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From Mosul to Turfan: The *ḥūdrā* in the
Liturgy of the Assyrian Church of the East

A Survey of its Historical Development
and its Liturgical Anomalies at Turfan

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After his election, Mar Awa III was enthroned Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East on 13 September 2021. His residence is in Erbil, Iraq. Prior to his election and enthronement, he was Bishop of California.

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Abstract

The “Upper Monastery” at Mosul was an important centre of liturgical development and reform of the Assyrian Church of the East. There, the liturgical book called *ḥūdrā* received its form as it is presently known. After a discussion of the genesis of the *ḥūdrā* in general, this paper examines fragments found in Turfan, China, which provide valuable insights into the spiritual and liturgical richness that shaped the Rite of the Assyrian Church of East. These fragments are particularly noteworthy in light of Anton Baumstark’s assumption that mission stations far from the place of origin (such as Turfan) tend to preserve older customs. Therefore, an exploration of these fragments will allow for a fuller understanding and appreciation of this rite and its development.

Keywords

Assyrian Church | Liturgy | History | Liturgical Book | Comparative Liturgiology

From Mosul to Turfan: The *ḥūdrā* in the Liturgy of the Assyrian Church of the East

A Survey of its Historical Development and its Liturgical Anomalies at Turfan¹

Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Awa III (ROYEL)

Introduction

Our discussion of the *ḥūdrā* of the Assyrian Church of the East² brings us predominantly to the city of Mosul, where it took shape at the “Upper Mon-

- ¹ For general information on the Christian texts of Turfan see Mark DICKENS, Multilingual Christian Manuscripts from Turfan, in: JCSSS 9 (2009) 22–42; ID., Syriac Gravestones in the Tashkent History Museum, in: Dietmar W. WINKLER – Li TANG (eds.), Hidden Treasures and Intercultural Encounters. Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia (OPOe 1), Vienna 2014, 13–49; id., The Importance of the Psalter at Turfan, in: Li TANG – Dietmar W. WINKLER (eds.), From the Oxus River to the Chinese Shores. Studies on East Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia (OPOe 5), Vienna 2013, 357–380. – The Christian Library From Turfan project was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK). Erica C.D. Hunter is the Principal Investigator of this project, aided by Mark Dickens who is Research Assistant on the same project. I am indebted to both for their permission to study and cite the fragmentary Turfan *ḥūdrā*.
- ² The Assyrian Church has had only one printed edition of the *ḥūdrā*. The late Mar Thoma Darmo, metropolitan of the Church of the East in Trichur from 1952 to 1968 (he was suspended in 1964), undertook the task of printing the Assyrian edition of the *ḥūdrā*, though almost identically based on the Paul Bedjan edition – excluding all of the Latin feasts introduced in the latter. The *ḥūdrā*, containing the *gazzā*, *kaškūl*, Psalter and the *qdam wad-bāṭar*, appeared in three volumes and bore the imprimatur of the Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Es-hai Shimun XXIII (1920–1975). In all probability, the Alqāye *ḥūdrā* preserved in the metropolitan’s residence at Trichur, dated 1598 AD, was utilized in the preparation of the Assyrian edition of the *ḥūdrā*. It is worth noting that until the appearance of the Assyrian *ḥūdrā*, the Chaldean editions of 1886–87 (of larger

astery". Down through its history, the ancient city of Mosul has had the reputation for displaying an unfavorable attitude towards the presence of the Christian constituency of the city. However, during the early to mid-seventh century of the Christian era, it was an important center of liturgical development and reform for the Assyrian Church of the East.

The Upper Monastery (dayrā 'elaitā)

The center of liturgical activity which gave birth to the *ḥūdrā* as we presently know it was the famed "Upper Monastery", or *dayrā 'elaitā* (ܕܝܘܪܐ ܐܠܝܬܐ). The father of modern liturgiology, Anton Baumstark, has remarked with regard to the earliest systematic reform of the "East Syrian"³ rite:

There is no liturgical domain which has been more hermetically sealed than that of the Nestorian Church, whose Rite received such a personal turn from the revision to which it was subjected by the Catholicos Išō'yahb between 650 and 657.⁴

print type) and 1938 were in use among the Assyrians, especially in the Middle East. Mar Aprem, metropolitan of the Church of the East, Trichur, has reprinted the same in 1993. It seems that the late Joseph E. Y. Kelaita had already begun the task of collecting manuscripts and editing them with the view of publishing the *ḥūdrā* as early as 1928; see Joseph E. Y. KELAITA (ed.), *Pūšāq Rāze d-sīm l-Mār Narsay Kennārā d-Rūhā* [The Interpretation of the Mysteries Composed by Mar Narsai of the Spirit], Mosul 1928, 112. The first Chaldean printed edition of the *ḥūdrā* was printed (in three volumes) in 1886–1887 edited during the patriarchate of Elia XII Abul-Yonan (Chaldean patriarch 1879–1894), under the title: *Breviarum iuxta Ritum Syroroum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*. The main redactors of this Chaldean edition, later reprinted at Rome 1938, were Mar 'Abdīšō' Gewargis Khayyat, Chaldean metropolitan of Amid and later patriarch from 1894 to 1899, and the Lazarist from Khorsabad, Paul Bedjan (1838–1920).

- ³ The term "East Syrian" is a commonplace in liturgiological parlance, and in no way deals with the subject matter of the ethnicity of the Churches who follow this rite. The Chaldean Catholic Church and the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church as follow the "East Syrian" rite, which we commonly refer to in this paper as the "rite of the Assyrian Church of the East".
- ⁴ Anton BAUMSTARK, *Comparative Liturgy*. Revised by Bernard BOTTE [trans. by Frank L. CROSS], Westminster/MD 1958, 19. English translation of the French edition: ID., *Liturgie Comparée. Principes et méthodes pour l'étude historique des liturgies chrétiennes*, Chevetogne 1939 [c.1953].

