marggam
Digital Library of Christianity in India
www.marggam.com

ASSYRIAN-SYRIAC CHANTS FROM THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

EVE GEORGES SADA
Norman, Oklahoma

2021

A DOCUMENT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

www.TheCMSIndia.org
CHRISTIAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

marggam
Digital Library of Christianity in India

www.marggam.com

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

ASSYRIAN - SYRIAC CHANTS FROM THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

A DOCUMENT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

EVE GEORGES SADA
Norman, Oklahoma
2021

www.TheCMSIndia.org

CHRISTIAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

marggam
Digital Library of Christianity in India
www.marggam.com

ASSYRIAN - SYRIAC CHANTS
FROM THE LITURGY OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

A DOCUMENT

APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Richard Zielinski, Chair

Dr. David Howard

Dr. Jennifer Saltzstein

Dr. Jeffrey Swinkin

Dr. John Jones

www.TheCMSIndia.org
CHRISTIAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

© Copyright by EVE GEORGES SADA 2021
All Rights Reserved

Table of Contents

List of Tables ix
Acknowledgments x
Preface xiii
Abstract xiv

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose 1
Significance of the Study..... 2
Scope and Limitations 4
Structure and Procedure 5

CHAPTER 2: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Assyrians 7
Music and Poetry 8
The Writing System 14
Consonants & Vowels 15

CHAPTER 3: THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

An Overview on the History of the Church 19
Prominent Church Writers (4th -7th) centuries 24
- Mar Aprem (St. Ephrem) ܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ 4th cen. (c.306-373) 25
- Mar Marutha of Maypharqaṭ ܡܪܝ ܡܪܘܬܐ 4th cen. (died c.420) 27
- Mar Narsai ܡܪܝ ܢܪܣܝ 5th cen. (c.399- c. 502) 30
- Mar Baḇai the Great ܡܪܝ ܒܒܝ ܪܒܐ 6th cen. (c. 551-628) 32

CHAPTER 4: CHANTS AND HYMNS

Church Hymnody 34
The Liturgical Year 35
Chant and Homilies Themes 37
The Writing Style and Genres 42
- *Soghithā* ܣܘܓܝܬܐ 44
- *Madrāšā* ܡܕܪܫܐ 46
- *`Onithā,* ܥܢܝܬܐ 47
- *Tešbuḥta* ܬܫܒܚܬܐ 48
- *Memrā* ܡܐܡܪܐ 49

Chant Melodies 50
Women's Choirs 52

CHAPTER 5: CHANTS AND HYMNS

1. Hymns of Advent (*Khathbshabe D-Subara*) 63
Teshbokhta: Brikh Khannana - Blessed is the Compassionate One
ܒܪܝܟ ܚܢܢܐ
ܡܪܝ ܒܪܟܬܐ: ܚܕܝ ܒܢܝ

2. The Feast of the Nativity of Christ (*`Eda D-Yalda D-Maran*) 69
Madrāsha: Shukha L-haw Yalda - Glory to That Child
ܠܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܪܢ
ܡܕܪܫܐ: ܫܘܒܚܐ ܠܗܘ ܝܠܕܐ

3. The Feast of the Epiphany (*`Eda D-Dinkhe D-Maran*) 73
Soghitha: Ri`yan Shaqlan - John the Baptist and Our Lord
ܠܝܠܕܐ ܕܡܪܢ
ܣܓܝܬܐ ܕܝܟ ܥܠ ܡܥܒܕ : ܝܘܚܢܢ ܡܥܡܕܢܐ

4. The Rogation of the Ninevites (*Ba`utha D-Nenwayeh*) 85
Madrāsha: Khannana Wa-mleh Rakhmeh - Kind and Merciful
ܚܢܢܐ ܘܡܠܐ ܪܚܡܐ
ܡܕܪܫܐ:ܒܪܟܐ ܘܡܠܐ ܪܚܡܐ

