

# RECLAIMING NARSAI'S *MĒMRĀ* OF THE FEAST OF THE VICTORIOUS CROSS

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## ABSTRACT

*In this article, I discuss the authorship of a mēmṛā with the incipit 'In the path of the divine mysteries, I have girded myself to walk' (ܒܚܠܩܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ) that is found in four manuscripts that mostly contain mēmṛē attributed to Narsai (d. ca. 500). Macomber read the heading of the mēmṛā in question as mār(y) Ṣlibā zkā (ܡܐܪܝ ܫܠܒܐ ܙܟܐ), which he took to refer to the author of the homily: 'an otherwise unknown Ṣlibazka' in his words. Departing from Macomber and building upon a previous suggestion by Ibrahim, I argue here that the earliest recoverable archetype of this heading actually read 'ē(ʿ)dā daṣlibā zakkāyā 'Feast of the victorious cross' (ܐܝܬܐ ܕܕܥܠܒܐ ܕܙܟܝܐ), which should be understood as the title of a homily implicitly attributed to Narsai. The change from an original title to a faux author started, I suggest, with a graphic error in which <ʿdʿ> (ܐܝܬܐ) was misread by a scribe as <mry> (ܡܐܪܝ). This problem was then exacerbated by Macomber's misreading of zakkāyā 'victorious' (ܙܟܝܐ) as zkā 'it has been victorious; it has conquered' (ܙܟܐ).*

## INTRODUCTION

According to Macomber, a *mēmṛā* with the incipit ‘In the path of the divine mysteries, I have girded myself to walk’ (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ ܕܡܝܫܬܐ) is found in the following four manuscripts that mostly contain *mēmṛē* attributed to Narsai (d. ca. 500):<sup>1</sup>

- ms. Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), Chaldean Patriarchate 71 (1188–1288), pp. 507–519: In addition to the *mēmṛā* in question, this manuscript contains thirty *mēmṛē* attributed to Narsai, one acephalous *mēmṛā* that Macomber credited to Narsai, and a *Mēmṛā on the Washing of Feet* attributed to Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> W. F. Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” *OCP* 39 (1973): 275–306, at 306, *passim*. Macomber’s article remains indispensable for any scholar working with the *mēmṛē* of Narsai. The present author, together with Kristian S. Heal and Sebastian P. Brock, is currently compiling a *Clavis to the Metrical Homilies of Narsai* that deals, *inter alia*, with the manuscript attestation. For an introduction to Narsai, with additional bibliography, see A. M. Butts, “Narsai’s Life and Work,” in A. M. Butts, K. S. Heal, and R. A. Kitchen (eds.), *Narsai: Rethinking his Work and his World* (Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> For this manuscript, see A. Scher, “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques conservés dans la bibliothèque du Patriarcat chaldéen de Mossoul,” *Revue des Bibliothèques* 17 (1907): 245; Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 280–281; F. G. McLeod, *Narsai’s Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension* (PO 40.1; Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 11. Only the first two (out of four) digits of the date of the manuscript are preserved, ‘15?? of the Greeks’, placing the manuscript between 1188 and 1288. The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (HML) recently digitized the collection of the Chaldean Patriarchate of Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), but unfortunately this manuscript was not among those digitized. To make matters worse, P. T.

ms. Diyarbakır 70 (1328), ff. 302a–310a: In addition to the *mēmra* in question, this manuscript contains thirty-four *mēmre* attributed to Narsai, the previously-mentioned *Mēmra on the Washing of Feet* attributed to Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor, (parts of) a *Mēmra on Narsai, Abraham, and John* attributed to Rabban Surin (with additions by his disciple Rabban Jacob), and a *Sogitā 'On Mary and Magi'*<sup>3</sup>

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Mingana reports, on the basis of a personal communication with the curator of the collection at the Chaldean Patriarchate of Baghdad, that this manuscript was lost in a disaster ('una sciagura') sometime between 1975 and 1990 ('*E saranno benedetti nel tuo seme tutti i popoli della terra*': *Uno studio di Pshitta Gn 22, 15–18 nell'esegesi di Mar Narsai* [Rome: Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Facoltà de Teologia, 2003], 39). Thus, I am entirely dependent on the secondary literature, especially Macomber, for the contents of this manuscript. For Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor and his *Mēmra on the Washing of Feet*, see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur, mit Ausschluss der christlich-palästinensischen Texte* (Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber, 1922), 222. Ibrahim thinks that this *mēmra* is actually attributed to one Rabban Emmanuel, though he is convinced that, regardless of its attribution, the homily is in fact authentic Narsai (I. Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai. Essai d'interprétation* [Ph.D. Diss., Pontificia Studiorum Universitas A. S. Thoma Aq. in Urbe, 1974–1975], 217–219 [s.v., Homélie N. LXXXIV]). The *mēmra*, which remains unedited, is found in the following manuscripts (in roughly chronological order): Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), Chaldean Patriarchate 71 (1188–1288), pp. 343–364; Diyarbakır 70 (1328), ff. 221a–232b; Diyarbakır 71 (14th–16th cent.), ff. 17a–26a; Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A (1868), ff. 233b–242a; London, British Library Oriental 9363B (late 19th cent.), ff. 116a–129a; Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), Chaldean Patriarchate 70C (late 19th cent.), ff. 17a–30a; Vatican, Syriac 588 (1918), ff. 70a–76a.

<sup>3</sup> For this manuscript, see A. Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés à l'archevêché chaldéen de Diarbékir," *JA* 10.1 (1907): 361–362; Macomber, "The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai," 281–282; McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension*, 11; as well as the Appendix at the end of the present article. Digital images of this manuscript are available at HMML (CCM0578): <<https://w3id.org/vhmm/readingRoom/view/502694>>. The *Mēmra on Narsai, Abraham, and John* attributed to Rabban Surin, with additions by his disciple Rabban Jacob, is

ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A (1868), ff. 253b–261a (incomplete): In addition to the *mēmṛā* in question, this manuscript contains thirty *mēmṛē* attributed to Narsai, the previously-mentioned *Mēmṛā on the Washing of Feet* attributed elsewhere but not here to Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor (see fn. 17 below), a *Mēmṛā of the Feast of the Discovery of the Cross* attributed to David the Scholastic, a *Mēmṛā on the Interpretation of the Sacrament of Baptism* by Emmanuel bar Shahhare, *Turgāmē that are Recited before the Gospel-(Reading)* by ‘Abdisho‘ bar Brikha of Nisibis, as well as nine *soḡyāta*.<sup>4</sup>

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partially edited, with a French translation, in A. Scher, *Mar Barḥadbšabba ‘Arbaya. Évêque de Ḥalwan (VI<sup>e</sup> siècle). Cause de la fondation des écoles* (PO 4.4; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1907), 85–88. See also Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 196–197. For the *Sogitā* ‘On Mary and Magi’, see fn. 29 below.

