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From Nineveh to Fars

The Poetic Program of Bar 'Ebrōyō and Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē

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Abstract

The Syriac poetry of the 11th–14th centuries (so-called Syriac Renaissance) was studied very purely until quite recently. One of the reasons for such indifference is a traditional approach of the scholars, who treated this poetry as a secondary one, because of a strong influence of the Islamic literature.

In this article, it is argued that the authors of this period were trying to connect their own poetical traditions with the achievements of the Persian and Arabic poetry. As the result, they created new original forms that need to be carefully examined.

One of the creators of this new style was probably Bar 'Ebrōyō (1226–1286), a famous West-Syrian philosopher and scientist. His esthetic approach was developed by his East-Syrian contemporary Khāmīs bar Qardāḥē of Arbelā, who used sophisticated rhythmic and rhyme schemes to achieve a stronger expressive effect. The article discusses one of his poems that demonstrates his outstanding skills as a poet experimentalist in both rhythm and rhyming.

Keywords

Syriac Renaissance – poetry – Persian influence – Mongol court – quatrains – Ghazals

Until quite recently, the poetry of the Syriac Renaissance (11th–14th centuries) attracted very little attention of scholars. It was commonly treated as secondary because of numerous changes that appeared in verse texts right in that period and were obviously borrowed from the Arabic and Persian poetic tradition. Such an attitude was apparently caused by the approach that was dominating

in the Syriac studies until the last decade. According to it, the classical period of the Syriac poetry was 4th–7th centuries, when it was completely original and at the same time developing earlier traditions of the Aramaic literature; in fact, its creators like Ephrem of Nisibin (4th century), hardly knew even Greek, and hence their heritage has been viewed as entirely independent. The Syriac poetry of that period was usually connected with liturgy or with exegetic treatises, and therefore it was often studied and estimated as an instrument reflecting theological thought in poetic means.

Such an opinion about the poetry of the Syriac Renaissance (11th–14th centuries)¹ was expressed, for instance, by Anton Baumstark, who – in his famous *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* – called the outstanding West Syriac encyclopaedist Bar ‘Ebrōyō (1226–1286) a mediocre poet.² It might be for that reason that poetry is the least studied part of the literary heritage of the outstanding Syriac author. Among a few works that discuss his verse texts is an article by Hidemi Takahashi³ and an article by Marianna Mazzola.⁴ The former contains a concordance of all the poems ascribed to Bar ‘Ebrōyō and the latter examines some of his sort poems.

The West Syriac encyclopaedist’s statement is well-known, saying that earlier the Islamic writers had to learn from the Christians, now [i.e. in his time] it is time for the Christian scholars to be instructed by the writings of the Muslims.⁵ This is valid not only for the his scientific and philosophic works, but for the verse pieces as well. Bar ‘Ebrōyō was one of the first Syriac poets, who actively used the accomplishments borrowed from the Arabic and Persian tradition, such as regular rhyming of various schemes, numerous poetic figures, such as *tajnīs*, exploiting seemingly secular motifs, as we will show below.

At the same time, it is generally believed that Bar ‘Ebrōyō was much influenced by the Arabic literary tradition, and even known to have composed works in Arabic himself.⁶ At the same time, the Persian impact that was especially clear in his poetic forms has been ignored. The outstanding author knew

1 See H. Teule, “The Syriac Renaissance”, *The Syriac Renaissance*, ed. H. Teule, C. F. Tauwinkl, B. ter Haar Romeny, J. van Ginkel, Leuven/Paris/Walpole (MA), 2010, pp. 1–30.

2 A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte*, Bonn, 1922, S. 319.

3 H. Takahashi, “The Poems of Barhebraeus: A Preliminary Concordance”, *Христианский Восток* [*Christian Orient*], 6 [12] (2013), pp. 78–139.

4 M. Mazzola, “Alcuni poemi di Barhebraeus e Bar Ma’dani nella redazione del ms. Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Orientale 298”, *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 36 (2013), pp. 83.