The definitive and normative period of the history of the rite of the Assyrian Church of the East took place at the famous “Upper Monastery”, located northeast of the city of Mosul, also known as the monastery of “Mar Gabriel and Mar Abraham”.⁵ It seems that the monastery first came to be known under the name of Gabriel, who either is Gabriel of Kaškar, or whose identity is altogether lost.⁶ According to the *Liber Castitatis* (*Book of Chastity*) of ʾIšōʿdnaḥ of Bašra, Gabriel of Kaškar built the “monastery of Mar Gabriel at Mosul” (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܩܒܪܝܐܠ ܕܩܝܫܐ ܩܒܪܝܐܠ), one of three monasteries which the saint built.⁷ However, one must take this early attestation with a grain of salt.⁸ According to Adolf Rücker, the foundation of the Upper Monastery is to be attributed to Mar Gabriel the “Wonder-Worker”, and names “Mar Abraham” among the more famous masters of the school of the monastery, from whence the name “Saints Gabriel and Abraham”⁹.

Nevertheless, it certainly came to be acquainted with the name of Abraham during the time of Patriarch Timothy I (ca. 780–823), whose master at the school of Bašūš, Abraham of Dašandad,¹⁰ was later transferred to the school attached to the Upper Monastery, known as the “Mother of Virtues” (ܩܕܝܫܐ ܩܒܪܝܐܠ ܕܩܝܫܐ ܩܒܪܝܐܠ).¹¹ A liturgical attestation to the naming of the monastery is to be found in the diptychs of the East Syrian liturgy,

⁵ Cf. Joseph HABBİ, *The Upper Monastery and the al-Tahira Church* [Arabic], Mosul 1969, 8.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Jean-Baptiste CHABOT, *Le Livre de Chasteté composé par Jésusdenah, évêque de Baçrah*, in: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire publiés par l'École française de Rome* 16 (1896) 225–291, here: 256 f. (nos. 61 f.).

⁸ According to Fiey, the mention of the third monastery “at Mosul” is an interpolation by a later hand. See Jean M. FIEY, *Mossoul chrétienne. Essai sur l'histoire, l'archéologie et l'état actuel des monuments chrétiens de la ville de Mossoul* (Recherches publiées sous la direction de l'Institut de Lettres Orientales de Beyrouth 12), Beirut [1959], 127, fn. 6. The fact that Gabriel of Kaškar died in 738/9, according to the *Liber Castitatis*, this places him at least a century after the founding of the monastery. See CHABOT, *Le Livre de Chasteté*, 257 (no. 62). Cf. Adolf RÜCKER, *Das “Obere Kloster” bei Mossul and seine Bedeutung für die Geschichte der Ostsyrischen Liturgie*, in: *OrChr(R)* 7 (1932) 180–187, here: 183.

⁹ FIEY, *Mossoul*, 127.

¹⁰ HABBİ, *The Upper Monastery*, 8. Cf. *The Book of Governors* (BUDGE 2, 380).

¹¹ Ibid., 8. Cf. FIEY, *Mossoul*, 127 f.

which describe the Upper Monastery and the two fathers associated with it:

And for the memorial of the man of God and son of man, in whom grace was victorious in signs and wonders, our blessed father Mar Gabriel, witnessed to for holiness and famous for strength and marvelous in deeds, the founder of the High Monastery and its holy school the mother of virtues. And for the Memorial of our blessed father Mar Abraham the interpreter of the divine scriptures [...].¹²

The fact remains that a great majority of the liturgical books bear the title “According to the rite of the Upper Monastery or the Cloister of Mar Gabriel and Mar Abraham near Mosul”¹³. This is most especially true of the more ancient liturgical formularies such as the *ḥūdrā*, *gazzā* and *kaškul*, along with the Gospel and Epistle lectionaries.¹⁴ Thus, the “Rite of the Convent of Mar Gabriel and Mar Abraham” of Mosul became normative for the East Syrian liturgy, even as the numerous manuscript evidences attest.¹⁵

The ḥūdrā: Its Formation and Edition

The *ḥūdrā* (ܚܘܕܪܐ), a Syriac term meaning “cycle”, is the principal liturgical formulary of the Church of the East. It has already been effectively studied by Anton Baumstark and William Macomber.¹⁶ The oldest extant

¹² Frank E. BRIGHTMAN, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, vol. 1, Oxford 1896, 279. For the Syriac text see Joseph E. Y. KELAITA, *The Liturgy of the Church of the East*, Mosul 1928, 239.

¹³ See RÜCKER, *Das Obere Kloster*, 180. 181, fn. 2–4. 182, fn. 1–3. Cf. Wilhelm C. VAN UNNIK, *Nestorian Questions on the Administration of the Eucharist by Isho'yahb IV. A Contribution to the History of the Eucharist in the Eastern Church*, Haarlem 1937 [Reprint: Piscataway/NJ 2006], 148.

¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Cf. FIEY, *Mossoul*, 129.