<sup>4</sup> For this manuscript, see A. Scher, “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia, aujourd’hui à la Bibliothèque Vaticane,” *JA* 10.13 (1909): 268; Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 284–285. Digital images of this manuscript are available at DigiVatLib (Borg.sir.83): <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Borg.sir.83](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.sir.83)>. For David the Scholastic, see Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 197. The *mēmṛā* attributed to him, which remains unedited, is found in the following manuscripts (in roughly chronological order): Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), Chaldean Patriarchate 72 (1705), ff. 248a–254a; St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies, Dietrich 6 (18th–early 19th cent.), ff. 284b–292a; Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A (1868), ff. 199b–204b; Alqosh, Notre-Dame des Semences 160 (1879), ff. 255a–261b; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek 57 (1881), ff. 255b–262a; Kirkuk, Chaldean Archdiocese 49 (1881), ff. 243b–249b; London, British Library Oriental 9368 (1887), ff. 250b–256b; Vatican, Syriac 498 (1890), ff. 265b–272b; London, British Library Oriental 5463 (1893), ff. 352b–356b; Teheran, Neesan 1 (1896), pp. 406–411; Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), Chaldean Patriarchate 69 (1896), ff. 284b–291b; San Francisco (1901), 1.598–613; Vatican, Syriac 588 (1918), ff. 56a–59b. See Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 306. A facsimile edition, of the San Francisco manuscript, is available as *Homilies of Mar Narsai* (San Francisco: Patriarchal Press, 1970), 1.598–613. For Emmanuel bar Shahhare, see Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 238–239 and L. Van Rompay, “Emmanuel bar Shahhare,” in *GEDSH*, 143–144. The Syriac of his *mēmṛā* is available, with an Arabic translation, in J. Ishaq, “The Sacrament of Baptism by Emmanuel bar Shahhare,” *Bayn al-*

ms. Vatican, Syriac 588 (1918), ff. 80a–84b (incomplete):  
 In addition to the *mēmra* in question, this manuscript contains seventeen *mēmre* (one repeated) attributed to Narsai as well as the previously-mentioned *mēmre* attributed to Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor and to David the Scholastic.<sup>5</sup>

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*Nabrayn* 11.42 (1983): 33–66 (in Arabic). A FT and study can be found in V. van Vossel, “Quelques remarques en marge du Memra sur le Baptême de Emmanuel Bar Shahhare,” *Questions Liturgiques / Studies in Liturgy* 82 (2001): 128–147. Macomber identifies this text as Emmanuel’s “metrical homily on the Hexameron” (“The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 285). This is, however, incorrect. For ‘Abdisho’ bar Brikha, see Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, 324–325. For the genre of *turgāma*, and ‘Abdisho’o’s contribution to it, see A. Mengozzi and D. Pastore, “The Late East-Syriac Genre of the Turgāmā: Forms, Function, Vitality in the Liturgy,” *Християнський Восток* 8 [14] (2017): 171–186. These *Turgāmē*, along with others, are edited in G. Benjamin, *Turgāmē la-m’aliyut ewangaliyon* ... (Baghdad, 1968). Contra McLeod (*Narsai’s Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension*, 14), the first 26 *mēmre* of this manuscript cannot derive exclusively from ms. Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), Chaldean Patriarchate 72, since the former contains the *Sogita* ‘On the Cherub and the Thief’ after *Memra* 40 ‘On the Resurrection’ whereas the latter does not (see A. M. Butts, “A Misapplication of *eliminatio codicum descriptorum* in the Manuscript Tradition of Narsai [d. c.500],” *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies Bulletin* 5.2 [2019]: 77–100).

<sup>5</sup> For this manuscript, see A. van Lantschoot, *Inventaire des manuscrits syriaques des fonds Vatican (490–631)*, *Barberini Oriental et Neofiti* (Studi e Testi 243; Rome: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1965), 115–116; Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 281–282. Digital images of this manuscript are available at DigiVatLib (Vat.sir.588): <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.sir.588](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.588)>. Macomber claims that ff. 69b–70a also contain the *mēmra* in question, but this is incorrect. As is indicated by a scribal note in the margin of f. 69b, ff. 69b–70a comes from *Memra* 27 ‘On the Parable of the Ten Virgins’. This was correctly relayed by van Lantschoot (*Inventaire des manuscrits syriaques des fonds Vatican [490–631]*, *Barberini Oriental et Neofiti*, 115). Macomber, however, mistakenly identified this material as coming from the *mēmra* in question, even though he was aware of the scribal note, writing “On f. 69b someone has written, erroneously in the margin, the *incipit* of the 27th *memra*, presumably with the intent of identifying the incomplete fragment, but the *explicit* on the

Macomber, who personally consulted all four of these manuscripts, attributes the homily in question to ‘an otherwise unknown Šlibazka’.<sup>6</sup> In his unpublished dissertation, Ibrahim questions Macomber’s analysis.<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim suggests—correctly as I will argue below—that what Macomber read as a personal name Šlibazka is actually part of the title of the homily. Ibrahim also proposes—again correctly, as we will see—that the latter component in the collocation is not the perfect verb *ṣkā* ‘it has been victorious; it has conquered’ (ܣܟܐ) but the adjectival form *ṣakkāyā* ‘victorious’ (ܣܟܟܝܐ), resulting in *Šlibā ṣakkāyā* ‘victorious cross’ (ܣܠܒܐ ܣܟܟܝܐ). Ibrahim is, however, less certain about how to account for *mār(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝܐ), which precedes the collocation in some manuscripts. He writes: ‘Il peut y avoir une erreur de copiste, ou peut-être certaines régions donnaient-elles à la sainte croix (Sliwa zakkaya) la particule ‘Mar’ comme pour les saints’.<sup>8</sup> While the latter suggestion is theoretically possible, it is ultimately unlikely in my opinion.<sup>9</sup> Regardless,

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following page is that of the *memra* of Šlibazka” (Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 292 fn. 2). Again, this is simply incorrect: This text comes from the end of *Mēmra* 27 ‘On the Parable of the Ten Virgins’ as the scribe correctly indicated. The text starts at A. Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina* (Mosul: Typis Fratrum Praedicatorum, 1905), 256, ln. 12, and it continues onto the next page where the *mēmra* concludes. This error is not inconsequential since Macomber uses it to claim mistakenly that the scribe of this manuscript knew the *mēmra* in question from two different sources.

