

An Anonymous Madrasa on Faith

by

SEBASTIAN P. BROCK

The *madrasha* published below is taken from British Library Add. 17181, ff. 29b-31a, a sixth-century manuscript containing a large number of anonymous works not preserved elsewhere¹. The piece is of some interest, both in its own right, and as a rare example of a *madrasha* not by Ephrem which is preserved in an early manuscript but was not (with the exception of a single stanza²) taken up by the compilers of the later liturgical collections of *madrashé*.

References to schism in stanzas 18-19, and above all the lines 'He is one... not to be divided into two' (stanza 6) and 'You (Christ) are inseparate and indivisible: if anyone separates you out, may he be separated from you' (stanza 7), strongly suggest that the *madrasha* was written in the aftermath of Chalcedon. The author, whom we may place in the late fifth or early sixth century, expresses the basic abhorrence felt in Syrian Orthodox tradition for any idea of 'dividing up' the one and only-begotten Christ into two natures; the language he employs, however, avoids the strict terminology of Greek theological tradition, and adheres instead to the fluid symbolic language of his great predecessor in the Syriac poetic tradition, Ephrem. The compassion and sorrow, rather than anger, that he feels over the schisms at which he hints is likewise true to the spirit of Ephrem, who, for all his horror at Bardaisan's teaching, could still write:

The Maccabees found some fellow Jews, as they lay slain, clasping pagan idols to their breasts (2 Macc. 12:40-43); for these they offered prayer and sacrifice. So do you, children of the Good One, pray for Bardaisan, who lapsed into paganism, having our Lord on his lips, but Legion in his heart. (*H. Haer.* LV. 11)

How much our anonymous author owes to Ephrem in his choice of individual motifs and phraseology will become apparent from the notes

¹ The majority of which not been published; among those that have been are the three homilies on Epiphany, recently edited by A. Desreumaux in *PO* 38.4; on p. 649 n. 1 he gives a list of the other texts in the manuscript which have so far been printed (to this list should now be added C.J.A. Lash, "An address of thanks", *Mélanges F. Graffin* = *Parole de l'Orient* 6/7 (1975/76), pp. 229-35).

² Stanza 12; see commentary.

following the text and translation, where the main parallels I have noticed are given.

The *qala* is given as *Pardaisa*, in other words the stanza pattern of 55.55.55.7.55.55 syllables³. As a matter of fact in a number of stanzas we find irregularities; Ephrem himself had occasionally substituted six syllables for five, but our author allows himself this freedom in a great many places (examples in stanzas 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 25). In the fourth line, where in Ephrem's *madrashe* using this stanza pattern⁴, there is always a caesura after the fifth syllable (i.e. 5+2), we find that in three stanzas this caesura is totally disregarded (10, 18, 19; cp also 4, 5 and 14); in stanzas 8 and 20 we have eight rather than seven syllables for this line. More anomalous are the stanzas with additional half lines (italicised) :

- stanza 4 : 55.55.65.77.55.55
- stanza 5 : 55.55.55.57.55.65
- stanza 10 : 55.65.55.57.55.55
- stanza 14 : 55.55.55.57.55.55
- stanza 17 : 55.55.55.75.55.55
- stanza 18 : 55.55.55.57. 5.55
- stanza 19 : 55.55.56.57.55.55
- stanzas 22-24 : 55.55.55.75.55.55

In no case does the sense allow us to excise the intrusive half line as a gloss.

BL. Add. 17181, f. 29^b

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³ For a classification of Ephrem's *qala*, or stanza patterns, and their titles see my "Materials for the study of the writings of St Ephrem", forthcoming in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*.
⁴ See Beck's note in *CSCO Ser.Syri* 78, p. vi.

וישם אהיה
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17 יהי אהיה
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18 יהי אהיה
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19 יהי אהיה

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20 יהי אהיה

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21 יהי אהיה

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.לתיקון גבולות ירושלים
 .שם המעבדות
 .היה לתיקון
 .המעבדות לתיקון
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 * כי הוא יקרא לו

.היה לתיקון
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 * כי הוא יקרא לו

.הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
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 * כי הוא יקרא לו

.הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 * כי הוא יקרא לו

22 והוא יקרא
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 * כי הוא יקרא לו

23 והוא יקרא
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 * כי הוא יקרא לו

24 והוא יקרא
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 * כי הוא יקרא לו

25 והוא יקרא
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 .הוא מן המעבדות
 * כי הוא יקרא לו

31^a

Translation

1. The barren (Elisabeth's) child gave testimony in the womb⁵ that it was the Lord God whom the virgin bore; it was for this reason he left in his mother's womb,

⁵ Luke 1:41.

to rebuke those who erroneously say
that the Power of the Most High⁶ did not reside in the womb.
John's leaping proclaimed that He was his Lord.

