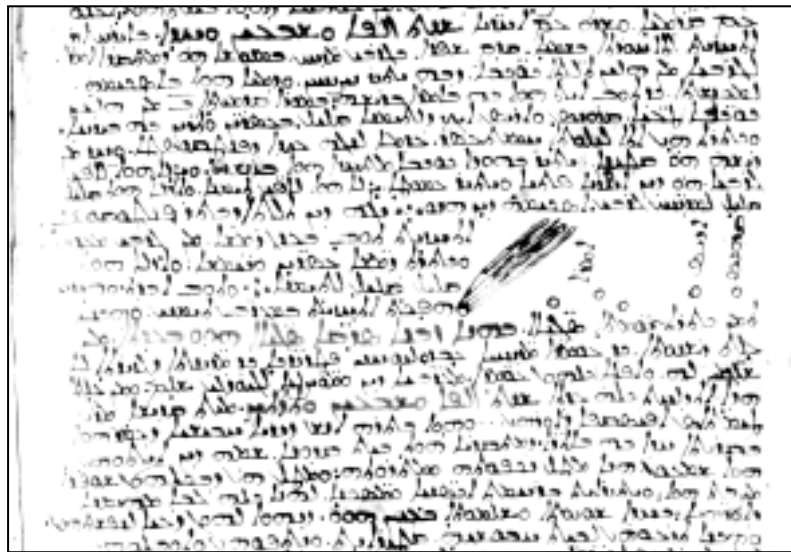


The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies

# JOURNAL

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- Adel al-Jadir - University of Tunis
- Muriel Debié - CNRS Paris
- Richard Burgess - University of Ottawa
- Geoffrey Greatrex - University of Ottawa
- Jan van Ginkel - Leiden University
- Witold Witakowski - University of Uppsala

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**Journal  
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de la Société Canadienne des Etudes Syriaques**

The *JCSSS* is a refereed journal published annually, and it contains the transcripts of public lectures presented at the Society and possibly other articles and book reviews

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The aim of the CSSS is to promote the study of the Syriac culture which is rooted in the same soil from which the ancient Mesopotamian and biblical literatures sprung. The CSSS is purely academic, and its activities include a series of public lectures, one yearly symposium, and the publication of its Journal. The Journal is distributed free of charge to the members of the CSSS who have paid their dues, but it can be ordered by other individuals and institutions for the following fees: \$35.00 for individuals and \$50.00 for institutions. Payment must be made in US dollars for orders from outside Canada. See the address of the CSSS on the back cover.

# Syriac Historiography Historiographie Syriaque

Papers presented at a Symposium on  
"Syriac Historiography"  
November 12, 2005  
Sponsored by

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada  
and  
The Department of Classics and Religious Studies,  
University of Ottawa

# *The Canadian Society for Syriac Studies*

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**Cover Picture**

“In the month of Adar (March), a shining sign was seen in the sky before dawn on the northeast side which is called Ram in the Zodiac, to the north of the three most shining stars. Its shape resembled a broom. On the twenty-second day of the month, it was still at the Ram at its head, in the first degree (of the Zodiac circle), the second after the wandering stars Kronos and Ares, somehow slightly to the south...”

*The Chronicle of Zuqnin* (written 774/775).

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## FROM THE EDITOR



**T**he articles published in this issue of the *Journal of the CSSS* are all papers presented at the CSSS Symposium entitled “Syriac Historiography/Historiographie Syriaque,” held at the University of Ottawa on Saturday November 12, 2005. We are all grateful to Prof. Geoffrey Greatrex, Department of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, for organizing a very stimulating and very successful conference, as testified by the quality of the papers published in this issue. All the papers are based on current research on Greek and Syriac historiographies conducted by the presenters, thus giving us a glimpse of recent developments in this important discipline.

\* \* \*

The Conference was financially supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Departments of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Ottawa.

\* \* \*

Chronology is the backbone of historiography; thus Prof. A. Al-Jadir’s paper on the numbers and dating formulae found in Old Syriac inscriptions and parchments (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>

centuries of our era) is a good beginning for this series of lectures. The dating system in Edessa, the birthplace of Syriac Christian literature, was largely adopted by later Syriac Chroniclers and historiographers, although these also followed other systems of Greek origin.

Eusebius of Caesarea greatly influenced Syriac historiography. It is not surprising, then, that two papers deal with this author in the present volume. Dr. Muriel Debié assesses the role of Eusebius in Syriac historiographical tradition, noticing that the latter’s Chronicle was not adopted by Syriac historiographers in its original form, either in form or content. While they relied on him in discussing ancient and biblical history, they viewed history as a whole from their own geographical and theological perspectives. The paper by Prof. R. Burgess compares the chronologies of three “translations” of Eusebius: Jerome, the 8<sup>th</sup> century Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre (the Zuqnin Chronicle), and an Armenian version. In doing so, Burgess engages in some necessary preliminary work before attempting the much more daunting task of reconstructing the original Greek version of Eusebius’ *Chronici canones*. The author stresses the importance of Ps.-Dionysius, little exploited thus far in this kind of research.

Professor Geoffrey Greatrex examines the 6<sup>th</sup> century work of Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene, based largely on the work of the genuine Zechariah originally written in Greek. A close examination of the contents and an analysis of the literary genre of the Syriac work leads Greatrex to argue that the work of Pseudo-Zachariah should be seen as a church history rather than as a chronicle, though these sub-genres are closely interconnected.

The chronicle of Patriarch Michael the Syrian or Michael the Great (12<sup>th</sup> century) is the largest of all Syriac chronicles, and makes use of a great number of early sources, some now lost, some in fragmentary form. Dr. J. van Ginkel's paper deals with the author's way of selecting and using his material. To what extent can the fragmentary sources be used to elucidate the mind and attitudes of the original authors? The paper calls for careful analysis of these fragments before reconstructing them, while acknowledging their importance as source material.

The Maphrian Bar-Hebraeus was the last major chronicler and historiographer, living during the Mongol period. Dr. W. Witakowski devotes his paper to this polymath, especially his two-part Chronography, the general and ecclesiastical histories, concentrating on the latter part. While this part is a continuing history of the Syriac Orthodox Church—Bar-Hebraeus' own Church—,

he also provides information relevant to the Church of the East (so-called "Nestorian"), a rare phenomenon in West Syriac historiography. It seems that the ecumenical spirit of this author had a bearing on his work as a historiographer.

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As is clear from the papers published in this issue, Syriac historiography is heir to Semitic and especially Greek heritages: Semitic in its tongue, Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic proper to Edessa), and Greek, in its literary genre and to a great extent, contents. There were several chronicles and ecclesiastical histories produced between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, some short and local, as in the case of the Edessan chronicle wrongly attributed to Joshua the Stylite, and others quite voluminous, as in the case of the Chronicle of Michael the Great. Most of these important sources are little known and inadequately exploited, due to outdated editions or translations, and to the general inaccessibility of these sources. One wishes for standard editions of Syriac historiographical works accompanied by translations into modern languages, something like the Loeb Classical Library. Without such editions, our knowledge of Near and Middle Eastern and World histories will remain incomplete. Such new editions and translation remain a constant *desirata*.

A.H.

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## NUMBERS AND DATING FORMULAE IN THE OLD SYRIAC INSCRIPTIONS\*



A. AL- JADIR  
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**T**he city of Edessa (modern Urfa in south-east Turkey) has yielded a number of ancient Syriac inscriptions through which one may form a picture of some aspects of its history, a glimpse of the course of the history of the “Blessed city” that was Edessa. The inscriptions provide us also with valuable information relating to the names of certain kings which can help to establish parts of the genealogy of the ruling dynasty: “The importance of these inscriptions is almost inversely proportional to their number and extent.”<sup>1</sup>

The early dated Syriac inscriptions use three different numeral systems in dating the texts: numeral symbols (ciphers), written-out numbers and an alphabet-based system.

### NUMERAL SYMBOLS

Writing is perhaps the greatest invention, since it made the documentation of human history possible. The origin of writing was connected with the practical need for keeping records of palace and temple property and produce in the early Near East. The necessity emerged to use number symbols from the beginning of writing to assist in

economic and administrative operations.<sup>2</sup> The peoples of the ancient Near East had methods of employing different signs to denote numerals without having to write the words out in full.<sup>3</sup>

The Sumerians had already devised symbols for numerals and two systems of counting: one was decimal, based on ten as the unit (1-10-100-1000), and the other, sexagesimal, based on the powers of 60 (1-60-3600). In the earliest stage, at about 3000 B.C., numbers were represented by strokes indicating units and circular impressions indicating tens.<sup>4</sup> A combination of both could produce a large numeral.<sup>5</sup> As the pictograms of the earliest writing developed gradually into abstract cuneiform (wedge-shaped) signs, the numeral signs were correspondingly changed.<sup>6</sup> The symbol for 1 was indicated by a single wedge (𐎗) and for 10 a broad oblique wedge (𐎗).<sup>7</sup> As a unit in the sexagesimal system, 60 could be expressed by a vertical wedge, originally recognized by its larger size than the wedge denoting 1, though the distinction in size later disappeared.<sup>8</sup> The sign for 100 could be written either (in the early period) by a big circle (O) or by a special sign (𐎗𐎗), pronounced ME.<sup>9</sup>



As for West Semitic, the numerals used in dating inscriptions were mainly written with particular signs corresponding to our figures. These signs are represented in ways that remained the same for many centuries. Obviously every script developed considerably over the course of time and in agreement with this fact the numerals also presented development in forms.

In the West Semitic Aramaic tradition (early Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Syriac and Hatran) the numerical notations were initially very simple, using a single vertical stroke to represent the units and adding other strokes up to 9 (except for 5, which appears sometimes in a different form). A special sign was used for 10 and similarly 20 has a sign of its own, whereas all the other numbers from 1 to 99 are formed by placing the basic signs side by side.<sup>10</sup> The signs for units ten, twenty and hundred in Old Syriac are shown in the table below:

Units	Symbols
1	
2	a $\Gamma$ or
4	
5	b > or
Tens	c $\neg$ d $\curvearrowright$
Twenty	e $\wedge$ f $\smile$
Hundred	g $\leftarrow$ h $\curvearrowleft$ i $\curvearrowright$

Old Syriac Numeral Symbols

a- Drijvers and Healey 1999, Pl. 37 (As 27); b- Drijvers and Healey 1999 Pl.20 (As 29); c- Drijvers and Healey 1999 Pl.40 (As55), Pl.27 (As37); d- Welles 1959, Pls. LXIX-LXXI; e- Drijvers and Healey 1999, Pl. 58 (Bs2); f- Welles 1959, Pls. LXIX-

LXXI; g- Drijvers and Healey 1999, Pl.58 (Bs2); h- Drijvers and Healey 1999, Pl. 25 (As36); i- Welles 1959, Pls. LXIX-LXXI.

The numeral signs found in the Old Syriac inscriptions are represented in the following examples:

|||||||  $\neg$   $\curvearrowleft$  | |||  $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ}$

“In the month of *Adar* of the year (3x100) +10+1+1+1+1+1+1+1 (=Seleucid 317, A.D. 6).”<sup>11</sup>

|||||  $\wedge$   $\neg$  |||  $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ}$

“In the month of Former *Tešri* of the year (3x100)+20+20+20+20+1+1+1+1+1 (=Seleucid 385, A.D. 73).”<sup>12</sup>

|||  $\curvearrowright$   $\text{ܘܢܝܢ}$

$\triangleright$   $\neg$   $\wedge$   $\curvearrowleft$  ||||  $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ}$

“On the 10+1+1+1 day of *Adar* of the year (4x100)+20+20+20+10+5+1(=Seleucid 476, A.D. 165).”<sup>13</sup>

|||||  $\neg$   $\wedge$   $\curvearrowleft$  ||||  $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ}$

“In the month of *Šebaṭ* of the year (4x100) +20+20+20+10+1+1+1+1+1+1+1 (=Seleucid 476, A.D. 165).”<sup>14</sup>

𐤀 𐤁 𐤂  $\neg$   $\wedge$   $\curvearrowleft$  ||||  $\text{ܘܢܝܢ ܘܚܘܢܝܢ}$

“In *Šebaṭ* of the year (4x100) 20+20 +20+10+1+2+1+2(= Seleucid 476, A.D. 165).”<sup>15</sup>

The numeral signs, which are used in the dated Syriac inscriptions of the first century A.D.<sup>16</sup> are as follows: a simple stroke for the numeral 1; five simple vertical strokes ||||| for 5; 10 is represented by a horizontal line with a small tail downward  $\neg$ ; 20 has the form  $\wedge$ ; and 100 has almost the same sign as 10, but with a small extra stroke in the tail:  $\curvearrowleft$ .

Some differences in certain inscriptions of the second century A.D. from Sumatar<sup>17</sup> appear in the case of the numerals 2, 5 and 6. The numeral 2 is given the sign 𐤒 in one of these inscriptions.<sup>18</sup> The latter is quite similar to the “Arabic” numeral 2 in current use in the Arab world. The numeral 5, as in later Syriac, has the form of the letter >.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the sign for 6 is drawn in different forms: as six simple vertical strokes 𐤒𐤒𐤒𐤒𐤒𐤒;<sup>20</sup> as the sign for numeral 5 with a simple vertical stroke at the left-hand side of it 𐤒><sup>21</sup> and by the form 𐤒𐤒𐤒.<sup>22</sup> The same early forms for 1, 10, 20 and 100 are also found in the Syriac Deed of Sale from Dura Europos, dated to A.D. 243.<sup>23</sup>

The numerical notations used in Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrene, Syriac, and Hatran are very similar, evidently developing from a common source.<sup>24</sup>

#### WRITTEN-OUT NUMBERS

While the above ciphers were used in writing, it is obvious that in *reading* the inscriptions the numbers would be given their full grammatical form. In the Old Syriac inscriptions as in Classical Syriac and other Semitic languages, the numbers 1-19 have masculine and feminine forms, according to the grammatical gender of the noun to which they are attached. The numerals from 3-10 use the masculine formation with feminine nouns, and vice versa. The numerals 1 and 2 show the same gender as that of the noun to which they refer.

The occurrences of the numbers written out in the dates of the Old Syriac texts (including the dated legal documents from the 240s A.D.) are as follows:

1- *dšnt 'rb' m'* “of the year four hundred.”<sup>25</sup> This could be the earliest Syriac

inscription found so far with the numbers written out in full. It shows only the number 400 and the other following numbers which should be expected are missing. Therefore the Seleucid date is evidently between 400 and 499. At the latest, the text was written in A.D. 187-88.<sup>26</sup>

2- *bḥmšm' wlt'šr'* “in [the year] five hundred and thirteen.”<sup>27</sup> In the dating formula the word (*šnt*) “year” is not mentioned in this inscription but it is understood from the fact that the numeral agrees with a feminine noun. The Seleucid year 513 corresponds to A.D. 201-02.<sup>28</sup>

3- *byrh' dr šnt 'šryn* “In the month of Adar of the year twenty.”<sup>29</sup> The dating formula is expressed with the name of month *Adar*, which is equivalent to March, and the year number 20 with the omission of the five hundred on account of its redundancy.<sup>30</sup>

4- *byrh' b šnt [...]'m' [...]'wtš'* “In the month of *Ab* of the year [...] hundred [...] and nine.”<sup>31</sup> This date follows a standard formula, which is also shown in the previous example. The month name *Ab* corresponds to August. The first number of the year is missing. Therefore one may assume the number 500, in which case the Seleucid date would be between 529 and 599. But on art-historical grounds it could be suggested that the year is 529/539/549 (A.D. 218, 288, 238).<sup>32</sup>

5- *byrh' nysn šnt ḥmšm'* *wiltyn wḥmš'* “in the month of *Nisan* of the year five hundred and thirty-five.”<sup>33</sup> The year 535 in the Seleucid era corresponds to A.D. 223/24 but the month of *Nisan* (April) of 535 fell in A.D. 224.<sup>34</sup>

6- *byrh' tmwz šnt tltyn wtš'* “in the month of *Tammuz* of the year thirty-nine.”<sup>35</sup> The dating is similar to what has been mentioned earlier, with the 500 to be added to the year number. In this case, the year is 539 in the Seleucid era, which corresponds to A.D. 227/28. With

the month of *Tammuz* (July), it fell in A.D. 228.

7- *bšnt ḥmšm'' w'rb'yn wšb'* "In the year five hundred and forty-seven."<sup>36</sup> The Seleucid year 547 corresponds to A.D. 235/6. This formula does not give the month name.

8- *byrh knwn qdm šnt ḥmšm'' whmšyn wtrtyn* "In the month of Former *Kanun* of the year five hundred and fifty-two."<sup>37</sup> The Seleucid year 552 corresponds to A.D. 240/41. The month (*knwn qdm*) is equivalent to December and fell in A.D. 240.

9- *byrh 'lwl šnt ḥmšm'' whmšyn wilt* "In the month of *Elul* of the year five hundred and fifty-three."<sup>38</sup> The date 553 in the Seleucid Era corresponds to A.D. 241/242. *Elul* is the name of month equivalent to September, and *Elul* of the Seleucid year 553 fell in A.D. 242.

10- *byrh 'yr šnt ḥmšm'' whmšyn w'rb' bmnyn' qdmy'* "In the month of *Iyyar*, the year five hundred and fifty-four in the for-

mer reckoning."<sup>39</sup> The year 554 in the Seleucid dating is A.D. 242/243, and the month of *Iyyar* (May) fell in A.D. 243.

It is striking that the system of writing the numbers in full has not been found in the dated Hatran inscriptions, but the year number is regularly given by means of numerical symbols. In Palmyrene, only a very few examples are attested (for example: *CIS* 4173 and 4174 from the year A.D.190/191). In certain dated Nabataean inscriptions, the year numbers are also written out in full.<sup>40</sup>

It is noteworthy that the month names used in the Syriac inscriptions are of Babylonian origin. The Mesopotamians used astronomy to set the calendar.<sup>41</sup> The Babylonian month names with little differences were also found in various Aramaic dialects, for example, in Nabataean, Palmyrene and Hatran inscriptions as the following Table shows:

	Babylonian	Syriac	Jewish	Nabataean	Palmyrene	Hatran
Jan.	Tebet	Kanun II	Tebet	Tebet	Tebet	Tebet
Feb.	Šebaṭ	Šebaṭ	Šebaṭ	Šebaṭ	Šebaṭ	Šebaṭ
Mar.	Adar	Adar	Adar	Adar	Adar	Adar
Apr.	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan	Nisan
May	Iyyar	Iyyar	Iyyar	Iyyar	Iyyar	Iyyar
Jun.	Siwan	Hzirān	Sivan	Siwan	Siwan	Hžuran
Jul.	Tammuz	Tammuz	Tammuz	-----	Qenyan	Qenyan
Aug.	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab
Sep.	Elul	Illul	Illul	Illul	Illul	Illul
Oct.	Tišri	Tešri I	Tišri	Tešri	Tešri	Tešri
Nov.	Marḥešwan	Tešri II	Marḥešwan	-----	Kanun	Marḥešwan
Dec.	Kislev	Kanun I	Kislev	Kislew	Kislew	Kanun

Table 2: The Babylonian Months with Their Counterparts in the Different Aramaic Calendars  
 Months in the Babylonian calendar: see Contenau 1966, 227  
 Months in the different Aramaic calendars: see Brock 2001, 121

The Babylonian month-names survive today in the Jewish calendar and in the Syriac and Christian Arabic calendar. The lunar months used in Jewish and probably also in Nabataean, Palmyrene, and Hatran inscriptions do not show exact agreement with our present calendar. For example, the month of *Nisan* may begin in March. On the other hand, the Syriac months have exact correspondence with the Julian (or old) calendar.<sup>42</sup>

### ALPHABET-BASED SYSTEM

Through the course of time following the appearance of the pictographic systems, the first alphabet was invented in the Near East in the early second millennium B.C. The first alphabet is called Proto-Sinaitic or Proto-Canaanite and was used for the North West Semitic languages including Aramaic, Hebrew and Phoenician.<sup>43</sup>

As far as the alphabet in the West is concerned, it seems that the earliest surviving inscriptions in Greek from the eighth century B.C. have a Semitic origin since

most of the letter forms can be paralleled in the Phoenician and Aramaic scripts; also the letters follow the same basic alphabetic order, though some supplementary letters (in addition to the 22 Semitic letters) were developed and added to the alphabet. The derivation of the Greek letters from the Phoenicians is substantiated by similarities in their names, by their forms and by the alphabetic order.<sup>44</sup> It appears that the Greeks used two different systems of numerals based on the letters of the alphabet. The older system, dating to the seventh century B.C., consists of acrophonic numerals, which means the initial letter of the word for the number is used as a sign for that numeral.<sup>45</sup> In the other system, the Greeks attached, at least from the second century B.C., numerical values to each of the letters of the alphabet as they appear in the table below.<sup>46</sup>

Under Greek influence the numeral system in Table 3 was adopted by Hebrew and Aramaic.<sup>47</sup> In agreement with Hebrew, Arabic and Greek, the Classical Syriac alphabetic values of the twenty-two letters of the alphabet are represented as follows: the first

Units		Tens		Hundreds	
A α Alpha	1	I ι Iota	10	P ρ Rho	100
B β Beta	2	K κ Kappa	20	Σ σ Sigma	200
Γ γ Gamma	3	Λ λ Lambda	30	T τ Tau	300
Δ δ Delta	4	M μ Mu	40	Y υ Upsilon	400
E ε Epsilon	5	N ν Nu	50	Φ φ Phi	500
Ζ ζ Digamma	6	Ξ ξ Ksi	60	X χ Chi	600
Z ζ Zeta	7	O ο Omicron	70	Ψ ψ Psi	700
H η Eta	8	Π π Pi	80	Ω ω Omega	800
Θ θ Theta	9	ς Ϟ Koppa	90	λ λ San	900

Table 3: Greek Alphabetic Numerals

nine letters of the alphabet (*'-t*) have classical values 1-9, and the next nine letters (*y-š*) show the tens from 10-90, while the remaining four letters (*q-t*) represent hundreds from 100 to 400. The numbers from 500-900 are written as additive combinations of the signs for 400 with signs for the other hundreds. For example *tq*= 500 (400+100).<sup>48</sup>

It has already been noted that the Old Syriac inscriptions from the first three centuries of our era reveal a system of numerical notation related to the Aramaic system. Afterwards, Syriac, under Greek influence, began to use the letters as number-signs, abandoning the cipher system to indicate the numerals<sup>49</sup> probably by the end of the first half of the third century A.D. The Syriac letter-numeral system in the Syriac inscriptions is found for the first time in two third-century documents,<sup>50</sup> where we find the numbers *bn* (52) and *gn* (53).<sup>51</sup> Apart from these two documents, this system has not been found yet in the early Syriac materials. This gives us an indication that the letter-number system in Syriac had not, so far, become as common as in a later period.

#### SOME HISTORICAL INFORMATION IN THE EARLY DATED SYRIAC INSCRIPTIONS

The surviving inscriptions from Edessa and the rest of Osrhoene have historic significance and refer to some members of the ruling dynasty of the little kingdom of Osrhoene whose capital was at Edessa in Northern Mesopotamia.<sup>52</sup>

Seleucos I Nicator founded Edessa in 304 or 303 B.C. (possibly at the site of an earlier city).<sup>53</sup> Although the early inhabitants of Edessa were mostly of Aramaean stock,

the Arabs gradually came to form a considerable proportion of the population by the end of the Seleucid period. When the Seleucids withdrew to the west of the Euphrates, Edessa acquired a certain independence and a dynasty of Arab stock reigned over the city and the surrounding region from about 132 B.C., starting with king Aryu (132-127 B.C.).<sup>54</sup>

The title *šlyt' d'rb* "governor of 'Arab'" appears only in one dated inscription from A.D. 165<sup>55</sup> found at the Sumatar Harabesi (situated approximately 60 km south-east of Edessa). The inscription reads:

- 1- *byrh šbt šnt 476*
- 2- *'n' tyrdt br 'dwn' šlyt' d'rb*
- 3- *bnyt 'lt' hd' w šmt nšbt' lmrh'*
- 4- *'l hyy mry mlk' .....*

- 1- In the month of šebat of the year 476
- 2- I, Tridates son of Adona, governor of 'Arab
- 3- Built this altar and set up a pillar for Maralahe
- 4- For the life of my lord the king.....

In this inscription the governor of 'Arab' (*šlyt' d'rb*) prays for the life of his lord the king and his sons, referring to Wa'el, son of Sahrū, the pro-Parthian king of Edessa<sup>56</sup> who reigned over Edessa for two years from 162/3 to 164/5.<sup>57</sup> Further evidence exists for Wa'el the king on bronze coins with his bust and his name in Syriac script and Vologeses IV of Parthia (148-93) portrayed on the obvers.<sup>58</sup>

A group of undated Syriac tomb inscriptions also at Sumatar shows local officials, presumably under the kings, with the title *šlyt' d'rb*. The persons who held this title are Wa'el son of Wa'el, Barnahar son of Dini and Abgar.<sup>59</sup> The word *'rb* is taken by Drijvers<sup>60</sup> to mean the region of desert area around Edessa to the Tigris, where "the ruler

of the Arabs” was in charge of the Arab tribes on behalf of the king of Edessa.<sup>61</sup> Ross, however, stated that “the most conservative approach is to conclude that *Arab* designates a fairly restricted area around Tella and Rhesaina.”<sup>62</sup>

Among the corpus of the dated Syriac inscriptions is the most ancient Syriac tomb text discovered so far.<sup>63</sup> It was found in the modern Birecik on the left bank of the Euphrates. This inscription records that the tomb was erected in A.D. 6 by an important local figure who was in command of Birtha (*šlyt' dbyrt'*), presumably the place on the site of Birecik which was part of Abgar's kingdom of Osrhoene. It remains plausible that this person, Zarbiyan son of Abgar, is not an independent local ruler, but an official of the kingdom.<sup>64</sup>

Another Syriac tomb inscription from Serrin (on the other side of the Euphrates, south of Birecik) of a religious functionary was dedicated in A.D. 73 by a man who also has a characteristic Edessan name, Ma'nu son of Ma'nu, with the non-religious title *qšyš'* “elder”<sup>65</sup> and the religious title *bdr dnhy*. The exact meaning of the term *bdr* has not yet been adequately explained.<sup>66</sup> It could be a name of a religious functionary.<sup>67</sup> The inscription is of a common type that indicates the continuation of the tradition of respect for burial-places and avoidance of their violation. It invokes a curse on any person who disturbs the dead man's remains and violators of the tomb are threatened with having no offspring to throw dust on their eyes, i.e. to fulfill the usual funerary rites, and with not getting a tomb themselves.<sup>68</sup>

The best-known king of Edessa, Abgar VIII the Great, son of Ma'nu, ruled for thirty-five years, perhaps from 176/177–

211/212. Abgar VIII called himself Septimius and there are coins with the portraits of king Abgar and Septimius Severus.<sup>69</sup> Although there is no direct reference to him in the dated Syriac inscriptions, he is probably represented at the center of a tomb-mosaic inscription discovered by Drijvers in 1979 in Şehitlik Mahallesi north of Edessa. This mosaic shows five people in two rows within a decorated framework. The significance of the inscription lies in the reference to Abgar, son of Ma'nu, the iconography of whose representation indicates that he was of royal rank.<sup>70</sup> On the basis of the script and content, this mosaic is probably to be assigned to the first half of the third century. It is likely, therefore, that the king is Abgar VIII, known as Abgar the Great.<sup>71</sup> The inscription reads:

1- 'n' brsmy' br  
2- 'šdw 'bdt ly  
3- byt 'lm' hn'  
4- ly wlbny wlhy  
5- 'l hyy 'bgr  
6- mry w'bd tby

1– I, Barsimya son of  
2- Ašdw, made for myself  
3- this house of eternity  
4- for myself and for my children and  
for my brothers  
5- for the life of Abgar  
6- my lord and benefactor.<sup>72</sup>

There are some doubts raised about the identification of this Abgar with the famous king Abgar VIII the Great<sup>73</sup> who died in 212 and was succeeded by his son Abgar IX Severus who reigned till 213.<sup>74</sup> In that year, Caracalla summoned the Edessan king Abgar and his sons to Rome where they were murdered; therefore the year 212/213 was to be regarded as the first year of “liberation” of Edessa and from that date Edessa was

proclaimed a Roman *colonia*.<sup>75</sup> The colony carried the names Marcia, Aurelia, Antoniana, Metropolitan and later Alexandria combined in various ways.<sup>76</sup>

The local dynasty returned briefly in 239-240<sup>77</sup> and around 240 the last member of the dynasty was granted the privilege of bearing the title "king" once again.<sup>78</sup> This was indicated in the Syriac legal documents dated from A.D. 240: "In the second year of Aelius Septimius Abgar the king."<sup>79</sup> Edessa reverted to being a colony in A.D. 241.<sup>80</sup>

Some features of the ordinary life of the people of Edessa and Osrhoene in the early years of 240s are reflected in three legal documents. The first document records the sale of a slave-girl which turned up in the excavation of Dura-Europos, but it was written in Edessa on 9<sup>th</sup> May (*Iyyar*) A.D. 243.<sup>81</sup> The earlier of two new Syriac legal documents is dated 28<sup>th</sup> December (*Kanun qdam*) A.D. 240 when Edessa enjoyed a short period of the restored monarchy during the reign of Septimius Abgar.<sup>82</sup> It is related to a transfer of debt.<sup>83</sup> The second new document, which dates from 1<sup>st</sup> September (*Elul*) A.D. 242 concerns a lease of repossessed property.<sup>84</sup> Around this time, it appears that Edessa had reverted to being a *colonia* and the name of the Edessan king is not mentioned any more.

