MANOLIS PAPOUTSAKIS

Vicarious Kingship

Studien und Texte zu
Antike und Christentum
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Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity

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Vicarious Kingship

A Theme in Syriac Political Theology in Late Antiquity

Mohr Siebeck

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for Stavros Zoumboulakis
ἐμοὶ μύριοι

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Introduction

The idea that the ruler on earth functions as the administrative representative of God in heaven is hardly an invention of Syriac writers in Late Antiquity. It appears, however, that, within the Christian tradition, Syriac poets and homilists between the fourth and sixth centuries – the period covered in this study – are the first to introduce the concept of "vicarious kingship" into a carefully thought-out and consistent eschatological pattern.

I begin my exploration from the latter end of the designated period. Jacob of Serugh (died 521) introduces the theme of the *vicarious* kingship of Adam when he elaborates on Gen 1:26–27 in his verse-homily *On Tamar* (Gen 38), ll. 41–46. Why should this fifth / sixth-century homilist dwell upon the creation and appointment of Adam specifically as "vicarious king" in a composition on a distinctly *messianic* theme? In this monograph, I attempt to answer this basic question, working my way back to the fourth-century masters Ephrem (died 373) and Aphrahat (mid fourth century), and even to the Peshitta Old Testament. The argument is presented in three chapters: the first ("The vicarious kingship of David") is divided into eight sections, the second ("Towards a historicization of biblical exegesis") into five, while the third and last chapter ("The vicarious kingship of Adam"), which is the shortest of the three, consists also of five blocks.

In Chapter I ("The vicarious kingship of David"), section 1, my aim is to demonstrate that Ephrem's interpretation of Gen 49:10a–b, a key segment of the eschatological oracle concerning Judah (Gen 49:8–12), provides the basic framework according to which JSTamar 45–46 is formulated. In this couplet, Jacob carefully models the motif of the creation of Adam that he might serve as a vicarious king until Christ the King comes on the sharp contrast between David (and the Davidic kings), on the one hand, and Christ the King, on the other, which Ephrem reads into Gen 49:10a–b.[1] Indeed, the Jacobean conception is satisfactorily explained only against the backdrop of a set of ideas regarding the Davidic kingship as developed in the 360s with continual reference to Gen 49:10a–b.

[1] Throughout this study, I use the Christianizing rendering "Christ the King" for the phrase *malkā mšiḥā*, discussed in Chapter I, section 1. However, one should not lose sight of the Jewish background of this title ("The King Messiah"); see Sebastian Brock, "Two Editions of a New Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel: A Review Article," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 48/49 (2005/2006), pp. 7–18, at 16.

Once the sharp polarity which Ephrem reads into Gen 49:10a–b is clearly brought out in section 1, the contrast between David (and the Davidic kings), on the one hand, and Christ the King, on the other, is illuminated through comparison with Peshitta Jer 33:14–26, where a similar tension, already present in the Hebrew text, is heightened by the Syriac translator (section 2). This comparison becomes all the more relevant, seeing that, as is explained in section 3, Jer 33:14–26 is systematically piled upon Gen 49:10a–b both in Jewish and in Christian exegesis. Moreover, comparing the two passages proves especially fruitful for, in the process, Peshitta Gen 49:10a–b emerges as a *covenantal* statement whose *unconditionality* Ephrem tries to mitigate (sections 2, 3 and 4).

