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EASTERN CHRISTIAN STUDIES 20

# SYRIAC ENCOUNTERS

Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium  
Duke University, 26-29 June 2011

Edited by  
Maria Doerfler, Emanuel Fiano  
and Kyle Smith



PEETERS

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THE BOOK OF KHAMIS BAR QARDAḤE:  
HISTORY OF THE TEXT, GENRES, AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

Alessandro MENGOZZI\*

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

George Percy Badger, an Anglican missionary to the Church of the East in the mid-nineteenth century, lists the (*Book of*) *Khamis* among the service books of the ‘Nestorians’ and describes it as follows:

‘The KHAMEES, a collection of hymns chiefly in exposition of the Life, Parables, and Miracles, of the SAVIOUR, and on the duty of repentance. The author of the poems lived in the twelfth or thirteenth century, and was the fifth son of his parents, whose cognomen was *Kardâhé*, blacksmiths. Hence he is called *Khâmees bar Kardâhé*.’<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to accept the biographical information inferred from the name *Khamis bar Qardaḥe*: not all Smiths are ‘blacksmiths’ nor are all those bearing the name *Quintus* fifth sons of a Roman family. Badger’s statement that *Khamis bar Qardaḥe* lived in the twelfth or thirteenth century probably derives from his conviction that the *Book of Khamis* and the *Book of Warda* — the other (and probably more famous) collection of late, East-Syriac hymns<sup>2</sup> — must have been composed before the mid-thirteenth century revision of the *Hudrā*. According to Badger, “that they [the books of *Khamis* and *Warda*] were written before the last revision of the *Khudra* is clear, since in that ritual there is a rubrical direction appointing what hymn in the two collections is to be used.”<sup>3</sup> Badger’s argument must, however, remain hypothetical in the absence of a systematic study of the history of the *Hudrā* and its textual transmission.

\* I thank Pier Giorgio Borbone, Emanuela Braidà, Bruno Chiesa, Grigory Kessel, Corrado Martone, Mary McCann Salvatorelli, Marco Moriggi, Fr. Mekhail Nageeb OP, Fabrizio A. Pennacchiotti, Anton Pritula, David Taylor, and Elena Treu for their help and valuable suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> G.P. Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals* (London: Joseph Masters, 1852), 2: 24-25.

<sup>2</sup> See A. Mengozzi, “A Syriac Hymn on the Crusades from a Warda Collection,” *EVO* 33 (2010): 187-203 for further bibliographical references.

<sup>3</sup> Badger, *The Nestorians*, 2: 25.

‘Avdisho’ bar Brikha did not include Warda or Khamis in the *Catalogue of the Ecclesiastical Authors*, a poetic work dated 1298 in the manuscript used by Badger for his English translation<sup>4</sup> (but possibly completed later, since it mentions a canonical work by ‘Avdisho’ dated 1315/6).<sup>5</sup> It seems as if Warda’s and Khamis’s works were not yet considered part of a standard East-Syriac library at the turn of the thirteenth century and/or that their books were not yet available to the author(s) of the *Catalogue*, who explicitly claimed that “after the best of our ability we have recorded the books which we have seen, our object being to show that the perusal of them is profitable.”<sup>6</sup> The first findings of a survey of the manuscript witnesses of the *Book of Khamis* confirm this state of affairs. The first versions of the *Book* were probably compiled around the middle or second part of the fourteenth century.

More precisely than Badger, Assemani had already suggested that Khamis bar Qardaḥe was a younger contemporary of the West-Syriac polygraph Barhebraeus (1226-1286),<sup>7</sup> since Khamis interpolated the latter’s poem *On Perfection*, known as a *mêmrā zawgānāyā* (a ‘coupled, doubled or rhymed poem’). Khamis added a couplet for each distich and other later East-Syriac poets, such as Isho’yahv bar Mqaddam (15<sup>th</sup> c.) and the Chaldean patriarch Joseph II (late 17<sup>th</sup> – early 18<sup>th</sup> c.),<sup>8</sup> continued to add verses. The text is usually preserved in West-Syriac manuscripts containing works by Barhebraeus.<sup>9</sup> A number of these manuscript collections also contain a question in verse addressed by Khamis to the West-Syrian monk Daniel bar Haṭṭāb, Daniel’s answers to the question, and a poetic reply by Barhebraeus himself.<sup>10</sup> The relationship of Khamis’s work with the poetic production by Barhebraeus (metrical and stylistic experiments, contents, occasional poems, etc.) is the subject of further investigation by Anton Pritula (St. Petersburg). Pritula sees the influence of Persian encomiastic

<sup>4</sup> Badger, *The Nestorians*, 2: 361.

<sup>5</sup> Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Webers, 1922), 325, n. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Badger, *The Nestorians*, 2: 379.

<sup>7</sup> J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (Romae: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide), 3.1: 566.

<sup>8</sup> Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 329.

<sup>9</sup> H. Takahashi, *Bar Hebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press), 339-41.

<sup>10</sup> See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 320; Takahashi, *Bar Hebraeus*, 344-45; and D. Taylor, “‘Your sweet saliva is the living wine’: Drink, desire, and devotion in the thirteenth-century Syriac wine songs of Khamis bar Qardaḥe,” in *The Syriac Renaissance*, ed. H. Teule and C. Fotescu Tauwinkl (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 38, n. 31 [31-52]. Syriac text published by P.Y. Dolabani, *Mušhōthō d-Mōr Grigorios Yuhannōn bar ‘Evrōyō* (Jerusalem: Dayro d-Mor Marqos, 1929), 157-59.

poetry (*madh*) in a poem composed by Khamis in praise of Barhebraeus, and he also finds traces of Sufi symbolism in a *turgāmā* on Lazarus and his sisters.<sup>11</sup>

Poems by Khamis were included in the Chaldean Breviary and in early printed anthologies of Syriac literature.<sup>12</sup> J.F. Coakley compared the contents of three manuscripts of the *Book of Khamis*: Berlin 66, Vat. Syr. 186 and Manchester 24.<sup>13</sup> In 2002, Shleimon Ḥoshabba published a complete edition of the *Book*. He was aware of the fact that ms. Vat. Syr. 186 (1477) contains a version of the *Book of Khamis*, but he collated only three late mss., two of which date from the twentieth century, and two of which are limited to the first part of the *Book*.<sup>14</sup> Ḥoshabba is currently preparing a second revised edition.