These three dated Syriac documents, besides the inscriptions, present historical information on political and social matters as well as on the way of life of the people of Edessa, using dating according to various eras and other markers.<sup>85</sup>

I- The Seleucid Era. The early Syriac inscriptions including the three documents from the A.D. 240s are usually dated according to the Seleucid era which began in

October 312-311 B.C. In order to calculate the corresponding Christian (or Common Era) date, it is thus necessary to subtract 311, or 312 if the month is October, November, or December.<sup>86</sup> The Seleucid era is referred to as *mny'n' qdmy'* "the former reckoning,"<sup>87</sup> presumably in contrast to the Roman or Parthian system of chronology.<sup>88</sup> The Seleucid date is also found with *dywny'* "of the Greeks," as in the document of A.D. 242: *byrh' lwl šnt gn whmšm' dywny'* "In the month of *Elul* of the year five hundred and 53 of the Greeks."<sup>89</sup> In Mesopotamia, dating by the Seleucid era was standard<sup>90</sup> and continued in use until it was replaced by the Muslim system of dating.<sup>91</sup>

II- One document names the year after the king who was then ruling and numbers it according to years of that monarch's reign. This kind of information, indicating the ruling years of the king, is represented by the legal document of A.D. 240:<sup>92</sup>

3- ... *wbšnt trtyn d'lyws spmyws 'bgr mlk'*

4- *br m'nw pšgryb' br 'bgr mlk' .....*

6- *ktyb štr' hn' bhykl' krk' hdt' dšyd' d'bgr mlk'*

3-..... and in the second year of Aelius Septimius Abgar the king

4- son of Ma'nu, crown prince, son of Abgar the king.....

6- this document was written in Haykla New Town of Hunting, of Abgar the king

This document refers to the second year of Aelius Septimius Abgar X son of Ma'nu the crown-prince, who reigned from A.D. 239 to 241 after the Romans reinstated the dynasty. There is no further mention of the title king under Roman rule as part of the province of Mesopotamia.<sup>93</sup>

The text shows also that the father of the

king Abgar had been a Ma'nu *psgryb*' (an Iranian term for a particular official, something similar to the crown-prince, heir-apparent), son of Abgar the king, who was the highest-ranking officer in the kingdom<sup>94</sup> for twenty-six years from A.D. 213 to 239,<sup>95</sup> but he had not in fact been a reigning king.<sup>96</sup> Perhaps this Ma'nu *psgryb*' who appears in the undated Syriac inscription from the citadel of Edessa is the father of Queen Šalmat:

- 1- 'n' 'ptwh'
- 2- nw[hdr'] br
- 3- brs[---]bdt
- 4- 'stwn' hn'
- 5- w'dryt' d'l mnh
- 6- lšlmt mlkt' brt
- 7- m'nw psgryb'

- 1- I, Aptuḥa
- 2- com[mandant], son of
- 3- ...[...m]ade
- 4- this column
- 5- and the statue above it
- 6- for Šalmat, the queen, daughter of
- 7- Ma'nu, the crown prince<sup>97</sup>

III- The year might also be named after an important event that had occurred. This is clear in two of the Syriac documents, where the era in which Edessa became a Roman colony in 212/213 is designated as that of its freedom, probably freedom from its local dynasty.<sup>98</sup> The date 212/213, therefore, was regarded later as the first year of the "liberation" (*dḥrwr*') of Edessa.<sup>99</sup> Hence the Seleucid year 553 (A.D. 241/242) which was mentioned in the document P3:3-2<sup>100</sup> refers to the year 30 of the liberation of Edessa and "presumably therefore of its new status as *colonia*:"<sup>101</sup>

- 2- .....byrh' lwl šnt ḥmšm''
- 3- ḥmšyn wilt bmnyn' qdmy' bšnt  
tlyn dḥrwr' d'nṭwnyn' 'dys' nšyht'
- 4- qlwny'

- 2-..... in the month of Elul of the year five hundred
- 3- and fifty-three in the former reckoning, in the year thirty of the liberation of Antoniana Edessa the glorious
- 4- colonia

The document P1:2-4<sup>102</sup> refers to the Seleucid year 554 (A.D. 242/234) as year 31 of the liberation of Edessa:

- 2- ... byrh' yr šnt
- 3- ḥmšm'' ḥmšyn w'rb' bmnyn' qdmy'  
wbšnt tlyn whd' dḥrwrh
- 4- d'nṭwny' 'ds' nšyht' qlwny'.....
- 2- ..... in the month of *Iyyar*, the year
- 3- five hundred and fifty four in the former reckoning, and in the year thirty-one of the liberation
- 4- of Antoniana Edessa the glorious colonia.....

IV- The two documents from 242 and 243 also present dating by the eponymous priest, Marcus Aurelius:<sup>103</sup>

- 4- ..... bkmrwt'
- 5- dmrqws 'wrylys.....
- 4-..... in the priesthood of
- 5- Marcus Aurelius.....

V- The document of A.D.243 appears also to identify the year by the name of the principal magistrate, as in many Greek cities.<sup>104</sup> The document shows that Edessa, after the Romans ended the dynasty, was administered by two annual magistrates (at this time Aurelius Abgar son of Ma'nu and Abgar son of Hapsay) denoted by the borrowed Greek term *strategia*:<sup>105</sup>

- 5- ... wb'strṭgwṭ' dmrqw[s]
- 6- 'wrylys 'bgr... w'bgr br ḥpsy
- 5- .... and in the strategos-ship of Marcus
- 6- Aurelius Abgar ... and Abgar son of Hapsay.<sup>106</sup>



VI- The three documents of the 240s show dating by regnal years of the emperor Gordian III (238-244). Under Roman rule down to the time of the emperor Diocletian, it seems that the people of Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Arabia used dating by regnal years of the monarch ruling over them.<sup>107</sup> For example:

1- *bšnt št d'wtqrṭwr qsr mrqws 'nṭwnyws  
grdynws 'wsbws 'wṭwkws*  
2- *sbstws*

1- In the year six of Autokrator Caesar Marcus Antonius Gordianus Eusebes Eutuches  
2- Sebastos.<sup>108</sup>

VII- Dating by “consulship” (*hpty'*) is also known with the names of the consuls of the year in question:

*bhpty' nyws rnyws wdtrybwnyws ppws*

“In the consulship of Annius Arrianus and of Cervonius Papius.”<sup>109</sup>

The other document is dated by the consuls of the year 242:

*bhpty' dwtyws 'tyqws wdlpydws  
prṭkst'ṭws*

“In the consulate of Vettius Atticus and of Lapidus Praetextatus.....”<sup>110</sup>

VIII- As a part of its dating, the document of the year A.D. 242 is assigned to the archonship (*rkwnwt'*) of Marcus Aurelius Alexandros son of Severus and Bar'ata son of Šalamsin.<sup>111</sup> An archon was another local official.

It can be deduced from what has been observed in the three legal documents that in Edessa as in many Greek cities it was the custom to mark years by the name of high officials for that year.<sup>112</sup>

## DATING FORMULAE

Most of the dates in the Old Syriac inscriptions appear at the beginning of the inscriptions and the same is true of the three third-century documents. The dating formulae in the available texts may be classified in three categories:<sup>113</sup>

A- Using the year alone with numbers written out; for example:

2- *bšnt ḥmšm''*  
3- *w'rb 'yn wšb'*

2- In the year five hundred  
3- and forty-seven<sup>114</sup>

In the legal documents of the third century A.D., this same formula emerges for the regnal years of the emperor Gordian III.<sup>115</sup>

1- *bšnt št d'wtqrṭwr qsr mrqws  
'nṭwnyws grdynws'*

1- In the year six of Autokrator Caesar Marcus Antonius Gordianus<sup>116</sup>

1- .....*bšnt*  
2- *tlṭ d'wtqrṭwr qsr mrqws*

1- ..... In the third year  
2- of Autokrator Caesar Antonius Gordianus<sup>117</sup>

1- *bšnt ḥmš d'wtqrṭwr qsr mrqws  
'nṭwnyws*

1- ..... In the fifth year of Autokrator Caesar Antonius Gordianus.....<sup>118</sup>

In one example in this category the word “year” is not mentioned:

1- *bḥmšm'' wlt 'šr'*

1- In [the year] five hundred and thirteen<sup>119</sup>

B- Using the month name with the year. This is by far the most common formula with some seven inscriptions using it:

- 1- *byrh 'dr šn 317*  
 1- In the month of *Adar* of the year 317<sup>120</sup>
- 1- *byrh tšry qdm šnt 384*  
 1- In the month of Former *Tešri* of the year 385<sup>121</sup>
- 1- *byrh šbt šnt 476*  
 1- In the month of *Šebaṭ* of the year 476<sup>122</sup>
- 1- *byrh ' dr šnt 'šryn*  
 1- In the month of *Adar* of the year (five hundred) and twenty<sup>123</sup>
- 1- *byrh 'b šnt [...]m' [...]t wtš'*  
 1- In the month of *Ab* of the year ... hundred and ... nine<sup>124</sup>
- 1- *byrh nysn*  
 2- *šnt ḥmšm'*  
 3- *wltyn whmš*  
 1- In the month of *Nisan*  
 2- of the year five hundred  
 3- and thirty five<sup>125</sup>
- 1- *byrh tmwz šnt tltyn*  
 2- *wtš' .....*  
 1- In the month of *Tammuz* of the year thirty  
 2- nine<sup>126</sup>

One example occurs with the word *yrh* "month" after the year number:

- 1- *bšbt šnt 476 byrh*  
 1- in (the month of) *Šebaṭ* of the year 476<sup>127</sup>

C- Using the month name, the year and the day of the month. This formula is less common in the Old Syriac. It occurs in the three legal documents of the third century. Examples are:

- 2- ..... *byrh 'yr šnt*  
 3- *ḥmšm'' whmšym w'rb'*  
 7- .....*bywm tš't'.....*  
 2- ..... in the month of *Iyyar*, the year  
 3- five hundred and fifty-four  
 7-.....on the ninth day.....<sup>128</sup>
- 1- *byrh knwn qdm šnt ḥmšm'' whmšyn*

- wtrtyn*  
 7- *bywm tmny' w' šryn*  
 1- In the month of Former *Kanun* of the year five hundred and fifty-two  
 7- on the twenty-eighth day<sup>129</sup>
- 2- *byrh 'lwl šnt ḥmšm*  
 3- *whmšyn wlt*  
 6- ..... *bywm ḥd byrh'*  
 2- In the month of *Elul* of the year five hundred  
 3- and fifty-three  
 6- on the first day of the month<sup>130</sup>

The formula containing day, month, and year is attested in one of the Syriac inscriptions at the end of the text as opposed to the beginning:

- 2- .....*bywm 13*  
 3- *b'dr šnt 476*  
 2- ..... on the 13<sup>th</sup> day  
 3- of *Adar* of the year 476<sup>131</sup>

It would appear that the dating formulae used in Old Syriac are in general related to the various patterns in Palmyrene, Nabataean, and Hatran concerning the position of dating formulae, numerical symbols, numbers written out and the different formulae.<sup>132</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Old Syriac inscriptions of the first three centuries A.D. demonstrate various kinds of numeral systems, using them mainly in dating formulae. Numbers are represented by numeral symbols or ciphers, numbers written out in full, and alphabetic symbols.

- By the first and second centuries A.D., in Old Syriac (like other Middle Aramaic dialects in Palmyra, Petra and Hatra), the single vertical stroke was used to represent the unit, extending to 9 by repetition of the strokes (though a sepa-

rate sign for 5 appears in one of the second century A.D. inscriptions). A special sign was used for 10 and also for 20, whereas all other numbers from 1 to 99 could be denoted by the repetition of the basic signs.

- Numbers written out in full appeared in Old Syriac inscriptions from the second century A.D. i.e. 187-88 at latest. This system was also employed in Palmyrene and Nabataean but not in Hatran.
- The early Syriac documents from the third century A.D. offer two examples of the alphabetic numerical system which reflect to a certain extent the fact that Syriac under Greek influence began to use the letters as number signs probably as early as the first half of the third century.

- For dating in the early Syriac inscriptions as well as in Palmyrene and Hatran, the Seleucid era is used in contrast to other systems of chronology, Parthian or Roman.
- The dating system has a variety of forms in the legal documents of the 240s. The dates relate to political, social and religious conditions in Edessa at that time. Apart from the use of the Seleucid era as a reference point, the kinds of the dates in these legal documents do not appear the Syriac inscriptions.

As far as the study of Syriac historiography is concerned, the Old Syriac inscriptions, including the Syriac legal documents of the third century of our era, form one of the sources for the study of Edessa's significant history.

NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> H.J.W. Drijvers, *Old Syriac (Edesseean) Inscriptions*, (Leiden: Brill, 1972), xi.

<sup>2</sup> H.W.F. Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon* (London: Sidwicks & Jackson, 1962) 445. *Idem*, *Everyday Life in Babylonia and Assyria* (London: Yale University Press, 1965), 72. C.B.F. Walker, "Cuneiform," in *Reading the Past Ancient Writing from Cuneiform to the Alphabet*, introduced by J.T. Hooker (British Museum: University of California, 1990), 17.

<sup>3</sup> J. F. Healey, *The Early Alphabet* (London: British Museum Press, 1990), 60.

<sup>4</sup> H. W. F. Saggs, *Civilization Before Greece and Rome* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 222-23; J. Oates, *Babylon* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1979), 15.

<sup>5</sup> A. Robinson, *The Story of Writing* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), 62.

<sup>6</sup> Saggs 1989, 222.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 223 – 24.

<sup>8</sup> Saggs 1962, 445- 447.

<sup>9</sup> Saggs 1989, 223.

<sup>10</sup> Healey 1990, 60. On numerical symbols in Aramaic from the fifth century B. C., Nabataean, Palmyrene and Hatran, see G. Ifrah, *The Universal History of Numbers from Prehistory to the Invention of Computer*, translated by D. Bellos, E.F. Harding, S. Wood and I. Monk (New York: John Wiley & sons Inc. 2000), 227-30, Figs. 18.1–18.8.

<sup>11</sup> H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa & Osrhoene. Texts, Translations and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), As 55:1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Bs 1:1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, As 29:1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, As 36:1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, As 37:1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, As 55; Bs 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, As 29; A 36; As 37.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, As 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, As 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, As 36.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, As 29.

<sup>22</sup> J. B. Segal, "Some Syriac inscriptions of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.," *BSOAS* 16 (1954) 35; Drijvers and Healey 1999, As 37.

<sup>23</sup> C.B. Welles, R.O. Fink, and J. F. Gilliam, *The excavation at Dura-Europos. Final Report V Part I. The Parchments and Papyri* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1959), Pls. LXIX–LXXI.

<sup>24</sup> See note 10 above.

<sup>25</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, As 41.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, As 16.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, As 9.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Am 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, Am 9

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Am 7.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Am 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, P 2:1.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, P 3:2-3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, P 1: 2-3.

<sup>40</sup> S.P. Brock, "Some Notes on Dating Formulae in Middle Aramaic Inscriptions and in the Early Syriac Manuscripts" in *Intertestamental Essays in Honor of Jozef Tadeusz Milik*, ed. Z. J. Kapera (Crakow: Enigma Press, 1992), 256.

<sup>41</sup> G. Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria* (New York: The Norton Library, 1966), 226–27.

<sup>42</sup> S.P. Brock and D. Taylor, *The Hidden*

*Pearl: the Heirs of the Ancient Aramaic Heritage*, Vol. I (Rome: Transworld Film, 2001), 58, 121.

<sup>43</sup> J. Naven, *Early History of the Alphabet. An Introduction to West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 175-76; Drijvers and Healey, 210; Brock 2001, 28.

<sup>44</sup> D. Diringer, *The Alphabet, A Key to the History of Mankind*, Vol. I (London: Hutchinson, 1968), 358; Cook 1990, 264-65; Healey 1990, 60; Brock 2001, 32.

<sup>45</sup> B.F. Cook, "Greek Inscriptions," in *Reading the Past; Ancient Writing from Cuneiform to the Alphabet*, introduced by J.T. Hooker (British Museum/University of California Press, 1990), 267-68; Healey 1990, 60.

<sup>46</sup> Ifrah 2000, 220; B. H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 61-3.

<sup>47</sup> Healey 1990, 60.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 60; Brock 2001, 58.

<sup>49</sup> Healey 1990, 60.

<sup>50</sup> J. Teixidor, "Deux Documents Syriaques du III<sup>e</sup>me siècle après J.-C. provenant du moyen Euphrate," *CRAIBL* (1990) 146-66; Drijvers and Healey P2; P3; S.P. Brock, "Some New Syriac Documents from the Third Century AD," *Aram* 3 (1991) 259-267.

<sup>51</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, 237, 243.

<sup>52</sup> H.J.W. Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 1.

<sup>53</sup> A. Harrak, "The Ancient Name of Edessa," *JNES* 51 (1992) 209-14.

<sup>54</sup> J.B. Segal, *Edessa the Blessed City*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 9, 16; Drijvers 1980, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, As36:2.

<sup>56</sup> Segal 1970, 23.

<sup>57</sup> Drijvers 1980, 13; Drijvers and Healey 1999, 36-7.

<sup>58</sup> F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 B.C.-A.D. 337* (Cambridge/ London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 473; Drijvers and Healey 1999, 36.

<sup>59</sup> Drijvers and Healey, As 47, AS 49, AS 51, AS 52; Millar 1993, 475.

<sup>60</sup> Drijvers 1980, 130.

<sup>61</sup> Segal 1970, 22 - 3.

<sup>62</sup> S.K. Ross, *Roman Edessa* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 26.

<sup>63</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, As 55.

<sup>64</sup> Segal 1970, 23; Millar 1993, 458; Drijvers and Healey 1999, 36; Ross 2001, 24.

<sup>65</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, 195.

<sup>66</sup> Millar 2001, 459.

<sup>67</sup> Drijvers 1980, 128; Drijvers and Healey 1999, 195.

<sup>68</sup> Drijvers 1980, 189; J. F. Healey, *The Religion of the Nabataeans: a conspectus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 174.

<sup>69</sup> Drijvers 1980, 14.

<sup>70</sup> H.J.W. Drijvers, "Ein neuentdecktes edessenisches Grabmosaik," *Antik Welt* 12 (1981) 19.

<sup>71</sup> A.H. Al-Jadir, *A Comparative Study of the Script, Language and Proper Names of the Old Syriac Inscriptions* (University of Wales Ph.D. thesis, 1983), 217.

<sup>72</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, 37 and Am10 pl.55

<sup>73</sup> K.Dijkstra, *Life and loyalty. A Study in the Socio. Religious Culture of Syriac and Mesopotamia in the Graeco-Roman Period based on the Epigraphical Evidence* (Leiden: Brill 1995), 257-58; J.B. Segal "A note on Mosaic from Edessa," *Syria* 60 (1983) 107-10.

<sup>74</sup> Drijvers 1980, 14.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-5.

<sup>76</sup> Segal 1970, 14; Ross 2001, 59.

<sup>77</sup> Millar 1993, 153; Brock 2001, 154.

<sup>78</sup> Dijkstra 1995, 252.

<sup>79</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P2:3; Brock 1991, 265.

<sup>80</sup> Brock 2001, 154; *idem*, 1991, 265.

<sup>81</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P1.

<sup>82</sup> Brock 2001, 159.

<sup>83</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P2.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, P3.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Jadir 1983, 233-34; Ross 2001, 58.

<sup>86</sup> D.G.K Taylor, "An Annotated Index of Dated Palmyrene Aramaic Texts," *JSS* XLVI/2 (2001) 208; Brock 1992, 257, n.5.

<sup>87</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P1:3; P3:3.

<sup>88</sup> A.R. Bellinger and C.B. Welles, "A Third Century Contract of Sale from Edessa in Osrehoene," *Yale Classical Studies* 5 (1935) 142; Segal 1970, 9 n.1.

<sup>89</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P3: i.

<sup>90</sup> Millar 1993, 458.

<sup>91</sup> Segal 1970, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P2.

<sup>93</sup> Dijkstra 1995, 252; M. Gawlikowski, "The Last kings of Edessa," in *VII Symposium Syriacum 1996*, ed. R. Lavenant, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*, 256 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998), 426; Drijvers and Healey 1999, 39.

<sup>94</sup> Segal 1970, 19.

<sup>95</sup> Gawlikowski 1998, 428; Millar 1993, 151.

<sup>96</sup> Ross 2001, 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, As1

<sup>98</sup> Segal 1970, 14-5

<sup>99</sup> Millar 1993, 476.

<sup>100</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, 243.

<sup>101</sup> Millar 1993, 476.

<sup>102</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, 232.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, P1:4; P3:4.

<sup>104</sup> Cook 1990, 268.

<sup>105</sup> J. A. Goldstein, "The Syriac Bill of Sale from Dura-Europos," *JNES* 25 (1966) 9; Segal 1970, 15, 20; Millar 1993, 480.

<sup>106</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P1:5-6.

<sup>107</sup> Goldstein 1966, 8.

<sup>108</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P1:1-2 see also P2:1-2 and P3:1.

<sup>109</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P1:2

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, P3:2.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, P3:5-6.

<sup>112</sup> Cook 1990, 268-71.

<sup>113</sup> Brock 1992, 253-61, gives notes on the dating formulae in the main Middle Aramaic dialects i.e. Palmyrene, Nabataean, Hatran, and Old Syriac.

<sup>114</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, Am6.

<sup>115</sup> Brock 1992, 257.

<sup>116</sup> Drijvers and Healey 1999, P1.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, P2.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, P3.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, As 16.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, As 55.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, Bs2.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, As 36.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, As 9.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, Am8.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, Am9.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, Am7.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, As 37, though there is considerable difficulty about the reading of *byrh*.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, P1.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, P2.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, P3.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, As 29.

<sup>132</sup> Brock 1992, 253-61.

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## L'HÉRITAGE DE LA CHRONIQUE D'EUSÈBE DANS L'HISTORIOGRAPHIE SYRIAQUE



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**A** lors qu'elle constitua une innovation remarquable dans la manière d'écrire l'histoire, la chronique d'Eusèbe finit par disparaître en grec (même si elle était encore utilisée au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle par Georges le Syncelle)<sup>1</sup> et ne subsista que dans une traduction latine faite au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle par Jérôme et, au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle, une traduction arménienne réalisée en partie sur le grec et révisée sur le syriaque.<sup>2</sup> Elle ne fonda paradoxalement pas un genre nouveau car elle demeura unique, réalisant de manière parfaite mais sans doute trop adéquate et trop complexe le programme auquel elle répondait, sans que pour autant son influence en fût moindre. L'histoire troublée de cette transmission lacunaire du texte est le signe de cette irréductible originalité, difficilement adaptable et impossible à reproduire. La chronique eut d'ailleurs dans l'historiographie syro-occidentale une postérité toute particulière sans que subsistât aucune traduction indépendante, la plupart des chroniques lui empruntant du matériel. Seule la chronique d'Élie de Nisibe, côté oriental, utilise Eusèbe, mais elle appartient à la même tradition issue de modèles grecs que l'historiographie occidentale et se démarque de la branche orientale, fondée sur des biographies.<sup>3</sup>

C'est seulement de manière indirecte que l'on peut déceler les traces et influences sur la tradition syriaque de ce texte fondateur de l'historiographie chrétienne. Deux niveaux doivent être analysés: celui du contenu, puisque les chroniqueurs dépendent largement, parfois sans le savoir, de cette source pour l'histoire ancienne. Même pour l'histoire biblique, ils ne reprennent pas la Bible, mais empruntent les listes de succession d'Eusèbe et de ses successeurs. Ces emprunts ne sont cependant jamais des copies littérales. Les chroniqueurs excerptent leur source, effectuant des choix dans le matériel à leur disposition.<sup>4</sup> Ils conservent aussi parfois des éléments d'information qui ont disparu dans les traductions en d'autres langues. Au-delà du matériel historique, ils adaptent également la chronologie proposée par Eusèbe et corrigent ses calculs. Pour ce qui est de la transmission du format, aucune chronique —à l'exception, dans une certaine mesure, de la continuation réalisée par Jacques d'Édesse—, n'a adopté la forme si particulière de la chronique eusébiennne avec ses listes de règnes et ses canons chronologiques. Seule la Chronique de Michel le Syrien reprend les canons mais, telle du moins qu'elle nous est parvenue, elle les extrait du

texte, ce qui ne respecte pas le schéma initial.<sup>5</sup> Paradoxalement, il semble pourtant que le format de la chronique tel qu'il est parvenu en syriaque a eu une profonde influence sur le développement ultérieur des genres historiographiques syriaques.

### LES EMPRUNTS À LA "CHRONOGRAPHIE"

Les chroniqueurs syriaques ont utilisé l'ensemble de la chronique d'Eusèbe à la différence de Jérôme et ont donc emprunté à la première partie de la chronique, c'est-à-dire à la "chronographie" proprement dite, composée de courts récits de l'histoire de différents peuples et nations suivis de listes de règnes, les *series regum*, selon l'expression consacrée par l'usage.<sup>6</sup> Jacques d'Édesse est un témoin de ses listes puisque sa chronique—bien qu'elle nous soit parvenue sous une forme très abrégée—présente une liste de rois macédoniens (mais qui commence plus tôt que celle d'Eusèbe), une liste des Ptolémées et une des empereurs romains.<sup>7</sup> Un autre témoin de ces listes est la chronique d'Élie de Nisibe.<sup>8</sup> elle donne en parallèle les listes d'Eusèbe et celles de ses successeurs, Annianos et Andronicos. Elle utilise aussi d'autres sources: des listes chronologiques tirées de l'Ancien Testament dans la version de la Septante et dans la version hébraïque sont données d'après le "livre des canons de règne de Ptolémée". Il s'agit du *κανὼν βασιλείων*, selon le titre grec, le canon des règnes de Claude Ptolémée qui est cité aussi par Georges le Syncelle. La chronique donne ensuite une liste d'après la Démonstration XVIII d'Aphraate puis une autre d'après "Annianos l'Alexandrin", allant d'Adam au commencement de l'ère des

Grecs, c'est-à-dire de l'ère des Séleucides (312/311 av. l'è. c.). Annianos aurait achevé son travail de correction d'Eusèbe en 412. Il ne nous est connu que par Georges le Syncelle qui le présente comme étant un moine alexandrin, mais ses listes sont reprises par la tradition historiographique syriaque. Il reprend également celle du mystérieux Andronicos qui n'est connu que de la tradition syriaque. Élie est sans doute celui qui reprend ces listes de la manière la plus complète. La *Chronique de Zuqnin* reprend aussi les listes de règnes abrégées des dirigeants de l'Ancien Testament, des souverains achéménides et des Ptolémées.<sup>9</sup>

L'histoire ancienne se réduit pour l'essentiel dans les chroniques syriaques à ces successions dynastiques.<sup>10</sup> L'histoire de l'Égypte par exemple, lorsqu'elle apparaît, tient tout entière dans la succession de ses souverains. De manière intéressante, la liste des dynasties des Pharaons n'est pas placée dans la chronique d'Élie de manière chronologique avec les listes des chefs bibliques, mais géographiquement, à la suite de la liste des évêques d'Alexandrie,<sup>11</sup> montrant par là même qu'elle ne figurait qu'en annexe, l'essentiel étant l'histoire chrétienne du pays. Cette liste intègre la période de domination perse sur l'Égypte et s'étend jusqu'à Cléopâtre, la dernière souveraine. Elle répartit les souverains en dynasties numérotées. La succession des souverains égyptiens, présente chez Michel le Syrien, n'est reprise ni dans la *Chronique composite* ni dans la *Chronique de Zuqnin* qui empruntent pourtant l'une et l'autre à la Chronique d'Eusèbe. L'histoire de l'Égypte pharaonique n'a en tout cas pas d'autonomie dans l'historiographie chrétienne.<sup>12</sup> Elle n'est évoquée que par ses synchronismes avec l'histoire biblique: descente de Jacob



en Égypte, adoption de Moïse, relations des Pharaons avec les Hébreux. Michel le Syrien essaie d'identifier quel Pharaon noya les enfants hébreux, lequel poursuivit ces derniers jusqu'à la mer Rouge ou encore lequel voulut prendre à Abraham sa femme. La religion égyptienne n'est évoquée qu'une fois à propos d'Apis dont Michel le Syrien rapporte que certains l'appellent Serapis et qu'il fut le premier dieu à être invoqué par les Égyptiens. Michel a gardé la note éditoriale d'Eusèbe dans laquelle ce dernier disait tirer ses informations sur la XVII<sup>e</sup> dynastie de Flavius Josèphe<sup>13</sup> qui, lui-même, reprenait Zamaris et Manethon. Michel a donc conservé, très indirectement, le souvenir des *Aegyptiaka* de Manethon, par l'intermédiaire de Flavius Josèphe puis Eusèbe. L'autre nom qu'il évoque, Zamaris, lui est parvenu de manière tout aussi indirecte, mais il ne nous évoque plus rien aujourd'hui. Outre les rencontres avec l'histoire biblique, Michel le Syrien a gardé des mentions des relations des Égyptiens avec d'autres peuples, à propos de l'adoption de Cainan, Dieu de Babel, en Égypte, et des guerres avec les Assyriens.