2. The angel who descended announced to the Virgin
that 'the Power of the Most High will reside in your womb'⁷;
prepare and make ready for him a temple of your virginity'.
The humble woman listened and acknowledged
saying, 'I am a maidservant⁸, the creation of his hands;
see, I have made ready my person,
let him be pleased to overshadow me.
3. 'Whose maidservant am I, if not of the God of all?
Let it be unto me in accordance with what your word has announced.
Would that I might become a mother for my Lord'⁹.
See how the Virgin testified and acknowledged
that He who bent down to her and resided in her womb
is the Lord of all that has come into being, who came to renew all
things.
4. It was no (ordinary) man that the Virgin bore,
for if a Virgin conceives it is an event full of wonder.
Who the child is becomes apparent through her who gave him birth.
Let us keep silence, my brothers, and let events
preach rather than words;
for if a virgin has given birth, it is to the Lord of all she has given birth
who in His grace has overshadowed and resided in her womb.
5. Let those who have gone astray show that this has happened before,
that some virgin has previously conceived without a man,
and a womb without intercourse has produced the image of man,
and without the seals of virginity being undone a child resembling us
has appeared.
All this proclaims without doubt that he is God :
blessed is He who by his very birth indicated he was the Son of the
Living One!
6. His birth from the Father was entirely full of marvel,
His birth from Mary is wholly full of wonder :

⁶ Luke 1:35.

⁷ Cp Luke 1:35.

⁸ Cp Luke 1:38.

⁹ Cp Luke 1:43.

the Father begot him without a mother, outside time,
(Mary) became his mother without a father.

Blessed is He who by these two (wonders) has taught me that He is God,
and that He is One, with these two births, not to be divided into two.

7. You came from the Father, you came from the mother,
you exist before time, you are subject to time,
you are from eternity, you are also a child whose days (can be numbered),
you are inseparable and indivisible.
If anyone separates you out, may he be separated from you;
for this is right, to acknowledge you as one, the only-begotten.
8. He is one with the Father, one with Mary,
one in essence, one in the womb,
one on the right hand, one amongst mortals;
he is one, the only-begotten, in all things,
in his death, in his life, in his passion, and in his glory.
Blessed is he whose cross crucified our captor.
9. I beheld you in the womb, and believed that you are God,
I beheld you on (her) knees, and held firmly that you are the bearer of all,
I beheld you amongst mortals, and acknowledged you to be Son of the
Living One,
I beheld you sucking and I believed
that you are the source of life, who gives suck to creation :
from the breasts of your grace do all things that have come into
existence suck.
10. Your hunger, O Provisioner of all, fills us all,
your thirst, O Fount of life, makes us drunk with good things,
your toil and your need has given rest to our weariness :
by all the deprivations which you, Lord, endured in your grace,
it is us, so deficient, whom you have enriched with your benefits;
the living worship you because your death has delivered them.
11. The Lord descended and lay down amongst those who sleep in Sheol,
the Wakeful One threw himself down upon the bed of the departed ;
In the nethermost region have I beheld the Most High.
Who will not be amazed and magnify you,
the Great One who made himself small to make great our smallness.
Blessed is He whose self-abasement made those below great !
12. Everything about you is a fountain of benefits :
your death is full of life, your passion full of glory,

the insults and scorn you underwent gave honour and raised us up.
 Who asked you, Lord, to lower yourself
 and suffer all this? It was your love which requested you
 to heal our sickness with the potency of our medicines!

13. It is but a small thing for your grace to have performed this for us,
 and although it is incomparable, it is still tiny (in proportion) to your
 love:
 if it had been possible for you to endure some further insult,
 you would have borne that too in your love.
 Blessed are you who are over all things, Lord of all that exists;
 grant that we may perceive, Lord, the true extent of your gift.
14. Your love summoned you and brought you down to shame and
 humiliation,
 your grace drew you to disgrace and contempt,
 your compassion asked you to become a companion to mortals;
 grant to us, Lord, a gift that is worthy to offer you,
 for without your gift, our gift is diminutive.
 May your compassion be the salt to flavour our offering¹⁰!
15. It was befitting, O Lord of all, that you should perform all,
 that you, the Creator of all, should suffer all,
 that you, Lord, the free-born, should free us from slavery¹¹.
 All this befits you, at all times,
 for if you established us, it is you who should renew us.
 Blessed is He who began among us, was revealed, and ended among us!
16. Foolish men, led astray, have abused your salvation;
 those who were delivered by your grace have made little of that grace
 of yours,
 they have exchanged your advent for something else that does not exist.
 Grant, O Pitier of all, that they may become aware
 that they are abusing your salvation and so destroy their own lives.
 Turn, O Lord, and regain those who have destroyed themselves!
17. Your benefits shine out more than the sun,
 your truth, spread over all, is greater than light,
 the radiance of your teaching has been revealed in our land.
 Your brightness which beholds everyone is turned so that we may
 behold you, Lord;