Using Ḥoshabba's edition and comparing it with a copy of the most complete ms. used by the Iraqi editor, David Taylor recently published an article on Khamis' songs in celebration of wine and love. In the last verse of a poem in praise of wine, Christ's blood, 'loved by Turks and Greeks alike' (*turkāyē 'am r(h)omāyē*<sup>15</sup> *rāḥmin lēh bḥad ševyānā*), he found a possible autobiographical remark that confirms and defines with more precision what was previously known of Khamis' life:

ܘܚܘܒܝܗ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ  
ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ

The wretched Khāmīs in Alapaq composed this song on sandalwood,  
Whilst he was among the Mongols, a reveler in their presence<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> A. Pritula, "Hāmīs bar Qardāḥē. Vostochnosiriski poet kontsa XIII v.," *Simvol* 61 (2012): 303-17; "Bar 'Ebroyo (Grigorij syn Arona) i Khamis bar Qardahē: Iz Nimyevii v Fars," in *Commentationes Iranicae*, ed. S.R. Takhtsyev and P.B. Lurye (St.-Petersburg: Neston-Istoriya, 2013), 508-14.

<sup>12</sup> A list can be found in A. Mengozzi, "Khamis bar Qardaḥe," *GEDSH*, 242-43.

<sup>13</sup> J.F. Coakley, "A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library," *BJRL* 75 (1993): 146-49 [105-207].

<sup>14</sup> S.I. Ḥoshabba, *Khamis bar Qardaḥē. Mēmre w-mušḥāthā* (Nuhadra: Prisatha da-Nṣivin, 2002), x.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor prefers to translate with the Arabo-Islamic term 'Rumi.' On various meanings of the term *r(h)omāyē* in Syriac and other Christian and Islamic languages of the region, see F.A. Pennacchietti, "Significati accessori del termine siriano per 'romano,'" in *To a Scholar Sahab: Essays and Writings in Honour of Alessandro Monti*, ed. E. Adami and C. Rozzoni (Alessandria: Dell'Orso, 2011), 101-10.

<sup>16</sup> Vat Sir 186: ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ 'the late Kh.' For catalogues of the Syriac manuscripts and abbreviations see, below, n. 24.

<sup>17</sup> Mingana 149: ܘܕܢܘܨܝܗ.

<sup>18</sup> Text: Vat. Syr. 186, 235a; Borgia Syr. 33, 243b; Mosul Dom 309, 98a; Mingana 149, 155b (Syriac folio numbering); Baghdad ChE 10, 80a. Edition: Ḥoshabba, *Khamis*, 205; trans.: Taylor, "Your sweet saliva," 47.

Taylor argues that this poem may have been composed in the last decades of the thirteenth century at the court camp of the Mongols in Ala Dagh and goes so far as to connect the autobiographical note to precise occasions, such as the three-day banquet that the Khan Arghun offered in honor of the Patriarch Yahvallaha (1288) or the public witnessing of Khan Gaikhatu's donations to the patriarch (1291).<sup>19</sup>

In the manuscript used by Ḥoshabba and Taylor,<sup>20</sup> an unnamed patriarch of the Church of the East (*qāṭoliqā d-madenḥā*, 'Catholicos of the East') is praised in verse six of the same poem. Pritula convincingly demonstrated that the reading *abun zahyā mār(y) denḥā* 'our reverend Father Mar Denkha' of the ms. Vat. Syr. 186 (1477) is preferable, and proposed to identify the patriarch praised by Khamis with Mar Denkha I, a monk of the Monastery of Beth Qoqa near Arbela, who became Metropolitan of Arbela and, in 1265, patriarch of the Church of the East. As a patriarch, he was forced to move back to Arbela for security reasons and died during a visit to Baghdad in 1281.<sup>21</sup> The poem that Khamis composed 'whilst he was among the Mongols' might date to an earlier period than that proposed by Taylor.

#### COMPOSITION AND GENRES

Since Badger does not mention poems of secular content in his description of the *Book of Khamis*, he and his informants likely meant the first part of the *Book* when they referred to 'the Khamees.' The first part contains hymns of the *'onithā* genre and, indeed, has been more frequently copied than the complete collection, which contains the hymns the 'sequences' (*turgāmē*), as well as religious and secular songs of other genres (*soghiyāthā*, *mēmre* and *tar'ē*). If we exclude the mss. that preserve only single texts attributed to Khamis,<sup>22</sup> a survey of the available

<sup>19</sup> P.G. Borbone, *Un ambassadeur du Khan Argun en Occident. Histoire de Mar Yahballaha III et de Rabban Sauma* (1281–1317) (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 110 and 112.

<sup>20</sup> See, below, n. 25.

<sup>21</sup> A. Pritula, "Ḥāmīs bar Qardāḥē (kon. XIII v.) i arbel'ski literaturny krug," *Khristianski Vostok* 6 (XII) (2013): 216–43.

<sup>22</sup> I have therefore excluded by definition the mss. containing only the *mēmre zāwganāyā*, as well as the poetical dispute with Daniel bar Haṭṭāb and Barhebraeus. Although they may help in understanding the history of its transmission, I do not consider liturgical collections witnesses of the *Book of Khamis*. This includes Paris BNF 181 (15<sup>th</sup> c.); Berlin 65 (1715); Cambridge 1980 (1723); Cambridge 2041 (18<sup>th</sup> c.); Cambridge 2820 (1882; see, below, n. 26); Baghdad ChaldMon 507\* (1926); Baghdad ChaldMon 655\*; and Tübingen 1052 (1649).

witnesses to the *Book of Khamis*<sup>23</sup> shows that we can divide them in two groups.