L'histoire ancienne du Proche-Orient n'est pas mieux représentée: la liste des souverains assyriens est réduite dans la *Chronique composite* à trois noms: Bel, Ninus et Semiramis. Une liste brève des rois de Babylone figure néanmoins dans cette chronique, mêlée à celle des rois chaldéens, jusqu'à Darius. Élie de Nisibe donne en revanche trois listes des rois d'Assyrie, d'après Eusèbe, Annianos et Andronicos, puis une liste des souverains mèdes. Michel est encore le seul à conserver le nom d'un auteur qui écrivit sur les Chaldéens: deux noms sont en réalité cités, l'un, Damaris, rappelle le Zamaris évoqué plus haut à pro-

pos de l'Égypte, l'autre est un certain Zamaridos, dont Michel dit plus loin qu'il est un mage, c'est-à-dire un perse, zoroastrien. Il ne s'agit là encore que d'une mention de deuxième main, d'après Eusèbe, de même que la mention de la chronique d'Aroud le Chaldéen. Michel a conservé aussi le nom d'une autre source d'Eusèbe, Asaph, qui aurait écrit un livre des généalogies des Chaldéens.

Les chroniques syriaques ne prétendent plus à l'universalité et montrent peu d'intérêt pour l'histoire des peuples qui ne sont pas en relation avec la Bible. Le projet d'Eusèbe qui était d'établir l'antériorité du peuple hébreu sur tous les autres est devenu une évidence pour l'historiographie chrétienne postérieure qui n'a plus rien à prouver sinon que les chrétiens sont bien les successeurs du peuple élu. Les chronologies concurrentes deviennent inutiles dès lors que l'entreprise apologétique est un succès. Les chroniques syriaques ont donc tendance à se concentrer sur la chronologie biblique, à l'exclusion de toute autre, exceptions faites de brefs aperçus ou des éléments en lien direct avec l'histoire biblique. La Chronique de Michel le Syrien est celle qui a le mieux préservé le matériel eusébien pour l'histoire ancienne, y compris les notes éditoriales de son modèle. Il est probable que l'auteur en avait un exemplaire (en traduction syriaque) sous les yeux, ce qui explique qu'il ait eu accès à l'ensemble du matériel. Le format de sa chronique témoigne de même, ainsi que nous allons le voir, de ce qu'un modèle complet était à sa disposition, qui respectait la mise en forme du texte. Sa fidélité au texte d'Eusèbe ne va pas cependant jusqu'à reprendre les choix de ce dernier concernant les débuts de la chronologie biblique.

## LA CHRONOLOGIE EUSÉBIENNE DEPUIS ABRAHAM

Le départ à Abraham du comput eusébien n'est en effet plus compris par ses successeurs. La *Chronique composite* présente ainsi une traduction de la préface d'Eusèbe à laquelle manque un passage significatif.<sup>14</sup> Eusèbe donne dans sa préface un calcul chronologique d'Adam au début de l'ère séleucide mais il ajoute qu'il ne se trouve ni chez les Grecs ni chez les barbares ni dans aucune autre nation d'histoire pour la période entre Adam et Abraham.<sup>15</sup> Ce passage n'apparaît pas dans la traduction syriaque. Eusèbe considérait comme une époque peu claire, voire mythique tout ce qui précède Abraham, mais ses réticences à l'égard des "temps immémoriaux" ne sont pas partagées par ses successeurs qui complètent ses canons pour la partie entre Adam et Abraham. Michel le Syrien mentionne bien qu'Eusèbe commença à établir ses canons chronologiques à partir d'Abraham, mais il dit les avoir complétés pour la période précédente.<sup>16</sup> La *Chronique composite* avant l'extrait des listes de règnes eusébiennes mentionne aussi qu'elles commençaient à Abraham et les complète par une autre source.

Les chroniques syriaques ne font que reprendre en cela les successeurs d'Eusèbe, Annianos et Andronicos qui donnent tous les deux une chronologie depuis Adam. Eusèbe lui-même donnait des synchronismes depuis Adam, montrant un tiraillement entre ses scrupules d'historien, soucieux de la fiabilité de la chronologie et son désir d'écrire une histoire vraiment universelle, c'est-à-dire commençant à la création, sa théologie de l'histoire supposant une continuité depuis Adam. Ses réticences d'historien ne sont visiblement plus comprises par ses succes-

seurs, et ce, dès Annianos, comme en témoigne la tradition syriaque.

La structure en deux parties de la chronique est aussi abandonnée: les listes de règnes qui faisaient partie de la "chronographie" proprement dite, c'est-à-dire de "l'écriture des temps" des dirigeants successifs des différents peuples, sont désormais intégrées dans le corps même des chroniques plus tardives. La *Chronique composite* qui ne présente pas une forme harmonisée mais juxtapose, comme un brouillon, différentes sources donne comme deux extraits différents les listes de règnes d'une part et la matière historique des "canons" d'autre part, tirée de la seconde partie de la Chronique d'Eusèbe. Entre les deux, elle donne le résumé de la préface d'Eusèbe. Cette présentation successive de la chronographie (listes de règnes), puis de la préface, enfin, des canons semble être le seul témoin en syriaque de la manière dont était construite la Chronique d'Eusèbe, avec la préface éditoriale entre les deux parties de la chronique ou plus exactement au début des canons. La traduction de Jérôme qui n'a pas conservé la partie chronographique présente aussi la préface comme introduction aux canons.

L'étude de la transmission de la partie chronographique de la Chronique d'Eusèbe montre donc deux choses: d'une part un rétrécissement des champs d'intérêt des chroniqueurs syriaques, puisque la chronologie des rois égyptiens, mais aussi mésopotamiens, disparaît à peu près, comme si ces histoires-là n'avaient plus d'intérêt. Seul Michel le Syrien reprend Eusèbe et va même jusqu'à le compléter par des anecdotes sur les Pharaons comme l'étymologie qu'il donne du nom Pharaon, à propos du 4<sup>e</sup> monarque d'Égypte. Les autres chroniqueurs ne retiennent de la chronologie égypt-

tienne que les bribes liées à l'histoire biblique qui est devenue centrale et à peu près exclusive. La deuxième chose que montre la transmission de la chronologie eusébiennne, c'est que, dès les successeurs immédiats d'Eusèbe, Annianos et Andronicos, le schéma d'une chronologie commençant de manière sûre seulement à Abraham était abandonné. La chronologie est réconciliée avec le projet eusébien d'écrire une histoire de l'humanité mortelle commençant avec Adam chassé du Paradis.<sup>17</sup>

#### LA TRANSMISSION DES CANONS ET SES CONSÉQUENCES

L'appauvrissement de la transmission qui touche la chronographie se vérifie aussi pour les canons constituant la deuxième partie de la chronique. La forme de ces canons eusébiens, avec les listes de dates—les canons proprement dits—complétées par les informations historiques—souvent appelées *spatium historicum*—en regard des dates a été abandonnée en raison de sa complexité, comme le montrent les différentes mises en page essayées par les versions latines ou la séparation du texte et des canons du dernier état de copie de la Chronique de Michel le Syrien. La copie d'un tel ouvrage requérait en effet une acribie toute particulière de la part des copistes, mais aussi infiniment de temps ainsi qu'une attention particulière au format qui ne pouvait cependant empêcher des glissements et des distorsions entre les colonnes de dates et le matériau historique et donc des erreurs chronologiques.

Mais l'abandon de cette forme s'explique aussi par le fait qu'elle était intrinsèquement liée à la philosophie, ou plutôt à la théologie de l'histoire développée par Eusèbe.<sup>18</sup> Le principe de ces canons avec les

colonnes de dates—jusqu'à neuf simultanément—, donnant la succession des différents royaumes, puis se réduisant à une seule avec l'empire romain, manifestait en effet que ce dernier était l'héritier politique des royaumes antérieurs qu'il domine progressivement des villes d'Italie aux royaumes semi-indépendants du Proche-Orient, mais aussi, en tant qu'empire chrétien, l'héritier spirituel et religieux du peuple hébreu dont il prend la place d'élu dans son histoire avec Dieu. La mise en parallèle des empires n'a désormais plus de sens puisqu'il n'en reste qu'un. C'est sans doute la raison pour laquelle Eusèbe ne donne pas de liste des rois perses, ce dont s'étonne W. Witakowski:<sup>19</sup> le système chronologique a atteint sa perfection avec l'avènement de l'empire romain chrétien, l'unification politique allant de pair avec l'unification religieuse du monothéisme chrétien.<sup>20</sup> L'historiographie syriaque a gardé la trace de l'explication donnée par Eusèbe de cette exclusion: le règne des Perses est présenté comme une royauté partielle et donc ne méritant pas d'entrer dans la chronique. L'empire romain est égalé à l'oikoumène tout entière. Cette vision du monde a pour conséquence d'exclure de l'histoire de l'Église la chrétienté de Perse qui est au-delà des frontières romaines de l'oikoumène.<sup>21</sup> Le format synchronique ne se justifie plus, dans la perspective même d'Eusèbe, à partir des *vicennalia* de Constantin qui manifestent cette unification politique et religieuse. Le schéma chronologique des canons de la chronique n'était plus susceptible de continuation, réduit qu'il était à une unique colonne. Eusèbe crée donc un nouveau genre historiographique pour rendre compte de cette période nouvelle des luttes contre païens et hérétiques de l'Église nouvelle d'abord persécutée puis intégrée

par l'empire romain. La manière très particulière dont fonctionnaient ces canons correspondait à une théologie de l'histoire exprimée dans toute l'œuvre d'Eusèbe mais sans doute restée en partie opaque à ses successeurs. La forme de la chronique eusébienne, qui avait trouvé son point d'aboutissement sous Constantin, n'était pas non plus susceptible d'être continuée comme telle parce que le contenu historique, plus abondant, devenait aussi plus important que les aspects chronologiques. D'une certaine manière, à partir de Constantin on assiste à la fin de l'entreprise de chronologie universelle (géographique) et au début d'une chronologie romaine et chrétienne qui fait désormais référence pour l'oikoumène.

La complexité matérielle de la copie d'un tel texte représentait par ailleurs un obstacle à la transmission de cette forme qui rendait difficile la gestion de la place des informations historiques vis-à-vis des canons de dates. Dès les traductions en arménien et en syriaque, au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle sans doute, peut-être même dès Annianos, le format des canons a évolué. La chronique de Jacques d'Édesse témoigne d'un format où les canons occupent le milieu du folio du manuscrit, avec l'histoire profane d'un côté et l'histoire ecclésiastique de l'autre. Ce format est sans doute à l'origine d'une grande mutation dans la forme de l'historiographie syriaque.

Le genre de l'histoire ecclésiastique qui prend le relais en mettant au second plan la chronologie (toujours fondée sur les règnes d'empereurs qui ordonnent la division en livres—un ou plusieurs règnes brefs constituant un livre) atteint au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle ses limites. C'est en effet à ce moment-là que sont produites les dernières histoires ecclésiasti-

ques, celle d'Évagre le scholastique en grec, celles de Jean d'Éphèse et du pseudo-Zacharie en syriaque. Deux raisons peuvent être avancées pour expliquer la fin de l'histoire ecclésiastique. La première est qu'il devient de plus en plus difficile de ne pas intégrer l'histoire civile, militaire notamment dans les histoires ecclésiastiques. Eusèbe s'était consciemment démarqué des historiens classicisants en refusant de raconter les guerres et en transportant les combats dans le domaine spirituel. Il voyait en effet dans l'avènement de la *Pax romana* sous Auguste et la venue du Christ sur terre le début d'une ère nouvelle de paix.<sup>22</sup> Ses successeurs ont plus de mal à éviter la présence des récits militaires.

Les genres de l'histoire classicisante, parallèlement, restent païens<sup>23</sup> et ne permettent pas aux auteurs chrétiens de rendre compte de la place grandissante des affaires de l'Église dans l'histoire impériale. Les exigences en matière de style—qui se doit d'être littéraire et classique—comme la place de la Tychè dans l'interprétation ne correspondent plus à l'histoire providentielle chrétienne. Ce genre s'éteint en grec et n'est guère représenté en syriaque que par l'histoire d'Édesse du pseudo-Josué. Et sans doute ce genre disparaît-il pour la même raison inverse, qu'il est difficile de ne pas intégrer les affaires de l'Église dans l'histoire profane alors que les affaires de l'Église et de l'État sont de plus en plus mêlées.

Le moment de floraison des histoires ecclésiastiques<sup>24</sup> se situe sous le règne de Théodose II, au moment justement où, sous l'impulsion de cet empereur, lui-même intéressé par l'histoire, est établi un code juridique nouveau qui régit les relations respectives entre l'Église et l'État. Plusieurs des auteurs d'histoires ecclésiastiques sont eux-

mêmes des scholastiques, c'est-à-dire ont suivi un cursus de droit qui débouchait ensuite sans distinction sur des fonctions importantes dans l'Église (évêques, patriarches) ou dans l'administration. Mais les tentations séparatistes du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle puis les persécutions du pouvoir chalcédonien à l'égard des opposants au concile, dont rendent compte les histoires du pseudo-Zacharie et de Jean d'Éphèse, rendent impossible de continuer le genre de l'histoire ecclésiastique. Celui-ci répondait en effet au projet d'écrire l'histoire de l'Église universelle (au sens à la fois géographique et temporel), incarnée dans l'empire romain. Mais les histoires ecclésiastiques d'histoire de l'Église sont devenues histoire des Églises: de l'Église arienne avec Philostorge, de l'Église monophysite naissante avec le pseudo-Zacharie et Jean d'Éphèse. Le projet de l'histoire ecclésiastique eusébienne qui était d'écrire l'histoire de l'Église victorieuse du paganisme et des hérésies et adossée à l'État romain se trouve mis à mal par les tendances séparatistes au sein de l'Église, durcies par les persécutions du pouvoir politique: il n'est plus possible à partir du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle d'écrire l'histoire de l'Église car elle n'est plus une. Quand se fait jour le sentiment que l'Église universelle ne fait plus un avec l'Église impériale chalcédonienne, il devient impossible de continuer à écrire des histoires ecclésiastiques, mais aussi de continuer, pour les opposants à Chalcédoine, à écrire en grec. Évagre le Scholastique, Jean d'Éphèse et le pseudo-Zacharie représentent les dernières tentatives pour écrire l'histoire ecclésiastique. Or c'est en syriaque que ces deux derniers donnent leur vision d'opposants à un régime et une Église chalcédoniens, de langue grecque.

Ce sont désormais des histoires régiona-

les de l'Église qui voient le jour qui prennent la forme de 'grandes chroniques' comme les chroniques syriaques ou la chronique de Jean de Nikiou<sup>25</sup> déjà évoquée, mais aussi d'une certaine manière celle de Malalas<sup>26</sup> et celles très différentes de Georges le Syncelle et de Théophane<sup>27</sup> qui constituent autant de réponses au besoin d'imaginer une manière nouvelle d'écrire l'histoire. Ces chroniques n'ont de commun avec les chroniques 'brèves' que leur composition ordonnée par la chronologie. Elles représentent le moyen d'intégrer histoire profane et histoire sacrée qui ne pouvaient plus être qu'artificiellement représentées par des genres séparés.<sup>28</sup> Elles empruntent plus ou moins selon le génie de chaque auteur au genre de l'histoire ecclésiastique ou de la chronique eusébienne, dans une liberté formelle que ne permettaient pas les genres antérieurs, tant du point de vue du style (souvent jugé "populaire" en grec) que du format (la chronique de Malalas comme celle de Michel le Syrien reprennent en partie de l'histoire ecclésiastique la division en livres organisés selon les règnes impériaux).<sup>29</sup>

En syriaque, la réponse à ces apories des genres historiographiques reçoit une forme particulière qui fait l'originalité et la relative homogénéité de cette tradition. La spécificité du format de ces grandes chroniques est la distinction introduite entre histoire profane et ecclésiastique, entendue désormais non plus dans le sens d'histoire de l'Église, mais d'histoire des affaires ecclésiastiques en regard de l'histoire civile. Ce que dit Michel le Syrien de la chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré, aujourd'hui perdue, sinon par des citations indirectes, laisse penser que celle-ci se présentait déjà en deux parties, profane et ecclésiastique. La *Chronique de 1234*

était aussi divisée en deux livres d'histoire profane et ecclésiastique dont un seul nous est parvenu.<sup>30</sup> La Chronique de Barhébraeus<sup>31</sup> enfin se présente aussi en deux parties. Il est probable que le format hérité de la chronique d'Eusèbe dont témoignent certains manuscrits latins, mais aussi, en syriaque, la chronique de Jacques d'Édesse, où l'histoire profane et l'histoire ecclésiastique sont réparties de part et d'autre des canons, a joué un rôle déterminant dans la création du genre particulier des grandes chroniques syriaques occidentales, qui n'a pas d'équivalent ailleurs. Si l'hypothèse de D. Weltecke concernant la présentation de la chronique de Michel le Syrien est vraie, ce serait un argument supplémentaire qui confirmerait cette interprétation du développement des grandes chroniques syriaques. La Chronique de Michel le Syrien qui se présente dans les manuscrits qui nous sont parvenus sous la forme de trois colonnes contenant respectivement l'histoire profane, l'histoire ecclésiastique et des *varia* serait une simplification due à un copiste d'un format originel où les canons de dates étaient intégrés au milieu du texte qu'ils séparaient de fait en histoire profane et ecclésiastique, comme dans le cas de la chronique de Jacques.<sup>32</sup> La difficulté déjà évoquée à copier de manière synchronique les tableaux de dates et la matière narrative, qui explique la quasi-disparition du modèle de la chronique eusébiennne, aurait poussé le copiste à sortir les tableaux, en gardant cependant le texte sous forme de colonnes, mais en faisant perdre ainsi aux canons leur sens et en les rendant impossibles à utiliser. Les autres chroniques ont abandonné complètement les canons chronologiques pour adopter une succession des entrées de dates qui permettait de gérer la masse narrative, qui

pouvait aller de quelques lignes à plusieurs pages.

Le maintien de la division entre histoire ecclésiastique et profane peut surprendre dans la mesure où les deux se trouvaient étroitement imbriquées dans l'empire chrétien. Les chroniques grecques manifestent l'abandon de cette séparation artificielle qui avait justifié justement la création du genre de la chronique pour pallier l'impossibilité de faire entrer l'histoire civile et militaire dans les histoires ecclésiastiques. Ce genre de la grande chronique permettait de réconcilier les deux aspects, on peut donc se demander ce qui a justifié le maintien de la séparation dans les chroniques syriaques. La réponse est sans doute à chercher dans la particularité de la situation politique des provinces et des Églises orientales. L'Église jacobite, miaphysite, n'était plus liée à l'État byzantin qui avait tenté en vain de l'éradiquer, ce qui explique la séparation entre histoire ecclésiastique et politique. Il n'existait plus de lien intrinsèque entre l'Église et l'empire chrétien. Avec le passage sous la domination d'un empire arabe, musulman de surcroît, les deux histoires se trouvaient plus encore séparées. L'histoire de l'Église jacobite n'avait plus partie liée avec l'histoire politique et militaire des pouvoirs byzantins et arabes. Si les chroniques syriaques sont universelles d'un point de vue historique parce qu'elles placent leur début à la Création, elles ne le sont plus géographiquement, leur centre d'intérêt restant très localisé: le patriarche Denys de Tell Mahré manifeste un intérêt pour l'Égypte dans l'exacte mesure où elle concerne l'histoire de son Église. Que l'Église ne soit plus appuyée sur le pouvoir politique explique que les chroniqueurs syriaques—qui tous écrivent après la conquête—aient fait le choix de maintenir

une séparation, pourtant malaisée, entre histoire ecclésiastique et profane.

Contrairement à ce qui a pu être dit, la Chronique d'Eusèbe n'était pas facile à continuer telle qu'elle. Elle a été d'ailleurs profondément remaniée par les chroniqueurs postérieurs qui lui ont ajouté une chronologie pré-abrahamique, une datation continue en années d'Abraham, ont corrigé de trois ans son comput et ont largement abandonné ses listes de règne, son intérêt pour les histoires non bibliques mais aussi ses canons chronologiques. Toutes les chroniques syriaques commençant à la Création lui sont néanmoins redevables de l'essentiel de leur information sur l'histoire ancienne, biblique ou non. La Chronique de Michel le Syrien fait

figure d'exception par l'ampleur de ses emprunts, aussi bien en ce qui concerne le contenu que la forme, ce qui s'explique sans doute par l'accès direct qu'aurait eu son auteur à un exemplaire traduit en syriaque, mais de la chronique fidèle à l'original. En dépit du fait que les chroniques syriaques ont excerpté à leur gré ce texte, n'en retenant que ce qui les intéressait dans le contenu et rejetant la complexité de son format, la chronique a sans doute eu une influence inattendue par le modèle qu'elle offrait d'une séparation entre histoire profane et sacrée. Il est probable qu'elle est à l'origine du format particulier des grandes chroniques syriaques qui sont une réponse à la nécessité d'écrire l'histoire d'une Église désormais indépendante du pouvoir politique.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Georges le Syncelle, *Eclogae Chronographiae*, éd. A.A. Mosshammer (Leipzig, B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> *Eusebius Werke. Fünfter Band. Die Chronik aus der armenischen übersetzt*, éd. Josef Karst, GCS 20 (Berlin, 1911); *Eusebius Werke. Siebenter Band. Die Chronik des Hieronymus. Hieronymi chronicon*, éd. Rudolf Helm, GCS 47 (Berlin, 1956). Pour une liste des chroniques syriaques reprenant celle d'Eusèbe, voir W. Witakowski, "The Chronicle of Eusebius: its Type and Continuation in Syriac Historiography," *ARAM* 11-12 (1999-2000) 419-437, spécialement 428.

<sup>3</sup> M. Debié, "Vies et histoire: l'originalité de la tradition syro-orientale," *IX<sup>e</sup> Symposium Syriacum, 20-22 septembre 2004, Dialogue des cultures* (Liban, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Plusieurs essais ont été faits pour extraire des chroniques syriaques le matériel eusébien: *Eusebii Canonum Epitome ex Dionysii Telmaharensis Chronico Petita*, éd. C. Siegfried et H. Gelzer (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1884). *Epitome Syria ex Eusebi Chroniconum Canonum Libro Deprompta*, p. 203-227 in *Eusebi Chroniconum Canonum quae Supersunt*, éd. A. Schoene (Berlin, 1866).

<sup>5</sup> D. Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten" von Mōr Michael dem Grossen (1126-1199)*, CSCO 594/Subs. 110 (Louvain: Peeters, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Pour une description du format de la chronique tel qu'il a été transmis en latin et en arménien, voir A.A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> "Chronicon Jacobi Edesseni," éd. E.W. Brooks, 231-330, trad. 197-258. in *Chronica minora*, CSCO III, t. 4(3) (Paris: E. Typographeo Republicae, 1903).

<sup>8</sup> *Eliae Metropolitae Nisibeni opus chronologicum* I, CSCO 62/Syr. 21, éd. J.-B. Chabot (Leipzig, 1949) = ser. III, t. 7 (Rome, 1910); CSCO 63/Syr. 23, trad. E.W. Brooks, (Louvain, 1954) = ser. III, t.7 (Paris, 1910); II CSCO 62/Syr. 22, éd.

J.-B. Chabot=ser. III, t.8 (Paris, 1909); CSCO 63/Syr. 24, trad. E.W. Brooks (Louvain, 1954).

<sup>9</sup> *Incerti auctoris chronicon anonymum Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum* I, éd. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 91/Syr. 43 (1927)/ tr. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 121/Syr. 66 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1949), 13-16/10-13.

<sup>10</sup> Pour une étude des traces laissées par l'histoire grecque antique, voir M. Debié, "Homère chronographe: la tradition grecque antique dans l'historiographie syriaque," in *Les Syriaques transmetteurs de civilisations: l'expérience du Bilâd El-Sham à l'époque omeyyade*, IX<sup>e</sup> colloque Patrimoine syriaque, Damas, 13-15 avril 2004 (Antélias, Liban, 2005), 67-94.

<sup>11</sup> Élie I, 22-23 T/12-13 V.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Michel Carrié a montré qu'il en allait de même dans la chronique égyptienne de Jean de Nikiou où n'apparaît pas de continuité entre l'Égypte ancienne et l'Égypte chrétienne romaine et byzantine, étant seuls parvenus quelques légendes et éléments déformés du passé pharaonique. J.-M. Carrié, "Jean de Nikiou et sa chronique: une écriture 'égyptienne' de l'histoire?," in *Événement, récit, histoire officielle: l'écriture de l'histoire dans les monarchies antiques, actes du colloque du Collège de France 2002*, Collège de France, chaire de civilisation pharaonique, Études d'égyptologie 3 (Paris, 2004), 155-171. A. Mosshammer dans son introduction à la traduction de la chronique de Georges le Syncelle note un même désintérêt de l'auteur pour les chronologies égyptiennes et babyloniennes dont il donne seulement des extraits (*Eclogae Chronographiae* lviii). Voir E. Jeffreys, "The Attitude of Byzantine Chroniclers Towards Ancient History," *Byzantion* 49 (1979) 29-83.

<sup>13</sup> Contra Ap. I, V

<sup>14</sup> *Chronicon miscellaneum ad annum Domini 724 pertinens*, éd. E.W. Brooks in *Chronica minora*, CSCO III, t. 4(2) (Paris: E. Typographeo Republicae, 1903), 91-93 /trad. J.-B. Chabot, 73-75.

<sup>15</sup> "In quibus nullus penitus nec Graeca, nec



Barbara et, ut loquar, in commune gentiles inveniuntur historia", ces mots manquent en syriaque. Cf. *Hieronimi chronicon* 15.

<sup>16</sup> W. Adler, *Time Immemorial: Archaic History and its Sources in Christian Chronography from Julius Africanus to George Syncellus*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 26 (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> La chronique de Georges le Syncelle réintroduit aussi l'histoire pré-abrahamique dans sa chronologie biblique.

<sup>18</sup> Jean Sirinelli, *Les Vues historiques d'Eusèbe de Césarée durant la période pré-nicéenne* (Dakar: Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines, 1961), notamment chapitre I, "Les intentions de la chronique."

<sup>19</sup> W. Witakowski, *The Chronicle of Eusebius*, 424 (cité n. 2).

<sup>20</sup> Voir G.F. Chesnut, *The first Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius*, *Théologie historique* 46 (Paris, 1977), 98 et ss. R.A. Markus, "Church History and the Early Church Historians," *Studies in Church History* 11 (1975) 1-17 offre un intéressant point de vue sur la question.

<sup>21</sup> Voir Sebastian Peter Brock, "Eusebius and Syriac Christianity," in *Eusebius, Christianity and Judaism*, éd. Harold W. Attridge, Hata Gohei, *Studia Post-Biblica* (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> Voir Pauline Allen, "War and Early Greek Church Historians," in *Papers Presented to the Tenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford in 1987*, *Studia Patristica* 19 (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 3-7.

<sup>23</sup> B. Croke, A.M. Emmett, "Historiography in Late Antiquity: an Overview," in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Sydney, Oxford, New York, Toronto, Paris, Frankfurt: Pergamon Press, 1983), 1-12.

<sup>24</sup> A. Momigliano, "De l'historiographie antique à l'historiographie médiévale," in *Problèmes d'historiographie ancienne et moderne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 120-144, spécialement 140-41.

<sup>25</sup> *Chronique de Jean de Nikiou*, tr. J. Zotenberg (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1883), traduction

de la version éthiopienne faite sur une version arabe remontant à un modèle copte.

<sup>26</sup> *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia: accedunt Chilmeadi Hodiique Annotationes et Ric. Bentleii Epistola ad Io. Millium*, éd. L. Dindorf, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn, 1831). *The Chronicle of John Malalas: A Translation*, E.M. and M.J. Jeffreys, R.D. Scott *et al.*, *Byzantina Australiensia* 4 (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986).

<sup>27</sup> *Theophanis chronographia*, éd. Carl de Boor (Leipzig: Teubner, 1883-1885; réimpr. Hildersheim, 1963). *Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284-813*, trad. C. Mango, R. Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>28</sup> B. Croke, A. Emmett, *Historiography*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Ces idées ont été discutées lors du séminaire sur le passage de l'historiographie antique à l'historiographie médiévale organisé en 2005 à Istanbul par l'Institut français d'études anatoliennes à l'invitation de Pierre Chuvin, en présence de D. Aigle, A. Borrut, J.-P. Mahe et G. Martinez-Gros.

<sup>30</sup> *Chronicon anonymum ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* I, éd. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 81/Syr. 36=CSCO ser. III, 14 T (Louvain: J. Gabalda, 1920); réimpression anastatique (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1953); tr. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 109/Syr. 56=CSCO 109, Syr. III, 14 V (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1937); réimpression anastatique (Louvain: Imprimerie Orientaliste, 1952); II, éd. Chabot, CSCO 82/Syr. 37 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1920); trad. A. Abouna, CSCO 354/Syr. 154 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1974).

<sup>31</sup> *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Syriacum*, éd. P. Bedjan (Paris, 1890), édition de l'histoire profane. *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l-Faraj* (2 vols.), éd. et trad. E.A.W. Budge (London: Oxford University Press, 1932).

<sup>32</sup> Sur la structure formelle de la chronique, voir D. Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung"*, 163-178: "Die Kolumnen sind eine Erfindung Michaels," 163 et les pages suivantes sur la place des canons.

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A CHRONOLOGICAL PROLEGOMENON TO RECONSTRUCTING  
EUSEBIUS' CHRONICI CANONES:  
THE EVIDENCE OF PS-DIONYSIUS (THE ZUQNIN CHRONICLE)



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Ten years ago, when I first conceived the idea of comparing Jerome's Latin translation to a reconstruction of Eusebius' original Greek version of his *Chronici canones* in order to determine what changes Jerome had made, it seemed to me a fairly easy task. Although the Greek original of Eusebius' chronicle no longer exists, we have Jerome, a reasonably complete Armenian translation, two Syriac epitomes, and many different Greek witnesses. There might be a few difficult decisions here and there involving the evidence of a single witness, but I felt confident that for the final section of the chronicle the result would be clear and straightforward.