The language in which Ephrem couches his contrast within the framework of Gen 49:10a–b involves the construct chain *nāṭar dukktā* (pl. *nāṭray dukktā*), a calque on τοποτηρητής, by which the Latin administrative term *vicarius* is rendered into Greek. The technical background of *nāṭar dukktā*, as exploited by Ephrem, is discussed in Chapter II, section 1. In this study, I *contextualize* this term by rendering it, on the one hand, as "*vicarious* king," when the person to whom it is ascribed is juxtaposed and antithetically compared to Christ the King (*malkā mšiḥā*), the true Emperor and "Lord of Kingship" (*mārāh dmalkutā*), and, on the other hand (in Chapter III, sections 3, 3.1 and 3.2), as "*vicarious* priest," when the person to whom it is ascribed, within the interpretative framework of Gen 49:10a–b now transferred from the discourse of *kingship* to that of *priesthood*, is juxtaposed and antithetically compared to Christ the eternal High Priest and "Lord of Priesthood" (*mārāh dkumrutā*). In Ephrem's thinking, the "vicarious kings" (*nāṭray dukktā*) who made up the dynasty which God *promised* to David (cf. Peshitta Gen 49:10a) relate to Christ the King, according to the exegetically augmented form of Peshitta Gen 49:10b, in exactly the same manner as that in which the "promised land" (cf. Hebrews 11:9) relates to "heavenly Jerusalem" (cf. Hebrews 11:16 and 12:22). In both well-balanced and contrastive pairs, i. e. the one of "promised land" versus "heavenly Jerusalem" and the other of "vicarious kings" versus "Christ the King," we are dealing, in Ephrem's own words, with the relationship between an "image," or "likeness" (*dumyā*), and its "prototype," or "reality" (*quštā*). In order that I clearly bring out the *iconology* of the latter pair, I explore, in sections 5 and 6, the *iconology* of the former. In doing so, I explain how Ephrem weaves Hebrews 11:8–16 into his interpretation of Gen 15. The Abrahamic covenant regarding "land" is of the same type as the Davidic covenant regarding "dynasty," and Ephrem meticulously brings out its *promissory* character in his exposition of Gen 15 in *CommGen*.

In Chapter I, section 7, in preparation for the discussion of the technical term *nāṭar dukktā* in Chapter II, I translate, annotate and discuss Demonstration V ("On the Wars"), 23–24, a notoriously difficult text, where Aphrahat uses the term *nāṭar malkutā* ("keeper of the Kingdom") and related diction as he weaves Gen 49:10 into his argument about the invincibility of the Constantinian empire

in the face of an impending Sassasian assault. It is my contention that Ephrem is aware of the argument in Dem V, 23–24 and that he ingeniously adapts details of it so that they might fit his own purpose. In Dem V, 23–24, Aphrahat presupposes a tradition of apologetics which goes back to the second century and discovers, in the narrative of the *census* (cf. Luke 2:1–7), the beginning of a harmonious co-existence between the Roman empire and the Kingdom of God. However, he does not present that relationship with reference to *iconology*, surely implicit in the apologetics built on the Lukan account. Rather than working with the *prototype*–versus–*image* schema, which Ephrem adopts in *HNat* XVIII, 1–3, Aphrahat seeks to describe the polarity between the Kingdom of God and the Roman empire in terms of contemporary international relations, which would have made perfect sense to his immediate readership (in Dem V, it is the impending military confrontation between the Romans and the Sassanians that the controversialist attempts to place in salvation history). The shift from the representation of that polarity as attested in Dem V to an advanced iconology in the writings of Ephrem leads to the sharpening and adaptation of *nāṭar malkutā* ("keeper of the Kingdom"), a quasi-mythological conception, to *nāṭar dukktā* (cf. τοποτηρητής), surely evoking technical administrative language, in elaborations on Gen 49:10a–b. Again, this development is linked to the change of meaning which *malkutā* apparently undergoes in those contexts which Gen 49:10b, especially in its expanded version ("until there comes He to whom *malkutā* belongs"), determines exegetically. In such contexts, *malkutā* for Aphrahat appears primarily to mean "kingdom," the actual realm, be it heavenly or earthly. For Ephrem, by contrast, it primarily denotes "kingship," the imperial office, either that of Christ the King or that of the Roman emperors, His *vicarii.* Although I do not deny the occasional ambiguity of *malkutā*, there is, I believe, a difference in the manner in which these two authors use the term in this particular context.

Thus, in Chapter I, sections 1–7, it is established: a) that the Jacobean motif of Adam's creation and appointment as "vicarious king" is satisfactorily explained only against the background of Ephrem's thinking on the Davidic kingship with reference to Gen 49:10a–b; b) that the piling of Jer 33:14–26 upon Gen 49:10a–b has not only sharpened the contrast inherent in the oracular formulation of the latter passage, but it has also revealed its character, in the Peshitta, as a statement of "grant" ideology; c) that the "vicarious kings" (*nāṭray dukktā*) who made up the dynasty which God *promised* to David (cf. Gen 49:10a) relate to Christ the King (cf. Gen 49:10b) in exactly the same manner as that in which the "promised land" (cf. Hebrews 11:9) relates to "heavenly Jerusalem" (cf. Hebrews 12:22); and d) that Dem V, 23–24 is at the back of Ephrem's mind as he works out his own pattern according to which human kingship relates to the Kingship of Christ. In the eighth and last section of the first chapter, I return to a major source with reference to which the argument has been shaped in the previous sections, that is, Ephrem's *Commentary on Genesis* 111:29–114:11 on Gen 49:8–11, here trans-

lated in full, annotated and discussed. What interests me most is the manner in which Ephrem *segments* the Blessing of Judah in such a way as to create a sense of "historical" depth, or development, which should prove useful when ultimately he proceeds to invest Peshitta Gen 49:10a–b with the tension present at Peshitta Jer 33:14–21.