1) The mss. of the first group contain the hymns (*ʿoniyāthā*) by Khamis, usually copied together with hymns by other authors. In the following list, they are arranged according to the centuries in which they were certainly (see dates in brackets) or probably copied, according to the information given in the catalogues.<sup>24</sup> The mss. marked with an asterisk are currently unavailable to me.

15<sup>th</sup> c.: Borgia Syr. 35

16<sup>th</sup> c.: Berlin 66\*; Jerusalem GrOrth 31\*

17<sup>th</sup> c.: Jerusalem GrOrth 23\* (1610); Diyarbakır 90\* (1635); Jerusalem GrOrth 2\* (1662); London 4062 (1674); Baghdad ChaldMon 493\* (1682); London 4063; Diyarbakır 87\*

18<sup>th</sup> c.: Vat. Syr. 185 (1703); Mingana 28 (1720?); Cambridge 1991 (1729); Baghdad ChE 43 (1746); Baghdad ChaldMon 504\* (1756); Jerusalem GrOrth 49\*; Mosul Dom 300

<sup>23</sup> I have surveyed the mss. of which I was able to consult copies or which are described in sufficient detail in the catalogues to give a clear picture of their composition.

<sup>24</sup> Baghdad ChaldMon: P. Haddad and J. Isaac, *Syriac and Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the Chaldean Monastery Bagdad [in Arabic]*, Part 1. *Syriac Manuscripts* (Baghdad: Iraqi Academy Press, 1988). — Baghdad ChE: “Archbishopric of the Church of the East: Manuscripts Library (Baghdad – Iraq),” [cited 30 Sept. 2012]. Online: <http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/semiarab/semitistik/schwerpunkte/aramaistik/orienth.pdf>. — Berlin: E. Sachau, *Verzeichniss der Syrischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1896). — Borgia Syr.: A. Scher, “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia aujourd’hui à la Bibliothèque Vaticane,” *JA* 13 (1909): 249-87. — Cambridge: W. Wright, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1901). — Diyarbakır: A. Scher, “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés à l’archevêché chaldéen de Diarbékir,” *JA* 10 (1907), 331-61, 385-431. — Ḥoshabba: see Ḥoshabba, *Khamis* and, below, n. 25. — Jerusalem GrOrth: J.-B. Chabot, “Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques conservés dans la bibliothèque du patriarcat grec orthodoxe de Jerusalem,” *JA* 3 (1894): 92-134. — London: G. Margoliouth, *Descriptive List of Syriac and Karshuni mss. in the British Museum* (London, 1899). — Manchester: Coakley, “A Catalogue.” — Mingana: A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1933). — Mosul Dom: B. Sony, *Le catalogue des manuscrits du couvent des Dominicains, Mossoul [in Arabic]* (Mosul, 1997). — Paris BNF: H. Zotenberg, *Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaites) de la bibliothèque nationale* (Paris, 1874). — St. Petersburg: N.V. Pigulevskaya, *Katalog siriyskikh rukopisey Leningrada* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1960). — Tübingen: J. Assfalg, *Verzeichniss der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Bd v. Syrische Handschriften* (Wiesbaden, 1963). — Trichur: Mar Aprem, “Syriac Manuscripts in Trichur,” in *The Church I Love: A Tribute to Rev. Placid J. Podipara CMI*, ed. J. Madey and G. Kaniarakath (Kottayam / Paderborn, 1984), 96-118. — Vat. Syr.: S.E. and J.S. Assemani, *Bibliothecae apostolicae vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum* (Romae, 1758-59).

19<sup>th</sup> c.: Mingana 130 (1849); Mingana 20 (1850); Baghdad ChaldMon 328\* (1868); London 2304 (1879); Cambridge 2813; Diyarbakır 88\*

20<sup>th</sup> c. and unknown: Baghdad ChaldMon 505\* (1922); Baghdad ChaldMon 924\*; Ḥoshabba 3\* (1954); Ḥoshabba 2\* (?)<sup>25</sup>

2) The second group of mss. contains texts belonging to both the first and the second part of the *Book of Khamis*:

14<sup>th</sup> c.: Diyarbakır 91\* (1394)

15<sup>th</sup> c.: Berlin 67 (1465, O<sub>1-2</sub> + only T); Vat. Syr. 186 (1477); Borgias Syr. 33

16<sup>th</sup> c.: St Petersburg 69 (? , parts of O<sub>1</sub>, T, M and E)

17<sup>th</sup> c.: Alqosh 85\*

18<sup>th</sup> c.: Vat. Syr. 185 (1703 O<sub>1-2</sub> + only a few *turgāmē*)

19<sup>th</sup> c.: Mingana 149 (1893); Mosul Dom 309 (1893); Manchester 24

20<sup>th</sup> c.: Ḥoshabba 1\* (1906); Trichur 25 (? , only T + M and E)

Since the hymns are contained in the first part of the *Book*, this might be the only part preserved, while the second part of the ms. has been lost. However, only one very late ms. containing only the second part of the *Book* is known (Baghdad ChE 10, dated 1934), either because of accident — since the first part of the ms. has been lost — or of a deliberate choice of the copyist or his client<sup>26</sup>. Moreover, mss. of the first group, which preserve only the hymns, appear to be structured as collections to be used for liturgical purposes. Therefore, it is probable that the first part circulated in various versions as the ‘Khamees’ described by Badger.

<sup>25</sup> Ḥoshabba used as a base text the ms. Ḥoshabba 1 (1906), which is the ms. Baghdad ChaldMon 921\*, i.e. no. 315 in J.M. Vosté, *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque syro-chaldéenne du couvent de Notre-Dame des semences près d’Alqoš (Iraq)* (Rome: Angelicum, 1929). ‘At the beginning of the ms., a preface by Father Shmuel Jamil informs us that he tried to collect various poems by Khamis bar Qardaḡe in this volume, which is a complete collection and numbers ninety-two poetical texts’ (Haddad and Isaac, *Syriac and Arabic Manuscripts*, 406; my trans.). See Taylor, “‘Your sweet saliva,’” 37, for further information on both the ms. and Father Jamil. Ḥoshabba (*Khamis*, x) does not describe the content of the mss., but does inform us that the other two mss. he collated (I label them Ḥoshabba 2 and 3) do not contain the poems on wine, wisdom, and other subjects. I therefore assume that they belong to the first group.

