

## Isaac of Antioch's Homily against the Jews

by

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*Homily Two against the Jews* is preserved in Vatican Syriac Manuscript 120, fols. 141a-148b\*, J. S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 1 (Rome 1719) 231, no. 73. The script most closely resembles that of plate XX in H. P. Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac Manuscripts* (Boston 1946), which is a specimen of a manuscript dated 548. There is nothing to indicate that the handwriting is that of an archaizing, much later hand. The manuscript, of course, cannot be older than the latest author whose work it contains. However, all the texts contained in our manuscript are those of Isaac of Antioch, if we can rely on the brief description contained in the Assemani catalogue. Since it is reasonable to assume that our manuscript was not written during the lifetime of the author, it cannot antedate the second half of the fifth century. The safest and most probable dating that can be suggested without a more detailed examination of the original is to call it a sixth-century manuscript.

The manuscript is written in a beautiful Estranglā script. Fol. 144a provides the exception to an otherwise easily legible manuscript. It appears that a later hand has attempted to fill in with ink the blurred outlines of the earlier text. In the process, many letters and words have been obliterated beyond recognition. Fortunately, the text is largely a midrash on Genesis 49, 8-12 which can be recovered with the help of the Biblical text.

Each folio page contains two columns varying in length from 22-25 lines. One column extends to 26 lines. The words are written in large letters, thus there are no more than two or three words on each line. Fol. 146a col. A, l. 4 contains four words, and fol. 145a col. A, l. 19, which also contains four words, is written in a much smaller Estranglā script. Fol. 145b col. B, l. 22 contains one long word.

The manuscript contains many additions, repetitions, and omissions which, in all probability, were not found in the original. The addition of superfluous letters occurs frequently in the manuscript. It is difficult to ascertain whether these errors may be attributed to the scribe or to earlier errors already contained in his *Vorlage*. In any event, our manuscript, despite its antiquity, does not contain a very reliable text. This is all the more regrettable since no other manuscript of this work has so far been traced.

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\* I offer my sincerest thanks to the Vatican Library for permission to publish this manuscript.



Fol. 141 a  
col. B

Homily two against the Jews

<sup>10</sup> ܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ

I have a judgement with Jacob,  
And a discourse with the Jews.

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ

Fol. 141 b  
col. A

If we all have one Father,  
Why should anyone feel superior to  
the nations?<sup>1</sup>

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ

I belong to the nations,  
And on behalf of my people I speak.  
What do you think, O nation,  
Did not the Lord create us as well as you?

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ

If God created us and you,  
He loves us as well as you.  
If your begetter did not beget us (too),  
(Then) you have in mind another God.

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ

But if your begetter is one,  
(Then) He doesn't love you any more  
than me,  
And you are no closer to (His) thoughts  
Than I or my people.

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ

These sentiments<sup>2</sup> of your fathers,  
You should not ascribe to God.  
For Esau<sup>3</sup> labored in hunting,  
And Jacob took the blessings.

<sup>10</sup> In margin in Serṭō script ܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ.

<sup>20</sup> The manuscript everywhere indicates *Yhūdāyē*, *Īhūdā*, *Yhūdāyūtā*, and *Yhūdāyā* with an *h*. The form without the *h* is later, cf. R. Payne Smith, *The-saurus Syriacus* (Oxford 1879) 1569. The preposition *b* and the accusative *l* are pronounced *ba* and *la* when they precede these forms, cf. Th. Nöldeke, *Compendious Syriac Grammar*, trans. James A. Crichton (London 1904) sec. 44, p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Ms. ܡܬܬܬܝܢ.

<sup>3a0</sup> I have not followed the manuscript which never joins the *Semkat* to the letter following it. However, I have indicated the diacritical points where they are shown in the manuscript.

<sup>40</sup> Ms. ܡܬܬܬܝܢ.

<sup>1</sup> *ammā*, "the nation", refers to the Jews. The plural *ammē*, "the nations", refers to the Christians.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. P. Bedjan, *Homiliae S. Isaaci Syri Antiocheni* 1 (Paris 1903) 565,18, "whoever hears these sentiments (*haššē*)".

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 27,3; 31. Cf. Jacob of Sarug, *The Blessings of Isaac to Jacob* = Br. Mus. add. 17,159, fol. 23b, lines 3-4: "he (Isaac) sent him (Esau) to toil a bit in hunting".

10

20

Fol. 141 b  
col. B



And Jacob also blessed Ephraem<sup>3a</sup>  
 Not as a result of his merit<sup>4</sup> and glory.  
 Both made the younger the older,  
 In the blessings but not in the possessions.

וְיַעֲקֹב בֵּרַךְ אֶת-עֲפְרַיִם  
 לֹא כִּי-בְרָכָה מֵעֲמָלָהּ וְכִּי-כְבוֹד  
 וְיַעֲקֹב בֵּרַךְ אֶת-יְהוּדָה  
 כִּי-בְרָכָה מֵעֲמָלָהּ וְכִי-כְבוֹד

Isaac made Jacob the older,  
 But he did not disinherit Esau.  
 With the blessings of his mouth he  
 disregarded him,  
 But he did not deprive him of (his)  
 portion (of the inheritance)<sup>5</sup>.

וְיִצְחָק עָשָׂה אֶת-יַעֲקֹב הַזֶּכֶּה  
 אֲבָל לֹא-חָטָא אֶת-עֵשָׂו  
 בְּבִרְכָּתוֹ שֶׁבְּפִי שֶׁל יִצְחָק  
 הִשְׁתַּחֲסֵף אֶת-יַעֲקֹב

Since he was the father of both of them,  
 He also loved them both.  
 And when he made the younger the older,  
 If you have been persuaded, these are  
 mysteries<sup>6</sup>.

כִּי הָיָה הוּא אֲבִי שְׁנֵיהֶם  
 וְיִצְחָק אָהַב אֶת-שְׁנֵיהֶם  
 וְכַשְׁמָלָהּ אֶת-יְהוּדָה  
 הַזֶּכֶּה מֵעֲמָלָהּ

30

Through the law you (appear) superior  
 to me,  
 Through circumcision and the Sabbath  
 which you observe.  
 And you boast of these  
 Which are dear to your childishness.

