The Syrian Orthodox Christians in the Late Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Periods: Crisis and Revival

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations

University of Toronto

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2015

ABSTRACT

Despite the protection afforded to the smaller minorities of the Ottoman Empire through the millet system (Chapter One), Syrian Orthodoxy witnessed weakness and depletion throughout the nineteenth century, caused by significant conversion to Western Christianity, particularly in Syria and in Iraq.

In the meantime a separate Western Christian intrusion was unfolding among the Syrian Orthodox communities in India. The resulting problems prompted a first journey by a Syrian Orthodox patriarch to that part of the world. Patriarch Peter’s journey in 1874-1877 was a landmark event that first entailed a journey to England and audience with Queen Victoria. The hitherto little known involvement of the Anglican Church in this intrusion is uncovered in Chapter Three.

The events following the 1895 violence in southeastern Anatolia became precursors to the genocidal Safyo of 1915, which resulted in the annihilation of nearly half the Syrian Orthodox in Anatolia and brought Syrian Orthodoxy to the verge of extinction (Chapter Four). The apathy of the victors of World War I towards the beleaguered survivors at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-20 contrasted with the accommodation the exiled survivors found in the Arab lands to the south, where historical affinity was rekindled (Chapter Five).
From the safety of this new environment, Syrian Orthodoxy, aided by the critical core of enlightened individuals, rose again drawing on venerable Syriac cultural tradition and an associated patriarchal standing that was characteristically free from social elitism and tribal sectarianism. Utilizing the quest for learning that was the mantra in the new nation states, the new leadership, despite meager resources, launched Syrian Orthodoxy on a course of revival and renaissance not witnessed since the days of Bar Hebraeus in the late thirteenth century (Chapter Six).

In addition to conventional primary and secondary sources, this thesis relies substantially on hitherto untapped Syrian Orthodox archival material, which has shed new light on many important events. In particular, the analysis of nearly 5700 letters from ordinary people to the patriarch of the day (Chapter Two) has provided a subaltern view of society, as opposed to the elitist view which conventional history often offers.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe profound thanks and gratitude to so many who have helped make this work possible. First and foremost, I acknowledge with deep gratitude the help of His Holiness of beloved memory Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, who, in addition to giving me encouragement, generously granted me free access to the Syrian Orthodox Archives, a deed that enabled the nineteenth and early twentieth century history of the Syrian Orthodox Church to be written, taking into account the historicity that has been uniquely offered by these hitherto largely un-accessed records.

My gratitude and prayers for wellbeing and release go to Archbishop Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim, the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan of Aleppo, who was kidnapped together with the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Boulos Yazigi on April 22, 2013. I owe Metropolitan Ibrahim an enormous debt of gratitude for his encouragement and active participation in the archival search project that Dr. George Kiraz and I undertook in the summer of 2010 in Deir al Za‘faran and in Mardin. With his help the joint trip also made it possible to reach the largely undiscovered ruins of the 11th century Mar Barsoumo Monastery near Malatin. I owe Metropolitan Ibrahim an additional debt of gratitude for providing me with a most valuable collection of documents comprised of 476 folios about the Syrian Dioceses, penned by Patriarch Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum.

My appreciation also goes to Metropolitan Saliba Ozman of Deir al-Za‘faran and Chorepiscopus Gabriel Akyuz of the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin for facilitating access to the Deir al-Za‘faran and the Mardin archives, respectively. I respectfully acknowledge the help of Metropolitan Malke Murad and of Raban Shemun Can of St. Marks Syrian Orthodox Monastery in Jerusalem in facilitating access to the St. Mark’s archives in Jerusalem in 2013. My thanks and appreciation also go to Metropolitan Theophelius George Saliba for the valuable information he provided during a recorded interview I had with his Eminence in July 2013 concerning the re-settlement of the survivors of the 1915 Sayfo in Syria and Lebanon.

I record with special appreciation the enormous help I received from Reverend Father Ephrem Adde for his transcription of numerous archival letters from Garshuni into Arabic as well as many translated from Syriac to Arabic. Thanks in this regard are also due to Raban
Marutha Hanna for his kind participation in this effort. Thanks are also due to Metrin Bezikoglu and to Lale Javanshir for their help in translations from Ottoman Turkish to English and to Aydin Akan for translations from modern Turkish to English.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Aziz Abdelnour for his generous help and insightful suggestions based on his valuable knowledge of many aspects of this work, and for having always been ready to help with access to archival material in London, particularly at the Lambeth Palace Library and at the British Museum Library.

Thanks and full recognition are due to Dr. George Kiraz for his active participation in the imaging of the archival material in Deir al-Za‘faran and in Mardin. This work became our joint project as it reflected our mutual recognition of its value to much needed research into the history of Syrian Orthodoxy in the nineteenth century.

Thanks are also due to Raban Dr. Roger Akhras of St Ephrem Seminary in Maarat Sednayya in Syria and to Chorepiscopus Joseph Shabo of St Ephrem’s Church in Aleppo, for their help in providing data and important, usually unavailable, secondary material.

I would like to thank the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto for its support over the period of my studies and in particular, my supervisor, Professor Amir Harrak for his immense encouragement and valued direction over the years, as well as to all the members of the supervisory committee for their careful reading of my dissertation and for providing important feedback to me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, first and foremost my wife Amira, without whose love and understanding none of this would have been possible, in addition to her help with the typing, as well as to my daughters May and Deena and my son Ziad for their constant encouragement.

I dedicate this work to the memory of my father Sa’id Dinno.
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1. Damascus – Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate - Bab Tuma, Damascus

P1070660
P1070661
P1080718
P1090952
P1090957
P1090606
P1090656
P1090658-P1090660
P1090664
P1090669-P1090671
P1090689
P1090692
P1090694
P1090925
P1090943
P1100029-P1100037
P1100039
P1100043
P1100127
P1100296
P1100370
P1100421
P1100422
P1100467
P1100475
P1100476
P1100481
P1100482
P1100484
P1100485
2. **Deir al-Za‘faran (Dayro d-Kurkmo) Monastery, near Mardin:** K denotes the Syriac name of the monastery.
   
   K05-0035
   K05-0046
   K05-0049
   K05-0325
   K05-1300, 1301
   K05-1450, 1451
   K07-B24-Part1-0106
   K10-01-36-0235
   K10-B2-0262, 0263
   K10-B02-0542
   K10-B20-0749
   K10-B20-0753
   K10-B20-0813
   K10-B45-0015
   K10-B45-0022
   K10-B45-0027
   K10-B86-0808

3. **Mardin - Church of the 40 Martyrs**
   
   40M-24/36-122
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   40M-24/40-057
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   40M-24/40-172
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   40M-24/45-094
   40M-24/45-093
   40M-24/46-322
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   40M-24/46-452
4. Jerusalem - St. Marks Syrian Orthodox Convent (Monastery)
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INTRODUCTION

i. Purpose and General Scope
When in 1516/17 Selim I incorporated southeastern Anatolia and the Arab lands to the south in the Ottoman Empire, the Syrian Orthodox Church\(^1\) was one of the smaller Oriental churches to join the expanded empire.\(^2\) The Syrian Orthodox, in common with other Syriac Christians, who had been weakened by over two centuries of insecure existence under Mongol and Turkic dynastic rules, found relative peace and stability under the protection offered by the Ottoman millet system. However, major sociopolitical developments occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that changed the tenets of stability offered by this system. Some of these developments were initiated by external factors: wars and increased West European infiltration through trade and missionary work. There were also associated major internal developments that were manifested by the Tanzimat reforms of 1839 and 1856 and the subsequent fast-moving sociopolitical developments. Political instability, fed by conflicting nationalistic visions held by the different constituents of the empire, led to sectarian tensions and violence that became the hallmark of a once peaceful empire. These events were the precursors of much which was to unfold during and after the First World War.

Throughout this period, the Syrian Orthodox found themselves under pressure from two major sources. The first related to the traditionally insecure social environment in southeastern Anatolia, that was made more acute by the unfolding geopolitical unrest, and associated tribal Kurdish hegemony, particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century. The second related to the Western missionary agenda that aimed at converting the Oriental Christians to the Western brands of Christianity (i.e., Catholic or Protestant).

Concurrently, the Syrian Orthodox communities in southern India, whose members far exceed in number those under the Ottoman Empire, came under increasing pressure from Anglican/Protestant missions to convert to that brand of Western Christianity. Its efforts to

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\(^1\) There is a growing tendency to replace the traditional name “Syrian” with “Syriac” in the name of the Church in order to avoid confusion with the country of the same name. I have generally used “Syrian” in deference to historicity, except when referring to churches that use the Syriac liturgical tradition. Further, the term “Syrian Orthodox Church” is generally intended to include followers, except where stated otherwise.

\(^2\) Under the Ottomans, the Syrian Orthodox lived mainly in southeastern Anatolia, northern Iraq, and in and around major cities in Greater Syria, including Aleppo, Damascus, and Homs.
reform and revive internally, despite pronounced efforts by Patriarch Peter III (1872-1894), were severely limited by the lack of resources, and by the reluctance of Western Christians to provide help untied to conversion or political benefits.

The violence that was initiated against the Armenians in 1895, quickly engulfed other Christians in southeastern Anatolia, including the Syrian Orthodox, and was a prelude to the much worse violence which occurred during the First World War. At the same time Church leadership, which had been weakened by the impact of the violence on its communities, became increasingly unfit to face the rising challenges in that critical period. The Church faced a leadership crisis for at least a decade before the onset of the War, which Church historians have generally been reluctant to address in detail. Additionally, this war came with its own calamity of massacres. In common with other Christians in Anatolia, the Syrian Orthodox were victims of gross massacres that have been increasingly recognized as genocide. These massacres wiped out nearly half of their population in their historical home base in Anatolia and forced most of the survivors into exile in the neighbouring Arab lands to the south. Yet, out of the abysmal prospects that prevailed at the beginning of the War, and the tragedies that were added by this war, a new chapter emerged in the life of this beleaguered church that heralded the onset of its much needed revival. From humble beginnings, this revival emerged and flourished in the few decades that followed the War, despite meagre material resources. In this revival, Syrian Orthodoxy sought to define itself by reference to its history of endurance and excellence.

The purpose of this thesis is two-fold: to identify and to analyze the salient events that characterized the near demise of this church, and to examine the phenomenon of its subsequent revival.

This study was made possible by access to a remarkable trophy of Syrian Orthodox Church archival documents from three main locations: one in Deir al-Za‘faran near Mardin, one in a church in Mardin and a third in the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate in Bab Tuma,

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3 The designation ‘Peter III’ was in use until the early twentieth century, as is evident from the archival documents. The designation was changed to ‘Peter IV’ upon review of the patriarchal lineage from the early Church whereby with Peter the Apostle being Peter I, Peter ‘the Fuller’ (470-471) being Peter II, Peter of Raqqa (571-591), traditionally known as ‘Petra’, came to be counted as ‘Peter III’, see Khalid Dinno, “The Syrian Orthodox Church: Name as a Marker of Identity,” Parole de l’Oriente 38 (2013): 193-211. In consequence, Patriarch Peter (1872-1894) came to be re-identified as ‘Peter IV’. However, with this work relying heavily on archival documents, it has been found more appropriate to adhere to the designation Peter III appearing in these documents.
Damascus, as well as a secondary collection in St. Mark’s Monastery in Jerusalem. Most of the collections consist of several thousands of letters addressed to the patriarch of the day. Some were from clergy, but, more importantly, a majority were from ordinary folk. This material has helped provide a true perspective of the social and economic conditions of the society in question. In particular, this material has shed light on some of the merits of the millet system that are often overlooked; on the extent of the political influence France exerted in support of the divisions within the Church; on the reluctance of the British to provide aid where such aid did not have a useful political return for them; and on the extent of Kurdish tribal aggression from 1895 until the end of World War I. In addition to this primary source material, the current study has utilized a host of other primary sources, including missionary and consular reports, as well relevant secondary sources. In addressing the post War revival, revivalist publications, which were largely in Arabic, were consulted and evaluated, and the findings presented here.

ii. Christianity in the Middle East, Trends of Historicity

It was only around the turn of the eighteenth century that Western scholars became increasingly interested in the study of Oriental Christianity. This was a time when a new era of geopolitical developments, both in Europe and in the Ottoman Empire, was evolving. What limited interest there was, prior to the eighteenth century, was largely confined to theology, liturgical texts and early church leadership. Even during an earlier time of direct contact, such as during the Crusades, Oriental Christianity was in fact no more than a minor interest for the Crusaders, compared to the prime purpose of their campaigns.

Beginning in the early eighteenth century, this relatively recent interest was shown mainly by Western church missionaries and a few travellers. However, the main purpose of the missionaries in going to the Orient was not as impartial students of history, but as envoys seeking to transform Oriental (Middle Eastern) Christianity according to Western norms, beliefs and practices. These interests, which were intertwined with the political interests of European countries in the Ottoman Empire, were initially promoted by France, but subsequently also by Britain and later, toward the latter part of the nineteenth century, by Russia and Germany.

Considering the broader state of scholarship relating to the history of the Oriental Christians and their churches, reference is made here to two articles that, together, bring out the
salient criteria that governed historicity of the Christians of the Middle East, past and present. The first, by Sebastian Brock, sheds light on the intra-Christian factors that explain why the study of Syriac Christianity has, for so long, been relegated to a secondary status. The second, by Laura Robson, considers Christianity in the modern Arab world, in a broader Christian perspective that is linked more to contemporary and global outlooks.

Brock draws attention to two main aspects: the many salient features of the Syriac Christian traditions that reflect their Semitic roots, and their Christological traditions and the associated richness inherent in the interpretation of their doctrines. He brings out some of the main features that reflect the Semitic roots, namely the use of poetry as a vehicle of theology, having a distinctive monastic tradition, and the therapeutic approach to penance that is so characteristic of the liturgy. He further reminds the reader that “although all the books of the New Testament were written in Greek, Christianity was born in an Aramaic-speaking milieu, and that the language that Jesus used for his teaching was Aramaic; a fact that not too long ago came to the attention of a very wide public audience watching Mel Gibson’s film 'The Passion of Christ.'”

Brock cites three reasons for the historical neglect of Syriac Christianity by world opinion. The first reason is the model for writing church history that Eusebius provided in the early fourth century. In his Ecclesiastical History he deliberately confined himself to the church within the Roman Empire and so neglected the growth of Christianity to the East, that is in the Sassanid Empire, which constituted an area where an important part of the Syriac Orient developed. With a few notable exceptions, almost all subsequent historians of the early church of all intervening centuries basically followed Eusebius’ model.

Although the majority of the Western world perhaps recognizes that the Orient was the cradle of Christianity, yet the current widespread notion is that Christianity came to the Western world through two main traditions, which are generally labeled as “the Latin West” and “the Greek East.” This concept of Christian tradition is at variance with historical reality, since it ignores the important Christian traditions and the religious contribution of the

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7 Ibid, p.16.
8 Ibid, p. 6.
indigenous churches of the Middle East. This situation was the result of the theological divide caused by the Christological controversies that culminated in the council of Chalcedon in 451 CE. Thus, the fifth century witnessed a split that is still with us today, with “Latin West” and “Greek East” Christians adopting the proclamation of faith formulated at Chalcedon, and Oriental Christians rejecting it. This alienated the Syriac Orient from European Christians who regarded them at best as schismatic, and at worst as outright heretical. The latter, Brock notes, “was certainly the view of the Latin West in the sixteenth and following centuries with the creation of the Eastern Rite Catholic hierarchies of the Chaldean Church in the mid sixteenth century and of the Syriac Catholic and other Eastern Rite Catholics, as offshoots of the Oriental Orthodox Churches in the following centuries.”

The third historical reason for the neglect of Oriental Christianity was the Arab invasion of the area in the seventh century and the subsequent establishment of Arab rule, which replaced that of the Byzantine and Sassanid Empires in that region. These new political and geographic boundaries effectively isolated the Christian Orient from the Greek East and the Latin West. This situation was perpetuated for the next millennium and beyond with very little contact existing between the Oriental Christians living under Islamic rule and Western Christians. Even during the campaigns of the Crusades that lasted nearly 200 years, contact was extremely limited, essentially confined to the Maronites in Lebanon. Such contact was often negative as conveyed by the chronicles of the West Syriac contemporary historian Michael the Syrian (d. 1191) and of the Anonymous Chronicler 1234.

Robson argues that for most of the twentieth century, scholars of the subject of the modern Arab world were disinclined from studying Middle Eastern Christians and Christianity. Researchers of the Middle East, who tended to view Islam as pivotal to the coherent definition of the region, were reluctant to research the role of Christianity in the development of the region’s civilization or in its cultural revival. Additionally, the history of the Christian communities in the area brings out a spectre of sectarianism and associated communal politics, into which many scholars prefer not to wade. Thus, historians tended to regard Christians as essentially marginal, appearing as victims of Muslim domination,

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9 Ibid., p. 16-17
10 Ibid.
11 Also known as the Anonymous Edessan. The number 1234 denotes the date of the last entry in the chronicle.
something that they inherited from the distant past. They were otherwise viewed as agents of Western powers, with which they had religious and political connections, aspects that they had inherited from the late Ottoman period, and somehow retained. Thus, historians of the Middle East, viewing the often high-handed attitude of the West towards the Arab world, were not inclined to study a religious structure and community associated primarily with the Crusades and more recently with Western imperial expansionism.

The essential relationship that was forged between many Christians in the Middle East with Western church institutions, and the ways in which some of the Western powers, such as France, and later others, had claimed Eastern Christian communities as “Protectorates” during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries further contributed to the inclination to regard Middle Eastern Christians as an outpost of Western Imperial interest than as an authentically Middle Eastern entity worthy of close study. In this regard, Bruce Masters, an Ottomanist, states: "To place Christians at the center of any research agenda might aid and abet those who would promote the politics of sectarianism in the region by providing unintended fodder for their polemic. As such, even the acknowledgement of the existence of separate religious communities in the Ottoman Arab past has been deftly sidestepped in the historical literature." Masters cites another reason for not writing Ottoman history with religious identities at its core: "Beyond the fear of the potential for contributing to the ongoing polemics, there is the nagging doubt that an emphasis on religion as a social category in the historical discourse might distort our understanding of the Ottoman past." 

Robson also attributes some of the difficulty in attracting historians to this field to basic cultural differences between the average historian of the Middle East embarking on such study and the churches under study. Most historians of the modern Arab world consider the functioning of Eastern Churches that have dominated Arab Christianity as an arcane mystery. Their theology, ecclesiastic structure and institutional history are unfamiliar to many scholars trained in universities in Europe and the United States, where Eastern Christianity is not a commonly taught subject, and where the structure of area studies throws up barriers between the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Added to these obstacles is the fact that throughout the

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14 Ibid, p. 5.
15 Ronson, p. 314.
Middle East gaining access to patriarchal official church archives is always difficult and at times impossible. More significantly, Robson notes, is that even in the context of global Christian studies, dealing with Christianity in Africa, Latin America, and South East Asia, Arab Christians have been largely ignored since the field focuses primarily on Christian communities created by Western Protestant and Catholic efforts. Hence, despite the global orientation of scholars in this field, their underlying assumption is that Christianity has only Western roots. Consequently, the histories of those Christian communities, which did not convert to Islam, do not fit easily within this paradigm.¹⁶

Recent interest in the Christians of the Arab world has, in part, been in response to the rise of political Islam since the 1970s and the consequent Islamatization of Middle Eastern politics in the public domain. The rise of the appeal of Islam as an institution was in response to the failures of Middle Eastern secular nationalism, as was manifest in the abject loss the Arabs incurred in the 1967 war.¹⁷ In response to this rise of Islam, Christians began to commit increasingly to Christianity as an institutional and politically significant entity, especially in Egypt and Lebanon.¹⁸ These and other considerations presented religion as a basis for all identity in the Middle East, and spurred the consideration of religion as a bar code of identity. As a consequence, the question of sectarianism emerged as a major issue in Middle Eastern history, bringing into the discussion the experience of religious minorities. However, a discourse emerged between this point of view and that of scholars refuting it, regarding sectarianism as a historically specific process dictated by the particular conditions of modernity rather than a permanent essential feature in the Islamic World.¹⁹ Thus, the question of sectarianism emerged as a major parameter in Middle Eastern history, bringing into the discourse the experience of religious minorities and, consequently, further interest in scholarly literature of religious Christians was generated.

An important factor that must not be overlooked with regard to scholarship relating to Middle Eastern Christianity has been the basic change in the climate of discourse between Christian Churches themselves during the second half of the twentieth century. This was

¹⁶ Robson, p. 315.
¹⁷ Ibid.
brought about largely by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and by the ecumenical movement that has flourished as a result during this period. Vatican II invoked a new spirit of dialogue with others that replaced the traditional attitude that bore the stamp of animosity and intolerance. The rising ecumenical spirit promoted a process of reconciliation and dialogue between different branches of the Church, and thus encouraged scholarship in the field of Middle Eastern Christianity. Some of the reconciliation and resulting scholarship was carried out under the umbrellas of two organizations: Pro Oriente and the World Council of Churches.

Founded in 1964 to promote dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Middle Eastern Oriental churches, Pro Oriente developed research studies and scholarly exchanges at academic conferences “Pro Oriente Colloquia Syriaca” as well as regional study groups in the Middle East, India and elsewhere. The proceedings of many of these conferences have been published under the title “Syriac Dialogue.”

The Middle East Council of Churches, which was founded in 1974 to promote dialogue between the Middle Eastern and the Protestant Churches, has provided a forum to discuss and publish their studies on the Middle Eastern Churches. The collaborative effort by scholars from different churches has resulted in 42 papers that were published in Arabic in 2002, and translated and published in English in 2005 under the title Christianity, A History in the Middle East. A number of papers in this volume provide material that is closely relevant to this current work.

Before leaving this topic, it is appropriate to indicate that the discussion in Robson’s article is largely premised on the assumption that the Middle Eastern Christians are Arabs. While this assumption may hold as valid for the Christians of Egypt and of most parts of traditional Greater Syria, essentially through cultural transformation, this is not the case in many other regions of the Middle East. Even before the large scale emigration of Christians

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22 Even in this situation, a strictly better choice of words would be “Arab Christians” rather than “Christian Arabs.” As Kenneth Cragg notes in The Arab Christian: A History of the Middle East, WJKP1991, p.11, it is theologically the more correct, with the ethnic meant to be adjectival to Christianity.
during World War I and afterward, the majority of the Christians in Northern Iraq and Northern Syria would consider themselves Syriacs, whose mother tongue is *Surath*, a Neo-Aramaic dialect. The Christians emigrating from eastern Anatolia who subsequently settled temporarily or permanently in Northern Iraq, Syria and Palestine generally spoke one or more of the following: *Turoyo* (another Neo-Aramaic dialect), Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish or Turkish, in their homeland, and gradually started to acquire Arabic as the language of the milieu in which they found themselves. In their recently adopted home country, they did not think of themselves as Christian Arabs. The majority of the people whose history is discussed in this thesis fall into this category, particularly in the time frame considered here.

**Review of Literature**

**iii. Sayfo and related studies**

*Sayfo* is the Syriac word for sword and is an abbreviation of *Shato d’ Sayfo* (the Year of the Sword), which native Syriac Christians continue to use to refer to the large-scale massacres committed against their communities in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War period, but mainly, in 1915. These massacres have been increasingly acknowledged in recent years as constituting genocide.

The tragic events that befell the Syriac Orthodox in the period between 1895 and the end of the War drew the attention of several scholars in recent years. David Gaunt specifically considered the period between 1914 and 1915 in his book *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I*. Gaunt’s work describes events on a local level “in order to reach a new level of accuracy about who was doing the killing, and who were the victims and what were the circumstances.” In this sense his work can serve as a complement to works with broader perspectives that focused on national politics and questions of ultimate responsibility. The region examined in his book covers the Ottoman

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24 Other terms used in this context are ‘Firman’, denoting the order to kill the Christian population and ‘Seferberlik’ denoting mass deportations. Books authored by eye witnesses: *D’mo Zliho* (The Shed Blood) by Qarabashi and Armalto’s *Al-Qusara fi Nakbat al-Nasara* (The Calamities of the Christians) by Ishak Armala (Armalto) do not use the term *Sayfo*. It thus appears to be a term that was subsequently adopted in published literature to describe those events. From interviews with older descendants who lived through these events it appears that the term *Sayfo* was in colloquial use in Tur Abdin since that time. For further elaboration see S. P. Brock, “Sayfo” in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, 2011, p. 361.


26 Ibid., p.1.
provinces of Van (foremost Hakkari), Diyarbakir, and Bitlis in southeast Anatolia, in addition to the Iranian province of Azerbaijan during its occupation by the Ottoman forces. Gaunt relies on sources ranging from oral testimonies from 35 eyewitness survivors and their descendents, to Turkish archival material, and published records by Western sources including missionary organizations. Gaunt acknowledges that his work should not be considered as definitive on the Syriac Sayfo citing two reasons. First, the scope is limited to 1914 and 1915, which was the most intensive genocidal period, although killing continued throughout the war years and even beyond into the era of the Turkish Republic. Secondly, he anticipated the likely appearance of new source material, including better access to Turkish archives.

Gaunt argues that the genocides were the result of ethnic cleansing polices that were developed by the Muslim Ottomans as a consequence of the sociopolitical developments in the Ottoman society after the Tanzimat reform period. The initial reforms of Hatt-i Sherif of Gulhane in 1839 and of Humayun in 1856 had promised the removal of discriminatory rules that governed the dhimmi status and, thus increased the public visibility of non-Muslims. This greatly displeased Muslim traditionalists, who saw this not only as contrary to the traditional outlook of Islam, but also as the result of foreign hegemony. The subsequent rise of Pan-Islamism, Ottomanism and then Pan-Turkism were fast growing tendencies towards ethnic and sectarian cleansing that culminated in the previously referenced genocides. Gaunt also notes that the massacres in the mid-1890s were clear precursors of worse events that were to come, and indicated that conflicts between the Ottoman Muslims and Christians were becoming serious, with a growing suspicion that local authorities were involved, while central government remained passive.

In his book *The Forgotten Genocide: Eastern Christians, the Last Arameans,* Sebastian de Courtois researched the events surrounding the genocides that befell the West Syriacs Orthodox and Catholic, over the period from 1880 to 1918. He defines the goal of his book as being: “to create in a lively manner a tragedy experienced by forgotten people”.

De Courtois’ review of primary sources was dual-pronged. The first was of Western sources in the diplomatic archives of the Quai d’Orsay, as well as the archives of the

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27 Ibid., pp. 47-51.
28 Ibid., p. 41.
Dominican fathers, which had been brought back to France from Mosul after the Gulf War of 1991. The second path was to eastern sources that included the writings of Isaac Armalet and Jean Naayem, as well as complaints lodged by the Syriac Orthodox and Catholic Patriarchs at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and 1920. In addition, de Courtois carried out interviews with the descendents of a number of survivors. However, at least in part, given his sources, which were mainly Catholic, his writing is tainted by a recurring prejudicial attitude against the Syrian Orthodox Church. He provides long quotes from Catholic missionaries who were clearly antagonistic to the Syrian Orthodox Church. In one, he quotes a Capuchin father who, in a long tract gloats over and pours scorn at the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch’s failure to convince Istanbul in the matter of the dispute over church property.\textsuperscript{30}

Based on this and similar quotes, de Courtois surmises that:

the ‘Aconite’ Church was already out of the loop of power. Defending itself clumsily, sometimes naively, the Church took a battle lost before it ever began and blew it out of all proportions into a question of political survival, which struck it a fatal blow.\textsuperscript{31}

This and many other statements by de Courtois indicate that his assessment is based on an essentialist view that the ordeal that those churches that did not spin into the Western “loop,” did so at their own peril, which they somehow deserved. All the same, de Courtois’ work sheds light on the composition and characteristics of the Syriac communities in their heartland in eastern Anatolia, where the massacres were perpetuated, and on the collusion between Kurds and the Ottoman authorities over their execution. He relates these massacres to the broader animosity that had been brewing in Ottoman society against Western intrusions and hegemony; and the price that defenceless Syriac Christians had to pay as a result.

Among the many accounts on \textit{Sa}y\textit{fo} by Syriacs, those by Ishak Armalah\textsuperscript{32} and by ‘Abd-Mshiho Na’man Qarabashi\textsuperscript{33} are some of the most comprehensive. Additionally, Syriac scholars in the diaspora were naturally drawn to this subject.\textsuperscript{34}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pp.26, 27.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 27.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ishak Armala, \textit{Al-quaṣāra fi nakabāt al-Naṣīra} (The Tragedy in the History of the Christians. Beirut: Deir al-Shurfa, 1910.
\item \textsuperscript{33} ‘Abed Mschiho Na’man, Qarabaschi, \textit{D’mo Zliho}, Ausburg: ADO, 1997.
\end{itemize}
iv. Regional and Inter-Faith Relations

The tragic events that the Syriacs encountered in Anatolia towards the end of the Ottoman era drew the attention of several historians to the social relations in the region in the years that preceded these events. The article by Ray Jabre Mouawad, published in Parole de L’Orient in 1992, is a summary of a larger study that the author carried out on Kurdish-Christian relations.

The article by Mouawad specifically deals with Kurdish-Syrian Orthodox communities, and maintains that the case the Syrian Orthodox is quite representative of relations of the Kurds with other Christian communities living among them: the Armenians and the East Syriacs. In discussing the Kurds’ common practice of plundering monasteries and churches, the author quotes the case of the monastery of Mar Mattai near Mosul, mentioned by George P. Badger: “the monastery was attacked by the Coordish [sic] Pasha of Rawandooz, whose soldiers defaced or destroyed most of the inscriptions, expelled the resident monks, and all plundered the church,” and notes that for fear of profanation of their churches, the churches in Kurdish areas had very low entrances, so that nobody could get into the church on horseback. Nevertheless, the author notes that these financial exactions were perpetrated only occasionally, with no apparent serious intent by the Kurds to eliminate the Christians living around them. This attitude, however, was at variance with the one that manifested itself during the repression led by the Sultan Abdul-Hamid against the Armenians in 1895 to 1896, and the measures taken by the Young Turks from 1915, which aimed at the elimination of the Christian inhabitants of the eastern part of the Ottoman Empire. In these events, the Kurds, notes the author, became the main executioners and beneficiaries of these plans.

Recently, this subject has also drawn interest from Turkish scholars. The work by Ibrahim Ozcosar is particularly relevant as it is largely related to the Syrian Orthodox Church. Reference will be made to this work where appropriate in the coming chapters. A recent study on the social relations in southeastern Anatolia appears in the book: Social

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Relations in Ottoman Diyarbekir, 1870-1915, authored by several writers and published in 2012. Two articles of interest in this book are one by Emrulla Akgunduz, and one by David Gaunt. The first article provides valuable data on the Syriac and other Christian population in the Diyarbakir vilayet (province): their numbers, professional affiliation, education and way of life, based on Ottoman salnames (statistics) and the Mardin data collected from the Forty Martyrs Church in Mardin. The paper notes the scarcity of economic data but remarks that the urban dwellers in Diyarbakir were in a much better economic state than those in rural areas who, on the other hand, were four times as numerous as the urban dwellers. The maarif salnames indicate that the Syriac Christians had their own schools, but that these schools had fewer students following the 1895 violence. The paper also notes the polarization between the Catholics and the non-Catholics of the Syriac Christians and the growing disagreement between the Syriac Christians and the Armenians over the millet status.

The paper by Gaunt discusses the background of the shifting tides in the relationship between the Kurds and the Ottomans and argues that the rising power of the Kurdish emirates, meant that the Syriacs became increasingly dependent on their short term alliances with the Kurds and were becoming increasingly trapped between unreliable tribal chiefs, with no peaceful strategic options. The alliance that emerged during World War I between the Ottoman central government, with its genocide policy, and the majority of Kurdish tribes, who fostered the ambition to settle on Christian property, spelled the end of the Oriental Christians in those parts. Only a fraction of those tribes who had made the protection of Christians a matter of honour could keep their promise.

The impact of the Protestant missions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the Middle East has been a subject of greater attention over the past few years. Much of the work has been documented in the proceedings of a conference held in Leiden in 2005 and

The work of the conference underlined the impact of the American missionary presence in the Ottoman Empire, particularly with respect to the Syrian Orthodox Church through the work of Alphaeus Andrus from his station in Mardin. (It is worth noting with some sadness that out of the 13 contributors only one came from the Christian Orient.)

The relations between the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Catholic churches became adversarial after the arrival of the Catholic missions in the Ottoman Empire with their express intention to bring Syrian Orthodoxy into Rome’s orbit. Recent scholarship on this by John Flannery and Anthony O’Mahony sheds useful light on this relationship, perhaps through hindsight reflections that may be summarized by O’Mahony’s statement: “In 1913, several Syrian Orthodox bishops converted to Catholicism. However, indiscriminate suffering of all the Syriac communities in the First World War would serve cruelly to underline the absurdity of such inter-Christian proselytism.” More recently, an article by Ibrahim Oscozar has provided an account of the conflict between the Syrian Orthodox and the Syrian Catholic Churches in Mardin over the past two centuries.

v. Studies on Syrian Orthodoxy through the Prism of Identity

As a result of the growing emphasis placed on identity in general, identity has become a vogue term whose use has drawn people to the study of even established ancient churches. ‘Narratives of identity’ now refer to the ways churches and people express different aspects of their history and heritage.

Several studies have been carried out relating to the identity of the Syrian Orthodox Church and people over the course of the twentieth century. The earliest were perhaps by scholars from within the Syriac Orthodox Church. The first by Ni’mat-Allah Denno/Dinno was published in Arabic in Mosul in 1949, and the second by Aphram Barsoum, Patriarch of the

43 Missionary Herald, Eastern Turkey Reports for 1879-1882.
46 Ibid., p.130.
47 Ibrahim Oscozar, “Separations and Conflicts.”
Syrian Orthodox Church (1933-1957), was published in 1952. The first paper aims at refuting the appellation “Jacobite” as a name, even though the name had had a very wide historical use. The paper relies on historical Syrian Orthodox sources as well as on official Turkish, Coptic, Greek Orthodox, Catholic and other sources. The paper remarks that, historically, the Syrian Orthodox Church identified itself by three attributes: as being Syrian, as being Orthodox and its historical affiliation to the See of Antioch. The term “Syrian” reflected its Syriac liturgy and tradition as well as its Semitic background as an Oriental church. It also reflected the core ethnicity of its followers. The term “Orthodox” has been in reference to its Miaphysite Christology. Finally, its identification with Antioch stresses its claim of an uninterrupted lineage from the Apostolic See of Antioch, which was initiated by Peter the Apostle.

The second paper, penned by Barsoum in Arabic and Syriac with sections in English, demonstrates the Aramean roots of the Syrian Orthodox by means of evidence that is partly Biblical, but mainly extracted from historical sources over the two past millennia. Barsoum’s paper was written to address the issue of identity that arose among the Syrian Orthodox communities who had immigrated to the Americas from the early days of their diaspora, right up to the mid-twentieth century.

The subject of the identity of the West Syrian Christians has recently been the focus of an extensive research project in the University of Leiden. Said research was concerned with investigating the evidence for the construction of a communal identity for the Syrian Orthodox as such identity might be reflected in the literary and the art-historical tradition of this group in the period from Chalcedon 451 to 1300 CE. Further reflections on the identity of these

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48 Ni’mmat Allah Dinno/Denno, Iqamat al daleel ’la Istimrar al Isim al Aseel wa Istinkar al Na’âr al Dakheel (Establishing the Proof on the Original Name and Negating the Alien Adjective), Mosul, 1949. An English translation of the historical evidence derived from Syriac Orthodox sources only, was presented with commentary by this author at the IX<sup>th</sup> Symposium Syriacum held in Malta in July 2012.

49 Miaphysite Christology defines that Christ has one nature out of two natures (‘one (mia) nature of the Word of God Incarnate’). This term has been adopted in the ecumenical spirit of the second half of the twentieth century to correct the misconception that arose at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. It thus replaces the term ‘Monophysite’ that was coined against the participants of the Council who did not agree with Council’s interpretation concerning the nature of Christ; the Syrian Orthodox, the Armenians and the Copts.

50 An English translation under the title The Syrian Church of Antioch: Its Name and History was published by the Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch in the United States and Canada, Hackensack, NJ (undated). An introduction to the article was published in Syriac by Archbishop J. J. Cicek in 1983.

Christians were made by Herman Teule who considered the literary output of Dionysius bar Salibi, Jacob Shakko and Gregory bar Hebraeus.\(^{52}\)

The research in Leiden arrived at a number of interesting conclusions. One was that the identity of the Syrian Orthodox evolved over the centuries from an essentially religious one, immediately following Chalcedon, to a community-based one that gradually acquired a sense of being an “ethnos.” It noted that before 451 CE the Syriac-speaking *Miaphysites* had no proper name that expressed the identity of their community, and that even in the early sixth century the *Miaphysites* still cherished the hope of being reunited with those who professed the official religion of the Byzantine Empire. In this context Van Rompay notes that even Baradaeus who reorganized the Church in the sixth century, at that time hoped that his move would be a temporary one, until an accord with the Chalcedonians could be re-established,\(^{53}\) and that the feature of any ethnic community that may have been present was the sense of connection and loyalty to a certain territory in the form of loyalty to that territory. The study also noted that persecution and alienation by the Byzantines had an important role in creating an independent identity. The study indicated that during the period 451 to 650 CE, the *Miaphysite* movement was bilingual, with the exegetical sources showing predisposition towards Greek sources. However, in the subsequent Islamic period (i.e., 650 to 1000 CE), one would notice that the impact of the Arab invasion caused the *Miaphysites* to gradually distance themselves from the Byzantine Empire and define their tradition as Syriac with the Syriac language playing a significant role as a distinguishing feature. The Syriac culture thus emerged as heir to at least three cultures: Aramaic or Mesopotamian, Greco-Roman and Jewish.\(^{54}\) The Leiden study further noted that, while all features of an ethnic community were present, the religious aspect remained central.\(^{55}\)

The historiographical and exegetical works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, often described as “the Syrian Renaissance” pointed to further developments of identity and led a

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complex interplay between the linguistic and the ethnopolitical factors with the Byzantines, the Crusaders, the East and West Syrians, all existing in a milieu that had been governed by the Muslim Arabs for several centuries but which was at that stage witnessing a strong emerging Turkish influence. These factors helped to solidify the identity of the Syrian Orthodox as a distinct religious and ethnic identity, and the interplay of these factors is evident in the works of scholars such as Michael the Syrian, Bar Salibi, and Bar Hebraeus.

A different identity for the Syrian Orthodox that is at variance with that discussed above, surfaced during the early years of the twentieth century. Animated by the turbulent sociopolitical climate that was blowing across Anatolia and beyond, a few Syrian Orthodox intellectuals began to promote an Assyrian identity, thus following in the footsteps of the East Syriac Christians. The move towards promoting this identity was spearheaded by two intellectuals: Na‘um Fa‘ik and Ashur Yusuf. They lived in the turbulent period leading up to First World War, when cultural and political aspirations made inroads within several Christian communities.

In considering the sociopolitical climate in the region inhabited by the West Syrians in Anatolia in the period from 1908-1914, Benjamin Trigona-Harany pays particular attention to the political and journalistic work of Na‘um Fa‘ik and Ashur Yusuf.56 This work brought out a number of interesting points. First, that these two nationalist activists did not aim to secularize the Suryani Millet, but sought greater participation of its clergy at all levels in reforming the community.57 It also noted that the nineteenth century had seen the emergence of conflicts between the Armenians and the Suryani Churches over ownership of properties, a matter that developed into a rising animosity between the two communities in many areas58 and provided an added impetus towards adopting a powerful nationality to counterbalance the Armenians’ political and social greater strength. However, Trigona-Harany made the observation that at the beginning, both activists saw Ottomanism as an acceptable solution that would safeguard their people’s interests, whether with regards to the Armenians or the Kurds; but that they subsequently renounced that support when, in 1912-1914, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) adopted Turkism, with its racist and sectarian sociopolitical agenda.59 Trigona-

57 Ibid., p. 195.
58 Ibid., pp. 189-199.
59 Ibid., p. 208.
Harany argues that it was at that point that these two nationalists came to the conclusion that *Assyrianism* was a better nationalistic mantle to carry. But the 1952 publication by Barsoum, referenced earlier, refutes any historical claims to an *Assyrian* identity.

The quest for an identity and for an associated name that was initiated by Naʿum Faʾik and Ashur Yusuf in the early years of the twentieth century resonated mainly among the Syriacs who immigrated during the 1950s to Western Europe: initially those in Germany, Holland and Sweden, but subsequently in other parts of the diaspora. Among the Syriacs in all these countries, the identity question created deep polarization around two names, the Syrian “Suryoye” and Assyrians “Suroye”. Nawras Atto recently published her extensive study, ⁶⁰ which was carried out as part of the Leiden project referenced earlier.

In the 1970s the new immigrants generally disliked being considered as part of other national groups of the Middle East living in the West (Turks and Arabs). Their search for a name was a consequence to what they considered to be an undesirable position. However, the resulting name debate became subject to competing political debates and ideas. Atto brings out the essential elements that initiated the name and identity debate, which were essentially related to unfulfilled expectations in the diaspora.

In the homeland, the community in question had a religious status around which its collective identity found expression, but it had been actively denied the status of an ethno-national group. This was consistent with the organization of the Christians along religious lines in the *millet* system. Thus, among the ordinary Syriacs/Assyrians, Christianity was the main nodal point around which their collective identity found expression. Europe, however, offered the opportunity to embrace an ethno-national status, which fuelled a name debate. In this open environment, hitherto unknown to the newcomers, social and political forces entered into the discourse as important parameters, however, often at the expense of historical realities. Thus the traditional debates of “Jacobites” versus “Syrian Orthodox” and “Monophysites” versus “Miaphysites” became largely superseded by a name debate of *Syrian* versus *Assyrian* (henceforth referring to this community as *Syrian/Assyrian*).

Atto notes that in the new environment the *Syrian/Assyrian* people came to realize that they had forfeited the concept of homeland and that their new habitat became the symbol of

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their eternal rupture from the historical *athro* (homeland). This devastating break has created the sense of having become *yatame* (orphans), despite the fact that they had been living as *yasire* (hostages) in their homeland.

In their efforts to promote national unity, the *Assyrian* activists introduced new national symbols and reinterpreted old ones. But they always maintained attention to language (classical Syriac plus spoken *Suryoyo*), secular music and folklore literature, thus building on the original ideas of *umthonoyutho* , “nationhood” promoted by such *umthonoye* “nationals” as Na’um Fa’ik and Ashur Yusuf, but revived in the late 1950s, as a reaction to Pan Arabism, which swept the Arab countries at that time. Atto concludes her in-depth treatment of the subject by aptly stating:

> The Assyrian/Syriac diaspora can exist only through the *social imaginary* of a homeland; without a homeland, there cannot be a diaspora or an existence outside the homeland. Unless there is a homeland, it is impossible to speak of a diaspora and the dispersion of a people. Consequently, to speak of the dispersion of one’s people is communicating where home is. This mechanism re-roots all ‘imagined members’ of the community in a homeland in order to continue to exist as a collective – creating the *myth* of a united people, although they continue to live dispersed in the diaspora. This can be seen as an attempt to turn this *myth* into a *social imaginary* through the strength of a shared collective of ideas in order to assure survival. ⁶¹

Recent research relating to the Syrian Orthodox Church, as seen through the prism of identity, has been carried out by William Taylor. ⁶² Taylor focused on the Syrian Orthodox Church during the particularly turbulent period of 1895-1914. This period was marked by massacres of the Armenians and the Syriacs in Diyarbakir and elsewhere in 1895-1896, the abdication of Patriarch Abdul Masih, and the political upheaval that engulfed the Ottoman Empire on the eve of the War.

One of the main themes of Taylor’s work was the relationship between the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Church of England. This relationship had commenced with the visit by Patriarch Peter III to London in 1874 to 1875, which resulted in some educational aid and

⁶¹ Ibid, p.509.
the supply of two printing presses to the Syrian Orthodox Church. This relationship was, according to Taylor, further cemented by the visit of Patriarch Abdullah to London in 1908. Taylor discusses the challenges to the identity of the Syrian Orthodox Church at that time from within, as brought about by conversions, and from outside the Church, as a result of the rise of the Turkism promoted by the Committee of the Union and Progress, as well as by the Kurdish incursions on the Christian population in Eastern Anatolia. The greater interest from the Church of England’s perspective was after the issuance of the *Apostolicae Curae* by Pope Leo XIII in 1896. For the Church of England between 1895 and 1914, an attempt was made by the *Oxford Movement* to demonstrate its Tractarianism. That is, the church order of the Church of England and its ecclesiology was somehow in an unbroken continuity with the Patristic period, a feature designed to appeal to the Orthodox Churches.

The theological dialogue that developed during this period contributed to the change of self-perception that each of the two churches had undergone throughout this period and, consequently, to a mutual recognition between them. Taylor considers the Church of England’s interest and this dialogue as being part of seeking ecclesiastical recognition from Orthodox Churches as a “sister” church to them.

For the Syrian Orthodox Church, its collective memory was imbued in its liturgical social and linguistic tradition for its internal definition of itself, particularly its patriarchal nature. These characteristics that arose from within, contrasted with its external identity as being a church serving a minority that, at best, was tolerated, but often persecuted throughout its history under the Byzantine, Arab and Ottoman rules. This naturally contrasts with the position of the Church of England’s overriding characteristic of being the “Established” Church of England, with congruity between monarch and church leadership.

Not withstanding the analogy Taylor employs in building up the notion of emerging identities between the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Church of England, the reality was that the dialogue between the two churches subsided as the political interests of the British Government changed. Taylor states: “the years leading up to First World War thus saw a drawing apart of the Church of England and the Syrian Orthodox Church through the incompatible and contradictory aims of the British Foreign policy interests and the Ottoman

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minority aspirations.\textsuperscript{64} Paradoxically, this underlines the true independence of the Syrian Orthodox Church from external political power, despite its overall weakness in relation to that of the Church of England in so many other aspects. My review of the Syrian Orthodox archival material for that period has indicated that the theological discussion that Patriarch Abdullah had in London in 1908 was brief and inconclusive (see Chapter Five). All the same, Taylor’s work fills an important information gap in the affairs of the Syrian Orthodox Church and provides useful commentary on many aspects of relevant events in that period.

\textit{vi. Other Studies on the History of the Syrian Orthodox Church}

The history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century has come down to us largely through studies and field observations made by people from other lands: travellers, church missionaries, diplomatic mission personnel. Due to difficult travel conditions, often marred with issues of safety, in-depth studies of communities would have presented considerable difficulties. This was particularly the case in many rural regions of the Diarbakir \textit{vilayet}, especially in Tur Abdin.

Two seminal works appeared in this category: the first was by Horatio Southgate, a minister in the American Episcopalian Church, and the other by Oswald Parry of Magdalen College Oxford, on behalf of the Church of England. Southgate spent several months in 1841 visiting various communities and monasteries.\textsuperscript{65} Almost 50 years later Parry carried out a similar task, but on a more extensive scale that entailed extensive travels throughout Tur Abdin, as well as in important cities such as Mardin and Mosul and their environs. Both travellers made insightful observations on church and social conditions.\textsuperscript{66} For Southgate, this was his second visit; his first visit, in 1838, involved a wider geographic coverage and interest that included the Armenian regions of Anatolia and northwestern Iran.\textsuperscript{67}

Given the cultural decline within the Syrian Orthodox Church in that period, very little has come to us from accounts of the Church and community in question, with the singular important exception of the unique work by Ayoub Barsoum (later Patriarch Aphram I

\textsuperscript{64} William Taylor, \textit{Narratives of Identity}, p. 31.
Barsoum) from 1905 to 1913, when he was a young monk in Deir al-Za‘faran. Monk Barsoum toured the villages and monasteries of Tur Abdin, documented the manuscripts in its churches, sat down with its elders and listened to their recollection of ancestral and Church history. The wealth of information he gathered was published by the late Patriarch Zakka Iwas.

Among the modern histories of the Syriac Orthodox Christians and their relationship with other communities was the work by John Joseph, published in 1983. In his monograph *Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in the Age of Transition*, he considers the historical background to the work of the missionaries, the confessional conversions and the subsequent events leading up to the rise of movements that steered Christian-Muslim relations at the threshold of the twentieth century.

Joseph refers to the scarcity of primary sources and, consequently, to the dearth of reliable secondary sources, noting that most of the available manuscripts he encountered were of religious nature or, “histories”, which generally revolved around the lives of saints and martyrs. Most of the historical records had, over the centuries, perished by fire or pillage. Nevertheless, Joseph provides a broad-based treatment of the issues relating to missions, conversions, and relations with Muslims, particularly with Kurds. In fact his book became an important secondary source material for many subsequent studies. Joseph concludes by relating the interaction between the Middle Eastern Christians with the proponents of nationalism in the newly established nation states that were formed following World War I, and their contribution to the emerging movements that shifted the relations away from the traditional framework to a non-sectarian nationalist one.

Joseph is perhaps better known for his work on the Church of the East in his two monographs: *The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbors: A Study of Western Influence on their Relations*, and its updated version, *Modern Assyrians*. It may be noted that Joseph  

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68 Barsoum toured the villages of Tur Abdin and surrounding regions where he interviewed the elders of the community to document past events, largely from oral transmission. The results of his most valuable work have appeared in the Patriarchal Magazines of the years 1933-1944, and since 1981.
69 See Bibliography.
71 This point may be disputed on account of the extensive inscriptions investigated and published by Harrak.
referred to the same people as Nestorians in 1961 and Modern Assyrians in 2000. This reflects an increasing trend, which has significant ethnic and political connotations, a subject that is outside the scope of the current study.

From within the Syriac Orthodox Church, several publications of historical nature have appeared, particularly since the mid twentieth century.

Two books were published in the 1980s by two Syrian Orthodox bishops. The first, *Tārikh abrašiyyat al-Mawṣil al-suryāniyya* (History of the Syrian Diocese of Mosul) by Shamʿun Saliba provides a historical overview of the history of this ancient diocese. The second, *Kanīsati al-suryāniya* (My Syrian Church) by the late Ishak Saka, provides a broad perspective of church history through the ages with a brief description given of all patriarchs, starting from Peter the Apostle to the late Patriarch Zakka I Iwas (122nd) patriarch. It also lists and briefly describes the line of *Maprihans* of the East and the patriarchs of Tur Abdin who had seceded from the main jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch at Deir al-Za’faran from 1364 until 1839. This book gives a brief outline of the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. Both of these authors wrote in the spirit of twentieth century ecumenism, thereby avoiding, apart from cursory references delving into the tense aspects of inter-church relations that affected the Syrian Orthodox Church from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries.

Two earlier books, one specifically on the history of Tur Abdin and the other on the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India, merit a special mention. The first, by Aphram Barsoum stands out as a unique document describing that historically important region in Oriental Christianity. Since the eighteenth century, Tur Abdin has attracted the attention and curiosity of several European travellers, archaeologists and writers. One of the earliest is Gertrude Bell who devoted a chapter to Tur Abdin in her book *Amurath to Amurath*, first published in 1911, and the more recent by Hans Hollenweger, entitled *Tur Abdin : Lebendiges Kulturebe*, which was written in German, English and Turkish. The description by Bell provides a snapshot of the region taken a few years before World War I, as part of a general survey of a much larger area that includes parts of Anatolia, Iraq and Syria. Hans

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76 Gertrude Bell, *Amurath to Amurath*, (Gorgias Press, 2003); The Churches and Monasteries of Tur Abdin, Pindar Press, 1982).
Hollenweger’s book includes an exquisite pictorial present-day account of the region, its still existing meagre Syrian Orthodox population, its churches and monasteries. However, Barsoum’s main concern throughout his book was to record Tur Abdin’s detailed history from the pre-Christian era, being under the Persians, the Byzantines, the Muslim Arabs, the Turks and the Mongols and finally the Kurds and the Ottomans, down to the early years of the twentieth century. Considering the major demographic changes that have occurred in that region since the First World War, including even village names, Barsoum’s work stands perhaps as a unique reference to the Aramaic culture and the Christian past of this region. Barsoum wrote his account in Syriac, which was translated into Arabic by the late Metropolitan Boulus Behnam in 1963 and by Matti Moosa into English in 2008.

On the Syriac Church’s history in India the book by Severus Yacoub Tuma, later Patriarch Jacob III (1957-1980), stands as an authoritative source. Tuma spent 13 years as priestmonk in Malankra, in southern India, where he compiled his book and published it in 1951. The book provides an historical account of the Syriac presence in that remote part of the East, liturgically and temporally, since the early centuries of the Christian era. It traces the historical developments that caused these relations to wane, particularly during the time of the Portuguese occupation. It discusses the efforts the church mobilized since the seventeenth century, when it delegated Gregorius Abdul-Jalil al-Mosulli in the mid-seventeenth century to restore its links with that region of its stewardship, and the difficulties caused by local divisions that have continued ever since. In 1964, during the patriarchate of the author, that region was granted the status as the Maphiranate of the East, as a mark of its importance to the Syrian Orthodox Church.

A number of interesting historical accounts of the Church’s ecclesiastical data and some community statistics covering specific periods from the sixteenth century have recently been published by Iskendar Bcheiry. In an article that appeared in Parole de L’Orient 29 (2004) Bcheiry provides a list of the Syrian Orthodox patriarchs between the sixteenth and the

80 Severus Yacoub Tuma, Taʾriḵ al-kanīṣa al-suryāniyya al-hindiyya (History of the Syriac Church in India), Beirut, 1951 (History of the Syriac Church in India), Beirut, 1951.
81 This is the designation used by the Church of Antioch to denote the regions that were within the Sassanid Empire. The first ecclesiast to carry this title was Mar Marutha of Tikrit in 628.
eighteenth centuries, based on a manuscript that was found as a supplement to the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian in Saddad, an ancient town located to the southeast of Homs in Syria. The list in the subject supplement provides significant information relating to the state of the church in that period.82

Bcheiry also published a monograph comprising a list of the Syrian Orthodox ecclesiastic ordinations from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries based on the Syriac manuscript of Hunt (SYR 68 in the Bodleian Library).83 In addition to its own informational value as an ordination list, this document provides significant topographic and demographic perspectives into the state of the church in that obscure period. Falling into this pattern of publication, Bcheiry published in 2009 a monograph The Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal Register of Dues of 1870.84 In that year, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Jacob II (1847-1872) sent the monk Abdullah (later Patriarch, 1906-1915) to collect the patriarchal dues from the communities of the provinces of Diyarbakir and Bitlis. This document was among those that had been collated by Dolabani at the Forty Maryrs Church in Mardin. A sequel to this, appearing in a separate monograph,85 was published by the same author in 2010. The value of these publications to the work of this thesis lies in providing supplementary or corollary data, which is a matter of particular significance in this work.

Among the most significant historical accounts pertaining to the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have been those researched and published by Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum in instalments in al-Majallah al-Batriarkiya al Suryaniyya (The Syrian Patriarchal Magazine) that was issued in Jerusalem over the period 1933 to 1941. This material has recently been collated, translated into English by Matti Moosa and published in a monograph under the title History of the Syriac Dioceses.86 The noted journal continued its mission as a vital source of articles on Church history and literature under the name “Al-Majalla al Batriarkiya” from 1962 onward. On the question of the history of

83 Iskandar Beheiry, A List of Syriac Orthodox Ecclesiastic Ordination from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, the Syriac Manuscript of Hunt 444 (Syr 68) in Bodleian Library, Oxford), Gorgias, 2010.
85 Iskandar Beheiry, Collection of Historical Documents in Relation with the Syriac Orthodox Community in the Late Period of the Ottoman Empire –The Register of Mardin MS1006, Gorgias, 2010.
Syriac culture, the book *Al-Lu’lu’ al Manthur* by Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum stands out as the most outstanding and comprehensive source on this vast subject. Written in Arabic, it was translated into Syriac by Yohannon Dolabani and into English by Matti Moosa.\(^\text{87}\)

**vii. Content**

Having gone through many archival documents, and given the fact that current research is inadequate to reconstruct the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in a most difficult period, I decided to undertake the writing of this thesis to shed light on the that period in the following chapters.

Chapter One examines the *millet* system, its functioning throughout the Ottoman Empire, and its specific application to the Syrian Orthodox Church. It also discusses the evolution of the *millet* system in light of rising nationalism among some of its ethnic strands and the eventual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter Two discusses the conditions and the challenges the Syrian Orthodox Church faced throughout the nineteenth century in the Middle East.

Chapter Three covers the impact of the Portuguese treatment of the Syriac Christians in India, the subsequent British rule, and the resulting incursions of the Anglican Church through its missionary branch on the Syriac Christians in that country. Light is shed on many aspects of the Anglican attitude that have hitherto been largely obscure. This chapter also highlights some of the positive aspects of the relationship that materialized between the two churches in the late nineteenth century.

Chapter Four examines the state of the Church and its leadership during the critical period leading to the First World War in which decline from internal and external conditions brought the church to the edge of an abyss. Based on some of the archival material, certain critical facts are uncovered considering the delinquency of Church leadership in that critical period.

Chapter Five, following a brief reference to the massacres and to the exodus during and after the First World War, addresses the initial period of re-settlement in the new environment. It also alludes to Church efforts to assure a modicum of safe existence of its folk who were still

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living in Turkey, while appealing to the international forum of the day, the Paris Peace Conference, for a redress of historical and other rights.

Chapter Six examines the critical factors in the revival and renaissance of the Church after the re-settlement of the majority of its people from Anatolia and its leadership in the Arab lands. Some of these factors can be attributed to the personal qualities of the prominent ecclesiastic and lay scholars who arose in that period, yet others to the cultural environment of the new habitat. The different manifestations of revival are addressed, along with new challenges as Syrian Orthodoxy establishes a sizeable presence in the diaspora.

The results of this study are summarized in the Conclusions.

viii. Archival Sources

The following archival material has been utilized, as appropriate, in the course of performing this study.

1. The archives at the Monastery of Deir al Za’faran (Dayro d-Kurkmo) and the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin.

Having been the seat of the Patriarchs of the Syrian Orthodox Church from the thirteenth to the early twentieth centuries, Deir al-Za’faran was a depository of documents for that church for a long time. However, due to repeated Kurdish incursions and looting over several centuries, it lost most of its library and archives.  

For the purposes of this research, I was granted specific permission to access and photograph these archives by the late Patriarch, of blessed memory, Zakka Iwas, a permission that was unprecedented in scope and is respectfully and duly acknowledged. The surviving archives at Deir al Za’faran were stored uncatalogued in batches two to four inches thick, whereas those in Mardin were bound in volumes, likely by or under the direction of Bishop Yohannon Dolabani (d. 1967).

Most of the imaging work at these two locations was carried out in July 2010 by a team that included George Kiraz and me. Earlier imaging work of some of the material at Deir al-

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88 In his book Narrative of a Visit to the Syrian (Jacobite) Church of Mesopotamia, p. 225, Horatio Southgate reports that when he wished to visit the monastery’s historic library, the bishop who accompanied him apologized for the library’s depleted contents, as “the Kurds had used most of the ancient codices as wadding for their guns during their last occupation of the establishment.”
Za‘faran had been carried out in 2005 and 2007 by a team that was headed by George Kiraz. The imaging work involved taking nearly 19,000 images.

2. Aphram Barsoum’s personal archives at the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate in Bab Tuma, Damascus.

Again, access to this material was made possible with the kind permission of the late Patriarch Iwas. It is believed that granting this permission was unprecedented.

When photographed in May and June, 2009, this collection had been moved from a previous location in the building during a recent renovation. This collection had been housed in the Patriarchate in Emesa (Homs), the seat of the patriarchate when Barsoum was patriarch (1933-1957). Through these moves the collection lost the classification system it would have likely had under Barsoum. The scope of the imaging work, though considerable, did not include the entire collection, which contained a vast quantity of literary material whose study falls outside the scope of the current work.

3. St. Mark's Convent Archives in Jerusalem (Dayro d-Mor Marqos)

This is a Syrian Orthodox monastery that still retains its old name as “convent”, although it is inhabited by monks and headed by a bishop. According to the Syrian Orthodox tradition, this monastery is where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper and where the Disciples met at the Pentecost. Because of its venerable historical status, this monastery has generally been called “Deir al-Kursi” (the Monastery of the Seat), referring to being the seat of James, the first bishop of Jerusalem.

My interest in searching for archival material here stems from the monastery’s historical importance, particularly in the late Ottoman period when it was used as the temporary seat of visiting patriarchs, such as Patriarchs Abdullah and Elias III. Access to the archival material was again made possible by permission of his Holiness Patriarch Zakka Iwas and was facilitated during my visit to the Monastery in July 2013, by Bishop Mor Severios Malke Murad, the Patriarchal Vicar of Jerusalem and Jordan, and by Raban Shamoun Jan. I found that many of the archival contents had been largely incorporated into the Bab-Tuma archives. The material that was possible to locate and digitize consisted of 685 documents that pertained mainly to the period from 1920 to 1940.

This is a 467 folio manuscript collection, a codex that was penned by Aphram Barsoum based on information he collected from his research and travels throughout Turkey, Iraq and Syria while he was a monk at Deir al Za´faran, before World War I, as well as in the course of his subsequent extensive research over the years. The location of the original manuscript is unknown, but Metropolitan Youhanna Ibrahim of Aleppo had a photocopy of the manuscript, which he was kind enough to permit a photocopy of it to be made for the purpose of my work in July 2010. The manuscript provides information about the dioceses of the Syriac Orthodox Church from the early centuries and Christian era, down to recent times. This vast wealth of information Barsoum painstakingly collected and collated from a variety of sources, that are, however, often not specified. Barsoum published some of his findings that covered most of the seventeenth and eighteenth century period in the Patriarchal Journal from 1939 to 1941(see other sources). Zakka Iwas published more in the same journal from 1981 to 1983. However, there is still considerable material, particularly relating to the Syriac dioceses over the earlier centuries, that remains unpublished. This material has been utilized here to form a historical skeleton of the Syriac dioceses over the centuries.

Kitab al Ahadeeth is a historical document that was penned by Barsoum in which he documented the results of his fact-finding tours throughout the dioceses of Anatolia in the period 1909 to 1913, when he was a monk at Deir al-Za´faran. He visited towns, villages, churches and monasteries, where he examined liturgical books, made notes and copied colophons and, together, texts that helped him unearth the history of these dioceses and the names and identities of the ecclesiastical fathers. In addition, he interviewed the elderly for historical accounts of events that occurred in their lifetime or orally transmitted to them from previous generations. Considering that the communities Barsoum visited were soon after subjected to massacres and the survivors to expulsion from their homeland, Barsoum’s work stands to have a unique value.

These accounts were compiled, and extracts from them were published in Barsoum’s name by Zakka Iwas in the Patriarchal Journal from 1981 to 1983, under the title “From the Book of Oral Accounts”. My access to this work is through the said journal.
5. Lambeth Palace Library Archives

I visited the library at Lambeth Palace in London in July 2011 and located source material pertaining to the visit by Patriarch Peter III to London, his meeting with the Archbishop Tait of Canterbury in 1874/5, and his visit to Queen Victoria. As a result of this visit a relationship developed between the Church of England and the Syrian Orthodox Church, which resulted in the provision of educational assistance and a printing press, and follow-up visits by both sides. The archives also relate to the visit by Patriarch Abdulla II in 1908 and include a large volume of written exchanges between the two churches over the period 1872 to 1909. Following standard procedures I engaged a specialist firm to digitize the 373 folios covering the selected documents.

6. The National Archives at Kew, London

I was interested in the consular reports from southeastern Turkey over the second half of the nineteenth century and the immediate pre-World War I period. I visited these archives in July 2013 and photographed 423 documents of interest.
CHAPTER ONE

UNDER THE OTTOMAN UMBRELLA
The Millet System and its Evolutions

This chapter situates Syrian Orthodoxy within the sociopolitical macrocosm of the Ottoman Empire. As part of a historical background, it considers first the millet system as a method of administering relations between the Ottoman State and its non-Muslim communities, its historicity and operation in the case of the three original millets (i.e., Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish). It then considers the developments in the millet system in the course of the nineteenth century, particularly in respect of Ottoman’s developing relations with Western Europe and the associated entry of Western Christian missions to apostatize the Empire’s Christian populations. The rapid internal sociopolitical developments in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman-Russian wars, the Balkan wars of independence, the resultant population movements, all left their indelible fingerprints on the security environments in which the small Syrian Orthodox communities lived in Anatolia. These communities, which had for the longest time been living under the protective umbrella of the millet at a remote, often forgotten, but generally peaceful edge of the Empire, were engulfed in violence, not of their making, that was initiated in 1895. However, by the second year of the First World War, it escalated to cause their almost total demise. In the meantime, the Syrian Orthodox communities that had been living in the Arab lands shared in the cultural revival and the nationalist aspirations in these lands, which subsequently became the new home for the survivors of the Anatolian genocide.90

89 Defining the millet here as ‘system’ is based on Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths of the Millet System,” in Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. Eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, Vol. 1, 1982, 69-88 (London: Holmes and Meier, 1982), p. 69. At the same time it is recognized that the designation ‘system’ to define the millet is subject to some controversy with a no clear alternative.

90 The term ‘Armenian Genocide’ in particular has been increasingly adopted in the international arena to denote the massive massacres and the ethnic cleansing to which the Armenians were subjected in Turkey in 1915 and in its aftermath, see Bruce Masters, “Armenian Massacres ‘Armenian Genocide’” in Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters, Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire, Facts On File, 2009, pp. 54, 55.
1.1 Historicity - General

The Ottoman millet system was a means for the Ottoman government to administer its non-Muslim population in a form of autonomy using religious authorities as intermediaries between the state and people. Three millets were originally created by the Ottomans: Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish, with Catholic and Protestant, and other communities only later being recognized as distinct millets.

The historical legal framework of the Ottoman millet system was the Muslim concept which recognized the non-Muslim monotheistic believers as the “People of the Book,” and accorded them protection as dhimmis (protected people). The very term millet had the meaning of ‘nation’ but without a political connotation. At its core it bore the notion of inferiority and subservience of non-Muslims to Islam and, thus, to Muslims. Islam could not support divisions that could threaten the political supremacy and the unity of the Muslim community, umma (Arabic) or ummet (Turkish).

Karpat points out that the pronouncement “and we have made you into people and tribes” (Quran 49:13) can be interpreted as a tacit recognition of the existence of ethnic, linguistic and tribal diversities within the community of believers.91 The paradox of the situation, as Karpat notes, lay in the fact that the millet system brought the non-Muslims into the Muslim principle of social organization while recognizing their religious and cultural autonomy.

“Organizationally, the Christians were ‘Islamized’ much the same way in which the Ottoman state was ‘westernized,’ (or as some Muslims contend, converted to the Christian way) after it began adopting the nineteenth century reforms inspired by the West.”92

Davison argues that three closely related, but distinguishable, meanings have been associated with the term millet. The first, and most common, is a community of people who get their identity from a common religious affiliation. In this manner millet has also been used for umma, the people of Islam or the millet-Islamiye, usually equated in the popular mind to millet-hakime, the ruling millet. However, throughout the following text the term millet will refer to one or more of the non-Islamic millets, the millel-i-mahkume, the ruled millets. The second meaning of the term millet has at times been used as an adjective to denote primarily the body

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92 Ibid.
of doctrine and practice common to one of the *millet* confessions: *millet* worship, *millet* ritual etc. The third use of the term *millet*, was with reference to the formal organization of the community: its ecclesiastical hierarchy, its constitution, and its administrative structure. In Arab milieus, the term *millah* has also generally been used to refer to a group or groups of people connected by ethnic, tribal or religious ties, Muslim or otherwise. In mundane usage, it refers a minority group that has deviated from the way of the majority.

Considering the historical manifestations of the birth and early developments of the *millet* system under the Ottoman rule, the following rather contrasting views by Benjamin Braude, Harry Luke and Halil Inalcik offer a reasonably wide spectrum for the purpose of an informed discussion.

Benjamin Braude maintains that the *millet* system originated through a continuation of myth in the sense of “fiction” or “illusion” and myth in the sense of “sacred tradition”. Accordingly,

the Greeks, the Jews, and the Armenians all believed that Mehmed II “the Conqueror” had a close personal relationship with their respective leaders. The Greeks claimed that Mehmed himself knew Greek. Mehmed in turn honored Gennadios with many gifts and tokens of esteem. The Jews claim that Mehmed studied Hebrew to read the prophecies of the Book of Daniel which had foretold his imperial success. Mehmed enjoyed the company not only of Moses Capsali, the so-called chief rabbi, but also sought out other Jews who provided him with regular shipments of kosher food. The sultan particularly enjoyed the Passover seder. The Armenians claim that Mehmed bestowed a personal promise of protection upon their leader, Yovakim, who responded by blessing the sultan’s sword.

On the other hand, as Braude points out, the major Turkish chronicler Ashikpashazade (c. 1400-1480) ignores all patriarchs, rabbis, and *millets*. In reality, according to Braude, the new head of the Greek Orthodox Church was a layman who was elevated by Mehmed to the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in one day. For the

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94 Gennadios was a lay philosopher, theologian but an anti-union figure who was first imprisoned by the Ottomans upon the fall of Constantinople in 1453-4. However, Mehmed II promoted him to the rank of Ecumenical Patriarch. The fact that Gennadios was an anti-union figure was likely intended to ensure no rapprochement with the Catholic enemies of the Ottomans.
95 Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths of the Millet System,” in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*. p. 75
96 Ibid.
Jewish community, which historically has rarely been hierarchical, the norm has been congregational organizations that were jealously opposed to any superstructure of authority. The terms, “chief Rabbi” and “hakham başi” have little administrative significance in Jewish history. As for the Armenians, with the approval of the clergy of neither Sis nor Ejmiacin, Mehmed is supposed to have created an entirely new patriarchate appointing a man who was his friend. According to Bardakjian\textsuperscript{97}, the reason for the creation of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople may be found in the political and military situation in eastern Anatolia. Unlike the Jews and the Greeks, the Armenians had a spiritual capital and demographic centre, which was in adjacent hostile territory, outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Wanting to encourage an Ottoman dependent but ostensibly autonomous see, Mehmed created the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1461 as a focus of loyalty for Armenians within the Empire. Over the centuries this post became a \textit{de facto} patriarchate; however, its ecclesiastical legitimacy was only grudgingly recognized, if at all. To the Armenians the chief patriarch (Catholicos) resided in Ejmiacin, and the Patriarch of Constantinople was little more than a local bishop.

Harry Luke presents an interesting view concerning the root of the \textit{millet} system. By reviewing the historical practices of Byzantium, Luke traces the Ottoman \textit{millet} system to Byzantium’s practice of granting, for political reasons, autonomy to groups of foreigners within its borders. He notes that “the Turks not only did the same but were induced by apathy, by administrative convenience, as well as by a skilful application of the principle 'divide and rule,' to make similar grants to groups of their own subjects. Membership of this group was determined - it is important to note - not by the geographical provenance or even by the language of those who composed them, but by what had become the dominant classification of men in the Near East, their religious allegiance. And thus there arose what was perhaps the most characteristic administrative feature of the Ottoman Empire, the \textit{millet} system.”\textsuperscript{98}

It may be noted that granting some form of autonomy to groups of foreigners or those practicing a religion that is different from the religion of the state, before Islam, was not


confined to Byzantium. The neighbouring Sassanid Empire adopted a similar practice creating a form of *millet*, whereby, the state recognized the Christians as a form of *millet* to worship in its own way and to be controlled in internal matters by its own patriarch or catholicos.  

The *millet*-based separation between various sections of the Ottoman society required all the subjects of the sultan to belong to one or other of these organizations, existing separately from one another, as it were, in watertight compartments. An apt, often quoted comment on the resulting situation was made by the reviewer of the first edition of Luke’s book: “In the days of the Sultans, Turkey was less like a country than like a block of flats inhabited by a number of families which met only on the stairs.”

The adoption of the *millet* system for the Empire’s non-Muslim subjects had also another result, namely that:

…the Turk, especially the Turk of the governing class, began to lose something of his racial identity. He had already become in a measure Byzantinized; and, now that he formed only a part, and not the whole, of the *millet* of Islam, he began to assume characteristics that were Islamic rather than Turkish. His terse, clear and concise speech came to be overlaid with euphuisms [sic] and foreign words to which the inflated language of the Byzantine Court and the rich vocabularies of Persian and Arabic alike contributed; he tended, if a Stambuli, to discard, then despise as something unrefined and boorish, the essentially Turkish traits and habits of his forefathers as preserved by the Anatolian peasantry.

Besides the *millet* feature, there is another aspect in which the Ottoman Empire may be regarded as a continuation of Byzantium, as well as the Sassanids, namely in the personage of the emperor. “The Emperor Basileus of Constantinople, as heir to the authority and traditions of the Roman Caesars, had been in his temporal capacity the supreme and unquestioned master of his Empire.” In addition to being the ultimate law-giver and supreme military commander of his nation, “he retained also the divine attributes of the Caesars.”

101 Ibid., p. 94.
103 Ibid.
unchallenged master. “The Byzantine Emperor and that of the Ottoman Sultan-Caliph had this much in common; that the sacred character of both potentates was ever before the eyes of their subjects, who owed obedience to them as a religious as well as a political duty.” As a consequence, upon his capture of Constantinople the Turkish Sultan assumed a measure of his Christian predecessor’s jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs over his new Christian subjects.

There is, naturally an undisputed continuity between the previous Islamic rules and the Ottoman Empire by virtue of the latter being a natural heir of the Islamic Caliphates. However, it was the continuity with Byzantium, which the Ottomans inherited, that helped in the acceptance of the new reign by the vast Christian population in the central lands, especially in the early years of the Empire. Both aspects, though in differing degrees, influenced the sultan’s relations with the heads of the non-Muslim millets.

Inalcık views the history of the so-called millet system under the Ottoman rule in four principal stages. These stages may be distinguished by the conditions under which the non-Muslim communities and their institutions survived in the Ottoman Empire and are best recognized when considering the Ottoman handling of their relations with the Orthodox of Europe as they carried their conquest deep into their lands. During the first period of their expansion, the Ottomans followed a policy of istimalet, of endearment, to win the support of the inhabitants of the conquered lands, by preserving existing social and administrative systems. Following the conquest of Istanbul by Mehmed II in 1453, a more assertive policy was adopted based on Sultanic codes of law and Istanbul, the capital became the seat of the heads of the three non-Muslim communities that he recognized: Orthodox Greeks, Armenians and the Jews. This period extended until the seventeenth century, which ushered in the third period when the first signs of decentralization appeared. Decentralization also gave rise to internal church re-organization and the rise of the new bourgeois class, which tried to dominate both the Armenian and the Greek Churches and led to the development of civil organizations with a certain degree of autonomy. This was followed by the fourth period in the nineteenth century, which ushered in the Tanzimat reforms of 1839 and 1856, to which further reference will be made later.

The concept of the *millets* appears to have changed over time. While many historians have accepted the nineteenth century model as being the one inherited from the fifteenth century, recent scholarship has not supported this concept and has shown that it was a relatively recent “Ottoman political innovation, even if its workings were always cloaked in the rhetoric of an ageless tradition.”

Irrespective of the way the *millet* "organization" was originally conceived, it did not stay constant but underwent significant changes, particularly over the nineteenth century. The *millets* were agents of change, often a source of importation of Western culture and methodology. The main *millets* were also conservative in their “mere continued existence as separately defined communities.”

1.2 The Millet System in Action - The Case of the Three Initial Millets

1.2.1 The Rum (Greek) Millet

The ethnic diversity of the Ottoman Empire was reflected in miniature in the composition of the Greek *millet*. Serbs, Rumanians, Bulgarians, Vlachs, Orthodox Albanians, and Arabs were all members of it as well as Greeks. The latter had gained prominence because of their influence over the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Holy Synod, and their representation at the top of the Orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy. Yet even the “Greeks” were not always alike. Many of them did not speak Greek at all but only Turkish, which they wrote, using Greek characters. Social differences were therefore also very present in this *millet*.

Because of the Ottoman *millet* system the Orthodox Church wielded even greater jurisdiction in civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs than it had had during the time of the Byzantine Empire. Provincial metropolitans and bishops as well as participants of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Holy Synod were almost always Greeks who showed little

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109 Ibid.

110 Ibid, p. 333. See Davidson for further elaboration of this topic.


sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic differences of their non-Greek members. This was the case until late in the nineteenth century. Many of the Syrian Christians, who were under Greek Orthodox jurisdiction, were discontented by the fact that the Patriarchate of Antioch was exclusively occupied by Greek clergy from 1720 until 1898. In the 1760s, the Ecumenical Patriarch preferred a Greek candidate over a Syrian one for the see of Antioch to prevent “least some of the Arabs come in ...and extinguish the bright flame of Orthodoxy.”  

Similar situations arose with the appointment of bishops in Eastern Europe. The Greeks were tacitly recognized as predominant not only in the millet itself but also in the fact that this millet seems to have been recognized for its precedence over other millets.

However, with time the patriarchate position was often plagued by endemic corruption. In the seventeenth century the office of Ecumenical Patriarch changed hands 58 times, the average tenure in office being some 20 months. It was a position that the bishops were always buying from the Grand Vizier over one another’s heads. As a consequence the average tenure was less than two years. In the seventeenth century, there were 58 reigns. The Greeks joined their fellow Orthodox Christians in experiencing oppression at the hands of the clerical aristocracy. All of this contributed towards the anti-clerical sentiment felt by both the ordinary people as well as by the new group of intellectuals in the period before Greece obtained its independence.

The first intimation of revolt within the Millet-i Rum came from the Greeks who were most open to the nationalism, which was being expressed in Western Europe. This was partially because of the cultural and commercial ties that the Greeks had with Western Europe, but also because of their pre-eminence in the Rum. The emerging nationalists focused primarily on the leaders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and of the Orthodox millet, who were perceived as having bought into the Ottoman lifestyle. The higher members of the clergy were bitterly attacked not only for their apparent corruption and extravagance of living but even more so for their voluntary support for a continued Ottoman Empire and their justification of

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113 Richard Clogg, “The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire,” pp. 185-186.
115 Richard Clogg, “The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire,” pp. 185-186.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid, p. 188.
118 Ibid, p. 192.
this as being divinely ordained.\textsuperscript{119} Thus, the first major threat to the integrity of the Millet-i Rum came from outside the millet, from the intelligentsia of the Greek and other Balkan diaspora in Europe, and especially in Russia, “who envisaged the history and the future of their own ethnic group, its church and culture in a secular-national frame of reference.”\textsuperscript{120} In the years leading up to the Greek War of Independence this fostered an atmosphere of intense intellectual activity. At the same time the dominance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was increasingly being threatened by patriarchates of Arab lands.\textsuperscript{121}

The millet reform that followed the Hatt-i Humayun of 1856, increased the influence of the lay in the administration of the millet. However, despite this the reforms undertaken by the millet administration were limited, and did not, as had been hoped, promote the concept of belonging to Ottoman Empire, that is Ottomanism. In fact, diminishing ecclesiastic control made way to a wider social and political emancipation of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{122} The reforms also encouraged the migration of Greeks from the independent kingdom of Greece to the Ottoman Empire. The primary motive of this emigration was economic, and it affected all levels of Greek society. As a result of this migration from the islands of the Aegean, the Greek presence in western Anatolia increased substantially during the nineteenth century. In the rural areas of Anatolia and European Turkey, the Greek populations were involved primarily either in farming or in commercial enterprises on a small scale. However, those in the urban centres of the empire were well represented in banking commerce and free enterprise professions, with special emphasis on education. Cultural movements that emphasized Hellenism became active through the latter quarter of the nineteenth century. These movements aimed to instill a sense of Greek consciousness in those members of the Millet-i Rum who even in the latter part of the nineteenth century thought of themselves as Christians rather than Greeks.\textsuperscript{123} A common practice in the nineteenth century was that of teachers trained in the virtues of Hellenic civilization at the University of Athens, who sought to impart, with varying degrees of success, their “nationalistic fervor to their Ottoman Greek brethren.”\textsuperscript{124}

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\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p.193 \\
\textsuperscript{120} Kemal H Karpat., “Millets and Nationality,” p.159. \\
\textsuperscript{121} Richard Clogg, “The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire,” pp. 192, 193. \\
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid; Kemal H Karpat., “Millets and Nationality,” pp.163-164. \\
\textsuperscript{123} Richard Clogg, “The Greek Millet in the Ottoman Empire,” p.197. \\
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., p.197,198.
\end{flushright}
Ottoman apprehension of this Hellenistic fervour was also somewhat shared by the Orthodox hierarchy. “One traveller was told by a Greek Isparta, called Serefidinglu, that the Orthodox bishop of Antalya was opposed to the establishment of Greek schools among his Turcophone flock for fear of corrupting their Orthodoxy.”

At the time of the Committee of Unity and Progress (CUP), the millet system was greatly affected by new, fast moving developments. The announcement by Cretans on October 6, 1908 that they intended to unite with Greece greatly heightened Turkish suspicions regarding the loyalty to the Empire felt by Greek Ottomans. The likelihood of any equal relationship decreased as the nationalistic message of the CUP was spread and the inclination of the Ottoman Greeks to lean towards Greece grew. “Such faint hopes as did exist were finally shattered when in October 1912 Greece joined Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro in the scramble for power over European Turkey.”

In March 1919, the Greeks were on the brink of occupying the west coast of Asia Minor. This prompted the Ecumenical Patriarchate to formally relieve Ottoman Greeks of their civic responsibilities as Ottoman citizens, thus dissolving the Millet-i Rum. It had, surprisingly, remained in existence for almost a century since the Greek War of Independence.

1.2.2 The Armenian Millet

According to Armenian tradition Sultan Mehmed II “made Bishop Yovakim the prelate of Bursa, naming him “p’at’rik”, that is to say patriarch, and gave him wide authority over the Armenians of Greece and Anatolia. The Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople has continued to exist ever since.” Without authentic documents, over time the above uncritical statement came to be considered as authoritative to which some uncorroborated additions were included. Consequently it was commonly accepted that, from the year of its inception, the

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125 Ibid. p.198.
126 Ibid, p. 199.
129 Kevork Bardakjian, , “The Rise of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople,” in Braude and Lewis, p. 89. Bardakjian quotes from what he terms as the “remarkable” History of Armenia by Mik’ayel Camc’een published in 1784-1786. It is appropriate to add that there has always been a corresponding religious authority a “Catholicos” in Armenia.
Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was a universal patriarchate for all Armenians of the ever-expanding Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{130}

According to Bardakijian, the transformation of the seat of Constantinople from a vicariate into a universal patriarchate was not due to an explicit or conscious Ottoman policy. According to this viewpoint, this transformation may be seen in the context of an evolutionary historical process that goes back to those medieval empires that allowed subject communities to retain their own laws and to apply them amongst themselves under the general jurisdiction of some recognized authority that was responsible to the ruling power.\textsuperscript{131} Braude, on the other hand, raises an important factor that points to a more politically conscious decision. Braude points out that “unlike the Jews and the Greeks, the Armenians had a spiritual capital, demographic centre which was outside the borders of the Ottoman Empire, in an adjacent hostile territory.”\textsuperscript{132}

After the conquest of eastern Anatolia and the defeat of the Persians at Chaldiran, north of Lake Urmia, in 1514 by Sultan Selim I, a larger section of eastern Armenia and a portion of Mesopotamia fell to the Ottomans. In 1516, Greater Syria and Egypt fell under the aegis of the Ottomans when the latter defeated the Mamluks on the plain of Marj Dabiq, north of Aleppo.\textsuperscript{133}

It was not always clear as to what areas or territories fell under the control or jurisdiction of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. Daranachi, a bishop in the early seventeenth century wrote that there were four communities that were not under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch in Constantinople. These were: the Mother See of Ejmiacin, the Catholicosate of Sis, the Catholicosate of Alt’amar, and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Prior to 1726, the Catholicosate of Ejmiacin, which controlled Eastern and Western Armenia proper, dealt directly with the Ottoman authorities. The Catholicosate of Sis exercised its authority in Cilicia and a little beyond: Sis (Kozan), Adana, Zeytun (Suleymanli), Yozgat, Gurun, Darende, Malatya, Marash, Aintap, Kilis, Aleppo, Antakya and Iskenderun. The Catholicosate of Alt’amar supervised a few towns (e.g., Hizan) and numerous villages in the southern part of Lake Van. Subordinate to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem were Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Ramallah,

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{130} Ibid, pp. 89-90.
\bibitem{131} Ibid., p. 97.
\bibitem{132} Benjamin Braude, “Foundation Myths of the Millet System,” p. 82.
\end{thebibliography}
Jaffa, Beirut, Cyprus, Latakia, Damascus and, until the middle of the nineteenth century, Egypt.\textsuperscript{134} Starting in the seventeenth century the patriarchate of Jerusalem exercised increased authority.

The patriarch in Constantinople, whose position according to tradition was sanctioned by Mehmed II, came in the course of time to be regarded “as \textit{primus inter pares}, a status which certainly contributed to his future reign over the entire Armenian population of the Empire.”\textsuperscript{135} Relations with the See at Ejmiacin were regulated in 1844; those with the Catholicosates of Sis and of Alt’amar and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem were subsequently adjusted to enable these Sees to retain their local jurisdictions and autonomy, while official business with the Porte was conducted through the See of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{136}

Even before the \textit{Tanzimat} era Armenian laity had had a voice in the \textit{millet}. In Constantinople a group of powerful individuals who were called \textit{amiras} became prominent. The word \textit{amira} is derived from the Arabic \textit{amir}, meaning prince or commander. The Armenians used this word for wealthy community elders who received various favours from the Ottoman government. The \textit{amiras} as a group possessed special powers and enjoyed special privileges.\textsuperscript{137}

The \textit{amiras} were most influential in the economic arena, in the educational sphere, that of government and official finance and in the business of money lending as \textit{sarraf}. Most frequently the individuals who were named as \textit{sarraf} were Armenian, although occasionally Jew and Greeks were so favoured. The \textit{sarraf} who were bankers were involved in administering the \textit{iltizam} tax. Others were also active as goldsmiths and jewelers. The \textit{sarraf} played a pivotal role in reviving Armenian culture.\textsuperscript{138}

The \textit{amiras} were important in the education sphere, founding schools next to every Armenian church in Constantinople, as well as fostering the publication and reading of literature and periodicals. Because of these many factors and activities, the \textit{amiras} were regarded as the leaders of this \textit{millet} and as the protectors of both the \textit{millet} itself and the patriarchate, both of which were under attack from Protestant missionaries and Catholic priests

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\textsuperscript{134} Bardakjian, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., p96.
\textsuperscript{137} Hagop Barsoumian, “The Dual Role of the Armenian \textit{Amira} Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian \textit{Millet} (1750-1850), in Braude and Lewis, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, pp. 172, 173.
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who, beginning in the eighteenth century, had embarked on an active program of conversion.\textsuperscript{139} The Catholic priests who practiced this were supported by the French and to some extent by the Austrians, while British representatives advocated Protestantism. No such foreign potentate was on the side of the Armenian Church. Formal Ottoman policy was to support the patriarchate in order to stabilize the \textit{millet}. The \textit{amiras} were in the forefront of this policy, which answered to their sense of values. However, the \textit{amiras} could not, by themselves, stand against Catholic proselytization. Consequently, in response to great pressure from the French, Armenian Catholics were allowed by Mahmud II to form their own \textit{millet}.\textsuperscript{140} Subsequently a Protestant \textit{millet} was formed in response to Protestant conversion attempts among other Oriental Christians as well as among the Armenians. This eventually caused an inevitable fragmentation of the collective will of the \textit{millet}.

Meanwhile, two new developments threatened the leadership of the \textit{amiras}. Another powerful group had formed in the late eighteenth century, namely the \textit{esnaf} or guilds, or artisans. They challenged the primacy of the \textit{amiras} by helping the Patriarch, intervening between the Porte and the \textit{millet} and building schools. When the \textit{Gulhane Hatt-I Humayun} of 1839 abolished tax farming, the \textit{sarrafs} were rendered superfluous and the balance of power was shifted to the \textit{esnaf}. However, this only lasted for two years after which the \textit{amiras} resumed their prominent role in the \textit{millet}, albeit with reduced influence.\textsuperscript{141}

Another challenge beside that presented by the \textit{esnaf} came from young Armenians who were coming home after graduating from European universities. Although these young people came from different backgrounds they were greatly susceptible to current French sociopolitical thinking, which advocated the separation of church and state. This group played an important role in the move to legislate the sharing of power, something which was totally in line with the goals of the \textit{Hatt-i-Humayun, the Islahat Fermani of 1856}, which had clamoured for reform of the \textit{millets}.\textsuperscript{142}

The constitutional movement gradually gained strength calling for democratic representation in the \textit{millet} organizations. In response, the \textit{amiras} consolidated to present a united front. However, they could not oppose the two imperial edicts, especially the \textit{Hatt-i-}

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, pp. 178, 179.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{141} Sanjian, \textit{The Armenian Communities in Syria under}, pp. 38, 39.
\textsuperscript{142} Louise Nalbandian, \textit{The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century} (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), p. 46.
Humayun of 1856, as more progressive and powerful groups gave the edicts their support. The amiras reluctantly accepted the constitution. They did this not because they genuinely accepted its provisions but rather because they wanted to retain power in the new system and exclude less desirable and more radical opponents.\textsuperscript{143}

In the capital all these elements (amiras, the esnaf and the returning intellectuals) were struggling for control. However, the ordinary Armenians who lived in the six eastern provinces of Anatolia felt abandoned without a voice and became increasingly agitated. They found encouragement by example in the success of their counterparts in the Balkans. They also found partners among the Russian Armenians, who resembled them in so many ways – historically, geographically and ethnoreligiously. The Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) and the international agreements that followed it (i.e., the Treaty of San Stefano, the Cyprus Convention, and the Treaty of Berlin) helped bring the “Armenian Question” into a sharper focus.

It was not considered feasible by the Western European powers to wage a war on behalf of the Armenians in hopes for enacting social reform. The subsequent pressure exerted on Sultan Abdul Hamid had the direct effect of his taking revenge on the Armenians.\textsuperscript{144} In light of all this, the Armenians determined that their desperate situation could only be changed by means of an armed struggle and insurrection. They reasoned that, if Bulgaria had been freed with the help of the Russians, then perhaps similarly Armenia might achieve its aims with British help.\textsuperscript{145}

Early in the 1880s all efforts by the British were abandoned as they recognized how difficult it would be to persuade the Turks as well as other European countries that there was an urgent need for reform. This intensified interest in the “Armenian Question” found reverberations among the Armenians in Russia and led to a rapid growth of revolutionary organizations, which concentrated their efforts on the political affairs of Armenians in Turkey.\textsuperscript{146} Moreover, the successful revolutions that had taken place in Greece and Bulgaria helped to convince Russian Armenian revolutionaries that Armenians could also be liberated

\textsuperscript{143} Barsoumian, p. 180.
\textsuperscript{144} Sanjian, p. 276
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, p. 277.
\textsuperscript{146} Nalbandian, p. 148.
from the Ottoman Empire. They saw in the Balkans the beneficial results of revolution and urged in their writings that the Armenians use the same methods to achieve immediate independence.

It was in this context that two nationalist organizations emerged to become the two most influential Armenian political parties of the late Ottoman period, and beyond. These were the Hnchakian and Dashnaktsutiun. Both parties were formed outside the geographical area of historical Armenia: the Hnchakian in Geneva, Switzerland in 1887, and the Dashnaktsutiun in Tiflis (Russian Trans-Caucasia) in 1890. Their leaders were Russian Armenians, many of whom had no connection with Turkey.

Adopting varying degrees of socialism and nationalism, particularly in dealing with CUP and with the concept of Ottomanism, the two parties were unable in subsequent years to adopt unified policies towards achieving their political goals. The Patriarchate, with support from the amiras, also opposed CUP and its agenda, which it feared would agitate for a greater reduction of control by the millet over the community.