<sup>26</sup> Cambridge 2820 (Telkepe in 1882) is a nicely handwritten and decorated collection of East-Syriac *soghiyāthā*. The *soghiyāthā* attributed to Khamis that feature in this manuscript seem to have been copied from sections S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> of a *Book of Khamis* and include wine songs and dispute poems.

In fact, the majority of the mss. preserve the hymns attributed to Khamis bar Qardaḥe together with hymns by other, usually later, authors. With very few exceptions,<sup>27</sup> the *'oniyāthā* by Khamis are preceded by the *'onithā* by Gabriel (called 'the philosopher') about Savrisho', the founder of the Monastery of Beth Qoqa, in the region of Arbela. Rubrics inform us that he wrote this lengthy hymn — 'eine monströse *'Onitha*', as Baumstark defined it — when he was still a monk at Beth Qoqa, before being appointed Metropolitan of Mosul and thus becoming one of the electors of Patriarch Yahvallahā III in 1281.<sup>28</sup>

The rubrics and the positions in which hymns by other hymnographers have been inserted allow us to distinguish groups of texts attributed to Khamis that remained relatively stable in transmission — stable insofar as both the texts and the order in which they were copied remained unchanged. The various sections are internally homogenous as far as literary genre and metrical forms are concerned.<sup>29</sup>

#### HYMNS ( *'ONİYĀTHĀ* )

O<sub>1-2</sub> — The two sections that form the first part of the *Book* contain *'oniyāthā* (stanzaic hymns) in which verses of (typically) four rhyming, seven-syllable lines are grouped in pairs and/or arranged according to an alphabetic acrostic, as in the classical genre of the *soghithā*.<sup>30</sup> The

<sup>27</sup> Berlin 66\* (16<sup>th</sup> c.); Alqosh 85\* (17<sup>th</sup> c.); Cambridge 2813; and Manchester 24 (19<sup>th</sup> c.).

<sup>28</sup> Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 323.

<sup>29</sup> The order in which the texts are copied is rather stable, as witnessed by the mss. of the first group and complete collections such as Borgia Syr. 33 (15<sup>th</sup> c.); Manchester 24 (19<sup>th</sup> c.); or Mingana 149 (1893). The ms. Tübingen 1052 (copied in the Monastery of Rabban Hormizd in 1649) is a collection of liturgical texts, especially *turgāmē*, and preserves a selection of *turgāmē* by Khamis that respects the order in which they are copied in the third section of the *Book of Khamis* (T). Vat. Syr. 186 (1477), Berlin 66\* (16<sup>th</sup> c.), and Manchester 24 (19<sup>th</sup> c.) share the omission of the fifth *'onithā* for the Rogation of the Ninivites in the first section (O<sub>1</sub>). Vat. Syr. 186 (1477) presents quite another order and does not include either the first three hymns or the last hymn of the second section (O<sub>2</sub>). Ḥoshabba, *Khamis*, perhaps depending on his mss. and trying to at least partly reproduce the order of the liturgical year, places the first three hymns of the second section (O<sub>2</sub>) right at the beginning and then mixes *turgāmē* (S) and hymns (O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>1</sub>), so that, e.g., the *turgāmē* for Christmas follow the hymn for the same feast.

<sup>30</sup> The term *'onithā* 'responsory' originally indicated the antiphon for the liturgical chanting of Psalms or the refrain of a *madrāsā*. In the late East-Syriac tradition, it designates a specific kind of hymn, which according to Badger (*Nestorians*, vol. 2, 25) was sung during the Communion service. This function was characteristic of a specific kind of hymn,

first section (O<sub>1</sub>) contains up to nineteen hymns for the Rogation of the Ninivites and on repentance. The second section (O<sub>2</sub>) contains up to nine hymns for various other occasions in the liturgical year: Annunciation (two hymns); Christmas (Eng. trans. in Badger, 1852: vol. 2, 39-49); Easter (*peṣḥā*; in fact, it deals with the Eucharist); Resurrection (*qiyānthā*, on Easter proper); Ascension; Isho'savran; Holy Cross (two hymns).

Between the two sections of *'oniyāthā* are penitential hymns by other authors: Giwargis Warda (13<sup>th</sup> c. ?); Mari bar Mshiḥa(ya) and Mas'ūd ibn al-Qass (13<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>31</sup>; Isaac or Asko Qardaḥa Eshbadhnaya (first half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.); the priest Ṣliḥa (first half of 16<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>32</sup>; and Israel of Alqosh (end 16<sup>th</sup> / beginning 17<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>33</sup>. Hymns for commemorations of saints Cyriacus, Stephen, George and/or for the feast of the Holy Cross follow the second section by Khamis (O<sub>2</sub>). They are works by Warda, Isaac and Israel (mentioned above), as well as 'Avdisho' of Gazartha and 'Aṭṭaye Athli (16<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>34</sup>.

It is quite clear that insertions and additions to the works attributed to Khamis were motivated by the contents of the hymns and their liturgical use. The first part of the *Book of Khamis* thus came to us in various anthologies of hymns, in which the *'onithā* by Gabriel of Mosul and the two sections attributed to Khamis represent the skeleton on which works of other authors were variously added in certain positions. Penitential hymns follow the first section, while the final part of the second section by Khamis on St. Savrisho' and the Holy Cross triggered, as it were, the addition of commemorative hymns by other authors on saints, martyrs, and the Holy Cross. Gabriel of Mosul, Mari bar Mshiḥa, Mas'ūd ibn al-Qass, and possibly Giwargis Warda were likely contemporaries of Khamis. The other hymnographers are later. This fact, together with the patterns of compilation of the mss., suggests that the sections by Khamis pre-date the anthologies, either as independent sections of other

i.e., the *'onithā d-( )rāzā* "O. of Eucharist/Communion," whereas in the classical East-Syrian tradition *'oniyāthā* were performed in one of the sessions of the night service; see A. Pritula, "The development of the term *'onithā* in East Syrian Literature," Paper presented at the 14<sup>th</sup> Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics (Turin, 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June 2011). As a poetic genre, the *'onithā* continued the classical forms of the *soghithā*.