<sup>6</sup> Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 281, see also 282, 284, 291, 306.

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai*, 219–222 (s.v., Homélie N. LXXXV).

<sup>8</sup> Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai*, 220.

<sup>9</sup> The word *mār(y)* is rarely used as an honorific for non-human entities, including the cross. This, for instance, occurs in the heading of Narsai’s *Memra* 54 ‘On the Finding of the Cross’: ܥܠ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܐܫܚܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܣܠܒܐ ܩܕܕܝܫܐ ‘On the feast of the finding of *mār(y)* holy cross’ (ܥܠ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܥܫܪܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܣܠܒܐ ܩܕܕܝܫܐ) in ms. London, British Library Oriental 5463 (1893), f. 194a and in ms. Teheran, Neesan 1 (1896), p. 225. Both of these manuscripts probably ultimately derive from ms. Urmia 34 (1715) (thus Macomber,

Ibrahim is, I think, on the right track. In the present article, I introduce hitherto-neglected manuscript evidence to argue, in line with Ibrahim and against Macomber, that the *mēmra* in question is not attributed to an otherwise unknown Šlibazka, but rather that in its earliest recoverable form this collocation is part of the title of a *mēmra* that is implicitly attributed to Narsai.

### THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

The oldest manuscript attesting the *mēmra* in question, which is also the oldest known manuscript attesting Narsai, is ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71 (1188–1288). Unfortunately, this manuscript is no longer accessible, and it is in fact likely lost forever.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is impossible to know for certain what the heading of the *mēmra* in question was in this manuscript.<sup>11</sup>

The remaining three manuscripts fall into two groups. The two Vatican manuscripts, mss. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A and Vatican, Syriac 588, attest the heading ‘*mēmra* of *mār(y)* *Šlibā ʕakēkayā* (“victorious cross”)’ (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܫܠܒܐ ܕܕܥܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ). For the full context, ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A introduces the *mēmra* in question as follows:

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܫܠܒܐ ܕܕܥܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

Again, in the strength of our praise-worthy God, we write the *mēmra* of *mār(y)* *Šlibā ʕakēkayā* (‘victorious cross’) (ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A, f. 253b)

A slightly shorter heading is found in ms. Vatican, Syriac 588:

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“The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 280, 286–287 and followed by others), and so this use of *mār(y)* could go back to this manuscript, though that it is not necessarily the case.

<sup>10</sup> See fn. 2 above.

<sup>11</sup> See further fn. 23 below.

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܫܠܒܐ ܕܕܥܠܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ

Again, *mēmra* of *mār(y) Šlibā ʔakkāyā* ('victorious cross')  
(ms. Vatican, Syriac 588, f. 80a)

I stress that there is no doubt about the reading *ʔakkāyā* (ܕܥܠܝܐ), clearly with *yod*, in both manuscripts. A different heading is found in ms. Diyarbakır 70:

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ

Again, *mēmra* of the feast of the victorious cross (ms.  
Diyarbakır 70, f. 302a)

Again, there is no doubt about the reading ܕܥܠܝܐ (*ʔakkāyā*). In addition, instead of *mār(y)* 'Lord' (ܡܪܝܢ), which is found in the two Vatican manuscripts, ms. Diyarbakır 70 attests ܕܥܠܝܐ (*ʔda* 'feast' (ܕܥܠܝܐ)). Neither Macomber, who personally consulted ms. Diyarbakır 70, nor Ibrahim, who does not seem to have seen the manuscript, note this reading, but it is absolutely certain as can be seen in Figure 1.





Figure 1

Ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 302a (= Turkey, Mardin, Chaldean Cathedral 60.19 = HMML Pr. No. CCM 00578). Photo courtesy of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Saint John's University, Minnesota, USA. Published with permission of the Chaldean Cathedral Mardin. All rights reserved.

**THE READING *ZAKKĀYĀ* ‘VICTORIOUS’ (ܙܟܝܐ) VERSUS *ZKĀ* ‘IT HAS BEEN VICTORIOUS’ (ܙܟܝܐ)**

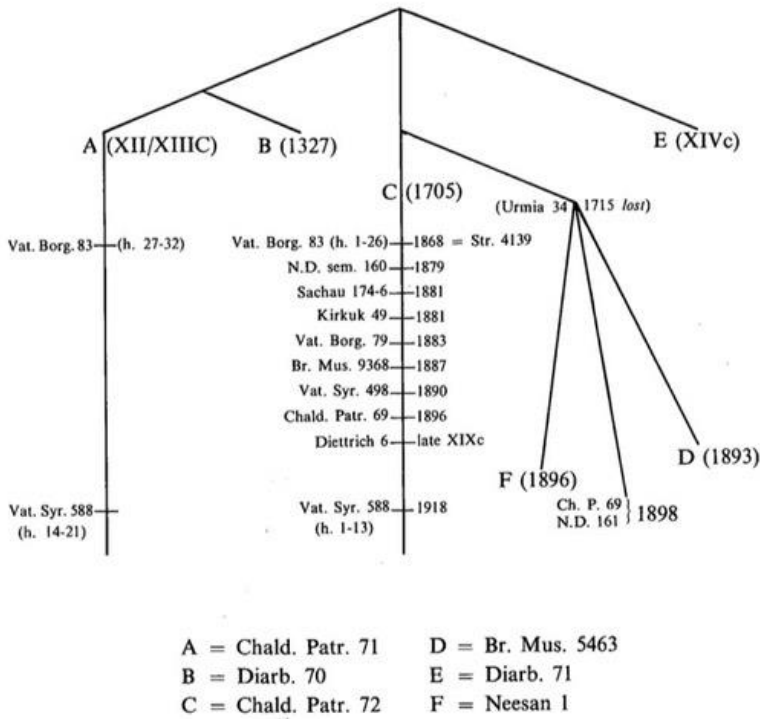
As already explained above, Macomber read *zka* ‘it has been victorious’ (ܙܟܝܐ), but Ibrahim questioned Macomber proposing that *zakkāyā* ‘victorious’ (ܙܟܝܐ) is more likely.<sup>12</sup> As far as I can tell, however, Ibrahim did not himself consult the manuscripts. Thus, it is striking that his proposal for *zakkāyā* ‘victorious’ (ܙܟܝܐ) finds unanimous support in the three surviving manuscripts: ms. Diyarbakır 70, ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A, and ms. Vatican, Syriac 588.