¹⁶ See William F. MACOMBER, *A List of Known Manuscripts of the Chaldean Ḥūdrā*, in: *OCP* 36 (1970) 120–134; *id.*, *The Oldest Known Text of the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari*, in: *OCP* 32 (1966) 335–371; cf. *id.*, *A History of the Chaldean Mass*, in: *Worship* 51 (1977) 107–120, here: 112. Cf. Anton BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluss der christlich-palästinensischen Texte*, Bonn 1922, 198; Baby VARGHESE, *East Syrian Liturgy During the Sassanid Period*, in: *The Harp. A Review of Syriac and Oriental Ecumenical Studies* 15 (2002) 205–218, here: 216.

copy of the *ḥūdrā* (10th–11th centuries), which has come to be known as the “Mar Ešā’ya *ḥūdrā*” (belonging to the parish at Mosul under this name), was effectively discovered by William Macomber, who writes concerning the *ḥūdrā*:

[The *ḥūdrā*] contains the variable chants of the choir for the divine office and the Mass for the entire cycle of the liturgical year. The compilation of the *Ḥūdrā* is traditionally attributed to the Catholicos Patriarch Išo’yahb III of Adiabene (649–649) and his collaborator, the monk ‘Enanišo’, and there is no compelling reason for doubting the attribution.”¹⁷

Jean Maurice Fiey conjectures that in all probability Išo’yahb began his liturgical reforms while he was yet metropolitan of Adiabene, sometime after 637.¹⁸ A credulous piece of information can be found in the *Book of Governors*. According to Thomas, Bishop of Marga:

And when Mar Išo’yahb was Metropolitan in Arbel, and wished to draw up in order a book (*penqīṭā*) of the Canons that he might send copies of it to all the countries of his patriarchate [i.e., during his patriarchate], he made the wise Abba ‘Anānīšo’, the love of whom is very dear and sweet to me, to sit with him during the drawing up of the canons [...].¹⁹

A bit further, Thomas actually specifies that these so-called “canons” are directly with regard to the breviary:

Now this Abba ‘Anānīšo’ [...] was a contemporary of both these patriarchs [i.e., Išo’yahb and George] and to both he showed his obedience; to Mar Išo’yahb in arranging the canons of the *ḥūdrā* [...].²⁰

¹⁷ MACOMBER, *Manuscripts of the Chaldean Ḥūdrā*, 120 f. For a description of the contents of the Mar Ešā’ya *ḥūdrā* see Pierre YOUSIF, *Appunti sulla preghiera liturgica del rito caldeo (commune)* [pro manuscript], Rome 1982–1983, 3.

¹⁸ Jean M. FIEY, *Išo’yaw le Grand. Vie du catholicos nestorien Išo’yaw III d’Adiabène (580–659) (Suite)*, in: OCP 36 (1970) 5–46, here: 10. Cf. Eugène TISSERANT, *Nestorienne (l’Église)*. XIII: La liturgie des Églises nestorienne et chaldéenne, in: DThC 11/1, col. 314–323, here: 319.

¹⁹ *The Book of Governors* (BUDGE 2, 177). Cf. Joseph S. ASSEMANI (ed.), *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana de Scriptoribus Syris*, vol. 3/1, Rome 1725 [Reprint: Hildesheim 2000], 145.

²⁰ *The Book of Governors* (BUDGE 2, 189). ‘Anānīšo’ was also the redactor of the East Syrian version of the “Paradise of the Fathers”, made at the behest of

We know that ‘Anānīšō’ was a good friend of ʾĪšō’yahb̄.²¹ He was a fellow-student of the future patriarch, while they were yet attending the school at Nisibis before the controversy with ḥnānā and his teaching had ensured, along with ‘Anānīšō’s brother ʾĪšō’yahb̄ who later became bishop of Qārdālīyābād.²² Again, according to Thomas’ testimony, ‘Anānīšō’ “the wise of understanding laboured so hard in the study of books, that he surpassed all who were before and after him in his knowledge”²³ and it was for this reason that the catholicos enlisted his aid in redacting the ḥūdrā and in organizing the other formularies.²⁴ ‘Anānīšō’ is also the author of the *Paradise of the Fathers*, which also included the monastic history of Palladius and of Jerome which he picked up during his sojourn in the desert of Scete. He compiled this anthology at the request of patriarch George I (661–680), thus becoming the standard book of reading in the East Syrian monasteries.²⁵

The fact that the recension of the ḥūdrā standardized by ʾĪšō’yahb̄ while he was already patriarch residing at the Upper Monastery had determined the name of this formulary, i.e.: “According to the Order (or Rite) of the

patriarch George. According to Jean Dauvillier: “A la demande du patriarche George I^{er}, H^enānīšō’ compila une nouvelle rédaction du *Paradis des Pères*, de Palladius et de saint Jérôme, enrichi d’additions prises à d’autres sources ou de souvenirs personnels. Cet ouvrage, qui devint le principal livre de lecture dans tous les couvents nestoriens, parmi les questions, les exemples et les conseils qu’il renferme, donne quelques informations sur le droit monastique.” Jean DAUVILLIER, Chaldéen (droit), in: DDC 3, cols. 292–388, here: 333. See also William WRIGHT, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, London 1894, 174–176.

²¹ According to Jean Dauvillier: “Il [ʾĪšō’yahb̄] fut aidé dans cette réforme par un de ses anciens compagnons d’étude, H^enānīšō’. Ce dernier, moine du Mont-Izlā, avait voyagé a Jerusalem et au désert de Scété, où il s’était initié a la vie des moines égyptiens, puis s’était retiré au couvent de Bêt(h) ‘Ab(h)ē.” DAUVILLIER, Droit, col. 333. Cf. Ephrem BADDY, *A Historical Glimpse of the Most Noted Authors and Organizers of the Chaldean Office [Arabic]*, in: *Al-Mašreq* 56 (1965) 519–520.

²² See WRIGHT, *Syriac Literature*, 174. Cf. FIEY, ʾĪšō’yaw le Grand, 10; BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte*, 201 f. ʾĪšō’yahb̄ the brother of ‘Anānīšō’ was later made bishop of Shenna, sometime before the demise of the Catholicos ʾĪšō’yahb̄ (ca. 659).