In Chapter II ("Towards a historicization of biblical exegesis"), I try to explain how in the 360s, during and after the short reign of emperor Julian "the Apostate" (died 363), Ephrem piles the Davidic dynasty upon the Constantinids and systematically reinforces the covenantal character of Peshitta Gen 49:10a–b at the same time as he mitigates its *unconditionality*. He does so by recourse to: a) language of "succession" (*yubbālā* = διαδοχή), by which the implications of the formula *lā neʿnad* ("[the sceptre] will not depart") at Gen 49:10a are reaffirmed; b) the concept of *vicarious kingship* (cf. *nāṭar dukktā*, a calque on τοποτηρητής = *vicarius*), already discussed in Chapter I, but here explored in greater detail; c) the theme of the *fealty* of the "vassal" to the "suzerain," who contracts the promissory covenant with him in reward for that proven virtue, as well as the concurrent theme of the *contrast* between fealty (characteristic of the exemplary "vassal") and lack thereof (characteristic of an adversary of that "vassal"). I suggest that Ephrem puts together such an enriched version of Gen 49:10a–b for highly polemical purposes, exploiting it in his writings against Julian "the Apostate," an epithet, first used by Gregory of Nazianzus, which has been only vaguely understood and which is here clarified.

Building on my discussion in the first two chapters, in the third and final chapter I return to the passage with which I open this study and try to explain how, in his verse-homily *On Tamar* (Gen 38), a composition on a distinctly *messianic* theme, Jacob of Serugh comes to adopt fourth-century use of the technical administrative term *nāṭar dukktā*, incorporated by Ephrem into multiple recastings of Gen 49:10a–b and long treated as a close synonym of *dumyā* (// *dmutā*, "likeness" = *ṣalmā*, "image"), in order to describe Adam upon his creation in the "image" and "likeness" of God (Jacob subscribes to a long tradition of interpreting the phrase "in our image, according to our likeness" as a case of hendiadys). In JSTamar 45–46, two separate exegetical patterns, each constituting a distinct attempt at dealing with Gen 1:26–27, are ingeniously interwoven. The one pattern centers on the glossing of "image" (*ṣalmā*) // "likeness" (*dmutā*) at Gen 1:26–27 specifically as an "*imperial* image" (*yuqnā* < [θεία] εἰκών) and presupposes the broadly assumed *vicarious* function of the *imperial images* in the Roman period. By virtue of the semantic parallelism between *nāṭar dukktā* (cf. τοποτηρητής = *vicarius*) and "*imperial* image" (*ṣalmā* // *dmutā* = *yuqnā*, reflecting [θεία] εἰκών), Adam, the "image" and "likeness" of God, the King of kings, was created in order *vicariously* to reign for Him. The other exegetical pattern, elaborated upon by Jacob of Serugh in *Letter* 23, 199:17–29, involves the subsuming of Gen 1:26–27 under the category of Peshitta Gen 49:10a–b, which Ephrem recasts as a promis-

sory formulation of mitigated unconditionality. Now, given that Ephrem contextualizes Gen 49:10a–b with reference to the Incarnation (cf. *HNat* VI, 19–20 and *CommGen* 113:17ff), it comes as no surprise that, in his verse-homily *On Tamar* (Gen 38), Jacob should, moreover, read Gen 1:26–27, retrojectively interpreted as a covenantal statement analogous to those addressed to Abraham and David, into the Lukan genealogy of Jesus into which, in a harmonizing fashion, he introduces Tamar, mentioned only by Matthew (1:3). At JSTamar 45–46, within a framework where the two genealogies of Christ are carefully blended, Peshitta Gen 49:10a–b and Gen 1:26–27 come to be exegetically interlaced; in Jacob's verse-homily *On Tamar*, messianic, that is, *eschatological* considerations come to be introduced into an exposition of the Creation of Man, a *protological* theme.

