christian orthopraxy. Anyone interested in Christian-Jewish relations, Syriac Christianity, Ephrem, fourth-century Christian praxis, or ongoing accusations of Christian "Judaizing" will find these hymns to be a treasure-trove.

This publication consists of a brief introduction, followed by Walters' English translation of the hymns with Edmund Beck's 1964 critical edition of the Syriac (CSCO 248 / Syr. 108) on facing pages. Although Walters' work has many strengths, my enthusiasm for seeing this hymn cycle translated into English for the first time is tempered by some of the unfortunate weaknesses of the publication. The number of copy-editing errors in the seven-page introduction is surprising, ranging from a missing word in the first sentence (1) to the misspelling of Beck's translation and critical

edition that is the foundation of Walters' work (2, 3), to a spelling mistake in a direct quotation from another author (6). On page 2, a list of three items is enumerated with numerals, but on page 3, only the first of three "following reasons" is signaled with a numeral, leaving readers to distinguish on their own where the second and third reasons begin. Numerous footnotes throughout the book are missing their final period, and a brief excerpt from Hymn 4 in the book's introduction is riddled with errors and does not match the translation later in the book (4).

The introduction also raises some more substantive issues. Walters sometimes refers to the competing religious holidays as "the Jewish Passover" and "the Christian Passover" (3, 5), and other times as "the Jewish Passover" and "the Christian Pascha" (3, 4). While an argument could be made for reading these hymns in light of a tradition about a "Christian Passover," Walters does not offer such an argument or any other explanation for the changing English terminology, and in the absence of more discussion, readers may rightly expect to see some distinction between the terms to acknowledge that the Jewish and Christian holidays differed in their focus. Although Walters cites some of the relevant scholarship on Ephrem and these hymns, his introduction is very brief and skims over complex topics quickly, often without the nuance that scholars might wish.

Fortunately, the translation of the full hymn cycle is more carefully edited. Fr. Elie Joseph Bali's addition of West Syriac vocalization and Walters' more complete index of biblical references will make this version more user-friendly than Beck's earlier edition. Walters describes that he "attempted to strike a balance between the literal and the free translation" (7), and of course with Syriac poetry there is always a range of acceptable English translations. Many of Walters' translations follow the Syriac text well, and make these texts accessible to an English-speaking audience. It is not difficult, though, to find places where Walters' translation is looser than will be helpful for some scholars. He sometimes translates a perfect verb followed by the past tense of the verb "to be" simply as the perfect (e.g., Hymn 1.18, 3.6, 19.3) in cases that weaken Ephrem's sharp distinction between times, covenants, and appropriate behavior. He also frequently translates the demonstrative pronoun as a definite article (e.g., Hymn 3.15; 4.16–17; 19.16, 25) in instances when I would prefer the former, and he has made

different choices than I would make in translating many nouns in the construct state as part of adjectival rather than genitive phrases (e.g., Hymn 3.6–7, 10; 19.1, 9), so that his "paschal lamb" and "lamb of life" (Hymn 3.10–11) lose in English the parallel construction that they have in the Syriac. Nevertheless, casual readers will have little reason to object to these translation choices. The fact that the Syriac text occasionally places the first letter of "Satan" above rather than beside the second letter may raise a few eyebrows (Hymn 1.11, 13; 3.15, 16, 18; 4.2, 5, 9), but should not impede anyone's reading of the text.

While it is easy to suggest some changes to the book, it is nevertheless invaluable to have this hymn cycle available. Walters' quite readable English translation will make these important and interesting hymns accessible to a much wider audience; the vocalized text will aid those who are learning Syriac; and the facing Syriac text makes it possible for readers who know the language to check the translation as they go. This book is a significant contribution to the study of Syriac Christianity, Christianity in late antiquity, and the complex relations between those we call "Jews" and "Christians." These hymns deserve a great deal more study than they have yet received, and it is my hope that Walters' publication will make this possible.

James Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis: Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Pp. xxxv + 573; hardcover $199; paperback $75.

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In this remarkable but idiosyncratic contribution to the historiography of late antiquity, James Howard-Johnston offers a rigorous reassessment of the major narrative sources for the momentous events that shook western Eurasia in the seventh century: the final "Great War" between the empires of Rome and Iran (603–628); the westward migration of Avars, Turks, and other steppe peoples and their incursions into Roman and Sasanian territory; and the meteoric rise of Islamic power from the death of the Prophet in 632 to the first Arab siege of Constantinople in 717–718. *Witnesses to a World Crisis* approaches this world through systematic study of its historians and histories. The focus throughout is on military, political, and social history, though readers interested in other themes and topics will also learn much from the book's methodical dissection of the sources.

Howard-Johnston approaches his sources with a clear and consistent goal: he seeks in each case to define the "character, interests, and working methods" of the historian, chronicler, or other writer responsible for the text in question (9). The point is to test the reliability of the source in order to extract from it the "nuggets of information" ideally derived from eyewitness experience or contemporary documents (65). Although he examines poetry, hagiography, and other imaginative genres, Howard-Johnston reserves his highest praise for more restrained texts, such as the Greek *Chronicon Pascale* and the Syriac *Chronicle of 724*. These texts preserve "the sort of solid, well-organized material which is meat to historians," precisely because of their authors' lack of imagination (49). Howard-Johnston works tirelessly to identify the sources behind his sources, insisting that such analysis is essential for assessing the accuracy of their reports. He finds, for instance, four distinct sources underlying the *Chronicle of 724* and at least nine behind the Armenian historian known as Sebeos. Howard-Johnston readily admits that such analysis is a "long and laborious business" with "inevitably conjectural" results (80). At times, his search for the sources behind our sources pushes beyond plausible reconstruction. In the

hands of a less skilled scholar, this methodology could easily lead to a rather insular approach to historiography. Fortunately, Howard-Johnston remains closely attuned to both the historical context and significance of each source. His analysis of the Armenian *History to 682*, which he "disinters" from Movses Daskurants'i's *History of (Caucasian) Albania*, shows, for example, how the Roman alliance with the Western Turks initiated in 624/625 set the stage for the Roman capture of Tiflis and Heraclius' invasion of Mesopotamia in the winter of 627. Howard-Johnston's chronological precision allows him to document cross-regional connections, which others have only postulated. It appears, for example, that it was Chinese efforts to destabilize the twin Turkish khaganates of the steppe in 629, which brought the Western Turks' military operations in the Caucasus to an "abrupt halt" (127).

