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## Assyrians in History

by Mark Gewargis — January 29, 2021.

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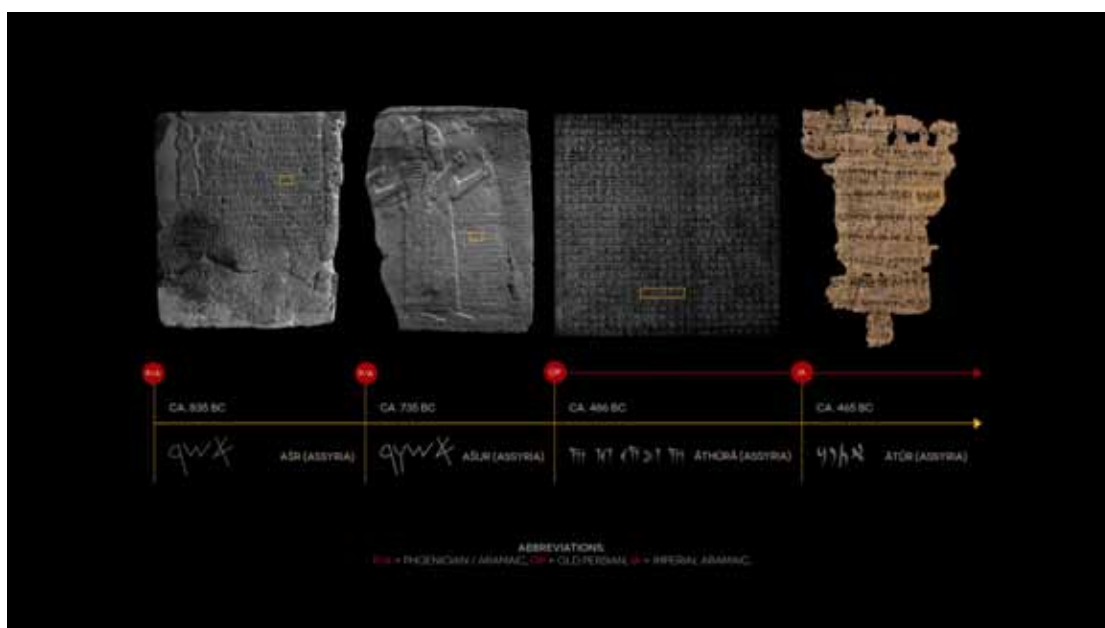
Chronology of historical references to Assyrians.

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## THE KURKH MONOLITHS: CA. 883-859 BC



BM118884

A. Kirk Grayson and the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia (RIM) Project, 1991.

### TRANSLATION:

According to a stele excavated in Kurkh (Üçtepe, Diyarbakır, Turkey) known to us as the Kurkh Monoliths, a population of Assyrians from Assyria were settled in Hakkâri and surrounding territories during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC). Historically, the ancient name of this territory was Nairi and corresponded to a region which extended northward to the Sea of Nairi (Lake Van) in the Urartian highlands. This is one of the most significant archaeological finds as not only does it testify that an Assyrian settlement existed in the region of Hakkâri prior to the sack of Nineveh, but also certifies the indigenous roots of the modern Assyrians of south-east Turkey.

### The text reads:

*"I (Ashurnasirpal II) resettled in their abandoned cities and houses Assyrians who had held fortresses of Assyria in the lands of Nairi (i.e. Hakkâri and surrounding territories)... I placed them in a peaceful abode."*

## FALL OF NINEVEH TABLET: 616-609 BC



### TRANSLATION:

*"...Aššur-uballit (II) ascended to  
the throne in Harran to rule  
Assyria...."*

 BM21901

## ZIGGURAT OF AŠŠUR TABLET: BRITISH MUSEUM / NEO-BABYLONIAN PERIOD



BM 38217

### DESCRIPTION:

The following tablet features the master plan for the reconstruction of the ziggurat of Aššur. According to the British Museum, this tablet is dated to the Neo-Babylonian period, following the conquest of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This suggests that the ziggurat was being re-constructed as a place of worship for the Assyrian population.

## ASSYRIAN SALES CONTRACT: BRITISH MUSEUM / LATE ACHAEMENID PERIOD



### DESCRIPTION:

The following bi-lingual tablet was excavated in Nineveh and is dated to the late Achaemenid period. Composed in both Akkadian and Aramaic, this tablet is a sales contract for barley and emmer. Based on this sales contract, a number of "witnesses" bearing theophoric Assyrian personal names can be attested demonstrating continuity of culture.

BM K.5424.c

## ADMINISTRATIVE TEXT: ACHAEMENID PERIOD



 Tablet Fort. 1204–101

### DESCRIPTION:

This is **Tablet Fort. 1204–101**. This ancient tablet was found by German archaeologist Ernst Emil Herzfeld between 1931–34 in the Persian city of Persepolis and is dated to the Achaemenid Empire. This is an administrative text that records “beer rations” given to “624 Assyrian workers”. These Assyrians, who were sent to Persepolis from Assyria, were among the many subject nations that contributed to the construction of royal palaces in the Persian heartland. The text is written in Elamite, which was one of the “official languages” of the empire, and the adjective Assyrian is inscribed as follows: *Āššūriyā*. This tablet is just one of the 30,000 tablets that were excavated in the city of Persepolis. There are a dozen tablets that document the existence of Assyrian workers in the Persian heartland as well as attest to the continuity of the Assyrians following the decline of their empire.



## CYRUS CYLINDER: BRITISH MUSEUM / 539 BC



 Cyrus Cylinder ('90920')

### TRANSLATION LINE(S) 30-32:

*"From Babylon to Aššur (Assyria) and from Susa, Agade, Ešnunna, Zamban, Me-Turnu, Der, as far as the region of Gutium, the sacred centers on the other side of the Tigris, whose sanctuaries had been abandoned for a long time, I returned the images of the gods, who had resided there to their places and I let them dwell in eternal abodes. I gathered all their inhabitants and returned to them their dwellings..."*



## APADANA EASTERN STAIRCASE: PERSEPOLIS / 522-486 BC



▲ The following relief depicts the *Āthurīyā* (Assyrian) delegation offering tribute to King Darius of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. The toponym *Āthor* and gentilic *Āthorāyē* is derived from the Old-Persian *Āthura* and *Āthuriyā*. Remarkably, the fifth-century BC can be seen as a transition period during which *Āthorāyā* came to be used as a self-designation by the Assyrians.



## ELAMITE FOUNDATION TABLET: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRAN / 522-486 BC



 Elamite Foundation Tablet ('DsZ')



### TRANSLATION LINE(S) 26-32:

*"And the beams of cedar wood  
were brought from a mountain  
called Lebanon.*

*The **Āššūrap** (Assyrians)  
transported them as far as  
Babylon, and from Babylon the  
Carians and the Ionians  
transported them to Susa.  
And the yaka timber was  
brought from Gandhara and  
from Kerman."*

## DAIVĀ INSCRIPTION: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRAN / 486-465 BC



▲ Daivā Inscription (XPH)

### TRANSLATION LINE(S) 22:

The Daivā Inscription (XPH) presents *Āthūrā* (Assyria), the Old-Persian rendering of the Akkadian name *Āššūr*, as one of the subject nations under Xerxes' dominion.

*"King Xerxes says: By the grace of Ahuramazda these are the countries of which I was king apart from Persia. I had lordship over them. They bore me tribute. What was said to them by me, that they did. My law, that held them: Media, Elam, Arachosia, Armenia, Drangiana, Parthia, Aria, Bactria, Sogdia, Chorasmia, Babylonia, Āthūrā (Assyria), Sattagydia, Lydia, Egypt"*

# HERODOTUS: CA. 484-425 BC



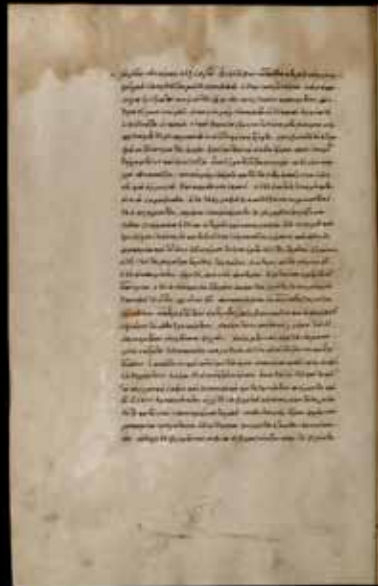
Herodoti, *Halicarn Assai Historiarum Lib. IX*  
Editio Secunda (Excudebat Henricus Stephanus,  
1592), 463.

## DESCRIPTION:

Historically, the name Syria[n] was derived from Assyria[n]. Archaeological evidence such as the Çineköy Inscription, an ancient monument (eighth-century BC) that was excavated in the village of Çine (30 km south of Adana, Turkey), attests to this. The monument features a bi-lingual Phoenician and Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription. In Phoenician, the toponym Assyria and the gentilic Assyrians are spelled as *Asur* & *Asurim*, while its Luwian counterpart has *Surali* to cover both forms. Amid their contact with the Near East, particularly in the south Anatolian territories, classical Greeks therefore adopted the shortened form employed by the Luwians. By the Seleucid-Greek period, cultural and civic categories were imposed upon their subjects, one of which was the formation of a Syrian *ethnos*. Since Assyrians and other classical communities (i.e. Aramean tribes, west of the Euphrates River) by Seleucid rule are considered to have spoken the same language, Greeks increasingly categorised them as one and the same—Syrians. In his *Histories*, the fifth-century BC Greek historian Herodotus explains: "this people, whom the Greeks call Syrians [in reference to those east of the Euphrates River], are called Assyrians by the barbarians [non-Greeks]". Strabo, citing Posidonius of Apameia (mod. Hama Governorate, Syria,) stated that "the people we Greeks call Syrians [in reference to those west of the Euphrates] were called by the Syrians themselves Arameans." By contrast, the Assyrians were distinct from the Arameans in pre-Hellenistic times. The Greeks, nonetheless, complicated this distinction.

# K- -H \ III KI QI H # K- \  
lyam Āthūriyā/ This is an Assyrian

## CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: CA. 150-215 AD



Manuscript: Codex Greek 250, f. 3v

### DESCRIPTION:

Clement of Alexandria was an early Christian theologian and philosopher. He was a convert to Christianity and was familiar with classical Greek philosophy and literature. In his book titled *Stromata* (composed ca. 198-203 AD), Clement of Alexandria writes about those "men, preserving the true tradition of the blessed doctrine, directly from the holy apostles, Peter and James and John and Paul". Clement identifies these men in the following passage: "of these the one—the Ionian—was in Greece, the other in Magna Græcia; the one of them was from Cœle-Syria, the other from Egypt. There were others in the East, one of them an *Assyrian*, the other a Hebrew in Palestine."



## ABDISSAR: CA. FIRST-CENTURY BC



 Coinage of Abdissar

### TRANSLATION:

Abdissar (Aramaic: 'bd 'šr "servant of Ištar" or "of Iššar") was the first Assyrian king of Adiabene. While most of the ruling class from this period bore Iranian and/or Hellenistic names (due to imperial influences), the name Abdissar is Assyrian in origin. In fact, the theophoric personal name is attested in various Neo-Assyrian inscriptions (cf. Iššar-šumu-ereš, Iššar-našir-duri). Furthermore, the Assyrian city of Arbelā (mod. Erbil, Iraq) historically served as the capital of Adiabene and was the cult centre for the worship of the goddess Ištar. It is worth noting that, Abdissar is represented on the famed rock relief at Bātās-Harir (approximately 50 km north-east of Erbil). The relief depicts the Assyrian monarch in profile dressed in ceremonial attire with his right arm raised and holding a spear or staff in his left hand. The artistic representation of Abdissar is consistent with the Assyrian stelae excavated at the city of Āššūr (i.e. Rāhat-Āššūr "Solace of Āššūr") dating to the same historical period.