Those who have seen the result, which was published in 1999,<sup>1</sup> will know that the result was neither clear nor straightforward. As my Greek text enters the fourth century, it erupts into a forest of brackets and question marks, indicating where I was uncertain of the wording or the chronology. This problem arose chiefly because it turned out that Jerome had altered the text as he translated it to a degree hitherto unsuspected and because other witnesses to Eusebius, who had

earlier been content with copying his text alone, began to use other sources once Constantine entered into the narrative. cursory examinations of earlier sections of the text demonstrated other obvious places where Jerome had altered Eusebius' chronology. For instance, he shifted Eusebius' date of the crucifixion by one year and moved the year of Cleopatra's death back four years, to correspond to the *ab urbe condita* date he had from his Latin source, all the while retaining Eusebius' regnal year chronology for the Alexandrians. As a result, Cleopatra dies in her eighteenth regnal year, yet her reign continues on without her down to year twenty-two. In spite of my difficulties in reconstructing the *Canones* in 1999, I still harbour a desire to attempt a reconstruction of Eusebius in Greek, in spite of the difficulties. I have undertaken some preliminary, mostly chronological studies in this direction, and I would like to take this opportunity to present some of my findings, though it must be recognized that my appearance at this conference is a sham since I can no longer even read names in Syriac, which was the limited extent of my knowledge back in 1999. Then I relied upon Sebastian

Brock, Marina Greatrex, and chiefly Witold Witakowski for Syriac help. Here I must admit that I have relied completely on the Latin translation of the Syriac and the German translation of the Armenian.

Although today we look upon Eusebius' two-part chronicle, the *Chronographia* and the *Chronici canones*, as a ground-breaking and novel work, the more I study his antecedents the more I am of the opinion that to contemporaries much of it would have seemed very familiar. The first part, the *Chronographia*, was no different in form from the apologetic chronologies of Julius Africanus, who in turn had developed his work from such earlier apologists as Theophilus and Clement; what set Eusebius apart from these earlier writers was that he made almost no original contribution, but simply copied everything from earlier authoritative texts. The secular content of the *Chronici canones* was similarly cribbed from earlier chronicles and epitomes, and to the contemporary reader would have seemed just as much a pastiche of earlier work as the first part.

On the other hand, a number of aspects of Eusebius' work would have seemed distinctly odd to an early-fourth-century reader. The first would have been the juxtaposition of two such disparate works, one in the form of Christian apologetic chronography, the second to all intents and purposes a traditional Olympiad chronicle. The second would have been the presence of Biblical history within this Olympiad chronicle, narrated alongside what for us is Greek mythology. And finally, perhaps most revolutionary of all, was the form of that Olympiad chronicle. Instead of the normal structure of paragraph blocks with the chronological data written in lemmata or rubrics above,

one was faced with descending strings of regnal years between which were suspended extremely brief comments concerning historical events. As far as we know, no Hellenistic or Roman Olympiad chronicle had attempted to record every single year over thousands of years in this way.

Eusebius thus lies at the confluence of two independent types of Greek chronography, secular Hellenistic olympiad chronicles and Hellenistic Jewish and later Christian apologetic chronography, a topic that I discuss briefly elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> and which I shall develop further in the preface to a book on Latin chronicles that I am now working on with Michael Kulikowski.

Yet, however revolutionary Eusebius' efforts were, the fact is that his influence on Greek historiography was severely limited. The *Chronographia* was the last apologetic chronological compilation; the *Canones* was the last olympiad chronicle. Diodorus, Panodorus, and Annianus produced chronicles that were in essence reworked versions of Eusebius, attempts to bring his decidedly anti-millenarian chronology more into line with the standard view that placed the birth of Christ around the year 5500 since the creation of the world, but we know little about their form or content. The *Chronicon Paschale*, composed in 630, was the last work to contain olympiad chronology, but it was fundamentally just translated, augmented, and extended Latin consularia, relying on the recounting of the annual consuls for its chronological backbone rather than the descending regnal years of kings or emperors. It would be another 200 years before Theophanes produced something similar, but even he collected all his chronological markers for emperors in Constantinople, kings of Persia, popes, and bishops into a

single rubric heading each year. He also relied heavily on narrative sources, which meant that much of his work abandoned the brief notes that Eusebius provided even for the most recent events. Most of the works now often called chronicles, such as the work of John Malalas, are not chronicles in the same sense as the *Chronici canones* at all, but epitomes, *breviaria*, and annalistic compendia. And not only was Eusebius' influence limited, it seems likely that an intact uncontaminated manuscript copy failed to survive even the fourth century. In this light we can only describe Eusebius' great experiment as a dismal failure in Greek.

In the Latin West, however, it was a different story, and it was here that Eusebius enjoyed his most lasting legacy. Through the translation made by Jerome in 380-381 the olympiad chronicle was brought to the West and spawned many continuators. Jerome's format was merged with the native consularia genre and the result was the birth of an historiographical form that was not only to survive the fall of the empire but to go on to become the standard historical genre of the Middle Ages as well.

In Syriac, we have a situation that lies half way between the Greek and the Latin *nachleben*. Eusebius had only one true follower (at least, that we know of), Jacob of Edessa, a chronicler who followed Eusebius' format exactly, without knowing that the Syriac translation that he was working from was a much altered reworking, not the original at all. He thought he was correcting Eusebius' errors but he was merely correcting those of some unknown Syriac editor. As in the West, Syriac translations inspired many later chronicles, and in two cases epitomes of Eusebius' work served as the basis for continuations, in the so-called

Chronicle of 724 and the chronicle of Ps-Dionysius or the Zuqnin Chronicle. Unfortunately, nothing is to be seen of Eusebius' chronological structure in these two works, completely eliminated in the former and reduced to date lemmata in the latter. As was the case in Greek, Syriac chronicles became more annalistic *breviaria* of history than true chronicles like Eusebius'. And by that I mean that the annual accounting of events was abandoned, narratives became longer and more involved, and the chronology was reduced to short headings or incorporated into the syntax of the historical entries. For Eusebius being able to see every single year on the page and to see the synchronism among those regnal years was just as important as the text.

One of the most important *crucis* in the long study of Eusebius' *Canones* has been the actual format of his text. Excerptors and epitomators give us no clue regarding this and so we must turn to the translators. Here we meet a problem because there are two completely different formats. The earliest is that of Jerome's translation. Here Olympiads and the individually marked decades since the birth of Abraham run down the left-hand side of each page or double-page spread, while the regnal years of the various kings, the so-called *fila regnorum*, are set up on the left and right side of each page or double page spread, where up to nine separate kingdoms have their regnal years recorded, until at the end the sole remaining kingdom, Rome, takes up its position on the left. This leaves an open space, the so-called *spatium historicum*, in the centre of the page for the inclusion of historical events.<sup>3</sup>

The second possibility is the structure of the Armenian translation and of the Syriac exemplar continued by Jacob of Edessa.

These run all the olympiads, years of Abraham (each one, not just by decade), and regnal years in that order down the centre of single pages and the spaces for the entries are added to the left and right of these multiple columns. There are no double-page spreads.<sup>4</sup> Because of the similarity of the formats and because of important linguistic indications in the Armenian translation that betray its Syriac origins, scholars have come to the conclusion that the existing Armenian translation of the Canones is probably the result of a collation between an earlier Armenian translation of a Greek text and a Syriac translation.<sup>5</sup>

It used to be argued and accepted that the Armenian and Syriac structure was that of Eusebius' original Greek text. But following the detailed analyses of J. K. Fotheringham and Rudolf Helm, who both spent many years working on their editions of Jerome's translation, it became clear that it was Jerome's format that most closely mirrored Eusebius' original.<sup>6</sup> Today no one believes that Eusebius' Greek Canones looked like the Armenian or Jacob of Edessa, and it is usually assumed that the transition from Eusebius' multiple *fila regnorum* to the central-column format took place in the earliest Syriac translation. However, Alden Mosshammer suggests that it occurred in an early Greek reworking of the Canones, perhaps produced in Alexandria at the beginning of the fifth century.<sup>7</sup>

Much further confusion and consternation has been caused by the fact that Jerome and the Armenian translation do not always agree on the dates assigned to the historical entries and often do not agree even on the order in which these entries are listed. After much comparison of the Latin and Armenian texts, Rudolf Helm came to the conclu-

sion that the differences between the two could be accounted for by assuming that Eusebius originally filled the single *spatium historicum* with up to three columns of text that Jerome and later translators read in a different order, depending on whether they read across or down the columns. Errors in the dating of individual entries and the omission of certain entries could be explained by the position of the entries in this type of format. This view was accepted and amplified by Mosshammer, the only other person to have studied this aspect of the Canones.<sup>8</sup> There is nothing inherently implausible with this interpretation, and there is existing evidence to support it: Jerome's translation includes a number of pages that preserve multiple columns (esp. 20, 23, 29, 31, 43, 46-51, 53, 57, 64, 65 [two columns] and 103 [three columns]), and in his preface he complains about the difficulty in figuring out the 'ordo legendi', the order in which one was supposed read the text (Helm 5.5). Furthermore, Greek manuscripts were often written in multiple columns, so it is not impossible that Eusebius would have written his text this way. The result is that both Helm and Mosshammer include sample pages of what Eusebius' manuscript pages would originally have looked like, though surprisingly both present pages written in minuscule, which was only invented 500 years after Eusebius' death.<sup>9</sup>

The major problem with this multiple-column solution as I see it is that if Eusebius assigned certain dates to certain events and if the translators were attempting to copy those dates, as well as the content of the text itself, it shouldn't make any difference whether a translator read down a column or across the columns: the dates are the dates. It would only make a difference if the trans-

lators didn't care where they stuck their entries: reading across three entries assigned to the same year and then writing them into three consecutive years for instance. But if that were the case, then it would not matter whether there were columns or not: the differences could be accounted for by copyists who did not care where they wrote their entries. The second problem is that there are also many discrepancies between Jerome and the Armenian translation in places where there are few entries, where there could never have been multiple columns to cause confusion. Now I do not doubt that Eusebius wrote some entries side by side, or in columns, or placed certain types of entries off to the side as a way of highlighting them (which Jerome then missed), but it seems to me that the theory of multiple columns cannot solve the problem of the serious discrepancies between Jerome and the Armenian translation.

To come to a definitive conclusion I subjected this problem to careful analysis and in order to provide a control against the dates found in Jerome and the Armenian translation I included in my analysis the chronicle of Ps-Dionysius, which begins with an epitome of Eusebius' *Canones*. What marks out the epitome of Ps-Dionysius from the other more well-known Syriac epitome in the *Chronicle of 724*, the only Syriac text that Helm considered in his edition of Jerome, is that it provides dates for almost all its excerpts from Eusebius, using years of Abraham. In this I am, in a sense, following von Gutschmid's 1886 comparison of the chronologies of these three texts, but he had different goals and used a different method of analysis.<sup>10</sup> He was also hampered by the fact that he had no reliable edition of any of the texts and for comparison used not a single

text of Jerome, but six different manuscripts.

My method was to compare the dates for every event that had a parallel in Jerome, Ps-Dionysius, and the Armenian translation. Only events dated in all three texts were considered. I also discounted any event in Ps-Dionysius that was not dated to a stated year or did not begin with the statement 'in the same year' or 'in this year'. Entries prefaced with statements such as 'at this time' were not considered since these entries almost always vary by ten or more years from the most closely cited date.

The first conclusion of this comparison was that Jerome, Ps-Dionysius, and the Armenian almost always agree in their chronology when the event is a royal death or accession that is described within the *fila regnorum* themselves. There are some instances of a lack of agreement but these can be explained by scribal errors or other obvious modifications. Since the *fila* are continuous strings of numbers that are only broken by the accession of a new king, this is what we would expect. Each event is pegged to a specific year within the string and cannot move as long as the translator or copyist did not change the actual chronology. As a result I have not included any of these events in my analysis; I have included only those entries that appear within the *spatium historicum* and do not relate to accessions, deaths, or other events that are pegged specifically to the *fila regnorum*. This exception unfortunately reduces the total number of entries for analysis to a meagre 210.

A comparison of these 210 dated events found that sometimes all three texts agreed with one another, while at other times all disagreed with one another. Sometimes two texts agreed but not the other. Nor was there a pattern with regard to the concentration of

the entries on a page; there could be agreement or disagreement regardless of whether the page was filled with entries or contained only a few scattered entries, and there was no pattern that suggested reading errors caused by multiple columns.

Of the 210 shared *spatium historicum* entries among Jerome, Ps-Dionysius, and the Armenian translation, only 30 entries, or 14.3%, are dated to the same year in all three texts (see Table 1A). Jerome agrees with Ps-Dionysius against the Armenian 43 times, which indicates that the Armenian is incorrect 20.5% of the time; Jerome agrees with the Armenian against Ps-Dionysius 40 times, which indicates that Ps-Dionysius is incorrect 19.0% of the time (about the same as the Armenian); and Ps-Dionysius agrees with the Armenian against Jerome 29 times, which means that Jerome is incorrect 13.8% of the time. Sixty-eight entries, or 32.4% of the total, have different dates in all three texts.

Now if we shift the criterion from an exact match of dates to one of allowing a one year difference either way among the three texts, so that, for instance, Jerome could assign an event to 1345 Abr., Ps-Dionysius to 1347, and the Armenian to 1346 (the assumed correct date being 1345), or Jerome and Ps-Dionysius to 1345 and the Armenian to 1346, the number of completely different dates drops from 68 to 14, or 6.7%, and the number of triple agreements rises from 30 to 122 (or 58.1%) (see Table 1B). Jerome agrees with Ps-Dionysius (i.e. the Armenian is incorrect by more than a single year) 19 times or 9% and with the Armenian (i.e. Ps-Dionysius is incorrect by more than a single year) 37 times or 17.6%, and Ps-Dionysius agrees with the Armenian (i.e. Jerome is incorrect by more than a single year) 18 times or 8.6%, which is statisti-

cally the same as the Armenian's error rate. The differences between A and B in the table show that while the mistakes that appear in Jerome and Armenian tend to be within a year, those in Ps-Dionysius tend to be larger than one year: the relaxation of the criterion produces a drop of only three entries for Ps-Dionysius, yet 24 for the Armenian and 11 for Jerome. The remaining level of error is much higher for Ps-Dionysius as well, about double that of the other two witnesses.

These patterns suggest something that no scholar has so far suggested and it has nothing to do with columns or reading up or down.

In a normal olympiad chronicle the page is graphically divided by the chronological notice that presents the olympiad, the archons, the consuls, or any other chronological system. The entry for that year then follows in a single block. No matter how the text is copied the chronology can never change. Although Eusebius' text was a great step forward with regard to its presentation of a great amount of information in a small space, especially the graphic inclusion of every single regnal year for over 2,300 years, the *spatium historicum* was not graphically divided in any way and there was nothing to tie any entry to any particular regnal year on the left or right other than its position on the page (and perhaps the impressions of the ruled horizontal lines used for writing). Since there was no way of anchoring the historical entries to the regnal years in a graphic manner, from the moment Eusebius' chronicle was first copied entries could start floating on the page, drifting up or down from one regnal year to another. This is particularly true on pages where the regnal years appear on every line of the text. Even the smallest slip of a single line could

cause the shift of a year. This became more of a problem on the double page spreads where the *spatium historicum* was quite wide and the entries quite short, and so the empty space between the edges of the written text and the regnal numbers was larger as well. As a result, every time the Greek original was copied every entry was subject to further potential shifting, up or down. This is probably what gave rise to one of the complications that Jerome mentioned regarding his Greek text of the Canones. He said that there were lines, or 'virgulae', all over the pages connecting entries (the 'res') to the regnal years (the 'numeri') (Helm 5.3-4). This obviously arose as different readers had compared one manuscript with another and used these lines to correct what they took to be entry creep in the manuscript that Jerome ended up using and its progenitors. The same phenomenon can be seen in some manuscripts of Jerome.

In addition, most entries extend from their own year, indicated by the location of the first line of the entry, down through one or more following regnal years, and scribes could easily and mistakenly treat several different consecutive entries, each supposed to begin opposite a specific regnal year, as if they were in fact one large block of text dated to the year opposite the first line, failing to notice where individual sentences began within the block. This is very common in Latin manuscripts of chronicles, where individual entries were jammed together into a single text block to save space. As a result the marginal regnal years lost the obvious connection with the text opposite and begin to drift up or down the margins, erroneously taking the text opposite with them. In Eusebius' text it was the just the opposite: the regnal years were fixed and it

was the text that shifted. Furthermore, scribes might not even have realized that Eusebius intended the first line of each entry to be opposite a specific number in the *fila regnorum*. For such a scribe, it may have been that as long as an entry in his copy was in the same general area it appeared in his exemplar he was happy. Even the great German scholar Eduard Schwartz denied that the *fila regnorum* were intended to be read in any more than a general fashion and refused to accept that Eusebius would have tied the entries to specific regnal years.<sup>11</sup> In addition, since it seems obvious that the *fila regnorum* were written out first and the entries added later, any scribe who failed to maintain the correct spacing of letters and words within an entry could end up with entries too long or too short. Any closely following entries would then be dated too late or too early, as scribes paid more attention to the relationship of the text blocks on the page to one another than to their relationship to the regnal years. Since there could be over thirty regnal years per page, the range for error was therefore enormous.

Jerome's complaint about the 'ordo legendi' is still valid: Eusebius no doubt wrote his entries in short lines or small text blocks all over the page. For one used to reading a text in neat lines within neat columns Eusebius' apparently haphazard text placement, combined with the fact that one had to read across double-page spreads for synchronisms and down to advance through time, must have confused all new readers of the text as much as it confused Jerome.

Next in the process we must consider exactly the same sort of problems with regard to the translations themselves. Helm has a special apparatus to show opposite which regnal year each entry appears in the



many different Latin manuscripts. The same problem must have occurred with the Greek, Armenian, and Syriac manuscripts as well.

There is a further problem with the Armenian translation in that it has two locations for the entries, one on either side of the column of regnal years. As a result entries could independently move up or down, thus seeming to alter the sequence of entries in relation to Jerome as well as their absolute chronology. It is also clear from my study in 1999 that crowding on one side or the other has shifted entries further down than they should be and in many cases caused the loss of entries that just didn't fit the narrow confines left for them.<sup>12</sup> In this study I have also found that in some cases dense text blocks forced the upper entries into empty spaces above, thus ante-dating them.

In view of these problems, it is really a testament to the care of the Greek scribes, the translators, and the later copyists that almost half of the surviving entries only vary from one another by a year, hardly a centimeter or two in the original Greek manuscripts.

This study therefore demonstrates, first, that multiple columns are not necessary to explain the chronological differences in the translations. Second, it shows that there is no 'parallel corruption' shared between the Armenian and Ps-Dionysius, as one might expect since both derived from the same later redaction of the Canones. It is Jerome and the Armenian that share the same low level of error and Ps-Dionysius that is the odd one out. Whatever the nature of the common source of the Armenian and Ps-Dionysius, its chronology was not modified from that of Eusebius' original in any way that is now evident. Third, it also suggests the solution to another larger problem.

It has always been assumed that the disappearance of Eusebius' original Greek text was due to Eusebius' anti-eschatological chronology, which set it apart from all other world chronologies of the time and made it the target of correction many times over the years. But that chronology could easily have been altered in a few places by simply changing the calculation figures or adding a supplement to account for the years between creation and Abraham, years omitted by Eusebius. His chronicle would not have to have been abandoned completely. This study, on the other hand, suggests another more obvious reason: it was just too complicated to be read easily and too complex a document to be copied accurately and economically. For later readers it made no sense to take up the space and the copying expense of recording regnal years in which nothing happened. As a result from a very early date I suspect that the early 'correctors' of Eusebius, like Diodorus, Annianus, and Panodorus, were not just changing his chronology from the creation of the world, as we know they did, but were also simplifying his *fila regnorum* into a more easily interpreted, more easily and cheaply copied, and less corruptible format.

And so Mosshammer is almost certainly right, that the structure we see in the Syriac and Armenian witnesses goes back to an early Greek recension of the Canones and was not a Syriac innovation.

But this takes us back to my original reason for undertaking this study. Given this obvious lack of agreement, how *can* one reconstruct Eusebius' Greek original? Obviously, it would be best to accept the date wherever two witnesses agree against the third, allowing for an error of one year. But that only gives us a date for 196 entries, out of hundreds and hundreds. And many puz-

zling and unusual problems still remain.

For instance, both Ps-Dionysius (1416 Abr.) and Syncellus (286.8-9, Mosshammer) record the foundation of Perinthus at the same time as Camerina, listing Camerina first. Perinthus therefore certainly appeared in Eusebius even though it does not appear in the Armenian translation (Camerina appears in 1417 Abr.). All manuscripts of Jerome mention the foundation of Camerina in the equivalent of 601 BC (1416 Abr.) but, like the Armenian, most do not mention the foundation of Perinthus. However, four do. One puts it in the equivalent of 602 BC (1415 Abr.), which is where Helm puts it. But the three others put it in 601 BC, one including it within the same entry and after Camerina. The only conclusion can be that Jerome originally missed the entry but someone later compared his translation to a Greek version and added the entry in the margin. Later copyists put it in slightly different places. That it is missing in Jerome and the Armenian can only be a coincidence. There is other clear evidence of Jerome's text having been corrected against the Greek as well, though not in these manuscripts.<sup>13</sup>

Another problem occurs in 735 BC (1282 Abr.) where both Ps-Dionysius and the Armenian translation locate the foundations of Syracuse and Catana in Sicily in a single entry. Jerome not only separates the entries, repeating the shared wording, but dates the first to 738 BC and the second to 736 BC, three years and one year earlier than the other two translations. The next entry, the capture of Messene by the Spartans, is dated to 735 BC (1282 Abr.) in all three texts. Unfortunately there is no Greek witness to help sort out the problem. Has Jerome spread these three entries out, moving them up into the empty space above, or did the Greek editor of the version behind Ps-Dionysius and the Armenian compress them?

So three steps ahead and two back. The result is that no accurate reconstruction of the Canones can ever be made, but if one accepts the evidence of Ps-Dionysius then a closer approximation can be produced. Whether that reconstruction ever will be made I cannot say, but until then it is certain that we can no longer blindly rely on just Jerome or the Armenian. The Syriac evidence must be given its proper due.

	A.		B.	
	Exact Match		One Year Allowance	
Three Agreements	30	14.3%	122	58.1%
Jerome = Ps-Dionysius (=Armenian Incorrect)	43	20.5%	19	9.0%
Jerome = Armenian (=Ps-Dionysius Incorrect)	40	19.0%	37	17.6%
Ps-Dionysius = Armenian (=Jerome Incorrect)	29	13.8%	18	8.6%
No Agreement	68	32.4%	14	6.7%
Total	210	100.0%	210	100.0%

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Studies in Eusebian and Post-Eusebian Chronography*, *Historia Einzelschrift* 135 (Stuttgart, 1999), 60-64.

<sup>2</sup> "Apologetic and Chronography: The Antecedents of Julius Africanus," in *Iulius Africanus und die christliche Weltchronistik*, *Texte und Untersuchungen zur altchristlichen Literatur*, ed. Martin Walraff (Berlin, 2006), 6-30.

<sup>3</sup> See John Knight Fotheringham (ed.), *Eusebii Pamphili Chronici Canones, Latine uertit, adauxit, ad sua tempora produxit S. Eusebius Hieronymus* (London, 1923); Rudolf Helm (ed.), *Die Chronik des Hieronymus. Hieronymi Chronicon*<sup>3</sup>, GCS, Eusebius Werke 7 (Berlin, 1984 [1956]), as well as my general introduction, "Jerome Explained: An Introduction to his *Chronicle* and a Guide to its Use," *Ancient History Bulletin* 16 (2002) 1-32.

<sup>4</sup> See Josef Karst (ed. and trans.), *Die Chronik aus dem Armenischen Übersetzt mit textkritischem Commentar*, GCS 20, Eusebius Werke 5 (Leipzig, 1911) and E. W. Brooks (ed. and trans.), *Chronicon Iacobi Edesseni*, in *Chron. min.* 3, CSCO 6, SS 6: SS 3.4, versio (Louvain, 1955 [1907]), 199-255; Syriac text: *Chronicon Iacobi Edesseni*, in *Chron. min.* 3, CSCO 5, SS 5: SS 3.4, textus (Louvain, 1955 [1905]), 261-327.

<sup>5</sup> See H. Petermann's introduction to his Armenian translation in *Eusebi Chroniconum*

*canonum quae supersunt*, vol. 2, ed. Alfred Schoene (Berlin, 1866), LIII-LV; Karst, *Die Chronik*, XXXVIII-LIV, and Alden A. Mosshammer, *The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition* (Lewisburg/London, 1979), 50, 59-60, 73-5.

<sup>6</sup> See the analysis of Mosshammer, *The Chronicle*, 38-73.

<sup>7</sup> Mosshammer, *The Chronicle*, 75-9, 80-1.

<sup>8</sup> Rudolf Helm, *Eusebius' Chronik und ihre Tabellenform*, *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Jahrg. 1922. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, nr. 4* (Berlin, 1924), 1-56; Helm, *Die Chronik*, XXVII-XXXVIII; Mosshammer, *The Chronicle*, 62-4, 81, 82-3.

<sup>9</sup> Helm, *Die Chronik*, XXX-XXXI and XXXVII, and Mosshammer, *The Chronicle*, 27.

<sup>10</sup> Alfred von Gutschmid, "Untersuchungen über die Epitome der Eusebischen Canones," in *Kleine Schriften von Alfred von Gutschmid*, vol. 1, ed. Franz Rühl (Leipzig, 1889), 483-529, at 492-524.

<sup>11</sup> See Mosshammer, *The Chronicle*, 55.

<sup>12</sup> See the commentary to the work cited in n. 1, pages 47-58, and my "The Dates and Editions of Eusebius' *Chronici canones* and *Historia ecclesiastica*," *JTS* NS 48 (1997) 473 n. 7.

<sup>13</sup> See Mosshammer, *The Chronicle*, 52-3 for two famous examples.

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PSEUDO-ZACHARIAH OF MYTILENE:  
THE CONTEXT AND NATURE OF HIS WORK



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The 560's A.D. were a time of optimism in the eastern Roman empire. To be sure, the twilight years of Justinian's reign were marked by serious disturbances at Constantinople and increasing financial problems, but across the empire, from Italy, Spain and North Africa to Egypt and the eastern provinces, the situation was calm.<sup>1</sup> For those who lived close to the eastern frontier, the fifty-year peace treaty signed in 562 was of paramount importance, bringing to an end a war that had begun in 540.<sup>2</sup> Although actual hostilities had tended to peter out towards the end of the 550's, the continuing danger of Persian attacks must have been a constant strain on the local populations, as indeed is evidenced by the "abominable and hideous affliction" that struck the city of Amida in 559/60. In this year, according to Pseudo-Dionysius' chronicle, which here derives from John of Ephesus, the citizens of Amida were struck by a sort of mass-panic, believing that the Persian king was on the point of attacking their city; other frontier cities, such as Edessa and Constantia, were prey to similar rumours.<sup>3</sup> There can be no doubt as to the impact of the conclusion of the treaty: as an inscription erected at Hierapolis grate-

fully attested in the wake of the ill-fated Eternal Peace of 532, "The cross extinguished the terrible roarings of war and the measureless hardships of life, as if (they were) a rough wave or a fire."<sup>4</sup>

Not only was the Persian foe at peace, but promising developments were afoot within the neighbouring kingdom—at any rate, if one were an opponent of the Council of Chalcedon. For although there had been intermittent persecutions of Christians by king Khusro in the past, notably after the outbreak of war in 540, their lot had steadily improved over the following years.<sup>5</sup> Several aspects may be noted here. First, the clause appended to the treaty of 562 that guaranteed the freedom of worship of Christians in Persia.<sup>6</sup> Second, the consecration of Ahudemme as bishop of Beth 'Arabaye in 559 by Jacob Baradaeus. The energetic Ahudemme did much to further the progress of Monophysitism among the Arabs on the Persian side of the frontier, apparently with the assent of Khusro, at least until he overstepped the mark and baptised one of the king's sons.<sup>7</sup> Third, the attitude of the king himself. Here it is appropriate to quote from Pseudo-Zachariah (XII.7):<sup>8</sup>

For one week of years the king of Persia also, as those who know relate, has separated himself from the eating of things strangled and blood, and from the flesh of unclean beasts and birds, from the time when Tribonian the *archiatros* came down to him, who was taken captive at that time, and from our serene king came Birowi, a perfect man, and after him Kashowi, and now Gabriel, a Christian of Nisibis. From that time he has understood his food, and his food is not polluted (?) according to the former practice, but rather it is blessed, and then he eats. And Joseph also, the Catholic of the Christians, is high in his confidence, and is closely attached to him, because he is a physician, and he sits before him on the first seat after the chief of the Magians, and whatever he asks of him he receives.

Out of kindness towards the captives and the holy men he has now by the advice of the Christian physicians attached to him made a hospital (*xenodocheion*), a thing not previously known, and has given 100 mules and 50 camels laden with goods (?) from the royal stores, and 12 physicians, and whatever is required is given; and in the king's retinue (?)...