בְּחֻמֵּי הַתּוֹרָה אַתָּה מְשֻׁלָּם  
 מֵעַלְמִי  
 בְּבְרִית הַמִּצְוֹת וּבַשַּׁבָּת  
 אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמֹר  
 וְאַתָּה מְבָרַח בְּאֵלֶּיךָ  
 אֵת אֵלֵּינוּ

Fol. 142 a  
 col. A

<sup>50</sup> For metrical reasons the pronoun *ennōn* may take an enclitic form *nōn*. Cf. lines 108 and 140, *liṭin-nōn*; 1. 419, *dahzā-nōn*. For additional examples in the writings of Isaac of Antioch, see P. Bedjan, *Homiliae S. Isaaci Syri Antiocheni* 1 (Paris 1903) 90,14; 96,20; 135,5; 143,5.

<sup>3a</sup> Genesis 48,19-20.

<sup>4</sup> *amlā* means "labor", and also the "result of labor", cf. Brockelmann, *Lex. Syr.* 530. The root *ml* also has both meanings in Biblical Hebrew, cf. H. L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Koheleth* (New York 1950) 1, on Koheleth 1,3, and *Supplementary Studies in Koheleth* = Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research 21 (1952) 35/36.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Jacob of Sarug, Br. Mus. add. 19,159, fols. 27b, l. 18-28a, l. 2:

When he was dying, Isaac did not write about his abundance,  
 And he did not leave orders concerning who should inherit his possessions.  
 He gave the blessing which was riches to the one who received it,  
 And concerning the possession, he did not leave any orders because it was despicable in his eyes.

Thus Esau was not deprived of his rightful share of Isaac's material possessions.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. lines 215/8. Just as Jacob who was younger than Esau was blessed by his father, so the nations who are younger than the Jewish nation were blessed by God. Cf. Jacob of Sarug, Br. Mus. add., fol. 23b, lines 13-18:

And when Esau, the elder, was sent to hunt prey,  
 The mystery of the nations called the younger that he should be blessed.  
 (Divine) goodness, then, took hold of Jacob through his mother,  
 For without labor he was blessed like the nations.



Concerning the law and circumcision  
And Sabbath observances which you  
have taken hold of,<sup>7</sup>  
Let us open and read in the law  
Concerning the first days:

ܠܬܝܘܒܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ

40

With what was Abel<sup>8</sup> triumphant?  
And how was Enoch crowned?  
How Noah and those of the House  
of Seth?  
And we shall see whether the law is good.

ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ

From this very law of yours  
You may learn of its invalidation.  
The weapon which you have seized  
(turns) against you,  
And the arrow which you have shot is  
wounding you.

ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ

For since the law itself proclaims  
That the righteous ones triumphed who  
did not observe it,  
It shows (thereby) great contempt for  
those who observed it  
But did not achieve the measure of the  
ancients.

ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ  
ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ

50

Fol. 142a  
col. B

<sup>60</sup> Ms. ܠܥܝܢܐ, cf. l. 67.

<sup>7</sup> Meaning, let us examine Scripture to ascertain whether the law which you stubbornly hold on to is valid.

<sup>8</sup> Isaac argues that the ancients were considered righteous men even though they did not observe the law. This theme occurs frequently in Syriac polemic literature against the Jews, cf. Aphraates, *The Homilies of Aphraates* ... (London 1869), ed. W. Wright, 205,12-18; Jacob of Sarug, Vat. Syr. ms. 117, fol. 342a col. B, lines 21-30; Dionysius bar Ṣalibhi, *The Treatise of Dionysius bar Ṣalibhi against the Jews* (Leiden 1906), ed. J. De Zwaan, Chap. II. An almost perfect parallel to this Isaac passage is found in Ephraem Syrus, Ed. Rom. 3,183 F-184A:

Let the righteous be unto you

An image of love, and be like them.

See, then (*ḥzī ḥākēl*), and become good in Enoch.

Be like Noah, the second head (of mankind).

My conjecture that the correct reading is *ḥzī Ḥākēl* "see Abel", has been substantiated by Professor P. Edmund Beck of St. Anselms College in Rome who was kind enough to check the reading in the Vat. Syr. ms. and in the Br. Mus. add.

On the favored position of Abel, see M. Sprengling and Wm. C. Graham, *Barhebraeus' Scholia on the Old Testament: Part I, Genesis-II Samuel* = The University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publication 13 (Chicago 1931), facs. p. 28, l. 30, where the name Abel has been derived from the Syriac *mawḥabṭā ḡallāhā*, "the gift of God".



By lengthily narrating the fame  
Of those who were without the law,  
It proclaims its own invalidation  
Since the ancients lived without it.

(Moses brought down the law.)<sup>9</sup>  
Through him are its observances made  
truthful,  
(And) He proceeds with (His) history  
So that we should be blameless.

Had they been accused by Him<sup>10</sup>,  
The House of Seth and Enoch and those  
of the House of Noah,  
They would have been enabled to confirm  
The observance of Sabbath and  
circumcision.

However, since He began by praising  
Those who triumphed without these,  
His scriptures are a reproach to you,  
That you have not achieved any portion.

It was not the Sabbath that adorned  
The righteous men of the first generations.  
Since they were victorious without the law,  
Why do you need the law?

If you assume its truthfulness, you  
consider it false,  
Since it declares victorious (one) who  
is not victorious.  
And if you assume its validity, you  
invalidate it,  
Since you are revoking circumcision  
and the Sabbath.

אמרו ויבא חסדו  
אמרו<sup>7a</sup> ואלו נאמרו<sup>7b</sup> דלא  
באמרו דלא נאמרו  
דלא נאמרו דלא נאמרו

(אמרו ויבא חסדו)  
מחזיקים ויבא חסדו  
מחזיקים ויבא חסדו  
מחזיקים ויבא חסדו

מחזיקים ויבא חסדו  
מחזיקים ויבא חסדו  
מחזיקים ויבא חסדו  
מחזיקים ויבא חסדו

אמרו ויבא חסדו  
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אמרו ויבא חסדו  
אמרו ויבא חסדו

<sup>7b</sup> Ms. אלו.

<sup>7a</sup> Perhaps read אלו in plural.

<sup>8b</sup> Ms. אלו, the *waw* having been added through dittography.

<sup>9</sup> Meaning, Moses brought down the law from Mt. Sinai and made its observances mandatory, but the Lord continued with His divine history invalidating the law through Jesus.

<sup>10</sup> If God had considered Seth, Enoch, and Noah delinquent because of their non-observance of the law, He would have shown, thereby, that the law is valid. Since God praised them, He confirmed the invalidity of the law.



The Jew says these (words) again:

"Concerning the law and circumcision  
Why were they (ordained) then?"

And I answered and said to him

Against the perversity of his saying:<sup>11</sup>

"That it should be a fetter for your  
servitude<sup>12</sup>

(Similar to) that which you served in  
Egypt."

And he answered again and said to me:

"Do you call the law a fetter?"