## STELE FROM AŠŠUR: ISTANBUL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS / 12 AD

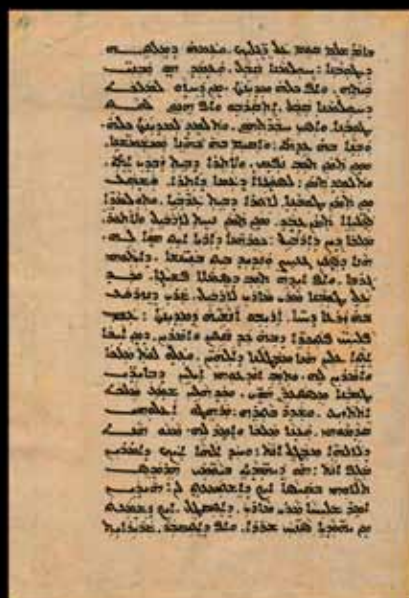


### DESCRIPTION:

The following stele is currently housed at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum. The artefact depicts a *Māryā* (Governor, Lord) of Aššur, Rāḫat-Assur ("Solace of Aššūr"). This is stele demonstrates that the worship of the Assyrian supreme deity Aššur, as well as other members of the Assyrian pantheon, continued during the advent of Christianity. The symbolism as depicted on the stele is consistent with ancient Assyrian art. Furthermore, the attire compliments folk clothing worn by Assyrians today.

*"[In] the year 300 + 20 + 3 (323 = 12 AD), the image of Rāḫat-Assur ("Solace of Aššūr"), son of B-Nabū-Aḫdīt ("I have rejoiced in Nabū"), Which he dedicated [to] Ištāt (Ištar) For his life and the life of 'Aynay his son."*

## THE ACTS OF MĀR MĀRĪ: FIRST-CENTURY AD



MS. Syr. 75, fol 56v

### DESCRIPTION:

The Acts of Mār Mārī the Apostle is considered to be an early Syriac-Christian text that discusses the introduction of Christianity to upper Mesopotamia, particularly in **Āthōr (Assyria)** and Arbelā. According to tradition, Mār Mārī was the disciple of Mār Addai and was instructed to preach Christianity in this region. The conversion of upper Mesopotamia was achieved through preaching and a series of miracles that struck the imagination and the hearts of the ethnic Assyrians. As soon as a city or town was converted, Mār Mārī is said to have founded a church, monastery, and school, appointing priests, deacons, and teachers over them. The date of composition of the Acts of Mār Mārī is controversial. Some scholars date the text to the sixth- or seventh-century, whereas others prefer a later date due to anachronistic references.

## INSCRIPTION FROM AŠŠUR: B. AGGOULA / CA. 189 AD



Artefact 17073, Translation No. 29

### TRANSLATION:

The following commemorative inscription was discovered in the city of Aššur. This inscription demonstrates that the ancient theophoric personal names such as *Aššur*, *Assarhaddōn* and *'Assurtāreš* were in use during the early Christian period. This piece of archaeological evidence also proves that an ethnic Assyrian population thrived in this city and attests their continuity post-empire.

## INSCRIPTION FROM AŠŠUR: B. AGGOULA / CA. 200 AD



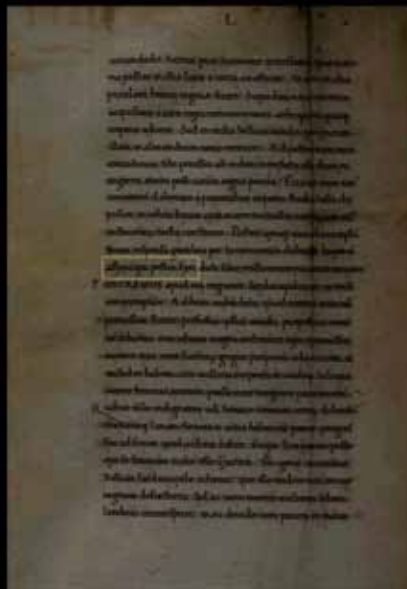
Artefact 17062, Translation No. 18

### TRANSLATION:

The following commemorative inscription was discovered in the city of Aššur. This inscription demonstrates that the ancient theophoric personal name *Assarḫaddōn* was in use during the early Christian period. This piece of archaeological evidence also proves that an ethnic Assyrian population thrived in this city and attests their continuity post-empire.

*"[May be remembered ... son of]  
'Assurḫedden (Assarḫaddōn)  
before 'Assur and Serūl"*

## MARCUS JUNIANUS JUSTINUS: HISTORIES, BOOK 1 / CA. 200-300 AD



### TRANSLATION:

"The *Assyrians*, who were afterwards called *Syrians*, held their empire thirteen hundred years."

English Translation of Manuscript:  
John Selby Watson, *Justin, Cornelius Nepos and Eutropius* (London: G. Bell, 1853), 5.

## ACTS OF SHARBIL: SECOND-CENTURY AD



▲ Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* vol. 1 (Paris: Otto Harrassowitz, 1892), 95.

▶ William Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity* (Williams & Norgate, 1864), 41.

### DESCRIPTION:

The Acts of Sharbil is a Syriac-Christian martyrdom text regarding a pagan high priest who was martyred for converting to Christianity. The setting takes place in second-century AD Edessa (mod. Şanlıurfa, Turkey.). The significance of the Acts of Sharbil is that the text records the continuity of the ancient Assyrian new year festival which was still celebrated and where the deities Nebu and Bel were worshipped. The text informs us *"when the edict arrived at the city of Edessa of the Parthians, it was the great festival on the eighth of Nissan, on the third day of the week. The whole city was assembled together near the great altar which was in the middle of the city opposite the office of records, all the gods having been brought together, and been decorated, and set up in honor, both Nebu and Bel together with their companions."*



## DOCTRINE OF MĀR ADDAI: CA. 300-400 AD



MSS. Syr. 4, fol. 119.

### TRANSLATION:

"Easterners with the appearance of merchants passed into the country of the Romans to see the miracles which Addai performed, and those of them who became disciples, received priestly consecration from them, and in their own country of the *Āthōrāyē* (Assyrians) they taught the sons of their nation, and they clandestinely built houses of prayer there secretly, because of the danger arising from the worshippers of fire and the adorers of water. But Nersai, the king of the *Āthōrāyē* (Assyrians), when he had heard of these things which Addai the Apostle had done, he sent to Abgar, the king; either send me the man..."



## MĀR AWGIN: ACTA MARTYRUM ET SANCTORUM / CA. 300-363 AD



▲ Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* vol. 3 (Paris: Otto Harrassowitz, 1892), 446.

### DESCRIPTION:

*Mār Awgin is traditionally regarded as one of the earliest saints who introduced monasticism into Assyria. According to his hagiography, Mār Awgin is said to have been a pearl-fisher at Clyisma, near Suez (mod. Suez, Egy.) and a disciple of Pachomius. It is reported that Mār Awgin set out to the Assyrian city of Sarguga (mod. Şırnak, Tur.), in which according to tradition "Šar-ušur, son of Sennacherib, had settled when he fled from the city of Nineveh," following the assassination of his father. In Sarguga, Šar-ušur "built his father's temple and was revering it, and the offspring and descendants preserved it until the time in which the saint (Mār Awgin) arrived there." This is an obvious reference to the Biblical narrative, nonetheless, the significance of this text lies in the fact the hagiographer recognizes and traces these descendants to an Assyrian past.*

## MĀR APRĒM (EPHREM) SŪRYĀYĀ: CA. 306-373 AD



### TRANSLATION:

*"Great Āthōr (Assyria) when she perceived it— called to the Magi and said to them,— take gifts and go honour Him— the great King Who in Judea has dawned."*

In a lullaby composed by Mār Aprēm from the same manuscript and attributed to the blessed Virgin Mary:

*"May Persia rejoice in your glad tidings!— may Āthōr (Assyria) exult in your coming- And when my Son's Kingdom shall arise,— may He plant his standard in your country!"*

▲ Manuscript: MS14506

▶ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series ed. 13* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007).

### Related Information

📖 [350: Hymn Composed by St. Ephrem the Great | Mar Aprim Rabba \(nightly bedtime prayer\).](#)

## AWTEL THE ASSYRIAN: CA. 329 AD



BNF Syr. 236, fol. 111r (composed in 1194)

### DESCRIPTION:

According to the Syriac hagiography of Mār Malkē of Clysma (ca. 223-329 AD), Awtel, the saint's disciple was from *"the land of Āthōr (Assyria)"* and is also described as *"Awtel the Āthōrāyā (Assyrian)"*.

## AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS: CA. 330-391/400 AD



### DESCRIPTION:

Ammianus Marcellinus was a fourth-century AD Roman soldier and historian. In book 23 of his *Res Gestae*, Marcellinus explains that Adiabene was "called *Assyria* in ancient times, but by long custom changed to this name (*Adiabene*) because, lying between the navigable rivers Ona and Tigris it could never be approached by a ford; for we Greeks for transire say διαβαίνειν. At least, this is the opinion of the ancients. But I myself say that there are two perpetually flowing rivers to be found in these lands, the Diabas and Adiabas, which I myself have crossed, and over which there are bridges of boats; and therefore it is to be assumed that *Adiabena* was named from them". Marcellinus also positions Nineveh and Arbela within Adiabene.

▲ Ammianus Marcellinus: *Historiae* (Rome: Sachsel, Georg; Golsch, Bartholomaeus, 1474).

## MĀR BEHNAM: CA. 352 AD



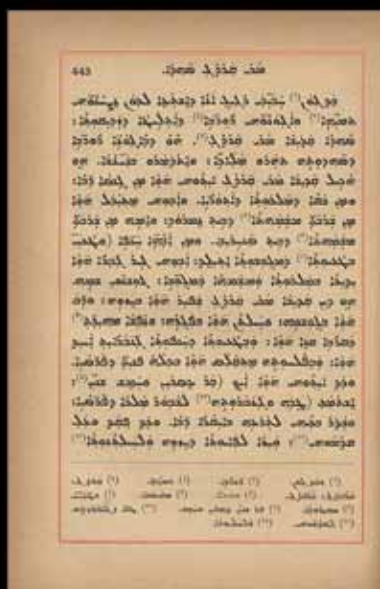
▲ Manuscript: Syr. 128

▶ The following manuscript is attributed to Mār Ya'qub Sruḡāyā or Jacob of Sarug (ca. 451-521 AD)

### DESCRIPTION:

Mār Behnam was the "son of Sennacherib the king of *Athor* (*Assyria*)" who ruled under the reign of Šāpur II. While on a hunting expedition he lost his way and was forced to spend a night in a cave in the mountains north of Nineveh. There he met Mār Matta who lived in one of these caves and was informed of the new religion (Christianity). Behnam was greatly impressed by the saint and, having heard of his miraculous powers, he asked him whether he could cure his sister Sarah who was suffering from an incurable disease. When she was cured by the saint, both Behnam and his sister Sarah embraced the Christian faith. On hearing the news, their father asked them to renounce their new religion, but they refused. As a result, he ordered their execution.