¹⁰ Cp Lev. 2:13.

¹¹ Cp Rom. 8:21.

grant us to behold your Luminary in your light, O Lord,
for error is devising how to cover it over with her darkness.

18. I am grieved and saddened that people are lost from you,
people whom your compassion has made brothers and fellow members :
a single mother gave birth to the two together,
and from the chaste womb which you, Lord, sanctified at your baptism,
we have both proceeded forth into life.
Grant that we may all together enjoy your kingdom!
19. Who will not feel suffering when he sees his fellow members
cut apart without mercy by the sword of the captor :
he lops off and throws away your field's produce without its having
ripened;
he has entered and cast thorns and tares into the field of your working¹².
Let them not be pulled up, Lord, but turned into wheat,
for this is what you wish — to save rather than to destroy¹³.
20. Your voice, O Holy One, has proclaimed and taught us
that you did not come into the world to condemn¹⁴,
but for deliverance, salvation and forgiveness.
Complete and bring to perfection your word to us,
so than men, saved by your advent, may not be judged by you,
may they (rather) perceive your coming and be saved by your becoming
subject to death.
21. I am aware and know that your mercy does not find fault
with the person who invokes you and supplicates on behalf of evil men,
for this is your will, to save each person¹⁵.
In the present case prayer and supplication
are all the more advantageous, for it is not through action
but through erroneous ideas that these souls are perishing.
22. It is the wicked you wanted to save rather than the good¹⁶,
for the good man lives and is saved by his good deeds;
so, rather than the upright, help the wicked,
for the upright will be saved by his uprightness and is held worthy of
your good things,

¹² Cp Matt. 13:24-30.

¹³ Cp I Tim. 2:4.

¹⁴ John 3:17.

¹⁵ Cp I Tim. 2:4.

¹⁶ Cp Matt. 9:3 (and parallels); I Tim. 1:15.

but you alone are the sinner's hope.

Let not the person who calls upon you, Lord, be ashamed!

23. I have acknowledged your advent, I have worshipped your salvation,
I have affirmed that you are the Son of the Living One, I have believed
that you are the Son of the Good One;
I know that you are gentle, I have perceived that you are compassionate,
and from all this (I know) that you bear the insult of those gone astray.
I have tasted your grace, through which you bent down to us.
May your compassion remain unchanged towards your servants!
24. The action of your justice is just towards the just,
let the action of your grace be seen towards the evil:
the evil and those who deny you (can) be made witnesses and heralds
by your grace
— people who were rejected and cast from your door.
Do you all the more multiply your compassion for them
so that, through them, the world may taste of your grace.
25. I have acknowledged your grace, I have proclaimed that you are the
Son of the Good One;
I have known your will and announced that you are gentle,
for that is what you prefer; I have indicated that you are compassionate.
As I have believed in you, Lord,
so may you prove to be to my guilty self:
I have affirmed that you are good, be good to me and save me by your
grace.

Commentary¹⁷

Stanza 1

This stanza, based on Luke 1:35,41, represents a polemic against the Nestorian position, for which see (for example) L. Abramowski and A. E. Goodman, *A Nestorian Collection of Christological texts*, Cambridge, 1972, II, pp. 55,113.

lept: John's 'leaping' in his mother's womb (Luke 1:41) was taken by Syrian Orthodox writers as his baptism and receiving of the Spirit¹⁸.

rebuke... (d-nakkes l-ṭa'ayya): similar phraseology in Ephrem *H. Haer.* IV.2.1 and *H. Nis.* XLV.1.4.

¹⁷ References to Ephrem are to Beck's editions in the *CSCO* unless otherwise stated.

¹⁸ See my "Baptismal themes in the writings of Jacob of Serugh", *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 205, (1978), pp. 343-4 with note 115.