²³ *The Book of Governors* (BUDGE 2, 176). For the works of ‘Anānīšō’ see ASSEMANI, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 3/1, 144–146; BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte*, 202 f.; WRIGHT, *Syriac Literature*, 175 f.

²⁴ Cf. WRIGHT, *Syriac Literature*, 175.

²⁵ Cf. DAUVILLIER, Droit, col. 333; WRIGHT, *Syriac Literature*, 175.

Upper Monastery of Mar Abraham and Mar Gabriel at Mosul”²⁶. The manuscript tradition almost always refers to this work as the “*ḥūdrā da-mdabrānūtā*”, i.e., the *ḥūdrā* “of the Dispensation (*economy*)”. This is an allusion to the whole liturgical year, with its different seasons and feasts in between, as celebrating the divine economy or *mdabrānūtā* (ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ) – the economy of salvation authored by God the Father and realized in his Son, Jesus Christ.

The early history of this most-important formulary is not known. Whether some sort of “primitive” recension of the book prior to the seventh century reforms ever existed cannot be known. The earliest witnesses to the *ḥūdrā* outside the book itself are the *Liber Superiorum* (*Book of Governors*) of Thomas of Marga and the *Expositio Officiorum* of Pseudo-George of Arbel, the author of which refers to the *penqītā* made by ʾĪšōʾyahb a number of times. At first glance, the title *penqītā* (ܩܢܝܬܐ), coming from the Greek πινακίδιον, seems to refer to a lost work of ʾĪšōʾyahb which describes the various reforms he effected and an explanation of the rubrics he had stipulated.²⁷ According to Baby Varghese the *penqītā*:

[...] was a commentary on the ceremonies of the eucharist, daily office and other liturgical rites. This work seems to have given a theological rationale for the liturgical actions. The theological explanation given to the liturgical actions by an influential patriarch invested them with “a sacrosanct quality to change”. This liturgical commentary, now lost, is used in an anonymous commentary on the anaphora and other liturgical ceremonies probably written in the ninth century.²⁸

However, according to Pseudo-George, the *penqītā* in question seems to be none other than the *ḥūdrā*:

Why is it that since the beginning of the year is Tešrīn II, and that there is no feast from Tešrīn to Kānūn I, the blessed ʾĪšōʾyahb kept the Annunciation and the beginning of the *penqītā* until Kānūn, and did not make its beginning [to be] from Kānūn? The Church celebrates four beginnings in counting the year, and every one of them has a day and month,

²⁶ Cf. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte*, 198, with fn. 9.

²⁷ See FIEY, ʾĪšōʾyahb le Grand, 11; YOUSIF, *Appunti sulla messa caldea*, 15. Cf. BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte*, 198.

²⁸ VARGHESE, *East Syrian Liturgy*, 217 f.

I mean the beginning of the year and the beginning of the *penqītā*, and the beginning of the books and the beginning of the governors. The beginning of the year is Tešrīn I; the beginning of the *penqītā* is Kānūn I; the beginning of the books is the beginning of the season of the Fast of the Passion; and the beginning of the governors is the beginning of the season of Resurrection [...] and the second [of the beginnings] is that of the dispensation, i.e. the *penqītā* [...].²⁹

Thus, according to the usage of *penqītā* in the *Expositio*, it could refer to none other than the *ḥūdrā* itself. Again, the author of the *Expositio* states:

Why is it that since the [period of] Consecration of the Church is before all of the liturgies, including Baptism [Epiphany], the blessed Ṭšō'yahb ordered the beginning of the *penqīthā* [to be] the Annunciation, and placed baptism at the Resurrection, and after the whole *ḥūdrā*, ordered the Consecration of the Church [...].³⁰

The so-called *penqītā* of Ṭšō'yahb is also mentioned by 'Abdīšō' of Nisibis in his *Catalogus*. Concerning the writings of Ṭšō'yahb he mentions that he ordered the *penqītā d-ḥūdrā*, or the "volume of the *ḥūdrā*".³¹ Here the understanding is clear – the *penqītā* and the *ḥūdrā* are one and the same volume.

It seems that in the period lasting from the christological controversies to the reforms of Ṭšō'yahb III, the Church of the East used to refer to the *ḥūdrā* as the *penqītā*, in agreement with the West Syrian usage which is in sway to this very day. A *ḥūdrā* manuscript of 1607/08, Cambridge Add. 1981, has this interesting rubric for the commemoration of "One Person" (celebrated on the second Friday preceding the beginning of Lent):

The Commemoration of "One Person", and it is also known as that of Mar Ābā the Catholicos. And know, O noble reader, that in the ancient *penqyātā* [pl.] it is assigned [the commemoration] as Mar Bar Sawmā

²⁹ Anonymi Auctoris Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae (CSCO.S 25, 25 f.; CONNOLLY).

³⁰ Ibid. (CSCO.S 29, 116 f.; CONNOLLY).

³¹ ASSEMANI, Bibliotheca Orientalis III/1, 139.