# MĀR QARDAGH: ACTA MARTYRUM ET SANCTORUM / 360-380 AD



## TRANSLATION:

"Holy Saint Qardagh was from  
the great race and lineage of the  
kingdom of the Āthōrāyē  
(Assyrians)"

▲ Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* vol. 2  
(Paris: Otto Harrassowitz, 1890-1895), 443.



# MĀR QARDAGH: ACTA MARTYRUM ET SANCTORUM / 360-380 AD



## TRANSLATION:

*"The blessed 'Abdīshō answered and said to him (Mār Qardagh), As it was told to me by my parents, they were from Ḥazza, a village in the lands of the Āthōrāyē (Assyrians)."*

### Important Note

Hazza is situated some 12 km south-east of Arbela (mod. Erbil, Iraq).

▲ Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* vol. 2 (Paris: Otto Harrassowitz, 1890-1895), 448.

▶ Joel Thomas Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh: Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq* (University of California Press, 2006), 26.



## THEODORET: ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY / CA. 393-457 AD

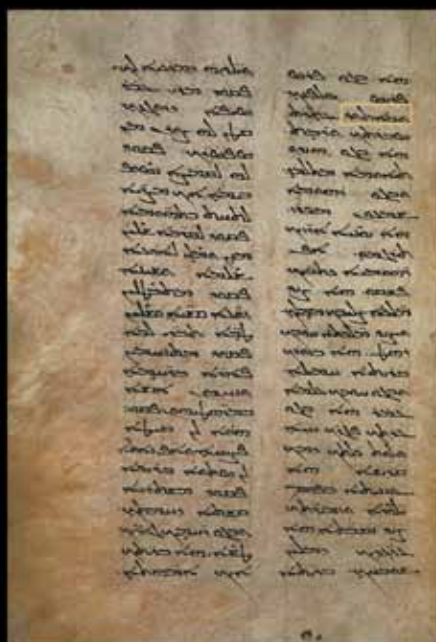


BNF Grec. 1433, fol. 196r

### DESCRIPTION:

Theodoret was a Syrian theologian at the school of Antioch, and Bishop of Cyrrhus (ancient city in modern Aleppo, Syria). He is considered to be an important source for the study of early church history. In Book 1, Chapter 6 of his *Ecclesiastical History* concerning the General Council of Nicaea, Theodoret informs us: "Mygdonia, which is called Nisibis by the Syrians and Assyrians". This reference is significant as Theodoret recognises Christian Syrians (those from geographical Syria, west of the Euphrates), and Christian Assyrians (those east of the Euphrates). Over time, the term "Syrians" was eventually adopted by the ethnic Assyrians in their language as "Sūryāyē" in a metaphorical and linguistic sense as they belonged to a larger multi-ethnic Syriac-speaking group. It is also worth noting that, Theodoret was well versed in the Greek and Syriac languages.

## MĀR CYRILLONA: CA. 396 AD



▲ Add. 14,591.

### DESCRIPTION:

Mār Cyrillona, also known as Mār Qūrillōnā was a late fourth-century AD Syriac-Christian author. Little is known about him or his precise ecclesiastical position except from what we can glean from his writings, a small collection of sermons and texts composed in Syriac. Mār Cyrillona is considered to be one of the earliest Syriac authors whose works have at all survived; a fact alone that makes him very significant. In his work titled *On the Scourges*, Mār Cyrillona informs us:

*"See how in Persia your doctrine is spread and in Assyria your gospel has prospered and grown."*

This reference is highly significant as it attests Assyria as a geographical reality during the early Christian period. Furthermore, the reference attests that Assyria and the ethnic Assyrians were among the first to embrace the Christian faith.

# MĀR NARSAI: VAT.SYR.498 (1890) / 400-550 AD

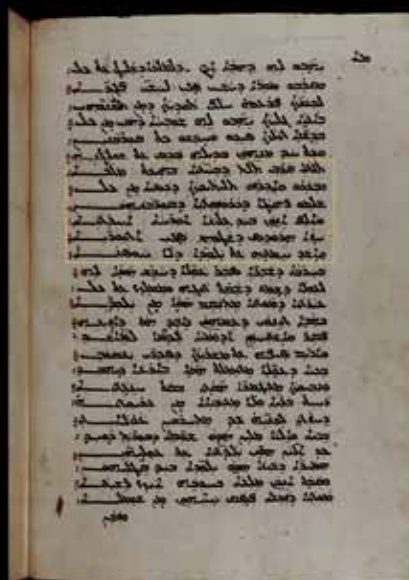


f102 (pictured above), f105-1106

## TRANSLATION:

"As great *Āthôr* (Assyria) realised, she called the Magi and told them; take offerings and go honour the great King that is born in Judea. Maryam: The height and depth bear witness to me, all the watchers and even the stars; that as a virgin I bore the Son, and He is the Son of God, go and proclaim Him! Persia will rejoice in your message, *Āthôr* (Assyria) will be happy with your procession; and when the light of my Son's kingdom shine, His peace will release within your borders. Magi: The Church will sing while rejoicing, "Glory in the birth of the most high!". For the height and depth are illuminated in Him, blessed is He whose birth illuminated the world..."

## MĀR NARSAI: MS.174 / 400-550 AD



MS. 174, fol. 43v

### TRANSLATION:

*"The three presented three sacrifices in the temple of the king, and they began early to preach the Trinity unseen to all. They completed the preaching phase of their sacrifices, and [the Lord] taught them another way through revelation. Herod saw that the Āthōrayē (Assyrians) dishonored him, and he poured out his wrath upon the children mercilessly."*

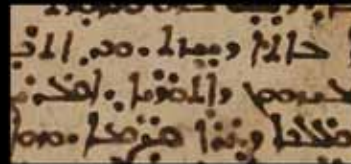
## MŌR JACOB OF SARUG: CA. 451-521 AD



### TRANSLATION:

Mōr Jacob of Sarug was one of the foremost Syriac poet-theologians. In his mēmṛē (homily) concerning the birth of our Lord and the star seen by the Magi, Mōr Jacob informs us that a "great star whose light is not from the firmament appeared there and shined and behold it *Āthōr* (Assyria) was alarmed by the sign it saw," and when the *Āthōrāyē* (Assyrian) wise men were gathered they said that the King who will disband the oracles will appear in Judea."

#### Selected Text



## JOHN MALALAS: CHRONOGRAPHIA / CA. 491-578 AD



 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Barocci 182.

### TRANSLATION:

John Malalas (c. 491-578 AD) was an ethnic Greek historian from Antioch in Syria. In book 8 of his Chronography, John informs us:

*"In the fourth year of the reign of Darius the Mede, the son of Assalamus, god sent Alexander the toparch (or king) of Macedonia, the son of Phillip, against the Assyrians and Persians and Parthians and Medes," and he "defeated Darius, the king of the Persians, the son of Assalamus, and captured him and all his kingdom, including all the lands of the Assyrians, Medes, Parthians, Babylonians and Persians".*



## KARKĀ D'BĒTH-SELŌK: ACTA MARTYRUM ET SANCTORUM / CA. 500 AD



▲ Paul Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum* vol. 2  
(Paris: Otto Harrassowitz, 1890-1895), 507.

### DESCRIPTION:

The history of Karkā d'Bēth-Selōk (lit. Fortress of the House of Seleucus) (mod. Kirkuk, Irq.) is derived from a fifth-century AD Syriac manuscript, according to which it was founded by the ancient Assyrian ruler, Sardanā (lit. Sardanapalus). According to tradition Sargon II built a palace there referred to as Karkā d'Sargon (lit. Fortress of Sargon). Following the establishment of the Seleucid Empire by Seleucus I Nicator, the fortress was re-developed and renamed to Fortress of the House of Seleucus. During the Christianisation period, the city was incorporated into the ecclesiastical province of Bēth-Garmaī. Transmission of such legends or folktales in textual records is an evident form of cultural continuity to an Assyrian past.



## MĀR SĒWĒRĀ OF NISIBIS: CA. 575-667 AD



BNF Syr. 346, fol. 169v

### DESCRIPTION:

Mār Sēwērā of Nisibis (ca. 575-667 AD), also known as Severus Sebokht was an ethnic Assyrian-Christian scholar and bishop of the Church of the East. Although little is known about his early life, Mār Sēwērā taught at the Theological School of Nisibis and left his post due to a doctrinal dispute with the Church of the East to become a prelate of the Syriac Orthodox Church. He is considered to be the first Syriac-Christian scholar to teach the "Hindu numerals" and "place-value" system outside of India and played a major role in translating philosophical and astronomical works from Greek into Syriac. In his *Treatise on the Constellations*, Mār Sēwērā informs us that it wasn't the Greeks, but the Assyrians/Babylonians who were masters of astronomy. Remarkably, Mār Sēwērā refers to these Assyrians/Babylonians as Sūryāyē (Syrians). This latter designation was due to the fact that the Assyrians (of his time) were considered to be part of the multi-ethnic "Syrian" or "Syriac" heritage.

## SYNOD OF MĀR ĪSHŌ'YAHB I: VATICAN ARCHIVES / 585 AD



### TRANSLATION:

*The priest and archdeacon Bar Aba was among the signatories of the acts of the synod of Mār Īshō'yahb I in 585 AD, on behalf of Hnana, "Metropolitan of the Āthōrāyē (Assyrians)".*

## THOMAS THE PRESBYTER: CA. 640 AD



▲ Add. MS. 14,643

### DESCRIPTION:

Thomas the Presbyter (ca. 640 AD) was a Syriac Orthodox priest and the author of an important Chronicle. In his Chronicle, he provides an eyewitness account to the events that took place in the mid seventh-century, particularly the early Islamic conquests. An important excerpt from the Chronicle of Thomas the Presbyter reads: "In Mesopotamia, many of the *Āthōrāyē* (Assyrians) which were in the Persian empire were sold by the Arabs." In another section of the Chronicle, the author informs us: "They ascended the mountain of Mardin, and the Arabs killed many monks in Qedar and Bnātā." Some Syriac scholars consider Thomas the Presbyter's Chronicle to be the first non-Muslim source that identifies Muḥammad by name.

## MĀR ĪSHŌ'YAHB III: CA. 649-659 AD

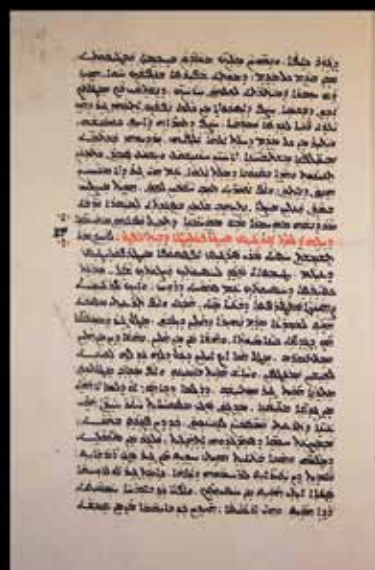


▲ Vat. sir. 157

### DESCRIPTION:

Mār Īshō'yahb III of Adiabene (Assyria) served as Catholicos-Patriarch of the Church of the East (c. 649-659). In a letter composed by the Catholicos-Patriarch dated to the seventh-century, an intriguing line can be found. The reference to the "Sūryāyē, and Ārāmāyē, and Hūzāyē, and Parsāyē" is providing us clues and perspective into the implications of these names. The significance of this source is due to the fact that the *Sūryāyē* (Syrians, "speakers of Syriac") of Assyria are distinguished from the *Ārāmāyē* (Arameans). This suggests that they were perceived to be two distinct group of peoples. Traditionally, the term *Sūryāyē* was employed to define; (1) an inhabitant of geographical *Sūriyā* (Syria), situated west of the Euphrates river toward the Levant, and (2) linguistic self-designation, i.e. "speaker of Syriac". Ethnic *Āthōrāyē* (Assyrians), east of the Euphrates toward Persia metaphorically employed this nomenclature to designate themselves linguistically.