5 H. Teule, “Barhebraeus and his Time: The Syrian Renaissance”, *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 3 (2003), pp. 21–43 (here: p. 25).

6 Takahashi H., *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, NJ, 2005, pp. 265–313.

this language, as is registered in his biography.⁷ And besides, in his historical chronicle, one finds direct borrowings from the Persian sources, such as ‘Alā al-Dīn Juvaynī’s *Historical Chronicle*.⁸

In his verse works, this influence is even more noticeable. First of all, the outstanding author was of the first Syriac poets who adopted the quatrain poetic form. It is well-known that quatrains (*rubāʿī, dūbaytī, tarāna*) is a purely Iranian form that goes back to the folklore literature and was alien to the Arabic tradition.⁹ The meter used for it is usually a specifically modified variation of *hazaj*. In one of his quatrains that follow the Persian poetic prototype, Bar ʿEbrōyō gives allusions to this fact:

10. ܪܘܒܝܥܐ ܠܝܫܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ
 ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ
 ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ
 ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ ܘܝܫܢܐ ܕܢܝܢܘܘܗ

One day, I will depart from Nineveh to see what happens.
 In the foreign lands, I will sing glory to my Lord and will see
 what happens.
 On the poplars of Fars, I will hang my harp and will see what happens.
 The Lord will soon claim my judgment on my haters, and I will see
 what happens.¹¹

The piece is composed in the dodecasyllabic meter that is commonly used in the Syriac quatrains and uses an AAAA monorhyme scheme. The piece seems also to imitate a refrain (*radīf*), characteristic for the Persian poetry.

Most likely, the text contains two semantic layers: a literal and a metaphoric one. On one hand, Bar ʿEbrōyō, being a maphrian of the West Syriac Church – with an official see in Takrit, North Iraq – had to travel to Western Iran to the

7 Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, pp. 27–28.

8 P. G. Borbone, “Barhebraeus e Juvaynī: un cronista sira e la sua fonte persiana”, *Egitto e vicino Oriente*, XXVII (2004), pp. 121–144 (here: p. 122); Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, pp. 28, 31.

9 See М. Л. Рейснер, *Эволюция классической газели на фарси (X–XIV века)* [M. L. Rejsner, *The Evolution of the Classical Ghazal in Farsi (10–14 cent.)*], Moscow, 1989, p. 10.

10 *Mušhōtō d-Mōr Grīgōriyūs Yūhannōn Bar ʿEbrōyō mafriyōnō qaddišō d-Madnhō*, [Glane/Losser], 1983, p. 64.

11 The poem is found in the two earliest extant manuscripts of Bar ʿEbrōyō’s poems, namely Huntington 1 (Oxford, Bodleian Library; 1498 AD) and Laurenziana 298 (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, 1487/8 AD) (see Takahashi, “The Poems of Barhebraeus: A Preliminary Concordance”, p. 131).

moving Ilkhan court in various cities, in particular, Tabriz and Maragha.¹² It is also well-known that the hierarch's main residence was the famous monastery of Mār Mattai in Mosul,¹³ a city located on the bank of the Tigris, near the ruins of the ancient Nineveh, still retaining its name in the official Church titles. He was buried in the same monastery.¹⁴ That is why the subject of the poem – going from Nineveh to Fars – has an actual biographic base, namely, his mission as a representative of the Syriac Church in the Iranian lands.

In the second semantic layer, the author is compared to the Prophet, who praised God with the psalter (harp), containing an allusion to Ps. 137, in particular, verse 2: *حالا حنا وحرهنا احم صنا* (*There [in Babel] on the poplars we hung our harps*), and verse 4: *ايم نعبس حصي اقمصاه وحننا داوحا بصنا* (*How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?*). The quatrain expresses Bar 'Ebrōyō's poetic program, which is creation of Christian literature that is enriched with the achievements of the Islamic – Persian and Arabic – poetic tradition.