5. The Great Lent (*Sawma Rabba*) 89
Madrāsha: Ha Rakhmeh D-Maggan - Behold! God's Free Mercy
ܗܐ ܪܚܡܐ
ܡܕܪܫܐ: ܗܐ ܪܚܡܐ ܕܡܓܢ

6. The Palm Sunday (*`Eda D-Osha`neh*) ……92
`Onitha: Ţuwa L-Yallude - Blessed are the Children
ܥܝܕܐ ܕܢܘܬܐ ܠܝܠܕܐ
ܚܫܒܚܐ: ܛܘܒ ܠܝܠܕܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ

7. Holy Maundy Thursday (*`Eda D-Pişkha*) ……..…..96
Madrāsha: Tawdi Lamshikha - Thanks be to Jesus
ܥܝܕܐ ܕܦܨܚܐ
ܡܕܪܫܐ: ܐܘܕܝ ܠܡܫܝܟܐ

8. Good Friday (*Ruta D-Khasha*) ……..…..…. 100
Madrāsha: It`ir Shahre Zmar - Stay Alert O Watchers!
ܪܘܬܐ ܕܚܫܐ
ܡܕܪܫܐ: ܐܝܬ ܥܝܪ ܫܗܪܐ ܙܡܪ ܘܡܕܐ

9. Great Saturday (*Shaptha Rabtha*) ……...104
Teshbokhta: Brikh Ithya - Blessed Be the One
ܫܒܚܬܐ ܒܪܝܟ ܐܝܬܝܐ
ܫܒܚܬܐ: ܒܪܝܟ ܐܝܬܝ ܠܒܥܠܐ

10. Easter Vigil (*Shahra D-Qyamta*) ……...107
Soghitha: Bazqiputha Tahra Khzith - The Cherub and the Thief
ܣܓܝܬܐ ܕܩܨܛܐ
ܫܒܚܬܐ: ܒܙܩܝܦܘܬܐ ܛܥܪܐ ܚܙܝܬ ܣܝܡ

11. The Feast of the Holy Resurrection (*`Eda D-Qyamta*) ……...120
`Onitha: Shabakh L-Marya - Praise God in His Sanctuary… Hallelujah
ܥܝܕܐ ܕܩܨܛܐ
ܫܒܚܬܐ : ܒܩܕܫܘ ܠܐܠܗܐ

12. The Ascension of Christ (*`Eda D-Sulaqa D-Maran*) ……..…..122
`Onitha: L-Khorsia D-Khila - Your Throne is Majestic
ܥܝܕܐ ܕܣܘܠܩܐ ܕܡܪܢ
ܫܒܚܬܐ: ܟܘܪܣܝܐ ܕܚܝܠܟ

13. The Feast of Pentecost *(`Eda D-Panţequsţeh*) ……..……126
Soghitha: B-`Eda Pşikha - At the Joyful Festival
ܥܝܕܐ ܕܦܢܛܩܘܣܛܝ
ܫܒܚܬܐ: ܒܥܝܕܐ ܕܦܨܚܐ

CHRISTIAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA

14. The Feast of the Transfiguration (*`Eda D-Gilyaneh*) ……..…133
Teshbokhta: Tawdi L-Ṭawa - Thanks be to the Good One
ܒܙܒܐ ܕܝܟܝܗ ܕܡܪ̈ܝ
ܐܬܚܦܣܐ: ܗܘ ܒܪܟ ܠܡܪ̈ܝ

15. The Feast of the Holy Cross (*`Eda D-Ṣliwa*) ……..…137
Madrāsha: Brikhu D-Waṣliweh - Blessed is He
ܒܙܒܐ ܕܨܠܝܒܐ
ܒܪܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܨܠܝܒܐ: ܚܕܝܬ ܕܒܨܠܝܒܐ

16. The Feast of the Sanctification or Hallowing of the Church (*Quddash `Edta*) ……140
`Onitha, Ni`ol B-Thawditha L-Heklakh - We Enter with Solemnity
ܥܢܝܬܐ
ܥܘܠ ܒܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܠܗܝܟܠܐ: ܥܘܠ ܒܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܠ-