# MĀR TIMOTHY I: CA. 780-823 AD



THRI00010 033

## DESCRIPTION:

Mār ʿTīmātē ʾōs Qadmāyā (Timothy I) was an ethnic Assyrian and native of Ḥazza (south-east of Erbil) who served as Catholicos-Patriarch of the Church of the East between c. 780-823. Respected both as an author and diplomat, Timothy I is considered to be one of the most impressive Catholicos-Patriarchs in the history of the Church of the East. In his letter addressed to the Metropolitan Mār Sargīs, Timothy states: *"To our brothers Hnānīshō and Ishō sōwran we have written twice and this by the law of God's word. Even if they do not wish to come, the Āthōrāyē (Assyrians) will honour them."*

## KHINNIS: CA. 800-900 AD



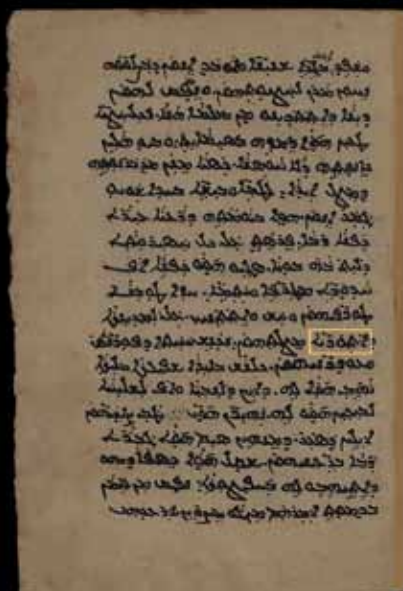
 Pictured: Khinnis relief depicting the Assyrian king Sennacherib and monastic cells carved onto the natural rock by early monks to purify the site.

### DESCRIPTION:

*Khinnis rose to prominence around the seventh-century BC during the reign of Assyrian King Sennacherib (740-681 BC), when the site served as the head of a great engineering system that supplied water to Nineveh. The canal was carved out of natural rock and the facade was adorned with reliefs depicting Assyrian deities, mythical figures and cuneiform inscriptions celebrating Sennacherib's achievements. During the Christianisation period of Assyria, the Khinnis reliefs were viewed as marks of paganism by early Assyrian converts. The ninth-century AD bishop Thomas of Marga informs us of the pioneering monks who carved monastic cells upon the facade in an effort to purify the reliefs off of their pagan past. The purification and transition of this ancient site is a form of 'adaptive reuse' which significantly attests the cultural continuation to an Assyrian past.*



## MĀR THOMAS OF MARGĀ: HISTORIA MONASTICA / CA. 800-900 AD



Source: Vat. Sir. 165, fol. 127r

### TRANSLATION:

*"A mighty famine took place in the days of the good shepherd, Want, in which there was no solace, spread over everything. Starving men and languishing beggars and orphans increased. The blessed man (Mār Māran-'ammeh) saw their afflictions and was pained and was grieved. He went to the city of the *Āthōrāyē* (lit. Assyrians) on their behalf, to collect from them a sack full of alms and oblations for them. Every man gave him with a full and ever flowing hand. For they held him to be like unto a prophet and an Apostle."*

## MĀR THOMAS OF MARGĀ: HISTORIA MONASTICA / CA. 800-900 AD



Manuscript Ref No: QACCT00110, fol. 16v

### DESCRIPTION:

"By the Divine command, he (Mār 'Aḇrāhām Kaškarāyā) came and dwelt in a secret cave in Tūr Izla, in the neighbourhood of the city of Nšibin. And he speedily became known unto men, inasmuch as he was ordained to be the cause of spiritual benefits unto many, through the everlasting fore-knowledge of Him who set him apart aforetime, that at his hands, and by his means, the holy fathers who were to become the founders of famous monasteries of the lands of the Persians, and Āthōrāyē (Assyrians), and Babylonians, might become disciples."

# MĀR ĪSHŌ'DĀD: CA. 850 AD



CPB 00121, fol. 57r

## DESCRIPTION:

Mār Īshō'dād "of Merv" (ca. 850 AD) was the Church of the East's "Bishop of Hdatā of Āthōr (Assyria)". He was a prominent theologian, best known for his *Commentaries* on the Old and New Testaments. Historically, this city was situated on the east bank of the Tigris River just below its confluence with the Upper Zab. However, following the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth-century, Hdatā was ruined and eventually abandoned by its Christian population. References to such cities in Syriac-Christian texts demonstrate that Assyria's geographical boundary extended beyond the city of Mosul or Nineveh.

## MĀR ĪSHŌ'DĀD: CA. 850 AD



MS. Syr. 622, fol. 316r (colophon), ca. 1490 AD

### TRANSLATION:

*"Through the help of our Lord, the Commentaries on the Epistles of the Blessed Paul, along with those of the whole New Testament which were composed by Mār Īshō'dād of Merv, Bishop of Hdattā of Āthūr (Assyria) were finished... This book was finished and concluded in the year 1801 [1490] of the kingdom of the Greeks; it was completed in the month of Nisān, the third [day] of it, on the sixth Saturday of the Great Fast of the Saviour. It was written in the district of Bāz, in the blessed village of Bēth-Sēlam, may our Lord populate it and guard its inhabitants from all hidden and obvious harms, Amen. In the days of the father of fathers, bishop and chief of all bishops, Mār Shim'ōn Catholicos-Patriarch of the East, and Mār Eliyā, Metropolitan of the Āthōrāyē (Assyrians), and of all the Orthodox believers; may the Lord extend the years of their lives in happiness in the leadership of their dioceses; while the watchful and zealous shepherd, the head priest of this diocese of Upper Dāsen and of Khlat was Mār Yahballāhā. May the Lord sustain him in mighty strength in his leadership of his diocese with the highest victory, Amen."*

## AL-MAS'ŪDĪ: CA. 896-956 AD



 Codex Or. 537a

### DESCRIPTION:

'Abū al-Hasan 'Alī ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī was an Arab geographer and historian who is referred to as the "Herodotus of the Arabs". According to his biography, al-Mas'ūdī was born in Baghdad and was purportedly descended from 'Abd Allāh ibn Mas'ūd, a companion of Muḥammad. He authored numerous works concerning geography, history, science, and theology. His celebrated book titled *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems* combines universal history with scientific geography. In a folio from this manuscript, the list of chapters consists of the following passage: "Mentioning the kings of Mosul and Nineveh, whom are the *Ātūrīyūn* (Assyrians), a glance at their news and biographies." Historically, the Arabic term *Ātūrīyūn* was derived from the same word — *Āthōrāyē* — found in Classical-Syriac which was employed by the Christian Assyrians as a self-designation in their language.



## TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES: CA. 900-1000 AD




### TRANSLATION:

*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles or the Didache (lit. Teaching) is an early Christian text that is dated by scholars to the first-century AD. In the Syriac version of the Didache, we are informed that the Āthōrāyē (Assyrians) "received the apostles' ordination to the priesthood from Aggai, a maker of silks, the disciple of Mār Addai the apostle." The following text was composed in ca. 900-1000 AD and copied from earlier texts.*



## AL-BĪRŪNĪ: CA. 973-1048 AD

The image shows a manuscript page with a table of names in Arabic script. The table is organized into columns and rows, with red ink used for headings and borders. The names are written in black ink. The table is titled 'AL-BĪRŪNĪ' and 'CA. 973-1048 AD'.

 Codex Or. 161

### DESCRIPTION:

Abū al-Rayhān al-Bīrūnī was an Iranian scholar and polymath who is credited to being the "first anthropologist". He was well versed in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, natural sciences, and physics, and distinguished himself as a chronologist, historian, and linguist. In his book titled *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, al-Bīrūnī documents the names of the ancient "kings of *Āthūr* (Assyria)", that is those "people of *Mosul*". By "Mosul", al-Bīrūnī undoubtedly meant the province of al-Jazīrah "the island" which was also commonly referred to as al-Mawṣil (the name of its capital city). It is worth noting that, this province constituted geographical Assyria and northern Mesopotamia. Although al-Bīrūnī's king list is dubious, the significance of this historical source lies in the fact that the author connects the people of this province with the ancient Assyrians.

## ARMENIAN SYNAXARIUM: CA. 1001 AD



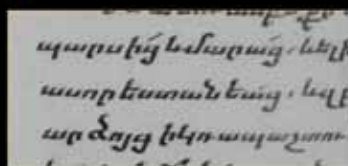
▲ Arm. 180, fol. 140v

### DESCRIPTION:

The following is an eleventh-century *Armenian Synaxarium* that was purportedly copied from an earlier manuscript, presumably from the fifth- or sixth-century. This manuscript constitutes one of the oldest surviving versions composed in the Armenian language. The *Armenian Synaxarium* is a compilation of the lives of saints, martyrs, and heroes. According to the narrative as preserved in the *Synaxarium* relating to Mār Addai (Thaddeus of Edessa):

*"The holy Apostle Addai, he performed many miracles and wonders in the name of Christ, preached to the Persians, to the Medes, to the Assyrians, and converted many."*

### ▼ Important Note



## MŌR MIKHA'IL RABO: CHRONOGRAPHY / 1126- 1199 AD

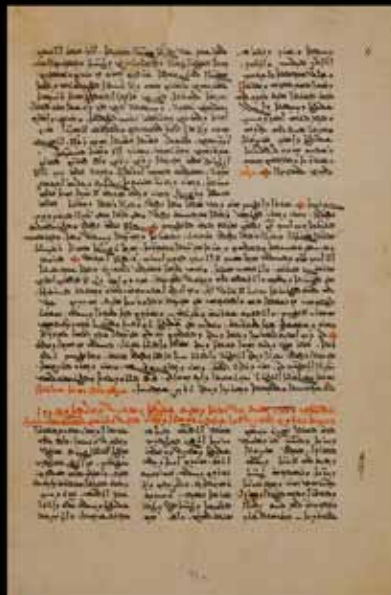


▲ Manuscript Ref No: SOAA 00250  
Folio: 378v  
Repository: Syriac Orthodox Church  
City: Aleppo, Syria

### DESCRIPTION:

In his Chronicle, Mōr Mikha'il Rabo (Michael the Great) informs us that Syria was geographically situated to the west of the Euphrates river and that the term Suryōyē (lit. Syrians) was employed within a metaphorical sense to those "who speak our language; the Ōrōmōyē (lit. Arameans), of which the Syrians are only one part." In the heading of his Appendix II, Mōr Mikha'il states "Aramean people, that is, sons of Aram, who are called Syrians, that is people from Syria (i.e. west of the Euphrates)." The celebrated author and Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church (ca. 1166-1199 AD) goes on to distinguish that the Ōthurōyē (lit. Assyrians) who were also known as Syrians lived "east of the Euphrates, that is from the banks of the Euphrates all the way to Persia." These Assyrians, as Mōr Mikha'il explains were the same as those who founded the city of Nineveh. With respect to the historical usage of the term Syrian, Mōr Mikha'il asserts that it was the Greeks who called the Arameans and Assyrians by that name. Significantly, these statements suggest that the term Syrian was employed by a multi-ethnic population who were not all necessarily ethnic Arameans and compliments historical accounts of earlier writers (i.e. Marcus Junianus Justinus "Assyrians, who were afterwards called Syrians", ca. 200-300 AD).