In addition, a stemmatic argument can be made that ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71 also read *zakkāyā* ‘victorious’ (ܙܟܝܐ). Our understanding of the stemmatic relationship between the more than two dozen manuscripts attesting *mēmre* by Narsai admittedly remains in its infancy. Nevertheless, in the most thorough analysis to date, McLeod proposes the stemma in Figure 2:<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Macomber, “The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 281, see also 282, 284, 291, 306 and Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai*, 220.

<sup>13</sup> For criticism of the central branch, headed by ms. Baghdad (*olim* Mosul), Chaldean Patriarchate 72 (1705) (= McLeod’s C), see Butts, “A Misapplication of *eliminatio codicum descriptorum* in the Manuscript Tradition of Narsai (d. c.500).”

**Figure 2**

Manuscript stemma from McLeod, *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension*, 18.

It is the left-most node that is of importance to us here. If this stemma is correct, then any reading shared in common by ms. Diyarbakır 70 (= McLeod's B), on the one hand, and ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A as well as ms. Vatican, Syriac 588, on the other hand, must by stemmatic deduction also be found in ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71 (= McLeod's A).<sup>14</sup> Thus, if McLeod's stemmatic analysis of these four manuscripts is

<sup>14</sup> Assuming of course that there is no contamination, drift, etc., which we have no reason to suspect here.

correct, then ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71 must also have read *zakkāyā* ‘victorious’ (ܙܟܝܐ).

Regardless, however, of whether or not one accepts the stemmatic argument, it should be stressed that all the extant manuscripts read *zakkāyā* ‘victorious’ (ܙܟܝܐ). The full import of this will become clear below, but for now it is enough to note that this reading corroborates Ibrahim’s contention that Macomber’s *zēkā* ‘it has been victorious; it has conquered’ (ܙܟܐ) is a misreading. This is important since, though the incorrect reading *šlibā-zēkā* could be a personal name, the same is not the case for the correct reading *šlibā zakkāyā*, which cannot be a personal name.<sup>15</sup> In fact, it is the unlikelihood of *šlibā zakkāyā* being a personal name that led Ibrahim to claim that either *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) here is an honorific title for the cross, which as stated above I think is less likely, or that *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) is a scribal error—a more likely proposition and one to which I now turn.

### THE READING ‘Ē(?)DĀ ‘FEAST’ (ܝܠܕܝܢܐ) VERSUS MAR(Y) ‘LORD’ (ܡܪܝ)

As already mentioned, Ibrahim proposed that *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) in the heading of the homily in question was possibly a scribal error (‘Il peut y avoir une erreur de copiste...’). He seems, however, to have been unaware of the reading ‘ē(?)dā ‘feast’ (ܝܠܕܝܢܐ) in ms. Diyarbakır 70. In this section, I argue that this hitherto-neglected manuscript evidence is decisive in showing that *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) is in fact a scribal error, as Ibrahim previously proposed.

Considering ‘ē(?)dā ‘feast’ (ܝܠܕܝܢܐ) in ms. Diyarbakır 70 versus *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) in the two Vatican manuscripts, we have, I suggest, a scribal error due to graphic similarity: The East-

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<sup>15</sup> For *šlibā-zēkā* as a personal name, see R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879–1901), 3405. It should be noted that, in contrast, *šlibā zakkāyā* is not recorded there as a personal name.

Syriac *ʿayn* followed by *ʾālap* (ܐܠܦ) of the former correspond to the *mim* (ܡ) of the latter; *dālat* (ܕ) and *rēš* (ܪ) are distinguished from one another only by the placement of the diacritical point; and the difference between the final *ʾālap* and *yod* is likely a deliberate intervention by the scribe to make sense out of how he read the first part of the word.<sup>16</sup> Given that a graphic error seems all but certain, the question becomes: Which reading did the archetype have? Is it *ʿē(?)dā* ‘feast’ (ܐܕܐ) or *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ)? The evidence, I think, supports reconstructing *ʿē(?)dā* ‘feast’ (ܐܕܐ) in the archetype.

The title of ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A is peculiar in that it only includes the name of the author. This results in a heading that lacks the title of the *mēmra*. Contrast this with the other case in the same manuscript where an author other than Narsai is named:<sup>17</sup>

ܐܡܬ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ  
ܡܠܟܐ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ

Again, *mēmra* of the feast of the discovery of the cross, which was composed by David the Scholastic, the great-of-light, who was teacher at Kpar ‘Azzā (ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A, f. 199b)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The latter will also obtain for the presence or absence of the *dālat* (ܕ) before *šlibā* ‘cross’ (ܫܠܒܐ): That is, whether the scribe read *ʿē(?)dā* ‘feast’ (ܐܕܐ) or *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) governed whether or not he followed with *dālat* (ܕ).

<sup>17</sup> Note that ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A also contains the *Mēmra on the Washing of Feet* by Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor (for which, see fn. 2 above), but it is not attributed to Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor in this manuscript. The heading simply reads: ܐܡܬ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* on the washing of feet for Thursday’ (ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A, f. 233b). Thus, the scribe of ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A seems to attribute this *mēmra* implicitly to Narsai. The same occurs in ms. Diyarbakır 70, where, however, a later scribe has changed the attribution to Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor (see fn. 21 below).

<sup>18</sup> For this author and text, see fn. 4 above.