Then I clarified my words and said to him:

"I am not (the cause of) your rebuke."<sup>13</sup>

Is it not after you turned astray

From the Lord after the calf

(That) there came down for you from  
Mount Sinai<sup>14</sup>

A chain for your bonds,

A heavy yoke which was cast

As if upon your rebellious neck.

And bonds and a shackle it was for you

That you would not leave your Lord.

Those of the House of Seth and Enoch  
and of the House of Noah

Were free men and (faithful) sons.<sup>15</sup>

And they did not need the fetters of the law.

To prevent your flight it was formed.

Your father was a righteous man.

See his justification against you

Which in his last will and testament he  
proclaims

To the band of his sons from his  
household.

והיה כן  
באשר נאמר  
לך בן אדם

80

והיה כן  
באשר נאמר  
לך בן אדם

והיה כן  
באשר נאמר  
לך בן אדם

והיה כן  
באשר נאמר  
לך בן אדם

90

והיה כן  
באשר נאמר  
לך בן אדם

והיה כן  
באשר נאמר  
לך בן אדם

100

והיה כן  
באשר נאמר  
לך בן אדם

<sup>11</sup> Meaning, and I answered him to counteract this perverse question.

<sup>12</sup> On the law as "shackles and fetters and bonds", cf. Ephraem Syrus, Ed. Rom. 3,188 E.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bedjan, *Homiliae S. Isaaci* ... 343,18-19; 345,5-6, the law is a rebuke to Israel for its sinfulness. The Hebrew *mūsār* is translated *mardūtā* in the Peshitta.

<sup>14</sup> This is a play on Exodus 19,20: "the Lord came down from Mt. Sinai".

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bedjan, *Homiliae S. Isaaci* ... 283,11: "have compassion upon faithful sons (*bnayyā*)".



Reuben<sup>16</sup>, you are my might and the  
first of my strength.  
Unstable as water, you shall not remain.  
Simeon<sup>17</sup> and Levi are brothers.  
Instruments of wrath are they cursed.

[Dan<sup>18</sup> is a serpent, and his brother<sup>19</sup>  
is a wolf,  
And another<sup>20</sup> is also a robber.]<sup>21</sup>  
Benjamin<sup>19</sup> is a ravenous wolf,  
And Dan is a basilisk.  
Gad<sup>20</sup> shall go out with a (robber) troop,  
And Issachar<sup>22</sup> has become a tribute.

Why did he call one of them a lamb<sup>23</sup>,  
Or another a dove<sup>24</sup>, or a merchant?<sup>25</sup>  
One a wolf, and one a serpent,  
And another he called a robber?

And from the entire body of his sons  
He separated the heart as for a sacrifice.  
He chose Judah (to be) the center  
Just as the heart which is in the center  
(of the body).

וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן

[וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן]

וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן

וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן

וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן  
וְיָחִיד לְךָ אֶת  
לְבָבְךָ כְּחֵן

110

120

<sup>90</sup> Delete this line which has been erroneously added under the influence of lines 141/2.

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 49,3,4.

<sup>17</sup> Genesis 49,5.

<sup>18</sup> Genesis 49,17.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin, Genesis 49,29.

<sup>20</sup> Gad, Genesis 49,19.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. lines 141-142.

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 49,15.

<sup>23</sup> Naphthali, Genesis 49,21.

<sup>24</sup> This should refer to Joseph, Jacob's favorite son. Cf. Ed. Rom. 1,110E-112B, for the high esteem in which Joseph is held in the tradition of the Syrian Church. But I can find no reference to Joseph as a "dove" in any of the commentaries.

<sup>25</sup> This refers to Zebulun. Cf. Ephraem Syrus' *Commentary on Genesis*, Ed. Rom. 1, 109 D: "since he dwells on the sea coast, his trade (*taggurteh*) is from the yield of the ships." The edition of this work by R. M. Tonneau, *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii* = CSCO 152, 115, sec. 8, has only minor variants. This allusion is also found in Barhebraeus' *Scholia*, ed. Sprengling and Graham, facs. p. 248, l. 13, English translation p. 249, v. 18. Cf. also *Sifre* (Vienna 1864), *w-zōt hab-brākā*, p. 147, sec. 354.







Dan, the serpent, hated the captain<sup>27</sup>.  
 Gad is the (robber) troop that loves  
 the hiding place.  
 And Benjamin is the wolf who watches out  
 For the food of the shepherds<sup>28</sup>.

דן שׂוֹרֵץ שׂוֹרֵץ  
 גַּד לִבְשָׁתוֹ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 בִּנְיָמִן הַכּוֹלֵף הַכּוֹלֵף  
 לִבְשָׁתוֹ הַיְּהוּדִים

1

Behold, the earth swallowed up the water,  
 And Reuben, the head of your tribes,  
 is no more.  
 There was a redemption for the nations,  
 And the instruments of wrath are no more.

מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 רֵעֻבֵן הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים

Behold, the serpent is crushed by the cross,  
 For the captain<sup>27</sup> of the nations has  
 blinded him<sup>29</sup>.  
 The (robber) troop that is persecuted  
 by daylight  
 (Now) hides for day has overcome it<sup>30</sup>.  
 And the flock dwells peacefully (without  
 disturbance) from the wolf,  
 For the shepherd has reprovved it  
 through the cross.

מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים

160

The mighty scepter from Zion<sup>31</sup>  
 The Lord has sent to the nations.  
 Leadership<sup>32</sup> and priesthood,  
 And your mighty scepter, you have  
 no more.

מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים

Upon Judah, Jacob poured forth  
 The entire treasury of his blessings,  
 That they would be preserved in the  
 mystery, so to speak,  
 For the Messiah (coming forth) from  
 Judah.

מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים  
 מִן הָאָרֶץ הַיְּהוּדִים

<sup>130</sup> Ms. מִן הָאָרֶץ.

<sup>140</sup> Ms. מִן הָאָרֶץ.

<sup>150</sup> Ms. מִן הָאָרֶץ.

<sup>27</sup> This refers to Jesus who is called *mallāhā dquštā*, “the captain of truth”, and *mallāhā dḥaymānūtā*, “the captain of faith” in Ed. Rom. 1, 3 C and D.

<sup>28</sup> That is, the prospective prey guarded by the shepherds which serves as food for the wolf.

<sup>29</sup> On Dan as the Antichrist, cf. Jacob of Edessa in Ed. Rom. 1, 191/3, and W. Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend*, trans. A. H. Keane (London 1896) 171/4.