<sup>31</sup> Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 306.

<sup>32</sup> Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 330-31.

<sup>33</sup> A. Mengozzi, *A Story in a Truthful Language. Religious Poems in Vernacular Syriac by Israel of Alqosh and Joseph of Telkepe (North Iraq, 17<sup>th</sup> century)*, CSCO 589 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 57-61.

<sup>34</sup> Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 332-33.

anthologies or as parts of collections uninterruptedly and entirely dedicated to Khamis. The mss. of the second group may be witnesses of the latter kind of collection, since the poems by Khamis are preceded by the 'onithā by Gabriel, but then generally copied with no interruptions or insertions.

This complicated transmission raises serious critical problems for the modern editor. It is not at all self-evident what we can define as the *Book of Khamis*. Is it, as the second group of mss. suggests, Gabriel's 'onithā on Savrisho' followed by a collection of poems by Khamis bar Qardaḥe? Or is it, as the first group of mss. and Badger's description suggest, Gabriel's 'onithā on Savrisho' followed by an anthology of hymns by various authors attributed to the hymnologist who penned most of the texts?

In the latter case, which authors and texts should be included? Ḥoshabba, following his main source (the ms. collection of works by Khamis ordered by Father Shmuel Jamil in 1906),<sup>35</sup> opted for the first definition and omitted Gabriel's 'onithā on Savrisho'.

#### SEQUENCES (*TURGĀMĒ*)

T — The third section of the *Book* contains up to twenty-two *turgāmē*, hymns that are to be sung before the reading of the Gospel and are therefore comparable to the sequences of the Latin rite. They exhort the faithful to listen and attend to the reading, often referring explicitly to the name of the evangelist chosen for a given feast. Sometimes, they give a foretaste of, or allude to the content of, the Gospel. They thus constitute a poetic amplification of the rites that prepare the reading of the Gospel.

The *turgāmē* usually consist of a series of rhyming verses, each composed of two dodecasyllables. Often, all the lines of a *turgāmā* have the very same end rhyme, as in the Persian *ghazal*, and verses are arranged according to an incomplete alphabetic acrostic up to letters *m* or *n*. In a number of *turgāmē*, the line can be further divided into three rhyming feet of four syllables, as in the first *turgāmā* for Christmas.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See n. 25 above.

<sup>36</sup> Text: Berlin 67, 52a; Vat. Syr. 186, 123b; Borgia Syr. 33, 152b; Mingana 149, 79b (Syriac folio numbering); Trichur 25, 88a. Edition: Ḥoshabba, *Khamis*, 30.



- 8) Look with discernment and earnest desire on this birth!  
Beget it in the mind and in the liturgy worship the laudable one!
- 9) Keep the commandments given and write them on the tablet  
of the heart that makes the ears listen to what is fixed in the brain.
- 10) The inheritance as sons of God and brothers of Christ  
this word sends and bestows through faith.
- 11) Every soul that now follows this way  
is clothed in light, it is not imprisoned and flies to heaven.
- 12) Listen with rejoicing to the voice of the Gospel by Luke the Apostle  
and be made worthy to see the mysterious birth with enlightened eye!

Despite the variation in the structure of the *Book of Khamis*, the degree of internal textual variation is surprisingly low. There is a certain degree of orthographic variation, especially insofar as the notation of vowel length is concerned. Copyists are more or less generous in using vowel points and other diacritics, but lexical and grammatical variants are rare. Omissions of lines and verses are also rare, partly thanks to the frequency of alphabetic acrostics which are often marked in red ink.

The elaborate metrical forms and rhyme schemes, which give a baroque flavor to these hymns, are connected with the introduction of Arabic and Persian models into late Syriac poetry, and hence in East-Syriac hymnography. The *Book of Khamis* is a precious witness to these new trends and modes.

#### POEMS (*MĒMRĒ*) AND COLLECTIONS OF EPIGRAMS (*TAR'Ē*)

M — A short section of up to seven poems (*mĕmrĕ*) follows the *turgāmĕ* in most witnesses of the complete collection. The first six poems are monorhyme series of dodecasyllables and thus share metrical features with the *turgāmĕ*. It is probably their content and use (being philosophical, allegorical, and occasional poems rather than liturgical texts) that distinguish the *mĕmrĕ* from the *turgāmĕ* of the preceding section. In the rubrics they are variously entitled e.g. *Divine Wisdom* (two poems); *Understanding of Faith Through the Letters with Which this Word is Written*; *The Silk-Worm as an Allegory of the Soul*<sup>40</sup>; an invective against the *Ignorance of the People of Arbela*; and *Praise of a Writer/Learned*

<sup>40</sup> Ed. and trans., A. Barotto, P. Riberi, M. Volpicelli, and A. Mengozzi, “La verità visibile nella natura e nella scrittura: Sul baco da seta di Khamis bar Qardaḥe (fine del XIII secolo),” *Kervan* 13/14 (2011): 47-55 [cited 30 Sept. 2012]. Online: [http://mbpro.net/kervan3/data/\\_uploaded/file/documents/13e14\\_5\\_BAR\\_MEN.pdf](http://mbpro.net/kervan3/data/_uploaded/file/documents/13e14_5_BAR_MEN.pdf).