17. Antiphons of the Martyrs (*ʿOnyātha D-Sahde*) ……..…144
`Onitha: Sahde Qadishe - The Holy Martyrs
ܥܢܝܬܐ ܕܫܗܕܐ
ܥܢܝܬܐ: ܫܗܕܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ

18. Hymns for Sundays and Feast Days (*Khaḏbshabeh W-d-`Eḏe*) ……148
Teshbokhta: Maran Ishu - Our Lord Jesus
ܕܫܒܚܬܐ ܕܒܝܕܐ
ܐܬܚܦܣܐ: ܡܪܢ ܝܫܘ

19. Hymns of Ordinary Days (*Soghyāthā D-Khashkhan L-Khulyom*)……..…151
Soghitha: Nwiye W-Malke - Prophets and kings
ܐܬܚܦܣܐ ܕܫܒܫ ܟܠܗܘܢ
ܐܬܚܦܣܐ: ܢܒܝܐ ܘܡܠܟܐ

20. Hymns of Holly Communion for Everyday……...154
(*Soghyāthā D-Qurbana D-Khashkhan L-Khulyom*)
Soghitha: Bashweekhuthhon - Upon Their Glory
ܗܘܠܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܕܟܐ ܕܫܒܫ ܟܠܗܘܢ
ܗܘܠܝܬܐ: ܒܥܒܝܫܘܬܗ̇ܘܢ

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Conclusion 159
Transliteration Sheet Guide 162

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Definitions of Terms (English / Syriac 165
Appendix B: Definitions of Terms (Syriac / English) 180

BIBLIOGRAPHY 196

KEYWORDS:

Church of the East, Syriac Chants, Assyrian Chants, Aramaic Chants, East Rite Tradition, Early Christian chants, Mar Aprem (Ephrem), Mar Marutha, Mar Narsai, Mar Babai the Great, Soghyatha, Madrashe, Tishbhatha, Onyatha, Mermre, Qinatha, Zmiratha.

List of Tables

Table 1. The Alphabet System 16

Table 2. Vowels (diacritical marks) *Zāw'ē* ܙܐܘܝܬܐ of Eastern Syriac Dialect 17

Table 3. Hard and Soft Articulation
Qušāya ܩܘܫܝܬܐ and *Rukākhā* ܪܘܟܝܟܬܐ 18

Table 4. Liturgical Weeks According to the Church of the East
ܫܒܥܬܐ ܒܝ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ 37

Table 5. Romanization Comparison Table 162

Table 6. Conjunction and Preposition Words Table 165

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All thanks to God, who strengthened me to finish this research and all the degree requirements during the challenging time of the pandemic caused by COVID-19. The people who helped me out throughout my journey are many. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Richard Zielinski, and to my committee members, Dr. David Howard, Dr. Jennifer Saltzstein, Dr. Jeffery Swinkin, and Dr. John Jones. I thank you for supporting my decision to choose my research topic and for providing guidance and feedback. I also want to thank Dr. Elizabeth Avery for all the assistance. Sincere thanks to Dr. Matthew Stock, to the staff at OU Fine Arts Library in Norman and OU Tulsa library, for assistance and for providing all the materials I requested for my research. I am deeply grateful to my parents Georges and Easter, my brother Dr. Samuel for your comments, prayers, and support. Special thanks go to my amazing husband Nabil for all your support and sacrifice, my son John, and my daughter Joy for understanding my dual responsibilities as a mother and a student, and for reviewing my document.

Finishing my last music recital during the pandemic would not have been possible without the assistance of all my beloved friends at Asbury Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Especially the music director and conductor Mr. Michael Kemp for providing the time, support and for participating in singing as well. I am in debt to Sheryl Martin and all members of Asbury church choir, organist, pianist, and Orchestra. My special thanks also to all OU student singers and instrumentalists, who were part of all my recitals. I would like to thank my talented friend from Jordan Raad Alzabin for providing the string quartet arrangement, and many thanks to Glades Khamoo for singing the solo hymn in the final recital remotely from Chicago. I am also grateful to Dr. Edward Torikian from the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK), Lebanon, for

the orchestration of two Syriac hymns. My deepest appreciation goes to the Vice - President of the University of Salamanca in Spain Dr. Efrem Yildiz for your insightful comments, suggestions, and words of encouragement.