## MŌR MIKHA'IL RABO: CHRONOGRAPHY / 1126- 1199 AD



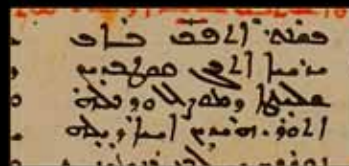
▲ Manuscript Ref No: SOAA 00250  
Folio: 352v  
Repository: Syriac Orthodox Church  
City: Aleppo, Syria

### DESCRIPTION:

In his Chronicle, Mōr Mikha'il Rabo (Michael the Great) informs us: "In 1482 of the Syrian Era [1171 AD] Qutb ad-din (Mawdūd), atabeg of Mosul and all Assyria, died".

The significance of this reference lies in the fact that Mōr Mikha'il recognises that Assyria extended beyond the geographical boundary of the city of Mosul. Furthermore, Mosul served as a provincial-centre under the dominion of the Zengid-dynasty of the Seljuk Empire. This province encompassed much of historical Assyria.

▼ Selected Text



## MŌR MIKHA'IL RABO: CHRONOGRAPHY / 1126- 1199 AD

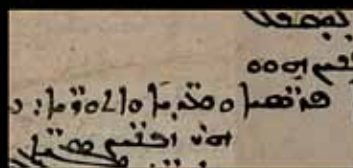


### DESCRIPTION:

In his Chronicle, Mōr Mikha'il Rabo (Michael the Great) informs us of the period in which Turkish powers "were growing stronger and were coming to ruin the Byzantines' country", and that they (Turks) "had ruled over the Persians, Medes, and Assyrians".

The significance of this reference lies in the fact that Mōr Mikha'il evidently recognises the Assyrians as a nation living alongside the Persians and Medes. The implications in this reference are straightforward.

### Selected Text



Manuscript Ref No: SOAA 00250  
Folio: 289r-288v  
Repository: Syriac Orthodox Church  
City: Aleppo, Syria

# MŌR GĪGŌRĪYŌS BAR ʿĒBRŌYŌ: CA. 1225-1286 AD



## DESCRIPTION:

Mōr Gīgōrīyōs bar ʿĒbrōyō, also known as Bar Hebraeus was a thirteenth-century AD Maphrian-Catholicos (Chief Bishop of Persia) of the Syriac Orthodox Church. He is considered to be one of the most learned men from the Syriac Orthodox Church who composed various works concerning philosophy, poetry, language, history, and theology. In his *Syriac Chronicle*, Bar Hebraeus informs us of a Kurdish Amir called Abū Bakr from Hakkāri who was a "rebel in the mountains of Assyria". The significance of this source lies in the fact that Bar Hebraeus recognises Hakkāri as a mountain of Assyria. In fact, Bar Hebraeus makes mention of Assyria as a "country" in its own right on par with Armenia, Persia, Syria and others throughout his *Syriac Chronicle*.

▲ Manuscript: SMMJ 00211  
Folio: 218r  
Repository: Syriac Orthodox Church  
City: Jerusalem, Israel



# MŌR GĪGŌRĪYŌS BAR ʿEḂRŌYŌ: CA. 1225-1286 AD

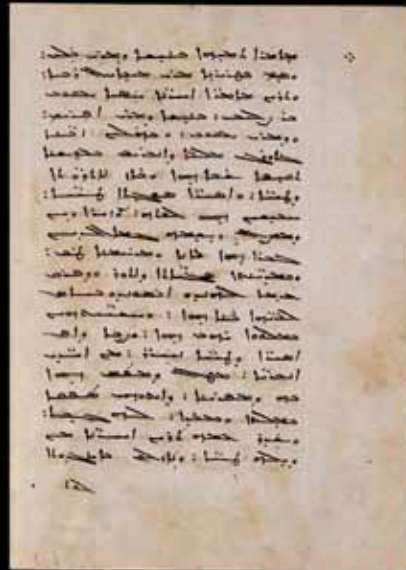


## DESCRIPTION:

Mōr Gīgōrīyōs bar ʿEḂrōyō, also known as Bar Hebraeus was a thirteenth-century AD Maphrian-Catholicos (Chief Bishop of Persia) of the Syriac Orthodox Church. He is considered to be one of the most learned men from the Syriac Orthodox Church who composed various works concerning philosophy, poetry, language, history, and theology. In his Syriac Chronicle, Bar Hebraeus informs us that, the Mongol emperor Güyük Khan had "handed over the countries of *Bēth-Rhōmāyē* (Byzantines) and of the *Iberians*, and *Āthōr* (Assyria), and *Syria*, and *Cilicia* to one of his chiefs whose name was *Ailshikātāi*." The significance of this source lies in the fact that Bar Hebraeus recognises Assyria as a "country" in its own right.

▲ Manuscript: SMMJ 00211  
Folio: 195v  
Repository: Syriac Orthodox Church  
City: Jerusalem, Israel

## MŌR GĪGŌRĪYŌS BAR ʿEḔRŌYŌ: CA. 1225-1286 AD

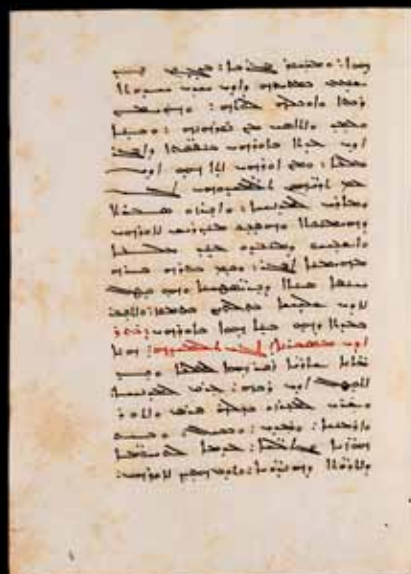


 Vat. Sir. 388, fol. 94r

### DESCRIPTION:

In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Mōr Gīgōrīyōs bar ʿEḔrōyō, also known as Bar Hebraeus presents some very insightful information regarding the territorial boundary of Assyria. In the following passage, Bar Hebraeus informs us: "*The vizir of Mosul named Jamāl al-Dīn, a just and very merciful man, who had built hospitals for the sick in many cities of Āthōr (Assyria)...*". It is worth noting that, Bar Hebraeus also considered the mountainous terrain to the north (i.e., Hakkānī) as having constituted part of Assyria's geographical boundary.

## MŌR GĪGŌRĪYŌS BAR ʿEḂRŌYŌ: CA. 1225-1286 AD

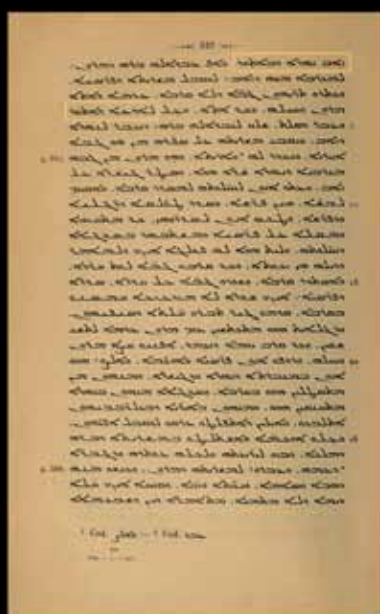


 Vat. Sir. 388, fol. 4v

### DESCRIPTION:

In his Ecclesiastical History, Mōr Gīgōrīyōs bar ʿEḂrōyō, also known as Bar Hebraeus presents a list of the nations evangelised by Mōr Aggai, the disciple of Mōr Addai the Apostle. Among the nations is a reference to **Āthōr (Assyria)**. This reference is in accordance with earlier Syriac-Christian texts, such as the Doctrine of Mōr Addai (composed some time in the first-century AD) and the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. According to Syriac-Christian tradition, the Assyrians were among the first nations to adopt Christianity.

## SYRIAC CHRONICLE OF 1234 THIRTEENTH CENTURY



### DESCRIPTION:

According to the Syriac Chronicle of 1234, Marwān II (684–750), the last of the Umayyad caliphs was defeated at the Battle of the Great Zab River. This defeat marked the end of the Umayyads.

The passage in this manuscript (now lost) reports that the battle took place in "the land of Assyria". Although the region was conquered just over 550 years earlier, Syriac Christians (at least by the mid-thirteenth century) continued to identify the region as Assyria.

 Jean-Baptiste Chabot, *Anonymi Auctoris Chronicon Ad Annum Christi 1234 Pertinens I* (Paris: E. Typographeo Reipublicae, 1916), 329.

## GIWARGIS WARDĀ OF ARBELA: BOOK OF THE ROSE 'WARDĀ' / 1250 AD



Folio: Canticle to the Patriarchs of the East

### TRANSLATION:

- Mār Mari the Āthōrāyā (Assyrian) from the renowned lineage [987 - 999].
- 'Awdisho the Āthōrāyā (Assyrian) from the noble race, who served the see of Nisibis and was elevated to the Apostolic one [1074 - 1090].
- Makūkhā the zealot, a just and blessed man, that was a prelate in Āthōr (Assyria), and was made Catholicos according to the law [1092 - 1110].
- Elyā full of victories, who became the greatest among the teachers, in Āthōr (Assyria) the fountain of learning, and he was counted in the company of the just [1111 - 1132].
- 'Awdisho the chosen vessel, from Āthōr (Assyria) the beautiful citadel, that was chosen by the spirit of the Lord, unto the high and sublime chair [1139 - 1148].

## GIWARGIS WARDĀ OF ARBELA: BOOK OF THE ROSE 'WARDĀ' / 1250 AD



CCM 00423

### TRANSLATION:

This canticle is part of a collection of hymns and poems in Classical Syriac, traditionally titled *Kthābhā d-Wardā* (Book of the Rose), that is usually attributed to Giwargis Wardā of Arbela. The significance of this work lies in the fact that Giwargis Wardā acknowledges the ancestry of the Christians of Adiabene (Āthōr) observing the Rogation of the Ninevites:

*"Oh Lord, accept the rogation of the Bawlāyē (Babylonians) and of the Āthōrāyē (Assyrians), for the leadership of the Church is disturbed and in disarray."*

#### Important Note

It is worth noting, Giwargis Wardā acknowledges various ethnicities in this hymn (i.e. Coptic-Egyptians, Turks and other easterners).



# MĀR YŌHNNĀN SULAQA: CA. 1552-1553 AD

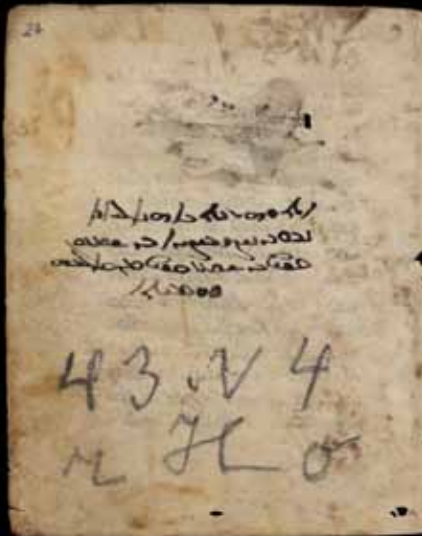


▲ Simeone Maiolo, *Episcopi Vitrariensis Historiarum Totius Orbis* (Rome: Populi Romani, 1586), 385.