The same form is used by this author also for satirical, as is rather common in the Persian tradition. For instance, the following piece that is obviously dedicated to one of his contemporaries, whose name though is not known:

صنا كصحنلا داعمدهلا اونا حنا :
 وحم نعبس اومه وحننا اونا حنا :
 حقفما حكت اوم حقفما اونا حنا :
 15: هولا كتنا حنلا ابا حه صنا حنا :

Only with a stretch, is this brute counted among the ones endowed with speech.

Since in fact, this rascal is from among the barking ones.

This nothing is brazen in twaddling and rant.

And in addition to stupid insinuations, he has a tinned throat.

In larger poetic forms, Bar 'Ebrōyō also used methods of the sufi poetry, where behind the first semantic layer of the description of the nature and wine, usually a spiritual subtext is concealed. Clearly, in this case, it uses Christian allegories, and also allusions to the Gospels, rather than to the Quran. Just one instance: in a lengthy poem on spring that praises rose, the author relates that

12 Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: A Bio-Bibliography*, pp. 23–25.

13 Ibid, p. 25.

14 Ibid, p. 25.

15 *Muṣhōtō d-Mōr Grigōriyūs Yūhannōn Bar 'Ebrōyō*, p. 51.

the elder-lilies worshiped rose, the child, which is a clear allusion to the Christ's adoration by the Magi.¹⁶

In East Syriac tradition, the first poet who was developing this direction, namely, developing various short poetic forms, including quatrains, was apparently Khāmīs bar Qardāhē, who was active in late 13th century. Like most of the contemporary poets, he was much understudied. In the last ten years, when the situation significantly changed many articles were written about his literary heritage, and the period of the Syriac Renaissance has become the mainstream in the area. Scholars like David Taylor, Alessandro Mengozzi and myself have analyzed various aspects of his poetry.¹⁷

Thus, some facts of his biography and poetic methods have become known. As his own poems show, he lived in Arbela and was involved also in the court activities in the Ilkhanids' residence at Ālā-Ṭāq in Iranian Azerbaijan.¹⁸ This is a documental evidence of the access of the Syriac poets to the royal court, which actually happened to it for the first time for the whole time of its existence. This might have played a very important character in the working out

16 Ibid, pp. 74–76.

17 D. Taylor, "Your Sweet Saliva is the Living Wine': Drink, Desire, and Devotion in the Syriac Wine songs of Khāmīs bar Qardāhē", *The Syriac Renaissance*, ed. H. Teule, C. F. Tauwinkl, B. ter Haar Romeny, J. van Ginkel, Leuven/Paris/Walpole (MA), 2010, pp. 31–53.

A. Mengozzi, "The Book of Khamis bar Qardahe: History of the Text, Genres, and Research Perspectives", *Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium, Duke University, 26–29 June 2011*. Ed. by Doerfler, M. E. and Fiano, E. and Smith K. R. Eastern Christian Studies 20. Leuven: Peeters, pp. 415–438; idem, "Quatrains on Love by Khamis bar Qardahe: Syriac Sufi Poetry", *Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum 60. Geburtstag*. Ed. by Griffith, S. H. and Grebenstein, S. Wiesbaden, 2015, pp. 331–344.

See also A. Barotto, P. Riberi, M. Volpicelli, A. Mengozzi, "La verità visibile nella natura e nella scrittura. Sul baco da seta di Khamis Bar Qardahe (fine del XIII secolo)", *Kervan – Rivista Internazionale di studii afroasiatici*, 13/14 (2011), pp. 47–55; A. Pritula, "Zwei Gedichte des Ḥāmīs bar Qardāhē: Ein Hochgesang zu Ehren von Bar 'Ebrōyō und ein Wein-Gedicht für die Khan-Residenz", *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums: Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011*, ed. by M. Tamcke, S. Grebenstein, Göttinger Orientforschungen, I. Reihe: Syriaca 46. Wiesbaden, 2014, pp. 315–328; A. Pritula, "One More Unknown Khāmīs' Ode in Honor of Bar 'Ebrōyō", *Христианский Восток [Christian Orient]* 8 [14] (2017), pp. 187–194; A. Pritula, "O Ringdove! Where Are You Heading For? A Syriac Dialogue Poem of the Late 13th Century", *Syrische Studien: Beiträge zum 8. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Salzburg 2014*. Edited by Winkler, Dietmar W., *Orientalia – Patristica – Oecumenica* 10, Wien, 2016, pp. 351–360; A. Pritula, and P. Zieme, "A Syro-Turkic Poem on Divine Economy Ascribed to Khāmīs: Critical Edition", *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 7:2–3 (2019), pp. 299–324.