Abdul Hamid and the Porte were deeply apprehensive of the intentions and activities of the revolutionaries. The Ottomans felt that their empire was being threatened by the Armenians, whom they suspected of being in league with the Young Turks, Greeks, Macedonians and others. In order to deal with potential uprisings, Abdul Hamid formed the Hamidie regiments, which were composed mainly of Kurdish cavalry troops. These regiments attacked and plundered Armenian villages with absolute impunity. In July 1894, the first large-scale attack on Armenians took place at Sasun in the province of Bitlis. Twenty-five villages were destroyed and some 20,000 people were slaughtered. The massacre of about 10,000 Armenians in Constantinople in September 1895 was the impetus for indiscriminate slaughter that followed throughout the Empire but especially so in eastern Anatolia, with great loss of life.

During the violent massacres of 1895 to 1896 in Asia Minor, a similar fate had escaped the Armenians of the Ottoman territories in Syria and much of Cilicia, which lay in the province of Adana, in Asia Minor. However, in 1909 there were violent attacks on the

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147 Ibid, p.149.
148 Ibid.
149 Louise Nalbandian, The Armenian Revolutionary Movement, p.182.
Armenians of Cilicia and the regions south of it. These attacks were much more ferocious than those that had occurred in Anatolia. The violence was not confined to the province of Adana but spread to communities in the Amanus, the valley of the Orontes, Jabal Musa, and Jabal Aqra, as well as Aleppo.\textsuperscript{151}

In the winter of 1914-15, the Turks suffered a crushing defeat at Sarikamish, on the Caucasian front. Enver Pasha, the Turkish commander and minister of war, accused the Armenians of complicity with the Russian forces. After the Allies failed to occupy the Dardanelles in March 1915, the Young Turk government decided to settle, finally, the troublesome problem of the Armenians in Turkey. A decision was made to exterminate the Armenians on the grounds of the threat that they supposedly posed to the vital interests of the empire because of their sympathy with Russia, Britain and other Allied Powers. This policy was carried out systematically and with brutality.\textsuperscript{152}

In April 1915, the ecclesiastical, secular and intellectual leaders of the Armenian millet were liquidated; more than 500 Armenian villages were pillaged and some 25,000 of their inhabitants were slaughtered in a prelude to what has come to be increasingly considered on the international arena as genocide in World War I.

\textbf{1.2.3 The Jewish Millet}

The smallest of the original three millets had a long and varied history. According to the Roman Jewish historian Josephus who wrote in the first century CE, there had been a Jewish community in Asia Minor since the fourth century BCE.\textsuperscript{153} Many of these Jews were so-called Romaniotes, who were Greek Jews, distinct from both Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Jews have lived in Greece possibly since the Babylonian exile.

More Jews came to Asia Minor at the time of the Crusades, mainly to escape the persecution by Crusaders as they passed through modern-day France and Germany. However, the major influx into Ottoman lands occurred in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when Jews, escaping the Inquisition in both Spain and Portugal, sought refuge to the east. Word had spread of the tolerant and very welcoming attitude of the Ottoman sultans by means of this

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., pp.280-81.
\textsuperscript{152} Sanjian, p. 283.
alleged statement: “I proclaim to you that Turkey is a land wherein nothing is lacking, and where, if you will, all shall yet be well with you. The way to the Holy Land lies open to you through Turkey. Is it not better for you to live under Muslims than under Christians? Here every man dwell [sic] at peace under his own Dine and fig tree.” This is an extract from a letter attributed to Rabbi Isaac Zarfati, supposedly in the mid 1450s and cited by Bernard Lewis. Eliyahu Capsali, who was Chief Rabbi of Constantinople for the Romaniote Jews at that time wrote in 1523 that “Sultan Beyzahid….made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, that none of the governors of his cities was permitted to reject or expel the Jews, but they must welcome them.”

Jews from other areas including Eastern Europe were increasingly drawn to Asia Minor as early as the eighteenth century and certainly in the second half of the nineteenth century. The tolerance enjoyed by the Jewish populace may be directly attributed to the autonomy provided by the Ottoman millet system in dealing with non-Muslim minorities in the general population.

Since each millet was to rule itself with the religious leader acting also as secular head, this created problems for the Jews who did not have the same religious hierarchy as did the Orthodox, Greek and Armenian churches. It was only in the 1830s that one of the elders would be confirmed by the Ottoman authorities as hakham bashi (chief rabbi), a title that exists to this day. This honorific comes from the Hebrew word hakham meaning a ‘sage’ or ‘wise man,’ and the Turkish word bash meaning ‘head’ or ‘chief.’ However, this personage, who also held secular power such as tax collector, did not inspire the automatic following of all the Jewish congregations in the empire, many of whom had their own religious leaders who might also be called hakham bashi. Congregations elsewhere in Turkey and the extended Ottoman Empire, wanting to maintain their regional independence, tended to obey their local rabbis rather than some nominal head in Istanbul; and even in that metropolis adherence to the hakham bashi was not automatic. The important point here is that this signified a “turning point in policy by the Ottoman authorities who hitherto had not interfered in the internal affairs

156 Bernard Lewis, The Middle East: a brief history of the last 2,000 years, p 187
of the Jewish community and for centuries past had given no official status to its representatives."

In 1865, a set of laws, known as the Hahambasi Nizamnamesi, was enacted to rebalance powers within the millet and to ensure that lay leaders took responsibility for implementing state authority. Such moves had been successfully implemented in the Greek and Armenian communities, but met with less success among the Jewish community at large for the reasons mentioned above. The disharmony in the Jewish community was most clearly demonstrated in the area of education. All educational institutions under the aegis of the Alliance were linked to a central committee in Paris to which they were required to regularly submit extremely detailed reports about administrative and financial matters as well as comments about the social and financial status of the local community. By examining such reports found in the archives of the Alliance, especially those relating to the Jewish communities of Istanbul, Bursa and Izmir, Paul Dumont was able to give an excellent overview of Jewish communal life under the millet during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Many Jewish communities in Turkey in the late nineteenth century evidenced “the extent of extreme destitution of its inhabitants,” being cramped, crowded and dirty. Notable exceptions were certain areas of Istanbul that were inhabited by the more advantaged—bankers, traders, and members of learned professions. Poverty was primarily caused by overpopulation, a natural consequence of the practice of early marriage common among Oriental Jews. Another possible explanation for this sudden spurt in population size in the Jewish population in the last decades of the nineteenth century may be the influx from Russia and the Balkans, many of whom arrived in Turkey virtually destitute. However, many of these Jews proved to be essentially in transit, passing through Turkey on their way to the United States, Canada, Palestine and even South America and certain African countries. Alliance reports also mention a conscious effort in the Jewish communities to limit births, especially by discouraging early marriages. Additionally, population size was naturally decreased by major health epidemics.

158 Ibid.
160 Ibid. p. 210
161 Ibid.
Although living in apparent harmony, Jews and Christians would often clash.\textsuperscript{163} Relations between Jews and Muslims were, on the whole, much more satisfactory. On the whole Jews appreciated their situation under the Ottomans. In April, 1892, on the 400\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the expulsion from Spain, “it was with expressions of sincere gratitude that the regional committee of the Alliance thanked Abdul Hamid for the protection that Jews enjoyed in Turkish territory.”\textsuperscript{164} However, matters were different in eastern Anatolia where Kurds attacked and persecuted Jews on a continual basis. For example, in Mardin the Jewish population, which numbered about 500 at the end of the nineteenth century, had completely vanished by 1906. They went to more receptive places such as Mosul and Urfa.\textsuperscript{165}

\textbf{1.3 The Missions and the Millets}

\textbf{1.3.1 Preliminary}

The \textit{millet} system, with its inherent autonomy, provided protection to the Christian communities from the pressures of total assimilation in the wider community, which would have changed the ethnic and linguistic character of these communities, particularly the smaller ones. In addition, it provided these communities with protection against coercion to convert to Islam. Until the Greek War of Independence in 1821, the Porte resisted the Catholic incursions into the Oriental Churches. However, dismayed by that war, the prestige of the Greek \textit{millet} at the Porte significantly reduced and, faced with European Catholic powers, particularly France and Austria, the Porte recognized the Catholics as a separate \textit{millet} in 1830, and became largely indifferent to Catholic missionary campaigns to proselytize Oriental Christians.\textsuperscript{166} This indifference later extended to England and later still United States of America as it permitted religious missions from these countries to preach their brand of Christianity among the followers of the Oriental churches throughout the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans agreed to this on the condition that the missionaries did not attempt to apostatize the Muslims. As a consequence of this apathy by the Ottomans shown toward their Christian communities, the foreign missions succeeded in initiating religious sectarian divisions within the indigenous

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid, p. 222.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid, p.225.
Christian churches. This resulted in weakening these churches, in fermenting turmoil in their communities, and in encouraging the practice of offering foreign protection to the converted.

Prior to the arrival of the Western missions, there were six Oriental Christian communities in the Ottoman Middle East: those belonging to the Armenian Church, the Melkite (Rum) Orthodox Church, the Coptic Church, the Maronite Church, the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox Church. The Armenians lived mainly in Anatolia and upper Syria; the Orthodox Melkite almost exclusively in Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan); the Copts almost exclusively in Egypt; the Maronites mainly in Lebanon; and the followers of the Church of the East and the Syrian Orthodox predominantly in Mesopotamia (eastern Syria, south-eastern Turkey and Iraq). Except for the Maronite Church, which had been linked to the Church of Rome from 1182, all the other churches were fully independent. All these Christians were living within the parameters of the millet system, which utilized the religious authorities as intermediaries between the state and people. Intercommunity relations were in a state of equilibrium that had been inherited from prior generations.

The Western missions had their undeniable positive effects on the Middle East in terms of sowing the seeds of cultural awakening, religious renaissance, and political awareness, but in the span of nearly one hundred years they succeeded in more than doubling the number of Middle Eastern churches, thereby creating sectarian divisions, and in destroying the tolerance and the mutual accommodation which, on the eve of missionary penetration, had characterized their relations.

1.3.2 Catholic Missions

In the latter half of the sixteenth century, and essentially as part of Rome’s counter-Reformation drive, Rome directed its attention towards the Middle East. The immediate objective in Syria was to initiate a full scale missionary assault against the non-Uniate Churches: the Melkite, East Syrians, Syrian Orthodox, and Armenian. Catholic missionary work in the Levant and beyond was carried out by missionaries coming from Spain and France on a limited scale long before the seventeenth century. In 1622, however, Pope Gregory XV founded the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, a

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centralized body in the Vatican with the responsibility of spreading the faith through missionary work. This replaced the prior missionary work which had been carried out by Portugal, Spain and France. Under the new policy of centralized missions, Rome put France in charge of promoting Catholic missionary work in the Ottoman Empire, motivated by France’s friendly relations with the Ottomans.

By 1626, Capuchin fathers sailed to Constantinople and Aleppo, followed a few years later by Jesuits, Carmelites and Dominicans who spread out through Syria, Iraq and Anatolia. They directed their efforts at the Armenians, the Greek Orthodox, and the Syrian Orthodox. The work resulted in the establishment of Uniate Churches – Eastern Churches united with Rome. The French Consul in Aleppo, Francois Picquet was instrumental in linking the rewards of conversion to Catholicism with commercial benefits, as well as in securing the Porte’s approval of all changes in status. This change would have been unlikely had it not been for that critical shift in the balance of power between the Ottoman Empire and Europe over the period from roughly 1650 to 1750.

The movement and work of the missionaries within the Ottoman Empire was aided by a system of capitulations that had been in place for nearly a century earlier. The capitulations or Ahdname were generally bilateral acts that were granted by the Sultan to confer rights and privileges in favour of subjects and residents in the Ottoman domains. The capitulations placed the French Ambassador to the Porte in a favourable position as protector of the Catholics similar capitulations were subsequently granted to England, Netherlands and Venice. By the end of the eighteenth century every European nation held the capitulatory treaty.

The arrival of Catholic missions in Aleppo during the first half of the seventeenth century marked the start of a process that with time created splits and divisions within each of the existing major Christian communities. This ended in the formation of separate Uniate churches. In the nineteenth century the activity of the Protestant missions caused further fragmentation of the Oriental churches.

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170 Ibid, p. 36.
174 Bruce Masters, “capitulations,” in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters (eds), (USA Facts on File, 2009), pp. 118-119.
The effectiveness of the missionary endeavors proved to be highly linked to economic considerations. For as the seventeenth century drew to a close, the Melkite traders commerce had become acutely aware of the advantages of consular protection and of the intimate connection between consular protection and membership of the Unia. By the start of the eighteenth century the Uniate Melkite traders in Sidon and elsewhere along the coast, as well as in the inland entry ports of Aleppo and Damascus, exclusively enabled and promoted by French consuls, in return for “unquestionable submission to Rome,” came to be in effective control of a substantial portion of the trade between Syria and Egypt.\(^{175}\)

The early resistance to the Western Catholic missions that was promoted by the Rum and the Armenian millets, found sympathy among the Sultans who did at some point defend the traditional churches in the empire in the face of excessive Catholic missionary pressures. This coincided with the early post-French Revolution period when, based on the principles of separation between church and state of this revolution, missionary activities abroad, which had been carried out with active government backing, were significantly reduced.\(^{176}\) However, the attitude of the sultan saw a sharp change after the start of the Greek War of Independence in 1821. The standing of the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul suffered a sharp decline, and the special relationship that had existed between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Porte ended. In consequence of this and of renewed pressure from the European Catholic powers, France and Austria in particular, the Ottomans recognized the Catholics for the first time, as millet in 1830.\(^{177}\) This led to the fragmentation of the old Oriental churches and the creation of new churches from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. It also led to a sharp increase in the number of millets recognized by the Porte. Several firmans or edicts were issued by the Porte recognizing successively: the Armenian Catholics (1830); and the Armenian Protestants (1850); the Greek Catholics (1848); the Chaldeans (1844, confirmed in 1861), and the Syrian Catholic (1843, confirmed in 1866).\(^{178}\)

\(^{175}\) Ibid, pp. 40-42.
\(^{176}\) Frazee, p. 164.
\(^{177}\) Bruce Masters, “millet,” in Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire, Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters (eds), (USA Facts on File, 2009)p. 384.
\(^{178}\) Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, “The Rise of Churches at the End of the Ottoman Era (Excluding Egypt) in the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) Centuries,” in Christianity: A History in the Middle East, Habib Badr, Chief Edit, Middle East Council of Churches 2005, p. 760.
The missions did not work independently from their parent countries. Their work soon became an instrument of European enterprise and expansionist policies, first by penetrating the Ottoman Empire economically and then seeing to its dismantlement. The economic and political interests of the French, as an example, were served in Syria by the converts of Catholic missions, who in turn were protected and rewarded economically by France by making them its clientele in commercial enterprises. These activities did not only weaken the indigenous Christian churches, but also created bitter divisions within each affected community. These activities often brought to life local prejudices, which had previously been suppressed and turned them to full sectarian divisions. The French Consul in Aleppo, François Picquet, for instance “could secure the designation of Andrew Akhijan, a disciple of the Catholic missionary priests, as Syrian [Orthodox] Archbishop of Aleppo, by promising to absorb some of the debts of [the Syrian Orthodox] Patriarch Ignatius Sham‘un.”

1.3.3 Protestant Missions

In the opening decades of the nineteenth century, various missionary societies in Great Britain and the United States issued annual reports of their work. What happened in one country was thus publicized in the other. “English missionary thought was then dominated by two objectives: the evangelization of all those ‘devoid of gospel truth,’ and the conversion of Jews.” The Church Missionary Society (henceforth the CMS) and the London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews were formed with a view to achieving these objectives. Both had their echoes across the Atlantic. Missionary work spread in the Ottoman Empire through two means: mission stations and missionary schools.

The first American missionary effort in the Middle East was started by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM, or the American Board), which was formed in 1810, of clerical and lay members representing Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Board’s stated aims "to propagate the gospel in heathen lands", or, as elaborated in the regulations, "to propagate the gospel among un-evangelized nations and communities". The wording could be interpreted to include not only the "heathen", but also, according to later

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181 Ibid.
182 Ibid, p. 5.
interpretation, non-Christians like Jews and Muslims and "nominal Christians in the Near East".  

The philosophy of ABCFM may best be gauged from the book written in 1872 by Rufus Anderson, the Foreign Secretary of the Board. The following is an excerpt from its introduction:  

We may not hope for the conversion of the Mohammedans, unless true Christianity be exemplified before them by the Oriental Churches. To them the native Christians represent the Christian religion, and they see that these are no better than themselves. They think them worse; and therefore the Muslim believes the Koran to be more excellent than the Bible.

Hence a wise plan for the conversion of the Mohammedans of Western Asia necessarily involved, first, a mission to the Oriental Churches. It was needful that the lights of the Gospel should once more burn on those candlesticks, that everywhere there should be living examples of the religion of Jesus Christ, that Christianity should no longer be associated in the Muslim mind with all that is sordid and base.

It is surprising that Anderson, writing his book nearly 60 years after the zealous start of the American missions still maintained the Board’s views about converting the Muslims.

Both British and American efforts were born of faith and zeal, and in neither was there room for alternative views. But while the English missions may sometimes be viewed as an aspect of the expansion of Great Britain’s image and prestige in the world, the American missions, at least at the initial stage, cannot be so viewed. Religious zeal was their sole brand from the start. “Its inspiration, common to all missions, was of course the gospel, ‘go ye therefore’, Jesus commanded the disciples, ‘and teach all the nations’. “  

The roots of American religious zeal may be traced to New England Puritanism.

Following their total failure in converting Muslims, the aims of the Protestant missions were formulated to be: the creation of a native Protestant community; the development of an educational system ranging from the village school to seminary and college; and the dissemination of a vast religious literature and a considerable number of textbooks.

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185 Tibawi, p. 10, with quotation from Matt., xxviii. 19.
186 Ibid.
The changes that were promoted by the Protestant missions were far reaching both from the purely religious perspective, as well as from sociocultural perspective. The excesses of the American missions drew comments from Oswald Parry of Magdalen College in Oxford who, writing after his travel in Anatolia and Mesopotamia in 1892, describes the American missionary attitude as follows. (Note that Parry’s use of ‘Syrian’ was in reference to the Syrian Orthodox and not to Syria).

The Americans came with a Gospel true in itself, in fact containing the very essence of that soul-winning message, but so rudely shorn of the garb in which the Eastern Christian had been wont from time immemorial to see it clothed, that his sensibilities were shocked and his national instinct aroused by what seemed sacrilege. It was natural that men who talk of the native Syrians as “so-called Christians “ and place them in thought on a par with or below their Muslim brethren, should be asked for the credentials of doctrines that never saw the light until their own Church was sixteen hundred years old; It was natural that the Syrian should ask who it was that helped to build the first Christian Church, witnessed the very writing of the Gospel itself, and sent missionaries with that Gospel to the shores of the distant West. It was a poor gratitude to come and charge these men’s children with ignorance and want of life that centuries of oppression had conferred as their accustomed lot. This is what many a fair-minded Syrian does say, though quite acknowledging the personal worth and piety of the missionaries, and the valuable work done by their schools; but fair-minded Muslims equally admit this. What the Syrian does complain of is the ignorance most of the missionaries display of their Church’s history, and the small allowance made for a conquered people…. 187

Tibawi notes that by 1882 Protestant missionaries had made clear their position towards the legitimate government and territorial integrity of a state in which they resided and operated:

Not only did they publicly declare their intention of subverting its established religion, not only did they openly pray for the extinction of the state and the absorption of its territories by their own Governments, but pending the achievement of these ambitions they claimed special privileges and exemptions, and with these very claims they accused the Ottoman authorities of intolerance, fanaticism and bigotry. 188

188 Tibawi pp. 256, 257
Artillery of Heaven
An interesting assessment of the American missions to the Levant has been presented by Ussama Makdisi in his book *Artillery of Heaven*, in which he demonstrates the failure of the missionary efforts at religious conversion of the people of the Middle East. 189

Considering the influence of the Protestant missions to the Levant, Makdisi remarks:

> It was to this conservative world that the American missionaries announced themselves in the third decade of the nineteenth century. They came not as crude military crusaders but as the redeemed ‘artillery of heaven’, men who were determined to reclaim biblical lands from the god of this world who had long since enslaved the ancient Eastern Christian churches. 190

Makdisi further notes that the idea of American missionaries as pioneers:

> depended - and still depends - on orientalizing the Arab World... It relies furthermore, on a notion of modernity that is described as if it were an American gift to be given to the people “sitting in darkness” people whose only choice is to reject or to adapt to forms alien to their history and culture. 191

Makdisi further notes the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University of Beirut), the product of the American mission’s most enduring and famous institution in the Middle East, “was not so much an act of cultured imposition as it was a final recognition of the futility of direct evangelism in deeply multi-religious lands, and also an accommodation to a local demand for secular education.” 192

Considering the overall influence of the missionary activities in the Ottoman empire, Deringil expresses the central nature of this influence in no uncertain terms, as follows:

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190 Ibid, p. 84. In elaborating on the expression “Artillery of Heaven” Makdisi refers to Kamal Salibi and Yusuf K. Khoury (Khuri), eds *The Missionary Herald*: *Reports from Ottoman Syria, 1819-1870* (hereafter MHROS), 5 vols. (Amman, Royal institute for Interfaith Studies, 1995),1:368. The original reference to the “artillery of heaven” in the *Missionary Herald* from July 1826 was to the Ancient Eastern Christian churches which Satan had seized and turned to the defence of his Kingdom. The missionaries were thus the latest weapons of God, a new kind of heavenly artillery.
None of the challenges to the legitimacy of the Ottoman state, and all that it stood for, was more dangerous in the long term than that posed by missionary activity. The threat posed by the soldier, the diplomat, the merchant, all had to do with the here and now; the missionaries, through their schools, constituted a danger for the future...Throughout the world the missionary appeared as the representative of a superior culture, ‘the white man’s burden’ personified.\textsuperscript{193}

The Ottoman authorities permitted the missionary activities despite the sectarian disputes that these activities generated among their Christian subjects.\textsuperscript{194} The missionary activities were from the start permitted throughout the empire apostatizing indigenous Christians as long as they did not engage in apostatizing Muslims. This apathy toward the indigenous non-Muslims of the Empire effectively undermined the \textit{millet} system under which its non-Muslim subjects had peacefully existed.

\textbf{1.4 The Syriac Christians in the Millet System}

\textbf{1.4.1 Historical and General Perspectives}

The Semitic expression of Christianity and the Aramaic language stand as the essential historical ingredients of Christianity in Mesopotamia and Greater Syria. After the advent of Christianity, the Aramaic language moulded differing ethnic and social ingredients into a homogeneous and integrated culture, as the Arabic language did later, upon the advent of Islam, when it mingled the various ethnic ingredients, creating Arabs, without regard to their geographical origins. Thus Christianity and a common language amalgamated the people of this region, with the early church serving as a melting pot, just as Islam did six centuries later.

Writing in the third century, Bardesan, the Edessan author who wrote the \textit{Book of the Laws of Countries} in the second century, did not consider himself to be the leader of a sect but rather to belong unquestionably to the “Universal” Church. “What shall we say about ourselves, ‘New race’ of Christians whom Christ has caused to be raised in all countries as a consequence of his coming? We are all Christians by the one name of Christ wherever we may

\textsuperscript{194} Tibawi, p. 26.
be found.”\textsuperscript{195} In fact, there were no ethnic or national distinctions to be traced from early Christianity; indeed, Oriental Christians refused to refer to their heathen ancestors so that we have no texts on their forefathers before the advent of Christianity.

However, over time the Christian community could not long maintain itself as a single new nation. Various factors - geographical, political, linguistic, religious and philosophical - gave rise to religious groupings. In the case of the Church of the East (so-called Nestorian), the hostility between the Roman and Persian Empires made it necessary for the Christians of Persia to build up not only their own independent ecclesiastical organization, but their own Christological doctrine, and to foster as little contact as possible with their brethren in the enemy camp.\textsuperscript{196} Eventually the church in Persia became a national church over which the Bishop of Seleusia-Ctesiphon wielded authority independently of the Patriarch of Antioch. Under somewhat differing circumstances, involving mainly Christological but in time also cultural factors, the sixth century saw the birth of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch (so-called Jacobite). Hence, in time, the Christian communities of the Middle East became almost nations: groups of individuals owing allegiance to one another and to their patriarch by ties of religion; the “\textit{miliet} concept” was in fact taking root. This concept became consolidated under Islam.

In discussing the impact of ethnicity and culture on the \textit{miliet} concept, Joseph notes the following, which, although stated in direct reference to the “Nestorians”, also applies to other Oriental Christians, including the West Syriacs:

\begin{quote}
It may be stated with certainty that the Nestorians have preserved their ethnic state clearly as it existed at the time of the Arab conquest, since intermarriage of Christians with Muslims implied conversion to Islam. Strictly speaking, the East and the West Syriacs are each members of a cultural rather than ethnic group, moulded together into a nationality by ties of a common language and, until the nineteenth century, a common church membership which, until the birth of the modern nation-states in the Middle East, was the strongest tie among men. The lineal
\end{quote}


origin of the sect, like that of most Middle Eastern nationalities, is hidden in the mists of history. They are a mixture of races and it is possible that they have Assyrian blood in their veins, especially certain sections of the community, just as other sects have Persian, Kurdish and Aramean blood. Indeed, the majority of their forefathers’ descendants are today Muslim Arabs, Kurds, and Persians.¹⁹⁷

1.4.2 Under the Ottoman Rule

The Syrian Orthodox and the East Syriacs came under the Ottoman rule upon Selim I’s advances through southeastern Anatolia, northern Iraq and Syria in 1516. From that point these Syriacs joined the Ottoman Empire as its smallest Christian communities. In common with the Copts, they were considered as part of the Armenian millet.

The Syrian Orthodox had had close affinity with the Armenians throughout their Christian history on both theological and social levels. On the theological level, the two churches were on the same side of the Christological divide, most importantly at Ephesus in 433 CE and at Chalcedon in 451 CE. On the social level, many of the Syrian Orthodox communities in southeastern Anatolia, (such as in Diyarbakir, Urfa, Kharput and Siirt and their environs) lived in close proximity with the Armenians, with whom they had mixed marriages and in many cases shared church buildings and church services. On the other hand the historical relationship between the East Syriacs and the Armenians was extremely limited, if at all existent. This was a matter that rendered the East Syriacs less receptive to accepting the Armenians as their liaison with the higher authorities at the Porte. Atiya adds a further interesting perspective in the broad social spectrum involving the Armenians, the Syrian Orthodox and the Church of the East. He notes:

the Jacobites differed from their Armenian and Nestorian co-religionists. While steadfastly retaining their faith and loyalty to their church the Jacobite people were never averse to social integration within the greater order of all citizens irrespective of religious differences. The normal behaviour, combined with religious tenacity, accounts for their survival in their traditional homeland, unlike the Armenians and the Nestorians, who were either exterminated or dispersed.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.
Adrian Fortescue, quoting twelfth century Muslim scholar, Shahrastani, gives his view on the “Jacobites”. Accordingly, Fortescue surmises that “on the whole they were a tolerant and kindly folk, who got on with their neighbours of other religions better than most people in the Middle Ages.”199

There are two significant factors that affected the differing responses of the Syrian Orthodox and the Church of the East towards their millet status. The first was the question of patriarchal succession. In the Church of the East it had become hereditary since the fifteenth century, where the patriarchate was inherited by a nephew or a brother of the deceased patriarch, essentially eliminating the need to seek ratification of the Porte for new patriarchal succession. Conversely, elevation to the position of patriarch in the Syrian Orthodox Church has always been by nomination and synod election. The second point relates to the fact that the Church of the East’s communities of Hakkari and those of northern Iraq lived in the secluded mountain region located at the periphery of the empire, where central authority was weakest, as well as in neighbouring Persia. As a result of these factors the Church of the East was little concerned, if at all, with seeking an independent millet status. It may be noted at this point that the Chaldeans (the Uniate section of the Church of the East) obtained an independent millet status in 1840, although Joseph cites 1843.200

1.4.3 The Syrian Orthodox and the Millet System

Not a great deal is known about the relationship between the Syrian Orthodox and the Armenians at the millet level over the Ottoman period. However, notes Ozcosar,201 all the official sources show that the Syrian Orthodox were represented by the Armenians through whom their contact with the Porte were conducted. Historical accounts also indicate that the two churches operated independently from each other in all matters concerning liturgical practices, ecclesiastical appointments and pastoral matters. Further, during the de-centralization era, the Ottoman state was even less inclined to pursue a rigid application of the millet system and the fine details of its operation particularly with regard to such small sub-

200 John Joseph *The Nestorians and their Muslim Neighbours* , p. 52.
millets. Diyarbakir, the provincial capital of the vilayet, was the point of official reference for the Suryani, then the Suryani Qadim (versus the new Catholic Suryane) Patriarchate until the early 1800s.  

However, one incident, which occurred in 1781 to 1782, brought the sultanic authority to bear on the investiture of a new patriarch. This was in consequence of an attempt by Mikhail Jarwah, the Syrian Orthodox bishop of Aleppo from 1766, who had converted to Roman Catholicism, to take over the patriarchate when it became vacant on the death of Patriarch Jirjis IV on July 21, 1781. Details of the unfortunate feud between Jarwah and the opposing candidate, Matta, an adherent of Syrian Orthodoxy, are outside the scope of the current discussion. However, it is relevant to state here that the matter, which had been tossed around between Diyarbakir, Mardin, Mosul and Baghdad, was eventually settled when the Syrian Orthodox party obtained a berat from Sultan Abdul Hamid I for the investiture of Cyril Matta as patriarch.

The next recorded event of seeking sultanic approval of a patriarchal appointment was that of Patriarch Elias II (1838-1847). Upon his election by the Syrian Orthodox Synod, he headed to Istanbul where he stayed for 14 months as the guest of the Armenian Patriarch, whose help he secured for the Sultanic beret of his appointment. Thus, from before 1800, seeking authority from the highest office in the land became a standard practice.

When Patriarch Peter III was elected and ordained patriarch in 1872, he travelled to Istanbul to seek not only a beret for his appointment, but also independence from the Armenian millet. He secured the first, but not the second.

Over the last two decades several authors have quoted John Joseph reporting that the Syrian Orthodox Church obtained the millet status in 1882. Joseph states: “It took ten years

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205 Ibrahim Ozcosar, Bir Yuzyl Bir Sancak Bir Cemaat, p. 227.
before the Jacobite millet, with the strenuous exertions of its Patriarchs and help from Great 
Britain was finally recognized (1882) as a separate and distinct community.” 208 Joseph also 
quotes from Oswald Parry: “When O.H. Parry visited the Jacobites on a special mission in 
1882, the patriarch had a bishop at Istanbul ‘with the right of audience of the Sultan.’” 209

A closer look at Parry’s referenced book places the above note in a more accurate 
perspective. Parry states “The present Patriarch has obtained, by strenuous exertions, the right 
to be directly presented at Constantinople, instead of the mere right to appeal through the 
Gregorian-Armenian Patriarch. He has now a Bishop at Constantinople, with the right of 
audience to the Sultan.” 210

From Parry’s account one may reasonably deduce that “by strenuous exertions,” which 
may have been with the help of Great Britain, Patriarch Peter III, obtained the right of audience 
with the Sultan and by implication the prospect of direct access to the Porte. The fact that 
Patriarch Peter and the succeeding Patriarchs, Abdul Masih, Abdullah and Elias III were all 
endowed with nishans from the sultans support Parry’s statement. However, Parry’s statement 
does not spell out formal independence from the Armenians in the form of being granted an 
independent millet status.

The source in Joseph’s referenced book specifying the 1882 date is the book by 
Silbernagl. 211 Silbernagl states (my translation): “The Jacobites were not recognized by the 
Porte and were represented there by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople. They have to 
be grateful for it was thanks to the English influence that, beginning in 1882, they were 
acknowledged as independent millet with their own Patriarch being recognized as their 
spiritual and secular leader.” 212

Silbernagl gives Eduard Sachau’s book 213 as his source of information. The following is 
my translation of the relevant sections in Sachau’s book from which it will be seen that the 
Syrian Orthodox who were seeking independent recognition from the Porte, lacked a critical 
support from a European power:

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208 Ibid.
209 Parry, pp. 314-15
210 Ibid.
211 Isidor Silbernagl, *Verfassung und gegenwartiger Bestand samtlicher Kirchen des Orients* (Regensburg: 1904).
212 Ibid, p. 308.
...the Jacobites are not recognized as a religious entity by the Porte and so have no religious representation there. They can only deal with the Administration through the intervention of the Armenian patriarch. However the Armenians have troubles enough of their own. Even if they had a measure of power, I doubt very much whether they would be inclined to exert themselves in any great measure for the Jacobites, with whom they have nothing in common…

Their Patriarch Pedros (sic, Peter III) was living in Istanbul as I came through it on my journey home. He was making every effort to obtain official recognition from the government for his own people. He could do this with the support of one of the European legations. He had been appealing to them for a long time in vain; yet this matter also had a political angle. Pedros and his people have only to accept the union with Rome which is offered to them on a daily basis – the Papacy would immediately gain a hundred thousand more adherents, and the Syrians would receive the protection of France…Since that time however there has been a change in favour of the Jacobites. They have the English to thank for the fact that, starting in 1882, they were recognized as an independent millet by the Porte with their Patriarch [acknowledged] as a religious and civil leader.214

In this, aside to the question of date, Sachau provides a clear indication of the predicament in which Syrian Orthodoxy found itself towards the end of the Ottoman rule: seeking survival as an independent historical Oriental church in the face of pressures by Rome, backed by French influence.

From the above it is seen that the widely referenced claim of the attainment of the millet status in 1882 is not based on any evidence that can be traced to a historical document. In fact the evidence which is available indicates that by 1891 the Syrian Orthodox still did not have an independent millet status. This evidence can be inferred from a letter penned in Arabic by Patriarch Peter and addressed to Archbishop Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The letter dated June 11, 1891, complains of the bad treatment imposed by the Armenians on the Syrian Orthodox under the excuse of millet affiliation, particularly with regard to property rights. The following is a translation of the letter that has been preserved in the Lambeth Archives. The translation appears to have been made by someone at Lambeth Palace or commissioned by it. I have checked the said translation for accuracy against the Arabic text and, where necessary,

214 Ibid.
out the necessary modification. The main issue in this letter was the Armenian attempt at expropriating Syrian Orthodox properties in Jerusalem.

We have already forwarded to your Grace, information as to the oppression and tyranny of the Armenians and their depriving us of the sacred places which belong to us in the Holy City, Jerusalem. Up to the present we have not obtained any restraint of their extensive lawlessness and oppression which it is impossible for us to endure...they are forcing us to become their subjects in order that they may seize what remains to us of churches, convents and their endowments... But the case, as you are aware, is that we and they are both subjects of the Ottoman Government, and according to the firmans and documents from ancient times which we have in our hands, we are independent like the other churches and the chronicles also testify to this.

The letter ends with a request to use England’s good offices with the Porte to ensure the requested protection. The letter bore the ending:

Ignatius-Peter III- Syrian Patriarch of Antioch

From Mosul, on June 11, 1891.  

Apart from the millet issue raised, the letter clearly expresses deep bitterness towards the Armenians who, under the millet system, were supposed to be representatives and defenders of the Syrian Orthodox, but were instead engaged in the attempt to appropriate to themselves properties historically owned by the Syrian Orthodox in Jerusalem. It may be noted that Patriarch Peter sent his letter from Mosul where he was on a mission to resolve another property issue; the ownership of one of two major churches which the Syrian Orthodox owned in Mosul, but which were claimed by the Syrian Catholics, with backing from France.

The sense of bitterness towards the Armenians is also expressed in a letter Patriarch Peter addressed to the Porte dated October 11, 1891, which appeared to be in response to a complaint levelled against the Syrian Orthodox (Suriani Qadim) by the Armenian Patriarchate. In his response Patriarch Peter rejects any mandate the Armenians continued to claim, as well as their accusation that Patriarch Peter’s journey to England in 1874/1875 was in order to unite his church with that of the English, pointing out at the same time to the multiple divisions

215 Lambeth Palace Library Archive, Benson 103.f.58.
216 Archival Document K10-B86-0808
within the Armenian Church and community. Patriarch Peter makes a specific reference to property disputes his church continued to have with the Armenians at various cities but specifically in Jerusalem.

1.4.4 Relations with the Porte

The reality of the dealings between the Syrian Orthodox and the Porte throughout the nineteenth century clearly indicates that the Syrian Orthodox had direct access to the Porte in all matters, starting from the notification of the election of a new patriarch to granting the patriarchhonours nishans, as well as the patriarch’s approval for travel outside the Ottoman Empire, as in the case of the travel of Patriarchs Peter and later Abdullah to England and to India. All other matters that required interaction with the Ottoman authorities at the vilayet level and lower were conducted by direct communication between the respective church authority and the local Ottoman administration.

For example, the audience between Patriarch Abdullah and Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1908 was requested directly by representative of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Istanbul, and the approval for the audience was communicated directly to the said representative (see Chapter Four). Thus, the Syrian Orthodox Church (Suryani Qadim) had a de facto recognition as a separate millet, even if formal recognition as such was, according to current evidence, not obtained.

It may also be noted at this point that towards the end of the nineteenth century the political developments within the Ottoman Empire beginning with the Tanzimat period (see later) rendered the millet system far more flexible than what it was at the beginning of that century. One of the features of this flexibility was the direct communication that became possible between the patriarch’s representative in Istanbul and the various offices of the Porte. One prominent case in this regard was in obtaining the approval of the Porte for the deposition of Patriarch Abdul Masih in 1903-04, where direct communication between the office of the patriarchal representative in Istanbul, conveying the decision of the church synod, and the Porte was evident from the archival documents (see Chapter Four). A further witness to the direct relationship between the Syrian Orthodox (Suryani Qadim) and the Porte was the audience that Patriarch Abdullah had with Sultan Abdul Hamid during Abdullah’s visit to Istanbul on his way to England and India (see Chapter Four).
1.4.5 The Orthodox Suryani Qadim Patriarchal General Regulation (Ortodoks Suryani Kadim Patrklgi Nizamnamey – i Umumiyesi)

The main progress in the application of the millet regulations in the Syrian Orthodox Church was the development of a regulation for the internal governance of the church and its community. A twelve member joint council, consisting of six clergy and six lay members was formed by a patriarchal order in late 1913. The joint council proposed a draft of sixty four articles that addressed matters that ranged from the election of the patriarch and bishops to joint councils at diocese level and a host of other regulations.\(^{217}\) The joint council completed the draft regulation, which was submitted to the Porte by Patriarch Abdullah in June 1914.\(^{218}\) No confirmation of final Porte approval has been identified.

1.4.6 Sultans and Patriarchs - Certain Parallels Worthy of Note

Despite the vast difference in scope of temporal jurisdiction and responsibility, between an Ottoman sultan and a patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, there were distinct parallels in the roots of their power and in the manner each was viewed by his subjects.

The Sultan - An Exemplary Status

The character of the Ottoman state may be viewed on the one level as an Islamic Sultanate but on a more communal level as a patrimonial monarchy, that is a state conceived on the model of a vastly extended household.\(^{219}\)

The ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity and heterogeneity constituted the most significant characteristics of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans imposed their rule on the diverse populations of their vast Empire by their emphasis on religion as the primary form of identity, thereby excluding the more complex ethnic and linguistic differences. This was particularly the case prior to the era of reform when the Ottoman state was a culturally conservative system of government in which authority and tradition went hand in hand.

At the top of the power pyramid stood the sultan, an absolute divine-right monarch. Since in theory the sultan enjoyed ultimate God-given authority to rule, his subjects considered

\(^{217}\) Battraqkhana Nizamnana ‘Mumi 1330=, scribed by Bishop Yuhannon Dolabani.
\(^{218}\) *Al Hikmat*, No. 22, June 20-July 3, 1914, p. 336. This is discussed further in Chapter Four.
him the sole source of legitimate power; he could therefore demand absolute obedience from them, including complete control over their lives and positions. He owned all the state lands and could dispose of them as he saw fit. Despite his absolute power, the sultan could not violate Islamic Law or custom. The opinion of the Muslim community, expressed through the *ulema* could strongly influence his decisions and actions. God had entrusted his people to him and the sultan was responsible for their care and protection.

**The Patriarch Among His People - an Enduring Legacy**

The patriarch is more than the head of the church. He is the symbol of the faith, the figurehead of the community and the father of the flock. Thus, he is traditionally perceived as the personification of the entire church.

The full title of the Patriarch in the Syrian Orthodox Church - “Ignatius Patriarch of the Apostolic Seat of Antioch and All the East” - is imbued with historical symbolism on multiple planes. Being a patriarch symbolizes an ancestral association with the venerable Old Testament Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Being of the Apostolic Seat of Antioch carries association with the Antioch, which was the historical capital of Roman Syria. This title also defines the geographic provenance of its jurisdiction. But more importantly, the association with Antioch is a source of pride to his church as this position endows the patriarch with the honour of being heir to and descendant of Peter the Apostle, who preached in that city in CA. 34 CE, and who is considered to be its first Patriarch. Moreover, Antioch was where the nascent believers in the new faith were first called Christians. The patriarch is also the father of a church whose roots are Semitic and whose liturgical language Aramaic, thus uniquely reflecting the cultural roots of Jesus himself and his disciples.

As a further layer of venerable historical association, beginning with Bar Wahib (1292), all patriarchs adopted, upon inauguration, the title Ignatius. This tradition has been in deference to the venerable memory of Ignatius the Illuminator, the third bishop of Antioch (from 98 to 117 CE), who was martyred in Rome.

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223 *Eusebius, Church History II*, 3.22
In the golden age of Syrian Orthodoxy, namely during the Abbasid Caliphate, the patriarch exercised his authority over the numerous dioceses that spread over Greater Syria, Anatolia, Mesopotamia and as far east as India and Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{224} He did not do this with the support of any temporal ruler or political power, nor through tribal allegiances and treaties, but by virtue of a venerable historical image, that endured in the face of adversity, coupled with an established tradition of independence. This accumulated historical precedence formed the basis for a lasting tradition. Thus, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, even though church membership had fallen greatly, in the eyes of his people, the patriarch still held the authority bestowed on him by a long tradition of survival under prolonged adverse environments.

The patriarch has thus been traditionally viewed by his people as the guardian and the protector of the Apostolic seat of Antioch, the descendant of Peter the Apostle, and the trustee of this position of honour. In the eyes of the state, he carries the responsibility of being the leader of his people, and in the eyes of his people he is viewed as father and shepherd. He stands as the symbol and defender of the identity of his church and, through that, his community.

Clearly, however, there are the obvious lifestyle differences between the sultan and the patriarch; the pomp that characterizes the palace life of the sultan compared to the austerity of monastery life that characterizes the life of a patriarch. This simplicity of lifestyle reinforced the symbol of fatherhood: of a father devoted to the well being of his children. Ordinary folk wrote to him about all manners of issues they faced. However this ease of accessibility did not detract from the reverence they had for him. The patriarchal archives are rich with examples that show the reverence people had for their patriarch (see Chapter Two).

The historical experience in the Middle East has also contributed significantly to maintaining patriarchal authority. The Arab conquest in the seventh century deprived the Christians of direct political power and relegated them to a \textit{dhimmi} status. At the same time, however, it provided the patriarchs many aspects of civil authority that they did not have before. Thus, in contrast to the situation in Europe, where the functions of a chief cleric were essentially confined to the religious domain, the patriarch’s overall authority was enhanced by

a significant civil authority. The adoption of the millet system by the Ottomans further consolidated this authority. Interestingly enough, drawing on this long standing custom, a good measure of this authority has persisted in the Arab Middle East to the present day.

1.5 From Millet to Nationalism

1.5.1 General Developments

In his excellent analysis of this subject, Karpat\textsuperscript{225} alludes to the basic difference in the concept of nationality in the late Ottoman period between nations in western Europe and those in southeastern Europe. He remarks:

In the West, the nation emerged by stressing its linguistic and cultural peculiarities in order to assert the king’s rights against the authority of the Church. In southeastern Europe, the Christians claimed national statehood and independence by asserting their religious differences and regard to the role of the Muslim sultans. Thus religion became the foundation of their nationhood and, despite a variety of other cultural, ethnic and historical factors which helped to define the national identity of the Balkan states, religion continued to color, consciously or subconsciously, their view of the Ottoman state, of the Turks in general and their own identity in particular.\textsuperscript{226}

It may be appropriate to argue that the prominent role given to religion in Europe’s southeastern regions is inherited from the millet system, which placed the Christian inhabitants of these regions in the position of millel-i-mahkume, the ruled millets. Thus, emancipation from this inferior status would certainly generate a genuine rallying issue towards nationhood, besides all other contributing factors.

1.5.2 Social Transformation of the Millets

Ottoman society as a whole underwent major changes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries under the impact of a series of internal and external economic, political and military factors. These changes altered the land tenure system, the army, the socio-economic structure of the community and ultimately the leadership of the millets.\textsuperscript{227}

\textsuperscript{225} Karpat, “Millet and Nationality”, pp. 141-169
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid. p. 144.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid, p. 152.
The structural changes which affected the millet system were reflected in the rise of the rural notables to power, the birth of new entrepreneurial – commercial elite in towns, and in the emergence of a secular intelligentsia. These were groups whose economic and political interests were in conflict with those of their own church and millet and with the conventional Ottoman concepts of authority.\textsuperscript{228} The power of the notables, both Muslims (the ayan and eshraf), and the non-Muslim leaders, was enhanced further after the mid-eighteenth century by the disintegration of the central government’s authority over most of its territories\textsuperscript{229}.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century the patriarchs of the larger millets emphasized the universality of the faith and not their respective ethnic origin or language since they could maintain their position in their socially and ethnically diversified millets only by upholding the universal elements of the faith. On the other hand, lesser clergy belonged mostly to the ethnic and linguistic communities they served. The survival of the ethnic groups in the millet was assured and reinforced indirectly by a system of local administration based on the rural (village) or town quarter (mahalle) communities they served. The changes in the social strata within the millets encouraged the rise of lay leaders who spearheaded the movement of national revival and independence. However, in many other instances these changes promoted undeserving lay leaders to positions of authority. As a consequence, many lay leaders owed their position and power mainly to their association with the Ottoman government rather than entirely to their influence in the community; these leaders were derided by the intelligentsia as "tools of the Turks."\textsuperscript{230} Thus, “the rural segments of the Christian millets in mid-century presented a paradoxical picture: their ethnic-religious consciousness and folk culture had developed alongside some of the leaders’ interest in maintaining the Ottoman political status quo.”\textsuperscript{231}

\textbf{1.5.3 The Tanzimat and Subsequent Eras}

When the Tanzimat was introduced, the goals, enacted by the decree of Gulhane Hatti-i Humayun in 1839, were to pledge life, honor, and property to all the Sultan’s subjects and their

\textsuperscript{228} Ibid, p.152.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid, p. 153.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid, pp.157-158.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid, p. 158.
equality under the law. It also entailed the establishment of a military system of conscription, as well as reforming the tax system from tax farming to state controlled, direct taxation.\(^{232}\)

Barkey argues that centralization was essential for the success of these reforms, citing two main reasons: the international condition, marked by the military threat from Russia and the weakness of its economic and financial position. In contrast to the Ottomans’ limited resources, the Russians had large manpower resources, and by 1750, Russia, with one fifth of the revenues of the French Monarchy, had the world’s largest standing army.\(^{233}\) The humiliating defeats in the series of wars with Russia from 1768 to 1774 were examples of the military challenges that faced the Ottoman Empire, and demanded a centralized control of the state.

At the time of Tanzimat, there was a view that preferred federalism. This “was presented, and backed by the National liberals and by the Greek and Armenian merchants in Anatolia who preferred a multiethnic, federalist state.”\(^{234}\) The proponents of this view saw this in terms of equality among all subjects, and implied ethnic and territorial autonomy. However, Barkey cites that Keyder is doubtful of the prospect of success of this decentralization. Barkey cites a similar view by Roderic Davison, based on the likely danger on a system involving “an intense mosaic of millets.”\(^{235}\)

Another feature of the Ottoman imperial rule was the flexibility in the management of religious diversity and the ability of the imperial authority to accommodate such diversity, to incorporate but not to alter its cultural and social inheritance. Generally sultans and their administrators succeeded in maintaining certain restraint and tolerance over their subjects, preventing abuse by officials or promoters of religions and ethnic hatred. Thus, despite the potential for explosion, the inter-ethnic relations were largely peaceful.\(^{236}\)

\(^{236}\) Ibid, p. 277.
Yet, this particular Empire, with its important heritage of religious tolerance, ended with a violent transition from empire to nation-state. The empire on the road to nonempire [sic] committed atrocities against its Greek and Armenian populations and, by 1915-1916, had enacted measures that ended in the large-scale destruction of a whole community, imprinting an entirely different legacy on the empire.\(^{237}\)

The emergence of ethnic and religious antagonism of non-Muslims goes back at least to the eighteenth century. It was motivated by the increased role of non-Muslims in European trade, and the backlash this created on religious and ethnic rivalries. In response, the Muslims felt disfranchized and “became aware of their newly acquired disadvantage and united in their Muslim identities in resentment. This was a recipe for inter-communal disaster.”\(^{238}\)

To explain their economic disadvantages, the Muslims blamed the lack of Shari’a law on the workings of commercial relations. In one case in 1764, a complaint by a well-established Syrian merchant about the disadvantage of sultanic law (\textit{kanun}), which was often based on capitulatory treaty provisions, that allowed favour to a Christian with the status of a dragonman for the British Consul, ended with the Porte responding with a relatively relaxed attitude that the Shari’a was to be followed when appropriate.\(^{239}\)

The economic disparity in the eighteenth century was compounded by the reforms of the mid-nineteenth century. Again in Syria more serious conflicts took place involving Christians in Aleppo in 1850 and in Damascus in 1860, principally resulting from the declining position of the Muslim traders. A central element in the 1839 Tanzimat reforms “brought regularization of the state-society relations: no more individual community compacts but rather one state-society arrangement for all.”\(^{240}\) This implied state courts that ruled independently of \textit{ulema}, and a conscription system that signalled the end of traditional expectations, for both the Muslim communities and non-Muslim communities. Further, the reforms, which guaranteed personal rights (i.e., security of life, property and honour) regardless of religion, changed the tenure of personal status. “Accordingly the empire could not claim the superiority of Islamic

\(^{237}\) Ibid, p. 277-278.
\(^{238}\) Ibid, 279.
\(^{240}\) Barkey, p. 286.
population over non-Muslims. In return, the state demanded that all citizens be loyal to the Sultan and to the Ottoman administration.”

The external weakness of the empire, exemplified by its defeat in the Russian-Ottoman war of 1877-1878, the realization of European influence and repercussions on the internal front created a crisis in confidence and legitimacy that led to the rise of three different identity options, which emerged throughout the three periods of Ottoman transition: the Tanzimat, Abdul Hamid II, and the Young Turks.

The official boundaries between religion and ethnicity became less clear during the Tanzimat era. While religion was still recognized as a central pivot of the millets, the reforms advanced by the state tended to undermine this status. The state came to stand for Ottomanism, an inherent secular ideology. Thus, “Ottomanism emerged as a discourse based on the multinational, imperial model of the empire, maintaining the integrity of the empire with equality among its citizens.”

The notion of liberation that was promoted by the Tanzimat reformers was seriously challenged by internal and external factors, particularly the difficulties encountered in achieving internal cohesion. In context of the consequences of this, but more particularly following the 1876 – 1878 war with Russia, the reign of Abdul Hamid (1876-1909) must be considered.

In March 1877, the first Ottoman Parliament was convened, but was prorogued by Abdul Hamid and the First Constitution suspended in 1878. The Second Constitutional period started in 1908, and parliament acquired a meaningful legislative power as late as 1909. In the intervening period Abdul Hamid based his rule on Islam being the connecting ideology of the state. He formulated a state policy that was based on religious solidarity and imperial continuity between his Muslim subjects of the empire. Wars of independence and resulting demographic changes with the resulting loss of European provinces, and the displacement of the Muslim population as refugees to Anatolia, provided fertile ground for

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241 Ibid.
243 M. Sukru Hanioglu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 75.
244 Ibid, p. 76.
245 Ibid.
246 Barkey, p. 290.
247 M. Sukru Hanioglu, p. 120.
248 Ibid.
building his policy on unity, survival and on Islamic legitimation. Hence, associated with Ottomanism, an Islamist or pan-Islamist perspective emerged, both as an opposition to the conservative outlook of the *ulema*, and as a political ideology of a consolidated Islamic empire, which Abdul Hamid embraced.\(^{249}\) The Islamic faith that followed was based on “the correction of beliefs” of the heretics and the spread of the official version of faith among Muslims of the Empire.\(^{250}\)

The Islamization proceeded at all levels, educating and reasserting core Sunni beliefs in regions with Shi‘a convictions. However, this was carried out largely by raising levels of mistrust and suspension among Muslims, and, as a result, “turned out to be disastrous for inter-religious relations in the empire.”\(^{251}\)

In reaction to Abdul Hamid’s Islamic policies, the Young Turks came to power through their 1908 coup d’etat on a secular platform. Although they started by officially embracing Ottomanism, they soon also turned toward nationalism, embracing Turkish identity.\(^{252}\)

The Young Turks’ initial liberal focus was soon to change to an increasingly authoritative attitude that was less embracing of the mosaic of Ottoman society. The catalysts to this were the secessionist movements and uprisings in Albania and Yemen, the Italian invasion of Tripoli in 1911 and the Balkan war of 1912-1913.\(^{253}\) With the empire being increasingly stripped of its ethnic and religious diversity, the Young Turks used Islamic symbolism as a core brand of their rule. Turkish nationalism and Islam became the exclusive elements of the reduced empire. “The Young Turks had strategized to mobilize their remaining identity fragments at the cost of the destruction of the Armenian Community.”\(^{254}\) The fate of the Armenians was shared by all the other Christians in Anatolia, who had no nationalistic ambitions.

Looking with a broad view at the Ottoman state at the end of the nineteenth century, a report prepared by Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, one of the most prominent statesmen of the nineteenth century,\(^{255}\) provides a summary of the essential premise upon which the empire

\(\footnotesize{\text{249} \text{ Barkey, p. 290.}}\)
\(\footnotesize{\text{250} \text{ Barkey, p. 292; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domain*, p. 49.}}\)
\(\footnotesize{\text{251} \text{ Barkey, p. 292.}}\)
\(\footnotesize{\text{252} \text{ Ibid, p. 293; Hanioglu, pp. 144-149.}}\)
\(\footnotesize{\text{253} \text{ Barkey, p. 293.}}\)
\(\footnotesize{\text{254} \text{ Ibid, p. 294.}}\)
\(\footnotesize{\text{255} \text{ Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (1822-1895) was a historian, statesman, sociologist and legist. He was close to Abdul Hamid. From 1877-1882, was minister in several portfolios that included Justice and Interior.}}\)
stood. Selim Deringil notes that as such, this document represents a “valuable repository of tacit knowledge of a leading Ottoman.” Cevdet states:

Since the time of Yavus Sultan Selim (Selim I) the Sublime state has held the caliphate and it is thus a great state founded on religion. However, because those who founded the state before that were Turks, in reality it is a Turkish state (bir devlet-i Turkiyedir). And since it was the House of Osman that constituted the state this means that the Sublime State rests on four principles. That is to say, the ruler is Ottoman, the government is Turkish, the religion is Islam, and the capital is Istanbul. If any of these four principles were to be weakened, this would mean a weakening of one of the four pillars of the state structure.

It is thus remarkable that one of the most competent and oft-quoted of Ottoman statesmen should explicitly say that the Ottoman state was, in the first instance, Turkish, a reality that was soon to unfold. Although other Muslims have their place, the Turks must always come first.

It is perhaps apt to conclude by quoting Barkey’s summary of the last two centuries of Ottoman history as follows:

Although the Ottoman Empire had been tolerant, its forbearance was built on the notion of order, which assumed the superiority of Muslims over non Muslims. Both conditions of trade and western Intervention had played havoc with this notion of Pax Ottomanica and Islamic superiority...Western support and advantages in trade, separate education, and the spread of a world system incorporating the idea of nationalism were all compounded by serious demographic instabilities.

The state response to the conditions of increasing Christian privilege and political ambitions, on the one hand, and decreasing Muslim status, on the other “was to dispense with diversity as an asset of empire. Once diversity was recast as weakness, another essential component of the empire was stripped away.”

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257 Ibid.
258 Barkey, p. 289.
259 Ibid.
1.6 Revival and Nationalism in the Arab Lands

1.6.1 In Greater Syria

In 1517, Sultan Selim’s conquest of Syria and Egypt expanded the territory of the Ottoman Empire to include the heartland of Islam which was also the home of the ancient Christian churches of the East: Melkite Orthodox, East and West Syriacs (i.e., Syrian Orthodox and Maronites) and Copts, as well as Jews. Muslim-Christian relations in Greater Syria were at a low ebb when the Ottomans arrived. “The Mamluk sultans had embarked on an ideological, as well as a military, campaign against the Christians in the aftermath of the crusades.” Their armies destroyed churches and monasteries, and the state imposed severe restrictions on their Christian subjects. The invasion by Tamerlane at the beginning of the fifteenth century wreaked mayhem and destruction on the whole region, but with particular predisposition for devastation of any Christian communities that lay in his path. Egypt, which was spared this latest devastation, had had its Coptic communities and churches under the cruel treatment of the Mamluks since the time of the Mongols. The almost continual persecution of the Copts from early Islam reduced a majority to an isolated minority.

In Syria, the majority of Christians were the Antiochean Greek Orthodox (the Melkites). The Syrian Orthodox occupied a distant second position in terms of population and influence. Earlier, the Church of the East had gained adherents in Mesopotamia, in Persia and in the lands of its eastern neighbors. Like the Syrian Orthodox, the followers of the Church of the East (the East Syrians) had their greatest success under Islam, during the early centuries of its rule. They also attained influence in the service of the Mongol invaders. After the Mongol dynasties in the Middle East were converted to Islam, the East and West Syrian communities suffered persecution and decline. They attracted little attention under Ottoman rule and then only as the object of European missionary advances.

In Lebanon, the Maronites established contact with Rome during the crusades, although union with Rome was not finally confirmed until the early sixteenth century. The Maronites maintained continuous and direct links with the West, with France in particular, which enabled

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261 Ibid, pp. 41, 42.
them to act as a channel in commercial, political, and spiritual matters. Another distinctive feature of the Maronites was their settlement in Mount Lebanon, largely secluded from the rest of the turbulent land of the rest of the Levant. This contributed to their sense of individuality as a community and their attachment to the land.

The Maronite union with Rome was a precursor of a development which affected every Christian church in the region. In the first phase of the Counter-Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church embarked upon a persistent programme to bring all the surviving Oriental churches under its domain. As a consequence, the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries witnessed deep sectarian conflict within each church as those forces loyal to the established hierarchies and dogmas fought with groups won over to Rome. The missions begun by the Latin missionaries in Syria in the seventeenth century, coupled with commercial incentives, were soon to produce the desired outcome. By about 1750, the overwhelming majority of Aleppo’s Christians and many of those in Damascus and the coastal cities of greater Syria had embraced one form or another of the Catholic faith. Somewhat later, a similar process started when Protestant missionaries made inroads on these same churches. During the nineteenth century the dissident groups, with the support of Western powers, gained recognition from the Ottoman authorities as autonomous millets.

Among those who rejected alignment with the Western Churches, the Arabic-speaking Orthodox (Melkites) were among the first to call for revival. This revival took the form of a call for the awakening of the Arab language, culture and nation. “Unlike their fellow Christians, they bore a twofold psychic burden. While the other Christians in the Arab provinces were considered inferior in status to the Muslims, they were at least masters in their own churches.” For the Melkites, on the other hand, there was an added yoke: the Greek dominance of the Antiochene patriarchate. Their sense of alienation grew in the aftermath of the Greek War of Independence, with the gradual triumph of Hellenic ethnicity in matters of ecclesiastical hierarchy. “As strangers in both church and state, they, of all the communities in the Ottoman Empire, were the most in need of the new identity, which nationalism offered. Not

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surprisingly, they were the earliest and most radical spokesmen for what became Arab nationalism.”

The contrast between the non-Muslims of Anatolia and the Balkans on the one hand, and those of the Arabic-speaking lands on the other is worth noting. Christians in the former areas were both numerous, if not a majority, and restive; they retained their own languages and were more open to the Western ideas of the Enlightenment and later nationalism. Christians in Arab lands, on the other hand, were minorities that had shared the language and social culture of their Muslim neighbors and, following their tragic experience from the time of the Crusades, were generally mindful of the risks of following the West without adequate consideration of the effects. Jews adopted a generally a more somber attitude toward the Ottoman authorities and regional contrasts among them were less marked but still perceptible: Salonican Jewry was clearly more advanced than that of Aleppo, for example.

The glaring comparison between Christians from different parts of the empire in the late Ottoman period can be seen most clearly as is aptly expressed by Braude as follows: “the Balkan Christians created their own nation-states. The Armenians in Anatolia tried and failed. Christians in the Arab countries sought new roles as confessional minorities in Arab national states.” It may also be noted that in the Balkans and Anatolia, sectarian animosities between Muslims and Christians gave rise to nationalist ones as religious identities were cast in political modes of expression that borrowed from the West. In the Arab provinces, on the other hand, nationalism emerged as a common denominator that helped overcome the historical rift between sectarian communities, as their elites worked through the religious and ethnic ambiguities in the succession nation states and evolved a new political identity as Arabs.

Viewing these evolutions as regional millet developments, the Christian elites in the Arabic speaking lands had become cosmopolitan in their economic and cultural interests. This made them more susceptible to adopting a newly articulated identity as Ottomans. In their tentative embrace of Ottomanism, however, the non-Muslims had stepped outside the more narrowly defined boundaries of their communities as millets. Ottomanism was the ideological means of a transition from an identity configured solely by religion to nationalism, as advocated by the intellectual elites among Arabic-speaking Muslims and Christians.

267 Ibid.
268 Ibid, p.5.
269 Ibid.
Keeping within the broader picture of these developments, Robert Haddad’s work on the Muslim-Christian and intra-Christian interactions in effecting the necessary transitions, merits careful consideration. Haddad argues that the Christians in the Arab lands twice played a role of accelerating the transmission of secular learning from the West to the Islamic world. On the first occasion, this was through their interaction with Greek learning, when many of the intellectual trends from the Hellenic and Greek civilizations, were to lead to the creation and rise of the salient institutions of Islamic civilization. On the second occasion, a millennium later, this was by promoting, through the impetus of their collective aspirations, access to the fledging Western civilization. During the first age of transmission, covered by the period from 750 CE to around 950 CE, this transmission was largely achieved through scholarship among the Syrian Orthodox and the East Syrians. These Christians, however, were not those who were engaged in the second age of transmission, for they had become marginalized over time by the persecution of invading Mongols and Turks, as well as by the rise of Islamic civilization, which, paradoxically, they had help establish. Hence by the time Selim established Ottoman rule in Syria, the “Christian Standard” had passed from the Syrian Orthodox and the Eastern Syrians to the Maronites and the Orthodox Melkites.

As noted before, the Catholic missionary work in Syria resulted in the creation of a sizeable Uniate body from the Melkite Orthodox, the Armenians and the Syrian Orthodox. As a result, until well into the twentieth century the Uniate Melkites were the most “Westernized” Arabic speaking community in Syria (and Egypt) and the most alienated from indigenous traditions and values. The paradox of the Uniate Melkite role in this awakening lies in the fact that the Syrian Arab ethnic awareness they helped initially to foster was to receive its fullest development, at least among Christians, in the Orthodox Melkite community. This was aided by two main factors: the Protestant missions, and, to a much smaller extent by the interest of the Russians, both in the nineteenth century.

The nineteenth century also saw the arrival and early development of the Protestant missions, mainly American, in Lebanon. Unlike the Latins who, in formal religious terms, demanded little beyond submission to Rome, the Protestants struck at the heart of the


ecclesiastical organization and at the traditional devotional life of the Eastern Christian (see Section 1.3).

The Russians also entered the fray by encouraging the ethnic and linguistic awareness of the Orthodox Melkites. They did this by means of setting up primary and secondary schools that emphasized the study of Arabic, as most of their Latin counterparts never had. However, Russian influence and Russian schools came too late and vanished too quickly to leave the lasting influence left by the Latin and Protestant missions.²⁷²

The nineteenth century saw forces at play among the Orthodox Melkites which were to transform the community from a passive victim to active promoter. More than any other numerically significant Christian community in Syria, the Orthodox Melkites were evolving as a community, responsive to Western influences but firmly rooted in the context of geographic Syria, sharing little of the Maronites’ commitment to Lebanese particularism, and especially the Uniate Melkites’ cultural alienation. The attitude of the Orthodox Melkites towards the West, was always conditioned by an awareness of having been victims, as well as beneficiaries, of Western penetration.

Considering the events at the more general level of the Ottoman Empire, the Tanzimat reform edicts of 1839 and 1856, which ushered in the policy of “Ottomanization”, served as an ideological transition from an identity configured solely by religious faith, the millet, to nationalism, advanced by the intellectual elites among Arabic-speaking Muslims and Christians. The changing demographic configuration of the Ottoman state during the last quarter of the nineteenth century rendered the reduced empire to consist almost exclusively of the heavily Muslim Turkish and Arabic-speaking territories of the Near East. The ensuing atmosphere for radical modification offered the Syrian Christians the opportunity for decisive influence which had not been available for a millennium. This was the opportunity to be the vehicle to transmit modern European learning to the Muslim society, which they seemed capable of reviving it. The Christian’s ability to influence society and to contribute to its development was derived from his now complete linguistic Arabization, his longer exposure and easier access to the West, and his own immense stake in developing social and political institutions in which he could fully participate. Thus, argues Haddad with merit, that the seeds of the second age of transmission and the new institutional arrangements it materially helped to

²⁷² Haddad, *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society*, pp. 84, 85.
foster, are to be found in the general adoption of Arabic: first as the vernacular tongue, and then as the only literary means of expression by the Syrian Christians in Greater Syria.\footnote{273}{Ibid, pp. 14. It may be noted that the ninth and tenth centuries had already witnessed a rapid decline in the use of Syriac among the Christians in Syria, a situation that became more consolidated in the succeeding centuries.}

The events of the nineteenth century and the intellectual impact of the second age of transmission also affected the Muslim elite, who were greatly inspired by the proliferation after 1860 of Arabic periodicals and newspapers, published and written for the most part by Syrian Christians (Jurji Zeidan and others) in their homeland (particularly Beirut) and after 1882 in the more relaxed atmosphere of British controlled Egypt.\footnote{274}{Haddad, Syrian Christians in Muslim Society, p. 87.} These unprecedented publishing experiences brought their readers, in addition to news and analysis of Western thought, much creative new usage of Arabic in prose and poetry.\footnote{275}{Haddad, Syrian Christians in Muslim Society, p. 88; Albert Hurani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939, Cambridge University Press, p. 97.} This was particularly apparent in the writings of a former student at the Syrian Protestant College, the Orthodox Melkite Jurji Zeidan (d.1914).\footnote{276}{Ibid, p. 88.}

The initial response of the Arab Muslim to the Western impact had been protective of the ideological defences of Islam. However, as certain Arab Muslims, notably the Aleppine al-Kawakibi (d.1903) saw it, one major weakness of the Muslim world was the dominance of the Turks, which had already been responsible for Muslim decline.\footnote{277}{Ibid, p. 89.}

The pioneering efforts of the Christian intellectuals from the eighteenth century towards \textit{al- Nahda} and Arabism had a parallel counter-part that was pioneered by Muhamad \textit{Abdah} in Egypt and Rashid Rida in Syria. Their \textit{salafiyya} existed as an intellectual movement that was independent from, and largely “oblivious to, \textit{al- Nahda} of the Christians.”\footnote{278}{Bruce Masters, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World, p. 175.} However, both helped to accomplish the same goal, namely the emergence of an Arab cultural awareness among Arab-speaking intellectuals, whether Christian or Muslim.\footnote{279}{Ibid.}

Thus, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Syrian Christians, particularly the Orthodox Melkites, were in the vanguard to create an ideology and community sufficiently broad to encompass them as full and equal partners, with their Muslim co-citizens, and thus to break the yoke of their marginality. “However, the Maronites with their Lebanese particularism would deem themselves ill-served by the triumph of a pan-Arab nationalism

\footnotesize{273} Ibid, pp. 14. It may be noted that the ninth and tenth centuries had already witnessed a rapid decline in the use of Syriac among the Christians in Syria, a situation that became more consolidated in the succeeding centuries.  
274 Haddad, Syrian Christians in Muslim Society, p. 87.  
276 Haddad, Syrian Christians in Muslim Society, p. 88.  
277 Ibid, p. 89.  
278 Bruce Masters, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World, p. 175.  
279 Ibid.}
which could not discard the tacit assumption that to be perfectly the Arab is to be also a Muslim.\textsuperscript{280} So too, would the Uniate Melkites, their Western affinities no longer fruitful, thus “drifting physically to Lebanon and politically towards the Maronite position.”\textsuperscript{281}

1.6.3 In Iraq

In the late Ottoman period Iraq had its unique set of geopolitical problems: recurrent Kurdish revolts in the mountainous north, Shi’i-Sunni divide in the south, and acute tribalism that also extended across the geographic borders to the Gulf and Najd. These problems were accentuated by two major factors: the traditional animosity between the Ottomans and the Safavid Iranians, with their intrinsic division across the Sunni-Shi’i divide; and the fact that Iraq was geographically in the hinterland of both the Arab world and the Ottoman Empire.

Iraq was isolated from the western Europeans who were establishing contact with the eastern Mediterranean cities from the early seventeenth century onward; that is with the exception of the limited trade made by the British through their East India Company, which ran boats up and down the Tigris and the Euphrates as far south to Shatt-al Arab and the Gulf. This geographical factor relegated Iraq in the eyes of the European commercial interests, particularly the French, and confined interest to the British. The remoteness of the Porte from Iraq enhanced the power of the local notables and tribal leaders, particularly in the all-important domain of land ownership and tenure.\textsuperscript{282}

In the late Ottoman period, the most notable dissimilarity in comparison with Syria, from the Ottoman perspective, was the lack of a strong preoccupation with the perceived dangers of “Arab separatism”, due to the presence of a large Shi’i population. For the Ottomans, the fear of Shi’i disloyalty was focused not on the “Arab” issue, but rather on the “Iranian” issue.\textsuperscript{283} Abdul Hamid, sensitive to the potential problem with the Shi’is and their traditional allegiance to Iran, sought to find a careful application of Pan-Islamism, which he attempted in Mosul, the vilayet and city, with a sizeable Sunni-Kurdish population. Thus, religion was deliberately

\textsuperscript{280} Haddad, \textit{Syrian Christians in Muslim Society}, p. 95.

\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{283} Gokhan Cetinsaya, \textit{Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908}, p. 151.
stressed as a social base with an emphasis on Islam in the field of public education, coupled with an appreciation of the important sociopolitical role played by the religious notables.

The non-Muslim minorities consisted of the Christians, the largest of the minorities, followed by the Jews, the Yazidis and the Mandaeans. The Christian population, proportionally smaller than that in Syria, lived mainly in Mosul, its environs, and in the mountainous areas to the north and northeast of Mosul. The Jews lived primarily in the cities: in Baghdad, where they had a large presence, and a much smaller presence in Mosul and Basrah. The Yazidis lived in a few villages in the Mosul vilayet while the Sabeans lived in a few southern cities, principally Amarah and Basrah and Nasiriya, as well as in villages.

The relatively small number of population constituents in Baghdad, except the Sunni Muslims and the Jews, is most remarkable, particularly with regard to the Shi´is. Their migration to Baghdad during the monarchy and subsequent regimes has been the subject of several interesting studies. The very minor presence of Christians in Baghdad is in conformity with a historical trend that had been ongoing from the heyday of the early Abassid era. Concerns for safety during subsequent rules pushed the Christian populations northward to the relative security of the mountainous region. A further noteworthy point is the tiny number of Europeans. This reflects the isolation of Iraq relative to other parts of the Arab Lands, even at that late point of Ottoman presence. Due to its wide ethnic and religious diversity, Mosul and its environs are considered next in somewhat of a more detail.

Mosul, traditionally home to many Christians, was also home to multiple ethnic groups: a majority of Muslim Arabs and many minorities comprising Muslim Kurds, Muslim Turks, Christians, Jews and a small minority of Sabeans. Parry estimated the population of the city in 1892 to be about 70,000. Young puts the total population in 1908 to be not far short of

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284 An interesting article by Fredrick and Margaret Simpich, “Where Adam and Eve Lived”, appeared in the National Geographic Magazine, December 1914, p. 563. The article provides the following population statistics for Baghdad at that time: Sunni Muslims: 120,000; Shi´i Muslims: 15,000; Jews: 40,000; Chaldeans: 1,600; Syrians: 1,200, Greeks: 150; Hindus: 75; Europeans: 40.


100,000, of whom, nine-tenths were Muslims and the remainder Christians and Jews.\textsuperscript{287} Parry estimates the Chaldean population to be 1,500 houses, the Syrian Orthodox to be 1,000 houses, the Syrian Catholic 400 houses and the American Protestants 30 houses.\textsuperscript{288}

Until the middle of the seventeenth century the Christians of Mosul belonged either to the Church of the East or to the Syrian Orthodox Church. As a result of the Catholic conversions the vast majority of the Church of the East community in Mosul joined Rome under the new name “Chaldeans.” During the latter part of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries a considerable proportion of the Syrian Orthodox joined Rome becoming known as Syrian Catholic. The Protestants, not desiring to be out-maneuved by the Church of Rome, carried out their own missionary work that led to further conversions from the indigenous churches. Gertrude Bell, clearly bemused by this fragmentation of the Mosul Christians, who, to start with, were a minority, writes:

To this pious confusion [of churches] Protestant missionaries, English and American, have contributed their share. There are Syrian Protestants and Nestorian Protestants, if the terms be admissible—though whether the varying shades of belief held by the instructors are reflected in the instructed; I do not know and I refrained from an inquiry which might have resulted in the revelation of Presbyterian Nestorians, Church of England Jacobites, or even Methodist Chaldeans.\textsuperscript{289}

The Christians generally lived in the relative isolation and protection offered by the millet system, and had a guarded interaction with the Muslim majority neighbours. They were not engaged in any form of separatist thinking; nor did they harbour any political aspirations that were separate from the rest of the population. Their peaceful, submissive nature, their integrity and their honesty generally earned them the sympathy of the more enlightened Muslims and

\textsuperscript{287} Wilkie Young, “Mosul in 1909”, Notes on the City of Mosul enclosed with Dispatch, No.4, Mosul 28, 1909, British Foreign Office 1951, 230-8, p. 231. Young notes that the only language spoken in the city (outside a Kurdish colony, numbering perhaps 3,000), was Arabic.

\textsuperscript{288} Oswald Parry, \textit{Six months in a Syrian Monastery}, p. 240.

\textsuperscript{289} Bell, Gertrude. \textit{Amurath to Amurath}, London: Macmillan and Co., 1924, (Facsimile Reprint by Gorgias Press, 2004), pp. 254-257. Bell also adds: “I had also the advantage of conversing with several bishops. Now there are so many bishops in these parts that it is impossible to retain more than a composite impression of them. They correspond in number to the Christian sects, which are as the sands of the sea-shore, but as I was about to journey through districts inhabited by their congregations, I made an attempt to grasp at least the names by which their creeds are distinguished from one another. As for more fundamental distinctions, they depend upon the wording of a metaphysical proposition which I will not offer to define, lest I should fall, like most of my predecessors, into grievous heresy. …”
afforded them a degree of reprieve from the prejudices of the unenlightened who were the majority. However, other less enlightened yet still powerful families also held sway among the lower sectors of the Muslim population. Thus, Christians in Mosul lived under a precarious balance between these social forces, often under the threat of persecution.

Young, in a consular report from Mosul, states:

The attitude of the Muslims [sic] towards the Christians and Jews, to whom as stated above, they are in a majority of ten to one, is that of a master towards slaves whom he treats with a certain lordly tolerance so long as they keep their place. Any sign of pretension to equality is promptly repressed.  

Bell, whose visit to Mosul was in the turbulent years leading to the Young Turk revolution, provides an even more caustic observation:

Universal liberty is not a gift prized by tyrants, and equality stinks in the nostrils of men who are accustomed to see their Christian fellow citizens cower into the nearest doorway when they ride through the streets. They had no difficulty in causing their dissatisfaction to be felt. The organization of discord is carried to a high pitch of perfection in Mosul. The town is full of braves who live by outrage, and live well. Whenever the unruly magnates wish to create a disturbance, they pass a word and a gratuity to these ruffians; the riot takes place, and who is to be blamed for it? The begs were all in their villages and could have had no hand in the matter; it was Abu’l Kasim, the noted bandit, it was Ibn this or Ibn that…

The position of the Christians in Mosul improved vastly after the declaration of a partial national independence, a statehood, in 1921, under British Mandate, and the formation of a strong central government in Baghdad. However, prejudices die hard and often persist under the surface ready to re-appear when circumstances once again permit, as has been the case since the American invasion of the country in 2003.

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291 Gertrude Bell, Amurath to Amurath, pp. 248-249.
The Arduous Journey for Revival

As an indicator of the lag in revival in Iraq in the nineteenth century relative to, say, Lebanon one may look at the first appearance and growth of newspapers. The first non-government newspaper in Beirut (Hadiqat al-Akhbar) appeared in 1858, while in Iraq, the first non-government newspaper in Baghdad (Baghdad) appeared in 1908, a full 50 years later, over which time 40 other newspapers appeared in Beirut. In Mosul, the first government paper (Al-Mosul) appeared in 1885 and the first non-government paper was (Nineva), which appeared in 1909.\(^{292}\)

During the early eighteenth century, education was confined to the few who attended mosque-run schools, which taught rudimentary basics in language and Quran recital. The Ottomans considered education a private matter that the state would not offer. When the Jalilis ruled over the city (1726-1834), they paid particular attention to schooling, which was mainly private. The rising intelligentsia of the day, led by the Umari family, opened few private schools that taught the Arabic language and religion.\(^{293}\)

It was in 1861 that the first public (government) school or “Maktab” was opened in Mosul. This was a combined primary and intermediate school. The school was upgraded to a secondary school in 1895 at which time it had 34 students. By 1907, there were only 10 government schools in the city of Mosul, with a total student population of 636, all male. At that time there were only 11 government schools in the surrounding villages, with a total student population of 118 students, again all male.

The Christians had their own schools which taught Arabic, Turkish and Syriac and the Jewish schools taught Hebrew instead of Syriac. Three church schools, one belonging to the Chaldeans, one to the Syrian Catholics and one to the Syrian Orthodox, were operating by the turn of the twentieth century. However most of the credit in non-government education goes to the Christian missions starting from 1750. The schools they opened accepted children of all religious denominations. The Dominican mission established a primary school for boys in 1854. In 1875, the school had 122 students and four teachers.\(^{294}\) They are also credited with

opening the first school for girls in 1873. This school was run by nuns who had a vital role in introducing education to girls, something that was unknown up to that time. The school was attended by both Muslim and Christian girls.295

However, important as the effort by the Dominicans was, it was limited in scope in comparison with the missionary programmes that were unfolding in Greater Syria, particularly in Beirut, where the Protestant missions spearheaded a drive toward broadly-based liberal curricula at secondary school and university levels.

The political visions and aspirations that were gathering momentum in the Arab world towards the end of the nineteenth century also found echoes in Mosul, particularly after the wider introduction of education, the move towards cultural revival and the introduction of newspapers. In one form or another, these visions revolved around the dissemination of modern knowledge.296 There were three distinct trends: an Islamic religious trend that mirrored the thought of Mohammad Abduh in Egypt; a social progressive one that called for social equality, for the emancipation of women and a system of government based on democratic process; and an Arab nationalistic one that was greatly influenced by similar movements that had already been gathering momentum in Syria. The Arab nationalist movement appealed to a significant number of middle and upper class intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century. Its proponents utilized the press, a novel medium at that time, for promoting their ideas. In the forefront of these who were engaged in this endeavour were Thabit Abdulnour (d.1958), Abdul Majid al-Bakri (d.1968), Mohamed al-Jalili (d.1963), and Daoud al-Chalabi (d.1962). After the First World War, this group found itself in confrontation with a new foreign rule: the British Mandate.297

In Iraq the term "Arab Christians" has generally been confined to traditional city dwellers. The majority of Christians, whose ancestral habitat has been in the mountains of Northern Iraq, have generally defined their identity as ethnic Assyrians, for those of the Church of the East, or Chaldean (among the Catholics).

Throughout the revival period and beyond, the Christians distinguished themselves in several aspects of learning. They emerged as active participants, as citizens in a country to which they historically belonged. They were usually in the forefront in most professional fields: medicine, education, engineering, industrial development, finance and foreign trade. The succeeding regimes, irrespective of their political directions and policies, found them to be honest, interactive and essential ingredients of a fast developing society. In less than half a century they and their Muslim colleagues succeeded in propelling Iraq to the forefront of the Arab world in practically all fields of knowledge.

1.7 Concluding Remarks

The *millet* system, which assigned the internal affairs of non-Muslim communities to their respective churches, strengthened the bond between the community and the church. As a consequence, this closeness between church and its people preserved the overall integrity of the smaller Christian churches such as the Syrian Orthodox as church and community from potential absorption within other larger religious entities. Thus, in the context of the Ottoman Empire and its Islamic mandate, the *millet* system, despite certain important shortcomings, preserved and protected the smaller, and one may dare say, even the larger Christian churches and their communities, at both central and local levels, from coercion to apostatize and from the pressures of being under the direct authority of a potentially intrusive system and often corrupt officialdom. However, the arrival of the Western missionaries with their intention to apostatize indigenous Christians changed the basis tenets of security that were central to the *millet* system.

The missionaries were from the start permitted to apostatize indigenous Christians as long as they did not engage in apostatizing Muslims. This apathy toward the indigenous non-Muslims of the Empire effectively undermined the *millet* system under which its non-Muslim subjects had peacefully existed. It removed the shield that had protected the *millets*. This resulted in divisions within the indigenous churches, which undermined the very foundations of the *millet* system. To their dismay, the indigenous *millets* found that the *millet* system under which they historically lived was no longer a protective shield, but a mere umbrella.

On a more general level, the complex interaction between Western intervention, the Tanzimat reforms, the rise of nationalism and the polarization around Islamism and
Turkification, in conjunction with major external factors, precipitated the final demise of the six hundred-year empire. The rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire is aptly represented by Barkey as the rise and fall of a solar system:

The Empire prospered as a solar system, with the planets circling the central sun, pulled in and held by the centre’s gravitational force. No other forces pulled at the periphery, nor did the orbits of the planets interact with one another, focused only on the centre. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a change of vast proportions for the Ottomans. The holdings on the periphery gained strength and grew freer of the gravity of the centre…. The rotations of the holdings on the periphery became less connected to the centre, increasingly pulled by the gravity of other centres in the international system, pulled outwards by war and commercial ties. The centre closed in on itself losing its flexibility in an attempt to reform. Religious identity emerged in the centre, weakening ties of legitimation to a diverse periphery…In the end, the Ottoman solar system was sufficiently weakened, and then flew apart, leaving a diminished sun.\textsuperscript{298}

\textsuperscript{298} Barkey, p. 294.
CHAPTER TWO

SYRIAN ORTHODOXY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

2.1 General

Syrian Orthodoxy in the nineteenth century was a mere shadow of its former self during the days of Bar Hebraeus (thirteenth century). This was the outcome of nearly two centuries of a stifled existence under the oppressive rules of the post-Mongol dynasties- the Qara Qoyunlu (the Black Sheep Turkumans) and Aq Qoyunlu (the White Sheep Turkumans) - and nearly three centuries of an existence at one of the remote margins of the Ottoman Empire. But the nineteenth century was a period of mounting losses and major challenges in the life of the Syrian Orthodox Church and its communities. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a general review of the state of Syrian Orthodoxy during this period, as background to the more specific topics and conditions discussed in the succeeding chapters.

The conversion to Catholicism at the hands of the Catholic missionaries that had commenced in the previous century in major centers such as Aleppo, Damascus, Emisa (Homs) and Mosul and their environs, grew more intense through most of the century; and the arrival of the Protestant missions mainly in the second half of the century added to the external challenges to Syrian Orthodoxy in the Middle East. Beyond the region, in southern India, the home of a large Syrian Orthodox Indian community, a troubling issue appeared on the horizon in the 1830s. Letters between the Patriarch and the clergy in India early in that period had led to the consecration of one of the Indian students who had come to Deir al-Za'faran for study as a bishop, based on credentials brought with him from India. However, it was subsequently discovered that the credentials were false, that the person concerned, Matthews, had been encouraged to take this course of action by the Church Missionary Society, the missionary wing of the Anglican Church in India, as part of their scheme to convert the Syrian Orthodox in that country to their brand of Protestantism. This soon developed into a major issue for the Syrian Orthodox Church and engaged subsequent Patriarchs, namely Jacob II, but particularly Peter III who travelled to India in 1875 to resolve the issue (see Chapter Three). This was the first journey ever made by a Syrian Orthodox Patriarch outside of the Middle East.
Looking beyond intra-Christian issues, the insecure environment in southeastern Anatolia, where most of the Syrian Orthodox lived, caused their towns and villages to be constantly at the mercy of the often abusive Kurdish tribes, which surrounded them. Deir al-Za‘faran, the Patriarchal seat since the thirteenth century, was invaded and occupied by the Kurds (see report by Horatio Southgate). The rebellion by Badr Khan in the 1840s against the central government wrought mayhem among the members of the Church of the East in Hakkari and also among some of the neighbouring Syrian Orthodox communities. However, some of the worst atrocities were committed during the Kurdish violence that started in 1895 (see Chapter Four).

On the internal front the accumulated decline of the previous centuries continued largely unchecked for the best part of the century in question. However, the efforts by Patriarch Peter III to resolve the Indian crisis afforded an opportunity of a positive interaction with the Anglican Church in seeking educational aid, based on the understanding of non-interference in the internal religious beliefs of the Syrian Orthodox. But because British policy was strictly based on mutual benefits, this aid was extremely limited since the Syrian Orthodox were unable to offer the British anything of significance in return for their favour (see Chapter Three).

The aim of this chapter is to present a broad picture of events as background to the material discussed in the following chapters.

2.2 Sources for this Chapter
In addition to utilizing published sources, particularly those by contemporary travellers, this chapter will for the first time analyse and utilise thousands of hitherto unexplored archival documents from the Patriarchal Archives in Deir al-Za‘faran, Mardin, Jerusalem and Bab Tuma (Damascus). The majority of these were letters sent from the community, both by groups and individuals, to their patriarch on all manner of subjects and issues that affected their lives. Nearly 5,700 of these letters have been analysed and the results are presented and discussed in this chapter.
2.3 The Land, the People and their Recent History

2.3.1 General

During the Ottoman rule, the Syrian Orthodox lived in two disparate regions of Asia: in the Middle East and on the southeastern coast of India (see Chapter Three). In the Middle East, they lived mainly in the southeastern provinces of Anatolia, in certain districts in Syria and in northern Iraq. In the nineteenth century the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire were impoverished regions; having attracted little or no attention in the course of the previous centuries, when the empire’s main concerns were in the Balkans and in the territories further west. Prior to the Ottoman rule in these regions, which commenced in the early sixteenth century with the rule of Selim I, these regions had been under local feudal rules that followed the Mongol reign of the region from mid-thirteenth century.

The majority of the Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic and Chaldean populations in Anatolia lived in the Vilayet of Diyarbakir, whereas the majority of the followers of the Church of the East lived in the Hakkari mountainous region, which was part of the Vilayet of Van. The rest of the Syriac Christians lived in the main population centers of Urfa to the south, Kharput to the northwest, and Siirt and Bitlis to the east of the Tigris. These populations, like the other numerous Christian communities in other provinces (Armenians, Greeks, Chaldeans, or followers of the Church of the East), did not form a majority. In the eastern vilayets the Kurds were the majority. The Muslim presence was reinforced with Circassians, Chechens, Azeries and Crimean Tartars, who had arrived in these vilayets as disfranchized settlers from lands that had seen wars of independence. The arrival of the newcomers added to the instability and volatility of the region.

The 1876-1878 war with Russia wrought further devastation to the roads of the eastern vilayets of Anatolia, which stretched east from Erzrum to Lake Van. To the south, battles against the Kurdish insurgents in the Nisibin (Nisibis) and Hakkari regions rendered the entire territory most insecure. Somewhat further south, the unruly nomadic Arab tribes living in an area that bordered the Syrian and the Mardin plains between Jazirah (Cizre) and Jabal Sinjar, added to the insecurity of the region. As one of the six eastern vilayets of Anatolia, Diyarbakir

was bordered to the north by the vilayets of Mumurt-al-Aziz and Erzurum; on the south by the vilayets of Aleppo and Mosul; and to the east by the vilayets of Bitlis and Van.

The city of Diyarbakir, known as Amida in ancient Greek and Amid in Syriac, had been part of Aramean, the Neo-Assyrian, Median, and later Persian, Roman and Byzantine territories. Situated on the banks of the Tigris, it was the administrative capital of the Diyarbakir vilayat. In contrast with the neglect that it had endured over recent centuries, Amida had previously enjoyed a celebrated history. As an early Christian center, it was enlarged and its defences strengthened by new walls around the city under the Roman Emperor Constantius II. The region in which it was situated was often a battlefield between the warring Byzantine and Persian Empires. It fell into the hands of the Persians in 359 and nearly three centuries later, in 639, to the Arab Bakir tribe, from which it derives its name. During the later Abbasid period (i.e., the eleventh century) and until its conquest by the Ottomans in 1515-1517, Diyarbakir, like all the surrounding regions of Anatolia and beyond into northern Iraq and Syria, witnessed the ravages of successive invasions that plunged these regions into complete devastation.

The city of Mardin was built on steeply sloped land that features a rock of the citadel after which it is named (Mardin) Marde in Syriac for impregnable fortress. The topography of the area is such that it provides a commanding view south, toward the Syrian Plain. To the south of Mardin, rises Mount Izla (also known as the Mountain of Nisibis) as a low mountain that extends along the border with Syria. Though called a mountain it is essentially a 77-kilometre ridge that runs east - west with a plateau (Tur Abdin) located to the north and the

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300 The Diyarbakir vilayet was divided into three sanjak (districts): Diyarbakir, Mardin and Arghana, each headed by a mutassarif, who resided in the main city of the sanjak. The sanjaks were administratively divided into kazas, each headed by a qaimmaqam. The Sanjak of Mardin, where most of the Syrian Orthodox lived, consisted of four kazas: Avineh, with administrative center at Savour, Nisibin, Jazirah and Midyat. All administrative posts in these vilayets were held by Turks, or at times by Kurdish notables. The vali, who resided in the capital of the vilayet, was a dignitary appointed by the Sultan and who thus wielded an authority that was crucial to the stability of the vilayet.

301 The entry of the Seljuks into Anatolia following the defeat of the Byzantine Emperor Romanus V Diogenes in the battle of Manzikert in 1071, marked the influx of the Seljuk Turks into this region. The control of the city and the surrounding region changed hands during various Turkic dynasties, becoming part of the Sultanate of Rum between 1241 and 1259, and the capital of the beylik of the Artuklu Dynasty. It was also ruled by the Turkic dynasties of the Qara Qoyunlu (The Black Sheep) in the period 1375-1468 and of Aq Qoyunlu (The White sheep) in the period 1378 – 1501. Their rules extended down to Mosul and Aleppo. The region in question came under occupation by Shah Ismail of Persia in 1507, an occupation that lasted only a few years before the noted Ottoman conquest.
Syrian Plain to the south. Dara is located at the eastern end of this ridge and Serwan at the other end.\textsuperscript{303}

In Syria, apart from the main cities of Aleppo and Damascus, the Syrian Orthodox lived mainly in Homs (Emesa) and in a number of small towns situated between Homs and Damascus: Saddad, al-Qariatain and al-Nabak. Homs, a large city located on the Orontes River 100 kilometres to the north of Damascus, was historically an important link between the interior cities and the Mediterranean coast. The famous monastery of Mar Musa al Habashi (Moses the Abyssinian) is located close to Sadad, approximately 60 kilometres to the south east of Homs. The other famous monastery in this area is that of Mar Elian, which is located approximately 40 kilometres to the north of Damascus.