The Contents of the ḥūdrā

The basic principle governing the order of the ḥūdrā is that it follows the Sunday cycle of the liturgical seasons of the year. In fact, a preface composed by Brīk-lšo' bar Eškāpe (14th century) explaining the various liturgical seasons of the year, based on the reasoning of ʾĪšō'yahb III, has been added to every ḥūdrā ever since.³⁶ Hence, the *propria* for the evening and morning offices of all the Sundays of the year, the office for the three-day-long Fast of the Ninevites and the Lenten offices are contained therein. According to Macomber:

Some older manuscripts of this collection contain the chants for only the principle liturgical days, that is, for the Sundays and Fridays of the year, the principal feasts and commemorations, and the ferias of the Lenten Fast and Easter Week [...] At the end of the Hudra there is normally appended a collection of common intercessional chants (*qālē d-'udrānē*) [...].³⁷

The older manuscript version of the ḥūdrā contained the texts of the three anaphora: the Anaphora of Addai and Mari preceding the Easter Vigil office; the Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia at the end of the Christmas office, and the anaphora of Nestorius at the end of the Epiphany office. This fact is interesting to note in relation to dating the compilation of the *ṭaksā* or the euchologion. The *ordo communis* of the *qurbānā* was never contained in the ḥūdrā, only the anaphora proper (though the Fraction and the rites from the end of the anaphora to the communion may be contained); the common rites of the liturgy were always to be found in the missal. Other rites contained in the ḥūdrā formulary are the following: the rites of baptism, absolution, renewal of the Holy Leaven, the reconciliation

³⁶ Superior of the Monastery of Beth Qōqā, sometime during the 14th century; for a brief biography see BAUMSTARK, *Geschichte*, 232. Cf. Juan MATEOS, *Lelya-Ṣapra. Essai d'interprétation des matines chaldéennes* (OCA 156), Rome 1959, 461–464; based on the manuscript Cambridge Additional 1981, fols. 2^v–4^v. For the Syriac text and English translation see: Antony VALLANVANTHARA, *Liturgical Year of the St. Thomas Christians. A Study of the Sources* [unpubl. doctoral dissertation, Université catholique de Louvain], 1978, 133–143.

³⁷ MACOMBER, *Manuscripts of the Chaldean Ḥudrā*, 121.

of heretics and the washing of the altar on Holy Thursday were also to be found in the Holy Week offices.³⁸

The Oldest extant *ḥūdrā* manuscript identified thus far, that of the now Chaldean church of Mar Eš'ya at Mosul,³⁹ contains only the offices for Sundays, Fridays, feasts of our Lord and commemorations of the saints – as well as for the ferial days of the Fast of the Ninevites and that of Easter week. It also contains the following: 1) order of *ṣaprā*; 2) anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia; 3) Rite of Fraction; 4) Anaphora of Nestorius; 5) baptismal office; 6) Anaphora of Ss. Addai & Mari.⁴⁰

These rites which were first to be found in the *ḥūdrā*, but were later separated this volume and collected into volume which came to be known as the *ṭaksā d-kahne*, or “Priests’ Manual”. It is not known who edited the *Priests’ Manual*, but it certainly existed as a single volume before the 13th century, the date of the earliest known manuscript of the *ṭaksā*.⁴¹ The present *ṭaksā d-kahne* of the Assyrian Church⁴² contains the following liturgical rites: 1) the text of the three anaphorae (i.e. Addai & Mar, Theodore and Nestorius); 2) the baptismal rite; 3) the rite for baking the eucharistic loaves and the mixing of the chalice; 4) the rite of the “Renewal of the

³⁸ Ibid.; ID., Oldest Known Text, 342 f. Cf. VARGHESE, East Syrian Liturgy, 217; YOUSIF, Preghiera liturgica, 2 f.; MACOMBER, Chaldean Mass, 113.

³⁹ This church (now a parish) was originally dedicated to the saint *Mar Išō'yahb Bar Qusre*. After the devastating events of the displacement of the Christian and minority population of Mosul and its environs by ISIS in July of 2014, the manuscript was taken to Ankawa (Erbil-KRG) for safe-keeping. It remains there to this day.

⁴⁰ Jacob VELLIAN, Pre-Diamper Sources of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy, in: Bosco PUTHUR (ed.), The Life and Nature of the St. Thomas Christian Church in the Pre-Diamper Period (Liturgical Research Centre of the Syro-Malabar Church Publications 1), Kochi 2000, 60–84, here: 71.

⁴¹ This manuscript belonged to the Chaldean Episcopal Residence at Séert, but was lost (unfortunately) during the ravages of the First World War. The library was reportedly destroyed when the Chaldean bishop of Séert, Mar Addai Scher, was martyred by the Ottoman Turks in 1915.

⁴² The *ṭaksā d-kahne* of the Assyrian Church of the East was first published by the Press of the Mission of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Assyrian Christians in two volumes; volume I was printed at Urmia in 1890, and volume II in 1892. The English translation of volume I was printed by the London SPCK in 1893. However, the normative text of the *ṭaksā d-kahne* is the edition printed and edited by the late Rev. Joseph E. Y. Kelaita at the Assyrian Press, Mosul, in 1928.

Leaven"; 5) the rite of Absolution; 6) the rite of administering oaths; 7) occasional prayers; 8) the collects for the liturgy of the hours; 9) the rite of the sanctification of waters; 10) the rite of the washing of the altar (on Holy Thursday) and 11) the rite of making *ḥnānā*.⁴³ With the compilation of the *Priests' Manuel*, this limited the *ḥūdrā* to the liturgy of the hours and the propers (*propria*) for the Eucharistic liturgy throughout the liturgical year.

A Turfan *ḥūdrā*?

The Turfan⁴⁴ fragment that concerns us here is the *ḥūdrā* identified as MIK III 45. It contains about 61 folios of what is identified as the *ḥūdrā* of the Assyrian Church of the East, containing other sundry offices and rites as well.⁴⁵ At the end of the specifically *ḥūdrā* portion of the manuscript, the *excipit* reads:

The penqītā of the rites and canons of the *ḥūdrā* of the whole year ends. Praise to the glorious Trinity, by whose power we began and by

⁴³ This is "holy earth" which is taken from the tombs of saints or the shrines of the martyrs. It is generally used for healing purposes, and in the liturgy of the Assyrian Church of the East it is used to sign the chalice at the wedding ritual.