Power of the Most High: Syrian Orthodox tradition regularly distinguishes the 'Power of the Most High' from 'the Holy Spirit' in Luke 1:35, identifying the former with the Logos¹⁹ (so already Ephrem, *Memra on the Prologue of John*, Lamy II, col. 515, and *Sermo de Domino nostro* 2).

reside (šra): a standard verb for the Incarnation in early Syriac writers²⁰.

Stanza 2

angel (ira): Cramer²¹ points out that Ephrem never calls Gabriel *ira*, and that this usage is characteristic of subsequent writers.

a temple (naos) *of your virginity*: cp Ephrem *H. Nat.* III.20.4-5, 'blessed is He who dwelt in the womb, building a sanctuary for himself to live in, a temple (naos) to be in'.

the humble woman (makkikta): based on Luke 1:47,52, but the epithet appears not to be used by Ephrem.

Stanza 3

God of all (alah kulla): I have not noticed this title in Ephrem; among later writers see, for example, Narsai (ed. Mingana) II, p. 150,3,13; anon. *madrasha* in Add. 17141, f. 9^a.

who bent down (etrken): similarly in stanzas 12 and 23. The verb is used of the incarnation several times by Ephrem, e.g. *H. Fid.* XLI.6.4; XLIV.8.1; *H. Haer.* XXXVIII. 14.8; *H. Parad.* IV.4.5 etc.²².

to renew all things: similarly in stanza 15. Compare Ephrem *H. Azym* XVII.6.1, where Christ is *mħaddet kull*.

Stanza 4

silence (nešle): the idea is characteristic of Ephrem (e.g. *H. Fid.* XV.2), who, however, prefers the verb *štq*. The stress on 'wonder' (cp stanza 6) is also a familiar feature of Ephrem's hymns.

Stanza 5

those ... astray (bnay ʔu'yay): the term is frequent in Ephrem, e.g. *H. Fid.* XXXIX.2.2; XLIV.11.6; LVI.7.4; *H. Haer.* III.8.1; XIV.7.1; *H. Nis.* XXX.16.3; XLV.7.1; *H. Jul.* I.5.6 etc.

the image of man (šlem naša): so Ephrem, *H. Haer.* V.5.5; XLIX.4.4; *H. Nis.* XLVI.8.6.

¹⁹ Cp my *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition* (henceforth cited as *Baptismal Tradition*), Syrian Churches Series IX, 1979, pp. 4-5.

²⁰ For its use in sacramental contexts see my "The epiklesis in the Antiochene Baptismal ordines", *OrChrAn* 197 (1974), pp. 200-201.

²¹ W. Cramer, *Die Engelvorfstellungen bei Ephraem dem Syrer*, *OrChrAn* 173 (1965), p. 73.

²² The *af'el*, which Ephrem uses at *H. Nat.* XVIII.9.3 and elsewhere, will be based on Old Testament passages such as Ps 144:4.

seals of virginity (ṭab'e...): Ephrem's genuine hymns employ *btule*, not *ṭab'e*; for the latter cp *H.Maria* XI.6; XVIII.20.

Son of the Living One (bar ḥayya): so also stanzas 9 and 23. Similarly Ephrem, *H.Fid.* XXIV.11.2; LXIX.19.1; *H.Nat.* VI.1.2; X.2.5.

Stanza 7

a child whose days... (bar yawmata): I have not noticed this term in Ephrem; it is probably modelled on *'attiq yawmata* (Dan. 7:9), sometimes used of Christ (e.g. *Sogh.*²³ I.47, '... the Ancient of days dwelt as a babe in the womb').

separated from you (plig...): perhaps based on Matt. 24:51 = Luke 12:46 (*Peshitta plag*). In Ephrem's time the polemic against *palguta* was aimed differently; see for example *S.Fid.* IV.193-204.

Stanza 8

He is one...: compare perhaps Ephrem, *H.Fid.* XXXII.16 (of Father and Son), and *H.Haer.* III.4-5 (anti-Marconite).

essence (ituta): lit. 'being'²⁴.

our captor (šabbayan): so also stanza 19. *Šabbaya* is used of Satan in *H.Cruc.* VIII.11.7; *H.Nis.* XII.1.2 and 5.3; *H.Par.* XIV.15.6 (contrast *H.Nis.* XXXVIII.1.6, where Christ in Sheol himself becomes *šabbaya*).