٥٨ تسك لکس هلیجده حاتس ملامتده دمقده یکتده وحده

۵۵۸ مملو مملو مملو مملو مملو

אם מלמדין בלשון חזקתא דאורייתא

٥٨ مزمزم دجس دمذ

<sup>19</sup> See the Appendix below for the text of all the headings.

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of *mār(y)* John (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 61b)

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of Peter and Paul (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 71a)

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of *mār(y)* Stephen (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 91b)

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of ‘one person’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 105a)

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of the Sunday that introduces the salvific fast (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 119b)

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of the second Sunday of the fast (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 127b)

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of the great Sunday of the resurrection (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 257a)

ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ ܕܡܪܝܝܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of the day of the feast of the ascension of our Lord (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 288b)

ܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ

Again, *mēmṛā* of the Sunday of Pentecost<sup>20</sup> (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 295a)

Two conclusions can be drawn from this: First, the scribe of ms. Diyarbakır 70 implicitly attributes the *mēmṛā* in question to Narsai.<sup>21</sup> Second, and more pertinent to the point that I am making here, the heading of the *mēmṛā* in question conforms to the structure of the other headings in this manuscript. The consistency of the pattern in ms. Diyarbakır 70 suggests that this manuscript preserves the archetypal reading in ʿē(?)*dā* ‘feast’ (ܡܢܝܢ), inversely correlating with the incongruity of the reading *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝܢ), which is found in ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A—an incongruity that suggests that this is not the archetypal reading.

<sup>20</sup> The *syāmē* on this word in the Syriac is not marking the plural but the final *ē* vowel, reflecting πεντηκοστή. See A. M. Butts, “The Use of *syāmē* as a Phonological Marker in Syriac,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 18 (2015): 93–109.

<sup>21</sup> An interesting comparison can be made with the *Mēmṛā on the Washing of Feet*, which occurs on ff. 221a–232b of this manuscript and which is explicitly attributed in other manuscripts to Rabban Gabriel of Shirzor (see fn. 2 above for a full listing of the known manuscripts). In the main body of ms. Diyarbakır 70, this homily is introduced as follows: ܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ‘Again, *mēmṛā* on washing the feet, and it is especially useful for Passover’. In the margin, there is a note further specifying the author: ܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ‘It is the work of Rabban Gabriel from Bet ‘Ābē’. Thus, the original scribe of ms. Diyarbakır 70 seems to attribute the *Mēmṛā on the Washing of Feet* implicitly to Narsai (this is also the case in ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A; see fn. 17 above). The scribe of the marginal note, however, changed the attribution from implicitly Narsai to explicitly Rabban Gabriel from Bet ‘Ābē. This contrasts with the *mēmṛā* in question: With the *mēmṛā* in question, no later scribe has changed the implicit attribution to Narsai by adding a scribal note or by other means.



That the reading ܥ(?)ܕܐ ‘feast’ (ܥܕܐ) is to be preferred to *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) is corroborated by *zakēkayā* ‘victorious’ (ܙܟܝܬܐ), which, it will be recalled, is attested in all of the available manuscripts and which, as Ibrahim already noted, Macomber misread as *zēkā* ‘it has been victorious; it has conquered’ (ܙܟܐ). As stated above, *Ṣlibā zakēkayā* is not a personal name. Thus, it is unlikely that *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ), which is an honorific used primarily with personal names, goes back to the earliest recoverable archetype. In contrast, there is no such problem with the reading ܥ(?)ܕܐ ‘feast’ (ܥܕܐ) in ms. Diyarbakır 70: The collocation ܥ(?)ܕܐ ܕܐܫܠܒܐ ܙܟܝܬܐ ‘Feast of the victorious cross’ (ܥܕܐ ܕܥܝܠܒܐ ܙܟܝܬܐ) makes perfect sense. This is where it is important to stress that even ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A and ms. Vatican, Syriac 588 read *zakēkayā* ‘victorious’ (ܙܟܝܬܐ): This is a residual trace of an earlier stage of this branch of the manuscript tradition in which it also did not have a personal name introduced by *mar(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) but rather a title beginning with ܥ(?)ܕܐ ‘feast’ (ܥܕܐ), just as in ms. Diyarbakır 70.

There is one final argument to make against understanding *Ṣlibā zakēkayā* as the author of the homily, and it is based on the content of the homily: The homily deals extensively and exclusively with the cross.<sup>22</sup> It would of course make sense for

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<sup>22</sup> See the summary in Ibrahim, *La doctrine christologique de Narsai*, 220–221. It should be noted that two other *mēmra* dealing with the cross are attributed to Narsai in the manuscript tradition: *Mēmra 54 ‘On the Finding of the Cross’* (ed. Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 2.114–30 [no. 30] and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2.414–439; see also L. Abramowski, “Narsai [ca. 415?–502], Hom. LIV [30] Mingana II, 114–130: ‘Unser König Jesus’, der ‘gekreuzigte Mann,’” in P. Gemeinhardt and U. Kühneweg [eds.], *Patristica et Oecumenica. Festschrift für Wolfgang A. Bienert zum 65. Geburtstag* [Marburger Theologische Studien 85; Marburg: Elwert, 2004], 157–166; K. B. Gibson, “An Early Syriac Apologia Crucis: *Mēmra 54 ‘On the Finding of the Holy Cross’*,” in Butts, Heal, and Kitchen, *Narsai: Rethinking his Work and his World*) and *Mēmra 55 ‘On the Bronze Serpent’* (ed. *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2.439–455 and [with ET] J. Frishman, *The Ways and Means of the Divine Economy: An Edition, Translation and Study of Six Biblical Homilies by Narsai* [Ph.D. Diss.,

a homily that deals with the cross to be entitled *mēmṛā d'ē(?)dā dašlibā ʒakkāyā* ‘*mēmṛā* of the feast of the victorious cross’ (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܝܕܐ ܕܕܐܫܠܒܐ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ). The alternative is far less likely: A homily on the topic of the cross could of course be written by someone named ‘Victorious Cross’, but the law of parsimony (i.e., Occam’s razor) suggests that this is not the case.