18 Taylor, "Your Sweet Saliva is the Living Wine", p. 48.

piece ascribed to ‘the late Mār Gabriēl’ (fol. 322v), apparently, Gabriel of Mosul. As for the reconstruction of the quatrains series a special research was conducted by Alessandro Mengozzi.

The same scholar studied and classified the extant manuscripts of the Khāmīs book, having defined which part of the book is present in which manuscript.²⁵ The text being discussed and published here (see Attachment) is found in most of the manuscripts containing *sōghyāthā* by this poet, including the earliest ones; they are the following:

CCM 00419 (Olim Diyarbakir 91, 1395 AD), fol. 223r–v

Vat. Sir. 186 (1477 AD), fol. 206v–207r

Borg. Sir. 33 (15th–16th cent.), fol. 247r

Trichur 25 (20th cent.), fol. 67r–v

We have used the edition published by Hošabbā in 2002²⁶ and based on rather new manuscripts, there the poem is also present, refereeing to it in the apparatus as *Hošabbā 2002*.

We use the earliest extant manuscript (*CCM 00419*) as a frame one, whereas the others are present as reference material in the apparatus. The textual discrepancy between the manuscripts is minimal. It is basically limited to the text’s title. Two earliest manuscripts – *CCM 00419* and *Vat. Sir. 186* – give ܕܡܢܬܐ ܕܡܢܬܐ ܕܡܢܬܐ ܕܡܢܬܐ (By the late Khāmīs, *sōghūthā* [that is] decorated), whereas the later ones contain ܕܡܢܬܐ ܕܡܢܬܐ ܕܡܢܬܐ (Another one, also by him). That may confirm that the poem was moved to the *sōghyāthā* section later, and the title was changed because of its becoming a part of the *sōghūthā* section by Khāmīs and being placed inside it.

1 Poetic Features of the Poem

In each stanza of the poem, a general rhyme scheme is retained (ababccccx), but each new stanza different rhymes are used. It is only the only end rhyme (x = šā) that is kept in all the six stanzas. In the Syriac poetry, rhyme, according to the general opinion, was borrowed from the Arabic tradition.²⁷ In non-strophic

25 See A. Mengozzi, “The Book of Khamis bar Qardahe: History of the Text, Genres, and Research Perspectives”, *Syriac Encounters: Papers from the Sixth North American Syriac Symposium, Duke University, 26–29 June 2011*, M. Doerfler, E. Maria E. and E. Fiano, *Eastern Christian Studies* 20, Leuven: Peeters, 2015, pp. 419–420.

26 Q. Šlēmōn Īšō’ Hošabbā, *Kāmīs bar Qardāhe, Mēmre w-Mušhātā*. Nūhadrā [Dohuk] (‘Irāq), 2002, p. 210.

27 B. Brock, “Poetry”, *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of Syriac Heritage*, NJ, 2011, p. 335.

forms, each two semi-lines are rhymed together (akin to *mathnawī* in Arabic and Persian poetry). In strophic pieces, an individual general rhyme is common for each stanza (aaaa, bbbb, etc.), in some cases, a universal end rhyme is maintained in the last semi-line of each stanza (aaax, bbbx), thus highlighting the formal integrity of all the stanza within one text, making it a monorhyme.