<sup>30</sup> Just as the robber troop is active only at night, hiding at dawn because of the fear of day, so must the Jew now hide that the dawn of Christianity has come.

<sup>31</sup> Psalms 110,2.

<sup>32</sup> מִן הָאָרֶץ may correspond to *οὐνοποιία*, cf. Brockelmann, op. cit. 140.



He established wedding gifts in Judah  
For the bridegroom who was to shine  
forth from him.  
He gave a portion to the church  
From that treasury of blessings.

ܠܝܫܬܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܠܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܠܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܠܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ

170

Judah, your brothers shall praise you.  
And your hand (shall be) on the neck  
of your enemies.  
Your father's sons shall worship you<sup>33</sup>.  
I have designated you king over your  
brothers.

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ

Judah<sup>34</sup> is a lion's whelp.  
From the killing, my son, you have  
come up.  
He kneeled and couched like a lion,  
And a lion's whelp, and who dares  
arouse him?

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ

180

A king shall not depart from you,  
Nor a prophet from the midst of your  
land<sup>35</sup>,  
Until one shall come and shine forth  
To whom that kingdom belongs.

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ

And it is not yours, my father, Jacob.  
He<sup>36</sup> says: "It is not mine?  
Tell us about his likeness,  
And what is the essence of him who  
comes?"

ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ  
ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ

<sup>160</sup> Ms. ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ.

<sup>170</sup> The normal form is ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ with a *yōd* before the *hē* as in l. 186, cf. Nöldeke, op. cit., sec. 199, p. 149. The less frequent ܕܡܬܬܬܝܒܬܐ is also found in l. 332. Cf. T. J. Lamy, *Sancti Ephraem Syri Hymni et Sermones* 1 (Mecheln 1882) 631,5-8, where both forms occur in the same passage and are parallel to one another.

<sup>33</sup> Genesis 49,8.

<sup>34</sup> Genesis 49,9.

<sup>35</sup> Genesis 49,10 reads, "the staff (*šabṭā*) shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver (*mḥaddqānā*) ..." Ephraem's *Genesis Commentary*, Ed. Rom. 1, 107 F = Tonneau, op. cit. 113, lines 16-17, reads; "He wrote, 'the staff shall not depart,' which is the king (*malkā*), nor 'the lawgiver (*mḥaddqānā*)', which is the prophet (*nḥiyā*) who predicts the future (*danḥaddeq 'iḏāṭā*)." This midrash is found in Jacob of Sarug, *Homily* 1, Vat. Syr. ms. 117, fol. 340b, col. C, lines 32-33, and even in Dionysius bar Ṣalibhi who lived in the twelfth century, cf. De Zwaan, op. cit. 27, sec. 6.

<sup>36</sup> The Jew is speaking, cf. lines 209-10, where the Jew also is speaking.



He has no beauty and no splendor<sup>37</sup>,  
Nor chariots and horsemen.  
He shall tie his foal to the vine<sup>38</sup>.  
Indeed, he has arrived but does not go  
inside.

He says that the nations are waiting for  
him.  
He will not tarry with you.  
To the house of his friends he passes  
quickly,  
And he does not linger with you.

Fol. 144 a  
col. B

Like a passer-by to the vine  
He ties his foal (but does not enter).  
He does not remain (with you),  
For there will be a lodging among the  
nations.

He guards the vine of the nations,  
And lays waste the vineyard of Israel.  
And he cleanses his garment in wine<sup>39</sup>,  
And his vestures in the blood of grapes.

Not with the blood of sacrifices does  
he make  
The offering, but rather with wine.  
He cleanses his cloak which has become red  
With the blood of grapes, not with  
sacrifices.

"What is the appearance, my father Jacob,  
Of the lord of the kingdom?"<sup>40</sup>

לחל למינהו ולא נא  
17a° חלוא וקלח  
נאסא כפחא חל  
חל חל חל חל חל

190

אחי דבנא חספא למ  
לח חספא חספא  
לבח חספא, חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא

אחי חספא \* חספא  
18° חספא חספא (חל חל)  
(חספא חספא) חל חספא  
דחספא חספא 19° חספא

200

20° חספא חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא

לח חספא חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא

חספא חספא חספא  
חספא חספא חספא

210

<sup>17a°</sup> The usual form is חל/ח.

<sup>18°</sup> Cf. lines 192-196.

<sup>19°</sup> Ms. חספא.

<sup>20°</sup> Ms. חספא.

<sup>37</sup> Isaiah 53,2.

<sup>38</sup> Genesis 49,11.

<sup>39</sup> Genesis 49,11.

<sup>40</sup> The Jew is speaking, cf. n. 36.



His eyes are more sparkling than wine,  
And his teeth whiter than milk<sup>41</sup>.  
That with wine he abolishes sacrifices  
Is his sign of glory.

Fol. 144 b  
col. A

וְיָלַד בְּיָמָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
וְיָלַד בְּיָמָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
וְיָלַד בְּיָמָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
וְיָלַד בְּיָמָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו

Isaac blessed the younger  
As though he were the older, and he  
was believed.  
And God blessed the nations.  
And according to your word, it is not true?

כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו

Read the last will and testament of  
your father  
When he disinherits you,  
And shakes himself free from their name,  
That they would not be called his heirs.

כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו

220

Jacob was blessed through deceit,  
And he is (rightfully considered)  
truthful and righteous.  
The nations turned in prayer,  
And should they not be worthy  
of the inheritance?

כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו

Jacob spoke falsely,  
And he left his sons the blessings.  
The Messiah blessed us in his name,  
And should his blessings, then,  
not be true?

כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו

230

Fol. 144 b  
col. B

Shall creation have fulfilment  
While the truth shall not?<sup>42</sup>  
Shall a stolen treasure be re-established,  
While one for the nations shall not be  
established?

כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו  
כִּי עֵינָיו, כִּי עֵינָיו

<sup>41</sup> Genesis 49,12. The traditional interpretation of this passage would be, "his eyes glisten from wine, and his teeth are white from milk", but this would make Judah a drunkard. Cf. Ibn Ezra, ad. loc.: "eyes redder than wine, and (teeth whiter) than milk".

<sup>42</sup> Since the world has seen its fulfilment in the birth of Jesus, surely the truth contained in his blessings to the nations will find fulfilment.



Reuben was alienated and rejected  
In the last will and testament of their  
father.  
Moses came and gave him  
His inheritance among his brothers.

Moses revoked the curses,  
And brought Reuben to the inheritance.  
And our master revoked the curse  
of the law<sup>43</sup>  
For the nations with his cross.