## TRANSLATION:

"Concerning the *Patriarch of the Eastern Church of the Assyrians*. Chapter 26. The *Patriarch of the Assyrians* swears obedience to the Roman Pontiff, especially about the cult images; from Onuphrius. It is our intention to prove that there were *Assyrian observers of the cross too at this time, it is under Julius III...* Once Simon Mama, the Metropolitan of all East across the Euphrates to the Indians was dead, the *Church of Eastern Assyria* had elected *Simon Sulaka as Patriarch*, a man distinguished for his Catholic faith, and had sent him to Rome for confirmation."

## NEBUCHADNEZZAR THE PRIEST: THIRTEENTH-CENTURY



 Vat. Sir. 647

### DESCRIPTION:

Nebuchadnezzar was a thirteenth-century priest and cousin of Mōr Philoxenus I Nemrūd, the Patriarch of Antioch, and head of the Syriac Orthodox Church. According to Dr. Jean Fathi, the names of these two prelates was most probably a conscious attempt to link the family to ancient Mesopotamian kings.

In the inscription pictured here, it reads: *"This book belongs to me, the wretched Nebuchadnezzar, son of the priest Shem'ōn, son of the priest Yeshu', of Qal'a Rūmayta"*.

# MĀR ABDĪSHŌ IV MARON: CA. 1562 AD

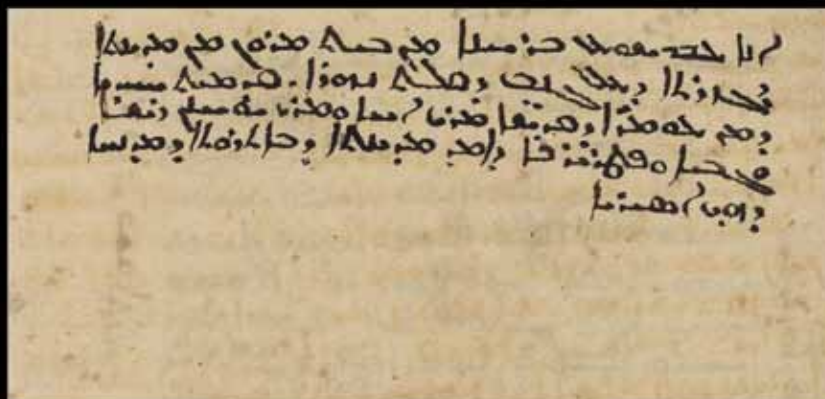


## TRANSLATION:

*"Patriarch of the Eastern Assyrians at the Sacred Ecumenical Council of Trent. Approval, and profession, and letters of Cardinal Marco Antonio Da Mula, ambassador to the Holy Council of Trent. 1562."*

▲ Abdisu IV Maron and Cardinal Marco Antonio Da Mula, *R.D. Patriarchae Orientalium Assyriorum De Sacro Oecumenico Tridentino Concilio*, 1562

## MĀR ABDĪSHŌ IV MARŌN: CA. 1562 AD

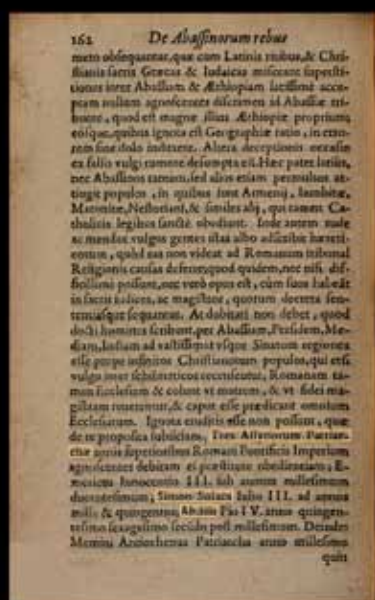


Source: Vat. Sir. 99, Profession of Mār Abdīshō IV Marōn

Translation

"I am Abdīshō Bar Hannā from Bēth-Marōn from the city of Gazarta that is on the shore of the river Tigris, formerly a monk from the holy monasteries of Mār Aphhā and Mār Yōhannān, head and eminence and patriarch of the city of Āmid, in the Eastern region that is Assyria."

## NICOLAO GODIGNO: c. 1615



▲ Nicolao Godigno, *De Abassinorum Rebus*  
(Lugduni: Sumptibus Horatii Cardon, 1615),  
162.

### DESCRIPTION:

Nicolao Godigno was a Portuguese Jesuit priest living in Rome. In his book *De Abassinorum Rebus* (published 1615), Nicolao informs us: "*Three Assyrian patriarchs, in previous years, acknowledging the authority of the Roman Pope, gave him due obedience: Emericus to Innocent III toward the year 1200; Simon Sulaca to Julius III around the year 1500; Abdisu to Pope Pius IV in the year 1562 and to Gregory XIII in the year 1575.*"







# THOMAS MORTON: THE GRAND IMPOSTURE / 1628 AD



## TRANSLATION:

"You have a Latin narration commended by Pope Pius IV unto the Council of Trent, concerning Abdissu Patriarch of the Assyrians, and all Churches under him, subjecting themselves to the Church and Pope of Rome. Our intended brevity will not permit the Repetition of so large a narration. Take unto you summarily those advertisements, which are proper to this cause in hand. It gives us to know, that the nation of the Assyrians was so far remote from Rome, that at Rome it was scarce known that there was any Church there."


Morton Thomas, *The Grand Imposture of the (now) Church of Rome* (London: George Miller, 1628), 338.

## RICHARD FIELD: OF THE CHURCH, FIVE BOOKS / 1628 AD



### TRANSLATION:

*"From the Assyrians and Indians  
unjustly named Nestorians."*

 Richard Field, *Of The Church: Five Bookes, The Second Edition* (Oxford: William Turner, 1628), 64.

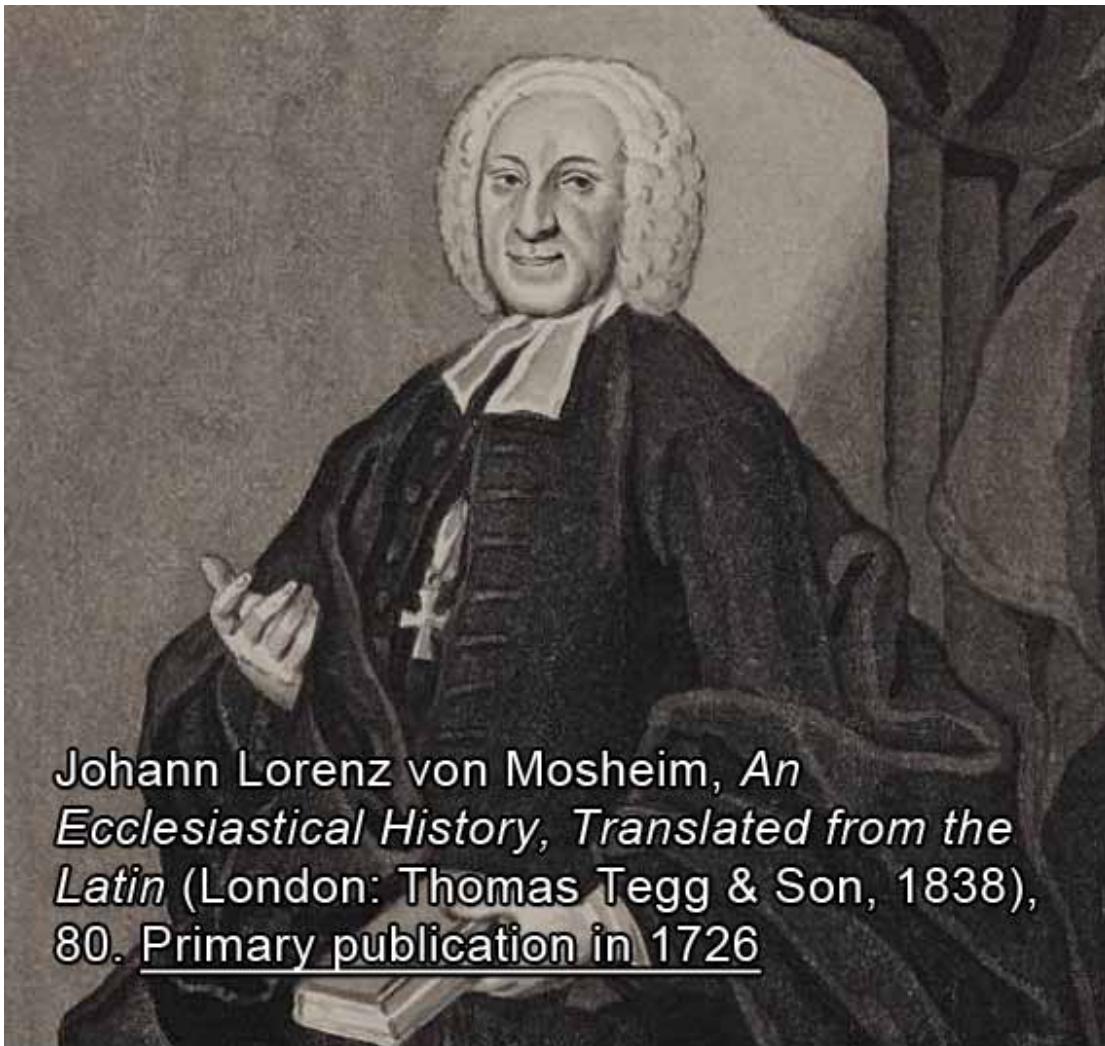
## MŌR TIMOTHY ISAAC: c. 1643 - 1721



▲ Sachau 168; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin 221

### TRANSLATION:

Mōr Timothy Isaac (c. 1643–1721) was the Syriac Orthodox Bishop of Amid (modern Diyarbakır, Turkey). In his book titled Syriac Grammar, Mōr Timothy is presented as the son of "deacon 'Abd Hayo the Assyrian."