(tr. Hamilton and Brooks, 217.14-218.5/146-7)

These are the closing words of Pseudo-Zachariah's work as it has come down to us; the section then breaks off, and it is uncertain how much more of Book XII there was. Although the section is attended by considerable chronological uncertainty—the date of composition must be later than 552 and before 567, the dates of Joseph's catholicate—its remarkable optimism is not in doubt.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear that the author believed that he was witnessing significant developments, including steps that might even lead to the conversion of the Persian king. Nor was he alone in holding out such hopes: John of Ephesus refers to the creation of a *catholicos* for the Monophysites in Persia, following a debate at the Persian court, while Evagrius notes reports that the king had even been baptised.<sup>10</sup> The role of the Christian Sebokht, Khusro's chief emissary to the Romans in 572, further testifies to the prominence of Christians at court.<sup>11</sup>

It is in this context that the work of Pseudo-Zachariah must be situated. The accession of Justin II was followed by a period of tremendous optimism and dynamism, witnessed by an outpouring of literary works, such as the *Cycle* of epigrams edited by Agathias, the *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* of Corippus and others.<sup>12</sup> The opening years of Justin's reign were marked by imperial attempts to improve the empire's finances and to resolve the festering doctrinal divisions that still plagued the empire.<sup>13</sup> With hindsight, of course, it is clear that all these efforts were doomed to failure; the renewal of war in 572 worsened the situation still further. But to a writer in the late 560s or the very start of the 570s, prospects for stability, prosperity, and indeed for the growth of the Monophysite church must have appeared good. It is surely no coincidence that both John of Ephesus and Pseudo-Zachariah terminated their works at this time, thus ending on a high note. Only when divisions among the Monophysites increased and persecution at the hands of Chalcedonians was renewed did John feel the need to produce a continuation of his work.<sup>14</sup>

So much for the context in which Pseudo-Zachariah's work appeared. It re-

mains to consider Pseudo-Zachariah himself and the nature of the work he produced. First, the anonymous compiler himself, who became known as Zachariah in the later Syriac tradition because of his extensive use of the *Ecclesiastical History* of Zachariah, bishop of Mytilene, in Books III to VI.<sup>15</sup> Much has been written on this Zachariah, author of other works, such as a *Life of Severus*, and a convert to Chalcedonianism during the reign of Justinian. Indeed, the tendency has been for Zachariah to eclipse Pseudo-Zachariah in discussions of the latter's work.<sup>16</sup> It is preferable therefore to concentrate on Pseudo-Zachariah, i.e. the author of the entire work in twelve Books. Since we know that Books III to VI were drawn mainly, if not entirely, from Zachariah, we propose to focus on the last six Books; the first two will be considered further below. Book VII concerns the reign of Anastasius and has a notably Amidene flavour:<sup>17</sup> it opens with an anecdote about a certain John *scholasticus*, brother of Dith, who was in Constantinople on a mission from Amida before the accession of Anastasius. He had visions of the future emperor's elevation, about which he informed him, but when, after assuming the throne, Anastasius wished to reward him, he was content with a document he had already received from Zeno.<sup>18</sup> The narrative of the war of 502-5 is detailed and replete with circumstantial detail, especially the siege of Amida.<sup>19</sup> In particular, there is the story of the ambush of the Persian general Glon, or Glonas, by a certain Gadono, whom Pseudo-Zachariah (or his source) claims to know personally (VII.5). A detailed account of the downfall of the patriarch Macedonius is quoted (VII.8), drawn from a narrative written by a presbyter Simeon; some have suggested that

he was from Amida, but the evidence is insufficient to be sure.<sup>20</sup> The list of the leading bishops at the end of the Book (VII.15) is also of interest: pope Hormisdas is there said to be still alive, which therefore implies that the statement must have been made before 6 August 523 or a short time thereafter, to allow time for the news to circulate.

It is highly improbable that the author of VII can be identified with the compiler of 569. Someone who knew Gadono in 503 would have to have been at least fifteen at that time; they would therefore have been about eighty years old by 569.<sup>21</sup> It follows that Pseudo-Zachariah was drawing on an early sixth-century source for this Book, or indeed several. Now in VIII, Pseudo-Zachariah offers a detailed account of successive bishops of Amida (VIII.5). Among these was a certain Māre, who became bishop during the reign of Justin but was soon banished to Petra, and subsequently to Alexandria.

And he stayed there (in Alexandria) for a time, and formed a library there containing many admirable books; and in them there is abundance of great profit for those who love instruction, the discerning and the studious. These were transferred to the treasury of the Church of Amida after the man's death.

(tr. Hamilton and Brooks, 79.24-8/54)

It seems plausible to suppose that Māre's library furnished Pseudo-Zachariah with some of his sources, including perhaps a version of Zachariah's *Ecclesiastical History*.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, if Māre put together his library in Alexandria, it is not likely to have contained such detailed information on Amida itself. We must therefore

rather suppose that Pseudo-Zachariah had access to other local accounts in addition to Māre's library.

Book VIII, devoted to the reign of Justin, shows little sign, apart from the digression on Amidene bishops, of a particular connection with the city. It does however offer a detailed report of negotiations on the Romano-Persian frontier in 524/5 (VIII.5) and of a raid by the Lakhmid chief al-Mundhir. About this last event, Pseudo-Zachariah (or his source) relates that he obtained the information from Dādā the anchorite, who witnessed it himself. Given that the razzia struck the vicinity of Antioch and Apamea, this implies contact with people at some distance from Amida. Book IX covers approximately the first ten years of Justinian's reign. It offers a wealth of detail on events throughout the eastern provinces (1-8), as well as a series of letters exchanged between Severus and Julian of Halicarnassus (9-13) and others between the leading Monophysite patriarchs during the mid-530s (20-26). The introduction to Book X states quite clearly that it was written during the reign of Justinian; it covers the period from 536/7 to 547/8, but most chapters have been lost. Its contents, however, were largely secular, covering both developments in the East (including Lazica) and in Italy. Having narrated the fall of Rome to the Goths, Pseudo-Zachariah then offers a complete chapter devoted to the buildings of the city (IX.16).<sup>23</sup>

While Book XI has been lost entirely, a few chapters of XII have survived. Chapter 4 concerns the image of Christ not made by human hands, the Camuliana. According to Pseudo-Zachariah, a woman of Dibudin (or perhaps rather Diobulion),<sup>24</sup> near Amasea, commissioned a copy of the image for her

village. In 554/5, however, the village and the building in which the image was housed were destroyed by barbarians. Justinian, apprised of the event, provided funds for the rebuilding of the village and, upon the suggestion of one of his advisers, raised further funds by having the original image paraded around the cities of the East. The author further states that this parade had been going on from then until 560/1 and regards it as a sign of the impending return of Christ at the end of the world. Chapter 5 continues in the same vein, relating the shower of ashes that struck the East in spring 556, which is perceived as being a sign of imminent disaster. Chapter 6, on the other hand, goes back to 553 and concerns church politics and the treatment of anti-Chalcedonians in the vicinity of Amida. The last chapter to have survived consists of an epitome of Ptolemy's *Geography*, followed by an excursus on the peoples of the Caucasus. Pseudo-Zachariah claims to have obtained information directly from prisoners taken by Kavadh in 503, who, after spending some fifty years in the Caucasus, returned to Amida. From a description of the conversions of various Hunnic peoples he passes to the extract quoted above concerning Khusro.<sup>25</sup>

Books I and II have so far deliberately been left to one side. They can provide some clues, however, as to his conception of his work. He makes clear in his opening chapter, for instance, that his aim is to provide a history for the edification of his readers, taking up his account where those of Socrates and Theodoret leave off (I.1, p.5/5). Before doing so, however, he feels it necessary to supplement and correct their accounts, and that of Eusebius. The rest of the Book is thus occupied with miscellaneous episodes, such as the story of Joseph

and Asenath (I.6)<sup>26</sup> and the account of Constantine's baptism at the hands of Silvester (I.7).<sup>27</sup> The Book also contains a letter from the author to Moses of Ingilene, requesting the story of Joseph and Asenath, and the latter's reply; in his own letter Pseudo-Zachariah alludes to having initially come across the story in a library at Resaina (I.4). Book II, on the other hand, relates ecclesiastical events from the 440's, setting the stage for the extensive narrative drawn from Zachariah in the succeeding Books.

To build up a picture of Pseudo-Zachariah from such disparate elements is no easy task. The following conclusions, however, may be offered. First, as is generally agreed, our author was a native of Amida and probably a monk. The frequent references to the city in the second half of the work have been noted above; and his concern for the spiritual edification of his readers is also clear.<sup>28</sup> It is highly likely that he built up his account over time, which serves in part to explain the varied chronological indicators as to the date of composition; some of these dates will also no doubt have been transmitted by his sources and left unaltered.<sup>29</sup> The identity and nature of these sources, however, are hard to establish. That he used the account(s) of earlier sources, probably Amida-based, is highly probable: from these were derived the detailed narrative (e.g.) of the siege of Amida in 502-3. We might tentatively put forward the following list of possible sources (leaving aside the obvious Zachariah of Mytilene):<sup>30</sup>

(a) An Amidene source, strongly interested in secular affairs, but offering an account of church history too. This source was acquainted with Gadono (VII.5). Given the detail about Amida and its bishops through-

out the first half of the sixth century, it is quite probable that more than one source is involved here.

(b) A source with close links to Constantinople, responsible (e.g.) for the accounts of the reconquests of Africa and Italy, and the Nika riot, to whom Dominic (IX.18) was known. Of course, (a) and (b) are not mutually exclusive, since, as the narrative of Dith's brother John shows (VII.1), natives of Amida certainly frequented the imperial capital.

(c) Dossiers of correspondence between important ecclesiastical figures, such as Severus of Antioch. Here we must note that Pseudo-Zachariah always strives to keep the length of documents quoted to a minimum (not always successfully), as he frequently insists (IV.6, IV.8, V.2, V.4, VI.7, cf. III.4). The dossiers continued to circulate in a fuller state, however, at least until the time of Michael the Syrian, who on several occasions provides fuller versions of the text; Evagrius too, we may note, had access to the correspondence between Severus and the other Monophysite patriarchs in the 530s (*HE* IV.11).<sup>31</sup>

(d) Oral sources, such as John of Resaina, quoted in XII.7 for the excursus on the Huns.

(e) One might add a chronicle source of some type for the first two surviving chapters of XII. These two chapters stand out from other secular material in VII-XII in several ways. First, they offer more chronological precision than elsewhere: dates are given not only in indiction years, but also by the regnal year of Justinian. Second, their tone is remarkably downbeat: the author of these chapters, writing during Justinian's reign (as is clear from XII.4), clearly believed that the end of the world was impending.



ing. If the earlier chapters of XII were drawn from the same source, one may infer that they contained descriptions of the numerous other natural disasters that swept the empire towards the end of Justinian's reign which can be found in the *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre (drawn from John of Ephesus).<sup>32</sup> Pseudo-Zachariah breaks off from this chronicle quite explicitly at the end of XII.5, backtracking to 553. The chapter which follows is far more similar to the earlier narrative in VII-IX and contains dating only by indiction year.

Despite the apparent contrast between the first two chapters of XII and the final one, in which Pseudo-Zachariah describes the remarkable progress made by Christianity in his time, both may be pointing to an imminent apocalypse: it was widely believed that the conversion of all peoples was a prelude to the final coming of Christ.<sup>33</sup> Their tone is nevertheless remarkably different, and it is possible that they derive from different sources; part of the final chapter, of course, is based on information supplied by John of Resaina, as Pseudo-Zachariah acknowledges. For a clearer picture of Pseudo-Zachariah's perspective, however, one further issue remains to be addressed.

What sort of work did Pseudo-Zachariah set out to compose? The work is entitled in the principal manuscript "a volume of narrative of actions that occurred in the world".<sup>34</sup> Given the vagueness of this description, scholars have debated as to whether the work should be considered a world-chronicle or a church history.<sup>35</sup> The contents of the work are, as we have seen, disparate and laid out for the most part in chronological order; both secular and ecclesiastical affairs are treated; documents are frequently cited *in extenso*. Yet all of these are charac-

teristics of both genres: they may be found in the chroniclers Theophanes and Michael the Syrian, for instance, but equally in the church historians John of Ephesus, Evagrius and Theodore Lector.<sup>36</sup> To pigeon-hole pseudo-Zachariah in one or the other category would seem therefore to be an exercise in futility—all the more so, perhaps, at a time when the boundaries between genres were steadily being eroded, as several scholars have observed.<sup>37</sup> Rather, it is necessary to look in greater detail at the indications he provides himself and the overall contours of the work.

Pseudo-Zachariah's preface begins with a lengthy series of biblical allusions, all with the common theme of monuments built to preserve the memory of a person or event, including the Tower of Babel and a statue made by Phidias.<sup>38</sup> From this, as we have seen, Pseudo-Zachariah moves on to justify his record of events since the last writers of church histories completed their work. Such a preface bears some resemblance to that of Theodoret's *Church history*, a work cited by Pseudo-Zachariah and available in Syriac, as well as to that of his approximate contemporary Evagrius.<sup>39</sup> He then proceeds to explain the need for the corrections he will make to existing sources in Book I before covering the period with which he is primarily concerned (450-568/9). The first chapter concludes with the following address to the reader:

Now we beg that the readers or hearers will not blame us, if we do not call the kings victorious and mighty, and the generals valiant and astute, and the bishops pious and blessed, and the monks chaste and of honourable character, because it is our object to relate facts, following in the footsteps of

Holy Scriptures, and it is not our intention on our own account to praise and extol rulers with flattering words, or to revile and insult with rebuke those who believe differently, provided only we do not find something of the kind in the manuscripts and epistles which we are about to translate.

(tr. Hamilton and Brooks, 6.18-27/4)

We might compare these words with Socrates' introduction to Book VI of his *Church history*:

The zealots of our churches will condemn us for not calling the bishops "Most dear to God," "Most holy," and such like. Others will be litigious because we do not bestow the appellations "Most divine," and "Lords" on the emperors, nor apply to them such other epithets as they are commonly assigned.<sup>40</sup>

Pseudo-Zachariah seems to have succeeded in fulfilling his objective not to indulge in invective of his opponents: while the persecutions of the anti-Chalcedonians are narrated in detail and Chalcedonians often described as "Nestorians", he (or his source) is prepared to acknowledge that the Chalcedonian bishop of Edessa, Asclepius, was "just in his deeds", while the patriarch Ephraim of Antioch is similarly described (VIII.4). Thus, although one of the usual objectives of church histories was to serve the community for which they were written, it is noteworthy that Pseudo-Zachariah achieves this with a remarkable lightness of touch. The most partisan sections of the work are undoubtedly Books III to VI, which also contain far more detail on church history than the subsequent ones. In other

words, Pseudo-Zachariah emerges as a remarkably moderate Monophysite, consistently loyal to Justinian and willing to report his successes in the West, for instance. He is, thus, close to Evagrius in his outlook, although he devotes more attention to the church history of Justinian's reign than does Evagrius.<sup>41</sup> John of Ephesus, by contrast, was a far more outspoken historian, at any rate for events of his own lifetime; this can undoubtedly be ascribed to his active involvement in these events and perhaps to the afflictions suffered by the Monophysite cause in the 570s.<sup>42</sup>

Given that Pseudo-Zachariah sees himself as continuing the works of Eusebius, Socrates and Theodoret, i.e. their church histories, it comes as a surprise that he should devote the second chapter of his work to correcting errors from Eusebius' *Chronicle* dealing with the dating of generations in the book of Genesis. Clearly, Pseudo-Zachariah was familiar with both works of Eusebius and thought it appropriate to introduce emendations to the *Chronicle* in his work.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, in conclusion we shall put forward two tentative arguments in favour of attributing Pseudo-Zachariah's work to the realm of church history rather than chronicle, all the while bearing in mind the ever slighter distinctions between the genres. First, and most importantly, the question of causation: even if Pseudo-Zachariah tends to relate events in chronological order, he is also interested in offering explanations for them. The opening of VII.3 is devoted to explaining the motivation for Kavadh's invasion of Roman territory in autumn 502, for instance; VII.10, concerning the activities of Philoxenus, offers analysis as well as bald narrative, explaining how Flavian was expelled from his

see. Now it is generally agreed that one essential characteristic of the chronicle genre is its very absence of analysis and explanation: it merely offers a sequence of unconnected events.<sup>44</sup> Second, and less convincingly, the presence of a focus or theme. Put more specifically, Pseudo-Zachariah's work has a point: he is writing for the improvement of his readers and because he believes that he is witnessing a period of great historical importance. Chroniclers, such as Michael the Syrian, may write to preserve the memory of past events (portrayed in a certain way) for the sake of a particular community, but their works remain unfocussed: they are essentially a collection of miscellaneous entries with little or

no sense of progress towards a particular point.<sup>45</sup> Pseudo-Zachariah, as we have seen, seems to have had an overall conception of his work and to have been leading up to the remarkable events of his own day. In doing so, he included some remarkably varied material, but this is covered by his statement on wishing to preserve the memory of events. His work, with its concentration on secular and ecclesiastical politics—omitting almost entirely, for instance, descriptions of holy men and their practices, featured prominently in Sozomen, Socrates and Evagrius<sup>46</sup>—should thus be taken as he presented it: as a continuation of the works of Eusebius, Socrates and Theodoret, drawing, like them, upon a wide range of sources.<sup>47</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See (e.g.) W. Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 210-17, E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, vol.2 (Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949), 558-64, 612-23. As Stein notes, a minor revolt broke out in Africa in 563, however.

<sup>2</sup> Details in G. Greatrex and S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars, A.D. 363-630* (London: Routledge, 2002), 131-4; henceforth *REF*.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronicon pseudo-dionysianum vulgo dictum*, vol.2, ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO Scr. Syr. 104 (Louvain: Peeters, 1933), tr. R. Hespel, CSCO Scr. Syr. 213 (Louvain: Peeters, 1989), 115-18. Translation in W. Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, Chronicle, known also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin*. Part III (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 104-7. Cf. W. Witakowski, "Sources of Pseudo-Dionysius for the Third part of his Chronicle," *Orientalia Suecana* 40 (1991) 266. The episode is discussed at length in M. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Rupprecht, 2003), 412-24.

<sup>4</sup> Translation from Greatrex and Lieu, *REF*, 97. Inscription in P. Roussel, "Un monument d'Hiéropolis-Bambykè relatif à la paix perpétuelle de 532 ap. J.-C.," *Mélanges syriens offerts à M. René Dussaud*, vol.1 (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1939), 367.

<sup>5</sup> See E. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd ed. (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1944), 426 and B. Martin-Hisard, "Le 'Martyre d'Eustathe de Mxeta': Aspects de la vie politique et religieuse en Ibérie à l'époque de Justinien," in *Eupsychia* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998), 495-6 on the generally favourable position of Christians during Khusro's reign, despite intermittent persecutions.

<sup>6</sup> Menander. *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. and tr. R.C. Blockley (Liver-

pool: Francis Cairns, 1985), frg. 6.1.398-407, cf. Greatrex and Lieu, *REF*, 133-4. See also A. Guillaumont, "Justinien et l'église de Perse," *DOP* 23-4 (1969-70) 48-50.

<sup>7</sup> He was arrested in 573 and executed in 575: see F. Nau in *PO* 3 (1909) 8-9 with J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide* (Paris: V. Lecoffre, 1904), 198-9. On Ahudemmeh see E. Key Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain. St Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 121-8.

<sup>8</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, vol.2, CSCO Scr. Syr. 39, 42, ed. and tr. E.W. Brooks (Louvain: Peeters, 1924), tr. J.F. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene*. London 1899.

<sup>9</sup> The reference to seven years since the visit of Tribonian, i.e. the doctor Tribunus, attested in Procopius (see *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol.3, ed. J. Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), s.v. Tribunus 2, is puzzling. He visited Khusro in 545 at the king's request, but not as a captive. If the reference is to this visit, then a date of 552 is implied.

<sup>10</sup> John of Ephesus, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars Tertia*, CSCO Scr. Syr. 54-5, ed. and tr. E.W. Brooks (Louvain: Peeters, 1952), VI.20, tr. R. Payne Smith, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1860). Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London: Methuen, 1898), IV.28, tr. M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius Scholasticus* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000). Cf. *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, tr. R.W. Thomson, comm. J.D. Howard-Johnston, with T. Greenwood (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), ch.9.

<sup>11</sup> See Menander, frg.16.1 with *PLRE* III, s.v. Sebochthes.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. A. Cameron's edition of Corippus' *In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris* (London: Athlone

Press, 1976), 2, 118 with R. Scott, "Malalas, *The Secret History*, and Justinian's Propaganda," *DOP* 39 (1985) 104-6, on the considerable literary output during Justin's early years. M. Whitby, "Theophanes' Chronicle source for the reigns of Justin II, Tiberius and Maurice (565-602)," *Byz* 53 (1983) 320 and n.38, cf. idem, "Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality," in A. Cameron and L. Conrad, eds, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East. I. Problems in the Source Material* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992), 55, suggests that the *Ecclesiastical History* to be found in *Anecdota Cramer*, vol.2, also concluded in 565.

<sup>13</sup> See A. Cameron "The Early Religious Policies of Justin II," *Studies in Church History*, vol.13, ed. D. Baker (Oxford: Blackwell's, 1976), 51-67 (= eadem, *Continuity and Change in Sixth Century Byzantium* [London: Variorum, 1981], X), the most detailed account of these attempts, with the briefer analysis in P. Maraval, "L'échec en Orient: le développement des Églises dissidentes dans l'Empire," in L. Pietri, ed., *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours*, vol.3. *Les églises d'orient et d'occident* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998), 461-7. Justin's plans to improve the empire's finances emerge in Corippus' panegyric as well as in his *Novels* 148 and 149 (of 566 and 569), cf. Cameron, *In laudem*, 170.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. and tr. E.W. Brooks, *PO* 18 (1924) 688, on the optimism generated by Justin's accession. Other church historians, including Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen and Evagrius, all conclude their accounts at a high point: see (e.g.) T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 143-5 (on the last sections of Socrates and his praise for Theodosius) with P. Maraval, in his introduction to *Socrate, Histoire Ecclésiastique*, Book 1, Sources Chrétiennes 477 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2004), 19 n.2, and M. Whitby, "The Church Historians and Chalcedon," in G. Marasco, ed., *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003), 489-90 (on Evagrius).

On the date of John's work, see (e.g.) J.J. van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus. A Monophysite Historian in sixth-century Byzantium* (Groningen: Ph.D. thesis, 1995), 48, according to whom part II of John's *Ecclesiastical History* concluded in year 6 of Justin's reign, i.e. 571. Witakowski, "Source," 252, places it rather in 569. Since the work does not survive itself, certainty is impossible.

<sup>15</sup> Pseudo-Zachariah's work was much cited, for instance, by Michael the Syrian. See J. Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte des Zacharias Rhetor: Überlieferung, Inhalt und theologische Bedeutung," in M. Tamcke, ed., *Syriaca. Zur Geschichte, Theologie, Liturgie und Gegenwartslage der syrischen Kirchen* (Hamburg: LIT, 2002), 92. Whether John of Ephesus made use of Pseudo-Zachariah is still debated: Witakowski, "Sources," 269-70, argues in favour of John using Pseudo-Zachariah, cf. P. Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Evagrius Scholasticus," *JTS* 31 (1980) 472 and n.5, while van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 68, believes that both John and Pseudo-Zachariah made use of a common source. M.A. Kugener, "Pseudo-Zacharie le rhéteur," *ROC* 5 (1900) 210 n.3 argues that Pseudo-Zachariah's work is independent of John's. See also E.W. Brooks in F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 6-7.

<sup>16</sup> See (e.g.) Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 78-81, P. Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus," 471-88, E. Honigmann, "Zacharias of Mytilene," in *Patristic Studies* (Rome: Bibliotheca apostolica vaticana, 1953), 194-204.

<sup>17</sup> So also Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 88-91. Rist notes that Eustathius of Epiphania's work may lie behind the detail concerning the siege of Amida, but it cannot be the source for the remainder of Pseudo-Zachariah's (and Procopius') account, since Eustathius died in 503. See G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War* (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1998), 75.

<sup>18</sup> *HE* VII.1. His information came from John, the *scholasticus* and brother of Dith; the latter features several times in Pseudo-Zachariah's work

(also at VII.5, XII.6) and may have been one of his sources.

<sup>19</sup> VII.3-5 on which see Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War*, 73-6; see also now M. Debié, "Du grec en syriaque: la transmission du récit de la prise d'Amid (502) dans l'historiographie byzantine," *BZ* 96 (2003) 601-22.

<sup>20</sup> See my forthcoming commentary, *ad loc.* L. Duchesne, *L'Église au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: de Boccard, 1925), 24 n.2, assumes that Simeon hailed from Amida, but the evidence is inconclusive.

<sup>21</sup> It is true, however, that Pseudo-Zachariah seems to have obtained eye-witness testimonies from prisoners seized during Kavadh's 502-5 war (XII.7).

<sup>22</sup> So Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 91 with Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus," 472. An Egyptian slant to III-VI is perceptible, I would argue, in the consistent distinction made between "Romans" and Egyptians in the lengthy sections given over to ecclesiastical affairs in Egypt. On Māre see also R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque* (Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1899), 361-2.

<sup>23</sup> Such a digression, cf. the epitome of Ptolemy's *Geography* at XII.7, might seem to favour the identification of Pseudo-Zachariah's work as a chronicle, absorbing wholesale other works or epitomes. See, however, E. Argov, "Giving the heretic a voice. Philostorgius of Borissus and Greek ecclesiastical historiography," *Athenaeum* 89 (2001), 514, on Philostorgius' inclusion of geographical and ethnographic excursions.

<sup>24</sup> See E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder. Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 18 (Leipzig: August Prier, 1899), Beilage, 5\*\* n.8 for this emendation of the Syriac.

<sup>25</sup> See p.2 of this version above. On the excursus on the Caucasian peoples see K. Czeglédy, "Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor on the nomads," in L. Ligeti, ed., *Studia Turcica* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), 133-48.

<sup>26</sup> A work that has attracted much attention recently and the earliest version of which is that offered here by Pseudo-Zachariah. The actual dating of the work itself remains controversial. See C.

Burchard, *Untersuchungen zu Joseph und Aseneth* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1965), Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 8, 24-5, 133, R.S. Kraemer, *When Aseneth met Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 225-37, S. Inowlocki, *Des idoles mortes et muettes au dieu vivant* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 22-6.

<sup>27</sup> On this account, derived from the *Actus beati Silvestri*, see W. Levison, "Konstantinische Schenkung und Silvester-Legende," in *Miscellanea Francesco Ehrle: Scritti di Storia et paleografia*, vol. 2 (Rome: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1924), Studi e Testi 38, 159-247, esp. 227, 235-9 on Pseudo-Zachariah and other Syriac versions of the legend; also now W. Pohlkamp, "Textfassungen, literarische Formungen und geschichtliche Funktionen der römischen Silvester-Akten," *Francia* 19 (1992) 115-96, esp. 137-8 and M. Amerise, *Il battesimo di Costantino il Grande* (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2005), 93-111. These apocryphal acts emerged in the second half of the fifth century: see Levison, *art. cit.*, 181, R.J. Loenertz, "Actus Sylvestri: Genèse d'une légende," *RHE* 70 (1975) 439 (placing an initial version in c.432), G. Fowden, "The Last Days of Constantine: Oppositional Versions and their Influence," *JRS* 84 (1994) 154-5. According to G. Fowden, "Constantine, Silvester and the church of S. Polyeuctus in Constantinople," *JRA* 7 (1994) 278-9, cf. *idem*, "The Last Days of Constantine," 162, the *Actus* became known in the East in the first quarter of the sixth century and may be reflected in a Syriac homily ascribed to Jacob of Serug, cf. Amerise, *Il battesimo*, 111. Pseudo-Zachariah (I.1), who refers to depictions of Constantine's baptism, seems to claim direct access to an account from Rome; no other source, to my knowledge, refers to such representations, although it is certain that they enjoyed a great popularity in later times: see (e.g.) the fresco from Santi Quattro Coronati in Rome (twelfth century) in N. Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), fig. 38. Fowden, "Constantine, Silvester," 278, suggests however that Anicia Juliana's church of St Polyeuctus in Constantinople

featured depictions of Constantine being cured of leprosy, for instance, a feature of the Silvester legend (found in Pseudo-Zachariah, I.7, 62-4/44-5), cf. C. Milner, "The image of the rightful ruler: Anicia Juliana's Constantine mosaic in the church of Hagios Polyeuktos" in P. Magdalino, ed., *New Constantines* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), 79, Amerise, *Il battesimo*, 111, and S.N.C. Lieu, "Constantine in Legendary Literature," in Lenski, ed., *Age of Constantine*, 300.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. (e.g.) Brooks' introduction to the *CSCO* edition, ii, Kugener, "Pseudo-Zacharie," 202.

<sup>29</sup> See Brooks in Hamilton and Brooks, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 5 for details. Socrates similarly built up his account over time: see Maraval, *Socrate*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> We must note in passing, however, that Pseudo-Zachariah may not have used Zachariah directly: D. Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten" von Mor Michael dem Grossen (1126-1199)* (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), *CSCO* vol.594, 43 n.82, notes the suggestion of Jan van Ginkel that Pseudo-Zachariah's account was based on a (fuller) Syriac translation of Zachariah as well as on another compilation, which he likewise abbreviated.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Michael the Syrian in J.-B. Chabot, ed. and tr., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*, IX.25, p.216 (translation), where Michael has a column's worth of a letter from Theodosius to Severus that Pseudo-Zachariah (or at any rate our version of him) has omitted. Evagr. *HE* IV.11 for the reference to the correspondence. Van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 64, argues instead that Michael had access to a fuller version of Pseudo-Zachariah than we do, which is also possible - although, given that the chief manuscript of Pseudo-Zachariah's work dates from c.600, this would imply a very quick abridgement. We might instead suppose an intermediary source, which included the whole dossier, unabridged. See also Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten"*, 138, on differences between Michael and Pseudo-Zachariah.