With his testaments, the son of Amram  
Invalidated the testament of Jacob.  
In the testament of Israel,  
Reuben was cursed and was alienated.  
And in the testament of Moses,  
The nations were rejected and were  
cast away.

Fol. 145 a  
col. A

Moses revoked the judgement of Jacob,  
And gave Reuben the inheritance.  
The Messiah revoked the curse of Moses,  
And made the nations enter the  
inheritance.

The blessings of the son of Amram  
were invalidated,  
And the curse of Jacob became confirmed.  
The last will and testament of the father  
was confirmed,  
And our savior sealed it.

Jacob judged with justice,  
And Moses blessed with mercy<sup>44</sup>.  
And the force of justice prevailed,  
And that of mercy which they did not  
deserve is invalidated.

כחצו לנחל נחם <sup>210</sup> ויבן  
בנחל נחם נחם

לל פלל נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם

נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם

240

לל נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם

נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם

250

נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם

נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם  
נחם נחם נחם נחם

<sup>220</sup> לל נחם נחם נחם

260

<sup>210</sup> Ms. נחם. The additional stroke forming the *nūn* is a later addition probably under the influence of l. 246; cf. l. 220.

<sup>220</sup> Ms. לל. This line appears to be a later addition in much smaller writing. All four words are on the same line where usually we find only two or three words. However, the verse fits the context and the versification scheme.

<sup>43</sup> Galatians 3,13: "the curse of the law".

<sup>44</sup> Jacob judged in accordance with the "measure of justice (*middat had-din*)," Moses in accordance with "the measure of mercy (*middat hā-rah'amim*)."



That which the father wrote,  
Like (the word of) God, was believed.  
The last will and testament of the father  
will not  
Ever be revoked by the judge.

Fol. 145 a  
col. B

A father is master over his actions  
As God is over His (actions)<sup>45</sup>.  
Therefore, Isaac blessed,  
And God sealed his words.

When Moses wanted to revoke  
The testament and judgement of Jacob,  
God came and affirmed  
That the law of the father may not ever  
be invalidated.

During his lifetime, Moses was able  
To revoke the judgement of Israel.  
After his death, his (own) judgement  
was invalidated,  
And that which the father decreed  
remained.

Moses and Jacob (were) like slaves —  
That which they wrote had to be  
confirmed.  
But that which a prince writes,  
May not be revoked or changed.

Fol. 145 b  
col. A

Our lord is the lord of both of them,  
His command may not be changed.  
His decree is everlasting,  
And his blessings are unto eternity.

Circumcision, you fool, was (but) a seal.  
It protected the treasury (which was)  
in your father.  
Now that (its) riches have come forth,  
Of what use is the seal to you?

כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית כִּכָּהֵן  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
וְהַבְּרִית הַזֶּה הִיא הַבְּרִית  
לֹא יִשָּׁח לִפְנֵי הַשֵּׁחַ

עַל־כֵּן \* אִכָּה כְּבֹדִי  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּבֹדִי  
כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹמֵר בְּלִי שִׁחָה

כְּבֹדִי דְּבַר הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה  
הִיא הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹמֵר  
וְהַבְּרִית הַזֶּה הִיא הַבְּרִית

270

כְּבֹדִי דְּבַר הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה  
הִיא הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה  
כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹמֵר

כְּבֹדִי דְּבַר הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה  
הִיא הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה  
כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹמֵר  
230

280

כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹמֵר  
כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹמֵר

כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית  
הִיא הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה  
כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית  
אֵין אֱלֹהִים שׁוֹמֵר  
240

<sup>230</sup> Ms. כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית.

<sup>240</sup> Ms. כִּי־נִסְתָּח דְּבַר הַבְּרִית.

<sup>45</sup> A father may do as he pleases, just as God may do as he pleases.



There is a sealed money bag which is empty.

Is (this) not you, O Jews?

The treasure is dug out from you.

Why do you use the seal?

Abraham was stamped like a vessel

Because of the treasure that was in him.

And the seal continued in your generation

Because the treasure was in you until now.

Now that (its) riches have come forth

And you have been sent from his treasury,

Why do you labor to employ the seal?

The ruined stores of your limbs

Are not fit to be treasures.

For upon rocks kings paid homage<sup>46</sup>(?).

In their times when they were filled,

Zealously they were sealed.

And when the riches within them went forth

Because of which they were sealed,

They remained open in a ruined state and were made

A latrine like you are.

So, the Jews

Were stamped with circumcision

Because of the seed of everlasting life

Which was preserved within them until the proper time.

And when that which it was<sup>46a</sup> (to protect) went forth,

Seal and stamp became ineffective<sup>47</sup>.

הוּא בִּשְׁמֵיךָ דְּלִבְיָא דְּמִינִי

אֵלֶּיךָ דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי  
דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

290

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי \*<sup>24a</sup>

דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

300

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

\*הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

310

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

הוּא דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי דְּמִינִי

<sup>24a</sup> Cf. l. 322 and Nöldeke, op. cit., sec. 304, for [וּמִינִי] with feminine forms.

<sup>46</sup> This allusion escapes me, nor am I certain that *yaqqar* means "paid homage".

<sup>46a</sup> Prof. Kutscher suggests that וּמִינִי, = Heb. לְפָנָיו, "before it".

<sup>47</sup> The root *npl* also has this meaning in Biblical Aramaic, cf. L. Köhler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti* 2 (Leiden 1953) 625.



Behold, they<sup>48</sup> are ruined, destroyed and  
despoiled,  
And (yet) they are proud of the seal  
upon them.

כח שוכח סתתו סתל  
סססס סססס סססס

The treasure is dug out and taken away.  
(Its) riches have come forth, but  
the seal stands.  
Now you might say: "Behold the  
treasure is with you.  
Why do you not use the stamp?"

סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס

320

[Abraham was stamped like a vessel  
Because of the treasure that was in him.  
And the seal continued in your  
generations,  
Because the treasure was in you until now.  
Now that the treasure has come forth,  
(Its) riches have come forth, but the  
seal stands.

סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס

Fol. 146 a  
col. B

Now you might say: "Behold, the  
treasure is with you.  
Why do you not use the stamp?"  
"It was given to me for sustenance,  
Clearly, not as (it was given) to you.

סססס סססס סססס  
250[סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס

330

In you it was in custody and was  
safeguarded.  
And it was (preserved) under the stamp.  
To me it was given for use.  
Therefore, I do not circumcise myself  
like you."

סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס  
סססס סססס סססס

<sup>250</sup> Delete lines 321–328. A number of difficulties are raised by this passage. Firstly, lines 321–324 are simply a repetition of lines 293–296 which add nothing to the argument. Secondly, the same question is repeated almost verbatim in lines 319–320 and 327–328, with one answer offered after the second question only. Thirdly, lines 325–326 make no sense. What may have happened is that while the scribe was writing the words סססס (l. 320), or perhaps after he had written them, he recalled that previously he had written approximately the same words (f. 293). He referred back to them and inadvertently continued copying the previous passage. Then he returned to the passage he was in the midst of copying and he continued with lines 318–320 repeating them again in lines 326–328.

<sup>48</sup> A masculine plural subject is understood. Perhaps it is *Yhūdāyē*, "the Jews".



O nation, you were the guardians  
Of the riches which were preserved  
for the nations.  
You want to continue circumcising;  
you will not give peace.  
Would that each of you would cut all  
the way<sup>49</sup>.

ܐܬܝܬܝܬܝܢ ܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ

Its rightful owners have taken the trust,  
And you are concerned with the  
regulation<sup>50</sup>.  
Unseemly<sup>51</sup> are the clasps (seals)<sup>52</sup>  
of the furs  
And of the garments which are cast  
upon the ground.

ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ

Fol. 146 b  
col. A

340

For when the garments on which they  
were, wore out,  
They were trampled and fell and were  
cut off.  
So long as there is strength in the  
garment,  
The clasp (seal) of its master guards it.  
But since its strength wore out and fell,  
Its clasp (seal) is being trampled among  
its tattered shreds.

ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ  
ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ ܕܕܢܚܝܬܝܢ

<sup>260</sup> Ms. ܐܠܠܝܬܝܢ, but there is no such form in the lexicons. Cf. Nöldeke, op. cit., sec. 51, p. 37, the rarer form is ܐܠܠܝܬܝܢ; the more common form ܐܠܠܝܬܝܢ. The Ms. does not indicate a plural form, but the sense seems to require it. Read ܐܠܠܝܬܝܢ = ܐܠ + ܐܠܠܝܬܝܢ + ܝܢ, cf. Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 744, on this plural form.

<sup>49</sup> This is a paraphrase of Galatians 5,12. J. Moffat, *The Holy Bible* (New York 1926) 248 translates, "O that those who are upsetting you would get themselves castrated." Cf. P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* <sup>3</sup> (Paris 1892) 271,21-22, "then the prefect said to the doctor, 'why did you not cut out (*gawwīt*) and sever (*qṭa't*) his tongue?'"

<sup>50</sup> Meaning, you are concerned with the regulation to protect the trust when, in reality, the trust has been taken from you. In other words, you practice circumcision for no reason since the treasure is no longer yours. Cf. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* 4420f. *qānōnē wathūmē*, "rules and regulations".

<sup>51</sup> Unworthy of being seen. Cf. Payne Smith 1233, *znayyā ḥzayyā*, "mores spectabiles", *neššē ḥazyātā*, "feminae spectabiles". Cf. Talmudic Aramaic, ܠܝܬܝܢ = Mishnaic Hebrew ܠܝܬܝܢ, "fit." Cf. also 1.301.

<sup>52</sup> Clasps inlaid with gems that hold the garments in place. Cf. Brockelmann, *Lex. Syr.* 267. "gemma." The term has the meaning "seal" in the sense of circumcision throughout this homily. *Meškē*, "furs", has the double meaning of "foreskins". Cf. Brockelmann 407, *meškē dḡabrūtā*, "praeputium".



That strength has gone forth from you,  
O nation, and your might has left you.  
And behold you are rolling on the ground  
With your ancient circumcision.

ܐܦܝ ܠܡܢ ܐܡܢ ܫܠܐ ܡܝܢܝܢ  
ܐܡܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ

350

Your garment has become soiled by  
blood,  
And has become fuel for the fire.  
Isaiah<sup>53</sup>, who saw you, assigned you<sup>54</sup>,  
To the burning of the flame did he  
put you.

ܐܠܥܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ

Fol. 146b  
col. B

For your shame do you carry your stamp,  
That you may indicate to me what  
you were.  
From your stamp I recognize  
That something great was (once)  
hidden in you.

ܐܠܥܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ

360

Now you may say: "It is the stamp  
Which the Lord placed upon Abraham."  
But if you are Abraham now,  
There is neither Sabbath nor  
circumcision<sup>54a</sup>.

ܐܠܥܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ

I am circumcised, not on (the) flesh,  
But rather (with) circumcision which is  
not (done) with hands<sup>55</sup>.  
Not with the removal of flesh, but  
In the spirit, by a removal that  
(removes) from evil.

ܐܠܥܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ  
ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܡܝܢ

<sup>270</sup> The ܝ is added above the line.

<sup>53</sup> Isaiah 10,16-19.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 648, "proposuit".

<sup>54a</sup> According to the Syriac polemic tradition, Abraham and the ancients did not observe the Sabbath. Cf. Jacob of Sarug, Vat. Syr. ms. 117, fol. 344, col. C, lines 3-5, "look at Abraham who did not observe the Sabbath at all." Cf. De Zwaan, op. cit., p. 8, sec. 5, "also Abraham prior to circumcision recognized God," and Aphraates, op. cit., 205: 12-18.

<sup>55</sup> Colossians 2,11: "and in him were you circumcised with a circumcision (made) without hands, with a removal of the flesh of sins, with the circumcision of the Messiah".



I have removed the entire flesh  
With the circumcision of baptism.  
Not like you, who of the little  
Flesh which you cut off are proud.

מחליץ ריבוי אדם מלח  
כחמיתות רבות  
לך חסדך אל  
חידושך חפץ ריבוי

370

Fol. 147 a  
col. A

By nature I am your brother,  
Though you have alienated us from you.  
Come, inherit with me in the Messiah.  
I am not envious like you.

בבשר \*אנכי רב  
אני רב רב רב רב רב  
אני רב רב רב רב רב  
אני רב רב רב רב רב

I do not bar you from entering  
The house of holiness, as you have  
barred us.  
For you put guards at the gates,  
That the Ammonite<sup>56</sup> would not enter.

לא אסור לך להיכנס  
לבית קדשך כפי  
רצונך לא אסור  
לבית קדשך לא אסור

380

I know that God will not  
Reject you if you return.  
And He loves you as (He loves) me,  
If you follow the right course.