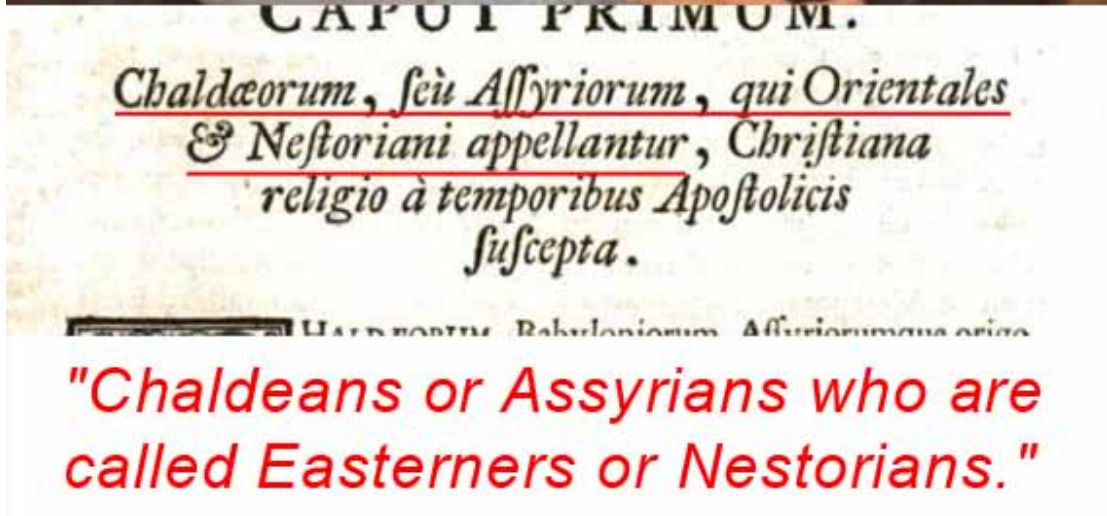
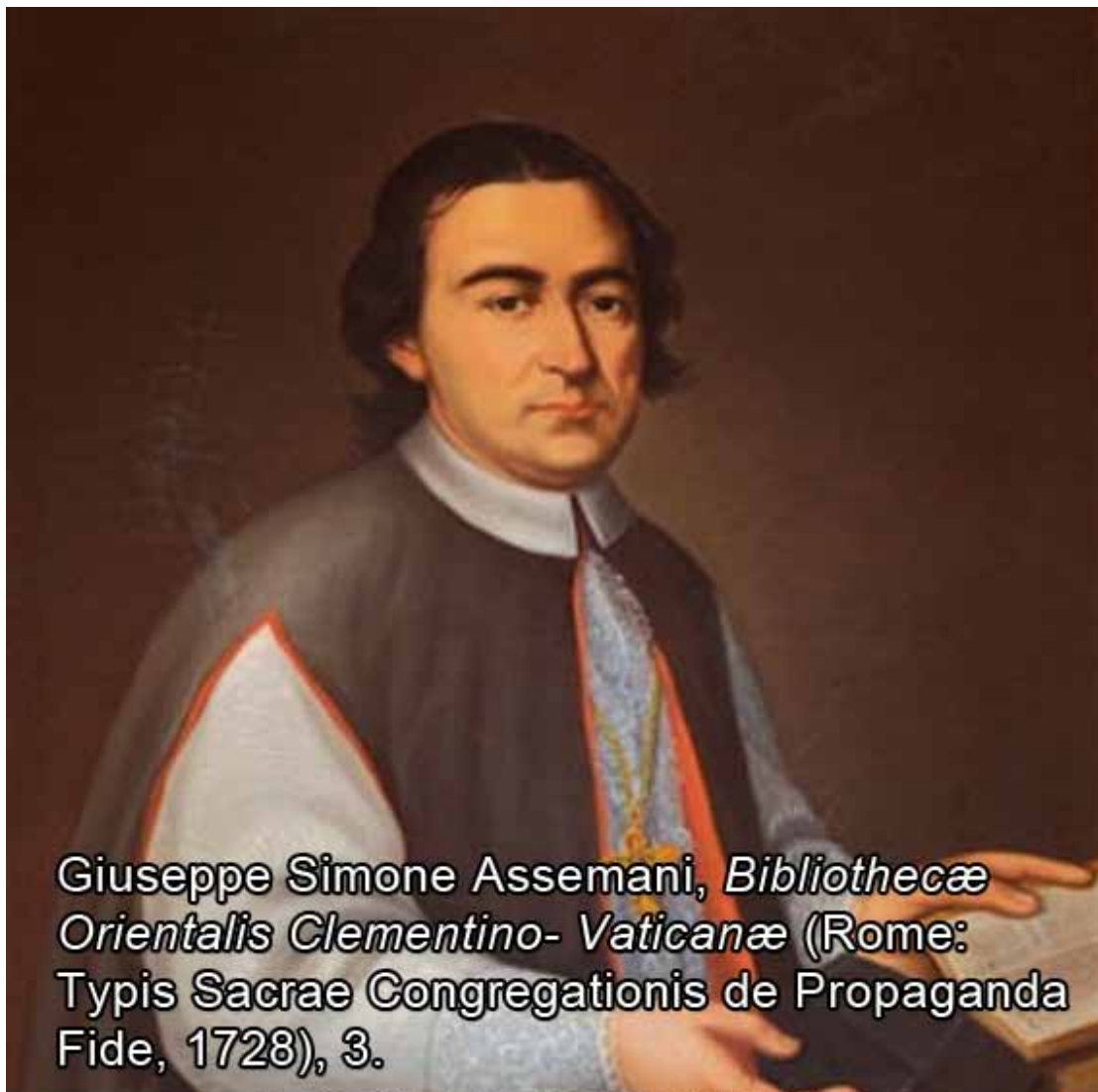


Johann Lorenz von Mosheim, *An Ecclesiastical History, Translated from the Latin* (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1838), 80. Primary publication in 1726

the boasting and exultation of the Romans subsided all of a sudden, and their hopes vanished."

vii. The ambitious views of the Roman pontiffs sowed the pestilential seeds of animosity and discord among all the eastern churches; and the Nestorian Christians, who are also known by the denomination of Chaldeans, felt early the effects of their imperious councils. In the year 1551, a warm dispute arose among that people about the creation of a new patriarch, Simeon Barmamas being proposed by one party, and Sulaka, earnestly desired by the other. The latter, to support his pretensions the more effectually, repaired to Rome, and was consecrated patriarch, in the year 1553, by pope Julius III. whose jurisdiction he had acknowledged, and to whose commands he had promised unlimited submission and obedience. Julius gave the name John to the





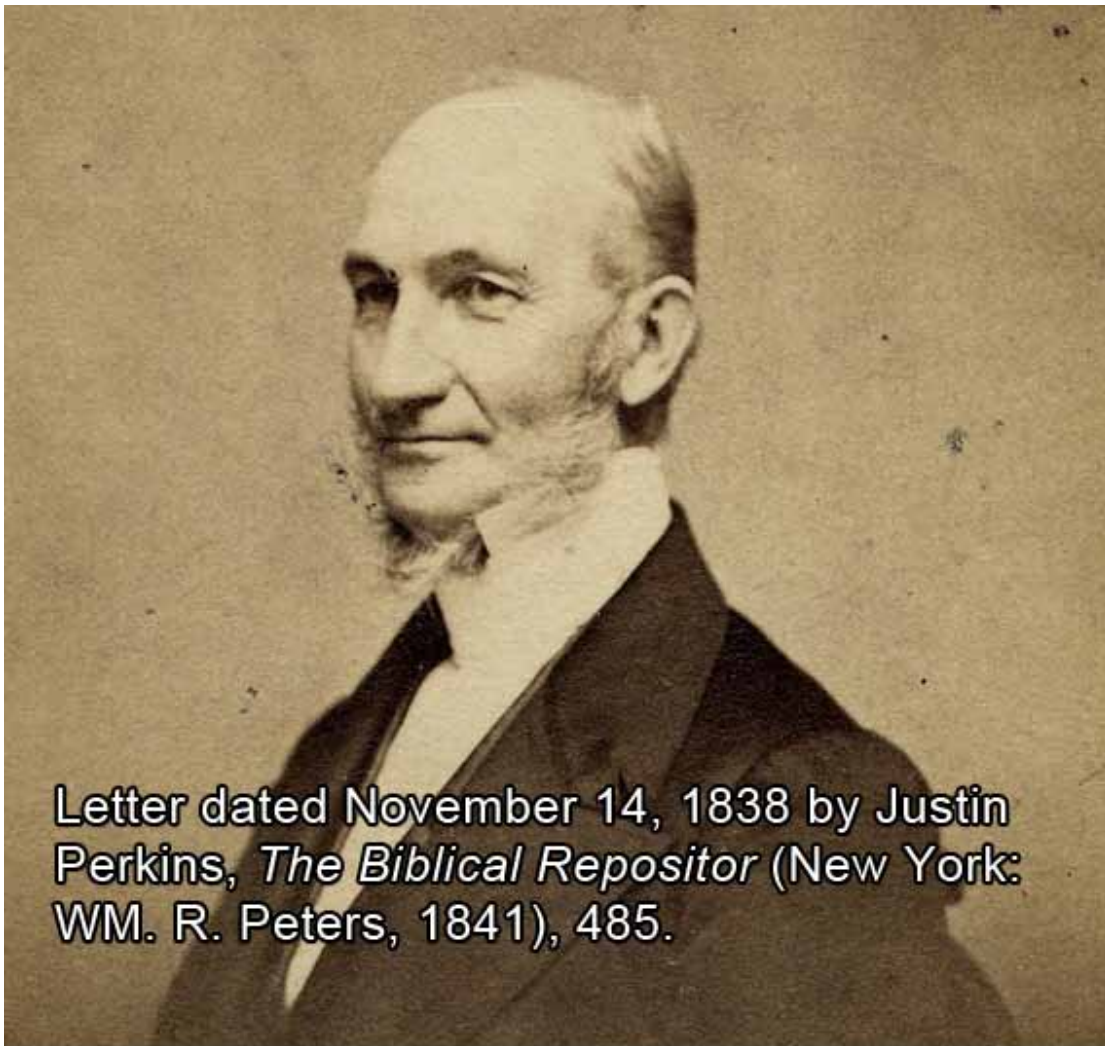


Eli Smith & Harrison Gray Otis Dwight,  
*Researches* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster,  
1833), 351.

some districts in the Kürdish mountains also acknowledge his supremacy.

*March 9.* We rode to Khósrova, a Chaldean village about two miles from Dilmán.—The present Chaldean Christians are of recent origin. It was in A.D. 1681, that the Nestorian metropolitan of Diarbekr, having quarrelled with his patriarch, was first consecrated by the pope patriarch of the Chaldeans. The sect was as new as the office, and was created for it. Converts to papacy from the Nestorian and Jacobite churches were united in one body, and dignified by the name of the Chaldean church. It means no more than papal Syrians; as we have in other parts papal Armenians, and papal Greek. The name of the first patriarch happened to be Yoosuf (Joseph), the same was assumed by his successors, and a Mar Yoosuf now occupies the see of Diarbekr, as patriarch of the Chaldeans.\* Khósrova is the residence of the bishop of all who are on this side of the Kürdish mountains. As we rode up to his