The *separate* origins and *independent* development of the two *imperial* themes as well as their subsequent interpretative *concurrency* in JSTamar 45–46 are discussed, in Chapter III, sections 3, 3.1 and 3.2, in the light of the ascription of *nāṭar dukktā* – this time, a *priestly* title (thus, "vicarious priest") – both to the *Levite* John the Baptist and to the ἀγενεαλόγητος Melchizedek. We are dealing with two distinct and competing traditions according to which the priesthood of Christ is approached in early Syriac: the one involves the theme of "vicariousness" *within* "succession," the other involves that of "vicariousness" *without* "succession." In formulating both, Jacob of Serugh resorts to the single pattern of Gen 49:10a–b (regarding *kingship*) as it is expounded by Ephrem. This study of kingship ends at a point where another monograph on priesthood may well begin. In Chapter III, section 5, a first step is taken towards exploring the Jacobean contrast between *kingly* Adam, who lacked fidelity to Christ, and *priestly* Noah, "the second Adam" and the progenitor's "replacement" and "successor," who remained loyal to Him.

In this study, I did not refrain from discussing Narsai, whose work is a component of the tradition upon which I have worked, because I felt that justice to his treatment of Gen 1:26–27 has already been done.[2] On the contrary, it was exactly because I felt that so much in his exegesis remains unsatisfactorily discussed that I decided to treat his *memre* separately. A fruitful way to approach that cerebral and lesser poet would be by studying his exegesis and compositional technique with continual reference to the rivalry with his brilliant younger contemporary, Jacob of Serugh. To the extent that their rivalry can be charted through the detailed study of texts, these two homilists retrospectively emerge "united in the strife that divided them." Exploring that antagonism should contribute something to our understanding of Syriac poetry and exegesis of the late fifth century. This is an area of great possibilities for scholars who are willing to dig

[2] For an overview, see Colette Pasquet, *L'homme, image de Dieu, Seigneur de l'univers. L'interprétation de Gn 1, 26 dans la tradition syriaque orientale*. Thèse présentée pour l'obtention du Doctorat conjoint en Histoire des religions et Anthropologie religieuse (Universite de Paris-Sorbonne) et en Théologie (Institut Catholique de Paris), 2006, pp. 147–189.

deep into the literary traditions of Late Antiquity.[3] Finally, here, I did not explore an important theme with which *vicariousness* becomes inextricably connected in the context of Gen 1:26–27, that is, the theme of the *unity* of God. Seeing that the complexity of this aspect of the interpretation of Gen 1:26–27 would have required yet another long chapter in order that its various emphases might be adequately brought out, I have chosen to discuss it in a separate article.

[3] For a recent contribution in this direction, see Lucas van Rompay, "Humanity's Sin in Paradise. Ephrem, Jacob of Serugh and Narsai in Conversation," in George Kiraz, ed., *Jacob of Serugh and his Times. Studies in Sixth-Century Syriac Christianity*, Piscataway, N. J., 2010, pp. 199–217. My detailed article "*United in the strife that divided them*: Jacob of Serugh and Narsai on Themes from Genesis" is forthcoming in *Δελτίο Βιβλικῶν Μελετῶν* 32.1 (June 2017).

Chapter I

The vicarious kingship of David

1. Messianic language in JSTamar 45–46

Jacob of Serugh introduces the theme of the *vicarious* kingship of Adam when he elaborates on Gen 1:26–27 in his verse-homily *On Tamar* (Gen 38), ll. 41–46. Why should this fifth / sixth-century homilist dwell upon the creation of Adam specifically as a "vicarious king" (*nāṭar dukktā*) in a composition on a distinctly messianic theme? In this study, I shall attempt to answer this basic question. In doing so, I shall necessarily limit myself only to some of the problems involved in the study of JSTamar 41–46:

ܐܒܘܟ ܪܚܡܢܐ ܟܕ ܓܒܠ ܠܗ ܒܨܠܡܗ ܠܐܕܡ܆
ܠܟ ܨܪ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܕܒܟ ܢܨܛܒܬ ܥܦܪܐ ܕܐܬܪܒ܀
ܕܡܘܬܟ ܝܗܒ ܠܗ ܠܐܕܡ ܕܢܠܒܫ ܟܕ ܒܪܐ ܠܗ܆
ܕܒܗ̇ ܢܡܠܟ ܗܘܐ ܥܠ ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܘܢܩܢܐ ܐܢܝܢ܀
ܒܡܦܘܚܝܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܥܒܕܗ ܟܕ ܥܒܕ ܠܗ܆
ܕܢܗܘܐ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܢܛܪ ܕܘܟܬܐ ܥܕ ܐܬܐ ܐܢܬ܀

When Your compassionate Father fashioned Adam in His image,
it was You He formed in him, so that in You the (lowly) dust, which was elevated to the state of majesty, might be adorned.