I cannot forget to thank Deacon Awgen Badine from the Assyrian Church of the East in Arizona for providing the main liturgical books and the music CDs of the chants and *madrashe* which were performed by Deacon Yousif Nooru. Thank you to Ms. Dena Ismail from Chicago for sending me a chant book. I thank Dr. Samir Yohanna, the Genral of the Antonian Order of the Chaldeans in Erbil, Iraq for providing the sound files and other useful material for my study. My appreciation goes also to Pastor Marwan Abi Nader of the Maronite Church of Tulsa, Ok for your interest and assistance.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Professor Sebastian Brock for your enormous contribution in the field of Syriac studies, which I have benefited from. Moreover, I am deeply grateful for your words of encouragement and for all the time you spent translating the homily of Mar Narsai that I requested for this study. In addition, I would like to thank you for editing my translation of the chant text. I would also like to thank Dr. Joseph Amar for your guidance on the Syriac text and the English translation of the homily *memra* of St. Jacob on Saint Ephrem.

A special thanks to our beloved Assyrian singer Ms. Linda George in Chicago for your insights on the chants' tunes and your warm encouragement. My special thanks to the Oud player, Mr. Nenos Yousef in Sweden for transcribing the chants' music and providing the notation of the Maqam scales. Lastly, this study would not have been finished without the enormous help of the choir teacher at the Assyrian Church of the East in Toronto Canada Ms. Farida Binyamin Adam, who not only recorded the chants but also was an immense help for

explaining the liturgy, the Assyrian chant text, and the performance practice of the chants. Ms. Farida has been teaching the Assyrian language and choirs for forty years in Iraq, Jordan, and later in Canada. I would not have been able to complete this research without all the assistance I received from each and every person listed above. It was essential to have such wonderful and professional individuals to guide me throughout my research.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the people and the organizations that worked on "Syri.ac" the open-access comprehensive bibliography of Syriac resources website especially the University of Oklahoma and Princeton University, who hosted the "Syri.ac" website. This online source was one of the main sources for my research to find all the manuscripts of the liturgical books that include all the chants. The "Syri.ac" website includes more than 3,600 digitized manuscripts and many catalogues. The website provides a full description of each manuscript and many other resources of Syriac scholarship in different languages. Although the digitized manuscripts were available from their original websites or libraries, it was hard to find the topics, chants, or writers without the organizing offered by Syri.ac website.

PREFACE

As an Assyrian, born and raised in my country Iraq, I witnessed many events that were not only challenging for the Assyrian families but also were devastating. Growing up in Iraq during the wars was not an easy time. Keeping our language alive was also not easy. Although all Assyrian families spoke in Assyrian with their children at homes and gatherings, reading and writing our language was not allowed in public or private schools. Therefore, our Assyrian churches offered to teach the Assyrian language to preserve our language and culture. However, not every church could offer to do so.

My parents insisted on taking my brother and me to our Ancient Church of the East in Baghdad to learn how to read and write our Assyrian language properly. The classes were held during the extremely hot summer of Baghdad, where the temperature usually is above 100°F, knowing that the classes were held outdoor in the open area around the church! When I remember those days, despite the hot dry weather, it was a precious time, and I can see how it influenced and shaped my life later. If I did not get that initial learning, I would not have been able today to read my language in ancient manuscripts and apply it to my field of study.

When I decided to write on the chants of the Church of the East, I aimed to provide the textual and musical information, the genres, and styles of the chants in the context of their liturgical, cultural, and historical background. Such as the Antiphons of the Martyrs, or the Women's choirs. Therefore, in this research, I provided some information on events that occurred throughout the Church history, including the massacres and genocides that directly affected the existence of the chants, language, ancient churches, and monasteries. These churches and monasteries were the home of all the ancient manuscripts that contained the oldest Christian history, liturgical books, and chants.

