

The Syriac Chronicle of Michael Rabo (The Great)
A Universal History from the Creation

Translation and Introduction by
Matti Moosa

A publication of the Archdiocese of the
Syriac Orthodox Church for the Eastern United States



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Dedicated to:

His Eminence Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim, Metropolitan of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch of the Eastern Part of the United States of America, for his most commendable effort in promoting and perpetuating the legacy of the Syrian Orthodox Church

And

In loving memory of my father Ishaq Moosa (d. 1960), deacon and malphono (teacher), who for decades served the Syrian Orthodox Church and the School of Mor Tuma (St. Thomas) in Mosul, Iraq

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In Memory of their parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, uncles and aunts. Elias and Jamila Johar Yunan Khbaiz Id Dayr, Rose, Yunan, Yacoub, Marcos and Mary who toiled to give their children the best available education.

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BOOK ELEVEN

COVERS THE PERIOD FROM THE YEAR 6115 OF ADAM, THE YEAR 593 A.D. AND TH YEAR 922 OF THE GREEKS. IN THIS PERIOD, EMPEROR HERACLIUS RULED THE ROMANS, AND KHUSRO RULED THE PERSIANS. IN IT, TOO, BEGAN THE KINGDOM OF THE ARABS (MUSLIMS) BY MUHAMMAD

Chapter One: On the commencement of the reign of Heraclius, and the affairs of the church at that time¹⁶³⁹

Heraclius ruled in the year 922 of the Greeks (A.D. 616) which is the year 21 of Khusro.

Phocas was killed by the Romans who had earlier killed Maurice and his children.¹⁶⁴⁰

When he assumed power, Heraclius sent a delegation to Khusro, king of Persia, seeking peace. He said, "We killed Phocas because he killed your friend the Emperor Maurice." He believed that peace could be achieved by such stratagems. Khusro, however, was not deceived. He not only did not conclude peace with the Romans, but also seized from them several regions.

In the first year of Heraclius, the Persians attacked Antioch and captured it. The Persian and the Roman armies engaged in battle, and the Romans were defeated after the Persians finished off a great number of them.

In the second year of Heraclius, which is the 22nd year of Khusro, Bahram, the Persian army commander, seized Caesarea Cappadocia. He killed thousands of people, plundered, took captives, and then withdrew.

In the fourth year of Heraclius, Shahrbarz subdued Damascus for the Persians. In the following year, he seized Khalil (Hebron) and the Jordan basin.

In the sixth year of Heraclius, Shahrbarz occupied Jerusalem and killed ninety thousand inhabitants. The Jews bought the Christians from the Persians for cheap prices and killed them.

The Persians took Zachariah, the Chalcedonian bishop of Jerusalem, captive and sent him to Persia accompanied by the wood of the adored Cross. They also took captive the Jews who bought the Christians and killed them, and did not leave one Jew in Jerusalem or its environs.

In the next year, Shahrbarz occupied Egypt. He seized Alexandria and killed a great number of its citizens. He also made Libya subject to Persians up to the boundaries of Ethiopia. In that same year, the Persian Shahin attacked Chalcedonia, captured it by force and destroyed it, and then withdrew. Thus, the Persians extended their influence to the Roman countries and to Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia), Syria, Cilicia, Palestine, Egypt and the entire seacoast. They plundered and took numberless captives. They carried to Persia treasures, slaves and other things like quadrangular marble stones, and many pieces of marble from Rome, Syria, and other western regions.

Heraclius made his son Constantine a Caesar in order to send him at the head of the army to fight the Persians, which had controlled a part of the Roman countries that extended from the Pontos (Black Sea) to the East.

In this time appeared the name of Muhammad in interior Arabia conducting merchant trips to Arabia and Palestine.¹⁶⁴¹

In the year in which Heraclius ruled, (A.D. 616) the Chalcedonian patriarch in Antioch called Anastasius was killed, and the Chalcedonian See of Antioch was bereft of a patriarch for 38 years. As for us, the Orthodox, our Patriarch of Antioch at that time was Athanasius who made union with the Copts, which he concluded with Anastasius, pope of Alexandria, as we have already discussed in details in Book Ten.

¹⁶³⁹ It should be noted that the entire Chapters of Book Eleven are not numbered in the Syriac text. The numbering is mine.

¹⁶⁴⁰ *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 142.

¹⁶⁴¹ Muhammad was born in 570 or 571 A.D. As a young man, he was employed by his first wife Khadija, a businesswoman, on trades with Syria.

In Alexandria, Cyrus became patriarch of the Chalcedonians.

In Constantinople, Sergius became patriarch. He sent Isaiah, a bishop from Persia, to Edessa.

Heraclius addressed a letter to Patriarch Athanasius and the entire congregation of our faith as follows:

From Heraclius, Emperor of the Romans, the believer in Christ God, to the Orthodox.

“Although we had no opportunity to investigate the doctrinal issues, yet by our orthodox faith which is in our Lord Jesus Christ, the one true God, we glorify and say that, the Son and the Word of God who has no beginning, and who was with the Father and the Holy Spirit before all the worlds, he, as one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, the consubstantial and maker of life, willed to be incarnated from our lady the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and was born from her for the salvation of mankind. He is a true God and he himself the God who suffered, and was crucified in the time of Pontius Pilate. The impassioned God suffered in his body. Certainly, suffering did not touch the united divine and human natures of God. We say concerning Jesus that he is the Word of God and his pure Son. He is of two natures united without confusion or division; he is one energy as Cyril of blessed memory said, ‘One nature of the incarnated Word of God.’ This indicates two natures united without confusion or division. No confusion is ascribed to one nature, and no division signifies one united nature of the incarnated Word of God. Of course, there is no division in the expression “two united natures.” Therefore, we anathematize anyone who believes otherwise, even if he was a member of the Council of Nicaea, the Council of Constantinople, the Council of Ephesus or the Council of Chalcedon.”

In the year in which Heraclius ruled the Romans, a sun eclipse took place for four hours. The plants perished and the grains disappeared, and famine prevailed.

In this year, Tayoye robbers from Arabia came, plundered Syria, and took captives. They destroyed many regions and killed many people. They burned everything without passion or mercy.

It is said that when one of the Roman emperors learned that his army was preparing to rebel against him, he enticed them to fight each other. He ordered some of them to wear yellow garments, and others red garments, and they fought each other. With this trick, he was able to get rid of them and their rebellion against him. The emperors of today, however, like Maurice, Phocas and Heraclius, are divested from wisdom because of distancing themselves from godliness. Therefore, “God gave them over to a depraved mind,” as it is written,¹⁶⁴² and they went on destroying each other. For this reason, Edessa suffered a great deal of evil. Khusro appointed a nobleman as governor of the city. However, he was greatly begrudged by the people who slandered him to Khusro, who believed them and did not rebuke them. The people asked the governor to meet with Khusro to ask him to lower the taxes. He did and obtained an order to dispense of matters in their interest as he wished. Upon his return, he met two unscrupulous envoys whom the Edessans had sent to Khusro to slander him. When the governor learned of this, he left them to heap up their abuses against him with as much force as the devil had given them. The governor returned to Khusro and informed him about the abundance of silver in Edessa. He advised him to gather it from the common people, from the churches and the elders, and from everywhere. Khusro sent to Persia 120,000 rats (pounds) of silver.

Chapter Two: On the appearance of Muhammad, and the response of Patriarch Athanasius to the letter of Heraclius, the Roman Emperor

In the year 933 of the Greeks (A.D. 622) and the 12th year of Heraclius and the 33rd year of Khusro, the kingdom of the (Tayoye) Arabs began. A man called Muhammad from the Quraysh tribe in the district of Yathrib, (more correctly Makka), claimed that he was a prophet.¹⁶⁴³ His followers are called Tayoye

¹⁶⁴² Romans 1:28.

¹⁶⁴³ Iliyya (Elijah) Bar Shinaya, a tenth-century Nestorian chronicler, correctly says that Muhammad ibn Abd Allah, the Prophet of the Muslims and their first king, went to the city of Yathrib and ruled it in the year 933 of the Greeks /A.D 622. See *The Chronicle of Iliyya Bar Shinaya*, translated from the Syriac into Arabic by the Rev. Dr. Yusuf Habbi (Baghdad, 1975), 128).

(Arabs), Ishmaelites, or Hagerites in relations to Ishmael and Hagar. They were also called Saracens in relation to Sarah and Midianites, that is, the sons of Keturah.¹⁶⁴⁴ However, although they had different names, their common name is Arabs. They call themselves by this name that is derived from Arabia Felix, an area situated between the River Euphrates to the north, and to the sea in the south, and from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf to the East.

Muhammad ibn Abd Allah traveled from his city of Yathrib to Palestine (Syria) for business. By conversing with the Jews, he became familiar with their doctrine of one God. When he saw that his kinsmen worshiped stones, wood, and other created objects, he admired the doctrine of the Jews and was inclined to it. Upon returning to his country, he proposed this doctrine to his people. At the beginning, few followed him, and then they increased in number. When he gained more power, he commanded them to obey him lawfully, sometimes by threats and other times by praising the land of Palestine. He said to them, "Palestine the good earth which was given to those people (the Jews) because of their belief in the one God." He also told them, "If you listen to me and forsake these false idols and believe in the one God, God will give you that good earth." With such talk, he deceived many. He began to form from them a gang and engaged in ambushes in the land of Palestine. He sent delegations to Palestine that they might hear what encouraged them to believe him and recognize him. In fact, he himself went there several times without sustaining any harm. He plundered and returned loaded with booty. The Tayoye (Arabs) believed what he had told them for their love of money, which was their wont. Thus, they went there, including those who did not yet obey him, pillaging because they saw that his followers had become rich. Therefore, they likewise followed him. In addition, when the number of those subjected to him increased, he did not personally lead those who went to plunder, but sent others to command his army while he remained comfortable in his city. He did not use persuasion to have people endorse his teaching and faith, but the sword and killing of his opponents. After a while, his armies raided and ravaged some regions. When his power spread, he imposed the Jizya (tribute) on the countries. He set for his people a permanent kingdom that gained strength following as the caliphate was assumed like a chain from one to the other. The caliphs subjugated many Roman regions, and then the Persian kingdom.¹⁶⁴⁵

He (Muhammad) set for them (Muslims) laws he claimed were given to him by God. He taught them to confess one God the creator of everything, but he confessed no Father, no Son and no Holy Spirit. He said that God is one, of one person, and that he was not begotten, and begat none and none is like unto him, and has no partner.¹⁶⁴⁶ He (Muhammad) accepted the Books of Moses and the Prophets, and a part of the gospel, but he rejected most of it and adhered to insignificant things. He maintained that the prophets did prophesy about Christ as a righteous man and a prophet like the rest of the prophets, but that he was not God or the Son of God, as we Christians believe. However, Christ is greater than other prophets because he was born without human medium but by the word of God that he breathed into Mary as he breathed his spirit into Adam who was created from dust and became a living being. Therefore, sometimes Muslims call Christ the Word of God and his Spirit on the premise that he is a slave and created by the word of God. This is instead of the expression "Son of God" which we maintain because he was born of God without passion as the word is born of the mind. They (Muslims) look at this from a carnal point of view. They accuse us that we believe that God made him (Christ) born of a woman, who they say, was Mary the sister of Moses and Aaron.

Most of them (Muslims) do not believe in the crucifixion of Christ by the Jews, but say that one of his disciples who looked like him was crucified and died. As to Christ, he disappeared because God lifted him up to the Janna, or Paradise. They believe, foolishly of course, that Paradise is a place of eating and drinking and marriage. It contains seats of gold and mattresses of ostrich feathers and rivers of milk, honey and trees, which bear pleasant fruits. They ascribe predestination and luck to God. They are free to marry four wives and an unlimited number of slave girls. If one of them divorces his wife by pronouncing an oath,

¹⁶⁴⁴ Genesis 25:1-2.

¹⁶⁴⁵ Cf. *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 141-142).

¹⁶⁴⁶ See Quran Sura 112.

he cannot take her back until she marries another man and this man divorces her. In this case, his oath is annulled, and he can take her back.¹⁶⁴⁷ They pray five times a day and prostrate themselves four times in each prayer. They believe in the resurrection of the dead, in punishment and reward each one according to his deeds. They are infatuated by the love of the world, and by sensual lusts, eating, drinking, garments and multiple wives. There is no objection that one of them would divorce his wife and marry another. They fast thirty days from dawn to dusk, but eat all night long until dawn. They perform the ablution by water before prayer and wash their victuals. In the case of cohabitation or night ejection, they wash all of the body and then pray. They turn toward Makka in prayer wherever they are. They practice circumcision of both male and female without heeding the Law of Moses that decrees that circumcision should be done on the eighth day after birth. However, they circumcise at any age.¹⁶⁴⁸ *End of the account of the appearance of Mubammad, chief of the Ishmaelites (Arabs).*

The reply of Patriarch Athanasius to the Emperor Heraclius, the king (emperor) of the Romans

Gracious lords, we, your servants, have been ordered to write down in brevity what concerns the divine doctrines and the doubts that surround them.

We believe and confess what the 318 fathers had set down at Nicaea. It is a fact that the Holy Spirit was with them, and accepted by the council of the 150 fathers at Constantinople, and the fathers of the Council of Ephesus who assembled because of the obstinacy of Nestorius. We are determined not to accept any other definition of the faith. Those fathers taught us to confess the Word who is from God the Father, and consubstantial with him and the Holy Spirit in substance and power. He took a rational and living body from the holy Mary of perpetual virginity, and who is rightfully called the Mother of God. He was united with this body naturally and actually, and he was not made before this union. However, he took what he willed on account of this union that was consummated simultaneously. Thus, he issued from the womb of the holy Virgin Mary Mother of God with a body. He was incarnated in a consummate and unchangeable form. He had two births: one before all the worlds without a body or beginning; the other is a physical birth in the fullness of time. He is One before and after his incarnation and physical birth, and no addition was made to the Trinity. Because our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is One, his nature is also One. We believe that his *qnumo* (hypostasis) is a compound of the divinity and the humanity, that is, of complete natures and persons as the fathers had expressed. His divinity was not changed into what it was not, or that his humanity itself was changed. Indeed, each one of the two natures maintained its own properties. We together believe in an ineffable union (of the two natures) which resulted in one nature of him who is One, incarnated and became man. He is in no wise divisible into two natures, or that he is two natures, two persons, two individuals, two Sons, or two Christs after the ineffable union which was consummated naturally beyond imagination and without change, or mixture, or division into two. In fact, the duality of natures dissolves their union, which becomes only a mixture, or a reversal of the divine mystery.

Moving from the divine Incarnation to duality, division, mixture and phantasy, to Nestorius who worshipped man, to the notorious Eutyches who said that he (Christ) being in the womb of Mary was a mere a presence in the womb, we say that, Christ the Son is one Lord consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and consubstantial with us in the humanity. He is impassible and undying in his divinity, passible and dying in his humanity. He is above change; the union of his divinity with his humanity was consummated without duality or division. We further say that all the divine and human actions, be they high or low, the words (spoken by him), and his thoughts, belong to one (Christ) alone. Not only have these, but also the voluntary, natural, and unblemished passions that he accepted voluntarily in the body, but still remained impassible in his divinity belonged to him. For suffering cannot draw near from that which is impassible by its nature. This is some of the probable matters on which account the heretics blasphemed. Certainly, he is true God who suffered, died and resurrected in the body. The Theologian (Gregory of

¹⁶⁴⁷ This Islamic practice blatantly contradicts what God said in Jeremiah, 3:1.

¹⁶⁴⁸ *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 142, mentions some of these Muslim traits with great brevity.

Nazianzus) said, 'We needed a true God incarnated and suffered that we may live.' This is in brief, what we believe and in a cursory manner, O our serene and protected-by-God king (emperor).

With respect to the divine Incarnation, we say that if the two sides should reach a full agreement, and the dogmas contrary to the truth are cast aside and anathematized, then we will concentrate on the issues. By God's help, we will be able to place the names and persons whom we believe are subject of suspicion, in proper perspective in the church lest some might think that we have separated ourselves without reason from those who differ with us regarding these issues. Therefore, we decided to include in this document the following simple matters:

We, our serene and gracious king, renounce the Council of Chalcedon for making a definition of the faith other than that established at Nicaea. It fell under the weight of the canons of the fathers, first at Ephesus, which anathematized anyone who introduced another definition of the faith, be they bishops, clergy or laymen. This Council (Chalcedon) established the previously mentioned definition that says that Christ is two natures and known in two natures. This proclamation is relevant in relation to what is divisible and not to one which is compound. In fact, the council overlooked the expression "from two natures" established by the fathers. It accepted the letter of Ibas (Hiba, bishop of Edessa) fraught with blasphemy. It defended Theodore (of Mopsuestia), teacher of iniquity, and defended Nestorius who contended against God. It condemned St. Cyril as a heretic, and considered the letter of Ibas as orthodox just because it contained Cyril's Twelve Anathemas. It admitted Theodoret (bishop of Cyrus), who contended against godliness and those who practiced it in his writings. He especially wrote against St. Cyril because he condemned Nestorius and his writings. In fact, Theodoret neglected Cyril's name and showed aversion when it was mentioned. Furthermore, the Council of Chalcedon accepted the *Tome* of the Roman Leo who palpably divided the one Christ, who is indivisible. He divided him into God and man, into two natures, and two hypostases. He also divided into two his actions and properties. He ascribed to God the miracles and sublime actions, and to man passions and lowly actions. He said that hunger, thirst, sleep and fatigue are the requirements of man, and feeding five thousand by five loaves, offering the water of life to the Samaritan woman at the well, walking on water without being wet, and calming the raging sea undoubtedly belong to God. Each one of the natures acts in participation with the other. Thus, the Word acts what is for the Word, and the body acts of what is for the body. One (the divine) shines in wonder works, the other succumbs to lowliness. As the merciful God is above change, thus man is not consumed by God's power and might.

These things call us to doubt and divide the churches. If they are revised, there will be nothing to prevent us from going to the House of the Lord together and enjoy spiritual joy. We beseech God, who reveals all secrets, that our position is for godliness and not for controversy. We, contrary to what some believe, are not seeking the love of self.

Chapter Three: Concerning the condition of the Persians after defeating the Romans and occupying their countries because they were divided and lost their victories; also, on the Romans who persecuted us (the Syrian Orthodox), as was their custom, after they seized several countries; and on the beginning of the kingdom of the Arabs, called Tayoye, in the 12th year of Heraclius, and the 32nd year of Khusro, and on the first Arab rule in Yathrib in the year 933 of the Greeks, 6130 of Adam and 604 of our Lord

In the first year of Muhammad, the Persian Shahrbarz seized Angora (Ankara) and then Rhodes. Khusro treated those who fell under his power with cruelty. The tongue is incapable of discussing the tribulations, pillage, taxes, captives and the killing that took place in the aftermath of the victory of the Persian, Khusro.

In the year 936 of the Greeks (A.D. 625), which is the 15th year of Heraclius, the 35th year of Khusro and the 4th year of Muhammad, Shahrbarz and Kardigan attacked Constantinople. Their armies penetrated Thrace and from there they invaded the western region. They occupied the city for one year and tightened their grip against it, that there was no hope to have it released. Rescue, however, came suddenly to the city.

It reached the ears of Khusro that Shahrbarz was holding him with contempt and describing him as an arrogant who takes pride in a victory for which he is unworthy. Khusro ordered Kardigan to behead Shahrbarz, but the Romans captured the carrier of the letter. When Heraclius learned of the matter, he summoned Shahrbarz and swore to him (concerning his safety) the truth of Khusro's plotting against him. Shahrbarz thought of a stratagem. He altered Khusro's letter and inserted into it the phrase, "Three hundred nobles were to be killed with Shahrbarz." When the letter was read, Shahrbarz said to Kardigan, "Does it please you to do this?" The chiefs (nobles) were furious and mocked Khusro. They made a compact of peace with Heraclius, and also gave him (their sons) as hostages for the confirmation of the conditions of the peace. Among the captives was the son of Shahrbarz, and the Persians departed on their way. Heraclius sent a message to Khagan, king of the Khazars, asking him to send him 40,000 soldiers so that he might fight the Persian king. Khagan replied, "The army will leave the Caspian Gate and will meet you wherever you wish." In return, Heraclius promised to give him his daughter Eudoxia as wife.¹⁶⁴⁹

Heraclius marched in the direction of Armenia. In every region that he passed through, he drove away the Persians and stationed Romans. When Khusro heard that Shahrbarz had rebelled, and that Heraclius was marching against his country, his spirit waned, and he was greatly depressed. He collected as many soldiers as he was able, made Ruzbihan captain over them, and ordered him to meet Heraclius. When the Persians met the Romans in battle, the Persians were defeated and their captain was killed. When Khusro heard that his army was defeated, he fled Sqrta where he was encamped, leaving behind his treasures and possessions. Heraclius pursued him to Sqrta, capturing his treasures and rich possessions, and set Sqrta on fire. Then Shirin, the son of Khusro, who had been imprisoned by his father, learned that his father had fled. He went forth from his place of bondage and pursued his father, killed him and reigned after him. When Heraclius returned to pass the winter in Athor (Assyria), and then pursue Khusro, Shirin sent a message to Heraclius informing him that he had killed his father and he himself reigned. He confirmed the covenant of peace with him, and that the Persians should leave the Roman countries and return to their own country. Then Heraclius turned his attention to Syria to evict the Persians from it. He sent before him to Syria his brother Theodoric (with an army). However, when the Persians learned from the letters of Shirin and Shahrbarz about the peace pact, they scoffed at Shirin and said, "We will never be subjects to Shirin." Meanwhile, the Jews were helping the Persians because of their hatred of the Christians. When Theodoric reached Edessa, the Jews insulted him, mocked him and resisted him. However, being pressured by Theodoric, the Persians pledged to leave the city. It happened then, that a Jew name Joseph who feared that his people might perish, climbed down the wall of the city at night and went to Heraclius at Tella. He begged to him to instruct Theodoric to forgive the Jews their insults. When Theodoric entered Edessa, he began to evict the Persians and the Jews. As he proceeded to have them killed, Joseph appeared with Heraclius' order not to harm them. Then, Heraclius came to Edessa, and from there went throughout the cities of Syria.

Shirin the Persian died in the year 940 of the Greeks (A.D. 629) having reigned for nine months. He was succeeded by his son Ardashir who reigned for one year and ten months. He was killed by Shahrbarz who then reigned, and confirmed the covenant (of peace) between him and the Romans.¹⁶⁵⁰

In the year 941 of the Greeks (A.D. 630), the 20th year of Heraclius and the 2nd year of Abu Bakr, the Persians departed Egypt, Palestine and the entire Roman region. They returned to Persia, but were divided against themselves. Some of them followed Shahrbarz, and others followed Kardigan. Shahrbarz sought help from Heraclius who sent an army to rescue him. They killed Kardigan, and Shahrbarz ruled for one year. However, one of his relatives, a friend of Khusro, killed him and he was succeeded by Baram, Khusro's daughter, who ruled for a few months and died. She was succeeded by her sister Zarimantocht. Within only two years, many ruled Persia including Shahrbarz, Baram, Khusro, Peruz, Zarimantocht and Hormizd.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 89.

¹⁶⁵⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 90].

After ruling for seven years, Muhammad died and was succeeded by Abu Bakr who ruled for two years and seven months.¹⁶⁵¹

As to Heraclius, he fell for violating the law by taking Martina, the daughter of his brother, as wife. She gave birth to an illegitimate son named Heraclonas (Heracleon).¹⁶⁵²

After Qura chastised Edessa, he plundered the silver of the ancient church, taking the vessels of all the altars, the canopy of the altar and its four pillars and other pillars; he sent to Khusro more than 100,000 ratls (pounds) of silver.

Khusro ordered the Edessan to be taken captive to Persia as quickly as possible. The Marzuban (governor) who was in the city was a compassionate man. He thought that they should be removed all at once but in several groups, hoping that they might be pardoned by the king. When he sent one group, a report came that Heraclius was marching to Persia, and thus whatever remained of the inhabitants remained in Edessa. Among the captives was Sergius, son of Iywannis Rasafia, already mentioned. From him Patriarch Dionysius, nicknamed Tell Mahre, derived his chronicle of six generations.

In the year 932 of the Greeks, the 17th year of Heraclius, the 37th year of Khusro, and the 6th year of Muhammad, a portion of the hemisphere of the sun disappeared. It lasted from October until June, and people believed that the sphere of the sun would never become whole again.

In this year, jarab (skin disease) and plague broke out in Palestine and tens of thousands of people died.¹⁶⁵³

In this time Anastasius, the orthodox pope of Alexandria passed away, and Andronicus was set up in his place. Andronicus addressed a letter to Anathasius, patriarch of Antioch, renewing the union (between their two churches.) The Chalcedonians had a patriarch in Alexandria named Cyrus. When the Romans returned to capture Egypt and evict the Persians, Cyrus stirred up persecution against the believers there and against those in Syria for the following reason:

When the Persian influence vanished and the Romans controlled the cities in Syria and Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia), Emperor Heraclius came to Syria and reached Edessa. The people, the clergy and the monks went to welcome him. He was astonished at their great number, but when he learned about their belief, he said to some who were in his company, "How is it that we have kept such a great people away from us?" He entered the city and endeavored to reconcile both sides (the Chalcedonians and their opponents). At the festival, he went to our Orthodox church and showed immense respect for the congregation. At the end of the celebration of the Eucharist, he proceeded to take the holy mysteries according to the custom of the emperors. However, Isaiah, the bishop of the city said to him "I will not offer you the Communion unless you anathematize the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo in writing." The emperor became angry, evicted the bishop from the great church, and handed it to the Chalcedonians. Others also left with the bishop including the leaders of the families of Rasfaia, Tell Mahre, Cosmas son of Arbai and others who had furnished the church with its vessels and properties. They expected to return to the church with the bishops after the emperor had departed it. When the emperor went to Mabug (Manbij), he was met by Patriarch Athanasius accompanied by twelve bishops. They were Thomas, bishop of Palmyra; Basilius, bishop of Homs; Sergius, bishop of 'Ars; John, bishop of Cyrus; Thomas, bishop of Mabug; Daniel, bishop of Harran; Isaiah, bishop of Edessa; Severus, bishop of Qinnestrin; Athanasius, bishop of Arabisus; Cosmas, bishop of Epiphania of Cilicia; and Severus, bishop of Samosata. They spent twelve days debating the emperor. The emperor asked them for a document of their faith, and they handed him a copy of the document (the reply of Patriarch Athanasius to Heraclius) recorded earlier.¹⁶⁵⁴ Upon reading the document, he praised their faith and asked them to provide him with the document that he had issued where he confessed two united natures in Christ, one will and one act in

¹⁶⁵¹ Muhammad died in 632 and Abu Bakr ruled for two years (632-634).

¹⁶⁵² On Martina and Heraclonas, see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 101-102, and A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, I, 193, and *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 145, note 4.

¹⁶⁵³ Cf. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 90.

¹⁶⁵⁴ See above pp. 693-694.

conformity with what Cyril had said. The patriarch and his bishops, however, noticed that in his document, the emperor agreed with Nestorius and Leo, hence, they rejected it.¹⁶⁵⁵ Heraclius became wrathful. He wrote to the four quarters of his kingdom saying, "Anyone who does not accept the Council of Chalcedon, his nose and ears shall be cut off, and his house plundered." The persecution continued for a long time. As a consequence, the great majority of monks confessed the council (of Chalcedon). Showing their faithlessness, a great number of the monks of Marun (the Monastery of Marun), the congregations of Mabug, Homs and the southern regions, accepted the Council of Chalcedon and usurped the churches and the monasteries. Heraclius would not even allow any orthodox (non-Chalcedonian) to have audience with him or listen to them complaining that their churches were usurped. However, the God of vengeance who alone has power over everything, who changes the kingship and gives it to whom he wills, and who sets up the weak in power, when he saw the treachery of the Romans who were plundering our churches and monasteries without mercy whenever they felt powerful, brought the children of Ishmael (Arabs) from the south so that, through them, we may have deliverance from the hands of the Romans. As to the churches usurped by the Chalcedonians, they remained in their hands because upon entering the city (Edessa), the Tayoye (Arabs) let every denomination keep the churches in their hands. In this period, we lost the great church of Edessa and the church of Harran. However, our benefit was not that trivial for we were saved from the cruelty of the Romans and from their wickedness, tyranny and profound hatred of us, and we enjoyed some rest.¹⁶⁵⁶ *End of the account.*

Chapter Four: On the Tayoye (Arab) invasion of the Roman and Persian territories and on the union Athanasius (Gamolo) made with the congregation of Takrit

We have already mentioned the rise of the kingdom of the Tayoye (Arabs) who carried on invasion, pillage, ambush and disturbance during the life of Muhammad. After Muhammad's death (A.D. 632), Abu Bakr succeeded him. He dispatched four armies led by generals, one to Palestine, one to Egypt, one to Persia, and the fourth against the Christian Tayoye (Arabs). All these armies returned victorious. The army dispatched to Palestine reached Caesarea. The Patrician Sergius gathered a force from the Romans and the Samaritans 5000 men strong and was ready for battle with the Tayoye (Arabs), but the Tayoye (Arabs) were more powerful. They defeated the Romans and then Tayoye (Arabs) annihilated the Samaritans. When Sergius saw this, he turned his back and fled. The Tayoye (Arabs) pursued them and harvested them like ears of wheat harvested by a scythe. Suddenly, Patrician Sergius fell off his horse, but his men helped him mount again. He fell off the second time but managed to mount the horse. He fell of the third time and said to his men, "Leave me and flee with your lives lest you, like me, drink the cup of death which God had destined for our kingdom. The wrath of divine justice is upon us." His men left him and fled. The pursuing Tayoye (Arabs) got to him and killed him with one stroke of the sword. They continued to pursue the Romans until the evening, and very few were saved. The Tayoye (Arabs) publicized this in Caesarea. Indeed, they were victorious wherever they went, and kings and their armies feared them.

According to the ancient custom of churches, the jurisdiction of the Four Apostolic Sees was in this manner. The See of Rome and the See of Constantinople had jurisdiction over one third of the inhabited world covering Europe, which is situated north of the western sea called Adrias (Adriatic, Mediterranean). The See of Alexandria was given jurisdiction over Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya situated south of the sea. The Greater Asia, whose eastern boundaries extend from the Adriatic Sea until the extreme eastern part of the inhabited world, was placed under the jurisdiction of the See of Antioch. Its area is a little smaller than the area of the former two parts. Thus, the patriarch of Antioch ordained a catholicos for Armenia, Ghorzan and Daran. It was not until Babai, who was murdered by Barsoum of Nisibin, that this law was abolished in the time of the Persian King Ardashir.

¹⁶⁵⁵ See above p. 698.

¹⁶⁵⁶ For an analysis of this account, especially in relation to the origin of the Maronites and their doctrine, see Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse University Press, 1986 reprinted Gorgias Press, 2005, 87-102).

Patriarch Athanasius delegated his syncellus John to the king of Persia, and had an audience with him. After his mission was completed, he returned to Athor (Assyria) and Nineveh. On the way back, he went to the Monastery of St. Matthew to receive blessing from the blessed fathers there. He met with Metropolitan Christophorus, and rejoiced for the conduct of the monks. He discussed with them the restoration of the union with the Apostolic See of Antioch, and how weak they had become since they had alienated themselves from it. They showed desire to accompany him to meet with the patriarch. John took with him Christophorus and three monks: Marutha, Aho and Ithalaha, and arrived in Antioch in the year 940 of the Greeks (A.D. 629) in order to be ordained bishops by the patriarch. But what happened there? The reader will learn what happened from the following reply addressed by the patriarch to the monks of St. Matthew's Monastery.

The letter of Patriarch Athanasius

To the God-loving and excellent, our spiritual son, the priest Matta, the archimandrite of the monastery, and all the priests, deacons and brothers in Christ at the Monastery of St. Matthew; the humble Athanasius in the God and mighty Jesus: rejoice in what we are about to write to you.

The divine psalmist David says, "Blessed are they who are blameless, who work according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their hearts. They do nothing wrong; they walk in his ways."¹⁶⁵⁷ In this age, the iniquitous do not walk in his ways. We, however, adhere without blemish to the orthodox faith in our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, who is the way that leads to the Father, as he truthfully said, "I am the way."¹⁶⁵⁸

We should deal with each other, and also with all the believers, with spiritual love. This is how to act according to the law of the Lord. For he said, "My commandment is this: Love each other."¹⁶⁵⁹ We should then suffer hardships and partake in his passions by keeping his commandment that is the good testimony he gave before Pontius Pilate, as it is written.¹⁶⁶⁰ Those who follow him should then seek the Lord with all their heart and soul, hate iniquity and love righteousness. You and others like you who love God, are as the apostle said, "The sweet aroma of Christ in those who are saved and those who perish. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life."¹⁶⁶¹ To whom then applies, after the holy apostles, the saying of the Lord, "You are the light and the salt of the earth,"¹⁶⁶² except to you and other holy people like you, who in the orthodox faith and good conduct, are like light and salt? They shined to those who were in error and led them back to the truth. For you do nourish the weak that are immersed in the mud of vile lusts, strengthen those of rotten behavior and salt them with righteousness. Who would rejoice more than we would when we hear such glad tidings about his sons? It is just and our duty to thank and glorify God who grants good gifts with good intention. We used to be filled with joy when we heard about your excellences. But when our son and syncellus, the presbyter John, returned and informed us about your love for all the saints, especially for us, we the weak, and told us about your humility, obedience, patience and constant vigilance in prayer, fasting and piety, and moreover, your fiery zeal for the faith, and readiness to suffer if anyone falsified your orthodox faith, or that the sanctity of the canons is violated, our syncellus has, in fact, seen much more than what we have heard about you. Thus, what we heard has immensely pleased us in these difficult circumstances.

Therefore, we the weak, long to reward you with what is worthy of you, as it is possible, like the matchless beneficences which God would grant you. Everything that John told you, by our permission, will persist and will be preserved for the coming generations. Now, we repeat the same principles, which we had decided in order to be preserved with utmost esteem, that your holy monastery would have honor and

¹⁶⁵⁷ Psalm 119:1-3.

¹⁶⁵⁸ John 14:6

¹⁶⁵⁹ John 15:12.

¹⁶⁶⁰ 1 Timothy 6:13.

¹⁶⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 2:15-16.

¹⁶⁶² Matthew 5:13-14.

leadership over all the holy monasteries in Persia. This stands so that your God-loving archimandrite will have leadership of the episcopate, over all the chorepiscopi and the archimandrites in the said quarters. He will also have the second dignity after the bishop. Furthermore, he will have precedence of the administration of church affairs whenever it is appropriate, as your archimandrites had been formerly accustomed. We have decreed that this should remain like the irreversible rule of God, and the unshakeable will of the Holy Spirit. In addition, the bishop who is canonically ordained for your monastery will be the chief priest and metropolitan over all the bishops of your region of Athor (Mosul and environs in north Iraq).

This is what is issued by us: we would like also to inform your affection, that the holy Bishops, Mor Christophorus, George, Daniel, Gregory and Yazdaphne, have been present in order to regulate the affairs of the church in your region. We have welcomed them as brothers after we experienced the temptation of your affection. They requested us to preside over, and to be spiritually concerned, with the churches at your place, same as our concern of the churches in our area. In fact, we used to apologize in the past because of the difficulty of the subject, and when our apology protracted, your insistent affection overcame us. Therefore, we executed their request and we will regulate the affairs of you churches, God willing.

Now that all are assembled here with good conscience and with our permission, and by the election of pious presbyters, we have ordained Metropolitan Christophorus alone for the diocese of Athor (Mosul and environs in north Iraq) that there will be one leader of the bishops of Athor, the Ishmaelites (Arabs) and the various Persian regions. Further, for the sake of the organization of the churches and by the urgency of God and the endorsement of the mentioned brother bishops, we have designated Mor Marutha of Takrit from Beth 'Arbaya as general leader and administrator of all the mentioned bishops and their dioceses, to represent us personally and act as our agent. We have permitted him to carry out this leadership responsibility, not only for his excellence and piety, but also on the strength of your testimonies. We request you to assist him as one who is in our place. If you did this, you would have pleased God and made us feel happy. You would also make us pray to God for you unceasingly to become a good example for the believers. May Christ our God who gave power to the disciples to step on snakes and scorpions, and control over the power of the enemy, give you the power to extinguish his fiery arrows and save you from the ambushes of the heretics. May he keep you as seeds for the good of the world, and crown your deeds and divine contemplations with success, and etc.

The event that took place at St Matthew's Monastery

Following the persecution by Barsoum of Nisibin, and setting the Monastery of St. Matthew on fire, Christophorus, the Armenian catholicos, came to the monastery and found a small number of monks like pigeons in their nests. When Babai and Bar Suhde, the metropolitan of St. Matthew's Monastery, Athor and Nineveh, had been killed (by Barsoum), he chose the well-known monk Garmai, and ordained him a metropolitan. Garmai, while still living, handed the episcopate to Mari, and Mari handed it to Yeush' Zkha, who handed it to Mor Suhde, and Mor Suhde handed it to Simon, who handed it over to Christophorus. All of these dignitaries were from the same monastery, and each one of them handed over the episcopate to the other during his lifetime. However, in the time of Christophorus, they renewed their commitment and obedience to the See of Antioch. We have mentioned them here that it may be known from whom the Easterners received the ordination in this period. Barsoum of Nisibin could not enter the country of the Armenians because they threatened to kill him. Thus, they preserved their faith. When the sons of Athor (Mosul and its environs) saw that the Armenians did not travel to Antioch to have a catholicos ordained for them (by the Patriarch of Antioch) according to the tradition, because of fear of the Persians, they, following their example, had a catholicos ordained for them.

In September of the year 945 of the Greeks (A.D. 634), a severe earthquake took place followed by a sign in the sky. Something like a lance appeared and moved from north to south. It remained for thirty days. Many people believed that it was a sign of the coming of the Tayoye (Arabs).

In this period, Heraclius issued a decree that all the Jews in his kingdom should be baptized. Some of them were baptized and converted to Christianity. For this reason, they fled the Roman regions to Edessa. However, when the grip was tightened against them, they fled to Persia. Meanwhile, many of them received baptism and converted to Christianity. *End of this history.*

Chapter Five: The commencement of the kingdom of the Arabs, that is Tayoye, and the death of the blessed Mor Athanasius (Gamolo)

In the year 946 of the Greeks (A.D. 634-5), and the year 24 of Heraclius, and the year 13 of the Arabs (Hijra, or the Islamic Calendar), Abu Bakr died having reigned for two years, and was succeeded by Umar ibn al-Khattab. Umar dispatched an army to Arabia that seized Busra (Bostra),¹⁶⁶³ and destroyed several towns. In the following year, he dispatched an army to Persia. The Persians were divided and fighting each other. Some of them wanted Yazdagird, son of Khusro; others wanted Hormizd. Then battle ensued between the Persians and the (Tayoye) Arabs, and the Tayoye (Arabs) were victorious. The Persians were killed and their kingdom weakened. Later, Hormizd was killed. The (Tayoye) Arabs triumphed over both the Persians and the Romans.

When Heraclius heard that the Tayoye (Arabs) had killed the patrician Sergius and his army was scattered, he instructed his brother, Theodoric, to assemble an army to fight the Arabs. Theodoric did what Heraclius ordered. He marched with apparent arrogance relying on human strength. The Romans shook their heads and mocked the *Tayoye)Arabs saying, "What are these sons of Hagar except dead dogs?" They reached the village of Gousit in the province of Antioch. There, a Chalcedonian solitary man was living on a pillar. Theodoric and some of his men spoke with him for some time. He said to Theodoric, "I understand that the reins of the Roman kingdom will be delivered into your hands as they were into the hands of your brother. I am confident that you will return triumphant if you pledge to annihilate the partisans of Severus (of Antioch who opposed the Council of Chalcedon.) after coming back." Theodoric said, "Before asking me to do this, I had determined to persecute the partisans of Jacob (Baradaeus)." Upon hearing this, one of his adjutants, an Orthodox (anti-Chalcedonian) officer, was fired with zeal but could do nothing then for fear of the general (Theodoric). Theodoric, enchanted with arrogance, camped in the neighborhood of the Arab army. The two sides met and the Romans were defeated. The Tayoye (Arabs) pursued them and trampled them like cut-off branches. When the power of the Romans was exhausted, that officer drew from Theodoric and said, "What happened to the promises of the solitary Stylite monk whom you trusted? Do you think you have returned with a high head?" Theodoric, who could hardly save himself and few others, was ashamed. He hid himself lest anyone would see him.

After the Romans were defeated, the Tayoye (Arabs) entered their camp and plundered the gold, silver, slaves and abundant possessions therein. Because they seized the Roman territories and the booty therein, the Tayoye (Arabs) were immensely enriched and expanded their occupied Roman territories.

In the year 942 of the Greeks (A.D. 631), the Patriarch Mor Athanasius passed away and was buried in the Gromya Monastery.¹⁶⁶⁴ He was succeeded by his disciple Yuhanon (John) known as John Sedroy (he of the Sedros, that is, supplicatory prayers) from the monastery of Eusebuna.¹⁶⁶⁵

In Alexandria, Andronicus succeeded Anastasius, who was succeeded by Benjamin. Both of these dignitaries sent ecclesiastical letters to Mor Athanasius before his death.

In this time, the Tayoye (Arabs) entered Persia and reached the Mountain of Mardin near Rish 'Ayna. They were told that the monks of the Qadir (Qidr, Qidar) Monastery and the Bayd (Eggs) Monastery were spies. Therefore, they killed a great number of them. The rest of the monks from the western region came to the neighborhood of the River Baliha (Kaliha), where they found a water fountain. They built near

¹⁶⁶³ Busra is a town of the Christian Ghassanid Arabs in Hawran, Syria. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, translated by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, 468, and Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 78, 147, 149, 150.

¹⁶⁶⁴ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 130, who follows Jacob of Edessa, says that he died on Tuesday 9 of April, 942 of the Greeks.

¹⁶⁶⁵ See Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, 77-78 and 321.

it a monastery called the Beth Rishir, meaning the monastery of the abbot of the Bayd (Eggs). The reason they called it by this name was due to the eggs of a bird which Jacob, its founder, had discovered.

The remainder of the monks of the Monastery of Qadir arrived near Callinicus (al-Raqqqa) at the temple that contained the pillar the Empress Theodora had built. They enlarged it, dwelt in it and called it the Pillar Monastery.

Theodora was from the town of Daman situated above Callinicus. She was the daughter of a priest. As a child, her father took her to a monastery, which at one time was called the Monastery of the Huts, to receive the blessing of the solitary monks there. She was brought up in chastity and the Orthodox faith. It happened that the Emperor Justin dispatched his nephew, Justinian to that region. At Daman, he heard of Theodora and wanted to see her. Upon seeing her, he asked her father to give her to him as wife. This was a very difficult quest for her parents because Justinian was afflicted with the error of those who confessed two natures (in Christ after their union).¹⁶⁶⁶ However, despite his error, the parents agreed to give Theodora to Justinian as wife because they feared the emperor. This happened by the dispensation of God that the Emperor Justin might mitigate his persecution of the Orthodox (non-Chalcedonians). Since she became an empress and till her death, Theodora was a solace and help to the Orthodox, as it is written in Book Nine. We have mentioned the late empress here because she built the Pillar Monastery during her reign. She also sent gold and built the monastery in which she was raised. This John Monastery became the refuge and protection for the persecuted (Orthodox).¹⁶⁶⁷

In this time, a severe earthquake took place and the sun darkened. The Churches of Resurrection and of Golgotha collapsed with many other places. These churches, however, were rebuilt by the Chalcedonian Bishop Madestus.

In this period, the Persians attacked the Romans. Isaiah, bishop of Edessa, and all the Orthodox bishops were driven out, and the Chalcedonians seized the churches. Shortly afterwards, the Tayoye (Arabs) captured Beth Nahrin. Cyrus, and the Chalcedonian bishop of Edessa was driven out, and the Orthodox bishops returned to their sees from the countries controlled by the Tayoye (Arabs).

In this period, plague broke out over all the regions of Syria and Phoenicia. A great star in the form of a Roman person appeared. In addition, a severe earthquake took place in Armenia and destroyed many places.

Chapter: Six: On the period of the waning of the Persian kingdom and the progress of the Tayoye (Arabs)

In the 4th year of Umar ibn al-Khattab, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), the Tayoye (Arabs) carried out raids against Syria up to the banks of the Euphrates River.

In the 5th year of Umar, the Romans of the Arabian region waged war against the Arabs in the city of Bustra called Ghbita (Arabic, al-Jabiya), situated on the River known as Yarmuk.¹⁶⁶⁸ The Romans were badly defeated and departed the region. The battle took place as follows:

General Bais, son of Shahrbarz the Persian,¹⁶⁶⁹ assembled an army and marched to the neighborhood of Damascus to guard that region. The caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs) met them and killed many of them. Upon reaching Damascus, they pitched their camp near the River Pharfar, which the Tayoye (Arabs) call Kadrun. In the next year, the Tayoye (Arabs) came to the neighborhood of Damascus. When he

¹⁶⁶⁶ This simply means that Justinian was a holder of the faith of the Council of Chalcedon, which stated that Christ is two natures in one person. To the non-Chalcedonians, this meant that the council had separated the two natures of Christ after they had been united in the Incarnation. To them, and to the parents of Theodora, this was a blasphemy. This subject has been thoroughly elaborated earlier.

¹⁶⁶⁷ See above Book Nine, Chapter 20, note.

¹⁶⁶⁸ See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 469, footnotes 2 and 3 by the translators, and *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 143, note 3 by the translator, and *The Chronicle of Elijbab bar Shinaya*, 131-132.

¹⁶⁶⁹ From the course of events, this must be Bannes of Theophanes, but he does not say that he is the son of Shahrbarz. In fact, we understand from Theophanes that he was a Roman. After denouncing Heraclius, the soldiers proclaimed him an emperor. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 470.

heard of their arrival, the patrician was scared. He appealed to the emperor's deputy in Edessa who assembled 10,000 fighting men to aid him. They met the patrician at Homs who had with him 60,000 fighting men. They came face to face with the Tayoye (Arabs), and the Romans were defeated. On that day, 40,000 Romans perished and a great number of them drowned in the River of Yarmuk. The son of Shahrbarz, whose life was saved, surrendered to the Tayoye (Arabs). He resided in Homs. He addressed a letter to Umar saying, "Give me an army and I will subjugate Persia to you." When Umar read the letter, he wanted to execute what it contained. However, the daughters of Khusro, who had been taken captives by the Tayoye (Arabs), said to Umar that he should not be deceived by the falsity of Shahrbarz. They told him what Shahrbarz and his son did to Khusro and his children. They further said that Shahrbarz treacherously killed anyone who did not swear oath to support the king and his sons, how could he then keep his oath to him (Umar)? Indeed, he wanted to rebel and rule. Umar believed them, and sent an order to have the son of Shahrbarz crucified on a wood in Homs.

After defeating the Romans, the Tayoye (Arabs) came to Damascus. They offered safety to its inhabitants and to other cities. From there, Umar dispatched Khalid (ibn al-Walid) with an army to the country of Aleppo and Antioch and killed a great number of people.¹⁶⁷⁰ No one was saved. No matter how many calamities the province of Syria suffered, we are still unable to discuss all of them because of their great number. Indeed, these woes are the result of the wrath of God.

At this time, Sa'd left Yathrib and encamped in the neighborhood of city of Kufa ('Aqula).¹⁶⁷¹ Meanwhile, Yazdagird, king of Persia, assembled an army and dispatched it to fight the Tayoye (Arabs). The army pitched its camp in the neighborhood of Kufa. They sent a man from Hira who knew Arabic to spy on the Arabs. When he came near the Tayoye (Arab) camp, he said to himself, "I will know from the person I meet, who will be victorious." He met a bedouin who was squatting on the ground defecating, while eating bread and cleaning his tunic from lice. The spy from Hira asked him in Arabic what was he doing. The bedouin said, "I am doing exactly what you see, taking in the new, casting out the old and kill my enemies." The man from Hira was sorrowful and said to himself, "A new people will enter and cast out the old, and kill the Persians." He went back and told the story to the Persians saying, "I found them (Arabs) barefooted and hungry people, but brave." He repeated to the general what he had seen and what he had thought. When the two armies met in battle, the Persians were defeated and were pursued to Ctesiphon on the River Tigris. A Persian army commander, who was wearing a shield, was pursued by an Tayoyo (Arab) who had nothing on him except a lance. As he was fleeing to a village, the commander saw a man in the field. He asked him to direct him to a place to hide and save himself from his pursuers. The man hid him realizing that he was pursued by many (Arabs). Shortly afterwards, a man appeared not wearing an army uniform, clumsily mounted on a horse, and not looking like a soldier. The man in the field was astonished and said, "How is it that a man arrayed in armor, and of more imposing stature and awesome countenance, flees from a naked man? The man reviled the Persian because he fled and hid himself from the bedouin. The Persian said, "Don't blame me. But hear and see with your own eyes in order to believe." He took an arrow and struck an iron shovel making a hole in it. He said, "With such a fling I struck the bedouin several times, but he repulsed them by his sleeve as if he was shoving away flies. This made me believe that God has given them victory, and this is why I fled."

Having learned of the festival observed in the Monastery of Simon the Stylite in the province of Antioch, the Tayoye (Arabs) came and took an enormous number of men and women, young and old, captive, and the Christians lost hope. Some of them said, "Why did God allow this to happen?" However, the prudent said that divine justice allowed it to happen. The reason is that the Christians indulged in drinking, gluttony, dancing, and other sexual immorality and uncleanness during the festivals of the martyrs, instead of fasting, prayer, keeping vigils and chanting (praises of God). Thus, they angered God who is just, who convicted and punished us.

¹⁶⁷⁰ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 131.

¹⁶⁷¹ Kufa is a Syriac term, Kubo, meaning thorns. Kufa is a city in southern Iraq.

In this time, Heraclius sent a man named Gregory to guard Cilicia Bridge lest the Tayoye (Arabs) cross over it.

In this time, the noble and victorious St. Epiphanes, the noble bishop, received the honor of true martyrdom because of the Orthodox faith. His martyrdom was as follows:

When the blessed (Epiphanes) fled before the Tayoye (Arabs) and entered the Roman country safely, someone informed the army commander, Gregory, who was designated to guard the bridge about the coming of Epiphanes. Because Gregory was arrogant, he mocked the sons of Hagar (the Arabs), threatened them and also threatened the partisans of Severus (of Antioch). When he learned that Epiphanes was Orthodox, he summoned him and asked him where he came from. Epiphanes said, "I am from Isauria and have deviated from the true path, but divine grace changed me and I became a partisan of Severus. I confess that the Word became incarnate and took flesh from the Virgin Mother of God. He is one without division, and one united hypostasis (person) with the body united to his divinity. I do not divide him into two: God and man. I do not ascribe the passions of death to his body and the miraculous things to his divinity as was proclaimed by the Council of Chalcedon." Gregory threatened him saying, "Accept our faith (of Chalcedon) and the emperor will offer you great influence. If you desist, I will deliver you to death." The combatant Epiphanes said, "Neither fire nor sword will separate me from the true Orthodox faith to which I am holding." Immediately, Gregory ordered he should be killed. As he was about to receive the crown of martyrdom, Epiphanes said, "I have hope in the Lord that the death of Epiphanes will be like the sword and war inside Syria." The holy Epiphanes prayed for his murderers and then received the crown of martyrdom by the sword. One day after his martyrdom, the commander of the Arabs army named Qanan arrived with captives. Gregory went out with his army to save them. Upon reaching Arab camp, the Tayoye (Arabs) surprised them, smote them, and annihilated them. In addition, they killed the horse Gregory was mounting. He asked a soldier to bring him another horse but could not respond to him. Meanwhile, the Tayoye (Arabs) pursued him, bound him in irons and killed him, as the holy Epiphanes had truly predicted.

Chapter Seven: On the murder of Yazdagird, king of the Persians, and the cessation of their Kingdom, and on Severus, bishop of Samosata, and his miraculous departure from this life at this time

The Persians and their king assembled for the second time at the River Tigris, which was the dividing line between them and the Tayoye (Arabs). They destroyed the bridge over the river between the two cities.¹⁶⁷² The Persian camp was rather quiet. Suddenly, however, the Tayoye (Arabs) acted rashly and said to each other, "Let us cross over to the Persian side. God who has helped us on land will also help us on the water." They crossed the river and took the Persians, who were encamped, by surprise and killed them. They seized Ctesiphon and gained possessions and captives. Then, for the third time, Yazdagird assembled a force at 'Aqula, but they were defeated and fled. They assembled for the fourth time in the Mountain of Madi, and the Persians were defeated and killed by the Arabs. These four troop concentration took place in one year. When Yazdagird, the last of the Persian kings, saw that his country was ruined, his army destroyed, his people fled and scattered, and he was unable to stop the Tayoye (Arabs) onslaught, he fled to the borders of the country of the Turks to the region of Maraghani called Sijistan. After hiding for five years, he was killed, perhaps by the Tayoye (Arabs) or by the Turks. By killing him, the Persian kingdom, known as the Sassanid kingdom, which ruled for 418 years, was no more. This kingdom was established in the year 538 of the Greeks (A.D. 227) by Ardashir son of Sabaq, and ceased to exist in the year 956 of the same calendar. in the time of this last Yazdagird which is also the time of Heraclius, emperor of the Romans and Umar bar (son of) al-Khattab, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs).

After the Persian king was killed, and the Persian kingdom ceased to exist, the Tayoye (Arabs) controlled the whole of Persia. They waxed in power and succeeded everywhere. They were victorious in wars because they were supported by God. They came to Aleppo and Antioch and killed a great number of

¹⁶⁷² These sites are Ctesiphon and Seleucia.

people. When Heraclius, the Roman emperor, saw that war had become ferocious, he departed with sorrow from Antioch and went to Constantinople. It is said that his farewell to the people was like a traveler saying, "Farewell Suzo Syria", meaning Syria stay in peace.¹⁶⁷³ He ordered his army to plunder and loot the villages and cities because they had fallen into the hands of the enemy. In fact, they pillaged and destroyed all the regions more so than the Tayoye (Arabs), and left them in their hands who controlled them. Heraclius addressed letters to the Romans of Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia), Egypt and Armenia, saying, "No one should wage war against the Arabs; those who can protect their land should stay in it."

When the Caliph Umar entered Egypt, Qura (Cyrus), bishop of Alexandria, went out to welcome him. He proposed to pay him 200,000 dinars a year on condition that the Tayoye (Arabs) should not enter Egypt. Umar agreed and left. Some, however, complained to Heraclius that Cyrus was offering Egypt's possessions to the Arabs without coercion. However, since the conscience of the Romans had been sickened, Heraclius addressed a letter to Cyrus to quit being the governor of Egypt. Instead, he sent an Armenian named Manuel to administer Egypt. When the Tayoye (Arab) envoys came to receive the money, they found Manuel with a Roman army at Babylon, known today as Fustat. Manuel send them back empty handed, saying, "I am not Cyrus who never wore arms but a tunic. This is why he promised you the possessions of Egypt. As to me, I am wearing arms as you see." The envoys went back and told Umar of what happened. Then, Umar entered Egypt and defeated Manuel who fled with a few men to Alexandria, and the Tayoye (Arabs) controlled Egypt and became its masters. Heraclius addressed a letter to Bishop (Cyrus) to evict the Tayoye (Arabs) from Egypt if possible, or else offer them double the amount he had already promised them. Cyrus went to the Arab camp and justified himself to Umar. He beseeched him to accept the money. Umar said, "I will never do what you want. Since we have controlled the country, we will never leave it." With this, Umar repelled Cyrus who left dispirited.¹⁶⁷⁴

At the end of the year 948 of the Greeks (A.D. 636-7), which is the 26th year of Heraclius and the 15th year of the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims), the Caliph Umar came to Palestine. He was received by Sophronius, bishop of Jerusalem, and talked with him about the country. Umar provided him with a covenant instituting that no Jew should have authority to dwell in Jerusalem. When Umar entered Jerusalem, he ordered a masjid (mosque) to be built on the site of the Temple of Solomon for their (Muslims) worship.¹⁶⁷⁵ When Sophronius saw Umar wearing a ragged garment, he brought him a clean raiment and a loincloth and begged him to accept it. Umar refused because he was accustomed not to take anything from anyone. He said, "No one should take anything from another person unless it has been given to him by God. For God gives every man what he wills. And if he was greedy to take a thing from a person, he would be behaving against the will of God."¹⁶⁷⁶

Umar was praised for many things like these. In fact, the Tayoye(Arabs) related many praiseworthy traits about him. The truth is that he was just and removed from avarice. Indeed, despite all the treasures and the possessions the Tayoye (Arabs) took from the Persians and the Romans, he did not take anything for himself, not even a new garment. When he rode a camel, he used his cloak as a saddle. When he sat down or slept, the ground was his seat. When Bishop Sophronius insisted (that he should accept a new garment), Umar said to him, "Since you have insisted that I should accept the new garment, I will, due to your honor, borrow it from you but will give it back to you when my own garment has been cleaned." This is exactly what he did.¹⁶⁷⁷

From there (Jerusalem), the Tayoye (Arabs) passed through the cities of Syria, and subjugated them all. Iyawannis (John), captain of the Roman host, came to Qinnesrin to meet with the Tayoye (Arabs). He made an agreement to pay them annually 100,000 dercone, or darics¹⁶⁷⁸ on condition that they should not

¹⁶⁷³ Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 152.

¹⁶⁷⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 95-96 with some variations.

¹⁶⁷⁵ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 132.

¹⁶⁷⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, with some variations.

¹⁶⁷⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 96 with some variations.

¹⁶⁷⁸ Daric is a Persian gold coin worth about one English pound and ten shillings. See *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J. Payne

cross to the east of the Euphrates River, and should not invade Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia). He paid them one-year tribute. When the foolish Heraclius heard of this agreement, he was wrathful against Iyawannis and banished him. This is how God rejected the kingdom of the Romans, and how Heraclius was led by blind thinking in running it.

In the year 951 of the Greeks (A.D. 640), the 27th year of Heraclius (the 18th year of the Tayoye (Arabs, Islamic Calendar), and the 6th year of Umar, the Tayoye (Arabs) crossed the Euphrates because they had not received the tribute. The citizens of Edessa went out to meet them, and received from them a pledge concerning their city. The Roman army left the cities with sorrow. The cities of Tella and Dara, which did not surrender, were seized by the Tayoye (Arabs) by the sword and the Romans therein were killed. They also controlled Beth Nahrin by the leader Ibn Ghanim (Iyad ibn Ghunm), and then returned to Syria. Umar imposed the *jizya* (poll tax) on all the countries occupied by the Arabs. Thus, the poll tax was imposed on the Christians in the year 951 of the Greeks (A.D. 640).

In the next year of 952 of the Greeks (A.D. 641), the 19th year of the Tayoye (Islamic Calendar), the 7th year of Umar (641 A.D.), Heraclius passed away having reigned thirty years and five months.¹⁶⁷⁹ He was succeeded by his son Constantine and then by Heracleon, nicknamed "The New David." Martina, Heraclius' wife,¹⁶⁸⁰ had Constantine blinded and set up her son Heracleon in his place.¹⁶⁸¹ The Senate was displeased by her actions, so they deposed Heracleon and set up Constans II (Constantine III) in his place.

In this time, Pyhrrus was Chalcedonian patriarch of Constantinople. He was ejected and Paul was set up in his place.

In Rome, after its destruction, arose Martinus. He was the 40th bishop of Rome. He was known for good conduct and piety.

The Orthodox Yuhanon (John) of the Sedros, ordained Constantine as bishop for Edessa. After Constantine's death, he ordained Simon for Edessa.

On Severus

Severus, bishop of Samosata, and brother of Patriarch Athanasius, had accompanied his brother to Alexandria to accomplish the union of the churches after the dissension that had taken place in the time of Damian and Peter. When he returned to his country, Severus continued to serve his congregation. He usually undertook pastoral visits to the believers from April to October, and from the commemoration of the martyr Mor Romanus to the festival of the Resurrection (Easter), he retreated to his monastery and never left it no matter what happened. One day, a wealthy man from the village of Nagrud came beseeching him to save him from a misfortune. Evidently, demons had dominated his house as a result of some matter, and no one could enter it. Even if a person came to visit, the demons hurled stones at him and would not let him in. When the blessed Severus heard this, he was very grieved. He promised that after the festival of the Resurrection (Easter), he would visit the village. When the time of the festival came, Severus, as promised, visited the village and went to the rich man's house. The demons came out to receive him, wailing. After praying, censuring and reading the *husoyo*,¹⁶⁸² he turned to the demons. He rebuked them, cursed them and commanded them to leave the house. Immediately, they disappeared and showed up no more in that village.

Furthermore, an army commander of Mabug (Manbij) was from the same town of the holy (Severus). He had brought the wood of the true Cross that he had received from Shahrbarz in Persia and delivered it to Heraclius in Mabug. It happened that his son died before receiving baptism. His father sent a messenger to the holy (Severus) beseeching him to come and give him condolence. When he arrived at the

Smith, Oxford: At the Clarendon Press), 1903), 91.

¹⁶⁷⁹ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 133.

¹⁶⁸⁰ Martina was mother of Heracleon and the second wife of Heraclius.

¹⁶⁸¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p, 96, says that Martina killed Constantine by poison.

¹⁶⁸² *Husoyo* is a propitiary prayer in prose form recited at certain times in different services. It is of two parts: the premium, or the introduction prayer, usually brief; and the *sedro*, which contains the text of the prayer. It is always accompanied by incense. See Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, translated by Matti Moosa, 77-78.

house, the boy's mother fell at his feet asking him to supplicate God to return life to the child in order to receive baptism, but the blessed (Severus) greatly apologized (for not answering her request). However, because of her great insistence, he prayed, and holding the child by the hand, raised him back to life, and baptized him. After remaining alive for that day and suckling, the holy (Severus) said to his mother, "I don't think that this child should continue to live. The best thing for him is to depart this life as a pure child free from impurities in order to inherit the kingdom (of heaven) as God had decreed for him. The child's parents did not object, so the child lay down and departed.

In addition, a violent demon entered a man from Amid, and he attacked anyone who happened to come his way. Many pregnant women who heard his screaming aborted. The people bound him in fetters, tied him to a carriage and brought him to the Monastery of Qinnesrin. They beseeched the holy (Severus) to heal him. Because of their great insistence, the holy Severus asked them to untie him and loose his fetters. The demonic man threw himself at the feet of the holy Severus. Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Severus rebuked the evil spirit saying, "Come out of this abode because it belongs to God." The evil spirit replied, "I will never leave him for he is mine and I am his by his own intention." The holy Severus rebuked him harshly, the demon came out of the man and departed, and no more harm befell him.

A magician from Edessa dwelt in Samosata. Because he was greatly pressured by the citizens of that place, he invited a group of evil spirits and commanded them to dwell in people. They did, and ruined many people who abandoned their homes and wandered throughout the mountains. When the holy Severus heard the news, he went to the Monastery of Elias to supplicate God on their behalf. Those who were possessed by demons congregated in the monastery. The demons wailed before the holy Severus. Seventy possessed men drew near to him, and he commanded the evil spirits to come out of them. They did come out, repining. Afterwards, more other demons entered them. The blessed Severus rebuked them saying, "Why did you return to these abodes?" The replied, "We are a different group. If you drive us out, others will come and enter them. In fact, we are legion." While he was arguing with them, they stood before an urn containing some relics of the Apostle Paul. They tied up their hands to their backs. They began to complain vehemently from the severity of their torment and then levitated off the ground to become like candles in the martyrrium. As they were tormented, the Apostle Paul commanded them to return to Severus to do with them what he willed. They returned and prostrated before Severus saying, "We have come to you in obedience to your friend the judge." Severus pressured them to tell him the name of their leader. They said that he was the magician (from Edessa). Severus summoned him and delivered him to the inhabitants of his town who tortured him and condemned him to death. The blessed Severus prayed and the demons could be seen no more in that district.

Then, the blessed Severus went to the Monastery of Mor Jacob in Kesum where God revealed to him that he would depart this life. He summoned the monks and asked them to perform the funeral prayer while he was standing in their midst. He beckoned to a monk to recite a *busoyo*, and to the other to complete the whole service. After they finished, the old man (Severus) withdrew from the holy table, bade her farewell, and received the Holy Communion. He turned toward the east and prostrated three times. Then he turned to the west and prostrated. He said to the brethren, "Farewell brothers. Pray for me and stay in peace." He stretched his hands and feet and gave up the soul. The death of the blessed Severus took place in the year 952 of the Greeks (A.D. 641). His prayer is with us. Amen.¹⁶⁸³

After the death of the holy Severus, and in the time of Daniel, bishop of Edessa, the demons possessed the brothers at the Monastery of Qinnesrin. The monastery's archimandrite called Bishop Daniel to help those poor men. He asked some of them to travel to the Monastery of Mor Jacob and bring back the relics of the holy Severus. However, the monks of the monastery refused to give it to them. Finally, they gave them a portion of the relics. When they arrived at the Monastery of Qinnesrin, the demons began to wail saying, "Woe to us that that lame has come. It is not enough that he drove us out of Samosata, but has chased us to this place too." They describe him as lame because he had fallen off his horse and since then

¹⁶⁸³ It is also said that he died in the year 643 A.D. See Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, translated by Matti Moosa, p. 319.

began to limp. One of the men possessed by demons was a disciple of the holy Severus. The demons threatened the evil spirit inside him saying, "Here comes his teacher to drive you away from him." The demon said, "I did not enter the body of this young man by my own will, but I was forced to do so. In fact, he had killed the dog of our master in the upper vineyard, and for this reason, he sent me to torment him. He also sent my mates to enter these monks because they left the church during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and went to play in the water ducts outside the monastery." The demons called the magician "our teacher." When the monks had these young men stand to the right of Severus's relics, the demons immediately wailed, shouted with stentorian voices, and abandoned them.