## CONCLUSION

To summarize, I propose that in the earliest recoverable archetype the *mēmṛā* in question was entitled *mēmṛā d'ē(?)dā dašlibā ʒakkāyā* ‘*mēmṛā* of the feast of the victorious cross’ (ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܝܕܐ ܕܕܐܫܠܒܐ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ). This is preserved unaltered in ms. Diyarbakır 70. In a different branch of the transmission, however, the word *ē(?)dā* ‘feast’ (ܥܝܕܐ) became *mār(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) through a scribal error. This erroneous *mār(y)* ‘Lord’ (ܡܪܝ) is found in ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A and ms. Vatican, Syriac 588.<sup>23</sup> Macomber then exacerbated the problem by misreading *ʒakkāyā* ‘victorious’ (ܝܚܝܬܐ) as *ʒkā* ‘it has been victorious; it has conquered’ (ܝܚܝܬܐ). In doing so, he completed the change from what was originally a title *ē(?)dā dašlibā ʒakkāyā* ‘the feast of the victorious cross’ (ܥܝܕܐ ܕܕܐܫܠܒܐ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ ܕܝܚܝܬܐ) into

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Universiteit Leiden, 1992], 1.109-122). For the broader context, see K. Bryant, *Festal Apologetics: Syriac Treatises for the Feast of the Discovery of the Cross* (D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Again, it is impossible to know for certain what ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71—the oldest manuscript known to attest the homily in question—read here, but this does not affect my argument. The only matter at stake with the reading of ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71 is whether the scribal error whereby <ʿd> (ܥܝܕܐ) became <mary> (ܡܪܝ) occurred prior to the copying of ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71, in which case it would serve as an *error coniunctivus* uniting ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71, ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A, and ms. Vatican, Syriac 588, or whether the scribal error occurred between ms. Chaldean Patriarchate 71 and ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A, in which case it would serve as an *error separativus* between the two manuscripts as well as an *error coniunctivus* uniting ms. Vatican, Borgia Syriac 83A and ms. Vatican, Syriac 588.

a faux person, his ‘otherwise unknown Šlibazka’. There is little doubt that the reading of ms. Diyarbakır 70 is to be preferred in this case. Thus, this *mēmra* of ‘The Feast of the Victorious Cross’ should be added to those attributed to Narsai in the manuscript tradition.<sup>24</sup>

#### APPENDIX: EXTANT HEADINGS FOR ALL *MĒMRĒ* IN MS. DIYARBAKIR 70

The following list provides the text of all the extant headings in ms. Diyarbakır 70 so that the reader has the full set of data at hand.<sup>25</sup> For each of the headings listed, I provide in the accompanying footnote the following information: the standard identification number of the *mēmra*, as established in A. Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*; a short title, which is generally based on S. P. Brock, “A Guide to Narsai’s Homilies,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 12 (2009): 21–40, though there is an occasional departure; and publication details (when relevant). All of this information is systematized in the *Clavis* mentioned in fn. 1 above though without the headings.

1. **ܐܠܗ ܣܠܬ ܕܡܥܪܐ ܥܡܕ ܡܥܬܝܐ ܠܡܚܒܬܐ ܚܒܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ (!)**  
**ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ**  
**ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ ܕܡܥܬܐ**  
 ❖ ‘By the power of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we begin to write  
 the book of *mēmra* of the (divine) economy that were composed

<sup>24</sup> Ibrahim (*La doctrine christologique de Narsai*, 219–222) maintains that the *mēmra* is authentic Narsai, and my admittedly precursory survey of the style and word choice would not rule this out. Nevertheless, final judgement on its authenticity must await further research, both on this *mēmra* in particular and the Narsai corpus more broadly.

<sup>25</sup> Macomber (“The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai”) references this manuscript by quire number plus folio within the quire. This has been updated to folio numbers based on the digital foliation of HMML. For instance, Macomber’s 2:9b is my f. 17b, etc.

by *mār(y)* Narsai, priest and teacher, tongue of the East and friend of the West, on the revelation of the prophets. First. (*Mēmra*) of the first Sunday, of annunciation’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 1a)<sup>26</sup>

2. ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ‘Again, another (*mēmra*) of annunciation on the divine revelations that came about to the blessed Abraham’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 17b)<sup>27</sup>

3. ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* on the birth of our Lord from the holy one’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 33b)<sup>28</sup>

4. ܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܡܡܪܐ ‘Again, *sogitā* of that *mēmra*’<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Memrā* 2 ‘On Revelations to Patriarchs and Prophets (II)’, edited G. Cardahi, *Liber thesauri de arte poetica Syrorum* (Rome, 1875), 47-51 (excerpt); Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.29-56 (no. 2); *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.39-77.

<sup>27</sup> *Memrā* 1 ‘On Revelations to Patriarchs and Prophets (I)’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.1–28 (no. 1) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.1–39.

<sup>28</sup> *Memrā* 4 ‘On the Nativity’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.77–98 and (with ET) McLeod, *Narsai’s Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension*, 36–69 (no. 1).

<sup>29</sup> *Sogitā* ‘On Mary and Magi’. See T. J. Lamy, *Sancti Ephraem Syri hymni et sermones* (Malines: H. Dessain, 1882–1902), 1, col. 129–144 (Syr. with LT); F. Feldmann, *Syrische Wechsellieder von Narses. Ein Beitrag zur altchristlichen syrischen Hymnologie, nach einer Handschrift der Königlichen Bibliothek in Berlin* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1896), 2–6 (Syr.), 6–11 (GT); J. Gwynn, “Selections Translated into English from the Hymns and Homilies of Ephraim the Syrian, and from the Demonstrations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage,” in *NPNF*, vol. 13, part 2, 287–289 (ET); E. Manna, *Morceaux choisis de littérature araméenne* (Mosul: Imprimerie des pères dominicains, 1901), 1.216–222 (Syr.); Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 2.372–377 (Syr.); E. Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Hymnen de Nativitate (Epiphania)* (CSCO 186–187; Louvain: Peeters, 1959), 209–216 (Syr.), 195–200 (GT); S. P. Brock, *Sughyotho Mgabyotho* (Holland: Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of

5. ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܡܡܪܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* of *mārt(y)* Mary, the holy virgin’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 42b)<sup>30</sup>
6. ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* of the appearance of our Lord’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 52b)<sup>31</sup>
7. ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* of *mār(y)* John’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 61b)<sup>32</sup>
8. ܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* of Peter and Paul’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 71a)<sup>33</sup>