Van Rompay, Lucas. 2011."*Narsai*." Edited by Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay. Digital edition prepared by David Michelson, Ute Possekel, and Daniel L. Schwartz. Gorgias Press; online ed. Beth Mardutho, 2018.

Vellian, Jacob. 2004. "The East Syrian Monastic Divine Office: A Study Based on Ms. Vat. Syr. 88." *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 56 (1–4): 293–301.

Vööbus, Arthur. 1965. History of the School of Nisibis. Louvain, Secrétariat du CorpusSCO.

Warda, Ninos. 2005. *SEYFO: The Assyrian Genocide in Intenational Law*. Harvard College Library Assyrian Collection. London: Firodil Pub House.

Watt, J. 2006. "Aramaic and Syriac." *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, December.

Wickes, Jeffrey. 2015. "Mapping the Literary Landscape of Ephrem's Theology of Divine Names." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 69: 1–14.

———. 2018. "Between Liturgy and School: Reassessing the Performative Context of Ephrem's Madrāšê." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 26 (1): 25-51.

Wigram, William A. 1910. *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church, or the Church of the Sassanid Persian Empire, 100-640 A.D. By W. A. Wigram*. England: Society for promoting Christian knowledge; ESGorham.

Witek, John W. 2007. "Review of Jingjiao: The Church of the East in China and Central Asia. Collectanea Serica." *China Review International* 14 (2): 513–15.

Yacoub, Joseph, and James Ferguson. 2016. *Year of The Sword: The Assyrian Christian Genocide, A History*. Oxford University Press.

Yildiz, Efrem. 1999. "The Assyrians A Historical and Current Reality." *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 13 (1): 15–30.

———. 2000. "The Aramaic Language and Its Classification." *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 14 (1): 23–44.

———. 2012. "The Assyrian Linguistic Heritage." In *The Assyrian Heritage: Threads of Continuity and Influence*.

———. 2016. "Los Cristianos Asirios Oriundos de Mesopotamia." *Revista de Pensamiento Personalista y Comunitario, Instituto Emmanuel Mounie. Madrid*, no. 121: 23–28.

———. 2016. *Himnos de Navidad y Epifanía*. Madrid: San Pablo.

———. 2020. *Grammar of Modern Assyrian Language*. Akkad book.

Yohannan, Abraham. 1916. *The Death of a Nation: Or, The Ever Persecuted Nestorians Or Assyrian Christians*. G. P. Putnam's sons.

Younan, Nadia. 2019. "Stateless Rhythms, Transnational Steps: Embodying the Assyrian Nation through Sheikhani Song and Dance." *Revue Européenne Des Migrations Internationales*, 35: 41–62.

Zeidieh, Ghyas. 2020. "A Performance Guide to the Syrian Composer Nouri Iskandar's 'Concerto for Cello and Chamber Orchestra' with Emphasis on Its Syrian and Assyrian Roots." Doctor of Musical Arts, University of Iowa.

marggam
Digital Library of Christianity in India
www.marggam.com

A digital archive of Christian Art, Books, Manuscripts & Manuals, Imagery Literature and Music.

Support Our Ongoing Projects

- Marggam Digital Library of Christianity in India.
- Aramaic Project - Reclaim Syriac to Reaffirm Identity.
- Encyclopedia of Syriac Chants.
- Resources for Researchers.
- Directory of Christaian Songs.
- Christian Arts / Music Iconography.



CHRISTIAN MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF INDIA
www.TheCMSIndia.org

An international forum for interdisiplinary discussion, and dissemination of knowledge,on Art, Literature and Music of about thirty million Christians in India

---

Christian Musicological Society of India, Josef Ross, 1st Floor, Peter's Enclave, Opp. Kairali Apts., Panampilly Nagar, Kochi Kerala, India-682036. Phone: +91 9496244981, +91 9446514981, Email - info@thecmsindia.org