During the nineteenth century the Syrian Orthodox of Iraq lived mainly in Mosul, the Iraqi region’s second largest city, and in its environs to the east of the Tigris in what is known as the Nineveh Plain. One of the important towns in this plain is Bakhdida (Qaraqosh) located 30 kilometres to the southeast of Mosul, and close to the renowned sixth century monastery of Deir Mar Behnam.\textsuperscript{304} Other towns include Bartella, located 20 kilometres to the east of Mosul; Baashika and nearby Bahzani both located close to Deir Mar Matta. This fifth century monastery, uniquely situated near the top of the Alfaf Mountain located 20 kilometres to the northeast of Mosul, is counted as one of the oldest monasteries in the world. At a distance of 120 kilometres to the northeast of Mosul, lies Sinjar an important town that is perched on a mountain by the same name. This town which lay on the trade route to Mardin gained particular importance following the World War I massacres where many of the exiled found refuge.

\textbf{2.3.2 Travellers’ Accounts}

Foreign travellers often provide valuable insights that are necessary to our understanding of many areas, particularly those that are neglected by history. Quite often their accounts may be the only ones on which one can rely. The regions of the Ottoman Empire where Oriental Christians lived from the eighteenth to the twentieth century are examples of such situations. Some of the accounts are of general nature, not specifically aimed at a particular church or

\textsuperscript{303} Hans Hollerweger, \textit{Tur 'Abdin}, p. 314.
\textsuperscript{304} In the course of the Catholic conversion campaign in the nineteenth century Deir Mar Behnam was taken over by the Syrian Catholics as of 1839.
community; others are aimed at the study of the conditions of specific churches and their communities. Examples of the first type are offered by the accounts by William Ainsworth, Mark Sykes and Gertrude Bell. Examples of the second type include those by Horatio Southgate and Oswald Parry, which addressed the Syrian Orthodox. This second category also includes the more numerous accounts written describing the regions inhabited by the followers of the Church of the East in the Hakkari region of Ottoman Turkey, Urmia in Persia and the northern region of Iraq. The traveller observations summarized here are presented in a chronological order.

Interests in this region by archaeologists, missionary and other travellers commenced during the first half of the nineteenth century. One of the first nineteen century travellers in the region that included Tur Abdin was William Ainsworth, an archaeologist. Reporting on his “Euphrates Expedition” Ainsworth described Tur Abdin as a “remarkably lonely and barren region of hard lime stones tilted up by igneous rocks extends from the Tigris at Jezirah ibn Omar to the site of Dara, and is prolonged to Mardin, whilst on the plain at its south-western extremity is the renowned city of Nisibis. This region, which it took us two days to traverse, is known by the name of Jebel Tur, an old Aramean name for a mountain, which has entered into the composition of many significant names, as Taurus, we may even find a relic of the same name in Mam Tor in our own country…” He found this district to be infertile and abounding in wolves and was happy to leave it: “It was a pleasant change when on Sunday, March 26, we left this region (not a very safe one to travel in), and entered upon the plain of Nisibis…” His visit included a number of monasteries including Deir al-Za‘faran, Deir Mor Yakub, and towns such as Mardin, Kalaat-Marah, located half-way between Mardin and Deir al-Za‘faran, and Bnebil, located to the northeast of Mardin.

Mark Sykes, the future formulator of the Sykes-Picot accord after World War I period, navigated the Tigris from its upper sources, passing through Hasanseif, with its famous cliff

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305 William Francis Ainsworth, A Personal Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition.
306 Mark Sykes, Through Five Turkish Provinces: London, Bickers & Son, 1900.
307 Gertrude Bell, Amurath to Amurath.
308 Horatio Southgate, Narrative of a Tour Through Armenia.
310 Ainsworth, A Personal Narrative,
311 Ibid., p333.
312 Ibid., p334
313 Mark Sykes, Through Five Turkish Provinces.
formation down to Mosul. His account, published in 1900, makes passing references to the lands of the Syrians. His main interest was in the Hakkari Mountains, home of the “Nestorians” in Anatolia.

Gertrude Bell, the well-known explorer, archaeologist, and subsequently British emissary to mandated Iraq, travelled in many parts of the Near East starting from 1892. In the course of her two journeys in 1909 and 1911, she surveyed and photographed most of the historic churches in Tur Abdin. Bell described her “Journey Along the Banks of the Euphrates” which she undertook in 1909 in *Amurath to Amurath*.\(^{314}\) Her findings from these two journeys included unpublished accounts, which were elaborated on by Marilia Mundell Manga.\(^{315}\)

One of the most enlightening early accounts by a traveller in the region, except Tur Abdin, was that by Horatio Southgate, a minister in the American Episcopal Church.\(^{316}\) Southgate stated that the purpose of his visit was to explore the state of the Oriental Churches in the Ottoman Empire and Persia. He visited a number of countries in the region twice over the period from 1837 to 1841. His first journey was in parts of Persia, Kurdistan, Armenia and Mesopotamia and his second, which commenced in Constantinople on May 7, 1841, was focused on the Syrian [Jacobite] Church.\(^{317}\)

Southgate commenced his first trip from Constantinople in the summer of 1837, travelling east through northern Anatolia into Sivas and Erzerum, and through the historically mixed Armenian-Kurdish territory to Bitlis and Lake Van, crossing over to Persian territory Salmas in Urmia. His travel in the rest of Persia took him to Tibriz, Tehran, Hamadan and Kermanshah, before crossing west into "Chaldea" and heading to Baghdad. In Iraq, he travelled from Baghdad to Kirkuk, then to Mosul. On the last leg of his journey in March 1838 Southgate headed for Mardin and Diyarbakir on his way back to Constantinople. During his second trip, he visited the Syrian Orthodox territories of Kharput down through Mardin, Deir al-Zaafaran down along the territory to the west of the Tigris: Jazirah and Mosul. He then travelled back through Mardin and Diyarbakir ending his second journey in August of 1841.

In the course of his first journey, Southgate made insightful observations about the state of the places that are of interest here: Baghdad, Mosul and Mardin. In Baghdad, he remarked

\(^{314}\) Gertrude Bell, *Amurath to Amurath*.
\(^{315}\) Marilia Mundell Manga, *The Churches and Monasteries of Tur Abdin*.
\(^{316}\) Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour Through Armenia*, pp. 281-283.
\(^{317}\) Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Vis.*
that “the traces of ancient glory of this renowned seat of the caliphs are still indeed visible but are the traces of a glory that is past.” He found that many of the fifty or so mosques to be in so ruinous a condition that prayer was no longer offered in them. He notes that “in no respect has Baghdad more remarkably declined from its ancient condition than in the state of its Medresseh.” This ruinous state had been compounded by the plague that occurred in the fall of 1831, which, according to the estimates of the British residents had wiped out two thirds of the population. The city’s fortunes were further reduced by a devastating flood the following spring, and scarcity of provisions threatened the whole population with famine. Consequently, “madressehs were left without professors, mosques without their imams, and the altars of Christianity without ministers. The famous splendor of the court was swept away and the whole city became a melancholic abode of a diminished and bereaved population.” The population which had previously been between 100,000 and 120,000 was at that point no more then 40,000. Among these were 1,200 to 1,300 Christians and 15,000 Jews. The Christian population comprised 125 Armenian families, 25 families of Armenian Catholics 100 of Chaldeans and Syrian Catholics. The Armenians had a church but no bishop, the Armenian Catholics worshiped by themselves in a house, the Chaldeans and Syrian Catholics with ten or twelve Roman Catholics (European families in the city) worshiped in one church but at different times according to their different usages.

In Mosul, Southgate was struck by the extent of the city, but also by the extent of the ruins. This last feature was attributed to the ravages of famine, then by plague that had occurred in previous years and left the city desert-like. He estimated the population to be of a similar size to that of Baghdad, namely 40,000. Amongst them were 1,500 Syrian Orthodox, a similar number of Syrian Catholics, and more than 3000 Chaldeans. The Jews numbered around 1,000. The administration of the city had seen recent changes from the late Jalili period, which was very chaotic, to a more orderly state of affairs when Istanbul took a more direct charge of the city by sending its own man to govern. There were eight Chaldean churches in the city, four of which were in the same enclosure, and under the same roof, “-of those four three were deserted and grass was growing to their very door-stones...”. “All the churches

318 Southgate, Narrative of a Tour Through Armenia, p. 166.
320 Ibid, p. 180
were poor and neglected and the furniture of the sanctuary was time-worn and mean. The interior was dark, and destitute of the least appearance of ornament or beauty of any kind. In all these respects they were inferior to the churches of the Syrians.”

This must be the Church of Mar Esha’ia, which is a cluster of churches, the oldest having been built before Mosul existed.

Southgate’s return journey to Mardin took him past Sinjar Mountain, a plateau region located well to the west of the Tigris, but he avoided Tur Abdin, heading instead to Mardin. He described the population of Mardin as having 3000 families: 500 Armenian Catholic, 400 “Jacobites,” 50 Syrian Catholic, 100 Chaldeans and 10 Jewish and the rest Muslims.

2.4 Tur Abdin: the “Heartland of the Syriac Tradition”

2.4.1 History and People

The Syrian Orthodox in the Diyarbakir vilayet were mainly concentrated in the Tur Abdin, a region where the people had managed to preserve their traditional territory, thanks to its mountainous nature. Historically, Christianity in Mesopotamia is believed to have been introduced initially to the urban centres and then to the rural areas. In the fourth century, St. Jacob, bishop of nearby Nisibis (d. 338) and his famous deacon St. Ephrem (d. 373), who was renowned for his poetry, would have frequented this region. It was in this region too, that in the course of the fifth and sixth centuries many famous monasteries came into being, such as the Monastery of Mor Awgen, who, according to tradition, was the founder of monasticism in Mesopotamia, and Mor Abraham, which was established by the East Syriac monastic reformer, Mor Abraham of Kashkar.

It was, according to Brock, “thanks to the blossoming of monasteries all over the plateau in the ensuing centuries that Tur Abdin has sometimes been accorded the title of ‘the Mount Athos of the East’ by European writers.” Brock adds: “Accordingly today, for many people Tur Abdin is renowned primarily for its numerous ancient churches and monasteries, some of which still function, despite the vicissitudes and ravages of time (not least in the present [i.e., 20th] century). For the Syrian Orthodox Church, however, it is much more than this, for Tur

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325 Ibid.
Abdin is above all a heartland of Syriac Tradition which reaches back to the early centuries of the Christian Church." Brock then reminds us of the little-known feature of the cultural role which Tur Abdin played in the transmission of texts by its monastic scribes, through whom many of the works on the spiritual life by some of the great East Syriac monastic writers, such as Isaac of Nineveh and John the Elder (Yuhanon Sobo), came to be shared in the Syrian Orthodox circles also. This might have occurred when some of the monasteries on Izlo, which had originally been East Syriac, eventually passed into Syrian Orthodox hands. Brock concludes his commentary by lamenting and at the same time reminding us:

"Though sadly depleted by large scale emigration, Tur Abdin nevertheless remains very much a spiritual focal-point, not only for the Syrian Orthodox Tradition, but also for the whole Christian tradition, not least since it is here, in the Monastery of Mor Gabriel, that a liturgical language, very close to the dialect of Aramaic that Christ will have spoken, is most lovingly and successfully nurtured—definitely not as a museum piece, but as very much part of a venerable and living Tradition which has enriched, and continues to enrich, the entire Christian tradition." 

As we will see, this linguistic uniqueness characterises the Plain of Nineveh in northern Iraq.

Barsaum, provides an extensive historical perspective of this region, which until the ravages of World War I, was the heartland of Syriac Christianity. In addition to providing a modern perspective on the geography of the region, Barsoum refers the reader to Arab geographers in their historical description of this region. These include ninth century geographers Abu al-Qasim ibn Khurudadbih and Abu al-Qasim ibn Hawqal of Baghdad, and the famed Yaqut al-Hamawi (d.1222).

The people of Tur Abdin were subjected to repeated attacks by the Assyrian King Shalmaneser I between 1276 and 1256 B.C., and, according to Assyrian cuniform inscriptions found in the ruins of the region, by the Assyrian King Adad-nivari II who reigned from 911-889 B.C. In 879 B.C. Ashurnasirpal II proudly proclaimed “I have subdued Matiate (Midyat)

326 Ibid.
327 Ibid, 23
329 Ibid, pp. 2, 3.
and its villages; I took much spoil from there, and laid upon them tribute and heavy taxes.”

This region was also very close to Amida (Diyarbakir), Marde (Mardin), Dara and Nisibis (Nisibin) where the main battles between the Roman and the Persian Empires had raged.

For nearly 1,000 years, between its conquest by Alexander the Great and the arrival of the Arabs, northern Mesopotamia was part of an unsettled frontier between the oft warring Greco-Romans and the Persians. It was inhabited by Syriac speakers, Arabs, Kurds and, later on by the Turks under different dynasties including the Ottomans who governed the area for nearly 400 years starting from around 1515.

The repeated wars between the Byzantines and the Persians, which spanned the sixth and seventh centuries, had significant repercussions on the Christians living on either side of the shifting borders. The East Syrians and the West Syrians found themselves under authorities with different persuasions and loyalties, a state of affairs that placed the region under repeated hardships. The Arab conquest in the seventh century removed the frontier beside which Tur Abdin had lain for nearly 1,000 years. However, the general fortunes of Mesopotamian Christians continued to fluctuate according to the policies of the individual Islamic rulers throughout the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. From then until the start of the Ottoman rule, the Christians in the entire region of northern Mesopotamia found themselves in a chaotic situation under under feudal rulers, who were at war constantly amongst themselves, wars in which the defenceless Christians were at the mercy of ruthless attackers, and their villages and churches the subject of repeated plunder.

The Syriac Chronicles of Michael the Syrian (d. 1199), of Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), and of the Anonymous Edessan 1234 (d. believed shortly after 1234), provide extensive accounts relating to the history of Tur Abdin and surrounding territory. However, the Continuation of Bar Hebraeus’s civil Chronicle by Priest Addai of Basabrina (in Tur Abdin) carries the description of part of the region’s history forward well into the early 1500s.

The continual depletion of the Christian population in these regions by conversion to Islam is underscored by examples of the conversion of the Muhallamiyya, a vast region lying

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331 Bell, p. 301.
332 Barsoum, History of Tur Abdin, pp. 63-68.
333 Priest Addai describes events occurring in 1401, 1405, 1413, 1416, 1417, 1418, 1425, 1426, 1431, 1433, 1438, 1441, 1448, 1449, 1451, 1453, 1454, 1455, 1457, 1460, 1462, 1464, 1477, 1492 and 1492, see Barsoum, History of Tur Abdin, pp. 68-75.
to the south of Tur Abdin. The oppression of the Christians in around 1583 to 1609 by Kurdish aghas and governors intensified to the extent that many, estimated at between 6,000 to 8,000, converted to Islam to escape persecution.  

Two maps are provided in Appendix A, one by courtesy of Hans Hollerweger from his book on Tur Abdin, and the other reproduced from the book by Oswald Parry, which itself had been taken from a publication by A. Andrus of the American Mission in Mardin. Most of the towns and monasteries that were still standing at the start of the twentieth century appear on one or the other of these maps.

2.4.2 Oswald Parry in Tur Abdin

Oswald Parry of Magdalene College, Oxford visited the “East” in 1892 for a period of six months on behalf of the Syrian Patriarchate Education Society, in order to inspect elementary schools already established by the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch with help from England, and consequently to promote further educational assistance. The society had been set up to administer educational aid to the “Old Syrian church” following the visit by Peter III to London in 1874. Parry’s visit, coming almost 50 years after Southgate’s second visit, provides an update on the conditions of the country of the Syrians in a century that had witnessed so much change here, as in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. As a result of his visit, Parry authored a book in which he provided insightful information about the region and its people.

Parry landed in Alexandretta, the port of Aleppo. From Aleppo he travelled to Urfa, Diyarbakir, Mardin, and Deir al-Za’faran. He then headed to Mosul through the Tel-Harran, Dara, Nisibin and Aznaur, and travelled back to Mardin through Simel, Feishkhabur, and Tchelgha. This was followed by his tour throughout a considerable portion of Tur Abdin to an extent not attempted hitherto by other travellers.

Parry’s tour throughout Tur Abdin took him first to Ma’sarta, then to Midyat for which he had the following interesting description: “There is plenty of color everywhere in the East, but more here than usual thanks to the rich maroon, with which the women dye their clothes, and the picturesque dresses of boys and men; long white tunics with gaily striped scarves

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334 Ibid, p.119.
335 Hans Hollerweger, Tur Abdin.
336 Parry, p. 168.
337 Oswald H. Parry, Six Months in a Syrian Monastery.
around the waist, and gorgeous red and yellow headdresses, of which the ends of the kerchief are stuck up like wings upon a Norseman’s helmet. A very handsome set of men they are too, these mountain Syrians, something very different from the courteous townsmen of Mardin, but no less hospitable; wilder and far more impetuous, but with the spirit that seems capable of better things than the majority of their more polished countrymen.”

From Midyat Parry headed north to Hassan-el-kief, a large village on the Tigris. He describes Hassan-el-kief, a mountainside town on the Tigris that crossed the Tigris to the northern bank towards the western pass through the mountains that divide it from the Plain of Bisher, leading to the Monastery of Mar Quriaqos. On his way back to Midyat, Parry visited Deir al-Salib, a monastery not far from Hassan-el-Kief, where he wished to see a manuscript that was known to have existed in that church. His encounter at that church indicated a growing appreciation of the value of old church books and liturgical manuscripts and is worth recording:

All my entreaties, however, could not persuade the people to bring out the book; they stoutly denied that there were any books in the place, although it was only the absence of the priest that made them do so. As a rule by never allowing it to be suspected that I wished to buy any property belonging to the churches, I was enabled to see more than would have otherwise been possible; for, thanks to the ravages of a museum agent and others, the people are exceedingly cautious in displaying anything of value that they possess. In addition to this the solemn curse of the Patriarch has been put against anyone who shall sell or give away any property of the Syrian Church.

2.4.3 Aphram Barsoum in Tur Abdin

During his travels in Tur Abdin in the early twentieth century Barsoum counted nearly 118 towns and villages that were still inhabited, which included 23 large and 10 small churches. Among the larger churches he cited: The Great Church (Cathedral) of Hah, dedicated to martyr Mor Sobo; the Church of Mor Addai in the village of Ishtarko; the Church of Mor Sobo and the Great Church of Mor Jirjis (Georgius) in the village of Arbio; and the church of Mor Stephanos in the village of Kafyat (Kafar Be), to name a few.

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Barsoum identifies 25 monasteries in this region of which he described eight as major. These are: the Monastery of Mor Gabriel; the Monastery of the Cross in Beth El, the Great Monastery of the Mother of God in Hah; the Monastery of Mor Jacob the Hermit in the village of Salah; the Monastery of Mor Abrohom (Ibrahim) of Kashkar in Beth Gugel; the Monastery of Mor Awgen; the Monastery of Mor Melke of Qulzum; and the Monastery of Mor Abrohom near Midyat.  

The Monastery of Mor Gabriel, historically known as the monastery of Qartmin and also as Deir el-'Umr (shortened version of Dayro-d-Umro d-Mor Shemun Qartmoyo (the monastery of the abode of Mor Shamoun of Qartmin), is located to the southeast of Midyat and to the east of the ruins of the historical town of Basabrina. This monastery has an illustrious but also tragic history that goes back to 397 CE and to its founders Shmouyel (Samuel) of Eshtin and his disciple Shem’un (Simeon) of Qartmin and subsequently, when its status as monastery was enhanced because of the care it received at the hands of Mor Gabriel, when the number of monks in it reached 300, and the support he received from Emperor Anastasius (491-518).

2.4.4 Under the Mercy of the Kurdish Rulers

The illustrious history of the region was marred, repeatedly, by the calamities that befell the entire territory, whether by disease, generally plague, or by aggression of the Kurdish Bakhti rulers from 1300 to 1855, starting with Amir Abd al-Aziz, who ruled around 1300, and ending with al-Din Scher IV and Musawwar Beg II, sons of Sayf al-Din Beg II, who were captured and taken as prisoners to Constantinople in 1855. Most of these rulers left nothing but destruction and oppression in Tur Abdin. The worst among these were Sharif II (1505-1513) and Shamdin or Shams-al-Din (1711-1714), and more recently by Badr Khan, the notorious Kurdish feudal chief (1833-1846), and by Izz-al-Din Scher and his brother Masud (1854-1855).

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341 Ibid, for a complete list of monasteries, see Barsoum, History of Tur Abdin, pp. 19 and 20.
342 See also Andrew Palmer “The 1600-Year History of the Monastery of Qartmin (Mor Gabriyel),” in Hans Hollerweger, Tur Abdin, Linz:Freunde des Turabdin, p. 38.
343 Barsoum refers to Arabic translation (1951) of the Sharifnamah by the Kurdish Emir Sharif al-Din Badlisi, pp.156-160. Barsoum also refers to the Egyptian writers: al-Qalqashandi, Subh al-Asha, from whom he copied three names: Saif al-Din I, Izz al-Din Ahmad, and Is, who ruled from 1330 to the end of October 1362.
While the Assyrians were the main target of Badr Khan’s aggressions, the unarmed Syrian Orthodox were also easy for him and other Kurdish warlords whose power extended throughout the mountainous region of northern Mesopotamia. In the course of his return journey from Mardin to Istanbul, Southgate passed through Kabbi Keui, a large Syrian village on the Tigris, where Muphrian Abdul Ahad of Tur Abdin was in refuge from Bedr Khan. The Muphrian had been two years absent from Mar Gabriel, the seat of his Diocese. That monastery had been fired on by Bedr Khan and was deserted. The Muphrian had been driven from his diocese by Bedr Khan, who wished to kill him for some complaint which he had preferred against the Bey before the Pasha of Diyarbakir. In a footnote Southgate records his grief at the later news of the death of the Muphrian:

He since returned, and I am grieved to add, has recently been put to death, by order of this Kurdish chief. He had been sent for by the Bey, and on the road was met by ten armed Kurds, (one of them a near relation to Bedr Khan Bey), who immediately shot him down, ripped him open, and took out his heart, which they carried away, probably as a token to the Bey of his death. This infamous man, to conceal his agency of the crime, immediately charged it upon the Syrians themselves, and fined the Syrian village nearest to the place of murder, 15,000 piastres, (about $600), for having murdered their Bishop!345

**Syriac Manuscripts as Wadding of Guns…**

Southgate recites his experience in visiting the once famous library at Deir al-Za’faran:

I had heard much of its value and expected to find it a rich repository of Syriac literature. What was my surprise, to find it consisted of no more than fifty volumes piled together on a shelf in a low, dark room, and covered thick with dust. Most of them were works in Arabic written in the Syriac character and the greater part were injured by time, neglect, and rats….The Bishop who accompanied me, told me that the rest were destroyed by Kurds during their occupation of the Monastery. They used them, he said, for wadding to their guns, and for culinary and other purposes.346

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Southgate, reciting recent history of oppression under Kurdish local feudal neighbours, notes that Deir al-Za‘faran “has been twice occupied by the Kurds, who held it at one time for forty years, and at another ten. It was only about five years ago that it was rescued the second time. While it was in their hands it went rapidly into decay, and when it was restored, it was little better than a ruin.”

2.4.5 Tur Abdin, a Separate Patriarchate

In 1364, when Isma’il was Patriarch, Tur Abdin seceded from the Apostolic See of Antioch at Deir al-Za‘faran. This break came as a result of a personal misunderstanding between Isma’il and Basilius Saba, Bishop of Salah that was caused by an ill-meaning third party. The historical accounts indicate that Isma’il’s arrogance and mismanagement of the matter enraged other bishops in Tur Abdin and led them to declare Tur Abdin a separate patriarchate. They enthroned Basilius as its first patriarch with his seat at Deir Mor Jacob in Salah. Saba held this position until his death in 1389. At that point, the bishops of Tur Abdin elected a successor, who, as in the case of the Patriarch at Deir al-Za‘faran, assumed the honorific title of Ignatius. The schism lasted 475 years, a period during which spurious ecclesiastical titles, including the maphrianate, were conferred on people, some of whom were undeserving. During this period five attempts at reconciliation with Deir al-Za‘faran failed but Patriarch Elias II of the latter monastery was finally successful at ending the schism in 1839. Irrespective of the initial reasons of the schism, the fact that it lasted so long provides a clear indication the state of decline in the Church during this period.

2.5 Ottoman Population Statistics

Recently, Emirullah Akgündüz provided an in-depth study of the Syriac Christians of Diyarbakir in the late nineteenth century. Largely based on his Ottoman statistical sources

348 Maphrian is an ecclesiastic rank that closely corresponds to Catholicos and is used to designate the prelate who holds the second rank after the Patriarch in the Syrian Orthodox Church. The Syriac word maphryanō literally means one who bears fruit. The oldest maphrianate was that of Tagrit, also known as the Maphryanate of the East. The Maphrianate of Tur Abdin note above was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Tur Abdin. The twentieth century saw the establishment of the Maphrianate of India. For further details see G. A. Kiraz, “Maphrian” in Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage, p. 264.
Akgündüz provides a rather rare and significant survey and discussion of the social, cultural, economic and political conditions of the Syriac communities in Diyarbakir in that period, when the city embraced all four of the Syriac religious communities within its borders (i.e., Orthodox, Catholic, Church of the East and Chaldean).

The Diyarbakir city salname of 1870 to 71 indicated that there were 1,434 Syrian Christian Orthodox, 976 Chaldeans, and 174 Syrian Catholics resident in the city of Diyarbakir at that time. Among the non-Muslims, the Armenian Orthodox (Apostolic Armenian) were in the majority, followed closely by the Catholics (i.e., Armenian Catholics, Syriac Catholics, Chaldeans and Greek Catholics). However, if every Catholic community is considered separately, then the Syriac Orthodox was the second largest non-Muslim community in the city. There was also a small number of Protestants and Jews.

The last population count in Diyarbakir salnames was for the year 1901 to 1902. Although these statistics differentiate between different religious groups, it does not distinguish between the different sanjacks of Diyarbakir. Of a total population of 398,785, the non-Muslims were approximately 20%. In the district of Diyarbakir, with a total population of 161,237 the percentage of the non-Muslims was 25%, and included 26,784 Armenian Orthodox. The number of the Armenian Orthodox in the province (vilayet) was 46,237.

It may be seen from these figures that between the years 1870 and 1901, the Syriac Orthodox was the largest Syriac community and the second largest Christian community after the Armenians. However, as Akgündüz points out, “the trustworthiness of all population figures, including those of the Ottoman salnames, is questionable and, indeed, still debated.”

**Christian Schools**

Based on the maarif Salnames, the education yearbooks published by the province, for the years 1898, 1899 and 1901, there were five Christian schools in the city of Diyarbakir: a Capuchin school run by the Capuchin missionaries, Ermeni Mektebi run by the Armenians; the Suryani Mektebi run by the Syrian Orthodox; the Rushdiya Mektebi run by the Chaldeans, and

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351 *Salnames* are official Ottoman yearbooks published by both central and local authorities. Published by both central and local Ottoman authorities, they included annual economic, statistical, historical data. The first *salname* was published in 1847 by Grand Vizier Koca Rashid Pasha. Military *salnames* listed military personnel; state *salnames* listed civil servants; and provincial *salnames* listed provincial administrators, as well as population figures of the province along with its economical data.

352 Akgündüz, p.222.

the Protestant Mektebi run by the Protestants.\textsuperscript{354} The drop in the number of students over the years reported in \textit{maarif salnames} may well be due to the social impact of the violence of the Kurds in and around the city starting from late 1895 and lasting through the first half of 1896.

2.6 Linguistic Profile

If we briefly consider the languages spoken by the Syriac Orthodox communities in Anatolia in the nineteenth century, we would find that residents of Mardin, Bne bile, Qal’at Mara, Ma’serti, Qillith, Isfis and Azikh spoke Arabic, while those of Diyarbakir and Kharpul, partly Arabic and/or Turkish and/or Armenian, and those further north spoke mainly Turkish and/or Armenian. The community in Urfa (Edessa) generally spoke Turkish and often Armenian. The majority of the people of the Tur Abdin region, with Midyat as its main city, spoke \textit{Turoyo}, which is a Neo-Aramaic vernacular. Towns speaking this vernacular, in addition to Midyat, included Hah, Ainward, Kafro, Kafirzi, Anhil, Morobo, Habsoos, Mlahto, Booty, Anhil and Mhaiziz. In the eastern part of Tur Abdin, such as Korboran, or further to the east of the Tigris, such as Bisharie, and around Deir Mar Quriasoqs, Kurdish was mainly spoken, often in addition to one of the other languages noted above.\textsuperscript{355} In Syria, Arabic was the spoken language, as it was also in most Syrian Orthodox communities in Iraq, with the exception of Bartilla and Bakhdeeda where a local Neo-Aramaic vernacular, \textit{(Surath)} was spoken, often alongside Arabic. For the language used in correspondence, as opposed to that spoken, see the next section.

2.7 People Writing to their Patriarch

2.7.1 Introduction

It can be seen from the preceding discussion that the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century has come down to us largely through studies and field observations made by people from other lands: travellers, church missionaries and diplomatic mission personnel. Due to difficult travel conditions, often marred with issues of safety, in-depth studies of communities presented considerable obstacles. This was particularly the case in


\textsuperscript{355} I am indebted to several individuals with background knowledge of local dialects for their help in mapping out an approximate linguistic layout of the Syrian Orthodox communities in Anatolia. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Assad Sauma for his help in this during a conversation on July 19, 2012.
many rural regions of the Diyarbakir vilayet, especially in Tur Abdin. A further factor was that many of the reports by missionaries were often biased in support of the aims of their missions. Despite these shortcomings, one should acknowledge with a sense of appreciation the efforts of those individuals by whose work an important gap in the history of the region has been filled. With the state of cultural decline that was so prevalent among the Syrian Orthodox clergies in their communities, very little has come to us from accounts of the church itself and its clergy. The singular important exception, though, is the unique work by Ayoub Barsoum (later Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum) from 1905 to 1913, when he was a young monk in Deir al-Za‘faran (see Chapters Five and Six.)

The recent access to the patriarchal archives of the Syrian Orthodox Church, principally in Deir al-Za‘faran and in the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, has changed the historicity profile of the subject and enhanced the potential for a more informed study. This access has paved the way for a unique look into the life of the Syrian Orthodox communities, particularly those that lived in Ottoman Turkey, during the second half of the nineteenth and the first few years of the twentieth century. Since most of the Syrian Orthodox population, as with other Christian populations in Turkey, was forced to abandon the land of its ancestors, the referenced archival records stand to represent a uniquely valuable conduit to past history of these communities. The tragic circumstances of the forced separation of these communities from their historical homeland would have likely led to an amnesia. Couple this with a desire to forget the painful past, a situation that further underlines the exceptional importance of the noted archival material, as it stands to constitute one of the very few sources on the state of the Church and the community during that period. The majority of this archival material consists of letters that were written during the second half of the nineteenth century to the patriarch of the day from a variety of sources from within the Church and community, as well as from external sources.356

The archival documents also included letters and encyclicals issued by patriarchs. The oldest of these are probably those by Patriarch Elias II (1838-1847). One of these was a letter dated in 1841 in Arabic addressed to a foreign ecclesiastic dignitary357 (See Section 2.10) and

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357 Jerusalem Archives, document J-DSC_0026.
two are encyclicals, one in Syriac dated May 15, 1845\textsuperscript{358} and the other in Garshuni Arabic dated October 1846.\textsuperscript{359}

2.7.2 Analysis of Letters to the Patriarch

i) Parameters

Given the wide range of topics covered by these letters, a comprehensive analysis of this enormous collection can only be a long-term project involving several teams. For the current study, the purpose of the analysis has been set to gain a general representative perspective of the state of the Syrian Orthodox Church and community in the nineteenth century. This includes the state of its dioceses, the Church’s relations with other churches and with the Sublime Porte, the socioeconomic condition of its communities, and inter-community relations.

To serve the intended study, a large proportion of the archival material, consisting of approximately 5,700 letters addressed to the patriarch of the day has been analyzed. The analyzed material constituted the majority of the Deir al-Zaʿfaran and the Mardin collections. The analysis was based on the following parameters: period; source (sender) identity; geographic provenance; subject matter, or issue; language of correspondence.

A form, the Archival Data Analysis Form, was designed to meet the first four objectives.\textsuperscript{360} This form was developed through an iterative process that started with a limited number (i.e., half dozen) of parameters for the subject of the correspondence, and increasing this number to nearly two dozen entries based on the wide range of issues that were found to have been raised in these documents as work proceeded.

ii) Period

The period in the Archival Data Analysis Form has not been defined by specific date or dates but rather in terms of the reign of patriarchs. This was done for two reasons. First, the date is

\textsuperscript{358} Bab Tuma Archives, document P1090957.
\textsuperscript{359} Bab Tuma Archives, document P1090952.
\textsuperscript{360} The issues examined in The Archival Data Analysis Form were analyzed under several sub-headings: reports from clergy/warden; on the need for clergy, issues among clergy; complaints about clergy; educational and cultural needs; administrative and pastoral issues; intra-community and personal disputes; matrimonial matters, financial hardships, on patriarchal dues and patriarchal properties, issues with neighboring communities and general security; issues concerning Catholics, issues concerning Protestants; issues concerning Armenians; issues with local government; expressing curtsey or repentance, and seeking help; issues regarding general conversion; issues addressing general Church status and decline; and issues relating to property rights.
often either not stated or not stated clearly, while the name of the patriarch is almost always stated. Second, given the vast number of documents, grouping them into smaller time intervals, say years, would in effect involve cataloguing, a mammoth task that is outside the scope of this work, in addition to being unjustified in relation to the intended purpose. The reign of the following patriarchs was taken to define the period entry in the form:
Elias II (1838 - 1847); Jacob II (1847 - 1871); Peter III (1872-1894); Abdul Masih II (1895-1903); and Abdullah II (1906-1915).

**iii) Document Dating**

Two dating systems were in use until 1840: the Julian for general internal correspondence, and Hijri for correspondence with government. Following 1840, the Rumi calendar was introduced in the Ottoman Empire in civic matters, as part of the 1839 Tanzimat reforms. There was no strict adherence to the Rumi calendar and the Julian continued to be used, often alongside the Rumi calendar.

**vi) Source (Sender) Identity**

Letters to the patriarch of the day came from a variety of sources. These included ecclesiastics (i.e., bishops, priests and monks); church wardens and community dignitaries, ordinary folk (i.e., individuals and groups of individuals); other Christians and Christian churches; Muslim neighbors; municipal and regional authorities; foreign diplomatic sources; and last, but by no means least, the Sublime Porte.

**v) Geographic Provenance**

It was difficult to determine the precise geographic source of many of the letters since in many cases the geographic location of the sender was either not clearly stated or not stated at all, presumably on the assumption that the sender was known to the patriarch. In many other cases the senders’ locations were minor villages whose names were subsequently erased or changed by the Turkish authorities, as part of the Turkification campaign that was waged by the Turkish government following the First World War. In most cases, however, it was still possible to

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361 This calendar came into effect from March 1840 until the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1926. The Rumi calendar was essentially a Julian calendar in length but with a starting point being the Hijri year corresponding to 1840, namely 1256. Thus, the difference of 584 years between the two calendars remains constant. Accordingly, a document dated August 14, 1305 would correspond to August 14, 1889 in Julian calendar and August 26, 1889 according to the Gregorian calendar. The 12-day difference between the Julian and the Gregorian calendars increased to 13 days in 1900.
identify locations from content or from recurrence of sender names, particularly in the case of clergy and community dignitaries.

**vi) Language of Correspondence**

The majority of the letters were written either in Garshuni, which is Arabic using Syriac script, or in Arabic. Fewer letters were written in Turkish and fewer still in Syriac. Most of the Turkish letters were written in Ottoman Turkish, although a few were written in Syriac script. A few letters, generally from India or from European countries, were in English, and even fewer still were in Armenian. Generally, correspondence with India was in Syriac. Correspondence with the Ottoman authorities was, naturally, in Ottoman Turkish. The majority of the correspondence from the Syrian Orthodox communities was in Arabic, or Ottoman Turkish, depending on the source location. The majority of the correspondence from the Syrian Orthodox communities, particularly from Syria and Iraq was in Arabic, written in Arabic script or in Garshuni. Letters from Anatolia were more varied with respect to language. This variation reflects the variety of languages spoken by the Syrian Orthodox communities in that region. This variety included Turoyo, Arabic, Turkish and even Kurdish. Letters from India were generally in Syriac, but a few were in English.

With nearly 50% of all correspondence being in Arabic Garshuni, it is reasonable to inquire why this is so, that is why in Arabic and why in a Syriac script. Is it to do with the addressee or the addresser? The addressees, any of the patriarchs in that period, would have been knowledgeable of not only in Syriac and Arabic, but very likely Turkish as well. On the other hand a very large proportion of these Garshuni letters came from Tur Abdin, where a Neo-Aramaic dialect, Turoyo, was spoken. It would appear that the choice of Arabic was perhaps linked to the elevated position that Arabic held as a language of culture and jurisprudence within Ottoman officialdom, as well as throughout the Asiatic regions of the empire, where the Muslims were the majority. It also appears, from the author’s conversation with old people in Turkey and in North America whose impressions were based on those from ancestors, that even in Tur Abdin, despite its strong Aramaic roots, the ability to communicate in Arabic was somehow considered to be an elitist attribute.

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The use of Syriac script is somewhat easier to explain. Syriac was considered a holy language in addition to being a marker of the collective identity of the Syriac Churches. Thus the Syriac script carried within it an aura of these attributes. One more factor may be cited, namely that writing in Syriac provided a degree of privacy from unwanted intrusions and surveillance. This point was demonstrated in some of the letters from the clergy, where the writer suddenly switches from Garshuni to Syriac, when discussing a rather sensitive matter, then back to Garshuni.

**vii) Issues Raised in Letters**

As one might expect, the letters dealt with a variety of topics: some of an administrative nature, from local bishops and other clergy; some from individuals or groups of individuals, generally relating to complaints about church or community conditions, or the appointment of clergy; others were petitions from individuals and groups requesting action, or requests for pleadings with government authorities, provincial or central, with respect to grievances against local officials or relating to aggression by neighbouring Muslim communities. Some dealt with reports on economic matters, collection of church dues, economic hardships or relating to property disputes with other Christians, all as set out in the noted *Archival Data Analysis* form. The results have been presented here in Figures 1 to 3 for Patriarchs Jacob II, Peter III, and Abdul Masih, to whom the majority of the letters were addressed.

The archival analysis has shown that matters of greatest concern to the community, as expressed by letters from individuals or groups of individuals, largely depended on the region from which the letters came. In Anatolia the major concerns were: aggression of and repeated incursions by neighbouring Kurds and the resulting loss of human life and property; the decline of economic conditions to the extent of driving people to convert to Catholicism or Protestantism because of the incentives offered; grievances against ill-qualified and non-responsive clergy; grievances against Ottoman local officials particularly relating to matters of security; social problems occurring within the community, involving matrimonial matters, family disputes and similar issues; and disputes with Armenians in certain mixed communities, particularly relating to ownership of churches that were used by the two communities.

Letters from Iraq were almost exclusively related to disputes with the Syrian Catholics over church property and the constantly expressed feeling of helplessness in confronting the
French-backed, more powerful Catholic side. Letters from Syria were largely related to church property dispute with the Syrian Catholics, particularly those relating to the ancient monasteries of Deir Mar Mousa and Deir Mar Elian at Nabak, and the animosity that had been created between the two parties as a result.

A remarkable feature of the letters is the large percentage of letters that were addressed to the patriarch from individuals and groups of individuals on all manner of topics: social, financial, church administration and others. This demonstrated that the patriarchate was readily accessible to ordinary individuals. Yet at the same time, the reverential manner in which the letters were written reflects the esteem with which the patriarch was held by his people, not only as their highest ecclesiastical leader, but also as their protector and father. This position of the patriarch, which was most evident in the case of Patriarch Peter, had been historically promoted through the ages, and in part as a result of the social system in the Ottoman Empire in which non-Muslims were organized as semi-autonomous millets. It is a testament of the trust these people had in the patriarch and of the confidence they had in his ability to resolve the issues they faced.

A large proportion of the letters describes relations with neighbouring Muslim communities, with other Christians and with the Porte. Hence, these letters provide valuable insight into contemporary social and political conditions. With these accounts not intended by their authors to be part of a written history, they are characteristically free from ex post facto bias, and, because of their large number, should provide particularly valuable testimony on the state of affairs they describe. Last, but not least, since a high proportion of the letters, particularly those from Anatolia, are from ordinary people, their content can be considered to represent the state of society as viewed from below, a subaltern view, as opposed to the elitist view which conventional social history often embodies. This in itself offers a much desired opening into a deeper view of history.

363 See archival document K05-0035.
364 See archival document K05-0049.
365 Letter K05-0035 shows a typical form of address: “In the name of the Lord, your guardian and Promoter of your patriarchal rank, our venerated Father, our lord Mor Inatius, the Apostolic Patriarch of Antioch Peter III.” In addition to the address, the beginning of the letter would typically have a reverential format in the form given in K05-0046, where it runs thus: “after kissing your honourable hands and begging for your good wishes and blessings.”
Declining Number of Letters After 1895

The strong tradition of the ordinary people, particularly from Anatolia, writing to the patriarch, which was so evident during Patriarch Peter’s reign, as noted above, continued during the initial period of Patriarch Abdul Masih’s reign, from roughly June 1895 to 1897. However, this trend saw a dramatic change, a drop, during the subsequent years: from 660 letters in 1897 to 231 letters in 1898, to 159 letters in 1899, to 86 letters in 1901 to mere 32 in 1904 when Patriarch Abdul Masih was deposed (see Figure 4). It is evident from the letters that did arrive in that period that their writers sought redress from the dire condition that they were facing. Contrary to general claims that these incursions were confined to the last few months of 1895, the letters from individuals and groups of individuals, as well as from local clergy, confirmed that the Kurdish incursions that started in 1895 continued throughout 1896 and part of 1897 (see also in Chapter Four). With the apparent inability of the patriarch to secure effective measures from the officials to ameliorate people’s grievances, the people of the affected areas lost confidence in the patriarch’s ability to help and saw no useful purpose in pleading their cases before him.

The meagre total number of letters addressed to Patriarch Abdullah (1906-1915) was due to a large measure to his prolonged period of absence outside Anatolia, and Deir al-Za‘faran, in his prolonged travels to England, India and Egypt, and his residence afterwards in Jerusalem (see Chapter Four.) In fact, as will be elaborated upon in Chapter Four, the latter part of the reign of Patriarch Abdul Masih and all of that of Abdullah marked the lowest ebb in Syrian Orthodox history.

The following charts give a bird’s-eye view of the archival material divided into patriarchal reigns, source, geographic provenance and subject matter.
Patriarch Jacob II (1847-1871)

Source (Sender) Identity

- Bishop, 25.4
- Priest/Monk, 17.8
- Warden/Church Board, 22.7
- Group of Individuals, 18.5
- Individual, 6.5
- Dignitary, 7.3
- Other, 1.9

Geographic Provenance

- Anatolia, 77.0
- Syria, 0.7
- Iraq, 14.4
- Jezreel, 1.4
- Istanbul, 5.2
- Other, 1.4

Subject Matter

- Clergy-related issues, 14.2
- Admin/pastoral, 24.7
- Community & personal disputes, 9.3
- Matrimony, 6.2
- Financial hardships & taxes, 8.0
- Issues w/ other Christians, 6.8
- Issues w/ Muslim neighbours, 4.4
- Issues w/ government, 5.4
- General church decline, 6.6
- Report from clergy/warden, 7.0
- Courtesy, 4.6

Figure 1: Letters to Patriarch Jacob II (1847-1871)  
No. of Letters Analysed: 382
Figure 2: Letters to Patriarch Peter III/IV (1872-1894)  
No. of Letters Analysed: 2505
Patriarch Abdul Masih (1895-1903)

Source (Sender) Identity

Geographic Provenance

Subject Matter

Figure 3: Letters to Patriarch Abdul Masih (1895-1903)  No. of Letters Analysed: 2678
Letters Received by Patriarch Abdul Masih

Note: letters for 1895 are those addressed to Patriarch Abdul Masih from his ordination in June 1895
2.8 State of Society and Leadership

The nineteenth century that had just been preceded by turmoil at the leadership level ended in the midst of another patriarchal strife. The subject of the first turmoil was Catholic conversion at the hierarchy of the Church and that of the second was the communal violence against Christians, and its negative effect on the patriarch of the day. These two events may fairly be considered to have bracketed the environment under which Syrian Orthodoxy existed in the nineteenth century. The intervening period saw Syrian Orthodox communities in Anatolia struggling to survive in the midst of aggressive social environment that was often created by Kurdish neighbours, divisions created by conversion to Western Christianity, poor economic conditions, and cultural isolation. Outside help without strings attached to religious conversion was scarce if not virtually impossible. Added to these impediments, Church leadership, except for Patriarch Peter, lacked the personal qualities and resourcefulness that were necessary to effect change.

There has been very limited material from Syrian Orthodox sources, whether primary-archival or secondary, relating to the patriarchates up to and including Elias II. Much more has come down to us from a contemporary source, namely the accounts by Horatio Southgate who made his two visits to the region in the period from 1838 to 1841.

i) People without Schools must inevitably Decline.

During his visit to Deir al-Za‘faran in the course of his second journey, Southgate noted that of the 25 monks belonging to the monastery only five of them were resident, the rest being scattered in villages performing duties of priests in vacant parishes. The five remaining ones were all employed in teaching. Each of the five had a class of five boys who had been gathered from different, often distant places. They were taught and maintained at the expense of the monastery. The origin of the school was in this manner:

When the Patriarch was in Constantinople in 1838, the Armenian Patriarch expostulated with him on the state of the nation, and among other things said to him that a people without schools must

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inevitably decline. The remark sank deep in the mind of the Patriarch, and was never forgotten. On his journey home, he visited most of the places where Syrians are to be found, and in every place established a school. They are of course on a very humble scale.\footnote{Horatio Southgate, \textit{Narrative of a Visit}, p. 202.}

Southgate noted that in the monastery, which was intended to be at a higher level than the others, instructions in ancient Syriac and Arabic, penmanship, with the first was very imperfectly taught for want of good teachers and text books, and the whole was not sufficient to supply the first rudiments of knowledge.\footnote{Ibid.}

\textit{ii) The Latin Priests and the French Consul}

Among the many incidents that highlight the sectarian divisions that Southgate witnessed the following demonstrates the poisoned atmosphere that came with the claimed “enlightenment” and some of the unethical attitudes of the French Consul in Baghdad in exploiting a tragic humanitarian situation as an instrument in aid of conversion. Southgate reports on an encounter between the Kurds and the new authority of the district of Jazira, which resulted in many of the residents in these areas being imprisoned. At this point Southgate adds: “the next day a letter from Azikh came from which I learned the “Chaldean Bishop of the district had offered, through the aid of the French Consul in Baghdad, to rescue from bondage the friends and all the Syrians who acknowledge the Pope.” The Syrian priest of Azikh who had a daughter in captivity had himself been to Baghdad to intervene for her release. “When he applied to the French Consul for the purpose, he was told that if he accepted the terms, he should have his daughter. The priest expostulated and implored, but in vain. The Consul must have his “pound of flesh”. After two months of unsuccessful entreaty on his behalf and unsuccessful endeavours to convert him on the other, he replied, “though my daughter was not only in captivity, but condemned to death, I would not consent to such terms for her release,” and returned sad and brokenhearted to his native place. While these things were going on, the Syrian Patriarch was obtaining a \textit{firman} for the release of all Christians from unjust taxation, and with liberality worthy of the man, interceded for them without distinction. He was successful, and the Syrians, the Syrian Papists, Chaldeans, and Armenian Papists alike enjoyed the beneficial effect of its
operation. It may be said that France does not protect any other than her co-religionists in the East.”

**iii) Parry Visits a School: Telling Reflections**

This is a brief exposition of the political views of mostly Syrian youth and their tendency to trust the Russians, and their disappointment with England. The views of youth, collected by Parry, likely reflected those of their elders and, hence, of the society they represented at large. Interestingly, most of the views expressed were largely vindicated in the course of the succeeding years:

The college led my Syrian friends to express their views on politics. Discontent with the present state of affairs, and the continually increasing strain of petty oppression could suggest no remedy but the interference of Russia. The experience gained of the Russians during the war impressed the natives of Armenia favourably and it is to them, failing the English that the Christians of Turkey look. France has never gained much prestige in this part of the East, in spite of her diplomacy…England has given too little proof of her willingness to aid or protect; while her Philo-Turk policy in the war has made many look with suspicion upon her; of Russia alone are they sure. It is a sad but certain truth that the natives, both Christian and Muslim, of interior Turkey, seem unable to trust England. They would like to trust her…but they can find no binding surety of her real sympathy, either with the Turks as an imperial power, or the Christians as co-religionists to be protected.

**2.9 A Period of Intense Conversion to Catholicism**

Matta of Mardin (1782-1817) became patriarch after the death of the previous Patriarch Jerjis IV in 1781, when he foiled an attempt by Bishop Michael Jarwah, the Catholicized Bishop of Aleppo to take over the patriarchal seat on January 25, 1782. When it unfolded, the event involved the taking over by Michael Jarwah and his group the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, with its seat in Deir al-Za’faran, and in doing so, subjecting the

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370 Parry is referring to a Government school to which Christian and Muslim students are enrolled, p. 48.
371 With his visit being in 1892, Parry is likely to be referring to the 1877-1878 Russo-Ottoman war.
372 Ibid, pp. 48-49.
373 “Conversion” is the term used in the literature to express the change over to Catholicism: see Charles Freeze in *Catholics and Sultans- The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 313; and Bernard Heyberger, “The Development of Catholicism in the Middle East (16th to 19th centuries),” p. 642.
historical independent authority of the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox of Antioch to the authority of the Pope of Rome. The ugly encounters that unfolded between Jarwah and Matta, the Syrian Orthodox counter contender, and their respective supporters, included imprisonment and banishment by Ottoman officialdom. A firman issued by Sultan Selim III naming Matta as patriarch foiled Jarwah’s attempt and restored the status quo. Details of the sad events are given by Tarazi from the Syrian Catholic perspective and in Al-Majallah al Batriarchiah from the Syrian Orthodox perspective. This, in fact, was a second attempt at a take-over at the top. The first failed attempt was by Andrew Akhijan in 1676. As Heyberger notes: “The stratagem of converting ‘heretics’ and ‘schismatic’ from the top, that is by first winning over bishops or the patriarch remained the favourite approach of both the Latin missionaries and the leaders of the Catholic Church.” Under this influence the second and the third decades of the nineteenth century saw the conversion of four Syrian Orthodox bishops: Issa Mahfouth, Antoun Simhairi, Yacoub Helani, and Matta al-Naqqar. Issa Mahfoudh, born in Mosul in 1800, was the Syrian Orthodox Bishop of Jerusalem when he announced his conversion to Catholicism in 1827. Antoun Simhairi, born in Mosul in 1801, was the Syrian Orthodox Bishop of Mardin and Amid when he announced his conversion to Catholicism in 1827. Yacoub Helani, born in Syria in 1894, was the Syrian Orthodox Bishop of Damascus when he announced his conversion to Catholicism in 1829. Matta al-Naqqar, born in Mosul in 1795, was the Syrian Orthodox Bishop of Mosul when he announced his conversion to Catholicism in 1832.

The loss of four promising young bishops in a small church over such a short period of time was a major blow to the Syrian Orthodox Church for several reasons. Firstly, it was because of the followers they attracted to their cause within the already beleaguered small church. And most damagingly, it was followed by the mutual antagonism that lasted many decades. The following narrative by Tarazi, an elite Syrian Catholic, demonstrates this

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374 It may be noted that the Porte resisted Catholic encroachment on Oriental Christians prior to the Greek War of Independence in 1821 but became largely indifferent towards this issue after that event, see Chapter One.
375 Tarazi, pp. 213-222.
378 Tarazi, pp. 142-144.
379 Ibid, p.47.
381 Ibid, pp. 334-335.
antagonism. Subsequent to the announcement by the two most renowned Jacobite Bishops, Issa Mahfoudh and Antun Simhairi of their conversion to their conversion to the Catholic faith, “they, utilizing the brutal authority of the rulers (local Ottoman officials) took over Mardin’s great church, known as the church of the Arbain (Forty Martyrs).” To recover the confiscated church, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch sent Matta al-Naqqar, who at that time was the Syrian Orthodox Bishop of Mosul, to lodge a complaint with the Vali of Baghdad, under whose jurisdiction Mardin was at that time. Matta al-Naqqar succeeded in his assignment and the two churches were returned to the Syrian Orthodox Church. Yet, when Matta al-Naqqar converted to Catholicism, he adopted the same tactic as his colleagues when he took over the Syrian Orthodox Church at al-Nabak and more importantly, the famous seventh century monastery of Deir Mar Musa al Habashi. The animosity toward the old church by the converted clergy is evidence of the aggressive atmosphere that the Latin missionaries created in order to motivate the conversion and to achieve the targets set by Rome.

One of the divisive issues that arose in the mid-nineteenth century was the selection of Mardin in 1854 as site for the seat of the Syrian Catholic Patriarchate. The selected location was no further than eight kilometres from Deir al-Za‘faran, the thirteenth century seat of the Syrian Orthodox Church. Did Rome have an input in this choice? The answer may be found in this quote from Frazee: “When Ignatius Antun died on 16 June 1864, Rome appointed

382 Ibid, p. 335.
383 Ibid.
384 The story of Matta al-Naqqar’s conversion, as recited by Tarazi, (pp. 336-337) merits some mention as it delineates the influence of the Latin missionaries on the conversion issue. According to the Tarazi narrative, Matta al-Naqqar was on his way to lodge a complaint to the wali of Aleppo against Yacoub Helani, the ex –Syrian Orthodox Bishop who, upon conversion to Catholicism confiscated the Syrian Orthodox Church in Damascus. According to Tarazi, al-Naqqar’s trip included Aleppo where he was to lodge a similar campaign to recover churches confiscated in that city many years earlier. He lodged for the night at al-Bindiqa, a rest house, which unknown to him had been recently transformed into the Monastery for the Lazarite mission. He was well received by Father Nicolas Ghodz the head of the mission. In the evening Father Nicolas said to Matta: “I asked the Holy Grace that led you by chance to our Apostolic net not to let you leave without (acquiring) the fruit for your eternal salvation.” The abbot engaged in explaining to Matta the errors of the Jacobite beliefs by quoting evidence of the work of St. Ephrem the Syrian. This made a great impression on Matta’s heart, who, as a result, could not help but declare his denouncement of the One Nature errors and his decision to follow the Catholic Faith. The fact that the Roman Catholic Church bestowed on Ephrem the Syrian, the most prolific fourth century Syriac hymnographer and theologian, the title “Doctor of The Church” in 1920 by Pope Benedict XV sheds light on some of the Latin missionaries’ methods to achieve their pre-assigned targets, apparently at any cost.

386 Heyberger, p. 642.
387 Ozcozar, p. 212.
Bishop Jirjis Shelhot of Aleppo to administer the church until the hierarchy could form an electoral synod, which in fact did not meet until May 1866, with the Latin apostolic pro-delegate presiding. When the Syrian bishops were told that Rome expected the new patriarch to live in Mardin, three of the candidates asked not to be considered. The withdrawal of some of the bishops would indicate a depth of discomfort towards this position by Rome. The enmity that the patriarchal seat location generated eventually forced the Catholic Patriarch, Ephrem II Rahmani, to move the seat of his patriarchate to Deir al-Sharfa in Lebanon in 1898.

2.10 The Church property Issues – A manifestation of the Divisions
Throughout most of the nineteenth century, patriarchs, bishops and other ecclesiastics of the Syrian Orthodox Church were busy running between their cities and Istanbul, at great expense, which they could hardly afford, in an attempt to recover churches and monasteries that had been taken over by the Catholics. This has been confirmed by the large number of archival letters covering most of the nineteenth century from Syria and from Mosul that addressed this matter. Patriarchs and bishops were for years travelling from their ecclesiastic seats to Istanbul, staying there for months at a time, to plead their case with the Ottoman officialdom in battles that were essentially doomed to fail considering French diplomatic influence and the financial resources needed to deal with Ottoman officials. What is particularly significant to note is that this action by the converted to take over buildings and facilities from the old Church had no known precedence in the case of the Armenians and the Greek Churches. With the prospects of fair outcome through direct representation proving dim, some of the patriarchs sought foreign government help. The ability of the Syrian Catholics to retain the church properties (i.e., churches, monasteries and cemeteries) despite desperate efforts by the Syrian Orthodox to recover them, enhanced the feeling of defeat that the Syrian Orthodox felt. This might well have been the tactic that the Catholics decided to adopt to demoralize the Syrian Orthodox, and consequently to induce further conversion to a winning side that had a European backing.

An elaboration on this subject is outside the scope of this thesis. However, as a background to the issues discussed in later chapters, it may be instructive to examine the broad

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388 Frazee, p. 294.
389 Atiya, A History of Eastern Christianity, p. 37
The contents of a letter found among the archives, which is perhaps the earliest in this category. This is a letter from Patriarch Elias II (1838-1847), written in Arabic and addressed to “Patriarch Alexander Griswold.” An accompanying note penned by Horatio Southgate defines the addressee to be Rt. Rev. Alexander Viets Griswold, D.D. Presiding Bishop of the P.E. Church, U.S.A. My translation of the main text of the letter appears in Appendix A.

The letter addresses the history of the church property issue through the reign of Sultan Mahmud who had issued six *firmans* ordering the return of the church property and the demolition of the partition walls that the Catholics had been built within them. The letter then traces the subsequent attempts by the Catholic side to re-take the churches:

After that, their bishop left for Islambul. When I heard of his trip I too sent a bishop. When he (they) reached the Blessed (Islambul) they found that Sultan Mahmud had passed away and had been succeeded by his son Sultan Abdul Majid. The bishop belonging to the Pope secretly went to the French Ambassador, pleaded with him and succeeded in having a *firman* issued again for dividing the churches. Thus our churches were once again divided by walls they erected in them, and up to this date they are under the control of those belonging to the Pope. In Aleppo and Damascus, too, they have confiscated our churches entirely such that our people are without churches or monasteries.

Subsequently, according to the letter, following a plea by the Syrian Orthodox, the Sultan ordered the two sides to adjudicate before the Patriarch of the Rum, likely with the Greek Orthodox as a neutral third party. This resulted in an order for the return of the church property under issue to the Syrian Orthodox, but the delay in implementation had caused the Orthodox side to lose confidence in the outcome. Thus, based on the twists and turns this issue had seen, and given its importance to the old Church, the author decided to seek the help of the addressee. Based on this, the letter concludes:

> in spite of how these matters would end, we request that you may place our request before the State of the English, may God protect it and keep it blessed, so that it would advise its ambassador in Islambul to speak with Sultan Abdul Majid, to ensure that after

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392 This would be Sultan Abdul Majid I (1839-1861)
issuing of the firman, a bishop under the Pope would not issue a subsequent firman for again dividing our churches and (to impress) that the Syrian taifa is under England’s protection just as the Papists are defended by the King of France…

The property issue with the Syrian Catholic and the sense of grievence it created persisted throughout the nineteenth century and during the French Mandate in Syria. This is demonstrated in the content of an interview recorded by Aphram Barsoum, when he was a monk in Deir al-Z‘faran from 1913 to 1915, with Patriarch Abdullah in which the latter recalls a visit Patriarch Peter had made to Sheikh al-Islam in Istanbul.\textsuperscript{393} Patriarch Abdullah states:

One day Patriarch Peter visited Sheikh al-Islam in Istanbul and expressed his complaint concerning the confiscation with the aid of foreign politicians of our church buildings, to the extent that his eyes glistened with tears. Sheikh al-Islam was deeply moved and told the Patriarch “we are aware of your rights and of your allegiance to us from early times. But do you wear a biretta?” The answer was “no”. He [Sheikh al-Islam] said “those who wear birettas force us to abide by their wishes and if they ask us of anything, they do so with a threat. Thus we are unable to antagonize them. I morn to see the tears of a venerable elder like you, but what is it that can be done.”

Addressing the state of division within the Syrian Christians on his first journey, Southgate elaborates on the conditions in Mosul, particularly noting the condition in churches:

These two are divided between the two parties, Syrians and Syrian Papists. The walls, which were built by royal order in 1837, were thrown down by royal order in 1838, and by royal order built again a few months after. They now stand in the middle of each Church, a dividing wall between the two parties, who worshiped as enemies under the same roof where their fathers assembled in peace and love. Then no foreign intruders had entered their peaceful fold. Now they are divided, torn, weakened, preying upon and devouring each other. When they worship it is no longer before one altar, but with a wall between them, as if jealous of each other’s sacrifice. Their two Bishops grew up together as brothers, read together, talked together, prayed together. Now they are leaders of hostile bands.\textsuperscript{394}

\textsuperscript{393} Barsoum, Aphram-published by Ignatius Iwas, Zakka I. “Min kitāb al-ḥādīṯ (From the Book of Oral History).” \textit{The Patriarchal Journal of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East.} No. 10, 1981, pp. 407-413.

\textsuperscript{394} Southgate, \textit{Narrative of a Visit to the Syrian [Jacobite] Church}, p. 137.
Southgate alludes to motives and hopes of the converted in general, including their aspiration of gaining the security of being protected by the French:

The Syrian Papists feel that they are superior to those from whom they have seceded, and act with confidence. The Jacobites, on the contrary, are filled with vague apprehension of contending against a Frank influence, and are depressed and timid.  

Like Southgate before him, Parry on his visit 50 years later commented on the division between the “Old Syrians” and the “papal Syrians” in Mosul. Referring to the Syrian Catholic Churches, which were likely built with Latin help, Parry noted that the churches were built on a magnificent scale, and were decorated in a manner that combined the peculiarities of Syrian and Roman traditions. “Often the Syrians of a town or village say to the American missionaries: "Build us church finer than that of the Latins, and we will all become Protestants. Such is the value of display."  

2.11 Conversion to Protestantism
Conversion to Protestantism occurred on a much smaller scale than that to Catholicism, yet its undertones bore the hallmark of a condescending attitude of regarding Oriental Christians as merely “nominal Christians” with little regard to their rich heritage.

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the arrival of a variety of Protestant missions to the Middle East. The early missionaries landed in Anatolia and Syria and worked their way inland to eastern Anatolia and to Iraq. One of the earliest missions to the land of the Syrian Orthodox was that of the Episcopal Church of the U.S., which appointed Horatio Southgate in 1835 to visit the Near East and to study the missionary potential in this region. Southgate recommended the founding of a mission to the Syrian Orthodox Church, which he said was free from “corruption” and was like his own church episcopalian in its organization.  

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397 Parry, p. 303.
398 John Joseph, Muslim-Christian Relations, p. 56.
Southgate arrived at the conclusion that “[i]n the Mesopotamian Churches the utmost jealousy has been shown of the simple and highly spiritual character of the ancient worship.” Southgate’s efforts, however, tended towards the Armenians in Anatolia. The Congregational Church of New England was next to explore work among the “Jacobites.” The mission, with Dr. Grant as representative, moved to Mosul. However, competition arose with the Church of England, under Badger. Writing in 1842, Grant complained to the American Board of Commissions of his church that “Mr. Badger is here and has commenced operations by assailing us.” The church, which at one time contained 20 members, had till the previous week dwindled to 10 nominally Christian men and women. Due to a growing competition in Mosul, both parties abandoned Mosul, which finally fell into the hands of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.

In Anatolia the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (BCFM), started operating among the Syrian Orthodox from the late 1840s. By the late 1850s, the Missionary Herald, the journal of BCFM wrote “the steady quiet light of Protestantism has shaken the Jacobite Church to its foundations.” To its principal missionary Rev. Marsh, “it was apparent that before many years the Protestants and the Papists would be the sole claimants of the Christian name in this part of the Turkish Empire.”

By 1860, the various stations that served the Armenian and Syrian Orthodox centres such as Sivas, Betlis, Mardin and Diyarbekir and Van were organized into the “Mission in Eastern Turkey.” Although the main focus of the Mission was the more numerous Armenians, enthusiasm towards the “Jacobites” increased as the American Board hoped to have a “footing in Jabel Toor” now that England had just guaranteed Turkey against any invasion of the Asiatic provinces. In the 1880s Midyat became a substation from which nearby towns were served with schools. An important high school was established in Mardin to which students attended from as far afield as Mosul.

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399 Horatio Southgate, Narratives of a Visit to the Syrian, P. 223.
400 John Joseph, Muslim-Christian Relations, p. 67, apud Thomas Laurie, Dr. Grand and the Mountain Nestorians, Boston 1874, p. 279.
401 The Missionary Herald, April 1871, 64, 4.
402 The Missionary Herald, 1859, 55, 6.
403 The Missionary Herald, 54 (1858): 255.
404 Ibid.
405 I am in possession of a copy of a graduation certificate for a student from Mosul that was issued from the Evangelical High School in Mardin, on June 18, 1890, bearing the signature of several teachers as well as of
The overall success of the Protestants among the Syrian Orthodox in Anatolia was at the end quite limited. The Protestant philosophy of attempting to alienate the people they apostatize from their religious cultural tradition, found little positive response among communities that were proud of that tradition. A report issued in September 1895, by Alpheus Andrus, the BCFM station leader in Mardin for several decades, clearly refers to the challenges his mission had faced and the limited prospects for the future:

The very important question with us here and now is, how to maintain this pressure and if possible, increase it with diminishing resources. The strain of entrenchment upon the evangelical movement for the last five years has been tremendous in the face of the trinity of movements we have mentioned.  

The “trinity” referred to here is cited earlier in the same report as being: Islam, the growing activity of the “papacy,” especially in those parts, and the disorganization of the Syrian Orthodox community among which they have been working, presumably meaning the lack of their response to the introduced indoctrination.

Yet this success by the Protestant missions, limited as it was, created considerable divisions among the communities in which it was operating. Below is a sample of letters from a few of these communities, addressed to the patriarch concerning this issue.

a) Poverty in many areas fuelled attraction towards Protestantism – where the rewards included financial aid. A letter from nine individuals from Siirt to the Patriarch Peter expresses the frustration and the dilemma of the community which is stricken with poverty, particularly with the prospect of a poor harvest season. “Those who join the Protestants receive aid from the British, as do Armenians to the exclusion of others.” They request that the Patriarch to ask the British to include them in this aid.  

b) A letter from a Church warden in Midyat reports on the divisions and animosities that the Protestant campaigns in Tur Abdin, and in Midyat - Tur Abdin’s largest town - in particular, has generated within these communities.  

c) A letter signed by 28 individuals from Tur Abdin to Patriarch Peter, dated February 15, 1894 describe the state of abject poverty of many of the communities and the exploitation of the Protestants of this condition to stir divisions and to attract conversion of the needy people.

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Alpheus Andrus, the head of the Mission. I could recognize one of the teacher signatories, Hanna Sirri, of the Sirri family a Syrian Orthodox family of many intellectuals in Mardin, who issued the first Hikmat journal in 1914.

406 The Missionary Herald, Jan 1895; 91,1; American periodicals.

407 The archival document: K05-1300, 1301 dated April 29, 1880.

408 The archival document: K05 -1450, 1451 dated March 27, 1882.

d) A letter from a group of two villages complaining of the harassment the Protestants were staging, using the local authorities against 37 families who decided to return to their old church.  

e) Two letters from Kharput, sent by Bishop Abdulnour al-Rahawi, describe the indoctrination school children get in Protestant schools that is contrary to Church beliefs, including objections to prayers to the Virgin Mary.

f) The extent of division that was created by the Protestants in Mosul may be demonstrated by a dispute that arose from the interference by the Protestant Church in a basic family-related private case of a burial. A man who had joined the Protestants died in 1893. His wife, mother and brother decided to have him buried in the family tomb in the Syrian Orthodox cemetery. The Protestants objected, insisting that with the deceased becoming a Protestant, he should be buried in a Protestant cemetery. The Protestant Church, preventing the burial procedure, took the matter to the Wali, who formed a committee to provide a recommendation. The committee recommended that he should be buried at the Syrian Orthodox Cemetery, which the Wali ratified. After the delayed burial the Protestants raised a formal objection in a letter to the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, Peter. The family responded with a letter that explained its point of view. It is not clear what directions the Patriarch provided. However, this incident further demonstrates the havoc many of the missions created within families and close-knit communities, in the course of administering their mandated missions.

2.12 Church Leadership

2.12.1 Dioceses

There are no accurate records of the dioceses at the start of the nineteenth century. Many dioceses that existed at the beginning of the century were eliminated or combined as a result of conversion to Catholicism, particularly in Syria, or of population movements, particularly in Anatolia. Saka provides a list of 25 metropolitan and bishop seats for various dioceses and monasteries, but does not accurately define the period. An archival document penned by Aphram Barsoum in 1929, provides a partial list of 17 metropolitan and bishop seats in 1863. However, for the reason noted above, Syria ended up with being a single diocese, having lost its communities in Aleppo, Damascus and in many towns and monasteries to the Catholic Church. Parry provides a list of “Old Syrian Bishops and their Sees” consisting of the following Sees (Dioceses): Jerusalem, Damascus (Homs), Edessa (Urfa), Amida (Diarbakir), Nisibin, Miaferkin (Farkin), Mosul, Ma’dan, Aleppo, Jazireh, and Tur Abdin. Parry’s list also

410 The archival document: K10- 01-36-0235, 0236, dated April 21, 1882.
411 The archival documents; 40M-24/45- 0093, 0094 dated, December 2, 1898
412 The archival Document: K05-0325, dated January 2, 1893.
414 Saka, Kanisati, p. 305.
415 Archival Document Bab Toma-P1080718.
includes bishops residing in the following monasteries: Deir al-‘Umr, Deir Mar Mattai near Mosul, Deir al-Salib in Tur Abdin, Deir Mar Jacob at Salah, Deir Mar Abraham at Midyat.\textsuperscript{416} It may be noted that some of the monasteries, such as Mar Mattai, were diocesan centres.

\subsection*{2.12.2 Patriarchs}

The patriarchs of the nineteenth century were:

- Matta of Mardin (1782-1817)
- Yunan of Mosul (1817-1818)
- Jirjis V of Aleppo (1819-1836)
- Elias II (1838-1847)
- Jacob II (1847-1871)
- Peter III/IV\textsuperscript{417} (1872-1894)
- Abdul Masih II (1895-1904)

Matta of Mardin became patriarch after the death of the previous Patriarch Jerjis IV in 1781, when he foiled an attempt by Bishop Michael Jarwah, the Catholicized Bishop of Aleppo to take over the patriarchal seat on January 25, 1782. When it unfolded, the event involved the taking over by Michael Jarwah and his group the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, with its seat in Deir al-Za‘faran, and in doing so, subjecting the historical independent authority of the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox of Antioch to the authority of the Pope of Rome. The ugly encounters that unfolded between Jarwah and Matta, the Syrian Orthodox counter contender, and their respective supporters, included imprisonment and banishment by Ottoman officialdom. A \textit{firman} issued by Sultan Selim III naming Matta as patriarch foiled Jarwah’s attempt and restored the status quo. This, in fact, was a second attempt at a take-over at the top; the first failed attempt was by Andrew Akhijan in 1676. As Heyberger notes: “[t]he Stratagem of converting “heretics” and “schismatics” from the top, that is by first winning over bishops or the patriarch remained the favourite approach of both the Latin missionaries and the leaders of the Catholic Church.”\textsuperscript{418}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{416} Parry, pp. 321, 322.
\item \textsuperscript{417} Peter III is used here as per contemporary terminology evidenced by the archival documents. He is Peter IV according to the terminology adopted by the Syrian Orthodox sources since the 1920’s. See Introduction.
\item \textsuperscript{418} Bernard Heyberger, “The Development of Catholicism in the Middle East (16\textsuperscript{th} to 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries),” in \textit{Christianity: a History in the Middle East}, (Habib Badr, chief ed.), 631-54. Beirut: MECC, 2005, p. 647.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
It is not the intention here to address the term of each of the patriarchs of nineteenth century; such information is available in many of the Syrian Orthodox Church sources. Besides the general social and security environment issues, which have been addressed earlier in this chapter, the most outstanding other issues were related to conversion to Catholicism and Protestantism due to their enormous impact on the Church and community, as has been evident from the analysis of the archival material. These two matters are briefly addressed here below.

2.12.3 A Patriarch with Resolve - Peter III (1872-1894)

When Patriarch Jacob died in 1872, the Synod met in Deir al-Za’faran to elect a successor. Their choice fell on Julius Boutros (Peter), Mutran (Bishop) of Syria who was in Istanbul at the time attending to the ongoing property disputes with the Syrian Catholic Church over the ownership of churches and monasteries in Syria. He was ordained patriarch on June 4, 1872. His elevation to that position promised better days for the declining Church.

His first task as Patriarch was to order the much needed renovations of Deir al-Za’faran, which had been neglected by his predecessor who had chosen to reside in Diyarbakir. Once he had this under way he headed to Istanbul to obtain the Sultan’s firman of his election as Patriarch. In Istanbul Patriarch Peter III (Patriarch Peter) worked on obtaining the firman through direct dealings with the Porte, without recourse to the Armenian Patriarchate. His efforts were hindered by the Armenians, but finally bore fruit when direct recognition of him by the Porte was secured. He might have also attempted to seek a separate millet status for the Old Syrians (Suriyani Qadim), but he did not succeed in that. During his one year stay in Istanbul, news from India indicated a worsening situation with regard to the action of Bishop Matthew who had usurped the ecclesiastical leadership of the Syria Orthodox Church in the Malabar. This matter had been brewing for nearly 30 years with increasingly negative results for the community in Malabar, in addition to constituting another challenge to the Syrian Orthodox in the Middle East. Despite being in his seventies, Patriarch Peter decided to travel to India to personally confront the situation. This was a remarkable decision showed not only depth of vision but courage to embark on a journey that entailed the approval of the Sultan as well as the English authorities. It was also the first time a Syrian Orthodox patriarch travelled outside the Ottoman Empire. Approval of the English authority was necessary and that was by

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no means an easy task for the core reason for the problem in India was the missionary work by the English among the Syrian Orthodox Indians and their involvement in creating the division (see Chapter Three). Patriarch Peter’s imposing personality and courage were essential factors that enabled him to exact an approval through the British ambassador in Istanbul to visit London. Understandably, the Archbishop of Canterbury was not pleased with Patriarch Peter’s visit to London and India. But despite this negative attitude, Patriarch Peter was able to secure an audience with Queen Victoria who, upon meeting with him, remarked that “he reminded her of our Father Abraham.” She asked him to pray at the grave of her late husband Prince Albert. This the Patriarch did at a service, which the Queen and her eldest daughter attended.421 Further, with the Queen’s blessings, Patriarch Peter was able to secure an educational aid for his people and the supply of two printing presses (see Chapter Three).

Patriarch Peter’s term witnessed fast moving political events involving the Ottoman Empire and in particular his home base in eastern Anatolia. These included continued pressure by Western missions on the Oriental Churches including his Church. He responded to all these events by encouraging education by all means available, limited as they were, on the one hand, and by resolving some of the outstanding property problems with the Catholics, on the other. At the same time he recognized that he was fighting a losing battle against the French influence, which was draining his Church’s resources and deflecting its attention from other pressing issues. Having travelled widely, to England, India and Egypt, he had a more ecumenical outlook that might have been expected at that time. His strong personality earned him respect from all around him including potential adversaries. His compassionate attitude towards ordinary people earned him deep respect and trust. The patriarchal archives, which includes thousands of letters addressed to him from ordinary people, provide clear testimony of this. His courage and authority wonderfully blended with pastoral love for people.

Parry describes one of his last audiences with Patriarch Peter at the patriarchal diwan (chamber) in the “Arbain”, or Forty Saints Church in Mardin. Parry states:

It was a true Eastern picture…A more imposing sight it would be hard to imagine than this head of a persecuted church, the descendants of Ignatius “Moran Mor Ignatius Peter III, exalted Patriarch of the Apostolic see of Antioch and of all the Jacobite churches of Syria and in the East…”

421 Ibid, p. 293
He sat there hearing every word that passed, seeing to read as clearly as men fifty years younger. Only his brow betrayed many a trouble gone through; something too of the impatience as well as the dignity and the power of the lion showed there. But a particularly soft smile overcame the slight sign of pain as he rose to his full height of 6 feet and more, and, stroking his long beard, spoke in courtly Arabic his words of welcome, leaning on his monk’s shoulder as he paid the delicate compliment of shaking hands...His Holiness knows how great a line he represents and is proud of it. Nor is it an empty one: for besides two hundred thousand subjects of the Porte that acknowledge him their head, he counts under his rule three hundred thousand or more of the Queen’s subjects on the Malabar coast, and in Ceylon.422

Patriarch Peter died on October 7, 1894 and was followed by Abdul Masih II, (see Chapter Four), whose term was inaugurated with the 1895 Kurdish violence against the Christians. This violence, which continued beyond that year, marked the start of two decades during which the Church was in continual crisis, and which terminated with the 1915 massacres and exile (see Chapter Five). Thus ended a century that witnessed the vulnerability of a church and its communities, that were ill equipped on their own to deal with the dynamic changes of modernity that were unfolding around them. Their refusal to align themselves with foreign influences that would detract from their historical sense of being, made them prey to their designs, and left them weakened and depleted.

422 Parry, pp. 61-62.
CHAPTER THREE
ANTIOCH, CANTERBURY AND INDIA

3.1 Introduction
The challenge to Oriental Christianity by the Western Christian orders (i.e., Catholic and Reformed/Protestant) has conventionally been considered to have occurred first in the Middle East, the birthplace of Christianity. However, a closer examination shows that the initial challenges were first encountered in southern India, which, in addition to the Middle East, had been home to Syriac Christianity from the first century of the Christian era. Roman Catholicism was introduced to southern India by the Portuguese who invaded that country in 1503. This date is considerably earlier than the missionary campaign that Rome mounted in the Middle East following the establishment of the Congregation for the Propaganda of Faith by Pope Gregory XV in 1622.

With the decline of Portuguese power, other colonial powers, namely the Dutch and the British, accompanied by their missions, gained influence. The Dutch followed the Portuguese in colonizing India. By 1663, they had taken over Cochin on the Malabar Coast, thus ending 160 years of Portuguese presence. Dutch occupation, which lasted until 1795 when their power gave way to that of England, witnessed no serious interference with ecclesiastic affairs of the Syrian Christians.

The missions that influenced the Syriac Christians of India after the Portuguese, were those sent by the British, who arrived during the early days of the British colonization of India in 1795. This date too was still a few years earlier than that of the arrival of the first American Protestant mission in the Middle East, which was pioneered by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in late 1819.423

The relationship between the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Anglican Church began and grew during the nineteenth century largely as a result of the two churches’ competing interest in the Syrian Christians of southern India. The Syrian Orthodox Church had between 100,000 and 300,000 followers in southern India.424 The Anglican Church was interested in

424 The 100,000 figure is based on the Lambeth Palace document, Tait 214. ff. 19-28. The 300,000 (strictly 295,770) is reportedly based on local Indian government sources cited by Ignatius Jacob III in Al-‘sara al-Naqiyah fe Tarikh al-Kaniesa al-Suryaniyah al-Hindiyah, 1973, p. 85.
any Christians in India for religious and political reasons. The religious interest was promoted through the missionary work of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), which operated as the Anglican Church’s missionary wing in that country, and elsewhere. CMS had as its express aim to bring the Oriental Christians, if not into unity with the Anglican Church, at least under the wings of its doctrinal hegemony. The evidence uncovered in the course of the current research clearly shows that the Anglican Church, through CMS, was an active promoter of the schism that began in the early 1830s within the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. There was an over-riding political aspect to the Anglican interest in these Oriental Christians. Here, as Taylor aptly notes: “A body of Christians with allegiances to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is a senior Peer of the British House of Lords and spiritual head of the Established Church, would be far easier to control than a body of Christians that poses its allegiance to a patriarch within the Ottoman Empire.”425

For the Syrian Orthodox Church, the challenges in providing ecclesiastic and pastoral oversight to the Christians in India were compounded by distance, by lack of resources and not least by competition with a country as resourceful and as powerful as England. The attitude of the Anglican Church was essentially colonialist in nature, often combined with a large dose of Orientalism. This attitude varied somewhat with changing political interests and, as we will see, to a limited extent by the personal attitude of the Archbishop of Canterbury of the day.

Notwithstanding the conflict of interests between the two sides, the relationship, which was formally inaugurated by Patriarch Peter’s visit to England in 1874, grew and was maintained at various levels of interest at least until the onset of the First World War. Following that war, the disappointment felt by the Syrian Orthodox in the attitude of the West at the Paris Peace Conference, rendered this relationship largely formal and limited.

3.2 Syriac Christianity in Southern India - Brief Background

According to Syriac tradition, Christianity was introduced to India by St. Thomas the Apostle who, according to tradition, landed in the port of Muziris on the Malabar Coast of Kerala in 52 CE to preach the Gospel among the native settlements of Kerala.426 The existence of a flourishing colony of Jews in that port town might have attracted St. Thomas to it. It is likely

that St. Thomas landed on the island of Malankara, in the bay of Muziris; hence the name of the Malankara Church.\textsuperscript{427} During the early centuries, several missions came from Edessa as well as from other parts of Mesopotamia following in St. Thomas’s footsteps to evangelize more of the region of Kerala. Marco Polo, who visited the region in 1292, reported that there were Christians on the Malabar Coast.\textsuperscript{428}

The Syriac language was the liturgical language in the evangelized territories throughout the history of the region. There is, however, some debate as to the affiliation of the Church in India over the period preceding the invasion of that country by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century. At various periods, one or other of the Churches of Antioch, of Seleucia and of Persia was involved in sending metropolitans and bishops to the Malabar Coast and in consecrating local ecclesiastics to promote and to administer the faith in those lands.

The involvement of the East and West Syriac Churches with the Christians of Southern India was not confined to ecclesiastical matters; immigration and settlement from Mesopotamia to the Malabar Coast took place at various times. In 345 CE, a large colony of 400 people headed by Bishop Thomas, the Cana’anite, emigrated from Edessa, landing in Cochin. This group survived and has flourished as an ethnic community until the present day. In recognition of their status, Patriarch Abdullah established a special bishopric for them in 1912. Tuma\textsuperscript{429} reports on another communal immigration this time in 825 CE from lower Mesopotamia.

In the twelfth century Bar Salibi was still able to affirm that “the faith of the Indian Church is exactly ours, we the Syrians.”\textsuperscript{430} Over time fourteen metropolitans and bishops were assigned to Herat. According to Bar Hebraeus, the first of these was Ibrahim, who was the fifty-fourth bishop to be appointed by Patriarch Dionysius Tell Mahre (818-845.), and the last was Yuhanna, the twenty-first bishop of the Patriarch Dionysius Yahya (1034-1044).\textsuperscript{431} Subsequent connections between Kerala and the Church are not clear. This is due to the Portuguese invasion, which “led to the wanton destruction of whole church archives and libraries, which is the reason why so little is known of the history of the pre-Portuguese Indian

\textsuperscript{427} Daniel Thomas, \textit{The Orthodox Church of India-History}, New Delhi, 1972, pp.3, 4.
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{430} Ibid., p.18.
However, after the sixteenth century, a full-fledged Syrian Orthodox presence in that part of India is evidence through Christian leadership appointed by Syrian Orthodox patriarchs, large communities using Syriac in the liturgy, church buildings, schools, and seminaries. But as we will see, the European blatant interference in Church affairs in the Near East was also the case in Kerala.

Under the tolerant rule of the native Maharajahs, the Syriac Church in India flourished and was generally at peace. It was ruled by one metropolitan assisted by an archdeacon, traditionally from the Palaomatta family.  

3.3 The Synod of Diampor (AD 1599): A new Start for the Church of India

When the Portuguese fleet under Vasco de Gama landed at Cochin at the coast of Malabar in 1503, the Portuguese noted that there were 200,000 Christians in the region having around 1,500 churches. The Portuguese were surprised to find more than 100 churches just on the coast of Malabar. Claudius Buchanon, one of the early Anglican missionaries in India, travelled throughout the Malabar region and recorded the following observation. “But when they [the Portuguese] became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship, they were offended. ‘These churches,’ said the Portuguese, ‘belong to the Pope.’ ‘Who is the Pope?’ said the natives, ‘we never heard of him.’ The European priests were yet more alarmed, when they found that the Hindoo [sic] Christians maintained the order and discipline of a regular church under Episcopal Jurisdiction: and that, for 1,300 years past, they had enjoyed a succession of Bishops appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch. ‘We,’ said they, ‘are the true faith, whatever you from the West may be; for we come from the place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians.’”

The conquering Portuguese attempted to forcibly unite the Malabar Christians with Rome, importing from Europe such techniques as the Inquisition, imprisonment and death. Syriac liturgical books were burned as part of the attempt to separate the Malabar Christians

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433 Fortescue, p.363 reports that the Christian Indians had a legend that St Thomas had chosen an archdeacon from that family. When the Metropolitan died, the archdeacon would petition the relevant Catholicos or Patriarch for a successor.
434 Ibid.
435 Claudius Buchanon, *Christian Researches in Asia: with notes on the Translation of the Scriptures into Oriental Languages*, 1812, p. 56.
from 1,300 years of their Syriac Christianity and heritage in order to bring them under Rome’s hegemony. Their campaign among the Indian Christians included the burning of their church records, which explains the reason for the lack of clarity about their Church history and its association with different Middle Eastern ecclesiastic orders.

These measures were reinforced by a synod that the Portuguese held in Diampor in June 1599. During this synod, they forced the formation of a line of Uniate metropolitans dependent on the Portuguese Latin Hierarchy.\footnote{Fortescue p 363.} According to the Synod’s declaration, “Officially and theoretically are all Malabar Christians were Uniates.”\footnote{Fortescue p 364.}

Buchanon, albeit reflecting the Protestant side of the Anglican perspective, conveyed to his readers the sheer intolerance of the Portuguese missionaries of the method of Christian worship that indigenous Indians practiced. They had no appreciation of the fact that the ancestors of the people they persecuted knew Christianity before them. They terrorized those who did not accede to their demands and burned their liturgical Syriac books and, finding the people still resolute, subjected them to the horrors of the Inquisition.

The Portuguese convened a Synod at a Syrian Church in Diampar, near Cochin in which a “Romish” Archbishop Menzes presided, where the 150 Syrian clergy who attended were accused of “having married wives; that they owned but two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; that they neither invoked Saints nor worshipped Images, nor believed in Purgatory...”\footnote{Buchanon, p. 56.} Buchanon noted that the churches on the sea coast “were compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope.” These churches were allowed to keep their traditional language of liturgy after Menzes “purged” their liturgy of its errors.

The churches in the interior, notes Buchanon, would not yield to Rome, hid their books and fled to the mountains where they sought the protection of princes. The resentment felt by the indigenous Christians over the actions of the Portuguese led them to seek help from their fellow Christians in the Middle East. In 1653, a number of clergy and lay leaders met in the church of Alnaghat, and in secret, for fear of the Portuguese, swore to call for a non-Uniate metropolitan as in previous times. They chose Thomas Palakomatta, of the appointed family of archdeacons, to seek a bishop.\footnote{Fortescue p. 364.} According to Fortescue, letters went out to Syrian,
“Nestorian” and Coptic patriarchs. However, the letter addressed to the Patriarch of Antioch, brought forth an immediate response for help.\footnote{440}{Ibid.}

### 3.4 Arrival of Mar Gregorius Abdul Jalil al-Mosulli

In response to this plea for help, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch sent Mar Gregorius Abdul Jalil al Mosulli, the Metropolitan of Jerusalem, to Malankara. Mar Gregorius arrived in Malabar in 1665 by which date the Portuguese had left. However, the division they had created in the Syrian churches in India persisted, as Buchanon has noted, for many of the Syrian Christians remained associated with Rome ecclesiastically and liturgically. Equally importantly, there were certain practices that the Portuguese had imposed on the churches, such as the cancellation of certain feasts, and demanding that priests be celibate, which were practices contrary to the traditions of the Syriac Christians. Gregorius travelled throughout Malabar to address these and other concerns. Gregorius re-established the historical ecclesiastic connection between the Christians of southern India and the Oriental Syriac Church, this time of Antioch.

Mar Gregorius also worked hard to re-affirm the doctrinal and liturgical bonds by preaching in churches across the land. On February 5, 1668, he issued an encyclical that incorporated teachings that would facilitate the return to the faith of the Church of Antioch. In the Bab Tuma archives there is a copy of an Arabic translation of Gregorius’ encyclical penned by the hand of Aphram Barsoum (later Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum) and dated in 1929.\footnote{441}{Document P1070660, 661.} The encyclical, penned in Syriac, was incorporated in a letter which Mar Gregorius wrote at the Church of Kottayam and addressed to the churches of Parur, Mulanthuruthi and Kandanad. My translation of Barsoum’s translation of Mar Gregorius ‘Abd al-Jalil’s encyclical appears in Appendix A 3.1.

The main thrust of Mar Gregorius’ letter was to denounce the Diampor Synod calling it “an illegal Synod in which they manipulated the Orthodox Faith...They have fallen into heresy and are attempting to draw others also to fall in it.”...“I ask you, therefore, to jealously guard the Canons of the Syrian Church...”
Mar Gregorius reminded his audience that: “[t]he men of the Roman Church had no authority over this diocese for 1,600 years...Do you think that the entire huge crowd was judged to perish in hell? No only a blasphemer with the devil in him would say that.”

Despite the division the Portuguese created and the departure of many to the Church of Rome, the direct authority of the Patriarch of Antioch that Mar Gregorius re-established has been continuously maintained in southern India, until the present, albeit with internal division and incursions by Western missionary interests, as will be discussed shortly.

3.5 British Interest in the Syriac Christians of Southern India

After the Portuguese, it was the turn of the Anglican Church to have an interest in the Syriac Christians in India, as a result of increased British power in that country. This interest goes back to at least 1811, when Claudius Buchanan published his *Christian Researches in Asia*, which was generally regarded as the first work in English in the nineteenth century on the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. Buchanan was inclined to a British hegemony formulated initially as a closer cooperation of the Syrian Orthodox and Anglican Churches. Such cooperation was, in Buchanan’s opinion, based in part on the fact that they were both Episcopal, but non-Papal churches, and on the shared practices of the Syrian Orthodox and Anglican churches, especially when they differed from the Latin tradition. Buchanan, in fact, advocated a full and formal union between the two churches in India, even though he acknowledged to the metropolitan that he did not himself have the authority to speak for the Church of England.

After Buchanan’s return to England, the Syrian Orthodox Church in India was given wide publicity, and it was brought to the attention of individuals and societies who had probably heard nothing of it before. Amongst the societies who were brought into contact with the Syrian Orthodox in India was the Church Missionary Society.

Initially the Syrian Orthodox in India accepted the educational help offered by the CMS missionaries and did not regard their presence as a threat. The years 1816 to 1836 thus

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443 Taylor, p. 5.
444 Taylor, pp. 4,5.
witnessed the first attempt at collaboration between an Anglican CMS and the Syrian Orthodox Church. Despite its initial cooperative nature the venture carried within it hidden dangers concerning the essential independence and integrity of the weaker church.