⁴⁴ There were four German expeditions to Turfan between 1904 and 1914, which yielded some 30,000 fragments altogether, under the leadership of Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq. After the initial publication of some of the Soghdian fragments of Turfan, the "Orientalische Kommission" was founded in 1912 at the Berlin Academy of Sciences.

⁴⁵ Since the writing of this paper, the Turfan euchological fragment known as MIK III 45 (surviving in 60 folios) has been edited and translated into English. The liturgical text, which is euchological in nature and has not been conclusively determined to be a *ḥūdrā* per se, is dated to the 8th/9th centuries, and comes from Bulayīq, near Turfan. A 14C test was conducted by the Klaus-Tschira-Archäometrie-Zentrum at Heidelberg University, in June 2014, which dated this fragment to 771–884 AD. The critical edition of the Syriac text of this service-book was published in 2017. For the full text see Erica C. D. HUNTER – J[ames] F. COAKLEY (eds.), *A Syriac Service-Book from Turfan*. Museum für asiatische Kunst, Berlin MS MIK III 45 (Berliner Turfantexte 39), Turnhout 2017. J. F. Coakley has referred to this fragmentary liturgical book as a *penqītā*. However, for the purposes of this present article, we have dealt with this important liturgical fragment of the Assyrian Church of the East in terms of its being a *ḥūdrā*.

gical units that are analogous or almost equal the present structure of the offices in the *ḥūdrā*. The evening office of the “Common Vigil” for All Saints (*ramšā*), therefore, may be delineated thus:

1. Antiphon “before *maryā qreṭāk*” (“Lord I have cried unto Thee” – the cathedral Psalm 140);
2. Psalm versicles of Ps 140;
3. Antiphon “after *maryā qreṭāk*”;
4. Antiphon of the *Basilike* (also known as the “Royal Anthem”);
5. Cathedral Psalm versicles (*šūrāyā*).
6. *Sūbāā* (compline), consisting of a series of antiphons commemorating the saints

Our *ḥūdrā* also makes mention of three further “anomalies” on fol. 19: the “Feast of our Lady Mary” (ܩܘܕܫܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܩܘܕܫܬܐ); the “Feast of St. John the Baptist” (ܩܘܕܫܬܐ ܕܝܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ); and the “Commemoration of the Solitaries” (ܩܘܕܫܬܐ ܕܝܫܘܪܝܬܐ).⁴⁹

First, with regard to the first two anomalies listed, it is to be noted well that the *ḥūdrā* never assigns the word “Feast” (ܩܘܕܫܬܐ) to the commemorations of the saints, as the word “Feast” is exclusively used to indicate the “Seven Feasts of our Lord” (i.e.: Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Transfiguration, Holy Cross). There is another class of days termed, quite simply, “Feasts”, and this term refers to feasts that do not belong to those termed “of our Lord”; these are: 1) First Sunday of Lent; 2) Palm Sunday; 3) First Friday after Resurrection; and 4) First Sunday of Summer; and 5) First Sunday of Consecration of the Church (i.e. *qūdaš ‘edtā*). However, and this is quite clear in our present tradition, the word “feast” is never used for the commemoration of the saints or martyrs; the term used exclusively is *doḵrānā* (i.e., commemoration, memorial).

Second, nowhere in the sanctoral of the Church of the East is there a “Commemoration of the Solitaires”. In fact, there are very few commemorations of saints who were solitaires or of monastic origin. The exception

⁴⁹ This least feast is non-existent in the present recension of the Church of the East *ḥūdrā*.

to this would be: 1) the commemoration of Rabban Hermizd on the third Monday after Resurrection and September 1; 2) the commemoration of Rabban Pethyon on October 25; 3) the commemoration of Mar Eugene the head of hermits on the Third Friday of *qūdaš ʿedtā*. However, there is no particular commemoration of the “Solitaries”. Similarly, on fol. 18^r, the *ḥūdrā* mentions a “Commemoration of the Catholicoi” (ܩܘܕܝܫܐ ܕܩܬܘܠܝܩܝܐ). In the present, there is no office (nor mention) of any commemoration of the catholicoi (i.e., patriarchs) of the Church of the East.⁵⁰

Further Anomalies of the Turfan ḥūdrā

The greatest anomaly, upon which I should like to dwell for some time in this paper, is the method for liturgically commemorating the saints. We noted above that the term “feast” is used in the Turfan *ḥūdrā* whereas in the present *ḥūdrā* the word “commemoration” is exclusively used for the liturgical observances of the saints and martyrs. For our Turfan breviary, it seems that the “feast” of Ss. Sergius and Bacchus is of great importance. Just before the anomalous office for Ss. Sergius and Bacchus (on fol. 13^r) a certain female saint by the name of “(Mārt) Šīr” is commemorated in the *ḥūdrā*; nothing is known about her biography nor is she mentioned in the *textus receptus* of the *ḥūdrā*.⁵¹ The antiphons for this office of “Mārt Šīr” indicate, in fact, a company of three saints which seem to be associated

⁵⁰ However, in some calendars there are certain patriarchs who are commemorated in the month of December, but there is no official commemoration or office for them in the *ḥūdrā*.

⁵¹ We could not identify a woman saint by the name “Šīr”. There are however, quite a few references to the name *Šīrīn*. For further information on the hagiographies of the female saints with the name *Šīrīn* see: Holy Women of the Syrian Orient, intr. and transl. by Sebastian P. BROCK – Susan A. HARVEY (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 13), Berkeley – Los Angeles/CA 1987, 177–181. Cf. Jean M. FIEY, *Saints syriaques* (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 6), Princeton 2004, 179 f.

