This collection of ten essays honors the career of Professor Sidney H. Griffith of the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. Griffith’s scholarship focuses on the Christian East, especially the Syriac Christian tradition, the tradition of Christian theologians writing in Arabic, and Muslim-Christian relations in the medieval period. This collection includes essays representative of only the first of these foci, and is organized around that tradition’s most famous and accomplished thinker, Ephrem of Nisibis (d. 373). The first section, “Poetry and Ephrem the Syrian,” includes essays from two of Griffith’s former students, Joseph P. Amar and Francisco Javier Martínez (who is now the Bishop of Córdoba, Spain). The second and longest section, “Texts, Terms and Metaphors,” includes five essays on a variety of topics, from sin and charity to radical renunciation (msarrqûtâ) to housekeeping as an ascetic theme in late antiquity. The third section, “After Ephrem the Syrian,” includes essays by each of the editors, as well as a Neo-Aramaic poem (and English translation) composed by Griffith’s former student and longtime colleague, Shawqi Talia—addressed to “Rabbi” Griffith on the occasion of the presentation of this festschrift. These contributions are sandwiched between an introduction, much of which is given over to Griffith’s biography, and a bibliography of his prolific scholarly career. As is always the case with such collections, the essays vary widely, not only in terms of theme, but also in terms of length: some are quite short (Anderson, Brock, Blanchard), while at least one is rather longer than the rest (Golitzen). All in all, the essays make for an interesting read for one already initiated into the joys of Syriac literature (in other words, these essays are not for the newcomer).

In “Syriac Strophic Poetry: Intercalated Psalms,” Joseph P. Amar examines a ramshô: a “vespers” text in which Psalm 51 is intercalated with strophic compositions narrating details of the Annunciation, or in the text’s own words, the “Announcement to the Bearer of God, Mary.” Of chief interest to this reader was how this text imagined the Trinity to have composed a fiery letter and to have dispatched an angel to deliver it to Mary, only to have the words of that letter, the very Word itself, enter into her ear and become incarnate. This contribution is followed by Francisco Javier
Martínez’s introduction to and translation of Ephrem’s hymns *De Virginitate* I-III (in Spanish).

In the third, very brief chapter, “Redeem Your Sins Through Works of Charity,” Gary Anderson uses a single verse, Daniel 4:24, as a lens through which to trace the notion of sin as a stain or burden in the First Temple period to the notion of sin as a debt to be repaid, including through almsgiving or charity, in the Second Temple period. This is followed by a rather long chapter by Alexander Golitzin, “A Monastic Setting for the *Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel*,” a seventh-century, West Syrian “historical apocalypse”—meaning that it focuses not on an ascent to heaven, but rather on a description of the end times. According to Golitzin, this text is less interested in having its readers “stand in attendance of the eschaton” and more interested in having them “seek to embody it,” to “resemble the Kingdom” that is on the horizon. The problem, as Golitzin sees it, is that other seventh-century apocalyptic authors (such as Pseudo-Methodius) were whipping up monastic audiences into a worried frenzy about “the collapse and rise of human empires.” But the monastic author of the *SAD*, Golitzin avers, isn’t concerned with anything “so small.” In order to rebut the apocalypticists’ appeals to the Book of Daniel, the monastic author is compelled to write under a pseudonym so as to “fight fire with fire.” This is a similar explanation to the one Golitzin has given elsewhere for the pseudonymity of the sixth-century *Corpus Dionysiacum*, namely that it is a strategy for claiming ancient authority in order to rebut the claims of contemporary but wayward monks. Michael J. Hollerich contributes an introduction and summary of a Syriac life of Athanasius of Alexandria, dating from some time after the mid-fifth century. What is most interesting about this text is how the larger tradition of Athanasian biography of which it partakes “was fertile and versatile enough to cross linguistic, geographical, and confessional lines.” Whatever their differences, it seems, Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, Byzantines, Monophysites (such as Severus of Antioch), and Nestorians (such as Barhadbeshabba) all could get behind Athanasius and endorse his Nicene orthodoxy—as if pining for a figure who could embody an elusive, truly ecumenical orthodoxy.

The next two chapters deal explicitly with asceticism. In Chapter 6, “Radical Renunciation: The Ideal of *msarrqûta*,” Sebastian P. Brock surveys the appearance of this term in Syriac ascetic literature and its different connotations. The noun is formed from the pa’el of *s-r-q*, “to empty,” and in fact the Peshitta translates Phil 2:7 (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, “he emptied himself”) as