אני יודע שאל  
אלהים לא ידחה  
אנשים רבים  
אני יודע שאל  
אלהים לא ידחה

Come, inherit God with me,  
And He will not recall your waywardness.  
Seek vindication through the son whom  
you have crucified,  
And He will not remember your  
bitterness.

אני יודע שאל  
אלהים לא ידחה  
אנשים רבים  
אני יודע שאל  
אלהים לא ידחה

I say and I repeat:  
For my sake, O nation, and for yours,  
Pay attention, O envious one,  
Let your neck serve peace.

אני אומר ואני חוזר  
על דברי  
אני אומר ואני חוזר  
על דברי

390

Fol. 147 a  
col. B

<sup>280</sup> In margin, partially obliterated; apparently a later addition, possibly, intended to replace אֲנִי.

<sup>28a0</sup> Rd. בן אדם or בן אדם.

<sup>56</sup> Deuteronomy 23,4.



The key has come which opens  
The treasures which you held before me.  
And he has cast his key with your keys  
Which you have hidden from the nations.

ܐܬܝܬ ܕܟܝܬܐ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
290 ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ 300 ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ

Like a dragon upon a treasure  
You sat on the law.  
And like a heap of stones they cleared  
and cast you away,  
That the riches beneath you might  
be used.

ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ 310 ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ 400

Your hiding place has been uncovered,  
And your law has been opened.  
In it we saw the mystery of the son,  
As well as both his festivals and  
appointed seasons.

ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ

In it we read and knew  
That a virgin shall conceive and give  
birth.<sup>57</sup>  
In it we learned how much you afflicted  
The prophets in your rebelliousness.  
In it we observe your mentality<sup>58</sup>,  
That you have been very disobedient  
in your days.

ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ 31a0 ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ 410

And because of these you desired  
That no one should learn your laws.  
You did not enter life through them,  
And you did not let (others) enter.

ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ  
ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ ܕܬܬܝܬ

<sup>290</sup> Cf. Payne Smith, *Thes. Syr.* 3495, for additional examples of this form used as a preposition, and also Jacob of Sarug, Br. Mus. add. 17,159, fol. 25b l. 4, and fol. 32a, l. 10. The Ms. clearly indicates ܕܬܬܝܬ in the plural, but the meter requires the singular. An alternative reading would be ܕܬܬܝܬ ... ܕܬܬܝܬ.

<sup>300</sup> The *ālāp* seems to be erased. The more common form is ܕܬܬܝܬ in the *p'al*, but the *aḥ'el* with the same meaning, apparently, is possible.

<sup>310</sup> Ms. ܕܬܬܝܬ.

<sup>31a0</sup> An enclitic form pronounced *gray-nan*. Cf. Nöldeke, op. cit., sec. 63, p. 44.

<sup>57</sup> Isaiah 7,14.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Bedjan, *Homiliae S. Isaaci* ... 77,10: "grant me a contrite heart, and a mentality (*tar'itā*) full of love".



The lot has come which removes  
Controversies between mighty ones.  
The lot of life is our lord  
Through whom life has come to the  
nations.

At that time, the prophet who saw them  
In this mighty conflict  
Of the nation said: "Indeed, I  
And the nations are being wronged with  
regard to the inheritance."

He raised his voice to the heights:

"Lower the heavens, O Lord, and come  
down<sup>59</sup>.

For through you can be removed  
This mighty conflict."

He came down according to the word  
which was spoken,  
And his revelation was like the lot.  
His kingdom has come to the nations,  
And Israel sits in amazement.

When the lot of Jonah<sup>60</sup> was defeated  
On the sea, and (the lot) of the sailors  
was victorious,  
He knew that the nations were  
victorious (in the legal battle),  
And the nation was guilty in judgement.

He drew lots with the nations, and they  
defeated him,  
And with the sailors and he was not  
victorious.  
He protested impudently  
to no avail,  
For he drowned, and they were saved.

Let us take for ourselves a Scripture,  
That we may inquire of it concerning  
us and you.  
And from the treasury of your books  
bring forth  
The invalidation of your observances.

ܐܬܝܬܐ ܠܝܬܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܐ ܕܝܠܐ  
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<sup>320</sup> Ms. ܐܘܠܐ with Nestorian *ālāp*.

<sup>59</sup> Psalms 144,5.

<sup>60</sup> Allusion to the storm in Jonah 1.



The Lord said to my lord, Jesus<sup>61</sup>:

Sit at my right hand, and behold he is  
sitting (there),

And I will make your enemies

A footstool under your feet.

330 אֲדַבֵּר לְיְהוָה לְיָמִי, יֵשׁוּעַ.

דַּהֲבָה תִּהְיֶה יְמִינִי מִמָּחָה מֵאֵת.

אֶהְיֶה אֶשְׁמֵךְ כְּתֹלָדְכֶם  
בְּמִכְזָּל דַּמְךָ וְאֶשְׁמֵךְ יְרֵכְךָ

330 The MT of Ps. 110,1-4

(1) נָא יְהוָה לְאֲדוֹנִי

שֵׁב יָמִינִי עַד-אַשִׁית

אֵיבֹיךָ הָדָם לְרִגְלֶיךָ

(2) מִטָּה עֹזךָ יִשְׁלַח

יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן רֹדֵה

בְּקֶרֶב אֵיבֹיךָ

(3) עֹמֵד נְדָבוֹת בְּיוֹם חֵילֶךָ

בַּהֲדָרִי קָדֵשׁ מִרְחֹם מִשְׁחָר

לֶךְ טַל יִלְדָּתְךָ

(4) נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה וְלֹא

יִנָּחֵם אַתָּה-כֹּהֵן לְעוֹלָם

עַל-דִּבְרֹתָי מַלְכֵי-צֶדֶק

The Peshitta text of Ps. 110,1-4

אֲנִי מִנְּיָא לְאֲדוֹנִי

וְיָאֵב לְךָ מִן עַמְּךָ בְּמִכְזָּל וְאֶשְׁמֵךְ

כְּתֹלָדְכֶם בְּמִכְזָּל דַּמְךָ

וְסִלְיָא וְעִמְּךָ נִעְבִּיר

מִנְּיָא מִן יְהוָה וְסִלְיָא סִלְיָא

וְאֶשְׁמֵךְ כְּתֹלָדְכֶם

בְּמִכְזָּל בְּמִכְזָּל וְסִלְיָא

בְּמִכְזָּל בְּמִכְזָּל מִן מִכְזָּל

מִן מִכְזָּל לְךָ לְךָ לְךָ

מִן מִכְזָּל סִלְיָא

נִבְרָךְ וְיָאֵב וְסִלְיָא בְּמִכְזָּל לְעוֹלָם

בְּמִכְזָּל וְסִלְיָא

Isaac's exegesis of Ps. 110,1-4:

(1) The MT and the Peshitta agree. Isaac interpolates **וְאֶשְׁמֵךְ** to explain **אֲנִי**. He also adds **וְיָאֵב**, **וְסִלְיָא**, and **וְאֶשְׁמֵךְ**.