When He created him, it was Your likeness He gave Adam that he might put it on,
so that in it *he might reign* [*namlek*] over (all) created things and make them his own.

When He made him, it was by (an act of) *breathing* [*mappuḥitā*] that *He anointed him* [*mšiḥā ʿabdeh*, *lit.* "He made him anointed"],
so that he might be a *vicarious king* [*nāṭar dukktā*] in the world *until You come* [*ʿad ʾāte ʾatt*].[1]

Sebastian Brock noted that the title *malkā mšiḥā*, one of the features which links early Syriac literary tradition with the milieu that produced the Palestinian targumim and, thus, points to the Jewish Palestinian origins of at least one strand of Syriac Christianity, is primarily used in early writings and is revived, for good reasons, in the seventh century.[2] Moreover, he demonstrated that, from among

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[1] Unless otherwise stated, the translations in this monograph are mine.

[2] S. P. Brock, "Syria and Mesopotamia: The Shared Term *Malka Mshiḥa*," in M. Bockmuehl and J. C. Paget, eds, *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity*, London and New York, 2007, pp. 171–182; *id.*, "The Use of the Syriac Version in the

the passages where this messianic title crops up in the Palestinian targumim, in Syriac it becomes associated primarily with the Blessing of Judah at Gen 49:8–12. According to Brock, although the Jewish Palestinian attestations of the title focus on Gen 49:10, on the Syriac side the emphasis is placed on Gen 49:9 instead, indicating, thus, separate developments in the two traditions.[3] Upon closer consideration, however, it would seem that this last point is not so and that, on the contrary, there is continuity over this detail as well between the Jewish and Christian Aramaic traditions. Seeing that my interpretation of Jacob's lines hinges upon the fact that *malkā mšiḥā* relates specifically to Gen 49:10*b*, I should start by explaining why I believe this to be the case. Although my conclusion bolsters the link with Palestinian Judaism, I am not concerned with the problem of continuity *per se*.

Peshitta Gen 49:8–10 reads as follows:

ܝܗܘܕܐ ܐܢܬ ܢܘܕܝܟ ܐܚܝܟ ܐܝܕܟ ܥܠ ܩܦܠ ܒܥܠܝܟ ܒܢܝ ܐܒܘܟ ܢܣܓܕܘܢ ܠܟ ܓܘܪ ܐܪܝ ܒܪ ܛܪܦ ܒܪܝ ܥܠܬ ܟܪܥ ܫܟܒ ܟܐܪܝ ܘܟܠܒܝܐ ܡܢ ܝܩܝܡ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܢܣܬܠܩ ܫܒܛܐ ܡܢ ܝܗܘܕܐ ܘܡܚܩܩܐ ܡܢ ܒܝܢ ܪܓܠܘܗܝ ܥܕ ܕܝܐܬܐ ܕܠܗ ܘܠܗ ܢܣܒܘ ܥܡܡܐ

Judah, it is you your brothers will praise; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; the sons of your father will bow down before you.

Judah is the whelp of the lion; from murder, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down and crouched like a lion, and like the whelp of the lion, and who will rouse him up?

The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the expositor from between his feet, until there comes he to whom it belongs: it is him the peoples will expect.

As is well known, already in the fourth century Gen 49:10b appears in the expanded form "until there comes He to whom *malkutā* belongs" (*'dammā dnite*