Remark

These stories about magicians and the demons exorcised by holy men cannot be doubted because they were mentioned in the book of the trustworthy Patriarch Dionysius (Tell Mahre). The reader should realize that magicians and demons have no power over people without the permission of God, as it happened to the righteous Job. This man, well known for his righteousness and zeal, was a subject of temptation in one way or another. *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Eight: On the death of Heraclius king (emperor), of the Romans, and the murder of Yazdagird, king of the Persians, and the murder of Umar, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), and on the chief priest in this period

Umar, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), subjugated the Romans and the Persians by his victories over them. Consequently, the Persian king fled and hid in the country of the Turks.¹⁶⁸⁴ Heraclius left the provinces in the hands of the Tayoye (Arabs) and fled to the capital (Constantinople) where he passed away.¹⁶⁸⁵ He was succeeded by Constantine, who was blinded by his father's wife (Martina),¹⁶⁸⁶ and was succeeded by Constans II who killed his two cousins and their mother. Umar, having reigned for twelve years,¹⁶⁸⁷ was killed as follows: A man working as a polisher (decorator) complained twice to Umar against his Qurashite master for oppressing him. Umar paid him no attention because he was busy with matters of the state, or, had forgotten about his complaint. The man was angry with Umar and stabbed him with a knife in the abdomen while he was praying, and Uthman succeeded him. He was the fourth ruler of the Tayoye (Arabs) (beginning with Muhammad).¹⁶⁸⁸

Uthman began to display avarice. He collected gold and changed the dispensations of the caliphs before him. The Tayoye (Arabs) gathered together to kill him, but when he promised to behave like his predecessor, they reconciled with him.

In the year 961 of the Greeks (A.D. 650), Uthman sent his son Sa'id to pursue Yazdagird, king of Persia, who had been hiding in Sijistan for five years. Then, he came forth and went to Kufa. Sa'id, after subjugating all of Persia, came to Marw (Marv). Yazdagird, fearing that he might be delivered to Sa'id, hid himself in a mill. A Turk who was there killed him and carried his head to the marzuban (governor) of the city. When the marzuban saw that his king had been killed, he delivered the city to the Tayoye (Arabs). He sent the crown of the Persian king to Uthman who, in turn, sent it to Makka where it is still there.

In this time, the Tayoye (Arabs) destroyed Caesarea of Palestine. Regarding its beauty and treasures, it is rightful to apply to it the same lamentations as for Jerusalem. Its sages knew not the Lord, the ancient of days, and its elders heeded no judgment. Its streets and alleys were filled with iniquity. Its young men and women defiled each other, and the cries of the wronged people reached the ears of the Lord. Thus, the Lord

¹⁶⁸⁴ Yazdagird fled to (Marw, Marv). See *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 133.

¹⁶⁸⁵ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 132.

¹⁶⁸⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 96, says that he was poisoned to death by Martina.

¹⁶⁸⁷ More correctly, ten years.

¹⁶⁸⁸ It is difficult to ascertain the source from which Dionysius Tell Mahre derived this information because he gives none. His story of Umar's death is different from known Arabic sources in our hands. See for example, *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, II (al-Najaf, 1358 of the Islamic Calendar/A.D. 1939), p. 137, and Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, Tenth Edition (Macmillan-St. Martin's Press, 1976), 176, note 4.

had the Tayoye (Arabs) subjugate it. Mu'awiya (Ibn Abi Sufyan) came and invested it by land and sea. He attacked it constantly from December to May. Still, the citizens received no promise for the protection of their lives. Although seventy-two mangonels (engines of war) hurled stones against its wall, it was not breached because it was firm. Then, the Tayoye (Arabs) dug a hole and some of them went in while others scaled the wall by means of ladders. They killed, and some of them were killed, for three days. After that, the Tayoye (Arabs) became stronger. Seven thousand Romans, 1,000 of whom who were guarding the city, fled by ships and Mu'awiya plundered abundant possessions. He also imposed the jizya (poll tax) on the inhabitants. Then he went up to the country of the Greeks. He encouraged his troops saying, "We are going up to lands rich with gold and possessions of every kind. God has delivered it into our hands because of the sins of its people." He passed into Cilicia looting and taking captives. The Tayoye (Arabs) then went to Eumita, seized its gates and took its inhabitants by surprise. Mu'awiya ordered them killed and stationed guards lest anyone of them escape. After gathering its riches, they tortured the nobles so that they might show them where other riches were hidden. They carried off all the people, men, women, and children into slavery. They defiled this wretched city so much that they even laid with women in the churches, and they returned to their country rejoicing. These things took place in the year 951 of the Greeks (A.D. 640-641).

In this period, plague broke out in Syria and Beth Nahrin, and many perished.

In this same period, while the Arabs were rebuilding the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, the building collapsed. The Jews said (to the Arabs), "If you do not remove the cross raised on Mount Olives opposite the Temple, the Temple will not be built." However, when they removed the cross, the edifice remained firm. By means of this pretext, they brought down many crosses. Since then, hatred of the cross prevailed in the kingdom of the Tayoye (Arabs), and they persecuted the Christians for honoring the cross.

In this period, the sun eclipsed on the third hour of October 29, and the stars appeared. People were seized by fear from this wondrous sign.

In this period, 'Amr (Ibn Sa'd), the Tayoyo (Arab) amir, ordered that crosses should not be exhibited openly on festival days or in funerals, which pleased the Jews immensely. Therefore, the Tayoye (Arabs) began to remove the crosses from churches. It happened then that a Christian, close to 'Amr, saw a Jew trying to remove the cross from the top of the Church of St. John the Baptist. He was fired by zeal and went to 'Amr and said to him, "Just prince! It is unfair to give the opportunity to the Jews to scoff at the mysteries of our religion." Immediately, God changed the heart of the prince who replied, "I have not ordered that all crosses should be removed except those drawn on the walls of the streets." He ordered a man standing by to climb to the top of the church. He did, and snatching the cross from the Jew's hand, struck him on the head and cracked it, and his brain gushed out. The Christians were immensely consoled, and the Jews disappointed. The Christians began to raise the cross during their prayers, festivals and funerals. However, the people of Homs and Damascus continued to raise the cross on these occasions without paying attention to the order of the prince ('Amr).

In this period, Martin, bishop of Rome (649-653), convened a council in Rome attended by 109 bishops. It condemned the Emperor Heraclius, Sergius, Cyrus and Paul, and anyone who did not confess two natures, two actions, two wills and two forms (in Christ).¹⁶⁸⁹

In this period, the amir 'Amr ibn Sa'd, forbade crosses from being exhibited outside the churches. He further ordered crosses to be erased from the walls. 'Amr summoned our Patriarch John (of the Sedros). When the patriarch entered into his presence, 'Amr began to say strange things about the books (the Old and the New Testaments), and addressed to him fatuous questions. The patriarch answered them all based on the Scriptures and on natural evidence. 'Amr was astonished about the patriarch's courage and profound knowledge. He asked him to translate the Gospel into Arabic on the condition that he should remove from it anything that indicated that Christ was the Son of God, and also remove the terms of baptism and the cross. The blessed John, relying on God, said, "God forbid that I will delete one letter or one line from the Gospel, even if all the arrows and the lances of your army pierced my body." Seeing his resoluteness, 'Amr

¹⁶⁸⁹ See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum (Ecclesiastical History)*, 1, translated into Latin by Joannes Baptista Abbeloos and Thomas Josephus Lamy (Lovanii, 1875), 277, and Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, translated by Matti Moosa, 321.

permitted him to do whatever he saw fit.¹⁶⁹⁰ He summoned the bishops and a group of men from Tanukh, Uqayl, and Tay, well versed in both Syriac and Arabic languages and ordered them to translate the Gospel into Arabic. He then submitted their translation to commentators for examination. Thus, the Gospel was translated and delivered to the amir.

As to Egypt, it was found in some sources that Benjamin, patriarch of the Orthodox, delivered it to the Tayoye (Arabs) because of their persecution by the Chalcedonians. It is reported that Cyrus, the Chalcedonian patriarch, used to wear on one foot a red shoe, and on the other a shoe worn only by monks, to show that he had religious as well as a worldly authority. He drove away Patriarch Benjamin from Egypt who went to the Arabs and promised to deliver Alexandria to them if they ejected Cyrus and handed to him the churches (seized by the Chalcedonians). He returned to Egypt and ordered his congregation to deliver Alexandria to the Arabs. When Cyrus learned this, he gathered all the gold and silver vessels of the churches, stealthily boarded a ship and fled to Constantinople. Benjamin retrieved the churches. Since then, and until this day, the Chalcedonians had no success in Alexandria and Egypt. They did not even dwell there except for few of them. The Orthodox, however, gained control of the churches and the monasteries until our day.

In this period Severus Sabukht, bishop of Qinnestrin, (d. 667), and Matta, bishop of Aleppo, were well known in religious and profane sciences.¹⁶⁹¹

Chapter Nine: Containing the letters of Patriarch Mor Yuhanon (John) to Marutha, metropolitan of Takrit; and the letters of Marutha to John concerning the persecution (inflicted) by Barsoum of Nisibin on the Orthodox; also, on the heresy of the impious Maximian (Maximus)

In his refutation of Maximian (Maximus), the presbyter Simon from the Monastery of Qinnestrin, said that Maximus derived his heresy from the teachings of Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia. Then, it spread among the monks of the monasteries in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. One of them (monks) was called Palea-Lura and the other Nea-Laura (as J. P. Chabot has it in Book Eleven, Chapter 9, p. 433, n. 2, or Daphlaludha and Dinaludha in the Syriac text). They adhered to the ideas of Origen, who had been influenced by Plato, and was inclined to paganism. Up to that time, they kept their ideas secret, but Sergius, a monk from Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia), exposed them. He traveled to Jerusalem to worship and visit these monasteries. The monks tried to attract him to their belief telling him that, "What we have learned from Origen is that the souls of human beings and animals, birds, beasts, trees and fish of the sea, were angels before falling into sin. Because they were alienated from the love of God, they were cast down from heaven and became worthy to dwell in bodies as if they were locked up in prisons. Each one of them is tortured according to the magnitude of his sin, and they transmigrate from one body to the other. At the end, however, and after they have been tormented for their sins, the decree of the punishment of the souls and of the devils will be removed, and they will regain their past glory. After all, Christ shall be crucified thrice after the Resurrection: twice for the devils and once for the souls. This is the anticipated resurrection where the souls are liberated from the bodies. When the souls and the devils are purified from their sins, they will be transformed into their original form as angels and assume divine nature. The archimandrite of their monastery says, 'I was formerly their prior as Christ was chief of the angels, and Christ is no better than us. As he had become God, so also we will be transformed and become gods. God has no favoritism that he would honor Christ more than us. This is the true resurrection, by whose means we will be completely liberated from the body, because the body desires what is bad for the soul, and the soul desires what is bad for the body. The will of the soul is one thing, and the will of the body is another. Likewise, Christ has two wills. As to the bodies, they shall rise at the Resurrection, but in a spherical form.'"

When that virtuous monk Sergius heard this, he sneaked out at night and fled the monastery. He went to the Emperor Justinian and informed him about these men. The emperor ordered that they be

¹⁶⁹⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum (Ecclesiastical History)*, 1, 276.), and Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, translated by Matti Moosa, 321.

¹⁶⁹¹ For a biography of Severus Sabukht, see Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, translated by Matti Moosa, 325-328.

driven out of their monastery. Then Patriarch Menas convened the Fifth Council and anathematized anyone who confessed that Christ is of two wills or two actions. In addition, he anathematized the impious Theodore of Mopsuestia whose books contained this doctrine. The council further anathematized the Agoenetes who held two wills and two operations in Christ. In addition, the Emperor Heraclius made some investigation and anathematized those who held two wills and two operations in Christ.

In the time of Constans, son of Heraclius appeared the disciples of Plato in the district of Tiberias. Maximus journeyed to Africa and met with the Nestorians who, finding that he was holding their same belief, accepted him. He journeyed also to Rome and deceived the Patriarch Martin, who accepted those disciples and provided them with a monastery. Then Maximus went to Constantinople. When Emperor Constans heard about his teaching, he assembled a council in which Maximus debated Constantine of Perga. Constantine proved that Maximus was in agreement with Nestorius and Theodore (of Mopsuestia). The council admonished him but he would not desist. The emperor ordered him locked up in a nuns' convent to shame him. However, the impious Maximus enticed the nuns not to take the Eucharist from their adviser, claiming that the Holy Spirit does not descend upon him (during the celebration of the Eucharist). He also lured them not to take the Communion even from Paul, the patriarch. The nuns, however, kicked the Eucharistic elements with the heels of their shoes as instructed by Maximus. When this matter was exposed, the emperor commanded that the nuns be dragged through the streets of the city and burned by fire. He had Maximus' tongue cut off, and yet he did not desist but addressed letters to different quarters. The emperor had his right hand cut off, and Maximus used the left hand. The emperor ordered his left hand cut off and banished him. Maximus was not worthy of any rank in the church of God.¹⁶⁹²

The letter of Patriarch Yuhanon (John) to Marutha

To our pious brother and fellow-minister, Mor Marutha, the bishop and metropolitan of the country of Persia, John the wretched who holds the Apostolic See of Antioch, and the servant of the Syrian Church, who is adorned by the name of the patriarchate in our Lord Jesus Christ the Almighty God, greets you in peace and asks for your prayers in the Lord.

You are well aware that during our visit to the king of the Persians, the union with you was accomplished. For you were like a flock inseparable from the rest of the sheep since the persecution stirred up by Barsoum of Nisibin until the time of my master, the Patriarch Mor Athanasius. Since ancient times, the See of the Catholicoses of the Persians, Armenians, Gorzan and Dara, were subjects to the See of Antioch until the murder of the Catholicos Babai. Since then, your leaders disposed of matters as they wished until we came to you as I have said. We met with your Metropolitan Christophorus and Addai, the archimandrite of St. Matthew's Monastery. You have united yourself with us after the said metropolitan had come to us, you ordained bishops assigned by the metropolitan, and with you were the bishops of Mor Athanasius.

We asked you to relate the story of Barsoum's persecution, but since the matter was not clear enough in the time of the blessed Athanasius, we neglected it. Now, that we have been called to occupy his (Athanasius) position, although we are not worthy of it, we beseech you to relate the story, knowing that many similar stories have reached you. We only hope that you would not neglect our request, that you may be remembered in what we will store in our library. Pray for us that the Lord may assist us, according to his own will, to dispense of the affairs of his flock that is redeemed by his victorious cross. We also hope that our quest and appeal would not be considered an intrusion.

The entire brothers and the Syrian bishops send their greetings and ask for your holy answered prayers.

¹⁶⁹² For an analysis of this account, see Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse University Press, 1986, reprinted Gorgias Press, 2005), pp. 98-102).

The reply of Marutha to Yuhanon (John)

To the blessed Chief Father and Chief Priest, the treasure of the holy and glorious church, the Patriarch Mor Yuhanon (John), Marutha, the stranger, and by the grace of God, Metropolitan of St. Matthew's Monastery and the East, sends divine greetings and asks for your answered prayers.

The letter of your holiness, which we received, has filled us, our brothers and the sons of our congregation with great joy and delight. For God has set you up as successor to the holy Athanasius after his death, and as leader of his church which he had chosen, not by the means of human will, but by the Holy Spirit who had chosen the great Peter. We, therefore, pray that you may receive the gift of the apostle himself and inherit him in his See.

As to your request concerning the story of Barsoum's persecution, I would like you to know, O chief of chiefs, that all of the stories which were preserved at the monastery, were burned by the impious Barsoum along with the monastery. This story is not available everywhere because a great number of learned men and historians were then martyred. However, in order not to frustrate your beatitude, we will put down the available information we heard from trustworthy elders who, in turn, had received it directly from their fathers, beginning with Nestorius and gradually afterwards.

After Nestorius was condemned by the Council of Ephesus (431) and banished to Patmus,¹⁶⁹³ Rabula (bishop of Edessa) brought the contemptible commentaries of Theodore and his master Deodore. They were read and condemned by the church of God. The Emperor Theodosius ordered their teaching burned wherever they were found, and the death of anyone who accept them. Upon his return to Edessa, Rabula found books by Theodore at the school of the easterners and set them on fire in the middle of the city. The partisans of this heresy fled to Nisibin, then under Persian rule. There was a bishop in the city called Barsoum who was infected with this evil heresy. He did not proclaim them openly because he was under the authority of the Catholicos Babai, and the catholicos was under the authority of the patriarch of Antioch. When the catholicos was summoned to attend the council, he could not because of fearing the (Persian) government, which was engaged in war with the Romans. Here our conscience is awed by the persecution of Barsoum, the flood of iniquity, the chaser of saints, and the murderer of the righteous and the sword of Satan.

Babai and his bishops included their approval in the following letter they addressed to the council:

To the holy ecumenical council assembled in Ephesus by the will of the Spirit, Babai, Catholicos of the East and his bishops ask for your divine greetings.

You have invited us to attend your assembly on account of the perversion contrived by Nestorius. As you well know, we are under the authority of a kingdom remote from our faith. Since we could not attend, we decided to send you our endorsement for fear that persecution might be stirred up against us by the heathens, in case we attended. We also feared that the knife that killed our father in the recent past might slaughter us.

We agree and consent to everything resolved by the council. We renounce the blemished teaching contrived by Satan against the church. We also reject those who consider the Son lesser than the Father, or pertinently say that Christ is God who dwelt in man. Or, confess two natures and two *qnume* (hypostases, persons) of Christ after the natural and hypostatic union (of the two natures) done in an ineffable manner, and in a wondrous compounding without division or confusion. They do not confess the Son was born of the Father before all ages, and that he himself was born of Mary in latter times; he is consubstantial with the Father in his divinity and consubstantial with us in his humanity. He is and no one else. He is the one who was crucified for us in the flesh. He is God in everything be they sublime or lowly. He himself descended into Sheol (Hades) and destroyed the bonds of death. He resurrected with glory and ascended into heaven without an addition to his person. He will come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. We anathematize all the deviated heretics, and accept the holy Council of Nicaea and the Council of Constantinople and this, your third Council (First Ephesus).

¹⁶⁹³Nestorius was banished to Oasis in Egypt.

We write this in the spirit of one faith. We ask your holiness to honor us by accepting what we have written. We ask you to pray for us and for all the brothers. We beseech you not to blame us for the delay because we are under the authority of an impious (Persian) kingdom.

Babai sent this letter with two monks to Ephesus. Upon reaching Nisibin, they stayed at the church. Barsoum asked them where they were going, and they told him everything. He said to them craftily, "The king of Persia has spies in our city (Nisibin). If they would know that you are going to the country of the Romans, they will kill you and you will also cause the death of Babai. So, leave the letter with me and I will take care of delivering it." The monks listened to him, returned to Babai, and informed him of the matter. Babai said to them, "You have done well by listening to the advice of our brother Barsoum." Then Barsoum went to the Persian king and showed him the letter. He read it to him, and said that, "Babai is a spy for the Roman emperor." He rejoined, "I would like to inform you that in the lands of the Romans appeared a man called Nestorius who reprovved the Roman emperors saying that the law does not allow them to wage wars against the Persians, but rather surrender and pay them the tribute. When they saw that he was teaching these ideas, they wanted to kill him, but then had him banished." The King said, "It seems that this man is wise and loves our kingdom." Barsoum said to the king, "If you deliver to me the Christians in your kingdom, I will teach them his ideas, and they will never become spies for the Romans in Persia." The king then delivered Babai and the Christians into his hands. Barsoum said to Babai, "Endorse the faith of Nestorius and keep your position." Babai said, "May your authority go with you to perdition. As to me, I anathematize Nestorius and all those who follow him." The impious Barsoum threatened Babai with torment and death. The holy Babai said, "You, enemy of justice and second Judas, what do you have more than death? I would rather die a thousand times than deviate from the truth." Barsoum ordered his tongue cut off, allegedly for insulting the king. Finally, he had his head cut off. The blessed Babai had already instructed the believers to bury him in the wall in a standing position, with his face looking toward the east until the Son of God comes again, and justice takes its course.

Barsoum's persecution (of the Orthodox) began in Ctesiphon and extended to Beth Garmai.¹⁶⁹⁴ Some bishops fled to the Jazira and others to Armenia. Still others succumbed to him for fear of death. Those who resisted him, Barsoum had slaughtered. Then, he came to Arbil (Adiabene), and its bishop escaped. A great number of presbyters and faithful laymen were killed. Barsoum reached the province of Nineveh. He seized Bar Suhde, metropolitan of St. Matthew's Monastery and Nineveh with twelve monks and ninety presbyters. He asked them to celebrate the Eucharist that he may receive the Communion, or else, he would celebrate the Eucharist and offer them the Communion. They said courageously, "God forbid that we will give the holy elements to the dogs, or take contamination from hands dripping with blood." Barsoum had all of them killed in the Monastery of Baznitha (Bahzani), and set on fire the Monastery of St. Matthew in the Mountain of the Thousands.¹⁶⁹⁵ He annihilated the Christians except for those in the monasteries, and ordered the rest to be persecuted. Those who resisted him, and were patient, went up to the mountains and have since been called monks to this day.

When Barsoum reached Banuhadra (present-day Duhok north of Mosul) and tried to ascend to the hut of Mor Samuel (Samuel) near the village of Mordani, the angel of God stood in front of his beast and stopped her from going further. It did not budge although he forced her to move. He sent a message to the blessed Samuel, and Samuel let Barsoum's beast loose. Then, he went to the village of Beth Adhre (Ba'idhra north of Mosul) and set up impious canons. He decreed that no presbyter, deacon or bishop should be without a woman (wife). This is because he himself would not be reviled for having a harlot companion. He learned that the believers (Orthodox) had met at Ctesiphon and secretly set up a catholicos name Acacius. He wrote to Acacius reminding him of the murder of Babai. Fearing death, Acacius unwillingly accepted Nestorius. Then, when Barsoum traveled to the Armenian region and reached Arzen, the Armenians threatened him saying, "If you do not go back, we will avenge the blood of the faithful." The impious wrote to the Persian king saying, "The Armenians have rebelled against you." The king asked the opinion of his

¹⁶⁹⁴ Beth Garmai is a province in Iraq where Philoxenus, bishop of Mabug, was born.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Called the mountain of the thousands because, at one time, there lived in it thousands of monks.

counselors. They advised him not to provoke an internal conflict that would divide his kingdom just because the Christians had complaints. He summoned the Armenian kings unto him, but they responded saying, "Unless you swear an oath that you will not alter our laws, and do not dispatch us to fight any people except the Turks, we will come on the condition that the cross will precede us because we are Christians. Otherwise, we will not come." After consulting with his nobles, the king agreed with the Armenians and repulsed Barsoum. Thus, the Armenians were saved from Barsoum.

As to the Metropolitan Bar Suhde and the twelve monks, they were locked up in the house of a Jew in Nisibin. When the wicked Barsoum returned, he promised Bar Suhde to appoint him the head of all the bishops if he confessed his doctrine. He also promised the clergy to ordain them bishops. When Bar Suhde resisted him, Barsoum ordered him to be stoned and the monks crucified. The Jew in whose house these men were detained, confessed Christ when his son was healed by a miracle, and was baptized by the holy Bar Suhde. He is the one who transferred the remains of Bar Suhde to the Baznitha Monastery.

If we would relate the hardships suffered by the faithful at the hands of the anathematized Barsoum, or narrate the stories of the saints who were martyred during the persecution, we would need the tongues of angels in order not to forget, by our stupidity and credulity, the memory of the martyrs.

Barsoum assembled three councils: one in Ctesiphon, the second in Kirkuk and the region of Beth Garmai, and the third in Ba'idhra. He instituted impious canons in all of them. They were refuted by the holy Philoxenus in two large volumes. Since no chief priest was left in our country, seven monks journeyed to Antioch and were ordained bishops. Upon returning home, however, they could not appear in public. Following the death of the impious Barsoum, the Armenian catholicos came and performed ordinations in our district. It has been proven to us, that the number of bishops, presbyters, monks, laymen and other believers murdered by the accursed Barsoum, amounted to 7,800 souls. These things took place before the time of Theodosius II (the Young), and from then until the time of Constans, son of Heraclius.

We found in an Arabic manuscript the death of the impious Barsoum as follows:

When Barsoum was on his way to the king of Persia to ask for more troops to persecute the faithful (Orthodox) and annihilate them for good, he entered a village called Karma in the neighborhood of Takrit. He celebrated the Eucharist with the intention of forcing the inhabitants of the village to receive the Communion, but the men of the village fled. Then, the women were called by force to partake in his Communion. A nun took the elements by her lips and then spat it out of her mouth. Barsoum bowed down to pick it but she struck him with an iron key on his head. He was then finished by her companion nuns. His disciples and the soldiers were standing outside. When he delayed, they went and saw him lying flat on the floor, and the women had fled. They moved him to Nisibin and buried him in the church. *End of the narrative.*¹⁶⁹⁶

Chapter Ten: The epoch of Constans II, son of the Roman Emperor Heraclius; and on Uthman, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); and the account of the Tayoye (Arabs') capture of Caesarea of Cappadocia and the sea islands; and on the death of Mor Yuhanon (John) and other church matters

In the year 958 of the Greeks (A.D. 647), the 25th of the Tayoye (Arabs) and the 5th of Constans, Gregorius the patrician of Africa rebelled against Constans.

In this year, the Tayoye (Arabs) raided Africa, waged war against the patrician, and killed a great number of his army. Afterwards, they returned and seized all the coastal cities. Gregorius offered his allegiance to Constans.

Mu'awiya (Ibn Abi Sufyan), commander of the Tayoye (Arab) host, divided his army into two camps, and appointed a Syrian named Habib, an evil man, as captain of one of them and dispatched him to Armenia in October. When he and the army reached Armenia, they found it covered with snow. They brought oxen and drove them in front of them, which made a pathway for them to pass through. Thus, they entered Armenia unimpeded by the snow, or being detected by the inhabitants who were unaware of what

¹⁶⁹⁶ It is unfortunate that this Arabic source is not identified.

was happening. The Tayoye (Arabs) fought against the Armenians, looting, taking many into captivity, and burning the villages. Then they withdrew to their land rejoicing. The other army, under Mu'awiya's command, went to Caesarea of Cappadocia. When they crossed the mountain passes, they found the villages teeming with people and beasts, and plundered them. They attacked the city for ten days. Finally, they destroyed the whole district, left the city desolate, and then returned.

A few days later, they returned to Caesarea once more and attacked it for many days. When the people saw that the wrath against them was great, and that there was no one to save them, they pledged to pay the Tayoye (Arabs) the jizya (tribute). When the Tayoye (Arabs) entered the city and saw its beautiful buildings and monasteries, and its abundant possessions, they regretted their pledge of safety, but they did not go back upon their oath. However, they carried whatever they desired and went to the city Amorium.¹⁶⁹⁷ When they saw that it was adorned with trees like Paradise, they were astonished at its beauty. They marched and invested the city, and when they saw that they were unable to capture it, they offered its inhabitants a pledge of safety and open it for them, but the people would not agree. Finally, Mu'awiya sent troops who surrounded the city and plundered immense amounts of gold and silver like dust, and returned to their country.

In the year 960 of the Greeks (A.D. 649), Mu'awiya collected thousands of soldiers and brought 1700 ships from Alexandria manned with armed men. They went down into the sea and arrived at the Island of Cyprus. Mu'awiya also ordered the Armenians to be brought to keep the ships steadfast in the sea. He sent a message to the inhabitants that they should come out and take a pledge for the safety of their lives. However, when they refused to do so, the Tayoye (Arabs) brought the Alexandrians who were annoyed, because the people of Cyprus would not let the Tayoye (Arabs) enter the island. They tied the ships and entered the island in arms killing and plundering. Then they went to Constantia (Salamin), the capital city, which was teeming with people and captured it by force. Mu'awiya entered the Episcopal house and defiled it by committing an impure lustful act.¹⁶⁹⁸ God allowed the defilement of this church because the clergy had changed the faith of the holy Epiphanes that was built in his time. After collecting the gold of the island and its possessions and captives, they divided the booty. The Egyptians took a portion and they took the rest, and then returned.

However, as God's face was turned against the island to destroy it, he, after a while, stirred up Abu al-'Awar and his army who returned to Cyprus for the second time because he heard that some people had dwelt in it. Upon his arrival, these people trembled from fear. The Tayoye (Arabs) entered the island and brought out the people who were hidden in underground tunnels. They plundered the whole island and they moved to the city of Pathos.¹⁶⁹⁹ They tightened the grip around it, and its inhabitants asked for safety. Abu al-'Awar pledged not to harm them provided they give him gold, silver and possessions. The people gave him what he asked for, and, having collected all this wealth, the Tayoye (Arabs) returned to Syria.

Then, Mu'awiya tried to seize Arwad, which is another island, but failed. He sent a message to their Bishop Tuma (Thomas) to tell the inhabitants to leave the city and go in peace, but they refused to do so. At this time, Mu'awiya went to Damascus, but then returned to Arwad and captured it. He evicted its inhabitants and had it plowed under so that it would never again be inhabitable.

In the year 965 of the Greeks (A.D. 654), Abu al-'Awar and his army sailed to the island of Cos and captured it through the treachery of its bishop. They plundered all its possessions, killed many of its inhabitants and took the rest captive. They razed its fortress to the ground. Abu al-'Awar went to Crete and plundered it, and went to Rhodes and laid it waste. They destroyed the wondrous brass colossus, which it is said to have been one of the wonders of the world. They decide to break it down and take its Corinthian brass. It was standing straight like a man, and they found that it was built on rocks deep in the ground fixed with huge iron rods. A number of men got together, and by ropes tied around the colossus, pulled it down.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Amorium, Amuriyya of the Arabs.

¹⁶⁹⁸ Tell Mahre does not say what this defiling act is. However, it is most likely an immoral sexual act.

¹⁶⁹⁹ The Lapathus of Bar Hebraeus in his *Chronography*, 98.

Immediately, it fell to the ground. It is said that it was 107 feet tall, and weighed 3,000 loads of brass. The brass was bought by a Jew from Emessa (Homs).

In the year 960 of the Greeks (A.D. 649), Patriarch John, nicknamed he of the Sedros, passed away in December and was buried in the church of Mor Zu'ra in Amid. In this same month, Simon, metropolitan of Edessa passed away. In this same year, Mor Theodore from Qinnesrin was ordained a Patriarch of the Orthodox See of Antioch.

In Alexandria, the patriarch of the orthodox was Benjamin.

Both Rome and Constantinople were controlled by Chalcedonian bishops for a long time. Since then, their heresy added evil upon evil, and sin upon sin, especially the second heresy more than the first one. In fact, although the bishops at Chalcedon iniquitously defined two natures in Christ, still they did not confess two wills and two substances. Later, however, appeared the expression of two substances by John Grammarian, and two wills by Maximus from Yasfin in Tiberias. Maximus was condemned in the time of Constans, and banished to the Caucasus in Armenia. His hands and tongue were cut off because he would not return to the right path when a council was assembled in Constantinople to discuss his case. However, Martin, bishop of Rome, whose conscience was corrupted by the heresy of two wills and two acts, assembled a council in Rome, as we mentioned above, and anathematized the Emperor Heraclius and the Patriarch of Constantinople because they did not confess two wills, two substances and two acts as they professed two natures and two acts, or two natures and two properties.

As to Constans, nephew of Emperor Heraclius,¹⁷⁰⁰ he journeyed to Rome, bound Martin and kept him in his company. Constans, knowing that Martin was a follower of Maximus who maintained the doctrine of two wills and two substances and two operations, while simultaneously holding to two natures. So, he intended to deter him from holding the belief of Maximus. The reason is that the Chalcedonians never accepted the doctrine of two wills, two substances and two acts. This heresy, however, crept into their midst after a while, as we shall explain later.

In this time, an Armenian named David¹⁷⁰¹ with a number of soldiers left the capital (Constantinople). Meanwhile, Valentinus with his soldiers left the country of the Arabs. They communicated with each other to meet in a certain place to fight the Arabs. When the Tayoye (Arabs) learned of this, they attacked Valentinus and killed him. When David reached Beth Nahrin and found no Tayoye (Arabs) there, his troops began to commit evil acts. They went to the village of Beth Ma'da and looted gold, silver, other possessions, bread, wine and meat. They beat the Christians and filled their nostrils with sand and ashes in order to (force them) to show them the treasures hidden underground. Nothing was heard except the crying and wailing of decent women who were raped right in front of their husbands.

When Titus and his troops witnessed the behavior of the Romans, that David did not rebuke them, he went up to David and said to him, "It is not appropriate for you as a Christian to stretch your hand against the Christians, nor will the emperor praise you when he learns that you have entered this country to plunder and burn." He ordered him to take his troops and leave to save those whom the Armenians had taken captive. Thus, Titus saved many people.

When the reports about David reached the ears of 'Is¹⁷⁰² in Damascus, he assembled an army and came to Edessa; the Armenians were frightened and left everything in the camp and fled. The Tayoye (Arabs) pursued them in groups of fifties and hundreds and eventually caught up with them. David returned and ordered his men to fight the Tayoye (Arabs). Titus with his men formed one front as the Tayoye (Arabs) tried to seize him. Seeing that he had mighty men with him, they left him and turned their attention to David and his army. The miserable David called out to Titus saying, "This is the time to show your affection for the Romans." He replied, "If I help you, the Lord will never support me." Indeed, the sighs of the poor and the defilement of women stirred up such divine wrath. David and the men in his company were slaughtered because the Tayoye (Arabs) pursued him alone. As to Titus, he fled to Amid.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Constans II, or Constantine III (641-668), was son of Constantine II, the son of Heraclius. He died from poison in May 641.

¹⁷⁰¹ Prince of Saharhonians. See J B. Chabot, *Chronique De Michel Le Syrien*, II (Paris, 1901): 443, footnote 2.

¹⁷⁰² Chabot calls him Tyadh. See *Chronique De Michel Le Syrien*, II, 444.

In the year 958 of the Greeks (A.D. 647) a severe storm raged, uprooted the trees, and destroyed the pillars of the blessed ascetics.

At this time the people of 'Aqula, or Baghdad (more correctly Kufa in southern Iraq), moved to Mabug (Manbij) via Harran, and from there to Hama.

In Syria and Beth Nahrin, a vicious plague and severe famine broke out. Varying reports about these events were recorded in different books. Nevertheless, these things did really take place. We will give here their details.

Chapter Eleven: On the march of Arabs against Constantinople; and the defeat of the Romans at sea; and on Constans who killed his brother and went to Rome, but then returned to Syracuse; and on the cannibals who ate human flesh; and how the heresy of the impious Maximus was accepted in the capital where he was condemned and rejected

In the year 966 of the Greeks (A.D. 655), the 35th year of the Tayoye (Arabs), the 10th year of Constans, the 9th year of Uthman, Mu'awiya prepared ships to sail against Constantinople the capital city. It happened that two zealous men released the captive prisoners who were jailed in Tripoli where ships were built. They killed the Tayoye (Arabs), burned the equipment of the ships and fled by boats to the country of the Romans. When Mu'awiya, captain of the Tayoye (Arab) host, heard of what happened, he was outraged and assembled an army larger than that the first one and had ships prepared. The expedition, commanded by Abu al-'Awar, came to the place called Phoenicia and he found there the Emperor Constans and his brother Theodosius. While they were preparing to attack the Arabs on the following day, Emperor Constans slept and dreamt that he was in Thessalonica. He related his dream to an interpreter who said, "It would have been better if you have not slept, O emperor, to see this dream. Thessalonica is to be interpreted: This Allio Tin Niki, that is 'allotted the victory to others and victory will be for your enemies.'" The emperor scoffed at this interpretation, and set ships on the sea for battle, but the Romans were defeated by the Tayoye (Arabs). The emperor himself would have been killed if it were not for the son of a trumpeter who leapt to the royal ship, and carried the emperor across to another ship so that he might be saved. He himself remained on the royal ship. After he killed many (men), he was himself killed. The fighting was so intense it was said that the dry sand ascended more than the vapor between the ships. The Romans were defeated, Constans and his brother fled to the capital, and the war quieted down.¹⁷⁰³

Abu al-'Awar, captain of the Tayoye (Arab) host, ordered that dead bodies be taken out of the water, and they numbered about 20,000. When the Arabs were ready to march against Constantinople, Ptolemy went out to meet them and promised to pay them an annual tribute from the country of the Romans. However, when he reneged on his promise, the Tayoye (Arabs) went up and plundered Isauria. Then, Ptolemy paid the tribute and concluded peace with the Tayoye (Arabs) for three years. The emperor sent Gregorius, son of his brother, Mu'awiya as a hostage in return for the gold. However, the Tayoye (Arabs) did not keep their pledge and, like the Romans, not only violated their commitment to the Tayoye (Arabs), but to each other. Now, Constans killed his brother Theodosius that the kingdom might remain for his sons. This was why the army hated him for acting without mercy, and when he learned of this, he went to Rome. As he tarried there, the troops agitated against him, saying, "It is not seemly for the emperor to be in Rome because he is far away from the Arabs." Then Constans came to the island of Sicily. When he arrived at Syracuse, he chose to live there. He sent for his sons, but the citizens were unwilling (to let them go), saying, "We will not permit our emperors to go away from us." Then he made his three sons Constantine, Tiberias and Heraclius, Autocrators. He then made them dwell in the royal city while he himself dwelt in Syracuse. He was afraid that his troops would kill him, as he killed his brother for no offense. For this, the people called him "the second Cain."¹⁷⁰⁴

¹⁷⁰³ See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 98-99.

¹⁷⁰⁴ See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 99.

Following the death of Constans (d. 668), nephew of Heraclius, the wicked heresy of Maximus was anathematized and rejected. Even so, it was accepted in the capital in the time of Constans' son, as it had been accepted in Rome as follows:

A person named Agathon was ordained a patriarch for Rome to succeed Martin. He had a soldier friend of the rank of Comte named Theodore from Colonia¹⁷⁰⁵ of Armenia. He urged Agathon to convene a council. When the bishop assembled in Rome, they reconfirmed the wicked heresy of Maximus and the heresy of John Grammarian. They resolved that since the Council of Chalcedon had determined that in Christ there are two natures, two prosopons and two operations, it was imperative to confess (that in Christ) there are two substances and two wills. Indeed, they had been immersed in this error and anathematized those who did not confess two substances and two wills. Agathon, bishop of Rome, confirmed this definition (of faith). He addressed a letter to Constans carried by the monks of Nisibin, as said earlier, and mentioned those who had deceived Agathos, as we said in the previous chapter. He sent with the monks one 170 (pound) of gold as a bribe for the emperor. He also sent gold to the leaders in order to accept what the council had determined which he had assembled in Rome. It is said that bribe blinds the eyes of wise men, especially that the eyes of the Greeks had been blinded for a long time by the heresy of two natures, which appeared in Chalcedon. In fact, they went from bad to worse and from one ditch to the other. They accepted and surrendered to and confirmed the impious teaching of Maximus, which proclaimed two wills, two acts together with two natures in Christ.

In this period, a severe famine took place in the earth to the extent that people ate the flesh of animals and everything unclean.

At this time, a man named Elisha, from the village of 'Ufri in the district of Germanicia (Mar'ash) and who originally came from the east was a companion of robbers, but later separated himself from them. He retreated to a cave and behaved like a solitary ascetic. During the famine, he was accustomed to eating human flesh. Although the famine was no more, he never quit this evil custom. In fact, he went down to the villages, and deluding children, he took them up to his cave, slaughtered them without mercy, and ate their flesh. He hid their bones and clothes in a place near his cave. When he happened to meet their mothers while they were wailing, he comforted them with pleasant words, and give them the flesh of their children to eat, saying (to each of them), "O woman! Do not grieve for the loss of your child, but rather rejoice because he is saved from hunger. Take, eat this which I have hunted." The poor women ate and thanked him not knowing where the flesh came from.

One day Elisha said to laborers from the village of 'Ufri during the grape harvest, "I am ready to set a banquet for you provided you give me the wine of your vineyards." Then he went to the village to prepare food as he was accustomed, but could not find a child (to slaughter). It happened that a monk from the Monastery of Mor Mari named Damian came to the village to buy cheese. When Elisha saw him, he told him to come along with him and he would sell him hundred pounds of cheese. Elisha went along with him, and he took him into his cave. He told him to sleep and have some rest until he brought him the cheese. When Damian slept, Elisha struck him with a stone on the head and killed him. He cooked his flesh, which was fatty. He took the flesh of his thighs to the village and set it before the laborers to eat. While they were eating, one of them named Matta (Matthew) said, "Elisha, Sir. The smell of this meat is not good." Elisha swore that it was the meat of a calf, but Matta stopped eating while the others ate their satisfaction.

A day later, the monks looked for Damian but could not find him. Other people, however, saw him going up with Elisha to buy cheese, and they became suspicious. Several days later, the dog Elisha¹⁷⁰⁶ went to the village to snatch children as his evil custom was, but found none. Evidently, the citizens of the village hid their children for fear of what had been happening. Elisha met a young priest and said to him, "Would you like to buy cheese?" The priest, trying to ferret out information from him said, "How much do you sell it for?" He said, "Hundred pounds a dinar." The priest went up to the cave with Elisha but with great caution. Elisha said to him, "Sleep and have rest until I come back." He left but delayed coming back. The

¹⁷⁰⁵ Perhaps the city of Ani of Armenia.

¹⁷⁰⁶ In the Middle East until today calling a person "dog" is very denigrating; it is an insult.

priest, however, was awake and vigil. At night Elisha, thinking that the priest was sleeping, carried a stone and went in to kill him. The priest jumped up and said, "You want to kill me, Elisha?" Elisha said, "No. It is only a joke." The priest spent the night awake and praying. In the morning, he said to Elisha, "Where is the cheese?" Elisha said, "I have no cheese." The priest then held him and brought him down to the village. He shouted to the villagers and they rushed to him. He told them what happened between him and Elisha, and asked them to tie up the culprit, which they did. They went up to the cave and found eleven skulls of children and the head of Damian that had not yet decomposed. They also found the boiled flesh of people and the children's clothes. They delivered Elisha to the judge, and under torture, he confessed his crimes. The judge had him crucified on wood.

In this time, in the district of Christian Emessa (Homs) lived two women in one house. One of them had a child. Her mate said to her, "How is it possible that you nurse this child milk under these harsh famine circumstances?" The child's mother said, "Fear God, Sargo. What is on your mind?" Sargo kept silent. A day later, the child's mother went out to pick herbage because the famine was very severe. Her mate (Sargo) called two other women and a man who used to eat human flesh. They slaughtered the child, cooked him, and ate him. When the mother returned home, the wicked Sargo told her, "Your child has died, and we buried him with the unbaptized." The mother asked her to show her the grave, and when she showed her the ground, she began to dig but could not find the child's body. She went to the judge and told him the whole story. The judge seized the two women and had them tortured until they confessed their crime. He ordered them burned by fire together with the man.

Further in this period, a woman died, and other women came and ate her thighs.

Chapter Twelve: On the murder of Uthman, after whom the Tayoye (Arabs) kingdom split into two parts, and then reunited. On the kingdom of the Romans and the council they assembled in Constantinople known as the Sixth Council, which was to introduce the heresy of two wills and two operations and two essences (in Christ), and on the murder of Emperor Constans

When Uthman, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), was constrained, as we said earlier, he promised to abandon his evil habits, and thus the Tayoye (Arabs) reconciled with him. However, when he returned to his evil habits, the Tayoye (Arabs) gathered together and told him, "Why don't you behave according to what had been delivered to us by Muhammad? You have hoarded in your treasure money which had been purloined and pillaged, and you deal with whoremongers and wicked people." He replied, "Since I am caliph I will do whatever I wish to do." They parted from him and every day connived to kill him. They gathered at the door of his house armed and said, "Either you abandon your evil practices or die instantly." Then, he wrote to Mu'awiya informing him of this matter, and instructed him to send him an army. However, the Tayoye (Arabs) stormed his house and killed their caliph Uthman in the city of Yathrib (Madina). In the meantime, Mu'awiya sent an army commanded by Habib to rescue Uthman. When the army reached Busra, and learned that the caliph had been already assassinated, they returned and informed Mu'awiya of the matter. Thus, the Tayoye (Arabs) were split. Those in Yathrib and Babylon joined Ali, son-in-law of Muhammad, and those in Syria and Egypt joined Mu'awiya. These events took place in the year 967 of the Greeks (A.D. 657) and the 35th year of the Tayoye (Arabs) (Islamic Calendar).¹⁷⁰⁷

In this year, the followers of Ali and of Mu'awiya prepared for war. After a great number on both sides were killed, Mu'awiya withdrew without meeting Ali. Again, the two sides reassembled for war. After a great deal of bloodshed when many perished, three zealous men determined to kill the three who were the cause of this war among the Tayoye (Arabs). One of them journeyed to Egypt to assassinate Sa'id. The second went to Mu'awiya's camp but was captured and killed. The third entered the camp of Ali, struck him with a spear, and killed him. Then, the Tayoye (Arabs) in East and West became subjects of Mu'awiya who transferred the residence of the caliphate from Yathrib to Damascus. Mu'awiya commanded the army for fifteen years and spent five years in the split state that he ruled for twenty years.¹⁷⁰⁸

¹⁷⁰⁷ *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 145, and *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 137. The accounts of these chroniclers are very brief.

¹⁷⁰⁸ The account of Tell Mahre of the early Arab government following the death of Muhammad in 632 is very correct. This early

In this time, the heresy of the Haroriyyin, after the village of Harawra', (near al-Kufa in southern Iraq) appeared. In this village, the Tayoye (Arabs) assembled and rebelled against the state of the Muhajirun (immigrants) until this day.¹⁷⁰⁹

In the year 980 of the Greeks (A.D. 679), the 47th year of Constans, the 9th year of Mu'awiya, and the 54th year of the Tayoye (Arabs), Abu al-'Awar ordered the Christian soldiers to pay the jizya (poll-tax) in all Syria. Until then, they had paid no tribute in the Tayoye (Arabian) kingdom.

At this time, the seven-year peace between the Tayoye (Arabs) and the Romans ended. The Tayoye (Arabs) raided the entire country of Asia, Bithynia and Pamphylia. Furthermore, a plague broke out in Beth Nahrin while the Tayoye (Arabs) continued their devastation and plunder up to Pontus and Galatia.

In the year 980 of the Greeks, Constans was killed in Syracuse. It happened that he entered the bath, and Andrew, son of Troilus, covered his head with so much soapy foam that he could not open his eyes. He struck him with a copper bucket on the head, he died, and Andrew fled.

The Greeks set up a certain (*comes obsequii*), Mizezius, as emperor. He was of Armenian origin and a patrician by rank.¹⁷¹⁰ He was a mighty man, handsome and chaste in behavior. In fact, they made him emperor against his will. When Constantine learned that his father was killed, he came to Sicily and killed Mizezius and his companions. He then set up his brothers Tiberius and Heraclius as emperors.

In the year 976 of the Greeks (A.D. 665), 44th year of the Tayoye (Arabs), 23rd year of Constans, and 5th year of Mu'awiya, a controversy arose on account of the Resurrection Festival (Easter). Some Christians observed it on Palm Sunday, others on the New Sunday (the Sunday following Easter).

In the next year, a flood took place in Edessa at night; the water pushed against the wall and made a breach in it, and the city was inundated with water. Many people drowned.

In the year 977 of the Greeks, and the 24th year of Constans, Sapur, nicknamed Aparasitgan, captain of the Armenian host, rebelled against Constans. He sent to Mu'awiya a man named Sergi (Sergius), saying, "If you give me help, and send me an army to kill Constans, I will subjugate all the Romans (or Roman countries) to you." When Constantine, the emperor's son who was in the royal city heard these things, he sent to Mu'awiya Andrea, a eunuch and his cubicularius, who was renowned for his knowledge of the art of war. Mu'awiya ordered that Sergi should first be ushered into his presence in order to connive against Constans. In the meantime, Andrea mounted a blind beast and went to Damascus to tell Mu'awiya to warn him not to be deceived by that rebel. However, when he learned that Mu'awiya was to receive Sergi, he did not want to enter into his presence. Mu'awiya commanded that Sergi should come in first, followed by Andrea. Sergi went in, bowed down and took a seat. When Andrea went in, Sergi trembled, leapt up and bowed in homage to him. When Mu'awiya saw this, he was angry with Sergi, saying, "You coward and of little mind. What happened to you? If you are terrified by this slave in this wise, and leapt up and bowed to him, what would you do if you saw the one who he sent?" Sergi replied, "I did this, not through fear, but because of habit." Turning toward Andrea, Mu'awiya said to him, "What is it that you want?" Andrea said, "The emperor has sent me to you to expel this man sitting before you." Mu'awiya said, "You are all our enemies. The man who multiplies the jizya (tribute) for us, him we will help." Andrea replied, "It is true that the emperor and the rebel are your enemies, but there is one enemy better than the other and a friend better than the other. Moreover, the slave and the master are not equal. For the master freely and in a most excellent manner attends to the business of the state, while the slave who lives under servitude does more in a slavish manner because he is a slave. Therefore, what my emperor pledged under any condition, even though it is less than what this tyrant has pledged, you should believe him and not this unscrupulous man. If this tyrant would win you to his side by his pledge, know that he is a liar. If he had done so much evil to his master who is his benefactor, how could you believe his promises?" He said this and left. On the next day,

period of Arab history is stained with murder and bloodshed. Three of the pioneer caliphs, Abu Bakr, Uthman and Ali, were murdered. It was a sheer struggle for power.

¹⁷⁰⁹ The Muhajirun are those who immigrated with Muhammad from Makka to Madina in 622. They are in contradistinction of the Ansar (helpers), the men of Madina, who supported Muhammad and asked him to move to their city.

¹⁷¹⁰ See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 110.

Sergi arrived earlier. When Andrea came, Sergi did not stand and bow down before him. Andrea said to Sergi, "You hopeless one, why have not you stood up before me?" Sergi was bold, looked at him disdainfully and yelled at him like a woman. Andrea threatened to have Sergi's testicles cut off. Mu'awiya said to Andrea, "If you do not give us the land tax of all your country, nothing of your kingdom will remain except the name. Otherwise, be on guard." Andrea said, "It seems that the Arabs decided to have the substance and we the shadows. Nevertheless, we have hope in God." Then Andrea left and went to Melitene. He commanded the guards of the mountain passes to seize Sergi when he passed through. Now, Mu'awiya had promised to send an army with Sergi, but the ambush seized him and brought him to Andrea. Andrea said to him, "Are you Sergi who mocked me before Mu'awiya?" He commanded, and his testicles were removed from him and placed in his hand. Then, he had him crucified. As promised, Mu'awiya sent an army to Sergi, but before it arrived, it happened that Sapur was mounting his horse in front of his house. He was pressured by the Persians, fell off the horse and died. When the Tayoye (Arabs) learned of this, they plundered the whole Roman territory to the confines of Chalcedon, and went back.¹⁷¹¹

Since we have previously started to discuss the heresy of Maximus of two wills in Christ, we should endeavor to complete its discussion. We should also explain how the council, which assembled in Constantinople, known as the Sixth Council, endorsed this heresy, although it was convened after the death of Constans, that is, in the time of Constantine.¹⁷¹² However, we postponed the discussion of this heresy to this time in order to make the chronological order of events easier for the reader.

After the death of Constans, his three sons ruled. In the 12th year of their reign, the year 992 of the Greeks (A.D. 681), and the 60th year of the Tayoye (Arabs), a council known as the Sixth Council assembled in Constantinople. It was attended by 250 bishops including the delegates of Agathon and his written consent. Theodore, having been bribed with gold by the emperor, endorsed the innovation (of faith) by the council. When the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch rejected him, they were removed from their seats. Because bishops from Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Armenia did not attend, they (the council's members) invited a person named Peter and offered him the seat of the patriarch of Alexandria. They seated another person in the place of the bishop of Jerusalem. They did not permit the emperor's two brothers to attend because they knew that they would not accept the innovation, and become opponents of their father, Constans.

Macarius, bishop of Antioch, debated at length with them, proving from the writings of Cyril (of Alexandria) and declaring that the expression of two wills and two operations in Christ is a heresy. The representatives of Rome were outraged saying, "This man is a partisan of Severus (of Antioch), and for this reason he quotes Cyril." The emperor, however, compelled the bishops to sign the innovation. Some of them signed unwillingly. Macarius was banished to Rome where he spent his life in prison. In this manner, the wicked heresy of Maximus was introduced.

There is no doubt that the deviation of the Chalcedonians from the firmness of orthodoxy is manifest to anyone who investigates this subject profoundly. He will realize how they (the Chalcedonians) were affected so fast by this evil heresy that confronted them. If this was not the case, why did they confess for the last 125 years since the end of the corrupt council (of Chalcedon) until now, one will, one operation and one substance, along with their confession of the multiplicity of natures? Thus, they added corruption upon corruption.

As to our church, we the Orthodox, Theodore from the Monastery of Qinnestrin, was our patriarch. He administered the church for eighteen years, and died in the year 978 of the Greeks (A.D. 667). He was succeeded by Severus known as Bar Mashqa from the Monastery of Phaghimta.

In Alexandria, Agathon was a patriarch.

In this period, the eloquent Severus Sabukht passed away. In addition, Trokos, bishop of the Arab tribes, passed away.

In this period, Janurin of Amid was renowned as a jurist.

¹⁷¹¹ Cf. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 100-101.

¹⁷¹² He is Constantine IV Pogonatus 668-685.

In this period also, a great number of Jews believed in Christ.

In Edessa, Gabriel was bishop of the faithful (Orthodox). In the same city, the Chalcedonians had a bishop named Tiberius ...lacuna... *End of the story of church fathers and of kings.*

Chapter Thirteen: The commencement of the reign of Constantine and his brothers, sons of Constans, the Roman; and on Mu'awiya, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); and the conflict between the patriarch and the bishops

In the year 981 of the Greeks (A.D. 670), the year 55 of the Arabs and the year 10 of Mu'awiya, Constantine IV (nicknamed Pogonatus) reigned. He commanded that the Romans should be subject to him and his two brothers Tiberius and Heraclius equally, and that the portraits of the three should be stamped on the darics (Roman coin), and be equally honored. He further commanded that no one should place one of them over the other. He went to Gallia and Italy and subdued all the western nations.

At the beginning of the reign of Constantine, the Tayoye (Arabs) marched into Africa and took about 80,000 men captive. A year later, they captured Lycia and Cilicia, and then they camped at a city on the seashore. Three Roman patricians marched against them, and conquered them, and 30,000 Tayoye (Arab, Muslims) men perished. The rest fled on ships, but they were destroyed by the storms. Then, a carpenter from Ba'back named Callinic, who had fled Syria to the Roman country, burned the Tayoye (Arab, Muslim) ships by fire, destroying the ships and those in them at the sea. From this time, the Romans learned how to make the fire called naphta. Callinic has been celebrated by the Romans until this day.¹⁷¹³

In the ninth year of Constantine, a group of Romans came to Mount Lebanon. They were known as Marada (Mardaites), but the Syrians called them Gargumoye (Jarajima). They seized the country from Mount Galilee to the Black (Amanus) Mountain. They always came out to plunder, and for this purpose, they were dispatched by the Romans against Lebanon. Eventually, the Tayoye (Arabs) overcame them, killing some and plucking out the eyes of others.¹⁷¹⁴

In this year Iyawannis, son of Mizezius, rebelled against Constantine for seven months. Constantine personally marched against him and killed him in Sicily. After his triumph and causing fright among the Tayoye (Arabs), Constantine became arrogant and violated the covenant with his brothers because he wanted to give the sovereignty to his son Justinian, known as the Arrogant.¹⁷¹⁵ Thus, he abandoned the fear of God and decency, and rejected his brothers for no apparent reason or crime they committed. He brought into subjection the leaders by means of gifts. Leo, one of them, said, "It is improper to disdain those who have governed us without having committed something wrong. I would not agree to do so." The emperor ordered that his hands, legs and tongue be cut off. Even so, he went on in the company of the governor exclaiming, "I do not deny the Trinity which is in heaven, and I will not reject the Trinity which is on earth. Thus, he suffered the death penalty.¹⁷¹⁶

Constantine summoned the princes of the Romans and said unto them, "You Tiberias and you Heraclius, what do you call me? Do you call me your brother or your king? If you call me "king", I will call you my brothers. If you call me "brother" I shall know you as enemies." They replied, "We do not abstain from calling you our great elder brother, but certainly we will never call you "our king," because we reign jointly with you." However, the Senate, because their eyes had been blinded by bribes, sided with Constantine and cast out the two brothers.

After Theodore, Severus known as Bar Mashqa was ordained as patriarch of Antioch for us, the Orthodox, and a controversy took place between him and the bishops. The reason was that Severus was a

¹⁷¹³ Cf. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, translated by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1997), 494, and *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, ed. and translated by Harry Turtledove (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 52, footnote 114.

¹⁷¹⁴ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 496, and 507-507; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 101, and Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History*, entire Chapter 19, pp. 174-194. Moosa discussed in detail the Mardaites and the Jarajima, and the claim of the Maronites of Lebanon that they are the descendants of the Marada.

¹⁷¹⁵ He is Justinian II Rhinotmetus (having a disfigured nose).

¹⁷¹⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p.101.

bishop of Amid, but when out of necessity he became a patriarch, he treated matters of the church with harshness. He was a difficult man supported by the caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs). Therefore, many bishops became his adversaries of who were Sergius of Zuqnin and Hananya, bishop of the Monastery of Qartmin (Mor Gabriel) and others. They wanted to ordain a bishop themselves for the Jazira when necessity presented itself, and not the patriarch, according to the common custom. Severus would not agree to such ordination because he was difficult and unrelenting. These bishops were elders renowned in the church and adherents to the ancient canons that gave authority to the metropolitans of the dioceses to ordain bishops. Patriarch Severus claimed that this custom had been abolished since the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). For this reason, the patriarch of Alexandria ordained bishops for Libya, and the patriarch of Antioch ordained bishops for all the districts under his authority. Moreover, all the patriarchs who occupied the thrones of Antioch and Alexandria themselves ordained bishops. This practice should also be followed now. Because of this, controversy took place between the bishops. The patriarch was prepared to depose all the bishops if he could. Then, the bishops who supported the patriarch assembled in Beit Tellat. When Sergius and his companions learned that the patriarch and his supporting bishops came to declare their condemnation of them, they took the precedence by condemning the patriarch and the bishops in his company. In turn, the patriarch condemned Sergius and the bishops with him. He addressed letters to their dioceses warning people not to have communion with them. He also forbade those who supported them to proclaim the name of the patriarch. The trouble continued until the death of the patriarch.

A severe earthquake took place and destroyed many cities.

In the year 980 of the Greeks (A.D. 669), the winter was very harsh, and there was plenty of snow, ice and cold. Olive trees and vineyards withered over all of Syria and Beth Nahrin.

On Sunday of December 983 of the Greeks (A.D. 672), an eclipse of the sun took place.

In the year 988 (A.D. 677), a frightful morning star appeared, and remained for sixty days from August 28 to October 26.

In the year 989 of the Greeks (A.D. 678), during the third watch of the night, a perfect rainbow appeared in the sky. It was something extraordinary because rainbows did not appear at night. Those who watched it thought that the end of the world was at hand.

In this year, mice multiplied in Syria and Phoenicia and devoured the grains, and famine took place. One year later the locusts came.

In the year 990 of the Greeks (A.D. 679), on the third hour of the Sunday of Resurrection (Easter Sunday), a severe earthquake took place and destroyed the city of Batnan (Sarug), the church of Edessa also collapsed. Mu'awiya ordered it rebuilt because he saw in a dream that Ali was killed and was set up as caliph in his place.

In this year, there were numerous earthquakes in different quarters, which continued for seven years.

At this time the evil heresy of two wills, two substances and two operations in Christ spread among the Chalcedonians. They forced the people to accept it by the power of the sword, which is the same method that the first heresy (of two natures) of the Council of Chalcedon was propagated. *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Fourteen: The letters exchanged between Patriarch Severus Bar Mashqa¹⁷¹⁷ and the Bishops Sergius Zakunoyo and his partisans, concerning the controversy between the two (parties)

The letter of Severus addressed to Yuhanon (John)

To the pious and holy spiritual brothers, our fellow-bishops who are honored by God, and are equal in the service: Yuhanon, metropolitan of the diocese of the East in Persia, and all the holy Fathers with him, who are subject to God and to our lowliness; from Severus, by the mercy of God, patriarch of the Apostolic See of Antioch. Rejoice in the Lord.

¹⁷¹⁷ Died in 665 A.D. See *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 146-147.

I would like to remind you of a matter which is not hidden from your lordship, bearing witness to you before God and his holy and chosen angels, in this moment in which I anticipate the last breath and deliverance of my spirit to God, that you may become my witnesses after my death and defend me to all, that I have not done anything wrong against the rights of the church, and have not wronged anyone. However, I have labored and fought for its safety and its order with all the power in me. I want you especially to do this before the monks, world leaders and bishops should they assemble in a certain council. You are responsible before God on the last day for every addition or subtraction of what you have heard or learned in this respect. More specifically, I shall challenge you, Bishop Yuhanon bar Kipha, Mor Joseph and Mor Sergius, that if you do not relate what you have witnessed in me by your eyes and heard by your ears in this respect, you will be asked to give an answer to God on the Day of Judgment for everything you have detected in me when you came to Arabia. Many times, I summoned Stephen, who is close to me, but he refused to come. I am well aware that after my death, they (the bishops who oppose the patriarch) will circulate false and evil reports saying that I have pardoned and forgave them. They will designate me as the "Blessed" and "the Holy" and pretend that they did not hate me. They will offer oblations and supplications for my soul in order to have the world follow them. Then they will say, "He died and could no more do good or harm."

It should be known to all the people on earth and to the host in heaven, that in my lifetime they (the opponent bishops) did not come to see me, or ask for forgiveness. Therefore, I did not remove from them the anathema that will be upon them until they repent and do what I have written. If they come to me in my lifetime, it would be easier to forgive them and ask them for none of my rights. Now that I am departing (this life), God will ask you for the rights of my struggle if you would accept them, not in conformity with the requirements I am writing here. I am entrusting the judgment to you, to the monks, the clergy and the lay people. An ecumenical council should assemble covering all the districts. To it should be invited experienced people of every rank, and those mentioned dignitaries (his opponents). In addition, you, Mor Yuhanon, it is in your power to pardon and accept anyone proved to have done no wrong or transgressed the canons. Only, censure him for the controversy, and the fact that he had imitated his companions by signing the uncanonical anathema, and that he should declare as false the charges against me. You all know as I do that these things are not true and not confirmed. You, Mor Yuhanon, pardon him. However, when I demand that you substantiate what I am saying in writing, I do so not for fear of the anathema, which even I do not consider an anathema, but to remove the doubts of the faithful and the mockery of the heretics. If this is not done, the whole world will be suspicious of them and me. As to the culprits, they should come with their charges and face each other. Then, he who is proven guilty will be dropped from his sacerdotal office according to the apostolic canons; he who is lawfully proven not guilty will be acquitted and accepted. The investigation should be conducted in public in order that the guilty and the innocent should be known to everyone. You will become an example to the world for your justice and fear of God, that you hate evil and love good, and that you are not biased in your judgment. However, if they rebel and do not execute (what I have said), and do not challenge the anathema in writing, or refuse the investigation of charges against them, forsake them and have no communion with them. You should have no mercy upon them, but leave them die condemned to become food for the kindling fire prepared for the devil and his angels. I have hope in God that their lives would not extend too long after my death, but will follow me. In addition, there, before God the judge of all, I will demand from them of what I have given them. After all, I did not litigate them before people. However, if this matter is left alone, these poor people who are subject to God and my lowliness will deliver me into the hand of God, and also into your hands. If you choose one for the episcopate, it should be done by the consent of the Metropolitan Mor Gabriel and by our Father Mor Iliyya (Elijah).

I wrote to your fatherhood with fastness and brevity because the shadow of death chases me. I beseech you, as a faithful steward of Christ, to remember me always in your prayers, because the place to which I am going to is awful and frightful even for the righteous. The grace of our Lord be with you and with us. Amen.