(2) The MT and the Peshitta read **יִשְׁלַח** and **נִעְבִּיר**, the third person singular forms of the imperfect. Isaac uses the participle with the first person enclitic pronoun, **וְאֶשְׁמֵךְ**. He interprets **וְסִלְיָא** to mean **וְסִלְיָא**. The MT reads **רֹדֵה** in the imperative; the Peshitta reads **וְסִלְיָא** in the imperfect, which is equivalent to the Targum's **וְהָיָה רֹדֵה**. Isaac reads **וְסִלְיָא** using the relative pronoun *d* rather than the conjunctive *w*. He deviates markedly from the traditional verse order in reading 2b with 3a.

<sup>61</sup> The translation of the Peshitta text of Psalm 110: 1-4 reads: (1) The Lord said to my lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet". (2) The Lord will send you the mighty scepter from Zion, and it will rule over your enemies. (3) (To)? your glorious nation, on the great day(?), in adornments of holiness from the womb, from the beginning I begot you, o child. (4) The Lord has sworn and He will not break faith, you are the priest forever, in the likeness of Melkizedek.

This portion of the Isaac manuscript is a midrash on Ps. 110,1-4. Cf. n. 33<sup>o</sup> of the text for a detailed comparison of the MT, the Peshitta, and Isaac's exegesis.



The mighty scepter from Zion  
I am sending amidst the nations,  
That it will rule over your enemies,  
So that they will be unto you a  
glorious nation.

ܣܬܝܠܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܢ ܨܝܝܢ  
ܡܥܝܢܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܡܢ ܠܒܢܐ ܕܢܬܝܬܐ  
ܕܢܥܠܡܐ ܕܒܒܠܐ ܕܩܝܝܢܐ  
ܕܢܬܝܬܐ ܠܗ ܒܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

450

In adornments of holiness from the womb,  
At the very beginning, (when) I begot  
you, O child,  
I said to you: You are the priest,  
Forever in the likeness of  
Melchizedek<sup>62</sup>.

ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܢ ܨܝܝܢ<sup>34°</sup>  
ܡܥܝܢܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܡܢ ܠܒܢܐ ܕܢܬܝܬܐ<sup>35°</sup>  
ܕܢܥܠܡܐ ܕܒܒܠܐ ܕܩܝܝܢܐ  
ܕܢܬܝܬܐ ܠܗ ܒܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ  
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ

(3) This verse is very difficult. Isaac overcomes the difficulties by reading 3a with 2b, and by reading  $\text{ܒܢܐ} = \text{ܒܢܐ} = \text{ܒܢܐ}$  = Peshitta  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$  only, eliminating the difficult  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ . The MT reads  $\text{ܡܫܝܚܐ}$  together. The Peshitta separates the two words. For the difficult  $\text{ܡܫܝܚܐ}$ , it reads  $\text{ܡܫܝܚܐ}$  which is equivalent to the Hebrew  $\text{ܡܫܝܚܐ}$  as the first word of 3c.

(4) Isaac omits 4a returning to it later in lines 457–458. He interpolates the words  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ , and he follows the Peshitta text of 4b and 4c. The Hebrew  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$  is very difficult. Some Hebrew manuscripts read  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ . Two Septuagint texts read  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$  which occurs three times in Koheleth 3,18; 7,14; 8,2 with the meaning “because of”. The usual translations of these two words in Ps. 110 found in most English Bibles “after the order of”, or “in the manner of”, are educated guesses. The Peshitta reads  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ .

(Lines 457–458) Isaac returns to 4a. For the Peshitta of 4b  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ , our manuscript reads  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ , but the meter renders this reading impossible. The correct reading may be  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ .

(Lines 459–460) Isaac interpolates  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$  and  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ .  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$  is the same as the Peshitta of 3c.

As may be seen, the Syriac Bible text of Ps. 110 which Isaac was familiar with is very similar to our Peshitta text. However, Isaac does not quote literally. He rearranges verses, interpolates words, and omits phrases which do not suit his purpose. This portion of the Isaac manuscript may well be called a midrash on Ps. 110,1–4.

<sup>34°</sup> Ms.  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ .

<sup>35°</sup> The  $d$  is added above the line. This shows that the scribe of our Ms. wrote  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$ ,  $\text{ilettāk}$ . Forms such as  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$  (lines 48,394) and  $\text{ܒܢܐ}$  (l. 438) were pronounced  $\text{ehatt}$  and  $\text{eddalīw}$ .

<sup>62</sup> On the Jewish interpretation of the Melchizedek passages in Genesis 14 and Psalms 110, cf. A. Aptowitzer, *Melchizedek. Zu den Sagen der Agada* = Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums 70 (1926) 93–113.



Fol. 148 a  
col. B

Tell me, O nation, who is  
This one (concerning whom) these  
promises (were made)?  
The Lord swore, and He will not  
break faith  
That he should be a priest forever  
Who is born of the adornments of  
holiness  
From the beginning (of time) to the end  
(of time).

אנכי לא בשר ודם  
הוא הנביא אשר נאמר  
היה בשר ודם ולא נשבר  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים

460

You would not give a cup of water  
To the god who restored life to your  
dead.  
Let it be (assumed) that he had  
committed a murder.  
Does one give vinegar to a murderer?

בשר ודם הוא  
האלהים אשר חיה את המתים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים

The nations give wine  
To a murderer who goes out to die.  
You give him vinegar  
To cause him additional pain.

הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים  
הנשבע אלהים

Behold, he died in hanging as you  
wished.  
For what reason do you (continue to)  
blaspheme him?  
Does not his blood flow upon the ground?  
And still you are not satisfied.

הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי

470

Blessed is he who uprooted the vine  
That squeezed vinegar<sup>63</sup> into the  
mouth of its lord,  
Who turned up the vine of Sodom<sup>64</sup>  
That gave gall<sup>65</sup> for his hunger.

הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי

Ended is the second (homily)  
against the Jews.

הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי  
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הוא מת תלוי  
הוא מת תלוי

<sup>360</sup> Ms. ܐܘܕܢܐ; cf. n. 33°.

<sup>63</sup> Matthew 27,48.

<sup>64</sup> Deuteronomy 32,32.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 27,34.

(To be continued)