Because of the Evangelical nature of its members, CMS as an Anglican society represented the Protestant “wing” of the Church of England. Thus, it was inevitable that after an early offer of assistance its true attitude would surface, which would be to criticize many of the practices and beliefs of the Syrians as “superstition.” Consequently, it did not take long for its members to actively campaign to “reform” the Syrian church with which they were working.

A crisis of authority soon developed from the fact that the missionaries were theoretically working under the direction of the Syrian Orthodox Metropolitan appointed by Antioch, but in fact they were there at the instigation of the Resident who, possibly for political reasons, pushed for “reform”. The tension between “reform” and conservative factions became more and more obvious and explicit. In 1836, following the Synod of Mavelikkara, the relationship between the CMS and the Syrian Orthodox deteriorated further and was finally severed.445

Following this split, those Syrians who had been influenced by their contact with the Anglican missionaries, led by Abraham Malpan, who was in the forefront of those who advocated “reform”, decided to take steps to work for the conversion of the entire Syrian community. In order to promote his brand of “reforms” Abraham Malpan orchestrated for Joseph Mathew, his nephew, to travel to Mardin under false credentials in order to be consecrated metropolitan by the patriarch himself.446 Mathew went in 1841, and returned to India in 1843, as Mar Athanasius. This brought him into direct conflict with the already established metropolitan, Mar Dionysius IV (d. 1855) and with his successor Dionysius V, who was consecrated by Patriarch Jacob II in Deir al-Za‘faran in 1865. The dispute also gave way to divisions and litigation concerning Church property. The litigation and acrimony continued. By 1870, the situation had existed for over three decades and had become increasingly dire so that patriarchal intervention was requested to end it. Mar Dionysius thus invited Patriarch Peter to India for this purpose. En route to India, the Patriarch was to visit London to secure the necessary permission. The CMS “reformers” had thus, inevitably,

445 Taylor, pp.6,7.
446 Tuma (later Patriarch Ignatius Yacob III), History of the Church of India, tras. Matti Moosa., pp. 175-186.
generated a protracted dispute which was to be the catalyst for a close interaction between the Syrian Orthodox and Anglican churches over the following few decades.

3.6 Patriarch Peter’s Visit to England

3.6.1 Purpose and Initial Steps

Patriarch Peter’s visit to India first required the permission of both the Sultan and of Great Britain to visit England and then that of Great Britain to visit its crown jewel colony, India. The purpose of the visit from the viewpoint of the Syrian Orthodox is clearly expressed by Bishop Gregorius Abdullah Satoof (Sadaddi), who was at that time Archbishop of Jerusalem, and later became Patriarch (1906-1915). Patriarch Peter instructed Bishop Abdullah to accompany him on his visit and in a telegram, told him to join him in Istanbul, where he had been staying for over a year. Abdullah wrote an account of the entire trip, starting from Istanbul, which lasted from 1874 to 1879. In this account he states: “on April 11, 1874, a Thursday, a telegram arrived at sunset from our lord Patriarch Peter reading: ‘attend here quickly as we have urgent business.’”

Abdullah reports that he left Jerusalem on April 18, 1874, travelled overland from Jerusalem to Jaffa, then by sea to Haifa, Beirut, Cyprus, Rhodes and Izmir, landing in Istanbul on May 1, 1874. He then describes Patriarch Peter’s mood upon meeting him in Istanbul. In this account Abdullah summarizes the many worries and the multiple concerns and frustrations that Patriarch Peter had been encountering since his installation as Patriarch in 1871. My translation of the full text of Abdullah’s description is given in Appendix A 3.2.

The range of problems enumerated by Abdullah clearly underlines the psychological pressures under which the Syrian Orthodox communities had been labouring in the course of preserving their historical identity and status. Abdullah cites several factors that had been weighing heavily on the mind of Patriarch Peter: his inability to rid his church of the yoke imposed on it by being counted as part of the Armenian millet; the property disputes with the Armenians at a number of locations particularly in Jerusalem; the long ongoing conflict with the Catholics concerning church properties; as well as the main problem caused by the Protestant missionary incursions within the Syrian Orthodox communities in India, which was the primary cause of his journey to London.

447 *Al-Majalah al-Batriarkah*, No. 42, February 1985, p. 75.
Abdullah then cites how the idea of the journey to London came about:

Thus at that point he [the Patriarch] approached Priest Curtis, who served at the Church of Ghalta in Istanbul, and informed him of the stress he been under. Consequently, the said priest communicated immediately with the Anglican Church in London. After a while, a response arrived stating that if the Syrian Patriarch were to come (to London), his presence here should yield positive outcome.  

Although the main and official reason for Patriarch Peter’s journey to England was to seek official permission to travel to India and to reclaim full ecclesiastical authority over his church in that country, clearly other matters listed in Abdullah’s account were very much on Patriarch Peter’s mind. In addition, although not stated in that account, educational aid figured repeatedly and strongly in the discussions he had and the requests he made in London.

The Reverend George Curtis - referred to as “Priest Curtis” in Bishop Abdullah’s quoted statement - wrote on July 16, 1874 to the Archbishop of Canterbury stating that the object of the Patriarchal visit was twofold:

1. To obtain from her Majesty’s Government official recognition of his authority over certain British Subjects in Southern India similar (as far as possible) to the recognition which he has already procured from the Sultan’s Government of his jurisdiction over certain Turkish subjects in the Ottoman Empire
2. To gain help, material and moral in his work of advancing the cause of education and religion among the thousands committed to his charge.

Upon his arrival in London, Patriarch Peter wrote several letters to Archbishop Tait, the Archbishop of Canterbury, about the central theme of his visit; namely the division in the Syrian Church in India caused by the illegitimate status of Athanasius, whom the British authorities had been supporting. In one of these letters, dated September 7, 1874 (Julian) - corresponding to September 19, 1874 (Gregorian) - in which he makes clear the position of the Syrian Orthodox Church in regard to those of its clergy and followers who do not follow its laws:

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448 Al-Majalah al-Batriarkah, No. 42, February 1985, pp. 75-78.

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A few people have written to you expressing their desire that the Syrians in India become independent, with the ability to ordain their own bishops, one from the other. This would be contrary to the very premise of our Syrian Church and its laws, where only the patriarch may ordain bishops, and would lead to a division within our Church. We trust that you do not encourage such division. I understand that you have received letters from India that promote Athanasius as leader of the Syrian Church in India. Athanasius has been and still is a renegade. He has been such since the times of my predecessors Elias II and after him Jacob II. Also, he has deviated from Church teachings. If he is a member of the Syrian Church, he should follow the laws of this Church with obedience. Otherwise, he should leave the Church and follow whoever he desires. It is not permissible that he stays Syrian by name only, while he is contrary to that in his heart…

On October 16, Badger summarized the aims of the Patriarch’s visit to India in an article he published in *The Times* in which he supported the Patriarch’s request for educational help. What is particularly significant about this letter is that it denied the Armenian’s claim that his visit to England was for the purpose of a union with the Anglican Church.

Doubtless there are a number of other points which it would be indispensable to enquire into, were the Patriarch's object to seek intercommunion with our Church. He has no such quixotic object in view, his simple errand being, as far as I know, to enlist the sympathy of the clergy and laity of the Church of England to enable him to introduce education among his depressed people, who are sadly in want of enlightenment and have no foreign aid to rely upon, as have the Syrian Catholics and other Uniate communities in the East. Moreover, he seeks the co-operation of Englishmen because a very large portion of his people, called the Christians of St Thomas, is located in India within Native States, under the protection of the British Government.

### 3.6.2 Encountering Closed Doors

Taylor cites a letter from Archbishop Tait to Prime Minister Disraeli, of September 1874, which summarizes the Anglican position.

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450 Letter of Patriarch Peter to Archbishop Tait dated September 7, 1874 (Julian) (Tait 202. f.
452 Taylor, p. 24.
453 G.P. Badger in *The Times*, October 16, 1874.
The so called Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch has come to England on business connected with his authority over the Syrian Christians in India. He is with a Firman from the Sultan and with proper introduction to me. My views respecting his connection with the Syrian Christians are embodied in the enclosed newspaper. 455

The referenced newspaper is The Guardian, September 16, 1874, which, with reference to the Indian dispute, stated, "the Archbishop of Canterbury supports Athanasius, not Dionysius." 456

It is clear, from the foregoing, that the Anglican Church was far from being impartial in this central issue in Patriarch Peter’s visit, and that its position was diametrically opposed to that of the Syrian Church. Archbishop Tait’s position had been formulated from advice given to him by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in India, including in particular one from the Bishop of Calcutta, stating, in a letter to Archbishop Tait earlier in the year, that "Mar Athanasius and not Mar Dionysius is the true Mutran [i.e., Metropolitan]". 457

Despite this discouraging turn of events and his disappointment with the Archbishop of Canterbury's response to this central issue on his agenda, the Patriarch turned his focus to the political authorities, addressing another thorny issue. Writing to Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary in October 1874, he sought British “oversight and protection” similar to that to the Catholics by the Pope and the French. 458

On October 31st of that year, Elizabeth Finn wrote to the Archbishop, "The Armenians in Constantinople have formally accused the Patriarch to the Turkish Government of coming to England to promote the union of the Syrian Church with the English Church. He is looked upon in the East as a very liberal man to have come here as he has done". 459 This newly apparent expressed concern for the internal Turkish situation appears to have influenced the Archbishop. On November 4th, he wrote to the Foreign Secretary, urging the British Government to formally intervene in the Ottoman Empire on behalf of the Syrians, saying,

455 Letter of Tait to Disraeli, Addington Park, Croydon, September 1874. (Tait 202. f. 221).
456 Taylor, Antioch, p. 18
458 Letter of the Patriarch to Lord Derby (Foreign Secretary) of the October 12, 1874, translated by G.P. Badger (FO. 78/2367).
459 Letter of Elizabeth Finn to Tait (Tait 202. f. 225).
"[t]he Roman Catholics and Greeks are protected by the French and Russian Ambassadors but the other bodies of Christians seem to be exposed to very great privations".\textsuperscript{460}

The British Government, avoiding reference to the issues raised by the Patriarch, chose silence and merely sent letters to the Governor General of India, and to the Governors of Madras and Bombay, introducing the Patriarch to the British authorities in India, stating that the Patriarch was coming to India in connection with questions of his jurisdiction. The letters made no reference to the ecclesiastical dispute nor to the ensuing divisiveness nor to any role the authorities there might have had in it.\textsuperscript{461}

Undeterred by the evident lack of progress, the Patriarch now pursued another important matter on his agenda, that of seeking educational aid. To this end he visited the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) on November 17, 1874, requesting educational aid. In response to questions put to him concerning the needs of his community, the Patriarch enumerated the following:

(a) Schools – The Patriarch wished for elementary schools for the children of both sexes in all towns and throughout the provinces. The books necessary would have to be printed there. One lady had already given a small press, but other and larger ones were required but a beginning once made, help on the spot would be forthcoming to continue the work. The teachers in the present schools were not all priests, the clergy themselves were often so ignorant as not to be able to read the Lord's Prayer. This led to:
(b) Clerical Colleges or Training Schools for Teachers. At present the knowledge of Holy Scripture, the Liturgy, and a general acquaintance with the pastoral duties of their future office, but practically much less was accepted as sufficient. The Patriarch wishes to have a College of deacons and teachers at his own patriarchal seat near Murden [sic] to be conducted by a teacher selected by himself. Education at first must be gratuitous, in the course of time, candidates would be prepared to pay something. The education would include acquaintance with English and French. If this education was not taken in hand by those attached to the Patriarch of Antioch, the Roman Catholics would step in and offer it. At the present time, the Syrian Uniates send their deacons to Rome.
(c) Books – The Patriarch especially mentioned Bibles, Prayer Books and the Psalter. He wished for Bibles in four languages, Syrian (first of and above all), Turkish, Armenian, and Arabic, the style to be vernacular, and such as would be easily understood by the people.\textsuperscript{462}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[460] Letter of Tait to Lord Derby, November 4, 1874 (Tait 202. f. 227)
\item[461] Taylor, \textit{Antioch}, p. 24.
\item[462] Taylor, \textit{Antioch}, pp. 27, 28, from the recorded Minutes of Meeting on November 30, 1874, of Standing Committee of SPCK. (Minutes of the Standing Committee SPCK (22) November 1874-January 1876), pp. 3-5
\end{footnotes}
The details of this request by the Patriarch demonstrated his wish to include girls in any plans for education as well as to pay particular attention to teacher training and ecclesiastic education.

A sub-committee was formed in response to the Patriarch's requests, which met three times in the next three months, only to come to the conclusion that no action should be taken.463 This attitude underscores the real lack of any true British interest in helping fellow Christians in the Middle East to improve themselves. It appears the British, at least initially, wanted enlightenment to occur only through their own missionary channels.

The Patriarch had first sought the Archbishop of Canterbury’s influence to curb the British missionary intervention in a matter that concerns Antioch’s historical ecclesiastic authority, but he met with a negative attitude. He next sought political intervention from the government on behalf of his community in the Ottoman Empire and received no answer. On November 19th, the Patriarch had seen the Ottoman Ambassador, Musurus Pasha, in an attempt to enlist his support in his attempts to see the Queen. The Ambassador refused, claiming that it was not only irregular for a Patriarch to see a foreign monarch, but also that it would bring suspicion and possible discredit on the other Christian millets in the Empire. He also pointed out to the Patriarch that the Armenians had written to him attempting to discredit him (the Patriarch).464 Furthermore, the Patriarchal request for material support in educational matters was listened to with politeness and interest, but no action was taken.

The negativity that the Patriarch encountered on all fronts did not dissuade him from pursuing his fight - this time by taking his grievances to Queen Victoria. Here the Patriarch introduced a new element to the list of unresolved grievances, namely the dispute with the Roman Catholic Church in Damascus, Mosul, and Aleppo. The Patriarch referred to the fact that other churches had foreign powers to protect them: "the Roman Catholics have oppressed us and, being aided by the influence of foreign governments, have taken our churches."465 Objections were raised by the Foreign Office, citing likely objections by the Ottoman Embassy. On December 28, 1874, four months after arriving in London, an internal account

463 Ibid, p. 28.
464 See 'Abdallah Sadadi, Al-Majalah al-Batriarkah., vol. 23, No. 45/46, p. 277. See also FO 78/2367, for the Patriarch's letter to Lord Derby reporting the meeting.
465 Ibid.
addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury stated, "It is a most unfortunate expedition, and one can only be sorry that he came." The author of the account went on to say:

Of course these Orientals do not see or understand the way in which things are managed in England. Had an English dignitary gone to Syria, he would have been made so much of, that the Patriarch cannot understand that the Archbishop had not sent to enquire about him. He already says some bitter things, in consequence, of our church.\textsuperscript{466}

On the other hand, Tait had already been warned privately of the situation as early as the 5\textsuperscript{th} of January, when Mrs Finn wrote to him on the subject:

The real fact of the matter is that the Patriarch does not wish to obtain from the British Government authority to exercise spiritual rule over the Syrian Church scattered throughout the native states of Cochin and Travancore – so that with the power of England to support him, the native Princes of those states may be compelled to recognise as Bishop whosoever he may appoint and use physical force in ejecting whosoever he may be pleased to depose – but he does wish…that he may not be prevented from exercising authority.\textsuperscript{467}

3.6.3 Shedding Light on the Anglican Position on the Syrian Orthodox Church in India

My research at the Lambeth Palace Library archives unearthed an internal report that was entitled: \textit{The Case of the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch Fairly Stated, London, January, 1875, compiled from official documents and authentic papers}.\textsuperscript{468} This 17-page report provides a detailed background of the dispute within the Syrian Orthodox Church in India and lays the blame unequivocally at the hands of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the British establishment in India. The first section provides a statement of the issues in which it acknowledges that Athanasius, using deception and false documents, secured consecration as a metropolitan by Patriarch Elias II in 1843. Following the discovery of the deception by Athanasius, and his gross violations of civil and canon laws, the Patriarch summoned him to Deir al-Za‘faran to answer for these. When he refused to appear, his consecration was annulled and Dionysius consecrated in his place. However, Athanasius remained defiant, assisted by

\textsuperscript{466} Taylor, Antioch and Canterbury, p. 30, quoting letter of E. Hamilton-Blyth to Tait dated December 28, 1874 (Tait 202. ff. 242-3).

\textsuperscript{467} Letter of Elizabeth Finn to Tait, January 5, 1875. (Tait 202. ff. 250-1).

\textsuperscript{468} \textit{The Case of the Syrian Patriarch Fairly Stated -Compiled From Official Documents and Authentic Papers}, (London, January 1875), Tait vol. 214. ff. 19-28. An abridged version of the report is given in Appendix A 3.3
CMS and the British administration in India. The report questions the motives of the perpetrators and concludes that they are

none other than the desire, springing from a very mistaken religious zeal, and fostered by plausible assurances of the wily Athanasius, to see the Syrian Church “reformed” [as they would call it] and Protestantized.

The report makes a scathing attack on the narrow-mindedness of many Anglican clergy, thus:

We all know the blindness with which religious men sometimes mistake the means, and bid us “come and see their Zeal for the Lord;” and we are no strangers (certainly not in England at this moment) to the narrowness of party spirit, which regards as damnable error all worship which is not ruled by our square and compass.

The report demonstrates the interference the British clergy practiced in the affairs of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India, quoting a statement by the Bishop of Madras made in November 4, 1870 in which he criticized Mar Dionysius as being “tenacious of the existing state of things in the Malabar Church, not willing even to part with prayers to the Virgin,”

The report summarises its findings in a forthright manner giving every right to the Patriarch of Antioch in the issue, stating:

The Archbishop of Canterbury has asked for proofs, our Government have required information. We trust that both the one and the other will now be satisfied. The fact of the deposition is manifest. The right of the Patriarch of Antioch to depose is also unquestioned

The last section of the report is as unequivocal as the rest of it in denouncing the attitude of the British ecclesiastic and civil authorities in India and the practices in which they were engaged throughout the developments of this issue. It ends with this damming statement:

But the British Government (ever bound to promote peace among its subjects), has interfered already, and to some purpose, through its representative, the Resident of Travancore: for not only has he lent himself to the settlement at a packed meeting of a disputed monetary claim; but the supreme Government has, by its persistent refusal to
utter the one word asked for, virtually taken sides, and thrown its weight into the scale in favour of schism, robbery and wrong.\textsuperscript{469}

However, despite the fact that this internal Lambert Palace report unequivocally lays the blame for the Syrian Orthodox Church’s trouble in India on the CMS branch of the Anglican Church, Archbishop Tait remained obdurate. From his entrenched position, he stated in February, 1875, “It is not desirable that the Patriarch and his attendants remain longer in this country than is absolutely necessary.”\textsuperscript{470}

3.6.4 Audience with Queen Victoria, then Departure

Still pressing his case on the Archbishop, the Patriarch wrote to him bitterly on February 15\textsuperscript{th}, “When you have distinguished between the good and the evil you will decide justly”.\textsuperscript{471} Tait must by now have been aware that the Patriarch was not prepared to compromise his position, and this he had reiterated again and again to the three men delegated by the Archbishop to be responsible for the Patriarch.\textsuperscript{472}

As for the requested British intervention on behalf of the Syrian Orthodox Church with respect to property rights in the Ottoman Empire, this request was turned down as per Lord Derby’s letter to the Patriarch on January 28, 1875.\textsuperscript{473}

On March 5\textsuperscript{th}, the long awaited audience requested with the Queen was granted at Windsor. An interesting account of this audience was given by the Dean of Windsor. The Queen saw the Patriarch again, one week later, on March 12\textsuperscript{th}. This time they met in the mausoleum at Frogmore, and no discussion took place.\textsuperscript{474}

With the audience 'achieved', Tait was by now anxious to have the affair brought to a close and for the Patriarch to leave Britain. He wrote to this effect on March 8, 1875 clearly indicating that he wanted no more to do with this matter. His final analysis was, “We come to the conclusion that it must rest with the authorities in India to decide what attitude they ought

\textsuperscript{469}Ibid., ff. 26-28.
\textsuperscript{470}Letter of Tait to Sir Thomas Biddulph, February 2, 1875. (Tait 214. ff. 32-34.)
\textsuperscript{471}Letter of the Patriarch to Tait, February 15, 1875. (Tait 214. f. 62)
\textsuperscript{472}For details of this, see letter of H. J. Wright to Tait, February 18, 1875. (Tait 214. f. 70).
\textsuperscript{473}Letter of Lord Derby to the Patriarch, January 28, 1875. (Tait 214.f 17).
\textsuperscript{474}The accounts of the Audiences may be found in The Syrian Church in Mesopotamia (1908), p. 4, E. Finn, Reminiscences of Mrs Finn (1929, p. 250. The first Audience appeared in the Court Circular of The Times Saturday March 6, 1875, the second did not. (Information from the Royal Archivist, Windsor Castle). In Syrian Orthodox sources, Julian Calendar dates are used. Thus, Abdallah Saddadi, op. Cit., (Vol. 23, No. 45/46), p. 28 speaks of the audiences on February 21\textsuperscript{st} and 28\textsuperscript{th}.
to assume in reference to the divisions which have taken place among the Syrian Christians of Malabar.\(^\text{475}\)

The Patriarch left London, heading to India, on March 27, 1875 (Julian, as per Bishop Gregorius Abdullah’s travel record, corresponding to April 8 Gregorian).\(^\text{476}\)

Thus, the first high level encounter between the Syrian Orthodox and the Anglican Churches ended with a shock of reality for the Syrian Orthodox Church. While this particular chapter ended in disappointment and bitterness, it did not completely deter Patriarch Peter from seeking good relations with the Angliicans. Endowed with endurance and vision, he continued to appeal persistently for help in the years to come on two fronts: seeking much needed educational aid for his people, and support in seeking an independent millet status and so freeing his people from the Armenians yoke. On the educational front, the Patriarch’s repeated appeals, delivered with charisma and persistence, finally struck a tone of sympathy. A Syrian Patriarchate Education Fund was created in 1875 with the support of 18 senior bishops as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury. Below is an excerpt of the committee’s initial report, which includes Patriarch Peter’s appeal for assistance.

Tait died in 1882. Subsequent Archbishops of Canterbury were not really supportive of a relationship with the Syrian Orthodox Church that was responsive to this church’s educational needs. In January 1883, shortly after Benson had succeeded Tait at Canterbury, the Patriarchal representative in Constantinople Butrus Abd-el-Noor, wrote to Lambeth requesting assistance from the Archbishop and the Syrian Patriarchate Educational Committee for the maintenance of a Syrian School in that city. Benson consulted R.T. Davidson, who had been Tait’s domestic chaplain for an appropriate response. Davidson’s advice bluntly expressed an Orientalist attitude:

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\text{This requires the utmost caution. There is at least one 'schismatic' lot of 'Ancient Syrians'. I adjure you to send the letter you received – or the name and style of the authority with a note from yourself to Curtis, who will tell you if it is alright. The delay is of no consequence to an Oriental.}\(^\text{477}\)
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\(^{475}\) Letter to Tait to the Patriarch, March 8, 1875. (Tait 214. F. 87)
\(^{476}\) Al-Majalah al-Batriarkah, No. 23, p. 285.
\(^{477}\) Memorandum of R.T. Davidson to Benson (Lambeth Archives: Benson 11.f.2).
The request was eventually partially fulfilled by printing a number of New Testaments in Syriac. The Syrian Patriarchate Education Society was also partly responsible for the raising of the funds to provide a Syriac printing press, the type for which had been cast during Patriarch Peter’s visit to London in 1874-1875. There appears to be some controversy about the fate of that press. During his visit to London in 1888, Bishop Gregorius Abdullah requested a replacement press. The new press was assembled and installed in Mardin in 1889, and the first Syriac books were printed that year.

A new impetus towards providing educational aid appears to have been generated in 1892. Funds were raised by the Syrian Patriarchate Educational Society to enable Oswald Parry of Magdalene College, Oxford to visit the region in order to provide a detailed assessment of educational needs. The visit, which was made over the period from April to November, 1892, resulted in the publication of his findings in a pamphlet in that year, and in his famous book *Six Months in a Syrian Monastery*. His extensive groundbreaking field study provided a depth of information that was unmatched by most previous travellers, whose findings were generally somewhat superficial.\(^{478}\)

However, the enthusiasm with which Parry advocated providing educational help came rather too late to have any effect. The developing political situation against the Armenians in southeastern Anatolia in 1895 and the resulting massacres, which also included Syriac Christians, prevented any serious contact between the Christians in Anatolia and foreign countries. A school which had been opened in Mardin in 1888 seems to have fallen victim to the troubled state of the region in 1895. A. N. Andrus wrote from Mardin that the ‘Jacobite Syrian School’ had closed on July 2, 1895.\(^{479}\)

### 3.7 Patriarch Abdul Masih and Canterbury

Patriarch Abdul Masih renewed attempts for contact with the Church of England for the purpose of educational aid while Frederick Temple was Archbishop of Canterbury (1896-1902), but his requests were met with apathy. The American Congregational Missionary in Mardin, A. N. Andrus, wrote to Randal Davidson, Temple’s successor, in 1903, hoping for a different response. However, Davidson declined assistance citing the following reason:

\(^{478}\) Credit must at this point be also given to the two books by Horatio Southgate, namely: *Narrative of a Visit to the Syrian (Jacobite) Church of Mesopotamia*, 1856

\(^{479}\) Taylor, p. 79 referring to a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, *The Times*, March 14, 1898.
“I fear that it would be impossible for us to hold out any hope at present of being able to send emissaries to help the members of the church, because of the work which is at present being carried out among the Assyrians.”

3.8 Patriarch Abdullah and Canterbury

Andrus’ attempt to persuade Archbishop Davidson to resume educational aide was repeated upon Abdullah’s access to the patriarchate. However, Davidson’s response dated December 1, 1906 was “a very definite and unelaborated negative.”

Patriarch Abdullah’s visit to London from October 1908 to August 1909, on his way to India provided a further opportunity for contact and for request by Andrus for the resumption of educational aid to the Syrian Orthodox. This time, Elizabeth Finn wrote to Archbishop Davidson hoping for even more: for a relationship that would be similar to that based on the mission to the Assyrians. Davidson’s response was embodied in a letter he wrote in August 1909 to the Bishop of Calcutta elaborating on the Patriarch’s visit.

He has had two interviews with the king. He also has seen Lord Morley. I gather that he hopes in India to collect some funds for his own flock for the benefit of the suffering people in Mesopotamia…although it is clear, and I think he understands this, that we cannot accept definite responsibility for helping him to meet these particular needs.

The Educational Society Fund, which had been dormant for years stood at 166 pounds 11 shillings and 8 pence in August 1909 and remained at that same value on December 16, 1914.

On another front, a Lambeth Conference had been held in the summer of 1908, which is prior to Patriarch Abdullah’s visit, which commenced in October of the same year. The Conference resolved to form a closer relationship between the two Churches. Thus, in December 1908, the patriarch was invited to a formal interview with the Bishop of Salisbury, John Wadsworth, the chairman of the Eastern Churches Committee of the Lambert

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480 Letter from Davidson to Andrus, August, 1, 1903 (Davidson 83. f. 434).
481 Taylor, Antioch p. 91.
482 Letter of Davidson to the Bishop of Calcutta, August 6, 1909 (Davidson 299. f. 89).
483 Ibid, p. 94, footnote 27, citing banking info of Coutts & Co, The Strand. The account was closed on December 16, 1914.
484 Ibid, p. 97.
Conference. The statement of faith that resulted from the interview, involved 26 questions and answers, included 22 articles of faith. However, Patriarch Abdullah eventually refused to endorse these statements. According to *The Daily News* of August 23, 1909,

Unfortunately there was no practical outcome of the efforts made during the Patriarch’s stay to promote a closer union between the Eastern and Anglican Churches. In accordance with a resolution of the Pan-Anglican Congress, the Patriarch was approached, and had a series of interviews on the subject, with the Bishop of Salisbury, who endeavoured to draw up a species of catechism for the information of the Lambeth Committee of Bishops. The language difficulty, however, seems to have proved fatal to any understanding, His Holiness subsequently repudiating entirely the Protestant character of the answers attributed to him by his English interpreter.

*The Daily News* quoted Patriarch Abdullah saying, “I myself am most anxious for a rapprochement between the two churches if it can be accomplished without sacrifice of any vital doctrine. We are entirely at one with the High Church party, but the attitude of the Low Church men is a great obstacle.”

3.9 *The Apostolicae Curae* - the Source of a Temporary Rapprochement

In a recent book, William Taylor considered the hypothesis of mutual recognition between the Syrian Orthodox and the Anglican Churches. According to Taylor, the need for this arose from the Anglican perspective as a result of the issuance of the *Apostolicae Curae* Bull by Pope Leo XIII in 1896. The said Bull stated: “We pronounce and declare that the ordinations carried out according to the Anglican rite have been and are absolutely null and utterly void.” This was Rome’s response to the *Oxford Movement* and the *Tractarian* vision within the Anglican High Church that had been gathering pace over the previous few decades. For the Church of England between 1895 and 1914, an attempt was being made by the *Oxford Movement* to demonstrate that church order of the Church of England and its ecclesiology were somehow in an unbroken continuity with the Patristic period, something

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485 Archival documents P 1100036 to 1100037
486 Taylor p. 98.
488 Ibid
which would appeal to the Orthodox Churches. This and other characteristics, such as the use of the vernacular in liturgy and Scripture and the historic episcopate, were intended by the Tractarian apologists to demonstrate that the Church of England, like the Syrian Orthodox Church and other Orthodox churches, has always been a historic church. Taylor cites a statement by Brooke Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, which explicitly refers to the shared values between the two churches: “The interest is mutual. These independent churches appeal with especial force to England and to the Churches of the Anglican Communion.”

According to Taylor, in this same discourse of mutual recognition, the Syrian Orthodox Church was seeking recognition as an independent church of the Ottoman State following its immense losses through missionary conversion, and poor material conditions. Taylor proposed that the collective memory of the Syrian Orthodox Church was imbued in its liturgical social and linguistic tradition for its internal definition of itself, particularly its patriarchal nature. These characteristics contrasted with its external identity as being a church serving a minority that, at best, was tolerated, but often persecuted throughout its history under the Byzantine, Arab and Ottoman rules. This situation naturally contrasts with the position of the Church of England’s overriding characteristic of being the Established Church of England, with congruity between monarch and church leadership.

The theological dialogue that developed during Patriarch Abdullah’s visit to London in 1908/1909 is seen by Taylor as being part of seeking ecclesiastical recognition from Orthodox Churches as a sister church to them. However, as noted before, the theological dialogue which the Church of England initiated during Patriarch Abdullah’s visit was inconclusive to the extent that Patriarch Abdullah declined to ratify the resulting document.

In his review of the referenced book by Taylor, Andrew Palmer remarks: “Taylor does not provide evidence that Canterbury formally sought recognition from Antioch, still less that the latter formally validated Anglican orders and sacraments.”

It may be noted here that the Syrian Orthodox sources (i.e., books, journals, and archival documents inspected by the writer) have not in any way addressed the question of mutual identity recognition for which Taylor has devoted so much space in his book. Paradoxically,

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492 Taylor, Narratives of Identity, p. 63.
493 Ibid, p.16.
with all factors considered, the discussion around mutual recognition underlines the true independence of the Syrian Orthodox Church from external doctrinal and political influence, despite its overall weakness in comparison to the power and dominance of an establishment such as the Church of England.

The merits of analogy Taylor employed in constructing the notion of emerging identities between the Syrian Orthodox church and the Church of England, notwithstanding the reality, was that the dialogue between the two churches subsided as the political interests of the British Government changed. Taylor states: “The years leading up to First World War thus saw a drawing apart of the Church of England and the Syrian Orthodox Church due to the incompatible and contradictory aims of British Foreign policy interests and the Ottoman minority aspirations.”

All attempts from within the Anglican side to breathe life into the aid enterprise to the Syrian Orthodox failed. Such attempts were renewed in 1913 when the British felt that their association with the Assyrians was failing, with the possibility that the Assyrians were inclined to form a relationship with the Russians. At this point Henry C. Holy, the British Vice-Counsel in Mosul wrote to Davidson in 1913 incorporating this proposal:

The Archbishop of Canterbury’s mission to the Nestorians has had ideas of sending a similar mission to the Jacobites. If Mar Shimun eventually throws in his lot with the Russians, as seems possible, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Mission will very likely be compelled to withdraw, and should this be the case it is certainly hoped that they will turn their attention to the Jacobites. They would, I think, find a more grateful task; moreover, the Jacobites are a well-to-do community, and would bear the greater part of the expense themselves; they only want Englishmen as organisers and teachers.

The British Consul input in this matter points to the likely link between British political interests with an Anglican church-based aid. However, as things developed neither this, nor his meeting with Barsoum in 1913 caused Davidson to change his mind.

Contact between the two churches, which had been minimal since 1892 came to an end on the eve of the First World War and throughout the war. Contact was renewed, without much

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496 Taylor, Narratives of Identity, p. 21.
497 Letter to Henry C. Holy, Vice Counsel in Mosul 20 February 1913 (Assyrian mission papers, box 13, 1911-17), cited by Taylor, Antioch, p. 102.
expectation of a breakthrough on the Syrian Orthodox side in 1919 while Barsoum was in London preparing to attend the Paris Peace Conference.

3.10 Patriarchal Visits to India

In the course of his two year visit, Patriarch Peter worked hard to introduce ecclesiastical reform into a church that had suffered neglect and division for such a long time. With his strong personality, his lifelong experience in dealing with church and community problems, he was able to bring considerable order into church practices and administration. One of the first tasks he undertook was to confirm the excommunication of the controversial Matthew (Athanasius) whose deceitful inauguration in the first place was what had precipitated the nearly four decades of division within the Indian church.

Through relentless zeal and determination, Patriarch Peter fought for the historical right of the Patriarchate of Antioch and was by March 1876 able to convince the Maharajah to issue a decree abrogating the previous decrees that had been issued to Athanasius Matthew, through which he practiced his disobedience. In addition, Patriarch Peter proceeded to affirm the authority of Antioch upon the Syrian church in Malabar by an order he impressed upon the Governor of Kalikut to issue in this regard, stating: “There is no authority for the Pope or the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon over the churches of Malabar, for they are under the authority of Antiochian Patriarch from the early centuries” The governor of Koolam issued a similar ruling stating: “The Syrian church in Malabar has always been under the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch from the early centuries.”

One of the other landmarks of his mission was convening a synod in Mulanthuruthi in 1876. The Synod enacted a number of reform edicts that aimed to regulate the working of the church and its local councils. One of the edicts was for the re-organization of the communities into seven dioceses, each headed by a bishop who is to be ordained by the Patriarch. In forming the division into diocese he relied on the latest official statistics for the population count of the communities, which totalled 295,770 individuals. Another reform was the

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498 Moosa, 257
499 Ignatius Jacob III, Al-Sara al-Naqiyya fe Tarikh al-Kaneesa al-Suryaniyya al-Hindiyya, p. 84.
500 Ibid. This statement by the Governor of Koolam lacks accuracy, for although the West Syriac writing inscription, Serto, has been attested as early as the fifth century, most ancient inscriptions attested so far have been East Syriac.
501 Ibid.
establishment of two councils: a consultative council comprising of 130 ecclesiasts and lay members; the other an executive council headed by an Archbishop with a membership of 24, one third of whom were to be ecclesiasts. The members of the executive council were to be elected by the consultative council. The underlying reason for this broad representation was stated to be as follows: “The church had in the past endured bitter results of division when no challenge could be mounted against the absolute authority of the Metropolitan.”

Following the decisions of the Synod, Patriarch Peter divided the church into seven Bishoprics (i.e., dioceses headed by bishops). These were the bishoprics of Kottayem, Kandanad, Angamali, Cochin, Niranan, Thompton and Koolam.

Malabar enjoyed stability and peace in the period following Patriarch Peter’s visit. In this period, two ecclesiasts particularly excelled in Syriac scholarship: Matta Kunat and Gurgis Watsheeri. In 1889, Patriarch Peter awarded each the title “Malphono” (learned teacher).

3.11 Subsequent Developments in India

During the patriarchate of Abdullah there was an attempt at a certain measure of autonomy, when Dionysius Joseph, the senior bishop (Metropolitan of Malabar), chief of the executive council, requested the authority to ordain bishops. However, based on established tradition, Patriarch Abdullah turned down the request. Further, early in the patriarchate of Abdullah, Dionysius Joseph and Iyawannis Paul wrote to the Patriarch for permission to send two candidates to be ordained bishops. Patriarch Abdullah ordained the two candidates in Jerusalem on May 31, 1908 calling one Cyril Paul and the other Dionysius Gurgis. Soon after, Dionysius Paul, the Metropolitan of Malabar, died while Patriarch Abdullah was still in London preparing to travel to India. Dionysius Gurgis wrote to Abdullah requesting to be promoted to the metropolitan of Malabar. Patriarch Abdullah approved the request without sufficient inquiry about the suitability of this individual as candidate, a matter that proved to be a source of considerable trouble in the years that followed. When Patriarch Abdullah arrived in India in October 1909, he discovered the disobedience of Gurgis, who was also seeking authority as a catholicos or a maphrian to enable him to appoint bishops without recourse to Antioch, a matter that Patriarch Abdullah naturally rejected. Eventually the Patriarch

\[502\] Ibid
\[503\] Ibid, p. 91.
excommunicated Gurgis in May 1911. However, Gurgis had his supporters who ignored the excommunication and continued to support him.

In 1912, Dionysius Gurgis invited the deposed former patriarch, Abdul Masih, to Malabar. The latter reportedly absolved him from excommunication, and legal action ensued. In 1923, the court of appeal in Trivandrum confirmed the excommunication of Dionysius. However, Gurgis journeyed to Deir al-Za’faran to appeal to Patriarch Elias III to absolve him from the excommunication. Patriarch Elias promised to absolve him if he satisfied a number of conditions. However the matter remained unresolved. In 1930, the Catholicos and three bishops submitted a request to the viceroy Lord Erwin to visit India to convene a Synod to resolve the outstanding issue of Dionysius. Patriarch Elias III acceded to the request and embarked on a visit to India, arriving in New Delhi on March 8, 1931. In the course of his visit, Patriarch Elias III absolved Gurgis. However, the problem did not end there for Gurgis and his followers were seeking a greater measure of autonomy. This question of autonomy was negotiated over the years and decades that followed until it was resolved by elevating the status of the Metropolitan to that of a catholicos. This was reflected in a Patriarchal Encyclical that was issued from Damascus July 12, 1964. The title of catholicos was subsequently changed to Maphrian in conformity with the Syrian Orthodox historical practice, with jurisdiction confined to India.504

3.12 Concluding Notes

From the dawn of Christianity, the Syriac Christians of southern India lived by the spirituality and by the rites of Semitic Christianity. They seemingly lived over the centuries in total harmony with themselves and under the ecclesiastic authority of Antioch, Ctesipnon, Faris, or Herat. This harmony continued until it was suddenly disrupted by the arrival of the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century who forced Catholicism on the Syriac Christians through intolerance and Inquisition. As a mark of their intolerance, they burnt most of the Syriac liturgical books and forced a lasting division among peaceful communities on the Malabar Coast. The Portuguese, thus, inaugurated the first split among the Syriac Christians in India.

504 Ibid, pp. 129-130. It may be noted that the Maphrianate had been eliminated in 1860 following the death of Maphirian Behnam the Fourth.
When the British took over as a colonizing power they utilized their authority to introduce their brand of Christianity among the remaining indigenous Christians. As a result, friction ensued with Antioch whose followers these Christians were.

To the Syrian Orthodox Church, the Syrian Christian Church in India was its crown jewel in the same way that India was the crown jewel of the British Empire. This status of the Syrian Church in India had gained prominence since the early nineteenth century when Syrian Orthodoxy in the Middle East had been retreating and feeling demoralized under the debilitating pressures of conversion in the ranks of its communities to Catholicism. Under these circumstances the defence of its following in India took on a particular importance and urgency. The challenge was taken up by the newly elevated 75-year-old Patriarch Peter, who had never seen a foreign land or spoken English. He made his way to London to seek permission to travel to India and presented his case in London, overcoming a web of intrigues of British autocracy over a period of nine months.

While Patriarch Peter was able to limit the damage created by the Anglican missions, a further division was added to the earlier division created by the Portuguese. Thus, the fifteen centuries of harmony under Oriental Christianity was broken under the banner of Western Christianity, first by Rome’s Christianity and then by the Protestant brand of the Anglican Christianity. These divisions were harbinger of further divisions in the following decades. Some of these divisions were encouraged by internal weaknesses of the Syrian Orthodox Church, particularly during the first two decades of the twentieth century. What started as theological and rite-based divisions extended to quests for autonomy and independence, often influenced by political aspirations. Thus, the one united Church in southern India before the Portuguese invasion of the country has now splintered into eight churches: two Oriental Orthodox: Malankara Syriac Orthodox Church (Jacobite Syrian Christian Church)\(^{505}\) and Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church;\(^{506}\) two Catholic: Syro-Palankara Catholic Church\(^{507}\) and

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Malabar Catholic Church (Syro-Malabar Catholic Church),\textsuperscript{508} one associated with the Church of the East: Assyrian Church of the East (also referred to as the Chaldean Syrian Church in Kerala);\textsuperscript{509} and three Reformed/ Independent; and Malabar Independent Syrian Church,\textsuperscript{510} St. Thomas Evangelical Church and Malabar Mar Thoma Syrian Church.\textsuperscript{511}

Patriarch Peter travelled to London under duress from multiple worries, seeking help and sympathy from his church’s English counterpart. In addition to the issue of India’s Syrian Christians, he sought help in his fight for release from the Armenian yoke in the \textit{millet} system back home, but more importantly he sought financial aid for educational purposes in order to release his people from the greater yoke of illiteracy and backwardness. He recognized even more than his predecessors had that educating his communities was key in facing the challenges of a new world order in which his church had lagged behind.

The attitude of the English Christian Establishment toward the Syrian Orthodox ranged from the kind of sympathy and understanding displayed by Brooke Foss Wescott, Bishop of Durham to the arrogance of R. T. Davidson, advisor to the Archbishop of Canterbury and later Archbishop of Canterbury himself (1903-1928).

Part of what Westcott expressed in his Preface to Parry’s \textit{Six Months in a Syrian Monastery}, referring to Oriental Christians was:

> They desire to learn fully the teaching of their own ancient formulations and Holy Scriptures. They are not committed to any modern errors...they guard with the most jealous care their apostolic heritage, and are still able to express through it the power of their own life... These general remarks apply with particular power to the Old Syrian Church.\textsuperscript{512}

On the other hand, R. T. Davidson’s statement under reference made in 1883, made in response to request for educational aid, said:\textsuperscript{513}

> This requires the utmost caution. There is at least one 'schismatic' lot of 'Ancient Syrians'. I adjure you to send the letter you received

\textsuperscript{512} Parry, \textit{Six Months}, p. vii.
\textsuperscript{513} The statement was given earlier and is repeated here for ease of reference.
– or the name and style of the authority with a note from yourself to Curtis, who will tell you if it is alright. The delay is of no consequence to an Oriental. 514

Given the general lukewarm attitude of the Anglican Church towards the needs of the Syrian Orthodox Church, it was British foreign policy interests in the Ottoman Empire that largely defined the attitude of Canterbury toward Antioch. That was also clearly evident in the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, as will be seen in Chapter Five.

514 Memorandum of R.T. Davidson to Benson (Lambeth Palace Archives: Benson 11.f.2).
CHAPTER FOUR
SYRIAN ORTHODOXY IN THE PERIOD 1895-1914
EXTERNAL AGGRESSION AND INTERNAL DECLINE

4.1 Introduction
The period from 1895 to the onset of the First World War witnessed such a decline in Syrian Orthodoxy that by the end of this period, this first century church was threatened with complete extinction. External and internal factors conspired to precipitate this threat. The increasingly poisoned political environment that engulfed eastern Anatolia in particular and the subsequent violence in that region threatened the stability and the social balance in this region, where most of the Syrian Orthodox traditionally lived. At the same time, internal weaknesses that had been fermenting for over two centuries became more apparent during the terms of two patriarchs: Abdul-Masih (1895-1904) and Abdullah (1906-1915). The term of the first commenced at the start of the 1895 violence against the Armenians but which also involved other Christians, including the Syrian Orthodox, and the term of the second ended with his passing in late 1915, at the height of Sayfo, the Year of the Sword. This chapter examines Syrian Orthodoxy during this critical period.

The external factors were concerned not only with the immediate environment in which the Syrian Orthodox lived, but extended much further afield to the volatile conditions that had engulfed the Ottoman Empire from the early nineteenth century. These conditions had major geopolitical dimensions and were also closely related internal ones that reflected the national aspirations and social development of many non-Turkish segments of the population, particularly the Armenians and the Kurds. The complex interplay between these competing factors gave rise to an era of violence that extended from 1895 to 1914, with its worst and most intense expression materializing during the First World War.

As a result of these factors, the relatively stable millet system (see Chapter One) under which Syrian Orthodoxy had managed to maintain its integrity was itself seriously challenged by the fast moving events of the nineteenth century.\footnote{See Chapter One.} In fact, the last three decades of the
nineteenth century saw the final unravelling of the basic tenets of the millet system under which small peaceful communities such as the Syrian Orthodox had hitherto existed.

Although primarily concerned with the Syrian Orthodox Church, this chapter commences by briefly considering the important external factors in order to gain a reasonable perspective of the environment that surrounded the Syrian Orthodox communities in eastern Anatolia in the period in question.

Church authors have generally shied away from spelling out Church leadership weakness in the period covered by this chapter. This was particularly the case with Abdullah’s critical period. In his book Kanīsatī al-suryāniya (My Syrian Church), Ishak Saka allocates less than half a page to Patriarch Abdullah’s reign and period, despite its importance. An attempt is made in this chapter to rectify this shortcoming by analyzing both periods with the additional aid of hitherto untapped, very significant, primary sources, which became available for this research. These sources are from the Syrian Orthodox archives in Deir al-Za’faran, Mardin and Bab Tuma (Damascus). The referenced archival material had been penned in Arabic, some in Arabic script but many in Garshuni.

4.2 The Geopolitical Dimension

4.2.1 Wars of Independence and Consequences on Ottoman Society

The nineteenth century saw Russian expansion through Trans-Caucasia that threatened eastern Turkey and led to Muslim migrations from these regions into Anatolia. With Russia’s expansionist policy unfolding, the Ottomans suspected that in a future war, the Ottoman Christians would likely side with their co-religionists, the Russians. “They especially suspected the Armenians, the leading millet among the non-European Christians of the Empire.”

The Armenians constituted the principal Christian communities in the six vilayets of eastern Anatolia, namely Sivan, Van, Erzurum, Bitlis, Kharpur and Diyarbakir. The Armenian community leaders looked forward to a future of internal autonomy and security. In addition to their contacts with Western Europe and with Russia, they began to establish within Turkey itself close contacts with the representatives of the “New World,” the American missionaries. By the second half of the nineteenth century missionary institutions – churches, hospitals, and

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516 Ishak Saka, Kanīsatī al-suryāniya (My Syrian Church), Aleppo, 2006, p. 213.
schools of all grades—were established all over Anatolia in such centers as Smyrna, Istanbul, Marsovan, Sivas, Kharput, Erzerum, Bitlis, Van, Mardin, Aintab, Marash, Adana, Tarsus, and Kayseri (Caesarea), as well as in many smaller localities. “By 1860 a veritable literary revival had swept over the Armenians in all branches of literature, adding momentum to the national rebirth.”

Events came to the fore in 1875 to 1876 when the Porte suppressed an uprising in Serbia and in Bulgaria. Representatives of European governments convened in Istanbul in 1876 in order to avert another war between Russia and Turkey and to discuss peace terms between Turkey and her Balkan provinces. The Armenians wanted to join these deliberations. The Armenian Patriarch in Istanbul drew the attention of the conference to the suffering of his people in a document entitled “Report on the outrages which occurred in the Provinces.” The patriarch reminded the participants that the Armenians had not rebelled against the Porte as the Bosnians and the Bulgarians had done, “but that did not mean that the grounds and justifications to rebel were wanting.” “If the sympathy of the European powers could be won only after an insurrection”, the Armenian Patriarch had told Salisbury, the British Foreign Secretary, “then there would be no difficulty to start such a movement.” Clearly, the Armenians found encouragement in the success of their counterparts in the Balkans.

The Russo-Turkish War in 1877 to 1878 marked a humiliating defeat for the Ottomans. This war resulted in the Russians claiming several provinces in the Caucasus and in the independence of several Balkan provinces, including Bulgaria and Serbia. In the Treaty of San Stefano of March 1878, they secured from the Ottoman government the promise that in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, their security would be guaranteed against the Kurds and Circassians. When this treaty was revised at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Article 61 of the new treaty required that the Porte expeditiously carry out the improvements and reforms dictated by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians. The Armenians hoped that with the help of Russian and other Christian powers such as Britain, they could at last exercise some form of self-rule. However, the ethnic environment in which they lived made this untenable.

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518 Ibid, p. 82.  
519 Krikorian Armenians, p. 116, n. 7; Sarkissian, Armenian Question, pp. 53-54  
520 Sarkissian, ibid., p.52  
521 For a text of the treaty, see Shaw and Shaw, History, 2:188  
Largely unaware of these inherent dangers that surrounded them, many of the Ottoman Christians, encouraged by their Western mentors, entered the decade of the 1880s with the conviction that they too would soon have some relief from the restrictive, often oppressive, rule of the Ottomans. Many of the missions went further to speculate that the defeat of Turkey at the hand of the Russians in 1878 marked the eclipse of the political as well as the religious power of Islam.\footnote{John Joseph, p. 86.}

The Turks, for their part, suspected that in a future war the Ottoman Christians would most probably side with their foreign co-religionists. “They especially suspected the Armenians, the leading millet among the non-European Christians of the empire.”\footnote{John Joseph, \textit{Muslim-Christian Relations}, p. 80.} At the same time the Armenian leaders were well aware of the events that were unfolding in Europe and were especially familiar with the developments taking place in the Ottoman Christian provinces in the Balkans. “They were also among the first non-European subjects of the sultan to experience a literary renaissance and a national awakening during the post-Napoleonic era.”\footnote{Ibid, p. 81.}

\subsection*{4.2.2 \textit{European Power Politics}}

Britain entered the ongoing encounter, motivated by no small measure by its animosity to Russia. It noted that the Russians could muster 150,000 Caucasians that could threaten its interests in Iran and its all-important trade route from India to the Far East. Britain was concerned that the Christians in east Anatolia (i.e., Armenian Orthodox) would stand with Russia; that in the case of the Syrian Orthodox, they, the Syrian Orthodox, might be motivated to turn to Russia to help them resist the aggressive Catholic and Protestant proselytism among them.

Thus, Britain was making a concerted effort after 1878 to remediate the sad condition of the Ottoman Christians. “British intervention in [sic] their behalf – whether Armenians, Nestorians, or Jacobites – was motivated by the desire to keep them loyal to the Turkish government in the event of a future Turko-Russian war, which could involve Great Britain.”\footnote{John Joseph, p. 85 cites Shaw and Shaw, \textit{History}, 2:184, that during the 1877-78 war Disraeli and Layard had envisioned “a possible British expedition into eastern Anatolia to drive the Russians back, perhaps encouraged by the ‘mob’ demand for a war with Russia to save India as well as the Middle East from [Russian] imperialism.”}
While the main European powers - Britain, France, Austro-Hungary and Russia - were in the midst of their deliberations at the Congress of Berlin, Britain and Turkey signed a defensive alliance/treaty concerning the Asiatic provinces of Turkey. The treaty provided for British armed support in the event of Russian aggression in Asiatic Turkey. In return, the Sultan yielded to British pressure by ceding control of Cyprus to British rule.\(^{527}\) It was also proposed in late 1878, that the major cities of eastern Anatolia be served by consuls or vice-consuls. The consular reports, which started to arrive in early 1879, alarmed not only the Porte, but the European powers as well. The enforcement of the proposed reforms through European supervision amounted to taking the whole of Turkey under European tutelage.\(^ {528}\) The cession of Cyprus to Britain and the Anglo-Turkish convention was in reality part of the British design to bring most of the Middle East under the umbrella of the British political system.

4.2.3 A Simmering Internal Unrest Among the Majority Muslims - Consequences

Among the Turkish population itself, there was widespread anxiety, according to a reporter of *The Times* of London that their political supremacy in their own lands was in real danger.\(^ {529}\) With their power already being threatened by the secularist policies of the reform movement (Tanzimat), the *ulema* succeeded in the difficult decade of the 1870s building a negative response to the secularization imposed by the Tanzimat, the influence of foreigners, and the intrusion of the foreign representatives, all of which were factors that had brought about the dire situation in the empire.\(^ {530}\) The Muslim population in eastern Anatolia, predominantly Kurdish, felt especially threatened at that time by natural as well as sociopolitical events. The decade 1880-1890 saw violence and famine. Robbery and pillage were often resorted to during periods of famine. Conditions became more acute toward the end of the nineteenth century, especially after the Turko-Russian War of 1877-78, which paved the way for nomadic attacks which until then had been drastically reduced. “When it was over, the war of 1878 left its impact everywhere, on faraway Damascus as well as on Diyarbakir.”\(^ {531}\)

\(^ {528}\) Lynch, *Armenia*, 2: 410-11  
\(^ {529}\) Cited in *M.H.* 76 (1880): 68  
\(^ {531}\) John Joseph, p. 89.
As more southeastern European regions gained independence from Ottoman rule, population displacement became a common practice in the late nineteenth century. The displacement policies of the new states meant that diverse groups of people - Albanians, Macedonians, Serbo-Bosnians, Muslim Greeks, Crimean Tatars, Muslims from the Caucasus, Bulgarian Muslims and others - resettled within the Ottoman Empire. The population displacement situation was further intensified by the wars with Russia, the Balkan Wars and in Tripolitania with Italy, factors that rapidly altered the demography within the Ottoman Empire. Eastern Anatolia was affected by the resulting influx of migrants. The arrival of disfranchized immigrants created problems. The new Muslim immigrants came carrying a grudge against Christians for taking control of the countries in which they had their homes.

As a result of all these conditions, a greater measure of instability occurred over the period between 1895 and 1914 when communities of Circassian were settled in and around Diyarbakir. According to a British Consular report, Circassians were involved in violence and extortion against Christian communities throughout eastern Anatolia. An 1896 memo from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Mission to the Assyrians, describes the role of the Circassians in creating local instability.

Another favourite means adopted by the Turks of getting rid of Christian subjects is by sending a number of Circassians to settle in their midst. It will [sic] well known and openly said by the Turks that the Circassians will soon cause the Christians to go away from that district.

The missionaries stationed all over eastern Anatolia wrote extensively during the 1880s and 1890s about the mounting trend toward violence that the country was going through. The Reverend Alpheus N. Andrus, who operated among the Syrian Orthodox of Tur Abdin for many years from his headquarters in Mardin, blamed Muslim grievances on Islam’s being “envious of the progress of her [Christian] neighbors.” Andrus then goes on to note that this envy had accentuated the pan-Islamic movement, and had led to a widening of the gap in relations between the Muslim majority and the Christian population. The missionary leadership

532 Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*, p. 117.
533 British Consular Report FO 424/184/641, dated October 2, 1895.
was also aware of the fact that the reforms urged by the West on behalf of the Ottoman Christians, was resented by both the government and the dominant Muslim population.\footnote{John Joseph, p. 87, foot note 38, cites that as early as 1844 a missionary letter from Mosul reported that “every dog of a Frank” could go to the Porte and secure a firman where their own mullahs were utterly disregarded when they complained of grinding oppression. See M.H. 44 (1844): 369.}

The complex array of people, races, and religious confessions in eastern Anatolia, and the lack of central power was a recipe for disaster in 1895 and succeeding years. The central power was either weak or was part of a coercive plan to deal a blow to some or most of the Christians. The volatile environment which existed in eastern Anatolia between 1895 and 1914 undermined the tacit balance offered under the \textit{millet} system, leaving the Syrian Orthodox community, the smallest of the indigenous Christians communities, vulnerable and unprotected.

Given what it considered to be untenable conditions, Britain, by 1883, gave up on reforms in eastern Anatolia. This withdrawal paved the way for a Kurdish-Turkish alliance. As fellow Muslims, who, geographically were positioned close to the Russian Caucasus on the eastern borders of the Ottoman Empire, the Kurds were the only large sector of the population that the Ottoman government could trust in these critical encounters. It was therefore of vital priority for the Porte to bring them under its fold. The scene was set for establishing the Hamidie Regiments. By the early 1890s Kurdish tribes were officially conscripted and armed into a group bearing the name of the Sultan, and throughout Abdul Hamid’s reign, and through them implicitly the Kurdish tribes of eastern Turkey, were given favorable status.\footnote{For a study of conditions that led to the formation of the Hamidie Regiments and the role they played as tool of the Ottoman government to supervise and control the Eastern frontier, see Duguid, “Politics of Unity,” pp. 139-55. See also Hassan Arfa, \textit{The Kurds}, pp. 24-25.}

The broad aim for their establishment was to harass the Armenians in eastern Anatolia, particularly in the areas that border Russia and Iran. A great deal has been written about the selection of the Hamidie regiments from among the Kurdish tribes, their mode of operation and the atrocities they committed against the Armenians as well as other Christians in the period from 1895 to 1908 when they were disbanded.\footnote{See Janet Klein,\textit{The Margins of the Empire}, Stanford University Press, 2011; Selim Derigil, \textit{The Well-Protected Domains}, Tauris, 2011.} The formation of these regiments reflects Abdul Hamid’s policy of utilizing the sentiments of tribalism to deal with social and political issues by playing off one sector of society against another, utilizing historical animosities, religious or otherwise. The role of these regiments as a counter to rising Armenian political
claim and as a reaction to European support for the emancipation of the Armenians is made clear from a note by the Hungarian Turkologist, Arminius Vambery:

The more the Armenians are supported by Europe, the greater becomes the danger which threatens them by the hand of the Kurds and the Ottoman authorities, for the scattered and isolated conditions of these Christians, makes every effective defence totally illusory and still more under the present circumstances, when the so-called Hamidie Regiments consisting of adventurous Kurds have been provided with modern arms by the Sultan.538

Up to the onset of the 1895 violence, the European countries of Britain, France and Russia continued to apply pressure on the Ottoman government to effect internal reform especially in the six vilayets of eastern Anatolia. One of their demands was for better representation of the Christians in the administration system, as was also voiced in the British Queen’s speech on August 15, 1895:

Internal troubles have broken out in the Armenian provinces of Asiatic Turkey, and have been attended with horrors which have moved the indignation of the Christian nations of Europe generally and of my people especially. My Ambassador and the Ambassadors of the Emperor of Russia and the President of the French Republic, acting together, have suggested to the Government of the Sultan the reforms which, in their opinion, are necessary to prevent a recurrence of constant disorder. These proposals are now being considered by his Imperial Majesty the Sultan, and I am anxiously awaiting his decision.539

However, while these countries were pursuing these policies they did not ponder sufficiently the possibility of an adverse reaction by the Ottomans. The Austro-Hungarian position, communicated to the British Ambassador in 1896 underlines this danger.

But practical statesmen are bound to consider the situation from another standpoint, and to face the certainty that the conflicting interests, which are only conciliated by the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire as it stands, would at once, if the latter were threatened by coercive measures, be brought into active opposition,

538 As quoted in Jeremy Salt, “Britain, the Armenian Question, and the Cause of Ottoman Reform, 1894-96,” p. 318.
539 Queen’s Speech, House of Lords, Thursday, August 15th 1895, published as ‘The Address,’ The Times, Friday, August 16, 1895.
with infinitely more calamitous results to humanity at large than even the savageries being perpetrated on this wretched people.\textsuperscript{540}

4.2.4 The 1894-1896 Violence Against the Armenians

The first incidents of the violence on a large scale occurred in July 1894 in Sasan in the vilayet of Bitlis, which resulted in the destruction of 25 villages and the massacre of approximately 20,000 individuals.\textsuperscript{541} This was followed by a massacre of approximately 10,000 Armenians in Istanbul in September 1895, which marked the start of a bloody campaign throughout the empire, particularly in eastern Anatolia.\textsuperscript{542} Sanjian summarises the further casualties thus:

The abortive seizure of the Ottoman Bank at Constantinople by a band of revolutionaries on August 26, 1896, brought on a second massacre in the capital, followed by similar atrocities at other points. According to conservative estimates at least two hundred thousand Armenians lost their lives in the course of the three years (1894-1896), and more than half a million were robbed of their possessions and made homeless.\textsuperscript{543}

4.3 The Impact of Violence on Christian communities (Syrian Orthodox and Assyrians)

The violence against the Armenians in Diyarbakir was to seriously affect the Syrian Orthodox. The Syrian Orthodox had no political or nationalist interest that it would share with the Armenians. The violence against the Armenians, especially in Diyarbakir, seriously impacted the Syrian Orthodox and increased the dangers surrounding its communities. It was in response to this critical instance that the Syrian Orthodox sought to distance themselves from the political aims of the Armenians. Both Ottoman and missionary sources operating in the region of conflict admit very clear differences between the Armenians and the Syrian Orthodox as separate and distinct communities. They noted in particular that the Syrian Orthodox did not share in the nationalist aims of the Armenian groups, nor did they espouse any nationalist aspirations of their own. Reports by missionaries also shed light on this matter. Andrus,\textsuperscript{544}

\begin{itemize}
\item Sir E Monson to the Marquess of Salisbury, January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1896 (FO 424/186/ No. 1, dated January 1, 1896).
\item Sanjian, p. 278.
\item \textsuperscript{542} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{543} Ibid. The attempted bank seizure was carried out by members of the Armenian Dashnak party. The bank employed many Europeans, British and French, and the seizure was ostensibly to draw European attention to the plight of the Armenians.
\item \textsuperscript{544} Stationed in Mardin as an American Congregationalist missionary, Andrus frequently sent reports to the British Foreign Office and to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Elizabeth Finn, who hosted Patriarch Peter in London in
\end{itemize}
stationed in Mardin, sent a report to London, which invited the following elaboration by Mrs. Finn:

The Christians of the Old Syrian Church are loyal subjects of the Sultan, perfectly well behaved and inoffensive. They are the principal inhabitants of Mardin. There has been no disaffection to the Turkish Government among this simple people. An effort is being made to collect some funds for their relief, especially among those who have become acquainted with the late Patriarch when he was here in 1874-1875, and with the Bishop, Mar Gregorius, during his second visit to this country in 1888-89.  


4.4.1 His Early Life and Election to Patriarchate

Born in 1854 in Qal‘atmara, a village located halfway between Mardin and Deir al-Za‘faran, Abdul Masih joined the monastic order at Deir al-Za‘faran at the age of 12, becoming a rabban (priest-monk) in 1875. He served in Amida (Diyarbakir) and Midyat until he was ordained bishop for Syria in 1886 by Patriarch Peter III under the ecclesiastic name Julius. Abdul Masih served this bishopric until his election as patriarch in 1895.

Upon the death of Patriarch Peter on October 7, 1894, the normal procedure for electing a successor commenced with consultations among the bishops with the aim of reaching a consensus. According to Dolabani, after seven months of consultations, the general consensus of the Synod was leaning towards the election of Abdullah Sattuf of Saddad, Syria. However, there appeared to be last minute changes of opinion which led to the election of Abdul Masih as patriarch on June 14, 1894. Dolabani does not offer a reason for the change of opinion. Reporting in the Missionary Herald, Rev. Alpheus Andrus provides a summary of the prevailing divisions among the contenders and the resulting atmosphere that encouraged further defection to Catholicism:

1874-1875 often acted as an intermediary, as in the following extract of a letter to the Foreign Office, as Andrus reports.

545 Mrs. Finn to the Marquess of Salisbury, February 17, 1896, 75, Brook Green, London (FO 424/186).

546 Abbreviated from Qal‘at al-Umara’ (the fortress of the amirs)

547 Yohannon Dolabani, Phatryarche d; Antiochiae, pp. 276-277.

548 Ibid.

549 However, in a letter of congratulation to the Patriarch from Syria dated August 29, 1895, the Synod meeting was indicated to have taken place on June 12, 1895 (Document 40M-24/46-337).
Several causes have been and are still at work to give impetus to the downward trend of the Jacobite Syrians. On the seventh of October their patriarch died. His death was a signal for the beginning of a rivalry among the bishops in a race for the patriarchal chair. For the first time in the history of this church and of the ecclesiasticism in this empire, the government has stepped in and boldly intimated who of the bishops shall not be allowed to be chosen patriarch by the Jacobite community, while on the other hand it holds the office before the remaining eligible candidates subject to the highest bidder. Each bishop has his coterie of followers, and the longer this unseemly squabble sways the community, the deeper becomes the heart-burnings, envies, jealousies, strifes and divisions among its members.

Already the evil effects of such a chaotic condition of affairs are beginning to be seen in the defection of some to the Papal Syrians, and the closing of schools for lack both of funds and interest necessary to their maintenance.\(^{550}\)

The bishops attending the election synod were Qorillos Jirjis the Patriarchal Vicar in Mardin; Qorillos Shamoun, Bishop of Midyat; Athanasius Dinha, Bishop of Deir Mar Abhai in Swerek; Yulius Behnam, Bishop of Jazirah; Qorilos Yohannon, Bishop of Nisibin; Athanasius Aphram, Bishop of Deir Mor Gabriel; Yulius Abdul Ahad, Bishop of Deir al-Salib and Kurbural; Timotheus Barsoum, Bishop of Deir Mor Melke; and Ewanis Elias Halooli, Head of Deir al-Kursi (referring to the seat of Jerusalem which had a special status). The following Bishops who did not attend the Synod, but assigned their votes with the majority: Gregorius Jirjis al-Saddi, Bishop of Jerusalem and Timotheous Episcopos Foulus, Patriarchal representative in Istanbul. Of the two remaining bishops, Dionysus Behnam Samarchi and Gregorius Abdullah, Bishop of Amid; the first had been suspended by from service by Patriarch Peter since 1891 and disallowed from standing for election or for voting in one.\(^{551}\)

The second, Gregorius Abdullah, objected to the election procedure and outcome and, backed by the lay council of the diocese, travelled to Istanbul to voice his objection to the Ottoman authorities.\(^{552}\) One of the documents examined indicates the Sublime Porte canvassed the opinion of the some of the dioceses about Abdul Masih’s election, but upheld the decision of

\(^{552}\) Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 16.
the Synod. The Sultan issued a firman dated the 19th of Rebiyaul-ewal 1313 H (corresponding to September 9, 1896) confirming Abdul Masih as patriarch.

4.4.2 A Troubled Era - The 1895 Violence and the Syrian Orthodox Communities

No sooner had the new patriarch begun to assume the responsibilities of office than his community in the city of Diyarbakir and ones in surrounding villages and several regions to the northeast of the vilayet found themselves the target for aggression by Kurdish tribes and the Hamidie Regiments. Accounts of the violence are reported here from three types of sources: a secondary source published by Aphram Paulus Barsoum, two published sources, each based on an eye witness account, one by Qarabashi and another by Aphram Barsoum, and a number of primary sources in the form of letters to the patriarch, drawing attention to their dire conditions and to the devastation that had befallen their homes and villages. This third group of sources are from the archival material at Mardin and at Deir al-Za‘faran and are published here for the first time.

In early October 1895, signs of violence against Christians became evident in Diyarbakir. The violence was ostensibly against the Armenians but in reality it included all other Christians in the and around the city of Diyarbakir. The resulting carnage extended to the Tigris River at Hisn Kifa, as well as up to Sivas. The Turkish authority had ordered the Kurds to be prepared for an attack on the Armenians, ostensibly to crush an Armenian unrest. However, the rumours that circulated talked about attacks that would include all Christians. Upon hearing these rumours all the Christians closed their shops and barricaded themselves in their homes while their leaders forwarded requests to Anis Pasha the Vali for protection. The mob, with swords in their hands, attacked not only Armenians but other Christians too. After four days of carnage, the governor of Diyarbakir noticed that Muslims were being killed too through some fire exchange with the Armenians. So, he asked the Syrian Orthodox Bishop

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553 Document 40M-24/44-0212, dated July 11, 1895.
555 Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, pp. 16-18.
556 Qarabashi and Aphram I Barsoum, Tarikh Tur Abdin.
558 Primary sources covering this are scarce. Secondary sources generally agree about the sequence of events, See De Courtois, pp. 99-112.
Abdullah of Diyarbakir (later Patriarch) to make a joint plea for calm.\textsuperscript{559} When this plea produced no tangible results, the \textit{Vali} wrote to the \textit{Mutasarrif} of Mardin instructing him to request the presence of the Patriarch in Diyarbakir in order to calm down the Christians and to allay their fears. Immediately upon receiving this request, Patriarch Abdul Masih headed for Diyarbakir. When he arrived on October 20\textsuperscript{th}, he was surprised that nobody was there to meet him. He immediately headed for the Syrian Orthodox Church “Mariamana” (Church of the Virgin Mary), which was already crowded, becoming like “Noah’s Ark for all Christians.”\textsuperscript{560} On that day, a Friday, the Kurds surged out of the mosques shouting “Muhammad Salawat” (Prayers be on Muhammad). The sound of gunfire soon filled the city. Patriarch Abdul Masih sent someone with a message to the \textit{Vali}, but the messenger was stabbed to death. However, accounts differ as to whether he did manage to deliver the message.\textsuperscript{561} Patriarch Abdul Masih then headed out to the \textit{Vali}, passing by the corpses of slain Christians on his way. The \textit{Vali} eventually responded by sending a military force to quell the violence. According to one account Sultan Abdul Hamid had instructed a confidant in the confidential telegram “to punish the Armenians for three hours.”\textsuperscript{562} However, the three-hour punishment extended to days and then to weeks and was expanded to include not only the Armenians but many other Christians.\textsuperscript{563} According to Qarabashi the violence in Diyarbakir lasted until December 18, 1895.\textsuperscript{564}

4.4.3 Eyewitness Accounts of the 1895 Violence

4.4.3.1 Contemporary Published Accounts by Syrian Orthodox Sources

\textit{i) The account by Abdul Masih Qarabashi (1903-1983)}

Qarabashi, who joined Deir al-Za‘faran as a young student, stated: “I came across a small booklet in Syriac in the personal library of Priest Paulus, of the Church of Qarabash, the son of Priest Abdul-Ahad of the Priest Lahdo family.” The content was translated to Arabic by

\textsuperscript{559} Qarabashi, p. 86.
\textsuperscript{560} Ignatius Aphram I Barsoum, \textit{Tarikh Tur Abdin}, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{561} Athanasius Aphram Barsoum (p. 18) says that the messenger was killed after he delivered the message, whereas Qarabashi (p. 87) says that the messenger was killed on his way to the \textit{Vali} and that the killers delivered the message to the \textit{Vali}.
\textsuperscript{562} Ibid., Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{563} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{564} Qarabashi, p. 88.
Bishop Theophilus George Saliba in 2005, and the account presented here is my translation from the Arabic text.

The violence, which commenced in October 1985 in Diyarbakir, was precipitated at the local level by the Kurdish aghas Gamil Pasha and Bahram Pasha, who sent letters to the Kurds inciting violence against the Christians. The letters promised weapons to kill the Christians and to pillage their homes, as soon as they assembled in Diyarbakir. As in the earlier report, on the Friday, the Kurds surged out of the mosques shouting “Muhammad Salawat” (Prayers be on Muhammad), commencing their slaughter. The violence was not confined to that city but soon spread to include surrounding towns and villages. Qarabashi reports that in al-Sa’diyah a village located approximately 10 kilometers to the southeast of Diyarbakir of a mixed population of 300 Syrians and Armenians the Kurds attacked the Christian population on November 1, 1895, killing most of the male population, abducting women and pillaging homes. Those who managed to escape found refuge inside the local church, where they barricaded themselves. The Kurds with soldiers - likely of the Hamidie Regiment - climbed the roofs, made a hole through them, poured fuel inside and ignited it. Those who survived the fire opened the gate only to come face to face with their killers. Only three men survived the massacre and they managed to reach Diyarbakir to tell their story.

At the village of Qarabash, Qarabashi’s ancestral hometown, located approximately 10 kilometres to the east of Diyarbakir, the majority of its population of nearly 1,000 were Syrians (Orthodox) and a few Armenians. Here, the Kurds attacked on Friday November 1, 1895, as they did in other locations. The attacking Kurds unleashed their swords on the peaceful population killing the young and the old and looting for two full days. Some of the villagers found refuge under a huge bird tower located at the northern end of town. The Kurds demolished the tower from the top, killing all those who had taken refuge underneath it. The very few who survived the carnage managed to flee under the shadow of darkness, some to Diyarbakir, and others to surrounding villages, where they found refuge with Muslim friends. When the survivors returned, they rebuilt the bird tower, under a new name: the “Tower of Martyrs.”

566 Qarabashi, p. 89.
567 Ibid., p. 90.
In Miardarqin, an important town in the early history of the church, located to the north east of Diyarbakir, a similar tragedy to that in Sa‘diyah unfolded. The town had a population of nearly 1,000, the majority of whom were Syrians and Armenians. Here, as generally elsewhere, Kurds used their swords against all Christians. Those who took shelter inside the local church faced the same fate as those of Sa‘diyah, in that again the Kurds poured fuel into the church through a hole they made in the roof and set those seeking protection inside the church on fire. Only 10 men and three women survived.  

In the village of Ai-Bar “located half an hour journey” to the west of Diyarbakir, the Christian population consisting of Chaldeans, Syrians and Armenians were tricked by the Muslim chiefs into believing that they were being taken to Diyarbakir for safety. However, after they gathered them together, they slaughtered them all, and then went back to their village and pillaged their possessions.

In the village of Swerek, the Kurdish chief Haj Uthman Pasha, and his brother gathered the Kurds from surrounding villages and led a three day slaughter that massacred all Christians, except for four families.  

The massacres included the villages Ainsha, Telkhas, Harnak, Satia, Safita, Sa‘diyah - Qozan to the east; Ali-Bar, Qartta, Qara, Kleesa, Quart to the west; Qadhi and Batrakiha to the north; Kaibia, Jrihia, Khan Iqbinar, Orza Oghai, Holan, Bshairyah, Liqa, Khazwan, Kharpot, Adiaman (Hisan Mansour) and others to the south. Attacks in Mardin, were very limited, and its population was saved by the chivalry of local Muslim leaders. However, villages close to Mardin - Al-Qusour, Bnaibil, Qal‘atmara, Mansourya and many others - were not so fortunate. Tur Abdin was generally saved from this carnage.

The total number of the Syrian Orthodox who lost their lives in the 1895 massacres has been estimated to be around 4,000. However, the tragedy was not confined to those few months of 1895, for the Kurds, who appeared to operate with impunity; and indeed with the tacit approval of Ottoman officialdom, if not at its instigation, became emboldened to continue after 1895.

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568 Ibid., p. 90, 91.
569 Ibid., p. 92
570 Qarabaşhi, p. 51.
571 Ibid.
The account published by Aphram I Barsoum, based on a Syriac memro (metrical ode) in twelve-syllabic meter by Priest Aphram Sharko Safar of Midyat written in 1895.\textsuperscript{573}

When Patriarch Abdul Masih II arrived in Amid on October 20, of this year (1895), the Muslims attacked the Armenians and smote them by the sword. Fright gripped the Syrians, Chaldeans and Rum.\textsuperscript{574} The patriarch sent a telegram to Sultan Abd al-Hamid II and obtained from him a royal decree for the protection of the Christians...The Church of the Mother of God became like Noah’s Ark for all Christians, and the patriarch continued to comfort and strengthen them...

At noon, the Muslim Turks smote by the sword in Amid (Diyarbakir) (Christian) men, women and children. The carnage extended to the boundaries of the Tigris River at Hisn Kifa and up to Sivas...The Muslims rumored that they were only punishing the Armenians for their disobedience to the government. In reality, that they were calling for the annihilation of all Christians [my emphasis].

4.4.3.2 Unpublished Witness Accounts from the Deir al-Za‘faran and the Mardin Archives
What is presented here is a sample of letters sent to the Patriarch during these events
The letters were sent by clergy, church wardens, deacons or individuals. They are in Garshuni Arabic vernacular, mostly using highly colloquial language, likely written in a state of great desperation. Translation to the modern idiom presented a considerable challenge. To be faithful to the spirit of the original text in these letters, I have opted, where practical, not to replace the content with my own narrative and to translate the letters in as simple a language as possible.

i) A letter to Patriarch Abdul Masih from Priest Ibrahim, who appears to be from Sherman, located to the northeast of Tur Abdin in the Bîtîlîz Villayet, dated October 23, 1895

Two days ago people from Sherwan arrived to report that on Sunday the 15th, nearly 100 men of the Danabkta kochers,\textsuperscript{575} who are located near Batlis, headed by two sons of the chief of the tribe, Mijdâd Agha, attacked the villages of Koudhadizan, Marj, Madan, and Hawell Monastery. They killed Priest Gorgias, 10 men and four women in Madan, three men and a woman in Koudhadizan, and two men in Marj. They burnt down the Monastery and most of

\textsuperscript{573} Ibid
\textsuperscript{574} Greeks, Byzantines commonly known as Rum Orthodox
\textsuperscript{575} The kochers were Kurdish nomads.
the houses, causing the people to run for their life, taking refuge in friendly Muslim villages.

The attackers did the same in Eroun, as we have learned. We reported this to the Mutassarif, who sent a force to quell the attackers. Two days ago we heard that the Alkia and other kochers ransacked Kaysama, Kukan, Kilo, Hilcami, and Damsrak, looting all that they could lay their hands on. The Mutassarif again sent a force with Sheif Abdul Qahar Effendi to keep order and to help return some of the looted goods.

One cannot thank this man enough for his chivalry. We will see how things will develop and will inform your beatitude accordingly.\(^{576}\)

\[\text{---}\]A Letter to Patriarch Abdul Masih from Deacon Elias al-Khoury, dated November 12, 1895

This letter details the tragic conditions encountered by the Syrians residents of more than 50 villages in the Bsheriya region, which is located to the northeast of Tur Abdin, in the Bitlis Vilayet. In obvious desperation, the writer starts abruptly, without the usual courtesy thus:

Do something for the poor of this hour, urgently, for there is no abode for the poor of nearly 50 villages, whose houses were burned down, and whose people were ransacked and subjected to annihilation. Those who managed to escape the tribes were trying to find shelter from the cold next to any walls they find. Many came to the Monastery, or to Zarjel, Kifirzi, Jeduk and Jansiker, where they found refuge under the protection of Hassan Agha Muhammad Ali, and Razjan Agha, sons of Ibrahim Hasso Zarjali.

The writer then explains how local official(s) searched the monastery for suspected “rebels” and when they found none ordered those who had taken refuge back to their villages. The writer then describes the dire condition of the poor villages and the threats the normal occupants of the monastery had to endure:

Thus, they sent these people back to the villages hungry and naked; the ground being their beds and the sky [their roof]. As a result (of these conditions), they suffered illnesses that caused 20 to 30 or more to die every day. On top of that, more than eight days ago, on Sunday evening, Jaja Babouri and all the tribes of the mountain and of Ghazrai, came down to the Monastery shouting: ‘Come out,

\(^{576}\) Document 40M-24/41-0196.
you priests, because your firman is in our hands, today we will
demolish the Monastery and sever your heads.577

The writer then speaks about a group of Kurdish Aghas who arrived and exchanged fire
with the attackers for four hours, finally quelling the attack. However, the villagers appear to
have been under the threat of attacks all the time for the writer goes on to add: “Everyday we
hear that attackers are again gathering to attack us.”

At this point the writer switches from Garshuni to Syriac578 to state: “Saeed Agha is a
friend of the ruthless attackers, and he is the one who is responsible for the atrocities in our
area.” Then, reverting to Garshuni, he reports on the very many telegrams he had sent to
officials, and begs for a solution to the dire condition of people in Ghazwan and Jizran, for
families who had been chased out of their villages and were living in the open under no shelter
or protection of any sort, but threatened with daily attacks of annihilation.

The description in this letter reinforces other accounts that demonstrate that, while the
attacks on the non-Armenians was not the intention of the Ottoman officialdom those attacks
occurred due to deeply harboured ill intent, largely based on religious prejudice, to utilize
every opportunity to revert to pillage, despite the fact that those that were being pillaged were
generally as poor as the attackers.

4.4.3.3 The Violence Continues Beyond 1895

The 1895 violence has generally been portrayed as a short-lived event defined by the year
1895. However, the reality displayed by the archival documents and letters from Deir al-
Za’afaran and Mardin does not support this portrayal of the state of events in many parts of the
Syriac Christian homeland. These documents show that the violence extended throughout 1896
and much of 1897, generally becoming a pattern of re-occurrence throughout the years that
followed. In fact, they were the precursors of the Sayfo of the First World War. A sample of
these documents is presented here.

The events that strongly engulfed many Syrian communities in Anatolia in 1895 and
persisted throughout the following years cannot be attributed to political motives, as was the
case against the Armenians in response to their nationalistic aspirations. In the case of the

577 Document No. 40M-24/40-0171, 0172
578 Resorting to Syriac was in many cases when seeking confidentiality.
Syrians, the Kurds were perpetrating the killings, abductions, and theft against people who had no national or political aspirations. They were committing these acts against people with whom they had shared the same land and the same state of abject poverty for generations. The spirit of the killing, the pillage and the forced religious conversions appear to mirror the spirit of ghaza, which was so characteristic of the wars the early Ottomans waged at the formation of their empire against the people of the lands they invaded. The violence and the lawlessness described reflect endemic sectarian fissures that are exploited by the aggressors during political unrest and weak governance.

i) A Letter to Patriarch Abdul Masih from Donabid bin Hagop, dated March 21, 1896

This is a letter from an Armenian who lived with his wife and their young child in a village in the vicinity of Diyarbakir. The Kurds, who had abducted his wife and son, agreed to return his son but kept his wife claiming that she had become a Muslim. In his letter, the husband is beseeching the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox to help save his wife from the abductors.

Before the well-known events [referring to the general violence of 1895], I had travelled to Diyarbakir from my village Jum, leaving behind your slave, my family (wife) and my three year old son. I could not return to Diyarbakir during the events due to the dangers on the road. In the meantime the Kurds had abducted my wife and son as a reward of ghaza…I need to inform you that my wife has several brothers in the village. Thus, fearing death reprisals against them, she has not been able to return to her faith. She stated in a message that if the Patriarch of the Syrians took up her case, she would surely be able to return. I beg of you to call her for an audience before you in order to give her strength when she appears in court to state her religion.579

ii) A Letter to Patriarch Abdul Masih from Goria and Sawma, dated July 18, 1897

Here the two villagers tell in a few words their dilemma at the hands of those with whom they had shared a common existence for centuries:

What is presented before your Holiness is that for some time, we in the village of Heck have been reduced to nothing, with the looting of our sheep and all other possessions. Worse still, is that all our harvest produce are with Haji Kourteck and his followers. Now, we slaves of your Holiness do not know what to do. People have

been thrown out of their villages and have been forced to beg in order to live.\textsuperscript{580}

\textbf{iii) A Letter to Patriarch Abdul Masih from Sawmay Lahdo, dated July 21, 1897}

Here, too, is a further example of Kurdish tribal attacks that clearly bear the imprint of religious attacks carried out in the spirit of \textit{ghaza}. However, the fact that the writers ask for the protection of a certain Kurdish agha indicates that despite the general abuse and aggression chivalry still had a chance to operate.

This is concerning the matter of our ruined village, Zaynorah. We, the people of this village, had come to you to sort out our problems. Your beatitude instructed us to return to our villages, while your beatitude would sort things out. But no sooner had we returned than the rise against, and the killing of, the Christians started. So we escaped from our village, and the village remains in ruins.

Now we again beg your beatitude to solve the problem of our village, so that we may all return from our temporary places of refuge and settle in it. We beg you to write to Chalihi Agha to oversee our peace from being attacked by the tribes, for we have become extremely poor and exhausted. It is because of our extreme poverty that we have not been able to travel to you before now. I have now come in order to find a solution for the Suryani community in our village.\textsuperscript{581}

\textbf{iv) A Letter to Patriarch Abdul Masih from Sawmo bin Bolo, from Saroot village, dated March 2, 1898}

This letter tells the story of a village community that was forced to convert to Islam during the 1895 violence, and was forced to remain in that state nearly two and half years later. This is an example of a state of anarchy, where both ecclesiastic and local civil authorities stood helpless before the tyranny of Kurdish tribes, who operated undeterred, often under the banner of the Hamidie regiments.

What I lay before your beatitude is that I ran away from my village during the troubles. When I returned I found most of the villagers

\textsuperscript{580} Document No. 40M 24/45 – 0518.
\textsuperscript{581} Document No. 40M-24/45 – 0458.
were forced into Islam. They forced me to marry one against my wish. When I now examine my life I feel full of sorrow, we have nobody to save us from dying under sin. Our children are unbaptized. We no longer have a priest.  

v) A Letter to Patriarch Abdul Masih, from Goria Ibrahim and two others, dated October 11, 1899

This brief letter shows the dire conditions in which many lived some four years after the 1895 violence. This and other letters clearly shows that the violence that occurred in 1895 was by no means transient, but reflected deep-rooted attitudes that were perpetuated well beyond that occurrence. The letter simply states: “We have now been reduced to five families for the Muslims have taken over our village, and the officials are taking our 'bread'. We do not know what to do.”

4.4.3.4 Witness Accounts by Foreign Missions

Further verification of the dire conditions during which existed during and after 1895 can be found in consular reports and in reports by some of the missionaries who were operating in southeast Anatolia at the time. The conditions in many places were dire even before the 1895 violence. The Missionary Herald of October 1895 (91,10), reports on the conditions prior to the 1895 violence. From Van, Missionary Frazer wrote on June 26:

On Monday night Hindostan, a village in a near district, was robbed of a thousand sheep and two men were killed. On Monday some men were beaten here in Van, and from Aghausts came news to the effect that a certain pasha is threatening annihilation of all Christians between that town and Erzroom.

It may be noted that although the area referenced above was inhabited mainly by Armenians, the threat was for “the annihilation of all Christians.” The same letter from the Missionary Herald includes the following:

Last week letters were received from Moosh, signed by several priests and our preacher describing the pitiful destitution that

584 Missionary Herald Nov. 1895: 91, 10.
prevailed. The names of 65 persons who had died of hunger and exposure were recorded, and an appeal was made for help.\footnote{Ibid.}

Writing from Mardin in August 1, 1896, A.A. Andrus reports the following:

The outlook at the end of June, to which date this letter brings down the record, was not reassuring. The plundered villagers who have had but a tithe of their property restored to them; their burnt and broken down houses are still in ruins; much of their grain has been either pastured while green, reaped when ripe, by the Koords [sic], or carried from the threshing floor by the marauding Arabs. Life is hardly more secure than property for those who still retain the name of Christian, and the prospect for reform is as remote as it was a year ago. We have no faith in the Ethiopian’s changing his skin or leopard his spots. Meanwhile the prospect for the next winter is darker than ever.\footnote{Missionary Herald of January 1902; 98,1,p.43.}

Andrus, commenting on the Hamidie Regiment, states: “This irregular cavalry is very largely responsible for most of the irregularities which have disturbed those regions during the last eight years.” Also: “the vast majority of these troops have been drawn from this stalwart and vigorous Koordish [sic] race.”\footnote{Missionary Herald of November, 1896; 92,11, p. 488f.}

\section*{4.4.3.5 A Visit with a Different Aim and Outlook - Pillage and Religious Intolerance of a Different Form}

The sense of defeat and weakness that Oriental Christians experienced, particularly at that period, extended beyond Kurdish aggression. Some of the missionaries, in addition to their basic work which involved diverting those Christians from their traditional religious practice, were engaged in stripping them of their religious heritage under the benign claim of ‘manuscript collection’. The case of Rendel Harris of Clare College, Cambridge offers an example. In the Missionary Herald of November 1896,\footnote{Missionary Herald of November, 1896; 92,11, p. 488f.} Mr. Andrus reports on the one month visit by Professor J. Rendel Harris\footnote{British Quaker, academician and Orientalist.} and his wife, pursuing his main interest: collection of manuscripts:
We enjoyed with the professor a hunting expedition for 20 days in search for old and rare manuscripts in the Jebel Tur (Tur Abdin Mountain) but did not meet with the success we had hoped because of the suspicions and covetousness of the people. Moreover, alas! the Koords in the late raids destroyed a great number of valuable Syriac manuscripts.\textsuperscript{590}

Mr. Harris’s frustration with the result of his hunt for manuscripts extends to his abject intolerance of Oriental Christianity when he says:

It is a good district also for studying the decline and the prophesying [of] the approaching decease of Syrian monasticism, for most of the monasteries are in ruins and so much reduced as not to be better than ruins. I am glad to be at the bedside of this erratic religion, and if a shake would hasten the patient’s dissolution, I would gladly give him a brace of Shakes.\textsuperscript{591}

The expressed objectives of Harris’s expedition, as well as his disrespectful remarks warrant a couple of comments. First, his “hunting expedition” for manuscripts of a cultural tradition that he inherently despises is inconsistent with an academic discipline and more appropriate for an art dealer. Second, “the suspicions and covetousness of the people” reflect a growing awareness among clergy and wardens about the value of these manuscripts and the need for protecting and preserving them as valuable heritage artifacts, even though they may be fully ignorant of their real content. Third, his remarks about Syrian Orthodox Christianity and its monastic tradition, employing such intolerant and abusive language, reflects a tunnel vision of other cultures, which is so contrary to the attributes of what a learned man from Cambridge should embrace. It is also a further example of the Orientalist attitude that Edward Said describes so well.\textsuperscript{592}

4.4.4 Consequences on Abdul Masih’s Patriarchate - His Deposition

The Kurdish aggression of 1895 to 1898, coming as it did almost immediately after Abdul Masih took office as patriarch, became the defining feature of his term. These events exposed, yet once again, the basic tragedy that marked the life of the Syrian Orthodox communities, 

\textsuperscript{590} Missionary Herald of November, 1896; 92,11, p. 488f.  
living as unarmed minorities among armed Kurdish clans, who were constantly competing for control of the region and living on the proceeds of terror they caused in order to exact protection money from the Christian population.

In addition to tragically affecting the lives of many communities, the dire conditions that resulted from the 1895 events also diminished the long held belief in the stature of the patriarchate as an institution which was responsible for the welfare of its people, and capable of their protection. Through these events, the Syrian communities came to realize how helpless the patriarch, as a person and as an institution, was in the face of such events. This point was clearly reflected in the sharp drop in the number of letters to the Patriarch, many of which were appeals for help, see Figure 6. Further, by examining Figures 3 and 4, regarding sender identity one notices a significant drop in the proportion of letters arriving from the laity, see Figure 4. As a result, the communities increasingly came to the realization that they had essentially become helpless. This situation encouraged more people to convert to Catholicism and to Protestantism, where avenues for material help and for protection by external powers were, at least, perceived to be far more likely and available.