After the patriarch's death, a group of schismatic bishops in the west, began to declare peace saying that they did not know any patriarch except Severus. They addressed the following letter to the people of Rish 'Ayna:

Therefore, beloved brothers and spiritual sons, the Spirit who laid down the law to which you are subject urges you to pursue peace everywhere. It says, "Seek peace," and, "Seek peace and pursue it."¹⁷¹⁸ We urge to you as you listen to the voice of our lowliness through this letter, to obey God and our king (emperor), and endeavor, great and small, to pursue peace. If everyone showed as much zeal as fighting with his brothers until today, and was tormented by the raging waves of conflict stirred up by the devil, the enemy of peace, we would by now have attained to the cheerful spring and our storm would have turned to a fresh breeze by the help of God. Let then all of us pursue peace and establish it in order to be saved from the raging billows, even though we are still under trouble. Let everyone of us reach out to the other with the concord of the one spirit and one soul, especially after you have read this letter and received information from its carrier concerning what God had done through us. We are continuing our effort in both plain and rugged places. All have become subjects to God and to us. We have become harbingers of peace in all the countries of the west, and among the people (Arab tribes) of Tanukh, Tayy and 'Aqula (Kufa), in the Jazira and Edessa. God made peace by our coming and brought the schismatics into our fold. There was joy among the angels of heaven and in all the church, and sorrow for the enemies who rejoice for our defeat. We have truly enjoyed this peace that was anticipated by everyone, even since the blessed Patriarch Severus was still living. He was somehow angry with us and we were angry with him by the machinations of the devil. In any event, the Lord called him up before this was done in order to administer his incomprehensible judgments and put our own affairs in order.

After his noble death, we did what we were prepared to do that we may have you rejoice in this good endeavor. We wish you peace and safety and urge you to pursue the same. We would like also to inform you about the course we have taken to achieve concord between the two sides of those who belong to us, which was not an easy matter. As to those who defended the mentioned holy and blessed man (Patriarch Severus), and do harm to each other like enemies, we have sought them and made peace with them. We also have entered the name of the blessed (patriarch) into the sacerdotal diptychs, and offered for him oblations and supplications. Furthermore, we offered the prayer of forgiveness before God. We have further accepted all of the clergy whom the holy patriarch had ordained, or ordained by one of the bishops of Persia, or by your bishop, our brother Mor Gabriel. We left each one of them in his own position and consider them as our sons. This, the wisdom of God has done concerning the peace of his church, and the devil was cast away from it. Therefore, you would do well not only by supporting the peace which God has wrought in his church, but also urge Mor Gabriel to pursue peace, that there will be no dissension in the church of God. However, if he assumes another course, encroaches upon a diocese not his, steps on the brothers the bishops, abolishes the canons of the church, and performs uncanonical ordinations, he should immediately desist doing so. He should not neglect to work for peace because God wants to transport him quickly unto himself in order to give him rest. He alone cannot impede peace because the love of peace has filled us all. We embrace the dissenters as brothers, and we consider him (Mor Gabriel) as our brother and colleague. Therefore, if he really seeks peace of the church, let him come quickly unto us because we are waiting for him. You are witnesses of this matter before God who sees everything. Do not hold back the peace of the people of God who are waiting for it. It is about to be realized by the power of him who does everything good. Hurry up then, and let us rejoice by the presence of some of you and of Mor Gabriel in their company. Or, write to us what would make us joyful, that we may turn our attention to your noble affection.

¹⁷¹⁸ See Psalm 34:14.

The letter addressed by the schismatic bishops to Mor Yuhanon (John) and those with him

We, the wretched and the unworthy to be called chief priests, whose names and signatures are appended below, have addressed to you this letter at your request O holy Yuhanon, metropolitan of St. Matthew's Monastery, and through you to the bishops there, even to the whole world. We pledge to accept, by the will of God, everything that would please God and confirm his church for the building up of our faithful brothers. That is to say, we have removed, and will remove, the anathema that we have issued against the holy Patriarch Mor Severus (Bar Mashqa) who is transported unto the Lord. We have allowed, and will allow, his name to be proclaimed in the churches and monasteries with the fathers who have departed (this life) before him, and who were in agreement with him concerning faith and good administration. He will also be remembered in them (churches and monasteries) with honor by all the Orthodox. It is well known that we have accepted, and will accept the ordinations he, the fathers and the brethren bishops who were with him had performed, be they presbyters, deacons or lower dignities. We did this with good conscience, as we have already said, for no reason except to have these schisms and controversies removed from our midst, and that the peace of the churches would prevail everywhere. We have written and affirmed to some everything that would lead to the peace of the church of God, and agree with the canons that we mentioned in brief, for the glory of God and the unity of the people everywhere. We have signed this letter and affixed our seals for the steadfastness of all, at the church of Bishop Eunomius.

Signed: Sergius, bishop of Germanicia; Yuhanon (John), bishop of Phanicus; Stephen, bishop of Busra; Julian, bishop of Tella; Domit, bishop of Harran; Sergius, bishop of the district of Homs; Abraham, bishop of the district of Arzen; Yuhanon, bishop of Circassia; Gabriel, bishop of Rish 'Ayna; Hananya, bishop of Damascus; Iliyya (Elijah), bishop of Ba'lbak; Nonnus, bishop of the Arab tribes; and Severus, bishop of Harar. This was done in the year 995 of the Greeks (A.D. 684).

The letter of Yuhanon (John), Metropolitan of the East, the messenger of peace

To the God-loving and holy in all things: the priests, deacons, holy clergy, archimandrites and honorable periodeutes (chorepiscopi), to the entire venerable monks, the illustrious, the victorious, the leaders, the prudent administrators, and the entire faithful in the districts of Antioch and the sojourners in the district of Beth Qrosta who lead an ascetic life in the holy monasteries, from Yuhanon the weak, by the mercy of God Metropolitan of St. Matthew's Monastery and the Persian countries. May your safety and peace be plentiful.

No doubt, you have been aware of the controversies, the troubles and the dissensions that have taken place between us by the machinations of the traducer (Satan). We prefer not to discuss them here, first, not to scratch the ears of the brothers and second, because we do not want to discuss sorrowful matters while we are in a state of rejoicing. However, we would like to inform your piety of one thing. I was far away in our district in Persia and had not yet journeyed to Rish 'Ayna, where the brothers, the bishops, assembled. I had no idea how great was their intention, and how it was directed towards peace. Hence, is my delay for two reasons, first, I had no idea to what their good intention was directed, as I have just said. Second, I, the weak, was bashful to offer counsel or command, when venerable elders worthy of God's mercy proclaimed the truth. They are able to guide and straighten out not only themselves but us also, even men of knowledge according to the apostolic directives. However, when I learned that the holy Patriarch Mor Severus (Bar Mashqa) had chosen me as mediator for peace, I had no idea how and why he did so. In fact, the western fathers appealed to me in their letters to work for peace. Therefore, I hastened to Rish 'Ayna speaking to them at length concerning peace which is cherished by God. When I noticed that the mercy of God was upon them, that they were blameless and desired this good thing (peace) many folds more than me, we regenerated everything until we accomplished peace. We stamped our seals and signed, we the fathers whose names are appended below:

Sergius of Zakunoyo, chief priest; Yuhanon, bishop of Julan, Joseph, bishop of Mabug (Manbij); Stepeh, bishop of Arabia; Julian, bishop of Tella; Domit, bishop of Harran; Sergius, bishop of Homs;

Abraham, bishop of Arzen; Yuhanon, bishop of Habura; Gabreil, bishop of Rish 'Ayna; Hananya, bishop of Damascus; Iliyya, bishop of Ba'lbak; Nonnus, bishop of the Arabs; Severus, bishop of Harar.

These bishops resolved in writing not only the abrogation of the anathema of the said holy (patriarch), but also that his name and the names of his brothers, the bishops, should be proclaimed in the diptychs, and that his name should be mentioned together with the names of his brothers, the fathers. They have also accepted with good will his ordinations of presbyters, deacons and the ordinations performed by his brothers, the bishops.

After these matters were done according to the will of God and our desire, we conducted the prayer of forgiveness for all the transgressions of the two sides, whether they concerned the anathema, the institution of canons, imprecations, or other matters which would stir up conflict like this one, and whether they were started by the blessed (patriarch) against the fathers, or by the fathers against him. I was the first to recite the prayer of forgiveness according to their request, with the consideration that I represent the patriarch. Then, every one of them (the bishops) recited in turn a prayer of forgiveness for what has happened. In fact, I appealed to them to do so. I want to say in brief that everything, whether by me or by them, was done by the will of God, and that they should investigate this matter in order to seek concord and peace. We have addressed this letter to you, O pious ones, that, from now onward, no one should antagonize or offend his colleague, saying, "I am the patriarch or I am the bishop, things of this nature." If he says so, he will then become the cause of conflict, dissention and dishonor to the word of God, which is active and sharper than any double-edged sword, can cut the soul and the body and cast into the fire of hell.¹⁷¹⁹ Therefore, we return and say, "We will revert to past altercations, such as, who is Paul and who is Apollos." This is what the apostle (Paul) wrote to those who were engaged in conflict for such matters.¹⁷²⁰ We are one in Christ. We would like to be one in the Orthodox faith, in love and charity. This must be accomplished if you obey God and our weakness. It will also be accomplished if you subject yourselves to your administrators in whatever they tell you for the glory of God and for your salvation. For, they keep watch for your sake as if they offer an account on your behalf. Therefore, it is imperative that you listen to them in everything that they may care for your affairs rejoicing and not being compelled. We are all hoping that you will execute this from all your hearts, and for the benefit of your souls. Doing so, you will give rest to our weakness and will please God who rejoices for peace.

This is what we are pleased to write to your affection. Now, if one might be audacious and transgress what we have written, whether a monk, clergyman or a layman, who would not subject himself to his leader, and thereby transgress the word of God for whatever reason, he will be considered alien from us and from the holy church of God. This is our resolution, I, Metropolitan Yuhanon and the holy council of the entire bishops of Syria.

The letter of the council addressed to those (Syrian congregations) in Persia for the same purpose; and the ordination of Athanasius

To the holy and fellow-servant bishops in the country of Persia, to the archimandrites, all the monastics who lead a chaste life, the venerable sage church leaders, the clergy and lay people who live in this country; from Sergius Zakunoyo, Yuhanon, Joseph, Stephen, Julian, Domit, Abraham, Sergi, Yuhanon, Gabriel, Iliyya (Elijah), Hananya, Nonnus, Halphai and Abhai, the weak, and by the mercy of God bishops of the Roman countries. The grace of our Lord be with you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The temptations and the hardships which overwhelmed us for the past four years or more, which you have been informed of, and so did all, nay, there are those who have lived them, did not happen because we have sinned or transgressed the canons. They happened because the negligence that overtook us was caused by our sins, or by the temptations that distinguish the lazy from the active. Indeed, the pursuit of

¹⁷¹⁹ Hebrews 4:12.

¹⁷²⁰ 1 Corinthians 3:4-6.

anything must necessarily lead to its exposition, according to the apostolic saying,¹⁷²¹ Such a thing even happens to the saints. The Lord declares saying, "Do you think it is inconsistent to recompense you for your labors and toils?"¹⁷²² As to us, we the weak, it is not for this alone but rather for our sins that we, like the holy youth in Babylon, shout that, "We have sinned and done wrong. No one of us does what is righteous and just, and no one sets up a fence or stands in a hole in order to resist your wrath."¹⁷²³ With these words, we discipline ourselves, receive great consolation, and reap abundantly the fruits of joy. If we are cast into the fire or the water as the divine chanter (David) says, we will make it to dry land with God's help.¹⁷²⁴

Brothers, when we were under discipline we grieved for the dissention that inflicted the churches and monasteries because of the envy of the devil and not by the transgression of the faith. It was done by some persons, as you know. But God, who has foreknowledge of everything, willed by his incomprehensible judgment, to transport unto him the holy Patriarch Mor Severus because of whom the conflict between the two sides, that is those who support him and those who support us. Before he departed this world, he wrote a covenant, as he found fit, and handed it to your Metropolitan Mor Yuhanon to be a mediator to decide between the two parties as he saw fit. We can only ascribe what has happened between us (and the patriarch), whether right or wrong, to the will of God. Indeed, we have not differed over this matter, but rather assembled all of us, i.e. those whose names are put down above. We sent messengers to the metropolitan to come unto us in order to realize peace as he saw fit. When the blessed metropolitan (Yuhanon) learned that he was designated as a mediator, he hastened to come to us as if his invitation was from God. He came to the city of Rish 'Ayna where we assembled awaiting his arrival. With us were the archimandrites of our district and some notables. Upon his arrival, we looked upon him as if he was an angel sent by God, and we exchanged holy kisses. He refused to listen to the reasons of the conflict because his main purpose was peace. Therefore, he closed the page of all that we said and did, and directed our sights to the church. He advised that prayers of general forgiveness should be said for the transgressions of both parties. He was first to offer such a prayer and we followed him. Thus, by his effort, peace prevailed. All of this was done by God as we have previously said.

Now, what quarter and district would not enjoy that peace loved by God? In addition, what city or monastery would not feel proud of it? Or, what society and house would not become its abode? Or, which leader, administrator or people would not call for it or commend it? It is your metropolitan who did and propagated this work in our country. Therefore, if we assembled a myriad of words and attributes of virtue, we would not be able to present a correct picture of the conduct of this man. While we do not neglect others, we will nickname him as the "establisher of peace and love."

Therefore, fathers and brothers, all of you should always imitate him, and follow his example if there is conflict or controversy amongst you. For you have in him, by the grace of God, a good shepherd. Let him be unto you like Christ. Follow him and obey him in everything. God, the Lord of peace and safety, had destroyed the enmity by his body, and we, who were dead, he brought back to life by his Resurrection. He will grant peace and safety to his people and church among the kingdoms of the earth to the end of the world. Amen.

The letter of the Bishops to the Monasteries of the Edessans

First, beloved brothers, we announce to you the tidings of reconciliation and peace granted us by Christ, our peace. It had a very pleasant and effective influence on everyone. It is the peace of which the envious devil had deprived us. He divided us into Judah and Israel, and delivered us to the Babylonian captivity, which confused the tongues, and created a language of controversy instead of peace. He did this that we may continue to weep at the banks of its rivers for life, because we are far from Jerusalem, the city of peace. There on the poplar trees which have no fruit we hung our harps, which play for peace. We could

¹⁷²¹ I have no idea what is the reference to this apostolic saying. May be an allusion to 1 Corinthians 11:19.

¹⁷²² Perhaps an allusion to Acts 26:16.

¹⁷²³ Cf. Daniel 9:5-6.

¹⁷²⁴ Psalm 65:5-12.

not move while we were in a foreign land, or raise praise to the Lord because of the conflict, hatred and animosity before the captors, our enemies.¹⁷²⁵ In fact, they, I mean the devils, heathens, Jews and heretics want us to be held under such circumstances. Therefore, it is not fitting for those who are distant from peace to sing it. We say with utmost courage that it is the proper time to return from Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem, our city of peace. We will then become one people under God and one kingdom, as we all offer him glory in his holy temple. When God has delivered our Zion captivity from Babylon our enemy, we will rejoice like those, and our mouth will be filled with laughter and our tongue with praise. Our enemies will then say, "The Lord had done something great for these people by giving them his safety and peace."

We would like to inform you, however, that by the grace of God, any place we reached and preached peace, the entirety of people from all the districts west of the Euphrates, along with the cities, monasteries and villages, joined us. Also, the people-lovers of Christ, of Tanukh, Tayy, Kufites (Aqula), and all the Orthodox of the west and the Jazira joined us. They became one with us and drove away Satan, and both sides heaved a sigh of relief. We beseeched our partisans to insert the name of the holy Severus in the sacerdotal diptychs and commemorate him, since he was displeased with us and we were displeased with him by the envy of Satan. In addition, we embraced those who dissented from us and who had defended him, as brothers and sons. We did the same in the blessed Edessa and endorsed each one in his own dignity and position, whether he was ordained by the blessed (Patriarch Severus), by our brothers the bishops of Persia, or by Mor Gabriel, bishop of Rish 'Ayna. We will also consider the holy Mor Gabriel as our brother, should he come unto us, despite the fact that he visits dioceses that do not belong to him and performs ordination without apparent canonicity. However, we will not deviate from our goal since our objective is to seek peace. In case he has already ordained some of you as presbyters, we will accept them as our brothers. Therefore, we urge you, beloved in the Lord, to seek peace, imitating Christ, the lover of peace.

Upon receiving this letter, let two or three dignitaries from every monastery, together with the archimandrites, come unto us to the Christ-loving city of Edessa in order to rejoice in the peace of the church of God. However, if you become a cause of conflict, schism, or convulsion of the church of God after all what we have done to accomplish peace, you will appear before the throne of Christ for judgment. God forbid that such a thing will happen to you. May divine grace be with you all. Amen.

Jacob of Edessa copied these two letters by the request of the bishops before he became the bishop of Edessa. Afterwards, the bishops journeyed to Rish 'Ayna where they convened a council with Metropolitan Yubanon (John) of Takrit, and accomplished peace.

Chapter Fifteen: On the death of Mu'awiya, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), and the division of the kingdom; and on the kingdom of the Romans, and the ordination of Athanasius as Patriarch of Antioch

In the year 992 of the Greeks (A.D. 681), which this is the year 63 of the Tayoye (Arabs), (i.e. Islamic Calendar), Mu'awiya passed away in Damascus, having ruled Syria for 21 years.¹⁷²⁶ Of these, 15 years were in the time of Uthman, and the remaining 6 years spent against Ali. The total of his rule was 21 years. He was succeeded by his son Yazid. Yazid ruled three years and six months. He died in the year 995 of the Greeks (A.D. 684). In this year, Mukhtar (Ibn Abi Ubayda) rebelled in Kufa, or Babylon. He was a charlatan, a cheat and a hypocrite. He claimed prophecy and revelation. Because the sons of Yazid were too young, dissension took place among the Hagerites (Arabs). The people of Yathrib (Madina) set up for them a caliph called Abd Allah (Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr). The people of Damascus and Palestine set up one of Yazid's sons, hoping that he would govern when he reached the age of puberty. Those in Syria and Phoenicia followed Dahhak (Ibn Abi Qays). Thus, each quarter adhered to a certain person.

¹⁷²⁵ Cf. Psalm 137:1-4.

¹⁷²⁶ According to Arab sources, Mu'awiya died in A.D. 680. See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 193, and *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 143. According to *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 146, Mu'awiya died in the year 677 A. D.

In the midst of this turmoil, a certain person named Marwan ibn al-Hakam, hailed from Yathrib to Damascus. He gathered the leaders and said to them, "O Qurayshites! Hear me, for I am older than all of you. I have come to reconcile the people of Yathrib with the people of Syria. It is, then, not fitting for the sons of our nation to fight one another, but should subjugate themselves to the person chosen by God. If you think it is acceptable, let us write down the names of three men on three arrows and hand them to a man who knows nothing about them to turn them around by his hand, and then throw one of them into the middle. The person whose name appears on the arrow will be set up as king (caliph). All of them agreed to the idea. The names were written and the lot fell on Marwan, and they set him up as their caliph. Marwan ruled for nine months and then died. The Tayoye (Arab) kingdom was divided into many factions.

While Abd al-Malik, son of Marwan, was proclaimed a caliph, a man, named Abd Allah (Ibn al-Zubayr), was set up a caliph in Babylon. A certain man, Ibn Hubab, rebelled in Rish 'Ayna and ruled it. Nisibin was ruled by a man named Burayda. Umar, son of Sa'id rebelled and controlled Damascus, and Zufar rebelled and controlled Cercesium. When Abd al-Malik saw that he was surrounded by trouble from every direction, and was greatly disturbed by the Marada (Mardaites) in Lebanon, he wanted to conclude peace with the Romans. Emperor Justinian (II Rhinot metus, 685-695) agreed, and peace was concluded for ten years on the condition that Justinian should evict the Mardaites from Lebanon and prevent the robbers from plundering the lands of the Tayoye (Arabs). In return, Abd al-Malik agreed to pay the Romans 1000 dirham, a mare, and a slave every day. One of the conditions stated that Cyprus would be under joint authority of the Romans and the Tayoye (Arabs), and that it should pay the poll tax to both of them. Armenia, Ghorzan, Arzen, and the northern part of Madi, that is Azarbayjan, were subject to the Romans. In the meantime, Justinian evicted the Mardaites from Lebanon and made them dwell in the country of the Romans. They numbered 12,000.¹⁷²⁷

Having insured peace with the Romans, Abd al-Malik began to fight those who rebelled against him one by one. He triumphed over them and captured their cities. Abd Allah ibn Zubayr fled but was pursued by Hajjaj (ibn Yusuf al-Thaqafi) to Makka at the house of prayer (the Ka'ba). Hajjaj set up mangonels, destroyed the wall surrounding the Ka'ba and killed ibn Zubayr, but then he rebuilt the wall.¹⁷²⁸

As to Justinian, he became arrogant and would not share the Tayoye (Arabs) authority in Cyprus, and so invaded the island in the seventh year of his reign. Abd al-Malik reproved him for violating the peace before the expiration of its period. Therefore, Muhammad, the amir (governor) of the Jazira, invaded the country of the Romans and fought them near Caesarea of Cappadocia. The Saqaliba (Slavs) joined the Tayoye (Arabs), and seven thousands of them accompanied them to Syria. The Tayoye (Arabs) stationed them in Antioch and Cyprus. They gave them wives to wed and provided them with food and provisions. In the year 1006 of the Greeks (A.D. 695), the Romans penetrated deeply into Antioch. The Tayoyo (Arab) army attacked them killing most of them and the rest fled.

In this time, Abd al-Malik gathered many canal diggers to make the shallow waters of a certain river flow abundantly. While they labored hard, Abd al-Malik passed away and nothing came out of the project.

In this period, a colossal comet appeared for eleven days. In addition, the winter was very severe with plenty of snow and ice. The River Euphrates and the lakes were frozen, the olive trees dried up in all quarters and the vineyards in some of them. Wine dried up in jars and people became terribly distressed. Cattle, animals, birds and many people perished because of the cold. Afterwards, a huge comet appeared at night for forty-one days. Other comets appeared for seven days beginning in September of the year 995 of the Greeks (A.D. 684). On September 22-23 of this year, the Arabs fought against each other ferociously for many days and thousands perished from both sides. It is said that the number of those killed was 40,000. The fight took place near the River Khazer in the country of Nineveh. Because of this fight, their power weakened and they humiliated each other. This was because of their arrogance and defilement.

¹⁷²⁷ For a thorough analysis of this subject, see Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse University Press, 1986, reprinted, Gorgias Press, 2005), entire Chapter 19, especially, pp. 180-186.

¹⁷²⁸ According to *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 144, the Ka'ba was burned down.

For four years, Bar Mashqa pressured the bishops, from the year 991 to 995 of the Greeks (A.D. 680-684) in which he passed away. In this year, the council, previously mentioned, assembled in Rish 'Ayna and concord was achieved with the dissenting bishops. Athanasius, the commentator and disciple of Severus Sabukht, by whose effort Greek was taught at the Monastery of Qinnesrin, was ordained a patriarch. Athanasius spent his last days at the Monastery of Mor Malke. In the year 995 of the Greeks (A.D. 684), he was called to occupy the See of Antioch and assume the administration of the church.¹⁷²⁹

After Agathon, Yuhanon was ordained for Alexandria.

In this time was renowned Jacob the eloquent, known as Jacob of Edessa. He was later ordained as bishop of Edessa by Patriarch Athanasius the commentator known as Athanasius of Balad (d. 868).¹⁷³⁰

On Jacob of Edessa

Jacob was from the village of Ayndaba in the province of Antioch and the district of Gomya. In his youth, he studied under the pious Father Cyriacus (Quryaqos), the periodeutes (visiting cleric) of his province, the books of the Old and New Testaments and the books of the doctors of the church. Then, he went to the Monastery of Aphantonya (Qinnesrin) where he became a monk and studied the Psalms in the Greek language. He also studied the Scriptures according to the Greek text and became well versed in them. He journeyed to Alexandria where he remained for some time. After gaining a portion of philosophy, he returned to Syria and reached Edessa where he gained wide fame, and became known to everyone. Finally, he was ordained a bishop for the episcopal see of Edessa by Patriarch Athanasius the commentator (Athanasius II of Balad, d. 686). He spent four years suffering hardships from those who uncanonically prevented him from conducting the service, and from those he had evicted from the church of God. And when, for his zeal and fiery conscience, he could no longer endure (these men), he resigned his position, handed it to Patriarch Julian and departed with his two disciples Daniel and Constantine. Before he departed, however, he differed with the patriarch and the bishops over the observation of church canons. However, no one hearkened to him because all of them said that it was necessary to alleviate the observation of canons according to circumstances. Therefore, he burned in front of the monastery, where the patriarch was staying, a copy of the church canons saying, "I burn with fire these canons as superfluous which you trample under foot and heed not."¹⁷³¹

Afterwards, he went to stay at the Monastery of Mor Jacob in Kesum. He wrote two treatises, in one he criticized church leader; in the second he rebuked those who violated the canonical rules. At this time, Habib, an old amiable and meek man was ordained for Edessa, but the monks of the monastery of Eusebuna invited Jacob to come to their monastery and resume teaching the Greek language, which had been suspended. At this monastery, he taught eleven years and commented on the Scripture according to the Greek text. This caused the monks who hated the Greek language to rebel against him. He left with seven of his disciples for the Monastery of Tal'ada. Meanwhile, his pupil Constantine was ordained a bishop for Bithynia, but for some reason he did not join his see and was transferred to Homs. Mor Jacob remained at Tal'ada for nine years, adjusting the Old Testament. After the death of Habib, the zealous people of Edessa led by the elder Athanasius the great, appealed to the patriarch to send Jacob back to them. Jacob returned and administered his see for four months. He left, accompanied by his disciples, for the west (to the Monastery of Tal'ada) to collect his books. At this monastery, he collected his books and sent them back to Edessa, but suddenly passed away. He was buried in the monastery on June 5 of (708), and many miracles appeared on his grave.¹⁷³²

¹⁷²⁹ This is Athanasius of Balad (d. 686). Balad is called today Esi (Old) Mosul between Mosul and Baghdad in Iraq. For his biography and works, see Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, 331-333.

¹⁷³⁰ See previous footnote.

¹⁷³¹ See William Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894), p. 142.

¹⁷³² For more on Jacob of Edessa, see Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, pp. 334-351.

Chapter Sixteen: On the period of the Roman King (Emperor) Justinian who was deposed; and on Athanasius Bar Gomaya who enjoyed the favor of Abd al-Malik, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); and the events which took place in the church in this period because of the chief priests

Upon Constantine's death, he was succeeded by his son Justinian (Rhinotmetus, 685-695) who was arrogant. At the beginning of his reign, he concluded peace with the Tayoye (Arabs) and then annulled it, as we mentioned in the previous chapter. He afflicted the Romans with many evils to the extent that he almost annihilated all of the prominent leaders of the state. For this reason, they (the leaders) joined forces against him and seized him. They cut off his nose and cast him into prison. Then, a person named Leontius ruled in the year 1000 (more correctly 1007) of the Greeks (A.D. 695-696), and the year 77 of the Arabs, (i.e. Islamic calendar).

In this year Muhammad, amir of the Jazira, executed unjustly the chiefs Simon, son of Nonnus of Halouja, and Mardansha of Nisibin and his son.

In the year 1008 of the Greeks (A.D. 697), the Tayoye (Arabs) began to mint coins, *dinars*, *zuzze* and *fulse* with inscriptions only, and no portraits.

In the year 1009 of the Greeks (A.D. 698), the amir Atiyya conducted a census of the strangers and expatriated a great number of them to their countries.

In the year 1010 of the Greeks (A.D. 699), Apsimoros came from Cilicia and drove away Leontius from the kingdom, did not kill him, but reigned in his stead. The plot against him was as follows:

This Apsimoros, who was known as Tiberius, was an army general. When the Slavs rebelled against the Romans, Leontius left them plundering, ravaging and playing havoc in the countries. Apsimoros attacked them, defeated them and subdued them. He became so strong that he revolted and drove away Leontius, saying, "As Justinian (II Rhinot metus) was deposed for his bad conduct, especially for plundering Cyprus and annulling the peace treaty with the Tayoye (Arabs), which caused the destruction of many Roman regions, thus Leontius, who was great and powerful but reverted to bad deeds, is deposed."¹⁷³³

Apsimoros dispatched an army to fight the Tayoye (Arabs). When the army reached Samosata, they killed five thousand Tayoye (Arabs). They pillaged, took captives and then withdrew. Meanwhile, Abd al-Malik, caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs), appointed two captains of the host, for Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia), Mosul, Armenia and Azarbayjan, and made Hajjaj a captain over the countries of Persia and the Tayoye (Arabs). One of these governors, Muhammad ibn Marwan, came to Edessa. The inhabitants admitted him to the city peacefully, and he settled in it. On the next year, Abd al-Malik sent Hajjaj to Iraq and Persia. He killed the Tayoye (Arab) leaders and plundered their homes without mercy. Muhammad ibn Marwan did the same thing in the region under his authority. He collected the Armenian chiefs in one of the churches of Armenia, set it on fire and burned them all. He also killed Anastasius, son of Andrea, the governor of Edessa, and pillaged his house. Despite all these things, the Christian nobles managed the public affairs of some cities.¹⁷³⁴

In the year 1014 of the Greeks (703), the amir Walid ibn Umar died and was succeeded by Harith ibn Ka'b, who was succeeded by Qura ibn Sahrik. Maslama ibn Abd al-Malik was appointed the amir of the region of Qinnasrin.

In the year 1005 of the Greeks (A.D. 694), and the year 75 of the Tayoye (Arabs), i.e. Islamic Calendar), an eclipse of the sun took place from the third hour to the fourth hour of a Sunday in October. Dense darkness prevailed and the stars appeared.

In this same year, there was no rain anywhere and the prices of grains skyrocketed. The measurer for wheat was sold for three dinars. People ate the bread of lentils, chickpeas, oats and other grains.

In this period, Abd al-Malik (Ibn Marwan) ordered that crosses be removed and pigs be annihilated.

¹⁷³³ Apsimoros was known as Tiberius III, 698-705.

¹⁷³⁴ Bar Hebraeus says that the nobles managed the affairs of the kingdom of the Arabs. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 104. Such a treatment of the Armenians is hardly mentioned by Islamic sources.

On Athanasius bar Gomaya

Athanasius, known as bar (son of) Gomaya, was from Edessa. He was intelligent, prudent and expert in church and profane teachings. When his fame spread all over, the Caliph Abd al-Malik heard of him and summoned him unto himself. Having realized that he was intelligent and erudite, he made him an instructor of his younger brother Abd al-Aziz, whom he appointed as governor of Egypt. In addition to the money Abd al-Malik paid him, Athanasius' children received one dinar from the pay of each soldier. In general, all of the countries of the Arab kingdom were placed under Athanasius' administration. The troops in Egypt numbered 30,000 and Athanasius received 30,000 dinars, not to mention the income of other things. In the twenty-one years he spent in Egypt, Athanasius became extremely wealthy. He possessed four thousand slaves, villages, mansions, gold and silver like stones. He was chaste and zealous in the faith. He had three shops in Edessa from whose revenue he commanded to be built a magnificent temple in the name of the Mother of God.¹⁷³⁵ In many places in Egypt, he built churches and monasteries. In the city of Fustat in Egypt, he built two great temples. He also built in Edessa a baptistery and placed in it the image of Christ, which had been sent by Abgar the king. He made a fountain of water like unto that which Bishop Amazonius had made in the old church of Edessa, and decorated it with gold, silver and marble sheets. The reason for the building of the baptistery was as follows: When the Edessans could not pay the whole tribute imposed on them, a certain swindler advised Muhammad, the tribute collector, that if he would take hold of the image (of Christ), the Edessans would be willing to sell their own children and even sacrifice their own lives than let him take it. When Muhammad carried out the advice of the swindler, the Edessans determined to pay everything they possessed, even receive death than lose the image. Finally, and as a result of being heavily pressured, they appealed to the leader Athanasius to pay five thousand dinars towards the amount of the tribute, and keep the image with him until they had paid him back the whole amount. Athanasius took the image joyfully and paid the amount of the tribute. Then he called a skillful artist and asked him to make a copy of the image. He did, and the copy was almost exactly like the original, but he darkened some parts of it make it look old. When the Edessans paid back the money, Athanasius gave them the copy of the image and kept the original. Sometime later, he revealed the truth to the Edessans, and built the splendid baptistery, for which he spent an incredible amount of money, all in honor of the image. Athanasius knew that the original image that had been delivered by the hand of Yuhanon the messenger ended up with him. A few years later, he placed the image in the baptistery.

The Patriarch Dionysius Tell Mahre who wrote down these things, added saying, "I have received information about these things from my maternal grandfather the presbyter Daniel, son of Samuel of Tur Abdin. I personally believe that the image is now held by the Chalcedonians in Edessa which came into their possession since the time of the Greek kings (emperors), and Athanasius bar Gomaya took it from them." This Athanasius was envied by Mansur, a Chalcedonian who was a syncellus of Abd al-Malik in Damascus. When the amir Abd al-Aziz passed away, Sergi son of Mansur accused Athanasius that, "Bar Gomaya has stolen the treasures of Egypt and taken them with him." When Athanasius appeared before Abd al-Malik, he welcomed him with kindness and said to him, "Athanas! We believe that the Christians have this much of wealth. Give us some of it." Athanasius gave him (a portion of it) until he was satisfied. Still, plenty of treasure remained with Athanasius.¹⁷³⁶

In the year 995 of the Greeks (A.D. 684), Athanasius the commentator known as Baladi, was set up as patriarch. After occupying the patriarchal throne for three years, he passed away in September 995 of the Greeks (A.D. 687). He had ordained Mor Jacob as bishop for Edessa. On his deathbed, he instructed Sergius of Zakunoyo, who considered himself a chief priest, to ordain Gewargi (George) a bishop for the Tayoye (Arab) tribes. He obeyed him in November. In the same month, Julian was set up as patriarch of Antioch. Julian and his father were in the army of David the Armenian, which was destroyed by Heraclius. Julian's father lived in the west and married a Syrian woman who gave birth to Julian. His father raised him

¹⁷³⁵ Bar Hebraeus says that this temple was built from the revenue of four hundred guest houses (inns) Athanasius had in Edessa. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁷³⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 105.

up alongside him in the army. Then, his father brought him to the Monastery of Qinnesrin where he studied Greek and the Scriptures. He was called "Roman" because of his father. He fell in love with the monastic life and chastity and attained a high degree of perfection, excelling many of his companions. He was so handsome that it was said that he deserved the kingdom (to be an emperor).

In Alexandria after Agathon, Yuhanon became a patriarch, followed by Simon and then by Isaac.

In this time, Sergius Zakunoyo, George, bishop of the Tayoye (Arab tribes), and Jacob of Edessa became renowned for their knowledge. As to Patriarch Julian, he was opposed by some (bishops), and trouble stirred up in the church because of Denha, metropolitan of Takrit and other men from his district. They were Yuhanon of Cercesium, bishop of Beth Garmay, and Joseph, bishop of the Taghlibite (Arabs). These bishops wanted to ordain bishops without the permission of the patriarch, as had been the custom prior to the Council of Chalcedon. Julian disagreed and said, "things should be done as they were in the time of his predecessor." When his side gained more strength, the patriarch ejected Denha, bishop of Takrit from his see and set up another one in his place. He also deposed Joseph, bishop of the Tayoye (Arabs) and set up another one in his place. The blessed Julian solved these problems by the power of God and the help of the emperor, and peace prevailed in the church.

The ordination of bishops was performed by the patriarch according to the canons. The bishops were examined, and some of them, who were proficient in profane sciences, divine teachings and adorned with good spiritual conduct, were chosen to become chief priests.

Having administered the church for 21 years, Julian departed this life in 1091 of the Greeks (A.D. 708). In this year also, the malphono (doctor), the holy Jacob, bishop of Edessa passed away. When the monks of the monastery of Tal'ada sensed that his end was near, and that there was no hope for him to live, they hastened to carry back his books to their monastery before they would be taken across the opposite side of the Euphrates. *Here ends the account of these histories.*

Chapter Seventeen: On the return of Justinian after ten years of exile and assuming the kingdom for six more years; the death of Abd al- Malik, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) and his successors; the Christian Tayoye (Arab) martyrs in this time

In the year 1015 of the Greeks, which is the 19th year of Abd al-Malik, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), he dispatched Maslama to Mopsuestia and captured it. In that year the Tayoye (Arabs) of Kufa and Basra rebelled against Abd al-Malik and fought war against him. Also in that year, Justinian II (Rhinothmetus) escaped from exile and fled to Khagan (Khan), king of the Khazars, and then Khagan rejoiced in him and gave him his daughter as wife.¹⁷³⁷ Then Justinian sought the help of the Bulgarians, (obtained soldiers from them), and marched against Constantinople, Apsimoros fled. Justinian reigned again for six years, after living ten years in exile. He killed Leontius, Apsimoros, and many nobles, and sent others into exile. He divested the kingdom of learned men. He released six thousand Arab captives and sent them back to their countries. In addition, he sent a large army to bring his wife, but the soldiers perished at sea.

When Khagan heard these things, he sent a message rebuking him, saying, "You of little mind and understanding, wouldn't it have been better if you only sent a few soldiers? Did you think that I would have deprived you of her? Nay, and by the life of your craziness, I would have not done so. Send someone to take her back." When Justinian heard this, he was ashamed. He sent, and brought back his wife and his son Tiberius (III) and made him joint emperor.

In the year 1017 of the Greeks (A.D. 706), the Tayoye (Arabs) rebuilt Mopsuestia, which they had recently captured, fortified it with strong walls, and made it a garrison post on the Roman frontier. Abd al-Malik, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), went there and passed away in it. Some are of the opinion that he was killed there. He was succeeded by his son Walid, the ninth caliph, who ruled for nine years and five months. He appointed Mirtat (Murad), son of Sharik as captain of the host of Qinnesrin. He also appointed Qura for Egypt. He sent an army with Maslama and invested Tauna (Adana), a town of Cappadocia. He

¹⁷³⁷ He gave him his sister as wife. She became a Christian and took the name of Theodora, the wife of Justinian 1. See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 125, and A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, 1, 194.

fought against it for nine months, and Justinian sent an army of Romans. However, when they engaged (with the Arabs in battle), they were defeated and about forty thousand of them perished. The Tayoye (Arabs) captured the city in the month of March, and pillaged and looted abundant wealth.

In the year 1021 of the Greeks (A.D. 710), the amir of the Jazira was removed and Maslama replaced him. In the year 1022 of the Greeks (A.D. 711), Maslama captured Turanda, Garguma, Tounada, and other cities in Cilicia on the Roman frontier. He placed a garrison in Tounada.¹⁷³⁸

In this same year, Philippicus (Bardanes, Vardan an Armenian) rebelled and killed Justinian, emperor of the Romans and his son Tiberius, and he himself reigned, A.D. 711-713.¹⁷³⁹

At this time, Walid, caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs), commanded that the Christian captives be killed, and they were killed inside all the churches of Syria.

Philippicus reigned in the year 1023 (A.D. 712, more correctly, 711). He was skillful in the profane sciences. He wanted to reject the Sixth Council and the dogma of Maximus of the two wills.¹⁷⁴⁰

In this year, Maslama, captain of the Tayoye (Arab) host, captured the city of Amasia and many other regions. Abbas ibn Walid captured Antioch of Pisidia and pillaged abundant booty.

After Philippicus reigned for two years and six months, he was rejected by the Romans who blinded his eyes. Anastasius (II) reigned for two years and five months.

In the year 1026 of the Greeks (A.D. 710), Walid, amir (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) died and was succeeded by his brother Sulayman for two years and six months.

In this year, Sulayman entered the region of Galatia, captured its fortresses and returned with a large booty.

Anastasius sent an army to the western region, but the army rebelled against its leader and killed him. The Romans set up Theodosius (III 715-717) as king (emperor). Anastasius fled to Nicaea, and thus he was deposed and Theodosius reigned in his place.

In the year 1020 of the Greeks (A.D. 719), Iliyya (Elijah) from the Monastery of Gubba Baraya (The Outer Pit Monastery) was ordained as patriarch of Antioch in his own monastery. He was the bishop of the city of Apamea. After serving the episcopate for eight years, he was called to occupy the sublime throne of Antioch of Syria. He transferred Constantine, the disciple of Mor Jacob (of Edessa) from Homs to Edessa after the death of Mor Jacob. He ordained Daniel, who was also a disciple of the holy Mor Jacob, as bishop for Homs instead of Constantine.

In Alexandria after Isaac, Alexander became a patriarch. In this time David bishop of Germanicia (Mar'ash) passed away. He was a good and renowned learned man.

Patriarch Iliyya had an audience with Walid, the amir of the Tayoye (Arabs). Walid welcomed him and honored him greatly. This took place at Hasarta.

In this period, the Christian Tayoye (Arabs) received true martyrdom for the following reason: Muhammad, captain of the Tayoye (Arab) army, despite the countless evils and killing he perpetrated in Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia), further decided to convert the Christian Tayoye (Arabs) to Islam by force. He summoned the chief of the Taghlibite (Christian Arabs) named Maw'id, asked him to deny his religion and proclaim Islam. Maw'id refused to recant, and Muhammad had him cast into a pit filled with mud. After a time, he had him pulled out of the pit and tried to delude him (to accept Islam). When he refused, he had him murdered, and ordered he should not be buried. The body (of Maw'id) remained cast on top of a dung hill, but it did not stink, and no carnivorous animals fed on it. Eustathius of Dara asked for his body, took it and built on it a monastery.

Walid said to the Taghlibite Sham'ala, the confessor, "Inasmuch as you are a chief of the Tayoye (Arabs), you disgrace all of them when you worship the cross. Therefore, do what I will and become a Muslim." The blessed Sham'ala said, "Your whole kingdom is nothing but dust compared to what Christ

¹⁷³⁸ This must be al-Tuwana of al-Baladhuri. See Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri, *Kitab Futuh al-Buldan*, 1, ed. Salah al-Din al-Munajjid (Cairo: 1956):190.

¹⁷³⁹ See Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 127, and A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, 1, 194.

¹⁷⁴⁰ Cf. Ostrogorsky, *Ibid.* 153, and A. A. Vasiliev, *Ibid.* 230.

had promised us. I am chief of all the Tayoye (Arabs) of Taghlib, I am afraid lest I become the cause of the destruction of all of them. If I deny Christ, they will deny him also." When Walid heard these words, he commanded that he be dragged outside face downward. He swore that he would have him eat his own flesh, but the noble Sham'ala remained resolute. Walid ordered a piece of his thigh cut off, roasted on fire and shoved into his mouth. Even so, he kept living, and the wound was still shown on the body of this true martyr.

In this time, the Chalcedonians of Constantinople made Germanicus, bishop of Cyzicus, their own bishop. Shortly afterwards, however, they deposed him when they discovered that he was of the heresy of Mani. Others defended him and considered that he had been wronged. All this happened because of the confusion of the Chalcedonians and their demonic jealousy.

In the year 1016 of the Greeks (A.D. 705), plague spread and one third of the inhabitants of the earth perished because of it. In the next year, a severe earthquake took place and the village of Sarin and many other places were destroyed. In April of this year, there was severe cold that caused olive trees and vineyards to dry up.

In this same year, fierce fighting ensued between the western Tayoye (Arabs) and the eastern Tayoye (Arabs) on the banks of the Tigris River, and the eastern Arabs were defeated.

In July of the year 1019 of the Greeks (A.D. 708), a marvelous phenomenon took place. Meteors were seen shooting constantly at night in the sky from south to north, a thing which had not been heard of for generations. The holy fathers, especially Jacob of Edessa and Moses bar Kipha (d. 903) wrote about this phenomenon saying, "What would natural scientists say who senselessly claim that they (the meteors) are only dense air, and that when it rises it collides with fire and burns?" Now, one should ask them, "Where does all this dense air rise from, and where it was hiding?" However, as they could not answer, they said that the Lord does what he wills. The analysts of this phenomenon said that these meteors symbolized the Tayoye (Arabs) who had at this time invaded the countries of the north killing, burning and devastating them and their inhabitants.

In this time Walid, amir (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), commanded that sorcerers be killed. They (Arabs) tied them to pieces of wood and cast them into the water. Those who floated were killed (by the Arabs), and those who sank died (were saved from torture).

In the year 1022 of the Greeks (A.D. 711), Walid commanded that public accounts should not be written in Greek but only in Arabic, for until this time, all public accounts were written in Greek.¹⁷⁴¹ Now Walid hated the Christians, and destroyed their churches. The first church he destroyed was the Great Church at Damascus, and built a mosque on its site. He did the same in many other places.¹⁷⁴²

On February 28, 1024 of the Greeks (A.D. 713), a severe earthquake took place that destroyed many places in the districts of Antioch, Aleppo and Qinnasrin, especially the churches and temples. In this year, the plague spread. In May of this year, an incredible number of locusts swarmed; also, a hurricane uprooted the trees and destroyed the buildings. In April of the year 1025 of the Greeks (A.D. 714), there was a severe, freezing cold, which made the leaves of the trees and vines wither and fall off.

In this period, Philippicus, king (emperor) of the Romans, evicted the Armenians from the regions under his authority. They found refuge with the Tayoye (Arabs) who stationed them in Melitene, which was the fourth Armenia. They multiplied in these regions and allied themselves to the Tayoye (Arabs) against the Romans. This indicated the maladministration of the Romans who were given to a reprobate mind, filled with lack of understanding all because of their hatred of the Orthodox. *End of the narrative.*

Remark¹⁷⁴³

Let it be known to those who might read this book with good spirit, appreciation of the labor of writing it, and affection for knowledge, that it has been laboriously gathered and methodically arranged,

¹⁷⁴¹ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 524.

¹⁷⁴² *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 524.

¹⁷⁴³ Found on page 453 of the Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex.

from the books of trustworthy historians, most of which are found in this our book. It is especially derived from the histories of our Father Mor Jacob of Edessa, whose entire history has been incorporated here. For he had systematically configured the festivals and computation of the years from Adam, that is, from the beginning of the temporal world to this time. We have incorporated here his entire history together with the indispensable parts, with the help of the one who is sought by everyone.

However, here ends the history of the holy (Jacob of Edessa), whose labors have ended at this time, as he was transported to everlasting life. After him, we find no one who was more engaged in such configuration and computation of years displaying the passing of generations. Like a pillar set up in the middle of the house, and from every direction it is known that the roof of the house stands firm because of it, likewise, these configurations and the computation of years fixed in the middle of the chapters of this book, display, as in a picture, the image of every epoch and the significance of events, and when, where and how they took place. Here is the reason that awakened my simplicity. For where the holy (Jacob of Edessa) ended, there Mor Mikha'il (Michael) began. He appealed to be aided by divine grace, which is abundant in all and for all, to enable him to finish what is left, the same way he had compiled and written from the beginning until now.

Therefore, anyone who reads (this book) should know that where the blessed Jacob ended his configuration and computation of the years or, in the year 1021 of the Greeks (A.D. 710), there began the Patriarch Michael. He did record and compute the number of years from the year 1022 (A.D. 711) until the year 1506 (A.D. 1195), a total of 484 years during which these things were written.

Let anyone who loves accuracy investigate this matter. He will notice that although the blessed Jacob departed this life in the year 1019 of the Greeks (A.D. 708), yet we have said that the years are written down in the chronological table until the year 1021 of the Greeks (A.D. 710). One can assume that, after his death, one of Jacob's pupils recorded the numbers of these two years and added them to the work of the deceased Jacob, or, the date of his death in 1019 (A.D. 708) is inaccurate.

He who reads (this book) let him pray for those who participated in it, especially the weak and sinful Michael and his parents. (Michael here is Michael of Urbish who transcribed this book).

Chapter Eighteen: On the second siege of Constantinople by the Arabs; and the story of the founding of Byzantium related at the beginning of the history of Dionysius (Tell Mahre) which also contains a chapter on church affairs in this period

In the year 1026 of the Greeks (A.D. 715), after the death of Walid, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) and Sulayman's rise to power, Maslama invaded the country of the Turks.¹⁷⁴⁴ He captured abundant spoils and returned. In the year 1027 of the Greeks (A.D. 716), Maslama went to the country of Asia and captured Pergamum, Sardis¹⁷⁴⁵ and other regions, spoiled them and then returned. In the same year, Sulayman urged Maslama to go against Constantinople. Maslama assembled 200,000 soldiers and 5,000 ships for the transportation of men and provisions. He collected 12,000 beasts,¹⁷⁴⁶ six thousand camels and six thousand asses to carry provisions for the camels and fodder for the mules. The camels were loaded with arms and the equipment of the mangonels (engines of war), and made ready sufficient food for them for several years. He appointed over them a captain, Umar ibn Hubayra. Sulayman swore that he would never quit fighting against Constantinople until he seized it or ruined the land of the Tayoye (Arabs). With them went 30,000 men called Mutawa'yin (volunteer warriors). They were divided into two divisions; one went by sea and the other by land. When they entered the country of the Romans, they began to burn down the churches and shed blood. In just one location, they slaughtered 6,000 men. Meanwhile, dissension took place among the Romans who turned against their king (emperor) Theodosius. Now Leo, the captain of the Roman host, was with Theodosius. When the Tayoye (Arab) army reached the city of Amorium, Leo met with them and promised to help them capture the city. In return, Maslama promised Leo that when he

¹⁷⁴⁴ *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 159-160, and *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 156.

¹⁷⁴⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 107 says it was Rhodes. He is right. See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 212.

¹⁷⁴⁶ Bar Hebraeus says twelve thousand artisans. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 107.

seized Constantinople, he would make him the king (emperor) of the Romans; Leo returned to Constantinople. Meanwhile, the Tayoye (Arabs) captured one city after the other and pledged the inhabitants' safety. Then, King (Caliph) Sulayman came marching with 12,000 warriors and laid siege against Chalcedon in order to prevent provisions from reaching Constantinople. When Theodosius learned of Leo's pledge to Maslama, he shut up Leo's family in prison (in Amorium), and ordered his men to guard them strictly. When Leo learned of this, he went to Sulayman asking him to provide him with 6,000 warriors. He besieged Amorium, and its inhabitants were afraid of him. However, when he drew near the wall of the city, Leo told them upon oath that his deal with the Tayoye (Arabs) was fraudulent. (They believed him) and handed him the members of his family. He dismissed the Tayoye(Arab) warriors after giving each one of them twelve dinars. He went up with some Romans to Constantinople. The Roman soldiers met him and were pleased with him, set him up as their emperor, and delivered into his hand the son of Theodosius. Leo entered Constantinople and Theodosius left the city. He received the tonsure and became a cleric.

Leo reigned in the year 1028 of the Greeks (A.D. 717), which is the year 98 of the Tayoye (Arabs Islamic calendar). When Maslama learned that Leo had reigned, he rejoiced thinking that he would deliver the city (Constantinople) to him. However, Leo frustrated him, and began to fortify the city and store provisions in it. When Maslama learned that Leo had deceived him, he crossed the sea with his army and ships and encamped on the other side of Constantinople. He was with 4000 men in the rear when the Bulgarian whom Leo had hired, attacked him and killed many of his men. Maslama himself escaped with great difficulty and reached the Great Camp that was pitched on the western side of Constantinople, opposite of the Golden Gate. He dug in the back a trench for his troops between his camp and the city opposite the towers. The Tayoye (Arabs) were surrounded by the sea on the right, and on the left side where their ships had docked; they were boarded by 10,000 men and Egyptian sailors who were set up to guard the ships against the Romans. Maslama stationed 20,000 men between him and the towers, and another 20,000 stationed on the side opposite of Syria. The battle ensued between the Tayoye (Arabs) and the citizens (of Constantinople), as well as those who were in the towers, and between the ships in the sea. On the other side were the Roman Sicilians who made it difficult for the Tayoye (Arabs) to come out in a group of less than 2,000 men if it was necessary. Then, the Bulgarians rushed upon the Tayoye (Arabs) and killed many of them. Indeed, the Tayoye (Arabs) feared the Bulgarians more than they feared the citizens inside the city. Meanwhile, winter came upon them and they were afraid to escape. First, they feared their king (caliph), second, they feared the sea, and third, they feared the Bulgarians. The shadow of death appeared before their eyes, but Maslama kept deceiving them saying that gifts were coming for them from the king (caliph). Meanwhile, the Tayoye (Arabs) suffered greater tribulation from the outside than from the Romans on the inside. They were so afflicted with hunger that they ate the bodies of the dead, and even their own refuse. Some of them even ate each other. The measure of wheat brought sixteen dinars. Meanwhile, the Tayoye (Arabs) searched for soft stones, which they chewed with pleasure. They even ate the bitumen of the ships.

While the Tayoye (Arabs) were thus greatly suffering, their amir (caliph) Sulayman died after reigning for two and a half years. He was succeeded by Umar¹⁷⁴⁷ who tried to rescue his people from the Romans. He sent a messenger to investigate their condition, but Maslama provided him with false report. He addressed letters (to the caliph) saying that his fighting men were in good shape, and that the city (Constantinople) would soon fall into his hands. When the messenger learned that Maslama had provided false information, he asked him to send with him an army contingent, but the contingent could not leave because of the wintry condition. Furthermore, Maslama did not tell the army of the death of Sulayman. Nonetheless, the Romans who were on the wall shouted to the Tayoye (Arabs), saying, "Your king (caliph) is dead." Upon hearing this, the Tayoye (Arabs) were frightened. In the meanwhile, the caliph's messenger came with an order to Maslama to retreat. Another order was sent to the army to leave in case they disobeyed Maslama if he refused to retreat. When Maslama tried to hide the order, the men clamored against him, but consequently, both sides rejoiced.¹⁷⁴⁸

¹⁷⁴⁷ He is Umar II ibn Abd al-Aziz 717-720.

¹⁷⁴⁸ Cf. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, translated by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, 550, and Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*,

As to Umar, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), he bought 2000 horses and mules, and sent ten dinars to each one of the men as subsistence money for their safety. He¹⁷⁴⁹ was greatly grieved over their condition. Then, when the Arabs began to retreat, the Romans rushed upon them, killed many of them and burned their ships by fire. Consequently, a great number of Tayoye (Arabs) perished by sea storms. The city (Constantinople) was saved.

The Founding of Byzantium, known today as the City of Constantinople

In ancient times, the kingdom of the Romans was ruled by many kings (emperors). One ruled Italy, another ruled Macedonia, and still another ruled Thrace. Byzos was the ruler of Asia and Thrace. He wanted to build a capital for himself in a fortified location. He summoned an expert artisan and commissioned him to search for a suitable place for the new capital. The artisan explored many places but did not succeed in finding the right one. He became tired of searching and was greatly distressed. He threw himself to the ground to find some rest. He picked up a stick and a string and wrapped them with his red garment. He placed them next to him and slept. Behold, a hungry eagle was soaring in the sky. He eyed the red garment and thought it was a piece of meat. He dived down and snatched it. Because of his great force, his claws sank deeply into it. The artisan woke up at the sound of the eagle's wings that had snatched the garment and soared high with it for fear of the man, and perched in some place. Then, he released his claws from the garment and flew off. The artisan went to the place where the eagle had perched, and found the garment and the stick over which it was wrapped. The artisan continued his sleeping on that spot. In a dream, he saw a person saying, "Plan the city here." When he woke up, he marveled at the dream. He began to walk through the place and contemplate it. He found it to be suitable for living and in accordance with the king's desire for its spaciousness and impregnability. It was surrounded by sea on three sides, which contained sweet water in abundance. He went to the king and informed him about the location. The king was pleased and said that the choosing of the spot was done by God, and then he went to see it. When he saw the location, he commanded the city to be planned on it. The length of the location was ten miles and its width was from sea to sea. The artisans began to build the city, but before the building was completed, Byzos died and his brother Antos reigned instead of him. Antos was concerned about the city's building and its ornamentations. The city was called Byzantium, which a compound name of Byzos and his brother. In the time of Alexander, all the Roman countries were subject to the authority of one person.

When the believing Constantine (the Great) reigned and defeated the tyrants who opposed him, he, likewise, desired to build a city worthy of his kingdom. He saw that Rome, although large and fortified, was too far from the Roman provinces. Then Byzantium was suitable more than any other location; he ordered it to be expanded two more miles toward the west in order that its length would measure twelve miles. He completed its rebuilding and decorated it with many ornaments. The city was built on seven hills, and between two of those hills was a harbor for ships having two fortified towers. From one tower to the other an iron chain was laid down to prevent the ships from coming in and going out without permission. The city was surrounded by sea on three sides, and on the western side was land. Constantine also had a colossal wall, a distance from it called *Macrontikos*, that is, the long wall to connect between the two seas. A spacious length of land extended between the wall and the city. The width of the city from sea to sea on the eastern side was four miles, and the depth of the sea there was unfathomable. The city of Byzantium was founded in the twelfth year of Manasseh.¹⁷⁵⁰ After year 970, it was rebuilt by Constantine who called it Constantinople after his name.

Up to this point, we have recorded in our book, written in our language, (the Syriac language), the names of the chief priests who were set up in the four holy Sees of Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople and Antioch. We derived their names from nations and sources in the Roman and Greek languages, although their authors are Chalcedonians. From here onward, my book will have no names of the Chalcedonian

202-204 and 212.

¹⁷⁴⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 108, says that Umar send 20,000 equestrians to them (the troops).

¹⁷⁵⁰ The thirteenth king of Judah who reigned in the first half of the eighth century B.C.

bishops who were set up in the Sees of Rome or Constantinople. It will be restricted to the names of the bishops who were set up in the Sees of Alexandria and Antioch because they were Syrian or Coptic Orthodox for two reasons: First, is due to the expansion of the kingdom of the Tayoye (Arabs) into Syria and Egypt where Syrians and Copts lived. Furthermore, there was no need or benefit from searching the Chalcedonian chief priests who hated and persecuted the Orthodox. Second, is that the Chalcedonians were greatly corrupted by the heresies which afflicted them as we have previously explained, and will further explain. Our Fathers and the holy historians of the church realized that, by holding two natures, two wills, two substances, two operations and two Christs instead of one Christ, the Chalcedonians had greatly augmented their corruption. Thus, they completely overlooked them and never used their language or book as they did earlier. Furthermore, no Orthodox educated men remained in their districts. These then, are the reasons for not putting down the names of their chief priests in our histories, except for sporadic occasions here and there according to necessity. We will, by the help of God, collect from their books what is suitable for a testimony. We will be concerned, indeed, we have determined to interpret their writings correctly as much as possible, and to the extent which will enable our weakness to collect and put down chronologically in this book the facts that had been confirmed and attested to by many trustworthy writers.

Chapter Nineteen: On Umar, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) who hated the Christians, and his unexpected death; and on Yazid who succeeded him; on Leo, king (emperor) of the Romans, and the entrance of Mor Iliyya (Elijah) into Antioch and his death; and on the ordination of Athanasius

Since he began to reign, Umar (Ibn Abd al-Aziz, 717-720) mistreated the Christians for two reasons: first, his intention to magnify the Islamic Shari'a (law), and second, for the failure of the Tayoye (Arabs) to capture Constantinople, that a great number of them perished. This stirred up his hatred of the Christians whom he antagonized in different ways. He was jealous for the spreading of their teachings believing that he feared God and shunned evil. Yet, he tightened the grip on the Christians to force them to embrace Islam. He issued a decree exempting from the jizya (poll tax) every Christian who converted to Islam. He also resolved that the testimony of a Christian against a Muslim (in a court of law) would not be accepted, nor should a Christian assume an office in the state. Moreover, he forbade Christians from raising their voices in prayer or ring a church bell, or from wearing garments of green color. He also forbade them from riding saddled horses. Furthermore, he decreed that if a Tayoyo (Arab, Muslim) killed a Christian, he should not be charged with murder but only pay blood money amounting to five thousand dirhams. He also forbade the offering of vows to the monasteries and churches. He even confiscated parts of the revenues of the churches and the monasteries, and of the poor. He commanded that Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) should not drink wine or other drink.¹⁷⁵¹

In the year 1034 of the Greeks (A.D. 723), in the month of February, Umar died. He was succeeded by Yazid (the son of Abd al-Malik) who ruled for four years.¹⁷⁵²

In the region of Qinnasrin there were set up as chiefs: Mirtat after Forwart followed by Nadir, then Nadir, followed by Muhammad, who was followed by Laith.

A Tayoye (Arab) man from Hira named Yazid ibn Muhallab, rebelled against Yazid, and attracted the people of Hira, Kufa, Basra and the country of Persia. Yazid ibn Abd al-Malik dispatched an army from the west, from the Jazira and Mosul and engaged him in a battle west of Babylon. Muhallab was defeated and killed, and his followers scattered.¹⁷⁵³

Yazid, (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), commanded that the images or pictures of every living being, people or animals, be obliterated from the temples, walls, wooden panels, stones and books.¹⁷⁵⁴

¹⁷⁵¹ For some of Umar's mistreatment of the Christians, see *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, translated by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (1997), 550.

¹⁷⁵² *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 155, and *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 154.

¹⁷⁵³ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 109.

¹⁷⁵⁴ Bar Hebraeus adds that they took down the images of the saints and the kings from the churches and houses. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 109.

In this time, the Tayoye (Arabs) captured the strong fortress of Shayzar in Cilicia.

In this period, Leo, the Roman emperor, stirred up persecution against those who lived in his country but did not hold his same belief (meaning those who did not agree with the Council of Chalcedon).¹⁷⁵⁵ Many of them fled to the country of the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims). Some Jews embraced Christianity, were baptized and called "neophytes," or "the new citizens."

In the year 1037 of the Greeks (A.D. 726), Yazid died having reigned four years and a half. He was succeeded by Hisham, the thirteenth in number of the caliphs, who ruled for nineteen years. No sooner had he become a caliph than he began to overburden the people with excessive taxes. He made canals for the water to flow from the Euphrates River above Callinicus (al-Raqqa) to irrigate the crops and plantations. The income derived from them was more than all the tribute and taxes collected from his dominions.

In this year, the Tayoye (Arabs) attacked Neocaesarea in Pontus, and destroyed it. In this year, they also invaded the land of the Turks led by Jarrah (Ibn Abd Allah), captain of the host.¹⁷⁵⁶ They seized one great city, and gained abundant spoils, then departed.

As we have previously said, Patriarch Julian was succeeded by Iliyya (Elijah), who was the bishop of Apamea.

In the first year of Yazid, which is 1034 of the Greeks (A.D. 723), Patriarch Iliyya entered the city of Antioch with honor accompanied by monks and bishops. He consecrated there a new church, which was built by his effort. This event took place 230 years since the Patriarch Mor Severus had departed it. During this period, not one of our Orthodox patriarchs had entered it until Mor Iliyya, who entered it in the time of the Tayoye (Arabs).

In the next year, 1035 of the Greeks (A.D. 724), the holy Mor Iliyya consecrated another church in the village of Sarmada Uluna in the province of Antioch. He suffered much from the wicked and heretic Chalcedonian inhabitants. In this year, Patriarch Iliyya died and was buried in his Monastery (Gubba Baraya). He died on October 27, having served the episcopate for fourteen years and the patriarchate for fourteen years. He lived 82 years. May his memory be a blessing.

In the year 1036 of the Greeks (A.D. 725), Mor Athanasius was ordained as patriarch for the See of Antioch. He was the abbot of the Monastery of Gubba Baraya. In February of this year, died our Father Gewargi (George), bishop of the Tayoye (Arab) tribes. In addition, in the year 1037 of the Greeks (A.D. 726), Patriarch Mor Athanasius, achieved a unity with the Armenians by the effort of Iyawannis.

In the year 1029 of the Greeks (A.D. 718), a severe earthquake took place. Then, in the year 1031 (A.D. 720), locusts swarmed during the crop season and devoured the grape vines, figs and olives. As a result, wine became scarce.

In this time, a Syrian man from the district of Mardin deceived the Jews, claiming to be the Christ. To other people, he said he was an apostle sent by Christ. He collected large amounts of money, but then he was arrested by the governor, and confessed his crime.

In the year 1032 (A.D. 721), water fountains dried up because of the scarcity of rain and snow, and in many places, people were in terrible distress. They had to walk as far as seven miles or more to draw water. Some places were desolate of people, and crops were extremely scarce. These events took place in the months of August and September. In April of the next year, swarms of locust devoured the crops. Provisions became scarce which afflicted both people and beasts.

In the year 1036 of the Greeks (A.D. 725), plague broke out in many localities, especially in Beth Nahrin, and many people died.

At this time Leo III (717-741), emperor of the Romans, following the example of the Tayoye (Arab) caliph (Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz), had the images removed from the walls and wooden panels. He also took down the images and pictures of the saints and kings that hung in the churches and in homes.¹⁷⁵⁷ This action caused a vehement sedition in the kingdom, and many opposed the emperor openly. *End of the narrative.*

¹⁷⁵⁵ See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 109.

¹⁷⁵⁶ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 154.

¹⁷⁵⁷ The reference here is to the Iconoclast Controversy. See Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 138-147, and A. A. Vasiliev,

Chapter Twenty: On the union made by Patriarch Athanasius (III) with Iyawannis (John IV Odznetzi), catholicos of the Armenians; the spread of the heresy of Maximus, and the abrogation of the phrase "You who was crucified for us" from the Trisagion in this period.