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Central Europe, 1982), no. 8 (Syr.); R. Beshara, *Mary, Ship of Treasures* (USA: Diocese of St. Maron, 1988), 85–88 (ET); S. P. Brock, *Bride of Light. Hymns on Mary from the Syriac Churches* (Moran Etho 6; Kerala: SEERI, 1994), 125–132 (ET); S. P. Brock, “Mary and the Angel, and Other Syriac Dialogue Poems,” *Marianum* 68 (2006): 139–147 (ET); S. P. Brock, *The Bride of Light: Hymns on Mary from the Syriac Churches* (Moran Etho 6; Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2010), 139–145 (ET); S. P. Brock, *Mary and Joseph, and Other Dialogue Poems on Mary* (TeCLA 8; Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2011), 49–68 (Syr. with ET); S. P. Brock, *Treasure-House of Mysteries: Explorations of the Sacred Text through Poetry in the Syriac Tradition* (PPS 45; Yonkers: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2012), 167–176 (ET).

<sup>30</sup> *Mēmra* 5 ‘On Mary’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.104–128.

<sup>31</sup> *Mēmra* 6 ‘On Epiphany’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.134–157 and (with ET) McLeod, *Narsai’s Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension*, 70–105 (no. 2).

<sup>32</sup> *Mēmra* 7 ‘On John the Baptist’, edited H. Gismondi, *Linguae Syriacae Grammatica* (2nd ed.; Beirut, 1900), 103–110 (selection) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.163–185.

<sup>33</sup> *Mēmra* 8 ‘On Peter and Paul’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.68–89 (no. 4) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.191–220. GT in P. Krüger, “Ein Missionsdokument aus frühchristlicher Zeit. Deutung und Übersetzung des Sermo de memoria Petri et Pauli des Narsai,” *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft* 42 (1958): 271–291.

9. ܐܘܬܐܪ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܠܬܐ ܐܘܬܐܪ ‘Again, *mēmra* on the apostles’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 83a)<sup>34</sup>

10. ܐܘܬܐܪ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܐܘܬܐܪ ‘Again, *mēmra* of *mār(y)* Stephen’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 91b)<sup>35</sup>

11. Acephalous<sup>36</sup>

12. ܐܘܬܐܪ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܬܐ ܐܘܬܐܪ ‘Again, *mēmra* of “one person”’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 105a)<sup>37</sup>

13. ܐܘܬܐܪ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܥܬܐ ܐܘܬܐܪ ‘Again, another (*mēmra*) on the departed and the resurrection’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 110b)<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Memrā 9 ‘On the Four Evangelists’*, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.220–241.

<sup>35</sup> *Memrā 10 ‘On Stephen’* (incomplete), edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.90–99 (no. 5) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.241–253.

<sup>36</sup> Rabban Surin, *Mēmra on Narsai, Abraham, and John* (incomplete), with addition by Rabban Jacob, disciple of Rabban Surin; for which, see fn. 3 above. Macomber (“The Manuscripts of the Metrical Homilies of Narsai,” 296) claims that after *Mēmra 10 ‘On Stephen’*, the end of which is missing, and before the acephalous *Mēmra on Narsai, Abraham, and John* by Rabban Surin there is part of Narsai’s *Memrā 11 ‘On the Three Doctors’* (edited [with FT] J. P. P. Martin, “Homélie de Narses sur les trois docteurs nestoriens,” *JA* 9.14 [1899]: 446–493 and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.253–287). This, however, seems to be incorrect. Though the text here has some similarities with Narsai’s *Mēmra 11 ‘On the Three Doctors’*, it is not that text. Rather, on f. 97a, Rabban Surin’s *Mēmra on Narsai, Abraham, and John* already seems to begin, though acephalously, and the rubrics on ff. 102b–103a indicate the start of the additions by his disciple Rabban Jacob. Narsai’s *Memrā 11 ‘On the Three Doctors’* is not found in ms. Diyarbakır 70.

<sup>37</sup> *Memrā 17 ‘For Any Saints Day’*, unedited.

<sup>38</sup> *Mēmra 18 ‘On the Departed and the Resurrection’*, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.743–764.

14. ܐܫܬ ܡܠܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* of the Sunday that introduces the salvific fast’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 119b)<sup>39</sup>

15. ܐܫܬ ܡܠܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* of the second Sunday of the fast’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 127b)<sup>40</sup>

16. ܐܫܬ ܡܠܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ‘(Again, *mēmra*) of the third Sunday of the fast’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 136a)<sup>41</sup>

17. ܐܫܬ ܡܠܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ‘(Again, *mēmra*) of the fourth Sunday of the fast’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 144b)<sup>42</sup>

18. ܐܫܬ ܡܠܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ‘Again, of the same, (*mēmra*) of the fifth Sunday of the fast’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 153a)<sup>43</sup>

19. ܐܫܬ ܡܠܟܝܢ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ܕܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܥܬܝܬܐ ‘(Again, *mēmra*) of the sixth Sunday of the fast, of the virgins’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 165b)<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Mēmra* 20 ‘On Lent I’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.167–181 (no. 10) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.292–312.

<sup>40</sup> *Mēmra* 21 ‘On the Temptation of Christ’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.312–334.

<sup>41</sup> *Mēmra* 23 ‘On Lent III’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.181–94 (no. 11).

<sup>42</sup> *Mēmra* 24 ‘On Lent IV’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.195–209 (no. 12) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2.679–699.

<sup>43</sup> *Mēmra* 26 ‘On Lent V’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.223–143 (no. 14).