Despite the tragic conditions that prevailed for most of the first three years of his term in office, Patriarch Abdul Masih worked hard to remedy the numerous wounds in his communities that resulted from these conditions. He did so by caring about the displaced and the hungry, and by strengthening the bonds between communities that had been weakened as a result of pressures of conversion to Catholicism and Protestantism, as he did in Midyat in 1897. He helped many who had converted to Catholicism to return to the mother church. In 1900 he headed to Istanbul, where he stayed nearly 15 months. In Istanbul he had two audiences with Sultan Abdul Hamid. The Grand Vazir Saed Pasha dissuaded him from his plan to visit India. However, the traumatic events, particularly many of the events to which he was personally a witness that befell his community and other Christians in Diyarbakir and elsewhere early in his Patriarchate affected his mental health. As a result, based on unsound advice he resorted to alcohol to which he became addicted. This adversely affected his

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593 Saka, Kanisati, p. 213.
595 Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 21.
596 Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 21.
mental faculties and his ability to deal with the mounting issues of his community everywhere. Over time the worsening state of affairs surrounding the Patriarch generated a consensus among the bishops that he should be deposed and replaced with somebody who was more capable of dealing with the situation. The lack of an obvious candidate who was both willing and capable caused considerable delay before a decision for the deposition and replacement was made. This was made particularly more difficult by the fact that Bishop Gregorius Abdullah, his rival for the patriarchate, had left the Church in 1896 and joined the Syrian Catholic Church, as will be discussed in some detail later.

The deposition of Abdul Masih represented a rare event in the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church. Not surprisingly, rumours persisted long after the event as to whether there was an external factor, in particular an order from the Sultan to remove him, ostensibly because of his drinking problem. During my research of this matter, oral sources generally claimed that Episcope Paulus of Urfa (Edessa), the Patriarchal representative in Istanbul, was coordinating the effort to unseat Patriarch Abdul Masih, seemingly in fulfillment of an order by the Sultan. The archival material under study has yielded a document of critical importance, which has shed light on this matter. This is a letter, which was penned in Arabic by Episcope Paulus, and sent from Istanbul and dated March 27, 1903. This letter clearly shows that there was no interference from the Porte in this matter; that, to the contrary, the Porte sought evidence that the deposition of Abdul Masih was by popular demand; “the unseating the Patriarch depends on his rejection by the millet” as expressed by a decision of the Synod. In this letter Chorepiscopos Paulus urges the bishops, members of the Synod, to make a clear decision to depose Patriarch Abdul Masih in what he saw was as a necessary step in order to save the millet from further decline:

I will emphasize here that this time we would, with the grace of the Creator and with the Sultanic justice achieve our aspired result, for when discussing the issue, the Ministry of Justice answered, that the unseating of the Patriarch depends on his rejection by the millet, so if you categorically refuse to accept him…Thus, if you now emphasize that you would never accept Abdul Masih as Patriarch, they would no doubt replace him.

597 Document 40M-24/26- 0122: My translation of what may be regarded as an important historical letter appears in Appendix A4.1.
A further, independent, confirmation that the deposition of Abdul Masih was sought by a decision of the Syrian Orthodox Church is offered in a consular report by Avalon Shipley, the British Vice-Consul in Diyarbakir, see text in Section 4.5.

It is unclear what steps transpired immediately following Paulus’ letter. However, Dolabani reports that a synod was held later that year, on October 10, 1903 in Deir al-Za‘faran which decided to depose Patriarch Abdul Masih. According to Dolabani, those attending the Synod were: Qorilos Girjis, Patriarchal Vicar of Mardin; Athanasius Yacoub, Bishop of Nisibis; Athanasius Aphram Bishop of Deir Mor Gabriel; and Athanasius Dinha of Deir Mar Abhai. The declaration of deposition was also signed by Timotheus Paulus, Patriarchal Vicar in Istanbul, Mar Dionysius Behnam; Qorilos Elias (Qodso of Mar Mattai); and Iyawannis Elias (Halooli), Bishop of Jerusalem.

The decision of the Synod was communicated to the Sublime Porte with a request for a Sultanic order to remove Abdul Masih from the civil authority invested in him by the Porte in order to commence the process for electing a successor. The Porte’s decree for the deposition was issued on July 16, 1904 by a decision of the Council of Minutes, which was communicated by the Grand Wazir to the Governor of Diyarbakir.

4.4.5 Abdul Masih after Deposition – Manifestation of Continued Decline

After his deposition, Abdul Masih resided in Midyat. There, he watched with added sadness, his rival, Abdullah, being installed as patriarch in 1906.

In 1908, the new patriarch ordained a number of bishops. One of these was Gurjis, from Malabar whom he ordained at St. Mark’s Monastery in Jerusalem under the ecclesiastic forename Dionysius. When the Patriarch Abdullah subsequently visited Malabar, starting in September 1909, Dionysius rebelled against him, which caused the patriarch to excommunicate him in May 1911. The patriarch then convened a council in August of the same year at Always, in Malabar. The council, which was attended by the delegates from 230 churches, endorsed the patriarch’s anathema of Dionysius Gurgis and designated Cyril Paul as Metropolitan of Malabar.

598 William Taylor, Narratives, Appendix AXVIII.
In 1910 the disgruntled Gurgis invited Abdul Masih to visit India. Letters between the two sides were exchanged continuously until 1912 when the Indian party in question sent him some money to travel. On his way to India he stopped in Mosul, where Antoune Abdulnour, a well known community leader and dignitary attempted to dissuade him from his plan, but to no avail.600

In India, Dionysius Gurgis had Abdul Masih ordained a monk, Fannus Kallisery, a metropolitan with the name Gregorius Gurgis. The ordination was carried out under the claim that the deposition of Abdul Masih was not legal; that it had not been approved by a synod. On May 10, 1912, the Turkish government addressed a letter through Tawfiq Pasha to Sir E. Grey in London, requesting him to write to the governments of Travancore and Cochin that Patriarch Abdul Masih had been deposed.601

Upon his departure from India he headed to Jerusalem from where one of his relatives from Qal'atmara, the Syrian Catholic Chorepiscopos Yacoub Melke, took him to Beirut, where he joined the Syrian Catholic Church.602 Following this, he travelled to his home town of Qal'atmara.603 The details of what actually transpired at that point are difficult to ascertain. However, all accounts generally agree that he eventually returned to live in Deir al-Za'faran, where he spent his last days, died and was buried.

What ensued next is taken up by a contemporary source, Al- Hikmat, a journal that began to be issued in Mardin starting in 1913. The account, published in the June 11 and June 24, 1914 issues of Al- Hikmat, describes Abdul Masih’s reception in Deir al-Za‘faran and his brief association with the Catholics. It chronicles “his desire to return to the bosom of his mother, the Syrian Church, as he became certain of the good will of the Taifa towards him, and, as he also realized that those who worked to convince him to join Catholicism, did so for their own aims out of hatred towards the Syrian Church.”

600 Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 27.
601 In 1923, the Court of Appeal in Trivandrum confirmed the excommunication of Dionysius Gurgis. In response, Gurgis journeyed to the Za’faran Monastery to appeal to Patriarch Elias III to absolve him from the anathema. Patriarch Elias III attempted to resolve the issue during the last few years of his life in India, but to no avail, for it transpired that Gurgis’ real intention was declaring independence. Thus, this saga unfolded to yield yet another permanent division in the Syrian Orthodox Church in India.
603 Ibid.
According to the *Al- Hikmat* account, Abdul Masih was invited and accompanied to Deir al- Za‘faran in a celebratory manner by a number of dignitaries on June 8, 1914, where he was given residence:

On entering the monastery, his beatitude headed to Beth Qadshe [the graves of the saints and patriarchs] where he conducted the prayers for the departed clergy, and wept profusely. He then entered the church and was shown to a seat that was especially prepared for him.\(^{604}\)

*Al-Hikmat* takes up the return of Abdul Masih again in its Issue No. 22, June 20 to July 3, 1914, pp.336 and 337. Here, *Al-Hikmat* provides an account of an encounter between Abdul Masih and Bishop Gabriel, the Syrian Catholic Bishop of Mardin. This appears to be based on an official complaint made by Bishop Gabriel in which he claimed that:

Patriarch Abdul Masih, who had gone to Qal‘atmara for a visit, was taken by the Syrians to Deir al-Za‘faran, where he is now confined but wishes to return to Catholicism. In addition, he has in his possession certain items that belong to us, which I wish returned.

*Al-Hikmat* reported that the Mutasarrif sent a committee to Deir al-Za‘faran to investigate the claim. According to the same account Abdul Masih denied those claims answering:

I am Syrian Orthodox, I stayed for a while with the Catholics as a visitor. I have now by my free will returned to the house of my fathers and grandfathers, to my mother’s bosom. So what is it that the Catholics demand from me? Are they not ashamed of submitting a report so devoid of truth, as this?

Repaying to the question of the articles that Bishop Gabriel demanded to be returned, Abdul Masih reportedly answered, “I owe the Bishop nothing. Further, if Patriarch Rahmani requires the return of what he offered me as a present in replacement of a cross and the ring and such, let him himself approach me.”\(^{605}\)

*The Spirit of Division and Animosity, a Significant Document*

During my search of the Barsoum archives in Bab Tuma, Damascus, in May to June 2009, I came across a letter, hitherto not made public, and penned in Arabic by Ignatius Ephram Rahmani, the Syrian Catholic Patriarch. The letter, addressed to Abdul Masih and dated June

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\(^{604}\) *Al-Hikmat*, June 11, June 24, 1914, pp. 314-315.

\(^{605}\) *Al-Hikmat* No.22, June 20 to July 3, 1914, pp. 336 and 337.
16, 1914, provides background of the utmost importance to the seemingly unimportant argument noted above between Bishop Gabriel and Abdul Masih concerning some articles ostensibly provided to Abdul Masih by Patriarch Rahmani of the Syrian Catholic Church. My translation of the letter is given in Appendix A 4.2. In this letter, Patriarch Rahmani refers to a communication with Pope Pius X concerning Abdul Masih:

In today’s mail we received a letter from his Holiness Pope Pius X in which he informs us that you have sent him a letter dated April 28 ultimo in which you explained to him what had happened to you, particularly the theft of the cross and the two rings that he had bestowed on your respectful beatitude.

Patriarch Rahmani then conveys a message of assurance:

His Holiness and Lord the Pope reminded us to provide you every now and then with all your needs to cover your expenses. As you well know we have not and will not detract from providing you with all that which brings to you comfort and peace of mind, for all that matters to us is your good health, which we hold dear to our heart, as your good conscience would attest.

And more importantly, concludes with the reminder:

Further, our Lord the Pope commands us to remind you with what you promised him, namely that you would exert yourself to re-claim our separated beloved brethren to the fold of one Catholic Church, and no doubt you are paying attention to this matter. As we promised you, we will, upon our receipt of the next mail, God willing, forward to you the cross and ring and a sum for your pocket expense.

It may appear remarkable that the Pope of Rome would engage in details of soliciting help from a person whose small church had declared him unfit to run that church, all in order to bring that church under Rome’s control. Spectacular as this evidence may generally seem, it is not isolated as it falls within the spectrum of means and practices that were employed by the Latin missionaries and their local counterparts, with French official backing, in fulfilling the same aim. Examples of this evidence are offered in Sections 4.5 and 4.6.
4.5 At the Turn of the Twentieth Century - Attrition Under Multiple Threats

The compounded weakness of the Syrian Orthodox Church at the turn of the twentieth century is, as noted earlier, well reflected by the dramatic reduction of letters the patriarch received from his clergy and community (see Figure 4 in Chapter Two). From this figure it can be seen that the number of letters reduced from 660 in 1897 to 143 in 1900 and to a mere 32 in 1904. The crises that the community faced, whether from continued Kurdish tribal aggression or from pressures to convert to Catholicism or Protestantism, were beyond patriarchal ability to confront.

Another independent perspective on the prevailing conditions in Jazirah, Tur Abdin and nearby regions is offered by a British consular report dated December 4, 1905. The report refers to the feud within the Syrian Orthodox hierarchy following the deposition of Abdul Masih. It confirms the separate evidence presented here earlier that the deposition was by an internal decision:

> The Jacobite community throughout the country is being at the present moment greatly agitated by the struggle between the partisans of the ex-Patriarch and the partisans of the Bishop of Mosul. The former was dismissed by Iradé [decree] at the request of a great majority of priests and people some months ago, but has refused to relinquish his position.

> The internal feud within the Syrian Orthodox following the deposition of Abdul Masih played into the hands of the Kurds who exploited these divisions to exact protection money from the feuding sides, which appeared to have fed into the ill-intent of some of other of the Christians who were “not ill-pleased to see them do it”.

> This report, with sections quoted below, describes and comments on the dire conditions of the Christians who were living among the Kurds in the districts of Nisibis and Midyat, which lie in the heartland of the Syrian Orthodox in Anatolia. The condition of the Syrian Orthodox - the Jacobites in the consular report - was particularly dire. Beset by internal weakness in their ranks over the past 10 years, matters became worse as a result of the division and uncertainty following the deposition of Abdul Masih.

> In addition to affirming these conditions, the report refers to the role that the Latin missions played, often in tacit collusion with the Kurds, in deliberately making the position of

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606 F.O. 424 Further Correspondence/Asiatic Turkey, 1905 Inclosure No. 106 from Vice-Consul Avalon Shipley to Sir N. O’Conor, Diarbekir, December 4, 1905.
the “Jacobites” worse in order to force them to convert to bear the allegiance to Rome in return for French-sponsored protection:

The districts of Nisibin and Midiat are in a very disturbed state, owing to continuous fighting between the different tribes. The Christians who suffer in consequence are mostly Jacobites, and their representative at Diarbekir tells me that they are gradually being forced to leave their villages and take refuge in the towns. My French colleague confirms this statement, but adds what the priest was not able to maintain, that the suppression of the Christians by the Kurds is a deliberately pursued policy of the Government [my emphasis].

How the Kurds utilized the dissensions between the Christians, Catholic (i.e., Syrian and Chaldean), and the Syrian Orthodox to their advantage is discussed next.

As far as I understand the question, it seems to me that the Kurds are taking advantage of dissensions existing among the Christians to induce rather than force them to take different sides, and thus expose themselves to retaliation from the tribes to whom they do not belong, while paying heavily for such protection as they may get from those to whom they do.

This report clearly points to the attitude of apathy that the French Consulate in Diyarbakir adopted towards the persecution of the non-Catholic Christians by the Kurds, all with the cynical aim that the persecuted Christians would be “driven into the Latin fold” for protection.

I have been greatly surprised to find how generally entertained among the Moslems, the Jacobites, and the Catholics (Armenian, Chaldean, and Syrian) is the opinion that the 'Latins' are carrying on a very active propaganda through their missionaries, and that they are not disposed to view the persecution of the Christian villagers by the Kurds with unmitigated displeasure, and that the French Consulate does not press for their protection with the energy with which it appears to do so. This in the hope that they will be driven into the 'Latin fold.'  

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607 F.O. 424 Further Correspondence/Asiatic Turkey, 1905 Inclosure No. 106 from Vice-Consul Avalon Shipley to Sir N. O’Conor, Diarbekir, December 4, 1905.
4.6 Patriarch Abdullah II Sattuf (1906-1915) - Oscillating Allegiance at Time of Turmoil

4.6.1 Early Ecclesiastic Career

Born in Saddad, a small town located to the southeast of Homs in Syria, in 1883, Abdullah Sattuf (Abdullah) joined monastic life as a vocation in early youth. He studied and then taught in Edessa, and spoke Arabic, Turkish and Syriac from an early age. By an order from Patriarch Jacob II (1847-1871) in 1870, monk Abdullah embarked on a project to register the names of the households of the Syrian Orthodox communities in the two vilayets of Diyarbakir and Bitlis, and to collect Patriarchal dues from these communities.\(^608\) He was ordained a bishop, with the title Gregorius, by Patriarch Peter in 1872\(^609\) for the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem.\(^610\)

Soon after this ordination, Bishop Abdullah was summoned by Patriarch Peter to accompany him on his journeys to England and to India in the period 1875 to 1877. He wrote an account of these journeys, which has been published in Al-Majala al-Batriarkia (the Patriarchal Magazine), and referenced in Chapter Three. Following his journey, accompanying Patriarch Peter to India, Bishop Abdullah led a life that was marked with controversy and disagreement with many, including those in his home community in Syria, but above all with Patriarch Peter. His controversial position in his relations with others, and his disobedience toward Patriarch Peter led to his dismissal from his position as bishop. However, his subsequent atonement led to his re-instatement, a situation that was repeated three times during Patriarch Peter’s tenure. Eventually, shortly before Patriarch Peter’s death he was appointed Bishop of Amid (Diyarbakir).\(^611\)

During the early days of Abdul-Masih’s Patriarchate, Abdullah found himself in controversy with the Ottoman authorities during the critical period of the autumn of 1895, as a consequence of which he took refuge in the French Consulate. Several of the documents from that period cite that the French Consul told him that he could not stay in the consulate or be

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\(^{610}\) This ecclesiastical title was in the conformity with the custom that was valid until that time for a bishop appointed for that monastery. The said monastery, known as Deir al-Kursi (the Monastery of the Seat referring to the historical ecclesiastical lineage to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem from the fourth century), had a certain status which was also reflected in the manner of appointment of its bishop. For, whereas generally a bishop is appointed by the Synod for a specific bishopric on the basis of a petition by the community of the bishopric, the bishop for Deir al-Kursi is appointed by a joint decision of the Patriarch and the Synod.

\(^{611}\) Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, *Batarikat*, p. 34
provided with a safe exit unless he joined Catholicism. Documents from both Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic sources\(^{612}\) confirm that he joined the Syrian Catholic Church until 1906 when he returned to his old Church, to be elected a patriarch.

Syrian Orthodox sources generally brush over this unsavoury chapter of its history. In his often quoted book on the history of the Syrian Orthodox patriarchs Dolabani\(^{613}\) assigned a mere page and half to Abdullah’s patriarchate while Saka\(^{614}\) gave it a mere half a page. Aphram Paulus Barsoum\(^{615}\) did assign somewhat more space, but that was to cover part of his journey to India. However, like the other named authors, Aphram Paulus Barsoum avoided addressing the decline the Church witnessed during and through his patriarchate. A more detailed account of Abdullah’s life before and during his term as patriarch has been extracted and compiled from the archival material that has become available for this study, as set out below. Let us look in more detail as to what happened as derived from the archival material.

Following his return from the trip to India with Patriarch Peter, Abdullah was appointed Bishop for Syria with seat in Homs. However, difficulties he had with priests and congregation caused Patriarch Peter to move him from that position. Whilst he was there the Patriarch received letters from Saddad\(^{616}\) and from Homs\(^{617}\) that expressed bitter complaints from the congregation of these two communities about him. Following further controversial relations he had with other bishops and communities where he was assigned to serve, Patriarch Peter sent him to England in 1887 to gain experience in operating the printing presses that England had decided to provide the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate.\(^{618}\)

As an indication of the troublesome relations Bishop Abdullah had with others, one of the documents,\(^{619}\) a letter dated December 26, 1886, from Patriarch Peter to the Khandan of Homs,\(^{620}\) provides an indication of the problems resulting from Abdullah’s conduct. In this


\(^{613}\) Yohannon Dolabani, *Fatriarkhe d'Antiokha*, pp. 282-283.


\(^{617}\) Archival Document K10-B20-0813, dated February 3, 1882.

\(^{618}\) Given that the source documents are un-catalogued, no continual timeline concerning the period from Abdullah’ return from India until he travelled to London on his second trip in 1887 could be compiled in the course of this study.

\(^{619}\) K10-B45-0015

\(^{620}\) Chief Ottoman administrator.
letter Patriarch Peter informs the chief local official that Abdullah has incited problems wherever he went; that he repeatedly disobeyed Patriarchal orders, and that, consequently, he has been discharged from his ecclesiastic duty in Homs, and been replaced by Abdul Masih. The Patriarch asked the Khandan to ensure that Abdullah did not stay in Homs, but should either return to Deir al-Za’faran or to go to Beirut. It appears that, subsequent to this, Abdullah opted to go to Beirut, where he was to learn the installation and the operation of the printing presses.\(^{621}\) Abdullah, it appears, subsequently found his way to London. Based on reports of further challenge to authority, the Patriarch decided to discharge him from ecclesiastic duties yet again. The Patriarch explained his action in a letter to Dr. Tramlet of the Anglican Church dated September 18, 1897.\(^{622}\) Receipt of the Patriarch’s letter by the Archbishop of Canterbury was acknowledged by David Sasson, who communicated with the Patriarch in Arabic and who, in this case, acted as liaison with the Anglican side, as per his letter dated February 23, 1888.\(^{623}\)

It appears that after another pleading for pardon Patriarch Peter pardoned Abdullah once again. The pardon was communicated to London and was acknowledged in a letter by David Sasson dated May 22, 1888.\(^{624}\) In this letter, Sasson speaks well of Abdullah who was being trained in the assembly and operation of the printing presses. Sasson also notes, apparently in response to a demand for Abdullah’s return to Anatolia, that it would be nearly impossible to find someone who would travel out to install the printing presses. Sasson also said that he would be recommending an extension to Abdullah’s stay as this would also help in collecting funds for educational purposes. Here Sasson notes that after Abdullah’s return, there may not be anyone who would pursue the educational fund matter.

With the archival documents being un-catalogued and incomplete, it has not been reasonably practical to trace Abdullah’s movements after 1888. However, in a letter dated July 11, 1894, addressed to a number of dignitaries,\(^{625}\) barely a few weeks before his passing on October 7, 1894, Patriarch Peter laid out the problems that Abdullah continued to create with the communities with which he came in contact, despite the repeated efforts he (the Patriarch) made in attempting accommodate his wishes. One of the later duties he had assigned him was the bishopric of Diyarbakir, while he (the Patriarch) was in Mosul in 1892. The letter continues

\(^{621}\) Patriarch Peter’s letter to Abdullah dated February 12, 1887 (K10-B45-0022).
\(^{622}\) K10-B45-0027
\(^{623}\) K07-B24-Part1-0106.
\(^{624}\) K10-B02-0542.
\(^{625}\) 40M-24/48-447. In deference to issues of privacy I have considered it inappropriate to publicize the letter.
to state that a report reached him about Abdullah’s continued problems in Diyarbakir, at which point, the letter clarified, Abdullah undertook to settle down in his hometown, Saddad, which Patriarch Peter permitted.

4.6.2 On Abdullah’s Departure to the Catholic Church

Abdullah’s history following Patriarch Peter’s death was no less controversial than during the Patriarch’s life. Abdullah was unhappy with the choice of his rival Abdul Masih as Patriarch. In the course of disturbances and violence that started in Diyarbakir in October 1895, Abdullah reportedly took refuge in the French Consulate in Diyarbakir. According to accounts that circulated in that period, the French Consul informed Abdullah that he could not keep him or organize a safe passage for him out of Diyarbakir unless he became a Catholic (see below). A contemporary Syriac Catholic source (Tarazi626) simply states: "On March 30, 1896 Gregorius Abdullah Sattuf swore the oath of Catholicism in the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Diyarbakir in the presence of Bishop Marutha Butrus Tabal, representing Patriarch Behnam II."627

The archival material in Mardin and in Bab Tuma provides several documents concerning Abdullah’s departure to the Syrian Catholic Church and referring to the ensuing results. The following is a partial list:

- A letter from Yusuf Akhtiar from Diyarbakir, to Patriarch Abdul Masih, dated October 10, 1895 (40M-24/40-057) in which Akhtiar, a warden and likely a lay patriarchal representative, refers to Bishop Abdullah’s action of taking refuge at the French Consulate in Diyarbakir. A more detailed translation of the contents of this letter will shortly follow.

- A letter from Altoune Abdelnoor from Mosul to Patriarch Abdul Masih, dated October 20, 1895 (40M-24/46-322) referring to the critical issue created by Bishop Abdullah’s refuge at the French Consulate and news of his joining the Catholic Church.

- Two letters from Aboud Suriyani,628 Homs, one dated April 4, 1896 (40M-24/46-205); the other dated December 10, 1897 (40M-24/47-255), both to Patriarch Abdul Masih, generally

626 Philip de Tarazi was a well known Syrian Catholic dignitary, author and benefactor. His book Al-Salasil al-Tarikhia al-Suryaniya, Beirut, 1910, is held to present the historical events from the Syrian Catholic perspective.

627 Ibid., pp. 351-352.; Apram Paulus Barsoum, p. 34. This issue comes up in other archival documents later in this chapter.

628 Aboud Suriyani a leading Orthodox lay dignitary and church warden with a record of long service to the church in Syria.
referring to the controversies that Abdullah continued to create among the Syrian Orthodox Church communities in Homs and in other locations.

- A letter priest Abdullah of Homs, dated November 17, 1897 (40M-24/47-249), referring to the controversies that Abdullah continued to create among the Syrian Orthodox Church communities in Homs.

- The letter from Bishop Abdullah himself to a number of dignitaries in Diyarbakir, dated September 25, 1896 (40M-24/45-051,052) about his journey to Deir al Sharfa (The Seat of the Syrian Catholic Patriarchate in Lebanon). A more detailed translation of the contents of this letter will shortly follow.

- A letter from Bishop Abdullah to Alntoune Abdelnour from Deir al-Sharfa, in Lebanon dated September 25, 1896 (Bab Tuma – P1090664). In his letter, Abdullah describes his journey from Diyarbakir to Deir al-Sharfa, without getting into an analysis of his situation.

- A letter from Bishop Abdullah to Altoune Abdelnour from Deir a-Sharfa, in Lebanon dated January 3, 1897 (40M-24/48-417). In this letter, Bishop Abdullah expresses his personal trials and complains about the way he had been treated since he joined the ecclesiastic service. Without dwelling on the circumstances of his departure from the Syrian Orthodox Church, he acknowledges being in the care of the Syrian Catholics.

The following are two letters that directly relate to Abdullah’s departure to the Catholic Church:

i) The Letter from Yusuf Akhtiar630 from Diyarbakir to Patriarch Abdul Masih, dated October 10, 1895.631

This letter is significant for two reasons. First, it was from someone who was very close to both the Patriarch and Bishop Abdullah, and second, it was written in the midst of the unfolding issues.

After the preliminary address:

629 Altoune Abdelnor was a well known Syrian Orthodox educated lay dignitary in Mosul, who, beside his trading business with foreign countries including India, acted as an advisor and facilitator between Deir al-Za’faran, during the patriarchates of both Abdullah and his predecessor Abdul Masih, and the Syrian Orthodox ecclesiastic hierarchy in India.

630 Yusuf akhtiar is the father of Yakoub Akhtiar (al-Amadi), cited by Taylor in Narratives of Identity, p. 98-103.

631 Archival Document - 40M-24/40-057. The letter is written in highly colloquial local dialect, which presented considerable difficulty in deciphering certain expressions. Help of older folk with ancestors from that region was sought.
If you ask about Bishop Abdullah, I would inform you that when he received your telegraph, calling him to attend before you, he said nothing. Shortly after, government representatives arrived requiring him to accompany them to the Patriarch. He requested them to come back in two hours. In the meantime he mounted his horse and headed to Oseb’s home. Mr. Oseb took Bishop Abdullah to the home of the Consul (French Consul), where Bishop Abdullah remained. The consul asked Oseb to go to the Vali to relieve the Bishop of any demand by the government. The Vali told Oseb not to interfere in this matter. The Consul then went to the Vali and informed him that the Bishop Abdullah has become Catholic. Thus Bishop Abdullah moved to and lived at the Armenian Catholic Church.

The Bishop’s family started to talk ill of your Holiness; that your move was to coerce him [the Bishop] in order to get rid of him by making him change his faith. As a result the motive of your letter was unclear.

Three days ago I sent a note to Bishop Abdullah requesting to meet him secretly. He answered after an hour, inviting me to visit him. It was a Saturday and we met alone. We talked about the subject. He asked 'what have I done to cause this problem? In what did I disobey him that he would hand me over to the government?' I said to him 'the Patriarch did not complain about you, it was the government who wanted your removal from here to avoid creating a problem among the community. It was for this reason he was forced to send a telegraph so that you may not feel frightened when you are sought by the government.' So the Bishop said 'if you agree with the Patriarch’s claim, I will also agree, and let us keep all in confidence. The Patriarch is my superior and 'the crown of my head' and I will never become Catholic and will not become 'Latin', I will not change.' The writer then requests the Patriarch to send a letter of further assurance.

**ii) Bishop Abdullah’s Perspective**
This is expressed by his letter from Deir al-Sharfa, Lebanon, dated September 25, 1896. The letter is addressed to a number of individuals in Diyarbakir.

The grace of God and the heavenly blessing may embrace our beloved, dear and esteemed dignitaries: Qiryaqos Khadrasha, Shammas Tomas Alinaq, shammas Hanna Moumchi and Hanna Efendi, Najma and Yaqoub Rathwaali, Yaqoub safar and Yaqoub Balaq.

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May the blessing of God dwells on them, on their homes and children by the intercession of our Mother, the Virgin Mary, and all martyrs and saints, Amin.

We wish to inform your friendly selves that we [I] received your letter dated August 4, 1896, and were very happy and moved by your expression and pure love which pleased our hearts. As your heart imparted friendliness, this became manifest in our minds’ eyes and we raised thanks to the Throne of He who became majestic by His uniqueness, supreme by His qualities and who endowed upon us that our heart may rejoice by your precious wellbeing. As you are saddened by our separation so are we many times. In fact the separation has become extremely hard on us but to no avail, for this has been our fate, and, when subjected to trials, man has to persevere until the moment of deliverance is at hand. We hope that if God wills, we will be together again in order to quench our desire to see you.

Upon our departure from Diyarbakir we spent the first night at the home of our brother Mutran Dinha, at Swerek. However, we soon caught cold and a stomach ailment from which we suffered for the rest of the journey to Homs. The doctors advised that we should continue to Beirut to consult with a doctor there. Upon our arrival in Beirut we had to proceed to Deir al-Sharfa in Mount Lebanon in order to recuperate. It is for this reason that we attended the said monastery as we sought a quiet environment, which this monastery offered better than any where else in the Ottoman Empire. So we have decided to stay in it for two reasons: first for peace of mind from troubles and known disturbances, and second for the climatic quality of the air in the mountain. We are now staying in here awaiting the appropriate time when we may return to Homs, at which point we will contact you, as we will not, and will never, forget you.

You have mentioned that his Beatitude’s heart is with us. We, on our side, are grateful to his Beatitude, especially for the kindness he showed in the home of Mr. Asfar and we know that as far as he is concerned, we have no fear, and are sure of his promise. So we ask God Almighty to help us act in accordance to His will for our intention is to do good toward all, and the salvation of our soul. This would be known to you. We request you to convey our respect to his Beatitude, requesting that he does not forget to

633 The extensive introductory salutation is often encountered in letter-writing although perhaps not to the extent exhibited here. This rather lengthy introduction has been included here in order to convey this genre of letter writing. It may be appropriate to again remind of the use of ‘we’ for the first person singular, and, similarly, the corresponding use of ‘you’.
include us in his prayers. We send peace to all members of the 
taifa. May the Grace of Jesus Christ be with you always, Amen. 
Our father who art in Heaven ……etc. 

By the Grace of God

Gregorius, Mutran Abdullah, the weak From Deir al-Sharfa
Seal

It is not entirely clear with what duties he was charged in the Syrian Catholic Church. According to Suhail Qasha, Abdullah, as a Syrian Catholic bishop, took part in the election of Ephrem Rahmani, as patriarch of the Syrian Catholic Church in the Synod meeting of that church that was held on October 9, 1898.

Philip de Tarazi states:

On March 30, 1896, Abdullah swore a Catholic Oath at the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Diyarbakir before Bishop Marutha Putrus Tabbal, deputizing Patriarch Benni II. He (Abdullah) was then appointed bishop for the Syrian Catholic in Homs and its environs. In 1902 he travelled to Rome and visited France, where he was shown appreciation and offered considerable help. He then went with Patriarch Ignatius Ephram Rahmani [Syriac Catholic Patriarch] to the Sublime Porte where he had the honour to be presented to the Sultan who bestowed on him the Mejidi-Class 2 Medal.

On the other hand, Gregorius Jirjis Shaheen belies Tarazi and claims that he, himself, is the bishop of Homs, Hama, Tadmur and Environs. Shaheen confirms the scenario of Abdullah’s refuge at the French Consulate, adding:

When he saw that the Consul would not protect him unless he became Catholic, he declared his Catholicism at the hands of the Consul, who then sent a telegram to Patriarch Behnam Binni in Mosul, who accepted him and sent him fifty French Lires.

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634 It has always been the normal practice that only a patriarch ends his letters with the first sentence of the Lord’s Prayer. It is therefore rather strange that Abdullah, a Bishop at that point, would end his letter in this manner.
636 Tarazi, p. 352.
I have not encountered any information as to the date and the detailed circumstance of Abdullah’s return to the Syrian Orthodox Church. Available published sources simply state that when the position of Patriarch in the Syrian Orthodox Church became vacant, Abdullah was elected to take up that position. Among the Bab Tuma archival documents I found a reference to his return to the Syrian Orthodox Church on a loose page of what would have been part of a report by Yuhanna Abachi, a priest-monk (later a Bishop of Deir Mar Mattai in 1923). On this page, Abachi, quoting Bishop Abdullah, states: “As my return to the Church drew near, a Jesuit from Homs came to see me in the house and inquired ‘I have heard that you have decided to return to your [sic] Church’. I replied: ‘It is not known yet’, at which point he [the Jesuit missionary] said ‘You have decided to do this’, repeating it several times and adding ‘you are excommunicated, you are excommunicated’. At which point Bishop Abdullah became angry and said to him [to the Jesuit] “You are who is excommunicated and your Pope is excommunicated” at which point he [the Jesuit missionary] left running.

This encounter with the Jesuit missionary sheds further light on the atmosphere of animosity and divisiveness between the two branches of the Syrian Church, and the prevailing spirit of exploitation that was being practiced by the foreign missionaries who, for more than a century, had been promoting this division, often encouraging and indeed promoting, and attracting to their fold ecclesiasts from the Syrian Orthodox Church who had grievances in their own church. The cases of Abdul Masih and of Abdullah are vivid examples of this. Rome was directly involved in the decisions relating to their acceptance into the Catholic Church in both these high profile cases: in the one Abdul Masih who had been Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church, and in the second, Abdullah, who became the succeeding Patriarch in the same church. In both cases the “conversion” was seemingly not based on doctrinal conviction but was essentially motivated by a desire for higher office, as in the case of Abdullah, or as an expression of revenge, as in the case of the deposed Abdul Masih. The return of both individuals to their old church, as was also often the case with other dissatisfied ecclesiasts of lower rank, particularly around that period, provides support of this argument. This issue points to Rome’s basic interest, which was, first and foremost, to further weaken the Syrian Orthodox Church and to quicken its final demise.

638 Dolabani, pp. 282-283, Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 34,
639 Document P110370.
4.6.3 Abdullah Sattuf the Patriarch

4.6.3.1 Initial Period
Abdullah was elected and ordained as Patriarch Abdullah II\(^{640}\) (Patriarch Abdullah) in Deir al-Za’faran in August 15, 1906.\(^{641}\) Tarazi’s reference to the return of Abdullah to the Syriac Orthodox Church was marked with acceptance accompanied with the hope that Abdullah would continue to shoulder the task he undertook by his reunion with Rome: “No doubt this eminent ecclesiast who officially declared union with the Church of Peter, and made a promise before the Holy Gospel to remain in its faith will continue to promote reunion between the Syrians and work to remove division in the branches of the honourable old nation.”\(^{642}\)

In early March 1908, Patriarch Abdullah ordained a number of Bishops in the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin as follows: Iyowanee Elias Shakir, for Diyarbakir; Ostatheos Saliba, Patriarchal Vicar in India; Gregorius Ephram Al-Saddi for Deir al-Kursi, Jerusalem; Qorilos Mansour, for administration and to oversee the printing press in Deir al-Za’faran, but later transferred to Edessa; Athanaseus Tuma Kassir, Bishop at large in Diyarbakir and later to Mosul; Antimos for Edessa; Julius Ibrahim; Severus Samuel Deir Mar Melke; and Philoxenus Abdulahad.

4.6.3.2 Patriarch Abdullah’s Travels

No sooner than he completed these ordinations, Patriarch Abdullah left Deir al-Za’faran and Mardin on March 14, 1908, and as it turned out, never returned to these places again. He set out on a journey of almost five years to the far lands of England, India and Egypt and upon his return he headed to Jerusalem, where his journey ended on April 3, 1913. Apart from brief trips to Syria, which he made following his return from India, Patriarch Abdullah resided in Jerusalem until his death on November 26, 1915. He was buried in the Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem.

This trip to England was his third and that to India his second. He had accompanied Patriarch Peter on his first trip to both countries in 1875 to 1877, and he subsequently made a

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\(^{640}\) Abdullah I was Patriarch from 1550-1557. Abdullah I was renowned for his effort to print the Syriac New Testament, for which purpose he sent priest Moses to Europe with a manuscript of the Syriac New Testament with a task of having it printed in the west-Saka 202.

\(^{641}\) Saka 213; Almanach 1925 (parjeans. Chukke)-K05-KUR00004; Tarazi p.353

\(^{642}\) Tarazi, p. 352.
follow up trip to England in 1887 to 1888, in connection with the acquisition of printing presses.

Published Syrian Orthodox sources make no reference to Abdullah’s trip to England as Patriarch beyond stating that he had an audience with King Edward VII. As to his trip to India, these sources provide a brief summary of Patriarch Abdullah’s difficult encounters in that country. His decree to excommunicate Dionysius Gurgis caused additional division, since shortly after his departure from India, the aides of the ex-communicated bishop invited the deposed Abdul Masih to India, where he re-instated the excommunicate Gurgis. This action set into motion the politics for further entrenched divisions from which the church in India has not completely recovered to the present day.

Patriarch Abdullah’s journey abroad began in Mardin on March 14, 1908 and ended in Jerusalem on April 3, 1913. According to my survey of the literature, nothing has been published about this five year journey, except a two page summary on the Indian leg of the journey.

My search in the Barsoum’s archives in Bab Tuma uncovered a most valuable 70-page Arabic manuscript, a diary of the entire journey. The authorship of the diary is not stated in that documents that were found. However, Tuma states that Patriarch Abdullah was accompanied by two monks: Yuhanna Abachi and Elias Qoro. The same author (i.e., Tuma) states elsewhere that Yuhanna Abachi was Patriarch Abdullah’s secretary and scribe during the noted trip. One can therefore postulate that the author of this diary was Yuhanna Abachi.

I found a second document in Barsoum’s Bab Tuma archive that relates to Patriarch Abdullah’s journey. This is an 86-page Arabic manuscript, in a handwriting that appears to be the same as that of the first document, which indicates the same authorship, namely Rabban (priest-monk) Yuhanna Abachi. The bulk of the document relates to encounters in India. However, the first eight pages report on the period that the travelling party spent in London and a discussion the Patriarch had with representatives of the Church of England.

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643 Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 36.
646 P1100475-P1100510
649 P1100422-P1100467.
Travel diaries such as the one under reference often make for very informative reading concerning the routes followed, modes of travel, the places visited, the people encountered and the dignitaries visited. Such reading can provide a more realistic perspective that adds to the historical narrative that relates to core topics of the documents. In this respect, the five-year journey Patriarch Abdullah took provided an abundance of interest. It was a journey through three countries - England, Egypt and India - on three continents. What is particularly interesting is that the diary includes descriptions of audiences with two emperors Sultan Abdul Hamid and King Edward IV, in addition to an audience with a Maharajah.

The audience with Sultan Abdul-Hamid sheds light on several interesting features of Ottoman royalty at that time. Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, it shows the position of respect and recognition that the Patriarch of a small non-Muslim community living at the remote edge of the Empire, held at the highest office of the Empire. As for the theological dialogue with the Church of England, a nuanced comment will be offered later. Perhaps a third point of specific interest of this journey is the route taken and how different and indirect that route was compared to routes that would be taken not many years later, when travel over land became much safer and more agreeable than at the time in question.

The travel diary commences thus in my translation:

When his Beatitude Patriarch Abdullah decided to proceed to the Sublime Porte to seek audience with our Great King the Sultan, son of the Sultan, son of Ghazi, Abdul Hamid, he sent a telegram to al-‘Attaba al-Shahinshahya, with a copy to the Esteemed Director of Jubilees and a copy to his Chorepiscopos Paulus, requesting permission to proceed, as per normal custom. His Beatitude also appointed Mutran Tuma Kassir as his deputy.

4.6.3.3 The Journey to Istanbul

The Patriarch and his travelling companions, the two priest-monks, left Mardin on March 14, 1908, on their first leg of the journey, heading to Diyarbakir, where they awaited the Sultan’s permission to proceed to Istanbul. The permission arrived on March 28, and the travelling party then started on its journey to its first destination, Istanbul. The party stopped for the night at Swerek, at the residence of Bishop Dinha of Jazirah. The next main stop was

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650 The patriarchal representative in Istanbul
651 P1100476
Urfa (Edessa), where the party arrived on April 2, 1908. The next stops were Sarugh\textsuperscript{652} and Mabbug,\textsuperscript{653} and arriving in Aleppo on April 5, at the start of Passion Week, which the party celebrated in Aleppo. The Patriarch and his party were received at every stop with pomp and procession by the clergy and the community. From Aleppo, the party then headed to Homs, arriving in that city on April 17. The next two weeks witnessed several receptions given in honour of the Patriarch by governors of cities and dignitaries. These events continued until May 1, 1908, when the party headed for Jerusalem. Interestingly, the trip from Homs to Jerusalem was by train from Homs to Baalbek and Beirut then by boat from Beirut to Jaffa and then by train from Jaffa to Jerusalem, where the party arrived on May 4, 1908, entering the city through the historical Bab al-Khalil.

In Jerusalem, the Patriarch and his party headed to St. Mark’s Convent (Monastery).\textsuperscript{654} On May 16, 1908 the party of Patriarch Abdullah held a meeting in St. Mark’s Monastery that was attended by Bishop Halooli and the monks of the Monastery in addition to the monks who were travelling with His Beatitude. At St. Mark’s, the Patriarch ordained two bishops for India: Mar Qorillos Paulus and Mar Dionysius Gurgis. The ordinations were based on petitions which the two candidates had brought with them from India. The Patriarch and his party stayed in Jerusalem until June 11, 1908, during which period they held meetings with officials and dignitaries from other churches. Subsequently, the party resumed its journey, travelling from Jerusalem on to Jaffa by rail, and sailing to Istanbul on June 12, 1908. After a brief stop at Izmir where the party attended the Greek Orthodox Church, the party resumed its travel, arriving Istanbul on June 18, 1908.

Soon after arrival in Istanbul, the Patriarchal party visited the Bash Katib at the Porte to express the Patriarch’s wish for an audience with the Sultan. The Bash Katib undertook to seek the Sultan’s approval for this request. The approval was granted on August 20, 1908 for an audience on the following day, namely Friday August 21, 1908. However, in the intervening period, the travel diary recorded the street celebrations it witnessed marking the deposition and the replacement of the Grand Vizir. No doubt the Ottoman archives have detailed descriptions

\textsuperscript{652} The home town of the sixth century poet Jacob of Sarugh.
\textsuperscript{653} The home town of the fifth century theologian Philoxinos Mabbug.
\textsuperscript{654} Convent is the historical name. The Syrian Orthodox Church consider St. Mark’s Convent to be where Jesus and his Disciples had the Last Supper and where the Disciples were meeting on the Pentecost
of this event. However, what makes the current account interesting is that it was viewed from a politically unmotivated ecclesiast coming from a remote corner of the Empire:

On Friday, July 11, 1908, Farid Pasha, the Grand Vizir, was deposed and replaced with Saeed Pasha. A Hamayoun was also issued to re-activate the Constitution. This decision gave rise to a great three-day celebration that was unprecedented in the history of the City. The inhabitants of Istanbul displayed a great many ornaments and exhibits, and happiness was evident everywhere. On the fourth day, the crier made an announcement in the souks and in the streets, and the newspapers published that 'by order of our Lord, the celebrations should come to an end and all are to return to work.' The newspapers appeared every day, praising the virtues of honesty while, at the same time, condemning those who betrayed the King and the milla. As part of the celebrations, prisoners were released throughout the country and individuals who had been exiled were allowed back to their region of residence, with feeling of happiness.

Another interesting entry in that specific period was the return of the exiled Armenian Patriarch Izmirian and the visit that the Patriarch and his party paid to him:

July 25, 1908 marked the return of his Beatitude the Patriarch Izmirian to Istanbul after a 12 year exile in Jerusalem. For soon after the events they, in an attempt to ameliorate the ill-feelings, and as a gesture of good will, awarded Izmirian a nishan. However, Izmirian did not accept the nishan stating: 'I would not sell the blood of the people, and keep quiet by getting a nishan.' Thereupon, he was exiled to Jerusalem for twelve years. The day of his return was a great day, which was celebrated by all newspapers in Istanbul.

In its entry for July 26th, the diary records that the Patriarch and Bishop Elias paid a visit to the Armenian Patriarch on the occasion of his return from exile. The journey by horse-drawn carriage to the Armenian Patriarchate at Qum Qabi took twelve hours.

On August 20th a bashi from the Ministry of Justice arrived, bringing the documents that carried the notification regarding the proceedings at the upcoming Royal audience.

4.6.3.4 Patriarch Abdullah’s Audience with Sultan Abdul Hamid

655 Milla is used here in its broadest context as community at large irrespective to religion and ethnicity.
656 P1100481
657 Referring to the 1895 violence and the associated massacres, particularly of the Armenians.
658 Referring to the Ottoman authorities.
659 P1100482.
One of highlights of Patriarch Abdullah’s four-year travel - from leaving Mardin on March 14, 1908 and returning to Jerusalem on June 2, 1912 - was his audience with Sultan Abdul Hamid. The audience was brief but its significance was in the fact that it did take place between the Sultan and the head of a small Christian community that lived at the edge of the Empire. The respect with which the Patriarchal party was met is also worthy of note.

The following is my translation of the main parts of an account of this audience, as per the entry on August 21, 1908 in Abachi’s Diary.

On Friday at 4 am. His Beatitude, Chorepiscopos and his aide, his Eminence the Bishop, Fahim Beg, monk Bishara, and monk Elias headed to the reception parlour of the Royal. Half an hour before arrival we saw that the Shahinshah military had lined up the road. Music played and a huge crowd of over ten thousand, not counting the military, had lined both sides of the road. We alighted from our carriages while a path was made for us to pass between the lines of soldiers. We walked to the Humayun Office, which was located within Yaldiz Palace, the residence of our lord, Sultan Abdul Hamid.

We were taken to a special office in an open space. At five o’clock, a signal was given that his Shahinshah will attend to pray at the Hamidie Mosque, which is close to Yaldiz Palace. The military and the people stood in lines. We too, came out to the veranda and stood by the military to salute our lord, Amir-al Mu’mineen. Beautifully ornamented carriages carried the Sultanic Harem. Two officers with their arms embraced, walked in front of each carriage, up to the entrance to the Mosque. These were followed by carriages carrying the sons of his lordship, who all alighted and entered the Mosque. Suddenly, there was a great uproar and the sound of fine music was heard as our Lord arrived in a carriage that was ornamented with gold, as were the fine carriage horses, while his lordship dressed in simple attire. With a sword in his hand and a smile on his face, he waved to the well-wishing crowds, who had aligned both sides of the carriageway, until the Royal Carriage arrived at the gate of the Hamidie Mosque, when he alighted from the carriage and entered the Mosque.

The next paragraph demonstrates the special attention the Patriarch received at breakfast, which was delayed for the rest of 150 guests in order to meet the Friday fast practice of the Patriarch:
In the meantime, we returned to the beginning of the procession, where the chief of the military, adorned with First Class Majidi and First Class Ottoman medals, arrived and presented his Beatitude with a cigarette and coffee, as he then did to the rest of the party. He invited his Beatitude to a breakfast. However, as it was Friday and his Beatitude was fasting he thanked the host but excused himself from eating, explaining the reason. The hosting officer said 'there is also of what your honour would eat.' The military officers became busy, setting up special tables with silver plates and utensils for serving the fasting food, all to a fine order. After his Beatitude had his meal, they invited us and guests more than 150 to have breakfast, which we did within half an hour, that is, before our Lord completed his prayer.

The next section of the diary entry describes the ceremonial Sultanic procedure that unfolded:

There upon the crowd stood ready to salute his Sultanic lordship. As his Lordship mounted his carriage accompanied by the Grand Vizir and his first in line, his eldest son, he again waved to the welcoming crowds until he arrived the Buldan Sarabi in honour and in high esteem. After he ascended to the hall that overlooked the road he bid farewell to the crowds as the victorious military started to depart also. At this point, the Master of Ceremonies ‘Atuqolto Ghalib Pasha presented his Lordship that in accordance with a Royal Decree, the Patriarch of the Old Syrians is here present to offer his respects. Thereupon, the Master of Ceremonies came back and accompanied his Beatitude with Mutran Elias and the Episcope Paulus for the audience [with the Sultan]. They were away for about ten minutes. After making his salutation his Beatitude spoke in Arabic, wishing his Lordship continued Sultanic leadership to the end of time. His Sultanic Lordship was pleased and paid extraordinary attention, and said 'I am thankful. Convey to all the people my salute, and give them the good news about the Constitution so that they would act in accordance with it, as I am personally concerned with the well-being and comfort of all the Ra'eyah.'

After a final farewell bid, the party left and his Beatitude offered thanks for some twenty of those who attended to the party with special thanks to the Master of Ceremonies, who said that thanks are really to the Grand Vizir.

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660 Refraining from eating animal product.
On September 23, 1908, at 11 o’clock, the Patriarch and Chorepiscopos Paulus attended *Yaldız Palace* to offer congratulations and blessings for the start of Ramadan. On September 29, 1908, permission was granted for the operation of the printing press that had been installed in Deir al-Za‘faran. On September 18, 324 the Porte issued its permission for the Patriarch to travel to England and to India.

On October 9, 1908, the Patriarch and his aides left Constantinople for Marseille, stopping on the way in Napoli and arriving in Marseille on October 16, 1908. This was followed by a train journey to Paris from which, on October 17, 1908, the party continued by train, boat and train again, arriving in London on the same day.

4.6.3.5 *Patriarch Abdullah in London*

The purpose of the visit to London was ostensibly to seek permission of the British Government for the Patriarch to travel to India. This permission was conveyed in a letter from the Minister for India and was handed over to the Patriarchal party on July 12, 1909, nearly nine months after the party’s arrival in London. Beside courtesy calls, an audience with King Edward VII on December 22, 1908, and a medal award from His Majesty on July 9, 1909, not a great deal was accomplished by the visit. The Church of England did not enter into a dialogue with the Patriarch about the tenets of its faith, it did however have a dialogue with the Patriarch about the tenets of faith of the Syrian Orthodox Church. The January 29, 1909 entry of the travel diary states: “On Friday at 4 pm we went with his Beatitude to the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury [Lambeth Palace]. There were six Bishops and nine priests forming a Synod. They asked about the beliefs of our Orthodox Church, for they were saying that the Syrians denied the incarnation of our Savior Jesus Christ. After questions to and answers by his Beatitude, they became convinced that the Syrians are truly Christians. The question and answer session lasted two hours.”

The inquiry relating to the tenets of faith should be looked at in the context of the rapprochement sought by the Church of England with the Orthodox Church.

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661 P1100484
662 The date is stated here (P1100484) according to the Rumi Calendar. This corresponds to September 18, 1908 according to the Julian Calendar, according to which the diary is dated, and to October 1, 1908 according to the Gregorian Calendar.
663 P1100485, P1100486.
664 This meeting appears to have been subsequent to that held at Salisbury on December 21, 1908 that was attended by Dr. Wordsworth, the Bishop of Salisbury and others and in which the tenets of faith were discussed, as per Taylor, *Narratives of Identity*, pp. 128-133, and Archival Documents P1100029-P1100037. Curiously, no reference in the diary is made to the Salisbury meeting.
Churches in facing the *Apostolic Curae* Bull by Pope Leo XIII in 1896, referenced here in Chapter Four.

As an interesting aside, the diary entry dated April 11, 1909 (corresponding to April 24, 1908, Gregorian), made while the travelling party was still in London reads: “On Monday, London Newspapers have reported that Sultan Abdul Hamid has left for Germany. The reason is unknown.” The entry of Wednesday, April 15, 1909 (corresponding to April 28, 1908, Gregorian) states: “The Monday newspapers have reported that that they have installed Muhmad Rashad, the Crown Prince, as King [sic] instead of Sultan Abdul Hamid. We have seen his picture in the newspaper, which reported that the new sultan is in Turkey.”

**4.6.3.6 Patriarch Abdullah’s Journey to India**

Patriarch Abdullah and his party left England on August 8, 1909, heading for India. The voyage took the party through the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, out into the Indian Ocean, and ended in Bombay on September 12, 1909.

The main events of the two year sojourn in India are described in Rabban Abachi’s diary and in its accompanying supplement. The encounters in the course of these two years are outside the scope of this work. An informative summary may be found in the account by Tuma (Ignatius Yacoub III).

Patriarch Abdullah left India on October 8, 1911, heading for Egypt where he arrived on October 18, 1911. His stay in Egypt lasted until May 31, 1912. The diary entries of the seven and a half month’s period provide little justification for the continued absence from the Patriarchal seat in Deir al-Za‘faran or Mardin. One of the issues that appear to have consumed much of his time was his attempt to seek Lord Kitchener’s approval to be granted a plot of land for a church, a matter that was not even resolved by the time he left Egypt. In the mean time, letters from various Bishops started to arrive, complaining about the prolonged period of

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665 P1100490.
666 Ibid.
667 Dates relating to the journey are according to the Julian Calendar. Thus thirteen days must be added to change to Gregorian dating.
669 P1100508.
670 Ibid.
absence from the Patriarchal seat (see later). Eventually, Patriarch Abdullah and his party sailed from Egypt and arrived in Jaffa on June 2, 1912.  

The Abachi diary reports that over the next several months the Patriarchal party travelled between Jerusalem, Homs, and nearby towns while matters elsewhere had been in need of greater attention and were getting progressively more acute. One entry notes: “in these days the Bishopric of Homs and the rest of the Bishoprics are in such acute disorder that prompted an Egyptian newspaper, al-Mugattam, dated December 7th, to claim that nearly 20,000 of the Syrians and their Bishop in the Diyarbakir vilayet desired to depart to the Rum Orthodox Church.”

The entry of April 1, 1913 refers to the return of the Patriarchal party to Jerusalem, to treat his Beatitude’s eyes. The diary ends with the entry on May 23, 1913, which marked the celebration of the Pentecost in Jerusalem and ends with a note: “In that evening the Rum Orthodox prevented us and the Copts from entering the Dome; however after a lot of to and fro they did allow us to proceed to perform the old rites.”

Despite repeated requests and pleadings from all quarters for the Patriarch to return to the Patriarchal seat in Deir al-Za‘faran or Mardin in order to attend to the faltering affairs of the Church and community, as will be expanded on below.

4.6.4 Facing the Wrath of Community and Clergy
Following Patriarch Abdullah’s return from his long tour, many letters began to arrive from dioceses, church communities and from prominent dignitaries requesting, in fact urging, his return to Deir al-Za‘faran to deal with the faltering affairs of the church, particularly in the critical period leading to the First World War. Unfortunately, he paid little attention to the increasingly urgent requests. His deputy at Deir al-Za‘faran, Mor Qorilos Mutran Jirjis, was aging and was becoming increasingly incapable of managing the affairs of the church at large.

The letters expressed anguish and a deep sense of concern fearing the complete annihilation of Syrian Orthodoxy and the eradication of its venerable heritage which many previous generations had fought to keep alive. This was the period that saw the culmination of a century of unprecedented external challenges from the proponents of Western Christianity,

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671 Ibid.
672 Archival Document P1100510
673 Ibid.
an accumulated internal decline of the Church, and, on the other hand, meager human and material resources to defend itself against the collective external pressures. The continued absence of Patriarch Abdullah from his seat of responsibility, whether premeditated, as many of even those who had been close to him began to suspect, or because of sheer apathy, brought the Syrian Orthodox Church to the edge of the abyss. Selected quotes from these letters are included in the following narrative. The letters, hitherto unpublished, are unique in the unprecedented, increasingly desperate language used in addressing the patriarch. For this reason, where appropriate, a more detailed translation of their text is given in Appendix A 4.

All the letters were addressed to Patriarch Abdullah, except for the first one which was addressed to Mutran Jirjis, his deputy at Deir al-Za‘faran.

i) A Letter to Mutran Jirjis, the Patriarchal Vicar in Deir al-Za‘faran and Mardin, from Khouri Hanna Shamoun, Azikh, dated December 30, 328 Rumi (December 30, 1912, Julian; January 13, 1912, Gregorian)

Khouri Hanna Shamoun, a priest in Azikh, expresses the agony that was increasingly felt by many when he states: “We are unhappy, because we do not know what has happened to our Syrian Taifa and we have no news about his Beatitude. We have become embarrassed towards other twa’if.” Expressing despair the writer declares: “All that is left for us is to climb the top of the mountains and other high places and scream with tears (cry out tearfully) with Jeremiah in his lamentations. Who will give water to my head and to my eyes so that I may cry day and night for the killing of my people’s daughter, that is, on the tragedy of our Syrian taifa, which has become food stock for lies and pasture to feed for all the tawa’if.”

Three letters from Bishopric Boards, which included lay members, expressed increasing degrees of concern and desperation at the neglect of the patriarch which caused the unraveling of many of the Church affairs and the defection in increasing numbers of members of its communities, as well as many of its clergy, to Catholicism or to Protestantism. Two of these

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674 40M-24/46 – 0452
675 Plural of taifa.
676 This is a variant of verse 3:48 in the Lamentations of Jeremiah.
677 40M-24/46 – 0452.
letters, dated August 1, 1911 and May 10, 1913, were from the Bishopric Board in Diyarbakir
and the third, dated March 6, 1913, was from the Bishopric Board in Mardin.

ii) The letter from the Old Syrian Taifa Board of Diyarbakir to Patriarch Abdullah, dated
August 1, 1911

The writers after expressing various concerns, inform the patriarch that “most of the
bishoprics now say 'Patriarch Abdullah has gone away; he does not enquire about the milla and
is unconcerned with its affairs.' Thus it is necessary that you should return to attend to all
matters that have suffered delay…”

Signed by Majlis al Taifa (Board of the Community), in Diyarbakir, with 13 seals and
signatures.

iii) A letter from the Milla Board and the Patriarchal Vicar in Mardin, dated March 6, 1913

The letter expresses frustration more forcibly:

We informed your Eminence in previous letters of the decline in the entire milla. We no longer know which matter we should
address first and which we should postpone. Two days ago we
expressed the sad conditions in Kharput. The conditions in Midyat
are several times worse. We still receive, daily, telegrams from the
various bishoprics expressing their grievances with each other and
the infighting that is going on, no doubt with dire consequences,
while your Beatitude continues to postpone resolution of the issues
from month to month.

The letter ends with this warning:

If you desire the diminution of the milla, we are acting to remove
the blame that might be placed on us, and you would have to
answer to what is happening. There is no value in repeated
Correspondence, for the condition of the milla no longer allows
delay. We therefore repeat our request for a speedy positive
resolution.

Mutran Jirgis, the Patriarchal Vicar, Mardin and 12 lay members of
the Milla Board,

678 P1090606.
679 P1090656.
Dated March 6, 1913.

iv) The letter from the Bishopric Board of Diyarbakir to Patriarch Abdullah, dated May 10, 1913

The letter appears to be a follow-up of a letter sent a few weeks earlier on March 30, 1913 frankly informing the Patriarch about the dysfunctional state of the *milla*, and attributing this to his unwarranted absence. “Being away from this Seat has caused our *milla* to abdicate its rights and to lose its opportunities for progress. If you are thinking of abandoning your duties, as has been the case for such a long period of time, then how unfortunate is this poor *milla!*” In an unprecedented reprimand, the letter states:

> Who will answer for that before Almighty God on the Day of Reckoning for this neglect and for not asking about the rights of the *milla*, while the other *milal* [plural of *milla*] are devouring us from every side? Who is the shepherd, who is the head and who is the one who is responsible before God and before the living conscience?

The letter then describes the losses and the missed opportunities in the sale of properties in order to finance the most necessary social projects; the loss of ownership of many properties (i.e., lands and buildings) due to poor follow-up with authorities concerning registration of ownership of many of these, and so on. It then refers to the failure of the administration to inform the community of the new laws that would affect their lives. It also refers to the neglect in dealing with the important matters of ratifying the ordination of new bishops with the appropriate authorities at the Sublime Porte and the repercussions accruing therefrom, in terms of loss of prestige, loss of rights to administer Bishopric boards, local and municipal elections, military service, and such, all in comparison with the diligent pursuit of these matters by other Christian Churches. The letter then addresses the neglect in following-up the matter of the enactment of the *millet* regulation (Nizamnanah). The letter tells the patriarch that “[t]hrough bad management, we have become a laughing stock among other *tawa’if*” and in conclusion warns:

> We will await, hour by hour, a telegram from you to notify us of your return. *Otherwise results would be dire, and this is our last letter to your Beatitude.* [my emphasis]

680 P1090669-P1090671
Signed: Suriyani Qadim Millet Majlis of Diyarbakir, May 10, 1913

v) A letter from an individual signing as: “the one who is sad about the affairs of the Milla, Elias Shamoun,” dated August 1, 1913

A separate three-page letter from “one who is worried about his milla,” (Elias Shamoun) echoes the terrible state of affairs: “I am in a state of great sorrow concerning the current conditions of the Syrian nation, and of the incurable wounds with which this poor taifa has been inflicted.”

The decline in the taifa, coupled with non-concern during your time has never been witnessed at any other time by our fathers and grandfathers... These matters will mark a black blot on the history of your Patriarchate, that will never be removed by coming generations. Suffice it to say that since your return from your tour of India four of your Bishops have moved to other churches.

He expresses fear that the Catholics and the Protestants have designs on the Church:

If you did not ask about your flock, who is then to ask about them? Would it be the chiefs of the Pappists. Or would it be the Proates [Protestants]? who are both ready to snatch our milla to themselves? So, if you are a true father, a decent shepherd, it is your duty to return to the Seat [Patriarchal Seat] and to enquire about your sheep. Otherwise the milla would disintegrate and then you know you would answer to that before the throne of God.

He concludes, likely expressing the general feeling at that time stating:

I am not in the position to threaten nor do I intend to disobey; however, the burning in my heart and the pain in my chest call me to write as a son would write to his father and grandfather.

Signed: “the one who is worried about his milla, Elia Shamoun,” on August 1, 1913.

Two letters from Altoune Abdelnour, a well known Syrian Orthodox lay dignitary in Mosul and a close acquaintance of the Patriarch, were written late in 1913, to draw attention to the increasingly dire situation in the milla everywhere. By virtue of his close contact with the

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681 P1090658-P1090660.
Syrian Orthodox hierarchy in Malabar, India, Abdelnour drew Patriarch Abdullah’s attention to the intrigues that were being plotted in Rome and in Deir al-Sharfa, the seat of the Syrian Catholic Church against Syrian Orthodoxy in that country.

vi) The first letter from Altoune Abdelnour, Mosul, dated November 21, 1913

In this letter Abdelnour addresses the increasing critical situation of Patriarch Abdullah’s extended absence from the Seat of the Patriarchate in Deir al-Za‘faran, with its likely consequence of causing the disintegration of the milla. He draws attention, in particular, to the equally critical situation in India and the attempts by the Syrian Catholic Patriarch, Ephram Rahmani, to convert the Syrian Orthodox community in India to Catholicism. With regard to the affairs of the milla in general Abdelnour states:

As is known, the affairs of the milla are unraveling everywhere, that, according to general opinion, you have been complacent by preferring to remain in Jerusalem, a situation that would soon lead to the disintegration of the milla. He who entrusted you on this lot will not accept this neglect from your Holiness.

Abdelnour, likely referring to previous letters, was becoming increasingly critical of the Patriarch’s insistence on staying in Jerusalem after his prolonged absence from the seat in Deir al-Za‘faran. In his letter dated November 21, 1918, Abdelnour complains that the affairs of the milla are unravelling everywhere, that according to general opinion the Patriarch had been complacent in the fulfillment of his duties by staying in Jerusalem and that has led to a situation that would soon lead to the disintegration of the milla. He refers in particular to the Syrian Catholic attempts to take charge of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Malabar and to hand it over to Rome. Regarding Rahmani’s attempt to convert the Church’s members to Catholicism, Abdelnour warns that “[i]f this was to occur in your time what the Catholics had claimed about you, would come true.”

Abdelnour’s letter shows the intrigues in which the Syrian Catholics were engaged in order to undermine what was left of the Syrian Orthodox Church and particularly to score good points with Rome. In this regard the letter also refers to

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682 Bab Tuma P1090689 and P1090692.
683 Likely referring to a statement by Tarazi, commenting on the return of Abdullah to the Syrian Orthodox Church to become a Patriarch, stating “No doubt this ecclesiast who officially declared his union with Peter’s Church, and gave a promise before the Holy Gospel to remain firm in his beliefs, will labour to bring about the union of the Syrian race…” Tarazi, p. 352.
attempts by the Syrian Catholic Patriarch Rahmani to exploit the deposed Abdul Masih in an endeavor to impress Rome. The letter also claims that the Propaganda in Rome held the upper hand relative to the Syrian Catholic Church in conducting Rome’s drive to bring Syrian Orthodoxy under its control. One indication of Rome’s limited confidence in Syrian Catholic leadership was the Propaganda’s decision to directly control and manage any of the Malabar Churches that would be converted to Catholicism. In this regard Abdelnour states:

> It has reached us from your friend and my friend, priest Yusuf Khayyat Al-Mosulli, that Rome has sent Bishops Elias Halouli and Ibrahim to Malabar\textsuperscript{684} to dismantle our milla there, and turn it Catholic, and that it [Rome] has provided the funds and arranged for the stay of that party there. This man [Yusuf Khayyat] is a trusted source, so do you want this to occur in your time [during your patriarchate]? If this was to occur, what the Catholics had claimed about you, would then come true. As for us, as soon as we heard this news, we wrote to inform Bishop Saliba, and Priest Matti Konat,\textsuperscript{685} to get this news verified and to convey to them our thoughts should this become actuality.

Thus, the letter seemingly based on reliable sources, foretold what actually transpired two decades later, when the Syrian Orthodox Malabar Churches that were converted to Catholicism became directly attached to Rome and not to the Syrian Catholic Church in the Middle East.

In a post script, the letter writer tells of a further development, based on news he had just received certain monks in Mardin joining the Prouts (Protestants), and he again urges the patriarch to return to Mardin.

\textit{vii) A letter from Altoune Abdelnour, Mosul, dated December 12, 1913}\textsuperscript{686}

After the usual introduction, the letter reviews the position of the people of Mardin and of other regions with respect to current issues. He reminds the patriarch that he had not fulfilled earlier promises to return to Deir al-Za‘faran, and with frustration states:

> Thus, based on our mutual love and respect, we dare express what is our duty in accordance with our conscience and state that it is not permissible by the tenets of Church law and the tenets of

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\textsuperscript{684} These two bishops defected to the Catholic fold, but later returned to the Syrian Orthodox Church.

\textsuperscript{685} Both were located in India.

\textsuperscript{686} P1090694.
proper administration that you abandon the *milla* with no caretaker while you stay in Jerusalem as if the matter is of no concern to you. We do not believe that the Creator who entrusted you with the flock would accept this from you, in accordance with the promises you made on your installation on the Antiochian See.

Abdelnour then provides an update of news from the Church in India. He reports on developments in the Bsheiriya district near Siirt, where the Catholics, through the Chaldean the bishop of Siirt, are suspected of planning to convert Syrian Orthodox communities. The letter unveils the rivalry between the Latins (i.e., Roman Catholics) and the Syrian Catholics who are both aiming to convert nearly 4,000 Syrian Orthodox and gain the accrued benefits to their respective sides. He provides what turned out to be his last warning to his old friend, the Patriarch, in no uncertain language:

> You will see to what state our *milla* has descended, and what the enemies have done to it from all sides, with no one to raise concern. Is it permissible that the sheep are left to be devoured by the wolves while the chief of its shepherds remains unaware of all this? Some write to say that His Beatitude’s actions are deliberate, proving Tarazi right and others said about him. I am exceptionally surprised, and I have fallen sick as a result, and have been under the attention of a doctor...It is out of our [my] extreme anguish that we [I] have written this request so that you would exercise your full determination and effort to repair the affairs of the *milla*, if you were to return to your Seat in order to end this deteriorated state of being under the mercy of wolves, and not to give cause to prove what the others have said about you.

Despite all these and likely many other pleadings, Patriarch Abdullah stayed in Jerusalem, giving his ailing health as the reason. He died in Jerusalem on November 26, 1915, during *Sayfo*, ‘the Year of the Sword’ and was buried at St. Mark’s Monastery. Thus, of his nine-year tenure he was away from his patriarchal seat for nearly seven and a half years.

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687 Altoune Abdelnor, the author of this letter, died less than two months later, on February 4, 1914, as per *Al-Hikmat*, 1913/1914 No. 14, p. 210.
688 Referring to Terazi’s statement in *Al-Salasil al-Tarikhiyah*, p.352, in which he expressed confidence that Abdullah, as patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox, would continue to work for the Catholic Church.
689 P1100421
4.7 Beyond Church Leadership

The paralysis at Church leadership level, particularly during Patriarch Abdullah’s term, resulted in increased calls for reform, both at milla Board and at individual levels. Some of these calls translated into positive actions. The following is a summary.

4.7.1 The Nizamnamah - Milla Constitution

The much awaited Milla Constitution (Nizamnamah) was finally drafted in 1914. Millet constitutions were mandated by the Tanzimat reform, the Hatt-i Humayun, of 1856. The milla Board level 1914 finally saw the completion of the milla Constitution (Batriarkana Nizamnamah ‘Mumi -1330’). The draft for this legislation was prepared by a milla board that was particularly set up for the purpose. This board was formed from the combined membership of six ecclesiasts and six lay dignitaries.

The drafting board completed its work on March 18, 1914 and sent a draft to the Patriarch for approval. This approval was reported in Al-Hikmat. The accepted draft was sent to the Porte for final approval and enactment. With the Porte being engaged in the upcoming war, it is unclear whether the Nizamnamah was enacted. However, this became a moot point, as the events on the ground in the years that followed prevented a meaningful application of the document for many years. This notwithstanding, upon his election, Patriarch Elias III signed a memo that was attached to the Nizamnamah document, undertaking to follow its provisions.

The draft Nizamnamah consisted of 64 articles that stressed the democratic representation of the milla in decision making at the level of the individual diocese, as well as regulating the appointment of bishops and clergy and defining their duties.

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690 Based on a copy of the draft document penned by Bishop Yuhannon Dolabani in my possession.
691 The six ecclesiasts were: Timotheos Episcopus Paulus, the Patriarchal Vicar at the Porte; Qorilos Mutran Jirjis, the Patriarchal Vicar in Mardin; Iwaneese Mutran Elias (later Patriarch Elias III), Head of the Diocese of Mosul; Athanasius Utran Tuma, Head of the Diocese of Diyarbakir; Qorillos Mutran Mansour, Head of the Diocese of Kharput; and monk Ephram Barsoum (later Patriarch Ephram I Barsoum), head of Deir al-Za’faran. The lay dignitaries were Mansour Kan’o, Naoum Shahristani, Hanna Siri Tchikki, Yousuf Raji, Hanna al Qass, and Hanna Hanasha.
693 Based on the copy in my possession
An article appearing in the July 1914 issue of *Al-Hikmat* shows that there was a clear awareness that the mere enactment of a law does not by itself yield reform; that the spirit of change must be mobilized to effect the desired change. To demonstrate this point the article draws a stark comparison between the French and the Japanese revolutions on the one hand, and the Ottoman and the Persian ones on the other. It draws attention to the difference in degrees of success between these contrasting examples, clarifying that while the French and the Japanese were ready to exploit the opportunities presented by their revolutions, the Ottomans and the Persians were not.

### 4.7.2 Journalism

The first Syriac periodical issued in Turkey was *Kevkeb Medinho* (The Star of the East), which first appeared in 1910. It was published from Diyarbakir by Naoum Faiq as a literary journal. However, it had nationalistic overtones that aimed to raise awareness for the need to dispel lethargy and to rise above the humble status quo. The journal was published in Ottoman Turkish, expressed in Syriac script (Garshuni Turkish). Faiq immigrated to the U.S. in 1912 from where he continued to publish his journal. This was likely the most popular Syriac periodical of the late Ottoman period.

A second journal entitled *Murşid-i Asuriyun* (The Guide for the Assyrians) was first published in Kharput by Asur Yusuf from 1909 to 1914. This, too, was published in Ottoman language expressed in Syriac script.

A third paper with a Diyarbakir connection, was *Intibah* (Awakening), a periodical that was published in the U.S. by Cedbur Boyachi between the years 1909 and 1915, and appeared under the name *Beth Nahrein* from 1916. A fourth journal, published in 1918, was *Sifuro* (Bugli) with the stated aim *tenvir-I efkara hadem* (servant to the illumination of the thinking people).

Last, was an institutional journal, *Al-Hikma*, which designated itself as ‘Religious, Literary, Historical, and News Source Journal’. This was issued from Deir al-Za’faran and
printed on this monastery’s presses that were acquired as a result of Patriarch Peter’s visit to England 1874/1875. *Al-Hikmat* was bi-weekly with its first year starting in August 1913. In the opening statement of the first issue Mikhail Hikmat Tchikki, the editor states that *Al-Hikmat* was the first news magazine to appear from Mardin.⁶⁹⁹ The advent of the First World War and the following unsettled period caused this journal to shut down after completing its first year, not to reappear until 1927/1828, this time from Jerusalem.

The first article of the first issue *Al-Hikmat*, following the editor’s opening statement, was by monk Ephram Barsoum (later Patriarch I Barsoum) and was entitled “Voice of Heavenly Wisdom”. In it he invites the reader not to rely on ancestral pride, but to lift the soul from the depth of despair to the hope that is coupled with action in order to ensure a bright tomorrow.⁷⁰⁰ All 24 issues of the first year stressed the same theme, the need to dispel lethargy and to work hard adopting the progress of the advanced nation as guide and an example. The journal also included a good variety of historical literary articles relating to church history, as well as news. It also addressed several social issues.

### 4.7.3 Theme of Periodicals in Anatolia

A common theme between these periodicals, except perhaps *Al-Hikmat*, which focused more on Church history and current affairs, was their emphasis on “union and progress,” called for by the intelligentsia of the day. The call for progress was evidently justified in a society that had suffered centuries of decline. The intent, therefore, was to mobilize the people to remedy this crucial ill. Progress in the form of unification and awakening sought by *Suryani* intellectuals Ashur Yusuf, Naoum Faig and Sabbur Boyaci was predicated on these awakenings being amongst the people as well as the ecclesiastic structure of the church.

The call for union is more difficult to explain in light of the known conditions that prevailed at that time, as well as from the documentary evidence. There were no known schisms or divisions within the society or among the different societies that constituted the overall Syrian Orthodox community in the period in question. There were, indeed, local variations, even prejudices, in customs and habits, about which people many strongly felt, something that has commonly existed even among fairly homogeneous societies. Further, since

⁶⁹⁹ *Al-Hikmat*, 1913, 1, 1, pp. 1-3.
⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 4-9.
the Syriac Orthodox communities, unlike those of the Church of the East, were non-tribal, societal differences did not go beyond normal variations. It may, therefore, be reasonable to question whether the call for “unity” was part of the political brand of the day with which the Syrian Orthodox intelligentsia wished to associate and to promote at that time, all for a good reason, namely its call for “progress.” However, Trigona-Harany, based on an extensive study of the Suryani press, advances some of the alternative thinking that was espoused by Ashur Yusuf, Naoum Faiq, and Sabbix Boyaci in this regard.\(^701\) According to contemporary thinking, the call for unity was motivated by the desire for independence, that of the Suryanis from the Armenian millet. This trend was motivated by the emergence of conflicts between the Armenian and the Suryani churches over the ownership of property particularly during the second half of nineteenth century. Compounded by the problems resulting from the 1895 violence, some of the intellectuals reacted negatively against clergy who took moderate attitudes towards the Armenians. Mutran Tuma Kassir was accused of allowing Armenians to use the Forty Martyrs church in Mardin on the premise that there was “no difference” between the two communities. It appears that now Naoum Faiq reacted harshly to this stating that, in the past, seeing the Suryani and the Armenians as one and the same “ruined our millet, our kind (cinsiyet) and our language and allowed [the Armenians] to occupy our churches, monasteries and religious foundations, making us their subordinates, and to conceal what was rightfully ours.”\(^702\)

Thus, threatened by the minority status under the Armenians and worst still under the Kurds, Ashur Yusuf, Naoum Faiq and other nationalists of the day likely supported Ottoman nationalism as the most plausible means of their people’s survival, who had no independence aspirations of their own. They saw this without necessarily renouncing their Suryani or Assyrian identities. Naoum Faiq would in fact become the Assyrian nationalist portrayed in the historiography, after he arrived in the U.S. in 1912, and especially after he began to receive the news of the massacres and of the devastation endured by the Christians remaining in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War.\(^703\)

\(^701\) Benjamin Trigona-Harany, *The Ottoman Suryani from 1908 to 1914*, Gorgias, 2009, pp. 113-151.
\(^702\) Ibid., p.p. 198-199.
\(^703\) Ibid., p.212.
4.7.4 Beyond Anatolia

Considering the Syrian Orthodox communities outside Anatolia in the few decades preceding First World War, Mosul and its environ stand in the forefront in terms of population size and sociopolitical importance (see Section 1.6.3). What is significant to point out here, is that while Syrian Orthodox intellectuals in southeastern Anatolia were forging a revival perspective that was within the concept of Ottmanism, those in Mosul, like the other Christians in the city, were in a different political environment; one that was strongly Arab nationalist, with an Islamic overtones. Being Arabic-speaking, ancestrally or more recently, they did not feel alienated from the general motif of Arab nationalism. In fact, many of them embraced this trend as part of the quest for revival of the historical Arab civilization of which the Christians were part.\footnote{Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, “Al-Mosul wa al-Harakat al-‘Arabiyyah al-Qawmiyyah” in Mawsoo’at al-Mosul al-Hadhariyah, Mosul, 1993,4, pp. 129-144.}

They were, no doubt, being influenced by the much more pronounced trend that was being pioneered by their co-religionists in the Levant, and to some extent in Egypt at the time. They, like the other Christians, were in the forefront in importing and setting up printing presses and taking active interest in journalism.\footnote{Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad, “Al-Nashir wa al-Sahafa fe al-Mosul” in Mawsoo’at al-Mosul al-Hadhariyah, Mosul, 1993,4, pp. 362-377.} The resulting environment was crucial for setting the stage for the coming church and community revival in the coming decades.

4.7.5 A Promising Personality

In 1905, a young man of 18, Ayyoub Barsoum from Mosul, joined Deir al-Za‘faran as a student. He had studied as a child in the Dominican School in Mosul, and studied Arabic literature and rhetoric at the hands of a local Muslin imam. He was tonsured a monk in 1907 and named Aphram after St. Ephrem the Syrian and priest in 1908. He taught at the school in Deir al-Za‘faran and became a director of its printing press in 1911, when he compiled and printed a number of liturgical books.\footnote{G. A. Kiraz, Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage, 2011, p. 62. Poulus Behnam, Nafaha al-Khuzam, pp. 22, 23.} Over the next three years, he toured Tur Abdin and most churches and monasteries throughout Iraq, Syria and Sinai, searching for and documenting Syriac manuscripts. During his extensive tour of Tur Abdin he conducted extensive interviews with older folk of various communities, documenting their stories about...
their ancestral history and that of church personnel in those times. Consider the massacres and displacement of the people in question in the coming few years, Barsoum’s enterprising initiative turned out to be singularly valuable. Most of the material he gathered was subsequently published in the Patriarchal Magazine in the 1980s. In 1913, at the age of 26, Barsoum embarked on an extensive journey through western Europe, visiting libraries and museums in Florence, Rome, Paris, Berlin, London and Cambridge, documenting Syriac manuscripts.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Barsoum who was endowed with scholarly potential, coupled with a pride of his community’s historical heritage, would lead his Church in the years to come to a much awaited revival.

4.8 Concluding Discussion
The 1895 violence in southeast Anatolia, which was centered in Diyarbakir but included surrounding villages, affected the Syrian Orthodox community more than any other non-Armenian Christians (i.e., Chaldeans, Syrian Catholics and Assyrians). The atrocities, which were committed in late 1895, mutated over the following years to pillage, robbery, pressures to convert to Islam, all under the threat of the sword. The poor economic conditions of these communities made them unable to pay for their livelihood with money. The miseries they faced during the years that straddled the turn of the twentieth century were well documented by consular reports. One British consular report, which I have quoted in some detail describes the state of misery which Kurdish tribes consistently caused the Christians in that region. The report also sheds light on the way the Latin missionaries, in a tacit unholy alliance with the Kurds and backed by French diplomatic personnel, exploited the misery of the Syrian Orthodox communities in order to drive them to the Latin fold. These events came at a time when the Syrian Orthodox were at the weakest point they had been for a long time. The waning mental health of its patriarch, the move of his rival to Catholicism, the declining state of the clergy, and last but not least the general state of poverty, all combined to bring the church to its lowest point in history.

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The ordeal surrounding building a consensus to depose Patriarch Abdul Masih continued for several years, becoming especially critical in the years 1903 to 1905. The absence of an obvious suitable replacement threw the church into further turmoil and deeper decline and provided the impetus for further desertion to other churches. When the replacement finally arrived it turned out to be none other than Abdullah Sattuf, bearing his controversial history that included joining the Catholic Church for over 10 years.

Abdullah’s term as patriarch was no less controversial than his previous ecclesiastic career. He stayed in Deir al-Za’faran for only a year and three quarters out of his total term of nine years. He embarked, quite unnecessarily, on a trip to England, India and Egypt that lasted five years with very little to show for it. When he returned, he went straight to Jerusalem, where he spent the last two and a half years of his term until his passing on November 26, 1915, at the height of Sayfo. During his stay in Jerusalem he received many requests and pleadings to return to Deir al-Za’faran to handle the increasingly critical situation which existed in all the dioceses. However, he ignored all pleadings citing health reasons. In the meantime the Church was descending into further decline with increasing pressure on members to convert to obtain greater security.

Reprieve from the pressures to convert paradoxically came when all Christians were subjected to the sword, to Sayfo, when all foreign missionaries fled the field and the churches they formed faced a common fate of massacres and exile with their historical brothers.

The following other points are worthy of specific mention:

1. The position of dignity and respect accorded by the Porte to the patriarch of a small Oriental Church and community, existing at the far edge of the Empire, demonstrated here by the audience which Patriarch Abdullah had with Sultan Abdul Hamid and with King Edward VII in London.

2. The travel diary of priest-monk Abachi provided a contemporary perspective on the ordinary life, personalities and means of travel in the many countries: Turkey, England, India and Egypt and the Levant.

3. The letters addressed to Patriarch Abdullah in Jerusalem shed light on a number of delicate issues. The letters by Altoune Abdelnour from Mosul dated in 1913 alluded to the hitherto little known attempts by the Syrian Catholic Church to swing converts in India to its fold at the same time as the Propaganda in Rome was intent on taking these
converts under its own fold. Many years later, in 1930, a separate Syrian Catholic Church was formed in Kerala - the Malankara Catholic Church\textsuperscript{709} - that was indeed directly attached to Rome as Abdelnour’s letter noted in 1913.

4. Based on Abdullah’s neglect of his church, which amounted to abandonment at its most critical moment in history, many, even those who were close to him, began to have doubt as to his allegiance to the Church. Those who voiced this doubt referenced his defection earlier to the Syrian Catholic Church and his return from it only to become its Patriarch. In voicing this doubt they alluded to a statement in Tarazi’s book,\textsuperscript{710} and hinted that his neglect of the affairs of his office was in fulfilment of his allegiance to the Syrian Catholic Church. The question of his real allegiance to his office as patriarch, thus remain a troubling one.

5. Despite the paralysis with which church leadership was inflicted during the period under discussion, signs of modest revival and social awareness within the communities began to appear. This revival was expressed and enhanced by the press medium, before it was scuttled by the First World War.

\textsuperscript{710} Philip de Tarazi, \textit{Alsalasil al Thahabia}, p. 352.
CHAPTER FIVE
MASSACRES AND EXODUS – FROM SAYFO TO SAFETY

5.1 Introduction
The atmosphere of aggression and terror that began during the 1895 massacres continued in the years that followed. Villages were plundered and people abducted and forced to convert with increasing frequency throughout the Eastern vilayets, with no serious attempt made by the Ottoman State to control or curb such activities. The suspicion that the Ottoman authorities had shown towards the Armenians was utilised by the Hamidie regiments and most of the Kurdish tribes to abuse the entire Christian communities in those vilayets. The actions of these groups were a harbinger of worse things to come during the First World War. A broad reference to the immediate political developments that preceded these events was made in Chapter Four.

In fact the period between 1895 and 1915 was not free of massacres. The main event in this period took place in and around Adana, the provincial capital of Cilicia.\(^{711}\) In a two week long attempt to gain power in 1909 by demonstrating its allegiance to Sultan Abdul Hamid, the local mob committed a massacre that broke out on April 14 of that year against Armenians as well as other local Christians. It was ostensibly to protest against the Young Turks movement that had forged an alliance with the Armenian Tashnak party. The toll this time totalled nearly 20,000 Christians including 850 Syriacs and 422 Chaldeans.\(^{712}\) The failed counter-revolution attempt at that time by Abdul Hamid led to his replacement by Sultan Muhammad V (R 1909-1918), who was merely a figurehead monarch. These riots were blamed on the old monarch, and some of his officials were hanged. However, what was new here was that all Christians shared the same fate in these massacres, which were driven by an essentially religious focus rather than by an ethnic political one. These massacres signified that the brewing Turkish nationalism had turned its attention against all Christians, not just the Armenians.

Thus, the horrific annihilation of Christians starting in 1915 demonstrated itself to be a religiously based ethnic cleansing that had started in 1895, revealing its ugly face again in 1909 and then demonstrating its full wrath in 1915 and the following years. During the 1895 pogroms, the Great Powers pressured the sultan to put an end to the massacres. However,

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711 Avedis Sanjian, p. 279.
712 Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors, p. 45
during 1915 and the following years, the situation was different. This time the Ottomans were on the opposite side of the Western powers. Consequently, the Ottoman military and civil authorities were unhindered in creating the pre-conditions for a general massacre, providing the climate orders for its implementation and giving the perpetrators a free hand to execute it. Thus, what came to be increasingly considered in the international arena as genocide that targeted the Armenians and the Greeks, immediately spilled over ruthlessly to include all other Christians. This was in accordance with the Turkification scheme, which was designed to rid the Ottoman state, and subsequently Turkey, of all ethnic and religious groups, particularly the Christian population, that did not fit within the narrow limits of that ethno-religious group (see Chapter One). The year 1915, which marked the beginning and witnessed the worst events of the massacres, came to be known by all Syriac groups as Sayfo, which literally means “sword” and has come to signify the Year of the Sword, or the events of 1915.

5.2 Sayfo

A good deal has been written about the Armenian genocide, which has over the past fifteen years also been increasingly recognized on the international scene indeed as genocide, albeit nearly a century after the occurrence. The total number of Syriacs affected by the different massacres was certainly much lower than that of the Armenians. However, the proportion of losses in relation to total population, particularly for the smaller Syriac communities, such as the Syrian Orthodox, was in fact higher. Sayfo, which started in April of 1915, continued for most of that year, while the ‘safarbarlik’ (the exile) continued well beyond that year. The massacres abated when the Ottomans, in reaction to international pressure, or as a measure of appeasement, ordered a halt of the massacres in late 1915. However, the animosity that was behind the violence naturally continued and marked a clear motive for the survivors to seek safe existence elsewhere.

713 Providing evidence of official planning and implementation of these events to what constitutes a ‘genocide’ is outside the scope of this work. With 2015 marking the first centenary of these horrific events, the subject of defining those events as ‘genocide’ has come to the fore, although it remains mired in political considerations.

714 The year 2015, marking a centennial of those massacres, has witnessed a greater international recognition of those massacres as constituting a genocide, although this subject is still mired in political considerations.

715 See Introduction for a further elaboration on the term Sayfo.
Several studies have emerged, particularly recently,\(^{716}\) which have focused on the horrific massacres inflicted on non-Armenian oriental Christians: Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Chaldeans, and Assyrians (members of the Church of the East).\(^{717}\)

Contemporary sources form the backbone of witness accounts about the dreadful realities of what happened. In addition to diplomatic archives, the account by Dominican Father J. Rhetoré\(^{718}\) is particularly extensive for its coverage of the massacres of all Christians in the eastern provinces of Anatolia. Statements by American missionaries, which were compiled by James Barton,\(^{719}\) the head of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions that operated in the Ottoman Empire, provide a further source of valuable information.

Contemporary native sources generally include those by: Ishak Armala,\(^{720}\) Abdul Masih Qarbashi,\(^{721}\) Yousif Gibrael al-Qass and Elias Hedaya,\(^{722}\) and Ignatius Aphram Barsoum.\(^{723}\)

It is not the purpose of this study to elaborate on the scope or details of these events in a manner that would serve the subject with the justice it merits. However, it must be noted that in addition to the gruesome human toll, no church or monastery was spared and no sanctity was respected. Deir al-Za‘faran, the seat of the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church from the 12th century, was not spared from attack. The monastery had become a refuge for hundreds of women, children and the elderly from the surrounding villages. Qarabashi, who was twelve at that time and a resident student at that monastery, was an eye witness who later collected notes from older eye witnesses.\(^{724}\) Qarabashi’s account of the attack on Deir al-Za‘faran shows that had it not been for the chivalry of one army officer, who saw the state of the beleaguered and


\(^{717}\) The term ‘Assyrian Genocide’ has been used in many recent studies whereby ‘Assyrian’ in this context is a general umbrella term for peoples with closely related ethnic and Christian identities, otherwise identified by their church affiliation as of the Church of the East, Chaldeans, Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic.

\(^{718}\) Jacques Rhétoré, Les chrétiens aux betes. Paris: Cerf, 2005, based on Les Chretiens aux betes, four manuscript notebooks Fr. Rhetore, a Dominican Father (1841-1921) left behind.


\(^{720}\) Ishak Armala, Al-Qisarah fi Nakabat al-Nasara(TThe Tragedy in the History of the Christians), Beirut: Deir al-Sharfa, 1910.

\(^{721}\) Abdul Masih Qarabashi Al Dam al-Masfook, tras, Theophilus George Saliba, Lebanon 2005.


\(^{723}\) Aphram Barsoum, History of Tur Abdin (trans Matti Moosa), Gorgias Press, 2008.

\(^{724}\) Qarabashi, pp. 170-172.
frightened refugees and felt mercy towards them, all of the refuge seekers would have been slaughtered and the monastery robbed and destroyed. According to the cited sources, as well as many others, most of the towns and villages inhabited by Christians suffered almost total annihilation. Diyarkbakir, Nusaibin, Azekh and Siirt (where the carnage included the scholar, the Chaldean archbishop Addai Sher) saw an almost total annihilation of their Christian populations.

According to Father Rhetore, who was an eye witness to many of the events he describes, of the 174,670 Christians who were in the Diyarkbakir vilayet in 1914, 82.5% disappeared as a result of Sayfo. Both de Courtois and Gaunt, relying on Rhetore, estimate that the Syrian Orthodox community lost nearly half of its Middle Eastern population in the First World War carnage.

Two Samples of the Massacre Accounts
A detailed or comprehensive account of the massacres and the resulting carnage are well outside the scope of this work. It may, however, be instructive and appropriate to convey a little of what has been written in the form of two samples, both from eye-witness accounts: one by Qarabashi, a Syrian Orthodox, and the other by Rev. Alpheus Andrus, a missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, who was based in Mardin since 1868.

a. The Account by Qarabashi
In the introduction of his account Qarabashi states:

From the start of First World War in 1914, I started to write down what I could about the events that I either witnessed or heard about from trustworthy people. The general feeling was that the war was not going to last. However, our hopes were soon dashed, as the war extended for four years. The tragedies: pain and suffering, theft, hunger and disease, and all forms of extermination that were witnessed during the war made it feel like a century rather than four years.