<sup>32</sup> Ps. Dion. *Chronicle*, vol.2, 129-36/116-21. This source also includes a synchronisation be-

tween year 9 (560/1) and 562 years since the coming of Christ. No other such synchronisation is offered in Pseudo-Zachariah, but the calculation is in line with Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. J. Thurn, CFHB (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), tr. E. and M. Jeffreys and R. Scott (Melbourne: Byzantina Australiensia, 1986), X.1 (placing Christ's birth in the 42nd year of Augustus' reign, i.e. 2 B.C.). See H. Inglebert, "Le développement de l'historiographie chrétienne," *MedAnt* 4 (2001) 562-3, on the origins of this chronological system.

<sup>33</sup> See P. Magdalino, "The history of the future and its uses: prophecy, policy and propaganda," in R. Beaton and C. Roueché, eds., *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies dedicated to Donald M. Nicol* (London: Ashgate, 1993), 5-6, citing Matthew 24.14, cf. Romans 11.25.

<sup>34</sup> I.1, p.2.1-2/1, my translation. Cf. Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 81, 84. W. Witkowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre: a study in the History of Historiography*, *Studia Semitica Upsaliensia* 9 (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1987), translates "the book of narratives of events which happened in the world."

<sup>35</sup> See Rist, "Die sogenannte Kirchengeschichte," 84-7, noting the views of earlier scholars, cf. F. Winkelmann, "Kirchengeschichtswerke," in F. Winkelmann and W. Brandes, eds., *Quellen zur Geschichte der frühen Byzanz* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1990), 205 and n.6 (doubting the appropriateness of the label *Kirchengeschichte*). To the works Rist cites one should add van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 20-2, 83, who views both John and Pseudo-Zachariah as the authors of church histories.

With Pseudo-Zachariah's vague title one might compare the opening words of Pseudo-Joshua's work, which describes his account as "a book of narrative of the period of distress which occurred in Edessa, Amida, and all Mesopotamia" (in J.B. Chabot, *Incerti Auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, vol.1, *CSCO* Scr. Syr. 43 [Louvain: Peeters, 1927], 235, tr. J. Watt in idem, "Greek historiography and the 'Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite'," in G. Reinink and A.G. Klug-

kist, eds, *After Bardaisan* (Louvain: Peeters, 1999), 319, with accompanying discussion, questioning whether this should necessarily be seen as a chronicle). See further P. Nagel, "Grundzüge syrischer Geschichtschreibung," in Winkelmann and Brandes, *op. cit.*, 252-3, on the terminology, with the detailed discussion in Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 152-69.

<sup>36</sup>On the components of church histories see R.A. Markus, "Church history and the early church historians," in D. Baker, ed., *Studies in Church History* 11 (Oxford: Blackwell's, 1975), 1-6, 9-12, Inglebert, "Le développement," 567-71, H. Leppin, "The Church Historians (I): Socrates, Sozomenus, and Theodoretus," in Marasco, ed., *Greek and Roman Historiography in Late Antiquity*, 247-53 and M. Whitby, "Greek Historical Writing," 55-6. On chronicles see B. Croke in E. Jeffreys, B. Croke and R. Scott, eds, *Studies in Malalas* (Sydney: Byzantina Australiensia, 1990), 32-3, 37-8 and Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, ch.3.

<sup>37</sup>See (e.g.) A. Cameron "Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in late sixth-century Byzantium," *Past and Present* 84 (1979) 26 and n.118 [= eadem, *Continuity and Change*, XVIII], W. Liebeschuetz, "Ecclesiastical Historians on their own Times," *Studia Patristica* 24 (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), 162-3, Markus, "Church history," 15-16 (on the Theodosian period).

<sup>38</sup>For which compare Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. R. Henry (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1967), 84, a summary of the work of Methodius, cf. G.N. Bonwetsch, ed., *Methodius* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1917), GCS, *De Resurrectione*, ch.35.3, p.274-5. For some useful remarks on Pseudo-Zachariah's preface in relation to other Syriac histories, see E. Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1988), 104-5.

<sup>39</sup>Theodoret of Cyrillus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. L. Parmentier, rev. G. Hansen (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), GCS, I.1.1, cf. Evagr. *HE* I.1. Theodoret's work was undoubtedly available in Syriac: see Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten"*, 43, cf. H. Inglebert, "Le développement," 579. As Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 136, notes, Pseudo-Dionysius puts forward a

similar justification for his work, which also contains a moral aim. The preservation of the memory of events is a theme that goes all the way back to Herodotus, of course. As Pseudo-Zachariah mentions in the text cited below, he would have been able to translate both Theodoret and Socrates for himself anyway.

<sup>40</sup>Tr. NPNF, ed. G.C. Hansen, *Sokrates Kirchengeschichte*, GCS (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 310.22-6. Cf. Socr. *HE* V.proem., where he insists on his desire to present the facts (ed. Hansen, 274).

<sup>41</sup>Evagrius, like the fifth-century church historians, tends to reduce the amount of space devoted to church history as his work progresses, cf. Whitby, "Greek Historical Writing," 56-7, Leppin, "The Church Historians (I)," 244-5. On the partisanship of Zachariah see Allen, "Zachariah Scholasticus," 488-9 and M. Whitby, "The Church Historians," 461-6.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. Theodore Lector, who accompanied Macedonius in his banishment to Euchaita and is heavily critical of the opponents of Chalcedon, especially the Emperor Anastasius: see Whitby, "The Church Historians," 469-73. Van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 109, 120-1, underlines the abiding loyalty of John to imperial rule, however.

<sup>43</sup>On the transmission of Eusebius in Syriac see Nagel, "Grundzüge," 253-5 and Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 78-9. Inglebert, "Le développement," 578 and n.80, argues that Eusebius' *Chronicle* was only available in Syriac from 600, with a second translation appearing c.692; at any rate, no Syriac version of the work has survived, see Weltecke, *Die "Beschreibung der Zeiten"*, 43. If Inglebert is correct, it would follow that Pseudo-Zachariah was using the original Greek version.

<sup>44</sup>See (e.g.) Liebeschuetz, "Ecclesiastical Historians," 163, Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 60. Eusebius is unusual in attributing an active role to God in the causation of events; see T. Morgan, "Eusebius of Caesarea and Christian historiography," *Athenaeum* 93 (2005) 193-208.

<sup>45</sup>As, for instance, does the *Church History* of Eusebius. But as Maraval, *Socrate*, 19, shows, Socrates had no such focus. Philostorgius' work



certainly had an objective, seeing in contemporary developments the result of persecution of the Arians, cf. A. Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 144 and Argov, "Giving the heretic a voice," 515-17, Inglebert, "Le développement," 570; so too did part III of John of Ephesus' *Church History*, recording the destruction and oppression, secular and ecclesiastical, that foreshadowed the end of the world, cf. Whitby, "The Church Historians," 478-9. On the other hand, Witkowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, 136-8, argues that Pseudo-Dionysius' *Chronicle*, like Pseudo-Zachariah's work, had a moral aim.

<sup>46</sup>Cf. Leppin, "The Church Historians (I)," 233-4, on the presence of miracle stories in all three Theodosian church historians. On Evagrius see Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History*, 1 and idem,

"Greek Historical Writing," 56.

<sup>47</sup>This was clearly the perception of the scribe of cod. Vat. syr. 145, in which extracts from Pseudo-Zachariah's work feature after some from Socrates and Theodoret. See J. Assemanus, *Bibliothecae apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus in tres partes distributus : in quarum prima orientales, in altera graeci, in tertia latini, italici aliorumque europaeorum idiomatum codices*, vol.3 (Rome: Typis sacrae congregationis de propaganda fide, 1759), 253-63, cf. idem, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol.2 (Rome: Typis sacrae congregationis de propaganda fide, 1721), 54-62. These are followed by brief accounts of the fall of Dara in 573, the sack of Apamea (also in 573) and the death of 2000 virgins, who threw themselves into a river.

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MICHAEL THE SYRIAN AND HIS SOURCES:  
REFLECTIONS ON THE METHODOLOGY OF MICHAEL THE GREAT AS A  
HISTORIOGRAPHER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN HISTORIANS\*



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**P**atriarch Michael the Syrian (d. 1199) wrote his famous *Chronography as a universal history*.<sup>1</sup> J. Tubach describes the work and author as follows:

Bleibenden literarischen Ruhm erwarb sich Michael durch seine Weltgeschichte, die von der Schöpfung bis ins Jahr 1194/5 reicht. Michael teilte die riesige Stoffmenge in drei Kategorien: Kirchengeschichte, Profangeschichte und Verschiedenes. Nach chronologischen Gesichtspunkten geordnet, berichtet er über die geschehenen Ereignisse in drei parallelen Kolumnen. Sein Ideal bei der Darstellung ist Objektivität und chronologische Präzision. Die Beschäftigung mit der Vergangenheit geschieht allerdings nicht um ihrer selbst willen. In der Geschichte sieht Michael Gott am Werk. Sein Walten in der Welt steht in enger Korrelation zum ethischen Verhalten der Menschen. Die Abwendung von Gott bringt nur Unglück. Erdbeben, Mißernten etc. sind eine unmittelbare Folge menschlicher Sünden. Durch die Lektüre vergangener Ereignisse

soll der Leser aus der Geschichte lernen, daß ein echter Gottesglaube seine Hoffnung nicht auf Menschen, Ideologien (Astrologie) etc. setzt und daß die Gleichgültigkeit in religiösen Dingen nur ein Glaube zweiter Wahl wider besseren Wissens ist. Implizit ist die Kirchengeschichte Michaels letztlich eine Apologie des Christentums.<sup>2</sup>

In order to write this enormous work Michael had to rely, for the most part, on other historiographical works of the previous centuries. Due to the method used by many Syriac authors of quoting and excerpting their sources in order to create their own account—a technique once referred to by Larry Conrad as a layering technique—many otherwise lost works have now been preserved, at least partially, in Michael's *Chronography* and in similar works, most notably the *Anonymous Chronicle of 1234*.<sup>3</sup> The study of Michael's selection and editing process will help us in our study and use of these fragments as reflections of the preceding works. In the following study some more general remarks on the use of these fragments will be presented.

The need for a study like this has been indicated by Dorothea Weltecke, who has described the scholarly interest in Michael and his Chronology up until her own time as follows:

Nach hundert Jahren Text- und Quellenkritik lässt sich folgende Bilanz ziehen: Michaels Chronik scheint eine recht bunte, wenn auch "wertvolle Materialsammlung" zu sein, wie es Wolfgang Hage 1992 formulierte. Der Steinbruch erscheint noch lange nicht erschöpft, und der Abbau wird bis in die Gegenwart weiter vorangetrieben. ... Die vollständige Chronik als gewolltes Werk eines Einzelnen wird seit Langlois und Chabot nicht mehr untersucht. Eine Monographie ist nie erschienen. Es scheint, dass dem die Annahme zugrunde liegt, Michaels Chronik sei mehr oder weniger ohne einen willentlichen Akt entstanden, habe sich zufällig aus dem Material ergeben und spiegele höchstens die materiell oder intellektuell eingeschränkte Recherchierfähigkeit des Autors. Dass die Weite seines Horizontes an die Fülle der ihm zur Verfügung stehenden Quellen gebunden ist, versteht sich natürlich. Doch zeichnet sich in der Diskussion um die verlorenen Geschichtswerke eine Erkenntnis ab, die für unsere Fragestellung von einiger Bedeutung ist: Michael hat seine Quellen bearbeitet.<sup>4</sup>

The technique of quotations and excerpts is partly to blame for this use of Michael as a "Steinbruch". However, Michael may well have preserved fragments from his sources, but he did rework ("*bearbeitet*") them. As stated before, Michael did have a plan, and he did write his Chronography with a clear

and particular goal in mind; that of instructing his audience! As a result Andrew Palmer adapts the description of the layering technique as follows:

They [Syriac chroniclers] present themselves as objective analysts, but ... they compiled or composed their texts in retrospect to serve moral, religious and political purposes. ... By careful selection and significant juxtaposition of events they led the reader to draw conclusion by his own intelligence, with a minimum of didactic intrusion of the author's part.<sup>5</sup>

What are the implications of this new assessment of Michael's Chronography and his use of sources, especially for scholars who try to use these fragments to gain an insight into the ideas and ideology of the authors of these fragments? Can we extrapolate any guidelines for the historical usefulness of fragments as a source for the period of the original work and the original author? The aim is eventually to present a more structured account of Michael's working method and—hopefully—provide some additional insights in the "usefulness" of "fragments" for modern research, and on how to handle these fragments. Although similar work has been done for Western Medieval Historiography, this will probably be a first for Syriac Historiography. In this article some first preliminary thoughts will be presented.<sup>6</sup>

Methodologically this aspect of Syriac historiography can best be studied for the period from the 6th century until the 11th/12th century. The main reason is that we can assume that Michael had access to the original source text and did not have to rely on go-between texts. For the preceding period, however, he could only access his

sources through intermediaries, which may have adapted the original text.<sup>7</sup>

For the 6th century Michael used the works of Pseudo-Zachariah of Mitylene (ca. 568)<sup>8</sup> and John of Ephesus (d. 588).<sup>9</sup> For later centuries Jacob of Edessa (d. 708), Dionysius of Tel Mahre (d. 845) and Ignatius of Melitene (d. 1095) are the most important sources for his work.<sup>10</sup> Sadly these works have been lost and only fragmentary traces can be found in later Syriac historiography, which has prompted the interest in some form of evaluation in the appreciation of these fragments in the first place.

Of special interest to us are Pseudo-Zachariah, John of Ephesus and Dionysius. Ignatius and Jacob are problematic because they do not seem to have written a narrative text like the other three authors. As a result Michael lifted only short remarks from these texts, which are very difficult to attribute to any particular source and are not very informative about the ideology and perception of history of their original author.<sup>11</sup>

A study of Michael's use of the works of John and Pseudo-Zachariah—texts that have, in part, been preserved through an independent manuscript tradition—will help to establish Michael's method of use of his major sources, including some indications towards his selection process. These findings may then help interpret some of the larger fragments of Dionysius of Tel Mahre, and especially help to show the potential use of these fragments for historical research but also the limitations forced upon this kind of research.<sup>12</sup>

As stated before, fragments from these sources, most particularly from the Church History of Dionysius, have also been preserved by another so-called compiler / chronicler, the Anonymous Chronicler of

AD 1234.<sup>13</sup> In addition to the comparison between Michael and the real text of his source, a comparison of the two compilations from the late 12th/early 13th century could help establish some insights on how "representative" of the real work these two collections of fragments are. In addition, a comparison of the anonymous Chronicle and John and Pseudo-Zachariah can shed light on the technique of the Anonymous chronicler.

My preliminary comparison of Michael and John of Ephesus was published in 1998. From this comparison it first became clear that Michael had reduced his source by about 75 percent. In order to adapt his material to his needs, Michael excerpted and rearranged it. At times, he also added brief statements to his excerpts, sometimes within the excerpts and quotations. His more general aim of instructing his audience also came into sharper focus. Part of his instruction seems to have been to arouse his lethargic community and to show them that their church, the Syrian Orthodox community, had always been the heirs of God's community and had always triumphed under pressure. As a result, I made the following statement in my concluding remarks: "Therefore I would argue against attempts to 'reconstruct' sources on the basis of these fragments."<sup>14</sup> This statement has drawn some criticism,<sup>15</sup> and I would argue that some clarification might be useful.

It was never my intention to deny that these fragments have their use for historians who aim to set forth the history of the preceding centuries. My main objective was to argue against "reconstructing" those sources, which gives the impression of a "real", coherent text, to be used as if it were a fragmentarily preserved text like Jacob of

Edessa's Chronicle as preserved in the mutilated manuscript of the British Library.<sup>16</sup> My objection was that a reconstruction on the basis of fragments taken from compilations should be treated differently. The fragmentation in a mutilated manuscript is haphazard; an act of fate. The fragmentation, which forms the basis for a reconstruction of a lost text on the basis of later compilations, is not by accident, but is created out of a wilful act ... sometimes even of several similar acts through the centuries.

To what extent is it possible to make statements about the original work on the basis of these fragments? On the most basic level, events and historical data, which are explicitly mentioned in the text, can and should, with a high probability, be attributed to the original work. For example, dating the ascension to the throne of a certain king or caliph and descriptions of certain political, military or socio-economic events can be extracted from these fragments.<sup>17</sup> However, the lack of a reference to a certain event does not mean that it was not part of the original. One should be careful to argue *e silentio*.

Based on Michael, our knowledge of the history of the heresy of the Tritheites would be minimal, whereas his source, John of Ephesus, has assigned half a book to this religious group.<sup>18</sup>

Juxtaposition of certain events, interpreted as potential implicit linking of two events as explanatory for either one of these events, is also more tricky. For example, the assassination of emperor Maurice and the release of al-Mundhir, the Ghassanid king, are located next to each other in the (possible) fragments of Dionysius of Tel Mahre in the Anonymous chronicle up until AD 1234. This link by positioning is not

present in Michael the Great.<sup>19</sup> The Syriac language used in the two fragments also shows no explicit linking between the two fragments. The anonymous compiler in the 13th century probably did want to link these two events together, but we can not conclude from this that Dionysius of Tel Mahre, the source of the fragments, did as well!

Therefore, on a factual level, these fragments do provide us with "contemporary" source material, although we do need to be careful in our interpretation.

In addition, when using these collections of fragments for the study of an attitude or interpretation of a factual event by the author or the community of the author, one must consider the circumstances of their preservation. On the basis of these considerations, we may indicate whether or not some views and perceptions, which may be present in the fragments, can with more or less certainty be ascribed to the original, lost, work.

Statements on the motivation or interpretation are very difficult unless they are explicitly present in the excerpt, but even then a distortion is not unlikely. The same is true of the perspective on history (goal, driving force, etc.). The later author or compiler will only include these if they agree with his own perception and interpretation.

The only time that the attitude of the original author is most probably preserved is when fragments contain elements which are explicitly argued *against* by the later excerptor or whenever fragments run counter to an *explicitly* expressed line of argument or general perspective of the compiler, for example as stated in the introduction or in other meta-historiographical expressions of the excerptor.<sup>20</sup>

After having established the *implicitly*

expressed general perspective and aim of the compiler on the basis of his own work—sometimes on the basis of a comparison of his use of an also independently preserved source—it is possible to attribute those elements that *run counter* to these aims and perspective to the “original” as well. However, assigning these elements to the original author is only as “trustworthy” as the establishing of the perspective of the compiler is clear.

The problem with this very critical approach is that under these “rules” one can not establish an overlap in perspective between the original author and the compiler. It is only the material that runs counter to what you expect of the compiler, and as such that will result in distortion as well!

As stated before, comparing the fragments preserved in various compilations, which have come into existence *independently* of each other, will help, although both excerptors will have adapted the material. If preserved in both, the perspective can be—to some degree—related to the original author, although one needs to keep in mind that the perspective of two independent compilers living in a similar historical and socio-political context may overlap and differ from the original author living under different circumstances.

In addition, having established a certain framework of thought, which can be assigned to the original author on the basis of these rules, one can then begin to theorise about other elements in the fragments that would also fit this framework and can be clearly found in the fragments from the original works. Even though these may also reflect the view of the compiler, they may well also reflect that of the original author. However, one always has to keep in mind

that these elements should always be treated with an increasing amount of caution and that the attribution is based on rather shaky evidence.

Therefore, when working with fragments, which have been preserved by way of a selection process by a later author, we need to be extra careful when studying topics that transcend the factual material of a fragment. This is especially true in the field of the history of *mentalité* (attitude towards a certain ideology or line of thought), ideology or sociological processes. The fragment and framework and arrangement in which they have been preserved first and foremost reflect the perception and ideology of the compiler, not the original author and his work. As a result, a “reconstruction” from the fragments themselves is never possible. The coherence of the material has been irretrievably lost and only a selection of fragments has been preserved. Statements on the basis of these fragments are possible, and should be made, but one always has to clarify the degree of reliability of the attribution of these ideas to the original author.

In the case of Syriac Historiography and the study of the development of a sense of identity within the Syriac historiographical tradition, this has some important implications. Michael the Great and the Anonymous Chronicle of 1234 have preserved large parts of earlier historiographical works. One would like to use these fragments as testimony of the attitude of the original authors. To do so requires, however, more analysis and much circumspection.

To return to the quotation from Weltecke’s study at the beginning of this brief article, Michael’s Chronography is not a Steinbruch, but it is a triumphal arch, a

work of art. The Arch of Constantine was built by using spolia from many older monuments. Those monuments are lost, but fragments live on through the work of Constantine's architect. However, although one

can admire the technique and the iconography of the fragments, but statements about the aim and intention of the original monuments that were taken apart for the building of this arch are, at best, hypothetical.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche 1166-1199*, (4 vol) (Paris: E. Leroux, 1899-1924) (cited as: MS <book>, <chapter> (text pages from vol. IV; translation pages from vol. II or III).

<sup>2</sup>J. Tubach, "Michael Syrus," *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* [http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/m/michael\\_syr.shtml](http://www.bautz.de/bbkl/m/michael_syr.shtml).

<sup>3</sup>For references to this 'layering' technique, as Larry Conrad has called it, see J.J. van Ginkel, "Making History: Michael the Syrian and his Sixth-Century Sources," in *VII Symposium Syriacum 1996*, OCA 256, ed. R. Lavenant, S.J. (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998), 351-358; J.-B. Chabot, A. Abouna, (*Anonymi auctoris*) *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, CSCO 81, 82, 109, 354 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1916, 1920, 1937, 1974).

<sup>4</sup>D. Weltecke, *Die Beschreibung der Zeiten von Mor Michael dem Grossen (1126-1199). Eine Studie zu ihrem historischen und historiographiegeschichtlichen Kontext*, CSCO 594 (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), 14 (italics mine). Weltecke as at least partly remedied the lack of research of Michael in this her own study.

<sup>5</sup>A. Palmer, *The Seventh Century in West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), xxviii; also see Fiey, "Les chroniqueurs syriaques avaient-ils le sens critique?," *ParOr* 12 (1984-5) 253-64.

<sup>6</sup>For some first general remarks and an analysis on the basis of a limited text corpus see van Ginkel, "Making History...". The final version with a comparison of all relevant material will be part of my forthcoming study on Michael the Great.

<sup>7</sup>These preceding sources were all originally in Greek. Michael may have had access to some of these works in translation, but it is more likely

that he had only reworked versions of these texts.

<sup>8</sup>Michael refers to Zachariah (of Mytilene), but rather than using the Greek original, he refers to the Syriac Pseudo-Zachariah, who has reworked and added to the Ecclesiastical History of the real Zachariah. E.W. Brooks, *Historia Ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, CSCO 83, 84, 87, 88, (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1919, 1921, 1924, 1924), (cited as PZ <book>, <chapter> (<text pages>; <translation pages>).

<sup>9</sup>Only Part Three of his Church History has been preserved. E.W. Brooks, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars Tertia*, CSCO 105, 106 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1935, 1936), (cited as JE <book>, <chapter> (<text pages>; <translation pages>).

<sup>10</sup>On the importance of these three see the editorial remark in MS X, 20 (377; 356-357).

<sup>11</sup>It should be noted that there are some larger fragments from Jacob's Chronicle in Michael, but these refer to much earlier events, even before Christ. Although interesting from the point of view of why Michael included them, these are not useful for a discussion on the use of fragments as a source. Ignatius may be the intermediary for some larger fragments from the Byzantine tradition, although it more likely that his Chronicle consisted of only short lemmas.

<sup>12</sup>This comparison will be published in my study on Michael and his sources.

<sup>13</sup>For a collection of the fragments of Dionysius from the Seventh Century see Palmer, *The Seventh Century*, 105-221; on Dionysius and his Church History, see Rudolf Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre, jakobitischer Patriarch von 818-845: zur Geschichte der Kirche unter dem Islam*, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 25,2 (Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1940).

<sup>14</sup>van Ginkel, "Making History..." esp. 357

<sup>15</sup>For example Weltecke, *Die Beschreibung der Zeiten von Mor Michael dem Grossen*, 148



n.88: "Man darf aber vielleicht diese Skepsis auch nicht zu weit treiben."

<sup>16</sup> E.W. Brooks, "Chronicon Iacobi Edesseni," in E.W. Brooks, I. Guide, I-B. Chabot: *Chronica Minorca* III, CSCO 5, 6 (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1905, 1907), 261-327; 197-255.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. M.G. Morony, "Michael the Syrian as a Source for Economic History," *Hugoye* 3.2 (2000) <http://bethmardutho.cua.edu/hugoye/Vol3No2/HV3N2Morony.html>.

<sup>18</sup> JE III, bk 5, ch 1-12 (253-262; 191-198) have not been preserved in Michael's Chronography at all. On Tritheism and the importance of John of Ephesus's testimony see A. van Roey, "La controverse trithéite depuis la condamnation de Conon et d'Eugène jusqu'à la conversion de l'évêque Elie," *Von Kanaan bis Kerala. Festschrift für Prof. Mag. Dr. Dr. J.P.M. van der Ploeg O.P.*, AOAT: Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des AOAT 211, ed. W.C. Delsman e.a. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 487-497; idem, "La controverse trithéite jusqu'à l'excommunication de Conon et d'Eugène (557-569)," *OLP* 16 (1985) 141-165; R. Ebied, A. van Roey, & L. Wickham, *Peter of Callinicum. Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, OLA 10 (Leuven: Department Oriëntalistiek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1981).

<sup>19</sup> 1234 (218-219; 172); MS X, 24 (388-389; II 375); also see 1234, ch. 137 (281-282; 219-220) on emperor Constans and some notable

events of his time. This material can be found in MS XI, 11 (432; 446: Constans move to the West), MS XI, 12 (433, 451: Easter date), MS XI, 8 (421-422; 432: eclipse [?]), MS XI, 10 (428; 443: famous bishops), MS XI, 8 (423; 433: famous people), the attack on Egypt is not mentioned in MS.

<sup>20</sup> For example Dionysius' assumption that originally the Arameans were only living west of the Euphrates, which Michael first quotes and then disputes (MS XII, 16 (522; (III) 76) = 1234 (112-4; 88-90)), cf. MS Appendix II (749-750; 445-446): Note that Michael quotes Dionysius in his Appendix, but has rearranged the material compared to the quotations in book 12 and 1234).

<sup>21</sup> Hans Peter L'Orange, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (2 vols.), Studien zur spatantiken Kunstgeschichte 10, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978; repr 1939); Beat Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41, Studies on Art and Archeology in Honor of Ernst Kitzinger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday (1987), 103-109; Joseph Alchermes, "Spolia in Roman Cities of the Late Empire: Legislative Rationales and Architectural Reuse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 48 (1994), 167-178; Jas Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian triumph: the art of the Roman Empire AD 100-450*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

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THE ECCLESIASTICAL CHRONICLE OF GREGORY BAR‘EBROYO\*



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It does not seem that Gregory Bar‘Ebroyo<sup>1</sup> (Grēghōrīyos Bar‘Ebhṛāyā,<sup>2</sup> hereafter: BE) requires any introduction,<sup>3</sup> since he is one of the most famous authors who wrote in Syriac, perhaps second in this respect only to Ephrem. BE was a scholar, a genuine intellectual, and a prolific and versatile author. His erudition, encompassing the whole scientific gamut of the epoch, is most impressive. The range of the topics of his works stretches from theology and other ecclesiastical disciplines to science, including medicine and astronomy, as well as philosophy and literary humoristic composition. He wrote mostly in Syriac, but sometimes in Arabic. Living in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (1225/6-86), he was able to profit from the long tradition of Syriac scholarship, but he also enriched this intellectual tradition by introducing into it material from Greek and Muslim scholarship. In the range of his interests and the volume of his intellectual-literary output (he left over thirty works) he surpassed both Jacob of Edessa (7<sup>th</sup> century) and Job of Edessa (the East Syrian author of scientific encyclopaedia, the 9<sup>th</sup> century). These achievements place BE in a unique class—a class reserved for him alone. It is mainly due to his schol-

arly output that the period of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries called ‘Syriac Renaissance’ becomes really momentous. He may not have been a very original thinker, as is sometimes pointed out, but he was certainly able to encompass most of whatever the Syrians had produced over the centuries of the development of their intellectual tradition.

Within his intellectual activities historiography occupied not a marginal part. BE is known to have written two large historiographical works: one in Syriac and one in Arabic. The latter was, as it appears, the very first work of his ever printed in Europe, as it was published as early as 1663 in Oxford by the English Arabist Edward Pococke. Its title *Al-mukhtaṣar ta’rīkh al-duwal* (*An Abbreviated History of the Dynasties*) suggests that it was an abridgement of his earlier and larger work, the *Chronography*, the secular part, written in Syriac. However this is not a simple abbreviation of his Syriac work, but one that has been adjusted to Muslim readers, *inter alia*, by using material from Arabic Muslim sources, such as the *Chronicle* of ‘Izz al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr of Mosul (d. 1223), which partly replaced material of Syriac sources (Michael the Elder).<sup>4</sup>

The Syriac work is entitled *Makhtābhānūth* (or: *Makhtābhūth*) *zabhnē*, literally ‘writing of times’, which is a calque of the Greek *Χρονογραφία*. Gregory was not the inventor of this term; it was used already before him, for instance by Michael the Elder (*Mīkhāʿel Rabbā*; henceforth ME).

BE’s work is a universal chronicle. It is the last work of Syriac classical historiography, after which the Syrians did not venture to write universal history any more.