(Mart) Zarwandōkt, follows a similar liturgical structure for the observance of the commemoration of Ss. Sergius and Bacchus.⁵⁶

As a general rule of the *ḥūdrā*, the commemoration of any saint is observed on day; never are the commemorations prolonged more than that, though the same saint may have more than one commemoration in the sanctoral throughout the year. Bearing that in mind, it becomes quite clear that what we have on our hands in the Turfan *ḥūdrā* is something liturgically that is utterly unparalleled in the rite of the Church of the East. Let us first examine the *incipit* of this anomalous week-long office for the commemoration of the saints of Merw, which reads: “The rites which are observed for the weeks of the festivals of the saints. First, in the week of Mart Šīr the Herald” (fol. 7): .ܩܚܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܘܢ. Under this structure, the celebration of the saints’ commemoration is observed for an entire week. Each day consists of a liturgical repertoire which, to a great extent, resembles the liturgy of the hours of the Lenten season.⁵⁷ The offices which are contained each day for the afore-mentioned observance are the following: 1) vespers (*ramšā*); 2) compline (*sūbāā*); 3) nocturns (*lalyā*); 4) cathedral vigil (*qale d-šahrā*); 5) matins (*šaprā*); 6) Eucharistic liturgy with *propria*; and 7) sext (*d-palgeh d-yawmā*). Such a structure is comparable only to the Lenten structure of the liturgy of the hours. We list some other interesting notes on the hours of prayer noted above, in further detail:

1. *Ramšā*: The office for the “First Day” (of the week of celebration) begins with the vespertine psalmody, or *marmīthā*, and the select psalm versicles or *šūrāyā* according to their order. The main vesper-

⁵⁶ The Turfan *ḥūdrā* then introduces a unique structure for the commemoration of the saints. Specifically in reference to Ss. Sergius and Bacchus, it indicates that there is to be the memorial of the saints for one whole week! The *ḥūdrā* indicates it thus (in fol. 13^r): “(Again) the week of the blessed Mar Sargis (spelled as one-word ܡܫܬܘܢܗܘܢ) the victorious martyr; the dawn of the first day [...]” The two martyrs are commemorated in the sanctoral of the Church of the East on fourth Friday of Resurrection and on the first Sunday of November.

⁵⁷ Much of the material regarding the background of the *ḥūdrā* has been taken from the first chapter of my doctoral thesis; see David ROYEL, *The Lenten Liturgy of the Hours in the Assyrian Church of the East. A Historico-Liturgical Study* [unpubl. doctoral dissertation, Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome], 2007, 64–82. 130–139.

tine psalm (Ps 140) is indicated to be recited “[...] upon the bema, chanted”, and the “Antiphon of the Basilke” is then indicated, being taken from a collection of anthems to the martyrs.

2. *Sūbāā*: The opening psalmody of the office of compline is given, indicating that they begin at the beginning of the Psalter and are to recite three “[...] *šūbāhe* each evening”, which may be the archaic liturgical term for our modern-day *hūlāle*.⁵⁸ After the psalmody, the series of select antiphons follows, accompanied by the “minor” diaconal litany.
3. *Lelyā*: The rubrics indicate that at the beginning of the office of nocturns they are to recite “[...] [for the] *maremyātā*, they are to recite five *šūbāhe* every *lelyā*” (fol. 7^v). It is interesting to note that the term *maremyātā* is to be found when indicating the divisions of the liturgical Psalter, whereas the term *hūlālā* is not to be found. It is believed that the original division of the liturgical Psalter in the Syriac-speaking Churches has always been the *marmītā*, which is shared by both the Church of the East and the Syriac Orthodox Churches, with the further division of the *hūlālā* being a much later Church of the East sub-division of the Psalter. This is followed by the *mowtbā* (i.e. the night prayer *kathisma*) antiphons, then a select psalm known as the *šūbāḥā* (not to be confused with the opening psalmody-of monastic origin), a *tešbōḥtā* hymn (indicated “of the day”); the diaconal litany (which is usually the indication of the conclusion of the office) is not present.
4. *Ṣapṛā*: Our *ḥūḍrā* indicates that the repertoire of morning psalms (*mazmōre d-ṣapṛā*) is to follow the ferial order (ܡܘܨܘܒܐ ܕܝܘܡܝܐ ܕܝܘܡܝܐ ܕܝܘܡܝܐ), “[...] the morning psalms [are] in the manner of feriales” (fol. 7^v). This certainly refers to the morning office as found in the present *ordo communis* of nocturns in the liturgy of the hours of the

⁵⁸ The *hūlāle* is a grouping of three *maremyātā*, which in turn are formed of three psalms. Ideally, each *hūlālā* is comprised of nine psalms. In the liturgical psalter, there are 21 *hūlāle* total, 20 of which comprise the 150 psalms, and the 21st is comprised of the “Songs of Moses” (Exodus 15:1–21, Isaiah 42:10–13, 45:8; Deuteronomy 32:1–21b; Deuteronomy 32:21c–43).