725 Rhétoré, p. 136.
726 De Courtois, p. 195; Gaunt, Massacres, Resistance, Protectors, pp. 434-5.
727 Qarabash, p.109.
The account starts with rumours that spread on August 3, 1914 of a war by Germany and Austria against Russia, England and France. Orders for mobilization and conscription were issued on the same day. Pressures were applied by local government on Christians, first to join the campaign for conscription, but then to doubt their allegiance, accusing them of harbouring feelings of sympathy for the English and French enemies.

Qarabashi provides a chronology of events leading up to the massacres. The following are some of the important events: On March 1915 the Ottomans issued an order for all Christians in Diyarbakir to surrender their arms, especially those who had been under conscription, and were forced to perform hard labour, such as carrying stones for road building.\(^728\) On April 9, 1915, the Ottoman military detained over 1,200 of Diyarbakir’s Christian elites, and subjected them to torture. On April 25, the authorities had the detainees bound in ropes and led outside the city to the River Tigris, where they were told to be taken by boats to Mosul. What actually transpired was that the soldiers accompanying the prisoners were joined by a Kurdish tyrant, ‘Malki, and his men. After a two-day journey, the prisoners were made to land where they were all shot dead and their bodies burnt.\(^729\) When the killers returned to Diyarbakir, the vali repeated the killing campaign, this time taking 500 men who were taken to the nearby valley, slaughtered and dumped.\(^730\)

Qarabashi’s account recites repeated scenes of forced labour for men, the killing of men, women and children, rape and forced conversions. People in the thousands were paraded out of the city through “Mardin Gate” ostensibly to be deported to Mosul, but in actuality to be made naked, with their clothes and whatever else of value taken, then killed and dumped.\(^731\)

The campaign that started with the Armenians, very soon included all other Christians. The accounts recite the atrocities not only in the city of Diyarbakir but also in other towns and villages of the vilayet: K’aibiya, Qatarbil, Jarokiya, Sacdiya, Hawarjiya, Amid, Juma Harrar, Aubarchi.\(^732\) Even Deir al-Za‘faran, the seat of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate was not spared the ordeal, saved only by a last minute response to pleadings by Mutran Jirjis, the patriarchal deputy, to the governor of Mardin\(^733\) the chivalry of individual soldiers. The

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\(^{728}\) Ibid, pp. 124-125.
\(^{729}\) Ibid, pp. 126-127.
\(^{730}\) Ibid, p. 127.
\(^{731}\) Ibid, pp. 137-149.
\(^{732}\) Ibid, pp. 156-171.
\(^{733}\) Ibid, pp. 171-172.
villages that were in the vicinity of Deir Za‘faran: al Qalsatma, Al-Mansuriah, Bnabil, Bkeera, Dara, Macsarta, Baval, Bkeera, al-Qusour, Qilath and Sour, were not saved by the appeals for mercy and were devastated like the others. The horrific massacres of the Christians at Azekh, Siirt, Kurbaran and Nissibin further demonstrated the sectarian intent and brutal Ottoman rulers and their Kurdish collaborators and, based on a pattern of official behaviour and repeated, consistent outcomes constituted the makings of a genocide, based on a pattern of official behaviour and repeated consistent outcomes.

b. The Account by Andrus

The account by Alpheus Andrus was part of a number of accounts that were collected and published by James Barton referenced earlier. The section written by Andrus who remained in Constantinople until the summer of 1917 reports on incidents to which he or others were eye witnesses. I have selected two locations whose inhabitants were almost totally Syrians, namely Kulleth located twenty-five miles northeast of Mardin, and Bnedbeel located “2 1/2 hours” (as per cited report) east of Mardin.

From Kulleth:

Koords (sic) from the surrounding villages of the Rajhdeeya, Makhshneeeya and Devorareeya districts attacked the village in the early morning hour. Pastor Hanoosh Ibrahim (Protestant) was killed on the threshold of the parsonage, and his aged mother on top of him. As many as the villagers had arms and daggers defended their firesides, but most were slain, many women and children were made captives while very few escaped. The Koords did not assist the government in the deportations, but only in killing, the taking of captives and booty. The entire village of some 250 houses (there were no Moslims (sic) in it) was wiped out, and the houses and lands were appropriated by Koords. The village was 2/3 Syrians and 1/3 Syrian-Protestant.  

From Bnedbeel:

I saw the Koords coming on to attack the village and gave the alarm. It was daylight. The villagers assembled and put themselves under my leadership, as I knew Koordish tactics, having lived so much among them. Putting myself at the head of the villagers we suddenly charged and scattered the Kurds. This gave time for the villagers to gather up

735 Ibid, pp. 196-208.
736 Barton, p. 100.
what they could, and seek safety for their families and themselves by fleeing to Deir Zaofaran (sic) and Mardin. I then advised the leading men not to accept the invitation of the soldiers, who nominally were sent to protect the village from just such attacks, to eat breakfast with them, as I distrusted them, since they had not helped us to drive the Koords off. They did not take my advice, which I emphasized, by leaving the village with what of my household goods I could take with me (my wife and children I had previously sent on to Mardin foreseeing trouble). In self-confidence they prepared food for the soldiers and sat down to partake of it with them. When the soldiers finished eating they turned on their hosts and shot them down. The Koords, learning what had happened, returned and helped the soldiers in plundering the village.737

The Qarabashi and the Andrus accounts clearly demonstrate that the massacres were aimed at Christians, irrespective of whether they were Armenians or not.

A more detailed account of the losses among the Syrian Orthodox is given in the following table, which was presented by Severus Aphram Barsoum to the Paris Peace Conference in February, 1920. Barsoum’s numbers are generally supported by Rhetori who estimated Syrian Orthodox losses to be 96,000 lay persons, in addition to two bishops and 156 priests, with the destruction of 111 churches and monasteries.738 Eight out of twenty Syrian Orthodox dioceses were entirely or largely wiped out and whole areas that had historically had considerable Syriac presence, notably Bsheriyya (Syrian Orthodox and Chaldeans) and Hakkari (Church of the East), were entirely depleted of their Christian populations. Further Sayfo prompted the survivors to seek safety abroad, thus generating the impetus for the creation of a massive diaspora that came to account for a large proportion of all Syriac Christians.739

737 Ibid.
738 Rhetore, p. 185.
List of Losses Incurred by the Ancient Syrian Orthodox Nation in Mesopotamia and in Armenia During the War of 1915-1918.\textsuperscript{740}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Vilayet</th>
<th>Names of Cities and Kazas</th>
<th>Number of Villages</th>
<th>Number of Families</th>
<th>People Massacred</th>
<th>Churches and Monasteries Ruined</th>
<th>Priests and Monks Killed</th>
<th>Bishops and Vicars Killed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diyarbakir vilayet</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Diyarbakir and surroundings</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>5379</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shirwan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lice</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>4706</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F. Siman, Episcop. Vicar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Deirek</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Siverek</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>897</td>
<td>5725</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mgr. Denha, B. of Siverek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Viranshehir</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mardin</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>5815</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Savur</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>6164</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nusaybin</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>7000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Jezireh</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>7510</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>F. Stiphan, Patriar, Vicar</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Besheriye</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>4481</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Baravat</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F. Gibrail, Archmandrite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Midyat</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3935</td>
<td>25830</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>F. Ephrem, Vicar; Mgr. Yacoub, Bishop of Deir al Salib</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bitlis vilayet</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Bitlis</td>
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<td>850</td>
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<td>Siirt</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F. Ibrahim, Vicar of Siirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Shirwan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Gharsan</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>5140</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Harput vilayet</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Harput</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Urfa sanjak</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Urfa</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>340</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong>\textsuperscript{741}</td>
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<td></td>
<td>345</td>
<td>13350</td>
<td>90313</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{740} Presented to the Paris Peace Conference by Archbishop Severus Aphram Barsoum, representative of the Syrian Orthodox Church at the Conference.

\textsuperscript{741} As noted in several subsequent publication, such as \textit{Manarat Antakia al-suryaniyya}, published by Gregorius Yuhanna Ibrahim, Dar al-Ruha, Aleppo, 1992, p.XIV, the “Totals” line has errors whereby the number of villages should be 336, number of families 13,360, number of churches and monasteries 160, and number of priests and monks killed 155.
5.3  *A Devastated Community with a New Leader- Elias III Shakir (1917-1932)*

During Sayfo came the news from Jerusalem of the passing of Patriarch Abdullah on November 26, 1915. He had been away from Turkey, continually, since 1908 until his death in Jerusalem, a period during which he had been quite distant from the main affairs of his office, (see Chapter Five). Thus the news of his passing made no noticeable impression on a community that had been, and was still, so absorbed with its own life and death matters. Mor Iwanis Elias Shakir, the Archbishop of Mosul, was voted as a *Locum Tenens* (Patriarchal *Qaimmaqam*) on February 27, 1916. Archbishop Elias Shakir\(^{742}\) conducted the duties both of archbishop and patriarch from Mosul, where he continued to organize relief work for the survivors of the slaughter and the deportees of all Christian denominations, who had been arriving in Mosul and its environs mainly from Siirt, Diyarbakir and Jazira since the beginning of Sayfo.

When the carnage abated, Elias Shakir headed to Deir al-Za′faran on October 17, 1916 where he called for a meeting of the Synod to elect a patriarch. The Synod voted him patriarch by seven out of nine votes, and he was installed patriarch on February 12, 1917 (February 25, 1917 Gregorian) as Ignatius Elias III.\(^{743}\) The date of his election is not given in the often referenced sources.\(^{744}\) However, I came across an interesting archival document, a letter that indicates that the election took place on November 8, 1916.\(^{745}\) This letter, which was signed by Elias Shakir as Patriarchal *Qaimmaqam* (*Locum Tenens*), was addressed to Aphram Barsoum (later patriarch) who at that time was a *raban* (priest-monk) and, according to the letter, was deputizing for Archbishop Gregorius Ephrem of Jerusalem for the purpose of the election.\(^{746}\) In

\(^{742}\) Born in Mardin on October 30, 1867, Nasri Shakir studied at the school of the Forty Martyrs Church in Mardin. At Patriarch Peter’s encouragement, Nasri joined the theological school at the Forty Martyrs Church where he was ordained a monk in 1889, assuming the name Elias and Raban (priest monk) in 1892. In 1895, he was appointed head of the monastery of Quryaqos, in Becheiryah, and the following year to the position of chief monk at Deir al-Za′faran, where he paid particular attention to the education of the young orphans, who had found refuge in the monastery following the 1895 violence. In 1899, he was sent to Midyat to make peace in a region that had been troubled by division resulting from Christian denominational conversions. In 1902, he was sent on similar missions to various parts of the Diyarbakir region, where he served with compassion and commitment. On March 2, 1908, he was consecrated Bishop of Amid (Diyarbakir) by Patriarch Abdullah, with the ecclesiastic title Mor Iwanis. After a brief working assignment in Midyat in 1911, he was transferred as Bishop of Mosul in March 1912. Source: *Al-Majalla al-Batriarkiyya*, No. 1, 1931, p.3.

\(^{743}\) *Al-Hikmat*, Year 2, 1927/1928, p 42; *Al-Majalla al-Batriarkiyyah*, No. 1, 1931, p. 4.


\(^{745}\) Archival Document P1080563.

\(^{746}\) Poulus Behnam, *Nafahat al-Khizam*, p. 24, refers to this event.
addition to being a noteworthy correspondence between two prominent personalities in the Syrian Orthodox Church, one a patriarch and the other the next patriarch, the letter sets out the essentially simple, democratic procedure for electing a patriarch.\textsuperscript{747} The following is my translation of the Garshuni Arabic text of the letter:

To the Very Reverend Father Aphram efendi, Deputy of His Eminence Mor Gregorius Aphram Bishop of Jerusalem, of Total Respect.

There will be a final meeting for the election of a patriarch in the morning of Wednesday, the 30\textsuperscript{th} of the current month, which is the memorial day for Mor Yacoub, the malphan (teacher). This (the election) will be performed by each (participant) writing his opinion (choice) on a paper which he drops in a cup on the Altar. The outcome is then revealed. We have notified this to his honour the deputy of the Mutassarif who may attend. I am also notifying you so that you may be prepared at the appointed time. May the Lord guide us, with you, to what leads to the Glory of His Holy name.

Penned on the 28\textsuperscript{th} of November, 1916.

Elias III’s patriarchate was characterised by extensive pastoral missions throughout Turkey, Greater Syria and northern Iraq and in India in a tireless endeavour as father and shepherd in the resettlement of entire communities that had been devastated by Sayfo.

On May 20, 1918, the new patriarch ordained Aphram Barsoum an Archbishop of Syria under the ecclesiastic title Severus. In 1919, Barsoum accompanied the Patriarch to Istanbul, where, on September 26, 1919 he had an audience with the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed Wahid from whom he received a firman (decree) for his patriarchal appointment. On his way to Istanbul, the new patriarch visited a number of communities in Diyarbakir, Urfa (Edessa), Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Damascus, Zahle and Beirut to offer moral encouragement.\textsuperscript{748}

In common with other Christian religious leaders who lived through and closely witnessed the devastation of the massacres, Patriarch Elias III faced the additional task of dealing with the Turks under whose jurisdiction thousands of his flock still lived. Additionally, unlike other Christian communities living in Turkey prior to World War I, the Syrian Orthodox had had the seat of their patriarchate in Asia Minor for no less than fourteen centuries, and in

\textsuperscript{747} This procedure saw a recent application in the election of the current (new) patriarch on March 30, 2014.

\textsuperscript{748} \textit{Al-Majallah al-Batriarkiyah}, 1933, No.1, pp. 4,5.
Deir al-Za‘faran in particular, since the twelfth century. Being driven from that patriarchal seat, as indeed did eventually occur during the term of Patriarch Elias III (see later) was an additional blow of historic proportion to his church and people. Thus, the task ahead for Patriarch Elias III was enormous and the resources, whether human or material, were meagre. He was, however, endowed with a compassionate nature that helped console his devastated communities.

5.4 International Forums and Treaties - The Paris Peace Conference

5.4.1 Sèvres and Lausanne

The period immediately after the First World War was a time of critical transition for many parties: the Allied victors (headed by the “Big Four”: Great Britain, France, the United States and Italy), and the defeated Central Powers (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire/Republic of Turkey). Of particular importance, however, were the lands and their inhabitants that were under the control of the losing side. These issues were discussed at the Paris Peace Conference, which was convened over the period from January 18, 1919 to January 21, 1920.

President Woodrow Wilson of the United States, one of the main attendees submitted his famous document, ‘Wilson’s Fourteen Points’, which aimed to establish a more liberal and diplomatic world based on the concepts of democracy, sovereignty, liberty, and self determination.\(^\text{749}\) However, it was Britain and France, already major colonial powers, who controlled the proceedings of the Peace Conference.\(^\text{750}\) Their prime ministers (David Lloyd George of Great Britain and Georges Clemenceau of France), aided by their large delegations, maneuvered and competed against each other to control the proceedings and to divide up the lands and the colonies of the losing sides between them.

In addition to the decision about the formation of the League of Nations, five major peace treaties resulted from the Paris Peace Conference. One of these, the Treaty of Sèvres, dated August 10, 1920, dealt with the legacy of the Ottoman Empire.\(^\text{751}\) However, this treaty proved unworkable when it was rejected by the Turkish side for what it considered to be onerous.


\(^{750}\) One of the other main attendees was Vittorio Orlando, the Prime Minister of Italy, in addition to representatives from 32 countries and nationalities.

\(^{751}\) The other four treaties were; the Treaty of Versailles, June 28, 1919, dealing with the legacy of Germany; the Treaty of Saint-Germain, September 10, 1919, dealing with the legacy of Austria; the Treaty of Neuilly, November 27, 1919 dealing with Bulgaria; and the Treaty of Trianon, August 10, 1920, dealing with Hungary.
conditions, including the significant loss of territory and internal control. Paul Helmreich offers
the following assessment:

The developments of 1919-20 created such turmoil in the Near East that it is questionable whether any treatment drawn up in the winter
and spring of 1919-1920 could have brought anything approaching
long range stability and peace in the Near East. Given the
traditional policy attitudes of the Allies and their seeming inability
or unwillingness to take these new developments realistically into
account, the possibility of a stable peace virtually disappeared... By
the time the powers succeeded in formulating the treaty, its
provisions no longer applied to the situation in hand. ⁷⁵²

As a result, the Treaty of Sèvres was renegotiated and was ultimately replaced by the Treaty of
Lausanne on July 24, 1923, which was negotiated and signed with the Republic of Turkey.

For the Near East, British and French intentions had been formulated prior to the War in the
secret Sykes-Picot bilateral agreement of 1916, which involved dividing the Arab lands of
Greater Syria and Iraq between Britain and France. The British and French, in a declaration
they circulated widely in Arabic, “conveniently discovered that their main goal in the war on
Ottomans had been ‘the complete and definite emancipation of the peoples so long oppressed
by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administrations deriving their
authority from the initiate and free choice of the indigenous populations.” ⁷⁵³ In reality, British
and the French acted as though the Middle East was theirs to quarrel over. They squashed any
consideration of “national” political demands, confining the matter to the much more limited
and vaguely phrased “protection of minorities”. Under the Treaty of Lausanne, these lands
were formally divided between these two colonial powers and brought under their control as
mandate states.

5.4.2 The Case for the Syriac Christians

At the Paris Peace Conference, representatives of different affected ethno-religious groups
were granted the opportunity to present their case before the Conference. The Syrian Orthodox
were represented by Archbishop Aphram Barsoum, Archbishop of Syria at the time. In his

⁷⁵² Paul C. Helmreich, From Paris to Sevres, the Portion of the Ottoman Empire at the Peace Conference of 1919-
386, 387.
Memorandum (see Appendix A5.1), Barsoum presented a six-point request that included a measure of autonomy in Turkey, and recognition of, and compensation for, the loss of life and property. He noted that “our nation apart from the persecutions inflicted upon it in the by-gone days of the Red-Sultan Abdul-Hamid in 1895, has proportionately to its number suffered more than any other nation whose fate was the cruel sword of the Turks and the dagger of their brothers in barbarism the Kurds.” He specifically noted that the massacred included 90,000, “Syriens” (Syrians) and 90,000 Nestorians and Chaldeans. Addressing the international political arena, Barsoum bewailed the fact that “this ancient and glorious race which has rendered so many valuable services to civilization should be so neglected and even ignored by the European press and diplomatic correspondence” which talked about ‘Armenian Massacres’ while the right name should have been ‘The Christian Massacres’ since all Christians have suffered in the same degree.” In asking for financial compensation and a reassurance for the safety of his people against “criminal Turkey,” he also objected to “the projected establishment of a Kurdish authority” and requested “the emancipation of the villoyet of Diarbekir (sic), Bitlis, Kharpout, and Ourfa from the Turkish Yoke.”

5.4.3 Barsoum’s Attempt for a Dialogue with the British and the French

Prior to the presentation of his memorandum, Barsoum attempted to have an audience with the British and French Foreign Ministers. In both cases he had little success. He wrote to Stephen Pichon, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs on November 17, 1919, requesting a meeting. He also wrote to Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Minister, on February 16, 1921, for the same purpose.

The initiative with the French side set into motion a series of communications within the corridors of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Review of these communications sheds considerable light on the mode of French thinking during that crucial period in the history of the Middle East. The following are some of the letters in question.

Mr. Goût of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported on the requested visit by Barsoum in a note dated November 26, 1919,754 (See Appendix A 5.2 for full text). In describing the visit, he recapitulates the historical rivalry between the Syrian Orthodox and the Syrian Catholics, encapsulated at the monastery of Mar Elian, near Homs, which had been

754 De Courtois, pp. 233, 234., with images of the original document in pp. 322, 323.
recently transferred to the former by the Ottoman authorities. Describing Barsoum as “just another of the intriguing priests the East abounds in,” Goût claims that the Patriarch, “seeing that the French influence will soon be preponderant in Syria, now rushes over to us, forgetful of the flattery with which he showered the Turks and the Germans.” Taking a superior position, Goût says that “there is no need for concern..... his patriarchy and community are of no real consequence.”

It appears that the French could not see the dilemma of the Middle Eastern Christians except through the narrow prism of religious affiliations. Barsoum’s request for recognition of Christian rights, including those of his own church, was overlooked by Mr. Goût, who clearly reflected the intra-Christian sectarianism, which his country had so persistently practiced throughout the nineteenth century. Mr. Goût then goes on to state: “it does not seem possible that we should take up the position against our protégés and the only thing to do is to recommend to General Gouraud that he stays out of the affair, at least for now.” In the last paragraph Mr. Goût demonstrates clear streaks of partisan politics coupled with Orientalist arrogance and sheer disdain for a “small group of Christians.”

French preoccupation with sectarian divisions at a time of deep crisis is also evident from the following confidential report on Barsoum’s youth (see Appendix A 5.3), which had been requested by the French diplomatic services. This states that Barsoum had converted to (traditional) Catholicism after studying with the Dominican Fathers at Mosul. He subsequently went to Deir al-Za’faran where he returned to the language of his fathers in the hope of becoming a bishop. This did not happen until 1920. He lived in Homs and then in Damascus where he was “an ardent supporter of Emir Faisal.” He had accompanied Patriarch Elias to Constantinople because he was “the only Jacobite prelate to speak French.”

The inquiry again demonstrates that the French were more concerned about the messenger than with the message. According to the report, the messenger Aphrem Barsoum had been Catholic at one point. Like many other Syrian Orthodox school students of his age at that time, he had attended the Dominican Fathers’ well-known school in Mosul. In 1905, at the age of 18, he left the Dominican school and travelled to Deir al-Za’faran, which he joined as a

755 Ibid.
756 Referring to the Syrian Catholics
757 De Courtois’s p, 235 is a translation of the original document whose image is given on p. 328.
monk.\textsuperscript{758} The other interesting observation was that “Mgr. Severius has proven an ardent supported (sic) of Emir Faisal”, which to the French was a highly undesirable attribute.

Another French diplomatic report, a telegram from Charles Roux, dated November 7, 1919, repeats the apprehension about Barsoum’s affinity to Emir Faisal\textsuperscript{759} (see Appendix A 5.4). It states that Barsoum had left for Paris on the previous day using a French passport as a”special protégé”. The report warns that “this Orthodox prelate was fairly closely connected with Emir Faisal in Damascus, and that he tried very hard to woo the Arabs, even in his public speeches.

Thus, the tone of warning and disapproval with which the French regarded Barsoum was because of his non-Catholic affiliation and his pro-Arab nationalistic stance which, worse still, included support for Emir Faisal, a “presumed protégé” of their British rivals. This again shows the partisan intra-Christian policies, which were being played out in dealing with the central issues of security for Oriental Christians following their horrendous ordeal during the First World War.

Again regarding the rivalry between the French and the British, de Courtois provides an insight into a further interesting incident: “on the Catholic side, Mgr. Rahmani came in person” to the Paris Peace Conference. Before leaving Syria, a part of which was still under British military occupation, Mgr. Rahmani had had to cheat in order to get out of the country, by “having the Pope send for him to come to Rome, since the British would never have let him leave otherwise.” As de Courtois notes, this little incident illustrates the tangible tension between France and Great Britain on the Eastern Question.\textsuperscript{760}

Barsoum’s attempt to seek a direct meeting with Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, although wrapped in typical British diplomatic garb, fared no better than his attempt to see his French counterpart. In the course of attending the Paris Peace Conference, Barsoum visited London where he requested to see Lord Curzon. There is no indication that the visit actually materialized. However, according to a letter dated February 16, 1921 from Patriarch Elias III to Archbishop Davidson, head of the Church of England, a response to the request for the visit was received from Curzon’s assistant, dated March 12, 1920, quoting Patriarch Elias

\textsuperscript{758} For Barsoum’s biography see Poulus Behnam, Poulus Behnam, \textit{Nafahat al-Khizam}, Mosul, 1959, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{759} De Courtois’s p, 231 is a translation of the original document whose image is given on p. 318.
\textsuperscript{760} De Coutois, p209
III that “the interests of our nation will not be lost sight of when the moment for their considerations arrives.”

5.4.4  Barsoum’s Nationalist Position

The French accusation of Barsoum as being a supporter of Faisal and a promoter of the Arab cause at the Paris Peace Conference merit some elaboration. That Barsoum was a promoter of the Arab cause was a reality as is evident from a speech he made at the Paris Peace Conference (see Appendix A 5.5) and is consistent with his background. Barsoum grew up in Mosul, a city that was deeply rooted in Arabic tradition and culture, and with least attachment to Turkish culture and influence. Though primarily Sunni Muslim in character, Mosul also embraced Arabism towards the latter part of the Ottoman period, no doubt influenced in no small measure by the nascent Pan-Arab cultural revival in Greater Syria in that period. The active participation of the Christian intelligentsia in that revival and their prominent role in promoting Arabism had reverberations in Iraq, all be it to a lesser extent, where many Christian intellectuals joined their Muslim colleagues in the move towards independence from the Ottoman rule. As an example of this trend, which was espoused by many Christian intellectuals, one may cite from a case that closely relates to Barsoum’s immediate family background. One of Barsoum’s maternal cousins, Thabit Abdulnour, headed one of the pro-independence Arab nationalist societies, Jam‘iat al-‘Alam, which was formed in 1914. The society, whose membership included such eminent figures as Ali Jawdat al Ayoubi and Mawlud Mukhlis, became particularly active during the Arab Revolt of 1916. In the course of promoting the aims of the Revolt, the society’s leaders, with Thabit Abdulnour in the forefront, made direct contact with Al- Sherif Al-Hussain.

But beyond home background, Barsoum, as an intellectual, residing in Syria where he was archbishop of Syria and Lebanon, would have been well aware of the intellectual currents

761 Letter of Patriarch Elias III to Archbishop Davidson, dated 16th February 1921 (Davidson 199. f. 124)
763 Ibrahim Khalil Ahmad notes that in order to avoid harassment by the Ottoman authorities, the founders of the society gave it a name that could be read as al-‘Alam, meaning flag, as an indication for a new nation, or al-‘lim meaning knowledge
764 Ibid. pp. 138-139.
765 Ibid.
in that country and with the work of the pioneers of Arab cultural revival and nationalist thought. His address before the Paris Peace Conference, see below, and his nationalist position, while he was patriarch, all to his credit, support the accusation by the French that he was a Faisal and an Arab nationalist supporter.

No doubt Barsoum’s encounter with Western indifference towards the ‘Christian genocide’ on the one hand and towards the aspirations of the people of the Arab lands on the other cemented his nationalistic vision. But these were not the only factors that affected Barsoum, and indeed his subsequent community leaders, patriarchs and others. It was the added comfort that after enduring four centuries of existence at a neglected margin of the Empire under Kurdish tribal tyranny, his people were now in the milieu of the historically more accommodating Arab cousins with whom they shared common cultural roots and centuries of worthy cultural interactions.

5.4.5 Barsoum’s Address Before the Paris Peace Conference

In an interview with Paulus Behnam (later Archbishop Gregorius Paulus Behnam), Arnobius Aphram Barsoum reflected on his participation in the Paris Peace Conference. Below is my translation of this reflection is given in Appendix A5.5. Addressing the Conference in French, Barsoum expressed his support for World Peace and then vividly “described in detail the tragedies that befell [his people].” At the conclusion of his speech he sensed no empathy for his people from the attendees. He said, “I felt I was addressing rigid statues of dead stones” and left the meeting feeling quite hopeless.

Following a meeting of a number of Free Arabs (Arabs seeking freedom), where, together, a list was made of points to make to the Conference, he rose again to speak to the Conference. He brought out the Arab cause and aspirations. He emphasized “that the Arabs are Arabs whether they are Muslims or Christians,” and recounted some of the tragedies that had occurred in Arab lands, concluding by stating “that the Arabs have a holy right to freedom, independence and the life of honour for theirs is a great nation with an enduring historic heritage and a vast contribution to human civilization from the oldest of times.”

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Barsoum was reflecting the feeling of the majority of the Christians, particularly the exiled, who found peace and safety among the historical co-inhabitants of their common homeland. This last statement was met with acclaim from his Arab colleagues. It was in appreciation of this nationalistic position that his Arab colleagues shouted “you are the ‘Bishop of Arabism,’ indeed you are the ‘Priest of Time.’”

The principal and influential participants in the Paris Peace Conference, Great Britain and France, made no serious effort, if any at all, to punish the perpetrators of the Armenian and Syrian ‘genocide’. They were preoccupied with dividing up the booty of the war between them. They had the opportunity to develop humanitarian policies and strategies to prevent repetition of this ‘genocide’, but showed no real interest in pursuing such a course. Had they shouldered their moral and human responsibilities at that time, they might well have prevented the larger genocide that was to come.

The Syrian Orthodox leadership, having become aware of the attitude of indifference towards its central issues shown by the participants at the Paris Peace Conference and to its pleadings for help and security, and with many of its people still living under Turkish rule, settled back to its conventional philosophy of seeking peace and practicing compliance, as faithful citizens of whatever country they found themselves. This was Patriarch Elias III’s approach, as we will see next.

5.5 In the Upper Mesopotamian Homeland in the Aftermath of the War

5.5.1 The Patriarch Preaches Allegiance

In addition to being a period of major political transformation across Europe and the Middle East, the period between the end of the First World War in 1918 and the proclamation of the Turkish Republic (October 29, 1923)\(^{768}\) was a transitional phase during which different minority groups still living in Turkey attempted to secure safer living conditions for their members.

While Barsoum was making the case for his people at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and subsequently at the meetings in Lausanne in 1923, the Patriarch, mindful of the dangers that still surrounded the remaining Syrian communities in Turkey, continued with his approach

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\(^{768}\) This period may be extended to 1926 when the Mosul Question between Turkey and Great Britain was resolved.
of pledging allegiance to the Ottoman, and after that to the Turkish, authorities. During his visit to Urfa (Urhoy, Edessa) in 1919, he was criticized by some of his community members on account of his plan to visit the Turkish governor of the city before visiting the British governor. According to Abrohom Nuro\textsuperscript{769}, who is originally from Urfa, and confirmed by Zakaria Shakir\textsuperscript{770} (1972), the Patriarch reacted to this criticism with the advice: "My Son, let me do my job. I know what I am doing. The English are guests, whereas the Turks are here to stay."\textsuperscript{771} It is likely that as time passed, Patriarch Elias III became increasingly convinced of the soundness of this approach, particularly after he realized that the Western countries were not going to show much interest in the Syriac Christians beyond the bounds of their own interests. Indeed, he often expressed solidarity with Turkish political elite such as Rauf Bey, Ismet Inonu and Fevzi Cakmak, as his secretary Zakaria Shakir confirms in 1972:

\begin{quote}
...So when the Patriarch visits Turkish statesmen for the first time
...he speaks about and explicates his Turkish policy… ‘We, the
Syriac denomination, are loyal to the administration to which we are
subject.’...‘We don’t have any links with Western nations.’\textsuperscript{772}
\end{quote}

The Patriarch’s conciliatory approach was based on a survival strategy and should be viewed in the context of his own time and, particularly, based on his personal experience during Sayfo. Consistent with this attitude, Patriarch Elias III maintained amicable relations with Turkish political elites. His secretary Zakaria Shakir (1972) reports that the Patriarch had three meetings in Ankara with Mustafa Kemal. Prior to his meeting with Mustafa Kemal on February 9, 1923, Patriarch Elias III was interviewed by Celal Nuri, the owner of the newspaper \textit{Ileri} and a close ally of Mustafa Kemal. In this interview, the Patriarch made a statement about his position on the future of Assyrians/Syriacs in the Turkish Republic:\textsuperscript{773}

\begin{quote}
So far, the issue of minority rights has entered neither the minds nor
the dreams of the community I represent. We shall protest this very
vigorously. I, on behalf of my community, did not make any such
demand, nor do I make it now, nor shall I in the future. \textit{Süryaniler} are
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{769} A well-known Syriac teacher and an active proponent of Syriac heritage, he was born Ibrahim Kahlaji in Urfa in 1923, then migrated as part of the massive Edessan exodus of 1924. He was probably the first to Syriacize his name, to Abrohom Nuro. He died in 2009, leaving behind a rich personal library (see: George Kiraz, “Abraham Nuro,” \textit{Hugoye Journal of Syriac Studies}, Vol. 12.1, 3-4 (2009).

\textsuperscript{770} Zakria Shakir was Patriarch Elias III’s nephew (brother’s son) and personal secretary, see Athanasius Aphram Barsoum, p. 59.

\textsuperscript{771} Atto, p. 90.

\textsuperscript{772} Ibid, pp. 88-89.

\textsuperscript{773} Ibid, p. 92 where background to this and to similar quotes are given in some detail. Ileri, 9 February 1923.
the minority of the people who live within the boundaries of the Misak-I Milli [National Oath]. They merely wish to live together with the majority [Turks] in good times and in bad and to enjoy the benefits of this…

No doubt, the loyalty that Patriarch Elias III so expressed reflected the insecurity and fear that he felt; he had no leverage with which to negotiate the future of his people with Mustafa Kemal. In the absence of any support from the Western Powers, he and his community were simply at the mercy of the Turkish rulers. It is thus ironic to note that after the post-First World War negotiations, the Syriacs, as a people, who had historically been recognized as a largely semi-independent, self-managed community (millet) were now, at the conclusion of the Paris Peace Conference, no longer protected by any treaty or established tradition.

5.5.2 The Expulsion of the Patriarchate from Turkey

In spite of his policy of loyalty, the stay of Patriarch Elias III in Turkey was becoming untenable even before it was officially ended in 1924. This was part of a Turkish policy to prevent any non-Muslims from holding any status in the country, and subsequently to get rid of non-Muslim presence. In a speech in May 1924 Mustafa Kemal announced that religious institutions constituted a discrepancy within a state which functioned on the basis of a single jurisprudence. He declared unequivocally, according to Atto, that: "The Orthodox and Armenian churches and Jewish synagogues which are based in Turkey should have been abolished together with the Caliphate."774

Additionally, the fact that the Syrian Orthodox community had not been recognized as a non-Muslim minority in the Treaty of Lausanne provided a pretext as well as a step toward the removal of the Patriarchate. Certain events in 1924 and 1925 provided the Turks with a final excuse. These events were the ‘Nestorian revolt’ in the Hakkari Mountains in 1924 and, one year later, the support given by a few members of the Assyrian/Syrian community to the Sheikh Said Revolt775 in 1925. The Kemalists utilized these events to eliminate any perceived

775 For an early source see Sykes (1924: 473-74).
opposition. Atto reports that a letter in the Secret Archive of the Vatican\textsuperscript{776} reveals that 150 Assyrians/Syrians (both Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholics) were deported from Midyad, Inwardo, Anhel, Mzizah and Midin. Another hundred persons were deported from Azikh.

Despite the loyalty demonstrated by Patriarch Elias III, the Kemalists perceived the Syrian Orthodox Church leadership as a potential threat that had to be eliminated. In 1924, an official decree issued by the authorities prevented Patriarch Elias III of the right to use his official (patriarchal) title in his communications with the authorities.\textsuperscript{777} An oral account given by Chorbishop Gabriel Aydin (Bar Yawno), who was a pupil at Deir al-Za‘faran when the Patriarch received the message to leave Turkey, states: \textsuperscript{778}

\begin{quote}
\ldots one day the governor of Mardin came to the Monastery to deliver a telegram from Ataturk [Mustafa Kemal] which had been sent to him [the governor]. The telegram read: ‘The clerical leader in the black cassock [the Patriarch] should leave Turkey immediately and should never ever return!’
\end{quote}

Following this decree, Patriarch Elias III left Turkey in the spring of 1924\textsuperscript{779} and, with this forced departure, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate lost the seat that had been its home since Michael the Syrian (Michael Rabo) was inaugurated there as Patriarch in 1166.

From Deir al-Za‘faran the Patriarch travelled to Aleppo, where he consecrated a church,\textsuperscript{780} then to Zahle (in Lebanon) before settling temporarily in Jerusalem. By an official directive dated July 7, 1931,\textsuperscript{781} Patriarch Elias III was stripped of his Turkish citizenship on the grounds that he had acquired Iraqi citizenship without seeking permission from the Turkish authorities. As a consequence, he longer could maintain any direct relations with Turkey.

The Turkish authorities also prohibited Patriarch Aphrem Barsoum from re-entry into Turkey on account of his stance at the Paris Peace Conference. A Turkish decree dated June 7,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[776] Secret Archive of the Vatican (Archivi Nunziature Partigi). Busta 392, cited by Atto p. 98, Foot Note117.. See also Luke (1925: 113) who mentions that the Patriarch was expelled from the Zafaran Monastery in spring of 1924.
\item[778] Atto, p. 99 reports that other according to oral information the governor of Mardin, Abdulfattah Baykurt Bey (1923-1925), who had a close relationship with the Patriarch, informed the Patriarch that it would be better for him to leave the country if he were not to forfeit his life.
\item[779] Luke, Mosul and its Minorities, p. 113.
\item[780] This is the Church of Saint Ephrem, which was constructed in the Sulaymania district of Aleppo from a donation by the benefactor Salim Azar.
\item[781] This document was signed by the President of Turkey (Mustafa Kemal), Prime Minister Ismet Inonu and other cabinet members. See for this document: T.C. Devlet Arsileri Genel Mudurlugu, BCA- Basbakanlik Cumhuriyet Arsivi, Basvekalet, 036/16/01/02, 17-1-18.
\end{footnotes}
1937, also banned the bringing into Turkey of any publications "because of their dangerous content."\textsuperscript{782}

The actions by Turkey to eliminate the presence of a small church from its historical roots in that country could not have been motivated by any perceived threat by that church that was in fact known for its peaceful historical record. Rather, the church's expulsion was prompted by the general policy of Turkification that saw Christians as unfit candidates for citizenship. The next section provides a further amplification of this.

5.5.3 The Further Alienation of the Non-Muslim Minorities

The ‘official’ Turkish minority policy, as outlined in the Lausanne Treaty \textsuperscript{924} of July 1923, incorporated the provision that non-Muslims would be allowed to exercise certain rights. However, Turkey limited the application of the non-Muslim rights to the three largest minority groups: the Greeks, the Armenians and the Jews.\textsuperscript{783} Although, as Oran notes,\textsuperscript{784} the Treaty consistently used the term “non-Muslim,” nowhere in the 143 articles are the three groups singled out. Smaller Christian groups (e.g., the Syriac Christians) were excluded from the protection of many rights such as those rights which were spelled out in the Treaty. One of these rights was the right given in Article 40 to “to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their own religion freely therein.”\textsuperscript{785} An attempt by the Syrian Orthodox to start a Bible study as late as 1949 met with frustration and failure.\textsuperscript{786} Oran reflects on the likely reasons for excluding the Syriac Christians from obtaining the rights given to other non-Muslim minorities and offers a

\textsuperscript{782} Atto, p. 100, citing T.C. Devlet Arsivleri Genel Mudurlugi, BCA- Basbakanlik Cumhuriyet Arsivi, Basvekalet, 030/18/01/02. 75-50-1.
\textsuperscript{784} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{785} Fredrick A. Aprim, \textit{Assyrians: From Bedr Khan to Saddam Hussein Driving into Extinction the Last Aramaic Speakers}, Xlibris Corporation, 2006, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{786} Atto, p. 95 demonstrates how difficult it had become for the Syriac Orthodox Church to educate its members in the liturgy and the Syriac language of its church when on the 19\textsuperscript{th} of October 1949, Archbishop Dolabani applied to the Turkish authorities (via the Governor of Mardin) to obtain permission to start a Bible course in the Za’faran Monastery. The correspondence between the Archbishop and the Turkish authorities illustrates the almost insurmountable difficulties which Dolabani encountered when he made this application and how he eventually had to give up after failing to make progress. The Turkish Ministry of Education set the condition that a compulsory Turkish language class, a history class and a geography class be included in the curriculum of the Syriac Bible course. See further for this correspondence, Akvuz (2005: 450-453).
possible explanation: “the lack of a kin-state that would serve as an advocate of these
groups.” However, as it turned out, even the recognized minorities did not fully enjoy the
rights agreed in the Treaty of Lausanne, for in time recognized minorities too found themselves
victim of legal and social discrimination and eventual expulsion from the country.

Following the almost total annihilation of the Armenian and Syriac communities and the
forced mass-population exchange between Greece and Turkey, the policy of Turkification,
aimed at creating a homogenous Turkish nation. Thus, despite the declared secular nationalist
policy of the Turkish Republic, Islam became a central element in the discourses on
Turkishness. Poulton notes that Mustafa Kemal saw Christians as inappropriate candidates to
become "Turkified.”

As a consequence of the application of the Turkification policies of the state in the
1930s, all minorities were forced to change their surnames to Turkish ones, in accordance with
the Surname Law of 1934. Similarly, the names of Assyrian/Syriac villages were changed to
Turkish names at the beginning of the 1940s. This was in accord with the Turco-centric
focus, which totally ignored the heritage of the indigenous peoples of the land and had as its
prime concern the interests of the Turkish-speaking groups. Further, although the role of Islam
was downplayed by the state-based modernization that was vigorously pursued in the country,
religion remained the criterion for determining everyday relations. While Christians were
allowed to play a noticeable role in public office during the late Ottoman period in particular,
under Turkification they were practically banned from being public servants. One Syrian
individual, expressing the majority sentiment, reportedly complained: “I could not even
become a garbage collector!”

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787 Oran, 2007, p. 38.
788 Atto, p. 95 citing B. Oran (2004).
789 Hugh Poulton, Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and Turkish Republic, New York: New
790 See Atto, p. 101-102, where it is noted that the law prohibits the use of surnames which are related to 'races
and nations other than Turkish' (Guven 2006: 115). It also forbids the use of certain suffixes in surnames, such as
–yan, -of, -ef, -vic, -ic, is, -idis, -pulos, -aki, -zade, and -bin.
791 According to studies which have been conducted, the names of approximately 28,000 places have been
changed into Turkish names since the 1940s, when the Expert Commission for the Modification of Names (Ad
Degistirme Ihtisas Komisyonu) was established. See further Tuncel (2000) for the 1949 legislation pertaining to
the administration of cities (Il Idaresi Kanunu).
792 Atto, p.107, made in reference to Law 788 which regulated the employment of officials (Memurin Kanunu),
which was applied between 1926 and 1965.

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Thus, for the remaining Syriac Christians, the scene was set for the following decades when more emigrations would, of necessity, occur. This time, in addition to North and South America, new destinations were added. Western Europe — initially Germany, but later Sweden, Holland and other countries — became the new target and the hope for security in an ever expanding diaspora.

5.6 **Following the Exodus**

5.6.1 **Resettlement and Challenges**

During and following the War, most of the Syriac Christians who had escaped the carnage headed south to Iraq and Syria. Those who headed to Iraq were mainly from Jezireh, Siirt, Diyarbakir and parts of Tur Abdin and generally sought refuge in the city of Mosul and in its environs. The majority of the deportees/emigrants headed south to northern Syria where they settled, at least initially, along the belt from Aleppo, in the west, to the border with Iraq. In addition to Aleppo, this belt included Ras-al ā‘in, Qamishli, Malkiya and Hasaka. These and other recipient towns and villages became significant settlement centres for the newcomers. From these locations many moved on to various other Syrian cities: Damascus, Hama, Homs, as well as to Beirut and Zahle. Those fleeing Adana in 1919 generally found refuge to the south in Tripoli in northern Lebanon. Jerusalem and Bethlehem generally attracted emigrants from Azikhi and its surrounding villages. Further waves of migration from Cilicia arrived in 1922 as well as in 1933. The annexation of Alexandretta (Iskanderun) by Turkey in 1938 resulted in further waves of emigrant to Syria and Lebanon.

Many of those who initially reached Lebanon and the northern Syrian coast immigrated to North America. Fewer refugees went to South America, generally to Brazil and Argentina. The presence of Syrian communities in North America, particularly in the United States, dates back to the late nineteenth century, when many silk weavers from Diyarbakir settled in New Jersey. Generally, new immigrants followed in the footsteps of previous immigrants from the same town or neighbourhood. Thus, those from Kharput generally followed the trail of people

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793 In the 1926 deliberations concerning the future of the province of Mosul, Britain countered Turkey’s claim by citing the presence of large Syrian/Assyrian and Kurdish minorities.


795 In an interview with the writer in July 2013, the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem, Murad Malke, who had served in South America recalled that many of the Syriac immigrants recited their ancestors stories intending to immigrate to North America but found themselves in South America, either as a result of their ignorance of the existence of two Americas or due to abuse by travel organizers.
from their previous town to Massachusetts, and those from Tur Abdin established residence in Rhode Island, as workers in local mills, while others settled in Michigan. Those who headed north to Canada generally settled in Sherbrooke, Quebec. Clergy were assigned from Jerusalem to look after the immigrants as early as 1907.

Many of those who made northern Syria their new home worked on the land, while others pursued local trades. Land ownership, especially on a large scale, was controlled by the mandate authorities, which facilitated land acquisition and farming. Both in Syria and Iraq, the new immigrants experienced an atmosphere of safety that allowed them to integrate with ease into the recipient societies. This situation contrasted sharply with the dire conditions they had experienced in Anatolia, particularly since 1895.796

This new feeling of security may be attributed to two main reasons. First, they were now essentially living in an Arab environment, especially in cities, under a discourse of Arab tolerance that Muslims and Christians came to believe in and to promote. When the victims of the massacres arrived in Mosul, which was still under Ottoman/Turkish rule, they were welcomed by the residents and were, including the Armenians, assisted to settle in the city and its environs. This outlook had been cultivated and practiced from the early rules of both the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates. Second, the Mandate rules in Iraq and Syria offered stable governance that permitted the new immigrants to begin to mend their shattered lives. The fact that these immigrants were readily granted citizenship in the new countries added to this sense of security. In addition, they enjoyed certain rights and facilities that were almost unknown to them previously; civil rights, freedom of worship without harassment, public education and government-based employment.

The sense of accommodation and welcome provided to the Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic and Chaldean immigrants in both Syria and Iraq during the Mandate years were maintained after both countries gained their independence: 1932 in the case of Iraq and 1943 in the case of Syria. The course of immigration and settlement for the Assyrians (members of the Church of the East), however, followed a different path, one that was based on demanding autonomy, and which ended in the tragic massacres of 1933 in Simele, in Northern Iraq.797

796 Al-Hikmat, Third Year, Nos. 3 and 4, March and April 1929, pp. 113-122.
5.6.2 The Exodus of the Last Edessans - The Last Caravan from Urfa

One of the remarkable cases of emigration/deportation following the War was that of the Christians of Urfa (Ruha, Edessa) in 1924. Urfa, located approximately 200 km to the east of Mardin, had a post-War Christian community consisting of nearly five thousand, mostly Syrian Orthodox Christians with a minority of Armenians, Chaldeans and Syrian Catholics. The Armenians, who totalled nearly five hundred, and who were all that were left of a pre-War Armenian community of 25,000, also joined the exodus. All the rest had been slaughtered during the War.

In the spring of 1924, this entire Christian community emigrated en masse in one caravan journey heading south towards Aleppo, leaving behind their homes and entire belongings. In his *Al Qafila al-Akhira* (The Last Caravan), Namiq, who was ten at that time, describes the exodus citing witness accounts and stories he collected later from elders. He stresses the feeling of insecurity and fear that prevailed on the eve of the exodus and the sense of great urgency that surrounded its execution. Namiq also emphasized the air of intrigue around the reasons for this unprecedented event. In fact, parents, relatives and elders hardly ever subsequently talked about it, preferring to hide behind some form of amnesia with regard to the reasons for it and the circumstances surrounding it. All the same Namiq, drawing on discreet rumours by elders, hints that the emigration likely occurred as recompense for unfulfilled obligations by a few of the community elders in commercial dealings with Muslim elites in the town. Sato, who studied the exodus and the re-settlement of the Urfallis, was unable to find a definitive cause for the emigration, opting for characterizing it as a “Selective Amnesia.” In reviewing the history of the massacres and oppressions of Christians of Urfa in the period 1915 to 1924, Sato brings into attention the 1920 battle between the French, who had occupied Urfa, and the Turkish troops. As a result of this battle the French withdrew after incurring humiliating losses. Elements of the Armenians had reportedly sympathized or even joined the French in battle, and this withdrawal by the French exposed the Armenian community to a

798 Rhetore, p. 70.
period of further slaughter. Subsequently, the Syrian Orthodox feared that they, too, would be subjected to a similar fate.  

While more than one reason might have been at the root of this amnesia, the overwhelming factor was likely the psychological need, as a survival mechanism, to forget the past when their historical right had been shattered. Thus, as Sato notes: “their Turkish past exists in a shadowy silence.”  

However, what might have been at the root of the amnesia was likely the sad realization that they, the heirs of the great city of Edessa, venerated as the first kingdom of Syriac Christianity, the center of the Syrian Church, the birthplace of classical Syriac literature, the Blessed City, as stated in the fifth century teaching by Addai, had handed it over to the aggressors. Their last two churches were taken over - one was used as a mosque, and the other as a workshop and a stable.

Archbishop Barsoum showed special kindness to the people of Ruha as they flocked to Aleppo in 1924. He felt extreme sadness as he witnessed their arrival at Aleppo about which he said:

Oh my God where are the Ruha’s monastic cells, monasteries, monks. Such have been the events of time and the swords of conquest and the policies of the tyrants, the plots of the greedy, the lapse of the mind, the errors of management, that caused Ruha to topple from progress to decadence and to swing between migration and mingling, thus Syriac was replaced with foreign tongues. The tempest of our time has flung Ruha’s remnants to one of the quarters of Shahba’ (Aleppo); they came with the feeling of shame, we felt compassion towards them as the mother does to its infant child.

Barsoum visited the exiles from Ruha often, encouraging them to build within themselves the spirit of zeal to overcome their predicament. He followed up carefully their steps of settlement in Syria and of “becoming citizens who are faithful to God and to their new homeland in which they should not feel strangers.”

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801 Ibid, p. 320.
802 Ibid, p. 323.
804 The Syrians of Ruha no longer spoke Syriac; they spoke Turkish and Armenian.
806 Ibid.
In their exodus, those last Edessans took with them what they could of the movable cultural heritage, including a few historical books. One of these was the oldest known copy of the Chronicle written by the twelfth century Michael the Syrian. This historical treasure remained in the custody of one of the community elders until it was lodged in a safe in St. Ephrem’s Church in Aleppo. Together with others attending a cultural event in Aleppo in 2008, I had the particular honour of viewing this document.\textsuperscript{807}

As the French mandate in Syria neared its end, a modest number of immigrants crossed from Syria to Lebanon under the perception that Lebanon with its strong Christian presence offered a greater measure of safety in addition to providing an easier access to foreign travel.

5.6.3 \textit{Help Arriving from Expatriates}

The deportees and emigrants lived under difficult economic conditions in their places of refuge. Having left their properties and possessions behind, they eked out an existence under very difficult conditions. Even though the recipient countries extended a sincere welcome to them, these countries and their resident communities were themselves under difficult economic conditions after the War.

Having always been materially as poor and needy as the communities it served and from which it was derived, the church could not provide financial help for the task of resettlement. Its \textit{awqaf} (religious endowments) in Turkey were in ruins, with 156 of its churches and monasteries in ruins (see Table). The \textit{awqaf} it had in Jerusalem barely provided a living for the few monks at Monastery St. Marks.\textsuperscript{808} Thus, attention turned to the Syrian Orthodox communities that had been immigrating to the New World since 1895 and in some cases a few years earlier. These communities had maintained close ties with the old country, where most social and cultural activities revolved around the church and the community. In 1899 a group, principally originating from Diyarbakir, formed an association to promote education among its fellow community members in the homeland. This association came to be known as TMS (Taw-Meem-Simkat) which stands for “\textit{Taraqi Madrashto Suryoito}” (the Syriac School for...

\textsuperscript{807} This historical document was subsequently imaged and published by Gorgias Press in 2009 under the title \textit{The Chronicle of Michael the Syrian, Edessa, Aleppo Syriac Codex}, and has recently been translated into English by Matti Moosa, and published by Beth Antioch in 2014.

\textsuperscript{808} Its traditional appellation “Convent” is commonly replaced with “Monastery.”
This group expanded in membership and in the scope of its nationalist aspirations, particularly when Na‘um Fa‘iq, a nationalist and an intellectual who immigrated to America in 1912 joined the association. The association became a gathering that was increasingly encouraged and inspired by zeal and nostalgia to help the communities in the homeland.

Through the efforts of this association a much needed orphanage and school was set up in Adana in the province of Cilicia, in southern Turkey, in 1919, when this province was under French control. However, because of increasingly difficult conditions in Turkey, and with encouragement from Patriarch Elias III, the orphanage was moved to Beirut in 1921, where it continued to provide the essential services of looking after orphans and their schooling. It also fulfilled an important need in providing candidates to serve church services as deacons and priests, for the new communities that had settled throughout Syria. In fact the Beirut Orphanage became a symbol of the support that the early and the later emigrants to the New World continued to provide to their homeland communities. In 1923, the orphanage and associated school were moved to a larger facility that had been specifically constructed for this purpose in the Musaitbeh district of Beirut. A larger facility was later constructed in Beirut in 1928. The T.M.S association continued its support in the succeeding decades through its expanding branches in the United States. The archival records indicate that the community in America was also supplying funds for the construction of the orphanage in Deir al-Za‘faran as well as the one in Adana.

5.6.4 Exploring the Prospects of Foreign Aid

In the 1920s, the Church made an attempt to seek financial aid from the Anglican Church and from the Protestant Episcopal Church of America. In the case of the Anglican Church, the aim was to bring some life into the Syrian Patriarchate Education Fund, which had been established following the visit of Patriarch Peter III to England in 1874 to1875, and which had been dormant since the early 1890s (see Chapter Three). My search through the Church’s archival material has uncovered three letters that are relevant to the question under discussion.

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810 See Chapter Six.
The letters clearly show the lack of real willingness to help a devastated Oriental church that had fallen victim to unspeakable aggression.

The first archival letter\textsuperscript{812} is a reply from Priest Arthur Henry Finn, writing on behalf of the Education Committee that was associated with the Fund. Finn’s letter appears to be in reply to a letter from Patriarch Elias III dated “1\textsuperscript{st} Tishreen in the past year”.\textsuperscript{813} Finn’s letter attaches a bank draft for 181 pounds and sixteen shillings, marking the closing of nearly thirty year old dormant account. Further, as would be noted from the text, he also requested an acknowledgement of a rather obscure nature listing “precisely the names of the children and of the teacher who will profit by the good will of the Christians in our country …” A facsimile of this letter is included in Appendix B, Document P1100039.

The second archival letter\textsuperscript{814} is from the Archbishop of Canterbury addressed to Patriarch Elias III in Constantinople. The letter, dated March 2, 1921, is in response to a detailed letter from the Patriarch dated February 16, 1921. The texts of the two letters are given hereinafter in chronological order.

i) The letter by Patriarch Elias III dated 16\textsuperscript{th} February 1921.\textsuperscript{815}

The patriarch provides a brief account of the losses incurred by his community in Turkey and alludes to the attempts made by his deputy to the Paris Peace Conference to meet with Lord Curzon. He expresses appreciation for the assurance given by a representative of the British government that “the interests of (our) nation will not be lost sight of when the moment for their consideration arrives.” The Patriarch then proceeds to ask the Archbishop to mediate at the London Conference that was about to be held, for help in the restoration of churches that had been destroyed, and in advancing the call for the security of his community in the Turkish territories. This was in essence a request that embodied faith in the addressee’s ability as well as the willingness to act.

ii) The response by the Archbishop of Canterbury came in a letter dated March 2, 1921.\textsuperscript{816} In his response the Archbishop of Canterbury states that he himself has no “direct power or voice” but hopes that Britain will do all that it can to aid the Syriac Orthodox. However, he

\textsuperscript{812} Archival Document P1100039.
\textsuperscript{813} Finn’s letter does not specify which “Tishreen”, Tishreen Awal (October), or Tishreen Thani (November).
\textsuperscript{814} Archival Document No. P110043. A facsimile of the letter is given in Appendix B
\textsuperscript{815} Letter of Patriarch Elias III to Davidson, 16\textsuperscript{th} February 1921 (Davidson 299. f. 124).
\textsuperscript{816} Archival Document No. P110043
fears that such help may be more limited in scope than he would have liked due to “graver and more anxious” conditions. His reply carried political overtones that related to questions about the minorities in Turkey that were still being raised in the Paris Peace Conference at that time. However, coming after similar responses over the previous thirty years, it caused the Syrian Orthodox Church to be apprehensive about any meaningful future interaction with the English Church in the future.

Despite the above, Archbishop Barsoum made one more attempt at seeking aid in 1927 on his way to America. This time, too, the response was negative, as can be gauged from the strongly worded letter Barsoum addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury:

The ordinary expression “I will try”, and “I am sorry”, and “I regret” intimidate me. I regret very much that our church cannot engage the attention of the Episcopal Church and my three missions in 1913, 1920 and 1927 have been unsuccessful. . .

The third archival letter, with the text below, is dated July 25, 1928, and addressed to Patriarch Elias III from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. The letter was a reply to one delivered by Archbishop Severius Ephram Barsoum while on a pastoral and academic visit to the United States. Here, John G. Murray, the Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America expresses a desire for close contact with the Syriac Orthodox church appreciating that its “long history of good works and sad martyrdom of your church and people has always won us to a desire for a closer contact with a Church that could be humble in prosperity and patient under adversity.”

Yet the Presiding Bishop of the named church regrets that the request for help was being made “when the country is facing grave financial difficulties.”

This response, coming from a prominent church in the richest country of the world, in replying to a request for help from the smallest church in the Middle East, one that had been devastated by massacres and displacement, is remarkable for its apparent lack of real concern. Taken together with the responses from the Anglican Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church came to the inevitable conclusion that, as a church which had lived in complete reliance on itself throughout its long challenging history, it would have to continue to do so in the modern age as well.

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817 Letter of Barsoum to Davidson, 19th May 1928 (J. A. Douglas)
818 Archival Document No. P1100127. For a facsimile see Appendix B.
Archbishop Barsoum, who had also seen firsthand the attitude of the West regarding the issues relating to the Syriac Christians at the Paris Peace Conference, would have likely not been surprised by these responses. Most likely it would have been Patriarch Elias III, who might have had more faith and hope for help from the Western Christians, who would have initiated and pressed for these attempts in seeking help. It was he who having noted the outcome would have likely been the one most disappointed with the reality.

5.7 Re-Building Church Institutions
The Church lost 155 monks and priests and seven bishops and vicars (see Table) in the massacres, not counting over ninety thousand faithful victims by the war. In the aftermath of these massacres and mass displacement of the survivors, Patriarch Elias III moved to re-assign the survivors of his clergy for services in various areas of settlements in Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon, in addition to attending to the remnant beleaguered communities in Turkey. As a first step, he ordained nine bishops in the period from 1923 to 1927, a great many within such a limited period.

It was also important to re-establish some form of training facility for the much needed new ecclesiastic cadre. Attention for this turned to the orphanage school in Beirut, described before, as one potential source for student candidates. The Diocese of Aleppo was revitalized to provide help in the settlement of the new immigrants who flocked to this diocese, particularly those who had recently been arriving from Urfa. St. Ephrem’s Church, which, as noted earlier, had been constructed in Hay al-Sulaymania in the City by the benefactor Saleem ‘Azar, was consecrated by Patriarch Elias III on December 7, 1925. The seminary provided Syriac language and liturgical teaching. Yuhanna Dolabani, who had distinguished himself

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819 This list of the ordained bishops appeared in Al-Majallah al-Batriarkiyyah (The Patriarchal Journal) No. 1, 1933, p. 6. The list comprised the following:
Gregorius Gibrael on March 12, 1923, for Jerusalem,
Qlimis Yuhanna on March 12, 1923, for Deir Mor Matta,
Iwanis Yuhanna on September 24, 1923 for the Seat (Deir al-Za‘faran),
Yulius Elias on September 24, 1923, as General Bishop,
Timotheos Tuma on October 1, 1923, for Tur Abdin,
Dionysius Michael on October 11, 1926 for Kottayam, India,
Diosqorius Tuma on October 11, 1926, for the Cannaniates, India,
Timotheos Augin on May 2, 1927 for Kundnat-India, and
Qorilos Michael on October 11, 1926, as General Bishop.
820 *Al-Hikmat*, 1927/1928, II, No.1, p. 44; Athanasius Barsoum, pp. 48, 49.
from an early age in promoting the Syriac language, was assigned to administer the start of this school, initially in Adana and then in Beirut.

5.7.1 The Dawn of a New Freedom – Welcoming the Patriarch in Mosul

Patriarch Elias III moved his temporary patriarchal seat from Jerusalem to Mosul in early 1928. Church-based literature does not offer an explanation of the reason for this move. The journey, which started on December 16, 1927, turned out to be an extensive pastoral tour that included Haifa, Beirut, Zahle, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, Deir al-Zur, and Sinjar\textsuperscript{821} before ending in Mosul on January 6, 1928. Patriarch Elias III was given a tumultuous reception as he entered Iraq coming from Syria, and then proceeded to Mosul. The freedom of public expression demonstrated by the reception he received upon his entry to Mosul contrasted sharply with the atmosphere of oppression that was prevailing in Turkey at that time, and may be worth noting. The following is my translation of part of the account of this reception, given in \textit{Al-Hikmat}. \textsuperscript{822}

When the news of his beatitude’s arrival in Sinjar January 4, 1928 reached Mosul, the whole of the \textit{taifah} (community) prepared to welcome him in a manner that befitted his esteemed status. For this purpose it sent a welcoming delegation to Sinjar that consisted of the scholar, Ni’mmat Allah Denno, and Messrs Stephan Jerjis, Khadhouri Abdul Noor, Nassir Sarsam and others. On the morning of January 6 the entourage of his holiness departed Sinjar. Additional welcoming notables joined the entourage as it travelled towards Mosul, headed by Mor Athanasius Tuma Kassir, Archbishop of Mosul, priests, monks and dignitaries that included Dr. Abdul-Ahad Abdul Noor…. Before the entourage arrived in Tal-‘Afar,\textsuperscript{823} cars carrying delegates from other Christian \textit{tawaiif} arrived in Tal-‘Afar to join the entourage: Armenians, Chaldeans, Syrian Catholics and Protestants.\textsuperscript{824} Upon reaching the outskirts of Mosul, his Holiness was transferred to an automobile that was specifically provided to carry him ceremoniously into the City. His vehicle was followed by 217 other vehicles, followed by many on horses and pedestrians. A large police contingent was provided to facilitate the ceremonial procession through the city. More than one thousand students, male and female, holding olive branches,

\textsuperscript{821} A town in north-western Iraq, near the Syrian border, around 125 kms from Mosul.
\textsuperscript{822} \textit{Al-Hikmat}, Vol II, 1927/1928, p. 155-162, and 211.
\textsuperscript{823} A town on the route to Mosul located around 70 kms from it.
\textsuperscript{824} In 1915 -1916, when Elias was the Archbishop of Mosul, he welcomed and provided assistance to the survivors of the massacres who were arriving in Mosul and its environs on a daily basis at that time, irrespective of their denominational affiliation. The Armenians, who suffered most, were particularly appreciative of that help, an appreciation that they exhibited during the reception, \textit{Al-Hikmat}, Vol II, 1927/1928, p. 161.
deacons in their white vestments, and scouts beating on drums, stood on both sides of the road leading to the church, as priests carrying a large cross welcomed his holiness as he entered the church.

The richness of the reception and the sense of freedom felt and enjoyed by those taking part was in sharp contrast with the oppressive mood that had prevailed in Turkey for a long time. The freedom displayed in Mosul with its conservative Muslim background was equally present or even more pronounced, throughout Syria, Lebanon and Palestine at that time.

5.7.2 Patriarch Elias III in Mosul then in India

In his as yet still temporary office in Mosul, Patriarch Elias III remained in particularly close constant contact with Jerusalem, where St Mark’s Monastery was becoming an important ecclesiastic centre. Priest-monk Dolabani had moved to it from Beirut in late November/early December 1927. In Jerusalem, Dolabani was assisted by priest monk Samuel Yashu, who had been appointed an administrator at the monastery.

Dolabani took an active part and directed the cultural activities at the Monastery: teaching at its seminary, editing and re-issuing school curricula for the dioceses, re-printing of liturgical books, and contributing articles for publication in the Al-Hikmat journal. Al-Hikmat, a religious, literary and historical monthly review, first appeared in 1913/1914. It was printed at, and issued from, Deir al-Za‘faran. However, it stopped being issued during the War years. The conditions that prevailed after the War delayed its resumption until 1927, when, with encouragement from Patriarch Elias III, it was re-issued from Jerusalem, with its second year being 1927/1928. Earlier, one of the two printing presses at Deir al-Za‘faran was imported and re-installed at St. Mark’s Monastery. This printing facility proved vital in printing liturgical material requested by the different dioceses. Patriarchal encyclicals were

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825 As per Archival Document J-0349, dated November 23, 1927 and J-0351, dated January 16, 1928 (Gregorian).
826 As per Archival Document J-0348, dated February 11, 1927.
827 As per Archival Document J-0353, dated June 12, 1928 and 0354 dated July 10, 1928.
828 As per Archival Document J-0364, dated October 21, 1929.
829 As per Archival Document J-0363, dated February 11, 1927. In this instance Husoye and Bar Ma‘dani books were requested.
830 As per title page of journal.
831 Al-Hikmat, Vol. II, St. Mark’s Syrian Orthodox Convent (Monastery), Jerusalem, 1927/1928.
832 I was able to see this long retired printing press during my visit in search of archival documents at the Monastery in July 2013.
printed and sent out, thus marking the first time the patriarch was able to address his flock on certain occasions, particularly the pre-Lent Message.

5.7.3 The Mar Matti Synod of 1930

One of the initial important landmarks on the road to revival was the convening of a synod to regulate the life in the church and to encourage lay participation in its affairs. This took place in 1930 in Mar Matti Monastery near Mosul. Although synods had prior to that been convened, they were usually for the purpose of the election of a new patriarch or for enacting the occasional law. Further, due to travel difficulties, they were not usually fully attended. Saka notes that important prior synods had been: the Synod held in the Monastery of Mar Barsoumo in 1555 during the patriarchate of Athanasius VI (1138-1166); and the Synod of Hitakh in 1523 during the patriarchate of Abdullah I (1521-1567).

The Mar Matti Synod, which was convened over the period October 11 to 25, 1930 Julian (October 24 to November 7, 1930 Gregorian), passed 41 resolutions that covered various facets of church activities and clergy duties. It also enacted a general parish (lay) council law to regulate the shared responsibilities between parish bishops and the elected representatives of the community. In addition to bishops, the Mar Matti Synod was attended by lay dignitaries that included representatives from the dioceses of Mosul, Deir Mar Matti, Syria, Aleppo, Jerusalem, and America. These were: N’imatallah Denno, Abdul Ahad Abdulnour, Elias Sha’ya, Antonious Khoury, Khacho Jirjis and Abboud Hazo.

Some of the Synod resolutions of particular interest here are the following:

- The need to coordinate between the liturgies adopted by various regions that had seen significant divergence over the decades and centuries. A committee was formed for this arduous task that comprised Aphram Barsoum, Yuhanna Dolabani and Ni’matallah Denno (Article 4).
- Recognition of the need to work on documenting by writing and sound the Beth Gaz (the traditional melodies of the various historical schools of Edessa, Mardin and Tikrit (Tigrit)) (Article 5).
- A decision to print various liturgical books and to perform careful translation of their contents to Arabic (Article 6).
- Emphasis on the teaching of the Syriac language in Church-run schools (Article 16).

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834 Ishak Saka, Al-suryān īmān wa-ḥuẓūra, Vol. IV, Aleppo, pp. 142-144.
835 Ibib.
• Various articles to modernize church prayers and to encourage lay participation in church affairs.

5.7.4 Patriarch Elias III Terminates his Journey in India

Not long after the conclusion of the Mar Mattai Synod, Patriarch Elias III embarked on a journey to India. The journey, which commenced from Mosul on February 6, 1931, was in response to an invitation by the British Viceroy in India to resolve an outstanding recurring issue of ecclesiastic leadership (see Chapter Three). Patriarch Elias III was accompanied by Bishops Abachi, priest monks Qiriaqos and Yashu of Jerusalem, Zakaria Shakir, his secretary, and Elias Khadouri, a lawyer. In the course of that journey, while on a difficult mission trying to get peace between warring factions he suffered a heart attack and died on February 18, 1932. He was the first Syrian Orthodox patriarch to die in India. He was buried at St. Stefans’ Church in Maninkara.

Patriarch Elias III led the Syrian Orthodox Church community through the most troubling period in several centuries in its history. He was endowed with tremendous wisdom and compassion, two qualities that were most needed in those troubling times. With these qualities he prepared the church for the next stage of its modern history and renaissance. This next stage demanded additional qualities: a more ambitious vision and greater resolve. This is the subject of the next chapter.

5.8 Concluding Remarks

1. Syrian Orthodoxy, already weakened by centuries of decline and over a century of conversions to Catholicism and Protestantism was, along with other Christians, the victim of what has been increasingly regarded as a genocide that eradicated nearly half of its population in the Middle East. This was a ratio that was higher than that suffered by the other Syriac Christians. As a result, many doubted whether Syrian Orthodoxy would survive these colossal losses, particularly given that such doubts existed even before the genocide. Thus, as the first centennial commemoration of Sayfo approaches, the story of the survival of Syrian Orthodoxy remains remarkable.

2. Unaided by the outside world well before Sayfo (see Chapter Three), Syrian Orthodoxy fared no better after Sayfo, when it was attempting to heal the wounds of its stricken

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836 See Chapter Three.
communities, all despite appeals for external help. The reasons for the absence of help were likely, once again, essentially that this group was too small to be politically significant or too unyielding to the pressure to join a Western Christian order.

3. While the losses of the Syrian Orthodox were proportionally larger than those of the other Syriac churches and communities, there was an element of paradox in what transpired. This was in the fact that, in the hour of need, her “sisters” who had been “protégées” of Western orders shared its fate in the sword unaided by their protectors. This must have given the stricken Syrian Orthodox a lift of morale to some extent in that, in spite of their weakness at the end, they were not alone: it was Christianity itself, not any particular denomination within it that determined their fate before the sword.

4. A further paradox may be perceived from the fact the deportation and exodus from the homeland offered the refugees, once they overcame the initial shock and were somewhat settled, a climate of safety they had always lacked. The new environment presented the newcomers with an opportunity for revival that would not have been available had they remained in the oppressive homeland environment in Ottoman Turkey.

5. The proceedings and the outcome of the Paris Peace Conference were essentially focused on the victors dividing up the war gains among themselves. Under this climate all hopes for justice for the victims of the genocide and for the rights of the survivors were relegated to low priorities that effectively rendered them meaningless.

6. In the immediate post-war period, the Syrian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Elias III and Archbishop Aphram Barsoum, in their different ways, laboured to provide compassionate leadership and demonstrated resolve to commence a period recovery, revival and renaissance. Both were far-sighted leaders who were aware of the constraints of their immediate environment and proceeded wisely forward.

7. Patriarch Elias III, very much aware of the plight of his people who were still living in Turkey, followed a policy of accommodation and submission towards the new Turkish leadership. Barsoum, then Archbishop of Syria and Lebanon, had already concluded that the future of his church and people lay within the Arab social and cultural environment to which it had contributed such a great deal many centuries earlier. This was consistent with his instinctive pro-Arab nationalist background and leaning. It was also reinforced by his negative experience in dealing with Western Powers in Paris and with Western churches.
CHAPTER SIX
SYRIAN ORTHODOXY AT THE THRESHOLD OF ITS SECOND RENAISSANCE

6.1 General
The twelfth and the thirteenth centuries have generally been recognized as forming an era of “Syriac renaissance.” That era witnessed the literary output of three outstanding Syrian Orthodox scholars: Dionysius Bar Salibi (d.1075), Jacob Bar Shakko (Al-Bartilli) (d.1241) and Gregory Bar Hebraeus (d.1286). This period also bequeathed to us two important chronicles, one by the renowned historian Michael the Syrian (d.1199) and one that came to be identified as the Anonymous 1234, largely believed to have been written and completed in that year by a monk from the historically famous Syriac City of Edessa.

In the fourteenth century the Syrian Orthodox and other Oriental Christians entered a period of over five centuries of hardship and decline that terminated with the tragic events of World War I for a great many, including in particular the Syrian Orthodox. Despite these tragedies the Syrian Orthodox witnessed a remarkable revival during the first half of the twentieth century which in turn paved the way for a greater revival in the succeeding decades. In Chapter Five consideration was given to the rehabilitation of those communities that had been devastated by the events of the War in Anatolia. In this chapter attention will be focused on studying the revival, which came to be reviewed by many as a second renaissance. This revival had two aspects: one related to the Church and the other to its community. Given their historical inseparable identity and fate, the advances experienced by one branch had a direct impact on, and formed an incentive to, the other. Despite this positive interaction each of the two grew under its own specific potentials and emerging personalities. Both the church, as an institution, and the community made major steps forward from the early 1930s on, despite the economic and the socio-political difficulties caused by the two World Wars, which had significant impact on the pace of recovery. In the course of this revival the Church in question made education of its clergy a major priority. Other priorities included the forging of a continuing bond with its communities and the review of liturgical material to better address the needs of modernity. A consequence of the revival is that the Church was able to shed the

839 The number 1234 appearing in the name refers to the date of the last entry in the chronicle.
stigma of backwardness that had been attached to it, particularly over the previous century, and that had been exploited by others to apostatize its followers to join other branches of Western Christianity. The Church’s success in these endeavours enabled it, by the turn of the second half of the twentieth century, to re-establish itself among its followers and to shed the debilitating stigmas of the past. The momentum generated by the first generation of reformers continued in the following decades to mark a recovery that, according to the late Patriarch Zakka I Iwas, had not been matched since the days of Bar Hebraeus in the thirteenth century. In this chapter attention is paid to the narrative of this revival that Syrian Orthodox came to view as a second renaissance.

The beginnings of the revival were humble and the first steps were barely noticeable flickering lights that had appeared over the horizon during the years that immediately preceded World War I. Those beginnings were characterized by working out an internal millet constitution (Nizamnameh), printing a few liturgical books and attempting to manage the few schools that the church had finally been able to establish. By all optimistic accounts, the Church in Anatolia was at that point at least half a century behind that of the Armenians living in eastern Anatolia, and even further behind in relation to the Armenians and the Greeks living in Istanbul. In Mosul, a traditional stronghold of Syrian Orthodoxy, Christians were in a better cultural environment than their counterparts in Anatolia, but were still generally behind the Chaldeans, who had had several decades of prior Latin missionary cultural and economic help, which put them well in the lead in professional and cultural achievements, such as in journalism and printing. In Mardin, an important Syrian Orthodox stronghold, the intellectual fervour of the years immediately preceding World War I resulted in the issue of the first literary journal, *Al-Hikmat*, in the summer of 1914. In Diyarbakir there were a few signs of enlightenment too. However, the flickering lights in Anatolia were soon to be extinguished by the advent of Sayfo.

Given this state of affairs it is reasonable to pose the following question: How did the Syrian Orthodox Church, the smallest of the indigenous Oriental Churches, already exhausted by safety issues with neighbours over the several previous decades, and by resisting alignment with the West for more than one century still survive the additional existential threat during

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Sayfo and still revive? What is additionally remarkable is that this revival did not come as a result of aid from others, for, as has been shown in Chapter Five, attempts to garner the help of Western Christians - both British and American - after the War proved fruitless. Thus, revival came about by drawing on the Church’s own resources. If this was the case, what were the main ingredients of this revival, and what were the catalysts? Who were the main actors in the vanguard of the healing process, which also ushered the Church over the threshold into new renaissance? This chapter will attempt to answer these questions.

6.2 Motivations for Revival

There are four factors which come to the fore in considering what motivated the revival: a number of inherited characteristics of the church in question; its inclusion of a large following in India, which conferred upon it a “universal” dimension; its exiled communities from Turkey now being in a new supportive social environment; and, last but not least, the rise of a core of motivated reformers under effective leadership. These factors are now considered in some detail.

6.2.1 Motivations Derived from Inherited Characteristics

a) The Church’s Historical Identity with Antioch

The Syrian Orthodox, as well as other West Syriacs (the Antiochian Orthodox, the Melkite Catholic, the Syrian Catholic and the Syrian Maronite) take pride in identifying themselves with Antioch, the City, and the historical Church of Antioch, even though Antioch was lost to all of them over the centuries. This city, which was the capital of Greater Syria, was one of the three capitals of the Roman Empire. More importantly, it was where the first adherents to the new faith were called Christians. Further, it was where Peter the Apostle preached in 34 CE, and where he stayed until 41 CE. The Syrian Orthodox consider Peter the Apostle to be the first Bishop of Antioch. When Peter left the City on a preaching mission, he appointed two bishops to manage the affairs of the new faithful: Aphadius, who was assigned to the

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842 Acts of the Apostles 11:26
844 Ishak Saka, *Kanīṣatī al-suryāniyya*, p. 126; Zakka I Iwas, *The Syrian Orthodox Church at a Glance*, p. 27.
Christians of pagan origin, and Ignatius the Illuminator for the Christians of Jewish origin.\textsuperscript{845} Upon the passing of Aphadus, Ignatius of Antioch became the sole Bishop of Antioch.\textsuperscript{846} It was Ignatius the Illuminator who gave the Church of Antioch the appellation “The Universal Church” for it included both Jews and the uncircumcised.\textsuperscript{847} The Church of Antioch was one of four Churches that were recognised with specific geographic jurisdiction by the Council of Nicea of 325 CE, the others being the Churches of Rome, of Alexandria and of Jerusalem. Constantinople was added by the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE. The Bishop of Antioch had jurisdiction over Asia. As a mark of reverence to Ignatius, all Syrian Orthodox patriarchs starting with Bin Waheeb ai-Mardini (1293-1333) have assumed the ecclesiastic title “Ignatius.”\textsuperscript{848} This adoption provided continuity to church identity over the centuries.

\textit{b) A Church that is Heir to a Venerable Semitic/Aramaic Tradition}

What helped preserve the morale of this church throughout the centuries of hardship, adversity and historical minority was the sense that this church was heir to a past glory; and that its church fathers and followers excelled in the pursuit of culture. Some of that culture was secular, which, in common with similar efforts by other Christian scholars at that time, was utilized in the transfer of Hellenic and Greek philosophy and science, to help build the nascent Arab civilization. Some of the growing culture was liturgical, which the church did not leave on the shelves but incorporated into its own liturgy. Today’s liturgy still bears strong witness to this.

The Christianity of Antioch was Semitic with clear Jewish roots. It was “greatly influenced by the faith that Jesus and his disciples and their early followers preached and practiced.”\textsuperscript{849} With their continued attachment to their Semitic roots, away from Greek influence, the Syrian Orthodox “eventually alone inherited this ancient liturgy of Antioch, which since the schism has been used only in its Syriac form.”\textsuperscript{850} Thus, as Fortescue states with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{845} Eusebius of Caesarea, \textit{Church History}, 3:22.
\item \textsuperscript{846} Ishak Saka, \textit{Kanîsatî al-suryâniya}, p. 126.
\item \textsuperscript{847} Severus Yacoub Tuma, \textit{Tārīḵ al-kanîša al-suryâniyya Anṭakiyya} (History of the Syrian Church of Antioch), Vol. I. Beirut 1953, p. 77.
\item \textsuperscript{848} Ishak Saka, \textit{Kanîsatî al-suryâniya}, p. 166.
\item \textsuperscript{849} John Joseph, \textit{Muslim-Christian Relations}, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{850} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
reference to the “Jacobites”: “so the rite of Antioch, once so mighty in the East, became the speciality of one little sect only.” 851

The inclusion of the poetry of the fourth century St. Ephrem the Syrian and of the fifth/sixth century Jacob of Sarug in the daily liturgy continues to bear witness to this and acts as a reminder of past glory. The scholarship of these and others, such as Philoxenus of Mabug (d. 523), and Moshe bar Kepha (d. 903) signified an early development of an indigenous Syriac exegetic culture that was increasingly independent of Greek thought. Further, while the Church was under a minority status under Islam, its scholars and historians Jacob of Edessa, Dionysius of Tell Mahre, and - in the late Abbasid period, early Mongol period, the exegetist, historian and scholar of Dionysius bar Salibi, Michael the Syrian, and Gregory bar Hebraeus adorned the pages of history of this small church with an outstanding cultural heritage. 852 The culture which the Syriac fathers developed was Semitic/Aramaic, which reflected the roots of Christianity in Palestine. Thus despite their minority status, the Syrian Orthodox were aware that they carried within them the DNA of a venerable Semitic/Aramaic culture, which became one of the main inspirations for their revival. 853

c) A Paradigm of Martyrdom

The Syrian Orthodox Church, in common with other Oriental churches, inherited martyrdom, as a paradigm of an exemplary mode of sacrifice for the sake of belief, from the early martyrs of the Church starting with Stephanos, Christendom’s first martyr. It was again in Antioch where Ignatius accepted his fate as martyr when he left for Rome upon orders by the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117) 854 to stand on trial knowing that the likely outcome would leave him to be devoured by the lions. Thus, if Peter conferred upon Antioch the robe of unwavering faith 855 by being its first head, it was Ignatius who conferred upon it the robe of martyrdom, and who, thus, initiated a paradigm of willingness and aspiration of its forefathers to pay

854 Christine Chaillot, The Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and All the East, 1998, p. 22.
855 “The Rock upon which I built my Church said Jesus.”
whatever price was needed for the sake of faith. The reverence of martyrdom is widely reflected in the Syrian Orthodox liturgy, and specifically in a canon that is often recited by which the martyrs of early Christendom are remembered.\footnote{The Holy Qurbano: the Canon of the Virgin Mary and the Saints.}

d) A paradigm of Survivability under Persecution and Minority Status

The post-Chalcedonian history conferred upon the Syrian Orthodox Church the robe of endurance under Byzantine persecution. This persecution is abundantly attested to in the literature.\footnote{Adrian Fortescue, The Lesser Eastern churches, p. 327; John Joseph, Muslim-Christian Relations, p. 10.} As Bas ter Haar Romeny, et al. note “[T]hose who had been persecuted by the Byzantines assumed the role of martyrs and were remembered as such. These memories formed the basis of a historical conscience.”\footnote{Bas ter Haar Romeny, et al., “The formation of a Communal Identity among West Syrian Christians: Results and Conclusions of the Leiden Project”, in Church History and Religious Culture, Vol. 89, No. 1-3, 2009, pp. 46-47.} During the same period the fate of the Church and of its communities under the Sassanids fared no better. They suffered at the hands of Sassanids not only for being of a different faith from that of the king, but for following the Church of Antioch which was located in the Roman enemy territory. Matters became more dire after the Council of Ephesus (341 EC) due to the animosity that arose between the followers of the two churches in the Sassanid Empire. Thus, the Syrian Orthodox, who had been a minority in Iraq relative to their coreligionist Church of the East, became subject to animosity by those coreligionists as well.\footnote{John Joseph, Muslim-Christian Relations, p. 5.}

The relief that the Syrian Orthodox obtained following the Islamic conquest was only partial and at best temporary. Under the new freedom, which lasted nearly two centuries, it enjoyed equality with other Christians (i.e., Rum and Church of the East). However, many of the succeeding Islamic rulers gradually took all Christians, the Syrian Orthodox included, back to the status of infidels. During this period the Church shrank in size and its churches and monasteries were frequently sacked. However, the church still managed to survive because of the immunity against dissolution, which it had acquired over the centuries.

The minority position of the Christians as dhimmis under successive Islamic rules brought all Christians under one umbrella of equal status. However, the Syrian Orthodox constituted a numerical minority within the dhimmis, a paradigm under which they continued to live. They
learned the skills of survival as a minority: self-reliance, prudence and allegiance to their church. The *millet* system which was adopted by the successive Islamic rulers particularly in the format adopted by the Ottomans, helped the Syrian Orthodox survive in what was otherwise an intolerant environment. In particular, it helped retain the bond of those communities which were thinly scattered over eastern Anatolia, Northern Iraq and Syria.

In the late Ottoman period, Syrian Orthodoxy, though becoming severely weakened by conversion to Catholicism and to Protestantism, remained resolute in its independence of and resistance to Western pressures. In 1909 the British Consul in Mosul alludes to this resilience quality:

> The Old Syrians or Jacobites are one of the most ancient and interesting of the Eastern Churches. In spite of persecution and comparative poverty they have stoutly maintained their independence for sixteen centuries, steadily refusing to sacrifice their convictions and freedoms for the advantages offered by Rome. When it is remembered that these advantages would include payment of the Priests and Bishops, free education for their children and, above all, the steady protection of their interests by the French Government, this unbending attitude is the more remarkable in a relatively small community.  

*e) Responsibility for a Large Following in India*

One of the significant factors that helped the beleaguered church promote the will to survive and revive, was its feeling of responsibility towards its large following in India, a following that was several times greater than its following in the Middle East. This added sense of responsibility for what was at stake gave rise to an added sense of determination to overcome hardship and to forge ahead on the road to recovery. It was in the context of this feeling of responsibility and attachment that Patriarch Elias III headed for India in 1931, even though his communities in the Middle East were still in the midst of recovery from the results of Sayfo.

*f) The Venerable Historical Standing of the Patriarch among his People*

The church communities held their patriarch in high esteem because of his spiritual and historical position as Patriarch of Antioch. He was also the chief of their *millet*, a corporate status that endowed a significant temporal authority. However, one of the main reasons for

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attachment between the patriarch as leader and his people was the manner in which he was appointed and the simplicity of his daily life. He lived as one of the people for the people. He lived in a monastery surrounded by monks, not in a palace surrounded by nobility. His life was as endangered as their own was. Just as their towns and villages were sacked, so was his abode. ⁸⁶¹

The Syrian Orthodox patriarchs did not come from a particular tribe or family, as was in fact the case with their neighbours in the Church of the East. The patriarch rose up the ecclesiastic ladder from being a junior monk to a bishop, and thence was voted by a synod to the patriarchy. Many joined a monastery as young orphans or were dedicated by their parents to serve the Altar. There was no monopoly on geographic provenance: Patriarch Peter III was brought in as an orphan from Mosul; Patriarch Abdul Masih, again an orphan, was from Qalat Marah, a village near Mardin; Patriarch Abdullah was from a small town, Saddad, in central Syria; Patriarch Elias III came from Mardin; while Patriarch Aphram Barsoum travelled as an eighteen year old young man by himself from Mosul to answer his vocation in Deir al Za‘faran.

The patriarch lived an austere life, but was deeply respected and revered by his people. The enormous corpus of letters from the Deir al-Za‘faran and Mardin Collections (see Chapter Two) bear clear witness to this. At the hours of need throughout history, and there were so many of them, he was always one of them, living among them, fully sharing their sorrows and fighting for their survival, well-being and dignity. This bond between patriarch and people was a crucial factor in preserving the integrity of the church in the face of the many historical adversities that it encountered.

The attributes noted above provided the potential revivalists with a sense of purpose and duty to uphold these historical honours, as well as with the resolve and the encouragement that the task demanded.

6.2.2 Congenial and Supportive New Environment
One of the main factors that aided the revival was the nature of the environment in which the Syrian Orthodox communities found themselves following their exile from Anatolia. The

⁸⁶¹ See Southgate, Narrative of a Visit to the Syrian, pp. 194-213 on the simplicity of the patriarchal setting in Deir al-Za‘faran, and p. 225 on the insecurity of that monastery. See also Parry, pp. 61-63.
majority that settled in Greater Syria (present day Syria, Lebanon and Palestine) enjoyed the safety and the tolerance offered by the people of these lands with whom they had shared a largely peaceful history many centuries before. Further more, the newcomers greatly benefited from being in the congenial cultural environment that these countries offered at that time. Syria had been in the forefront of Middle Eastern cultural revival and thus offered the new immigrants remarkable opportunities that were completely unknown to them in their previous homeland in Anatolia. Those who immigrated to Northern Iraq settled largely around Mosul and benefited from the educational and cultural opportunities that Mosul offered at that time.

Although the cultural status of Iraq at the end of World War I was markedly behind that of Syria, Iraq embarked on major steps in the field of education, beginning in the early days of the British Mandate in 1921 and continuing after the declaration of full independence in 1931. The yearning for revival that Iraq witnessed was most noticeable in Mosul, which had a tradition of being in the forefront of cultural revival in that country. This tradition had been cultivated during the Jalili period (1726-1834) and was subsequently largely maintained by learned personalities and in the houses of learning, both Muslim and Christian. In the course of the nineteenth century, Mosul benefited in no small measure from the missionary schools that had been established by the Dominican fathers as well as from the traditional Muslim houses of learning. Those houses of learning were privately sponsored and run, entirely outside the State’s scope of interest, by prominent families that were reputed for their learned status, particularly in the Jalili period. These important steps in promoting literacy and appreciation for the arts and other facets of culture were supported by the relatively early introduction of the printing press and journalism in Mosul.\(^\text{862}\)

Following World War I and particularly following the attainment of independence, the drive for better education in Iraq was given primary attention. This drive was spearheaded by Sati‘al- Husari, a Syrian educator who had accompanied Prince Faisal to Iraq. Al-Husari promoted a tradition of prioritizing public education. This tradition remained a priority throughout all succeeding regimes. What was particularly important was the fact that the general public of all strands of society came to share in this vision, so that education became the aim of all, rich and poor. As stated before in Chapter Two, Iraqi Christians distinguished

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themselves from the beginning in several aspects of learning: medicine, education, engineering and industrial development. They emerged as active participants who were usually at the forefront in most of professional fields. From the early 1920s and well into the 1960s, Christian teachers and doctors and other professionals provided much needed service in the Shi’ite towns and villages around the marshes of Southern Iraq. The newly exiled immigrants, who found themselves in this active education-driven environment, soon became active participants in it.

The recovery of the exiled Syrian Orthodox communities in Syria was somewhat slower. This was likely due to prolonged French colonial rule, as well as to the more limited economic resources in comparison with Iraq. Such more limited resources would have also likely been overstretched in the northern border areas where most of the new settlers lived. Yet despite these difficulties the new environment in which the exiles found themselves, whether in Greater Syria or in Iraq, offered opportunities for education and advancement that they had not known previously.

The educational and employment opportunities that independent Iraq offered its Christian citizens must be duly acknowledged. This attitude of fair treatment based on qualification contrasts sharply with that of the Republic of Turkey, where the Syriac Christians did not even have minority rights. A couple of examples will demonstrate the traditional quest for learning in Mosul from Ottoman times and the encouragement the educated enjoyed in the post-Ottoman Iraq. This is a family story of two brothers, Abdulla and Daoud Kassir of a Syrian Orthodox family.863

The younger brother, Daoud (1892-1976) attended a Dominican primary school in Mosul and was sent by his parents, travelling by mule-drawn coach, to Lebanon, where he attended a secondary school in Brumana in the Lebanese mountain to the north of Beirut. In 1911 he was admitted to the American University of Beirut where he studied pharmacy and mathematics, graduating in 1918. He returned to Mosul, where he opened the first pharmacy in that city. He then obtained a scholarship for entry to Columbia University in 1926, where he obtained his Ph.D. in mathematics, after which he returned to Iraq where he participated in many educational pursuits. He was appointed as the first Dean of the College of Engineering in 1943,
a college that was very prestigious in the course of the early development of Iraq, benefiting from the fast-growing oil resources in that country.  