As the material that BE collected for this work was quite bulky, he did not consider it any longer expedient to put it in one volume as his predecessors did, but rather divided it into two parts, secular and ecclesiastical. Moreover, abandoning the arrangement of the other two chronicles of the late classical epoch, that by Michael the Elder and the anonymous *Chronicle to the year 1234*, he may have published the two parts separately.<sup>5</sup>

The secular part, known from its first edition as the *Chronicon Syriacum*, or from the title of its English translation as *Chronography* (which is also used as the common title for both the secular and the ecclesiastical part), is a universal chronicle covering the period from the Creation until BE’s own time. However, after his death it was continued by an anonymous writer (probably his brother BarSawmo (BarṢawmā) up to the year 1297. It is divided into eleven parts called ‘successions’ or ‘dynasties’ (*yubbālē*) by which division BE encapsulates the idea of world empires originating from the prophecies of the *Book of Daniel*, but developed and brought up to date. In fact, he includes the Mongols (whom he calls ‘Huns’)—which of course could not be known to the author of *Daniel*—as the eleventh empire, contemporary with his lifetime.

The secular part was first edited and

translated into Latin as early as 1789 by Paul Jakob Bruns and Georg Wilhelm Kirsch,<sup>6</sup> but neither the edition nor the translation was satisfactory. In 1890 a better edition of the Syriac text was published by Paul Bedjan, but anonymously.<sup>7</sup> E.A.W. Budge’s publication of 1932<sup>8</sup> provides a facsimile edition of a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, but his English translation is based on the text edited by P. Bedjan, the Bodleian Library manuscript being imperfect.

The secular part is well known and often used by historians of the mediaeval Near East. Although it has often been referred to in various studies, it has never been the object of a historiographical analysis.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately the same must be said about the ecclesiastical part, to which we shall refer as the *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* (furthermore: *EX*). Although published over 130 years ago (1872-77), and thus known to scholars for quite a long time and often used as a source for the history of the Syriac speaking Christians, it has never been studied in a systematic way. Such a study (or studies) remains an overdue desideratum, and of course cannot be replaced by the present paper, which will only try to characterize BE’s work and set it in the tradition of Syriac ecclesiastical historiography.

## THE MANUSCRIPTS

As the last chronicle of this type BE’s work was often copied, and consequently—contrary to the case with all the other Syriac historiographical works—it is preserved in more than one manuscript.

Anton Baumstark listed the manuscripts that were known to him.<sup>10</sup> According to his

list the *EX* was preserved in manuscripts that contain the text of the whole *Chronography*, for instance Vatican Syr. 166, copied before 1356/7, or Vatican Syr. 383/8, which is a copy of the former, Berlin 237 (Sachau 210, before 1481/2),<sup>11</sup> Oxford 122 (Hunt 1, around 1499), Jerusalem, St Mark Monastery 36 of the year 1570/71, Florence, Palatino-Medicean Library, Or. 118 of 1578/9. There are, however, manuscripts that contain only the secular part,<sup>12</sup> as well as those in which only the ecclesiastical part can be found. In fact, this is the case of the London manuscript, on the basis of which the *editio princeps* was produced.

It is, however, not difficult to find more manuscripts that Baumstark apparently did not know of, for instance Additional 2006 of the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century preserved in the Cambridge University Library (only the ecclesiastical part). Such will have to be taken into consideration for a future critical edition of the Syriac text.

#### THE EDITION AND STATE OF RESEARCH

There are three editions of this quite voluminous work. However, before any of them appeared the London text was copied in the 1840's<sup>13</sup> by the Swedish scholar Otto Fredrik Tullberg.<sup>14</sup> Although he copied the text clearly with the purpose to publish it, Tullberg never brought his edition to an end, while the copy is extant in the Uppsala University Library (665 pp.).<sup>15</sup>

The first edition, as was already mentioned, was published in the years 1872-77 (in three volumes) by Belgian scholars Jean Baptiste Abbeloos and Thomas Joseph Lamy.<sup>16</sup> From the point of view of present

scholarly standards it is rather unsatisfactory, as it is based on one manuscript only, namely that of the British Library, Rich 7198, of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> Abbeloos copied it during his stay in London, and then decided to publish it with the help of Lamy. The text is not vocalised, except for some of the names.

The second edition appeared more recently, in Berlin in 1983, but it is not satisfactory either. It is not a printed text, but one that was copied manually and then multiplied anastatically. The *Vorlage* manuscript is unknown:<sup>18</sup> it does not come from any European library, but seems to be from a private collection of an immigrant in Europe. The scribe's name is Gabriel Farzoyo. The age of the manuscript remains unknown.

The third edition is of the same character as the one just named, and was copied and published in 1987, in the monastery of the Syrian Orthodox Church at Hengelo, the Netherlands, by a monk, Yulius Yeshu', i.e. the late Bishop Çiçek.<sup>19</sup> This edition has the same flaws as the previous. Also in this case the *Vorlage* manuscript and its age remain unknown.

Consequently a scholarly critical edition of Bar'Ebroyo's *EX*, based on a reasonable number of manuscripts, with an English or any other modern language translation, remains a rather urgent desideratum. Before such an edition appears, it is still Abbeloos and Lamy's text that should be used for scholarly purposes.

Let it be repeated here that although both parts of BE's *Chronography* were often used as sources of history of Near East and especially of the Syrian churches, it is surprising that no thorough study of either of them has been produced so far.

### THE GENRE OF BE'S WORK AND TRADITION OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

As our text presents a history of the church, a few words on ecclesiastical history writing seem to be in order. Ecclesiastical history is naturally a purely Christian genre of historiographical literature,<sup>20</sup> which started (if we disregard the *Acts of the Apostles*) with Eusebius' classical work entitled exactly Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἱστορία, finished (the third edition) in 324.<sup>21</sup> With this work Eusebius determined the character of the genre which after him found many continuators until today. If we disregard the historical source value of Eusebius' work, which is, of course, enormous, one of its most important historiographical results is that it determined what an ecclesiastical history work should contain. Thus, according to Eusebius it was (1) the succession of the bishops of the main sees, (2) famous writers or theologians, (3) heresies, (4) the vicissitudes of the Jews, (5) pagan polemic against Christianity, and (6) the martyrs.<sup>22</sup>

Eusebius's followers in the field of writing church history, Socrates Scholasticus, Sozomen, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, added to those topics two more: information on monasticism (unknown in Eusebius's epoch) and the conversion of the barbarians to Christianity (Sozomen).<sup>23</sup>

In Syriac historiography the genre was implanted by the translation of the work of Eusebius, probably as early as in the end of the fourth century.<sup>24</sup> Other Greek monographs of the genre followed, of which we have clear proof in the extant abbreviation of Socrates' *EH*,<sup>25</sup> as well as excerpts from it preserved in the *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, also known as the

*Zuqnin Chronicle*.<sup>26</sup> There are fragments of Theodoret's *Historia Philothea* in Syriac,<sup>27</sup> but whether or not his *Church History*, or for that matter, those of Sozomen or Evagrius were ever translated into Syriac is not sure. An extant translation from Greek is the *Church History* by Zachariah of Mitylene, which, however, is not preserved as an independent work, but included, perhaps by the translator himself or by an unknown continuator called conventionally Pseudo-Zachariah of Mitylene, into a new composition. The latter also has much material that belongs to secular history, and the work of this anonymous author, although in the standard edition entitled *Church history*,<sup>28</sup> should rather be (and sometimes is) called *Miscellaneous history*.<sup>29</sup> An originally Syriac work of the genre is that of John of Asia or Ephesus (sixth century), of which only the third and last part is extant in a separate manuscript transmission, while the second is preserved in excerpts in the already mentioned work of Pseudo-Dionysius (*Zuqnin Chronicle*).<sup>30</sup> The genre was continued even after the Muslim conquests, a well-known, but badly preserved, example being the *EH* of the "real" Dionysius of Tel-Mahre († 847).

In Syriac historiography of the late classical period, the genre merged with that of chronicle and the ecclesiastical material was incorporated into large works. It can be seen already in the *Zuqnin Chronicle*, where it is mixed with other material, but in the large chronicles of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, that of Michael the Elder and the anonymous *Chronicle up to the year 1234*, it was again dealt with separately. The former, which has a table structure,<sup>31</sup> has a separate column devoted to *historia sacra*, whereas in the *Chronicle to 1234* it is removed to form a

separate part. In the *codex unicus* of the *Chronicle* this is placed after that which provides the secular history material and is, unfortunately, not well preserved.

One should name here also the East Syriac historiographical tradition, in which the genre was present, too, although we mostly hear about the works rather than have them. Even if we disregard here the *Chronicle of Arbela* (also known as the *EH* of Meshiha-Zekha (*Māšīhā-Zəkhā*), the authenticity of which is still disputed, a closer look at the sources of the *Chronicle* of Elias BarShinaya of Nisibis (11<sup>th</sup> century) should convince us that the East Syrians were also quite busy documenting the history of their church. An interesting circumstance is that the East Syriac ecclesiastical historiographical tradition switched to Arabic earlier than the West Syriac, and thus the most important work from historical point of view, the *Chronicle of the East Syrian catholicoi*, is extant only in Arabic.<sup>32</sup>

### THE TITLE

The problem with the title that sometimes appears in cases of acephalous works does not apply here. Everything seems to be explained by the author himself, though the actual wording may be the copyist's. At the beginning of his text he says:

[col. 1] "With the help of God we write<sup>33</sup> the book of *Church History* ('*eqlasyasīqī*), that is the second part (*pelgūthā dā-thartēn*) of the *Chronography* (*Makhtābhānūth zabhnē*), composed by our holy father, blessed and illustrious Mor Gregory, maphrian of the East, who is (also known as) Abulfaraj, son of Aaron, the physician of Melitene" ... [col. 3] First—a preface: Having brought

forward (*yabbāleth*) the secular events (*su'rānē 'ālmānāyē*) from various writings and old traditions until today [in the secular part of the *Chronography*], from now on, with God's help, I approach the second part (devoted to) the ecclesiastical matters (*šarbē 'edhtānāyē*). In the first discourse (*mēmrā*), which is on the Western high-priestly office (*rēšūth kāhnūthā ma'rābhāytā*), I begin with Aaron, the first high priest (*rēškāhnē*) of the Old Covenant."

It is thus clear that the *EX* is the second part in a larger work (i.e. the *Chronography*—*Makhtābhānūth zabhnē*), and that itself it is divided into parts—two, as we shall see. The title of the second part (*mēmrā*) reads as follows:

II,<sup>34</sup> col. 1: "With God's help we put down<sup>35</sup> the second discourse (*mēmrā*) of the book of *Church History* ('*eqlasyasīqī*), which is about the ecclesiastical events of the East (*su'rānē 'edhtānāyē dā-madhnāhā*)."

### MORPHOLOGY

In dividing his historiographical work into two parts (like the author of the *Chronicle to the year 1234*) BE gave up the model of the Eusebian chronicle with its column construction, which had still been preserved by his main source (as we shall see), the *Chronicle* of ME.

The work of BE is, however, a chronicle, although not of the Eusebian type. It neither has any graphical structure of tables or columns, nor is it built of yearly date lemmata. Instead, it is built of lemmata that bring information on pontificates of the successive high priests, patriarchs or other hierarchs.

Every such entry is introduced with the words "After such-and-such another such-and-such", whereupon the number of years

of the pontificate of the incumbent is provided. A typical short lemma would read for instance as follows: "After Manasses, Honias, four years" (*Bāthar Mānaššē. Hūnyā. šānayyā 'arba'*; 21,1-2).<sup>36</sup>

Such short lemmata are not very frequent, and they occur when the chronicler does not have any other information at hand. This is the case in the first part of the *EX*, the one covering the Old Testament high priesthood. When there is more information to be presented, the length of the lemmata in this part oscillates between one and two lines: e.g. "After Eleazar Manasses, his uncle, ten years" (19, no. 48), to approximately one column of the printed text.

In later parts of the work, especially in the one that is devoted to the history of the Syrian Orthodox Church, the lemmata become longer and longer, reaching several columns in Abbeloos' and Lamy's edition. It seems that the longest is the lemma on Gregory Bar'Ebroyo himself (coll. 431-485), even though this was written by his continuator.

Such a construction of the *Chronicle* makes it basically a commented list of church hierarchs. With whatever information a lemma on a certain hierarch is filled its simplest form shows that the list plays the function of *fila regnorum* of the Eusebian chronicle model.

#### CHRONOGRAPHICAL SYSTEMS USED

This fact must also be stressed due to another circumstance, namely that the *EX* does not provide any other system of dating. A Syriac reader who would wish to correlate, say, an event from Theodosius of Antioch's

pontificate, with secular events of the same epoch or with the ruling emperor, would be disappointed consulting even BE's secular part, since the latter does not provide any means to connect the secular events with the ecclesiastical. The reader would either have to consult the *Chronicle* of ME or to sum up all the durations of the pontificates mentioned in the *EX* so far, do the same for the secular part, and compare.

This does not mean that there are no dates at all in the *EX*. Such are, of course, provided sometimes, but they are casual only, i.e. they do not create a dating system within which God's economy of salvation would be inscribed. Those casual dates – in the Seleucid era – are simply taken from the sources BE was using. In the part telling of events after ME's *Chronicle* has come to an end, the dates become more frequent.

One may venture a hypothesis that such "undated" historiographical narrative is still a result of the Eusebian chronicle model. In the latter (for instance, in the chronicles of Jacob of Edessa and ME) the events presented in *spatium historicum* are dated not directly but rather by their sheer position at the level of a given year provided by the *fila regnorum*.<sup>37</sup> Material of such lemmata, when taken out of the context of the *fila* and put into a different one, keeps its historiographical character only when the historian who removed them took care to copy the dates from the *fila regnorum* too. If he did not—as was the case, for instance, with the material in the so-called *Chronicle to the year 724*<sup>38</sup>—the material would lose much of its historiographical (let alone historical) value and become mostly fictional. Only the sequence of the narrative units (lemmata) makes it clear that we are still dealing with a historiographical document.<sup>39</sup>

### THE CONTENTS AND THE CHARACTER OF INFORMATION PROVIDED

The first part of the *EX* deals with “the Western high-priestly office” (col. 7,8), “Western” in the understanding of someone living in the “East”, as BE did (the circumstance to which we shall return). It contains the succession of the incumbents of the Jewish and Christian supreme sacerdotal office. It begins with the high priest Aaron (Syr. *'Ahrūn*, *Exod.* 28,4), even though it is said that most of his priestly teachings he learned from his brother Moses (col. 7). BE writes that he became the high priest: “in the 87<sup>th</sup> year of Moses”.<sup>40</sup> The succession of the high priests continues with Eleazar, Aaron’s son, Pinhas, Eleazar’s son, etc. Information provided is rather scanty: the lemmata in this part do not exceed a column of the printed text.

The list of the Jewish high priests contains 67 entries, the last two being Caiaphas and Annas, known from the New Testament. The lemmata on these two do not provide any information except their names, but just thereafter a note on the birth of Jesus during the pontificate of the latter is placed (*dānaḥ Māran*; 29,4fb). Then BE says that the old high priest office “disappeared”, and in its stead the one established by the Saviour came into being (31,2-4). Consequently the next lemma introduces Peter as the first high priest of the New Covenant.<sup>41</sup>

Further on BE shows the spread of the Christian priestly office in all parts of the universal Church. Thus, in addition to Peter he mentions all the apostles and the regions to which they brought the Christian message and were martyred (31-35). After the apostles there is a place for their disciples, who

continue the work of evangelization by establishing Christian communities in places such as Alexandria and other *metropoleis*. After that BE follows the episcopal succession in major centres of Christendom, starting, interestingly, with Rome but containing the hierarchs of Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Ephesus (35, last 1-39).<sup>42</sup> After this list BE does not narrate any longer the matters of Rome or of any other metropolis. Contrary to previous lemmata the Roman is a pure name list that provides no information except the number of years of the pontiffs (37-38).

Now a narrowing of the perspective occurs, and in the following narrative only bishops of Antioch are reported. BE explains: “Since our eastern lands are subject to the authority of the throne of Antioch, we arrange individually the succession of its governors in this chronicle, one by one until our epoch.”<sup>43</sup>

In the part based on Eusebius’ *EH* BE follows the topics of his source. Thus, he tells us that during bishop Cornelius’ pontificate in Antioch (43,1-7) the heresy of Cerinthus appeared, and during that of Eudus (*'Wdws*; Eus.: Eros) the heresy of Marcion appeared (43,8-21). The latter happened to affect Syria very much, although BE does not write about it, but on the other hand he tells us about events outside the region of Antioch, such as, for instance, about the apologete Justin, who, however, was active in Rome, not in Antioch (45,4-9). This shows that the names of the patriarchs of Antioch serve only as the scheme organizing chronologically the events narrated and not as a factor which determines what is being reported. In the case of the pontificate of Asclepiades a story is put down, that at least in this case fits geographically



the territory of the patriarchate of Antioch, as it is about BarDaysan (*BarDaysān*; 45,2fb-47). Incidentally, pairing Asclepiades and BarDaysan is not something that BE took from Eusebius, nor is the (legendary) material on BarDaysan. We do not know the ultimate source of these legends, but the direct source is of course ME's *Chronicle* (109b,2 fb-111,25 /tr. I,183-185).

Many lemmata bring no information whatsoever that may concern the bishops under whose name they are introduced. For instance, in the lemma on patriarch Tyrannios (*Twr'nyws*; 63,3fb-66), BE brings names of and information on several bishops of Edessa (originating from the *Original Chronicle of Edessa*,<sup>44</sup> although directly taken from ME's *Chronicle*; 120c,4-33 /tr. I,203-204), but there is not a single word on Tyrannios himself. Other examples of such a procedure include the lemmata on Philacillus (*Pyl'qllws*; 83-88) and the Arian bishop Euzoius (101-114). In these lemmata we find information on the composing of *madhrāšē* by the son of BarDaysan, Harmonios; on Antony's fight with demons (with a reference to Socrates Scholasticus' *EH*, I,21); on Mar Awgin's and his disciples' monastic establishments stretching to the borders of Persia, etc.; and on the heresy of Apollinaris of Laodicea and of Eunomius (of Kyzikos);<sup>45</sup> on the return of the bishops previously deposed by the Arian party, including Anastasius of Alexandria, after Julian (the Apostate)'s accession;<sup>46</sup> on the deaths of Mar Ephrem and Athanasius of Alexandria (107,4-7); Gregory of Nazianzus' elevation to the position of patriarch of Constantinople (107, 13-16), etc., respectively, but nothing on the hierarchs whose names serve as the captions!

Only incidentally, as in the case of

Julian, or Marcian (450-457 A.D.) - due to the latter's role in convoking the Council at Chalcedon (167-169) - do the names of emperors appear, but this is, of course, no surprise since they are dealt with in the secular part of BE's *Chronography*.

Contrary to Eusebius' interest in the fate of the Jews, BE does not seem to be interested in this topic. There is only one short lemma entirely devoted to the Jews, without any connection with the Christians (contrary to what is the case with the story of the Himyarite martyrs, persecuted by a Jewish king, 201,2fb-203,5). It is on a conflict among the Jews of Palestine and those of Babylonia about the leadership of the diaspora Jewry: The Babylonians chose an Ananite, i.e., a Karaite (365,4-14).

There is relatively little material on monasticism. Nevertheless, shorter notes can be found about famous monks or archimandrites, as, for instance, on Mar Awgin (see above), or Simon the Stylite (141,4-7).

The topic of heresies is, on the other hand, represented rather well. In addition to the reports on all the early Christian heresies (known from Eusebius) we find for instance in the lemma on Ephrem of Amid (Chalcedonian, A.D. 527-545) a note on Julian of Halicarnassus (211-212), whose so-called apthartodocetic views were combatted by Severus of Antioch, who eventually anathematized Julian.

Even more room is devoted to schisms, an unfortunate effect of problems scourging both the church universal and the Syrian Orthodox Church in particular. Here one may subsume the report on Theodore BarWahbūn, once the patriarch Michael the Elder's pupil and godson, whom some bishops opposed to ME elected as anti-patriarch in 1180. ME deposed Theodore, but the latter went soon to

Damascus and Jerusalem to bring his cause before the Muslim authorities (Saladin), and when this did not succeed, he went to Cilicia, where he was recognised as the patriarch of the Jacobites in the kingdom of Armenia. The schism lasted until Theodore’s death, 1193 (575-589).

As another example of perhaps not a schism but of deplorable behaviour of some of the hierarchs of the Jacobite Church the ‘picturesque’ story of one (*ḥadh*) Aaron of Segestan (in Persia) may serve (12<sup>th</sup> century; 517,10 fb-519,8). Guilty of fornication, he was prevented by his congregation from being their bishop, whereupon he turned Muslim. Then he repented, but was still not accepted as bishop, after which he moved to Constantinople and became a Chalcedonian. Then he returned to his original church, but soon became a Muslim again, repented again, and went to Jerusalem. From there he went to Lebanon, where he eventually became a Maronite.

Occasionally material appears that is difficult to classify into a specific category – perhaps one could term it “miraculous stories”, such as the so-called *Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, who are said to fall asleep in Ephesus during the persecution of Decius (emp. A.D. 249-251) and to awake during the reign of emperor Theodosius II (emp. 401-450), in order to testify to the reality of resurrection. The legend, very popular in the literatures of the *Oriens Christianus* (but also in Islam, due to its mention in the *Qur‘an*), is attested to also in Syriac historiography.<sup>47</sup> BE, who has it in the lemma on bishop Theodotus (A.D. 420-429, *EX* 141,10-145), as usual took it from ME (172b,2fb-176,7/tr. II, 17-21).

It is interesting how BE presents the transition from the Chalcedonian patriarchs

of Antioch to the miaphysite or Jacobite. The lemma on Severus of Antioch (187-193) does not contain anything unusual; neither do the lemmas of his Chalcedonian successors, except that in the lemma on Paul the Jew he writes that John of Amid, bishop of Asia (i.e. the historian John of Ephesus) provides a list of 55 bishops who on the accession of Justin (A.D. 518) were deposed together with Severus (195,9-196,11).<sup>48</sup> Then the death of Severus is reported in 854 Sel. (= A.D. 543; 211,4-1 fb). However, directly after this note a lemma on a new patriarch begins, only this one is introduced not with the words “After Ephrem [i.e. the former patriarch]—Sergius” but with the words: “After the great Severus died—excellent (*məyattərā*) Sergius” (213,1-2). This is Sergius of Tella, the miaphysite patriarch (557/8-561), actually ordained by Jacob Burdā‘ānā, but here the ordination is attributed to John of Anazarba. BE writes that the number of the orthodox (i.e., miaphysite) bishops diminished greatly by natural or other causes, and then the ones who remained in Constantinople consecrated Jacob, “a simple man” (*(‘)nāš pəšītā*, 215,5 fb) and a priest in the Monastery of Pesilta (*Pəsilṭā*) as bishop. He “began to cross the countries of the East and perform the imposition of the hands on the orthodox” (*wə-šarrī methkkərekḥ b-(‘)ath-rāwwāthā də-madhenəḥā. wə-yāhebh səyām (‘)īdhā l-(‘)orthōdhoksū.*), who were therefore called ‘Jacobites’ (*wə‘al ḥādhē ba-šmeh Ya‘qōbhāyē ‘ethqərīw.* 217,13-14). Thereafter the historiographical narrative goes on in a matter-of-fact way, the next patriarch listed being Paul of Beth Ukkame (233-249), followed by Peter of Kallinikos (249-259) etc.

The historiographical narrative continues

now only with the patriarchs of the Syrian Orthodox Church and comes up to the year 1496 (845,8-9). The lemmata on the patriarchs from Nemrod Philoxenus (ordained 1283, died 1292) onward were added by an anonymous continuator or continuators (777-853).

**The second part** (*mēmṛā*) of the *EX* is a chronicle of the ecclesiastical affairs of the "East".<sup>49</sup> Without explaining what he understands by the "East", BE brings us directly into *medias res*, beginning with a lemma on Thomas the apostle "the first high priest of the East" (*rēškāhnē qadhṁāyā dā-madhnāhā*; II,3,1-2). BE mentions regions evangelized by him, retells the story of Thomas mostly on the basis of *Acts of Thomas*, and adds that some time after his death his body was transported to Edessa, for which information he refers to Qusta BarLuqa.<sup>50</sup>

The next lemma concerns Addai, "one of the Seventy" (II,11,11), in which BE gives a short account of the famous *Legend of Abgar and Addai* (no letter of Christ is quoted, though). The *Legend* provides for BE the name of Aggai, who just like Addai is a preacher of the Gospel (*māsabbārānā*, II,15,1) in the "East". The next lemma deals with Mari (II,15-19), another disciple of Addai, a missionary figure created for the needs of the Aramaic-speaking areas to the east of Edessa to have their own "apostolic" evangelizer, who is known from a separate legend.<sup>51</sup> His activities remove the eastern *rabh-kāhnūthā* from Edessa farther to the east and south in Mesopotamia. Then the list continues with equally legendary Abrosius (II,196 fb: *'Brwsyws*; or *Abrīs*),<sup>52</sup> introduced by BE as Mari's disciple,<sup>53</sup> sent to the East from Antioch. After his death he was buried in a church in Seleucia. With the latter city the "Eastern" high priesthood reached the

actual centre of the Persian Church, and all the pontiffs of that Church dealt with by BE from now on will be residents of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital of Persia, which eventually (on the synod of bishop Ishaq 410 A.D.) won supremacy over all the other sees within the Persian Church and became also its ecclesiastical capital.

BE also says that "people say" (*meth-(')amrā*, II,21,5) that Abrosius was from Jesus' family, or rather Joseph the Carpenter's. Also, his successor, Abraham, came from the same family (II,21,9-10), and the same origin is attributed to the latter's successor Joseph as well (II,23,2).

Then the list of the *catholicoi* of the Church of the East continues. With Papa (II, 27-33), Simon BarSabba'e (Šem'ōn BarŠabbā'ē; II,33,35), and the narrative of the persecution of the Christians in Persia, the reader is on safer historical ground, and so he remains until the end of this part of the *EX*.

An interesting circumstance is that BE tries to explain many names of the hierarchs; however he explains not only Persian or difficult to understand names, such as Shahdost—"the friend of king" (II,37,2-3) or Bar Ba'šāmīn<sup>54</sup>—"the man) of four names" (II,39,8-9), but also those such as Tammūz (II,41,2-1fb), which according to him is "Chaldean." The name 'Tammuz' denotes a Babylonian deity, and is also used in Syriac and in other Semitic languages for the month July. Such a name should then be completely understandable for any speaker of this language, but BE explains even clear Syriac names, such as *Y(h)abh(')allāhā*—"God gave" (II,53,1-2), which according to him means *Mawhabhtā d-(')Allāhā*—"the gift of God". One can infer that apparently names construed in this way were not

popular among the Western Syrians.

In addition to the main line of the prelates of Seleucia–Ctesiphon BE sometimes also provides information on bishops of other sees—for instance of Nisibis (II, 77).

With Magna (II,53) hierarchs begin of “Nestorian” conviction educated in the School of Edessa. The lemma devoted to patriarch Baboway tells the story of Bar-Sawma, the author of the famous proclamation to Shah Peroz about the necessity for the Persian Church to have a different Christian, namely “Nestorian”, faith (*tawdūthā dā-khrestāyānē*; II,65,6 fb-67,14).<sup>55</sup>

In II, 99,6 a new element comes into BE’s historiographical exposition. A new hierarch is introduced, only not with the usual words (“After such-and-such ...”) but in the following way: “After the persecution of the orthodox (i.e. miaphysites)<sup>56</sup> of the East Ahudhemmeḥ (Aḥū-dh-[]jemmeḥ) became the metropolitan (*myṯrwpwʿ*, abbreviated) of the East”<sup>57</sup> (II,99,6-7). It is said that he was consecrated by Jacob Burdāʿana in A.D. 559, but also by the Armenian catholicos Christophoros, as the bishop for the Country of the Arabs (Bēth ʿArbāyē). He officiated among the Arabs and built two monasteries, of which one was in the vicinity of Tagrit. He died a martyr’s death and was buried in Mahoze, which event seems to be the only occasion at which this hierarch of the Jacobite Church reached, albeit *post mortem*, the capital of the Church of the East.

The lemma on his successor is introduced again in the conventional way: “After Ahudhemmeḥ Qamisho,” (Qāmīšōʿ; II,101,12). What follows now is a different line of hierarchs, that of the Jacobite prelates in Persia, not connected to Seleucia-Ctesiphon. If previously one or two events

in the vicissitude of the Jacobites were mentioned in lemmata of *catholicoi* of the Church of the East, now the roles are reversed. The latter are named, but it is not their succession any longer that provides the skeleton of the chronicle. Just as the deaths and accessions of the Sassanid kings (i.e. secular events believed to be of little importance for the development of the church), they are named within lemmata entitled with the names of the Jacobite metropolitans (*maphrians*). So is it with the report of the death of catholicos Ishoʿyabh (Īšōʿy(h)abh; II,105, last l.) and the accession of catholicos Sabrisho (Sabhrīšōʿ; II,107,1).

What is important, however, is that material concerning the hierarchs of the Church of the East (“Nestorian”) is included, a rare phenomenon in West Syriac historiography, showing our historian’s irenic and ecumenical attitude.<sup>58</sup>

In this way the line of the so-called Syrian Orthodox *maphrians* is continued until BE himself and beyond, although, as was already mentioned, it was supplemented by other people. The section written by his brother, BarSawmo (BarṢawmā), who was also his successor as a maphrian, is introduced in the following way: “From now on the brother of the author, BarSawmo, records the matter of his death: when, where and how it took place” (II,467, 9-11).

Then an account of the pontificate of BarSawmo himself is provided by an anonymous continuator (at least partly), and the same or another anonymous continuator or continuators drew the historiographical narrative until 1496 (II,563, last 2 lines).<sup>59</sup> The continuator(s) do not provide accounts on the East Syrian *catholicoi*, although sporadically they are named, e.g., Denha (Denhā; II, 507,6fb), who welcomed the

Jacobite patriarch visiting the maphrian's territory in 1358 A.D.