The seventh *mêmrā*, *On the Letters of the Alphabet*, is a rather lengthy poem, composed of rhymed quatrains of seven syllable lines. It features in most witnesses of the complete collection, including the earliest dated one (Diyarbakır 91\*, 1395), whereas Borgia Syr. 33 (15<sup>th</sup> c.) omits it. Apparently it was much appreciated since it was transmitted independently from the *Book of Khamis* in miscellaneous mss., such as collections of grammatical works — e.g., Paris BNF 369 (15<sup>th</sup> c.); Berlin 92 (1735); and Marburg 935 (1889). It was even transmitted among grammatical and poetical works by Barhebraeus and other West-Syriac authors — e.g., London 4086 (1806). This *mêmrā* should thus be studied in the broader context of late Syriac linguistic thought and pedagogical poetry.

E — The fifth section of the *Book of Khamis* contains epigrams (E) organized in up to six sections or chapters (called *tar 'ē*, ‘doors’, as in Arabic and Persian *bāb*) based on the themes addressed in the text. There are thirty-seven texts in Ḥoshabba *Khamis* on theology; fifty-six on wisdom; fifty-eight on opening and closing formulae for letters; forty-nine on love; another forty-nine on moral exhortations; and two hundred and five on various other themes. Epigrams, labeled *tar 'ē* (‘stanzas’?) in the mss., as the sections in which they are included, are monorhyme quatrains of dodecasyllables, sometimes grouped in poems of two or more quatrains. In fact they look like Persian *robā 'īyāt* written in Syriac.<sup>49</sup> In some mss., monorhyme poems (*mêmrē*) are added to epigrams in the various chapters, especially in the last one, and usually after epigrams on the same theme.

Although religious reflection surfaces here and there, Khamis’s epigrams address profane subjects (such as love, passion, and time) as well every-day objects (such as roses and candles) which carry symbolic meanings that are often borrowed from Persian poetry. They are usually quite simple and repetitive, playing with a handful of opposites: day and night; light and darkness; anxiety and rest; love and separation; heart and mind. They might be stylistic exercises, in which the poet molds into the Syriac language the imagery and moods of other, probably Persian, poetic traditions. The rhyme scheme of the following example (aaaa) is that of the Arabo-Persian *tamām-maṭla* ‘:

<sup>49</sup> On Khamis’s work as Persian poetry in Syriac dress, see Barotto et alii, “La verità visibile,” 48-51. A couple of quatrains from each of the six sections of E are published and translated into German in A. Mengozzi, “Persische Lyrik in syrischem Gewand. Vierzeiler aus dem Buch des Khamis bar Qardaḥe (Ende 13. Jahrhundert),” in *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums. Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011*, ed. M. Tamcke and S. Grebenstein (Wiesbaden: Harassowitz, 2014), 155-76.

ܠܠܥܡܘܫܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ  
 ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ  
 ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ<sup>50</sup>  
 ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ ܕܡܘܨܝܐ<sup>51</sup>

I said to the candle: <sup>52</sup> ‘Why did you desire to make love with fire and leave honey’s company after so long?’

He replied: ‘At that time I slept in the darkness in the womb of a beehive and now, look, I stand in the middle and light is upon my head.’<sup>53</sup>

### SONGS (*SOGHYĀTHĀ*) AND MULTILINGUAL TEXTS

S<sub>1</sub> — In Borgia Syr. 33 seven *soghyāthā* of religious content are copied after the third *tar’ā*. They are hymns for the Annunciation; Christmas<sup>54</sup>; Palm Sunday (three hymns); Easter; and a curious hymn *On Divine Economy* in which quatrains *b-suryāyā* ‘in Syriac’ and *b-mughlāyā* ‘in Mongolian’ (in Syriac script) alternate. The same texts are copied in Vat. Syr. 186 after the complete series of epigrams (E), except the hymn on Christmas and the bilingual hymn. The latter has been preserved in other liturgical collections of *soghyāthā*<sup>55</sup> and deserves further investigation

<sup>50</sup> Ḥoṣhabba, Khamis, Vat Sir 186 and Baghdad ChE 10: ܡܘܨܝܐ (‘furnace, region?’).

<sup>51</sup> Ḥoṣhabba, Khamis: ܡܘܨܝܐ; Vat Sir 186: ܡܘܨܝܐ.

<sup>52</sup> This quatrain, like others by Khamis, has the rhetorical structure of the Persian *so’āl o javāb* ‘question and answer’; see A. Bausani, “Letteratura neopersiana,” in *Storia della letteratura persiana*, ed. A. Pagliaro and A. Bausani (Milano: Nuova accademia, 1960), 301, and N. Chalisova, “Rhetorical Figures,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2009) [cited 30 Sept. 2012]. Online: [www.iranicaonline.org/articles/rhetorical-figures](http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/rhetorical-figures). On the candle in Persian poetry, see J.T.P. de Bruijn, “Candle (Pers. *šam’*). ii. Imagery in Poetry,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (1990) [cited 30 Sept. 2012]. Online: [www.iranicaonline.org/articles/candle-pers#pt2](http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/candle-pers#pt2).

<sup>53</sup> Mss.: Vat. Syr. 186, 199a; Mosul Dom 309, 106a; Baghdad ChE 10, 110 (Syriac page numbering); Trichur 25, 44b. Edition: Ḥoṣhabba, *Khamis*, 313.

<sup>54</sup> A. Mengozzi, “La versione nearamaica di un inno siriano per Natale,” in *Loquentes linguis*, ed. P.G. Borbone, A. Mengozzi, and M. Tosco (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 489-98.

<sup>55</sup> Mingana 51, 30a-35b; Mingana 494 (1609 and 1616), 129a; Mingana 129 (1855), 101b. Cambridge 2820 (1882) is a liturgical collection and, in various positions (7b, 16b, 34b, 33b, 50a), contains all the *soghyāthā* of Borgia Syr. 33 (S<sub>1</sub>), except the third hymn for Palm Sunday, but including the bilingual text (129a). The bilingual text also features in the mss. Cambridge 2041 (18<sup>th</sup> c.), 114a (which contains at least seventeen texts by Khamis, belonging to all sections of the *Book*, including poems on wine); Cambridge 2055, part 2; Borgia Syr. 33 (15<sup>th</sup> c., according to Scher); and the collection of East-Syriac *soghyāthā*, Baghdad ChE 6 (1719). On this and other Turkish texts in Syriac script, see also S. P. Brock, “Armenian in Syriac script,” in *Armenian Studies in Memoriam Haig Berberian*, ed. D. Kouymjian (Lisboa: Galuste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1986), 76; Borbone,

as a witness of the open-minded linguistic policy of members of the Church of the East and the multicultural environments that characterize its history.