The scheme used here is not quite typical for both Syriac and Arabic/Persian tradition. One faces a very dynamic structure: a complex version of a sonnet rhyming, or to be precise, its combination with a monorhyme. That testifies to the author's being an extraordinary experimentalist.

The rhythmic pattern with the alternation – 5-5(4)-5-5(4)-5-5-5-5 – seems to be one more confirmation of it. Such a one-syllable variation in Syriac verse texts seems to be more characteristic for hymns. Besides, in the manuscript Vat. Sir. 186, (fol. 206v–207r), two slight strokes above the line are used, a sign that is generally believed to designate chanting of the last syllable. Taking in consideration the historical context these poems were composed, one may assume that they were designed to amuse the Ilkhan court. In this case, it is very likely that the performance was accompanied by musical instruments, like it was common in Arabic and Persian tradition. Besides, the text itself has a mentioning of the strings sounds (stanza 3, line 5).

Unusually short poetic lines make their borders look somewhat unclear. In the Iraqi edition of the poems by Khāmīs that is based just on one manuscript the verses safe for the first two lines are grouped in three five-syllable feet in each line.²⁸

Such a division is reproduced by David Taylor, who used just the printed version, having also skipped a stanza.²⁹ Thus, fifteen-syllable verses appear that consist of three five-syllable feet each. Nevertheless, such a grouping is absent from all the manuscripts known to us, where only a line division (.) after each five-syllable one is used, and also a strophe division sigh after each stanza (*). Besides, the grouping is not supported by the rhyming that embraces the five-syllable segments.

The role of Khāmīs in the development of the East Syriac poetry can be characterized as experimenting in poetic technique, such as searching for new rhythmical patterns and rhyme schemes; also in introducing new topics in the tradition, such as wine poetry. Besides, he seems to first to have borrowed quatrains from his older West-Syriac compatriots, and reconsidered the traditional

28 Hošabbā, *Ḳāmīs bar Qardāhē, Mēmṛē w-Mušḥātā*, p. 210.

29 D. Taylor, "Your Sweet Saliva is the Living Wine': Drink, Desire, and Devotion in the Syriac Wine songs of Khāmīs bar Qardāhē", *The Syriac Renaissance*, ed. H. Teule, C. F. Tauwinkl, B. ter Haar Romeny, J. van Ginkel. Leuven/Paris/Walpole (MA), 2010, pp. 31–53 (here: p. 45).

Syriac verse forms, accommodating them to the needs and tastes of his time, and using the achievements of the Arabic and Persian poetry.

The contents of the poem is typical for a Persian *ghazal*, describing a banquet outdoors, exploiting classical topoi like wine cups, parties with friends and string instruments (see Attachment, stanzas 2, 3), at the background of a landscape (see stanza 1) that is apparently spring. All this are typical motifs of the *ghazal* poetic form.³⁰ At the end of the piece the motif of the life transience appears (see stanza 4), and then unexpectedly an image of a dove is introduced that is a symbol of the human soul (see stanza 5). Such an image was definitely borrowed from Islamic tradition, in particular, the *sufi* poetry.³¹

In the 13th century – right in the period when the Syriac author lived – the description of the spring landscape, a banquet with wine and musicians singing and playing string instruments became an important part of the Persian *ghazal* that underwent an influence of the *sufi* symbolic and used these already existing poetic topoi for mystical allegories.³² Quite often after these descriptions of the nature and a banquet, a didactic philosophic passage is introduced, just like in the “spring *ghazal*” by Sa’dī (died 1292), the great Persian contemporary of Khāmīs, whose literary works the Syriac author might have known and imitated in the poem being discussed.³³

The motif of the bird’s flying away – i.e. the departure of the soul – is exploited by Khāmīs in the *sōghūthā* on the ringdove published and discussed by myself elsewhere.³⁴ One can assume that this poem as well as other *sōghyāthā* by Khāmīs were meant for singing. First, the form itself emerged as strophic hymns for the Church service. Secondly, in the manuscripts of this author’s poetry collections, “voices” (tunes) are designated at which they were to be performed. That is how it looks like with the Syriac Church hymns of various periods and by different authors. But in case of the *sōghyāthā* by Khāmīs, the tune in the title of one of the pieces speaks for itself and has little to do with the common Church repertoire, reading: ܘܪܝܫܘܢܐ ܕܘܫܘܒܐ (At the tune: rise, cupbearer).³⁵