### SOURCES AND THEIR USE

At the present state of research it is of course impossible to provide a full source analysis of the work, but we shall try at least to suggest some possible lines for future investigations.

In the text of the *EX* BE names his sources only sporadically. There is no general list of the sources in the introduction. However, since the work in question was planned as the second part of a larger work, we consequently find a list of sources in the beginning of the secular part, which in fact is an introduction to the whole *Chronography*.<sup>60</sup> Here he names in the first place Michael the Elder's "great threefold historical chronography," thus referring to ME's *Chronicle*, composed in three synoptical columns (f. 1va,4-3fb.<sup>61</sup> *makhtābhānūth zabhnē hāy rabbāthā. tālūthāyath*), but also the historiographical works by Eusebius of Caesarea, Socrates Scholasticus, Zachariah the Rhetor, John of Asia, and Dionysius of Tel-Mahre. Admittedly, the named works constitute sources both for the first part of his *opus* and for the second.

BE does not mention the Bible, which of course was the ultimate source for both the Old and New Testament periods.

The names of the Jewish priests are in accordance with those in ME's work, examples of which we have seen already above. ME names two sources for the list: Andronicos (sixth century, not preserved) and Jacob of Edessa<sup>62</sup> († 706). The two are used both in ME's text and in his appendix no. 1, which provides the pure list of the hierarchs, according to the two sources named above.<sup>63</sup>

BE, however, decided to follow only the line of Jacob of Edessa, although when a major discrepancy occurs he makes a note by which the reader is warned that other data exist. So, for instance, he attributes to the sixth to ninth high priests the pontificates of 42, 52, 40, and 32 years, respectively (11,1-9), which is in accordance with Jacob of Edessa in ME,<sup>64</sup> whereas Andronicos attributes to the same pontiffs 48, 34, 50, and 42 years, respectively. For many of the high priests the ultimate source is most probably Josephus Flavius' *Antiquitates Judaicae*.

For the early Christian period the ultimate source was, of course, Eusebius' *EH*. Quite frequently, however, information of Eusebian origin is supplemented with that from other sources more difficult to identify, an example of which (on BarDaysan, 45) we have already seen above (to be compared with Eus., *EH* I,13).

BE's way of organizing information is different from that of Eusebius. If he does not have direct chronological information from Eusebius as to this or that event, he places it under the pontificate of the last bishop whom Eusebius named before the event in question. So, for instance, in the case of Mani (59-60, Eus., *EH*, 7,31), BE places him during the pontificate of Domnus (Eus., *EH*, 7,30,18), although Eusebius does not connect the two. The connection originates, however, with ME, who has Domnus of Antioch and the story of Mani on the same folio, even though in separate columns (Domnus: f. 116c, last l.; Mani: 116,b last l.-119,8 /tr. I, 198; 198-200).

It is seldom that BE names his sources, but we find some exceptions in the part for which Socrates Scholasticus' *EH* is the ultimate source, as is the case with direct or

indirect quotations from Socrates in I,117 (on Eudaimon, ME, 158b,18-35 / I,312-313), 129 (on Epiphanius, independent of ME ?) and 149,4fb-151,15 (on Nestorius).<sup>65</sup>

Material from Socrates' *EH* begins with the lemma on the Council of Nicaea. Since Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, is named by Socrates as one of the signatories of the decisions of the Council (Socr., *EH*, 1,13), it was only natural that in BE's construction of historiographical narrative, material on Nicaea would be put under Eustathius' name. In this case again the connection occurs already in the *Chronicle* of ME, in which in the chapter "On the epoch of the great and ecumenical Council of Nicaea" (bk. 7, ch. 2) Eustathius of Antioch is named as one of the leading bishops.<sup>66</sup>

We have already mentioned above that at least once BE refers to John of Asia or Amid (195) for the list of the miaphysite bishops expelled from their sees in A.D. 518. BE seems to have abbreviated the account present in ME 266b, new ch., 9 – 267,28 /tr. II, 171-173).

BE's work is of course fully original for the period after the *Chronicle* of ME comes to an end. Being written approximately 80 years later it provides an important continuation. One may assume that for this part—in addition to his own notes—BE used documents from the archives of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

## SOURCES OF PART 2

If for the first, "Western," part of *EX* all the sources were West Syriac, or – in the case of Eusebius or Socrates - at least known to and used by the West Syrian historians, we are faced with another situation as far as the

sources of the second part are concerned. The West Syrian sources would have very little to say about the history of the Church of the East. For this an East Syrian source would have to be used. Happily, we know this source. It is a history of the East Syrian *catholicoi*, written in Arabic, which is extant in the so-called *Book of the Tower*, previously known as the *Liber Turris*, in Arabic *Kitāb al-Mağdal*. The latter is a large theological encyclopaedia with a complicated and not yet clarified<sup>67</sup> textual history, written by 'Amr ibn Mattā in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century but supplemented by other authors. Previously the contributions of three various authors were conceived differently, and the first author was considered to be Mārī ibn Sulaymān (12<sup>th</sup> century). The history of the East Syrian patriarchs, which is only a section in the *Book of the Tower*, was consequently published under the latter's name.<sup>68</sup> This is BE's basic source,<sup>69</sup> in itself certainly based on earlier Syriac documents.

We have previously named some ultimate sources, such as the *Legend of Addai*, the *Legend of Mari*, etc., but also here it is doubtful whether BE used them directly. The abbreviated lemmata are most of the time in accordance with those in the *Book of the Tower*.

The material on the Jacobite maphrians, on the other hand, does not come from ME, as one might expect, and the source remains unknown. Hopefully a more thorough investigation in the future will throw more light on this problem.

## THE VISION OF HISTORY

BE in his work does not make any philosophico-historical statements, but as is the case with many historiographic works, one

can draw some conclusions on the historian's vision of history from the division of his work and from its contents.

In this context it is interesting to note that the ecclesiastical or religious history begins with Aaron and the line of the Jewish high priests, continued up to Annas and Caiaphas of the New Testament epoch. Then BE says that "the old high priest office disappeared" (*šannəyath rēšūth kāhnūthā 'attiqtā*; 31,2) and in its stead the one established by the Saviour came into being (*wə-qāmath w-(')eštarrərath rēšūth kāhnūthā bə-yadh Pārōqan.*; 31,3-4). This means that the *sacerdotium* was lost to the Jews, having been taken over by the Church, of which Peter was the first "high priest". BE adds that "When (our Saviour) set up Peter, the chief of the apostles, it was to him that He gave the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Consequently the next lemma introduces this first high priest for the new epoch: "After the high priests of the Old Covenant, Peter, the high priest of the New Covenant" (*Petros rēškāhnē də-dhīyāthiqī ḥadha(n)tta*; 31,8). In this simple way the transition between the Old and the New Covenant order is described. The Old Covenant has fulfilled its role and therefore the Jewish high priestly office was transmitted to the church, the *Verus Israel*, which, no matter whether ethnically Jewish or Greek, has stepped in as part of the New Covenant. BE, of course, lived in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the problem who was the real depositary of the New Covenant was no longer an issue to be discussed. One may remark that at least some major points in God's economy of salvation are marked in the *EX*, and that the Jews no longer play any part in it.

It seems, thus, that the first, the "Western", part of the *EX* does not present

anything unusual in the Syriac historiography or the vision of history. Let us add that the switch from the Jewish high priests to the Christian ones was taken over from ME.<sup>70</sup> It is kept within the general vision of the Christian view of history.

Things are more complicated, however, with the vision of history as presented in the second, the "Eastern," part of the *EX*. This seems to be entirely construed by BE. It is the first and, as far as I know, last time in Syriac historiography that an author officiating in the "East" makes such a claim on behalf of the tradition of his office, the maphrianate.

The division of the chronicle itself into the part providing information on the "Western" and "Eastern" hierarchs is important. These geographical terms are to be understood from the point of view of the author, who was a *maphrian* of the Jacobite Church, i.e., a hierarch second only to the patriarch, in charge of the eastern provinces of the Church, which had once been under Persian authority. The office had had a long tradition before BE's pontificate, even though the name itself is younger, used perhaps from Marutha's time (7<sup>th</sup> century) or from a later epoch.<sup>71</sup> By the decision of a church synod the office disappeared in 1850, but it was re-established in 1964, only then not for Iraq but for India.<sup>72</sup>

The reunification of the Jacobite bishoprics in Persia with the Jacobite Church of the Empire was brought about by the patriarch Athanasius Gammala ("Camel driver", 595–631) on the eve of the Arab conquests of the two empires. Nevertheless, due to the long time that the Eastern congregations lived separately, the Persian branch of the Jacobite Church developed a feeling of independence. Apparently, BE inherited this

feeling (although he himself originated from Malatya, from the western part of Aramea, the Aramaic-speaking area), to such a degree that he saw it as natural to provide a historical account of his office in the *EX*.

In the introduction to the *Chronography* he writes: “This last (part, i.e. the *EX*) I have sealed in two discourses; the first treateth of the Western high-priesthood which is of Antioch, and the second treateth of our own Eastern high-priesthood.”<sup>73</sup>

It does not seem probable that BE believed that his office was started by the apostle Thomas. He accepted many legends on the origin of Christianity in the region beyond the Euphrates—including the *Addai-Abgar story*—which became useful for BE as filling, so to speak, the *fila episcopatum*. However, perhaps the most surprising element here is the shifting character of the *rēškāhnūthā dā-madhnāḥā*. In the beginning it is a common Christian history (legendary, as it may be), and then it turns to presenting activities of hierarchs who are known from the ancient traditions of the Persian Church. All this cannot be understood as anything but an orthodox procedure, but then it shows interest in hierarchs who are essential for the spread of the “Nestorian” theology, such as BarSawma (of Nisibis), and then again switches to the Syriac Orthodox hierarchs, the holders of the office of maphrianate.

It is difficult to believe that BE was unaware of his “zigzag” exposition: there is no apostolic succession,<sup>74</sup> such as one could claim for the see of Antioch (albeit differently seen by the two parts on both sides of the Chalcedonian vs. anti-Chalcedonian divide). He certainly understood that putting together a list of ecclesiastical hierarchs one after another is a procedure with a deeper theological meaning than listing the earthly

kingdoms (*yubbālē*). While the latter is only proof of transience (in accordance with the Danielic vision), the former is proof of the direct line of the transmission of the deposit of faith. This originated with God, who put it into the hands of Moses, who conferred it upon Aaron, the latter upon Eleazar, etc. How, then, could BE imagine the act of *impositio manum* (*səyāmīdhā*) between, say, Baboway and Ahudhemmeḥ, whose lemmata come one after another?

He did not. Rather, one might say, his scholarly nature as a historian got the upper hand over his sensitivity as a theologian. It seems that he was confronted with a clear presence of ecclesiastical affairs in the territory of the maphrianate, and decided to show it in his work. He must have thought that the region of his ecclesiastical office had had a glorious past, and that it should be documented. Since in his vision the history of the church is mainly a history of her hierarchs, he felt obliged to construe a list of such, which, although somewhat unorthodox from the canonical point of view, seemed to him acceptable from the historical. In this way he would cover not only the official, so to speak, ecclesiastical history of the western part of his church, but also that of the eastern. Since, however, it was coextensive with that of the Church of the East, the history of the latter found its place in BE’s work, too.

To sum up, BE’s *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* is not a conventional piece of Syriac historiography that simply continued the work of documenting history from the place where his predecessors in the art of writing history stopped. Of course he did this, but not only this. He developed the idea of a chronicle-like organizing of historiographical material in reference to the area that no West Syrian historian before him



had ever trod upon. He may have been faced with some theological difficulties, but as a historian he could not accept the limitations imposed by such a consideration. Moreover, given his ecumenical attitude, the episcopal succession through the

legitimate *impositio manum* weighed lighter for him than the need to document the course of history that otherwise would have never been taken up. For this—not to mention his “normal” work of a historian—we should be grateful to him.

## NOTES

\* Abbreviations: BE – Bar'Ebroyo; CSCO SS – Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium: Scriptorum Syri; *EX* – *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* (of BE), fb – (the line of the Syriac text counted) from the bottom, *EH* – *Ecclesiastical History* (*Church History*), l. – line, ME – Michael the Elder (his *Chronicle*, (*Chronique de Michel le Syrien patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*), éd. et trad. en français par J.-B. Chabot, I-IV (Paris: E. Leroux, 1899-1924) is quoted by pages, columns: a – central (secular), b – innermost (varia), c – outermost (ecclesiastical), and lines; the translation by pages only.

<sup>1</sup> The name under which he has been most often referred to in scholarly literature, namely the 'patronymic' *BarHebraeus*, is a falsely Latinised form of what in Syriac is Bar'Ebroyo. This Latinised form deceived generations of scholars into believing that he was of Jewish descent (Bar 'Ebhryā - Syr. 'the son of a Hebrew'), whereas the 'patronymic' only points to the fact that his family originated in the village of 'Ebro (class. Syr. 'Ebhryā near Melitene). Cf. Jean Fathi-Chelhod, "L'origine du nom Bar 'Ebroyo: une vieille histoire d'homonymes," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies*, 4.1 (2001), <http://syrcom.cua.edu/hugoye>.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the present paper the Syriac names will be given in conventional forms, most often in today's *Kthobonoyo* (Western Syriac) pronunciation. In parentheses, however, for uniformity's sake early Classical Syriac transcription and pronunciation will be provided, no matter whether the author lived in early Classical period (conventionally up to the Arab conquests, when such a transcription would be historically proper) or if he lived in the thirteenth century, i.e. at the end of the late classical period of Syriac literature (as is the case with BE). Consequently spirantization (marked with *-h-* after the *begadhkephat* consonants, and not with underlining), gemination and *schewa* will be fully

applied. Unpronounced letters are put in parentheses.

<sup>3</sup> Generally on him see: W. Witkowski, "Syriac historiographical sources," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 132 (2006) 251-281, and the literature there provided. All accounts of BE's life in secondary literature derive ultimately from his life provided in the *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* (*EX*), II, coll. 431-485, supplemented by his biography by Gabriel of Bartelle (d. 1300); Assad Sauma, "Commentary on the 'Biography' of Bar Hebraeus," *Aram* (Stockholm) 7 (1998) 35-68.

<sup>4</sup> As has been shown by Herman G.B. Teule, "The Crusades in Barhebraeus' Syriac and Arabic Secular Chronicles: a Different Approach," in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context – Contacts – Confrontations: Acts of the Congress held at Hernen Castle in May 1993*, ed. K. Ciggaar, A. Davids & H. Teule, OLA 75 (Louvain: Peeters, 1996), Hebraeus et son public à travers ses chroniques en syriaque et en arabe," *Le Muséon* 118 (2005) 87-107, who does not know Teule's work.

<sup>5</sup> Generally on the Syriac chronicles of the late classical period see my paper quoted above, n. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Bar-Hebraei Chronicon Syriacum e codicibus Bodleianis descriptum*, ed. P.J. Bruns et G.W. Kirsch (Leipzig, 1789); the Latin translation volume was published in the same year.

<sup>7</sup> *Kāthābhā dā-makhtbānūth zabhnē dā-sīm lāmār(y) Grēghōrīyos Bar 'Ebhryā [=] Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Syriacum e codd. mss. emendatum ac punctis vocalibus adnotationibusque locupletatum*, [ed. Paul Bedjan] (Paris: J.-P. Maisonneuve, 1890).

<sup>8</sup> *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l-Faraj 1225-1286, the Son of Aaron, the Hebrew Physician, known as Bar Hebraeus, being the first part of his Political History of the World*, ed. and tr. by E.A.W. Budge, vol. 1: *English translation*; vol. 2: *Facsimiles of the Syriac texts in the*

Bodleian MS. Hunt No 62 (London: Oxford University Press, 1932; repr. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1976).

<sup>9</sup> See the literature quoted in Witakowski, *op cit.*

<sup>10</sup> A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur: mit Ausschluß der christlich-palästinensischen Texte* (Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber, 1922 [= Berlin 1968]), 318, n. 6.

<sup>11</sup> E. Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften, Abth. I-II*, Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin, 23. Bd. (Berlin 1899), 721.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> G.H. Bernstein, *Ankuendigung und Probe einer neuen kritischen Ausgabe und Uebersetzung der syrischen Chronik des Gregor Bar-Hebraeus* (Berlin, 1847), 3 (*non vidi*). For this reference, and generally for drawing my attention to Tullberg's material, I wish to thank Dr. Hidemi Takahashi, Tokyo.

<sup>14</sup> Professor of Oriental languages at the University of Uppsala 1843-53, the same who was the first to publish a part of the *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, see W. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē: A Study in the History of Historiography*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis: Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 7 (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 1987), 30-31.

<sup>15</sup> Uppsala University Library Ms. Syr IV:1-4 contains the full Syriac text of the *Chronography* (both parts), a Latin translation of fragments, and philological notes. K.V. Zetterstéen, "Report on the Manuscripts Left by the Late Professor O. F. Tullberg and Now in the Library of Uppsala University," *Le Monde Oriental* 2 (1907-08) 70-71 (66-83).

<sup>16</sup> Gregorii Barhebraei *Chronicon ecclesiasticum* quod e codice Musei Britannici descriptum conjuncta opera ediderunt, latinitate donarunt annotationibusque theologicis, historicis, geographicis et archaeologicis illustrarunt Joannes Baptista Abbeloos et Thomas Josephus Lamy, t. I (Lovanii, 1872), t. II (Parisiis & Lovanii, 1874), t. III (Parisiis & Lovanii, 1877).

<sup>17</sup> It contains 226 folios, J. Rosen & F. For-

shall, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo Britannico asservantur: Pars prima codicos Syriacos et Carshunicos amplectens* (Londini, 1838), 90-91.

<sup>18</sup> *Non vidi*; I owe this information to Dr. Assad Sauma Assad, Stockholm. The book has 447 pages.

<sup>19</sup> *Maxtavzavno d-eqlesyastiqi*, "Ecclesiastical Chronicle," ed. by Julius Yeshu' ([Glane] Holland, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> This does not mean that the genre came into being *ex nihilo* (see R. Mortley, "The Hellenistic foundations of ecclesiastical historiography," in *Reading the past in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Graeme Clarke, Rushcutters Bay [Australia: Australian National University Press, 1990], 225-250), but we have to omit discussion of this topic, as well as that of the Hellenistic roots of Luke's *Acts of the Apostles*.

<sup>21</sup> R.W. Burgess, "The dates and editions of Eusebius's *Chronici canones* and *Historia ecclesiastica*," *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 48 (1997) 501 (471-504).

<sup>22</sup> R.A. Markus, 'Church history and early church historians', in *The Materials, Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History: Papers Read at the Twelfth Summer Meeting and the Thirteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. D. Baker, Studies in Church History, 11 (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1975), 5 (1-17). To the topics mentioned above Markus adds the formation of the canon of the New Testament.

<sup>23</sup> G. Downey, "The perspectives of the early church historians," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 6 (1965) 65 (57-70).

<sup>24</sup> L. Van Rompay, "Some Preliminary Remarks on the Origins of Classical Syriac as a Standard Language: the Syriac Version of Eusebius of Caesarea's Ecclesiastical History," in *Semitic and Cushitic Studies*, ed. G. Goldenberg & Sh. Raz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 73, n. 15 (70-89).

<sup>25</sup> Not published.

<sup>26</sup> W. Witakowski, "The sources of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre for the Second Part of

his *Chronicle*,” in *Leimoon: Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén for his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. by J.O. Rosenqvist, Acta Universitatis Upsalensis: Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia, 6 (Uppsala, 1996), 183-184 (181-210). Here also is information on the extant Syriac manuscripts of Socrates’ work.

<sup>27</sup> Lives of Julian Saba and Jacob of Nisibis; see the introduction of P. Canivet & A. Leroy-Molinghen to their edition (& tr.) of Théodoret de Cyr, *Histoire des moines de Syrie*, “*Histoire Philothée*,” t. 1, Sources chrétiennes 234 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1977), 60-62.

<sup>28</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica Zachariae Rhetori vulgo adscripta*, t. I-II, ed. E.W. Brooks, CSCO [83-84], SS 3:5-6, textus [= 38-39] (Parisii, 1919-1921); interpr. est E.W. Brooks, CSCO [87-88], SS 3:5-6, versio [= 41-42] (Lovanii, 1924).

<sup>29</sup> Cp. W. Witakowski, “The *Miscellaneous History* of Pseudo-Zachariah of Mitylene,” forthcoming.

<sup>30</sup> This is the most studied Syriac historiographical work, to which no less than three monographs have been devoted, in 1856 by J.P.N. Land, *Joannes Bischof von Ephesos, der erste syrische Kirchenhistoriker*, Leyden, in 1905 by A. D’yakonov, *Ioann Yefesskiy i yego tserkovno-istoricheskkiye trudi*, S-Peterburg; and in 1995 by Jan J. van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus: a Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium*, (diss.) Groningen.

<sup>31</sup> According to Dorothea Weltecke’s research the column structure was once much more elaborated than it can be seen today in a simplified work of a copyist; D. Weltecke, *Die “Beschreibung der Zeiten” von Mōr Michael dem Großen (1126-1199): eine Studie zu ihrem historischen und historiographiegeschichtlichen Kontext*, CSCO 594, Subsidia 110 (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), 152-196.

<sup>32</sup> Maris, Amri et Slibae, *De patriarchis Nestorianorum commentaria*, ex codicibus Vaticanis ed. [ac latine reddidit] Henricus Gismondi, pars prior: Maris textus Arabicus (Romae, 1899), [Arabic]; Maris versio latina (Romae, 1899);

pars altera: Amri et Slibae textus, Romae 1896 [Arabic]; Amri et Slibae textus versio latina (Romae, 1897).

<sup>33</sup> The words so far are the copyist’s.

<sup>34</sup> The second part is published in the third volume of Abbeloos’s and Lamy’s edition, 1877, but since the first two volumes have common pagination, whereas the third has a separate one, we shall refer to the third volume as II.

<sup>35</sup> The words so far are the copyist’s

<sup>36</sup> ME 76c,84,2-13 /tr. I, 107; App. 741, /428; the number of the years of Onias in BE is not equal that in ME, who gives 36 years according to Jacob of Edessa (no. 36) and 14 according to Andronicos (no. 46).

<sup>37</sup> On the construction of a chronicle of Eusebian model see W. Witakowski, “The *Chronicle* of Eusebius; its Type and Continuation in Syriac Historiography,” *Aram Periodical* 11-12 (1999-2000) 419-437.

<sup>38</sup> See our forthcoming study on this text.

<sup>39</sup> In the methodology accepted here, historiographical texts are defined as being composed of the so-called ‘historical statements’ (i.e. ones which provide temporal and geographical coordinates). This means that the statement “Prince such-and-such arrived in such-and-such city in the year A.D. 1098” is historiographical (and has a logical value, i.e. it may be true or not), while the statement “Prince such-and-such arrived in such-and-such city” is literary-mythical (unless other conditions are filled, for instance that the date is provided in the beginning of a longer narrative of which the statement in question is a part).

<sup>40</sup> In the *Chronicle* of ME - f. 25c,13-16 /tr. 42; the 81<sup>st</sup> year in the translation is a mistake; Chabot took the Syriac letter numbers PZ (= 87) in the text for P’ (= 81).

<sup>41</sup> See below, the section on BE’s vision of history.

<sup>42</sup> BE follows ME (App. 1, 740 /tr. III, 429-430) but not slavishly.

<sup>43</sup> Col. 39,17—21: *wə-meṭṭul da-l(‘)awthentīyā dā-khursayā d-(‘)Anṭīyōkkhīyā māša ‘bādhīn ‘athrawwāthan madhnāhāyē. ‘al yubbāl qāyōmē*

*dīleh dīlānā`īth məṭakkəsīnnan l-yubbāl hānā. b(‘)īdhā b(‘)īdhā`ādhammā lə-zabhnā hānā də-bheh`īthayn.*

<sup>44</sup> W. Witakowski, “Chronicles of Edessa,” *Orientalia Suecana* 33-35 (1984-86) 491-492 (487-498).

<sup>45</sup> Against whom Basil the Great wrote his *Contra Eunomium*, c. 363/64.

<sup>46</sup> One of the few mentions of emperors, 101,15-105,9. In fact, in the same lemma also Jovian, Valentinus, Valens, and Gratian are mentioned.

<sup>47</sup> E.g. in the *Zuqnin Chronicle*, see W. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle*, *op. cit.* above, n. 14, p. 117.

<sup>48</sup> See the list in Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, *Chronicle (known also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin) Part III*: tr. by W. Witakowski, *Translated Texts for Historians*, 22 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 19-20.

<sup>49</sup> See the incipit quoted above (in the section on the title).

<sup>50</sup> The physician Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (Melkite, died 912, G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, 2: *Die Schriftsteller bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts*, Studī e Testi 133, (Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1960 [= 1947]), 30-32. No work of his, which would contain a story of Thomas, is known.

<sup>51</sup> *Les Actes de Mar Mari*, ed. & trad. par C. Jullien & F. Jullien, CSCO 602-603, SS 234-235 (Louvain: Peeters, 2003).

<sup>52</sup> This form of his name is known from the *Book of the Tower*, Arabic text 133b, Latin tr. p. 4; see above note 32.

<sup>53</sup> According to the *Book of the Tower*, he was from Jesus’ family, sent to the East from Jerusalem; *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> This is the spelling in the text, notwithstanding BE’s explanation, which would require the spelling *Barba`šāmīn*, or *B(‘)arba`šāmīn* (unless, of course it is an error of the copyist(s) or of the editors).

<sup>55</sup> The story is far away from being authentic. It is rather an invention of a Jacobite ecclesiastic, such as BE, who in this way explains the origin of the opposite Christology getting rooted in the

Persian Church. However, *si non é vero, é ben trovato*.

<sup>56</sup> Told about in the preceding lemma.

<sup>57</sup> For the Ahudhemmeḥ’s *vita* see: *Histoires d’Ahoudemmeḥ et de Marouta, métropolitains jacobites de Tagrit et de l’Orient (VI<sup>e</sup> et VII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, publ., trad. et annotés par F. Nau, *PO* 3:1 [= 11] (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1905).

<sup>58</sup> Which he also showed elsewhere: in the *Book of the Dove (Bar Hebraeus’ Book of the Dove together with some chapters from his Ethicon*, transl. by A. Wensinck [Leiden: Brill, 1919], 60), quoted by H.G.B. Teule in his: “*It is not right to call ourselves orthodox and the others heretics: ecumenical attitudes in the Jacobite church in the time of the Crusaders*,” in *East and West in the Crusader States: Context – Contacts – Confrontations*, Acts of the Congress held at Hernen Castle in May 1997, vol. 2, ed. by K. Ciggaar & H. Teule, OLA 92 (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), p. 22: “Thus I discovered that all Christian peoples, notwithstanding their differences, are in concord with each other.”

<sup>59</sup> There is also a further continuation up to 1582, which however remains unpublished, S. Brock, “Syriac Historical Writing: A Survey of the Main Sources [sic],” *Journal of the Iraqi Academy, Syriac Corporation* 5 (1979-80) 21 (1-30).

<sup>60</sup> Budge’s facsimile edition, pp. 1va-b, Engl. tr., pp. 1-2.

<sup>61</sup> Budge’s facs. ed.

<sup>62</sup> In the badly preserved, unique manuscript of the *Chronicle* of Jacob of Edessa no such list can be found.

<sup>63</sup> According to Jan van Ginkel (*Michael der Grosse und die Priesterwürde*, paper read at the Africanus-Tagung, Eisenach, May 2005), ME brought the two together being unable to decide which of them was “true”.

<sup>64</sup> ME 741, tables on the left side /tr. III,427-428).

<sup>65</sup> This quotation comes from Socr., *HE*, 7:32. The quotation can also be found in *Chronicle* of ME (172b,11-3fb / tr. II,15), but the latter does not say that it comes from Socrates.

<sup>66</sup> ME 124,b (but continuing a), 22-23, /tr. I, 244.

<sup>67</sup> On the textual history, the authorship's question, and the two versions of the *Book of the Tower*, see: Bo Holmberg, "A reconsideration of the *Kitāb al-Maḡdal*," *Parole de l'Orient* 18 (1993) 255-273.

<sup>68</sup> *Op. cit.* above, n. 32.

<sup>69</sup> A list of the East Syrian *catholicoi* can also be found in the 13<sup>th</sup> century work of Solomon, metropolitan of Basra: [Solomon of Basra], *The Book of the Bee*, edited with an English translation by E.A.W. Budge, *Anecdota Oxoniensia: Semitic series*, I:2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), Syr. QL'-QLH [131-135], tr. 115-119.

<sup>70</sup> ME, App. 1, 743 (two last columns), 745 /tr. 429.

<sup>71</sup> It is Marutha who is called the first *maphrian* by BE, II,117,7-6 fb: *Mārūthā maphrāyānā qadhmāya d-īthebh bā-Thā(')ghrīth*; P. Kawerau,

*Die Jakobitische Kirche im Zeitalter der syrischen Renaissance: Idee und Wirklichkeit*, Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), 23. According to W. Hage, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche in frühislamischer Zeit: nach orientalischen Quellen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966), 25-26, the title was used from the 11th century on. For Marutha's *vita* see above n. 57.

<sup>72</sup> Ignatius Zakka[y] I Iwas, *En inblick i Syrisk Ortodoxa Kyrkan av Antiokia* (1997), p. 26

<sup>73</sup> Budge's transl., p. 2; the facs. ed., f. 1vb. Dorothea Weltecke mentioned this explanation of BE in her paper 'Die drei grossen syrisch-orthodoxen Chroniken im Vergleich', read at the "Africanus-Tagung", Eisenach, May 2005.

<sup>74</sup> Cp. E. Molland, "Le développement de l'idée de succession apostolique," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 34 (1954) 1-29.

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