Wilhelm Heffening questions Mingana's interpretation of the term *mughlāyā* as meaning 'Eastern Turkish' and claims that this text shows linguistic features characteristic of Azeri Turkish. He then observes that in the Turkish stanzas the text as preserved in ms. Mingana 51 significantly differs from that preserved in the Cambridge mss.<sup>56</sup> Taylor suggests that the term *mughlāyā* might actually indicate not 'Mongolian' proper, but a Turkic dialect of Central Asia.<sup>57</sup> Only the philological reconstruction of the history of this text and a more accurate linguistic investigation would confirm its provenance. It is, however, interesting to see how natural it was in the manuscript tradition to associate the name of Khamis with a 'Mongolian' text.

S<sub>2</sub> — Between *mêmrē* (M) and epigrams (E), Ḥoshabba (2002) published twenty-six songs on various sacred and profane subjects, among which a section of *soghīyāthā d-ḥamrā wa-štar* 'songs on wine and other matters' is clearly distinguishable. Just two of the twenty-six texts are preserved solely in ms. Ḥoshabba 1, whereas the others feature in at least one of three other complete versions of the *Book of Khamis*. In Borgia Syr. 33 (15<sup>th</sup> c.) the *soghīyāthā* on wine come immediately after the section of religious *soghīyāthā* (S<sub>1</sub>). They are in same position, after E and S<sub>1</sub>, in Vat. Syr. 186 (1477), but in quite a different order. After the epigrams (E), Mingana 149 (1893) does not have the religious *soghīyāthā* (S<sub>1</sub>), whereas the *soghīyāthā* on wine and other subjects (S<sub>2</sub>) follow the epigrams (E) and are copied in an order very similar to that of Borgia Syr. 33.

In his excellent paper devoted to Khamis's wine songs, Taylor points out their relationship with the Arabic and Persian tradition of the *ḥamriyyāt*. The internal evidence mentioned above suggests that one of the poems was composed at the Mongol court camp of Ala Dagh "in 1289 [*sic* for 1288?] (or 1291) and it seems reasonable to suggest that many of his other wine songs may have been composed at about the same date,

"Un ambassadeur," 55, n. 2; A. Mengozzi, "The History of Garshuni as a Writing System," in *CAMSEMUD 2007*, ed. F.M. Fales and G.F. Grassi (Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N., 2010), 297, n. 2; A. Pritula, "Syroturica: Dvooyazichnoye stroficheskiye stihotvoryeniye mongol'skogo vryemyeni," in *Miscellanea Orientalia Christiana* ed. N.N. Selezmyov and Y.N. Arzhanov (Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities, Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies, 2014), 287-308.

<sup>56</sup> W. Heffening, "Liturgische Texte der Nestorianer und Jakobiten in Süd-Türkischen Mundarten," *OC* 3.9 (1935): 233, *contra* A. Mingana, "The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Far East: A New Document," *BJRL* 9 (1925): 338.

<sup>57</sup> Taylor, "Your sweet saliva," 48, n. 75.

before the conversion of the II-Khans to Islam, and the anti-Christian backlash in Arbela.”<sup>58</sup> According to Pritula, this may have happened in an earlier period, when Mar Denkha I was patriarch of the Church of the East. We can imagine that the various ethnic and religious groups represented at the court of the II-Khans strove to demonstrate their loyalty towards the sovereign and the openness of their culture to the influential Persian models circulating in all the Mongol empire, which stretched from the Middle East to China at the end of the thirteenth century.

What Borbone observed about historiography might very well apply to late East-Syriac poetry too: “De fait, même si l’historiographie est un genre bien connu et pratiqué dans le milieu de la littérature syriaque, on ne peut pas exclure que sur cette tradition se soit exercée, au XIII<sup>e</sup>-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, une impulsion ultérieure pour se rapprocher du climat culturel de l’époque mongole, auquel ne restaient pas étrangers les milieux ecclésiastiques cultivés.”<sup>59</sup>

The *soghiyāthā d-ḥamrā* can indeed be seen as Syriac *sāqi-nāmas*,<sup>60</sup> the felicitous attempt by a Syriac poet to imitate the dominant Persian art. The homage to Persian is explicit in a bilingual poem on love and wine in section S<sub>2</sub>, a poem that the rubrics describe as written ‘in Syriac, Persian, and Arabic.’ It is, in fact, composed mainly in Syriac and Persian and it includes an Arabic dialectal expression and Arabic lexical borrowings that are very common in Persian. Unlike the hymn *On Divine Economy*, in which the Syriac and (Azeri) Turkish alternate in different verses, here the code-switching between Persian and Syriac occurs within the line and the parts in one language do not translate the parts written in the other.<sup>61</sup>

Besides wine and love songs, the last section of the *Book* (S<sub>2</sub>) contains a complaint (*olihā*) of the poet *On the Death of his Son*<sup>62</sup> and three dispute poems, which were included in a collection of hymns and wine-songs in the nineteenth century (Cambridge 2820, dated Telkepe 1882)

<sup>58</sup> Taylor, “‘Your sweet saliva,” 48. The massacre of Christians in Arbela (1310) is described in the last part of the *History of Mar Yahvallahā* (Borbone, “Un ambassadeur,” 143-68).

<sup>59</sup> Borbone, “Un ambassadeur,” 23.