Stanza 9

I beheld...: the subject of the verbs could also be Mary (i.e. 'she beheld...'), but in view of stanza 21 it seems more likely that the first person is intended. For the anaphora with *ḥza*, compare Ephrem *H.Fid.* IV.8.

bearer of all (ṭ'in kulla): compare Ephrem, *H.Fid.* IV.18.2; V.11.6; XLV.3.6; *H.Haer.* VI.6.4; XXXVIII.11.8; *H.Nat.* IV.182.

source of life (neb'a d-ḥayye): the same phrase occurs in Ephrem, *H.Nis.* XIV.8.3.

*who gives suck*²⁵ *to creation*: cp Ephrem *H.Nat.* IV.149-50, 153; also *S.Fid.* I.267. The same sort of imagery²⁶ occurs in *H.Maria* X.21; XII.1; XIX.1.

Stanza 10

Provisioner of all (za'en kulla): a common title of Christ in Ephrem,

²³ Printed by Beck at the end of his edition of *H.Nat.*

²⁴ For the term in Ephrem see E. Beck, *Ephraems Reden über den Glauben*, *Studia Anselmiana* 33 (1953), pp. 1-4.

²⁵ Our author uses the rare form *mawneq*, in contrast to Ephrem who regularly employs the more usual *mayneq*.

²⁶ Cp also R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, Cambridge, 1975, pp. 315-6 (on Odes of Solomon 8:14).

e.g. *H.Fid.* XXIV.2.2; *S.Fid.* I.230; *H.Nat.* V.24.3; XI.8.2; *H.Virg.* XXIII.10.2; XXX.4.8; XXXVI.8.3.

your thirst, O Fount of life...: the paradox occurs in Ephrem *H.Azym.* XIII.10, 'he thirsted and asked for water, while hidden within him was the fount of life that has given life to all'. For the *mabbu' hayye*²⁷, compare Ephrem *H.Eccl.* XXXVIII.1.4; *H.Fid.* XII.10.2; LXXX.6.4; *H.Nat.* XXVI.5.8; *H.Nis.* LVIII.11.2.

deficient whom you have enriched (ḥassire a'tart): the same idea is expressed in *H.Azym.* I.2.2, 'you made your glory poor so as to make our poverty rich' (*ṣrikutan*), and *H.Nat.* III.1.4-5, 'Blessed is the Good One who all of a sudden made rich our poverty' (*ṣrikutan*). The paradox of the Rich One who became poor (based on 2 Cor. 8:9) is common in early Syriac writers, e.g. Aphrahat, *Dem.* XIV.31—a passage reflected by Philoxenus in his *Commentary on Luke* (ed. Watts), p. 73.

Stanza 11

The wakeful one ('ira, or 'Watcher'): Compare Ephrem, *H.Nat.* I.61-2; *H.Nis.* LXVI (response), etc. See also W. Cramer, *Die Engelvorfstellungen bei Ephräm*, pp. 93-108; this title of Christ is already found in Syriac in the *Acts of Thomas*.

bed of the departed ('arsa d-'annide): the phrase occurs in Ephrem, *H.Nis.* LXXIV.24.2.

made himself small (az'ar napšeh): so *H.Nat.* IV.186; XIII.8.5²⁸. The paradox of 'the Great One who became small' is a commonplace as a description of the incarnation in early Syriac writers, e.g. *Odes of Solomon* 7:3; *Acts of Thomas* (ed. Wright), p. 250; *Acts of John* (ed. Wright), pp. 7,37; Aphrahat, *Demonstration* XXIII.59 and often in Ephrem. The language continues to be popular in fifth and sixth century Syrian Orthodox writers, e.g. Jacob of Serugh, *Letters* (ed. Olinder) p. 86,7, p. 96.18; Philoxenus, *Commentary on the Prologue of John* (ed. de Halleux), p. 245,12 etc.

to make great our smallness (d-nawreb z'urutan): the same wording occurs in *H.Fid.* XXXI.10.1 (perfect).

whose self abasement (mukkakeh): a favourite term in Ephrem, e.g. *H.Fid.* XXXII.9.3; XXXV.3.2; LIV.1.4; *H.Nat.* IV.192; XVIII.7.5; *H.Nis.* XXXIII.6.2; *H.Virg.* XIV.5.8, etc.

²⁷ The phrase occurs in Prov. 14:27 etc.

²⁸ Compare Macarian Homilies (ed. Berthold) XLVIII.2.9,11,17 μικρόνει ἑαυτόν; cf further R. Cantalamessa, *L'Omelia 'in S. Pascha' dello ps. Ippolito di Roma*, Milan, 1967, pp. 195-9.