The story of his brother Abdulla (1887-1978) is even more adventurous and interesting and marks a legacy of endurance and achievement. Born in Mosul, Abdulla completed his elementary education at the Dominican Mission School in Mosul and his secondary education at the Evangelical School in Mardin. He then attended the School of Medicine at the American University of Beirut in 1909. In 1914, one year before completing his medical studies, he was conscripted into the Ottoman army. He was sent to serve as a doctor with the Third Division in the Caucasus near the refinery at Baku in Azerbaijan and then in the west of Armenia. He was shocked when he saw how “defenceless civilians became the victims of the revenge and lust of the Turkish soldier. With the instinct of a hunting dog they found the hiding places of the Armenians who had survived and made a cruel game of torturing them and knocking down the old men with the butt of their rifles. If they still moved, a kick in the chest with their heavy boots left them dead. They fell on women and silenced the screams of children, with a bullet.” When he questioned one of the soldiers about these acts he was told, “But their sons and brothers and fathers and cousins, the whole lot of dirty Armenians! They spied for the Russians; that is why we lost thousands of soldiers. They are Christians and wanted the Russians to win so that Anatolia would become a Christian country. We fight for Islam and will exterminate all Christian minorities.” Abdulla was glad they did not know he was a Christian. They heard his Arabic name “Abdulla Suleiman” and thought he was one of their religion.

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865 Maria Kassir, p. 91.
866 Ibid, p. 96.
867 Ibid, p. 97.
868 Ibid.
869 Ibid, pp. 97-98.
871 His name was, and still is, more commonly a Muslim name.
Abdulla joined his next assignment in Kut on the Tigris, 160 km to the southeast of Baghdad. There the British army comprising 13,000 English soldiers and Ghurkas from India under General Townsend had surrendered in April 1916. The Ottomans decided that the prisoners be taken to Istanbul and Abdulla was ordered to accompany them as a medical doctor. Under the already burning sun, many of the prisoners fell victim to heatstroke, cholera and malaria, diseases which the Ghurkhas resisted better than the English did. As a result only one third of the English and half of the Indians survived the journey.  

Upon completing his assignment, Abdulla was released from the army and was allowed to pursue his studies in Beirut, at the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University of Beirut) where he was awarded the degree of doctor of medicine in June 1917. He then returned to Iraq, where his first job was an appointment as Chief Medical Doctor of Baghdad Prisons. He then pursued his further studies in England from 1932 to 1934, when he was awarded a diploma as a paediatric specialist. Returning to Baghdad, he co-founded the Iraqi Children’s Protection Society and in 1943 he was appointed to the first Chair of Paediatric Medicine in the prestigious College of Medicine.  

While the case of the Kassir brothers is by no means usual, it does, taken with many others, demonstrate the Christians’ active pursuit of learning and the equitable opportunities that subsequent regimes in Iraq, appreciating these qualities, offered them in the course of their pursuit of education and employment. In this context it is perhaps also relevant to cite that when the University of Baghdad was established in 1958, from a large number of fully functioning individual colleges, its first president was Dr. Matti (Mathew) Akrawi, a Syrian Orthodox.  

6.2.3 The Role of the Church in the New Age  
The bond that was forged between church and community during the course of the revival is worth examining. In Europe, the link between church and community that had generally existed prior to the Age of Enlightenment began to wane by reason of the impact of modernity and the residual effects of wars. The French Revolution, which stressed the separation of state

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872 Maria Kassir, p. 101.  
873 http://www.geni.com/people/Abdullah-Kassir/6000000008007806499  
874 Their father had a large farming estate and was engaged in foreign trade. However, as per Maria Kassir (pp. 31-40) due to repeated poor harvest, Abdulla’s travel to Mardin was delayed three years.  
and church, provided a clear manifestation of the new era. In contrast, in the Middle East, where the Christians lived for centuries within the strictures of the pre-nineteenth century form of the Ottoman millet system, the church held, in addition to its religious duties, a central corporate position in relation to its community. In the new environment following WWI this changed, as members of the community became fully fledged citizens in the newly established Arab states. This development considerably reduced the temporal relationship between church and community. However, in this new social environment, the church remained as an essential ingredient of the individuals’ identity, whether in relation to the Muslim majority, or to other Christians. Even more important, the Church was a spiritual refuge to the stricken survivors who had witnessed the massacres of their beloved ones during Sayfo. These factors placed an added sense of duty and care and, at the same time, offered the Church the opportunity to extend its historical role as a faith base and guardian of the community.

6.2.4 The Rise of a Core of Motivated Reformers

From within the people of this impoverished church arose a core of three reformers who initiated and led the drive against a decline that had been entrenched for so long. The three, with Aphram Barsoum in the lead, also included Yuhanon/Yuhanna Dolabani and Ni‘matallah Denno/Dinno. With their concern and devotion they were able, by example, to inspire others to shed off the lethargy of the past and to turn what had been a debilitating decline into a revival. They promoted the education of the clergy and of the community, and worked to rejuvenate and reform liturgical practice to suit modern needs. But above all, by their devotion to scholarship, they raised the aspirations of their communities to emulate the glorious past and thus encouraged the rise of the enlightened ecclesiasts of next generations. Their initiatives resulted in the rise of succeeding generations of inspired scholars and reform-minded personalities who advanced the cause of revival. A brief account on first and next generations of reformers will follow shortly.

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876 In an interview I had with Patriarch Iwas in St Ephrem’s Seminary in Ma‘arat Sednaya (located 40 km to the northwest of Damascus) on August 26, 2007, Patriarch Iwas expressed what he considered to be his own opinion as well as what he considered to be the general consensus among his generation of Church scholars, that the names noted above formed the core of modern Syriac reformers. Ishak Saka, Al Suryan Iman wa Hathara, Vol. IV, p. 153, also includes Naom Faiq (see 6.4.4), Yacoub Saka (d. 1931), Paulus Behnam (see 6.4.5.2), Abdul-Ahad Tuma (Later Patriarch Jacob III) (see 6.4.5.1) and Moosa Shamani (d. 1976).
6.3 **Milestones of the Revival**

6.3.1 **Re-settlement of Refugees and Church Construction**

The re-settlement of refugees was clearly the first step on the long road towards rehabilitation and was covered in Chapter Five. Church construction closely followed re-settlement but, understandably, was constrained by limited financial resources. In the interim, make-shift churches were the answer.

6.3.2 **The Education of the Clergy**

Due to general illiteracy at the start of the twentieth century, this aspect of the revival presented one of the greatest challenges to reformers. As will be seen, Barsoum paid particular attention toward the establishment of a functioning seminary as a nucleus around which the education of the clergy could receive the necessary attention. This materialized by the establishment of the Ephremic Seminary in Zahle in 1939. Prior to this, the need for seminaries was met in limited scope by a number of local seminaries. The earliest was set up in Deir al-Za‘faran in 1911 by the efforts of Bishop Behnam Samarchi and the lay scholar Hanna Chiqi (the first editor of *al-Hikmat* journal in 1913). Dolabani was one of its teachers. The advent of WWI caused the closure of this seminary.\(^{877}\)

A second seminary was started in Mar Mattai Monastery near Mosul in 1923 under the initial guidance of Bishop Clemis Yuhanna Abachi. Its teachers included Yacoub Saka and Ni‘matallah Denno. This seminary continued until 1934 when the Zahle seminary was opened, but was re-opened from 1942 until 1946, when it was combined with the Ephremic Seminary that had been moved to Mosul that year. Another local seminary was set up in St. Mark’s Monastery in Jerusalem in 1928 with the encouragement of Patriarch Elias III. Yuhanna Dolabani and Murad Chiqi were amongst its teachers.\(^{878}\)

With the need for educated clergy being much greater than what one seminary or more could in practical terms supply, individual dioceses were encouraged throughout most of the twentieth century to engage school teachers, who in those days were in the vanguard of the educated, to join the priesthood. The fact that priests in the Syriac Orthodox Church are required to be married helped in attracting older experienced teachers to priesthood.

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\(^{878}\) Ibid, pp. 274-275, 280.
6.3.3 Church-Community Interaction in Education

The quest for the education of the clergy extended to an active participation of the church in the general education of future generations. Church-run schools existed before the turn of the twentieth century, but were limited in scope and attendance. A number of archival documents show school reports from the Mar Toma School in Mosul from 1921, although the school had been in existence probably since 1880.\(^879\) A second church-run school for boys was opened in Mosul in 1909. This was followed by a third for girls in the following year. These schools were subsequently incorporated into the government school system, but in deference to a request by the Church, they were granted a priority of offering their services of the Church communities. As a result, their curricula incorporated additional Christian faith-related material, as may be seen from school records.\(^880\) This pattern of church-community interaction in the field of education saw extensive application in the twentieth century throughout the region, albeit with certain fluctuations, depending on the policies of the government of the day. With careful attention being paid to teacher qualification, these schools generally enjoyed high standards of achievement and became exemplars to other schools. Their success strengthened the bond between church and communities as church was no longer seen as simply where one attends for a Sunday prayer, but increasingly as an integral part of society and family life. Thus, the affairs of the church increasingly became of immense interest to the community, and its reform and revival increasingly reflected the community’s desires and aspirations.

6.3.4 Liturgical Development

Liturgy was reviewed and streamlined in order to remove repetition and to generally shorten it to better suit the times. Liturgical books were printed for the first time, from their historical format as manuscripts, with appropriate modifications and updates inserted, and distributed to churches. This was a task that many of the early reformers Barsoum, Dolabani and Denno undertook and others subsequently continued. Part of the development involved increasing the Arabic content in the liturgy in many of the churches of Iraq and in Greater Syria, where the majority, even those from Tur Abdin, did not understand Syriac, but were increasingly

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\(^{880}\) Archival documents K10-BZ5-0089,0091,0092.
conversant in Arabic. The introduction of Arabic hymns in the early 1930s in Mosul (see Section 6.4.3) was part of this effort, which presented the congregation with the opportunity of participating in a tongue they understood, a matter that rendered church attendance more meaningful.

6.3.5 Translation Movement
If we considered the linguistic profile of the Syrian Orthodox communities in Iraq and in Greater Syria, the two regions where the majority of the post-Sayfo emigrants settled, we would find the following: the majority of those who settled in and around the city of Mosul and its environs arrived either from Mardin or from the lower regions of Tur Abdin, such as Azekh, where Arabic was the language of the majority of the newcomers. It was also the language of the indigenous Christians of Mosul. Those who made their way to Greater Syria were a mixture of those whose home tongue was Arabic or Turoyo, the Neo-Aramaic vernacular of Tur Abdin. The latter had the greatest initial difficulty in learning and adopting Arabic, which they considered to be the language of those who massacred their beloved. However, this difficulty was slowly overcome by the schooling of the young, the commonality between the two tongues and, perhaps more importantly, by the will to start a new page in their lives.

The church was mindful of the psychological barrier against adopting Arabic among many of the newcomers from Tur Abdin. Its reformers on the other hand recognized from the start the importance of translation into Arabic as a necessary means for the transmission of the Syriac heritage to new generations. Given the post-Sayfo demographic map, those early reformers appreciated that translation constituted an essential component in the process of cultural continuity and development and, thus, a means towards an aspired renaissance.

One may find an important precedence to translation from Syriac to Arabic in the liturgical context even in the Abbasid period when Christians adopted Arabic as a theological language, creating new terms in this language especially abstract names: ʾulūhā, from allahutha in Syriac; taʾannas, from ʾethbarnash, etc. They also adopted Arabic “neutral” names, neither Islamic nor Christian such as: Hasan and Faraj.881

It may be noted that effective translation required two pre-requisites: linguistic competence in both languages and, even more importantly, a thorough understanding of the translated content, particularly if it is of a philosophical or a theological nature, which was the case for most of the material actually translated. Given these attributes and prerequisites it is not surprising that all reformers, starting with Aphram Barsoum, were engaged to one degree or another in the translation of church liturgical books and other facets of Syriac cultural heritage. Finally, it is reasonable to speculate that the acceptance of Arabic as a linguistic medium among the Turoye was no doubt made more acceptable by the pro-Arab stance of Aphram Barsoum, which went a long way towards creating a feeling of affinity among the new comers with their new environment, a feeling of being in a milieu that is also “home.”

6.3.6 Restoration of Historical Name and Identity
Throughout their history, the Syrian Orthodox lived under the handicap of a name not of their choosing but of the choosing of their opponents in the Christological divide that resulted from the Council of Chalcedon of 451. They were called “Jacobites” after Jacob Baradaeus, and were also dubbed “Monophysites” based on the Chalcedonians’ perception of their Christology, which they shared with the Copts, the Abyssinians and the Armenians. In the course of their quest for revival, the Syrian Orthodox came to voice their discontent, increasingly, with these deeply entrenched terminologies, considering the first pejorative and the second a misnomer. Denno researched the historical archives of over fourteen centuries and presented the results in a seminal publication in 1949. This research likely was in the spirit of revival following centuries of decline. The noted publication provides evidence from the sixth to the thirteenth century sources that shows that the Syrian Orthodox called themselves ‘Syrians’, ‘Orthodox’ or ‘Syrian Orthodox.’ A sample of this evidence is given in Appendix A.6.1.

Denno notes that Bar Hebraeus also used the name “Jacobites,” mostly in Volume II of his Ecclesiastic History, where he used the term thirteen times, usually in the context of comparisons and discourses with what he called “Nestorians”, a term Bar Hebraeus used 59 times, and with the Melkites. It is interesting to note that in contrast to this, Michael the Syrian

882 Ni’mat Allah DINNO/DENNO, Iqāmat al-dalīl ‘alā Istimrār al-Isim al-Aseel wa Istinkār al-Na‘t al-DaKheel, Mosul, 1949 , (Establishing the Proof on the Original Name and Negating the Alien Adjective).
was somewhat more remote from the environment of discourse with other Oriental Christians and did not use the term “Jacobites” except five times, and that was in quoting opposing sides, whereas he used the terms Syrian or Orthodox 149 times.³⁸³

6.4 The Reformers and their Contributions

The revival activities outlined above were advanced by the first and subsequent generations of reformers, who are introduced hereinafter. Biographies have been included in order to delineate their contributions, particularly to scholarship, which, generally, has not had Western exposure.

6.4.1 Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum (1887-1957)

6.4.1.1 Brief Biography

Ayoub -Barsoum’s first name at birth- came as a young man of 18 from Mosul, to Deir al Za‘faran in 1905, where he pursued his Syriac language and theological learning. He was tonsured a monk in 1907 and a priest-monk in 1908, taking the ecclesiastic name Aphram, in honour of Ephrem the Syrian the venerable and prolific Syriac-language fourth century hymnographer and theologian. In 1911, he took on the responsibility of managing the Monastery’s press, in addition to teaching at the Monastery. Motivated by a keen interest in the Syriac heritage, church and community history, he began to tour the towns and villages in southeastern Anatolia where the Syrian Orthodox traditionally lived, and Tur Abdin in particular. He visited churches and monasteries where he documented their possessions in the form of books and manuscripts and interviewed elders for recollections of events of the past. The calamities that befell these communities a few years after these visits and interviews, eradicated most of these communities and scattered the survivors, making the wealth of information he collected unique.³⁸⁴ His keen scholarly interest was evident from his early days at Deir al Za‘faran. The archival documents bear clear witness to this. One particular document scribed in Arabic by young Ayoub carries the date February 10, 1906, when Ayoub was barely 19 years old. On the back cover of the document Ayoub writes: “copied from an Arabic copy I


³⁸⁴ A considerable portion of this information was published largely by Ignatius Zakka Iwas, as will be noted later.
found at the end of an old book in Deir al Za‘faran.” The document was a copy of a 12 page epistle sent by Patriarch Jirjis the Third to Pope Pius VI in September 1776, explaining the tenants of faith of the Syrian Orthodox Church. What may be noted from this is the research-oriented inquisitive nature of that young man.

In addition to his travel and research in Anatolia, Barsoum travelled to several centres of learning in Europe in 1913 in the pursuit of his study of Syriac literary heritage in manuscripts and in other literary sources. These included London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Cambridge, Oxford and Florence. These travels presented Barsoum with the opportunity of meeting with Orientalists with whom he would have had so much to discuss and to explore. During this trip he wrote an introduction to the Book of Treasures by Job of Edessa. He also published with Chabot the work entitled Chronicon Anonymum in CSCO in 1920.

His interaction with the literary figures of his time is typified by the letters he exchanged with Paul Bedjan. When the letters were written in 1920, Bedjan, a renowned scholar who had published 40 Syriac volumes, was 82 and Barsoum 33. Yet, despite the large age difference the tone of the letters conveys a deep sense of respect from a seasoned scholar to a fellow scholar who was only just beginning to make his imprint felt in the world of scholarship and ecclesiastical leadership. Further, the topics discussed indicate the two were well acquainted with each other’s scholarly work. Such was the reputation that Aphram Barsoum had gained in the literary field even from an early age.

Beginning with his early years at Deir al Za‘faran, Barsoum gained the reputation of being an active pursuant of Syriac heritage and seeker of reform. Two letters from the archives provide clear evidence of this. The first was from the Mardin branch of Jamiyat al Intibah (Society for the Promotion of Alertness), a lay Syrian community society that was concerned with promoting social-cultural progress, which had branches in major towns. The letter, dated June 30, 1913, pleads with Barsoum not to travel at that time in view of the rise of certain sensitive issues concerning Jerusalem, in which the Society wished him to play a leading role.

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885 Archival documents P1090925 and P1090943.
886 Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, The Glory of the Syrians, Mar Ignatios Ephrem Barsaum, Biography and Bibliography, 1996, p. 76
887 Ibid, p. 34
However, despite this request Barsoum did travel to Europe as reported earlier. Later in his travels Barsoum received another letter, this time from the community in Warenshahir, near Diyarbakir, which was represented by Jamiat al Intibah in that town, the “millet Board” and the local priest. The letter dated December 9, 1913, requests his early return. The content and tone of the letter provide clear evidence of the hopes the Syrian Orthodox communities placed on the shoulders of this 26-year old-monk. After a usual cordial introduction the letter states:

Our state and condition are wretched. We state, and we cannot hold back ourselves from stating, that if our condition continues as it is as present we would, God forbid, be dissolved. However, as we reconsider matters, and realize that we still have zealous people like you, then we should have no fear since we are certain that your zeal, deep conviction and chivalry would heal the deepest wounds in the body of our poor millet which has been beleaguered by the times… Our Syrian forefathers were martyred for the sake of this glorious jewel… Thus, it is unbefitting that we should let this jewel be buried by the earth of ignorance, for if we did our ancestors would seek justice from us until the end of time. We thus look forward with deep anticipation to your return. We wish you complete success to form a shining light for our millet and finally to leave an honorable memory on the pages of history.\(^890\)

Signature stamps of: Head of Intibah, Millet Board and Shepherd of Syrians, in Warenshahir.

Dated December 9, 329-Rum Calendar, corresponding to December 9, 1913 according to the Julian Calendar and to December 22, 1913 according to the Gregorian Calendar.

His image as a luminary was not confined to people of his generation but has lived on through successive generations to the present. Bishop Gregorius Paulus Behnam (d.1969) of the second generation of reformers wrote a biography of Barsoum in which he brought out many facets of Barsoum’s scholarship and leadership qualities as a luminary to his community.\(^891\)

The late Patriarch Zakka Iwas (1933- 2014), who may appropriately be thought of as belonging to the third generation of revivalists, published a good deal of Barsoum’s unpublished work in the patriarchal magazine. In a speech he made on November 22, 1987,

\(^{889}\) Archival Document 40M 24/48 – 175.
\(^{890}\) Archival Document 40M 24/48 – 003.
marking the first centennial of Barsoum’s birth and the 30th year of his passing, he reminded his audience that the golden age for his church, the Syrian Church of Antioch, was in the first four centuries, marked by the appearance of St. Ephrem the Syrian and which extended through the time that witnessed the appearance of Baradeus, Manbagy, Severus, the Rahawi and Michael the Syrian. He continued:

That golden age ended in the thirteenth century with the passing of Bar Hebreus. After Bar Hebreus, the church witnessed the imposition upon it of harsh and dark circumstances, which it survived by the will of the Almighty God, who at the turn of this century sent the learned scholar Mar Ignatius Aphram Barsoum of blessed memory, who ended the nightmare of the harsh years, rescued the Church from its fall and opened its eyes to its blessed history. He shone as a bright star for the Syrians and as a great reformer who created a new beginning in the history of the Church, a new frontier of enlightenment and revival… He lived seventy years that made up for the loss of seven hundred years from the thirteenth to the twentieth century that Syrian Orthodoxy lost from the time of Bar Hebreus to the rise of Aphram Barsoum, upon whom God bestowed unique intellectual qualities, vision and endurance. He was truly unique in his blessed qualities.

6.4.1.2 Barsoum the Scholar

Despite the enormous responsibilities Barsoum had to shoulder, he devoted much time to scholarship, to searching for and recording for posterity the nearly lost heritage of Syriac literature and history. The range of his interest and expertise is astounding as may be noted from the following brief treatment of his literary work. His main published work may be classified as follows:

i) Spiritual


ii) Syriological

892 Referring to Filexinous of Mabug, the fourth century exegete.
893 Referring to Severus of Antioch.
894 Referring to the Anonymous Chronicler of 1234
895 Zakka I Iwas, Historical, Theological & Spiritual Articles & Essays (in Arabic), Part three, Lebanon, 200, pp. 286-287.

**iii) Philological**

**iv) Historical**

**v) Apologetic**

In addition to the above, Patriarch Barsoum authored other works that have never been published. His Syriac-Arabic lexicon and his compendium of church history in the twentieth century are written in both Syriac and Arabic. In Arabic, he also wrote a history of the Patriarchs of Antioch and the famous men of the Syrian Church, a history of Syrian dioceses, an index of Syriac manuscripts, and translations of 10 liturgies of the Syrian Church. Also, in 1909, when he was a monk at the Monastery of Za’faran, he translated into Arabic the second part of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Bar Hebraeus.\(^{896}\)

Of Barsoum’s entire scholarly heritage his book *al-Lu’lu’ al-manthur* remains the most distinguished and best known. Dolabani translated it into Syriac and Moosa Matti into English under the roughly equivalent title “The Scattered Pearls, A History of Syriac Science and

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\(^{896}\) This additional work may be summarized in the following: Book *Sheemo*, the weekly prayer book in Syriac in 1913 and in 1936; Catalogue of manuscripts, especially those in the Oriental libraries; Arabic/Syriac Lexicon; Chronicle of Patriarchs of Antioch; History of Syriac Parishes, in Arabic; The book *Hadeeth*, containing stories of the 19th century as recited by elders and church clergy; and Collection of sermons and speeches in Arabic, Syriac and French, including poems, which reflect his renowned oratory ability.
In his introduction, Moosa notes that unlike his Western predecessors, Barsoum does not depend heavily on the work of Assemani, but he draws much information from the Syriac manuscripts surviving in churches and monasteries throughout the Middle East and from other original sources. The wider range of material generally does not lead him to conclusions that are in conflict with those reached by Western scholars, but frequently enriches his presentation of factual information. Wright, for example, in his biographical sketch of Bar Hebraeus, cites only the Bibliotheca Orientalis and Bar Bebraeus’ own writings. Barsoum furnishes additional evidence from the metrical biography of Bar Hebraeus and of his brother, by Gabrielle of Bartelli. A more detailed analysis of al-Lu‘lu’ al-Manthur may be found in Matti Moosa’s introduction to his English translation.

The search for literary heritage is generally motivated by the curiosity of a researcher. To Barsoum, however, this search was the product of more than an academic curiosity, but of a life-long interest in the heritage of the forefathers, as is evidenced by the enormous corpus of unpublished material he left behind. He documented manuscripts of lectionaries, liturgical books, Gospels and other material that he unearthed in his painstaking search throughout the region when he was a monk in Deir al-Za‘faran. In later years, Barsoum prepared indices in his own handwriting of the hundreds of Syriac manuscripts that he had discovered, and commented on them extensively. In his biography of Barsoum, Yuhanna Ibrahim describes the lists of the manuscripts, which Barsoum prepared in the 1940s as series of indices. Some of these were published by Yuhanna Ibrahim in three volumes: a 469-page volume covering the manuscripts of St. Mark’s Monastery in Jerusalem, a 472-page volume covering the manuscripts at Deir al-Za‘faran, and the general index consisting of 488 pages. Recently, Patriarch Zakka I was published three volumes of Barsoum’s manuscript collection indices.

One of the most valuable legacies Barsoum left is his personal compilation of the history of the Syriac Archdiocese. This is a huge 467-page manuscript, which Barsoum

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901 Ibid.
903 These were published in Damascus, 2008 under the titles: Omid and Mardin Manuscripts, (506 pages); Deyrulzafaran Manuscripts, (506 pages); and Tur Abdin Manuscript, (531 pages).
authored and inscribed in his own handwriting. A selection of the resulting history was published by Barsoum in various issues of the *Syrian Patriarchal Journal* that were published in Jerusalem from 1933 – 1941. Further extracts of this unique history have also been published by Patriarch Zakka Iwas in the *Patriarchal Journal* from 1980 onwards. An English translation of these has been made by Matti Moosa and published by Gorgias Press. The source book for this material is divided into eight volumes that cover a total of more than 180 towns, villages and monasteries that were at some point in the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church part of its Archdiocese, which, in the thirteenth century extended east to include Herat and to Sigistan in Afghanistan, south to Yemen, and north to Azerbaijan and parts of Armenia. I have been extremely fortunate to have obtained a facsimile copy of this document, which I have utilized in this thesis in sketching out the historical distribution of the Syriac diocese and their numbers over the centuries.

### 6.4.1.2.1 His Literary Style

**a) General**

In his biography on Barsoum, Paulus Behnam wrote concerning several facets of Barsoum’s scholarship, especially his style in writing history, which is worthy of special note. Behnam notes that in addition to providing historical facts, Barsoum infuses his description with a literary poetic description of people and places; and that he commences his description with an eloquent preamble that serves to put the reader in a multi-dimensional perspective, which enriches the subject with a sense of time and place.

“As an example listen to him describe Antioch as though he is viewing this historical city through a kaleidoscope that reveals its distant history.” Quoting Barsoum, he states (my translation):

> Great Antioch, the great capital of the East and its beautiful pride; a city renowned for its religious and civil history, its natural beauty

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906 I am deeply indebted to Metropolitan Yohanna Ibrahim who made a copy of this corpus available to me in July 2010.

and its important geographical location. In it Greek and Roman civilizations came together and bequeathed to subsequent generations the most beautiful of riches and the worthiest of heritages… In it were erected towering arches and great thoroughfares, beautiful gardens around fast moving rivers and imposing waterfalls. In it were erected rich temples and great churches. It had its golden days and historical zeniths, it is where Roman soldiers crowded to guard the kingdom, becoming the second capital after Rome to guard the frontier of the kingdom. It was in it where Caesars: Ghalos, Constantine and Ilianos preferred to reside in order to protect the people. It was here where the Apostles of Christ, to whom be glory, raised the banner of the Holy Gospel and the fall of the banners of Dafna (sic), Apollo and Venus thus proclaiming the noble principles of Christianity through which the fallacies of atheism were discredited. This is how Christianity transformed Antioch, making it the first shining center of Christianity, with founding fathers and scholars who adorned her with the crown of glory and ordained her bosom with magnificent honours.\footnote{Paulus Behnam, \textit{Nafāḥāt al-ḵuzām}, p.p. 56-57}

This description would likely appear excessively romantic in today’s mode of scholarship, which tends to confine its scope and description to the immediate facts in hand. However, Barsoum belonged to a generation of writers that was engaged in awakening society from a deep sleep, particularly in the social/political sphere. Using poetic expression and flowery language were common means to lift the reader’s morale from the state of lethargy and despair that had dominated his life for centuries. Other examples of this mode of writing may be found in the works of Mohammad Abda, Jamal al Din al Afghani and Jurji Zaydan.

\textbf{b) His Translation Style from Syriac to Arabic}\footnote{Ibid, p. 106}

Describing Barsoum’s skill in translating to Arabic, Behnam states “When you read his translated text you will feel a sensation that these texts had originally been written in Arabic. This is due to his astounding excellence in both languages. He enriches his translation with an extensive preamble that gives an in-depth historical background and a discussion of the core of translated text.”\footnote{Ibid.} Behnam cites several examples of translated works including in particular the exegesis of Ishaia by Dionysius Bar Salibi, the eleventh century exegete, which Barsoum published over a period of four years in the \textit{Patriarchal Magazine}, starting in 1935. Other
translations include works by Moshe Bar Keefo (d. 905), John of Phetonia (Deir Mar Quonsreen) by the seventh century luminary, Isaac the Syrian (also known as Isaac of Nineveh), and the Christological homilies by Isaac the Syrian. More directly related to the revival of his church, Barsoum worked hard to translate many Syriac liturgical texts into eloquent Arabic. By doing so, he began a trend that was to be continued by others in the following decades. Emerging scholars in the diaspora were also encouraged to translate the liturgical literature into European languages, all as part of a concerted effort to bring the liturgy closer to the understanding and the appreciation of churchgoers in the diaspora.

6.4.1.3 **Barsoum the Nationalist**
Barsoum’s efforts to bring a semblance of justice for devastated Syriac Christians at the Paris Peace Conference were discussed in Chapter Five, in which his support of the rights of the Arabs at that forum was also addressed. Barsoum maintained those positions throughout his life. However, he remained above local politics. His basic stance on major issues, such forfeiture of Iskandaroun, and hence Antioch, to Turkey in 1939, and the war in Palestine in 1947 was respected by politicians of all stripes.

When the French army entered Homs, he was invited to speak at a public gathering in celebration of the liberation of the city, which was also attended by the French General. In his speech, Barsoum reminded the French troops, who also attended the gathering, of their duties as liberators. He admonished them to be in Syria not as conquerors and invaders but as liberating friends. He praised the efforts of the Arabs for their role in the liberation of their land and whose rights should be respected. Many years later, in 1939, when the French yielded Iskandarun to Turkey, he criticized them for this action. It had been only in the previous year, as though he had prior knowledge of what was to happen, that he had written an article on the history of that wilaya and on its historic connection with Syria.⁹¹¹

6.4.1.4 **Barsoum the Reformer in Action**

a) **The Ephremic Seminary**
One of Barsoum’s principal goals, particularly in the initial years of his patriarchate, was the establishment of an ecclesiastic school, a seminary, that was qualified to graduate educated clergy to serve in the spirit of the new age. This had been the dream of his predecessors for at

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⁹¹¹ *Al-Majallah Al Batriarkiya Al-Suriyiyia* (The Patriarchal Journal), Year 5, pp. 256-265.
least 60 years, but they had lacked the necessary academic and financial resources.\textsuperscript{912} He had a building constructed for this purpose in Zahle, Lebanon. The choice of the location was influenced by Lebanon’s favourable position in the area of academic and religious studies at that time. He aptly called the school the Ephremic Seminary in reverence to the memory to Ephrem the Syrian, the renowned fourth century Syriac liturgical poet.

The foundation stone for the building was laid in 1934 but the acute lack of financial resources was a stumbling block towards the completion of the building. Patriarch Barsoum issued encyclicals to urge the communities to donate towards realizing this vital project.\textsuperscript{913} However, by 1938 much was still needed to complete the project. He, thus, sent a nuncio to the United States to collect donations. After one year the nuncio was able to collect US$1,200 dollars, which assisted in completing the building.\textsuperscript{914} Such were the material constraints facing the community everywhere. The school was finally opened on March 29, 1939. Paulus Behnam, the author of \textit{Nafâḥāt al-ḵuzām}, states that he was the school’s first registered student.\textsuperscript{915} The school was moved to Mosul in 1946, which, with the rising of the spirit of revival in that city, it was deemed to provide a better learning environment. Barsoum continued to follow the progress of the school right until the end of his life, all based on his deep conviction that the revival of his church was closely linked to the success of this project. He believed deeply that it was the plight of having uneducated clergy as shepherds in the past that had caused many of the flock to veer to the Catholic and to the Protestant churches.

In Mosul the Ephremic Seminary was an astounding success. Young men converged on it from all parts of Syria as well as Iraq, and some of its learned past graduates from Zahle, such as Paulus Behnam, and a number of learned scholars such as Nimmat Allah Denno, taught at the school. Its graduates were sought after to take ecclesiastic responsibilities in towns and monasteries throughout the region, as well as in the diaspora. The seminary’s sejour in Mosul ended in 1959 on account of the unhealthy socio-political environment that developed there at that time, which caused the majority of the Christians to leave that city for the safer social

\textsuperscript{912} Paulus Behnam, \textit{Nafahat}, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{913} Malateus Barnaba, \textit{Al’ithat al-Thahabiya fe al-Manshourat al-Batriarkiyya}, (The Golden Sermons in the Patriarchal Encyclicals), 1964, pp. 95-97. This is a collection of Aphram Barsoum’s encyclicals.
\textsuperscript{914} Paulus Behnam, \textit{Nafâḥāt al-ḵuzām}, p. 46.
\textsuperscript{915} Ibid.
environment in Baghdad.\footnote{This was in the aftermath of a failed coup d’etat on March 7, 1959 by Al-Shawaf, an army general, which resulted in a breakdown of law and order and violence with strong sectarian overtones that lasted for several months. However, the insecurity systematically experienced by the Christians, coupled with threats, kidnapping and killing caused the majority of the Christian population of the city to migrate to the safer environment in Baghdad.} Thus, the seminary was moved initially back to Zahle, then to ‘Atshana in Lebanon. However, the atmosphere of unrest from the Lebanese civil war that started in the mid-1970s once again prompted its move, this time to Damascus, where it still is. While the geographic location was shifting in response to environmental circumstances, the aims of the seminary, its popularity and status as a vital organ of a reviving church remained unchanged. The importance Barsoum attached to the seminary helped it maintain its status as a beacon that derived its shining light from the glorious past, which it aimed to emulate. As such, its graduates were increasingly encouraged to pursue higher studies in Western universities, as will also be noted later.

\textit{b) Re-settlement of Refugees and Church Construction}

Barsoum, aided by Dolabani, worked hard to facilitate the settlement of the new refugees (see Chapter Five). With the majority of the churches and monasteries in Syria belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church being taken over by the Syrian Catholics in the course of the nineteenth century, an acute need arose to construct new churches to serve the post WWI immigrants in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. New churches were constructed in each of Hasaka and Aleppo. The one in Aleppo was donated by Selim Azar and consecrated in 1925. Other churches in that early stage of re-settlement included the Church of Mar Jirjis in Zahle, again consecrated in 1925; the church of Our Lady in Maskina, in Homs; the Church of Mar Ilian in the Qariatain, which was consecrated in 1932.\footnote{This church was constructed to replace a well known church at the monastery of the same name that had been taken over by Catholics with French help.} Other churches constructed in that period and the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul in Msaitabah, Beirut, which was consecrated in 1933, principally served the immigrants from Adana, Mardin, Diyarbakir, Qilith, and Tur Abdin. One of the larger churches that were constructed in Aleppo at a later stage was the Mar Jirjis’ Church in Hay al-Suryan, which was consecrated in 1952 to serve the increasing population of the Rahawi immigrants, who had been exiled in 1924. T.M.S., the association of expatriates referenced earlier, continued to provide financial help, even through the years of the Great Depression. This help that was used for the running of Beirut orphanage. Funds were also sent
to aid the construction of the seminary in Zahle that had been initiated by Barsoum (see shortly), and many years later for the running of a seminary in Deir al-Za‘faran. 918

One of prominent personalities who advanced the church and school construction programme in Northern Syria was Ostathaeos Qiriaqos - Bishop of Syrian Jazerah (1943 - 1979). He was endowed with a serene personality that enabled him to work with others: Arabs, Kurds and other Christians. He was known as man of action who achieved a great deal with quiet resolution. He was appointed to a diocese that, by reason of its geographic location, had borne the brunt of the waves of migration from Anatolia. He conducted his work efficiently in a workman fashion and he achieved a lot and was greatly respected. He oversaw the construction of no fewer than 20 churches and a similar number of schools. 919

c) Synods and Canon Law

Aphram Barsoum convened four synods, all in Homs, Syria, the first in November 1933 and the last in November, 1954. He convened the first during his term as Qaimmaqam (Locum Tenens) following the passing of his predecessor Patriarch Elias III in India in February, 1932. The synod was held in Homs in November, 1933, to which, for the first time, bishops from India were invited. The synod considered the various matters concerning the church and decided to modify the decisions taken by the Synod of Mar Mattai of 1930. The new synod enacted 140 canons that organized the various aspects of the Church, the milla (lay) councils, the seminary, church schools and societies. Following this, this synod elected the new patriarch. By a vote of 14 out of 15 Aphram Barsoum was elected patriarch. He was installed in this position in Homs on December 16, 1933. The other synods convened during Barsoum’s patriarchate were from July 2 to July 21, 1934; from December 7 to 22, 1946; and from November 15 to 25, 1954. 920

6.4.1.5 Barsoum the Father and Teacher Addresses His Community

a) General

Barsoum addressed his community through encyclicals that were read out in churches. He wrote over 40 encyclicals in which he addressed the issues of the day, including the annual

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encyclicals that were issued at the start of Lent.\textsuperscript{921} Some of the earliest encyclicals urged support for the opening of the Ephremonic Seminary in Zahle, Lebanon. Each encyclical would commence with an artful opening that would lift the spirit of the reader or listener. The body of the encyclical would be in a clear, carefully crafted language that brought out the importance of the issue. Despite the literary format of his address, at a time when communities were still battling illiteracy, his encyclicals conveyed a message from a kind, loving father, one who was deeply concerned about the future. He reminded them of the glorious past of their ancestors and urged and admonished them to discard lethargy and inaction. He repeatedly impressed on them that illiteracy and ignorance had been the reasons for their sad state over the past centuries. He spearheaded the modernization of their liturgical books, translating many into Arabic to serve the Arabic speaking regions of his spread-out dioceses. However, the central theme for his reform plan was the education of the clergy. The founding of a seminary was one of his main concerns. The success of the seminary particularly after its transfer to Mosul in 1946 was key to propagating the revival movement throughout Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. This revival as noted before, was greatly facilitated by the recent cultural revival in those countries. Revival in the communities that were still living in Turkey, where the minority Christians continued to be severely disenfranchised, proved to be far less possible. As late as the 1940s, Barsoum was still attempting with little success to set up a seminary in Deir al Za‘faran to cater to the communities that still existed in Mardin, Diyarbakir, Tur Abdin, as is evident from his general epistle to bishops dated July 8, 1952, see next in \textit{b} below.

\textbf{b) Typical Encyclicals:}

\textit{i) The Encyclical on the Establishment of the Ephremonic Ecclesiastic School, dated March 20, 1934 (Julian)}

When we (I) reflected on the past glory that emanated from our numerous monasteries and religious schools, a glory that was based on virtues, theological and philosophical learning, as well as on those famous scholars and clergy who graduated from these schools; when we reflected on their holiness, wisdom and culture that were based on an enduring legacy and the crown of glory and heritage; and when we have also seen what has transpired in later times when that the glory vanished and its remaining light dimmed to what is unbefitting of our venerable past and of the

\textsuperscript{921} Ibid, p. 86.
clergy who bequeathed to us their legacy of learning, we have, with the Synod, resolved on the need to establish an ecclesiastic school to train clergy the cost of which would be borne by the believers.

When we (I), by grace and calling of God sat on the Apostolic Seat of Antioch, I aspired to make an offering from the fruits of my labour to God in order to purchase a suitable spacious land in Zahle, Lebanon. We have had a school built on it again out of my own funds, as an offering to God Almighty and to his Church, in the name of my namesake, the great malphan (teacher) of our Church, Saint Ephrem the Syrian...

The encyclical then calls upon the believers in all dioceses to donate towards the cost of running of the school.

ii) Lent Encyclicals

Barsoum issued an encyclical before the start of every Lent, a practice that has been followed ever since. The encyclical is read out in all churches on the Sunday that immediately precedes Lent. These encyclicals presented Barsoum, as they have done with succeeding patriarchs, with an opportunity to directly address the general congregation. The encyclicals stressed the virtues of fasting, but were more than just that; they were general sermons in which he preached Christian values. The following is an excerpt from an encyclical he issued in March 1937.

God has granted us the spirit of bravery and this spirit is supported by the Christian faith in [promoting] the merits of the holy fast, which is one of the pillars of worship required of all believers. Thus ye, the chosen of God, be robed by this strong armour that cannot be penetrated by the arrows of the enemy, and go forth into the fields of the honourable battle with hearts filled with belief and souls enriched with hope for victory. Come forth and receive it with smiling faces and happy hearts that render its hardship easy…

All Ye, the wealthy, do not despise fasting through insolence, relying on your opulent tables, but empower your souls to fast, and share for a little while, the need of your poorer brethren, and let not the fast complain about you to God who laid down the command of the fast…

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922 I might add the following with reference to Barsoum’s private funds. In an interview I had with Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I Iwas on June 6, 2009, Patriarch Iwas cited that Barsoum’s mother had given young Ayoub most of her gold savings as he set out on his travel to Deir al-Za’faran in 1905, funds that he used in subsequent years to pay for his travels and to donate towards church projects.


iii) A General Epistle to Bishops dated July 8, 1952

After offering our prayers and wishes for peace, we (I) have heard some of you complain of the weakness in the spiritual life of the believers. This is a case that is more acute in Europe and America than in Eastern countries. If we reviewed its immediate reasons, we would find they are the result of the recent wars. These are sorrowful events with dire effects that have been the concern of many society leaders. If we confine our attention to our blessed community, we would find that most of our people possess a measure of spiritual fortitude which is inherited and which is fortified by family upbringing, in addition to fortitude that is acquired from community schools, sermons and the reading of church books. However, the foregoing is inadequate to combat the corrupt facets of modern civilization, their fast development and their effect on society. The appropriate upbringing of the young in schools, church and public, needs fresh and careful attention and deep thought to ensure that graduates are offered adequate knowledge and awareness of their church’s principles, history and liturgy so that they may grow up feeling love and deep commitment to it. Failing that, the young would either be swept by the dangers of devious currents or grow non-caring and indifferent to the orthodox beliefs and to commitment to the welfare of the community.925

The epistle then proceeds to enumerate the essential ingredients for promoting spiritual fortification of the next generation, as well as the older ones. It stresses certain priorities: that sermons be given by qualified clergy, attention be given to community schools, religious textbooks be made available, and finally that the reading of patristic literature be encouraged. He draws the attention of the bishops to the need to encourage the re-printing of many of the prayer books that he had authored or collated and translated to Arabic himself over the years. But he emphasizes that the education of the clergy has always been central to any effort to move forward.

6.4.2 Bishop Philoxenus Yuhanna/Yuhanon Dolabani (1885 – 1969)

Dolabani was born in Mardin and educated at the Syrian Orthodox School and at the Cappadocian School in Mardin. He was tonsured a monk in 1908 and was appointed soon after to teach at the Patriarchal School in Deir al-Za‘faran. He was ordained priest monk in 1918 and in the following year accompanied Patriarch Elias III on a tour to provide help and comfort to

the remaining Syrian Orthodox communities in Anatolia. Over the next 15 years he looked after various church institutions, including schools, of the communities that emigrated from their homeland. In Adana, he looked after the orphanage that had been set up with aid from Taw-Mem-Simkat (see Chapter Five) and subsequently supervised its transfer to Beirut in 1921. In 1928 he was put in charge of the *Hikmat* journal that was being printed and re-issued in Jerusalem, while at the same time he continued his teaching of Syriac and liturgical material at the St. Mark’s Monastery in Jerusalem. He was then appointed Patriarchal Vicar of the Mardin region in 1933, thus once again serving the community and being in the environment he so loved. He was ordained Bishop of Mardin in 1946, an appointment he maintained until his passing in 1969.\footnote{G. A. Kiraz, “Dolabani, Philoxenos Yuhanon,” in *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, eds. Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz, Lucas Van Rompay, Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2011, pp. 129-130.}

Driven by a strong missionary spirit, Dolabani trained and ordained many priests and monks and deacons to serve in remote places as far away as Bitlis and Van, where the faithful had lost their clergy. He was a role model for generations of Syrian Orthodox clergy and members of church communities, especially for those with roots in southeast Turkey. In that capacity alone, he contributed greatly towards the revival of his church. Dolabani had an ascetic personality which enabled him to devote most of his life to scholarship in the fields that he loved so much: Syriac literature and philosophy. He authored over 40 books in Syriac, Arabic and Turkish, penned eight manuscripts and published numerous articles in literary and parish journals. A brief account of his publications is given in Appendix A6.2

### 6.4.3 Ni’matallah Denno\footnote{Ni’matallah Denno was my grandfather’s cousin.} (1885-1951)

Denno was a scholar, educator and reform-minded member of the Syrian Orthodox community in Mosul. He was born in Mosul, and grew up at a time when his church was at its lowest ebb. He also witnessed the arrival of refugees fleeing the 1915 massacres of Syrians and Armenians in southeastern Turkey. He saw the dire need to educate the members of his community, young and old, in the virtues of the beliefs of his church and in the richness of its Syriac liturgy and heritage. He served his church as deacon and then as archdeacon, by which title he was widely known. Apart from initial schooling he was self-taught. He mastered the Syriac language and
wrote several grammar text books for it. He wrote a number of books and articles defending the Syrian Orthodox Church and its beliefs against what he saw as defamations and distortions of historical facts (see Appendix A6.3). He wrote about the Aramaic and Syriac cultures and on church history and commented on literary works by others. He paid particular attention to church music and wrote a series of articles in which he analyzed the role of music in Syriac’s liturgical tradition. However, he was also aware of the dire need to engage the Arabic speaking communities of his church in the liturgy. As part of this effort he complied and published the first hymn book in Arabic in the Syrian Orthodox Church.  

Denno worked closely with Aphram Barsoum over the years starting from the time when the latter was monk, then Bishop of Syria and later Patriarch. Many of the letters exchanged included their individual reviews of ecclesiastic history. As with Barsoum and Dolabani, Denno was at the forefront of efforts to introduce structural church reforms and to promote a meaningful education of the clergy. He left behind an enduring reputation and a legacy that bore the imprints of a man who was devoted to bettering the church that he so deeply loved, to enable it to meet the challenges of a new era.

6.4.3.1 Testimony of an Eye-witness

The following is based on an article by Patriarch Zakka I Iwas which was published in the Patriarchal Journal in 1982 under the title “The Learned Archdeacon: Ni’matallah Denno.” In this article Patriarch Iwas traces his and his fellow seminarians’ encounters with Denno who taught at the Mar Ephrem Seminary in Mosul in the 1940s, and in particular how he inspired his students and instilled in them the desire to research the rich heritage of their Syriac ancestors. He states:

(I) considered Archdeacon Denno to be first after the Most Learned of blessed memory Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum and the most learned of blessed memory Bishop Yuhanna Dolabani.

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929 Letter from Barsoum to Denno, dated March 2, 1917 (Archival Document P1100532).
930 Letter from Barsoum to Denno dated March 31, 1926- from my personal collection of the Denno archives.
932 Zakka I Iwas, “Al-‘Alama al- Arkhdidaqon Ni’matallah Denno” (The Most Learned Archdeacon: Ni’matallah Denno), The Patriarchal Journal, No. 11, 1982, pp. 36-42.
933 The term used in Arabic, which is based on Syriac may be translated as “Thrice Blessed”
And we knew that our teachers, the monks Paulus Behnam (subsequently Bishop of Mosul then of Baghdad) and Abdulahad Toma (later Patriarch Yaqoub III) used to consult him about difficult issues on Syriac heritage: linguistic, historical and theological. . .

The article describes the spirit of encouragement that Denno infused in his listeners and readers to emulate the learning and the glory of their ancestors in the defence of their faith and church:

In his essays and in his poetry, he inspired the reader and the student with a spirit of enthusiasm for the church and for the homeland, and the singing of her glories, and the following of the example of the fathers of faith. Through the studies of his Syriac books and the reading of his Arabic essays, theological, historical, literary, and especially apologetic, we joined in the fervour of our dear Archdeacon Denno in the defence of the honour of the Church and in the upholding of her holy truth, and we felt a responsibility with him for engaging with our opponents on the battlefield, seeing in him David triumphing over Goliath in the name of the Lord God.

The article also brought out the humanitarian side in Denno’s work in the settlement of the Sayfo survivors in and around Mosul through the work of Jamiyal-al-Ihsan, a benevolent society that he had formed. In this regard the article quotes from a letter Denno wrote to Ruphael Butti, the editor of Al-‘Iraq newspaper, on April 30, 1926 in which he describes a recent persecution by the Turkish authorities of the Christians of Azikh, a town located in the southern part of Tur Abdin, and of the historical town of Nisibis, and the exile of the survivors from their ancestral homeland. The article concludes with a summary appraisal that notes:

From a review of the above we sense the wisdom with which God endowed Archdeacon Denno. He was truly like Stephanos, the first head of the deacons: “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3) to fulfill the word of the Lord “I was a stranger, but you gave me shelter” while at the same time he was endowed by the Spirit to act with wisdom such that while, defending the rights of the persecuted, he thought of the safety of others who could be subject to the same fate. . .

An abridged version of the article by Patriarch Iwas is given in Appendix A 6.3
For Denno’s literary legacy, see Appendix A6.3. In addition his literary legacy also included several unfinished literary works, which Patriarch Zakka I Iwas published on his behalf in the Patriarchal Journal934 over several years. Two areas of work that are closely related to the theme of this chapter merit a specific mention: his work on church name and identity (See section 6.3.6) and his introduction of Arabic hymns in the liturgy. This introduction was a landmark development towards promoting a more active participation of the Arabic-speaking majority of the churchgoers in Divine Liturgy. Published in 1934 under the title Al-Tarneemat al-Rouhiyah (The Spiritual Hymns), this book included 61 hymns that Denno had collected and edited. The use of these hymns was initially popular in Mosul, with its well-established Arabic-speaking community. Denno published a second expanded edition in the mid-1940s that incorporated 102 hymns. By the time a third re-print was published in 1962, the hymns had become widely known and were chanted throughout the Syrian Orthodox Churches outside Iraq as well. The latest re-print, the seventh, was published in Jerusalem in 2006.935 These hymns have often been incorporated as part of general prayer books.936 Denno provides an interesting historical background on the source of the hymns he had collected. Some of these hymns were early twentieth century composed largely by Barsoum, but others were from much older sources.937

6.4.4 Na‘um Fa‘iq (1868 – 1930)

Fa‘iq was born in Amid (Diyarbakir) where he attended church school. When the school was shut down due to lack of funds, he pursued self-teaching and later became qualified to take up teaching as a profession, along with many other intellectual interests from 1888 to 1912, when he emigrated to America. Fa‘iq had an enthusiastic affection for the Syriac language and literature. He was also a renowned Syriac journalist and nationalist, who like


937 The older sources include: Gregorius ‘Adul Jalil al-Mosuli, Bishop of Jerusalem (d.1681); Yuhanna Ghrair, Bishop of Damascus (d.1685); Issa al-Hazzar, early 17th century; Deacon Yussuf al-Hakeem al-Saddadi (d.1700); Gregorius Yuhanna Shqair Bishop of Damascus (d.1783); and Simeon al-Manie, Bishop of Tur Abdin (d.1730).
many others of his generation witnessed the persecution and extermination of his people in their homeland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He reflected his devotion to the Syriac language and nationalism through his extensive journalistic pursuits and in his other publications. He published a newspaper Kawkab Madenho in Diyarbakir in Syriac, Arabic and Turkish from 1910-1912. He initially had faith in the Young Turk movement, but that faith soon dissipated when the Islamic backlash to the Italian invasion in 1911 became evident. The persecution of nationalists not aligned with CUP caused him to emigrate to America in 1912, where he lived in New Jersy, where he established the newspaper Beth Nahrin (Mesopotamia) (1916 to1921). He also was editor-in-chief of Hudoyu - Al-Itihad (the Unity), which was founded by the National Chaldean Assyrian Society in America. In addition, he contributed numerous articles to two other papers, Al-Intibah (Vigilance), which was published in America, and Murshid al-Athorieen (the Mentor of the Assyrians), which was published in Kharput in Turkey. In addition to his journalistic pursuits, Faitiq authored no fewer than 28 books. Many of these were on the Syriac language and literature while others were of a pedagogical nature on subjects that ranged from mathematics to geography.

6.4.5 Second and Subsequent Generations of Reformers

6.4.5.1 Abdul-Ahadi Tuma (Later Patriarch Jacob (Yacoub) III (1957-1980)

Born in Bartilla, a historical Christian town near Mosul in 1912, Shaba Tuma (his name at birth) received his early education in his hometown before joining the seminary school of Deir Mar Mattai in 1923. In 1931, he left for Beirut where he taught the Syriac language at the Syriac Orphanage in Beirut. In 1933/1934 he was tonsured a monk, taking up the name Abdulahad, and was soon after ordained a priest monk. He was sent in the same year by Patriarch Barsoum as patriarchal envoy to India to head Mar Ignatius Seminary in Malabar. This he did over the next 12 years during which period this seminary graduated no fewer than 60 graduates. He also learned the local language, Malyalalam, and published in it. In 1946, he joined the Ephremic Seminary in Mosul, working closely with his colleague Paulus Behnam. In 1950, he was ordained Bishop over Lebanon and Syria, taking up the episcopal title of

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938 For an extensive account on the journalism in question see The Ottoman Suryani from 1908-1914 by Benjamin Trigona-Harany, Gorgias, 2009, pp. 113-127
Severus Jacob. In 1957, he was elected Patriarch of Antioch (Ignatius Jacob III) following the death of Patriarch Aphram Barsoum.

Patriarch Jacob III was an accomplished orator and a prolific writer whose works covered a wide spectrum of knowledge: theological, linguistic and historical. He was well-versed in Arabic, Syriac, English and Malayalam, which he mastered during his service in Malabar. He published most of his work in Arabic but he also published work in Syriac and Malayalam. He wrote extensively on church history up to the fifth century, on the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India, on the Himyerite Christian Arab martyrs in the sixth century, as well as on literary topics on the interaction between Syriac and Arabic literatures. A list of his most significant publications is given in Appendix A 6.4.

In addition to his ability as a scholar, he was exceptionally skilled in liturgical Syriac music of both the “School of Tikrit”, popularly followed in the churches of Iraq, and of the “School of Edessa”, popularly followed elsewhere. He was endowed with a remarkable memory for the tunes of over 700 melodies of the Beth Gaz, the Syrian Orthodox treasure of liturgical music tunes and their variations. This treasure had been orally transmitted over the centuries, but, in the midst of the turmoil of the early twentieth century, was in danger of being lost, despite certain attempts at expressing it in modern musical format in the 1920s. It was, therefore, most fortunate that an excellent sample of the Beth Gaz tunes was recorded in Patriarch Jacob III’s voice in the early 1960s and recently made available on the Internet as invaluable resource.

Patriarch Jacob III re-launched the Patriarchal Journal in 1962, and supported it with numerous literary articles. This journal has flourished ever since with contributions from a wide spectrum of learned authors. In addition, he has also contributed many articles on different subjects that were published in other major Middle Eastern periodicals.

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942 For his bibliographical profile see Ishak Saka, Al-suryān īmān wa-ḥaẓāra, Vol. IV, pp. 241-251, and for a summary see Matti Moosa’s translation of Ignatious Yacob III, History of the Church of India, Gorgias 2010, author’s profile.
943 Yuhanna Ibrahim, Beth Gazo according to the School of Edessa- Music of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, Damascus, 2003.
944 See sor.cua.edu/BethGazo/PY3RecordHistory.html
6.4.5.2 Paulus Behnam (1916 – 1969)

Born in Bakhdeda (Qaragosh), a historic Christian village near Mosul, Behnam received his preliminary education in his hometown and further education at the Seminary School of Deir Mar Matti starting in 1929. In 1938, he joined the Ephremic Seminary in Zahle, Lebanon, where he completed his studies and became a teacher in the College. He then became dean of the College when it was moved to Mosul in 1945. He edited and published two literary journals in Arabic: Al-Mashriq from 1946 to 1948 and Lisan Al-Mashriq from 1948 to 1951. Both journals were scholarly and highly educational. Their articles had a deep impact on the community for their cultural and educational value, and their publication represented a milestone towards learning, spreading awareness, and appreciating the wealth of the Syriac cultural heritage. The journals were augmented with contributions from wide spectrum of literary scholars, including Muslim scholars, on topics on Syriac and Arabic cultural interactions. In 1951, Patriarch Barsoum awarded Behnam the title “Melphan” for a thesis he wrote on Moshe Bar Kepha. In addition to being a prolific writer he was an outstanding orator. His sermons attracted large audiences for their rich context and poetic expressions. His humility and kindness added to his immense popularity.

He was ordained Bishop of Mosul in 1952. In 1959 he took a study leave at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Upon his return, he resumed his duty as bishop, this time in Baghdad, until his death in 1969.

Ishak Saka published a biography on Paulus Behnam in 1988 under a title that gives a clue of the legacy Behnam left behind: Sawṭ Naynawā wa-Ārām aw al-muṭrān Buluṣ Bihnām (the Voice of Nineveh and Aram, or the Bishop Paulus Behnam). In the introduction, Saka notes:

The purpose of writing a biography of Gregorious Paulus Behnam, is not only to keep the memory of this eminent scholar alive, but to

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946 Shathil Taqa, Shaban Rigab Shihab and Tho-al-Noon Shihab, see Ishak Saka, Sawt Neinawa wa Aram, p. 104.

947 I had the immense pleasure in listening, in person, to many of his sermons and lectures between 1965 and 1969, the year of his passing.
give the Syriacs true cause for pride from the memory of this great personality. Whoever wishes to prove that the Syrians still enjoy an enduring culture, then the life of Paulus Behnam is one of the best proofs for that.

No doubt the twentieth century has been the Syrian’s most enlightened era, one that has been akin to the era of Jacob of Edessa (d. 708), Moshe bar Kefa (d. 903) and Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286); for in this new era a group of enlightened scholars arose who have been widely recognized for their esteemed scholarship and impact, such as Priest Jacob Saka (d. 1931), Deacon Na’um Fa’iq (d.1930), Archdeacon Ni’mat-allah Denno (d.1951), Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum, the prime promoter of cultural renaissance in the twentieth century and its leader (d. 1957), Pheloxinos Yuhanna Dolabani (d. 1969) and Patriarch Jacob III (d. 1980). On par with these was Bishop Paulus Behnam (d. 1969). All these venerable personalities have been a source of great pride for their contributions towards the Syriac culture. The intellectual movement that they pioneered continues today with pride and great strength under our honoured living patriarch scholar Zakka Iwas.\footnote{Ishak Saka, Sawṭ Naynawā wa-Ārām aw al-muḥājan Buhluṣ Bihnām (The Voice of Ninevah and Aram, that is Mutran Paulus Behnam). Aleppo: Ruha Publications, 1988, pp. 17-18.}

In addition to the numerous articles Behnam wrote in al-Marshriq and in Lisan al-Marshriq, he authored a number of books on Syriac heritage, including a well-known treatise on Bar Hebraeus’ Ethecon.\footnote{See Ishak Saka, Sawṭ Naynawā wa-Ārām, and Albeer Abouna, Adab al-luḡā al-ārāmiyya, pp. 563-566.} Among other books he authored or translated one may cite: Ibn al–Ibri al-Sha‘ir (Bar Hebraeus, the Poet) 1967; A’alaqat al-Jawhariya bein al Lughatain al-Suryaniyah wal ‘Arabiyyah (The Intrinsic Relationship Between the Syriac and the Arabic Languages); translation of Aphram Barsoum’s History of Tur Abdin from Syriac to Arabic; Khamael al-Rihan (Orchards of Blossoms), a rebuttal to Ishaq Armalah concerning the renowned Sixth Century liturgical poet Jacob of Sarugh.

\textbf{6.4.5.3 Patriarch Zakka I Iwas (1933-2014)}

Born in Mosul, Sanharib joined the Ephremic Seminary in Mosul, where he was re-named Zakka. He took his monastic vows in 1954 and joined the Patriarchal Secretariat during the last years of Patriarch Aphram Barsoum’s life. He studied at the Episcopal School of Theology in New York in 1961 to1962. He represented the Church at Vatican II in 1962 to 63. He was
ordained Archbishop of Mosul and environs in 1963, where he served until 1969, when he took charge of the Diocese of Baghdad and Basrah. He was enthroned as patriarch on September 14, 1980. He held a fellowship of the Institute of Syriac Studies at the University of Chicago in 1981, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the Episcopal General School of Theology in New York in 1984. Endowed with a friendly personality he helped his church meet the challenges of the 34 year term of his office with a progressive ecumenical attitude. He accompanied Patriarch Jacob III in meeting Pope Paul VI in 1971 when a Common Declaration was issued (see later), and he held a meeting with Pope John Paul II in 1984 when a second Common Declaration was issued (see later).

One of Patriarch Iwas’ most fruitful legacies has been his encouragement of seminary graduates to seek further learning at institutions of higher learning in Europe and America. As a result, most of the younger generations of bishops and many of the clergy have higher university degrees. The necessity of educating the clergy to keep up with the demands of progressively advancing society was not lost on Patriarch Iwas. The fact that the current patriarch, Ignatius Aphrem II Karim is a doctorate graduate from a Western university gives evidence of this fruitful approach.

Patriarch Iwas was also published extensively on several issues: ecumenical, church history, Syrian Orthodox theology, on the role of women in the Syrian Orthodox Church and many other topics that relate to Christian life in late twentieth century (see Appendix A6.5 for a summary). Some of his most significant contributions were the numerous articles he published in the *Patriarchal Journal* on varied topics, including from the legacy of unpublished works by previous authors such as Aphram Barsoum, Ni’matallah Denno.

Two of Zakka’s contemporaries merit specific mention. These are Ishak Saka (d. 2011) and Saliba Shamoun.

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950 The author personally knew Zakka Iwas as Archbishop of Baghdad and Basrah and then as Patriarch whom he visited several times. He is deeply indebted to Patriarch Iwas for granting him the approval to search for and photograph the archival material used in this work.

6.4.5.4 Ishak Saka (1931-2013)

Born in Bartilla in 1931, he graduated from the Ephremic Seminary in Mosul in 1952. He was, throughout his life, devoted to serving at seminaries and religious schools; St. Ephrem Seminary in Mosul (1953 to 1955), and al-Hasaka Syriac School (1956 to 1961). He was ordained priest monk in 1961 and bishop in 1981. He continued to serve in various capacities in seminaries in Zahle, Mosul, Deir Mar Mattai, and was appointed Patriarchal Vicar for Higher Studies in 2002. He published 16 books and numerous articles. Some of his books are on exegetic topics, such as *al-Asrar al Sab’a* (the Seven Sacraments) which he co-authored with Zakka Iwas, others are of historical nature. Of theses *al-Suryan Iman wa Hathara* (the Syrians- Faith and Civilization), an extensive work that appeared in five volumes and *Keneesati al-Suryaniyah* (My Syrian Church), stand out in particular.

6.4.5.5 Saliba Shamoun (1932-)

Born in Bartilla in 1932, he graduated from the Ephremic Seminary in Mosul in 1954 and served initially in several dioceses and at different ecumenical conferences. He represented the Church in the Second Vatican Council in 1964/1965. He was appointed bishop of Mosul in 1969 taking up the ecclesiastic forename Gregorius. He authored nine books on various liturgical topics, and translated from Syriac to Arabic 11 others, most important of which are *The Six Days* by Jacob of Edessa, the *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian*, the *Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus*, and *Fan al Fasaha* (Art of Linguistic Eloquence) by Anton of Tikrit.

6.4.5.6 Gregorius Yuhanna Ibrahim (1948-)

One of the outstanding examples of the succeeding generations of ecclesiastical and cultural reformers is Yuhanna Ibrahim. Born in 1948 in Kamishli, northern Syria, he joined the Ephremic Seminary, graduating in 1967. The path he followed from that point demonstrates the development of the phenomenon of revival of the Syrian Orthodoxy in the second half of

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955 Published by Dar al-Ruha, Aleppo, 1990.
the twentieth century, which among other features, was characterized by the opening up to and the interaction with the rest of the world. He studied in Rome, the quintessential opponent of an independent Church of Antioch and of Syrian Orthodoxy in particular. This step was a manifestation of the attitude by the Syrian Orthodox Church towards the ecumenical vision that appeared on the world scene following Vatican II, in the mid 1960s. Both Patriarchs Jacob III (1957-1980) and Zakka I Iwas (1980-2014) interacted positively towards this new atmosphere in intra-Christian relations. Young clergy were encouraged to pursue their further studies in reputed centres of learning, irrespective of the denominational affiliation of these centres. The church thus entered a new era in its revival with confidence as it found no cause for fear of conversion of its clergy to other denominations, as had been the case a century or less earlier.

Ibrahim’s post-seminary studies were at the Oriental Institute in Rome, where he obtained a bachelor’s degree in Oriental Canon Law and a master’s degree in history from the in 1976. His ecclesiastic service also reflected another side of the Church’s new responsibilities towards its communities in the diaspora. He served as parish priest in both Holland and Belgium for a year before serving as principal of the Ephremic Seminary from 1977 to 1979. He was ordained as Metropolitan of Aleppo in 1979, a position he has held ever since.

While meeting the challenges of an expanding diocese in Aleppo with new schools and youth activities, he contributed greatly towards the Syrian Orthodox Church’s interaction with the rising ecumenical movement. He represented his church at meetings of this movement and was a member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, and a consultant for (Euomina e religioni ct. egidiou state committees) in Rome. He was also an active member of the Standing Commission of the Syriac Dialogue (Pro-Oriente) in Vienna from 1990 to 2006; of the Standing Committee of the Oriental-Catholic dialogue (Pro-Oriente); the Orthodox-Orthodox Dialogue Commission; and an advisor to the Executive Committee of the Middle East Council of Churches from 1999 to 2003 and to the Forum Syriacum of the foundation of Pro-Oriente since 2006.957

One of Ibrahim’s major contributions towards the revival of the Syriac culture was his establishment of publishing houses in Aleppo, Dar al-Ruha, and Dar Mardin in 1980 through

957 I am indebted to Aziz Abdulnour and to Chorepiscopos Joseph Shabo, Syrian Orthodox priest in Aleppo, for providing a CV of Bishop Ibrahim.
which he provided encouragement to scholars, both experienced and new, to research and write about this heritage. He often wrote lengthy prefaces to the contributor’s work, a matter that attests to the breadth and spectrum of his scholarship. His publishing facilities issued more than 170 books, before they were closed down in 2011 by the events of the civil war in Syria.\footnote{List provided by Fr. Joseph Shabo, who, until the start of the Syrian civil war, undertook the distribution of most of the books published by Dar al-Ruha and Dar Mardin.}

In 2008, Ibrahim started a programme of International Syriac symposia that were to be held bi-annually in Aleppo, each devoted to a theme or a historical Syriac scholar. The 2008 Symposium was on the work by Jacob of Edessa (d.708), marking 1,300 years of his passing. The 2010 Symposium was on the work by Gregory Bar Hebraeus (d.1268).\footnote{I presented a paper at each of the 2008 and the 2010 Symposia: a paper entitled “The Physical World in Jacob of Edessa’s Hexaemeron,” at the 2008 symposium, published by Gorgias Press, 2010, and a paper with Deena Dinno, as co-author, entitled: “The Cross-Cultural Outlook of Bar ‘Ebroyo” at the Second Aleppo Syriac Colloquium, June 30-July 4, 2010. The advent of the Syrian civil war has hindered publication of the symposium papers.} The one scheduled for 2012 could not be held due to the war in Syria.

On Monday, April 25, 2013 Bishop Ibrahim was kidnapped near Aleppo, along with Paul Yazdigi, the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo. Nothing has been heard of either since then. This has been a matter of the utmost concern, not only for their safety but, taken in the broader context, for the future of Christianity in their historical homeland.

6.5 Epilogue: In the Second Half of the Twentieth Century – Achievements and New Challenges

The work of the early reformers was continued by the succeeding generations, as it gained their admiration and became encouraged by its results. Education of the clergy, which was pivotal to the revival of the church, received further impetus from the policies of the late Patriarch Zakka Iwas. His term from 1980 to 2014 witnessed a surge in young monks and nuns who were sent for graduate study at recognized universities in Europe and in North America. This surge spilled over to create an increased desire among the emerging class of lay intellectuals to pursue studies in Syriac culture and history to one that served society, spiritually and socially. Priesthood that was once in poor repute because of the ignorance of those practicing it, now became attractive, not only to the forward looking younger generations, but also to some of the established intellectuals who sought in mid-life to switch careers. This in turn led to a closer
bond between church and community, as both collaborated towards a common goal of revival and progress.

The historical bond between people and patriarch under the millet system, which was characterized by an institutionalized link between individuals and the church, has now, in the new age of citizenship, had transformed but not diminished. The individual as citizen in the new age and environment no longer needed the church as an intermediary in his dealings with officialdom. However, the bond between the two continued to be strong, as the church still played a significant role by offering the community an important identity, particularly in Middle Eastern countries, where sectarian identity, be it religious, political, ethnic, or tribal, continued to be important.

**An Expanding Cultural Renaissance**

The revival of the Syrian Orthodox Church in the twentieth century formed the essential building blocks for a modern Syriac renaissance. However, the Syrian Orthodox were not the only contributors to this renaissance. Thomas Audo, the Chaldean metropolitan of Urmia (1853-1917) who published a major Syriac-Syriac dictionary, the first of its kind and Ephrem Rahmani, the Syrian Catholic Patriarch (1853-1917) were among the distinguished early scholars from other branches of Syriac Christianity who also contributed to this renaissance, and who were followed in the twentieth century by an impressive array of many others from all branches of Syriac Christianity.\(^{960}\)

As part of this home-based cultural revival, the twentieth century witnessed a remarkable increase in interest in the study of the Syriac heritage also by Western scholars, a trend that has increasingly extended to cover institutions of learning world-wide.\(^{961}\) As a further witness to this trend, international conferences have been held, most of them on a regular basis, which have been dedicated to the study of Syriac culture. Among these are Symposium SyriaCom that has been convening every four years since 1972; the North American-based Syriac

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\(^{961}\) In addition to universities, there are now cultural institutions that are wholly devoted to Syriac studies such as Beth Mardutho, NJ, which issue a specialist periodical *Hugoye*, or to Aramaic studies: ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, in Oxford, which publishes *ARAM Periodical*. 
Symposium, which is also convened every four years (the most recent being in 2015), as does the SEERI (St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute) conference which is held in Southern India, the home of churches that follow the Syriac tradition.

**An Expanding Ecumenical Vision**

One of the most significant developments in this period was the rise of an ecumenical spirit between churches of different denominations. Despite feeling trepidation from the past, the Syrian Orthodox Church reacted positively to this. During Patriarch Jacob III’s term, the Church joined the World Council of Churches in 1960 and Pro Oriente. Through him too, as well as through Patriarch Zakka I Iwas, remarkable progress was made with the Roman Catholic Church despite a troubled history. Two particularly historic highlights emerged from the meeting of Patriarch Jacob III with Pope Paul VI in Rome in October 1971, and from the meeting of Patriarch Zakka I Iwas with Pope John Paul II in Rome in June 1984.

The Common Declaration from the October 1971 meeting states, in part, that:

> Progress has already been made and Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch Mar Ignatius Jacob III are in agreement that there is no difference in the faith they profess concerning the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and become really man, even if over the centuries difficulties have arisen out of the different theological expressions by which this faith was expressed. They therefore encourage the clergy and faithful of their Churches to even greater endeavours at removing the obstacles which still prevent complete communion among them. This should be done with love, with openness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and with mutual respect for each other and each other’s Church. . .

What is striking about this text is that it took nearly fifteen centuries to recognize that, once prejudices are laid aside, the fifth century Christological controversies were not based on theology but on linguistic expression.

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962 SEERI homepage (http://www.catholicate.net)
963 The World Council of Churches was founded in 1948 to include most Protestant and Orthodox Churches.
964 Pro Oriente was founded in 1964 to improve the relationship between the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Christians.
The Common Declaration from the October 1984 meeting consisted of in 10 points. The following are excerpts from points number three and number nine. From point number three:

Accordingly, we find today no real basis for the sad divisions and schisms that subsequently arose between us concerning the doctrine of Incarnation.

From Point Number Nine of the Common Declaration, we read:

Our identity in faith, though not yet complete, entitles us to envisage collaboration between our Churches in pastoral care, in situations which nowadays are frequent both because of the dispersion of our faithful throughout the world and because of the precarious conditions of these difficult times. It is not rare, in fact, for our faithful to find access to a priest of their own Church materially or morally impossible. Anxious to meet their needs and with their spiritual benefit in mind, we authorize them in such cases to ask for the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick from lawful priests of either of our two sister Churches, when they need them. It would be a logical corollary of collaboration in pastoral care to cooperate in priestly formation and theological education. Bishops are encouraged to promote sharing of facilities for theological education where they judge it to be advisable.

Had the above been the attitude of Rome in the previous centuries, the misery of so many would have been avoided. Clearly, it was the ecumenical spirit that prevailed in Vatican II was which encouraged positive dialogue that promoted better understanding of the other.

**Challenges: An Expanding Diaspora**

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed increased emigration of Syrian Orthodox communities to the West principally from Turkey, but to a lesser extent from Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. The majority, particularly those originating from Turkey, headed initially to Germany but later to Sweden, Holland, Belgium and France as well as to Australia and to New Zealand. This trend continued well into the 1980s, at which point emigration from Iraq,  

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hitherto limited, began to take place following the start of the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988), as well as subsequently to the Gulf War of 1991.

The Church responded to this wide-scale movement of its communities across five continents by setting up new dioceses to serve the diaspora communities. Thus, the Church continued to constitute a central focus in the life of these communities, albeit not as uniquely or as decisively as it had been in their home countries. Thus, the Church, which in 1933 had eight dioceses in the Middle East\footnote{Mosul, Mar Mattai, Syria and Lebanon, Aleppo and Ben Nahrain, Jerusalem, Diyarbakir, Mardin and Tur Abdin.} and one in the diaspora (United States and Canada),\footnote{The Patriarchal Journal, 1930, pp. 13-15.} by the end of the twentieth century had 28 dioceses: 15 in the Middle East,\footnote{Three in Iraq (Mosul, Mar Mattai, and Baghdad and Basrah); four in Turkey (Istanbul, Mardin, Adiyaman and Deir Mar Gibrael); four in Syria (Damascus, Aleppo, Jazirah and the Euphrates, Homs and Hama); one in Jerusalem (including Jordan and the Holy Land); and three in Lebanon (Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Zahle).} and the rest in the diaspora,\footnote{Two in the US, one in Canada, one in each of Argentina, United Kingdom, Australia & New Zealand, the Netherlands, Switzerland & Austria, Belgium & France, Germany; and two in Sweden. Source: Syrian Orthodox Church’s official Web site.} in addition to approximately 20 dioceses in India.\footnote{Ibid.} Emigration from Iraq increased markedly following the American invasion of that country in 2003, and the resultant state of anarchy and insecurity throughout the years that followed. The post-2013 extremist Islamic onslaught on Mosul and environs threatens to eradicate Christianity from one of its earliest homes. The resulting quest for emigration is strongly evident.

A critical study of the impact of the new social environment on the lives of those immigrants was carried out within the scope of the Leiden Project.\footnote{Naures Atto, \textit{Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora}, Leiden University Press, 2011.} Considering the immigration to Sweden as a case study, Naurs Atto provides a clear insight into the psychological impact on the immigrants of leaving a historical homeland to settle in a remarkably different environment. One of the issues that emerged from the study is the difficulty of forging an identity in a new social environment and the competing considerations in doing so. The hitherto unchallenged identity of belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church was now increasing challenged by alternative identities that included ethnic and political dimensions. In this situation the church, while attempting to serve the new communities, has struggled to stay above these divisions, however, not always successfully.
An Ominous Existentialist Development

The civil war in Syria, now in its fifth year, has resulted in a humanitarian tragedy on a massive scale, with millions of refugees leaving the country. The evident Islamic focus of this conflict threatens to uproot Christianity from the land of its founders. The Syrian Orthodox Church, the smallest of the indigenous Christian churches, did survive the existentialist onslaught of Sayfo in 1915, and moreover subsequently revived and witnessed a flourishing renaissance. This was in no small measure made possible by the fact that the Church was still anchored to the land of its forefathers. But will it survive a new Sayfo if it is separated from the last of its historical physical roots?
CONCLUSIONS

No study, in any language, has covered the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church over the designated period as fully as this current study, which it is hoped will fill a dire gap, perhaps breaking ground in new research. The basis for this study, in addition to published sources, has been approximately 6,000 relevant images that were filtered from a much larger collection of uncatalogued, unedited and unpublished archival documents that were made available for this study and for which I am duly grateful. Searching through the archives of over 24,000 images was an arduous task, but it has been a task that has paid clear dividends in shedding light on a challenging subject. The conclusions of this study may be summarized as follows:

The millet system, which assigned the internal affairs of non-Muslim communities to the leaders of their respective religious institutions, strengthened the bond between religious institutions and their respective communities. Despite certain important shortcomings, this system preserved and protected the smaller, and one may dare say, even the larger Christian churches and their communities from being coerced to apostatize and from the pressures of being under the direct authority, whether at central or local levels, of a potentially intrusive system and corrupt officialdom. However, the arrival of Western missionaries with their intent to apostatize indigenous Christians changed the basic tenets of security that were central to the millet system. This resulted in divisions within the indigenous churches, in addition to wider sociopolitical implications throughout the Ottoman Empire.

There was an intimate yet very respectful relationship between the ordinary people of the Syrian Orthodox communities and their patriarch. The patriarch was directly accessible to all: individuals and groups. Letters were addressed directly to the patriarch by name. Yet, this accessibility was coupled with expressions of utmost respect that would strike the present day reader as outlandish, even obtrusive. A letter addressed to the patriarch is termed ‘ubūdiyya’ (testament of slavery), while a letter issued by the patriarch is termed ‘musharrifa’ (honour bestowing honour).

Surviving throughout its ancient history as a minority, Syrian Orthodoxy, in common with other Christian communities living under Islam, has always vested its identity with its patriarchs who stand as guardians of the Apostolic seat they inherit. By analogy, the patriarch
derived his respect and authority from this noble standing, akin to the manner the Ottoman Sultan derived his authority from no less than the Caliphate tradition.

What further contributed to this bond within Syrian Orthodoxy was the fact that the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which was headed by the patriarch, consisted of people of humble background, such as comprised the vast majority of the Syrian communities. There was no social nobility, such as ‘Medicis’ or Armenian “amiras” that would monopolize or control ecclesiastic appointments, including that of the patriarch. Similarly, there was no tribal structure within the Syrian Orthodox communities, no geographic dominance and no hereditary tradition that would pre-determine or monopolize any of the ecclesiastic appointments, including that of the patriarch.

Syrian Orthodoxy faced existentialist challenges from Western Churches both in the Middle East and among its communities on the Malabar Coast of southern India. The challenge to Oriental Christianity by the Western Christian orders (i.e., Catholic and Reformed/Protestant) has conventionally been considered to have occurred first in the Middle East, the birthplace of Oriental Christianity. However, a closer examination shows that the initial challenges were first encountered in southern India, home to Syriac Christianity from the early centuries of the Christian era. Roman Catholicism came to southern India by means of the Portuguese who invaded that country in 1503. This was considerably earlier than the missionary campaign that Rome mounted in the Middle East following the establishment of the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in 1622. Considering the Reformed/Protestant churches, their first missionaries arrived during the early days of the British colonization of that country, which commenced in 1795. This was still a few years earlier than the earliest American Protestant mission in the Middle East. It was the division caused by the British Protestant missionaries among the Syrian Orthodox in southern India that prompted the first contact between Antioch and Canterbury. This starting point of the relationship, which developed between the two churches during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, has not been duly acknowledged.

In the Middle East, the Syrian Orthodox encountered pressures to convert firstly to Catholicism throughout the nineteenth century and, to a much lesser extent, to Protestantism during the second half of the same century. Both modes of conversion drew on the accumulated weakness of the old Church. After an initial failed attempt by the Catholics at the
patriarchal level a few years before the start of the nineteenth century, pressures to convert were mounted throughout the nineteenth century with the help of Latin missionaries and French diplomatic intervention at the Porte. The track followed was the unprecedented method of taking over churches and monasteries from the old Church through French consular intervention at the Porte. The dichotomy between the secularism advanced by the French Revolution and the practice to the contrary of promoting sectarian division on a foreign land is remarkable. The attempts to shut down this church, as a surviving mark and beacon of Oriental Christianity, weakened it, and by the early twentieth century, brought it near to dissolution.

Although the violence that started in Diyarbakir in the autumn of 1895 against the Armenians, but also engulfed other Christian communities, was initially somewhat localized, it set the trend for similar acts in many other parts of southeastern Anatolia in the months and the years to come. That violence was in fact the precursor to the much more intense violence, the massacres of the Sayfo of 1915 and subsequent years. The lack of decisive governmental response to truly quell the aggressions of 1895 against the peaceful Syrian Orthodox and other Christian communities emboldened the perpetrating Kurdish tribes in most regions, as well as some of the Arab and Yazidi tribes in Jezirah and Nisibin, to loot and terrorize those communities that lived in their midst, and to apply pressure on them to convert to Islam. It also resulted in a loss of confidence on the part of the people in the patriarch’s ability to protect them against external aggression. Evidence of this can be readily seen in the diminishing number of letters appealing for help that were addressed to the patriarch at the turn of the twentieth century, whether by individuals or groups of individuals compared to previous periods. Further, the hunger and poverty, which engulfed most communities because of these events, accentuated the already desperate economic state of most of these communities. Their dire economic conditions rendered them increasingly susceptible to conversion under material enticement and a promise of better security offered by connection to a Western power. The documents, including consular reports, bear clear witness to this.

To compound matters, Patriarch Abdul Masih, traumatized by the killings he had personally witnessed in 1895, became increasingly unfit both to deal with the demands of his position as an ecclesiatic and as a civic leader, and to provide the stewardship that his people in this and other regions needed most during these critical years. He was eventually deposed in 1904. As a mark of the accumulated weakness of the Church at that point, Abdullah, who had a
controversial past was elected as the next patriarch in 1906. Abdullah’s shortcomings did little if anything to arrest the trend of decline: his continuous absence from the patriarchal seat in Deir al-Za’faran, from early 1908, right up to his death in November 1915; his preoccupation with his travels to England and India; his subsequent residence in Jerusalem for claimed health reasons all pushed the church further to the edge of the abyss. At that point total conversion to Catholicism and Protestantism was deemed by many to be the likely prospect for what was left of Syrian Orthodoxy. Based on Abdullah’s neglect of his church, which amounted to abandonment at its most critical moment in history, many, even those who were close to him, began to have doubt as to his allegiance to the Church, particularly in light of his previous defection to the Syrian Catholic Church.

The Sayfo genocide eradicated nearly half of the Syrian Orthodox population in the Middle East, a proportion of loss that was higher than that suffered by other Syriac Christians. Combined with previous losses through religious conversion, this tragedy brought the Church to the edge of the abyss from which many doubted it would survive. However, the arrival of the majority of those exiled to the Arab region, where Arab nation states were in the process of being formed, brought these communities to the threshold of a new life, to be among people who welcomed them in their midst, as though in remembrance of, and as a measure of reciprocity for, the way the Christians in Greater Syria and Iraq had welcomed their Arab cousins in their midst some thirteen centuries earlier. This new, much more tolerant environment afforded the devastated emigrants from Anatolia safety and the opportunity to begin to heal their lives from the devastation that had befallen them in their traditional homeland.

Refuge in the Arab states also gave the Syrian Orthodox Church a much needed opportunity to begin to reverse the trend of decline that had beset its existence for centuries. Thus, the demise of Syriac Christianity in Anatolia sowed the seeds of its re-birth in a land where it once shone. And it was this land, also part of their historical homeland, that would give rise to those few individuals who were to spearhead the long journey for revival. While Syrian Orthodoxy was receptive to Arabism as the nascent marker of nationhood, it, at the same time, also asserted its traditional Syriac/Aramaic identity. Thus, the emancipation of the Arab world from Ottomanism offered Syrian Orthodoxy the opportunity to engage in cultural revival both as indigenous Syriacs and as constituents of historical Arab culture.
Freed from latter-day Turkish and Kurdish oppression, the Syriac Orthodox, as well as all other Christians who emigrated from Anatolia, felt safe away from the threat of the sword, forced conversion and other persecutions. Despite its challenges, the new environment offered a new beginning for people who had been marginalized for so long. The new immigrants found themselves in the proximity of fellow Christians, who had been actively involved in the cultural emancipation of these nation states. This offered the newcomers unique opportunities for education and self betterment. Through education they had the opportunity to become active participants in the ensuing sociopolitical environment of these nascent nation states. This was in stark contrast to the environment of marginalization they had left behind.

The new nation states also offered a complete departure from the ‘sectarian’ millet system that still lacked the spirit of equality and citizenship, despite its reform during the second half of the nineteenth century. The immigrants, as citizens of the new nation states, began to feel an overall sense of freedom and security in the new environment. They also came to see the relationship between themselves as individuals and the Church as basically religious and not civic. At the same time, the new environment offered the Syrian Orthodox Church, with its new well-defined and reduced level of social responsibility, the opportunity to embark on much needed revival, not least by means of the education first of its clergy. The Church succeeded, in the course of this transformation, in developing a new bond with its communities through cultural and social interaction that was commonly based on the tenets of revival.

In the immediate post-war period, the Syrian Orthodox Church, led by Patriarch Elias III and Archbishop Aphram Barsoum, in their different ways, laboured to provide compassionate leadership and demonstrated resolve to commence a period of recovery and revival. Both were far-sighted leaders who were aware of the constraints of their immediate environment and proceeded wisely, though with differing scopes of aspiration. Patriarch Elias III, very much aware of the plight of his people who were still living in Turkey, followed a policy of accommodation and submission towards the new Turkish leadership. On the other hand, Barsoum, then Archbishop of Syria and Lebanon, had already concluded that the future of his church and people lay within the Arab social and cultural environment to which it had contributed such a great deal many centuries earlier. This was consistent with his instinctive pro-Arab nationalist background and leanings. It was also reinforced by his negative experience in dealing with Western Powers in Paris and with Western churches.
The post-World War I revival, which came to be largely viewed as a second renaissance, had two aspects: one related to the church and the other to community. Given their historical inseparable identity and fate, the advances experienced by one had a direct impact on and formed an incentive to the other. Despite this positive interaction each of the two grew under its own specific potentials and emerging personalities. Both the church, as an institution, and the community made major steps forward from the early 1930s on, despite the economic and the sociopolitical difficulties caused by the two World Wars. In the course of this revival, the Church made the education of its clergy a major priority. In consequence of the Church’s success in this endeavor, and particularly in light of the reputation of Ignatius Aphram Barsoum as a learned scholar, it succeeded in shedding the debilitating stigma of backwardness that had been attached to it, particularly over the previous century, something that had been exploited by others to apostatize its followers to join one or other of the branches of Western Christianity.

The momentum created and promoted by the first generation of reformers continued in the following decades to mark a recovery that, in the words of the late Patriarch Zakka I Iwas, “had not been matched since the days of Bar Hebraeus in the thirteenth century.”

One of the mechanisms of revival that was actively pursued by the early, and indeed, subsequent generation of reformers, was spearheading a translation movement into Arabic that utilized rising literacy among the communities in the new environment. This movement, which addressed the literary works of the forefathers - Ephrem the Syrian, Jacob of Sarug, Jacob of Edessa, Bar Salibi, Michael the Syrian, Bar Hebraeus and many others - had its core purpose to educate the communities about their venerable past and to instill in them the desire to emulate their achievements by the pursuit of learning. In the same vein many liturgical works, particularly hymns chanted during prayers, were also translated into Arabic, which was increasingly becoming the language of the immigrants from Anatolia.

Emboldened by this spirit of revival, Syrian Orthodoxy engaged as an active participant in the ecumenical movements that flourished in the second half of the twentieth century. Further, the revival of the spirit of confidence enabled it to meet the challenges of an extended diaspora with its inherent danger of dissolution in the wider world. To this end the Syrian

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Orthodox re-organized their communities by creating a four-fold increase in the number of their dioceses from the immediate post-World War I period, with much expanded jurisdiction extending from Australia to Sweden and from India to the Americas, overseeing over 48 dioceses, thus reflecting some of the glory in bygone days when Patriarch Dionysius of Tel Mahri (d. 845) ordained bishops to serve in over 80 dioceses that were spread out across Asia.

With Arabic being the language of the majority of the secondary sources (i.e., the published literary contributions of reformers), I had to translate a good deal of this material into English. It is hoped that, as a result, this will now provide an opportunity to Western scholarship to be introduced to these sources.

Finally, it is sad to ponder what effect the current intensifying sectarian conflict in the Middle East may have on the future of Christianity in its birthplace.
APPENDIX A 1

Map No. 1 of Tur Abdin by courtesy of Hans Hollerweger from His Book Published in 1999.

Map No. 2 of Tur Abdin at the time of Oswald Parry’s travels in 1892.
JEHEL TUR
IN THE NORTH EAST CORNER OF
MESOPOTAMIA.
APPENDIX A 2

The letter from Patriarch Elias II (1838-1847), addressed to “Patriarch Alexander Griswold.”

Note that an accompanying archival document penned by Horatio Southgate defines the addressee to be Right Reverend Alexander Viets Griswold, D.D., Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, U.S.A.

After the customary elaborate salutation, the letter acknowledges the receipt of a letter of introduction from the addressee concerning “your son and our dear Southgate.” The letter then proceeds as follows:

We also wish to inform you of our need from you to exert every possible effort to help us, for we have in these times been experiencing hardship from enemies of our Orthodox faith, the followers of the Pope. They have caused us considerable anguish and pain. Dwellers in Mosul have bribed the wazir in order to divide our churches, monasteries and other endowment properties. When we realized this we, the poor, went to Islambul [sic] and obtained from him of blessed soul, Sultan Mahmoud, six firmans, one to each town, to secure back our churches and monasteries from the hands of the enemies, and to prevent them from entry to these churches and monasteries. When we returned to Mosul, we presented the ownership certificates to the respected wasir, who immediately ordered the demolition of the walls that they had erected between us and them, and our churches were thus handed over to us. “After that, their bishop left for Islambul. When I heard of his trip I too sent a bishop. When he (they) reached the Blessed (Islambul) they found that Sultan Mahmud had passed away and had been succeeded by his son Sultan Abdul Majid. The bishop belonging to the Pope secretly went to the French Ambassador, pleaded with him and succeeded in having a firman issued again for dividing the churches. Thus our churches were once again divided by walls they erected in them, and up to this date they are under the control of those belonging to the Pope. In Aleppo and Damascus, too, they have confiscated our churches entirely such that our people are without churches or monasteries.” After the return of the referred bishop from Islambul, our bishop wrote a plea to the Sublime Porte. In consequence, our lord and Sultan,

976 Islambul (Lots of Islam) was in common usage at the time of writing this letter.
977 This would be Sultan Abdul Majid I (1839-1861)
ordered that they [the two sides] adjudicate before the Patriarch of the Rum. Thus our bishop and the bishop under the Pope each presented his case before the Patriarch of the Rum, who adjudicated that the Syrians are an old taifa and all the old churches and monasteries belong to them. The Rum Patriarch’s report was submitted to Sultan Abdul Majid. Accordingly, the Sublime Porte ordered that the churches and monasteries be handed back to the Old Syrians. However, this has not been implemented. We keep being promised day after day and month after month, that a firman would be issued, while our bishop still awaits this in Is lambul. They keep promising that matters would be restored in good order. However, in spite of how these matters would end, we request that you may place our request before the State of the English, may God protect it and keep it blessed, so that it would advise its ambassador in Is lambul to speak with Sultan Abdul Majid, to ensure that after issuing of the firman, a bishop under the Pope would not issue a subsequent firman for again dividing our churches and [to impress] that the Syrian taifa is under England’s protection just as the Papists are defended by the King of France…

The letter ended with “Our Father who art in Heaven, etcetera⁹⁷⁸,” followed by the Patriarchal insignia and signature. The letter is dated July 2, 1841.⁹⁷⁹

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⁹⁷⁸ Only patriarchs may end their letters with this statement opening sentence of the Lord’s prayer. While an Arabic translation of this sentence is given in this case, most other cases, as evidenced from the numerous archival documents I have reviewed, show a Syriac text only.