We have formerly discussed the heresy of Maximus (of two wills in Christ) and how Constantine (IV Pogonatus, 668-685) introduced it into the church of the Romans (Byzantines) after it had been obliterated by his father. Now we want to discuss the rift, which took place between them (the Chalcedonians in 727) on account of this heresy (two wills) which led to the abolition of the phrase, "You who was crucified for us." This heresy was maintained in the land of the Romans since the time of Constantine (Pogonatus) but was not at all known in Syria. Now, (the year 727) it was planted by the captives and plunderers who accompanied the Tayoye (Arab) armies and lived in Syria. Those who were corrupted by this heresy were the inhabitants of the metropolises, their bishops and leaders of whom was Sergius, son of Mansur, (perhaps father of St. John of Damascus). Sergius harassed the believers (anti-Chalcedonians) in Damascus and Homs not only to drop the phrase "You who was crucified for us" from the Trisagion, but also coaxed many of us (anti-Chalcedonians) to accept his heresy. Also, corrupted by this heresy, were the Sees of Jerusalem, Antioch and Edessa and the Sees in other cities since the time of King (Emperor) Heraclius. However, the monks of Beth Marun (the Monastery of Marun), their bishops and a few other people did not accept this doctrine (two wills), but all the inhabitants of the cities and the bishops accepted it. Many quarrels and anathemas took place because of it. The Chalcedonian followers of the Monastery of Marun reviled the followers of Maximus by calling them Nestorians, heathens and Jews, telling them that, "You do not confess that Christ is God, that he was born of a Virgin and that he was crucified and suffered in his body. However, you say that he was a simple man and a special person who was separate and remote from God, that he feared death. For this reason he cried, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as you will,' as if there were two wills, one for the Father and one for the Son, that there were in Christ two divided and separate wills opposing each other." The followers of Maximus reviled the followers of Marun (the monks of the Monastery of Marun) saying, "You do not confess the same faith of Chalcedon and the *Tome* of Leo, that you do not believe that in Christ there are two independent natures with their properties and operations preserved. For if there were two natures in Christ, it follows that there should also be in him two independent wills and operations. But, you confess the doctrine of Cyril (of Alexandria) and Severus (of Antioch) who maintained that in Christ there was one person and one nature, and that one is his operation, power and authority." They also called them Severians, Jacobites, and Theopaschites.¹⁷⁵⁸ These (the monks of the Monastery of Marun and their followers) soundly answered those (the followers of Maximus) saying, "If Christ is known in two natures, with their properties and actions preserved, as is stated in the *Tome* of Leo and the decision of the Council of Chalcedon, it is imperative also to believe in two wills, two operations, two persons, nay, also two Sons and two Christs." In all fairness, these two groups should not have assailed each other because both of them held identical faith, the faith of Leo and the Council of Chalcedon.¹⁷⁵⁹

The congregation of Aleppo split into two hostile groups: one followed their bishop who held the same belief as that of the Maronites; the other joined the followers of Maximus. The fight of these two groups was over the possession of the great cathedral, which was built by Acacius, bishop of Aleppo. Many times, they beat each other in the church. When the governor witnessed the altercation, he ordered that each group should have one-half of the church: the eastern part went to the bishop and the followers of Marun, the western part went to the followers of Maximus. A wooden partition was erected in the middle of the church, and a wooden altar was also set up in the western part. However, the altercations continued between the two groups. At the time of conducting the service and offering the oblation, the members of each group raised their voices in order to disturb the other. Many times, they threw away the oblations of

History of the Byzantine Empire, 1, 251-259.

¹⁷⁵⁸ Those who attribute suffering to God.

¹⁷⁵⁹ See Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History* (Syracuse University Press, 1986, reprinted Gorgias Press, 2005), 101-102.

each other and broke their crosses, nay, they without shame held the beard of the bishop and spat in his face. Even their women dared enter the sanctuary and drag the priests outside the church. When the governor realized that the partition of the church did not stop the altercations, he ordered that the partition in the middle of the church be removed and the entire congregation become subject to the bishop. He threatened those who disobeyed his orders to be punished and their heads and beards shaved off. Still, many did not obey and were tortured and their beards were shaved off. Then he ordered that the Eucharist should be celebrated every day by two priests: one from each group and offer it to his own congregation. The two groups agreed to this arrangement. In fact, they did what had never been done before, as two priests celebrated the Eucharist together on the same altar with two cups and two patens. However, to avoid the one from striking the other, the governor placed Muslim men at the sanctuary carrying whips. They sat there until the service ended. Finally, the people of Aleppo were ashamed of the indecorous behavior of the two groups. They evicted them from the church and became followers of Maximus.¹⁷⁶⁰

Weep, O Mountain of Sasson for the faith of Gregorius the Parthian held by the Armenians, as they say. Although it is the same faith that we (the Syrian Orthodox) hold, yet because of the customs they practiced, or because of negligence that spoils everything, neither they nor we were concerned, after the rift caused at Chalcedon, about the differences between them and us. The monks of Bar Aigore¹⁷⁶¹ in the district of Miyafarqat lived in the neighborhood of the said mountain. Every time a bishop of the mountain passed away, they went to see the catholicos of the Armenians¹⁷⁶² saying, "We are of the faith of Gregorius and no one in the Jazira is of this faith of the Armenians except our monastery." The catholicos believed them and ordained for them the bishop who they presented as their candidate. He also addressed a letter to the Sassonians who accepted the bishop because of their ignorance.

At this time, a presbyter from Miyafarqat named Bar Hadh Bshabo went to Hayyan of Tanukh. Both of them addressed a letter to the Catholicos Iyawannis (John Odznetzi), saying, "The monks of Bar Aigore oppose the Orthodox faith because they are followers of Julian the Phantasiast. Iyawannis was disturbed and astonished at the audacity of these men. He addressed a letter to the Patriarch Athanasius (III) asking him to define his faith. He also urged him to work for the union of the Syrians and the Armenians. Several letters were exchanged between the patriarch and the catholicos, and the presbyter (Bar Hadh Bshabo) was never tired of delivering the letters of the patriarch to the catholicos and to Gabriel, the bishop of the Sassonians. Gabriel, who was the archimandrite of the Sassonians' monastery, duped the Armenians into believing that the Syrians held that the body of Christ is susceptible to corruption as Severus (of Antioch) and Jacob (Baradaeus) confessed. Because of this, the Armenians were shocked and began to entertain doubt, for they knew only one kind of corruption. After the great toil the presbyter exerted, God moved the hearts of the patriarch and the catholicos to assemble a council. But, when they agreed that the council should convene in Arzen, the captain of the Armenian host delayed them from leaving for Arzen. However, the patriarch chose six bishops and dispatched them to the catholicos. When they arrived, the catholicos rejoiced and summoned his bishops to the meeting. Gabriel was also summoned to the meeting, and the bishops began their deliberation. When they found out that Gabriel was a disciple of Julian the Phantasiast, they asked him to anathematize him, but he declined to do so. They tore up his stole and expelled him according to their custom. As the Armenian and the Syrian bishops continued their deliberation of the term "corruption," the wicked Gabriel had already planted in the ears of the Armenian bishops the idea that the Syrians maintained that the body of our Lord is corruptible. Since they knew of no other corruption except that which occurs to the body when the soul departs it, they were distressed and resentful. The Syrian

¹⁷⁶⁰ Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History*, 102.

¹⁷⁶¹ It is most likely that the term *aigore* is the plural of the Syriac *aigoro* meaning roof of a house. These Armenian monks were called so because they worshipped demons on the flat roofs of their monastery, and supposed that demons had influence at the beginning and end of a month. In other word, they were demoniacs. See *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* of R. Payne Smith, ed. by J. Payne Smith (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1903), 3.

¹⁷⁶² This Armenian Catholicos is John IV Odznetzi, the philosopher. See *Chronique de Michel le Grand; Patriarche des Syriens Jacobites; traduite par la premier fois sur la version Armenienne du pretre Ischok par Victor Langlois* (Venice: Mekhitarist Publishing House, 1868), 253 and footnote 11.

bishops, however, presented to them proof from the holy books and from nature, but they were not satisfied. They only wanted testimonies from the Old and the New Testaments showing the corruptibility of the Lord's body. However, the catholicos, who was well versed in the Scriptures, desired meticulously to have the union achieved through his good offices. Meanwhile, the bishops presented the words of St. Paul in Acts saying that, "The fact that God raised him (Christ) from the dead, never to decay,"¹⁷⁶³ indicated that corruption occurred to his (Christ) body once before, and that it would not be corrupted again because he resurrected with an impassible and incorruptible body. We expect this same when "The Lord Christ will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."¹⁷⁶⁴ When they brought the Acts of the Apostles in the Armenian language, they found that this passage was exactly the same as it occurred in the Scriptures, with nothing more or less. At this, the catholicos tremendously rejoiced. He asked his bishops about the phrase "never to decay," to which they gave no answer, but submitted to what had been written in the Scripture. They reformulated the doctrinal passages that needed rectification in a manner that satisfied the two sides of the Syrians and the Armenians. However, they compromised a little lest they relapse to the former disputation. They resolved that anything that does not mar the truth refutes the vicious teaching of the heretics. In this manner, they achieved the union between them. The Syrian bishops were first to celebrate the Eucharist and offer the communion to the Armenians. They confirmed their union in one faith and recorded it in a document signed and sealed according to the instruction of the Holy Spirit. They deposited a copy of the document in Syriac with the Armenians, and a copy in Armenian with us, the Syrians.¹⁷⁶⁵

The Armenian catholicos was distinguished and highly commended for his knowledge and works of mercy and piety. He was generous and loved by everyone. Because of his holiness, they looked upon him as an angel.

The document drawn up by the Armenians and the Syrians upon their union

In the year 1037 of the Greeks (A.D. 726), which is the year 135 of the Armenian Calendar, you the bishops whose names are appended below, came to me, I the Catholicos Iyawannis (John) of Great Armenia, from Syria by order of Mor Athanasius, patriarch of Antioch:

Constantine, bishop of Edessa, Simon, bishop of Harran, Theodore, bishop of Mar'ash (Germanicia), Athanasius, bishop of Miyafarqat, Simon, bishop of Dara, for the purpose of making union between us and you, that is, between Syria and Armenia. We requested you, according to the canon, to define your faith, and you did and delivered it to us. Then, we ordered that a council be assembled by the venerable bishops in the district of Apahounis in the village of Mahsar (Manazgird, Manazkirt). We arrived there by order of the Holy Spirit, I, Iyawannis, catholicos of Great Armenia and the bishops in my company. They are:

Halphai, bishop of Arkiws; Theodore, bishop of Armen; Sahak, bishop of Mamigonians; Rasko, bishop of Basean; Sergis, bishop of Dephtis; Theorius, bishop of Bezounis; Theodore, bishop of Asamounis; Abel, bishop of Amatounis; David, bishop of Erestounis; Gregorius, bishop of Asarounis; Nozon, bishop of Asibogen; Joseph, bishop of Artsrounis; Gregorius, bishop of Wanand; Narkisos, bishop of Khorkhorounis; Esai, bishop of Golten; Iyawannis, bishop of Gnounis; Gewargi, bishop Rotakay; Joseph, bishop of Bakratounis; Mikha'il, bishop of Bagrevand; Jeremiah, bishop of Apahounis; Solomon, bishop of Mrina; Gabriel, bishop of Arzen; Khrou, the doctor (learned man) of Armenia; David, bishop of Sophrin; Salmon, archimandrite of the Monastery of Makenis; Raphael, the archimandrite; Simon, the doctor; Iwannis, the chorepiscopus; Gregory, bishop of Taron; Sahak, the chorepiscopus of Matines; and Sergis, bishop of the Sanasyane. Along with these bishops were presbyters and monks whose names we found no need to put down. Among them was also the illustrious, the son of the free, our compassionate brother Hakim, son of Abu Hakim.

¹⁷⁶³ Acts 13:34. Check Psalm 16:11 which says, "You will not let your Holy One see decay."

¹⁷⁶⁴ Philippians 3:21.

¹⁷⁶⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Abbelloos and Lamy, 1 (Lovain, 1872), 299-305.

We discussed the doctrinal document you sent us, and found that it contained genuine faith no different from the faith of the holy Apostles and the Orthodox fathers. Therefore, we accepted the form of the faith contained in your document addressed to us. In turn, you requested a copy of our faith, and we have appended it below:

We believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one nature of the Godhead, and three *qnume* (hypostases, persons). The Father is the head and the cause of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: by birth with respect to the Son, and by procession with respect to the Holy Spirit. We do not say that the Holy Trinity is one person and one hypostasis; it is one nature, one dominion, one will and one natural act of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We further believe that the Word, the only Son of God, dwelt in the womb of the immaculate and holy Virgin and became completely man. He took from us body, soul and mind without being changed in what he was, as he said, "I the Lord do not change,"¹⁷⁶⁶ but was united without division or change. Because he is God the Word, and he is in the bosom of God, he was conceived in the womb of the Virgin and was born of her without breaking the seal of her virginity. Thus, she is called the Mother of God because the one who was born of her is true God. He was united hypostatically with our body and became incarnated. He is one in the divinity and the humanity: one Son, one Lord, one *qnumo* (hypostasis), one Christ, one nature of the incarnate Word of God. We confess that he is the Word of God who did miracles as God, and suffered the human things as a man. Because he is perfect God and perfect man, and the incarnate Word of God, he took everything that belongs to us, save sin. As God, he made miracles, and like us, he grew in stature.¹⁷⁶⁷ He is perfect in his divinity, and fulfilled the redemption as God. He hungered and thirsted like a man, but he has quenched all those who thirst. He tired from walking. He slept like a man, but like God, who protects Israel with a watchful eye, he did not slumber.¹⁷⁶⁸ He suffered and died in the body, which is susceptible to death, but being God, he was beyond passion. On the third day, he rose from the dead by his body, which he took from the Virgin, but without being subject to corruption or death. He ascended to heaven and sat on the right hand of his father. And he will come with the same body to judge the quick and the dead, he whose kingdom has no end.

This is the faith, which we received from the Lord, the Apostles and the fathers. It is the faith handed down to us by the three Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople and Ephesus.

The anathemas drawn up by these Councils

1 Who does not confess that the consubstantial Holy Trinity is one nature, one Godhead, three *qnume* (hypostases) and three adored persons, and they are equal and perfect, let him be anathema.

2 Who does not confess that the Word of God has been truly incarnated from the Holy Virgin, that he took from her a created and finite, that is, limited body, or in other words, he took a body, soul and mind; but who say that Christ was manifested in an imaginary and a not real form, let him be anathema.

3 Who says that the Word of God did not take a body subject to death, sin and corruption, but took a body like the body of Adam before the fall, and by grace was not subject to sin and corruption, let him be anathema.

4 Who does not confess one nature of the divinity and the humanity, that is of the incarnated Christ who is a union of the divinity and the humanity, in an incomprehensible and ineffable manner, without the mixture or division or confusion of the two (natures), let him be anathema.

5 Who does not confess that Christ is one that is God and man, but divides him saying that God is one thing and man is another thing, let him be anathema.

6 Who does not say that the body of Christ is subject to corruption and not glorified since he was in the womb until the resurrection, contrary to what the prophets, the Apostles, and the father doctors say, that he became incorruptible, glorified and perfect after the Resurrection, let him be anathema.

¹⁷⁶⁶ Malachi 3:6.

¹⁷⁶⁷ Cf. Luke 2:52.

¹⁷⁶⁸ Psalm 121:4.

7 Who does not confess that the personal body of Christ is impassible and subject to death by its nature, but say that it is passible and subject to death by virtue of the divine nature, let him be anathema.

8 Who does not confess that Christ suffered in the body the human passions, save sin, but says that he suffered in his divinity, or says that his body did not take a part in the human passions, and that the corruptible body endured these passions, let him be anathema.

9 Who does not believe that Christ endured sufferings in an incorruptible manner, or attributes corruption to the passions, and does not say same as the prophets, Apostles, and the Orthodox fathers said, let him be anathema.

10 We anathematize all heresies and what is written about them by so and so, and we accept the testimonies of the holy fathers.

Brothers, we have written down this to confirm and preserve the union between both of us, especially, you who represent all of Syria, its bishops, chorepiscopi, and presbyters whose name are fixed above. We who represent all of Armenia have written this down before the Living and Quickening God and his holy angels, in order to be a seal and a confirmation of the faith that is the union between you and us until the end of the world. Having been convinced of all the deliberations, we have endorsed and stamped our seals as a manifestation of the truth. *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Twenty-One: On the death of Leo, king of the Romans; on Hisham, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); on Iyawannis (John), catholicos of the Armenians, and Athanasius (III), patriarch of Antioch and Alexander, patriarch of Alexandria; and on an audacious person named Bashir.

In the year 1038 of the Greeks (A.D. 737), some Egyptians rebelled against the Tayoye (Arab) governor. A large group of Tayoye (Arabs) attacked the rebels and killed a great number of them. Those who escaped the massacre, fled on ships through the Red Sea.

In the year 1039 of the Greeks (A.D. 738), Maslama, commanding a huge army, invaded the county of the Turks. The war lasted for forty days. When the Tayoye (Arabs) realized that they could not win against the Turks, they left their equipment behind and fled.¹⁷⁶⁹

In this period, the Turks turned their attention outside their own country. In the year 1042 of the Greeks (A.D. 731), they invaded Ardogin (Azarbayjan) under Tayoye (Arab) control, and occupied several villages and cities. Maslama, captain of the Tayoye (Arab) host, met them with a huge army and thousands fell on both sides. The Turks stopped seizing the rest of the cities under (Tayoye) Arab control in which they dwelt, but they established a foothold in the cities, which they captured. The Tayoye (Arabs) signed peace with the Turks.¹⁷⁷⁰

The Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) penetrated the Roman districts under the command of Mu'awiya, son of Abd al-Malik. They attacked the city of Gangra, whose inhabitants fled before the Tayoye (Arab) army, but the Tayoye (Arabs) tore down its walls and destroyed it. Then, they besieged the city of Nicaea, and after forty days of fighting, destroyed its walls. The Romans fled on ships as the Tayoye (Arabs) captured it and destroyed it.¹⁷⁷¹

In this year Hashim, the Tayoye (Arab) commander, ordered all Roman captives who had been seized by the Tayoye (Arabs) to be killed. He did this because he heard that Leo had killed the Tayoye (Arab) captives, but this was not true.¹⁷⁷² There was a controversy concerning Eustathius and his companions who had been martyred in Harran as to whether they were martyrs or not.¹⁷⁷³

¹⁷⁶⁹ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 156, and *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 159.

¹⁷⁷⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 110.

¹⁷⁷¹ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 157-158, mentions that Mu'awiya ibn Hisham entered the territory of the Romans.

¹⁷⁷² Bar Hebraeus, *Ibid.* 110.

¹⁷⁷³ See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 571, footnote 2. On p. 573, Theophanes says that Eustathius was son of Patrician Marianos.

In this year (733), Leo III married his son Constantine to the daughter of Khagan, king of the Khazars. Then, he placed the crown over his head and was proclaimed an (emperor).¹⁷⁷⁴

Mu'awiya, son of Hisham (the Umayyad caliph, 724-743), invaded the Roman country and captured Karsianon (Charsianos in Cappadocia).¹⁷⁷⁵

In the year 1053 of the Greeks (A.D. 741-742), Leo died after ruling twenty-four years, and his son Constantine succeeded him.¹⁷⁷⁶ (He is Constantine V Copronymus 741-775). Shortly afterwards, Artabasdu, his son-in-law, rebelled against him, and he went to Constantinople and sat down in the palace. Constantine, who was outside the city, fled and found refuge with the Anatolians who promised to help him. He came with them to Amorium of Phrygia, and wintered there. Then Artabasdu assembled an army and went to fight against him, but he was defeated and fled.¹⁷⁷⁷

In the year 1056 of the Greeks (A.D. 745, more correctly 743), Hisham, the Tayoye (Umayyad Arab) king (caliph) died after ruling for nineteen years. He was succeeded by Walid, the son of Yazid, (the son of Abd al-Malik).¹⁷⁷⁸

Walid ill-treated the family of Hisham and plundered their palaces. He had Abbas, son of Walid, dominate the kingdom. When Abbas saw that the wealth of the state was as huge as an ocean, he desired to usurp the kingdom. He charged Walid with every despicable conduct with the intention of attracting the Arab notables towards him, but the king (caliph) trusted him as himself. When Walid was in the desert, Abbas tried to rule himself. However, the Tayoye (Arabs) rejected him because he was the son of a slave girl, while they hated Walid for drinking wine and for doing other wicked things. Therefore, they proclaimed his brother Yazid as king (caliph) in Damascus. He sent an army and they overtook Walid, son of Yazid, while he was unaware of their coming in the desert. They cut off his head, fixed it on a spear, and they hung up beside it a wine jug.¹⁷⁷⁹

Afterwards, many including members of the ruling family rose up intending to control the kingdom. This resulted in constant conflict and warfare, and each one had with him troops who were his followers. In the West rose up Yazid, who was the source of all evil. Another one was Sakasi, and still another one was Sulayman ibn Hashim. In the Jazira rose up Bistam, who was of the Yahsiyya (sic) heresy.¹⁷⁸⁰ In Mosul was Sa'id ibn Hudhayl, the chief of another heresy (sect) called the Murji'a.¹⁷⁸¹ They were in the region of the Persians, Abd Allah ibn Umar, the king, occupied Wasit, Marwan was in Armenia, Ibn Sargi in Khurasan, and Abu Hudhayl was in Africa.

While this confusion increased among the Tayoye (Arabs), their affairs became also confused, and chaos was all over the regions. Five months after he began to reign, Yazid was inflicted with an ulcer in his body and died.¹⁷⁸² He was succeeded by Ibrahim his brother.¹⁷⁸³ He was a pleasant man to meet and his natural disposition was good. He was prized for his many charities. A few days later, he died (744).¹⁷⁸⁴

In the year 1048 of the Greeks (A.D. 737), a certain man whose name was Bashir from Pergamum, a Roman by race who in appearance looked like a Hagerite (Arab). He went to a Roman person in Harran and told him of a trick which he was about to play. He asked the man to go and slander him to Sulayman, son of Hisham, and tell him that he was Tiberius, son of Constantine, who was thought to have been dead for

¹⁷⁷⁴Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 110, and Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 139.

¹⁷⁷⁵*The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 567.

¹⁷⁷⁶*The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 159

¹⁷⁷⁷Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 147-148.

¹⁷⁷⁸See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 111.

¹⁷⁷⁹Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 111.

¹⁷⁸⁰Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 111 does not mention this heresy.

¹⁷⁸¹The Murji'a is a sect of Islam, which appeared in the Umayyad period. They held that a believing Muslim who commits a sin and does not declare it should not be considered an infidel, but his judgment should be suspended for the time being. See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 247.

¹⁷⁸²Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 111, says that two months after he began to reign, an ulcer broke out in Yazid's body and he died.

¹⁷⁸³*The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 580.

¹⁷⁸⁴According to Bar Hebraeus, *Ibid.* 111, he reigned for two months.

some time.¹⁷⁸⁵ When Sulayman heard the story, he believed the man whose name was Theopitus. He thought that he had in hand something significant. He swore to Theopitus to reward him graciously if he delivered the fake Tiberius to him. When he delivered the charlatan to him, Tiberius first began to deny he was Tiberius, having noticed that Sulayman took the subject seriously. Finally, however, he said, "I am he." Sulayman wrote to his father Hisham informing him about this Tiberius. When Hisham heard this, he wanted to magnify his son to the Tayoye (Arabs), for the son of the king of the Romans had fallen into his hands. He commanded (his servants) to array the man in purple, and had him brought to him. The fake Tiberius pretended to be the Christ. When he entered Edessa, he had the audacity to go to the altar and take by hand the offering from the Table of Life, according to the custom of the kings of the Romans. Then he went through the rest of the cities. When he reached Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) he stirred up great trouble among the Romans, that even Leo himself was afraid of him. However, those who knew him said that he had become a heathen. He called upon the Jews to bring up his ancestors to him by sorcery, and he commanded the chief sorcerer to tell him what his end would be.¹⁷⁸⁶

On a Sunday night of November 1040 of the Greeks (A.D. 729), a severe earthquake took place, and plague broke out. In the year 1050 of the Greeks (A.D. 739), an earthquake took place in Constantinople and most of it collapsed.¹⁷⁸⁷ In March of this year, so much rain fell that it was said that floodgates of heaven opened day and night. The waters gathered around Edessa, and its falls fell down so that the eastern gates were opened by the force of the flood, and the city was about to perish.

One year after union was made between the Syrians and the Armenians, Iyawannis (John Ozdentze), catholicos of the Armenians passed away in the year 1038 of the Greeks (A.D. 727). In that year also died Alexander, patriarch of Alexandria, who was succeeded by Cosmas, who lived a short period and then departed this life. In the year 1037 of the Greeks (A.D. 728), Denha, the catholicos of Takrit, died. In this year also died Mor Athanasius (III), the patriarch of Antioch. The bishops set up Iyawannis (John), bishop of Hawran, from the Monastery of Eusebona as a patriarch. Athanasius, bishop of Miyafarqat, and the rest of bishops attended the election of the patriarch.

When the bishops assembled to elect a patriarch, they were plagued with disagreement. Finally, they decided to choose the names of three candidate bishops and cast a lot for them. They trusted the old Athanasius Sandeloio (al-Na'aal, cobbler), bishop of Miyafarqat, to take charge of the balloting due to his old age, and because they thought that he was of good intentions. Athanasius wrote down the names of three candidate bishops in three ballots and placed them on the altar. In fact, he did not write down three names on three ballots as the bishops believed, but the name of Iyawannis only on all three of them. The bishops, who trusted Athanasius Sandeloio did not object, and agreed to have the three ballots placed at the holy altar. A person who had no knowledge of the whole matter was called to draw a ballot, and the name of the bishop written in it was to be chosen as patriarch. Therefore, when the name of Iyawannis, which had been written by Athanasius on the three ballots was drawn, all the bishops accepted him as the winner. But Athanasius Sandeloio objected, knowing that it was a trick (played by him), or perhaps it was a coincidence. Again, the bishops wrote down the names of three candidates on three new ballots and placed them on the altar. Another person was called to draw the ballot, and he pulled the same name of Iyawannis. The balloting was repeated three times and each time the name of Iyawannis was drawn.¹⁷⁸⁸ The bishops were astonished and said that this was the finger of God. Patriarch Dionysius (Tell Mahre), however, said that this was not the stratagem of Athanasius Sandeloio, but the work of the divine Providence that the same bishop won three times. He went on to say that, God does not allow tricks to act in the case of divine mysteries. Indeed, no sparrow falls into the trap without his permission.¹⁷⁸⁹ *Here ends the narrative about kings.*

¹⁷⁸⁵ According to Theophanes, Bashir claimed to be Tiberius, son of Justinian. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 570.

¹⁷⁸⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 110, relates this story with some divergence, so also does Theophanes briefly. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 570.

¹⁷⁸⁷ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 572.

¹⁷⁸⁸ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 159, and *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 176 which is very brief on this subject.

¹⁷⁸⁹ Matthew 10:29, and Luke 12:6.

Chapter Twenty-Two: On the period of Constantine, son of Leo, when the Tayoye (Arab) kingdom was divided; and on the setting up of a Chalcedonian Patriarch in Syria by order of the king (caliph) of the Arabs, and the conflict between the Orthodox bishops and the patriarch

After the death of Yazid and his brother Ibrahim, many sought power in order to rule the Tayoye (Arab) kingdom. Marwan¹⁷⁹⁰ went forth from Armenia and engaged in battle with Sulayman on the banks of the Euphrates River, killing about 12,000 of those known as *zokonoys* (subordinates, lackeys), and Sulayman fled to Rasafa.¹⁷⁹¹ Marwan came to Damascus and reigned there.¹⁷⁹² He carried off the royal treasures known as Dhu al-Cari' (sic), which formed loads for three thousand camels. He came to Harran, but the westerners complained against him because he did not make his dwelling with them.¹⁷⁹³

Marwan was passionately fond of hoarding gold. He severely oppressed the people, while his troops inflicted them with many wicked things. They beat them, plundered their possessions and violated their women before their husbands. He came to Emessa (Homs) and took it after four months of siege.¹⁷⁹⁴ He destroyed its wall and pounded the sculptures into dust with hammers. He also destroyed the wall of Ba'lbak.¹⁷⁹⁵ Then he came down to the country of Athor, known as Nineveh, and to the country of Parthia, that is to say, Asphahan.

Then, Abd Allah ibn Ali¹⁷⁹⁶ and a mighty army of Khurasan pitched their camp on the River of Athor (the Zab River in Iraq). Marwan, puffed up by arrogance, came and engaged in battle with Abd Allah ibn Ali (Abu al-Abbas), and Marwan was defeated.¹⁷⁹⁷ After he was defeated, Marwan and his followers disappeared and could not be found. In fact, Marwan fled to Busir in upper Egypt where he was killed, and his head and insignia were sent to Abu al-Abbas (the first Abbasid caliph).¹⁷⁹⁸ The Romans began to plunder his camp. It is said that he was despoiled of seven hundred camel loads of gold and silver money. He, his son, and his son-in-law came to Harran in disgrace, which he had made the center of his state.

At this time there went from Constantinople Ashkirash, captain of the Armenian host, he attacked Melitene, and looted the entire country. Most of the Romans and the Armenians who were living there entered into the country of the Romans. Constantine¹⁷⁹⁹ went to Constantinople and blinded the eyes of Artabasdu the tyrant, and succeeded in administering the state.¹⁸⁰⁰ He had a son, Leo, from the daughter of King Khagan.¹⁸⁰¹ Therefore, peace prevailed in the entire Roman territory because the Arabs were occupied in fighting each other.

After Marwan returned to Harran, Patriarch Iyawannis prepared fifty camels loaded with great gifts, and went to see him. Marwan welcomed him with alacrity and provided him with a decree empowering him to administer all church affairs. However, the bishops, instead of rejoicing, were filled with envy, anger and fear. They began to set traps to snare the patriarch. Since the See of Tur Abdin was then vacant, the men of

¹⁷⁹⁰ He is Marwan II (744-750), the last Umayyad caliph. He is nicknamed Marwan al-Himar (the ass) for his perseverance in war. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 111, says that he was nicknamed Himar al-Jazira (the wild ass of the Jazira), because he loved the flower of the crocus, which is called 'flower of the ass.'

¹⁷⁹¹ Theophanes sets the number at 20,000, and Sulayman fled and found refuge in Damascus. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 580.

¹⁷⁹² *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 174-176, and *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 160.

¹⁷⁹³ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 580.

¹⁷⁹⁴ Theophanes says that at Emesa, Marwan impaled 12,000 Arabs of the Kalbite tribe. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 583, and footnote 3.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Heliopolis See Theophanes, *Ibid.* 584.

¹⁷⁹⁶ Abu al-Abbas, a descendant of Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet of Islam.

¹⁷⁹⁷ According to *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 179.

¹⁷⁹⁸ See Abu al-Hasan al-Mas'udi, *Muru' al-Dhahab was Ma'adin al-Jawhar*, III, ed. Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Hamid, (Cairo, 1938), 163 and Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 285.

¹⁷⁹⁹ Constantine V Copronymus 741-775.

¹⁸⁰⁰ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 148. In his *History of the Byzantine Empire*, 1, 260, Vasiliev says that Constantine severely punished Artavodus (Artabasdu) but does not mention blinding him.

¹⁸⁰¹ He is Leo IV Chazar that is the Khazar, 775-780.

the district nominated a certain Dionysius, a protégé of Athanasius Sandeloio to be the bishop of Tur Abdin. Others, acting like mad dogs and pressured by Sandeloio, wanted him for this position. However, David, bishop of Dara, and Sarguna, bishop of Mardin, did not want this Dionysius. David said, "I want Dionysius to be (ordained a bishop) for Harran, even if all the people of the earth are with Sandeloio." However, the bishops disagreed, and when the patriarch investigated the matter, the bishops kept silent. He realized that the reason for their objection was sheer envy. Therefore, he summoned Dionysius in order to ordain him as bishop.¹⁸⁰²

Meanwhile, Quriqa (Quryaqos, Cyriacus), bishop of Sijistan, had a wicked teacher called Bar Salta from Rish 'Ayna. Both of these men wrote down a spurious book entitled *The Revelation of Enoch* in which they inserted passages pointing to Marwan and his son after him. The book was presented to Marwan by one of his sorcerers, and upon reading it, he felt happy like a child. He asked Quriqa to interpret it for him, and he interpreted it according to the desire of the king (amir). Because of his extreme joy, Marwan asked Quriqa to put his requests to him. Quriqa said, "I am the bishop of Sijistan, and since your enemies in it are many, you may, if you desire, transfer me to Tur Abdin because the position of its bishop is vacant. Moreover, I want to be near to you." Marwan sent a message to the patriarch saying, "Do not ordain a bishop for Tur Abdin until you receive my order." Thus, this door was open for the wolves. Quriqa wanted to be bishop of Tur Abdin, Abai, bishop of Arzen also wanted the same position, and still Gabriel and many other bishops wanted to be bishops of Tur Abdin. Thus, the eastern bishops trampled on the truth in order to split the church. Since they realized that they had no legal cause to lean on, they were afraid that the patriarch might anathematize them. Indeed, the church canons instituted that, "No bishop of a diocese anywhere, should be ordained without the approval of the metropolitan of that diocese." Therefore, the patriarch became angry because they were ordained without the knowledge of their metropolitan, Paul, but Quriqa was agitating in order to seize another see. In the meantime, the monks of St. Matthew's Monastery complained against the patriarch accusing him, unjustly, that he was the one who ordained them. When the subject was discussed in a council which assembled at Muraiba near Rish 'Ayna, the witnesses of St. Matthew's Monastery were condemned together with Bacchus, bishop of Nineveh, who himself had ordained them without the authorization of the metropolitan. In addition, Stephen was condemned who had been ordained by the governor's authority. Members of the council pledged to accept what was agreed upon by the Patriarch Iyawannis, by Athanasius, bishop of Miyafarqat, by David, bishop of Dara, by Timothy, bishop of Edessa, and the rest of the eastern and western bishops who were thirty in number. As to the case of Quriqa, bishop of Sijistan, it was overlooked for fear of the governor at that time. The patriarch declared in public the condemnation of Quriqa and those who participated with him, with the knowledge that many of the people of the district did not support him. As he was acting rashly and haphazardly, the tyrant who helped him died, and Quriqa sought refuge with Athanasius, bishop of Miyafarqat, who was his enemy in the past.

Severus, bishop of Amid from the Monastery of Zuqnin, grew old and his body became fragile and his sight dimmed. Some bishops suggested that he should retreat to the solitude of his monastery. Others objected to them. Abai, bishop of Arzen whose congregation had abandoned him, bribed the son of Marwan to write to the patriarch to appoint him a bishop for Tur Abdin, but the congregation of Qartmin (the Monastery of Mor Gabriel) tried in every way to have him appointed for Amid. The patriarch did appoint him for Amid, but did not appoint for Tur Abdin either Gabriel or Quriqa. When Dionysius saw this, he departed without being ordained. Prior to this time, however, the patriarch had divided the See of Amid into two dioceses and gave five districts to Isaiah, bishop of Ashpharin, with the rest to be administered by Severus. The people of Amid were disturbed and said, "We will not allow our district to be split, but we prefer to have one bishop, whether Severus, Abai or anyone else. Consequently, they agreed to have one bishop. Since Isaiah was a pupil of Athanasius Sandeloio, he became suspicious of the patriarch, and because of his influence, he and some bishops separated themselves from the patriarch. Thus, began the

¹⁸⁰² See Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 1, 307-311 translated by Abbeloos and Lamy.

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problems of Sandeloio with Patriarch Iyawannis. The Patriarch became hard pressed and did not know to whom he should listen, to the king (caliph), the bishops or the people. He became tossed by the wind not because of the faith but because of the love of leadership. Thinking that he had become forlorn from fear of God that prevailed in the church, Athanasius Sandeloio turned to more wickedness. He was more concerned with disturbance, altercation and sordid complaints against the patriarch. In the meantime, the patriarch himself was in conflict with Athanasius (Sandeloio).

In the year 1056 of the Greeks (A.D. 745), Walid, king (caliph) of the Arabs, ordered that the tongue of the patriarch whom the Chalcedonians had set up in Syria be cut off, and banished to Yaman (Arabia Felix). The reason was that the metropolitan publicly reproved the impiety of the Tayoye (Arabs).¹⁸⁰³

In December of this year, severe freezing took place and the great rivers froze up so that they could be crossed over. The fish heaped up like mounds and died on the shores. Because of scarce rain, severe famine took place, and plague broke out. The farmers and landowners sought work just for bread to fill their stomachs, and could not find one to employ them. Constant earthquakes took place here and there, even in the desert of the Arabs; the mountains drew close to each other. In the Yaman, the number of monkeys increased so much that they forced the people to abandon their homes. They even devoured some of them.

In June of that year, a sign appeared in the sky in the form of three pillars of fire. It reappeared in September. In the following year, there appeared to the north of sky something like a half moon. It moved slowly to the south, then returned to the north, and fell down. In middle of the month of March of the same year, the sky was filled with something like fine dense dust, which covered all quarters. In the ninth hour, pitch darkness occurred which covered the rays of the sun. At the end of January, scattered comets were seen in the sky, and from every direction, they intersected each other vehemently as if they were engaged in a fight. Amidst them was seen at night in the center of the sky a colossal pillar of fire. In addition, a huge comet was seen near the Milky Way that looked like a moon and remained for four days. Many believed that these signs symbolized wars, bloodshed, and the chastisement of people. Actually, these chastisements began, first of which was the plague which broke out everywhere, especially in the Jazira where five thousand souls were its victims. In the west, the victims were countless. In the region of Busra, twenty thousand perished every day. Moreover, famine worsened and villages became desolate. Grain owners mixed animal dung with the seeds of grapes, ate it and made bread out of it. They ground acorn and made bread out of it. They even chewed the hide of goats and sheep. Yet despite this mighty wrath, people did not repent. Indeed, the distress was not removed until they repented. Even Marwan, who did not believe in God, repented, and circulated a decree all over the Tayoye (Arab) countries asking them to repent.

Meanwhile, an earthquake occurred in Damascus for several days and shook the city like tree leaves. Among its buildings was a fortress which had been built by al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (al-Thaqafi of al-Ta'if in Hijaz), who spent a great deal of money in building it. It was destroyed and overturned from its foundation as more than eighty souls perished inside it. A great number of the citizens of Damascus perished. Furthermore, thousands of people perished in the Ghotā (the orchards of Damasus) and Darayya. The cities of Busra, Yawa (Nawa), Dar'a Ba'lbak and Marj Uyun were destroyed, and the water spring of the latter turned into blood. Finally, the waters receded when the citizens of these cities repented and offered constant supplications.

On the sea, an extraordinary storm took place where the waves appeared as if they were rising to heaven like water boiling in a cauldron, and from them emanated raging and doleful voices. The waters surged beyond their usual limits and destroyed many coastal villages and cities. In the region of Balqa', that is Moab, a fortress built on the sea shore and inhabited by Tayoye (Arabs) from Yaman, was uprooted from its foundation and thrown three miles away.

The earthquake also destroyed the city of Tiberias except for one house, which belonged to a man named Isa. It also destroyed thirty synagogues of the Jews. Many wondrous things took place. Marvelous

¹⁸⁰³ Theophanes says that it was the metropolitan of Damascus whose tongue Walid ordered to be cut off. His account is too lengthy compared to the few words of Michael Rabo. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 577-578.

public baths, which had been built by Solomon, son of David, tumbled down. They housed a fountain with laxative water. It had been adorned with wondrous artistic images, and provided with means of rest for those who sought healing. On the spot, there were earthen jars arranged in an artful order, and on each of them was inscribed how many drinks should be taken in order to purge the belly. Each patient selected the jar according to the quantity he needed. All of these magnificent things were destroyed.

A village near the Mountain of Tabor was uprooted with its buildings and houses and cast away a distance of four miles, yet not one stone of its building fell off. No human being or animal, not even one rooster perished. The water fountain near Jericho was pushed away from its location for a distance of six miles.

The city of Mabug (Manbij) was destroyed during the celebration of the Eucharist. Many great churches and many city walls fell down, and the victims thereof were countless.

In Constantinople, the statues of emperors and a great number of buildings fell down. The same thing happened in Nicaea and other cities.

In this period, their Patriarch (the Chalcedonian) Constantine, evicted Germanus from the church and ordained Anastasius.

In this time (A.D. 745), Marwan, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) ordered the Chalcedonians, and they ordained Theophilact Ibn Qanbara as their patriarch. Theophilact was from Harran and the caliph's goldsmith.¹⁸⁰⁴ He obtained from the caliph an order and troops to persecute the Maronites. When he arrived at the Monastery of Marun, he harassed its monks to accept the doctrine of Maximus (two wills in Christ) and desist from reciting the Trisagion with the phrase *You who was crucified for us*. Tormented by affliction, the monks promised Theophilact that on the next day they would submit to his order. Now, there was an old monk in the company of Theophilact whom he loved. This monk entered the church of the Monastery (of Marun), and striking the altar with his fist, he cried, "Unclean altar, tomorrow you will become holy." At that moment, he was stricken by divine justice and became possessed by a demon. He remained tormented all night long before he finally died. Ibn Qanbara became extremely grieved over the death of the monk and was seized with fear. He wanted to carry the body and leave, but the monks would not let him do this fearing that he would accuse them of killing him. Therefore, he left the body for the monks of the monastery to bury and left without accomplishing his purpose. The Maronites remained, as they are today, consecrating for themselves a patriarch and bishops from their monastery. They are distinguished from the followers of Maximus for their belief in one will in Christ and for reciting the Trisagion with the phrase *You who was crucified for us*. However, they accept the Council of Chalcedon.¹⁸⁰⁵

Then, Ibn Qanbara came to Mabug (Manbij) and tried to force the Chalcedonians in that city to accept the doctrine of two wills in Christ and desist from reciting the phrase, *You who was crucified for us*. He betrayed them to Marwan who fined them 4,000 dinars, and the trouble that had happened among them in Aleppo happened to them in this city, too. Finally, Andrew, the Maronite, came, obtained an order from the Caliph (Marwan), and built a church for the Maronites in Mabug (Manbij). The Maronites became separate from the followers of Maximus, and many disgusting and abominable things happened between the two groups.¹⁸⁰⁶

Chapter Twenty-Three: Contains the letters exchanged between Patriarch Iyawannis and Athanasius Sandeloio and the rest of the bishops concerning the events of this period

Having cast aside the fear of God, Athanasius Sandeloio resorted to the Caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs), Marwan. He slandered the Patriarch (Iyawannis) for collecting 150,000 dinars from Takrit and the East, and that he did not ordain bishops unless he charged them money. He also accused him of indulging in sexual immoralities and magic, things that even the sorcerers avoided discussing, let alone practicing. He even spread the report about him that he was living with a woman wearing the raiment of a nun, and

¹⁸⁰⁴ Theophanes calls him Theophylaktos, a priest of Edessa. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 583.

¹⁸⁰⁵ See Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History*, 89 and 114-115.

¹⁸⁰⁶ Matti Moosa, *The Maronites in History*, 114-117.

practicing fornication with other women, too. The patriarch assembled a council in Harran and summoned Athanasius three times through David, bishop of Dara, to attend, but he declined. When he refused to attend, the patriarch anathematized him. In addition, the Bishops David, Sarguna, bishop of Mardin, and Gabriel anathematized him. Along with him was anathematized Quriqa (Cyriacus). The schismatic bishops were Athanasius Sandeloio, bishop of Miyafarqat; Bacchus, bishop of Nineveh; Athanasius, bishop of Rish 'Ayna; Quriqa; Isaiah and Yuhanon (John). The rest of the bishops in the East and the West were loyal to the patriarch who suffered great hardships with avid courage. He was cast into prison and beaten. He was fined twelve thousand dinars to be paid to the tyrant caliph, but did not slacken in his adherence to justice. Still, Athanasius Sandeloio would not desist from doing harm to the patriarch. In fact, he accompanied Marwan to the East in order to launch more charges against the patriarch, but the Lord stopped him as he was looted on the way and returned discomfited and barefooted. In him was fulfilled the prophecy of Micaiah son of Imlah who said to King Ahab, "If you ever returned in peace, then the Lord has not spoken through me."¹⁸⁰⁷ Likewise, the Lord took revenge against the caliph who was defeated and fled in disgrace.

When patriarch Iyawannis heard what happened to the caliph and to Sandeloio, he left his monastery without the caliph's command. For the caliph had forbidden him to leave Harran until he had sent two bishops to Sandeloio to negotiate with him, and receive the said amount of money. Therefore, the patriarch kept his peace waiting for things to improve, but the Lord chastised his adversaries. Gabriel, whom Quriqa ordained as bishop for Sijistan outwardly and for Tur Abdin inwardly, became a stumbling block for him. However, although Quriqa initiated this trouble, the monks of St. Matthew's Monastery were the ones who provoked him tremendously. Indeed, they were accustomed to create trouble because of the bishops. In addition, Severus Bar Mashqa created similar trouble through Sergius of Zuqnin, who was ordained a bishop for Ascopolis with the support of the bishops of Mosul who frequently antagonized each other because of the metropolitan. In fact, they wanted this one to be for Takrit and another one a bishop for Nineveh, as has been previously said.¹⁸⁰⁸

The monks of the St. Matthew's Monastery were central in this conflict. In fact, no patriarch was set up for whom they did not create conflict until the time of Patriarch Julian the Roman, who resisted them when they opposed him, and ejected them from their sees and ordained other bishops in their stead. Julian summoned Bishop Denha of Takrit by force and had him dwell in the tower of the monastery. In his severe (disciplinary actions), he went in (the tower) and held Denha by the throat. He dragged him to the ground and stepped on his neck by his foot saying, "You are called Denha (brightness), but actually, you are darkness for rebelling against me." He left him in detention for life, but when Iliyya (Elijah) became patriarch, he restored him to his see. However, the conflict on account of the metropolitan had ended since the time of Patriarch Julian. No one dared demand other than the See of Takrit, which had been regulated by the Patriarch Athanasius Gamolo.

At this time, Athanasius Sandeloio stirred up trouble because of Isaiah. As the bishops' agitation intensified, the Patriarch Iyawannis kept silent in the isolation of his monastery, but the bishops spread the rumor that he did not want peace. Therefore, a council of the bishops of the Jazira assembled in the village of Tarmana in the district of Cyrus, in the year 1063 of the Greeks (A.D. 752), and made peace between Patriarch Iyawannis and Athanasius Sandeloio. Sandeloio threw himself at the feet of the patriarch weeping and asking forgiveness, but no sooner had Sandeloio reconciled with the patriarch than he reverted to his hypocrisy. He sought refuge with Abd Allah, brother of the caliph (Marwan). He bribed him and instigated him against the patriarch until he obtained from him a *systaticon* (letter of commendation) as a metropolitan without the endorsement of the patriarch and the bishops. Afterwards, the caliph commanded a council to assemble in Tella where the bishops were forced to proclaim Sandeloio a metropolitan. Upon learning of Sandeloio's wickedness, the believers separated themselves from the bishops who endorsed him and considered them heretics. Meanwhile, the congregation of David, bishop of Dara, forced him to

¹⁸⁰⁷ 1 Kings 22:28.

¹⁸⁰⁸ Cf. Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Abbeloos and Lamy, 311-315.

anathematize in writing with his signature, what happened in Tella. They also forced him to anathematize Sandeloio and those who supported him, and they did not accept him until he carried out their demands.

When the bishops saw that their dioceses had been split, they assembled and addressed a letter to the patriarch through Constantine, bishop of Samosata, informing him of what happened in Tella, and that they confirmed him in his Patriarchal See. When the blessed patriarch learned of what had happened, and witnessed that the dignity of the patriarchate was protected, he, because of old age, desired not to disturb the peace of the church, but accepted the appeal of the bishops. He forgave them and issued a proclamation of peace to be read in every quarter.

The Patriarch's Proclamation

To the venerable, holy brothers and colleagues; David, bishop of Dara; Yuhanon, bishop of Callinicus; Tamriqa (Theomariqa), bishop of Harran; Sarguna, bishop of Mardin; Timothy, bishop of Edessa; Stephen, bishop of Cercesium; Severus, bishop of Melitene; Athanasius, (bishop of Amid); Theodotus, (bishop of Arzen); Stephen, bishop of Tella; Abraham, bishop of the Qubi Monastery; and Yuhanon, bishop of the Jazira; who are assembled in the city of Tella together with the old and venerable Athanasius; Iyawannis the weak and patriarch by the mercy of God, to you who have in the Lord the law of love and peace, I constantly ask for your holy prayers.

My soul has greatly rejoiced, O wise in God and in divine matters, and by the news of peace, love and tranquility that were carried by our dear son, mediator and harbinger of peace, the Bishop Stephen, who has trusted and chose to be your representative to us. He has related to us your goals that are conducive to the peace of the church and ridding of hatred and enmity planted by Satan amongst us. This happened while we said no word lest, as human beings, our speech might be maliciously interpreted. Stephen also informed us of what you have achieved with the spirit of brotherhood and love for the cause of the peace of the church, and for annihilating conflicts and disturbances. Despite that I am far away from you, I did protect my position and my see. You have shown great concern for honoring my old age as good sons with good will who, in turn, anticipate to be honored by their successors. Because Athanasius does no more depend on the caliph, but submitted himself to your desire and longing for peace, and because you have cast aside the former disturbing matters that you may not suffer by remembering them, or you might revert to them, I have also done the same. I have put before my eyes my Lord Christ and remembered his love for humankind. I have overlooked matters not in the least lesser than what you have done, left everything and strengthened my spirit, and I, all of me, became one. As you chose the blessed, friendly affection established amongst you, I, by the grace of God, have become an instrument of peace and love as I had learned, and will remain so until the last breath, not only in regard to Mor Athanos, Athanasius and Isaiah, but to every person great or small. I do not harbor feeling of hatred or suffer for what happened. However, I have forgotten everything for the sake of Christ and his church, and consider it as if it had not happened at all, although the problems were many. If it were not for old age, I would have proceeded on my own will to meet those who are with you and who have antagonized me. I would have offered them the kiss of peace and pardoned them. Now I give pure peace to you and to all those with you who sought and will seek peace, but he who is the cause of dissension and suspicion will bear the judgment whoever he is. As to those (bishops) whom you have ordained, whether they were ordained for Amid, or in the case of Quriqa and Gabriel, and requested us to issue a decision in their behalf, I would like to have their matter left to a general council. I suggest this to avoid doubt that might be entertained by your brothers, the venerable bishops of the west, not because they do not want what you want or resolve, but just to avoid their doubts. Moreover, if this does not sound good to you, we do not want to force you lest we impede the reconciliation of the church of God. For this is the spiritual resoluteness that man disparages his own affairs in order to correct the affairs of others. I am well aware that my life is short. So, you should read what I have written to you with love in all your churches, and that all of you should raise thanks to God who turned our sorrow into

joy and broke down the middle wall of partition,¹⁸⁰⁹ and saddened the opponents who rejoiced to have us defeated. God, who has removed our distress and turned it into rejoicing, he himself will take care of his church and us. He will remove from it conflict and dissension by the prayer of the holy apostles who have laid down its foundations, and the prayers of the venerable fathers who suffered great tribulations for its sake, and magnified it by their learning, and particularly, by the prayer of the Mother of God, Mary. Amen.

The weakness of this letter is shown by the fact that the (Patriarch Mor Iyawannis) had become very old, and that for the intention of honoring the peace of the church, he condescended so much to the bishop, who deserved to be punished for offending the blessed (patriarch) and the holy church.

After receiving this letter, which contained peace, the bishops at Tella agreed to it and resolved in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, his Father and his Holy Spirit, the following:

We, bishops of the Jazira, who signed below next to our names, have assembled in the Church of St. Cosmas and Damian in the city of Tella in the year 1036 of the Greeks (A.D. 752), urged by God. We resolved forgiveness for everything that has some time ago happened, whether in the East or in the West. We have abrogated what is unlawful, whether it is the anathematization of our brothers the Bishops Athanasius and Athanas and their companions, or other matters that caused disturbances. We accomplished peace between the two sides according to the canons and the principles of the Apostles, and to the desire of our blessed patriarch. As we concurred by the power of the Holy Spirit, we decided that anyone who opposes this concord or attempts to invalidate it, whether he is a patriarch, a bishop or holds any other church office, is anathematized. We have written down this decision and agreed to declare that Mor Athanasius, bishop of Miyafarqat is the bishop of the Jazira. We have confirmed for him the metropolitan see as one of us, and agreed to proclaim his name, and he would proclaim the name of the patriarch which all of us proclaim.

Having met in (the Spirit of) God with our brothers the bishops in the city of Tella, and annulled everything which is unlawful, I, David, bishop of Dara, have agreed to what is written above, and fixed my signature. All the bishops did the same: Timothy, bishop of Edessa; Theomariqa, bishop of Harran; Yuhanon (John), bishop of Callinicus (al-Raqqqa); Stephen, bishop of Cercesium; Mor Abda, bishop of Armenia; a certain one representing Yuhanon (John), bishop of Sarug; Constantine, bishop of Samosata; Severus, bishop of Melitene; Athanasius, bishop of Amid; Stephen, bishop of Tella; Yuhanon (John), bishop of Rish Kipha; Theodotus, bishop of Arzen; Sarguna, bishop of Mardin; Abraham, bishop of the Qubi Monastery; Theodotus, bishop of the Senkelous Monastery; and Athanasius, by the grace of God, bishop of the Jazira.

At Tella, the decision was abrogated by the power of God and the mediation of our brothers, issued by me (David, bishop of Dara) concerning the brothers, the bishops, for different reasons, whether mentioned in this document or not, in agreement with what has been written above. Qura, bishop of Tur Abdin and Hisn Kipha; Isaiah, bishop of Aspharin; Athanasius, bishop of Rish 'Ayna; and Yuhanon (John), bishop of St. Matthew's Monastery also signed. Yuhanon, bishop of St. Matthew's Monastery further wrote: I have signed on behalf of myself and of the bishops Joseph, Yuhanon (John) and Zachariah who are from the Monastery of St. Matthew.

It seems that the bishops assembled at Tella were under pressure. In fact, they reestablished what they had demolished at Harran, where they were anathematized by Athanasius Sandeloio. Moreover, the bishops of St. Matthew's Monastery who were ejected at Muraiba were accepted, and without shame launched the same accusation, of which they were charged against the patriarch. In them were fulfilled the words of the apostle, "You who abhors idols, do you rob temples?"¹⁸¹⁰ Furthermore, Theodotus, bishop of Arzen, whom Athanasius (Sandeloio) accused of every kind of defilement, now began to praise him and call him the "Pillar of the Church" just because he took his side. In this sense, we conclude that his opposition of the patriarch was unfair. However, because of his passionate love of leadership, and that he was confirmed by the power of the Sultan, he showed some humility and surrendered the matter to the bishops.

¹⁸⁰⁹ Ephesians 2:14.

¹⁸¹⁰ Romans 2:22.

The bishops themselves decided to restore the deposed bishops to their positions. They also decided that the bishops, who were ordained instead of them and retreated to their monasteries, should retain their episcopal ranks as long as they live. Thus, Gabriel of Qartmin was ordered to go to Sijistan, or else be deposed. Meanwhile, they overlooked Qura. They laid down these canons as if they added wormwood to honey. Despite all this, however, the church enjoyed some respite. Afterwards, Sandeloio built a church in Miyafarqat and decorated it.

Chapter Twenty-Four: On the murder of Marwan and the unification of the kingdom of the Tayoye (Arabs); on Constantine, king (emperor) of the Romans and the council he convened in Constantinople known as the Seventh Council, which abolished the worship of Icons and anathematized Iyawannis (John), son of Mansur of Damascus, and George of Cyprus; the church of the Orthodox in which Satan, because of hatred, was wreaking havoc; and the conflict stirred up by Athanasius Sandeloio.

After his defeat on the road in disgrace, Marwan (nicknamed al-Himar, the last Umayyad caliph), was embarrassed to go to Harran. Therefore, he loaded his treasure on three thousand camels and went to Ascalon on the coast. Abd Allah ibn Ali pursued him, and he fled. Abd Allah sent an army to pursue him and they found him encamped on the Nile near Siwan (Aswan), on the frontier of the Nubians. A battle ensued between the two sides and Marwan was killed. His head was cut off and with his insignia were sent to the caliph, and Abd Allah (Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah the first Abbasid caliph, 750-754) became the sole ruler of the entire Tayoye (Arab) dominion.¹⁸¹¹

In the year 1063 of the Greeks (A.D. 752), the wife of Constantine V, who was daughter of Khagan, king of the Khazars, passed away and Constantine remained unmarried according to the custom of the Roman emperors. Three years later, some unscrupulous men tried to depose him. They pretended that they had affection towards him, and advised him to take a wife. However, since Constantine had no idea about their intentions, he said to them, "I will take your advice although I do not ignore the tradition of the Romans. I still say that the emperors should not be slaves to lust. So, if you think that my son should reign in my place, I will accept your counsel." These men sensed that he had discovered their intentions. Therefore, they advised him to have his son Leo, reign and he would continue to administer the state as long as he lived because he was prudent and hard on the enemies. Thus, he remarried.

In the year 1063 of the Greeks (A.D. 752), Constantine attacked Melitene and set up mangonels (engines of war) against its walls. Finally, he gave a pledge to the Tayoye (Arab, Muslims) living in it and left them on their own. He attacked Claudia and all the villages of Fourth Armenia and took their people captive.

In the year, 1066 of the Greeks (A.D. 755), and the year 135 of the Tayoye (Arabs, Islamic Calendar), Abd Allah Abu al-Abbas (al-Saffah) died after having reigned for four year and ten months. When Abd Allah ibn Ali heard of the death of Abu al-Abbas, he began to reign over the Persians and the Tayoye (Arabs). However, before his death, Abu al-Abbas designated Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) to be his successor. Meanwhile, Abu Ja'far was preparing to go to Makka to perform the pilgrimage. Thus, conflict ensued between him and Abd Allah ibn Ali. Ibn Ali began visiting the cities and acting as if he was the real caliph. Abu Ja'far sent against him an army commanded by Abu Muslim (al-Khurasani) and defeated him. Abu Muslim, however, rebelled against Abu Ja'far attempting to usurp the caliphate. In fact, he even attempted to abduct the caliph. Abu Ja'far sent against him a certain man named Isa who deceived him and led him to Abu Ja'far, and he had Abu Muslim killed. Under Abu Ja'far, the affairs of the state settled down and were unified.¹⁸¹²

¹⁸¹¹ According to Arab sources, Marwan was killed as he sought refuge from the Abbasids in a church at Busir in Egypt. His grave is seen to this day. See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 10th ed. (Macmillan: St. Martin's Press, 1970), 285. Theophanes says that the sons and relatives of Marwan made their way from Egypt to Spain, which is highly questionable. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 588.

¹⁸¹² *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 196; *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 160-164; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 113, rather summarizes

BOOK ELEVEN

While Abd Allah (al-Saffah), king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) was encamped in a region in the west, he heard a mighty tumult in the camp, and all the people were yelling and rushing to the graveyard. He, accompanied with few men, went to see what thing had happened with his own eyes. When they went, they saw eight men risen from their graves. Some were up to their breasts, others to their backs, and still others to their knees. Some of them wore beards dyed with henna according to Tayoye (Arab) custom. Many of those who went up to see what happened recognized them. However, when they talked to them, they did not utter a word. While the people were wondering (at the sight), the army commander ordered that they should be left alone and no one should approach them that day. He hoped to hear from them later about the truth of what had happened to them. It was then that everyone remained home that day with the exception of the men who were placed to guard them. On the next day, people came to see them but found them mute. Therefore, the army commander ordered that they be reburied. The people, astonished, returned to their houses.¹⁸¹³

On Sunday of February 1065 of the Greeks (A.D. 754), a pitch dark occurred so that people could not find their way when they left church. Torches were lit up and the darkness continued for three hours. This phenomenon recurred in April for three days, but the darkness was not as dense as the one that took place in February.

In this year, plague broke out everywhere, especially in Athor, that is Mosul. In this year also, and before sunrise, the comet known Sayf (Sword), appeared in the east toward the western part of the sky.

In this same year, Emperor Constantine convened a council of Chalcedonian bishops in Constantinople who hailed from the provinces of Rome, Dalmatia, Hillade, Cilicia and Sicily to discuss the subject of the veneration of icons. They decided that icons should not be venerated at all. They called this council the Seventh Council. Some of the bishops objected that the council was not canonical because it did not produce a definition of the faith. The Chalcedonians abhorred this emperor and nicknamed him the Iconoclast because he convened a council to abolish the veneration of icons. The council anathematized Iyawannis and George, bishop of Damascus, and George, bishop of Cyprus, because they adhered to the faith of Maximus. Constantine, however, was wise in his thinking and sound in his faith, and for this reason, the Chalcedonians hated him.

After pretending to be humble by conforming to the decisions of the council at Tella, Athanasius (Sandeloio) reverted to his intransigence. He ordained a person named Isaac as bishop for Harran without the approval of the patriarch or the bishops. It was said that Isaac was an expert in chemistry, and therefore, he was favored by Abu Ja'far. Finally, he became a stumbling for Athanasius. Some bishops, however, disliked what Athanasius had done. They blamed him for his audacity to ordain a bishop without the endorsement of the patriarch and the bishops, despite all the anathemas instituted at Tella. When the bishops fell into his grip, he treated them harshly. He accused Timothy, bishop of Edessa, alleging that he found with him letters containing assaults against Athanasius and against the amir Muhammad. He delivered the letters to Abu Ja'far who summoned Timothy unto him. When Timothy appeared before 'Aabi, or 'Aafi (governor of Mesopotamia), he defended himself courageously. He told (the governor) that the accusers should be punished unless they determine who the person was with whom the letter was found. When they failed to do so, the governor realized they were liars, and acquitted the bishop. In addition, Athanasius (Sandeloio) slandered David, bishop of Dara, to 'Aabi, but 'Aabi scolded him severely saying, "Don't say anything bad about David, I will not believe anything against him."¹⁸¹⁴ Apparently, 'Aabi greatly loved David. However, Sandeloio's (Athanasius) intention was to control these two bishops in order to

most of these events. Cf. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 588.

¹⁸¹³ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 112.

¹⁸¹⁴ In the Garshuni (Arabic written in Syriac letters), of 1759 version London, MS Arabic 4402, fol. 275, the translator Bishop Shuqayr of Sadat writes the name as 'Aaki. So does Rev. Chabot who writes it as Aki. See J. B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, II, 519, note 5. However, in his Arabic translation of *Michael's Chronicle*, Bishop Gregorius Saliba Shamoun of Mosul writes it as 'Aabi. See *Tarikh Mor Mikha'il al-Suryani al-Kabir*, 2 (Dar Mardin, Halab, 1996): 413. He is perhaps Muqatil ibn Hakim al-Akki, governor of the Jazira. See *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, 180, note 7 by Amir Harrak.

accomplish his objectives in the church without fear. David had ambition to occupy the see of Harran, which immensely offended Athanasius. Therefore, he ordained another bishop for Harran. Furthermore, the city of Bishop Timothy (Edessa), was the Episcopal Bishopric of Beth Nahrim (Mesopotamia) since the time of Mor Addai (Thaddeus the Apostle), and someone else had usurped it uncanonically. However, when Sandeloio usurped the office of a metropolitan, he also dreamed of usurping the office of the patriarchate. He arrived in Nisibin with Gabriel, of the three tongues. When Gabriel failed to obtain his desire from the patriarch, he turned against him, joined Athanasius, and his partisans. As much as it was possible, Athanasius gave Gabriel a small part of the district of Tur Abdin, and the remainder was given to Quriqa. This is why Athanasius forced these two bishops to concur and sign. However, the bishops of the Jazira assembled with Athanasius (al-Na'aal) without David, bishop of Dara, and Sarguna, bishop of Mardin, who separated themselves from him because he visited the churches without the patriarch's permission. When Athanasius entered Dara, the congregation would not receive him. On the contrary, they insulted him, and he departed the city immediately. When he won the leadership, he tried to depose the bishops chosen by the patriarch, and when he failed to depose David and Sarguna, he poured his wrath on Constantine, bishop of Samosata, and on Iliyya (Elijah), bishop of Sinjar. Instead of Constantine, he ordained Plotinus. In addition, instead of Iliyya the sage and learned, from the province of Mosul and not from his own province, he ordained the contemptible Joshua, who trampled upon the anathemas which his colleagues had instituted at Tella. *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Twenty-Five: The beginning of the reign of Abu Ja'far, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); the death of Patriarch Mor Iyawannis; the sedition created by the wicked Isaac; the election of Patriarch Gewargi (George) who was banished; and the building of the city of Baghdad which became the capital of the Arab kingdom

In the year 1066 of the Greeks (A.D. 755), Abu Ja'far ruled over the Tayoye (Arabs). Constantine, king (emperor) of the Romans went forth against Theodosiopolis of Armenia, which the Armenians call Garnoikagak, the Tayoye (Arabs) call Erzerum, and the Greeks call Calloincla. He seized it, took its people into captivity, and left it in a ruin.¹⁸¹⁵ He placed a garrison in the fortress of Bamak and returned to Constantinople. At Abu Ja'far's command, Melitene was rebuilt as it had been in the past, and he placed in it and a garrison. He also commanded that Theodosiopolis of Armenia be rebuilt, and he placed a garrison in it.

