

Regionalisation and the Integration of the Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity

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Abstracts

Volker Menze, Central European University Budapest: Ephrem the Syrian's Perception of Roman Emperors and Imperial Power

More than 20 years ago, Sidney Griffith wrote a seminal article on Ephrem and his understanding of church and state: "Ephraem, the Deacon of Edessa, and the Church of the Empire", in: *Diakonia. Studies in Honor of Robert T. Meyer*, ed. T. Halton and J.P. Williman, Washington: Catholic University of America Press 1986, 22-52. In this article, Griffith shows Ephrem's interaction with the "Church of the Empire" and non-Nicene "heretics" as well as with the Roman emperors. Griffith argues that Ephrem had an almost Eusebian understanding of church and state. Griffith expands on this in two further articles, mainly exploring Ephrem's *Hymns against Julian* and his *Hymns against Heretics*.

Since 1986 research on Ephrem the Syrian has greatly increased but due to Ephrem's theological-poetic oeuvre mainly directed towards exegetical and theological studies. For placing Ephrem into his historical context, scholars are still referred to Griffith's work and more recently to Andrew Palmer's article from 1999 ("The Prophet and the King: Mar Afrem's Message to the Eastern Roman Emperor", in: *After Bardaisan. Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han J.W. Drijvers*, ed. G.J. Reinink und A.C. Klugkist, Leuven: Peeters 1999, 213-236) who analyses one of Ephrem's *Hymn on Faith*.

In the context of a conference of "regionalization and integration of the Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity" it seems appropriate to re-examine the role of Roman emperors and imperial power in the works (mainly based on his *Hymns against Julian* and his *Carmina Nisibena*) of the provincial Ephrem the Syrian – an inhabitant of the border city of Nisibis, who witnessed and wrote about his home city's fall to the Persians in 363.