⁹⁷⁹ Southgate states the date as being July 14, 1841. There is no discrepancy in this as the first date is likely in accordance with the Julian Calendar, while that used by Southgate would be in accordance with the Gregorian Calendar, with the characteristic difference of 12 days between the two calendars in the nineteenth century.
APPENDIX A 3.1

Encyclical from Gregorius ‘Adul Jalil al-Mosuli to the Churches in Malabar, dated February 5, 1668 ⁹⁸⁰

The following is my translation of the Encyclical, preceded by a preamble published by Tuma. ⁹⁸¹ The preamble states:

In the Name of the Father the begetter, and the Son the begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father, One true God in Three Persons, to Him be glory and upon us His mercy forever.

Following the preamble, the text reads as follows:

News have reached me of the persecution that you have endured with patience at the hands of the blinded [misguided] men who departed from the correct laws of the Syrian Church and joined those who strayed under the influence of the evil kings of Portugal. They have convened for themselves an illegal synod in which they manipulated the Orthodox Faith, the faith of the venerable Apostles of our church, the established canons of the synod of Nicea, replaced the precious liturgy and laws of the early generations with new alien deviant laws. They have fallen into heresy and are attempting to draw others also to fall in their heresy. The heresies of the Catholics are so many, that time does not permit to enumerate them in detail, but we hope that we may talk about them verbally. I ask you, therefore, to jealously guard the canons of the Syrian Church, remembering that suffering and pain in this worthless world brings forth eternal life, happiness and comfort. The Lord says: “whoever perseveres to the end is saved and that the kingdom of God is acquired by forceful action.” In his epistle, St. Peter wrote: “For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). St. Paul, tongue of the Holy Church, wrote in the Epistle to the Philippians: “I hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the Gospel.” (Philippians 1:27).

And the venerable St. James says: “As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke the name of the

⁹⁸⁰ Document P1070660, 661.
⁹⁸¹ Tuma (later Patriarch Ignatius Yacob III), History of the Church of India, tras. Matti Moosa, Gorgias 2010, p. 56. Tuma provides excerpts of the letter that were extracted from a copy of the letter he had and notes that an other copy existed with the Edavazhikal family in Malabar. Tuma, p. 58, includes a summary of a second letter Mar Gregorius Abdul Jalil al-Mosulli wrote to the Syrians of Mylapore in 1669 in which he expresses sadness at the division in the Indian Church as a result of the Portuguese rule.
Lord. Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” (James 5:10,11). St. Ephrem the Syrian says: Bear the burdens without deviating from truth, welcome death with zeal for the sake of your fathers’ faith.”

And, in liturgical books we read in the service for the martyrs on Thursdays: “As for us, we do not deny him or his son; we are the offspring of Abraham and the heirs of Isaac: we die for the sake of the God of our fathers,” thus we die so that we may inherit eternal life. So take heed from the martyrs and for what they did, for with pleasure they agreed to devote their lives for the love of their fathers’ faith, whereas the liars among Indian Christians neglected the canons of the Syrians and accepted new canons, more than 1600 years after the arrival of St. Thomas. The men of the Roman church had no authority over this diocese for 1600 years, and a large number, [how many is only] known to God, of bishops, priests, deacons and Christian men and women lived and died in this diocese over the past 1600 years. Do you think that this entire huge crowd was judged to perish in hell? No. Only a blasphemer with the devil in him would say that.

Until now the priests have been permitted to marry according to the law, whereas the Roman Latins have banned the marriage of priests and deacons to the extent that many fell into the filth of debauchery. It was because of this that God punished the world with the Flood, saving only Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives. The said sin was the cause of the devastation of Sodom and Gomorrah, as He rained fire and sulphur upon them. These filthy people blasphemed holy matrimony and loved adultery. Thus serve them with the tiding that the punishment of God will be severe, so let it be known to you that matrimony is holy and its bed pure, and that God will punish the adulterers and the debauchers…

The letter ended with the following signature format:

The wretched Gregorius ‘Abd al-Jalil, servant of Jesus Christ, by the Grace of God, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, to the beloved sons the priest Gurgis, Periodeutes [visiting priest] of the church of Parur, priest Jacob, Periodeutes of the Church of Mulanthuruthi and the faithful of that church, priest Matta and priest Zechariah together with the Syrian deacons, and notable men and women and the young women, rich and poor in the two towns of Mulanthuruthi and Kandand.
APPENDIX A 3.2

The Account by Abdullah Sattuf (Saddadi) of Patriarch Peter’s Concerns On the Eve of their Journey to England and India

We found him to be very sad and deeply worried because of the affairs of the millet [referring to the Syrian Orthodox community as a whole] were encountering serious obstructions. Our millet found has been under the pressure of the Armenians who have always been attempting to confiscate our endowment properties and churches. We have, thus, attempted to disengage from them in respect of our affairs in Istanbul and with the Sublime Porte. In return, they have been actively hindering all efforts and activities relating to our lord [referring to the Patriarch] and millet. He [referring to Patriarch Peter] has spent nearly one year and has paid 300 liras, before he was able to receive the Firman confirming his Patriarchate. He also submitted a request to renovate the church in Bak Ohgly, which had burnt down, but here too the Armenians continued to obstruct this project right to the end. In addition, they took over Saint Ephrem’s Church in Edessa and the churches in Jerusalem and in other places, always acting to do us harm. We also had a conflict with the Catholics with regard to the lands in Fayrousa [in Syria]. Letters from India showed that Metropolitan Matthew has changed the liturgy of our church and has confiscated churches and parishes from other Bishops. Further our lord, the Patriarch sent official letters to Diyarbakir, Mardin, Mosul, and Sham; but the valis were bribed by the Armenians and by the Catholics and did not work with fairness and justice. He applied for a Firman for ownership of the properties in Jerusalem, but the Armenians hindered that. He also sent letters to India [to resolve the issues there] but to no avail. Thus, when he saw that affairs had reached a crisis point from all directions, he sought help of the Rum, but to no avail. At that point he approached Priest Curtis, who served at the Church of Ghalta in Istanbul, and informed him of the stress he been under. Consequently, the said priest made immediate communications with the Anglican Church in London. After a while, a response arrived stating that if the Syrian Patriarch were to come [to London], his presence here should yield positive outcome. A house accommodation has been arranged for him and one more person for a period of one month. Further, the said priest encouraged our lord [referring to the Patriarch] to proceed. We stayed in Istanbul a period of 3½ months.

982 Al-Majalah al-Batriarkah, No. 42, February 1985, pp. 75-78.
983 It is customary, in Arabic, to express the first person in the plural.
In the year 1873, the Archbishop of Canterbury addressed a letter to the most Venerable Petros, Patriarch of the Syrians Church, at Mardin, in Mesopotamia, with the object of eliciting from his Highness, if he felt disposed, full information on the subject of the rival claims of Mar Athanasius and Mar Dionysius to become Metran (Metropolitan) of the Syrian Church in Malabar. The Primate has consulted the Bishops in India, and has heard in reply, that they conceive that preference should be given to Mar Athanasius. This is not the opinion of the Patriarch himself; and it is because his people in India have appealed to him for aid that he has paid a visit to this country, a visit which he was encouraged to make by the friendly tone of the Archbishop’s letter, which reached him in Constantinople.

It may be gathered from the Archbishop’s letter that it is acknowledged on all hands that the rightfulness of the claim to be Metran turns upon the question whether, admitting the consecration of each in his turn, Athanasius, the first appointed, has been deposed by lawful authority.

It is the object of this paper, by a statement of facts, to settle this question. The history of the matter is briefly this. The Christians on the coast of Malabar, numbering over 100,000, and called Syrians, because their ancestors were converted from Syria at least as far back as the sixth century, have continued under the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch since 1685; have been governed by Bishops appointed by him; and, in the conduct of the Divine Offices, have been accustomed to the rite and the language of the church in Syria. But for several years past this Church has been in a state of much confusion, owing to the following circumstances.

Athanasius (also called Matthew)* was consecrated about 31 years ago by Ignatius Elias II, the then Patriarch of Antioch, who, however, very speedily found occasion to regret the appointment. He was charged with various and grave offences; as, e.g. he was charged with having consecrated a bishop in defiance of the canons.

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of the church; with permitting men who have been twice married to be ordained; with simony; with altering the ancient liturgy; with alienating church property; with irregular celebration of the Holy Communion, permitting only one element to be given in some cases, and in several instances using unconsecrated wine, etc. etc., against the laws ecclesiastical; and the Patriarch summoned him to Mardin to answer for himself. He refused to appear, was excommunicated, and finally deposed in 1846.

* Note: Syrian Bishops have always two names: one baptismal, the other official. Hence the frequency with which Athanasius, Dioynasius, etc., occur.  
+ These charges are vouched for by chorepiscopus Philipos.

A successor was appointed, but Athanasius bid defiance and has not only kept his post until now, but he has contrived to get the Maharajah to make him Metropolitan, and has exercised jurisdiction as such; and this, in spite of the utmost efforts of the Syrian Church in Malabar, backed by three successive Patriarchs at Antioch, who have severally excommunicated Athanasius, and have sent out first Mar Korillos to supersede him, and subsequently, on the health of Korillos giving way, Mar Dionysius, a native of India, was elected and consecrated.

The last four pages of the report summarize the intrigue practiced by the schismatic side, resorting to deceit, all with collusion by the British authority in India.

The reader may there find recorded, inter alia, an alleged settlement of a dispute by the votes of certain representatives of the Syrians, given before Mr. Ballard, the British Resident, a sum of money, claimed by the Syrian community, had for some time been locked up in the treasury at Trevandrum. Athanasius was bent on obtaining it, and a meeting was invited to assemble, ostensibly to consult about the best method of using the money. But when it is understood that this meeting was known beforehand to Athanasius; that it consisted of his friends and partisans, together with others who came through fear, and against their will; that few eminent among their priests or laity sanctioned it by their presence; that it was held in the compound of Mr. Baker, the leading missionary, at Cottayam, the very headquarters of the Church Missionary Society; that the Dewan, attended by armed soldiers, was present:- When these facts, vouched for by Philipos, the Cathanar of the church there, are considered, it will not require much reasoning to

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985 This is a footnote in the original document.  
986 This is a footnote in the original document.
cast doubts upon the freedom of this assembly (much analogous to an Ecumenical Council held by the Pope in the Vatican), or to make it appear that we are, probably, not far wrong in tracing to the Missionaries the misrepresentations which have prevailed so long, and so disastrously for the peace of this poor community of Syrian Christians.

The report then summarises the motives of the perpetrators as follows:

But [it will be asked] what conceivable motive can they have? The motive is none other than the desire, springing from a very mistaken religious zeal, and fostered by plausible assurances of the wily Athanasius, to see the Syrian Church ‘reformed’ [as they would call it] and Protestantized.

The report then makes an insightful scathing attack on the narrow-mindedness of many clergy, thus:

We all know the blindness with which religious men sometimes mistake the means, and bid us “come and see their Zeal for the Lord;” and we are no strangers [certainly not in England at this moment] to the narrowness of party spirit, which regards as damnable error all worship which is not ruled by our square and compass. Something, perhaps, of this spirit oozes out in a letter* written by the present Bishop of Madras, on the 4th November, 1870; in which speaking of the rival Metrans, he says: Mar Dionysius is tenacious of the existing state of things in the Malabar Church, not willing even to part with prayers to the Virgin”. Bishop Gell, accordingly, when consulted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressed himself as inclining to Mar Athanasius rather than Mar Dionysius. Yet it was not always so [as that letter of his lordship’s proves]. And if a candid man, such as therein appears, has so changed his opinion; if he and his brother Bishops in India have come- as a result of their recent examination into the matter- to a conclusion adverse to Mar Dionysius, and thus opposed to facts when looked at in candour; it must be that these prelates have relied upon the statements of men deceived, and therefore [unconsciously] deceiving.

* Quoted in The Western Star (of India) of November 14th, 1874. 987
+ “Still if the Patriarch had the right to depose Mar Athanasius and did depose him, it would seem to be the duty of the British Government to secure the recognition of the rightful Metran by the Travancore Government, and the duty of the Church of England, in such intercourse as we have with the Syrian Church, to recognise the same person.”- Bishop Gell, ibid. 988

987 This is a footnote in the original document.
988 This is a footnote in the original document.
The Archbishop of Canterbury has asked for proofs, our Government have required information. We trust that both the one and the other will now be satisfied.

The fact of the deposition is manifest. The right of the Patriarch of Antioch to depose is also unquestioned*. The inquiry with which the subject has been ingeniously mystified, as to how long the Malabar Christians have received their bishops from Antioch—this is wholly irrelevant to the contention. For not only [as is unquestionably true] have they for more than two centuries voluntarily adhered to Antioch; but it was thither that the very man who is causing all this schism, it was to Antioch that Athanasius himself went for consecration in 1843; and is upon the credentials [revoked in 1846] given by the Patriarch of Antioch, that this man bases his claims!

* The late Archdeacon Robinson in a remarkable letter to the then Patriarch of Antioch, fully acknowledges him as spiritual head of the Malabar Church, and testifies that Bishop Heber treated him as the authoritative spiritual ruler. 989

The last section of the report is as unequivocal as the rest of it in denouncing the very thought and the practice in which the British ecclesiastic and civil authorities in India were engaged throughout the matter. It ends with this damming statement:

But the British Government [ever bound to promote peace among its subjects], has interfered already, and to some purpose, through its representative, the Resident of Travancore: for not only has he lent himself to the settlement at a packed meeting of a disputed monetary claim; but the supreme Government has, by its persistent refusal to utter the one word asked for, virtually taken sides, and thrown its weight into the scale in favour of schism, robbery and wrong. 990

989 This is a footnote in the original document.
To our gracious brother Mutran [Bishop] Jirjis Efendi⁹⁹², esteemed Monk Ibrahim Efendi, and respected leaders of our community: After wishing you peace and enquiring about your honourable wellbeing, I wrote to you last week in detail about what transpired concerning Patriarch Abdul Masih and informed you that you need to emphasize, in a second petition what you had stated in the previous petitions you submitted, listing the negative qualities of the Patriarch and the repulsion all feel due to his poor administration, his preoccupation with his own pleasures, and his abuse of the Waqf [endowment] of the millet [community] and, thus, the need to depose him from this holy patriarchal position that he fills, and to replace him with someone capable of managing the affairs of the community and, finally, your refusal to accept him on any condition.

I have come to you now with this letter to re-emphasize what I stated in my previous letter, requesting you, a second time, to cooperate with each other and to help each other accomplish this task relentlessly, without any neglect. I beseech you in the name of the rights that are due to our dear millet not to delay for even one hour what I have written about, for were you not to do that, and you became complacent in emphasizing the content of these petitions, the Patriarch would remain in his position and you would be the ones who would be negligent in protecting the rights of our millet by overlooking the bad acts of the Patriarch and their detrimental effects that would continue to lead to our decline. As for us [me], all that remains for me to do is to shed light on a path that you should follow, as I am unable to achieve anything before receiving these petitions. On the other hand, if you prepare the necessary petitions and submit them to the respective higher authorities, I would seek ratification by the Porte and by the esteemed Ministry of Justice. I will emphasize here that this time we would, with the grace of the Creator and with the Sultanic justice achieve our aspired result, for when discussing the issue, the Ministry of Justice answered, that the unseating of the Patriarch depends on his rejection by the millet. Thus, if you categorically refuse to accept him. Also it is important to note is that what the

⁹⁹¹ 40M-24/46 – 0452
⁹⁹² Turkish title of respect following a name
referenced authority wrote to the *Vali* was based on an order from the Grand *Vazir* in which he had inferred from an earlier reply by the *Vali* to his enquiry, that it was possible to reform the Patriarch to your approval. That this [the enquiry] was only for the sake of testing the matter. Thus, if you now emphasize that you would never accept Abdul Masih as Patriarch, they would no doubt replace him. As you well know that I have already commenced this matter with you for the love of protecting the right of our *millet*, its *Waqf*, and its standing, and in recognition of respect of your esteemed selves. My hope is profound that you would confirm the petitions as noted above and in doing so not overlook the need to gather many signatures with no difference between elites and *rayah*. Concluding this with the hope and with the request that you would keep me informed expeditiously as to what transpires.

May the Lord extend your honorable life.

By the prayers of your holiness your brother, Timotheus Faulus Urhoyo [Paulus of Urhoy (Syriac) or Ruha (Arabic)], the weak, Patriarchal Vicar of Constantinople, March 27, 1903.993

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993 Document 40M-24/26- 0122.
May the Divine Grace that Descended on the Apostles in the Upper Room of Zion, Descend upon the Forehead of His Respected Beatitude Ignatius Abdul Masih Patriarch of the Antiochian Syrians, the Thrice Blessed, may God grant Him long life.

We offer you our good wishes, heart-felt greetings, love-filled desires and inform your beatitude that in today’s mail we received a letter from his Holiness Pope Pius X in which he informs us that you have sent him a letter dated April 28 ultimo in which you explained to him what had happened to you, particularly the theft of the cross and the two rings that he had bestowed on your respectful beatitude. He was greatly saddened by that, and he has written to us that he will send by the next post a gold cross and a fine ring [inscribed] with the name of your beatitude, together with a gold chain. His Holiness and Lord the Pope reminded us to provide you every now and then with all your needs to cover your expenses. As you well know we have not and will not detract from providing you with all that which brings to you comfort and peace of mind, for all that matters to us is your good health, which we hold dear to our heart, as your good conscience would attest.

Further, our Lord the Pope commands us to remind you with what you promised him, namely that you would exert yourself to re-claim our separated beloved brethren to the fold of one Catholic Church, and no doubt you are paying attention to this matter. As we promised you, we will, upon our receipt of the next mail, God willing, forward to you the cross and ring and a sum for your pocket expense.

In conclusion we send to your esteemed beatitude our sincere and heart-felt good wishes, and we hope that you will write to us from time to time the good news of your health, may God prolong your blessed brotherhood.994

From Beirut- June 16, 1914
Signed, Ignatius Ephrem, Patriarch of Antioch.

994 Bab Tuma- Document- No. P1100296
APPENDIX A 4.3

A Letter to Mutran Jirjis, the Patriarchal Vicar in Deir al-Za‘faran and Mardin, from Khouri Hanna Shamoun, Azikh, dated December 30, 328 Rumi (December 30, 1912, Julian; January 13, 1912, Gregorian)

The esteemed gentleman, the notable shepherd of all shepherds, the gentleman with all honour, Mor Qorilos Mutran Jirjis the Patriarchal Vicar of the Old Syrians, may his prayers be with us. After kissing your hands and begging for your prayers, which are always answered, we put forward to your elevated dignity that over the past year we have not received from you any letters or news. We are unhappy, because we do not know what has happened to our Syrian Taifa and we have no news about his Beatitude. We have become embarrassed towards other tawâ‘if. They embarrass us when they find out that we receive no directions or follow-ups from you. All that is left for us is to climb the top of the mountains and other high places and scream with tears [cry out tearfully] with Jeremiah in his lamentations. Who will give water to my head and to my eyes so that I may cry day and night for the killing of my people’s daughter, that is, on the tragedy of our Syrian taifâ, which has become food stock for lies and pasture to feed for all the tawa’if…We request you to inform us of his Beatitude’s condition and his whereabouts and why he has left the Antiochene seat and has unnecessarily stayed away so far elsewhere…

Your spiritual son, Khouri Hanna Shamoun.

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995 Plural of taifâ.
996 This is a variant of verse 3:48 in the Lamentations of Jeremiah.
997 40M-24/46 – 0452.
A letter from the Bishopric Board of Diyarbakir to Patriarch Abdullah, dated May 10, 1913.

After a usual celebratory address the letter starts as follows:

We were honoured with your written communication dated March 30, 1913, which we read out today, thanking the Lord on your good health. Further, whatever you ordered became clear to us.

To you, the most esteemed father:

We, the members of the Board, have agreed to write this letter to inform you about the dysfunctional state of our *milla* (*taifa*) which is losing enormously, materially and morally. All these losses have been incurred through mismanagement and because of ignoring the calls of the *milla* for your return to the Seat [Patriarchal Seat]. Being away from this Seat has caused our *milla* to abdicate its rights and to lose its opportunities for progress. If you are thinking of abandoning your duties, as has been the case for such a long period of time, then how unfortunate is this poor *milla*! Who will answer for that before Almighty God on the Day of Reckoning for this neglect and for not asking about the rights of the *milla*, while the other *milal* [plural of *milla*] are devouring us from every side? Who is the shepherd, who is the head and who is the one who is responsible before God and before the living conscience? You may ask what has been the loss incurred? Then, to answer, we will now dip our pen into the sea of our tears and write to you, to indeed show you the loss…

When will the leaders of the *milla* concern themselves with the interests of this *milla*? Is it when the *milla* commits a suicide and thereby loses all its rights? Is there no heart that is abound with zeal and mercy to look after the affairs of this *milla*?...All these losses have been incurred as a result of your being away from the Seat for such a long time. We have written many times requesting your return, and each time you say that our call is unnecessary. Yet, although it has been two and half years since your return from India, yet you are still moving between Syria and Jerusalem…

Our esteemed head, whatever we have written is also felt in our broken hearts about our poor *milla*, which has reached a state about which it is no longer possible to remain quiet, and all this has been the result of your absence from the Seat. There are several issues
with regard to the previous patriarch, the affairs of India, bishopric reform and others that require your presence…In Tur-Abdin and in other places rumours thrive among simple people about what might soon happen, in particular with regard to the rumour that, with a group of Catholic priests, the previous patriarch will tour Tur-Abdin to convert and devastate the *milla*...

We will await, hour by hour, a telegram from you to notify us of your return. Otherwise results would be dire, and this is our last letter to your Beatitude.

Signed: *Suriyani Qadim Millet Majlis* of Diyarbakir, on May10, 1913.\(^{998}\)

\(^{998}\) P1090669- p1090671
APPENDIX A 4.5

A letter from Mutran Jirjis, the Patriarchal Vicar in Mardin, and 12 Priests and Laymen of the Millet Board, dated March 6, 1913

After the celebratory greeting, the letter states:

We are honoured with receiving the words of your Apostolic blessing dated February 23, 1913. What you stated therein has been noted clearly. We informed your Eminence in previous letters of the decline in the entire milla. We no longer know which matter we should address first and which we should postpone. Two days ago we expressed the sad conditions in Kharput. The conditions in Midyat are several times worse. We still receive, daily, telegrams from the various bishoprics expressing their grievances with each other and the infighting that is going on, no doubt with dire consequences, while your Beatitude continues to postpone resolution of the issues from month to month. Additionally, most matters cannot be resolved by correspondence. We, on our part have no intent other than to express our fear of the eventual dissolution of the whole milla. Accordingly, we hereby express our proposal for you to appoint a deputy with the authority to resolve the affairs of the milla...

If you desire the diminution of the milla, we are acting to remove the blame that might be placed on us, and you would have to answer to what is happening. There is no value in repeated correspondence, for the condition of the milla no longer allows delay. We therefore repeat our request for a speedy positive resolution.

Mutran Jirgis, the Patriarchal – Vicar, Mardin and twelve lay members of the Milla Board,

Dated March 6, 1913.999

999 P1090656.
A letter from an individual signing as: “the one who is sad about the affairs of the Milla, Elias Shamoun,” dated August 1, 1913

The writer, after offering the usual respects introduces himself and offers his observations concerning the Syrian Orthodox Church and community from his travels and personal experience states:

I, your son, am a member from the Syrian community in Jazirah. When the school [Ecclesiastic School] was opened in Deir al-Za‘faran by the efforts of the late Mar Dionysius Mutran of Mosul, I attended that school. I then went to a government school in Aleppo… last year I attended secondary school in Mosul vilayet. This year I went to Diyarbakir to complete my studies in the sixth and seventh years [of study stage].

Through my travels from Aleppo to Urfa, Viren Shahir, Nisibis, Mardin, Jazireh and Mosul, then upon my return to Jazirah, Tur-Abdin and to Diyarbakir, I became well acquainted with the conditions of the Syrian nation, in three lands and vilayets. Driven by my love of my ethnic roots, my zeal towards my milla, I have penned these words of slavery¹⁰⁰⁰ to your Beatitude, I am in a state of great sorrow concerning the current conditions of the Syrian nation, and on the incurable wounds with which this poor taifa has been inflicted…

Dear Sir, the decline in the taifa, coupled with non-concern during your time has never been witnessed at any other by our fathers and grandfathers…These matters will mark a black blot on the history of your Patriarchate, that will never be removed by coming generations. Suffice it to say that since your return from your tour of India four of your Bishops have moved to other churches…

If you did not ask about your flock, who is then to ask about them? Would it be the chiefs of the Pappist? Or would it be the Probates [Protestants]? who are both ready to snatch our milla to themselves? So, if you are a true father, a decent shepherd, it is your duty to return to the Seat [Patriarchal Seat] and to enquire about your sheep. Otherwise the milla would disintegrate and then you know you would answer to that before the throne of God. I am

¹⁰⁰⁰ A standard form of address that was particularly common during Peter’s Patriarchate
not in the position to threaten nor do I intend to disobey; however, the burning in my heart and the pain in my chest call me to write as a son would write to his father and grandfather.

Signed: “the one who is worried about his milla, Elia Shamoun,” on August 1, 1913. ¹⁰⁰¹

¹⁰⁰¹ Bab Tuma P109157-P1090660.
A letter from Altoune Abdelnour, Mosul, dated December 12, 1913

After the usual introduction, the letter reviews the position of the people of Mardin and of other regions with respect to current issues. He noted that the general trend in the thinking was towards the formation of a combined delegation from Mosul, Mardin, Diyarbakir and including bishops, priests and lay dignitaries and others, to have an audience with him in Jerusalem. During such an audience, each representative would report on conditions in their respective towns, followed by a general discussion on what is needed to manage the affairs of the milla everywhere:

At that time there was a request for Mosul to participate with a delegation, but Mosul declined to join the proposed plan in deference to your feelings. Subsequently the others made known their intentions known to you and you responded by expressing your intention to return to your Seat [Patriarchal Seat], at which point all were happy. However, now they found that your promise has not been fulfilled; that you have stayed where you are. This has resulted in a disturbance, whereby they have blamed Mosul for this matter. Thus, based on our mutual love and respect, we dare express what is our duty in accordance with our conscience and state that it is not permissible by the tenets of Church law and the tenets of proper administration that you abandon the milla with no caretaker while you stay in Jerusalem as if the matter is of no concern to you. We do not believe that the Creator who entrusted you with the flock would accept this from you, in accordance with the promises you made on your installation on the Antiochian See. Now we have received some blame for that [your negligence] which we feel is justified…

With regards the diocese of Siirt, which you consider to be the diocese of Mar Quryaqos’ Monastery, according to confirmed information Mar Addai, the Chaldean Bishop of Siirt, has gone to Qadha of Bsheirya to lure them [the Syrian Orthodox] to become Catholic. He convinced them, and wrote a letter on their behalf to Rome to open a school in every village to be supplied with teachers from Rome, as they are 4000 and do not wish to join Patriarch Rahmani, but wish to be under the administration of the Latins. When Rahmani heard this he was upset as they decided not to join him. He immediately instructed his deputy Mutran Gabriel Tapouni in Mardin to head out to them, with priest Gorgias [who is originally from our milla but joined he Catholics, returned to us
then rejoined the Catholics, to convince them to remain under Rahmani’s administration and not under the Latins. We obtained this information from our common friend Priest Yousuf Khayyat al-Musilli in confidence, as there is bad feeling between him and Rahmani and does not wish Rahmani to succeed at all, for Rahmani does these things in order to get money from Rome. The said priest (Khayyat), who is well regarded, has a French report that discusses the above issue, as well as issues relating to Tur Mountain (Tur Abdin), Zaz, Hah and other locations. I have acquired the report from Khayyat and will now post to you. From it (the report) you will see to what state our milla has descended, and what the enemies have done to it from all sides, with no one to raise concern. Is it permissible that the sheep are left to be devoured by the wolves while the chief of its shepherds remains unaware of all this? Some write to say that His Beatitude’s actions are deliberate, proving Tarazi right and others said about him. I am exceptionally surprised, and I have fallen sick as a result, and have been under the attention of a doctor...It is out of our [my] extreme anguish that we [I] have written this request so that you would exercise your full determination and effort to repair the affairs of the milla, if you were to return to your Seat in order to end this deteriorated state of being under the mercy of wolves, and not to give cause to prove what the others have said [about you]. It is out of our [my] that we [I] have written this concerning Bsheriyyah. In the mean time I request that you issue orders to Mutran Tuma, Priest Ibrahim in Siirt, and the Mill Board in Mardin to be vigilant, as Mutran Jirjis is unable to act...

Signed: Altoune Abdelnour, Mosul

Dated: December 12, 1913.

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1002 Referring to Terazi’s statement in Al-Salasil al-Tarikhiah, p.352, in which he expressed confidence that Abdullah, as patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox, would continue to work for the Catholic Church.
1003 Altoune Abdelnor, the author of this letter, died less than two months later, on February 4, 1914, as per Al-Hikmat, 1913/1914 No. 14, p. 210.
1004 The aged Patriarchal Vicar in Mardin, who had on a previous occasion requested retirement.
1005 Archival Document Bab Tuma P1090694.
MEMORANDUM PRESENTED TO THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE BY

Archbishop Aphram Barsoum, Representing the Syrian Orthodox Church

ARCHEVECHE SYRIEN
DE SYRIE
DAMAS, HOMS
No. 23
February/1920
MEMORANDUM

We have the honour of bringing before the PEACE CONFERENCE in information that H.B. the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch has intrusted me with the task of laying before the conference the sufferings and the wishes of our ancient Assyrian nation who reside mostly in the upper valleys of Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia our chief points are the following:

1. It is to be noted that our nation apart from the persecutions inflicted upon it in the by-gone days of the Red-Sultan Abdul-hamid in 1895, has proportionately to its number suffered more than any other nation whose fate was the cruel sword of the Turks and the dagger of their brothers in barbarism the Kurds, as it will be seen by the enclosed list, which indicates the number of our massacred people amounts to 90,000, Syriens and 90,000 Nestorions and Chaldeans.

2. We regret bitterly that this ancient and glorious race which has rendered so many valuable services to civilization should be so neglected and even ignored by the European press and diplomatic correspondence, in which all Turkish massacres are called “Armenian Massacres” while the right name should have been “The Christian Massacres” since all Christians have suffered in the same degree.

3. We beseech the Peace Conference in it’s dealing with Criminal Turkey not to forget to extend it’s solitute to the innocent Syro-Caldeans whom no one can indite the plea of revolutionary movements, consequently we ask for the emancipation of the villoyet of Diarbekir, Bitlis, Kharpout, and Ourfa from the Turkish Yoke.

4. We protest against the projected establishment of a Kurdish authority, a so-called delegation is endavouring to promote it’s influence and renew the horrible scenes of the recent Kurdish barbarism.

5. We ask for indemnities in compensation of our damages.

6. We ask for the assurance of our National and Religious future.

Reproduced here from images of an original document given in Atto pp. 541, 542. No attempt has been made here to correct spelling or to rephrase in parenthesis.
We count on the justice of the Peace Conference to listen to our Nation which sighs for a tolerable future in which she can play her ancient role of Assyio - Chaldean civilization.

Barsoum’s signature
APPENDIX A 5.2

Letter from French Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Visit by Aphram Barsoum

Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a visit from Mgr. Barsaum
Note from Mr. Goût, November 26, 1919.
Republic of France
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Dept. of Political and Commercial Affairs
November 26, 1919

I received a visit from Mgr. Aphrem Barsaum. He made great protestations of his love for France to me, but he mostly left me with the impression that he was just another of the intriguing priests the East abounds in. That is why I asked Mr. Defrance if he was indeed, as he claimed, his patriarch’s delegate, and what his mandate was.

The Syrian Orthodox form a small community that comes under neither the Greek Ecumenical Patriarch’s, nor the Roman Pope’s jurisdiction. They use Syriac as their liturgical language and are more or less connected to the ancient Syro-Phoenician race. A large number of Syrian Orthodox broke away from their original church in the 18th century and formed the Syrian Catholic community, whose Patriarch is Mgr. Rahmani, who recognizes the Pope’s supremacy.

The two groups are naturally great rivals. They particularly fight over a monastery near Homs: Mar Elian. This monastery was awarded in 1835 by Ibrahim of Egypt to our clients the Syrian Catholics. Despite measures that the Syrian Orthodox have taken at the Sublime Porte, we kept our clients at the monastery. In 1914, because of their persistent attachment to France, the Ottomans took the monastery away from the Syrian Catholics and gave it to the Orthodox.

Mgr. Aphrem, seeing that the French influence will soon be preponderant in Syria, now rushes over to us, forgetful of the flattery with which he showered the Turks and the Germans.

In exchange for his protestations of love, he wants us to abandon the Syrian Catholics, who demand the monastery back and who have had Mr. Picot’s support to this end before Turkish authorities.

It does not seem possible that we should take up position against our protégés, and the only thing to do is to recommend to General Gouraud that he stay out of the affair, at least for now.

Like every intriguer from Syria, Mgr. Aphrem is very agitated, he speaks loudly all the time, believing that this will impose his will. There is no need for concern, for it is certain
that he will have to begin behaving again, and his patriarchy and community are of no real consequence. Even if he goes elsewhere with his list of grievances, there is no danger. He will try to come to an understanding with Faisal, that is fairly certain, but it is of no importance: between the Syrian Orthodox and us, when the agreement guaranteeing him his personal role is reached, Faisal will fail to show his disdain for this small group of Christians. When that day comes, they will be very happy with the protection that we will agree to accord them.
APPENDIX A 5.3

A Confidential Report on Archbishop Aphram Barsoum
Requested by French Diplomatic Services

Confidential report on Mgr. Barsaum requested by the French diplomatic services,
December 20, 1919.
Paris, Place St. François-Xavier, VII
December 20, 1919.
Sir,

Here is the information I was able to gather concerning the bishop of the Syrian
Jacobite faith (not united to Rome) who is presently in Paris, Mgr. Severius Aphrem
Barsaum.

He studied at the school and at the seminary of the Dominican Fathers at Mosul; at
that time, he became a Catholic. When he left the Mosul seminary, he went to the
Jacobite monastery of Deir al-Za’faran, renounced his Catholicism, and became a
monk with the aim of becoming a bishop. The bishopric was a long time in coming:
Mgr. Severus was in fact not promoted until last year.

Residing in Homs, then in Damascus, Mgr. Severius has proven an ardent supporter
of Emir Faisal. His Patriarch brought him with him to Constantinople, for unless I
am mistaken, Mgr. Severius is the only Jacobite prelate to speak French.

I would be pleased if this information proved to be of any use to you. In any case,
please be assured of the pleasure I had in taking the steps to procure the information,
and please accept my respectful and devoted sentiments.

Louis [illegible]
APPENDIX A 5.4

Telegram Announcing Archbishop’s Barsoum’s Arrival in Paris

Telegram from Charles Roux, November 7, 1919, announcing Mgr. Barsoum’s arrival in France

Foreign Affairs
Decryption of Telegram #2470
Rome, November 7, 1919, 9:00 pm
Received November 7, 11:35 pm
Confidential

Yesterday Monsignor Severius Aphram Barsaum, a Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) bishop, must have left for Paris. Traveling with a French passport as a “special protégé” and with recommendations from our High Commissary in Beirut and our High Commissary in Constantinople, this prelate presented himself at the Embassy, made great protestations to me of his love for France, and asked me for a letter of introduction to the Quai d’Orsay, which I did not think I should refuse him.

[The] French High Commissary at Beirut provided him, and his Patriarch, with the passport allowing them to travel freely to Constantinople. This favor, and the others that he received from our authorities in the East, were aimed at winning him, and his community, over to our interests.

I have learned from a sure source that this Orthodox prelate was fairly closely connected with Emir Faisal in Damascus, and that he tried very hard to woo the Arabs, even in his public speeches. Moreover he has a marked tendency of riding the fence with everyone, and he asked the Italians for a recommendation for Mr. Tittoni. He intends to go to London after Paris. Under these circumstances, I think we should take care not to offend him, but that we [must] be wary of him.

Charles Roux
APPENDIX A 5.5

Aphram Barsoum’s Nationalist Position at the Paris Peace Conference

(Statement by Barsoum when Interviewed by Paulus Behnan)

Son, I entered the Conference hall with a feeling of pain and hope. I saw men with heads covered with white, with eyes that had been coloured with the sight of blood and I imagined that their hands were soaked with the blood of the innocent that they spilled through that devastating war. Others were with the blood of youth still flowing through their veins, their eyes twinkling with imagination. So eyes were directed towards me wearing my oriental ecclesiastic attire. Looks of surprise and inquiry remained focused on me until I settled in the seat that had been allocated for people of my religious ecclesiastic position. After I heard many of the speeches that exposed the savagery of humans towards their human brothers, it was then my turn to speak. As I stood to make my speech, which was in French, the language of the conference, looks were directed at me, some as piercing arrows others as flowers emitting sense, I opened my address with a verse from the Gospel “Blessed are the peace makers, for they will be called the children of God.”

I voiced my support to the notion of World peace and I spoke about basis for World Peace. I then delved into the subject for which I had attended. I laid out the state of misery and need that surrounded the Orientals as a result of the War and I described in detail the tragedies that befell us. I drew a vivid graphic picture of the innocent dead and the remains of those who perished out of hunger and need and other calamities. I did not see a tear flowing on any cheek, nor did I find a look of mercy for the calamity of the Orientals, I felt I was addressing rigid statues of dead stones. No sooner than I ended my speech I became certain that all twinkling hopes have dwindled and died. All that remained within me was pain and ache. This was what transpired in the first meeting that I attended in what was called ‘a Peace Conference.’

As for the second meeting, this was convened following a meeting of a number of Free Arabs [Arabs seeking freedom], where, together, we laid down the points to address before the Conference. On the fourth day, after the first meeting, I entered the Conference accompanied by a number of the Free Arabs. Looks were directed towards us. Those present were surprised at the entry of a Bishop

1007 St. Matthew: 5.9.
surrounded by Arab Muslim warriors. No sooner than we settled down, that my colleagues requested me to speak. So I raised my hand requesting permission to speak and stood up. At the start of my speech I emphasized that the Arabs are Arabs whether they are Muslims or Christians. I then laid out the struggle of the Arabs alongside that of the victorious allies and I praised the spirit of their heroism and recited some of the stories of this heroism in Syria and elsewhere in the Arab land. I referred to the ruthless executions that were enacted onto those freedom fighters in Damascus and in Beirut as well as at the tragedies that befell the Arab lands. I stated that the Arabs have a holy right to freedom, independence and the life of honour for theirs is a great nation with an enduring historic heritage and a vast contribution to human civilization from the oldest of times.

No sooner than I came to the end of my speech, my Arab colleagues shouted “you are the ‘Bishop of Arabism,’ indeed you are the ‘Priest of Time.’” I recall those moments with a feeling of sadness and sorrow for all the labour and pain, which have gone with the wind.  

APPENDIX A 6.1

Name as ‘Syrian Orthodox’ - A Historical Perspective$

The following is a sample of what the Syrian Orthodox called themselves from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries:

1. The earliest available reference is the letter of the Synod of Bishops during the Patriarchate of Severus of Antioch (512-538) to the Abbots of the monasteries of Mesopotamia stating: “We, dear brothers and members of the body of our blessed Orthodox church, thus, adhere to the faith as we received it from Mar Severus, our great patriarch and teacher.”

2. The encyclical by Patriarch Athanasius I of Antioch (595-631) addressed to the monks of Mar Mattai Monastery near Mosul. In this he states “We grant your monastery the honour of leadership among all Orthodox monasteries in the Persian Kingdom.” Also addressing the bishop of Amid, the same patriarch says “I reflect deeply on the hardships that our church, we the Orthodox, has endured, but these have been beneficial.”

3. Jacob of Edessa (+708) writes in the opening sentence of his formulation of the creed reads: “We the Christians of sound belief, the Orthodox, believe ...”. Further, his formulation of the Canon of the Living Fathers of the Church, which is currently still recited during Divine Liturgy in the Syrian Orthodox Church includes: “We pray to God for the sake of our leaders “Mar... the Patriarch of Antioch... as well as all our Orthodox bishops.” Also, the Canon remembering the fathers of the Church includes “Let us remember our Patriarch Severus, the crown of the Syrians.”

4. Patriarch Dionysius of Tel Mahre (818-845): states in his Chronicle: “some claim that no king ever descended from among the Syrians. We reply to them that the Aramean kings of Damascus are called Syrian Kings in the Septuagint.”

5. Moshe bar Kepha: (+903) Bishop of Beth-Raman, Beth-kiona and Mosul and an exegetical and liturgical scholar. In one of his exegetic commentaries he states: “the early Orthodox priests did not consume the remains that stayed in the chalice … a beautiful custom that the Chalcedonians follow... but not the Nestorians.”

6. Dionysius bar Salibi, Bishop of Amid (+1171).
   a) In his discourse against the Chalcedonian belief he states: “We the Syrian Orthodox believe…”
   b) In his book “the Ten Chapters”, he states: “we the Syrians with the Copts and Armenians...”

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1010 Ephrem RAHMANI, Al-Muqtaṭfī al-Suryāniya, Part I, 1904.
1012 Ibid., p. 392.
1013 Ibid.
1015 His Exegesis on the Holy Qurbon (The Divine Sacrament), Chapter 3.
1016 His book on Discourses, preserved in Dinno/Denno’s private collection, Folio 10, p. 388.
7. In his *Chronicle*, Patriarch/historian Michael the Syrian (1166-1199) refers to the Syrian Orthodox at times as “Syrians” and at others as “Orthodox.” The following are two of ten examples Denno presented:
   a) “When Mar Severus left this temporal life the Orthodox chose Sergius in his place...”
   b) Referring to Mar Ahudeme (559-75) he states: “he prevailed upon the Catholicos... and the king Cyrus ordered the counting of both sides and the number of the Orthodox was five times the number of the Nestorians”.
8. The Anonymous Edessan, in his *Chronicle 1234*, uses the term Syrian or Orthodox in reference to the Syrian Orthodox. The following are two of a large number of references found on pages 153, 159, 160, 190, 253, 309, 320, 327 and 328 of the chronicle.
   b) “At this time Peter, the Patriarch of the Orthodox, died and Julian I (591-595) was consecrated in his place”. He then adds: King Heraclius (610-41) confiscated our church of Edessa and dismissed Isaiah as its bishop and thus “the church of the Orthodox was confiscated”.
   c) Elsewhere he states “around the year 1144 many gold and silver liturgical artifacts were discovered, which had been hidden in our church, we the Syrians.”

1. Severus Jacob (bar Shakko) al Bartilli, bishop of the Monastery of Mar Mattai (1241): in a letter addressed to his patriarch writes: “To the one who is endowed with the most glorious of virtues..., the Patriarch of the Orthodox people in all countries.” Many other references to “the Orthodox Church” and “the Orthodox people/nation” appear in his writings.
2. Bar Hebraeus (1226-1286). There are numerous references in his *Ecclesiastic History* referring to his people as Orthodox or Syrian. Below are few examples of the fourteen references made by Denno:
   a) Writing on the life of Patriarch Nūḥ the Lebanese (1493-1509), when he abdicated the patriarchate in Tur Abdin he announced that: “the Syrians have one patriarch only.” Elsewhere he also states: “Qassim Beh, the Sultan of Mardin granted Patriarch Nūḥ an acknowledgement that he was Patriarch on all the Syrians.”
   On the use of the term “Orthodox”, by Bar Hebraeus the following are few examples:
   b) “At that time Baradaeus was consecrated as a Metropolitan of all the Orthodox in the East and in the West.”
   c) On the life of Patriarch Sergius he states: “when the venerable Mar Severus died, the Orthodox instated Sergius as Patriarch for the Antiochan See.”
   d) “The physician of King Cyrus was an Orthodox from Sinjar.”

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1017 Ibid.
1018 Ibid., p. 308.
1019 Ibid., p. 313.
1021 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 146.
1023 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 561.
1024 Ibid.
1025 Ibid., p. 213.
e) Referring to Marutha of Tikrit he says “The bishops elected Marutha, declared him the most senior bishop and assigned to him the leadership of the Orthodox Church in the East.”

f) In The Ethicon, Bar Hebraeus states: “the Syrians celebrate five famous fasts…”. In the same book a chapter is titled “When were the hymns introduced in the Syrian Church and who introduced them?”

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1029 Ibid.
APPENDIX A 6.2
Philoxenus Yuhanna/Yuhanon Dolabani

The following is an abridged list of his main publications, which shows the diversity of his scholarship and his devotion to rekindling Syriac culture.¹⁰³¹

Books he edited and published in Syriac:

- *Selection of Poems of Bar Hebraeus* with comments and explanations, Jerusalem in 1929.
- Poems by Ibin al-Ma’dani in Syriac, Jerusalem, 1929.
- Exegetical works by Moshe Bar Kepha.
- Letters by Daoud Poulos Beth Raban.
- Poems by Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Noah the Lebanese, 1956.
- An abridged version of *Beth Gaz* (Church music), 1913.
- *Hikmat Aḥiqar* (the Wisdom of Ahiqar).

Books he authored or translated:

- Arabic translation of *Hidayat* by Bar Hebraeus, 1929.
- A series of 15 liturgical and pastoral books in Arabic and Syriac aimed at educating the young for a better understanding of the liturgy and the principles of the faith.
- History of Dier Mar Gabriel in Arabic and in Syriac.
- The life of Jacob Baradaeus in Arabic and in Syriac.
- Translations of the catechism by Patriarch Aphram Barsoum to Syriac.
- A large number of articles he wrote in literary journals, especially *Al-Hikmat*, which he helped issue in Jerusalem, and subsequently in the *Patriarchal Journal*.

In addition, he left behind many works in manuscript form.¹⁰³²


¹⁰³² These include: A manuscript on theology in 446 page; Sermons in Arabic and in Syriac; History of Mardin in Arabic, Syriac and Turkish in three volumes; Primer in learning Syriac; translation of the book *Theodora* by Poulous Behnam from Arabic to Syriac; translation of the book *al-Tariq a l-mumahad* (the Paved Road) from Arabic to Syriac; supplement of the book *Ašlu’u al-manṭūr*, including the contribution of the East Syriac, the Maronite, and the Melkite scholars, as well as various poems.
APPENDIX A 6.3

An article by Patriarch Zakka I Iwas published in the *Patriarchal Journal* in 1982 under the title “The Learned Archdeacon Ni‘matallah Denno.”

I met him for the first time in 1949 during the celebration of Holy Communion in Mar Toma Cathedral in Mosul. At that time I was 16 years old, studying in the Mar Ephrem Seminary. I had already heard a lot about Archdeacon Ne‘matallah Denno, but I hadn’t had the pleasure up till then of seeing this handsome man or of hearing his mellow voice. His reputation had spread afar; he was already renowned, especially in religious circles, and particularly in our Seminary, where we were learning about the Syriac scholars, past and present, and accumulating knowledge of what constituted ‘a man of learning.’

We considered Archdeacon Denno to be first after the Most Learned of blessed memory Patriarch Aphram I Barsoum and the Most Learned of blessed memory Bishop Yuhanna Dolabani. And we knew that our teachers, the monks Paulus Behnam (subsequently Bishop of Mosul then of Baghdad) and Abdulahad Toma (later Patriarch Yaqoub III) used to consult him about difficult issues on Syriac heritage: linguistic, historical and theological…

In his essays and in his poetry, he inspired the reader and the student with a spirit of enthusiasm for the church and for the homeland, and the singing of her glories, and the following of the example of the fathers of faith. Through the studies of his Syriac books and the reading of his Arabic essays, theological, historical, literary, and especially apologetic, we joined in the fervour of our dear Archdeacon Denno in the defence of the honour of the Church and in the upholding of her holy truth, and we felt a responsibility with him for engaging with our opponents on the battlefield, seeing in him David triumphing over Goliath in the name of the Lord God.

He was also foremost among the founders of a charitable society (*Jamiyat al-Ihsan*) in Mosul in 1926, an organization that accomplished many noble things, for it met the need of the poor, paved the way for the stranger, helped the orphan and the widow,

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1034 The term used in Arabic, which is based on Syriac may be translated as “Thrice Blessed”
and supported large numbers of those hardworking needy students to complete their higher studies…

In a letter Archdeacon Denno, of blessed memory, wrote to the great literary scholar Ruphael Butti (of blessed memory) in Baghdad on April 30, 1926, in which he stated:

‘We have been distressed by the tragedy of our brothers in Azikh and Nisibin these days. Those of wretched fate did not only suffer the misery of the past years, the Turks have since early last month turned their latest measure of vengeance against them. They took Azikh’s men and youth to an unknown location, and set their soldiers loose to ransack the town, which caused the women and children to flee under fear of abuse and hunger. They [the soldiers] beat and tortured their aged bishop Mar Yuliis. In the Nisibin district, the soldiers who went to take revenge against the Kurdish Agha Haja, torched several inhabited Syrian villages. They destroyed the famous Monasteries of Mar Malke and Mar Dodo and killed their monks for refusing to leave their monastery. The aged Bishop Mar Samuel died en route while fleeing on foot with others in heavy rain. Nearly 500 of those who survived the journey on foot arrived in Mosul in extreme misery. Our society Jamiyal-al-Ihsan is working hard to accommodate the waves of refugees that arrive daily. Our society will call upon various organizations to provide help. If you think it appropriate you might see fit to publish something in the “Al Iraq” newspaper provided that this would not arouse a negative reaction from the Turkish Government, for fear of reprisal against the Syrians who are still living in Diyarbakir, Mardin and Midyat.’

From a review of the above we sense the wisdom with which God endowed Archdeacon Denno. He was truly like Stephanos, the first head of the deacons: ‘full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom’ (Acts 6:3) to fulfill the word of the Lord ‘I was a stranger, but you gave me shelter’ while at the same time he was endowed by the Spirit to act with wisdom such that while, defending the rights of the persecuted, he thought of the safety of others who could be subject to the same fate…
Ni‘matallah Denno’s Literary Legacy

- Syriac reading and grammar school text books
- Mabadi’ al-Iman (Principles of faith)
- Church liturgy in two parts
- Palm Sunday Hymns for children
- Al- Tarn īmat al-Rouhiyya (The Spiritual Hymns), in addition to articles on Syriac music.
- Iqamat al Daleel ala Istimrar al-Ism al-Aseel wa Istinkar al-Na‘t al-Dakleel (Establishing the Proof for the Continuation of the Original Name and Refuting the Spurious Epithet) (1949).
- Mashahīr al-Suryan fe al- ‘uloom wa al-Bayan (The Renowned Syrians in Sciences and Logic).
- Various articles he published in literary journals, especially Al-Hikmat (in Jerusalem), the Patriarchal Journal (the al-Nashra al-Suryaniyya (Aleppo)

APPENDIX A 6.4
Summary of Publications by Ignatius Jacob (Yacoub) III

- *Tāriḵ al-kanīsa al-suryāniyya al-hindīyya* (History of the Syriac Church in India), published in 1951 under Tuma, Severus Abdul Ahad, the later Patriarch Ignatius Jacob III;
- *Tāriḵ al-kanīsa al-suryāniyya Anṭakiyya* (History of the Syrian Church of Antioch) 2 Vols. (Beirut 1953 and 1957);
- *Dafaqāt al-Ṭīb fī tārīḵ dayr al-giddīs Mār Matta al-ʿajīb* (The Surges of Aroma, or, the History of the Monastery of the Amazing Mar Mattai), 1961;
- *Kītāb al-mahrajānāt* (The Book of Festivities), 2 Vols. (1966-1969);
- *Ṣada al-manābir* (The Echo of the Pulpits-Homilies), 1969;
- *Al-laʾāliʿ al-manṭīra fī al-aqwāl al-maʿṭūra* (The Scattered Pearls in Famous Sayings) 2 Vols. (1967-1969);
- *Naʃaḥāt al-ʿabīr aw sīrat al-baṭriyark Mār Siwīriyyūs al-kabīr* (The Aromas of Flowers, or, the Biography of Mar Severus the Great), 1970;
- *al-Barahīn al-Hissiyya ala Ṭagārid al Suryaniyya wa al-Arabia* (The Tangible Proofs on the Relationship Between Syriac and Arabic), 1969;
- *Ujbat al-zamān aw Mār Afrām nabiyy al-sūrīn* (The Wonder of Time, or, Mar Ephrem, the Prophet of the Syrians), 1970;
- *Al-ḍuqāʾ iq al-jalīla fī al-abḥājī al-tārīḵiyyya wa-al-adabiyya wa-al-falsafiyya* (The Historical Facts in the Literary and Philosophical Historical Researches), 1972; and

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APPENDIX A 6.5
A Summary of the Published Work of Patriarch Zakka I Iwas

- *Al-markat fi amal Ra’i al- ru’at Mar Ignatius Yacoub III* (The Ascent- Works of Mor Ignatius Yaqoub III, the Shepherd of Shepherds), a biography of the Late Patriarch Yacoub III, 1958;
- *Ḥusn al-shahāda wa- al-adā’ fi sirray al-tajassud wa-al-fidā’ aww ‘aqīdat al-tajassud al-ilāhī* (Perfection of Witness and deeds in the Sacraments of incarnation), a treatise on the theme of Incarnation and Redemption from theological, doctrinal and historical points of view, 1959;
- *Al-asrār al-sab’a* (The Seven Sacraments). A theological and liturgical treatise, with priest Ishaq Saka, 1970;
- *Sirat Mar Aphram Al-Suryani* (Biography of St. Ephrem the Syrian) Baghdad, 1974;
- *Al-Ḥamāma* (The Dove), summary of the austere life of ascetics and biographies of anchorites by Bar Hebraeus;
- *Kinīsat Anṭākiya al-sūryāniyya al-ūrūṭūqīsūriyya ‘ibr al-‘uṣūr* (The Syrian Orthodox Church through the Ages), 1980;
- *Qiṣṣat al-kahf fi al-maṣādir al-sūryāniyya* (the Story of the People of the Cave according to Syriac sources);
- *Ḥašād al-mawā’iẓ* (Harvest of Homilies) 2 Vols., a collection of homilies delivered by His Holiness at the St. George Cathedral in Damascus at Christmas and Easter and on other religious occasions, patriarchal encyclicals, spiritual discourses and biographies of some celebrated personalities. Vol. 1, 1984 and Vol 2, 1988;
- *Maṣābīḥ ‘ala al-ṭūrāq* (Lanterns on the Road), a collection of treatises including religious literature, ecclesiastic history and biographies of saints;
- *Nuṣūm ṣāḥī’a fi samā’ al-kanīsha* (Luminous Stars in the Church), includes biographies of celebrated Syrian Fathers: Philoxinos of Mabbug (+523), Mar Gregory I, Patriarch of Antioch (+790), Jacob of Edessa (+708) and Dionesius Tell Mehri (+ 845); and
- Numerous articles in the *Patriarchal Journal*.

APPENDIX B

Photographs of Documents from the Syrian Orthodox Archives Referenced in this Thesis

Note: all codes in the lists that follow correspond to those on the electronic copies deposited at the institutions that keep the documents.

1. Damascus – Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate - Bab Tuma, Damascus
   P1070660
   P1070661
   P1080718
   P1090952
   P1090957
   P1090606
   P1090656
   P1090658-P1090660
   P1090664
   P1090669-P1090671
   P1090689
   P1090692
   P1090694
   P1090925
   P1090943
   P1100029-P1100037
   P1100039
   P1100043
   P1100127
   P1100296
   P1100370
   P1100421
   P1100422
   P1100467
   P1100475
   P1100476
   P1100481
   P1100482
   P1100484
   P1100485
2. Deir al-Za‘faran (Dayro d-Kurkmo) Monastery, near Mardin: K denotes the Syriac name of the monastery
K05-0035
K05-0046
K05-0049
K05-0325
K05-1300, 1301
K05 -1450, 1451
K07-B24-Part1-0106
K10- 01-36-0235
K10- B2-0262, 0263
K10-B02-0542
K10-B20-0749
K10-B20-0753
K10-B20-0813
K10-B45-0015
K10-B45-0022
K10-B45-0027
K10-B86-0808

3. Mardin - Church of the 40 Martyrs
40M-24/36-122
40M-24/38-181
40M-24/40-057.
40M-24/40-098
40M-24/40-172
40M-24/40-171
40M-24/41-196
40M-24/44-212
40M-24/45-052
40M-24/45-051
40M 24/45-406
40M-24/45-458
40M-24/45-391
40M 24/45-518
40M-24/45-094
40M-24/45-093
40M-24/46-322
40M-24/46-337
40M-24/46-452
40M-24/47-249
40M-24/47-255
40M 24/48-003
40M 24/48-175
40M-24/48-141 and 127
40M-24/48-417

4. Jerusalem - St. Marks Syrian Orthodox Convent (Monastery)
J- DSC_0026.
J- DSC_0027.
J- 0348.
J- 0349
J- 0353
J- 0363
J- 0364
منشور مارغيمرس عمليات المفاصل طفلاً

زمالة أفريل (1871)

كان هناك في سنة 1871م. بعد الحليب الكور من مارغيمرس عمليات المفاصل طفلاً، تحدثت شبكة مارغيمرس عن العمليات.

ماذا صرح جر الدفع الذي يتطلب متابعة جر تطبيق الزيت النافذة كنيلية الفنانون?

رابعة ترجمة من:

ما أن تصف إياتا المصدرين كانت يفن ما اتخز بالبما البلعاء الأناضول،

فقد جمعنا لهم فين فประเทศไทย، وقنوا فين ألماي قبان وكمال العامم،

تقلل الربانة كنتيجة بحث ضمان والربيع الوك المفتوحة.

ثم نحن نقول: رجاءً ونجاً ونجاً، بطل الله الوك المفتوحة.

هنا نقول: إنك يا ابناء الراحمين، أنتم تحملون عبادتك، وستنال الله عفواً ورضوانه.

العلاج المبكر للإitésا، عبد الله الأناضول، ونادر اللامع، على السواء، ورنا للبيت، على

الحذاء النفيش، لنكста السواء دعاء خيبة، ودوات مارغيمرس،

ل إذا كنت تهتم منديلة أيها، يا سيدي، (نامل) ردت اللامع، وادعو

هنا نقول: إنك يا ابناء الراحمين، أنتم تحملون عبادتك، وستنال الله عفواً ورضوانه.

ألا تعلم "نعم تفكر يا أبا مجي، لا تراجع بعد ما فيك راحة في

إيان العين"؟ ما رفعي عيني لرأي، بل تكلم فيد "لا تزعج

بالإيطاليا، بل دعوا السنة، بل دعوا، الذين نطقوا "لا تزعج

الإيطاليا، بل دعوا السنة، بل دعوا، الذين نطقوا "لا تزعج

الإيطاليا، بل دعوا السنة، بل دعوا، الذين نطقوا "لا تزعج
الإجابة على السؤال:

السؤال: ما هو الموقف الذي يعاني منه الإنسان في الاجتماعي؟

الموقف الذي يعاني منه الإنسان في الاجتماعي يعتمد على العديد من العوامل المترابطة مع البيئة والثقافة والدين والآداب الاجتماعية. من الممكن أن يكون الإنسان يعاني من مشاعر من الحرق والانزعاج والتوتر، وينتج عنه ذلك مشاكل اجتماعية و النفسية. يتعين على الإنسان أن يتعلم التكيف مع البيئة الاجتماعية و التكيف مع الآداب الاجتماعية و التكيف مع الآداب النفسية للحفاظ على صحته وسلاسته العقلية و الحياتية.
سنة 1863م 

1. الامتحان في عريض كرسيم (الدمنجي) 
2. استذكار عبد الوهاب بن الشيخ إدريس 
3. الامتحان أناسيب الحبان 
4. دبلوم دار لـ خليفة التفا 
5. دبلوم دار لـ محى سبيل 
6. دبلوم دار في وقفة ديوان سبيل 
7. تقرير حمله مهجة د. م. ك. 
8. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
9. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
10. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
11. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
12. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
13. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
14. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
15. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
16. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك. 
17. تقرير آخر مهجة د. م. ك.
نهاية: أمير العلم مارشا فروي السهران عليه اغتصاباه

هذا نص جديد لم نعتمد عليه في الترجمة. إنه يحتوي على معلومات تاريخية أو ثقافية، ولكن لم نتمكن من تحديد المكانة العلمية أو الأدبية لهذا النص.

المصدر: P1090658

الرقمidea: 372
ما يتصل على مذهب البناؤين الفيلفلة، وعليه، الجمهور والمفتون وفقهاء، وإن كان الأحكام الدينية لتكون على ما كشفه الله تعالى مثاب عليه، فله أن يتبع ما توجه منه، وصفه بالإمام ابن طفيل، وسمعته على شدهم، وحفظه على بعضهم، alors que تتوفر عليهم، فإنما تكون على ما كشفه الله تعالى؛ فإنهم يحملون عليه ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه على عهده، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فله أن يتبع ما كلفه عليه، وحفظه على بعضهم، فإنما تكون على ما كلفه الله عليه، فإ
لم تتم تحرير الاطلاع فيما فيه التفاصيل الناجحة فيما يتعلق بإرسال الأموال، خاصة فيما يتعلق بإرسال الأموال من طريق البر الرجل. ولا يوجد هناك أي معلومات عن أسباب هذه التأخيرات أو كيفية تحسينها.

العمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرجل في العدالة، والعمل على تحسين الردود على طلبات المرسلين تتم بشكل مستمر، وأن هناك تخطيطًا للمشي قبلاً بأعمال البر الرج
هذه رسالة إلى رفاق الأنظمة والرجال الذين ينتمون إلى فيضان الجزيرة العربية.
بناءً على الأقران، ندعوكم جميعًا إلى مساعدة ومساندة هذه الحملات، ونرجو أن تكون هناك مشاعر التأمل والعطاء بينكم.
إن لا يمكن تحقيق هذه الأهداف إلا بجهود الجميع.
لا تنسوا أن تكونوا جزءًا من هذه الحملة، ونأمل أن نرىكم في موقعنا.
الله يحفظكم جميعًا.
طاعة في الأدبيات العربية نزعت الفنون الأدبية للعصر. فالفنون العصرية تشهد في هذا العصر، وفافر، مدرسة نظرية، وعصرية، استطاعت روحي هذه العصرية أن تبدو النشرة الإبداعية التي تبدو في المدرسة والأدب.

مراجعات الفنون: عندما صدرت كتاب تأليف (3) محمد الفقيه كوكبة، توجد أنجازات عدة أثرت على الأدب.

وسير النصوص: مع تقريب الأدب، وتحريك ثقافة الأدب، وتحريك الثقافة، يمكن أن ندرس ما وراء النصوص، ونستند إلى النصوص. الأدب هو المحور الأساسي، وهو المحور الأساسي.

تذكير: المصادر الضخمة، تذكيرات الأدب، تذكيرات الأدب، تذكيرات الأدب.

الآداب الإسلامية: تذكر أن هذه الآداب، تذكر أن هذه الآداب.

والتلفزيون: تذكر أن هذه التلفزيونات، تذكر أن هذه التلفزيونات.

اليونان: تذكر أن هذه اليونان، تذكر أن هذه اليونان.

الفنون الحديثة: تذكر أن هذه الفنون، تذكر أن هذه الفنون.

فوق ما هو واضح، أن الأدب، وأن الأدب، وفق ما هو واضح، أن الأدب، وأن الأدب، وفق ما هو واضح، أن الأدب.
هذا المجلد من كتاب الأدب العربي، وقد قدمه المهندس الزهراني في العام 1382هـ، وهو تحت رعاية الدكتور أحمد بن عبد الله بن محمد البخاري. يتناول الكتاب موضوعات متعددة، بما في ذلك الأدب العربي الحديث والقلبي، والنصائح الأدبية وفقًا للأساطير والأدباء الكبار.

عندما قرأنا هذا المجلد، نلاحظ أن المهندس الزهراني كان له تأثير كبير على الأدب العربي، وكان له دور هام في نشر العديد من الأعمال الأدبية، بما في ذلك الأعمال العربية القديمة والحديثة.

هذا الكتاب يعتبر من الأعمال الأدبية المهمة التي ساهمت في نشر الأدب العربي، وتعتبر من الأعمال الأدبية المهمة التي ساهمت في نشر الأدب العربي، وتعتبر من الأعمال الأدبية المهمة التي ساهمت في نشر الأدب العربي.
لا يذكر مرة بأن نحن نحن الباسطين الذين نتمنى لعليكم، تحية، ونظرًا إلى الظروف التي تواجهكم، نقدم لكم بعض النصائح. نأمل أن تكون هذه النصائح رفقة، وأن تكون مفيدة في هذه الظروف الصعبة.

بكل إخلاص،
[署名、日期]
الرأي

التي بعلي ما أستأثرت
(الربع) الضرع، أنظر إلى جزء
الي سأيمه جمع النص رفع
الي ابنا ليستمسكا

١٢٠٠

كَتَبَ النحاس البَلْدَةُ كَالْجَمِيعِ الْمُهْرَابِ

١٩٠٢

١٠ ذَيْ القُحْرِ
من لحمك طبقت أنطاكية على طائفة السريان وباهر الشقي

دعة حبنا وجنآ حننا وأمسآ هدا نحن الخمساء

قُلتم ستين سنة عربية فرنا عنك يا آخر خيبر ندع قلبنا يدبر الدهر

الدهر ما فيت إن نحر وصم

10 سبتمبر 1904

P1090943
CONFIDENTIAL: for use of members of the Commission appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury under resolution 63 of the Lambeth Conference of 1908.

INTERVIEW AT THE PALACE, SALISBURY,

BETWEEN
H. H. MAR IGNATIUS ARBAILAH II.
Patriarch of the Jacobite Syrians,

AND

THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY
(Dr. John Wordsworth)

IN REFERENCE TO RESOLUTIONS 63 - 65
OF THE
LAMBETH CONFERENCE OF 1908.

SALISBURY:
PRINTED BY RIBBETT BROTHERS,
"JOURNAL" OFFICE JAN., 1909.
The following persons were present at the interview:

H. H. THE PATRIARCH IGNATIUS ABDALLAH II.

MRS. E. A. FINN (acting as interpreter).

THE BISHOP OF SALISBURY (Dr. John Wordsworth).


REV. HARRY W. CARPENTER, Precentor of Salisbury Cathedral.

The record of the interview has been carefully read to the Patriarch and corrected by him, and the two documents in the Appendix have been printed as supplied by him.

JOHN SAHIIM, Epiphany, 1909.
1. THE BISHOP -- Your Holiness was, I think, elected Patriarch of the Syrian Church in the year 1895, but did not actually take possession of the See until 1906?

THE PATRIARCH -- Yes; to both questions.

2. THE BISHOP -- Previously to that time you had no doubt held many important offices in the Church. May we learn what they were?

THE PATRIARCH -- I held office as Bishop of Jerusalem from 1872 to 1877; I went to India in 1876, and remained there four years, two years longer as representative of the Patriarch; during this time another Bishop was appointed Bishop of Jerusalem. On my return from India I was appointed Bishop of Homs, and held that Bishopric four years. The Patriarch then required my presence at Mardin to help in setting up the printing press which had lately been sent out there from England. At the end of 1877 I came to England in connection with this printing press, and remained in England 21 months. I then returned to Mardin, and remained a year with the Patriarch. After the Scottish Engineer, Mr. Boole, had set up the new printing press which had just been sent out from England, as well as the old one, I then taught the men how to do the work. I was then appointed Bishop of Diarbekr, and was elected Patriarch in 1895. I did not, however, enter upon my office, as another Bishop, Abd el Mesih, was irregularly nominated and held office for ten years.

3. THE BISHOP -- Could you tell us what number of Bishops there are in the Syrian Church, and in what places of the Turkish Empire and the Malabar coast?

THE PATRIARCH -- At Mosul two Bishops; one in the town and one at Mar Mattai.

At Mardin one, and three at Der Zafaran (the Yellow Convent).

At Jesirah (an island of the Tigris) one.

At Midyat one in the town and one in the Convent.

At Der- es- Sallib ("Monastery of the Cross") one.

At Mar - As - Jen one

At Kharpuz (Mas'umret ul Aziz) one

At Diarbekr one

At Homs and district one (often spoken of at Suria, and including Damascus).

At Jerashha (between Diarbekr and Urfa) one.

At Jerusalem (El Ruie) one.

At Constantinople (Stambul) one.

In Malabar there were two Bishops in 1906; since that time I have consecrated three in Jerusalem, so that now there are five.

4. THE BISHOP -- What is the number of adherents to your Communion?

THE PATRIARCH -- The whole Christian population directly under the Patriarch's rule in the Turkish Empire may be about 250,000 (probably rather under that figure).
In Malabar the calculations of Christians under my rule are variously said to amount to 400,000, 450,000, or even 500,000.

5. THE BISHOP -- This is, I think, your Holiness' third visit to England, the first having been in 1874 -- 5, when you visited this country in company with Mar Ignatius, Peter III, yourself then being Bishop of Jerusalem, in the time of Archbishop Tait; and the second, when you came on a mission from the same Patriarch in 1887 and remained 21 months in this country, being then Bishop of Roma (Eznœa) in the time of Archbishop Benson.

6. THE PATRIARCH -- That it so.

THE BISHOP -- I think on your second visit you obtained some help from England in the form of printing presses?

THE PATRIARCH -- Yes; but the first press was sent out as early as 1874 -- 5, but was somewhat injured in transit.

In 1886, through the generosity of a Manchester friend Mr. Redfern, and Mr. Miller Richards, the Edinburgh type foundry, we were provided with a new and valuable printing press.

7. THE BISHOP -- What books have been printed at this printing press?

THE PATRIARCH -- The first book was a Grammar, and the second a book on Christian doctrine; and then a Psalter. It was not, however, possible to print a big book, as the press would not take large sheets of paper; it was also difficult to teach the men to work it properly.

When the Patriarch died the work stopped, so his successor, Abû El Mæsâkh, cared nothing about printing; during the whole of his reign, i.e., from 1886 to 1906, nothing was done. Indeed, less than nothing; for the authorities were allowed the use of one of the presses, and great havoc was wrought upon our types.

I have now got both presses to work again, having had great trouble in collecting the pieces of one of them, and in repairing the cutting machine, which was much injured. But we want new type, both Arabic and Syriac.

8. THE BISHOP -- Have you any circumstances occurred to make intercourse with England difficult in the time which has since elapsed?

THE PATRIARCH -- The intrusion of Abû El Mæsâkh and the Kur-dish raids in 1886 -- 8; these completely prevented the employment of the press between the years 1885 and 1906. Barely a couple of months ago there occurred another Kurdisch raid; and, since that, a famine; see a letter from Mr. Andrus, a Friendly American Presbyterian, in the Daily News of 18th November, 1906; and the Morning Post 9th Jan., 1909.

9. THE BISHOP -- In what way can we in England, who sympathise with our brethren in Syria, be of service to your Holiness?

THE PATRIARCH -- Our great need is friendly interest on the part of your King and all your nation, and especially on the part of members of your Church. As my people are mostly extremely poor, I have to help them in times of distress. We want funds to help our printing work and type for our presses. We want funds for education of our people and clergy. I very much wish I could collect £400 or £500 for these purposes. With that I could do a great deal for my people.

10. THE BISHOP -- Who represents your Holiness in England?
THE PATRIARCH -- Our only representatives are the "Syrian Patriarchate Education Committee". Anything given to them, earmarked for any special purpose will be applied only to that purpose. Address o/o Mrs. Pinn, 72, Brook Green, London, W.

11. THE BISHOP -- Has your Holiness' attention been drawn to Resolutions 63, 64, 65 of the recent Lambeth Conference of Bishops in regard to the separate Churches of the East? Are you disposed to co-operate with such a Commission as is suggested in Resolution 63 in regard to dealing with your own Church?

THE PATRIARCH -- I have studied the resolutions and I quite approve of them. I am quite prepared to do what in me lies to further the object contemplated in them.

12. THE BISHOP -- It is obvious that any action of the kind there suggested would be reciprocal, and that we must be prepared in the Church of England to give account of our faith to any Church which we ask to give an account of its faith. May I ask if your Holiness has studied the English formularies and considers them sufficiently orthodox and satisfactory?

THE PATRIARCH -- Certainly I have a right to ask you as to your faith, just as you have right to ask us. The Christian faith is one. I have studied your formularies and find no difference between them and our own belief. I have discovered nothing in your Book of Common Prayer which is contrary to the faith as set forth in the gospels and the rest of the New Testament. We do not ask you to change your customs, nor do you ask us to change our customs. It is, as the Rev. Dr. Tremlett said, in your language you write from right to left, but there is no essential difference in the Faith.

13. THE BISHOP -- May I ask in particular if you consider the statements of the Tract which I have here, and one of which your Holiness has a copy, the Teaching of the Church of England on some points of Religion (published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge in English and Arabic in 1904) as answering most of the questions which other Bishops and Doctors of your Church would desire to put to us? Or are there any other questions on which you or they would wish for further information?

THE PATRIARCH -- The Bishops of our Church would, I am persuaded, be satisfied with the statements of your tract. I should be very glad to have 25 copies to give to them. The Arabic is intelligible but rather stiff. Should any other questions arise I should remember with gratitude your promise to give further information.

14. THE BISHOP -- Would the statement of faith of which an English version appears on pp. 6 - 10 of the "Ancient Syrian Church in Mesopotamia" (published by the "Syrian Patriarchate Education Committee in 1908) be accepted as authoritative by the other Bishops of your Church?

THE PATRIARCH -- Certainly it would be so accepted. The form of faith of which I spoke here printed is authoritative all over our Syrian Church, having been sealed and signed by the Patriarch.

15. THE BISHOP -- Can you tell me by whom was drawn up, and at what date?
THE PATRIARCH -- I will send the answer from London (This answer is delayed for further enquiry. The creed is however, very ancient).

THE BISHOP -- I observe that this document is drawn up in the form of anathemas. Is there any difficulty in putting the same truths in a positive instead of a negative form, prefacing them with a general statement, "We believe and confess that..."?

THE PATRIARCH -- Yes, it can be so expressed without the anathemas, and it will be sent in that form (see Appendix A).

THE BISHOP -- Have you any information to give us how this form of Faith is regarded by other Churches of the East or West, e.g. by the Church of Rome?

THE PATRIARCH -- Yes, about twelve years ago our Bishop George in Jerusalem presented it to the Latin Patriarch (Mgr. Valerio?) knowing that he was raising some question as to the faith of some other Christian bodies. He and his advisers said: "This is according to the true Christian Faith!"

THE BISHOP -- Have any overtures been made on either side as to re-union or inter-communion between the Jerusalem Syrians and the Greek Church?

THE PATRIARCH -- No, none.

THE BISHOP -- Do Syrians admit Greeks to communion on special occasions or generally, and do Greeks admit Syrians?

THE PATRIARCH -- The Syrians would admit any Greek who presented himself for Communion; there are a few Greeks in Mardin who do come to Communion. The Greeks, however, deny the validity of Syrian baptism, though for what reason we do not know, and so would not admit a Syrian to Communion unless he were re-baptised. A case of this has occurred within my knowledge. There is apparently no difference in the form of the rite. The Syrians give the Chrism, or Confirmation, with baptism; for a son there are three sponsors, as in England; for a daughter only one, a woman. The holy oil for the Chrism (the anointing) is consecrated by the Patriarch alone and sent round to all the Bishops, who distribute it to the Priests. A Deacon may not, in ordinary cases, baptize; but in cases of imminent danger anyone -- even a woman -- may baptize.

There is free inter-communion between Syrians, Armenians, Copts, and Abyssinians.

THE BISHOP -- What is the relation between the Syrians of your Holiness' Patriarchate, and the Roman Catholic or Uniate Syrians?

THE PATRIARCH -- There is no friendship between us and the Uniate Syrians; they try to take away our people and our Churches, and do take away the latter, even by force, when they get a chance. It was their custom to make us of French influence for this purpose. Custom to make us of French influence for this purpose. Were they successful frequently in so doing?

THE BISHOP -- What arguments do the Roman Catholics use in trying to draw away Syrians to their communion?

THE PATRIARCH -- Very often they use material arguments and offer money, protection, etc., to convert; the principal religious argument used is that there is no salvation outside the pale of the Roman Church. The former arguments are sometimes successful; but not one pervert has been obtained by the latter.
22. THE BISHOP -- Is there any controversy with the Greek Church as to persons whom the Greeks count as heretics being honourably commemorated by the Syrian Church? The Patriarch -- Yes, there are some seven names objected to, especially that of Dioscorus; practically, however, they do not object to any one save to him, because he opposed the tone of Leo at the Council of Chalcedon. We Syrians, however, consider that he was not fairly treated at that Council, as he was not allowed to reply to the charges brought against him.

23. THE BISHOP -- Are the persons so commemorated invoked as Saints, or are their prayers asked? Or what is the form in which they are commemorated?

THE PATRIARCH -- The words used by us are "May your prayers be with us as the Lord regards us and has mercy upon us"; this occurs after a mere commemoration of their names, with the introductory words "we remember". This prayer occurs in the Liturgy for Holy Communion after the prayer for consecration; but there is no direct appeal to them. The prayer in question is said by a Deacon and is almost word for word with that printed by Brightman (E.L. p. 94). I will send a copy of the passage from London. (See Appendix B.)

24. THE BISHOP -- I presume that these persons are also commemorated among the Armenians and Copts; if so would the Syrian Church be able to cease this commemoration, if it desired to do so, without consulting the Armenians and Coptic Churches?

THE PATRIARCH -- There would be no need to consult them or to ask permission of the Armenians or Copts on such a point; our Church is quite independent.

25. THE BISHOP -- May I ask what is the governing body of the Syrian Church, how it is constituted, and how often it meets?

THE PATRIARCH -- The Council would consist of Bishops, Priests, and Lay representatives. Every Diocese also has its own Council.

The Patriarch rarely has occasion to convocate a General Council, and only do so on the occurrence of very important business, as the distances to be traversed are so great.

The Council of Mardin consists of the Patriarch himself, the four Bishops of Mardin, about five of the most important priests, and twelve representative laymen, all nominated by the Patriarch. There is no intermediate Council between the Diocesan Council and the General Council, though if in the Diocesan Council there were any question which concerned another Bishop, e.g., the Bishop of Diarbakir, the Patriarch would summon that Bishop to attend the Council.

The Mardin Council meets generally about twice a week, though the frequency of meeting depends on the amount of business to be transacted.

26. THE BISHOP -- It is possible to procure the Liturgy or Liturgies of the Eucharist, and the forms used in Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, and other rites in the Syrian Church?

THE PATRIARCH -- As yet there are no printed copies; but we would willingly furnish written copies if they were required. The three books already printed at the
Marin press could quite well be sent to the British Museum; but this could not be done until I return to Marin. At present I am going to India, and may be detained there some months; probably there will be a consecration of two more Bishops, and a certain amount of general business to be transacted. I shall be leaving England soon after I have had my audience of the King and finished my task of procuring help for my people in Syria; I am hoping to collect £600 or £800, part of which would be devoted to educational purposes, part to relieving the poor of my people, among whom are 2,000 made orphans during the troubles. But any sums earmarked would be carefully allocated to the purpose for which they had been intended.

APPENDIX A. CONFESION OF FAITH.

See above, 14 - 17.

We believe and confess ----

1. That the Son of God is very God, even as the Father is very God, and that he is co-equal with the Father in essence, sovereignty and eternity.
2. That the Son is begotten of the Father essentially and eternally.
3. That the Son of God when he sojourned on earth in the flesh was in Heaven with the Father.
4. That He in that humanity did sit down at the right hand of the Father, and that He shall come again, as He is, to judge both the quick and the dead.
5. That Christ underwent no change or alteration, nor His Soul, and that His body did not see corruption, as it is written.
6. That Christ became perfect man without separation from the Divine essence, and we confess of Our Lord Jesus Christ that He is one, as it is written.
7. That God the impossible suffered in the flesh, as it is written, and that the Divine nature never separated from the human nature for one instant.
8. That Christ was not begotten by man like other men, but was incarnate, and became man by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, a daughter of David, as it is written.
9. That the Holy Virgin Mary brought forth Christ the Word of God, who was incarnate, and became man for our salvation.
10. That the body of Christ is not "an offspring of the Divine essence": but we confess that He was God before the foundation of the World, who humbled Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, as it is written.
11. That the body of Christ was not a phantom or mere image; and we confess that His was a real body like ours, and that the Virgin Mary brought forth the Incarnate Word in a real body.
12. That when God the Word was united to the body, the Divine nature was not commingled with the human nature, nor did the two natures become mixed and changed so as to give rise to a third nature, and we confess that the two natures became united in indissoluble union without confusion, mixture or transmutation, and that they remained two natures in an unalterable unity.
13. That the Word of God is not Created, but is Creator; and we confess that He is Creator, even as is the Father, and that He is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit in essence, power, the creation of created things, sovereignty, and eternity.
14. That the Holy Spirit is Creator and not created, and that He is of no time and is eternal; and we confess that He is Creator, even as is the Father and is the Son, and that He is co-equal with the Father and the Son in essence, eternity, dominion, power,
creation, majesty, and sovereignty, and that He proceeds from the Father and receives from the Son, and that He is with the 16. That the Holy Spirit is the essence of the Father, as the Son is of the essence of the Father, and God of God. 
17. As the Holy Spirit is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, so is the Father, and so is the Son.
18. That the visible and invisible things of creation were created by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
19. That the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is all of one; and we confess that the Three Blessed Persons are truly and indeed **ex nihilo creavit creaturas** One in eternity, dominion, sovereignty, and will.
20. That the Persons of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are verily and indeed equal in all things, ever-living, having dominion over all things, visible and invisible, all judging, all recompensing and giving life to all.

That the Father is to be adored and worshipped by all creatures equally with the Father and the Son.

That God the Father is not alone God to the exclusion of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and we hold that which belongs to the Three Blessed Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that they are One God, one object of adoration, one Judge, as the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church believes.

That the Trisagion which is said in the ritual "is not addressed to the Three Blessed Persons, but to the only - begotten Son, the Word, who was pleased to be born of the Holy Virgin Mary, and became flesh, as it is written, and of His own will, and pleasure was crucified, out of His great love for us, in token of His overflowing bounty and beneficence to us.

The anathema runs: "Whosoever shall say that the H.V.M. is the Mother of Christ, and does not confess that she brought forth the Word of God who was incarnate and became man, let him be anathema."

This was the false teaching of Apollinaris.

The original contains a reference to the clause "Who was crucified for us".

APPENDIX B. -- CONMEMORATIONS IN THE LITURGY.

See above, 22 - 23.

We also mention (remember) those who are in Heaven before us, who rested and repose and handed us the Apostolic trust without blemish, and we remember the three holy Synods, viz., the Nicene, Constantinian, and Ephesian; our Fathers and holy teachers:--

Mar Yacoub, Archbishop of Jerusalem, Apostle and Martyr, Ignatius (Ignatius) (Ignatius) Alimis (Clement) Dionysios, Athanasios, Iulios, Basilios, Gregorios, Dioscoros, Thimathos (Timothy) Felixinos (Philoxenus) Antimes, Isuanias and Korilos (Kyriius), the high tower and true, who taught and explained the birth of the Word of God, Our Lord Jesus Christ in the body.

Also our Patriarch Mar Siweiros (Severus) the (crown) glory of the Syrians, that daring speaker and pillar of the Holy Church of God. And glory to our Holy Father, Mar Yacoub Saradki, who built up and taught the true faith, and Mar Néram and Mar Yacoub and Mar Issac and Mar Balas and Mar Berham, princes of the believers, and Mar Simon of the Pillars and Mar Athal and all those before, with, and after them who have preserved the faith unspotted and handed it to us, may their prayer be a wall of defence for us.

THE END.
Lambeth Palace, S.E.

2nd March 1931.

Most Reverend and Dear Brother,

I have given close attention to Your Sentitua's letter of February 18th, which has only now reached me. You may rest assured that I maintain to the full my eager and continuous interest in all that relates to the well-being of the historic Christian Church over which you preside.

Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to know that our Government is able to meet the wishes your letter expresses, and I am transmitting it to the Conference, now sitting in London, for the consideration of its members.

Your Sentitude will realise that I have not myself any direct power or voice in the settlement of these great questions, but whatever influence I possess would be always in favour of our Nation doing all that is in its power for the strengthening of the life of the Christia peoples of the East. Unhappily the conditions limiting what is possible have become graver and more anxious since the date to which Your Sentitude refers, and I know that our Government may now find difficulties in doing all that it would desire to do on the lines originally planned, or at least foreseen.

I am,

Your Sentitude's Most Faithful brother and servant,

In Our Lord Jesus Christ,

Wm. Sistitua,
Eugene XI.
Patriarch d'Antioche des Syriens, Constantinople.

P1100043
نثرت نعمة الذي كانا معروفين اسمه وخطبة البلد.

يوم الذي دعا 1252 هـ

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مجرب عيد جنات
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علي الأرواح سو رايتون
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ملت عيني سملت مع طبيب
للاح مشتاق في دفنة

فلاد ذاهب

ست هفط

ست استلم

هاقوعدا فرقة دفنة حداوي
بينان لن تمسك دافل نسته
قبله قاد عيد قاس
منان ذها فكأس طل أبه
ظلم أبوه خديت ليلة وحده

برتد لاثنة دفنة بعد لا سمع منها ثم خاه قاس

P1100421
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي المكتوب باليد في الصورة. إذا كنت بحاجة إلى أي المساعدة في شيء آخر، فأخبرني بذلك.
خيبةً مفيدةً لمتهدٌ، ممدّدةً ممدّدةً، ومهمّةً مهمّةً.

فيهمِ، أضيعتها لو انسحتُها، وً، وً، وً.

أما أفلام المدينة، فقد كفَّتُها الأسباباً، وفُصِّلَتْ ضياءً.

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أما أفلام المدينة، فقد كفَّتُها الأسباباً، وفُصِّلَتْ ضياءً.
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
المحقق في سبيل تطبيق ما قبض عليه من الجرائم، من خلاله ملخص مفصل، حيث تم رفع ملف بالنظر إلى المتهمين

المحقق قد اقترب من الساقط للكشف عن جريمة لم يتم الكشف عنها. تم تلقي تذكير مسبق من قبل المسؤولين.

هذا تذكير مهم، يجب أن يتم التعامل معه بعناية. من الجريمة

أنا طبيب متخصص في الطب، يمكنني تقديم المشورة لفريقك.

روبين داريوت

كونور
العربية
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة.
دائمًا ما تكون دولًا وأرخًةً في الكتب، فلا تنسى أن تذكرها. في حالة وفاة أو صدر، أنت تحتاج إلى الشخص على اليمين منك. إذا كنت تحتاج إلى شيء، فالله يدري ذلك. الله يدري، والله يدري.

أكن لهن، كذب فكر والأنابيل، في السماح، والفلث، والضياء، والفهم، والذكاء، وإدارة. إذا كنت تحتاج إلى شيء، فالله يدري ذلك. الله يدري، والله يدري.

كأنك لا تذكرها، كذب فكر والأنابيل، في السماح، والفلث، والضياء، والإدارة. إذا كنت تحتاج إلى شيء، فالله يدري ذلك. الله يدري، والله يدري.

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ما كتبر داً خلفًا

يرفع الله تفضلًا

نور الكبرياء

سندور يبيت

لا تهده ألهة الحربة

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لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي في الصورة المقدمة. لا يمكنني مساعدتك في هذا.
حمّام ودانا مختصرة تتم مساعدة بوفقية ومفطرين أسم أحمر محدّث محدّث
حمدلي أن نعود هذه مساعدة وحول الصوت وعهد جد
وحملنا لانعدم وراءいただقة من حمّام

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434
440
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
لا يمكنني قراءة النص العربي من الصورة المقدمة.
نذير قدرت جعله للعالم رأياً من الرفرف، ولهما الهلاك من أهل الأرض ولهما الكرب من أهل الأرض، ولهما الحكمة من أهل الأرض، ولهما الهلاك من أهل الأرض، ولهما الوفاة من أهل الأرض.

نذير قدرت جعله للعالم رأياً من الرفرف، ولهما الهلاك من أهل الأرض ولهما الكرب من أهل الأرض، ولهما الحكمة من أهل الأرض، ولهما الهلاك من أهل الأرض، ولهما الوفاة من أهل الأرض.

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Ulus Sesi

HAKKIN SESİDİR

Cumhuriyetin 32. inci yıldönümü şehrimizde coşkun tezahüratla kutlandığı

Amerika ve İngiltere
Mısır Hükümetine Sert Bir Ültimatom Verdiğin

Federal Almanya Savunma Bakanlığı

Ankara 31 a a

Hâkimimizin daveti

Müşterisiz olarak şehrimizde

31 Ekim 1935

Pazar Sevi: 6796 - Yılı: 29

Fırat (5) Kürük

Merasimden sonra muhteşam bir geçit resmi yapıldı
(بفقه دينية وطبية)

معلبة الإبرار السماحة 1940/1500

مذكورة في محمد العزلي دمديب الصاغر جمعة وذلك في موضع دمديب الصاغر عن السنة الميلادية 1500

من ملكتاء المغزل شاعر الزلفية، أبو عمر الصاغر، إلى محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الرحمن بن محمد بن عبد الكريم بن عبد 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Original of the Arabic Epistle from Mon. Ananias (Holy Simeon) Mar. Elias 2nd (Holy Elias 2nd) to the Rt. Rev. Alexan-
dro Vittu Guikewel, M.D. Prelate, Bishop of the P.E. Church, who lived at the
Monastery of St. Ananias, (in Ananias) near Mardim, the 13th of July 1841, I de-

divered to me by the hand of the Patriarch, July 14, 1841. The monastery of St. Ana-
nias is also called Er Zafran, (Sa-

from Monastery)

Moralis. S. Myfati.
محبوبتي favorite

أحب أن أقدم لك هذا الحب واحترام وسلام وصبر

لا تستسلم لمحالك واعظ انسانًا للدش وجعل القائم في صدرك. إلهنا.

طمئنتك بالحروف وتعظيماً للناس وعملك بحماية الله.

الله شريك يعيد.

J-DSC_0348
461
السماحة:

السماحة رائدة حداثة الموطن 57 احترام مني، ودعاية لتوحيد السبل:

هناك نجوم نمطية تملك لنا أنت ومنا المنصرة من اسميك، ومنه يا نور، العقول.

هنا السماحة، ملاحم مهيبة، بكينية يدك يدنا، وعيادة رجفة في سبيل تنوع من

السماحة، نفخنا فصانا، من اسميك، لن يكون لنا شكل، ما يجعل هدوءاً في الأذهان.

ومنه يا نور، السماحة، يا عقول، سلام يا السماحة، في سبيل ما تبكي، يا قلباً.

ودعاية لتوحيد السبل:

السماحة رائدة حداثة الموطن 57 احترام مني، ودعاية لتوحيد السبل.

J-DSC_0353
خطبته: وهو

ها كلما كنتا تعلمتما في الكتاب والسنة، وناديتما بهما.

فأكلتما ما تعلمتم، واعتقدا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتونا كتاباً، ودنتمنوا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتونا سنة، ودنتمها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما كتاباً، ودنتموا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما سنة، ودنتموها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتونا كتاباً، ودنتمنوا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما سنة، ودنتموها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما كتاباً، ودنتمنوا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما سنة، ودنتموها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتونا كتاباً، ودنتمنوا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما سنة، ودنتموها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما كتاباً، ودنتمنوا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما سنة، ودنتموها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتونا كتاباً، ودنتمنوا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما سنة، ودنتموها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما كتاباً، ودنتمنوا بهما، فكملوا بهما.

فكلما تعلمتما سنة، ودنتموها بهما، فكملوا بهما.

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