In the year 1071 of the Greeks (A.D. 760), the Tayoye (Arabs) subjugated Africa. In this time, too, they subjugated the country known as Tabaristan. It was bound on the north by the Caspian Sea and on the east by Dorqniya, which is Jurjan, on the south by Media and a portion of Parthia, and on the west by Daylam. This land had plenty of high mountains, tall trees and thick woods. Its entrances and outlets were very rugged. From east to west, it was forty farsakhs (parasangs) long, and from north to south twenty farsakhs wide. It had plenty of munificent resources, meadows, valleys and all kinds of trees. In addition, the five walled cities were subjugated by the Tayoye (Arabs), and Mahdi moved from al-Rayy (not far from Tehran) and settled in the city of Nisapur located to the west of Marw (Marv).

In addition, in the year 1073 of the Greeks (A.D. 762), Abu Ja'far built a city on the River Tigris above Ctesiphon, and called it Baghdad, and he dwelt in it.¹⁸¹⁶ In the year 1074 of the Greeks (A.D. 763), a man named Muhammad rebelled against Abu Ja'far. He was from Yathrib, (al-Madina) and a descendant of Fatima, daughter of their Prophet, and Ali's cousin.¹⁸¹⁷ All the Tayoye (Arabs) followed him, but Isa, the captain of the host, went against him and slew him in Yathrib, the very city of the Prophet.

In the same year, the Khazars went forth and took 50,000 captives from Jurjan. Also in this time, the Tayoye (Arabs) subjugated the region of Kabul of the country of India.

¹⁸¹⁵ Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 149.

¹⁸¹⁶ *The Chronicle of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 165.

¹⁸¹⁷ He is Muhammad, surnamed Nafs al-Zakkiyya (the pure soul). See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 290.

Abu Ja'far overburdened all nations with various taxes, and he doubled the tribute on the Christians. He also had the Jaramiqa driven from their country.

In the year 1080 of the Greeks (A.D. 769), the Magians in Persia rebelled against the Tayoye (Arabs), and set up a chief for themselves. A (Tayoye) Arab army went forth against them, and the Tayoye (Arabs) were defeated. The Magians became strong enough to establish a kingdom for themselves, but a very strong army went against them, and the Magians were defeated. About 40,000 of them perished and their chief was killed. Their hopes were shattered, and they were again subjugated by the Tayoye (Arabs).¹⁸¹⁸

In this time, (A.D. 752) Emperor Constantine carried into captivity the people of Claudia¹⁸¹⁹ and stationed them to the interior of Constantinople. When he heard that they desired no union with the Romans, he summoned some of them and asked them the reason for their aversion to the Romans. They said to him, "We never had communion with those who accept the Council of Chalcedon, and divide Christ into two natures." The emperor commanded them to provide him with a copy of their faith, so they wrote down their faith and offered it to him. When it was read to him, they found it sound, profitable, and in agreement with the teachings of the fathers. He and the distinguished men of his kingdom praised it and endorsed it, and through this group (people of Claudia), the emperor officially attended a meeting for the purpose of achieving union with the inhabitants of Melitene, by the mediation of the captives in Syria. However, some people from their church (the people of Claudia), tried to thwart the effort of the emperor but failed. The emperor endorsed the definition of the faith by us, we the orthodox.

In the year 1073 of the Greeks (A.D. 762), swarms of locusts devoured the crops, and hail fell down and destroyed the plants. It is said that one hailstone weighed eight pounds.

In the year 1076 (A.D. 765), a severe earthquake took place in Khurasan (northern Iran) that even one of the mountains moved away from its place for a distance of three miles. Because it was formed of earth, it was shattered into pieces. In May of this year, a comet appeared in the zodiac of Aries (Ram) next to the sun, which was in the zodiac of Taurus. It looked something like a pillar whose tail extended toward the south, and it moved for twenty days lower than the sun. It remained under the rays of the sun for three days and then moved behind the sun for forty days. Fear gripped the people because of this spectacle. In addition, the colossus that the Magians worshipped was uncovered in the desert.

In October of the year 1066 (A.D. 755), the holy Patriarch Iyawannis passed away, and was buried in the village of Babraya on the Euphrates River. He served the patriarchate for sixteen years. Abu Ja'far, caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs), commanded the bishops to set up Ishaq (Isaac), bishop of Harran, as patriarch. We should explain here how he had such strong relations with Abu Ja'far. At this time, Isaac was an inmate of the Monastery of the Phorkasians in Edessa. He was visited by a sojourning monk and Isaac was gracious unto him. The monk, wishing to recompense Isaac, asked him to bring him a little bit of lead. Isaac brought the lead, and the monk melted it (in water). Then, he took something out of the bag he had with him and cast it into the lead, and the lead was transformed into gold. Exceedingly enchanted, Isaac asked the monk to teach him this art.¹⁸²⁰ The monk said that a certain man had given him only a little bit of gold, but Isaac did not believe him. He followed him, pushed him into a pit and dropped on him a big rock, which killed him. He thought that he could find in his saddlebag a book that would teach him this art, but found no book or lead except that bag, and he regretted what he did. Because of that lead, he struck a friendship with Athanasius Sandeloio, who ordained him as bishop for Harran, hoping that he would teach him the art of alchemy. For the same reason, his relations with Abu Ja'far were strengthened through 'Aabi, governor of the Jazira. Therefore, after the death of Mor Iyawannis, he forced the bishops to set up Isaac, unlawfully, as patriarch. The bishops assembled in Rish 'Ayna and declared him, uncanonically, as patriarch. Isaac obtained a decree from the caliph (Abu Ja'far) that he should be accepted by everyone. It authorized him to travel through the lands in order to gather ingredients of alchemy and teach the caliph this art. However, after a long travel through the lands, the caliph summoned him, examined him and discovered

¹⁸¹⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 114.

¹⁸¹⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 113.

¹⁸²⁰ This is the art of alchemy. It is a medieval chemical science meant to transform base metals into gold.

that he had no knowledge at all. He ordered that he be strangled and his body thrown into the River Euphrates.¹⁸²¹

Thus, what Isaac did to the sojourning monk, the same happened to him. Then, the caliph (Abu Ja'far) instructed the bishops to set up Athanasius Sandeloio as patriarch.

When Sandeloio became uncanonically a patriarch, he obtained a decree from the caliph (confirming him in his position). When he arrived in Harran, he wanted to ordain Abdun, a disciple of Isaac, a bishop. In fact, he had before promised to ordain him a bishop. Based on this promise, Abdun concurred with Sandeloio and informed the caliph that Isaac knew the art of alchemy but refused to teach him. For this reason, the caliph was wrathful and had him strangled. When Abdun accompanied Sandeloio to Harran, the congregation refused to receive him or Sandeloio. Rather, they committed an improper act by entering Sandeloio's chamber and strangling him. The people believed that their act was done by order of the caliph. Then, the monks of his monastery carried his body and deposited it in an urn in their monastery with honor. This was the end of Sandeloio.¹⁸²²

Let us now discuss the holy Gewargi (George) from the village of Ba'altan in the neighborhood of Homs. George studied, in the Monastery of Qinnésrin, the Scriptures in both the Greek and Syriac languages. He was appointed as secretary to Mor Theodore, bishop of Samosata. Theodore found him a man of chastity, wisdom and piety. He predicted, saying, "I feel deep down in my heart, that God will offer this man a high dignity in the church." He then said to George, "You should take care of the monastery in which you were raised because it is declining." Then, when Sandeloio passed away, the bishops assembled in Mabug (Manbij) in December of the year 1070 of the Greeks (A.D. 760), (to elect a patriarch). The candidates were David, bishop of Dara and Yuhanon (John), bishop of Callinicus (al-Raqqqa). Each of these dignitaries endeavored to win the honor of the high dignity (the patriarchate), to the exclusion of any other name by all means. When the name of George was mentioned, they summoned him, as he was still a deacon. The bishops welcomed him having learned of his knowledge and intelligence, except David, bishop of Dara and Yuhanon, bishop of Callinicus, who were filled with envy. They said, "We do not raise someone from the dunghill to the throne." However, when the people of Mabug learned that these two bishops objected to (George) because of envy, they reviled them with harsh words. The bishops, however, and with godly zeal, ordained George despite the objection of the two bishops. After the council dispersed, the bishops of the Jazira went home. As they crossed the River Euphrates they, instigated by Satan, ordained Yuhanon, bishop of Callinicus as patriarch, and the church was split. However, the faithful of Callinicus drove Yuhanon away and did not proclaim his name as a patriarch all his life. While George visited the western region, Yuhanon was playing havoc with the eastern region. Meanwhile, a section of the Jazira submitted to George. However, the confusion continued for four years until the death of Yuhanon in 1074 (A.D. 763). He was succeeded by David, bishop of Dara, who harassed George.¹⁸²³ *End of this and the former narratives.*

Chapter Twenty-Six: On the period of the death of Constantine, king (emperor of the Romans; and on Abu Ja'far, king (caliph) of the Tayoye that is Arabs, and on the imprisonment of Gewargi (George) in Baghdad for nine years

In the year 1080 (A.D. 769), the Tayoye (Arabs) went up with wrath against the Valley of Germanicia, which is Mar'ash, because they heard that they had become spies for the Romans. They carried off the people of the country into captivity, took them away and settled them in the land of Ramlah. This they also did with the natives of Samosata.¹⁸²⁴

¹⁸²¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 315, 317, 319.

¹⁸²² Bar Hebraeus, *Ibid.*

¹⁸²³ Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, 319-327.

¹⁸²⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 114, says that the Arabs did this because they heard that their spies had been enslaved by the Romans.

At this time, the Africans rebelled and killed the Tayoye (Arabs) and the Persians. Abu Ja'far sent against them Yazid to fight them. In the battle, Yazid killed 30,000 barbarians (Africans), and he subjugated all of Africa.¹⁸²⁵

In the year 1083 (A.D. 772), Abu Ja'far built a city by the side of Callinicus, and he called it Raphqa; no one had ever seen such handicraft as was displayed on its gates.¹⁸²⁶ When Harun (al-Rashid) reigned, he built a wall for the city behind the first one.

In this same year, Abu Ja'far marched from Babylon to Beth Nahrin, Syria and Palestine, and he appointed Musa bar (ibn) Mus'ab the Jew, a governor of the Jazira, and Musa bar (ibn) Sulayman for Qinnasrin. Both of these men were wicked and harsh. Abu Ja'far gathered all the silver and gold into his treasure house, that no dinar or one *fals* (less than a piaster) could be found except with businessmen. Because of the severity of the affliction, people began to dig up graves to sift the earth and rinse it with water, hoping to find a piece of silver, gold, or other precious metals in order to pay the taxes. In this way, the oppression of the people became worse. On top of this oppression, pestilence broke out in Syria, Beth Nahrin and Athor (Mosul). The afflicted person would first feel headache and then died. Then followed a famine of great severity, not only because of the shortage of wheat, but also because of lack of money. Moreover, there were no jobs for the poor. The churches, the monastery and homes were plundered. The price of an ox and donkey was one piaster. The price of five bushels of wheat was one piaster, and the price of youths and maidens was five piasters. Three years after this calamity, Abu Ja'far, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), who was the source of evil, died in the Ka'ba in the year 1087 (A.D. 776), having reigned for twenty-one years. Ibn Mus'ab, members of his family, and Musa, governor of Qinnasrin were arrested. The whole world heaved a sigh of relief from tribulation.¹⁸²⁷

Twenty-five days before Abu Ja'far's death, on September 19 of that year, Constantine, king (emperor) of the Romans, died, having reigned for thirty-four years and five months. Abu Ja'far al-Mansur died on October 7, 775.¹⁸²⁸ *End of the narrative about kings and the church.*

In the year 1080 of the Greeks (A.D. 769), a woman was found in the country of Bukhara who never ate food, had never suckled at the breast, or had a need for a drink. Mahdi (775-785), bar (son) of king (caliph al-Manaur, heard of her and brought her to Baghdad. He examined her case and found it true and beyond nature. Something like this was never mentioned by ancient chroniclers or sages of any country.¹⁸²⁹

A certain Christian named Cyrus, denied (Christianity) for some reason. Later, however, he repented and returned to it. Abbas laid hands on him and judged him. When the man did not consent to Abbas's choices (to reembrace Islam), he had his head cut off and his body thrown into the fire.

Abu Ja'far increased the taxes, and people were distressed.¹⁸³⁰ They began to dig up tombs hoping to find money. While they were digging the tombs of ancient pagans in Nicomedia, they found in the underground burial chamber the (mummified) body of Nicodemus, with it was deposited plenty of gold, emeralds and red jewels which glowed in the dark. The people informed Emperor Constantine of this discovery, and he sent men to see it. They saw plenty of gold and precious stones. The emperor, acting graciously, took nothing from these things. He sent artisans to block the entrance of the place, and they piled up on it a huge mound of earth lest it be opened again. Constantine said, "Is anything more shameful than to see living men in need of the dead? It is our duty to honor the dead."¹⁸³¹

In the year 1076 (A.D. 765), the bishops assembled at Sarug, and reconciled Patriarch Gewargi (George) with David, bishop of Dara. Despite the reconciliation, David did not desist from his wickedness

¹⁸²⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 114.

¹⁸²⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 114.

¹⁸²⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 115.

¹⁸²⁸ See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 294. Constantine V died on September 18, 774/775. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 619.

¹⁸²⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 114.

¹⁸³⁰ According to *The Chronology of Elijah bar Shinaya*, 167, al-Mansur came to Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) and oppressed the people with harsh demands.

¹⁸³¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 115.

or shrink from his malice, but went to Abu Ja'far, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs). He sneaked into the presence of Malik, secretary of Abu Ja'far, king of the Tayoye (Arabs), and slandered Patriarch Gewargi (George) saying that, "He became a patriarch without your command, and the annoyed us with his demands. And when we asked him the reason he did not obtain a decree from the caliph (Abu Ja'far), he said, 'I do not want the name of their messenger (Muhammad) to enter my chamber.'" Abu Ja'far became furious and sent soldiers to bring the patriarch to him. Upon appearing in the presence of the caliph, Abu Ja'far ordered him to take off his clothes and stretch his hands. The blessed (patriarch) called on the Virgin in the Greek language saying, "Theotokos, (Mother of God), help me." Asking what he was saying, a person, who hated the patriarch, said to the caliph that, "He is blaspheming." The patriarch was whipped three lashes and his blood flowed on the floor. Then the caliph said to him, "Why didn't you request a decree?" The patriarch said, "I did not want to annoy anyone, especially since I was forced to accept leadership (the patriarchal office)." The caliph said, "And why didn't you want the name of our Prophet to enter your private chamber?" The patriarch was surprised and said, "Indeed, the name of your Prophet is in all of our chambers and on our purses. It is inscribed on the dirhams (drachmas) and the dinars, so, how would I say such a thing?" When the caliph perceived his courage and intelligence, he realized that he was maliciously delivered unto him. He told his secretary to take him to his house with honor, and ask him whether he knows the art of alchemy. He began to honor him, and meantime, cajole him. However, the patriarch said to him, "I know nothing about alchemy, and I believe that it is not known even today." The patriarch remained in his house for three days eating neither bread nor drinking water. Finally, he was thrown into prison in Baghdad. The caliph assembled the bishops and commanded them to set up another patriarch. They said, "This is not possible." The caliph threatened to banish them to China. They were afraid, and mentioned the name of David (bishop of Dara), as their leader (patriarch). Most of them, however, fled and did not subject themselves to the caliph. Those who succumbed for fear neglected their congregations and dioceses. The caliph, then, offered David a decree and a mare in order to go around and force the believers to accept him. David, however, was received with contempt by everyone, and the bishops he ordained were driven out (by their congregations), but he was not ashamed, as it is written, "Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all."¹⁸³²

At this point, confusion and disturbance prevailed in the church of God. Instead of priests, deacons and other sacerdotal ranks, the Persians encircled the Table of Life with arms, swords and iron rods forcing the people to partake in the defiled communion of David. This also was done to other bishops who offered the sacrifice (Eucharist). As to the bishops who were loyal to Mor Gewargi (the patriarch), they were persecuted and forced to dress up with the white vestments of laymen when they traveled from one village to another. Meanwhile, the blessed (patriarch) remained in prison in Baghdad for nine years enduring all kinds of continuous torments. He penned in prison several splendid treatises and many *madrashas* (hymns) inspiring orthodox teachings. After the death of Abu Ja'far, the prisoners were released, and the saint patriarch was let out of prison. *End of this narrative.*

Here ends Book Eleven containing the events of 145 years. (922 to 1087) During this period, thirteen kings (emperors) reigned in the Roman kingdom, five in the Persian kingdom, twenty Arab kings (caliph), fifteen patriarchs of Antioch and eleven patriarchs of Alexandria. This Book consists of twenty-six chapters.

¹⁸³² Jeremiah 6:15, and 8:12.

BOOK TWELVE

WITH THE HELP OF GOD, WHO PERFECTED THE HOLY APOSTLE, WE BEGIN BOOK TWELVE OF THE BOOK OF HISTORY. IT BEGINS IN THE YEAR 1088 OF THE GREEKS, WHICH IS THE YEAR 157 OF THE KINGDOM OF THE ARABS, WHO ARE THE TAYOYE, THE YEAR 6260 FROM ADAM, THAT IS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION, AND THE YEAR 758 OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Chapter One: On the beginning of the reign of Leo IV, king (emperor) of the Romans; and Mahdi, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); and the release of Mor Gewargi (George) the holy and martyr patriarch¹⁸³³

In the year 1088 (A.D. 777), Leo, son of Constantine, reigned over the Romans.¹⁸³⁴ Twenty-five days later, Mahdi, son of Abu Ja'far, ruled the Tayoye (Arabs). Both released the prisoners who were taken captive by their fathers.

Mahdi opened the treasures of his father and scattered them like with a winnow fork. Not only did he squander them on his troops, but also on his jawari (slave women), for he was lecherous and loved entertainment. He was attracted to magic and divination, and the forecast of fate. Therefore, King (Emperor) Leo IV sent to him the 'Book of Jannes and Jambres' which contained the whole system of sorcery of the Egyptians, and the magic they did in front of Moses.^{1835 1836}

In the year 1090 (A.D. 779), Mahdi came to Aleppo, and the Tanukhians (Arabs of the tribe of Tanukh), who lived in tents round about Aleppo, went out to meet him. They were riding Tayoye (Arab) horses, and were decked in ornaments. Then it was said to him, "All these are Christians." Seething with anger, Mahdi commanded them to embrace Islam. Under severe torture, five thousand men became Muslims, but the women were saved. Some of them (Tanukhians) are still in the churches of the west, as testified by one of them named Laith. Afterwards, Mahdi went to the land of the Romans and encamped on the River Phuramon in the country of the city Arabisus. He sent his son Harun (al-Rashid) to spy the land of the Romans, and Mahdi returned to Syria and went to Jerusalem to worship.¹⁸³⁷ His son captured a fortress called Semalus, and after pillaging it and its surroundings, he returned.¹⁸³⁸

In the year 1092 (A.D. 781), the Tayoye (Arabs) attacked the country of Ephesus and carried away about 7,000 captives. At the same time, Emperor Leo dispatched an army, took some Syrian Orthodox captive and settled them in Thrace.¹⁸³⁹ A Chalcedonian historian said that Leo abhorred icons and never permitted their veneration. Like his father, he cleaved to the Orthodox (non-Chalcedonians).

In the year 1092 (A.D. 780-781), Leo died and was succeeded by his son Constantine (VI). Because he was only twelve years old, his mother Irene administered the affairs of the kingdom, and her name was mentioned next to his.

In the year 1094 (A.D. 783), Mahdi sent his son Harun, accompanied by two captains of the host, against the Roman country. Abd al-Malik laid siege against Nacolea, but his army was defeated and he fled in disgrace. Meanwhile, Bournike killed about ten thousand Romans, and Harun went against the royal city. The Romans made a cunning plan and shut in the Tayoye (Arabs) on the River Sangarius, the mountain being on one side and the river on the other side. The Tayoye (Arabs), facing a great difficulty, sued for

¹⁸³³ The Chapters of Book Twelve are not numbered in the Syriac text. The numbering is mine.

¹⁸³⁴ He is Leo IV, 775-780 called the Khazar because his mother was the daughter of Khagan, king of the Khazars.

¹⁸³⁵ See 2 Timothy 3:8-9. This is the only place in the Scriptures where St. Paul mentions these two men by name as having opposed Moses.

¹⁸³⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 116.

¹⁸³⁷ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 624.

¹⁸³⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 117. Cf. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 624-625.

¹⁸³⁹ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 623.

peace. Irene, in her womanly thinking, agreed to three years peace, and the Arabs were out of this dilemma.¹⁸⁴⁰

After one year, Ali rebuilt the city of Hadath.

In the year 1095 (A.D. 784), Mahdi died and was succeeded by his son Musa (al-Hadi), who reigned for two years.

In 1097 (A.D. 786), a massive Roman army went out and reached the city of Hadath which the Tayoye (Arabs) had recently built on the frontier, its inhabitants fled. The Romans destroyed all of its walls and buildings.

In July, Musa (al-Hadi), caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs) died, and was succeeded by his son Harun, called al-Rashid.

After Patriarch Gewargi (George) spent nine years in the prison of Baghdad, Mahdi assumed the government and set the prisoners free. When the patriarch left prison, Mahdi commanded him not to perform the duties of the patriarchate, or even call himself patriarch. Then, the blessed patriarch went to Takrit and was received by the congregation as an angel of God. He then passed through Mosul and the towns of the Jazira, and was welcomed everywhere with great honor until he reached Antioch. In that year, he deposed the bishops who were ordained by David, ordained ten other bishops, and left others to administer the affairs of the church as was necessary. He also deposed Plotinus who was ordained by Sandeloio, and restored Constantinus to Samosata. Shortly afterwards, Constantinus passed away and the people of Samosata asked for Plotinus to be their bishop, and the patriarch sent him back to them.

Two years after his traveling and building new churches, some men slandered him to the amir (governor) of the Jazira that he did not abide by the rules of the Commander of the Faithful (the caliph). The amir was angry and summoned him from Harran to Callinicus. However, before the patriarch appeared in the presence of the governor, Bishop Theodosius, who had ejected Sandeloio, entered into the governor's presence and explained that these men had falsely slandered the patriarch. He calmed down the governor. When the blessed (patriarch) went into the presence of the governor, the governor debated him, but he defended himself astonishingly well to the satisfaction of the governor. Theodosius, who was a friend of the governor, translated the discussion into Arabic. He praised the patriarch saying that he was a good man and a saint, and those who accused him of imposing heavy burdens on the churches, were liars. The governor was greatly satisfied, and the patriarch left triumphant. He went on administering the affairs of the church of God until the end of his life.

In Alexandria, Mina was patriarch for 40 years. He was succeeded by Iyawannis.

In 1095 (A.D. 784), the Edessans rebelled against their Metropolitan Zachariah for many reasons, most specifically that he did not censure his brother Simon for his evil conduct. When he did not obey, the Patriarch Gewargi (George) ordered him to leave Edessa, and be accepted by no one.

In May of the year 1096 (A.D. 785), Patriarch Gewargi assembled a council on the account of Yuhanon, metropolitan of Takrit, whom the Edessans charged with contemptible behavior. Yuhanon, however, claimed that they (the Edessans) were lying. The patriarch sent with him four bishops to investigate, so that if the metropolitan proved to be innocent, he would absolve him and reconfirm him (in his position). When the bishops reached Balad, Yuhanon Kiony deserted them and fled to St. Matthew's Monastery. He ventured to ordain three rebellious bishops to support him and disobey the patriarch. When the bishops perceived his audacity, they excommunicated him and the bishop he had ordained. Then, the patriarch ordained Joseph a metropolitan for Takrit, and Zachariah of the Monastery of Qartmin (the present Monastery of Mor Gabriel), for Edessa. Zachariah was ejected by the troublemakers in Edessa. *End of the account.*

When Mahdi began to reign over the Tayoye (Arabs), he sent a man named Muhtasib to destroy the churches, which had been built under the Tayoye (Arab Muslims). He also commanded that Christian slaves be sold. Thus, several churches were pulled down and the slaves fled. The church of the Chalcedonians in

¹⁸⁴⁰ See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 299.

Aleppo was demolished. He stirred up persecution against the Manicheans wherever they were found, and many Tayoye Arabs, Muslims) were killed for embracing the heresy of Manichaeism and never recanted. The region called Paddana Rabtha (al-Faddan al-Kabir) which teemed with Manicheans was demolished. Some Christians also suffered for being charged with embracing this heresy. People from the country of Goumaye were betrayed by a Persian, and were also captured. The reason was that they refused to give this Persian a residence in their village of Hinan, which waxed him angry, and he turned against them. He accused them of being Manicheans, while he was well aware of the severe punishment imposed on the Manicheans in Baghdad. He cast eight of their notables into prison, three of whom died under torture, and the other five were released, being saved by the Lord.

In the year 1095 (A.D. 784), flying locusts called the Kalbite came and destroyed the crops, and the entire Jazira was filled with them. After destroying the wheat, barley and other crops, they laid eggs in the plains and the mountains. After one month, the eggs hatched and the young locusts began to creep. They climbed the walls of the houses, the city walls, and crept into the homes through windows and doors. They filled everything, even water jars, water-skins, beds, tables and utensils. When they entered a house from the southern quarter, they went out the northern side going in the direction of Harran. They devoured everything, whether herbs, trees, woolen garments or the clothes of men. They particularly spread into Edessa, Sarug and Hisn Kipha. After devouring everything in the Jazira, they passed over to the west. There they devoured all the crops, vineyards, trees and all kinds of wood. Indeed, no one could tell of this bitter scourge that I have witnessed. Glory to the Lord of all! This severe plague lasted three years and was followed by plenty of vegetables, bread, wine, oil, all kinds of grain and the like.¹⁸⁴¹

Chapter Two: On how and when the controversy began in the Church concerning the expression "We break heavenly bread."

Some blamed Patriarch Quryaqus (Cyriacus) for creating the controversy in the church concerning the expression "we break the heavenly bread," but they were wrong. In fact, doubt has been raised about this expression since the time of Patriarch Gewargi (George), as attested in his letter to the deacon Gouriah from the family of Beth Na'ar in Edessa. In this letter he says, "Dear Son: In reply to your letter concerning the initiation of this expression, of how and when it entered the church, when some doubted it, and when it was rejected, I would say to you that our great Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ handed over to us three sacraments: the Sacrament of Baptism, the Sacrament of Sacrifice of his body and Blood (the Eucharist), and the Sacrament of Ordination of Priestly Ranks. For each of these Sacraments, he instituted a symbol. The symbol of Baptism is breath, that is, when he (Christ) breathed on his disciples and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'¹⁸⁴² Therefore, those who breathe on the water of baptism, whether chief priests or priests, do so in order that the sacramental breath permeates the water, and the baptized person will then receive the Holy Spirit of the second birth. With respect to the Sacrament of the Service of his Body and Blood (the Eucharist), he took bread by his holy hands, broke it and gave his holy disciples. The mystery is consummated in the prayer, which follows that of 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' for the effect of the same power given by Christ, which is the power of Almighty God, is perfected in this Sacrament performed by people who are weak. As to the laying on of hands, which pertains to the priestly Sacrament of Ordination, Luke says at the end of his Gospel, 'He lifted up his hands and blessed them, when he was taken up into heaven.'¹⁸⁴³ This holy tradition is performed in the holy church for those who come to accept the priesthood whether they are chief priests, priests or deacons. It is consummated by the right hand of God the Father who is Jesus Christ, and by us, the lowly. Now, if we confuse these rules and introduce other traditions of our innovation, we will be transcending the boundary of the divine Sacraments. Therefore, we should not breathe after the recitation of the prayer that follows the first one, concerning what is peculiar to this

¹⁸⁴¹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 118.

¹⁸⁴² John 20:23.

¹⁸⁴³ Luke 24:50.

Sacrament. Likewise, we should not lay hands on those ordained after the recitation of the last prayer, after the laying on of hands which follows lifting them up. In addition, if we breathe for the second time in the case of Baptism, we will be deviating from the Sacrament handed to us by our Savior. In this manner, too, if we repeat the prayer of the breaking of the bread, we would be doing something alien to tradition. For the Gospel does not say, 'He brake and blessed, and brake and blessed, and gave to his disciples,' for this repetition is not compatible with that power which perfects everything."

"As to your inquiry of when this (expression of we break the heavenly bread) began in the church, I have no knowledge about it. However, regarding when it was rejected, I know that from everlasting to everlasting it was rejected by the saints clothed by God. For the Holy Spirit caused this Sacrament of the Body and Blood of God the Word to be perfected by James, the first bishop, and Mark the evangelist. Moreover, the Egyptians and the Alexandrians testify that the expression 'we break the heavenly bread, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,' does not exist in the liturgy of St. Mark, son and pupil of the head of the holy Apostles (St. Peter), from whom he received his divine evangelism and the entire sacraments. This is also attested to by the Greeks, foremost of whom are the holy doctors (learned men) who celebrated the Eucharist according to the liturgy of James, the chief priest. Furthermore, the expression, 'we break the heavenly bread in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit', does not exist in the liturgies of Basil, Gregory, Timothy or Severus. Indeed, neither the liturgy of the Apostle James, nor other liturgies contain this expression, for all of these fathers wrote in Greek. It does not even exist in the Greek versions (of the liturgy). Since it does not exist in the liturgy of St. James and in other liturgies, this means that the liturgy has been complete (perfect) forever and ever."

"As to me, I have not forced anyone to recite or not to recite this expression, not because I am aware that it should not be recited, but in order not to give the opportunity to the troublemakers who are not concerned with building up the church. In fact, they insist on destroying it because of their love of leadership. Thus, they use it (the expression of we break the heavenly bread) as a means of dissension and for attracting the simple. Woe to us, then, if bread which has come down from heaven is found in our faith which is not the Son and God, the Word. And, if we break (the bread) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, it would be necessary for another Son, who is not the bread which came down from heaven, to exist."

"As to your question about when this expression entered the church, we say, two traditions have been handed down in the case of this sacrament, the first is holy, and the other is not. The holy Apostles determined that the sacrifice (Eucharist) be celebrated during the holy days of fasting (Lent) with the exception of Saturday and Sunday. They also instructed that the rite of '*Rshum Koso*' (blessing of the cup) could be celebrated during the other days of fasting because the people had received the communion in the evening. As he blessed the chalice, the officiating priest would say, 'Blessed is the cup of grace in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' Then he puts in the cup a forgiving *gmurto* and hallows it.¹⁸⁴⁴ This is a holy tradition. The *gmurto* will then sanctify the chalice, which has not been yet sanctified, and it is known as 'the Cup of Thanksgiving.' However, it is not one of sacraments our Savior mentioned and which point to his divinity, nor is it in conformity with any aspect of his Incarnation."

"The other tradition introduced by the impious Deodore, enemy of the truth and adversary of Christ, is not holy. He set up what he called *qurobo* (oblation), which is not close to God but far away from him. Deodore says, 'We break heavenly bread in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.' Nevertheless, I say that those who reiterated the expression 'we break heavenly bread,' are simple people who are as far from the idea of Deodore as heaven is far from earth. However, if one scrutinizes it carefully, he will find that it has the same efficacy. Who is then the Lamb of God other than that living bread which came down from heaven? John the Baptist, who uttered this expression, professed saying, 'This is the Lamb

¹⁸⁴⁴ Literally, *gmurto* is a live coal. In the Syriac liturgy, it is a particle of the consecrated bread in allusion to Isaiah 6:6, whose lips were touched by the angel with a live coal on the altar. It is interpreted as a type of Christ. See R. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1903), 72.

of God who takes away the sins of the world.¹⁸⁴⁵ As I said earlier when I compared these two expressions 'We sacrifice the Lamb of God before the Holy Trinity,' and 'We break the heavenly bread in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,' that they are not different from each other. However, according to his impious belief, Deodore divides Christ with an evil mind. Those, (the simple people mentioned above) out of ignorance, derived this expression from the rite of *Rshum Koso* (the Blessing of the Cup), because it harmonizes with it, and because it is a sanctification of an unsanctified cup. However, here it does not fit because it means that we break heavenly bread, which is the Son of God and his Word. Moreover, when this expression says that 'we break bread in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,' it, in fact, considers the heavenly bread remote from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. As someone (an officiating priest) says that so and so is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, it is the same as saying that the heavenly bread is broken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. For that heavenly bread is considered outside the scope of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I personally did not tell anyone to recite or not recite this expression 'we break the heavenly bread,' lest I give the opportunity to those who try to split the church by their impiety, and the rest of the letter." *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Three: On the period of the reign of Harun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); and on Constantine, king (emperor) of the Romans; and on the death of Patriarch Gewargi (George), and those who succeeded him in the church of the Orthodox, and the rest of events which took place in this period and are written down in this book

When Harun (al-Rashid), king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) reigned (798-809), he sent Abd al-Malik to rebuild the city of Hadath. Abd al-Malik prepared two thousand wagons. The churches located west of Sanja were demolished and their stones were used to build the wall (of Hadath). In addition, the church of Kesum and its fifteen temples were demolished.¹⁸⁴⁶

In September, Malshouf (sic) entered the land of the Romans and carried many into captivity. Then Sulayman, governor of Hadath, entered the Roman country to pillage and took many captives. In February, his son Job attacked the region of the seacoast and looted great spoils.

In the year 1104 (A.D. 793), the Qaysites fought with the Yamanites in the country of the west. It began in Palestine and extended to Emessa (Homs). Many were captured on both sides. In the same year, Abd al-Malik entered the country of the Romans and carried off many captives, and departed. Then, his son Abd al-Rahman, entered the Roman country and captured one fortress in Cappadocia called Rabasa. Nine men died from thirst before surrendering the fortress to him. When the Tayoye (Arabs) captured it, they took great spoils including precious vessels.

In this period, it was intimated to Constantine (the VI), emperor of the Romans, that Elpidius, the governor of Sicily, claimed to be an emperor of the Romans, and that he was cohabiting with his mother.¹⁸⁴⁷ When Constantine wanted to blind his eyes, Elpidius fled to the Tayoye (Arabs). Constantine commanded that his mother should never again be called 'Queen', and informed all his subjects. Then, he cast Elpidius' sons and wife into prison,¹⁸⁴⁸ and Elpidius swore to the Tayoye (Arabs) to hand Sicily over to them. He drew an alliance with Sulayman supported by oath. Accordingly, Sulayman led 40,000 men and marched with Elpidius under the condition that they would subjugate the entire Roman land. However, winter came upon them as they entered the province of Simisun. Four thousands of them perished, and the rest found refuge with the Romans, who treated them with human kindness and never harmed any of them. In January, the Tayoye (Arabs) departed the region (of Simisun), but the feet of a great number of them became ulcerated because of the snow. I saw about four hundred of them in Edessa. Subsequently, Constantine

¹⁸⁴⁵ John 1:29.

¹⁸⁴⁶ The stones of these churches were transported on the above-mentioned wagons. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 118.

¹⁸⁴⁷ Theophanes does not mention that Elpidius had sexual relations with the queen. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 628, and footnote 3 on p. 629.

¹⁸⁴⁸ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 627.

reconciled with his mother Irene, and decreed that she should be again addressed as a 'Queen.' Her name as queen was proclaimed everywhere except in the country of Armenia, whose nobles refused to do so because of the oaths they had sworn, so the tyrant king killed them.¹⁸⁴⁹

In addition to his evil actions, Constantine trampled upon a Christian tradition, and unashamedly took another woman as wife while his first wife was still alive. Thus, he was held with contempt by the people.

In the year 1100 (A.D. 789), a *Haruroye* named Walid¹⁸⁵⁰ went forth with five thousand men and came to Nisibin. He killed its governor, looted the merchants, and imposed on every Christian twenty-five *zuzze*.¹⁸⁵¹ The Tayoye (Arabs) feared him especially when he began to roam here and there killing the Tayoye (Arabs). After defeating the army of Abd al-Malik and emptying the highways from travelers, Yazid resisted him and killed him.

In the following year, Harun (al-Rashid) left Baghdad and came to dwell in Callinicus (al-Raqqa), a city on the Euphrates bank. He built in it homes for its inhabitants and for his leading men, and Callinicus became a second Babylon. He brought to it two (water) canals: one from the Euphrates, the other from Sarug. He bought the waters of the villages of Sarug from their owners, dug a new canal for them, and planted many gardens.

In 1108 (A.D. 797), Harun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), went forth to the country of the Romans. When passing by Edessa, the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) slandered the Christians to him that they were spies of the Romans, especially that the Roman emperor performed every year the prayer in their church. The Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) appealed to Harun to pull down their great church and not allow them to ring a church bell. Harun consulted Yahya, his Vizier, who advised him wisely that he should not do so. He had the accusers beaten and expelled.¹⁸⁵²

At this time, some wrote that a certain man from Thrace was digging in some place. He found an urn in which there was a corpse, on the urn was inscribed, 'Christ will be born of a virgin, and I now do believe. However, the sun will shine over me if what I said is fulfilled.'¹⁸⁵³

In 1097 (A.D. 786), The Edessans separated themselves from their Bishop Zachariah the Second, who came from the Monastery of Qartmin (Mor Gabriel). He was opposed by the clergy and the nobles, but not the common people of the congregation. When Patriarch Gewargi (George) heard of this incident, he transferred Zachariah out of Edessa.

When the blessed Gewargi was traveling on the road, he felt sick and his pain increased when he reached Claudia. He went to the Monastery of Mor Barsoum (near Melitene, Malatya), where he died in the year 1101 of the Greeks (A.D. 790), and his holy body was buried therein.

In June of that year, a council of bishops assembled in Badaya the Less in the plain of Harran and elected Joseph from the Monastery of Gubba Baraya (a patriarch). He was handsome and of pleasant features. However, when they engaged in discussion with him, the bishops found him to be simple (unlearned), and decided to send him back to his monastery. The bishops were split on his account. Some wanted him, and others rejected him. Finally, they ordained him unwillingly for fear of the monks of his monastery who were known for their love of quarrel. When Joseph was ordained, Zachariah, bishop of Edessa, brought him forcefully to Edessa to reconcile him with its congregation. He and the patriarch stayed in the church of Mor Cosmas outside Edessa, and the Edessan paid the patriarch a visit. After a prolonged conversation with him, the Edessan did not submit to the patriarch or even accept Bishop Zachariah. Then

¹⁸⁴⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 119.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Walid ibn Tarif al-Sahri. See Abu Ja'far ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, 6 (Cairo: Matba'at al-Istiqama, 1939), 46. He receives his epithet from *Haruriyya* which is another name of the Muslim sect of Kharijites. The Kharijites are called so because they seceded from Ali ibn Abi Talib and fought him (in 656), when he agreed to an arbitration with Mu'awiya who had challenged him for the office of the caliphate. They maintained that Mu'awiya was only a governor and not on par with Ali who was caliph par excellence. Their cry was that 'Arbitration belongs only to Allah.'

¹⁸⁵¹ A coin equivalent to five piasters.

¹⁸⁵² Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 119.

¹⁸⁵³ This passage is almost identical with the one related by Theophanes. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 627.

the patriarch left dejected, and did not enter their city. The bishops appealed to him to travel to Baghdad to receive a decree of investiture (from the caliph). Meanwhile, he gave permission to Yuhanon (John), who was until then taking care of the villages, to administer the city of Mabug (Manbij), which was until then administered by another bishop. When Patriarch Joseph accomplished his business in Baghdad, he visited on his way back the churches of the East (Mosul). He passed away at the Monastery of Mor Atanous above Tellbsam in December 1103 of the Greeks (A.D. 792). He ordained only one bishop for Ba'lbak named Anthimus.

In the year 1104 of the Greeks (A.D. 794), the bishops assembled in Harran, and on August 15, ordained Cyriacus (Quryaqos) from the Monastery of Bizona, as patriarch. Cyriacus was eloquent and pure, body and soul. Bishop Zachariah took him to Edessa, whose congregation received him like an angel of God. He entered the city with great pomp, and the people loved him. However, when he brought up the case of Zachariah whom they had rejected, the congregation displayed disobedience. The patriarch tried his utmost to reconcile them with Zachariah but they did not want him. Subsequently, the patriarch set apart four sections of the diocese of Edessa and placed them under the jurisdiction of Zachariah to administer in his lifetime. However, after his death, they would then be returned to the diocese, and the diocese would become one unit like before. The Edessans accepted this arrangement provided the patriarch should choose whomever he liked and ordain him as their bishop. Then, the patriarch departed the city. A short while afterwards, he ordained for them Basil from the Monastery of Qinnestrin. Realizing that, as a responsible leader, he was succeeding in his management and organization of the church, and that there was nothing to disturb church affairs, Patriarch Cyriacus thought that things would keep running in this manner. He decided to abolish the use of the expression 'we break the heavenly bread,' and he imposed on the clerics whom he ordained a condition not to use this expression. However, he forgot that before him Patriarch Gewargi did not abolish it but left its use to the discretion of the bishops in order to avoid a schism of the church. Because of this expression, trouble began in the church. In the year 1106 of the Greeks (A.D. 796), a council met in Beth Bati in the province of Harran. After deliberation, the bishops resolved that each bishop should use this expression or not according to what he saw fit, lest those who did not use it should entertain suspicion concerning it. Then, they issued forty canons regarding the revisions, which the patriarch had proposed in this council. Some bishops, however, opposed him secretly. Among them was Severus, bishop of Samosata, who had not agreed to the election of the patriarch in the first place, and the patriarch, in turn, was angry with him. When the patriarch visited Severus' diocese to correct some of the mistakes that had been committed because of Severus' negligence, Severus accused him that he had come only to find a charge against him. Therefore, he did not open for him the door of the church. However, when the patriarch presented to the governor his decree of investiture, the governor ordered Severus to open the door of the church. The patriarch entered the church, ascended the pulpit and excommunicated Severus. He passed from village to village excommunicating Severus. Severus gathered the bishops, the presbyters, the monks and the congregation, and went to see the patriarch in his monastery. The patriarch forgave him, and peace prevailed.

Chapter Four: On the period of the fall of Emperor Constantine and his mother and the reign of Nicephorus; on the things done by Harun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) at this time; on the treasure which was found in Edessa; on the trouble stirred up by the monks against Patriarch Cyriacus, and the union he consummated with the Julianists and its annulment.

When Constantine trampled upon the law and was held with contempt by the people, the Tayoye (Arabs) began to plunder the Roman countries unopposed, and the Romans contemplated deposing him. Instead of desisting from doing evil, Constantine increased his wickedness. Obsessed by debauchery, he took the daughters of the nobles and corrupted them. When he went forth to fight the Bulgarians, he reached Thrace where he indulged in drunkenness and debauchery. The nobles informed his mother of his behavior, and she promised to depose him. Upon his return, she had him blinded and she became the sole ruler. She appointed the eunuch Aetius a chief patrician, and made him second in command (in the

kingdom). When the Tayoye (Arabs) invaded the country of the Romans, Aetius defeated them. In the next year, they invaded the Roman country the second time and were victorious. They also invaded it the third time and were victorious. Then, the Romans wished to make Nicephorus, the Logothete (auditor), a Cappadocian, their king (emperor). When Irene heard of this, she ordered to have him blinded but Aetius the eunuch hid him and wanted to reign himself. He asked Irene to offer him the crown, but she refused, and he became wrathful. Irene informed Nicetas, the patrician, about the intention of Aetius, so Nicetas and the patriarch took counsel with the Senate, and it pleased them to make Nicephorus king. He reigned in the year 1114 of the Greeks (A.D. 803), and he honored Queen Irene and Aetius the eunuch, but they plotted to kill him by the hands of certain monks. When the plot was revealed, Irene was sent into exile to Athens, where she became a nun, and died there. Nicephorus did not harm the monks, and recompensed Aetius for what he had done.¹⁸⁵⁴

At this time, Harun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), built a city in Lesser Armenia near Melitene called Zubatra. While he was engaged in building the city, Saturecius (captain of the host of the Romans) attacked the country of the Peloponnesus, which had belonged to the Tayoye (Arabs) for a long time, subjugated it and established a garrison in it. He returned carrying off with him a great number of Tayoye (Arab) captives, sheep, horses and camels.¹⁸⁵⁵

As to the treasure that was found in Edessa, Dionysius Tell Mahre said, as we mentioned in Book Two, that the wife of Rasafya had buried this treasure when the king of Persia asked her to go with him to Persia. The house in which the treasure was buried belonged to the Rasafya family. Later, however, it was owned through inheritance by the family of Tell Mahre. Evidently, a man from the Goumayan family (in Edessa) had married a woman, and the ownership of the house went to Silvestrous, who was born by that woman for the Goumayans. He left it as an inheritance to his sons with a treasure. However, the sons, being used to riotous living, squandered their inheritance. They heard that beneath their house was a hidden treasure and began to dig in order to find it. Behold, they truly found a treasure under their house, but because they were infantile and had no discipline, they did not behave wisely and devoted themselves even more to riotous living, horses and hunting dogs. Then, when the report about them reached Harun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), he had them captured and imprisoned in Callinicus. He sent his own eunuch to Edessa to seize whatever they sold of royal things, including objects in the form of snakes and scorpions of silver filled with gold dust. However, these wretched, infantile men, thinking that these objects were filled with dirt, threw them away and sold the silver. This was obviously known. The eunuch seized their freeborn women and their mother, an aged woman. He took from them what remained of the jars, cases of gold, silver, valuable jewelry and Roman money, and he shut up each one in a separate chamber. He also imprisoned their virgin sister in a separate chamber on the fourth floor of the house of a Chalcedonian man and set Persians to guard over her. She kept awake hearing that they might come to defile her. However, hearing the sound of feet, she thought that the guards had come to rape her. She wrapped her face with a napkin, threw herself out of the window, and was found in the street. She died the next day. Fear fell upon the eunuch, and Harun himself was sorry for her death. He released her brothers and gave them back one-fifth of what was their own property.¹⁸⁵⁶

In the year 1109 (A.D. 798), Patriarch Cyriacus convened a council for the purpose of achieving union with the Julianists. It was attended by their leader Gabriel. When Gabriel realized that the doctrine of Julian was foolish, he and his partisans were convinced of our own (Orthodox) faith. Nevertheless, they could not bear themselves to proclaim the name of the holy Severus (patriarch of Antioch, d. 538), although they accepted his writings against Julian. They would not even condemn Julian by name. Patriarch Cyriacus, in consideration of the circumstance, overlooked these matters and hoped that they (the Julianists) might

¹⁸⁵⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 120. The account of Theophanes concerning these events is more detailed and different in many aspects. For example, he says that Irene was banished to the island of Lesbos where she died. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 655-658.

¹⁸⁵⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 119-120.

later come to agree with him. As to the office of the patriarchate, they decided that Gabriel should be the patriarch of the Julianists, his name should be proclaimed in our church, and the name of Patriarch Cyriacus proclaimed in their own churches. In the case of the death of either one, the living one would become the sole head of the entire church. Then, Patriarch Cyriacus offered the communion to Gabriel and his companions, and on the next day, Gabriel celebrated the Sacrifice (Holy Eucharist).

Some bishops, however, were displeased with Patriarch Cyriacus because of the idea of union. Therefore, the council resumed its meeting and Gabriel attended. The bishops demanded that he excommunicate Julian, but the patriarch objected to their demand saying, "It is not required of us to enter with them into such matters, for we do have administrative examples of ancient church leaders." Then, taking Gabriel aside, the bishops asked him to excommunicate Julian and endorse Severus (of Antioch). Gabriel replied, "Know my brothers, if I had not turned my face completely against Julian, the people would not have obeyed me, and I would not have led them to join you. Now, if you wish to win me alone, I will excommunicate Julian. However, if you wish to win the entire congregation, you ought to know that there are those who, out of ignorance or because of ancient custom, find it difficult to have him excommunicated openly. If you force them to accept his excommunication, they will turn backward, and the whole union which we have achieved will collapse." He reasoned at length with them, but they would not yield. They insisted that Julian be excommunicated at the pulpit. Gabriel found out the reason of their recalcitrance. He rose up, and, shaking (the dust) of his garment, said, "I have realized now that the truth which you claim is not by God or for his sake, it is because of your hatred of your leader (the patriarch), in order that peace would not be accomplished through him. You should know that God will demand of you the blood of the people for which you are impeding their salvation." Thus, the union failed because of the malice of the bishops, and the machination of the foe (Satan). May God overcome him and foil his wiles, and keep the Orthodox community safe from them. Amen. *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Five: On the beginning of the reign of Nicephorus, emperor of the Romans; on Harun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); on the separation of the Gubbites from patriarch Cyriacus, and the miracle which occurred in Mabug (Manbij), and the rest of events which took place in this period

In November of the year 1114 (A.D. 803), Nicephorus reigned over the Romans. He was an administrator and a mighty man. It is said that he was of Tayoye (Arab) origin. It happened that a man from Yaman named Jabala ruled over the Christians of Yaman.¹⁸⁵⁷ When Muhammad called the Tayoye (Arabs) to Islam, Jabala and his companions were made Muslims at the hands of Umar ibn al-Khattab, and he accompanied Umar to Makka. When Jabala was present with Umar at the masjid, a man who was called Fazara trod on him. Jabala turned and smote him and broke his nose. Fazara complained to Umar who said to Jabala, "Either you reconcile with the man, or hand to him your nose that he may break it." Jabala said to Umar, "How can a king like me permit a lowly man like this one to strike him? Umar said, "Although you are more honorable than he is in kingship, you are only equal to him in Islam." Jabala said to Umar, "Leave me until the morning, so that I might think of one of the two things you mentioned." In the night, Jabala and his companions fled to Cappadocia, and they became Christians again, and from him was descended this Nicephorus who reigned. When Abd al-Malik, who was chosen to fight the Romans, heard this, he said to Elpidius, the Roman who handed Sicily to the Tayoye (Arabs), "Tell me, who did you leave amongst the Romans who deserve the kingdom?" Elpidius said, "A rich man who descends from the emperors." Abd al-Malik asked, "Is there anyone else?" Elpidius said, "There is an intelligent man who fasts and prays named Nicephorus." Abd al-Malik said, "He is the one who has reigned." Elpidius said, "If Nicephorus is reigning, cast your dainty apparel and gird yourself about with armor and prepare yourself for war." This is what exactly happened. For, since the rise of Islam, no one among the emperors of the Romans was a fighting man and successful in war like Nicephorus.¹⁸⁵⁸ Nicephorus sent a message to Harun; the caliph was

¹⁸⁵⁷ Jabala was king of the Ghassanid Arabs in Hawran, Syria.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Theophanes does not have a good idea about Nicephorus. In fact, he hated him and accused him of causing ill will and

instigated and prepared for war. He commanded a huge army and invaded the country of the Romans. He was met by Nicephorus and his army, and each of them encamped opposite the other. Meanwhile, they sent messengers to each other and exchanged messages. Subsequently, they concluded peace, and each one returned to his own country. They sent gifts to each other, while their troops and people engaged in the exchange of business.¹⁸⁵⁹

In 1115 (A.D. 804), the Roman army attacked Cilicia and spoiled it. It also attacked the region of Mopsuestia and 'Ayn Zarba and took captives. The Tayoye (Arabs) overtook them at Tarsus and brought back the captives. When Harun, who was in Persia, heard this, he came to Callinicus, and in the month of April spoiled Heraclea. Nicephorus went out to fight him. When Harun saw the great army of the Romans, he sued for peace, and delivered to them all the Roman prisoners who were under his dominion. He even gave Nicephorus the tents in which he was living and their ornaments.

In the same year, Harun built a city above Callinicus, and called it Heraclea after the name of the wife he took from the House of the Heracleans. He gathered the artisans who erected tall buildings. The building of the city, however, caused financial distress, which caused the people to nearly starve. Harun opened his treasure and commanded that payments should be doubled. He scattered the wealth he had collected. Nicephorus also, being undisturbed by the Tayoye (Arabs), built Ankyra (Ancyra), and other places in the place of Tuana and Heraclea which the Tayoye (Arabs) had seized in his time. One of the Chalcedonian historians accused Nicephorus of many charges.

When Harun wanted to go down to Persia, he reviewed his treasures and found that what he possessed exceeded what Abu Ja'far (al-Mansur) had collected by ten million dirhams, that is five hundred million. He was happy for the abundance of his wealth. He performed three prostrations of prayer in every mosque. As he was going after a man who rebelled against him, he commanded that his eldest son Muhammad (al-Amin) should succeed him in the kingdom, and after him al-Ma'mun, and then al-Qasim respectively. However, this arrangement caused the division of their (Abbasid) kingdom. Muhammad (al-Amin) ruled in Baghdad, and al-Qasim ruled in Syria. As to al-Ma'mun, Harun took him with him to Khurasan, and instead of a place to reign, he gave him ten million silver pieces. Harun killed the rebel in the city of Tus, and in this city he died in the year 1120 of the Greeks (A.D. 809), having reigned twenty-three years.¹⁸⁶⁰

Nicephorus, emperor of the Romans, marched against the Bulgarians and killed an immense number of them. He seized their capital and destroyed it. He even had the audacity to stretch out the children on the ground so that threshing machines could shred them. In the year 1122 (A.D. 821), Nicephorus was assassinated by a Roman man.¹⁸⁶¹

The primary reason for the rebellion of the Gubbites was the incompetence of their Bishop Bacchus, who was also the bishop of the Cyrusians (the congregation of Cyrus or Qurush near Aleppo), in administrative matters. In addition, he did not adhere to apostolic canons. When Patriarch Cyriacus censured him many times and he did not obey, he suspended him (from service). Then, the bishops appealed to the patriarch to restore him, and he did. Bacchus, however, waxed angry with the patriarch and went on instigating the presbyters in his district to use the expression "We break heavenly bread," just to annoy the patriarch. When Bacchus was about to die, he called the presbyters and the chief priests, and excommunicated anyone who used this expression. He also warned them not to accept any bishops who were not from their own monastery. He said, "Nothing annoys me more than this Germanician (Patriarch

dissension within the empire. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 654-658 just for an example. The contemporary historian George Ostrogorsky portrays Nicephorus as a competent and learned man who tried to fix the political and economic problems of the Empire created by previous governments. See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Rutgers University Press, 1957), 166-175. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 120-121, follows Michael Rabo.

¹⁸⁵⁹ According to Tabari, Harun al-Rashid had a great contempt for Niqfur (Nicephorus) after receiving his letter. In a reply to Nicephorus, he addressed him as a dog of the Romans and the son of the infidel woman. See Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, 6 (Cairo: Matba'at al-Istiqaama, 1939), 501 and Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 300, who quotes Tabari.

¹⁸⁶⁰ See Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, 6: 528-529; *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 665.

¹⁸⁶¹ Cf. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 663.

Cyriacus), who split the districts and abolished the expression “We break heavenly bread.” After Bacchus passed away, his disciple, Akhsnaya, (a Syriac term for stranger), accompanied by a group (of monks) from the Gubba Baraya (Outer Pit) Monastery, who went to see the patriarch. They offered him a mule and a staff according to the usual custom of the church, and asked him to ordain Akhsnaya as bishop for them. He said to them, “It is not fair that monks control the dioceses as if by inheritance. We will ordain for you a bishop from another diocese, and will ordain a bishop from among you for another diocese.” When they realized that he did not fulfill their quest, they went to the Cyrusians, and instigated the entire region and urged the lay people to rebel (against the patriarch). The Cyrusians listened to the monks and rebelled, being motivated by sheer arrogance and abundant money. They decided to reject a bishop not from the Gubba Baraya (Outer Pit) Monastery, and to never allow their diocese to be divided. Patriarch Cyriacus wrote admonishing them to fear God and receive (the bishop) whom he would send them. However, they refused and said impudently, “We will not accept anyone of the (starving) villagers who has become satiated by eating bread; we want Akhsnaya.” Although Yuhanon, bishop of Aleppo, and Theodore, bishop of Seleucia, knew that the patriarch was hot tempered, and did his own word, still they urged him to hasten ordaining for the Cyrusians a bishop even without their consent. The truth was that these bishops committed an egregious mistake, and such counsel could not have come from these pious men. After all, when the patriarch ordained for the Cyrusian a monk from the Monastery of Mor Jacob in Cyrus, as a bishop, the wrath of the people of Cyrus heated up even more. No one accepted him except the people of Gubrin and Tarmizad (Tarmanaz?). The people of Cyrus stopped proclaiming the name of the patriarch (in their churches).

The rebels and the deposed bishops congregated and went to Harun, king (caliph) of the Arabs at Marj Dabiq (in northern Syria) where he was preparing to invade the country of the Romans. They presented to him a memorandum fraught with falsehood. In it they said, “We would like to inform the protected (by God) king (caliph) that Cyriacus who claims to be patriarch, and has become a head over us in spite of ourselves, holds a firman (decree), and imposes on us many heavy burdens. He is the enemy of the king (caliph) and of the entire Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims). He has built churches on the Roman borders, and has delivered messages to them. He refuses to stay in the place in where you stay. And if you go east, he goes west.” When the letter was read, the caliph issued an order that the churches in the region of *thughbur* (border towns) be demolished, including the new church, and that Cyriacus be brought to him in disgrace. However, God in his mercy did not allow the patriarch to be humiliated at the hands of impious men. Theodore, bishop of Seleucia, went to Callinicus on a swift beast and guided the patriarch and the bishops onto another highway, and they reached Jubrin . When the king (Caliph Harun) went out of Hadath to go to Jubrin , he met the patriarch on the road, and the patriarch greeted him. The caliph’s men told him that he was the patriarch. The caliph trusted the affair of the patriarch to his secretary Isma’il ibn Salih, who loved the patriarch, to investigate the charges leveled against him by the monks. When the patriarch, his monks and his bishops went into the presence of Isma’il ibn Salih, the group of Ciaphas also entered into his presence. They accused the patriarch of killing a bishop. They also clamored and mocked him and treated him with contempt. When Isma’il realized their cunning, he had them expelled.

While Simon, from the Monastery of Gubba Baraya who had become a bishop of the Arab tribes, was walking with his disciples, some robbers attacked them and killed them. It was rumored that the patriarch had hired Arabs to kill them.

Bar Matar, who was sent to demolish the churches, committed egregious acts not only in *thughbur*, but also in the villages of Antioch and Jerusalem. He pulled down ancient churches including our church in Jerusalem and collected great amounts of bribes. All the people condemned the Gubbites who were the cause of this devastation.

In the year 1118 of the Greeks (A.D. 807), Patriarch (Cyriacus) returned and dwelt in his monastery in Callinicus.

On June 23 of this year 1115 (A.D. 804), a severe tremor occurred in Mopsuestia, its wall fell down and many of its houses were destroyed. In addition, three villages in the region were destroyed, and the

River Jihun, which passed by its side, stopped flowing for six hours and the boats were grounded on the dry land. In this same year, locusts devoured all kinds of crops.

In this time, immense sedition took place in Rome as the people congregated against their Patriarch Adrian and blinded his eyes, but not entirely. Evidently, the man who blinded him treated him with mercy and fled to France, because Rome was then under the domination of France.

In this period was a heathen man (an Arab) of the tribe of Quraysh, whose name was Ruwayyih. His house was adjacent to a Christian church, and constantly listened to the prayers. He looked through the window, and vexed the priest by casting at him pellets made of clay during the Sacrifice (the celebration of the Eucharist). One day while he was looking at the priest through the window, as was his custom, Almighty God, who knows everything even before it happens, had mercy on him. The man saw in the middle of the paten a slain lamb rolling in blood instead of the bread and the wine. Shocked by this spectacle, he went to see the priest in order to verify what he had seen. When he looked carefully, he saw in the paten the lamb broken into pieces and dribbling with blood. However, the priest did not know what went on until the man told him the whole story. The priest began to teach him the holy mysteries, and the man (Ruwayyih) left his house, entered a monastery and was baptized. When the report of this man reached King (Caliph) Harun, he summoned him and asked him about the story. He said with great courage that what he saw was from God, and that he would never deny Christianity even if he was tortured and cut to pieces. They (Harun) bound him in iron fetters, and shut him up in prison for two years. After immense torture, Harun summoned Ruwayyih the second time and promised him precious gifts if he denied Christ. When he remained unshaken, he commanded that his head be cut off, and had (his corpse) hung on the wall of Raphka. Many people saw the light that came down from heaven and rested on his head. A certain Christian man from the country of Persia took it down and carried it to his city.¹⁸⁶²

At this time locusts swarmed for three years, they multiplied and devastated the country of Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia). Worse still, there was famine, and the people were in distress because of the heavy taxes and lack of money, which was gathered into the caliph's treasury.

In the year 1119 (A.D. 808), the famine became severe, and God sent wild beasts which dug up the bodies of the dead and ate them, they also boldly attacked the living. Women and children who went out looking for green herbs to eat were also attacked and devoured by beasts.¹⁸⁶³

The Building of the Monastery of Mor Hananya (Za'faran Monastery).

In the year 1104 of the Greeks (A.D. 793), Patriarch Cyriacus ordained a bishop for Mardin and Kafartuta, named Hananya, from the Monastery of Mor Matta (St. Matthew's Monastery) in the Mountain of the Uluf (north of Mosul), where thousands of monks and solitaries lived. The Nestorian writer Dnah Yeshu' (Yeshu' Dnah), bishop of Furath Mishan, present-day Basra, Iraq, in Book Ten, Chapter, Seven of his *Chronicle*, said,¹⁸⁶⁴ "In these days, Hananya, bishop of the Severians (followers of Severus of Antioch) founded a monastery in the Mountain of Mardin. He is the Jacobite bishop of Mardin, Kafartuta and the district of the Jazira. He was wealthy and loved strangers. He was from the monastery of Mor Matai (Matta) in the mountain of the Uluf. Hannaya found near Mardin a fortress built with huge rocks since the Roman era. He bought it and turned it into a monastery. He planted around it vineyards and olive trees and offered plenty of money to the governors. With his wisdom, he silenced his opponents. He constructed here a church and an altar, and gathered a group of monks. He took much care of them, having done this not for transient vainglory, but to receive recompense from above. This monastery is known as the Monastery of Mor Hananya in the Mardin Mountain until this day."¹⁸⁶⁵

¹⁸⁶² Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 121.

¹⁸⁶³ Bar Hebraeus, *Ibid.* 122.

¹⁸⁶⁴ This chronicle in three volumes is lost to us except this passage about the funding of the Hananya Monastery quoted here by Dionysius Tell Mahre.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 121.

Chapter Six: On the division of the Tayoye (Arab) kingdom after the death of Harun, and the division of the kingdom of the Romans after the death of Nicephorus; on the schism which took place against Patriarch Cyriacus

When Harun al-Rashid died (809), the building of Heraclea was halted and his son Muhammad, called al-Amin, reigned (809-813). Al-Amin transferred the treasures of his father from Callinicus (al-Raqqā) to Baghdad. He also transferred the treasure of his brother al-Ma'mun and his family who had reigned in Khurasan. Muhammad (al-Amin) was lascivious, lived a riotous life, and neglected the affairs of the state.¹⁸⁶⁶ As to al-Ma'mun, he was well bred, cultured and respectful of the law.

In the year 1121 of the Greeks (A.D. 810), conflict began between the two brothers Muhammad (al-Amin) and al-Ma'mun, because Muhammad violated his father's will and wanted to grant the right of succession to his own son rather than to his brother al-Ma'mun. In addition, Muhammad (al-Amin) did not give his brother the share of the money his father had granted to him, but laid his hands on it. He further tried to summon him treacherously in order to seize him, but al-Ma'mun discovered the treachery and refused his brother's summons. Subsequently war began between the two brothers.¹⁸⁶⁷ Then, many rebels emerged in their countries. One of them was 'Amr, who had been shut up in a prison in Callinicus for a murder crime he had committed in Samosata. 'Amr obtained a horse and a sword and killed the guard and those with him. He broke his fetters, fled to Samosata and killed its governor who had thrown him into jail. He plundered the merchants and fled with some of the members of his gang to Palestine. They began to plunder, kill and spoil the country. Muhammad (al-Amin) sent Sulayman to Homs, Damascus, and Palestine, but was opposed by 'Amr who destroyed his army; Sulayman returned to Baghdad discomfited.¹⁸⁶⁸

In Armenia, a person named Nasr rebelled and joined 'Amr. Both began to oppress people. Meanwhile, Muhammad (al-Amin) lavished largess on his troops and appointed Ali as their commander. He dispatched them to fight against his brother al-Ma'mun, who also dispatched his troops commanded by Harthama (ibn A'yun) and Tahir (Ibn al-Husayn), to fight the troops of his brother Muhammad. At first, Tahir came with four thousand men and met Ali, (captain of the host), with 30,000 men. Ali was defeated and fled. A great number of his army was drowned in the River Balikh where the battle occurred. Tahir's troops plundered great amounts of gold, silver and belongings.

The rebel, Nasr, went into Jazira plundering and spoiling. However, Khormiza (sic), governor of the Jazira, went forth to fight him, and killed many of his troops, and Nasr fled. When Muhammad (al-Amin) heard of the defeat of Ali and his army, he was scared and summoned Khormiza unto him. When the rebels, Nasr and 'Amr, learned that Khormiza was recalled, they assembled their armies and attacked the Jazira. They robbed, plundered, and killed without mercy. They committed fornication with married women and virgins and also with idle young men. They gathered tremendous amounts of money and then departed to Harran and Edessa where they set on fire villages, churches and monasteries. When the Tayoye (Arabs) captured Harran, the enemies of the Christians wrote to the rebels ('Amr and Nasr) saying, that if they would send someone who would destroy the ciborium of the church of the Christians, the Christians would ransom it with all that they had. The Edessans were scared because the wall of Edessa had not been rebuilt since it was demolished by Abu Ja'far. Since they had no one to protect them, they turned their eyes to heaven and resolved to fast and keep vigils and prayers. Then, God who is near to those who call on him in truth,¹⁸⁶⁹ put it into the heart of Yahya ibn Sa'id, and he departed and went to Nasr and 'Amr the rebels, and advised them to desist from their acts. They accepted the counsel of the old man by the inspiration of God, and the citizens of Edessa paid five thousand dirhams for their safety. These events took place in the year 1123 of the Greeks (A.D. 812).