<sup>44</sup> *Mēmra* 27 ‘On the Parable of the Ten Virgins’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.243–56 (no. 15), *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 699–716, and (with FT) E. P. Siman, *Narsai. Cinq homélies sur les paraboles évangéliques* (Paris: Cariscript, 1984), 6–22. It also in M. Nin, *Narsai di Edessa. L’Olio della misericordia* (Testi dei Padri della Chiesa 29; Magnano: Monastero di Bose, Edizioni Qiqajon, 1997). See also M. Nin, “L’omelia sulle dieci vergini (Mt 25,1–13) di Narsai di Edessa,” in E. Vergani and S. Chialà (eds.), *Storia, cristologia e tradizioni della Chiesa Siro-orientale. Atti del 3° Incontro*

20. ܐܝܬܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ‘Again, of the same, (*mēmra*) of Lazarus’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 173b)<sup>45</sup>

21. ܐܝܬܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ‘(Again, *mēmra*) of the Sunday of hosannas’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 183a)<sup>46</sup>

22. ܐܝܬܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ‘Again, another *mēmra* of hosannas’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 191a)<sup>47</sup>

23. ܐܝܬܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ‘(Again, *mēmra*) of Monday after hosannas’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 196a)<sup>48</sup>

24. ܐܝܬܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ܕܠܐܙܪܐ ‘(Again, *mēmra*) of Tuesday, of the Canaanite woman’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 204a)<sup>49</sup>

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*sull'Oriente Cristiano di tradizione siriana* (Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 14 maggio 2004) (Ecumenismo e dialogo; Milan: Centro Ambrosiano, 2006), 115–129 and D. Becerra, “Exegesis, Askesis, and Identity: Narsai’s *Mēmra* on the Parable of the Ten Virgins,” in Butts, Heal, and Kitchen, *Narsai: Rethinking his Work and his World*.

<sup>45</sup> *Mēmra* 28 ‘On the Raising of Lazarus’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.341–363.

<sup>46</sup> *Mēmra* 31 ‘Against the Jews’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.299–312 (no. 18) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.363–382. See also J. Frishman, “Narsai’s Homily for the Palm Festival – Against the Jews: For the Palm Festival or against the Jews?,” in H. J. W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg, and G. J. Reinink (eds.), *IV Symposium Syriacum, 1984. Literary Genres in Syriac Literature* (Groningen – Oosterbesselen 10–12 September) (OCA 229; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1987), 217–229.

<sup>47</sup> *Mēmra* 29 ‘On Palm Sunday’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.382–393.

<sup>48</sup> *Mēmra* 33 ‘On the Prodigal Son’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2.318–336 and (with FT) Siman, *Narsai. Cinq homélies sur les paraboles évangéliques*, 23–29. See also C. E. Morrison, “The Faculty of Discernment in Narsai,” in Butts, Heal, and Kitchen, *Narsai: Rethinking his Work and his World*.

<sup>49</sup> *Mēmra* 32 ‘On the Canaanite Woman’, edited (with ET) E. G. Walsh, *Sanctifying Boldness: New Testament Women in Narsai, Jacob of Serugh, and Romanos Melodos* (Ph.D. Diss., Duke University, 2019), 292–332. See also eadem, “‘How the Weak Rib Prevailed!’: Eve and the Canaanite Woman in the



- <sup>53</sup> *Memra 37 'On the Repentant Thief'*, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.327–340 (no. 20) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.438–457.

29. **ܐܘܬܐܪ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ** ‘Again, *mēmra* on the mysteries of the Church and on baptism’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 248b)<sup>54</sup>

30. **ܐܘܬܐܪ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ** ‘Again, *mēmra* of the great Sunday of the resurrection’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 257a)<sup>55</sup>

31. **ܐܘܬܐܪ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ** ‘Again, *mēmra* of Friday, of the confessors’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 263b)<sup>56</sup>

32. **ܐܘܬܐܪ ܡܡܪܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ** ‘Again, *mēmra* on the revelation of Christ our Lord<sup>57</sup> and on the condition<sup>58</sup> of the age to come, especially fitting for the last Sunday and for the commemoration of the departed’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 373a)<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Mēmra* 38 ‘On Mysteries and Baptism’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 1.341–356 (no. 21) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.457–479. ET in R. H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (TSt 8.1; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 46–61; FT in P. Brouwers, “Premier poème de Narsai sur le baptême (Memra 21),” *MUSJ* 41 (1965): 177–207. See also E. C. Ratcliff, “A Note on the Anaphoras Described in the Liturgical Homilies of Narsai,” in J. N. Birdsall and R. W. Thomson (eds.), *Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of Robert Pierce Casey* (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 235–249 and J. W. Childers, “In Search of Jesus: Performative Christology in Narsai’s *Mēmra* on Baptism,” in Butts, Heal, and Kitchen, *Narsai: Rethinking his Work and his World*.

<sup>55</sup> *Mēmra* 40 ‘On the Resurrection’, edited *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.479–495 and (with ET) McLeod, *Narsai’s Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension*, 136–161 (no. 4).

<sup>56</sup> *Mēmra* 41 ‘On the Confessors’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 2.28–45 (no. 24) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 1.495–520.

<sup>57</sup> The manuscript reads: ‘of Christ, of our Lord’.

<sup>58</sup> Reading **ܕܝܠܕܐ**.

<sup>59</sup> *Mēmra* 52 ‘On the Second Coming’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 2.1–28 (no. 23) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2.539–578. LT in E. Delly, “Le 23<sup>e</sup> ‘Memra’ de Narsai,” *Divinitas* 3 (1959): 514–553.

- <sup>64</sup> *Memra 58 'On Isaiah's Vision'*, edited *Ktabona d-Partute* (Urmia, 1898), 235–250; Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 2.131–44 (no. 31); and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2.471–490. ET in T. Kuzhuppil, *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah: A Theological Study of Narsai's Interpretation of Isaiah 6* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2006), 171–189.

38. ܐܬܬ ܡܠܟܬܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܐ ܕܥܝܪܐܢܐ (!) ܥܝܪܐܢܐ ܥܝܪܐܢܐ ܥܝܪܐܢܐ ‘Again, *mēmra* of the fourth Sunday, on<sup>65</sup> the Church and on the priesthood’ (ms. Diyarbakır 70, f. 325a)<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The manuscript reads ‘of’.

<sup>66</sup> *Mēmra* 59 ‘On the Church and the Priesthood’, edited Mingana, *Narsai Doctoris Syri Homiliae et Carmina*, 2.144–56 (no. 32) and *Homilies of Mar Narsai*, 2.505–522. ET in Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, 62–74. See also B. D. Spinks, “A Note on the Anaphora Outlined in Narsai’s Homily XXXII,” *JTS* ns 31:1 (1980): 82–93.