Liturgy," in B. ter Haar Romeny, ed., *The Peshitta: Its Use in Literature and Liturgy*, Leiden, 2006, pp. 3–25, at 18–19; *id*., "Some Distinctive Features in Syriac Liturgical Texts," in R. R. Ervine, ed., *Worship Traditions in Armenian and the Neighboring Christian East*, Crestwood, New York, 2006, pp. 141–160, at 145; and *id*., "Divine Titles and Epithets in Syriac Writings: Some Approaches," *Parole de l'Orient* 38 (2013), pp. 35–48, at 43–44. For Brock's thesis regarding the Jewish Palestinian origins of a robust strand of early Syriac Christianity, see his "A Palestinian Targum Feature in Syriac," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 46 (1995), pp. 271–288, especially 279–281; *id*., "An Early Interpretation of *pāsaḥ*: *'aggēn* in the Palestinian Targum," in J. A. Emerton and S. C. Reif, eds, *Interpreting the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honour of E. I. J. Rosenthal*, Cambridge, U. K., 1982, pp. 27–34; *id.,* "Passover, Annunciation and Epiclesis: Some Remarks on the Term *'aggēn* in the Syriac Versions of Lk. 1:35," *Novum Testamentum* 24:3 (1982), pp. 222–233; *id.,* "The Lost Old Syriac at Luke 1:35 and the Earliest Syriac Terms for the Incarnation," in W. L. Petersen, ed., *Gospel Traditions in the Second Century: Origins, Recensions, Text and Transmission*, pp. 117–131, Indiana, 1989; and *id*., "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979), pp. 212–232.

[3] Brock, "Syria and Mesopotamia: The Shared Term *Malka Mshiḥa*," p. 177; *id*., "Divine Titles and Epithets in Syriac Writings," p. 44, n. 44.

man ddileh [*h*]*i malkutā*), a reading which also provides a link with Palestinian Judaism.[4] A witness to that form of the verse (cf. *CommGen* 113:20 and 114:7–8), Ephrem interprets Gen 49:10b christologically by strictly limiting the Judahite and Davidic interpretations to what precedes that segment of the prophetic utterance, i. e. to Gen 49:8–10a, cf. *CommGen* 113:25–30:

> Indeed, although the passage (which begins) from "Judah, it is you your brothers will praise" [Gen 49:8a] and includes "the sceptre and the expositor will not depart" [Gen 49:10a] should be understood with reference to Judah and to the kingship of David and the sons of David, who (descended) from Judah, the passage, however, (which begins) from "until there comes He to whom it belongs [Gen 49:10b], etc." should be understood with reference to the Son of God *in truth* [*šarrirā'it*], and not by any means with reference to David and the sons of David, who (descended) from Judah.[5]

Here, the concern of Ephrem is not so much to restrict the christological interpretation to Gen 49:10b as to prevent the Davidic interpretation from being extended beyond Gen 49:10a.[6] Elsewhere in his œuvre Ephrem does not hesitate to *retroject* the christological interpretation upon "the whelp of the lion" at Gen 49:9.[7] A case in point is *HNat* VI, 19, where "the Whelp of the Lion" (*guryā daryā*), new-born Jesus, is antagonized by "the paltry Fox" (*ta'lā šiṭā*), Herod the Great, in accordance with a traditional reading of Matthew 2 in light of the Blessing of Judah.[8] In agreement with this reading of the Blessing, Jacob of Serugh does not extend the Davidic interpretation beyond Gen 49:10a and always interprets Gen 49:10b christologically. However, he also often reads "the whelp of the lion" at Gen 49:9 in the light of Gen 49:10b. Thus, in JSTamar 251–2, *guryā daryā* is taken in its Judahite context of Gen 49:9:

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[4] For the forms in which Gen 49:10b is attested in the *Demonstrations*, see T. Baarda, *The Gospel Quotations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage (I. Aphrahat's Text of the Fourth Gospel)*, Amsterdam, 1975, pp. 293 and 295–296, and R. J. Owens, *The Genesis and Exodus Citations of Aphrahat the Persian Sage*, Leiden, 1983, pp. 172–175. For Ephrem, see T. Jansma, "Ephraem on Genesis XLIX, 10. An Enquiry into the Syriac Text Forms as Presented in his Commentary on Genesis," *Parole de l'Orient* 4 (1973), pp. 247–256 (on Jansma's interpretation of the expanded reading, see further Brock, "The Lost Old Syriac at Luke 1:35 and the Earliest Syriac Terms for the Incarnation," p. 130). See also Brock, "Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources," p. 218; R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom*, Cambridge, U. K., 1975 (second edition: Piscataway, N. J., 2004), pp. 282–284; M. Weitzman, *Introduction to the Syriac Version of the Old Testament*, Cambridge, U. K., 1999, p. 137; J. F. Coakley, "Mushe bar Kepha and a Lost Treatise of Henana on Palm Sunday," *Le Muséon* 120 (2007), pp. 301–325. Jacob of Serugh himself often works with that form of the verset, cf., e. g., Prose Homily IV ("On Palm Sunday"), 14 and 28, ed. F. Rilliet.