¹⁸⁶⁶ Theophanes says that Muhammad al-Amin was incompetent in all respects. See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 665.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Tabari details the conflict between the two brothers. See Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, 7 (Cairo; Matba; at al-Istiqama, 1939): 1-116.

¹⁸⁶⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 124 with some difference.

¹⁸⁶⁹ Psalm 145:18.

The winter months of this year (1121, A.D. 810) were temperate and the rain was seasonal. Crops of different kinds were plentiful everywhere. At the end of January, however, a northern wind blew up for eight days and everything was burned as if by fire. In that year, there was no yield of crops, vineyards or fruit trees, especially in Athor and Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia).

In this year, the Monastery of Qinnestrin was devastated as follows. A certain Nazarene (Christian) man named Rabi'a raised a banner over the bridge on the Euphrates River. He and his companions assembled and came to the Monastery of Qinnestrin. Since no one gave them anything to ransom the monastery, they plundered it and set its magnificent church, which had no equal, on fire. They also set on fire the temple of the Apostle Thomas above the cave, and the fortress. Finally, the Gubbite, who lived in the neighborhood, came and took the wood and the doors, and demolished the monastery. This was the first monastery to be devastated during the reign of the Arabs.

Then, rebellious men and chief robbers appeared in the west, Egypt and in all Africa, and seized the possessions of the Christians. Then, the Qaysites, the Yamanites, the Kufites and the Sulaymanites turned against each other and fought each other. All they had done was to annihilate the Christians.¹⁸⁷⁰

When Patriarch Cyriacus learned that the people of Cyrus (Qurush) rejected the bishop whom he had ordained for them, he assembled thirty bishops and went to Jubrin where they addressed letters calling for peace. In addition, he sent four bishops to Kafar Halif where the monks of the Monastery of Gubba Baraya had assembled. They went forth against the bishops like Tayoye (Arab) wolves hurling stones at them and insulting them. When the patriarch witnessed their brutality, he went to the amir (governor) of the district. The governor sent men who brought unto him forty of the troublemakers, and the patriarch shut them up in the monastery. Then, the notables of Cyrus went to see the patriarch. They apologized to him, and asked for his blessing. They promised to reconcile the monks with him if he would release the forty prisoners. The patriarch recited the prayer of forgiveness over the monks and released them with the forty prisoners. However, when they returned to their villages, the prisoners, stirred up by the devil, reneged on their promises, followed the counsel of Matta of Kafartuta, and transgressed the church canons. By the mediation of the excommunicated Job, Yuhanon, the hunchback of Kokhta, who was deposed by the Patriarch Gewargi, had the audacity to ordain two bishops, Gabriel from the Gubba Baraya (Outer Pit) Monastery, and Theophanes from the Monastery of Eusebuna, for the Tanukhian village of Komit. When the bishops learned of this, they informed the governor who summoned all those who attended that meeting, and seized Yuhanon, bishop of Kochta and some monks. They did not desist, however, despite the advice of the bishops, but insisted with even more audacity, to challenge the patriarch and make him hear offensive words. It was then that they were excommunicated by Philexine, bishop of Nisibin, who later joined ranks with them and tore up the excommunication copy of the Gubbites (monks of the Gubba Baraya Monastery).

Copy of the Excommunication of the Gubbites

In the name of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, in the year 1119 of the Greeks (A.D. 808), a holy council met in the village of Jubrin of the people of Cyrus, concerning the events that occurred in the church. While they were deliberating according to the canons of the church, suddenly some men who were suspect bishops defiled with unclean boils of lusts, began to display disobedience to God and his church. Of these bishops was the defiled Job, once the bishop of Massissa, who was charged with murder and drunkenness, and even worked as a tax collector. He pressured the members of his diocese to pay more taxes. He trampled upon the commands of the patriarch and held the holy mysteries with contempt. Along with him was Yuhanon, bishop of Kochta, a deceiver who had no known homeland, and who was not counted among the bishops. These men, like Dathan and Abiram who conspired against Moses, have willfully conspired against the chief priesthood and the holy council assembled in Jubrin.¹⁸⁷¹ They invited

¹⁸⁷⁰ See *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 665.

¹⁸⁷¹ Dathan and Abiram are Reubenite sons of Eliab who, with others, opposed the authority of Moses and Aaron, and accused them of having set themselves above the Lord's assembly. See Numbers 16:1-3.

corrupt men to join them like Gabriel, Theodotus and Theophanes, and ordained them as bishops while they were depraved men. Therefore, our council, along with our chief priest Jesus Christ and the Apostles, declare the excommunication of Job, Yuhanon, Gabriel, Theodotus, Akhsnaya, Matta, Simon and Theophanes. It is resolved, on the living word of God which is feared by the powers of darkness and all creation, that God does not recognize them as bishops, even priests, and that they are not counted among the believers, but they are excommunicated. Anyone who accepts them will partake in their iniquity.

I, Cyriacus, by God's mercy, Patriarch of the Apostolic See of Antioch, have excommunicated those whose names are mentioned above.

Signed: Yuhanon, bishop of Germanicia, Li'azar, bishop of Aurim, and the rest of the bishops.

After the council dispersed, the monk Abraham from the Monastery of Qartmin (Mor Gabriel) came to the patriarch who was at the Pillar Monastery. He asked him to pray and forgive his brother Simon from the Gubba Baraya Monastery. He blamed his brother and rebuked him (for his opposition of the patriarch). He promised to bring him to the patriarch. The patriarch believed him and prayed for his brother. However, upon his departure, he met Matta of Kafartuta, and by his influence of cajolement, Abraham forgot his promise and followed the rebel (Matta). The bishops, who were deposed twice, met and set up a patriarch for them. Their heresy was established even more and they became enemies of the church. That wretched (Matta) began to ordain spurious bishops for the dioceses. They went about holding onto the expression "We break heavenly bread," and accusing the patriarch of the heresy of the Julianists. They further circulated the report that the expression "We break heavenly bread" was known in the Syrian churches of Syria, Beth Nahrin and Athor. In their wandering, they reached Alexandria and Egypt. They planted doubts among the believers with the intention of alienating Mark (patriarch of Alexandria) and Cyriacus. Cyriacus, however, addressed a letter to Pope Mark explaining to him the true happenings, and Mark ordered those monks expelled. He assembled the bishops and excommunicated Abraham and those who ordained him, and all the Gubbites. *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Seven: On the internecine conflict of the Tayoye (Arabs) between themselves and with the rebels; the murder of two Roman kings (emperors); the rebuilding of the walls of Edessa, Kesum and Samosata; the intensification of the opposition of the excommunicated recalcitrants (bishops) to Patriarch Cyriacus

In this period, which was the year 1124 (A.D. 813), many rebels like Nasr and 'Amr appeared in the kingdom of the Tayoye (Arabs). Nasr and 'Amr went up to Tarsekyana, Bazabde, Bamoraya and Tishpa, looting and burning by fire until they reached the village of Hadis. They found in a small monastery outside it a blessed man, a solitary ascetic in a small cell, and demanded from him everything that he had. He gave them everything that belonged to him and to others. After delivering to them everything, they set the solitary and his cell on fire. Then 'Amr went to Samosata and built a fortress and dwelt therein. Nasr went to Sarug and made them pay a tribute to him. People in the Tayoye (Arab) kingdom gathered around any man who mounted a horse or cried out with a loud voice, and while these things were done among the Arabs, similar things were being done among the Romans.

Five months after Stauracius, son of Nicephorus had reigned, the Bulgarians came against the royal city (Constantinople) to make war against him, and Stauracius was wounded in the thigh. His wound become swollen and broken up, and he died. Some say that his sister Procopia, daughter of Nicephorus, poisoned him so that Michael, her husband, might reign. Then Michael reigned, and again the Bulgarians came to the capital but Michael did not fight against them, and left their resistance to Leo the patrician. Leo made war against the Bulgarians, defeated them, and killed their king. Then the Romans deposed Michael and set up Leo as their emperor.¹⁸⁷² He seized Michael, tonsured him and placed him in a monastery, and he castrated his sons. He made peace with the Bulgarians and gave them the salt marsh over which they were

¹⁸⁷² He is Leo V the Armenian (813-820).

fighting. This Leo was from Armeniacos, and he reigned seven and a half years. He was killed by another Michael (Michael II the Stammerer 820-829), who reigned after him.¹⁸⁷³

When Muhammad (al-Amin) learned of the atrocities committed by these rebels in Beth Nahrin and the west, he sent Husayn, who brought Abd al-Malik from prison that they might go forth against them. When the rebels learned of this, they abated their atrocities a little bit. Abd al-Malik, who was a wise man, summoned the rebels to have peace, while in the meantime, he had a different intention. He commanded the blacksmiths to make plenty of iron fetters in order to bind the rebels and send them to Baghdad. While the negotiation of peace was going on between Abd al-Malik and Nasr and 'Amr, a Persian man saw a certain Tayoyo (Arab) at the city of Callinicus. He recognized him from the horse he was mounting which belonged to his father, who the Tayoye (Arabs) had killed in Sarug. He took this incident as pretext to fight the Tayoye (Arabs). The Persians gathered and fought the Tayoye (Arabs), and many fell on both sides. Then the rebels, 'Amr and Nasr, set fire on the road which connected Raphika with Callinicus, burning the Pillar Monastery, and fled. Husayn went to Baghdad to lodge a complaint against Abd al-Malik, but death overtook Abd al-Malik in Callinicus.

On May 14 of the year 1123 (A.D. 812), a total eclipse took place from the ninth to the eleventh hours. It became dark like night, the stars appeared, and people lit lamps. Then the sun reappeared for one hour.

When the rebels learned of the death of Abd al-Malik, they began to plunder and spoil anew, extending their control over some regions. Then 'Amr and Nasr rebuilt Samosata by the hands of poor Christians. Abu Shok Ganawaye rebuilt the wall of Edessa with the expenses collected from a group of Edessans. He gathered the Ganawayens of Tishpha and made them dwell in the houses of the Christians. Nasr captured Rish Kipha, Sarug and Kesum, and encircled it with three walls. (The other walls of Edessa, Samosata and Kesum were built in the time of the Tayoye (Arabs) in the year 1125 (A.D. 814). After some time, the walls of Samosata and Kesum collapsed.)

Abd Allah ibn Hashim seized Harran, followed by his son who also seized the city. Umar seized Thella, and Habib took Rish 'Ayna. Abd Allah took Mardin, and Abbas took Cyrus (Qurush). Uthman took Qinnésrin, Antioch and Apamea, and Muhammad established himself in Cilicia. Thabit set up gates in the mountain pass of Cilicia, and appointed to them guards so that the district of Cilicia might be a haven of safety to those who were persecuted and poor. King (Caliph) Muhammad sent Abd Allah, governor of the Jazira, against the rebels, but they agreed to fight with him. He treated them tactfully, sent them away with peace, and left each of them in control of the district in which they dwelt. He opened the treasures of the caliph at Raphika and appropriated most of it. Afterwards, the rebels began to fight for the control of Harran in order to spoil it, but when they were unable to seize it, they withdrew. As to Husayn, he went down to Baghdad to lodge a complaint against Abd al-Malik, and when his accusations were not accepted, he began to think of rebellion.

After the Gubbites were excommunicated and ejected from the church together with Abraham whom they had ordained a patriarch, the (Syrians) of Takrit stirred up a conflict with Patriarch Cyriacus because he never heeded their complaints against their bishop, Simon. Some said that the patriarch did this because he tried to belittle the importance of the See. Or, as his opponents claimed, that he was biased toward Simon for being his own disciple, and that he had ordained him without their consent. Having suffered plenty from the Takritians, the patriarch commanded Simon to go to his monastery until he became reconciled with the Takritians. Simon, however, refused to do so, and opposed his own master. However, when the patriarch alluded to his excommunication, he departed unwillingly. As a result, the congregation was split into two groups: one vilified Simon and his master, the patriarch; others lauded Simon and berated the patriarch because he had him depart. Thus, the patriarch was abused by both groups. When this evil increased, five bishops went to see the patriarch and asked him to convene a council to discuss this problem. A council was assembled and attended by the Takritians both friends and foes. They

¹⁸⁷³ *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor, 672-675; George Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, 173-175; Bar Hebraeus, Chronography, 125.*

charged Simon with egregious accusations—which I (Dionysius Tell Mahre) would rather not record for the forthcoming generations—including beating and killing. When the testimonies were presented, the bishops became suspicious of Simon, but the patriarch did not allow them to excommunicate him. However, Theodosius, who was ordained a bishop for Edessa, had left the city because of some trouble and stayed with the patriarch, helped Simon. However, his help was to no avail, and when the bishops found that there was no use of discussion, they advised that he should go to his monastery. However, Simon refused to do so, and submitted his resignation. Meanwhile, Philexine, bishop of Nisibin, was deposed and it was resolved that he should not attend any council. As he had exerted effort to have Simon deposed, he himself was deposed.

Patriarch (Cyriacus) took with him Theodosius to Edessa to reconcile him with its congregation. When they arrived in Callinicus, the Tayoye (Arabs) had already seized it, and the city suffered from famine. Therefore, they left Callinicus and went to Edessa where the patriarch reconciled the Edessans with their bishop Theodosius. The patriarch also made an effort to reconcile Simon with the people of the East. He permitted Simon to visit the bishops who had deposed him in order to gain their consent and become reconciled with the members of his congregation, that they may not impute blame to him upon his return. Simon deceived many of them by having them sign their consent, and presented it to the patriarch as a preparatory step to restore him to his see. When the patriarch prepared to go to Ceresium, Simon had already gone ahead of him to the city. Momentarily, a harbinger came to tell the patriarch that Simon had passed away. He and the congregations of the East heaved a sigh of relief. I (Tell Mahre), abstain from the things that the men of the monastery of Simon said about him upon his death, because of the reverence of the holy office of the holy priesthood.

Patriarch Cyriacus went down to Takrit and ordained Basil of the town of Balad.¹⁸⁷⁴ He was proficient in civil laws, in taxes and the manner they were collected, which made the patriarch believe that such a person would be able to run the affairs of the Easterners. For this reason, he ordained him a bishop.

The See of the East remained split from Antioch for a time, following the murder of Babai until the time of Garmai, who was ordained (a bishop) for Athor (Mosul) and Nineveh by Christophorus (metropolitan of the Armenians), and granted him the power to ordain bishops, as did the Catholicoses of Persia in the past. When it (the See of the East) rejoined the See of Antioch in the time of Patriarch Athanasius (Gamolo, d. 631) and Christophorus, metropolitan of the Armenians, he, at his ordination of Marutha as bishop for Takrit, confirmed Christophorus as the metropolitan for Athor, and gave Marutha the authority even over Christophorus, metropolitan of Athor, himself. Thus, the affairs of the regions of these dignitaries went about smoothly: the metropolitan of Takrit administered the affairs of all the bishops, while the metropolitan of Mosul had only the title of “Metropolitan.”

Basil was infected with the disease of pride. He stirred up a conflict between the members of the congregation of Mosul because, according to their custom, they proclaimed their bishop Daniel a Metropolitan. Thus, all the Mattians (the monks of the Monastery of St. Matthew) and the bishops rebelled against him and against the patriarch who supported him. They endeavored, as they wrongly thought, that they would destroy the dignity of their monastery. As a result, Mosul was split into two factions: one supporting the monks of St. Matthew’s Monastery and Daniel; the other censured them and leveled many charges against Daniel, and demanded the investigation of his case. The conflict led them to beat each other and they were even thrown into prison and fined by order of the governor. Patriarch Cyriacus excommunicated the monks of St. Matthew’s Monastery and their bishops, but the monks had the audacity to excommunicate the patriarch and Basil.¹⁸⁷⁵ *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Eight: On the intensification of rebellion in the dominions of the Tayoye (Arabs) and the murder of king (caliph) Muhammad (al-Amin); and the murder of Leo, the Roman Emperor; and

¹⁸⁷⁴ Balad is a town about seven miles south of Mosul. Its ruins are known today as Eski Mosul.

¹⁸⁷⁵ See Ignatius Yacoub III, *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew In Mosul*, translated by Matti Moosa (Gorgias Press, 2008), 41-46.

on the conflict stirred up against Patriarch Cyriacus; on his death; on the heresy started in Harran by a certain Chalcedonian Theodoricus nicknamed Phuglo (wild radish), who was exposed by the learned Nonnus, archdeacon of Nisibin

When Husayn, the captain of the Tayoye (Arab) host, contemplated a rebellion against the King (Caliph) Muhammad (al-Amin), he said to the Persians that Muhammad was supporting the Tayoye (Arabs). He gathered a group of the Persians and they went against Muhammad, bound him in iron fetters and cast him into prison. Husayn went out, sat on the bridge of Baghdad, and summoned his troops to submit to Abd Allah (al-Ma'mun). From prison, Muhammad sent to Husayn a message supported by oaths that he did not want the kingdom but only wanted his life and properties spared. When the Persians heard this, they felt sorry for him saying that he was wronged. They released him and set him upon his throne. Husayn was afraid of Muhammad (al-Amin), but Muhammad swore to him that he would not impute to him an offense. When Husayn went to see him, Muhammad gave him his ring and authorized him to administer the kingdom. Husayn, however, did not believe him and thought that it was only a trick. He fled to Harthama, captain of the host of al-Ma'mun. Afterwards, Muhammad sent him a message swearing that he would not do him harm. Still, Husayn would not submit. It was then that Muhammad fought against him and killed him.

The Tayoye (Arab) rebels thought that if they seized the city of Raphika, they would not let the Persians remain in the Jazira anymore. They advised Nasr and the rest of the rebels to accept the Banu Qays and join them. When they (rebels) came to Callinicus, they camped in the houses of the Christians at enormous expense to those households. Raphika was administered by Qawad ibn Isa, and when the rebels sieged the city, the people inside it stormed those outside with the stones hurled by mangonels (engines of war). Patriarch Cyriacus and Theodosius, bishop of Edessa, were then inside the city. When the people were distressed by hunger, they began to eat rice, bread and legumes. Eventually, they reached a rather a fragile peace according to which he Aquilites (men of Kufa) seized Callinicus, and the Persians seized Raphika.

In that same year (A.D. 813), when al-Ma'mun saw that many had deserted his brother Muhammad (al-Amin), he sent Harthama and Tahir, the captains of the hosts of al-Ma'mun, to subjugate the countries for him. Upon reaching Baghdad, schism ripped apart the whole city and its people were divided into two parties. They entered the treasuries of the kings (caliphs) plundering gold and household effects. Sometimes they killed each other because of the booty, and since no stones were found in Baghdad, they smashed the pillars of the churches and used them to hurl stones by engines of war. When Muhammad saw this, he appealed to Harthama to spare his life and possessions, and Harthama swore to him to do so. However, Tahir was angry with Harthama for doing this, and set up guards who overtook Muhammad (al-Amin) at night when he was fleeing in a boat. He threw himself into the river, swam away to safety, and hid himself in the house of a cotton merchant. They found him there and killed him; they raised his head on a lance and paraded it through Baghdad.¹⁸⁷⁶ These events took place in the year 1124 of the Greeks (A.D. 813).¹⁸⁷⁷

In this period, Muraiba was seized by the Ganawayens Maqsif and Rabib, and they oppressed the people tremendously. Then Nasr came, took Muraiba from them, and killed them. He and Abbas marched against the Tanukhians encamped at the River Quwayq near Aleppo. They founded there a city without a wall because it was too big and extensive, but it was a rich city teeming with troops and merchants. Even the citizens of Aleppo could not overcome them. After the Tanukhians fought against the Qaysites for ten days, they finally tired of fighting and left at night, men and women, to Qinnésrin without being detected by the Qaysites or the Aleppines. The Qaysites and the Aleppines entered the city plundering their houses and their rich villages; they devastated them, and left them desolate until this day. Indeed, these people deserved what happened to them since they deserted their faith for trivial things, by the same token, they deserted their possessions and departed barefoot, naked and overwhelmed.

¹⁸⁷⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 126. Tabari details the murder of Muhammad al-Amin. See Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, 7: 76-94.

¹⁸⁷⁷ This year corresponds to the year 198 of the Islamic Calendar, See Tabari, *Ibid.* 76 and 94.

When Harthama grieved over the death of Muhammad (al-Amin), al-Ma'mun sent him to Khurasan and ordered that he be killed there.¹⁸⁷⁸ He appointed Hasan (al-Hasan ibn Sahl) as captain of the host in his place. Outraged by his murder, Harthama's men went into the (public) bath and killed those who killed Harthama. Al-Ma'mun commanded that all of them be executed.¹⁸⁷⁹

In the year 1126 (A.D. 815), Tahir arrived with four thousand (Persian) troops at Callinicus. The Christians rejoiced and the rebels trembled. Some of them submitted and surrendered their regions to him. Nasr, however, did not submit, but at the beginning, he killed one of the notables and two hundred men. When Muhammad, captain of the host heard this, he crossed the Euphrates to face Nasr. However, because he did not leave the troops an opportunity to rest but engaged them in battle, he was defeated and killed with a great number of his men. When the report of his defeat reached Isa (Isa ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Khalid), he began to torture the rebels and kill them. Meanwhile, Tahir sent him a message asking him not to torture the rebels, but he did not hearken to him. Then, Tahir with twenty Arab men marched against Nasr, who surprised him, and he barely escaped with this life, but two of his mighty men who tried to rescue him were killed. When the Persians faced the Tayoye (Arab) troops, they began to kill them without mercy. Tahir, however, who did not cherish war, tore his garment and cast off his turban, and thus war with Tayoye (Arabs) quieted down.

In this time calamities in the world increased, but the children of the church were relatively comfortable. However, the wayward partisans of Abiram, that is Abraham whom the recalcitrants ordained as patriarch, did not let Patriarch Cyriacus have rest. They always gave asylum to every murderer, adulterer, or those ejected from the church. They also allowed the presbyters, who married the second time, to serve unlawfully. They also permitted the presbyters and deacons to wed two wives, and they went about deceiving simple folk, especially the remnants of the Tanukhite (Arabs). When the conflicts of the Easterners with the patriarch intensified, as we have mentioned in the previous chapter, the patriarch was forced to confirm Daniel as a metropolitan for Mosul in a proclamation he issued in this case.

The Proclamation issued by Patriarch Cyriacus and his Eastern bishops

Cyriacus, by the mercy of God, Patriarch of the Apostolic See of Antioch, and the pious bishops with me. We assembled in Mosul on August (16), 1128 of the Greeks (A.D. 817), to investigate the conflict between the monks of the Monastery of Mor Matta (St. Matthews' Monastery) and the bishops and those loyal to them from the city of Mosul and its environs, and the Takritians who are present in Mosul for whatever reason. As our wish is to reconcile these groups, we have concentrated on the claims of both sides and neglected those that are unnecessary. We have decided what is appropriate for the establishment of peace.

The congregation of the Takritians lodged charges against Bishop Daniel asking that they should be examined, and that he should be condemned. However, the monks of St. Matthew's Monastery and those loyal to them did not agree to his condemnation. They also did not agree that the charges against him should be discussed for the sake of peace. They further demanded that his name should be proclaimed as a bishop in the churches of the Takritians in Mosul. In turn, he should subject himself completely to the venerable See of Takrit, as do the bishops in the dioceses of the East. Furthermore, as a metropolitan, he (Daniel) has no right to exercise the authorities of the said first see (in precedence). In addition, because of his precedence, the metropolitan of Takrit has no right to act in the dioceses of the East without the consent of the bishop who is in charge of management. Moreover, he has no right to ordain a bishop for any of the sees under his jurisdiction without the endorsement of the metropolitan of St. Matthew's Monastery and the bishops of the diocese, according to church canons. Meanwhile, the bishop should look to him as their head and as having precedence among them. If he should make a call, they should respond to him and do nothing without his authority, and if he finds it necessary to visit one of them, he should be welcomed with honor.

¹⁸⁷⁸ For a different reason of killing Harthama, see Tabari, *Ibid.* 7: 129-130.

¹⁸⁷⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 126-127 with some differences.

We commanded Mor Daniel to overlook the abuses done to him by the congregation of Takrit and should entertain no retaliation of what had taken place in the course of the conflict, unless the abuse is so grave that the person who committed it cannot escape justice. For example, a man will desert his wife and marry another one, or he marries another wife next to his former wife, or steals the wife of another man; or commits adultery or murder.

This is what we found to be appropriate, and commanded it for the confirmation of peace, which is acceptable to God, and to establish firmly the authority of the See of St. Peter.

Therefore, we command both sides to adhere to the decisions according to the word of God, and that no one should have the audacity to abolish any of them. He, who provokes animosities, should be kept outside the priestly compounds until he repents. This also applies to anyone who would take a church case to the judges of the civil courts.

However, despite all these resolutions, peace between the two sides was not accomplished, and in the midst of this struggle, Patriarch Cyriacus was overtaken by death in Mosul on August 16, 1128 of the Greeks (A.D. 817). His holy body was taken on a boat to Takrit, the city of his forefathers. He served the Patriarchate for twenty-four years and ordained eighty-three bishops. During his service, he did not hold gold or silver (in his hand). He was pure, body and soul, and committed many miracles. He was zealous and relentless in observing apostolic laws. Because of this, he was in constant conflict with those who transgressed these laws. Thus, he spent his life in bitterness. He penned a book on dogma, and another one, which contained his splendid letters.

In the year 1125 of the Greeks (A.D. 814), a certain Chalcedonian person from Edessa named Theodoricus, nicknamed Phuglo (wild radish), was for a while a bishop of Harran, and then was deposed by their Patriarch Theodoretus on the strength of the charges lodged against him. He ended up wandering through the countries and propagating the dogma of Maximus, adding more heresy than Maximus. He corrupted the minds of some people, both Chalcedonian and Orthodox.¹⁸⁸⁰ When he found out that the Chalcedonian definition of faith stated that Christ is two natures in one *qnumo* (hypostasis, person) and that after the union of these two natures cannot stand on its own, he began to teach that the nature of the hypostasis is one thing, and the divinity which is from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is something else. He also taught that the natures of the divinity and the humanity were united in the hypostasis (person) of the Word (Christ). When he saw that the Chalcedonians did not agree with him, he roamed around in the west and deceived a great number of simple Maximians. Then, he went to Alexandria and won the admiration of simple people. However, he did not succeed (in that city) despite having been a Sophist, proficient in the Tayoye (Arabic) language, and capable of refuting heathens. He went to Armenia, and the Patrician Ashot was deceived by him and won him to his cause. It was then that Patriarch Cyriacus sent Nonnus, archdeacon of Nisibin, to expose the heresy of Theodoricus lest he deceive the Armenians. When he arrived in Armenia, Nonnus found that Ashot had already leaned toward the heresy of Phuglo (Theodoricus). Ashot thought that Nonnus, who was still young, could not debate Phuglo or stand up to him because he was a philosopher. When Nonnus wanted to debate him, Phuglo declined because he, a bishop, would not condescend to debate a youth. The truth is that he was scared lest he become exposed, and when Ashot pressured him to debate, Phuglo lost the first round. He did not even succeed in the second round, and thus was humiliated and exposed. Apparently, he had not even read one single book or become well versed in the holy teachings. All he knew was a smattering of philosophy. He left defeated. The words of the Prophet Jeremiah, "You will be disappointed by Egypt as you were by Assyria," were fulfilled in him.¹⁸⁸¹

After Phuglo fled Armenia, Ashot and his sons sponsored Nonnus and kept him as their honored guest in order to enjoy his conversations. Nonnus liberated not only Ashot, his sons and all Armenia from the heresy (of Theodoricus), but also from the heresy of the two natures. He also liberated them from the

¹⁸⁸⁰ It should be remembered that the anti-Chalcedonian Syrians considered the Chalcedonians as heretics.

¹⁸⁸¹ Jeremiah 2:36.

heresy of Julian, the Phantasiast, who had corrupted many after the union that had been accomplished by Patriarch Athanasius (Gamolo) and Catholicos Iyawannis.

In this time, heathenism began to appear in Harran after it had been decimated since the time of the Christian kings (emperors) and the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims). It happened that a Qurayshite person named Ibrahim from Harran was bribed by the heathens who resided in Harran, the nest of heathenism, known as Harranians, and he permitted them to observe their defiled practices openly after they were practiced in secrecy. They even went as far as having a bull adorned with expensive cloth, garlands of fragrant flowers and bells hanging off its horns, and proceeded to parade the bull in the streets accompanied by trumpeters, then offered it as a sacrifice to their idols.

In the year 1128 of the Greeks (A.D. 817) in which Patriarch Cyriacus died, an extremely severe earthquake took place. It crumbled the mountains and blocked the water springs in the village of Agorsa in the district of Claudia. One of the mountains collapsed and glided down to the River Euphrates and blocked its water flow all day long. Meanwhile, springs of sulphur water gushed out in many areas.

Chapter Nine: On the time of al-Ma'mun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); the murder of Leo, king (emperor) of the Romans and the reign of Michael II. In this period, the bishops assembled in Callinicus (al-Raqqa) concerning the expression "we break heavenly bread"; and the ordination of the historian Patriarch Dionysius (Tell Mahre).

When the citizens of Baghdad did not cease fighting each other, Hasan who was delegated by al-Ma'mun, left Baghdad and dwelt in Kufa. When the Qurayshites and the citizens of Baghdad realized that the government was slipping from the hands of the family of Hashim because al-Ma'mun was far away and Tahir was in the Jazira, they brought Ibrahim, son of Mahdi, and set him up as a caliph.¹⁸⁸² Hasan prepared to fight against the people of Baghdad. When Tahir, who was then in Callinicus (al-Raqqa), heard that Abraham had reigned, he came to terms with the rebels. He lavished largess on some of them and appointed others as governors. He appointed Ibrahim the Qurayshite as governor of Harran, and Ibrahim permitted the heathens to sacrifice (to their idols) in public. He also appointed Abd al-Ali as governor of Edessa. Abd al-Ali encumbered the people of the city with heavy taxes. When he desired to seize one of their villages, he overburdened its people with exorbitant taxes in order to force them to sell it, and then would buy it at a trivial price. He also decided to evict the people of Edessa from their city and settle the Sulaymanite tribe in it. When the citizens of Edessa complained against those who settled in their houses or in the villages, he said to them, "Why do you complain against us, you Christians? In the time of the Romans, you utilized this land while our forefathers wandered in the wilderness tending camels and sheep. Now, we have taken it from the Romans by our sword. So, why do you find it hard to surrender it to us, and become aliens from it? Get out of my face and endure what has happened. Just pay the poll-tax and shut up." They left grieving.

Meanwhile, Tahir overlooked the calamities brought about by the iniquities of the rebels. He built a wall to fortify Callinicus and Raphika, gaining more strength. He became interested in listening to the lectures of philosophy and its interpretation. He also made contact with the rebels in the year 1127 (A.D. 816). However, the rebels wrongly thought that he had deserted them because he feared them. Even more, they plundered not only the Christians, but the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) as well; the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) fought them and drove them away. Meanwhile, Nasr and Abbas became allied to each other, and marched to Hira against Uthman, who assembled a huge army, and they could not seize him. Then Uthman went to Tahir and urged him to fight the rebels, or give him an army to fight against them. Tahir, however, divulged some secrets to Nasr and Abbas with the intention of impeding peace in these regions in order not to be transferred to Egypt. When Uthman learned of this, he sent a message to al-Ma'mun telling him that Tahir was collaborating with the rebels, but the messenger was captured. When Uthman learned this, and also realized that the enmity he harbored toward Tahir, Nasr and Abbas had been exposed, he, in turn, gathered rebels and began to loot and spoil. Regarding Uthman, Dionysius (Tell Mahre) said, "Uthman had

¹⁸⁸² See Ahmad ibn Yaqub ibn Wadih, *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III (al-Najaf: Matba'at al-Ghari, 1358 of the Islamic Calendar/1939 A.D.):178.

a great affection for me. Therefore, I scolded him with affection saying, 'How could you, an old man, go forth to pillage and spoil?' He informed me of all what had happened between him and them (the rebels)." Nevertheless, the kingdom of the Romans itself was plagued with disturbances.

In 1132 of the Greeks (A.D. 821), Michael, the army general, rebelled against his predecessor Leo (V the Armenian), and deposed him and reigned in his place. As Leo deposed his predecessor by force, likewise, he was ejected by this Amorian Michael from the throne and life.¹⁸⁸³

When the rebel Nasr heard that al-Ma'mun was coming to Baghdad, he called his secretary, a Christian wise man, and addressed a letter to the Patrician Emmanuel expressing his desire to make an alliance with the Romans. When King (emperor) Michael heard of this, he dispatched to him a delegation. Nasr, who was in Sarug, learned that the delegation had arrived in Kesum. He gathered the rebels and told them with pride the arrival of the delegation. They, however, were furious and told him, "Do you want to become a *kafir* (infidel) and vex God?" With such words, they poisoned his mind, and he sent men and killed the members of the delegation. So, the pastoral proverb, "He who endeavors to seek what he has not lost, will find what does not please him," was fulfilled in them (the Roman delegation).

In this time, disturbance took place among the Romans because of a certain man named Tuma (Thomas). In the time of Harun (al-Rashid), this Tuma claimed to be the son of Constantine and asked Harun to provide him with an army in order to restore the kingdom. Although Harun did not pay much attention to his demand, still he held him with honor on the premise that he was the son of a king (emperor). When Harun died, al-Ma'mun summoned Tuma and sent him as the head of an army, to either subjugate the Roman kingdom to him, or at least provoke troubles to it through warfare. Tuma was a magician, and claimed to see visions. He marched against the capital and laid tight siege against it for six months. When King (emperor) Michael was in distress, he pledged to set free the Tayoye (Arab) captives, if they fought against the rebel (Tuma). They agreed and had the rebel flee and seek refuge in a fortress. However, the Tayoye (Arabs) pursued him and seized him. They cut off his hands and legs and raised him on a lance. This was the end of Tuma, son of Mosmar. However, Michael reneged on his pledge and did not release the Arab captives.¹⁸⁸⁴

When their captain of the Tayoye (Arab, Muslim) host was pursuing the rebels, the Christians thought that he would heave a sigh of relief. However, Tahir doubled their jizya (tax) and treated the people of Sarug and Edessa badly. He even denied his companions their rights, and they assembled to kill him. When he learned this, he dropped himself from the wall at night and fled to Callinicus. His companions feared that Nasr might pursue them, so they also fled. So, the citizens of Edessa were freed from heavy burdens.

While the Persians were plundering everything that came their way, wrath fell on them by Nasr and his companions. They seized them in groups of fifties or hundreds and slaughtered them like sheep after looting their possessions. Meanwhile, Nasr and his rebel companions went up to Edessa to plunder, and waged ferocious war against it. All the people of Edessa went up the wall (of the city). The women carried stones to the men on the wall to hurl them against the attackers. Those who could not climb up the wall kept praying, and I, (Dionysius Tell Mahre), was one of them. Dionysius Tell Mahre said, "We wanted the Persians to overwhelm the Tayoye (Arabs), lest the rebels would control the city. But God showed mercy as Umar, one of the rebels, fell (was wounded), and the rebels retreated in disgrace." Momentarily, the two snakes, Nasr and Abbas, dominated the region of the west and afflicted the people with many evils. Finally, they challenged each other to drinking wine, and each of them bragged that he was mightier than the other

¹⁸⁸³ Michael II (820-829), the stammerer, is called Amorian in relation to the city of Amorium in Phrygia, his birthplace. Leo V was murdered by the followers of Michael, his old comrade in arms, at the high altar of the Church of St. Sophia. See George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 180.

¹⁸⁸⁴ Cf. A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, I (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964): 274-276 where he calls Thomas the Slav or Slavonian and the importance of his insurrection; and Asad Rustum, *al-Rum fi Sisatibim, Dadaratibim, Dinibim, Thaqafatibim and Silatibim bi al-Arab*, 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Makshuf, 1955): 320-322.

was. Then Nasr hit Asim's head with the cup, and Asim went to his father. They assembled their troops and went forth to meet Nasr. Many of them were killed, and finally became his subjects.

Aspag captured Samosata and resided in it. Nashab, his cousin, entered upon him and killed him and the members of his family. Like the other rebels, he ruled the city.

After the death of the pious and blessed Patriarch Cyriacus, the Gubbites and the people of Cyrus (Qurush) got together and came to Abiram. They said to him, "When we will be condemned and separated from the church because of the expression 'we break heavenly bread?' Behold, the patriarch who endeavored to have it removed has been transported (passed away). Therefore, we would like to rejoin the church and see our condemnation in Syria and Egypt annulled." Abiram and his companions craftily said, "We, in turn, also suffered, and were vilified for your sake because we did not want the expression 'we break heavenly bread' to be abolished in our time. You well know that Cyriacus had fallen into the heresy of Julian (the Phantasiast), and denied the Trinity because he did not prefer this expression to be said during the breaking of the body (celebration of the Eucharist). Let us wait a little until another chief priest (patriarch) is set up. If he would say this expression even one time, let the Trinity condemn me if I do not relinquish my position and retire. And if I pretended to be the head (of the church), you should not then considered me a Christian." The accursed Abiram said this thinking that the bishops would not choose someone other than him as a chief priest (patriarch) while he was still alive. If they did so, they would continue to be split and dissentient. Now, Abiram had a gang of supporters who managed his own affairs, and with such words, he dampened the spirit of the Christians.

When the bishops witnessed that the Gubbites had disturbed the church of the west, and that Basil the Takritian and the monks of the Monastery of St. Matthew had disturbed the church of the east, they assembled in Callinicus in June 1129 of the Greeks (A.D. 818), with Tahir's protection. There were about forty-five bishops. Those who did not attend sent their endorsement. Abiram and the band of monks also came (to Callinicus) and lodged at an inn. They communicated with the bishops concerning the expression of "we break heavenly bread." Moreover, since some bishops espoused it, the assembled bishops gave the choice to anyone who wanted to use it or not. They also reconciled Basil the Takritian with the monks of the St. Matthew's Monastery.

The document issued by the Holy Council which assembled in the city of Callinicus, and attended by bishops from all the countries under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic See of Antioch

In the month of June of the year 1129 of the Greeks (818 A.D.), we assembled in the name of Almighty God, according to church order, and exchanged apostolic counsel as it should be. In addition, we studied the reasons of the sedition and disturbance that is still tearing asunder the members of the church and the faithful in every city and region. We deliberated these reasons with prudence and resolved with one spirit and by the inspiration of the (Holy) Spirit, that the reason for lack of peace is the worthless altercations and the futile ideas concerning the expression of "we break heavenly bread," that is the bread which is our life and the breath which enlivens the soul. This expression is used by those who love trouble as a pretext to stir up sedition in order to accomplish their evil desires. In order to bring together all the members of the church who separated from it, in one way or another, and add them to the body of Christ, we have concurred with one spirit that this dogma is undoubtedly a healing for those who are wounded, and that from now on, no one should antagonize the other in any form. Therefore, we affirm according to the apostolic commandments that each one should resort to his conscience and endeavor to build up his own self according to the precepts of the apostle who taught that, "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."¹⁸⁸⁵ As we do not want anyone to oppose what we deem appropriate concerning this expression, we also do not want to contradict those who differ with us concerning it. Therefore, according to the word of life which the Lord granted to his holy Apostles, we resolve not to quarrel with anyone who insists that the expression, "we break heavenly bread," should be

¹⁸⁸⁵ Philippians 2:4.

used or not, for in this case one of the sides will be necessarily blamed. As our forefathers who administered the church of God cared for everyone in order to win the whole, and treated the conflicts with wisdom and prudence, thus we also as sons of their piety, perceive the same method and follow in their footsteps in spiritual administration. There is no other way to treat the present situation. If one of them (the bishops) stirs up a quarrel regarding these matters, and shows no respect for the definition (of the faith) by the holy fathers, he should be deposed and divested of the grace of the priestly dignity, and rejected and dishonored by our community if he is a bishop. If he is a presbyter or a deacon, he shall be condemned and divested of his rank. If he is a monk or a secular person, he shall be forbidden to partake in the holy mysteries (the Holy Communion) and from mingling with the believers. Moreover, as we thank God for his affection toward us, we declare that what we have defined complies with the canons of the church and the rules of our fathers. We are confident that the church of God has operated since the first generation with concord and without conflict. So that if one sides said something, the other should have kept silent, and not quarrel, or hold each other with contempt in regard to these matters until these our days. We have resolved that everything that has been written about the expression "we break heavenly bread" should be burned by fire, whether it concurred with it or opposed it, that no one shall have the authority to write anything about this subject (the expression). We did not find anything indicating that the ancients (fathers) had provoked this subject. We do not suspect, in any form, that the holy body of the Son of God that we receive at the holy altars is not merely and practically heavenly bread. However, we do believe and condemn anyone who, like us, does not maintain that the bread we receive at the altar is heavenly bread according to the teaching of the holy Patriarch Severus (of Antioch. d. 538). We also condemn anyone who says that it is not the body of the *qnumo* (hypostasis) of God (Christ) which he took from Mary and became a sacrifice on the cross. We further condemn he who says that it (the body) is broken not just to satisfy the partaking of many, but it is certainly a Messianic sacrifice.

We, the bishops, have unanimously fixed our signatures to the letter of Iliyya (Elijah), bishop of Harran, addressed to Patriarch Dionysius (Tell Mahre) in this respect. Therefore, these two opinions should be thoroughly and truthfully examined. *End of the account.*

Chapter Ten: On the resolutions of the Council of Callinicus (al-Raqqa)

After the matters related above were completed, an old man got up on the next day and, standing in the middle, said, "The purpose of assembling this holy council is to elect a chief for us and then attend to other issues. However, the assembled members perceived the necessity of discussing church affairs first. This was done by God's help in forty days without dissension or altercations among us. Now, we should proceed to realize our good endeavor and discard from our minds every harmful profane thought, or things that cause bias. If you agree, I suggest that we fast for three days and keep praying day and night, and supplicate God to find for his church someone who knows how to tend it with piety and holiness. And if the Lord is present when two or three gather in his name, how much more he is present if forty-five assemble in his name?"¹⁸⁸⁶ Those present appreciated the idea of the old man and fasted three days, and kept vigil and prayer. They were seated according to their ranks. They decided that each one should be asked about what he thought during the days of supplication, and to whom his idea was directed, and whether there was an eligible one (to be a patriarch) in his monastery. The majority said that there was no suitable person in their monasteries, while others mentioned the names of some prominent persons, one of whom was the efficient malphono (doctor) Mor Atonous. Finally, Theodore, a bishop from the Monastery of Mor Jacob in Kesum arose and said, "A monk from the Monastery of Qinnésrin came and stayed with us for two years. We examined him and found him to be suitable for this service (the dignity of the patriarchate)." By these words, he opened the door to other bishops who had set their eyes on this monk, and all of them testified in his favor. The council decided that the bishops should enter into the altar in order that the election be consummated. Standing before the Table of Life, they consulted with each other and

¹⁸⁸⁶ Matthew 18:20.

unanimously agreed to the election of the monk Dionysius from the Monastery of Qinnesrin. They wrote down the report of their agreement and all of them signed it as follows:

When this council of piety and peace convened by the act of the Holy Spirit, the whole affair proceeded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit himself. Confidence was high concerning the good result, and by the action of the Holy Spirit, we unanimously agreed to the election and ordination of a head, in order to be, after Almighty God, a patriarch of the Apostolic See of Antioch: we mean brother Dionysius from the Monastery of Yuhanon (John) bar (son of) Aphtonya (the Monastery of Qinnesrin). We have concurred with his election and signed before the Holy Cross.

I Basilius, bishop of Takrit, endorsed the outcome of the election and have affixed my signature. So also did Bishop Hadh Bshabo of Marga, Bishop Yuhanon of Mar'ash (Germanicia), Bishop Anastas of Damascus through Bishop Theodosius of Edessa, and Bishop George of Qinnesrin through his deputy, and others consecutively. After they signed, they designated five bishops, and Thomas, archdeacon of Nisibin, and some monks as well to go and fetch Dionysius. When Abiram and the Gubbites (monks of the Gubba Baraya, or Outer Pit Monastery) learned that the council had elected a head and reached an agreement concerning the expression of "we break heavenly bread," he was frustrated and angry. He gathered his partisan (monks) and said to them, "See what the bishops have done. They chose a head from the monastery and the city that has rejected the expression of "we break heavenly bread." I adjure you by the word of God that, when I have passed away, you should not deposit my body in the grave until you have set up a head to take my place, and you should not reconcile with these (bishops)." The monks said to him, "This is not what you promised, but you did say, 'I will give up leadership if the elected patriarch uttered this expression even once.' Then all of us will become subject to him. You should then wait until the head is ordained and see what his point of view is." The hypocrite, however, excommunicated those monks and left with the stranger (monks) loyal to him. He went to the congregation of Cyrus (Qurush) to have some of the wicked among them partake in their hypocrisy. As to the Gubbites who did not submit to him (Abiram), they went to the assembled bishops to ask their forgiveness.

At this point Dionysius (Tell Mahre) said, "From the inception of writing the events contained in this book, and until now, I have recorded them with courage and audacity. I neither praised nor disparaged anyone with any bias or favoritism. Now that I have reached this chapter, I prefer to hold my peace, and desire that another historian should write about my weakness, if there is one who has enough experience, as I do, about my own affairs. He should discuss without fear my shortcomings and incompetence. He should reveal, as much as possible, my blameworthy actions, and he himself, not I, mention the reforms, which deserve praise. Since there is no one who knows my private affairs as I do, I find it imperative to mention these two processes adhering to what is truthful, and avoid trivial ideas and neglect praise lest those who love to criticize think I am making myself virtuous. I do know myself that I am the lesser and the weakest of all people. In addition, I do not know how the fathers were involved or even deceived by having confidence in me. However, because of their innocent thinking, they succumbed to strange heresy, and learned from many how I would handle this matter (of being chosen a patriarch). They had already known what my thinking was when I was twice invited to the Episcopal dignity, and how I fled from place to place. This made them think that I would also flee when I heard the news of my nomination. Therefore, they sent two brave monks to Mor Jacob's Monastery where I resided because the citizens of Qinnesrin were scattered. They came at night and hunted me down, and I was very embarrassed. When I realized that there was nowhere to escape, I kept quiet. Like a criminal, they kept me under guard until the bishops arrived. I wept and prostrated before them but they showed no mercy toward me. They led me from that silence to the middle of the council while I was trying to get away from them. Again, I began to weep and expose my sins and my weakness and incompetence. However, they forcefully fell upon me saying, "He who rebels and complains, God's wrath will fall upon him." Finally, they did not hesitate to leave their seats and bow down to my lowliness. Here I found myself roaming a dark sea with no hope of escape. I used to believe that it was difficult to accept the priesthood, especially for a miserable and lowly person like me. Indeed, it was even difficult for those who have reached the summit of perfection. Nevertheless, I perceived that insisting

on disobedience was most dangerous. Therefore, on Friday, they ordained me a deacon at the Pillar Monastery. On Saturday they ordained me a priest at the Monastery of Mor Zakai, and on the first Sunday of the year 1129 of the Greeks (A.D. 818), they elevated me to the dignity of the priesthood (patriarchate) at the great church of al-Raqqa (Callinicus), and proclaimed me an heir to the throne (of Antioch), I who did not deserve to untie shoelaces. I testify to God that I have not been infected by the love of leadership, and that such a desire, which entices many men, never crossed my mind.

Since you have asked me, dear son Iyawannis,¹⁸⁸⁷ to write for you the events which took place in our time, let us rely on God and discuss the matters which followed our call (to the patriarchate) whether concerning church matters, profane matters, or the matters of the public treasury. As I have accepted the throne of Patriarch Cyriacus, I have also accepted from him the charge to rush into battle against the Gubbites, just as I would accept a torment for my body, and a bruising of my bones, lest I feel arrogant because of the great gift granted me.

When the council had dispersed, I directed my concerns to healing the dissension within the church. I chose ten bishops, and went up to the village of Balash. I summoned the Gubbites to discuss peace. They said to the delegation, "We will not show up until the patriarch confirms the expression of 'we break heavenly bread.'" Therefore, we lost any hope of the Gubbites. Then we proceeded to the congregation of Qurush (Cyrus) among whom were presbyters and deacons, and discussed with them the question of peace. However, when they learned that we do not forbid the expression "we break heavenly bread," they were inclined toward us. When Abiram and his followers learned that the people of the district had obeyed us, they became sore angry and decided not to keep these simple folks in the city. In fact, they abducted many of them. We, however, went from Cyrus to Antioch in October, 1131 (A.D. 820) where the bishops proceeded with the *Synthronismas* (ceremony of the enthronement of the new patriarch) after the resolution of the council was read.

The Systacon (Letter of Electing the Patriarch)

To the true believers and beloved in our Lord, the presbyters, deacons and the entire Christ-loving congregation, in the great city of Antioch and its environs, the holy Council assembled by the Holy Spirit in the city of Callinicus (al-Raqqa), grants you abundant peace and love in Christ our Savior.

You and we, our beloved, have been alienated from each other by the grievous things that have occurred up to this time, and were bereft of the leadership of Mor Cyriacus, the great captain and the shining light, who is now with the saints, awaiting the reward of his righteous deeds. Because of these deeds, he will be privileged to enjoy the witnessing of the Holy Trinity along with the righteous who preceded him. Therefore, we did not deem it proper to neglect that leadership, honor another one before it, or concern ourselves with it whatever it may be. Indeed, by the testimony of all (bishops), the successor of Cyriacus, and the confirmer of the holy church who is more worthy of this leadership than anyone else, is the one who will be elected by us by the power of the Holy Spirit. When Moses was transported (died), and by the hand of God was buried, and when Elijah was raptured to heaven in the chariot, God decided to set up successors for the race of Jacob, known as Israel, instead of them. He did this also to divide the Promised Land for the twelve tribes of Israel according to their portions, and by a miracle annihilated the multitudes of the Canaanites. He commanded them to observe the laws and attain to perfection. He fed the people who were detained in the wilderness with the bread from heaven, which truly and not by imagination symbolized the body of one of the persons of the Trinity, that is God the Word, which is broken for the believers. We have, likewise, perceived that God, by the Holy Spirit, is truly pleased to choose as a patriarch Mor Dionysius, especially that all efforts to elect someone else have failed. We have succeeded in having his lordship elected because of his serenity, character, excellent deportment, immaculate life and endeavor to promote divine teachings. We have elected him with one spirit and by the power of the Holy Spirit and by previous mediation. We have declared him justly to be the head of our church, we the Orthodox. We have

¹⁸⁸⁷ This is John, metropolitan of Dara d. 860. See Aphram Barsoum, *Scattered Pearls*, translated Matti Moosa, 391.

joyfully celebrated (his election as patriarch) together with the sons of the church who are nearby. Indeed, the whole church is rejoicing, which is a manifestation of union and positive activity. Therefore, by participating with us in the grace of this delight, and showing your complete obedience as the ancients did, accepting your shepherds, nay, the shepherds of the whole church of God and embracing them with both arms, and adhering to proper order in everything, you have actually exhibited the awesome dignity of the city of God in the most excellent form. You have also become a good example for others that they may imitate you through this pious father (Dionysius Tell Mahre) the chief shepherd and the head of all after the Christ God. We raise our supplication to God the Father, the Almighty, who has granted us such a great gift and blessing through which and by which we will be able to draw near to him and become worthy of ceaseless benefactions and of eternal life, by the grace of his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit for his own glory. Amen.

Appended are the signatures of all the bishops.

Chapter Eleven: On the events of the Tayoye (Arab) kingdom in the time of al-Ma'mun, and the affairs of the Roman kingdom in the time of Michael, and the events of our church in the time of Mor Dionysius (Tell Mahre)

In the year 1130 (A.D. 819), al-Ma'mun, king (caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs) came from Khurasan to Baghdad upon hearing that his uncle Ibrahim had reigned (as caliph), that there were divisions and warfare among the citizens of Baghdad, that Hasan was seated in Kufa and Tahir in Raphika, separately. When al-Ma'mun arrived in Baghdad, the citizens deserted Ibrahim and set him upon the throne of his father. Ibrahim fled into hiding.

Tahir went up to meet al-Ma'mun, and al-Ma'mun accepted him. In the year 1132 (A.D. 821), he appointed him a governor of Khurasan because he trusted him. After Tahir left for Khurasan, al-Ma'mun magnified Abd Allah his son and appointed him in his father's place. He commanded that Yahya should remain in the Jazira. Then the rebels became strong, and Nasr bought the fortress of Beth Balish.¹⁸⁸⁸ He assembled his troops and went down to the River Hani near Callinicus. When Isa marched against him with a group of rabbles, he killed them all, plundered the villages, and controlled them. When al-Ma'mun heard this, he was outraged and sent against him Shabib, captain of the host, and with him seven thousand fighting men. Nasr was frightened and sent a message of submission to al-Ma'mun. Al-Ma'mun sent back a message saying, "If you are really truthful, come and step on my rug and I will honor you." However, Nasr was only trying to procrastinate with the caliph. Then Shabib prepared for war. Nasr divided his troops into three camps and Shabib forbade the Persians to provide them with food. Distressed by hunger, they were forced to plunge into battle, many perished on both sides, and the Tayoye (Arabs) fled. The Persians began to plunder the rebels. They went on eating, drinking, acting extravagantly, and mocking those in the interior of the wall. As the Persians were boastful (as if they had defeated the rebels), Nasr came back upon them, and they fled before him from fear. When Shabib saw that he could do nothing against the Tayoye (Arabs), he wished to go to Antioch and fetch the gold that had been brought from Egypt in the time of Harun (al-Rashid). He slipped out secretly at night, but Nasr knew of his departure and went forth ahead of him. He cut down about three thousand (Persians) who were with him. Then he shouted out to them, "Put down your arms and go wherever you want." The wretched laid down their arms, and (Nasr's men) seized them all. Then they pursued Shabib and caught up with him, and the Persians were stricken with fear. Nasr cried out saying, "He who will join me will I give a horse and thousand dinars," and a great number joined him. Shabib, together with few men, fled to Baghdad in disgrace, which he deserved because he never stopped his troops from doing iniquities against the poor. As to Nasr and his Tayoye (Arab) troops, they gained strength against the Persians and killed even those who joined them and laid down their arms. When Nasr returned from fighting Shabib, he was told that the Yamanite who was in Manbij (Mabug) had attacked the villages on the River Shagur, which the Arabs called Sagur, and spoiled them. Nasr and his followers set up

¹⁸⁸⁸ According to Bar Hebraeus' *Chronography*, the English translation, p. 128, Nasr sold the fortress of Beth Balish.

ambush (in these villages), and when the men went forth to their work, they fell upon them and killed everyone they found, men and women. Many peasants and poor people found refuge in the Monastery of Borim, so (Nasr) set it on fire. Some of them were burned (to death), and others cast themselves down and were smashed to pieces. Nasr and his men cut off their heads by the sword and carried them to Sarug. Thus, many poor people perished.¹⁸⁸⁹

In this time when Ibrahim, the amir (governor) of Harran, was walking on the roof of his grand cupola, he saw new a building. He asked the cupbearers with him, "To whom do the new and white buildings belong?" Because they were heathens, they told him that, "These are churches which the Christians built in your time. This is why many Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) have become suspicious of you, because you let them build whatever they could not in the time of the Romans. They even accuse you of receiving bribes." Ibrahim was outraged, and before the sun was set, our cathedral in Harran was torn down. The altar of the church of the Mother of God in Qouba was demolished and a small part of the altar of Mor Gurgis was torn down. In addition, the temples of the Chalcedonians, the Jews and Nestorians were torn down. All these denominations beseeched God for mercy. That night, God changed his heart and he regretted (his action.) In the morning, he summoned the Christians and asked them to rebuild what had been demolished, and they restored everything within few days.

In this year (A.D. 819), was lack of rain and the crops did not grow, which caused the prices of grains, wine and oil to soar.

In this time, the people stood against Basilius, metropolitan of Takrit, because of his arrogance and misbehavior. He was not only harsh to the sons of his own church, but also to the heathens of Takrit. He was not satisfied with interfering in the affairs of the church, but also in matters related to public taxes, which were not his concern. He was too close to the governor. He interfered in the matters of the jizya (poll tax), he even imposed the jizya on the Mhagroye (Muslims), and when the Mhagroye (Haggrites, Muslims) saw his impertinence, they stood against him. The people were greatly harmed because of him, and because of him, they (the Muslims) killed the pigs in the market place. Yet despite all this, he did not let up, but took with him some men and went down to Baghdad to launch a complaint against the Hagerites (Muslims). However, the Hagerites (Muslims) went down to Baghdad and reached it ahead of him. They launched a complaint against the Christians concerning church bells, crosses, wine, and that the pigs entered the masjids. They accused Metropolitan Basilius and the chief Abdun of vilifying their Prophet (Muhammad). Accordingly, an order was issued abolishing the rites of the Christians and to arrest Basilius and Abdun. Basilius fled and Abdun witnessed martyrdom for Christ. Al-Ma'mun enticed Abdun by offering him money and position to proclaim his conversion to Islam. He even threatened him and had him tortured but did not succeed. Then he cast him into prison under torture. After seven months, Abdun departed (this life) a martyr by the sword in the middle of the tribunal, and his body was suspended on a gibbet. The many prodigies and miracles that accompanied his martyrdom surpass words. As to Basilius, who threatened to evict the Muslims from their homes, he could no more enter Takrit. As he tried to rebel against the See of Antioch, he was himself now without a see. Still, more strange, was that he did not learn a lesson from what had happened to him.

In the month of April of the year 1130 of the Greeks (A.D. 819), Marcus, pope of Alexandria, passed away nine months after the ordination of Mor Dionysius (Tell Mahre, patriarch). He was succeeded by Jacob.

In the year 1131 (A.D. 820), Mor Dionysius (Tell Mahre) accompanied by bishops, left Antioch for Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) and then Baghdad in order to obtain a *firman* (decree) from al-Ma'mun following the example of his predecessors the patriarchs. The *firman* was issued by the efforts of Tahir and by his endeavor a council was assembled to have him (Tell Mahre) elected (a patriarch). Patriarch Dionysius said about Basilius of Takrit that, "He was not a monk in any monastery, but a layman when he was called from the market place for the episcopate. Therefore, he bore a grudge against the Mattaians (the monks of

¹⁸⁸⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 128-129 with some variations.

St. Matthew's Monastery), and against us. Being arrogant, he attempted to rebel against us thinking that he could have the congregation of the east revolt against the See of Antioch. Like the condemned Barsoum of Nisibin, he thought that he could set up himself a catholicos.¹⁸⁹⁰ When he did not succeed in concocting anything in the time of Cyriacus, because he was from Takrit, he had the illusion that through the Takritians he could succeed in our time. Thus, he poisoned the Takritians against me, saying, 'This patriarch is your enemy.' To the bishops he said, 'For how long should we remain subjects under the authority of the westerners, while they pilfer the money we collect? And why do they not recognize our See as equal in dignity to the See of Egypt (Alexandria)?' However, the Lord did not let him fulfill what went through his mind because the Takritians had a great affection toward us. In fact, they wrote to us while we were in Baghdad asking us to spend the feast with them. However, he (Basilius) said to them that, 'The bishops who were in his (Patriarch Dionysius) company urged him to return quickly to their own country in order to consecrate the *Mirun* (Chrism).' But to us, Basilius wrote saying, 'The circumstances are not appropriate for your visit to Takrit because the rulers of the city oppress the believers greatly.' When we discovered his ill intentions, we deserted the road to Mosul, and went via the Euphrates River to the city of Cercesium. After consecrating the Chrism, and celebrating the feasts, we went up to the villages of the Khabur, and then to Nisibin, Dara and Kafartuta, the cities of Beth Nahrin.

As to the stranger monk of the Monastery of Gubba Baraya (Outer Pit), he had rebelled against the church because he was not ordained a bishop to succeed his master, Bacchus. Evidently, the Council of Callinicus frustrated his hopes to become a bishop when he was nominated by Abiram for this position. When he witnessed that the monastery (of the Gubba Baraya) was overlooked, he was forced to come to us pleading for peace. We demanded from him, and from those with him, to iterate the expression "we break heavenly bread," and they did. They immediately condemned Abiram and those loyal to him. They promised not to be united with him anymore. Accordingly, we absolved them and offered them the mysteries (Holy Communion) on the premise that they were schismatics who returned to the fold.

When Uthman al-Tamimi, who was in control of interior Syria, Homs, and Phoenicia, came to the Monastery of Qinnasrin via the Euphrates, and saw that the magnificent church had been devastated by fire, we (Dionysius Tell Mahre) appealed to him to rebuild it. He welcomed our request and granted us a *firman* (decree) to have it rebuilt. He provided us with letters to the rulers in order to assist us in renovating the churches and monasteries. I, (Patriarch Tell Mahre) informed him of the rebellion that took place at the Monastery of Eusebuna in the province of Antioch since the time of Patriarch Cyriacus and the loyalty of its monks to the partisans of Abiram. He wrote to the amir (governor) of the Arabs to evict the partisans of Abiram and hand it over to us. We repossessed the monastery after the partisans of Abiram had stolen its books and precious vessels.

Concerning the rebel Abiram: In 1139 (A.D. 828), Abiram went down to Baghdad and obtained a *firman* authorizing him to become a patriarch. However, many times, Abd Allah ibn Tahir censured him for his rebellion.

In that year, a council of forty bishops together with the Patriarch Dionysius (Tell Mahre), assembled in the Monastery of Euspholis near Rish 'Ayna, on account of Philoxenus, bishop of Nisibin, who was removed from his see. His opponents were Nunnus, archdeacon of Nisibin and Abu Ra'ita of Takrit, who were both eloquent sages. However, he refused to attend the council and went to Nisibin without permission. The council excommunicated him together with Abiram, but then these two men came into agreement with each other. *End of the account.*

¹⁸⁹⁰ Barsoum of Nisibin was a Nestorian bishop who obtained orders from the Persian king to persecute the Orthodox of the East. He was instrumental in destroying St. Matthew's Monastery. The Syrians condemn him for his atrocities. See above Book Eleven, entire Chapter 9; Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 63-71, and Patriarch Ignatius Jacob III, *Duṣfaṣat al-Tib fi Tariḳh Dayr al-Qiddis Mor Matta al-Ajib* (Zahla, Lebanon, 1961), pp. 29-30, translated into English by Matti Moosa with the title *History of the Monastery of Saint Matthew in Mosul* (Gorgias Press, 2008), 28-29).

Chapter Twelve: On the beginning of the reign of Theophilus, king (emperor) of the Romans; the success of al-Ma'mun who is Abd Allah, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs); on the impudence of Abiram, and the triumph of Mor Dionysius

In the year 1140 (A.D. 829), Michael (II the Stammerer), king of the Romans, passed away and Theophilus (829-842) reigned. The Bulgarians and the Kurdonye, who were Kurdish by race and *hanfe* (Syriac term meaning pagans, but in this context it means Muslims) by faith, offered him their subjugation.

These Kurdonoye (Kurds) had received from their forefathers an idea, by means of divination, that someone from them named Mahdi was expected to appear and lead the nations into belief in God. He would bequeath his kingdom to someone else, and this kingdom would have no end. Those who believed in him will resurrect forty days after their death, go to their folks, and then move to an unknown place.

This anticipated Mahdi did appear in these days. He covered his face with a veil¹⁸⁹¹ and sometimes pretended to be the "Christ," and at other times the "Holy Spirit." His followers increased daily in number, and multitudes from every nation gathered around him with the intention of plundering and spoiling. He made his center in the impregnable mountains of Kurdistan. His worship spread into Jazira and Armenia. He devastated Beth Zabdai (present-day Azekh), and Tur Abdin, and killed people without discrimination. The Magians worshiped him and considered everyone who did not worship him an alien. Even the Caliph al-Ma'mun feared him. When they (the partisans of the Mahdi) came to plunder the Monastery of Qartmin (Mor Gabriel Monastery) and the neighboring villages, Hasan, who tremendously honored the beliefs of the Christians, became filled with zeal and suddenly fell upon them and defeated them, and they fled. The Mahdi, whom they deified, attempted with some of his men to escape from the presence of Hasan to the country of Ishaq bar (son of) Ashot (the Armenian). Ishaq seized him and detained him. The Kurds gathered at night and attacked Ishaq's house to rescue their king, but Ishaq cut off Mahdi's head, took it with his money and family and fled. When the Kurds entered into (Ishaq's house) they saw only the body of the Mahdi.

Shortly afterward, Ishaq and his troops waged war against the Tayoye (Arabs), and the Tayoye (Arabs) laid in waiting for him and his family, but a heathen woman informed the villagers of the ambush. A great number of people entered the fortress with the monk, who was the brother of Ishaq's wife. Then came the Kurds and killed the men and fought with stones those who were in the fortress, but the believers (Christians) hurried to find a shelter in their houses. That pious monk prayed for them with sighs. He supplicated Christ while carrying an urn containing the relics of the saints. Meanwhile, his believing sister urged him to continue to pray. She placed her suckling child before the Lord, and beseeching Christ, she said, "Lord Christ, have mercy on your servants for the sake of this child on whose face the traces of baptism could still be seen."