Witnesses to a World Crisis offers important new observations about the nature and chronology of the early Islamic conquests as well as contemporary views of the new religion. Here too Howard-Johnston's insights emerge piecemeal, patiently acquired and assembled from close study of each text. For example, his reading of the Ethiopic *Chronicle of John Nikiu* (composed, he contends, in Coptic during the mid-seventh century) underscores the rapid and well-planned nature of the Islamic conquest of Egypt in 641/642, which culminated in the evacuation of the last Roman administrators in September of 643 (189–190). His reconstruction of the Umayyad-Roman wars hinges on his high respect for the lost history of the mid-eighth century bishop Theophilus of Edessa, which seems to underlie the accounts of later writers in Greek, Arabic, and Syriac (i.e., Theophanes, Agapius, and Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, the last preserved via the twelfth-century *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian*). In Howard-Johnston's estimation, Agapius, an eighth-century Chalcedonian bishop of northern Syria, was the "least inclined to tamper with Theophilus' text," while the Byzantine chronicler Theophanes (d. 818) edited with a much heavier hand (231–232). This reconstruction will likely require revision in light of Maria Conterno's more recent study of this same cluster of chronicles.[1] Even so, Theophanes emerges in Howard-Johnston's analysis as an invaluable source for understanding how Constantinople

[1] Maria Conterno, "Processo ai testimoni: un' inchiesta storiographica sulle fonte per il VII secolo," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 24 (2011): 897–912, reviewing *Witnesses*.

survived the onslaught of Islamic military expansion. Theophanes' *Chronicle* preserves evidence for what were arguably the three most vital steps that enabled the Romans to retain the Aegean core of their empire: "the mobilization of the peasantry of Asia Minor… the improvement of the defences of Constantinople…and, most important of all, adoption of guerrilla methods, as developed by special forces in the Lebanon, for the defence of the Roman heartland, by land and sea" (301). Working with translations, Howard-Johnston offers a more condensed, but similarly rigorous review of the seventh-century material included in later Middle Eastern sources: Eutychius, the *Chronicle of Seert*, the *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria*, and the Zoroastrian *Khwadaynamag* or *Book of Lords* (as preserved in Firdowsi and the Islamic sources). Howard-Johnston plucks from each of these sources unique and plausible details about the dramatic events of the seventh century. The *Chronicle of Seert*, for example, documents the crucial role of the East-Syrian patriarch in the diplomatic negotiations, ca. 630, which finally "brought the Roman-Persian war to a formal end" (330). The *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* offers a sobering account of the increasingly tough anti-Christian measures imposed by the Arab governors of Egypt beginning already in the 680s (322–323).

As a Byzantine historian whose research has drawn him deeper and deeper into Islamic history, Howard-Johnston brings a refreshing perspective to study of the Islamic sources. He is sharply critical of the revisionist school of Islamic historiography, which has posited an "almost unbridgeable gap" between the era of the conquests and the Islamic sources of the ninth and tenth centuries that describe these events (372). Indeed, his entire analysis inclines toward becoming a defense of the methods and reliability of early Islamic historical writing. We must not, Howard-Johnston argues, view this Islamic tradition of historiography as "something strange, prey to unusual forces," just because of its reliance on oral sources (392). While this is a seductive line of argument, Howard-Johnston's effort to explain away more legendary and unreliable elements of the Islamic sources as "disruptions in the historical narrative" is based upon a false dichotomy between "religious truth" and "historical truth" (380). The problem with this approach—and it is a tendency that runs throughout the book—is that it tends to impose upon the sources a very modern view of what constitutes good history.

The final chapters of the book (ch. 14–16) offer a compelling narrative overview of the final Roman-Sasanian war, the rise of Islam, and the era of the conquests. Building on the meticulous chronological reconstruction established in the previous chapters, Howard-Johnston provides a magisterial account of the political and military history of the seventh century. His analysis in these sections includes valuable discussion of the imagery and themes of the Quran (esp. 449–450), and insightful remarks on the sociology of the early Islamic community (452–460). It also offers a vigorous defense of the sophistication and centralization of the early Islamic state, emphasizing the role of "Meccan statecraft," especially under the caliphate of Mu'awiya (472 and 518–529). Howard-Johnston's characterization of the modern historiography on this issue may be overly schematic and even a little dated. But it is nonetheless helpful that he engages the issue explicitly, affirming the general congruence between his view of the conquests and previous scholarship by Fred Donner, Hugh Kennedy, and others.

In sum, this book will rightly take its place as a pivotal study in the historiography of late antiquity. The author's learning is prodigious and his methodology painstaking. Based on some four decades of intensive reading, writing, and teaching, *Witnesses to a World Crisis* will become an indispensible resource for scholars working on many different facets of this tumultuous era. One hopes that the book will also inspire other approaches to these same texts—analyses that will not only sift them for "nuggets of information," but also probe their distinctive qualities as religious and cultural documents. Scholars working in every genre and language of late antique historiography will find much to contemplate in Howard-Johnston's grand synthesis.