Assyrian Church of the East.⁵⁹ The office also mentions the “canon” (*qānōnā*) for Psalm 51 (‘Have mercy on me O God’) – indicated as being “one of the minor (ones).” Our *ḥūdrā* at this point also mentions that the “O Lord, in the morning’ shall be [recited] on the bema”, referring to the *madrāšā* of matins, which refrain is Psalm 5:3 (“My voice you shall hear in the morning, O Lord, and in the morning I shall prepare myself and see you”). The rubric that this *madrāšā*, which in the present breviary exclusively appears in the Lenten season, is to be recited at the bema is indeed precious, since the contemporary *ḥūdrā* does not indicate mention it at all. Finally, the Turfan rubrics indicate that the “antiphon of the Chest” (ܐܢܬܝܢܐ ܕܥܘܒܕܐܘܬܐ) is to follow according to its rite. We have no idea as to the identity of the ‘*ōnīṭā d-glōsqmā*, however the word may refer to a storage chest, or most likely a reliquary wherein are housed the relics of the saints or martyrs.⁶⁰ It might have been a processional hymn to the martyrism of the church, generally at the end of the office.

5. *Sext (d-palgeh d-yawmā)*. The office of sext or midday prayer, in *textus receptus* of the *ḥūdrā* only exists in the Lenten season; it is called “the prayer of ‘*edānā*”, a term which denotes the “hours” of prayer in general, but here it specifically refers to sext. This office begins with the recitation of “three *šūbāhe*” for the *maremyāṭā* each day. Then follow a series of antiphons, a select psalm with refrain (i.e., *qānōnā*), a *tešbōḥtā* hymn, followed by the “Antiphon of the Bema” (essentially the Communion hymn), which is generally to be found in the *propria* for the Eucharistic liturgy on any given day.

This same liturgical structure follows for the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh of the *ḥaggā* (ܐܘܘܪܝܢܐ) or “festival”. The actual commemoration of the saints in question, the “eighth day”, is referred to as the “feast” (ܐܘܪܝܢܐ). The office for the feast day (i.e., the eighth day) follows the festive

⁵⁹ For the contemporary liturgical text, in English translation, see: East Syrian Daily Offices [trans. by Arthur J. MACLEAN], London 1894 [Reprint: Piscataway/NJ 2002], 103–109.

⁶⁰ Cf. Robert P. SMITH (ed.), *Thesaurus Syriacus*, vol. 1, Oxford 1879 [Reprint: Piscataway/NJ 2007], col. 726. This term comes from the Greek γλωσσόκομον.

structure for feast days and Sundays. It begins with the night office (*lelyā*), which it refers to as the “first *mowtbā* of *lelyā*”, followed by the cathedral vigil on the commemoration day only (*qale d-šahrā*). The cathedral vigil is oftentimes considered the “third *mowtbā*”, or *kathisma*, and is observed by the clergy while standing. The reason for this is that the bishop in his cathedral (or the catholicos-patriarch, as the case may be) would be present for the night office; it is, therefore, also known as the “*mowtbā d-beṭ qāthōlīqe*”, or “*kathisma* of the Catholicoi”, for at this time the patriarch (or bishop) would attend the night office. Next, the propers for the festive morning office follow (*šaprā*) and the *propria* for the Eucharistic liturgy which conclude the week-long observance of the saints’ festival. An interesting note about the *propria* is that they include the verses of the Post-Communion hymn “Your Body and Your Blood you have given us to eat” (ܩܒܘܬܟܝܘܢ ܘܒܪܘܚܝܢܟܝܘܢ ܕܘܨܝܒܝܬܟܝܘܢ ܕܘܨܝܒܝܬܟܝܘܢ ܕܘܨܝܒܝܬܟܝܘܢ), which is a hymn following the “Antiphon of the bema” (i.e. the Communion hymn) and which is exclusively found on the seven feasts of our Lord. The week-long office concludes with the simple words “That of Mart Šīr is ended” (ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܡܪܬ ܫܝܪ ܕܘܨܝܒܝܬܟܝܘܢ).

Conclusion

The father of *Comparative Liturgy*, the German philologue and liturgiologist Anton Baumstark (1872–1948), formulated a number of ‘laws’ (in German: *Gesetzmäßigkeiten*) that delineated his hypotheses concerning the development and growth of liturgies.⁶¹ One of these ‘laws’ proposes that missionary posts distant from the mother territory of the particular rite tend to preserve more ancient usages. It is my belief that the Turfan *ḥūdrā* MIK III 45 is indeed a very unique and important demonstration of this law. As such, its import cannot be overestimated in the academic realm of liturgiology as a science. The case may very well be that our fragmentary Turfan *ḥūdrā* preserve liturgical structures and usages that go back either to the time of the beginnings of the liturgical reforms of the catholicos-pa-

⁶¹ Cf. BAUMSTARK, *Comparative Liturgy*, 15–30. See also Robert TAFT, Anton Baumstark’s *Comparative Liturgy Revisited*, in: ID. – Gabriele WINKLER (eds.), *Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years After Anton Baumstark (1872–1948): Acts of the International Congress, Rome, 25–29 September 1998 (OCA 265)*, Rome 2001, 191–232, here: 196–210.

triarch Mar ʿIṣṣō'yahb III (648/9–658/9) dated at circa 650 A.D., or quite possibly even earlier.

The spiritual and liturgical wealth to be discovered in the Christian literature of the Turfan fragments is indeed quite rich and enriching for a greater and more wholistic understanding of and appreciation of the breath of diffusion of the rite of the Church of the East. Our *ḥūdrā* fragment is, in my opinion, a precious pearl in that rich collection. That great wealth now only remains to be unearthed and delved into further for the greater benefit of liturgy, the liturgiological science and Christendom at large.

Abbreviations

COri	Christian Orient. An Indian Journal of Eastern Churches for Creative Theological Thinking
CSCO.S	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Scriptorum Syri
DDC	Dictionnaire de droit canonique
DThC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique
Harp	The Harp. A Review of Syriac and Oriental Ecumenical Studies
JCSSS	Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica
OPOe	orientalia – patristica – oecumenica
OrChr(R)	Orientalia Christiana

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