When the Kurds were about to enter the fortress because one of the doors had already been burned down, another monk took a spear, like Phinehas,¹⁸⁹² and cast himself from the wall and, reaching the chief of the Kurds, by the help of God, drove the spear into him and killed him, and they could not harm him. The believer spent the night in vigil. As to the God-fearing wife of Ishaq, she determined to deliver herself to death rather than fall into the hands of the heathens. She entered into the arms chamber and held a gold decorated sword that its shimmering might attract them and they would slaughter her. Early morning she prepared to go out and die, but the Lord, who is near those who call on him in truth,¹⁸⁹³ caused the Kurds to retreat from attacking the fortress, which they were about to seize, and turn away to plunder those in the region before they escaped. When Ishaq heard this, he dispatched foot soldiers to the fortress, but they returned grieved as they met with young men deep in prayer, with their swords tied to each other. On the next day, Ishaq arrived with his valiant troops. Because they (the Kurds) were tired of fighting against the fortress, they could not even hear the voice of their guards, and when they attempted to escape, they could not because of the snow. A great number of them were destroyed and slain. This was the end of the Mahdi

¹⁸⁹¹ Thus he was known as al-Muqanna', ie. he with the veil.

¹⁸⁹² The reference here is to Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest. See Numbers 25:7-9.

¹⁸⁹³ Psalm 145:18.

and his partisans. After the Mahdi, his men (those who were left of them) set up another leader named Harun (Aaron), and Ali killed him. After him arose Babek, the cattle herder who fled to Theophilus, king of the Romans, for refuge.¹⁸⁹⁴

Afterwards, when al-Ma'mun learned of what Nasr had done to Shabib, he summoned Abd Allah bar (son of) Tahir and promised him much beneficence and great positions, like Pharaoh promised Joseph. After he accepted the responsibility, Abd Allah took twenty thousand fighting men and arrived in Callinicus (al-Raqqqa) in the year 1134 (A.D. 823); all the Persian leaders became subject to him. When the rebellious Nasr heard that Abd Allah was a quiet and humble man, he perceived his manner as weakness, so he instigated his partisans to fight him before he surprised them. When they reached the River Khabur, Abd Allah confronted them with twelve thousand fighting men, and the Tayoye (Arabs) of Nasr fled hither and thither. If, for instance, they were seen today in the land of Harran, they would be instantly seen near Callinicus. When Abd Allah realized that it was difficult to seize Nasr by mere chasing, he directed his attention to the cities in which Nasr settled, like Sarug and Kesum. Then, when he reached Balish (a town between Aleppo and Callinicus, known today as Maskana) he was mocked by the men on the wall, but Abd Allah ordered his men not to answer them. He sent his general Uzir who met Nasr in the village of Sarrin (one of the villages of the city of Aleppo).¹⁸⁹⁵ He slaughtered forty of Nasr's men, and they (the rest) were stricken with fear. He seized by force Nasr's fortress, which was his center of operation, captured the three hundred men who were in it and sent them to detention in Raphika. Abd Allah came to Sarug and commanded that the grain and the hay should be gathered in sufficient quantities for his troops when he attacked Kesum. At this time, the people of the Jazira and the west were so distressed (by famine) that they preferred death. They were even forced to harvest the wheat, barley and other grains and thresh them before the regular season to sell them. Nasr went around massacring the harvesters, burning everything he found. When Abd Allah heard of the calamities caused by Nasr, he attacked Balash ferociously and showered the Tayoye (Arabs) with stones. Meanwhile, Nasr commanded the Christians to go up the wall to weep and lament so that Abd Allah would know that he was attacking the Christians and not the Arabs (Muslims). However, the amir (Abd Allah), being a compassionate man, ordered that stones should not be cast into the city lest the Christians be stoned. He also ordered (his men) to dig under the wall, which they did, and breached it. They controlled the city and, seizing the rebels, they bound them in irons and sent them to Baghdad. When Uthman ibn Thumama, governor of interior Syria, Qinnestrin, Homs and Phoenicia learned of this, he offered submission to Abd Allah, who received him with alacrity.

As to the accursed Nasr, he went around the district of Sarug slaying Persians and Christians including Abd Allah, captain of the Persian host. This made ibn Tahir immensely furious, and he prepared to attack Kesum, the stronghold of Nasr. When Nasr learned this, he sent a message to ibn Tahir pledging his submission to him and offering his children as hostages. Bar Tahir replied that, "If he does not come in person, I will not grant him safety."

In October of the year 1135 (A.D. 824), Abd Allah attacked Kesum and built houses in preparation for the winter. They set up their engines of war which could hurl stones each as large as an ass's load. Now Kesum had five walls and a trench. Then Nasr commanded that Christian women should go up the wall carrying their children, and should weep and cry out and beseech (the attackers) not to hurl stones at them. When Abd Allah heard their crying, he ordered that they should not cast stones into the city, but should only hit the wall heavily. Then Nasr, seeing that all his rebel companions had submitted to the amir (Abd Allah), he opened the gate of the city and sent his three sons, two hundred loads of fine flour, three hundred loads of barley, five hundred sheep, ten mules, ten slaves, three concubines, three eunuchs, gold and silver, gifts to all the noble men, and said, "Accept my gift, and keep my sons with you, and in the morning I myself will come." After accepting Nasr's gift, bar Tahir commanded the young men (sons of Nasr), saying, "Go back to your kinsfolk so that they may not be anxious." In the morning, Nasr went forth, dismounted

¹⁸⁹⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, pp. 131-132.

¹⁸⁹⁵ See the Chorepiscopus Barsoum Ayyub, *al-Usul al-Suryaniyya fi Asma' al-Mudun wa al-Qura al-Suriyya* (Names of the Cities and Villages of Syria) (Dar Mardin: Aleppo, 2000, 225).

his beast at a distance and walked on foot. He drew nigh from Abd Allah (bar Tahir), bowed down and kissed his foot and hands, then bar Tahir also dismounted, and the two sat down together and talked to each other secretly. The amir (ibn Tahir) commanded Nasr to enter the city, and he did so, pretending that he would leave it and go to him in Callinicus after twenty-five days, and, bar Tahir in his simplicity believed him. He commanded his troops to sell the provisions they had gathered for the winter. The people of Kesum went about their business with freedom. After Abd Allah departed, Nasr proceeded to rebuild Kesum and fortify it. When Abd Allah informed al-Ma'mun of Nasr's surrender, al-Ma'mun was delighted. Then Abd Allah marched to Samosata, and the rebel Yabish who was there, tried to get away, but the amir (Abd Allah) seized him and sent him in chains to be imprisoned in Raphika.

At this time, Tahir died in Khurasan, so the caliph sent his second son (Abd Allah) to replace his father. He addressed a letter of condolences to Abd Allah saying, "Now that Nasr is subjugated, go to Egypt and establish peace there," but al-Ma'mun had struck the stern of the ship only because Nasr rebelled again. Then, when Abd Allah wrote to Nasr asking him to come and meet with him, Nasr replied, "I am ready to fight you. As to my son Mansur, do not only shut him up in prison in Baghdad, but roast him in fire and eat him." Abd Allah informed al-Ma'mun of this matter, and the caliph became very angry against Abd Allah, and even sentenced him to death because he let Nasr escape after he had fallen into his hands. Therefore, Abd Allah hastened and, gathering his troops, descended upon Kesum the second time and waged fierce war against it. Again, the region was in great distress, and famine spread everywhere because the people were ordered to offer food to the army. It was in the month of August that bar Tahir marched against Kesum. Before the fighting began, Isa, captain of the host, drew nigh the wall and said, "Nasr! I am Isa who is talking to you. You have committed myriads of evil things beyond your capability. When you returned (repented), the compassionate caliph accepted you with delight. Now, go forth and meet with the amir (Abd Allah) for you have already received the recompense of your rebellion, and I will be your guarantor." Nasr replied, "Your words have not even entered my ears, and we will have no harmony with you as wolves have no harmony with lambs." Then the war became fierce, and most of the inhabitants of the city were killed by the stones. Nasr did not let anyone weep for the dead, but they buried them like dogs. Anyone who escaped the battle, or descended the wall, had his head cut off by the sword. When the fighting intensified and the outer wall was breached, Nasr made the Christian women go up the top of the wall carrying their children and weeping. When Abd Allah (ibn Tahir) heard the cries, he ordered the fighting to stop. The troops built houses for the winter (and resided therein). When Nasr saw that famine had become severe in the city, and people were eating donkey and other animals, and that a head of a donkey was sold for ten *zuz* (fals), he lost hope and tried to escape, but could not. He sent a message to Abd Allah to accept him and Abd Allah replied, "Although you are unworthy, but for the sake of the cries of the poor people, send me your two sons and forty men to talk to them." When they went forth to him, he said to them, "If you consider yourselves hostages, we will stop the fighting until we receive a response from the king (caliph)." They said loudly, "Do whatever God shows you to do." Then, a response came from the caliph saying that if Nasr and his companions should come to Abd Allah, he had the authority to do with them as he wanted. Then Nasr went out with ease and demanded that few men should guard him to go to Abd Allah. When he met Abd Allah, he asked him to give him the city of Kesum, but Abd Allah refused his demand. Then the two sides shouted, "How great you are Lord for the deliverance which has taken place." Immediately, they sent Nasr's men to Kafr Zu'ra, a small village which he had built in Sarug, next to the ruins of an ancient city called Dimitir, which Sennacherib had destroyed and used its men to carry the bricks of its wall upon their necks and cast them into the Euphrates. In ancient times, there were four cities about twelve miles distance from the Euphrates. They were Sarug, Dimitir, already mentioned, Batnan known as "The Lion's Den," and Hawra in which Malphono Mor Jacob (of Sarug, d. 521) was periodeutes (a visiting cleric) before he was ordained bishop and now is called the Fortress of Bar Nuna. The amir (Abd Allah) commanded that the walls of Kesum be destroyed, and Nasr and his companions surrendered and requested the guards to provide them with horses and mules in order to leave. This deliverance took place in March of the year 1136 (A.D. 825), and the Jazira and the west suffered a tremendous torment from the rebels for fourteen years

until Abd Allah, that serene man, was able to establish lasting peace. *The history of kings (caliphs) is ended.*

In this time, the amir Abd Allah came to Callinicus. He was visited by the rebel Abiram and his companions in order to obtain a *firman* (decree) from him. Patriarch Dionysius (Tell Mahre) also came to the city, and went first into the presence of the amir. The amir asked him about Abiram and his gang, and he told him about their rebellion against Patriarch Cyriacus and the rest of their affairs. He said that their purpose of obtaining *firman* was to stir up trouble in the region because they had no one to support them. Then, the amir ordered that the wicked Abiram be brought into his presence. He asked him, "What is your dignity?" and he said, "a patriarch." I (Dionysius Tell Mahre) objected that he was telling a lie, but Abiram went on discussing the expression "we break heavenly bread." The amir asked, "What is the content of this expression?" The Patriarch (Dionysius) said, "This is the expression which they (Abiram and his men) used to create conflict between us, and also as a cover for their love of leadership. It is mentioned in the Gospel, and we necessarily use it in our prayer. However, we do not always read the Gospel in the church, but sometimes only portions of it and expound it to the people. At other times, we support our prayer with some verses of it, as you also do. You do not recite all of your book (the Quran) in your prayer, but the Imam recite some of it when he leads the people in prayer, or he selects a verse from it and builds his sermon upon it. And those present do not object to his recital of this part or the other, as these audacious men do and disturb the church." After relating this whole account in the Arabic language, the Lord granted me mercy in the amir's sight. He ordered his chamberlain to ask the thousands of Christians who were standing outside to identify their leader. The chamberlain shouted, "Who is your leader?" and they said, "Abiram is not our leader, and neither he is a Christian." The historian said many things in our favor, but we did not record them here.

After Abd Allah investigated these matters and saw the *firman* issued by his father, Tahir, he looked distrustfully at Abiram and said, "I see that you are a liar and a misleading man, and the leadership is for this Patriarch (Dionysius)." He ordered that his *birouna* (a head cap worn by the clerics) should be removed from him, and he censured him saying, "I do not want to hear that you have put on the cap anymore, or that you hold a staff, or claim that you are a patriarch. Go and hold your peace, and disperse your fellow monks. And if I hear that you have roamed through the cities, your blood will be upon your head." In this manner, he dismissed Abiram and his companions after having received what they deserved as a recompense of their impiety. However, because of our sins, the Lord permitted that the church be humbled for a little time as the rebels raised their heads high for a reason like the following one. The monk who was ordained by Abiram and who came to us we forgave, though he and his companions returned to their vomit, and by the influence of Barsoum called Theodosius, bishop of al-Raqqa (Callinicus), who because of his willful ideas was furious for the return (repentance) of the Gubbite (monks), and never ceased to make trouble. He and others had impeded the process of peace made by Patriarch Cyriacus with the Julianists. As Theodosius reviled Gabriel, and he retreated, he did the same to Abiram. He summoned him to his monastery and handed him the *firman* (decree) of the Gubba Baraya (Outer Pit) Monastery. He paid him the expenses and informed his brother, Simon, who was in Baghdad, to obtain for him a letter of recommendation. When the Alawites (partisan of Ali), saw the *firman* of Ali ibn Abi Talib, they assisted him and obtained a *firman* for his brother Abiram, authorizing him to move (freely) throughout the cities. Simon of Dara returned from Baghdad carrying the *firman* for his brother, Abiram. He gathered a band of monks to meet with the Amir Abd Allah. The amir also sent for us (Patriarch Dionysius), and we proceeded from Antioch. After we entered into his presence, he summoned the others (to appear before him). When the amir saw the clerical cap on Abiram's head, he looked at him with fury and said, "Why did you wear the cap and did not hearken to my command?" Abiram said, "It is a mere head covering and not a (clerical) cap." The amir asked me whether it was so, and when I affirmed what the wicked (Abiram) said, he was gratified, but I contested the veracity of the *firman* while they (Abiram and his partisans) insisted that it was credible. The amir, however, refuted them on several points. Finally, we reached the conclusion that the amir would obtain an order to annul the *firman*. Twenty-six days later, a command was issued to the amir Abd Allah saying, "The Christians have made a petition to us denouncing Abiram for claiming to be a patriarch while they have Dionysius as

their own patriarch. Summon the Jacobites of that region and ask them to whom they want to be subject. Confirm his leadership and offer him appropriate assistance, provided it does not contradict with justice.” The amir allowed me to enter into his presence and left Abiram outside. He told me, “I will give you a letter which will annul Abiram’s *firman*, and will place him under your authority and depose anyone who opposes you.” Then, he called his chamberlain and said to him, “Hold the hand of the patriarch and leave. Summon Abiram and his band and hand them over to him (the patriarch) to adjudicate them the way he wants.” The chamberlain came to where thousands of Christians and Muslims had gathered. He seated me on a cushion and said to the rebels, “The amir commands you to subject yourselves to the patriarch who is authorized to expel you or depose you.” He ordered Abiram to bow down to me, and he did. Turning toward me, he said, “He is now in your hands. Do to him whatever you want.” Those present thought that I would order that they be beaten or castrated, but I thought that it would be better to admonish them. I said to them, “Now that you have fallen into my hands, I advise you to fill your hearts with the fear of God and desist from splitting the church, and each one of you should return to his land.” Then I ordered that the cap be removed from Abiram’s head as a sign of depriving him of the leadership he had usurped. They left in disgrace and went to Cyrus (Qurush), which is in the region of Gargar in the proximity of the River Kabtai. However, they kept spreading the report saying that, “The amir has accepted us and granted us the authority to ordain bishops.” Therefore, with such fantasies they deceived the simple villagers. When we heard this, we obtained a *firman* from the amir and letters to his governors and came to Jibrin in the district of Qurush. When the governor of that district read the letter of the amir, he ordered that Abiram and his companions be brought to him under guard like robbers. He asked me, “What do you want me to do with them?” I said, “I would like to see them disciplined a little before the villagers who are loyal to them. Since I am sitting with the governor, I demand that Abiram, Sliba and Noah, the so-called bishops, be divested of the insignia of the priesthood (defrocked).” After exposing their falsehood before everyone, I said to the governor, “Send them to prison,” but the villagers began to complain. Nevertheless, the governor ordered the Persians to drive them away with sticks, and everyone returned to his home. Three days later, the governor was transferred from Jibrin, and we asked him to send them to the prison in Aleppo, but they agitated claiming they were wronged, and were assisted by the Chalcedonians of Aleppo for the purpose of humiliating us. The governor of Aleppo summoned us to his presence. When we explained to him the truth of the matter, he ordered that they be thrown into prison, where they spent twenty days. When the westerners saw that they were humiliated, they sent us messengers pledging that they would not treat us arrogantly at all, showing readiness to sign everything we wanted. We agreed, and the governor of the region, accordingly, issued a document signed by the people of Cyrus. Meanwhile, the recalcitrants (Abiram and his companions) pledged not to enter Cyrus or stir up trouble. The church enjoyed some tranquility far from the harm of the rebels, but when the Amir Abd Allah was transferred to Egypt, the recalcitrants reneged on their pledge and entered Cyrus. However, they did not succeed in stirring up trouble. *The narrative on the patriarch is ended.*

In this time, the Sea of Cilicia cast out a huge whale forty cubits long, and its thickness was more than its length. Some described it as if it was a portion of a mountain or a gigantic beast. People of the region cut off its flesh and roasted it. They took some of it to Antioch, as was said by Dionysius (Tell Mahre), who saw more than forty jars filled with its brain, and a similar number of jars filled with its oil, which was used for cooking or lighting.

Chapter Thirteen: On the corruption planted by the rebels in Egypt in the time of al-Ma'mun, king (caliph) of The Tayoye (Arabs), and the events that took place in al-Basra in this period, and the case which was provoked in the church for which Patriarch Dionysius traveled to Egypt

In this period, as Nasr and his companions rebelled in Syria, the land of Egypt was also spoiled by rebels. Two persons, Sari and Gawri, took hold of the country and imposed the jizya (poll tax), gathering gold like stones. After their death, Ubayd, son of Sari, succeeded his father in the Fustat and the southern regions, while Ahmad succeeded his father Gawri in the northern region of Egypt, despite that the people who came from Andalusia were in control of Alexandria. When in the year 1137 (A.D. 826), Abd Allah bar

Tahir came to al-Arish, Ahmad went forth to meet him and obtained a pledge to protect his possessions because his father, Gawri, had collected gold and molded it in the form of blocks and buried it. He told his relatives that he felt shame toward the ground for the abundance of gold he had buried in it. As to (Ubayd), son of Sari, he was wealthier than Ahmad was, and his city was fortified. He owned eighty thousand men (slaves), most of whom were Mauroye (blacks). Abd Allah feared him because he had left his army in Palestine. Therefore, he sent to Ubayd three old men to discuss with him peace. Ubayd arrogantly answered saying, "I am subject to the caliph and his governor. Choose one of three things: Either you designate a person to collect the jizya in Egypt after I have taken hold of it, and I will protect him, or ask for the jizya and I will deliver it to you without you coming here, or be ready for war." Abd Allah never made a move until his forces were in the west and the Jazira arrived. Then he began to fight bar Sari. In April, he invaded Fustat. When Ubayd saw that the war had become fierce and the roads were cut off and he could not transport provisions either by sea or land, he sent a message to Abd Allah saying, "My amir, I would like to see the grace of peace descend (upon us) without the mediation of anyone. Therefore, I will leave tomorrow." The Amir (Abd Allah) replied, "Since you have taken this stand, I, too, will pledge the safety of your family and your possessions." Immediately, bar Sari went to see Abd Allah, they made peace and ate and drank together.

When the Andalusians took hold of Alexandria, they evicted the Christians and the Jews from their homes and dwelt in them. Abd Allah asked them to send him ten men in order to choose one of them as their chief. However, they sent him some ruffians; he expelled them and commanded that a person whom he specified be sent to him. When they disagreed, he attacked the city in March 1138 (A.D. 827), and seized its citadel. In the past, the city was in ruins except for the rubble of great churches and big mansions. No inhabitants could be seen except in the neighboring villages. After nine months of siege and fighting, the Andalusians surrendered and requested to buy houses to live in. However, the Christians refused the request, and they were forced to return to their country. Meanwhile, fifty Andalusians and their families were sent to al-Raqqa (Callinicus). When Abd Allah subjugated Egypt, he decided to control Africa entirely. He seized eighty persons returning from Makka, and commanded them to write to their countrymen to come to the amir in order to set up a chief from among them. However, when the Africans learned that their countrymen were seized, and based on what they had heard of the good treatment of Abd Allah to everyone, they went to meet with him. He set up for them two good men, and took with him the rest to meet the Caliph al-Ma'mun who had gone to al-Raqqa in the year 1139 (A.D. 828).¹⁸⁹⁶ He settled those who accompanied him in Anazarbon (Anazarba) in Cilicia. *End of the narrative.*

Upon hearing that Nasr was seized and sent with the rest of the rebels to him in Baghdad, al-Ma'mun was delighted. However, despite his tyranny, Nasr loved the Christians, and doubled the jizya (poll tax) on the Christians who converted to Islam. He oppressed them and treated them mercilessly. He said to them, "Just pay me the jizya and each one will have the freedom to follow the religion he wishes." A great number went back from the masjids to the churches, and anyone who raped a woman, he would cut off his head. Indeed, he killed many of his followers for this same reason.

Abd Allah left his brother Muhammad as his deputy and departed to the western regions. He conquered Palestine peacefully, and subdued the rebel Hasan in Tyre and forced him not to leave his house. When Hasan disobeyed, Abd Allah had him killed. He went down to Jerusalem and prayed in the holy places the Muslims had there, and visited the places traversed by the Lord Christ. Then he went down to Egypt.

In the year 1136 (A.D. 825), overwhelmed by zeal, thirty thousand citizens of Basra went by ships to Bahrain to kill its inhabitants for their acts of piracy, and for preventing merchants and oncoming ships from India, China and Persia from reaching Basra and Baghdad. However, when they landed, the sons of Bahrain learned about their landing and fled with their families to an island. This island had a crossing that led to a rugged road, which strangers could not traverse. When the men of Basra tried to cross it, they were

¹⁸⁹⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 131.

swept toward the depth of the sea. Seeing what happened to them, the natives of Bahrain went forth in their boats and caused the thirty thousand men of Basra to drown.

In this time, al-Ma'mun heard that the Qurayshites, the men of his own tribe, were plotting against him. He seized four of their chiefs, cast them into prison and bound them in iron fetters. As they lost any hope of life, they connived secretly with each other to set fire in the great marketplace called al-Muhit (Karkho), so that if al-Ma'mun got there, they would send someone to assassinate him. When al-Ma'mun learned of this stratagem, he went out at night to the prison and had all the Qurayshites killed, and returned to his court. In the morning, he had the bodies suspended on wooden posts, and fear struck everyone. Members of his retinue did not realize that he refrained from killing them earlier not because of weakness, but of compassion. He even seized his uncle, Ibrahim, but did not execute him for his old age. Ibrahim had learned how to play the lyre. He used to buy young boys and girls, train them and sell them for thousands of dinars to make a living.¹⁸⁹⁷

At the beginning, the demolishing of churches began in Takrit and then transferred to the Jazira and the west as we have already said in our discussion of Basilus.

In the year 1136 (A.D. 825), (divine) chastisement also afflicted us because of our sins. The devil stirred up against the churches a devastating war. In Edessa, Yaqzan had a Chalcedonian secretary called Walid, who hated the Christians. When people complained to Yaqzan against Walid, he honored him even more for the evils he had committed against the Christians. Nevertheless, the Takritians could not endure him and went down to Egypt to meet with the Amir Abd Allah. They laid charges against him and against Yaqzan. When Walid realized that his fall was inevitable, he urged Yaqzan to demolish their churches. He wrote to the governor of al-Raqqa to increase the burdens of the Edessans and their Metropolitan Theodosius. As the governor himself hated the Christians, he presented their case to the Amir Muhammad. However, Muhammad, being still young, was deceived by the words of the governor, and ordered that every new building should be demolished. They (Arabs, Muslims) demolished the church of the Forty Martyrs, the bishopric, the sacristy of the great church, the baptismal font in the northern part of the church, the pulpit and many other things that were arranged by Basilus and Theodosius. They also demolished the convent of the Chalcedonian nuns and a church of the Chalcedonians. They also built a masjid in the tetrapylon in front of the ancient church, a location known as Beth Sabto "Sabbath Assembly." It is a building topped by a dome in which the elders and leaders assembled after the morning service to discuss dialectic subjects taken from church books, and profane matters until noontime lunch. In addition, Amir Muhammad commanded the Christians to surrender their slaves in order to embrace Islam. When the Muslims of Harran learned of this, they rushed to the church to demolish it and annoy the Christians.

We (Patriarch Dionysius Tell Mahre) heard of this news while we were in Nisibin. We immediately took with us the bishops and journeyed to Egypt to meet with the Amir Abd Allah. We boarded a ship at Yafa (Jaffa) while Theodosius and others traveled through the land route. At sea, a storm raged and the ship was about to sink. The storm was so fierce that we lost hope of life. Two days later, we were tossed by the waves to the harbor of the city of Tansis (Tannis), where more than thirty thousand came out to meet us. Tansis stands in the middle of what seemed an island surrounded by the flooding waters of the Nile and the great Adriatic Sea (the Mediterranean). The waters serve as a wall for the city. The inhabitants came out in boats to welcome us and receive our blessing. They persisted doing so from morn to dusk, and we could hardly reach the confines of the city because of the crowds, until soldiers came from the city and, using sticks, dispersed the crowds and led us to the church. We were visited by Jacob, Pope of Alexandria, and his bishops. They welcomed us and expressed their joy for the arrival in Egypt of another patriarch after Severus (of Antioch).¹⁸⁹⁸ We discussed the union that Patriarch Athanasius Gamolo made with Anastasius following the schism that took place between the two patriarchs Gamolo and Damian of Egypt. We then learned that they (Pope Jacob and his bishops) had no apparent concern for history, and that they always

¹⁸⁹⁷ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 131.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Severus died in Egypt in 538.

BOOK TWELVE

stumbled in their speech. However, although Jacob was deficient in knowledge and administration, yet he was a righteous and pious man.

We tarried a long time in the cities located on the river's bank because the people did not allow us to leave a city until we had celebrated the sacrifice (Communion) and offered it to them. Indeed, the Egyptians took tremendous pride in receiving (the Communion) from the hand of a patriarch. However, as we were delayed, Theodosius rushed ahead of us to inform the Amir (Abd Allah) of what happened to us on the sea. When we entered into the amir's presence at the Persians' camp, he blamed me for traveling by the sea. However, because of his immense honor of me (Tell Mahre), he said, "What urged you to come to Egypt while you are an old man and hold such a supreme position? A letter from you would have been sufficient for the purpose. You could have included in it what you wanted, especially, that your brother is the one responsible for this case." I said, "Your highness, he is only a metropolitan who seeks whatever is beneficial for himself because of the calamities Edessa had suffered. However, I myself am more sorrowful for the demolishing of our churches and the abrogation of our rituals." Nevertheless, we met the amir despite the fact that he was occupied all day long with war. In any event, our conversation was profitable. I handed him the letters of the inhabitants of the Jazira and the west, together with their complaints against his governors. I related to him the lamentable thing that took place in Tannis, a city of Egypt. Despite that it was teeming with people and churches, yet we saw no people as poor as its inhabitants. They told us that the reason (for their poverty) was because their city is surrounded by water and they had no fields or crops, and thus were unable to possess anything. They even had to fetch their drinking water from faraway places, and pay four piasters for one jar of water. Weaving is their trade, and their women spin cotton wool and their men weave and receive from the merchants, their employers, and half a piaster a day. They further said, 'Our wages are hardly sufficient for our livelihood. Worse still, (they said) that a five dinar tax has been imposed on every individual among us. If we cannot pay the tax, they cast us into prisons, or force us to surrender our sons and daughters to serve like slaves for two years for only one-dinar wages. In addition, if it happened that a woman or a young girl gave birth to a child, they would have us swear by God not to expose the case. Quite often when the setting the date to free the wife of someone, another new jizya is imposed on him.' This is why they appealed to us to inform you, O Amir about their case in order to have mercy on them." Then the amir (Abd Allah) commanded that these people should pay the jizya like the people of the Jazira, that is 48 piasters for the adults, 24 piasters for those of medium income and 12 piasters for the poor, and levy them according to a head count. He (the amir) provided us with instructions to rebuild everything that had been demolished in Edessa, and forbade the destruction of churches everywhere. He addressed a letter written in his own handwriting and signed by him to his brother Muhammad. In it he said, "O man, I do not think that God has brought you forth upon us from Khurasan. My camp is filled with blessed bishops and monks who have presented complaints against you. In addition, they, especially the patriarch and his brother the metropolitan of Edessa, call on God for the injustice you have done to them by demolishing their churches. I know that you are a young man without experience, but do not forget that I know those men who instigated you against the Christians. By doing so, they did not wish you to become close to God, but only to fulfill their desires." After a long debate, Abd Allah instructed his brother to stop harming us. Then he handed the letter to us, but Metropolitan Theodosius could not wait to see the contents of the letter. He took it from the hand of one of the scribes, opened it, transcribed a copy of it and then sealed it. When Muhammad received the letter, he stopped the storm (of persecution) and released the prisoners. This salvation took place in the year 1137 (A.D. 826). However, the devastation of churches was complete in the region of Yaqzan, who five months later, led an army against the land of the Romans, but was killed and his army perished. Thus, his iniquity fell upon his head. *The narrative is ended.*

Chapter Fourteen: On the events which took place in the church; the opposition of Philoxenus, bishop of Nisibin and Li'azar, bishop of Baghdad, because of whom patriarch Dionysius journeyed to Baghdad to meet with al-Ma'mun, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs), and he himself wrote this account with meticulous precision

Now we say concerning the war the devil waged against us in the year 1139 (A.D. 828), that we also share in the sufferings of the church as our predecessor patriarchs did when some bishops were infected with the disease of ambition for leadership. For example, Sergis Zakonoyo turned against (Patriarch) Severus bar Mashqa; Denha, metropolitan of Takrit, against (Patriarch) Julian; Athanasius and Ishaq against (Patriarch) Iyawannis; Yuhanon and David against (Patriarch) George; and Abiram against (Patriarch) Cyriacus. These men acted to tear up the church because of their ambition for leadership. At the time when the Lord kept away dissension from us, we were afflicted with complaints and cases lodged by the dioceses against their bishops, and with inappropriate charges against the chief priests. We admonished Philoxenus, bishop of Nisibin, not to enter the city (Nisibin) until the investigation of the sinister charges launched against him by Nonnus, the archdeacon known for his excellence, had ended. We spent six years investigating this case hoping that the Lord might find a solution or an exit suitable to him, in order that the holy church may not be humiliated for investigating him. When he (Nonnus) did not desist from agitating the congregation and creating trouble in the city, we assembled forty bishops in Rish 'Ayna and deposed him. However, he took the judgment of God lightly and accompanied by his partisans, went to the people of Cyrus, Qurush, and attracted to himself Abiram and his partisans, who gnashed their teeth against Philoxenus in the council assembled by Patriarch Cyriacus in Jubrin. They made Abiram enter the church of Nisibin despite that he was condemned by the Patriarchs Cyriacus, Marcus and Jacob, and by the bishops of Syria and Egypt. Thus, the church of Nisibin was split into two divisions.

In this time, a decree was issued by al-Ma'mun stating that any group of ten men or more desiring to set up a leader for them should not be opposed. He did this in order to weaken us and to dictate to us. For this reason, we decided to meet with him and have him abrogate this decree, especially since fear prevailed following the division among the Jews. The Jews of Tiberias set up a person named David as their leader, while the Jews of Babylon set up another person named Daniel from the sect of the Ananians, who observed Wednesday rather than Sabbath day. When their case reached al-Ma'mun, he decided that each group should submit to the leader of their choice.

When we arrived at the capital (Baghdad), and before having an audience with the caliph, the devil stirred up a dissension much worse than that of the congregation of Nisibin. The congregation of Baghdad presented to us charges against their Bishop Li'azar, which they had presented to us two years earlier in Antioch. We, however, did not support them hoping to achieve concord. Nevertheless, when they pressured us to read the investigation report, and we became convinced of the accusations against him, we deposed him. However, we never thought of taking this action until we had gone to Takrit where the investigation was supposed to be done, in order that our people would not be humiliated in that city (Baghdad). When the church of Baghdad was split and their case reached the caliph, the partisans of Li'azar attributed the trouble to us.

The peaceful caliph calmed his wrath when he learned that we had only come to visit with him, carrying gifts for him. After a while, he permitted us to enter into his presence, and the bishops stood at a distance. He allowed me (Patriarch Tell Mahre) to draw alone near to him while he was mounting a horse in his garden. He stretched his right hand to me according to the royal custom of the caliphs who usually stretch their hand as a sign of honoring those who first enter into their presence. He asked me, "What is your business, and how things are going with you?" I said, "We are enjoying peace under you, as Paul said to Felix, and the conditions of our own people have improved in your time.¹⁸⁹⁹ Therefore, we not only offer you our thanks, O victorious King (Caliph), but offer prayers to the Lord to prolong your life." He then beckoned to me to go on talking. However, since I had learned that complaints had been presented to him

¹⁸⁹⁹ Acts 24:2.

concerning Li'azar, I wanted him to open for me the discussion (concerning this subject). I said, "We the bishops had no purpose to appear at your gate except to offer you our greetings and pray for you. However, as we waited too long in this city, it happened that we received complaints against the bishop of this city (Li'azar) by people who formerly supported him. When through investigation and testimonies the charges were proven against him, we deposed him. But he, with some rebels, went on opposing us, and based their actions on your decree that states, 'Every group of ten men and more have the right to set up their own leader, and no one has the right to oppose them.' It is incredible that such a thing would emanate from the justice of the king (caliph). We, however, approve of punishing anyone who acts with audacity and lies to the caliph." Al-Ma'mun said, "This, my decree, had been issued in the case of the Jews. We are not obliged to set up a leader for your people as long as you are under or rule." I said, "O just King (Caliph), what kind of justice is your judgment, and when was it that such a decree was issued by a caliph like you? You know that between you and us, there are covenants and promises confirmed and signed by the seals of the caliphs who conquered the cities, and accordingly, we surrendered to you. Therefore, if you violate your covenants and do not leave us to observe our rites and leadership, you will be doing us wrong. Also, our affairs will be disturbed and we will be fighting each other, and you would not become our ruler." I said this as I was crying with a loud voice and moving my finger at him like one who was fighting his own friend over the division of the booty. He also raised his voice as if he was challenging an opponent without being resentful of my attitude toward him. Then he asked me how to issue a decree against Li'azar, and I related to him his whole story. Then he told me of the complaints raised by the supporters of Li'azar against us. Finally, he said, "You Christians, especially you the Jacobites, disturb us and harm us great deal, as is clear from the complaints you present to us against each other. So, leave now and come back tomorrow." The bishops and the caliph's own troops were astonished at the liberty I took in talking to him, but what I did was by the Lord's strength and the gentleness of the caliph.

Ten days later, we told Li'azar of Mardin, who was a member of the caliph's retinue, to remind the caliph of his promise, and he did. There was present the chief judge Yahya ibn Akthum. The caliph ordered that Yahya and the judges be present at his assembly. In the morning, I alone entered into the presence of the caliph while the bishops stood at the door. I saw him seated on his throne surrounded by Baghdad's judges and learned men. I greeted him and prayed for him, and he ordered me to sit facing him. He said to me, "I see that you, O patriarch, have blamed me wrongly because of the decree I have issued concerning you. Therefore, I have gathered the jurists in order to talk to you before them." Then, turning to the Shuyukh (elders) he said, "What do you think? Are we obliged to appoint a Christian governor while the state belongs to us? Or, that according to the decree I issued in their case and the case of the Jews, they enjoy the peace and tranquility which we made available to them as long as they are loyal to us and keep quiet, and no one will force them to change their faith and traditions?" They answered this question addressed to them unscrupulously saying, "Who is more than you experienced in the matters of judgments? Or, who other than you has issued a decree more fair than you have?" When I heard the disturbing answer of the Shuyukh (Muslim learned men), I did not utter a word, but said to al-Ma'mun, "If you would only allow me to talk about the secret of the Christians." He gave me permission, and I went on saying, "When our religion was revealed to the world through the teachings of Christ who saved us from the worship of idols, and after he completed his dispensation and ascended into heaven, he called his disciples and instructed them to preach faith in him. The disciples won many people, except for the few to the faith by performing miracles. When they saw that death was inevitable, they thought of handing the message to others before they departed this world. They divided the inhabited world into four parts and set up a head for each one of them whom they called patriarch. They made their sees in four great cities: Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople and Antioch. In addition, these patriarchs ordained bishops and set up a metropolitan for every ten bishops, and authorized him to ordain a bishop in his place in case of his death. They also authorized the bishops to ordain priests, deacons and other lesser ranks. Thus, the patriarch had authority over the bishops, priests and deacons. No one under his authority had the right to oppose him or annul a decision he issued, or contradict what he did unless he deviated from the faith. In this case, the

other three patriarchs would meet and adjudicate him. These rules are enforced until this day. Since the time of Christ and until this day, no sovereign has changed our traditions, especially the Muslim caliphs. In fact, your late fathers confirmed our leadership and provided us with decrees to this effect. You yourself granted me such a decree at the beginning of your reign. Since you are so devoted to justice, I hope that you would not enact new laws, especially, that no other caliph like yourself was known to have been endowed with wisdom, eloquence and greatness of soul. As to the complaints launched against me by that deposed bishop, the caliph should know that some wicked deposed Christians are wont to raise charges against us. Because they know that they are not supported by church canons, they resort to you slandering us as enemies of the Muslims. Or, that we vilify your Prophet and stir up other sinister matters punishable by death. Then, I related to him the case of David, bishop of Dara, with Patriarch Gewargi (George), and the story of the monks of the Gubba Baraya (Outer Pit) Monastery, and Abiram with Patriarch Cyriacus. I concluded my discussion requesting him to reject the complaint presented against us. He said, "We have heard of how our predecessors treated you. We, too, will treat you according to what is appropriate. But, why do you Christians cling to this matter more than people of other religions?" I said, "People of other religions are disturbed, and expect my audience with you will result in freeing them from this decree. However, our leadership differs from that of the Magians and the Jews who call their leaders kings, and receive leadership by inheritance. They pay their kings a tribute, which is not in our tradition. There are three kinds of leaderships in existence: the natural, the coercive and the voluntary. The natural is like the authority of the father over his children and the man over the woman. Under this kind of authority, all people are equal. The coercive leadership either is granted by God or comes as a result of fear of the sword, as is the case of all kingdoms of the world. However, your leadership is authentic. The authority of those under you, who levy the tributes and taxes and present them to you, is metaphorical because they collect money for he who has the highest leadership. As to us, leadership comes as a result of election and the concurrence of the ideas of people. We look at it as priestly duty and not as a civil leadership. As the Imam leads the people in prayer in your community and directs the people to what is good, thus, the patriarch and the bishops lead the people in prayer and urge them to observe the laws. They impose punishment against the evildoers, not by using beating or killing as you do, but by divesting him from his office, whether he is a bishop or a priest. If he is a layman, he will be ejected from the church. We, therefore, are not like other people, O Caliph. The loss we will suffer as a result of abolishing our leadership cannot be likened to a material thing; it touches our belief and renders us far away from God. We do not think of sharing your leadership. Our utmost concern is that our leadership should not be debased by offering it to anyone who wishes and under any circumstance." Al-Ma'mun said, "We do not forbid you from divesting he who opposes you from his rank, but we do not allow you to eject a person from the church or prevent him from prayer." Then he beckoned to his scribe to read the letter of the judge of Mosul. As he began to read, the caliph turned to me and said, "Listen, O Patriarch, and see how much we have endured from you." When the letter was read, I noticed that the judge was slighting the Christians. I could not bear this and said, "May God protect you, O Caliph. For several days, the people of Mosul have been standing at your door waiting to launch a complaint against their judge who has greatly wronged them. Shouldn't you permit them to come in and listen to their complaint?" He said to me, "Can you talk in their name?" I said, "The people of Mosul claim that they have surrendered their city voluntarily to the Arabs, and the conqueror pledged not to demolish any of their churches or abrogate their traditions. However, this judge demolished their great church and abolished their law." The caliph instructed the Chief Judge Yahya to listen to the people of Mosul concerning the conquest of their city. If they had surrendered it peacefully, then they should enjoy the pledge given them by its conqueror. Concerning us, he said, "We do not interfere in your business. But if one of the bishops rebelled against you and trouble stirred up because of him, we command that the Waqf (religious endowment) of his church should be placed under your authority, and he will have no right to administer the affairs of his church with the exception of praying in it." To the Judge Ishaq (Isaac) he said, "See that if it is proven that Li'azar (bishop of Baghdad) is under the authority of the patriarch, carry out our command concerning him, and

forbid him and his followers from stirring up trouble.” Thus, we departed, and I had no support except the Holy Spirit who promised to guide those who strive for the sake of Christ.

Truly, it is very difficult for the king (caliph) to admit that he was overwhelmed. However, after our departure, we learned that he was very satisfied with our conversation with him. The jurists said to the people gathered outside, “The speech of your leader was magnificent, and we commend him for his courage. You should adhere to him and respect him because we have seldom seen a Christian who has such courage and convincing power.” This event took place in March of the year 1140 (A.D. 829).

Chapter Fifteen: Concerning some events that took place in the time of three Roman kings (emperors) whose names are mentioned in a previous chapter; and on the affairs of the church recorded by the Patriarch Mor Dionysius in his book with precision.

Patriarch Dionysius said that a wise man at the capital of the Romans (Constantinople), who was a contemporary of four Roman kings (emperors), and knowledgeable of their affairs, related to me the following. He said that Stauracius, mentioned before,¹⁹⁰⁰ suffered a great deal from the Bulgars and from his sister Procopia, who administered poison to him to eliminate him and secure the kingdom for her husband Michael.¹⁹⁰¹ However, Michael, who received the kingdom in a wicked manner, did not enjoy it and received the recompense of his wickedness. The Roman princes gave up on him and decided to kill him because he squandered the treasury of the kingdom. However, Michael learned of their plot and thought how to save himself from death. When the strategus Leo returned from war against the Bulgars victorious, the emperor Michael, carrying the crown, went out to receive him. When the two met each other, Leo dismounted to bow down to the emperor. Michael also dismounted and placed the crown on the head of Leo saying, “Accept the, kingdom because it is worthy of you.” He bowed down before him and went on saying, “Since you have achieved victory the crown is suited to you.” Such a move was appreciated by the Romans, and Leo sat on the throne.¹⁹⁰² Michael and his wife tonsured their hair and assumed monastic garb.¹⁹⁰³ The Romans castrated his four sons two of whom died while the other two lived.

When Leo began to reign, he was told that the patriarch of Constantinople renewed the worship of icons of the saints, for which Leo antagonized him. However, that wretched (Leo) had opposed the prostration to the images of saints or even to the cross. He thought that the cross was no greater than the images (of saints). Thus, he could not distinguish between worshipping the name of God and worshipping man. It was usual that the cross, which a person hung round his neck, would contain an image. While the emperor and the patriarch were deeply engaged in this controversy, the Romans fell into another heresy. In the past generations, there was a colossus in the capital and which was so high that no one could reach its top. On its head was fixed a copper image with a crown over its head. It was called Augustus Caesar, and the people used it as a subject of magic. They believed that if the crown over the head of the image moved, death would take place in the city. It just happened that the crown moved, and after great difficulty, a man was found to climb and restore it to its proper place. The patriarch (Nicephorus) summoned this man and gave him small images secretly, and said to him, “Take these images and let no one know that I have given them to you. When you have climbed the colossus and straightened the crown, come down and say that you have found them inside the crown. The patriarch’s intention was to show that the worshipping of images is an ancient tradition with the Romans. When this man climbed down and showed the images to the people, the emperor asked him, “Have you truly found the images there?” The man said, “Yes, I have truly found them there.” The emperor further asked him, “Were the images hidden or exposed?” The man said, “They were under the skies.” The emperor ordered that they be sprinkled with water, and immediately the pictures disappeared and there was nothing left in their frames. When the trick was discovered and the man

¹⁹⁰⁰ See above Chapter Seven, p, 695.

¹⁹⁰¹ He is Michael Rangabe 811-813.

¹⁹⁰² He is Leo V the Armenian 813-820.

¹⁹⁰³ See *Theophanes*, translated by Harry Turtledove, p. 181.

confessed that what he did was planned by the patriarch, the emperor banished the patriarch and set up Theodotus (Melissenus) in his place.¹⁹⁰⁴

Leo became conceited and acted harshly. He killed those who worshipped icons, and also killed many Roman. When the realized that he would annihilate them, they decided to get rid of him. However, Leo learned of their intentions and seized Michael,¹⁹⁰⁵ bound him in irons and decided to kill him on Good Friday. Michael's wife beseeched him not to kill him on that day, and Michael sent a message to the notables loyal to him saying, "If you cannot find a way to rescue me, I will say that you are accomplices in plotting against the emperor." The notables, then, attacked Leo and killed him inside the altar after he had reigned for seven and a half years. They brought out Michael from prison and proclaimed him their emperor. Michael was of Jewish origin from the city of Amorium, and his grandfather was converted to Christianity. Four years after his reign, his wife Thecla passed away, and he brought out the granddaughter of Constantine from the convent and married her. Since the Romans do not make an emperor a person who is married the second time, they placed the crown on the head of his son Theophilus. He lived four more years after the reign of his son without placing the crown on his head or sitting in the throne. His wife Thecla, however, gave birth to a son but, being the granddaughter of the Empress Irene, Irene disdained to raise a child of Jewish origin lest he defile the kingdom. Therefore, she killed him. After Michael passed away, she tonsured her hair and entered the convent, and thus Theophilus reigned.¹⁹⁰⁶

As the holy Iyawannis (St. John Chrysostom) was wearied because of the length of his commentary on the parable of Li'azar (Lazarus), we have spent four days discussing this man (Lazarus) whom the gospel calls "meek" so that he deserved the bosom of Abraham.¹⁹⁰⁷ We say this in order not to become weary relating at length the narrative about the one who resembled him by name but not by conduct. Not that he is worthy to be talked about, but to show how the caliph (al-Ma'mun) issued a decree against us and, by the grace of God, no harm touched the church. Therefore, we ordained a metropolitan for Baghdad instead of Li'azar with whom the church was delighted and invigorated.

In October of the year 1141 (A.D. 830), we departed Baghdad for Takrit in response to the insistence of the congregation who wanted to be saved from Basilius, against whom they launched many complaints. Basilius had disturbed the congregation by his letters, even after the heathens ejected him, and urged them to hate each other and us (Patriarch Dionysius Tell Mahre). When we decide to assemble a council for his case in Mosul or Balad,¹⁹⁰⁸ we heard that Basilius was indisposed and staying in a monastery outside Balad called Dayr. We sent him three bishops who found him suffering from gangrenous sores so that his side, mouth, gums and teeth were worn out and stinking. The bishops could not draw nigh to him because of the stench. He answered them stammering behind the cloth placed over his face, saying, "Go and tell the bishops that I am alright, and that after a while I will come to you." However, when the delegated bishops wanted to see his face, he refused and returned to tell us his story. We were astonished at his condition, especially since he did not overcome his arrogance while facing death by surrendering to the hand of God Almighty. A day later, he passed away and we took care of his funeral. His opponents were immensely delighted, especially the easterners who were freed from the conflict he had stirred up among them. In addition, his death created an atmosphere of peace. In fact, we were at a quandary regarding his case thinking that the easterners would dissent publicly because of his seditions. We summoned Daniel from the Monastery of Bir Qum and ordained him a metropolitan for Takrit, and then we journeyed to Syria in December 1141 (A.D. 830).

In this year Mor Jacob, pope of Alexandria passed away and was succeeded by Mor Simon, who served the patriarchate for only five months and then died. Afterwards, Joseph was ordained a patriarch.

¹⁹⁰⁴ See Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 179.

¹⁹⁰⁵ He is Michael II the Stammerer 820-829.

¹⁹⁰⁶ Theophilus 829-842.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Luke 16:22.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Balad is a city about seven miles distant from Mosul. It was ruined in the fourteenth century. Today it is called Eski (old) Mosul.

Chapter Sixteen: On the invasion of Theophilus, king (emperor) of the Romans, of Lesser Armenia, and his inclination toward the Tayoye (Arabs); on the events which took place in the church, and on the anti-christ who gained renown through a lowly person and was finally exposed

When Theophilus, king (emperor) of the Romans, witnessed that the Bulgars had come to him offering their allegiance, and also that the Kurds and the Tayoye (Arabs) fled to seek refuge with him, he thought he could overwhelm the Arabs (Muslims). He went forth and laid siege against Zubatra. His men set up ladders, climbed and entered the city.¹⁹⁰⁹ They killed and were killed and finally the Romans and the barbarians conquered the city. They killed men, women and children mercilessly, and took the women captive while they were naked. After plundering the city, they set it on fire and departed, but the Tayoye (Arabs) rebuilt it.

In the following year, Manuel the patrician rebelled against the Emperor Theophilus. He went to al-Ma'mun, caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs), and incited him to invade the territory of the Romans.¹⁹¹⁰ When al-Ma'mun came to Harran, he prevented the demolishing of two churches. He also commanded that no church should be demolished without his order, and when he heard about the splendor of the church of Edessa, he went to see it. He asked the bishop about its revenue, and the bishop said, "Most of the revenue is made to cover the tribute imposed on it." The caliph decreed that inns, shops, and other things like them should be exempt from the tribute. The decree was made public throughout the Jazira, but after a short period, the Tayoye (Arabs) abolished it.

In June, al-Ma'mun attacked the country of the Romans and seized four fortresses in Cappadocia, and returned to spend the winter in Damascus. In May 1142 (A.D. 831), he attacked the Roman country the second time but could not seize the fortress of Lulu'a.¹⁹¹¹ He returned to Kesum where Patriarch Dionysus had an audience with him. When he learned of the Egyptian rebellion, he went to Damascus in 1143 (A.D. 832), and sent the two army generals Khair and Aphshin to subdue Egypt. Then he heard that Ujaif (ibn Anbasa) had seized the Lulu'a and that its inhabitants surrendered peacefully and without opposition because of the severe famine.¹⁹¹²

In this time, the Patrician Emmanuel deserted the Tayoye (Arabs) and reverted to Theophilus, king (emperor) of the Romans. In addition, al-Ma'mun swore that he would attack the Roman country and subdue its people. Scared, Theophilus sent a message suing for peace in return for paying an annual tribute. Al-Ma'mun replied, "My condition for peace is that you should subject yourself to me in addition to paying tribute regardless of its size. I do not argue about whether it is large or small."¹⁹¹³ When the king of the Romans heard the reply of the caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs), which resembled the reply of Nahash the Ammonite,¹⁹¹⁴ he kept quiet and said no word.

Then, when al-Ma'mun went to Cilicia, a Roman man came to see him who claimed to be of the stock of kings. He asked him to set him up as a king. Al-Ma'mun believed this imposter and instructed Job, patriarch of the Chalcedonians in Antioch, to make him a king because he learned that a king could not be set up without the patriarch. The patriarch prayed over him and placed a crown over his head after receiving three thousand gold dinars and precious stones. The bishops of Constantinople assembled and excommunicated the wretched Job, who was of their faith. In addition, the one who had become a king did not succeed and no one followed him. He remained for two years in the Tayoye (Arab) camp and then *hgar*, became a Muslim at the hand of Abu Ishaq. He reviled Christ and mocked Christian beliefs.

Al-Ma'mun seized many fortresses in the Roman territories by peace and by lavishing generous gifts. In September, he returned to spend the winter in Kesum. He ordered that the walls of Cyrus (Qurush) and

¹⁹⁰⁹ A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire*, I, 267.

¹⁹¹⁰ In *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III (al-Najaf, 11939): 192, the author gives a different story of Theophilus and al-Ma'mun.

¹⁹¹¹ *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 193-194.

¹⁹¹² *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 194.

¹⁹¹³ *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 192 but no text of the letter is mentioned.

¹⁹¹⁴ 1 Samuel 11:1-2.

all the fortresses in Syria and Beth Nahrin Qinnesrin be demolished. From the beginning of the year 1144 (A.D. 833) to March, he stayed in Salous.¹⁹¹⁵ The people suffered immense hardships when he gathered the crops and the hay for his army, but most of what was gathered rotted from the abundance of rain and snow. Then, he gathered flocks of camels in preparation to attack the country of the Romans once more, and he caused their owners immense distress. Because of his excessive oppression of the people, he was cursed by everyone. He commanded his son al-Abbas to secure the payment of the tribute by the governors, and the governor who paid more than the required tribute was given the full freedom of action.

In May, al-Ma'mun marched against the Roman country. He gathered the artisans in order to rebuild the city of Tyane, which the Tayoye (Arabs) had destroyed. He fell sick and died in July 1144 (A.D. 833).¹⁹¹⁶

In 1141 (A.D. 830), when al-Ma'mun, king of the Tayoye (Arabs) was in Kesum, Patriarch Dionysius (Tell Mahre) went to meet with him. When al-Ma'mun journeyed quickly to Damascus, the patriarch accompanied him to that city. It was there that the caliph, through the mediation of Li'azar of Mardin, accepted the gifts carried by the patriarch. Al-Ma'mun sent a message to the patriarch saying, "Remain here that you may come with us to Egypt. We want to send you as a messenger to the people of al-Farma in Lower Egypt to desist from rebellion and display obedience. In February, al-Ma'mun arrived in Egypt accompanied by the Patriarch Mor Dionysius for the second time. The patriarch himself said, "When we arrived at al-Farma the first of the Egyptian cities, the King (al-Ma'mun) called me through Fadl who is in charge of his royal affairs. When I entered into his presence, he stretched his hand to me as usual (shook my hand) and said, 'You have heard, O patriarch of the rebellion of the Christian Copts known as Biyamaye who have not learned a lesson from the first war which subdued them. Moreover, if I were not a merciful man who desired no killing, I would have not sent you to them. Take bishops and a group of Egyptians with you and journey to these rebels and give them a pledge of safety. They should come to the place I choose for their residence. And if they do not obey I will slaughter them by the sword.' I beseeched the caliph to keep them in their region. However, he refused. He decided on two things: they either should leave their country or be killed. He also ordered that the patriarch of Egypt should accompany me, so we traveled via the river. Eight days later, Patriarch Joseph joined us. We came to the district of Bashrout where the people of Biyamaye live. We found them gathered in an isle surrounded by water and by bamboo and papyri. Their leaders came to us, we blamed them for their recalcitrance, and for the acts of homicide they committed. However, they complained against their governor. When we told them of the decision to leave their country, they became furious. They appealed to us to ask the caliph's permission to meet them, and they would tell him how much they have suffered from their governor Abu al-Wazir who has doubled their tribute. They also said that the governor cast them into prison at night, and when their women brought food, they were violated and defiled by the soldiers. In addition, the governor killed many of them and decided to annihilate them lest they complain to the caliph against him. He even forced Aphshin to gather provisions for the army from their villages and murder their men. It happened that some soldiers saw a woman and wanted to rape her but she cried out, and the people on the island heard her cry. They rushed to her, defended her, killed, and were killed. Therefore, peace vanished completely." *This grievous narrative is ended.*

Patriarch Dionysius said that, "Many times we desired to discuss the country of the west called 'Syria,' and Mesopotamia called Beth Nahrin, especially when we mention the Jazira. But it seemed to us that the simple folk do not do this. They call Beth Nahrin as Syria, and call metaphorically the inhabitants of the western Euphrates as Syrians. Here we may say that 'Syria' is a generic name of two kinds. It is officially applied to the inhabitants who dwell in the region west of the Euphrates, which extends from the Amanus Mountain (the Black Mountain) situated north of Antioch to the southern boundaries of Palestine, and crosswise from the sea (the Mediterranean) to the River Euphrates. But, why is it called Syria?"

We say that during the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt, two brothers were found in this region: one was called Soros, the other, Cilicos. For love of leadership, they fought each other. Cilicos took his army to the region lying within the Amanus Mountain, known today as the Black Mountain, and

¹⁹¹⁵ *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 194 it is mentioned as Salghous.

¹⁹¹⁶ *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 196. He was buried in Tarsus.

established a kingdom in his name called Cilicia (Kilikia). Soros dominated the region west of the Euphrates and it was called Syria after his name. Later, it was divided into many states. I mentioned this because some claim that the Syrians had no king. However, the children of Israel entered the Promised Land and established a separate kingdom, same as the people of Tyre who established a separate kingdom for themselves. Also, the Aramaean kings who ruled Damascus were called Syrians. We find in the Septuagint version (of the Bible) written, "Ben Hadad, king of Aram, mobilized his entire army and laid siege to Samaria."¹⁹¹⁷ Again, "The commissioners of the king of Aram advised him that, 'their gods are the gods of the hills,'"¹⁹¹⁸ and, "The king of Israel had said to his officials, 'Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to take it from the king of Aram?'"¹⁹¹⁹ Therefore, those who live to the west of Euphrates are, in fact, Syrians. However, metaphorically, they are called Syrians because they spoke the Aramaic language whether they were in the eastern or the western part of the Euphrates, that is, they lived in the region extending from the sea (the Mediterranean) to Persia where many kings had risen. In Edessa, kings rose from the Abgar clan; the clan of Sanatrouq ruled the city of Ntira (Hatra) in the land of the Tayoye (Arabs); the family of Ninosh ruled in Nineveh; and the family of Nebuchadnezzar ruled in Babylon, who spoke Aramaic concerning his dream of the statue and its interpretation.¹⁹²⁰ We mention these things to confirm that the Syrians are truly the inhabitants of the western region and the inhabitants of the Jazira that is Beth Nahrin who live east of the Euphrates, and that the origin and foundation of the Syriac language is the city of Edessa.

In the year 1141 (A.D. 830), a severe hailstorm destroyed the crops. It was followed by locusts that devoured the vineyards and the olive trees. Then the locust settled down and laid eggs. In the following year, it destroyed all the crops, grapevines and trees. In the year 1144 (A.D. 833), heavy snow fell and cold was severe. The River Euphrates and other rivers were frozen and people crossed over them by walking. Fish died and were cast to the shore. Even wine was frozen in the jars.

In this time, al-Ma'mun marched against Egypt accompanied by the Patriarch (Dionysius Tell Mahre) and found the Nile had become frozen, a thing that had never been heard of before.

In this year (1144), there was a great famine in Khurasan worse than that which happened in Samaria.¹⁹²¹ The people sold wheat worth 130 dirham for one piaster. They ground the joints of straw, kneaded it and baked it. In addition, they dried palm leaves, kneaded them and baked them. They gathered date kernels, ground them and ate them. Even one woman slaughtered her infant child, cooked it, and ate it. However, she was discovered and confessed that she had killed several babies, and they killed her. A stranger died in the inn, and several men and women cut off his flesh and ate it raw happily. We heard these reports from a decent old presbyter who came to us from Aphrah, a city of Khurasan, to find for the people a bishop.

Chapter Seventeen: On the events recorded by Patriarch Dionysius which he witnessed during his visit to Egypt in the company of al- Ma'mun

The blessed (Patriarch Dionysius) said, "When we met with the army general al-Aphshin, and he told us that the (Egyptian) rebels refused to surrender, he went on to say that (in this case) peace is irrelevant. Go to the caliph (al-Ma'mun) and tell him that there is no place for peace." He began to fight the rebels. He set fire in the villages, vineyards, orchards and churches, and in the entire region, but the Biyamaye attacked the Persians with arrows and lances through the bamboo. In addition, they brought their neighbors and incited them (against the Persians), and they killed and were killed. When we had an audience with the caliph, I told him everything, especially the injustice Abu al-Wazir had done to the Copts and how it impeded the peace, and how the people of the region complained against him and against two others. As

¹⁹¹⁷ 2 Kings 6:24.

¹⁹¹⁸ 1 Kings 20:23.

¹⁹¹⁹ 1 Kings 22:3.

¹⁹²⁰ Cf. Daniel entire Chapter 2.

¹⁹²¹ 1 Kings 18:2.

the caliph listened to me with interest, I was emboldened by the zeal which gripped me to admonish him, citing God as a witness, to remind him of the account he would give his Lord on account of the flock which is under his trust. I cited the words of the Prophet who said, 'I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame.'¹⁹²²

When I finished, he said, "These governors do not act according to my will. I do not overburden anyone. Moreover, if I am compassionate toward my Roman enemies, why should I not be compassionate to my own flock? I will redress everything by God's will." On the next day, his secretary, who had investigated the case of these wronged people (Egyptians), called me in order to inform him of the injustice of the governors of Egypt. He said that he would relate my words anew to the caliph and to Abu Ishaq (al-Mu'tasim, al-Ma'mun's brother) who was responsible for these wronged people. I, however, was very cautious of Abu Ishaq, a man known to have no mercy. I returned on the next day and told Abu Ishaq that, "We should fear God and not man." Then I related to him the whole story from the beginning and added to it what I had forgotten to mention to the caliph. Afterwards, the caliph gave me permission to return to Damascus.

I have recorded my observations in Egypt as follows hoping that it would not be a cause of frustration but an admonition to the hearers.

Our impression about Pope Joseph and the bishops is that they are pious, humble and rich in God's love. We were immensely honored by them to the degree that, during our stay with them, they offered us first the matters of highest esteem, spiritual or otherwise, which are peculiar to the Pope alone. However, we detected among them customs incompatible with their virtue and far off from the spirit of Cyril, Dioscorus and Timothy who issued canons for the church.¹⁹²³ We also discovered their negligence of the Holy Scriptures, especially the monks who had been deprived of this grace. The humble among them concentrated on handiwork and the recitation of Psalms. Those who performed the services had no concern for the knowledge of wisdom. They were rather busy collecting money in order to pay for obtaining a position of leadership in the future. In fact, no one could win a position of leadership without paying at least two hundred to three hundred dirhams. If an educated and learned man was found without money, his ambition to acquire leadership was impossible. When we blamed them for such behavior, the pope said, "We have resorted to this method because our church has incurred immense debts which otherwise cannot be settled." Then I said that such procedure is against the Apostolic canons, and he who receives the priesthood by offering a bribe deserves excommunication together with one who ordained him. They said that, "Although this is repulsive, yet we demand from the person who practices it to redeem any pawned church vessels." I began to laugh rather than cry for their simple mindedness. I told them what Christ said to his apostles when they said, 'Here are two swords,' and he replied, 'That is enough.'¹⁹²⁴ They did not baptize males before forty days, and females before thirty days of their birth. Thus, many children died without being baptized. They violated the canons in several other matters as well. Therefore, we wrote down some observations and handed them to them.

We also beheld the pillars that Jeremiah¹⁹²⁵ said were standing in Heliopolis (Temple of the Sun) whose priest was Potiphar, father-in-law of Joseph. Each of these pillars was hewn from a single rock. They are more than sixty cubits tall and six cubits in circumference. They are mounted on a base ten cubits wide and seventy cubits tall. They are inscribed with the portraits of heathen gods from top to bottom with pontifical writings no one has yet been able to read. It is truly a wonderful spectacle. These pillars are not made of soft but firm marble resembling those of Ba'lbak, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, as it is said. However, they are different from those of Egypt because they are only forty cubits high, while the pillars in Egypt are more than sixty cubits high. The mind is bewildered at how these pillars were cut off and transported to these places, and what skills did they use to install them on the bases? If a thousand men got

¹⁹²² Psalm 119:46.

¹⁹²³ These are the Egyptian patriarchs who were champions of Orthodoxy.

¹⁹²⁴ Luke 22:38.

¹⁹²⁵ See Jeremiah 43:13.

together, they would not be able to move from the ground as much as one finger length. On the crests of these pillars are fixed white bronze crowns that look like a helmet the soldier wears over his head during the war. Each one weighs more than thousand pounds. Despite the fact that the city has been ruined since the time of Christ, neither the Egyptians nor the greedy Tayoye (Arabs) ventured into climbing the pillars to bring down the bronze, as the Tayoye (Arabs) did to the colossus in the island of Rhodes which they smashed and carried from it three thousand loads of bronze. If someone should ask, why did Jeremiah prophecy that Christ will demolish the pillars of Beth Shemesh,¹⁹²⁶ yet here they stand not demolished. We answer, 'Let him know that Christ destroyed and abolished worshipping them as God. He left these pillars as a sign for the coming generation in order that Christians should realize the devil's power over people and that his servants suffer a heavy burden in honor of his worship.'

In the city were more than five hundred statues of deformed appearances set up in its streets and outside its gates. Each one occupied an area of forty cubits. We learned that it was a religious center of idols and heathens of every region.

We also witnessed in Egypt the Pyramids that the Theologian (Gregory of Nazianzus) mentioned in his Discourses.¹⁹²⁷ They are not the granaries of Joseph as some thought, but are wonderful chambers built over the graves of ancient kings. Nevertheless, they are oblique and solid mass and not hollow or empty on the inside, but have no doors. To the side of one of them we saw a crevice about fifty cubits deep whose walls were laid with stones people had crushed in order to see whether they were hollow.

