

Robert Doren (ed/trans),

Stewards of The Poor: The Man
of God, Rabbula, and Thiba in
Fifth-Century Edessa

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THE MAN OF GOD

THE ORIGINAL SYRIAC LIFE ^{early 6th c.}

THE ACCOUNT OF THE MAN OF GOD from the city of Rome. He was triumphant and received a crown because of his poverty and toil for Christ's sake in the days of the holy Mar Rabbula, bishop of Edessa.

My friends, let us hear with discerning affection the account of the marvelous man. For we rightly call him an angel of God, as he despised all the pleasures of this transitory world. Now the account of him is like this.

This man was heir to great wealth, but he chose for himself the hatred of wealth. He exchanged it for the love of poverty: not ordinary poverty, but [one]¹ of shame and reproach. For he was a destroyer of pride by his abasement, and of abundance² by his abnegation, but he was a builder of divestment³ and of abasement.⁴ He was perfect in fasting: from his belly⁵ he barred food, and he did not yield to his belly so that he might not be enslaved like Esau.⁶

¹Amiaud, following BM Add 14655, reads 'a true [poverty]' (ܠܚܝܠܘܬܗ).

²Amiaud reads ܠܚܝܠܘܬܗ, 'haughtiness'.

³To translate ܠܚܝܠܘܬܗ, I have used the root meaning of ܠܚܝܠܘܬܗ, 'to take off, to strip' rather than 'to send'. McLeod emends to ܠܚܝܠܘܬܗ, 'eremital life'.

⁴A resonance to Jer 1:10: 'I appoint you . . . to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant'.

⁵Amiaud: 'mouth'.

⁶Gen 25:29-34.