30 For instance, see Rejsner, *The Evolution of the Classical Ghazal in Farsi*, p. 55.

31 See A. Pritula, “O Ringdove! Where Are You Heading For? A Syriac Dialogue Poem of the Late 13th Century”, *Syriscche Studien: Beiträge zum 8. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Salzburg 2014*. Edited by Winkler, Dietmar W., *Orientalia – Patristica – Oecumenica* 10, Wien, 2016, pp. 351–360.

32 See *ibid.*, pp. 55, 62.

33 See *ibid.*, pp. 167–169.

34 See Pritula, “O Ringdove! Where Are You Heading For?”, pp. 351–360.

35 Borg. Sir. 33, fol. 249r. This refers to the poem immediately following the one being published here.

Thus, from the standpoint of contents, the poet obviously followed the Persian ghazal motifs, whereas metrically, he obtained the strophic structure of the traditional Syriac *sōghūthā*. At the same time, he introduced a regular end-rhyme in the piece that turns it in a monorhyme, an obligatory characteristic of the ghazal form. This illustrates Khāmīs' originality in poetic technique and his attempts to create Syriac verse texts of the new style that had to combine the features of his native poetic tradition with the borrowed achievements of the Persian-Arabic poetry.

Supplement

Translation

Text

[fol. 223r] By the late Khāmīs
sōghūthā, an ornate one

ܕܡܚܬܝܢ ܡܚܘܒܝܗ
ܗܘܫܒܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ 36

1. Time has stretched out,
and suffering has passed.
Arise, oh honorable companion,
let us rejoice now
in the tree shadows
on a meadow with lilies,
to the young vine sprouts
and to the coach of the scents
of human vapor.

[1] ܕܡܚܬܝܢ ܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܘܫܘܒܝܗ
ܗܘܫܒܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܡܘܫܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܝܫܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܬܝܝܬܝܗ ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ
ܬܚܘܒܝܗ ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ
ܥܠ ܗܡܘܕܝܗ ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ
ܘܡܘܫܒܝܗ 37
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ

2. And since the time has allowed,
do not linger, lazybones!
With a prudent friend,
sit down at the bank of the spring
pass the bowls around,
pour out the dried fruits
burn the fragrancy of scents,
drive away concern
before the sun sets.

[2] ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܡܘܫܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܫܘܚܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ
ܕܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ

36 Borg. Sir. 33, Trichur 25 ܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ; Hošabbā 2002 ܡܚܘܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ.

37 Borg. Sir. 33, Trichur 25, Hošabbā 2002 ܡܘܫܒܝܗ ܫܘܚܒܝܗ.

3. From the ancient purple,
 reach quiet
 and drink with the one who is desired
 attainment of happiness
 at the sound of the strings
 and the fragrancy of incense,
 with your friends and beloved
 before you vanish!
 And throw away reasoning!

[3]³⁸

³⁹

 ❖

4. And do not think that you stay
 here constantly!
 Death is to come that we will feel.
 And we will undergo changes.
 Arise before the time
 of the disarraying death
 and recollect
 the hour of demise
 and the departure of the soul!

[4]

 ❖

5. Since you do not know
 where your night shelter is,
 and are not aware
 when your death is.
 Be vigilant in mind
 [fol. 223v] and move / towards the time,
 when the dove flutters away
 and abandons the nest,
 and never gets imprisoned again.

[5]

 /
⁴⁰
⁴¹
 ❖

38 Vat. Sir. 186 < stanza 3.
 39 Borg. Sir. 33
 40 Trichur 25
 41 Trichur 25 A feature of the manuscript is vowel variation a/ā.