The area of each pyramid is five hundred cubits long, five hundred cubits wide and two hundred fifty cubits high. While its base is five hundred cubits, its top is one cubit only. The size of each of its stone is between five to ten cubits long. From a far distance, they look like gigantic mountains. To their (the Pyramids) side we saw a rock like a mountain or a round hill. It was hewn and from it was made a statue (the Sphinx) for the worship of their kings. We also saw a chamber built on the Nile River before it divides into four branches. It looked like a quadrangular cistern with a stone post in its middle, engraved with degree marks for measuring the water level when the river floods in September. When the water inundates the chamber, the experts know how high the water has reached that day. If the water level drops less than fourteen degrees, which is the average degree of the flood, then only a small piece of the land of Egypt is watered. It will not yield the required crops that year and subsequently, taxes increase. However, if the water level rises to seventeen or eighteen degrees, then the entire land of Egypt is watered and taxes are levied that year. If the water level rises twenty degrees, the flood will then spoil the crops that year. In brief, from the measures inscribed on that post, the experts are able to know the amount of taxes levied annually in Egypt.

The King (caliph) al-Ma'mun went down to the Biyamaye and stopped the sword against them. He summoned their chiefs and commanded them to leave the region. They told him of the bad treatment they had received (from the governors). They said that since their livelihood depended on the papyrus and fishing, they might not find a source of livelihood somewhere else. Eventually, they succumbed to his order, left by ships to Antioch, and then were sent to Baghdad. They numbered about three thousand souls. Most of them, however, died on the road and others, about five hundred souls who were captured in war were taken captive by the Tayoye (Arabs) who sold them in Damascus. This was a matter that had never been done before in the Tayoye (Arab) kingdom, namely, the sale of people who are under the yoke of the jizya (tribute). However, by the help of God, we urged the believers to buy all of them and thus saved them. They did not return to their country because of the famine there. Many of them went to Syria to find bread. Meanwhile, the Caliph (al-Ma'mun) issued an order to his governors not to treat the Egyptians harshly, or else they would be killed. In addition, he dropped half of the jizya (poll tax) imposed on them. Nevertheless, after leaving Egypt the Egyptians were more oppressed. The Persians attacked the villages, captured people in groups of ten or twenty persons, and sent them to al-Fustat without ascertaining their crime or innocence. Many of them perished without having done wrong, and those who were bound in fetters offered a bribe to their captors to set them free. The captors said to them, "You have been handed to us in

¹⁹²⁶ See Jeremiah 43:13.

¹⁹²⁷ See *Patrologia Graeca*, 36: col. 580.

numbers. Wait a little until we find someone on the road, and we will capture them and then release you.” They met three men: a priest and two Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) one of them was an Imam of a mosque. They seized them in place of the men who offered them a bribe and set them free. Since they seized them unjustly, they gave them no opportunity to talk, but killed them. Thus, the corpses of innocent people filled the roads. At this time, warfare, captivity, famine and death prevailed in Egypt. *This various narrative is ended by the help of God.*

Chapter Eighteen: On the death of al-Ma'mun, and the commencement of the reign of Abu Ishaq (al-Mu'tasim) and how Theophilus, emperor of the Romans heaved a sigh of relief. The journey of Mor Dionysius to the East, and other matters

When al-Ma'mun died in Tyane in the land of the Romans, a sharp controversy stirred up among the Tayoye (Arabs) for three days. Some of them wanted Abbas (son of al-Ma'mun) to rule over them; others wanted Abu Ishaq (al-Mu'tasim, brother of al-Ma'mun) to be their ruler.¹⁹²⁸ While they were assembling, the curtain of the door opened and Abbas emerged saying, “The kingdom is for Abu Ishaq. Pray for the preservation of his life.” A bewilderment overwhelmed the camp. They burned the buildings of Tyane and its crops and provisions, and departed in haste. Abu Ishaq went down to Baghdad to receive the kingdom of his fathers, but was apprehensive that he would be rejected by the people because he was receiving the kingdom by force and not by consensus. However, when Abu Ishaq, nicknamed al-Mu'tasim, arrived in Baghdad in October, the people welcomed him and offered him the kingdom, but still were afraid of him because of his cruelty. Yet, as soon as he established himself, he began to construct splendid building for his residence. He had a water canal dug and planted an orchard for his pleasure. He sent his troops to fight the Zotoye (Zut) who lived on the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers. They were rebellious people and a source of trouble for the caliphs. They attacked, killed and plunder the merchants who traversed between Basra and Baghdad and between India and China. The army could not cope with them because they fought in small boats. Al-Mu'tasim sent against them the Copts whom he had taken captive in Egypt. These Copts were accustomed to life on the water. They could dive in the water like fish without being detected, and shower the Zut with arrows and caused them to flee. Thus, the Biyamaye defeated the Zut. They and their women and children were seized and cast into prison in Baghdad and then perished.¹⁹²⁹

When al-Mu'tasim saw that the Copts had overwhelmed the Zut in war, he loved them and chose some of them to work in his service in his gardens and orchards. Others he used to weave cotton cloths because the Egyptians were famous in this trade. The rest, he allowed to return to their country. However, when they reached the sea and were about to board the ships and return to Egypt, divine wrath caught up with them. A severe storm raged and they were drowned in the sea.

In the year 1146 (A.D. 835), Abu Ishaq sent the son of his uncle Tahir to fight the rebellious people of Media who lived in the Mountain of Sadqa. He killed about five thousand of them and controlled those mountains. In addition, he sent Aphshin against Babek al-Khurrami who had destroyed a great number of Arab forces. In this same year, Umar (ibn Abd Allah) and his companions of Melitene set ambushes in the country of the Romans. The Emperor Theophilus faced them and chased them off at the beginning, but the Tayoye (Arabs) regrouped their troops and defeated the Romans, killing a great number of them as they were retreating. The emperor managed to escape with few men, but the Tayoye (Arabs) entered the emperor's palace and pillaged even his bed and clothes, and their hands were filled with his possessions.

In this time, a huge whale was seen near Bahrain. It was about one mile long, and the people of Bahrain were scared to venture into the sea. The divers for jewels would not step into the sea, and for three months, the whale disturbed the sea by its fluctuating movements. The people supplicated God to save them from him. Finally, God sent a small fish about one span long, which entered into the ear of the whale

¹⁹²⁸ Bar Hebraeus is mistaken in making al-Mu'tasim the son of al-Ma'mun. Al-Mu'tasim was a son of Harun al-Rashid and brother of al-Ma'mun. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 133. As a son of Harun al-Rashid, see Tabari, 7, 223.

¹⁹²⁹ Cf. *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 197-198; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 133.

and killed him and he was washed about by the waves and cast on the shore. The people cut up its flesh, roasted it and ate it. If they could not roast it, they salted it, dried it in the sun, pounded it and ate it.¹⁹³⁰

In this time, people brought to Abd Allah bar (son of) Tahir, governor of Khurasan, an infant whose mother had given birth to him that year. However, he grew up to the stature of a man, and the hair of his beard sprouted, a gruesome and bewildering phenomenon.

In the year 1146 (A.D. 835), a strong flow of water gushed at night from the river of Zubatra, a city of the border towns (*ithubur*), while people were sleeping. The waters rose up above the wall, which collapsed, and inundated the streets and the houses, and three thousand souls were drowned inside. On the opposite side, the wall also collapsed and the waters gushed forth. Many houses and buildings collapsed. In addition, the Tigris River overflowed and destroyed many houses and buildings of Baghdad.

In this year, the Mhagroye (Hagerites, Muslims) of Harran stirred up war against the Christians. At the dawn of Sunday of the Resurrection, they destroyed the churches of Mor Jirjis (George) of Qubo and Mor Ahodemeh, which were recently built. The words (of the Prophet Amos) were fulfilled in the people of Harran, which say, "I will turn your religious feasts into mourning."¹⁹³¹

The holy Dionysius (Tell Mahre) said, "In June of the year 1145 (A.D. 834), we went to Baghdad to greet King (Caliph) Abu Ishaq (al-Mu'tasim) who was recently set up in his position. We reached Nisibin and reconciled the sons of our church whom the rebellious Philoxenus caused to dissent for six years. Immediately, after their union with us, they ejected him and he went to the wicked Abiram who was residing in the district of the people of Qurush (Cyrus). In Mosul, we tarried in order to bring peace to the churches in that city concerning the controversy over the proclamation of metropolitans. While the congregation of Mosul proclaimed Cyriacus of St. Matthew's Monastery a metropolitan, the congregation of Takrit refused to do so. Eventually, and by the power of God, we succeeded in bringing them together when we went down to Takrit to ordain a metropolitan for its congregation, and found a solution acceptable to both congregations." We wrote down the following, "In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Upon our arrival in Takrit, I, Patriarch Dionysius by the mercy of God, and the pious bishops who were present: Uthman, bishop of the Taghlibite (Arabs), Addai, bishop of Karma, Iliyya (Elijah), bishop of Narsibad, Tuma (Thomas), bishop of Sijistan, Musa, bishop of Balad (Eski Mosul), Cyriacus, bishop of Mosul, and Yuhanon, bishop of Baghdad, assembled to elect a metropolitan for the aforementioned city (Takrit) and all the East. Then, we ascertained the reason of the prolonged conflict between (the monks) of St. Matthew's Monastery and their bishop Cyriacus with the Takritians who were dwelling in Mosul. When we examined the subject, the monks of St. Matthew's Monastery said that according to an ancient tradition they observe, the bishop who is ordained for the region of Nineveh is proclaimed a metropolitan in their church. They demanded from the Takritians of Mosul to do the same in their church. The Takritians of Mosul retorted that it was not possible to proclaim him except as an ordinary bishop. They categorically refused to accept any metropolitan other than the metropolitan of Takrit. Therefore, we assembled priests, deacons, monks, and the notables of Takrit and deliberated how to find a cure for this ailment. We observed that the proclamation of the bishop (who is ordained for the region of Nineveh that is Mosul) as a metropolitan does not impinge upon the honor of the metropolitan of Takrit. On the contrary, his honors would enhance the dignity of the see of Takrit because of the increase of the number of those under his jurisdiction. Then, we reached a solution acceptable to the Takritians and to the monks of St. Matthew's Monastery. We resolved that Cyriacus should be proclaimed a metropolitan in the entire churches of the Takritians of Mosul twice a year as do the rest of the churches. The first time, it should be done on Palm Sunday when the believers are gathered for the blessing of the olive branches in the churches of the Takritians, the second time at the occasion of consecrating the *Mirun* (Holy Chrism). As to other days, the Takritians are free to proclaim as they wish."

We also found in the letter of the Council of Callinicus that the monks of St. Matthew's Monastery and the Takritians agreed that the bishop of Mosul should be proclaimed a metropolitan, and at the same

¹⁹³⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, p. 134.

¹⁹³¹ Amos 8:10.

time, he would be subject to the metropolitan of Takrit. We also decided to raise the honor of the See of Takrit. We affirmed a previous canon, which says that the bishops should perform the ordinations and the consecration of altars in all the churches, each in the manner he sees fitting. However, when the metropolitan is present in the city, the bishop of the city should allow him to perform these duties in his churches because he has precedence to the bishops of the East as second to the patriarch. In addition, the metropolitan of Takrit, whenever he wants, can invite the bishops under his authority to a meeting. If conflict should arise between a bishop and his congregation, the metropolitan of Takrit should adjudicate between the two sides. If a complaint is launched against a bishop, the metropolitan should summon him, investigate with him and issue a verdict according to the canons. Bishop Cyriacus and whoever shall succeed him should submit to the metropolitan of Takrit concerning these matters.

We have put these matters in order in November of the year 1146 (A.D. 538), in Takrit. Afterwards, Mor Tuma was elected and ordained a metropolitan for Takrit. As we were getting ready to visit with the caliph, we received reports from the west that forced us to return to the Jazira to treat the reasons calling us to return, and then proceed anew to extend our greetings to the king (caliph).

Chapter Nineteen: On the second campaign of Theophilus, emperor of the Romans against the country of the Arabs; the visit of Gewargi (George), King of the Nubians to Abu Ishaq, king (caliph) of The Arabs; the new cities the caliph wanted to build; the third visit of Patriarch Dionysius to Baghdad; the conflict stirred up in this time between the Nestorians of Baghdad and the Chalcedonians in Antioch

Abu Ishaq, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) abandoned Baghdad and went to dwell between the two tributaries of the Tigris: the Great Qatlob and the Lesser Qatlob¹⁹³², which water the region of the Aramaeans. He liked this region more than Baghdad because it was tranquil and had plenty of hunting game. One of the kings had destroyed this city, when Harun al-Rashid, Abu Ishaq's father, desired to have it rebuilt. But after having its wall rebuilt and the city itself almost completed, Abu Ishaq deserted it and built the village of Shomro (Samarra) situated between Athor (Mosul) and Babylon. Shomro (Samarra) was a small village built on the bank of the Tigris River, and had no natural merit. Even living in it was uncomfortable. It was deprived of all of God's blessings, but Abu Ishaq loved it for the sake of hunting and had it built. He had canals dug up to bring water from the Tigris, and planted it with gardens, orchards and palm trees. He brought from Egypt balsam nursery plants and papyri from which paper is made.¹⁹³³

At this time, many of the partisans of Babek al-Khurami and Nasr, the captain of his host, got tired of fighting the Persians.¹⁹³⁴ They fled to Theophilus, emperor of the Romans, and became Christians. Theophilus thought that since these people had come under his authority, he could through them defeat the Tayoye (Arabs). He sent a message to the Tayoye (Arabs) asking them to pay the jizya (tribute) of Greater Armenia, and in case they refused, he would destroy it. Since the Tayoye (Arabs) had no army, they used prudence and paid the tribute.

In the summer of 1148 (A.D. 837), Theophilus marched for the second time against Zubatra, which the barbarians had captured and massacred mercilessly Jews and Christians alike.¹⁹³⁵ They were so wicked that they even violated women and opened their bellies. After they spoiled and burned the city, they passed to the country of Melitene and did the same thing, and sent the captives to the country of the Romans. Then they passed on to Hanzit and the country of Arsamosata and laid siege to the city. The Arabs who were living there feared them especially, when they heard of the destruction of Zubatra. They thought that they should either leave the city or pay the jizya (tribute) to the Romans, especially since the Persians could not help them because they were busy with war with Babek. In addition, they were angry with Abu Ishaq

¹⁹³² They are most likely the Great Zab and the Lesser Zab.

¹⁹³³ *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 199.

¹⁹³⁴ On Babek, see Abu al-Hasan al-Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhabab wa Ma'adin al-Jawbar*, edited by Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Hamid, 4 (Cairo: Dar al-Raja', 1938), 10-13). Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 135 calls Babek the Khuwarizmite.

¹⁹³⁵ Tabari, 7, 263.

who overburdened them with exorbitant taxes. They were even more incensed against us, Christians, and almost decimated us if it were not for the fact that they heard that the Romans had despoiled the Christians of Zubatra, and tightened their grip against the Christians of Edessa. They did so because of a certain audacious Edessan Christian person called Shamouna, who joined the Romans and urged them to annihilate the Tayoye (Arabs). When the Romans had laid siege against Arsamosata, the Tayoye (Arabs) of the Rabi'a tribe connived with the natives of Melitene to fight the Romans, but they were defeated and four thousands of them perished. The Romans burned Arsamosata and destroyed it. Then they passed on to the country of Armenia. Theophilus sent a message to the natives saying, "If you do not open the gate and receive a pledge of safety for your lives, I will kill you and destroy your city as I did to Zubatra." The judge and the notables went out to meet him and reasoned well with him. They appealed to him to give them a respite for some time. Finally, they gave him hostages as a manifestation that they would not plant ambushes in his country. After they presented him with gifts and delivered unto him the Roman captives in their city, he departed for fear that, he might be overtaken by the Arab forces.

Abu Ishaq (the Caliph al-Mu'tasim) disturbed by the conduct of the Romans, dispatched against them 'Ujaif (ibn 'Anbasa) with forty thousand troops.¹⁹³⁶ However, the Romans were emboldened and destroyed them, and very few escaped with their lives. He dispatched another army in the winter, which spoiled the people, seized the cattle and horses and retreated. When they reached our regions, they closed the roads like enemies and spoiled every one whom they met. When Babek al-Khurrami saw that his band of men were defeated and fled to the Roman territory, he carried whatever he could of his possessions and buried the rest in the ground. He fled to the country of the Romans with four hundred of his men. They reached the village of a certain man named Estephan, an Armenian patrician who invited Babek to his house with alacrity. He bound him in iron fetters, and informed the caliph al-Mu'tasim of what he had done. The caliph rejoiced that Babek, his enemy was seized because he had annihilated more than one hundred-thousand souls. He sent gifts to Estephan, and commanded his men to bring to him Babek with Aphshin. When Babek appeared before the caliph Abu Ishaq, he asked him, "Are you Babek?" and Babek said, "Yes I am." The caliph commanded that his right arm be cut off, and then his left arm, and finally his head, and hanged it upon a tree.¹⁹³⁷ He gave his possessions and position (as a captain of the army) to Aphshin. Shortly afterwards, Aphshin discovered the possessions Babek had buried in the ground. Because of the plenty of money he now possessed, he, the other one (Aphshin), became a rebel.

At this time in the year 1147 (A.D. 836), Gewargi (George), son of the king of the Nubians, went to see the king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) for the following reason. Since ancient times, it was the custom of the Nubian kings to donate every year to the Tayoye (Arabs) 360 Moorish slaves, baboons trained to imitate the behavior of human beings, giraffes, ivory, ostriches, and tigers' hide. In return, the Tayoye (Arabs) gave the Nubians many measures of grain from Egypt, measures of olive oil, vessels and precious raiments. They also permitted them to levy taxes on the Nubian Muslims living in their country. According to this agreement, the Muslims should not spoil the Nubians, and neither the Nubian should pass by Syene, a frontier city on the side of Egypt, and enter Tayoye (Arab) territory. However, this rapprochement was abrogated because of the disturbance that has inflicted the world since the time of the sons of Harun (al-Rashid), as the influence of Tayoye (Arabs) had extended, and they became more inclement toward the Nubians. Accordingly, the Arabs did not send anything to the Nubians, nor the Nubians send anything to the Arabs. When al-Mu'tasim learned of this, he sent confidants from his retinue to the king of the Nubians saying, "Send us what is our rights as usual according to the ancient custom, or else, I will send the Arabs to spoil your country." When the messenger arrived, King Nabados has already died and his kingdom was administered by prince Zakariyya. This Zakariyya was not from the royal family, but his wife was and she born him a son named Gewargi (George). The people placed the royal crown on his head, and his father kept administering the state until he reached the age of puberty. When Zakariyya learned from the envoy

¹⁹³⁶ See al-Mas'udi, 4, 14-15.

¹⁹³⁷ Tabari, 7, 262 says that Babek was crucified between the two bridges. Abu al-Hasan al-Mas'udi, 4, 12-13 says that Babek's head was hung on the bridge.

what went on in the mind of the Arabs, he sent his son to Abu Ishaq (the caliph) that he might find grace in his eyes, and by this method could fulfill his desires. He said to the envoy of the caliph, "I do not prefer that discussion should be done between us by correspondence, but I shall send my son who will rule over the Nubians to extend greetings to your caliph." The envoy transported this desire to the caliph, who and his governors in Egypt, to welcome him with respect and pomp. When al-Mu'tasim learned that Zakariyya's son had reached the Fustat of Egypt, he wrote to the governors to hire camels for his entire retinue and give him thirty dinars a day for his expenses so that the governors of the cities should welcome him as a king. At al-Raqqā (Callinicus), he was welcomed by the governor of the Jazira and by Christians and Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims). They hovered over him like something strange, especially that he was mounting a camel with a strange saddle different from the saddles in our region. It was topped by an baldachin embroidered with precious cloth and on its top stood a golden cross. In one hand he carried a staff, and in the other a cross. Young Nubians marched on his right and his left carrying crosses. They were preceded by a mounting bishop carrying a cross in his hand. All the crosses were made of gold, and all the horsemen and the slaves in his company were black. He was also accompanied by two bishops who died on the road, as also did some of his attendants and many of his troops because of the snow and ice. The sons of al-Raqqā (Callinicus) had never seen such a spectacle before.

The whole company remained in Callinicus until Christmas. Then, Gewargi (George) went down to Baghdad where he was celebrated by the army in the marketplaces, and during this time stayed in one of the royal palaces. He remained there from February until August. The reason for his delay was that a Nubian who levied the taxes from the Nubians who lived in the country of the Arabs rebelled against the Nubian king and *hagar*, that is, became a Muslim.¹⁹³⁸ Gewargi seized him and bound him in fetters. The wretched man wrote to the Tayoye (Arab) caliph saying, "This man (Gewargi) is an imposter and not the son of the king." The caliph sent someone to Egypt to investigate the matter. For this reason, Gewargi was delayed from having an audience with the caliph Abu Ishaq. However, when the caliph received an answer that Gewargi was the son of a king, he summoned him unto him, and ordered the military troops to welcome him with their arms and regalia. Gewargi passed through their rows on both sides of the road. He was adorned with a wreath and a crown over his head topped by a cross. Abu Ishaq arranged for men to assemble more than what al-Ma'mun had done. When Gewargi entered into his presence, he held him by the hand and had him seated before him. He learned through the interpreter that he had come to offer his greetings (the caliph welcomed him cordially). He gave him plenty of expensive gifts of gold and silver.¹⁹³⁹ He also gave him raiments, musk and ambergris (perfume) and ten bedecked camels especially for the riding of kings. He ordered that he (Gewargi) should be honored in all the towns until he enters his land and also that he should be given thirty dinars daily for his expenses.

At this time, conflict arose among the Chalcedonians of Antioch, and also among the Nestorians following the death of their Catholicos Sabr Yeshu. They left the choice (of a new catholicos) to Bakht Yeshu and to Sulayman, the two physicians of the caliph. Sulayman chose Abraham, bishop of Hadath, while Bakht Yeshu chose Mari, metropolitan of Beth Laphat. Hence was their conflict. The bishops who accepted Mari took him to the high places of Seleucia-Ctesiphon because no catholicos could be ordained except there. When Sulayman learned of this matter, he was disturbed and went to see the caliph Abu Ishaq. He complained against the bishop who chose Bakht Yeshu saying, "They did not take into consideration my relationship with you and my service to you since adulthood to old age." Driven by zeal, the caliph ordered Mari to be bound in iron fetters. The Nestorian set up Abraham, bishop of Hadath as catholicos by the caliph's order. Thus, the Nestorians were split into two factions, one proclaiming Mari as a catholicos, the other proclaiming Abraham. Likewise, their churches were divided, and in every church two services and two Eucharists were celebrated for many years until Mari passed away and the leadership settled on Abraham.

¹⁹³⁸ The Syriac verb *hagar* or *ahgar*, derives from Hagerites, meaning Muslims.

¹⁹³⁹ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, pp. 134-135.

As said earlier, Patriarch Mor Dionysius (Tell Mahre) journeyed to Baghdad. He said, "At the beginning of August of the year 1147 (A.D. 836), I entered into the presence of Abu Ishaq, same as I did according to my custom with his brother al-Ma'mun in the city of Baghdad. He received me with pleasure in the new city he had built between two rivers. The king of Nubia had arrived in Baghdad since February without having an audience with the caliph. The king, who had spent a long time on the road, wrote to me upon his arrival in al-Raqqah asking to meet with me and have my blessings. I replied that, 'I cannot see you before meeting with the caliph. But you may go ahead of me and I will see you there.' I reminded the caliph of him saying, 'I would like to meet him because he is of our same belief. But I don't know the reason of his delay.' After the caliph met Gewargi and honored him through the mediation of Sulayman his physician, he said to me, 'Go and meet that Nubian.' I took with me certain bishops and believers and went to see him. I saw an intelligent, handsome and well-bred young man about twenty years old. He was of an appearance worthy of kings. Through an interpreter we sensed that he was a true Orthodox and zealous for the faith and shunned communicating with the heretics. On Sunday we celebrated the Eucharist and had him and his people partake of it, for they had with them a complete set of the sacred vessels used for the celebration of the Eucharist.¹⁹⁴⁰ After we received a decree from the caliph and returned, the king of the Nubians honored us by granting us some gold and silver gifts worthy to be granted by someone like myself in order to become a memory in their kingdom."

"After our departure of Baghdad in the year 1148 (A.D. 837), we received on the road a report of the death of Abiram. We immediately proceeded to the region of the people of Cyrus (Qurush) to reconcile them to us. However, the impious Philoxenus, bishop of Nisibin, Sliba and the monk Simon, had already ordained Abiram's brother (a bishop); the condemned Philoxenus laid his defiled hand on him because the news of church peace disturbed him. When the people heard of this matter, they were furious for they knew how wicked Simon was. Then all of them attended our council in Jubrin, and we forgave them. We discussed the ordinations some priests and deacons received from that rebel, and the case of those (clerics) who were married more than once but were not stopped from serving. We said that, according to the canons these clerics are divested from the ordination, since Abiram was also divested from the episcopate. We even condescended to grant them the same ordination, which is given to those who return from heresy. As to those married more than once, we will not accept them. It is for their own good that we have written a document of reconciliation, hoping that they may return to us on the next day and we will absolve them. But the priests who were married more than once gathered ruffians like themselves, and with a great clamor said, 'Why should we reject those who have fulfilled our wishes and did not deny us any quest or any place in the church, and want us to follow the one for whom we have no love?' Those miserable simpletons were deceived by such speech and returned to their vomit. However, those of sound mind returned to us, and those who were cowards followed a zigzag course. On the one hand, they praised us and disparaged Simon, and on the other hand, they participated with them on some occasions, being influenced by their relatives. They resembled the Samaritans of whom was written that, 'They worshiped the Lord, but they also served their own gods.'¹⁹⁴¹ Be that as it may, the partisans of Abiram were defeated and could no more affect anything good or bad just like the nations idols."

Chapter Twenty: On the march of Abu Ishaq, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) into the Roman territory; the defeat of Theophilus, emperor of the Romans; the deplorable destruction of the city of Amorium (Ammuriyya); an atmospheric phenomenon; and ecclesiastical events which took place at this time

In the year 1149 (A.D. 838), the Caliph Abu Ishaq was prepared to attack the country of the Romans. He divided his troops into two camps, and placed the first under the command of Aphshin who entered the gorge of Hadath. He personally led the second camp of troops who entered the gorge of Tarsus with 50,000 fighting men, 30,000 merchants and those who hire beasts and slaves, 50,000 camels and 20,000

¹⁹⁴⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 135.

¹⁹⁴¹ 2 Kings 17:33.

mules, not counting the caliph's cavalry and army. When they reached Safsaf, they found in it a Roman spy and killed him. Then, when they reached the city of Nicaea, which was in ruins, they destroyed its citadel. They then moved to Ancyra, but found no one in it for the inhabitants had fled to the great city of Amorium. The caliph ordered the destruction of the wall of Ancyra, which was built of very huge stones. They seized nine carriages for the transportation of people from Ancyra and brought them to the camp. The emperor Theophilus attacked the camp of Aphshin of 30,000 warriors and killed 3,000 Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims). Immediately, however, God sent heavy rain, which halted the fighting and the Roman troops, were scattered. Theophilus withdrew with 2,000 men. The rest thought that he had been killed and fled to Constantinople. When the rain stopped and the atmosphere cleared, Theophilus saw that the Romans were scattered; he and those with him dismounted their horses and gathered around the emperor. They were surrounded by the forces of Aphshin, which consisted of 30,000 men but could not overwhelm the 2,000 men with Theophilus. Then they brought engines of war so that they might hurl stones on them. The Romans fought breaking through the ranks of the Tayoye (Arabs). When darkness settled the fighting stopped. The Romans lighted their camp and then departed hastily to Amorium, and Theophilus was saved.¹⁹⁴²

Theophilus' mother sent him a messenger telling him that the Romans who arrived at the capital spread the report that he was killed, and that the leaders were to appoint another emperor. As he hurried to leave, Theophilus commanded the troops in Amorium to shut the gates of the city. And Amorium became like a mountain goat lamenting its kids. When he reached Constantinople, he killed the nobles who wanted to set up another king (emperor). He returned to Amorium and witnessed the destruction the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) left behind. He blamed himself for having destroyed Zubatra first. He realized that he had only struck the stern of the ship. He sent Basilius the Patrician of Kharshana to Abu Ishaq (al-Mu'tasim) with two letters and gifts. In the first letter, he admitted his offense, and appealed to the Patrician Aeitus to set free the Tayoye (Arab, Muslim) captives in order to insure peace. The second letter contained threatening and invective in case he rejected peace. Abu Ishaq welcomed the letter heartily and demanded that the Romans should set free all of the Tayoye (Arab) captives, Nasr the Kurd and his son, and Emmanuel (the Patrician). Basilius said, "This is not possible." Abu Ishaq said, "Depart, then." Basilius handed him the letter that contained threats, and when Abu Ishaq read it, he was furious. He handed back the gifts of the emperor of the Romans with his envoy. He commanded Abu Sa'id (Muhammad ibn Yusuf), captain of the Tayoye (Arab) army, to set ambushes in the Roman territory. He also authorized him power over Beth Nahrin and Syria. When Abu Sa'id reached Aleppo, he commanded that the jars of wine be broken and the wine spilled down the streets. He was visited by a Chalcedonian bishop who beseeched him to have compassion on the Christians. However, Abu Sa'id rejoined, "Do not tire you, O bishop. You are people whom I abhor too much, and who will not receive from me anything good. Pray that I may die in the land of the Romans that I might not see you again." When he moved to enter the Roman territory, he took the fighting men aside and left the leader Bashir with the sons of al-Massisa (Mopsuestia) on the other side. After Bashir gained abundant booty and captives, he was joined by Nasr, the Kurdish leader, and rescued the Roman captives. When he was overtaken by Abu Sa'id, Nasr weakened, and Bashir killed him and hung his head on a lance. When the Kurds saw that their leader was killed, they witnessed death before their eyes. They dismounted, and dragging Nasr, they began to fight on foot until all of them perished. Abu Sa'id gathered their heads and brought them to al-Massisa. He had them salted in order to ship them to the caliph. He found out that many of them were sons of al-Massisa, especially when their wives recognized their husbands by their heads. It was a great lamentation and joy turned into sorrow. However, the caliph (al-Mu'tasim) rejoiced for the killing of Nasr who had devastated Zubatra. He placed a gold medal around Bashir's neck and granted him gifts. *This account of kings and wars ended by the help of God. Glory to him. This postscript is written in Arabic letters, and briefly in Syriac in red ink in the version of the Edessan-Aleppo Codex.*

¹⁹⁴² Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 136.

BOOK TWELVE

At this time Abu Ishaq, caliph of the Tayoye (Arabs), had a son named Dawud (David) who hated the Christians. By his influence, the caliph issued a decree forbidding a cross to be placed outside the churches, or the ringing of (church) bells, or raising of voices during prayers or on the streets during funerals. He also forbade (the sale) of wine in the cities or in the streets. The people (Christians) became a prey to the commissioners who implemented this decree according to the (bribes) paid them.

In November of the year 1149 (A.D. 838), a comet appeared in the northern and southern parts of the sky, its rays extended to the west and lasted for sixteen days. It appeared at dawn until the rays of the sun disappeared.

In this year, Abu Ishaq attacked the Roman territory, but when he saw that things were not happening the way it pleased him, he was saddened and said, "We have not done well by coming here." When he wanted to leave, Ahmad, his confidant, said to him, "It is not proper for a king like you to leave the territory without benefit. Behold the city of Amorium is not too far from here, let us seize it." Like Ahithophel,¹⁹⁴³ the caliph took his advice. When the caliph saw the fortifications of the city, he build around it mounds of earth. His army began to hurl stones against it with mangonels (engines of war). They clouded the sun with their arrows as they shot the men on the wall. Others set up tents covered with hide to protect those who were digging ditches under the wall. Those inside fought with bricks against those who drew near the wall and chased them away. They looked as if they were covered by a cloud of sand and ashes. Within three days, 3,000 men perished on both sides. Finally, the Tayoye (Arabs) showed the caliph a disjointed spot in the wall, and they hurled against it stones by the mangonels (engines of war) for three days until it collapsed. Those inside mourned and those outside rejoiced. The fighting men gathered around the breach and the corpses were piled up so high that they prevented those outside to enter. Abu Ishaq was vexed and gathered his troops and Turkish slaves and stationed them in the vanguard followed by the army. He commanded that everyone who wanted to escape be killed. The Romans asked to meet with him, and he gave them permission. The bishop and three notables asked him to leave the city, but he hardened his heart with arrogance and refused to leave. When the three men were about to leave, a notable called Jawadin pledged to hand the city over to him (the caliph) by a stratagem. The caliph welcomed the idea and gave him 10,000 dirham. Then Jawadin gave the Tayoye (Arabs) the secret word, saying, "When I stand on the wall and take off my turban, you shall know that I have kept the fighting men away from the breach. So, come and enter (the city)."

When the bishop saw Jawadin return to the caliph, he realized that he wanted to hand the city to him. He informed the natives of the city of the matter, and some of them proceeded to the church shouting, "Lord have mercy." Others shouted the same while they were in their houses, and still others went down to (hide) in the wells and cisterns. The women held around them their children like a hen in order they might not depart from them, whether to the sword or to slavery. Meanwhile, the swords of the Tayoye (Arabs) wreaked havoc, and the corpses were piled up. After their swords quenched their thirst of blood, an order was issued to stop the fighting, drive the people out of the city and plunder it. The caliph entered the city and was astonished at the splendor of its buildings and streets, but he was disturbed by a report that reached him, and he set the city on fire.

The city was teeming with convents for women, and more than a thousand nuns (virgins) were taken captive in addition to those killed and those who were given to the Turkish and Mede soldiers to humiliate them. Praise to the incomprehensible dispensations (of God). All those who hid in the houses and church cells were burned by fire. When the booty was gathered to one place and the caliph saw that the people were still too many, he ordered them killed. He also killed another 4,000 men. He further ordered the soldiers to grab the garments and golden, silver and copper vessels as much as they could carry. As looting was going on, the soldiers abducted men too. The cries and wailing of men, women and children were heard who were

¹⁹⁴³ Ahithophel joined the rebellion of Absalom against his father King David. He advised Absalom to annihilate David and his men and the kingdom would be his. David prayed Jehovah to turn his counsel to foolishness, which Jehovah did, and saved David. See 2 Samuel 16:23, and 15:51. When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was rejected, he went home, put his household in order, and hanged himself. 2 Samuel 17:1-32.

snatched from the hands of their parents. When the caliph heard the wailing and the cause of lamentation, he was moved because he did not order people to be abducted. He rose up in fury and killed three men with his own hand whom he met driving away captives. He ordered that people should be returned to where they were assembling. He gave some of them to his military notables, others to his Turkish captains, to his retinue, and he sold others to merchants. Each family was sold without distinction between sons and parents.¹⁹⁴⁴

The destruction of Amorium took place on July 6, 1149 (A.D. 838). With its destruction, the two kingdoms of the Romans faded because of the calamities that afflicted it. The kingdom of the Tayoye (Arabs) also began to fade as the Tayoye (Arabs) learned through magic that their kingdom would fade away the day they seized the fortified city of Amorium. For no one was able to conquer it before Abu Ishaq who vanquished it within twelve days. He found in it a great number of people and immense possessions that belonged to the neighboring cities but were stored inside it. In this manner, was their end. *End of the account.*¹⁹⁴⁵

While those in the Demosion, that is, the House of the Kingdom, were in these years engaged in their evil doing, our church was enjoying some rest. For the sons of the church and the entire congregation were always under the burden of exorbitant tributes imposed by the governors. In addition, they were victims of warfare and conflicts among rulers. However, while the believers had found rest and were not affected by the problems of the leaders of the church, the devil stirred up persecution in Sarug by a *hanfo* (Muslim) person.¹⁹⁴⁶ Driven by wicked zeal, he searched for those who apostatized Islam and returned to Christianity to force them to re-embrace Islam. He seized many of them who courageously endured torture. Finally, this storm calmed down by means of a woman from the village of Bashman who resisted and never flagged under torture, like those who had fallen away. When the governor of al-Raqqā (Callinicus) learned of her case, she was brought up to him, and he was moved by her prudent and intelligent speech. He summoned that Muslim person and ordered him beaten, bound in iron fetters and thrown into prison. Then deliverance was achieved.

In this time, dissension took place in the Church of the Chalcedonians in Antioch, and the chief priests were disgraced as they assembled to elect a successor to the Patriarch Job. The proponents of Job nominated a deacon who was a friend of Job, while Job's opponents nominated Eustathius, a disciple of Basilus, metropolitan of Tyre. The governor of Antioch supported this last one because he was a native of Tyre. He summoned the opponents who did not want Eustathius and ordered them to accept him, and they did. However, the presbyter who carried the letter to Eustathius said to him before handing it to him, "I am delegated to you and to Nicolaus of Damascus. Now if you give me so many dinars I will elect you." When he demanded money, Eustathius withdrew his nomination. The presbyter erased his name from the letter and wrote down the name of Nicolaus. Some bishops welcomed Nicolaus and ordained him in Aleppo. The supporters of Eustathius swore not to accept him at all, and when Nicolaus came to Antioch, some welcomed him while others hurled stones at him and at those in his company. Meanwhile, the *hanfe, hanifs* (Muslims) and the Jews mocked them and threw dust at them. In the end, the partisans of Eustathius triumphed and would not let Nicolaus enter into their churches.

The archdeacon of the great church, in his capacity as deputy of the patriarch, having the authority to determine the areas of influence of the bishops, admonished them not to overstep the threshold of the city. So, they remained outside the city for two months. Then they found refuge in the home of Abu Sa'id, the governor of the Syria, and obtained an order from him to the governor of Antioch to allow him (Nicolaus) to visit those who supported him in Antioch. Nicolaus entered Antioch surrounded by armed soldiers who beat his opponents. The *hanfe, hanifs* (Muslims) and the Jews shouted, "You renegades deserve to welcome your leader with the beating of staves instead of crosses, candles and songs." When they reached the church of Cassianus, the opponents (of Nicolaus) shut the doors. However, the soldiers broke

¹⁹⁴⁴ Cf. *Tarikh al-Yaqubi*, III, 201-202, Tabari, 7, 1263-264 and Mas'udi, *Muru' al-Dhabab*, 4, 15.

¹⁹⁴⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 136-138.

¹⁹⁴⁶ The Syrian called the Muslim several names of which is *hanifs, hunafa*.

through them, and after beating them, sent them to prison. In the church, there was great lamentation and murder when they brought the silver seat for Nicolaus to sit in (as a patriarch). On the next day, Nicolaus opened the treasury of the church and brought out the golden and silver vessels, and gave them to the governor and his soldiers. He used force with his opponents to receive the communion from him, but they spewed it out of their mouths and trampled it under their feet. The amir (Abu Sa'id) appointed a man who took from them thirty dinars a month just to sit at the altar in order to watch them not murder each other.

Meanwhile, Eustathius, who was still a deacon, obtained an order from the amir to be ordained a patriarch. He was ordained a patriarch by the deposed bishop of al-Raqqa (Callinicus) and another bishop, a stranger, who had not yet received the office of priesthood. Since Eustathius could not receive the dignity of a patriarch unless he sat on the patriarchal throne, he bribed the governor of Antioch with five hundred dinars. He forced the partisans of Nicolaus to bring out the seat from where it was hidden, and Eustathius sat on it surrounded by soldiers. Then he and Nicolaus divided the churches. Some of them congregated in the church of the Mother of God, others in the Church of Cassianus; both condemned each other. At the church of al-Raqqa, two priests celebrated the Eucharist on one altar, and condemned each other. *End of the narrative.*

Chapter Twenty-One: Concerning the end of the two sovereigns Abu Ishaq, King (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) and Theophilus, emperor of the Romans, who reconciled with each other and died shortly afterwards; on the dreadful events which took place, and on the appearance of the rebels once more in Tayoye (Arab) regions; on the petition and the appeal written down by the blessed Mor Dionysius at the end of his book, and on his death which occurred in this period

When Abu Ishaq (al-Mu'tasim) captured Amorium (Amuriyya), and destroyed it by fire, he learned that his nephew Abbas, (son of his brother al-Ma'mun), was conniving to have him killed. He seized his Nestorian scribe and physician who revealed to him Abbas' plot and his accomplices. He also exposed his connivance with Theophilus, emperor of the Romans, and the condition Abbas made with the inhabitants of Baghdad. The condition was that as soon as they heard that Abu Ishaq and Ujaif (ibn 'Anbasa), captain of the army host, were killed, they should proclaim Abbas in the streets and mosques as caliph. Abu Ishaq seized Abbas and Ujaif, who could not escape through the city's wall, and bound them in iron fetters. He mounted them on camels and departed Amorium, of whose inhabitants very few were saved. He took with him the Patrician Aetius, the governor and the Muslim Bodin, and returned proudly to his own country. Meanwhile, Abbas died in Mabug from torture and hunger.¹⁹⁴⁷ Then the caliph addressed a letter to the countries saying, "Let everyone know that Abbas, son of al-Ma'mun is found to be an enemy of our kingdom. He was ready to hand the entire Tayoye (Arab) camp to the Romans. Therefore, he should be cursed by everyone."¹⁹⁴⁸

In these days, the Roman came by sea to the harbor of Antioch and looted the merchants. They took captives and returned in their own ships. For this reason, Abu Ishaq ordered that a fort be built in the harbor.

At this time, Mangshur,¹⁹⁴⁹ son of Aphshin's sister, began to plunder the merchants and contemplate a rebellion. He seized an Armenian merchant and took all his possessions. This wretched man went to complain to Aphshin. Aphshin wrote to his nephew to return the possessions to the man. Secretly, however, he wrote to him saying, "Why didn't you kill him?" Aphshin's nephew killed him and sent his head to the caliph claiming that it was the head of Babek's son-in-law, and that he killed him because he was intending to rebel. The caliph rejoiced and paraded the head through the streets of Shomra (Samarra). He also inquired from Mangshur, the murderer of merchants, about a Tayoyo (Muslim) merchant in Armenia. Mangshur summoned this merchant, but he refused to come knowing that he had already committed crimes

¹⁹⁴⁷ Tabari, 7, 276- 283 and Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahab*, 4, 15. Both chroniclers do not say that Abbas died in Mabug.

¹⁹⁴⁸ Tabari, 7, 282, says that al-Mu'tasim reached Samarra in an excellent condition and called Abbas the accursed one.

¹⁹⁴⁹ On p.542 of the Edessa-Aleppo Syriac Codex, the name appears as Manshur. Later it is mentioned as Mangshur. Tabari, *tarikh al-Umamwa al-Muluk*, 7, 224, mentions Mangjur al-Ashrosni a relative of Aphshin in Azerbaijan.

and that Mangshur would definitely confiscate his possessions. The merchant assembled an army and declared rebellion. Mangshur informed the caliph of his rebellion. The caliph sent a messenger to the merchant saying, "You have to come either by your own will or by force." Therefore, the merchant went to the caliph with great ease and apprized him of all that Mangshur had done to the merchant, whose head he had cut off and sent to the caliph claiming that he was ready to rebel. He supported his claims with ample evidence. The caliph sent an army that seized Mangshur, and he confessed that Aphshin had instigated him to rebel, but Aphshin denied this and declared it to be false. The caliph had Mangshur killed in prison and deposed Aphshin.

In the year 1152 (A.D. 841), Abu Sa'id invaded the Roman territory and took captives, but the Romans in Cilicia overtook him, defeated him and sent back the captives. Again, he invaded the Roman territory, but withdrew in disgrace. On their part, the Romans spoiled Hadath, Mar'ash and the country of Melitene.

At this time, Theophilus sent gifts to Abu Ishaq, king (caliph) of the Tayoye (Arabs) and asked for an exchange of Tayoye (Arab) prisoners with Roman prisoners. Abu Ishaq accepted the gifts and gave him great gifts twofold, and said, "We Arabs do not compare the Muslims with the Romans because Allah honored the Muslims more than them. Nevertheless, if you hand me back the Tayoye (Muslim) prisoners without recompense, I will reward you many folds over. And in everything we are triumphant over you." The Roman envoys returned with fifty camel loads of costly gifts, and there was peace.¹⁹⁵⁰

Aphshin, who was lifted up to the skies like Capernaum, went down to Sheol (Hell),¹⁹⁵¹ because the caliph had rejected him on account of the son of his sister, contemplating rebellion and killing the king (caliph). He took his Khurasan companions to Khurasan to kill Abd Allah ibn Tahir and receive the kingdom of his forefathers in that country, but his envoy was captured and brought to the caliph. He told the caliph of the errand Aphshin had chosen him to perform, and handed him the letters written in the language of Khurasan. The caliph sent a message to Abd Allah to seize Hasan, son of Aphshin, the governor of Khurasan, to stop him from rebelling against the caliph if he learned that his father was arrested. The caliph commanded that Aphshin be thrown into the depths of the earth, and all his possessions confiscated. Ibn Tahir wrote to Hasan, son of Aphshin, to come unto him, as if it was by order of the caliph, and receive his father's position. Hasan believed him and proceeded to Naishur. Ibn Tahir seized him and bound him in iron fetters, and said to him, "The caliph orders you to shed your wife," and young Hasan agreed to let her go unwillingly. She was sent to her father Ashnuq (Ashnas)¹⁹⁵² along with Hasan's slaves and members of his family. Hasan himself was bound in iron and sent to the caliph who cast him into a dungeon with his father. Finally, Aphshin died under torture. It was rumored that he was uncircumcised, and worshipped the idol found in his house.¹⁹⁵³

In the year 1153 (A.D. 842), there appeared a man in Palestine named Tamim who was nicknamed Abu Harb, claiming that he was a king. He was followed by thirty thousand hungry and naked men. He used to cover his face with a kerchief and pretend to be zealous for the Law (Shari'a) of the Prophet, and that he came for the wronged people. He did not levy more than four piasters of jizya (tribute) which made many people happy, but he did not continue to do the same and began to plunder and kill. He went up to Jerusalem and the Tayoye (Arabs), Christians and the Jews fled. He entered the mosques and the churches and looted everything in them. He wanted to burn down the Church of the Resurrection and other churches, but the patriarch gave him much gold and he departed. Then, Raja' (ibn Ayyub al-Hadari), captain of the host, marched against him with eight thousand men. When they reached al-Raqqa, they heard that Abu Ishaq, had passed away, and they prepared to plunder. However, God showed mercy, and immediately arrived the report that Harun (al-Wathiq, 842-847), son of Abu Ishaq, had become a caliph, so the rebels did not plunder and the disturbance ended. However, Bar Baihas (Arbihus in the Syriac text) of Damascus

¹⁹⁵⁰ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 139.

¹⁹⁵¹ See Luke 10:15.

¹⁹⁵² See Tabari, 7, 301.

¹⁹⁵³ Tabari, 7, 303-308.

gathered five thousand men and began to plunder and kill. Raja' pursued him and killed four thousand of his men and the rest were scattered. Then Raja' concentrated on Abu Harb. He seized one of his spies. When he told him about his whereabouts, Raja' honored him and sent him to Abu Harb with the intention of having peace with him. He told him that he would not leave his place until he had received a response from him. But Raja' moved that evening and in the morning, he attacked Abu Harb and killed eighth thousands of his men. He also seized Abu Harb and one thousand of his men and sent them to the caliph.¹⁹⁵⁴

In this time, the people of Nisibin, Dara and Amid began to use brigandage, and a Persian force was sent against them. Fighting began near Dara and the Persians killed about two thousand Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) and plundered everything that was in Dara. However, they did not kill the Christians because they were wrathful against the Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims). Many Tayoye (Arabs, Muslims) saved themselves by using the sign of the cross.¹⁹⁵⁵

Abu Ishaq died (843) and left tremendous possessions because he levied taxes even from the dead. He built the city of Shomra (Samarra) and enriched it. The cost of one single public bath was thirty-two thousand silver pieces. He charged thirty thousand silver pieces a year as a tax for entering into Shomra (Samara). He was lecherous and addicted to drinking wine. With his death, eight thousand slaves were freed. He left forty thousand horses for the cavalry, twenty thousand baggage mules, and thirty thousand slaves for stables. In those days also died Theophilus, emperor of the Romans.¹⁹⁵⁶

In March of the year 1154 (A.D. 843), a red sign like fire appeared in the northern part of the sky. Its appearance was repeated on April 26, and occurred on three consecutive nights. It appeared at the beginning of the night and remained until the morning; also, glaring rays were seen like torches. On the tenth of the month, God sent a heavy rain cloud that old people and we had not heard or seen before. The violent rain swept huge rocks and turned the lands into lakes. Haran suffered great havoc by the streams that flowed down the Hasme Mountains, especially the mountain called *Yutheb Rishhe*, or, "*the one who rides its head.*" Having formed a huge river, the torrents swept the villages of the region to Beth Quba. The houses, inns and shops were filled by water and collapsed. In some regions, houses fell upon people killing them. If it were not for the fact that the torrents took place at daytime and the governor had gathered people to set up dams, the entire city would have perished. The flood reached al-Raqqā (Callinicus) leaving behind destruction and ruin. Afterwards, on Friday in June, a severe earthquake took place in Cilicia, Armenia, and eight fortresses of its wall collapsed. Several houses also fell down, and two hundred souls perished. The people remained in the open for two months for fear of thunders, which did not calm down day or night.

In July of that year, fire fell in both Baghdad and Basra on the same day and at the same hour. More than fifteen thousand shops were destroyed in Baghdad and Basra. On that same day, a city of Khurasan was overturned and buried its inhabitants. It turned into a mound, and no one was left alive except a man and a donkey.

On September 24, something like a fiery cloud appeared in the east and moved to the north and then to the west. Its upper side was red like blood, and the lower side was like a figure of the moon. Its light shone on the eastern side over the walls and the houses, while the southern side remained dark. This sign was seen from two o'clock in the evening until the cock's crow, and more dense darkness prevailed.

In December of the year 1152 (A.D. 841), the snow on the mountains thawed because of abundant rain, and the streams overflowed with water. The Tigris inundated Shomra (Samarra), killed more than ten thousand souls, and destroyed many buildings.

In this time, a chief called Malik from the murdering and blood-shedding tribe of Rabi'a, controlled his own tribe, seized many of their highway robbers, and imprisoned them in the city of Balad (Eski Mosul). When they smashed the door to escape, the natives of Balad discovered them and killed three of them. Five hundred relatives of the murderers gathered and destroyed the Tayoye (Arab) regions and villages. When the

¹⁹⁵⁴ Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, 7, 312-314; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 139.

¹⁹⁵⁵ Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 140.

¹⁹⁵⁶ Tabari, 7, 314-315 and 318 where he mentions the death of Theophilus; and Mas'udi, *Muruj al-Dhahal*, 4, 18; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 140.

sons of Hasan, chief of the Rabi'a tribe heard this, they went out to plunder. The caliph had previously seized their village in return for a payment of three thousand dirhams, which Hasan was still to pay for his collection of land tax. In addition, they destroyed the regions of Nisibin, Sinjar, Tur Abdin and the Qardu Mountain. The caliph sent a relief expedition to Malik, who pursued them and filled up the mountains and the plains with the corpses of the Rabi'a tribe.

In this period were two governors in Damascus: one was called Raja' who was responsible for the collection of the tribute and the necessities of the country; the other, Ali, was responsible for fighting and the protection of the regions from damage. Raja' slandered Ali to the caliph and presented (to him) a pretext that the whole region should be placed under his authority. However, when Ali learned of this matter, he seized Raja's letter to the caliph, and he himself wrote a letter in the name of the caliph considering him to be the absolute governor of the region. The caliph summoned Raja' and slaughtered him and his children and laid his hands on their private possessions, estimated to be worth thirty thousand in addition to another forty thousand, which was a tribute due the caliph. He also laid hands on their gold, silver, garments and many other objects. When Ali continued his carnage, some commissioners arrived and bound him in chains. Then, when the city was at the verge of destruction, rescue came from God as the caliph asked that Ali be brought to him. Ali, however, pretended to be insane, as if afflicted by an evil spirit, and thus he escaped death.

In the year 1135 (A.D. 824), rain did not fall in the winter and plants did not grow until May, but snow continued to fall and the cold was severe. Grains were scarce and the income meager, and there came a severe famine, pestilence and death. Worse still were the excessive and cruel jizya (tribute) and the iniquity of commissioners who were thirsty for the blood of the hapless people. The poor had nowhere to flee, and did not know whether to feed their hungry children or pay taxes to the ruffian tax collectors, or take care of the sick members of their families. A great number of poor people desired to pick firewood or herbage to eat instead of bread, but could not because of the severe cold. They perished inside the houses from hunger and cold. When the rich people could find no bread or plants, they decided mercilessly not to sell grain to the poor lest they benefit from it. In April, however, rain fell and plants improved, but God sent hail that destroyed several villages in the Jazira and the west. Then, he sent crawling locusts that devoured the late growing plants, and thorns grew up and severe windstorms uprooted the trees and hurled them far up to the skies. We (Patriarch Tell Mahre) witnessed these things with our own eyes. We also saw fields whose top soil was swept by the wind and piled up in the planted fields looking like threshing floors of grain, which buried and covered the plants.

In this same winter, armies were assembled in the region of Qardu to fight the rebellious Kurdish leader Musa. The inhabitants of the region suffered severe hardships because the soldiers occupied their houses and ate and drank. As a result, prices skyrocketed. A measure of salt was sold for forty piasters; two *uqiyyas* (equivalent to two ounces) of cheese were sold for one piaster, and fifty walnuts for one piaster, while the region of Qardu used to export cheese and walnuts. The Persians could not overwhelm the Kurds because the Kurds did not go out to fight unless they had eaten and drunk to their satisfaction and slept enough to rest. In the meantime, the Persians suffered from severe cold that paralyzed their hands. The Kurds killed about fifteen thousand Persians.

Pestilence spread for two years in Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) and moved to the west. However, it was most devastating in Palestine and the seacoast, where many villages became desolate and fields were left unplanted. Five hundred graves were dug for the corpses at Ramla in only one day. Because the living could not dig more graves, they dug a long ditch and threw the corpses into it. About two thirds of the inhabitants of Palestine perished by pestilence.

Dionysius Tell Mahre, our patriarch of we the Orthodox, lived in this period, and he wrote down in this book most of the events in great meticulousness. In his last days, he appended his book with a solemn words mingled with counsel and admonition. He said, in this period people were distressed more than in any other period of Tayoye (Arab) reign because of the avarice of the rulers. Any increase of taxes went to the governor who imposed taxes at will. Commissioners were appointed in every department to swallow up

the miserable people in one way or another. In al-Raqqa, they appointed a governor, called Qadi, as a tax collector, and administrators for special functions. One administrator was appointed to check on those who engendered corruption, another one to watch the people and send reports to the caliph, another to report on the yield of the land, and still another to look into peoples complaints, yet he was oppressive more than anyone else. This was in fact, what they did in every city. In order to know the extent of the iniquity to which avarice had led these commissioners, I only relate some of their actions.

When Ali, governor of Damascus, heard that a certain wealthy man had died, he summoned his sons and accused them of having killed him. They answered that their father died a natural death. He retorted, "No, but you have killed him in order to inherit him." He bound them in fetters and cast them into prison. At night, he had their father exhumed, slaughtered and reburied. In the morning, he summoned the men and said to them, "If you were telling the truth, bring out the body of your father from the grave." They did not know what had happened, and found their father slaughtered. The governor whipped them and confiscated their wealth. This same governor bought lean camels and delivered them to villagers to fatten them in the winter. However, because they were so emaciated, they died. The governor claimed that the camels belonged to the caliph, and imposed thirty dinars fine for each camel.

While he was traveling from one village to the other, the governor of Qurush (Cyrus) saw camels urinating on the road. He summoned the owner and said to him, "Why do you let your camels urinate on the road? Don't you know that the Muslims who pass through this road will slip and fall?" He imprisoned him and his camels and did not release him until he paid him two dinars. On another day, this governor saw a man falling off his donkey and his head was injured. When he learned that the donkey had bucked him off, he ordered that the donkey be killed because it bucked the owner off. When the poor owner witnessed the unjust verdict, he paid the governor two dinars and saved the donkey. When two people litigated each other, he imprisoned of both them, and both ended losing. Therefore, people stopped presenting complaints to him and were forced to observe the commandment, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil."¹⁹⁵⁷

The governors forbade the picking of grapes in their season until they exacted a thousand dinars from the owners of each vineyard. They did the same thing to (wine) presses. They decreed that no one should press until he had paid an amount of money demanded by the governors. The governors sealed the wine in the jars until those who sold it and those who bought it paid them money. They even imposed taxes on the roads and city gates. During the harvest season, they received a share of the crops. They did the same thing during the season of picking olives. All of these unjust procedures were concocted by Ahmad ibn Abi Dawud.

If we discuss the deeds of the subordinates of Ahmad's clan, our minds would be boggled and tongues become speechless from the abundance of their iniquity. Indeed, they waxed so powerful that no one could resist them or prevent them from satiating their lusts. One of them would stop a Christian from plowing his field and force him and his family to harvest his own field and to work for him. However, the governor never stopped him, and if a member of Ahmad's clan coveted a village, he doubled the taxes on its inhabitants until they were forced to sell it for the cheapest price. In this method, Ahmad usurped several villages. The people, even the Muslims, endured immense atrocities by the governors and by Ahmad's followers.

I shall proceed to relate one of the governors' anecdotes, which calls for mockery and reveals their hypocrisy. A devil of the kind which speaks from the inside of a possessed man, entered into the wife of a *banfo* (Muslim) husband from that region. Her parents brought a sorcerer to exorcise the devil. The devil, however, insulted the sorcerer before the crowd that gathered to watch this illusion. When the incantation of the sorcerer failed, he held a glaring sword to kill the devil. Immediately, the devil cried out through the mouth of the young woman, saying, "Hear me, O people. Although I am one of the sons of this earth, yet, by race, I am a subordinate and a friend of Ahmad ibn Abi Dawud and this sorcerer is trying to kill me." When the sorcerer heard the name of "subordinate," he fled lest they will kill him. However, the

¹⁹⁵⁷ See Romans 12:17.

subordinates (of Ahmad) tried to take revenge of the devil that resorted to them. Thus, like the devil, many people joined the subordinates to protect them from the governors and their subordinates by whom the crops of the miserable people were scattered and there was no one to help. The king (caliph) did not open his doors to people. Worse still, God overlooked us. If we called, he would not respond because we had angered him by our bad deeds. We became just what the apostle said, "We are engaged in iniquity and fraudulence, and think of evil and other abominable matters."¹⁹⁵⁸ Because of these and other things, God handed the Christians over to their enemies. Their haters had control over them and tried to decimate the freedom, which the laws of the Christians contained, in addition to the disgrace they suffered.

Therefore, I, with severe pain and deep sorrow, write down this chastisement in order to show how God overflowed us with his wrath. He unleashed his sword and stretched his bow preparing for us the means of his anger. Now, I (Patriarch Tell Mahre) dare say, "How much longer should I endure you? And what was required of me to do which I did not? Indeed, you have considered repentance of no importance, and you have hardened your hearts because of my prolonged patience with you. You have stored for yourselves punishment for the day of wrath." You may want to retort saying, "Why you, who hold the reins of the church, did not watch over her seriously that the Lord may listen to your prayer and keep his wrath away from her as Moses did when he prayed for Israel and he was answered." I say to such people that I am a sinner like other people, and do not have the same status as that of Moses."¹⁹⁵⁹ It might be said that, "Because of your piety you have been entrusted with the incomprehensible laws of the Lord, and given stewardship of this diverse life whose administration is considered the art of arts and knowledge of knowledges. With such experience, I have learned the difficulty that confronts the shepherds, especially if they have a sensitive heart, which is like decay to the bones. It is not that I am in need to offer your prudence a picture of how much I suffer from distress, and how many nights I spent sleepless, and how many days I found no rest in addition to disturbing thoughts which burn the heart and spread fever through the body. For everyone has turned aside and there is no one who understands or seeks God. If I were a saint like Moses and affectionate like Jeremiah, I would have been of use to the people who insist on its situation and do not change it. Indeed, Moses did not pray alone although he was silent, but had the people pray with him. And when they (the children of Israel) looked up and saw the Egyptians, they were terrified, as it was written, and they cried out to the Lord."¹⁹⁶⁰ Thus, the crying out of the people and their repentance opened the door before the prayer of Moses. As to us, who is amongst us who would repent and who would not? And who would accept counsel and adhere to the canons, who does not shake his head and disdain the canons and those who issued them? It is fair to be said to us what had been said to Jeremiah, "Do not pray for this people, for I will not listen to you."¹⁹⁶¹ And his saying, "Even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—appealed for this people, I will not listen to them."¹⁹⁶² Therefore, like the Prophet Jeremiah, we say, "Woe to us for we have sinned!"¹⁹⁶³ for our heart has become drunk and our eyes darkened. Let us cry out with Paul "The time is short,"¹⁹⁶⁴ and "the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."¹⁹⁶⁵ The signs are many. One of them is the rebellion about which the apostle said, "For that day shall not come...and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."¹⁹⁶⁶ Therefore, I, the wretched, lament my life. And because of my sins I am about to swallow the cup even its dregs to the end. I mourn and my heart is sorrowful when I see with my own eyes the calamities the sons of the church suffer, and that everyday more calamities are added unto us. Now that I am standing at the door, imagine the inevitable, terrible punishment that will take place in the hereafter. The only solution for the freedom from the

¹⁹⁵⁸ Cf. Romans 1:29-30.

¹⁹⁵⁹ Exodus 14:13-14.

¹⁹⁶⁰ Exodus 14:10.

¹⁹⁶¹ Jeremiah 7:16-17.

¹⁹⁶² Ezekiel 14:14.

¹⁹⁶³ Lamentations 5:16.

¹⁹⁶⁴ 1 Corinthians 7:29.

¹⁹⁶⁵ 1 Thessalonians 2:16.

¹⁹⁶⁶ 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

bondages of sin is death, which I desire as the best positive thing to me. Hoping that that day shall come, I nourish my soul with what one of the saints had written to a person who, like me, suffered for the sake of the church.” He said, “Do not yield to the imagination concerning the general pains of the church. However, nourish yourself with hope and piety, and remember what the Lord said to his disciples, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you;” John 15:18 says “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first;” and what Paul said to Timothy, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”¹⁹⁶⁷

Here, the learned Patriarch Dionysius nicknamed Tell Mahre, ended his chronicle, which he penned in two volumes in sixteen books, eight books in each one, and divided into chapters. He wrote it in response to the quest of Iyawannis, metropolitan of Dara. In each of them, he included the events of two hundred and sixty years beginning with the reign of Maurice, that is, 894 to 1154 of the Greeks (A.D. 573-834); the year of the death of Theophilus, emperor of the Romans; the death of Abu Ishaq (al-Mu’tasim); the reign of his son Harun (al-Wathiq) of the Tayoye (Arabs); and the reign of Michael, son of Theophilus, who was under age and his mother administered the state.

With the end of Book Twelve, also ended the chronicles of sixty-five years, that is from the year 898 of the Greeks (A.D. 587) to the year 963 (A.D. 652). During this period, eight Roman emperors were set up as well as six caliphs of the Tayoye (Arab) kingdom.

Glory to God, the Lord of generations and times. Yes and Amen.

Remark

With the help of God, we have collected the chronicles and the events of past generations from the books of ancient and trustworthy historians. We have also derived a pericope information from the books of prudent men who wrote down the events, which took place before their time and during their time up to their departure of this world, and bequeathed them to the forthcoming generations. Of these, we may mention St. Dionysius, (Tell Mahre) whose Chronicle has enriched our writing of history until today and after his death. Following his Chronicle, we began to add to the texture of the evidences. However, other than the Chronicle of the said Patriarch (Tell Mahre), we had no source except Ignatius, metropolitan of Melitene,¹⁹⁶⁸ who commenced his Chronicle from Constantine the Great with great brevity. Indeed, he had treated events rather haphazardly. However, we added his brief writings to our book until this time. From now onward, we will use his Chronicle, which we already remarked that it contains only small portions of the chronicles of the Roman emperors. His table contains only the names of our chief priest. It did not treat the Arab kingdom, which was dominant then as Dionysius had done, or the kingdom of the Turks, which commenced in his days or little after, and which is in control today. In addition, he did not concern himself much with the churches of other denominations, and did not write down any table to be mentioned. Therefore, it is necessary to transmit what is correct of the chronicles of peoples, and add them to what already had been written in order that this texture would not be deficient. In fact, it should be woven from the beginning until the end of our life (1199) in order to become a foundation on which, those concerned with historical chronicles, will build each one in his own time until the end of this ephemeral world.

¹⁹⁶⁷ 2 Timothy 3:12.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Ignatius III, metropolitan of Melitene was a learned man well versed in the Scriptures. He was proficient in the Greek and Syriac languages. Bar Hebraeus places him on par with Thomas of Harqal, and Jacob of Edessa. He died in 1094. See Bar Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical History*, I, ed., and translated into Latin by J. B. Abelos and T. J. Lamy (Lovain, 1872), 439, and Ignatius Aphram I, Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls*, translated by Matti Moosa (Gorgias Press, 2003), 418-419.

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