Stanza 12

This stanza is incorporated into a *madrasha* for Lilyo on the Fifth Sunday after the Feast of the Cross (*Fenqitho* VII.275, also printed among the *Hymni dispersi* (stanza 11 of no XXI) by Lamy in vol. IV of *S. Ephraem Hymni et Sermones*). A search through the 64 *madrash*e with the *qala* 'Paradise' to be found in the *Fenqitho* indicates that this is the only stanza from our poem to have been borrowed by the later liturgical compilers²⁹.

fountain of benefits (neb'a d-'udrane): Christ's 'benefits' to man are a frequent topic in Ephrem; for the precise phrase compare *m'in 'udrane* in the *Hymni dispersi* XXII.4 (not genuine).

scorn (šituta): cp *H.Nat.* XXIII.12.1; *H.Nis.* XLIV.12.4.

heal our sickness: although Ephrem is fond of medical imagery³⁰ (Christ is 'doctor' at *H.Nat.* III.19.3 etc), and uses *krihuta* of the human state (*H.Fid.* LX.13.2), this particular phrase does not, to my knowledge, appear in his hymns, although it is found in Aphrahat, *Dem.* XIV.31.

the potency of your medicines: the phrase *ḥayla d-sammāne* occurs in *H.Fid.* XLI.3.5.

Stanza 13

perceive: the verb *rgš* (again in stanzas 16,20,23) is frequently used by Ephrem of man's apprehension of Christ's divinity (e.g. *H.Nat.* IV.132; *H.Nis.* XLV.16.1).

Stanza 14

your grace drew (ngd) you: cp *H.Maria* III.3 (not genuine).

companion to mortals: for the converse, humanity becoming companions to supernal beings, see *H.Azym.* I.2.3.

salt to flavour our offering: I have found no close parallels in Ephrem; compare perhaps *H.Eccl.* IV.11.1 and *H.Fid.* XXV.14.

Stanza 15

Creator of all (barraya d-kull): Ephrem uses *bare kull*, *H. Eccl.* XLV.22.2; *H.Haer.* III.7.2; *H.Virg.* XLVIII.3.2, etc.

the free-born (bar ḥere): so Ephrem *H.Eccl.* XLVII.3.4; *H.Nat.* XVII.9.1; XX.1.5.

should free us from slavery (ḥarrar l-'abduṭan): compare Christ as *mḥarrar 'abde* in *H.Cruc.* IV.1.1 (cp *mḥarrar kull*, *H.Fid.* LII.11.5).

²⁹ I have not been able to find any trace of this *madrasha* in the various early liturgical collections of *madrash*e in British Library manuscripts which I have examined.

³⁰ See Murray, *Symbols*, pp. 199-202.

Stanza 16

abused (ṭlm): the verb is a favourite one of Ephrem's in such contexts (e.g. ṭlam ṭaybuta: *H.Haer.* XV.10.5; *H.Nis.* VII.8.3; *H.Par.* XIV.14.5; *H.Res.* V.1.5).

have made little of that grace: compare perhaps *H.Fid.* L.2.4.

O Pitier of all: so quite often in Ephrem, e.g. *H.Eccl.* XII (response); *H.Nis.* LIV.22.1; *H.Virg.* XXXIII.5.3; XLI (response).

Stanza 18

a single mother: i.e. the baptismal font; cp *H.Epiph.* XIII.1.

chaste womb: the imagery of the baptismal water as a womb is a commonplace in Syriac tradition³¹ (in Ephrem, e.g. *H.Virg.* VII.7.4 (*karsa*)).

Stanza 20

perceive your coming: cp *H.Nat.* XXIV.11.2.

Stanza 23

Son of the Good One: again in stanza 25. This is another favourite christological title in Ephrem, e.g. *H.Haer.* XLII.6.5; *H.Nat.* III.8.1; *H.Virg.* XI.20.3; XVII.1.5.

taste of your grace: again in stanza 25; cp *H.Haer.* LIII.11.4.

Stanza 24

justice...grace: the balance and contrast of justice and grace is recurrent in Ephrem; in origin the idea probably goes back to the Jewish distinction between God's *middat ha-din* and his *middat ha-raḥamim*.

Stanza 25

I have acknowledged (ṣelmet): probably an allusion to the baptismal *syntaxis* which employs this word.

³¹ See *Baptismal Tradition*, pp. 84-5. In Syrian tradition Christ's own baptism in the Jordan effects the potential consecration (in sacred time) of all baptismal water: see *Baptismal Tradition*, pp. 8-9, 75-9.