[5] For an annotated translation and a discussion of *CommGen* 112:29–114:11, see section 8 below.

[6] On hypotheses regarding the identity of the exegete(s) against whom Ephrem's polemic in *CommGen* 113:21–25 is addressed, see section 8 below.

[7] This retrojection is attested already at Revelation 5:5. It should be recalled, however, that Revelation was translated into Syriac only in the sixth century.

[8] On the temporal adaptability of Gen 49:10b, taken to allude now to the Epiphaneia, now to the Parousia, see sections 7 and 8 below. *HNat* VI, 19–20 is discussed in Chapter II, section 5.1.

ܘܒܙܒܢ ܕܟܣܝ ܟܣܝܐ ܥܠ ܫܦܪ ܕܐܪܝܐ ܕܓܘܪܝܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܡܨܝܕ
ܠܓܘܪܝܐ ܕܐܪܝܐ ܕܢܬܟܒܫ ܒܗ ܘܢܬܚܒܫ ܒܗ ❊

And, while (Tamar) was covered up, her beauty was peeping out through her veil that it might become a snare for *the whelp of the lion* [*guryā daryā*] to get entangled in it. (tr. S. P. Brock, adapted)

By contrast, in the homily *On the Massacre of the Babes*, at JSB 1:141:14–15, Jacob identifies "the Whelp of the Lion" with new-born Jesus, closely following *HNat* VI, which he knows in depth:[9]

ܕܐܬ ܕܐܪܝܐ ܓܘܪܝܐ ܕܐܪܝܐ ܒܓܘ ܚܘܪܬ ܐܝ ܒܡܨܪ ܟܐ ܫܘܥܠܐ ܘܦܛܝܪ
ܘܡܬܗܘܠܠ ܕܐܬ ܠܡܚܒܠܗ ܕܐܬ ܒܥܠ ❊

The Whelp of the Lion [*guryā daryā*] was revelling in the forests of Egypt and the paltry Fox was strutting up and down, (seeking) to destroy Him.

Finally, it is the strict boundary between Gen 49:8–10a and Gen 49:10b that Dem IV ("On Prayer"), 6, PS I, 148:7–9 presupposes: *wabḥaṣṣeh 'itaw*[*hy*] [*h*]*wā guryā daryā Ihudā dbeh ṭmir* [*h*]*wā malkā mšiḥā* ("And in his [i. e. Jacob's] loins was the whelp of the lion, Judah, in whom *malkā mšiḥā* was hidden"). *Pace* Brock, here, Aphrahat does not "refer to *malkā mšiḥā* in connection with Gen 49:9," in contradistinction to Targum Neofiti, which reserves the messianic title for Gen 49:10b.[10] In Syriac, no less than in Jewish Aramaic, *malkā mšiḥā* gravitates towards Gen 49:10b, not towards Gen 49:9. The question regarding the segment of the Blessing to which this messianic title pertains will ultimately prove important for our understanding of JSTamar 45–46. As *CommGen* 113:25–30, quoted above, manifests, a clear line is drawn between, on the one hand, the Davidic kings, spoken about at Gen 49:10*a*, and, on the other hand, Christ (the King), spoken about at Gen 49:10*b*. This sharp contrast will become all the more evident, when it is further emphasized with reference to Jer 33:14–26 in section 2 and when its implications are brought out in section 4 below.

Before I take the first step towards interpreting JSTamar 45–46 in the light of the Blessing of Judah, I shall focus on a detail of Gen 49:10b which firmly ties the title *malkā mšiḥā* to that verset. Upon examination of the passages which Brock amassed in order to contextualize it, it transpires that *malkā mšiḥā* markedly tends to appear in connection with the verb "to come," which, as is well known, has strongly messianic connotations. Here, I only need to present a couple of examples:[11]

[9] On JSB 1:141:14–15, see my article "The Making of a Syriac Fable: From Ephrem to Romanos," *Le Muséon* 120 (2007), pp. 29–75, at 49–60.

[10] Brock, "Syria and Mesopotamia: The Shared Term *Malka Mshiḥa*," pp. 176–177.

[11] They are drawn from Brock, "Syria and Mesopotamia: The Shared Term *Malka Mshiḥa*," pp. 178–180.

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