<sup>60</sup> On the *sāqi-nāma* (lit. ‘Book of the Cupbearer’) as a Persian poetic genre, see P. Losensky, “Sāqi-nāma,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (2009) [cited 30 Sept. 2012]. Online: [www.iranicaonline.org/articles/saqi-nama-book](http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/saqi-nama-book).

<sup>61</sup> Text, German and Italian transl. in Mengozzi, “Persische Lyrik in syrischem Gewand.”

<sup>62</sup> Khamis’s complaint may have been a model for Neo-Aramaic verses on the same very sad subject: see Joseph of Telkepe (17<sup>th</sup> c.; see Mengozzi, “A Story,” 64) and the Poem *On the death of his Son Anton* by David Barzane (19<sup>th</sup> c.), preserved in the possibly autograph ms. Mosul Dom 82; see A. Mengozzi, *Religious Poetry in Vernacular Syriac from Northern Iraq (17th-20th Centuries)* CSCO 628 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), xv.

and then translated into Neo-Aramaic.<sup>63</sup> The *Dispute of the Months* features in the twentieth-century mss. Ḥoshabba 1 (1906) and Baghdad ChE 10 (1934) and can hardly be ascribed to Khamis bar Qardāḥē,<sup>64</sup> whereas the *Dispute of Gold and Wheat* features among Khamis's works both in the ms. used by Ḥoshabba and in the ms. Borgia Syr. 33. The *Dispute of Cup, Jar, and Wine-Skin* might belong to the original collection of Khamis's wine songs and can be found in Borgia Syr. 33; Mosul Dom 309 (1893); Ḥoshabba 1 (1906); and Baghdad ChE 10 (1934).

## CONCLUSIONS

The *Book of Khamis* is a blanket term that covers a variety of ms. collections containing poetical texts, the majority of which are attributed to Khamis bar Qardaḥe — an East-Syrian author active in the last decades of the thirteenth century who was somehow connected to the town of Arbela and was probably a representative member of the East-Syrian community at the court camp of the Il-Khans.

To the best of my knowledge, the earliest dated collection is the ms. Diyarbakır 91 (1395), currently unavailable. Other important collections belong to the fifteenth century: Berlin 67 (1465, a ms. that was probably broken up at various points and interrupted after the *tūrgāmē*); Vat. Syr. 186 (1477); and, probably, Borgia Syr. 33. Since the fifteenth century, but especially in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, only the first part of the *Book* (containing the *'oniyāthā* by Khamis) was frequently copied in liturgical collections of hymns by Khamis and other contemporary and later authors. This is probably the form of the *Book* that Badger came across and described in the mid-nineteenth century. Two (more complete) versions of the *Book* were copied at the turn of the twentieth century and one of these served as the basis for the Iraqi edition by Ḥoshabba.

<sup>63</sup> Brock edited and studied various witnesses of the classical Syriac disputes of the *Months* and *Gold and Wheat*, that have ancient Mesopotamian antecedents and late Aramaic parallels; see S.P. Brock, "A Dispute of the Months and Some Related Texts in Syriac," *JSS* 30 (1985): 181-211. Probably in the nineteenth century, the three disputes were translated in a Neo-Aramaic dialect of the plain of Mosul; see A. Mengozzi, "The Neo-Aramaic Manuscripts of the British Library," *Mus* 112.3-4 (1999): 482. The Neo-Aramaic poetic versions were published in M. Lidzbarski, *Die neu-aramäischen Handschriften der Kgl. Bibliothek zu Berlin*, 2 vols. (Weimar: Emil Felber, 1896).

<sup>64</sup> S.P. Brock, "Joseph and Potiphar's Wife (Genesis 39)," in *Syriac Polemics: Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink*, ed. W.J. van Bekkum, J.W. Drijvers, and A.C. Klugkist (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 43, n. 12.

In the various mss. texts are copied in series that are relatively stable in transmission and internally homogenous as far as genre and content are concerned. We can thus identify the following sections:

First part (liturgical collections frequently copied in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries):

'*onithā* by Gabriel of Mosul on Mar Savrisho' founder of Beth Qoqa

O<sub>1</sub> '*oniyāthā*: 'hymns' for the Rogation of Ninivites and on Repen-  
tance (for Lent?)

penitential hymns by other authors

O<sub>2</sub> '*oniyāthā*: 'hymns' for various occasions

hymns on saints, martyrs and the Holy Cross by other authors

Second part (following the '*onithā* by Gabriel and O<sub>1-2</sub>, without hymns by other authors):

T *turgāmē*: 'sequences' to introduce the reading of the Gospel on various occasions

M *mēmre*: monorhyme poems with philosophical, allegorical, and satirical content

E six sections (*tar 'ē*) of epigrams (also called *tar 'ē*) dealing with various religious and profane subjects

S<sub>1</sub> *soghiyāthā*: hymns to be sung on various feasts of the liturgical year

S<sub>2</sub> *soghiyāthā*: songs on religious and profane subjects; a sub-section is dedicated to wine songs, a fascinating Syriac adaptation of the (Arabo-)Persian *ḥamriyyah* genre

Although they are among the earliest, only a few mss. preserve both the first and the second part and can be considered witnesses to a complete version of the *Book of Khamis*. Moreover, the texts that were copied and the order of the sections in the second part vary, sometimes significantly, throughout these few mss.

S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> contain two bilingual poems: a hymn *On Divine Economy* with alternating verses in Syriac and probably Azeri Turkish (called 'Mongolian' in the rubrics) and three quatrains (*robā 'iyāt*) on love and wine that mix Syriac and Persian within the lines. They graphically represent the multicultural milieu in which the poems attributed to Khamis were composed and transmitted. They also suggest that it would be worthwhile to further investigate the models of Khamis's poetry, which are probably to be found in the (Arabo-) Persian culture that was dominant in the vast territory of the Mongol empire. The *Book of Khamis*

could be a precious witness of the process of incorporation of Persian models and trends into late East-Syriac poetry. New themes, motifs, meters, and rhyme schemes were perhaps first tried out in profane genres and only afterwards introduced into the hymnography — the traditional domain of classical Syriac poetry.

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