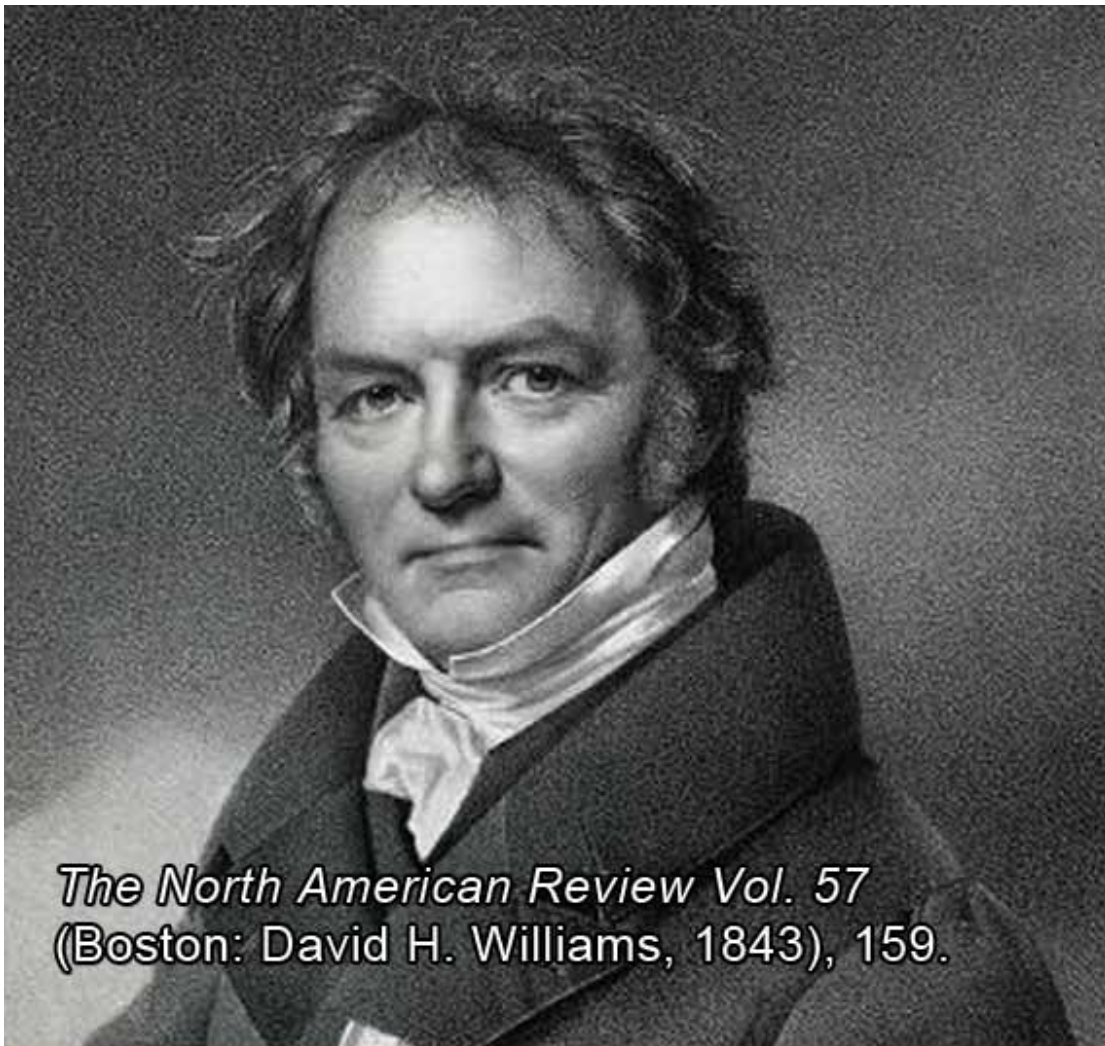
Letter dated November 14, 1838 by Justin Perkins, *The Biblical Repositor* (New York: WM. R. Peters, 1841), 485.

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*The Nestorians.*

[Oct.

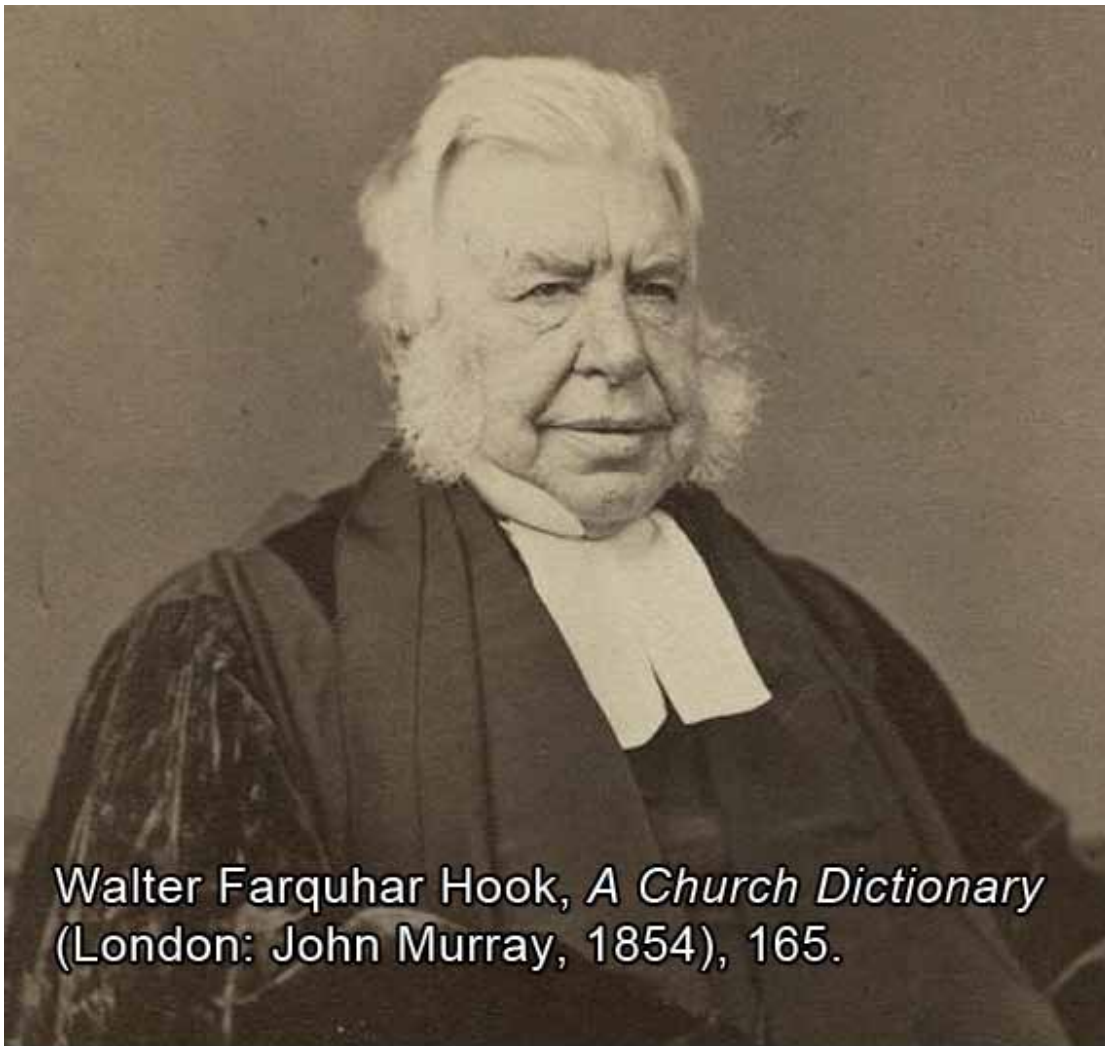
The so-called "Chaldeans" of Mesopotamia received that title, as you know, from the pope, on their becoming Catholics. Their ancient language is also the Syriac, and their written character was the same with that of the Nestorians; except among that portion of them who were converted from the Jacobite sect, who, I believe, use the common Syriac character familiar to European scholars. These "Chaldeans" all used the ancient Syriac as their written language, until their modern conversion to popery. Since that event, some of their books have been prepared in the Arabic tongue; in order, as is supposed, that the people, having abandoned their own ancient language and literature, may be the more easily induced to em-



*The North American Review* Vol. 57  
(Boston: David H. Williams, 1843), 159.

But besides these independent Nestorians of the mountains, who thus acknowledge no authority even in temporal matters, save that of their own patriarch, and who bear among their neighbours the proud title of *Ashiret*, "the tributeless," a large body of the same race are found in the plains and region on the west of the mountains, in the vicinity of Mosul, where they are subject to the Turks. These, however, for the most part, more than a century ago gave in their adhesion to the Pope of Rome ; and their patriarch, still residing at el-Kôsh, acknowledges his supremacy. The Pope bestowed upon them, in return, the venerable, but unmeaning, title of Chaldeans, which they now claim ; although they were and are truly nothing more than papal Nestorians, or Nestorian Catholics. Niebuhr fell in with them ; and gave to European scholars the first intimation that the Syriac



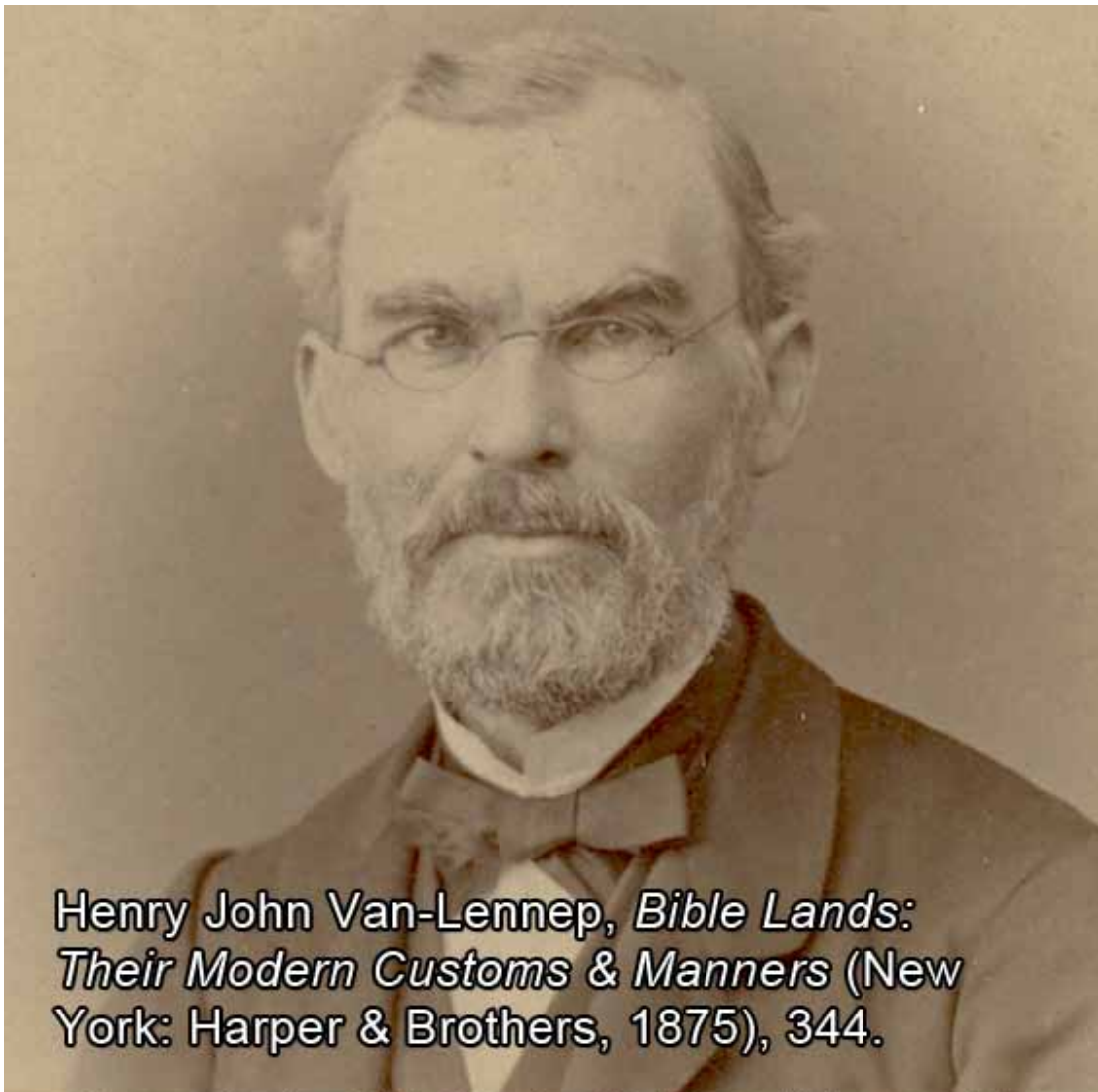


Walter Farquhar Hook, *A Church Dictionary* (London: John Murray, 1854), 165.

**CHALDEANS.** A modern sect of Christians in the East, in obedience to the see of Rome. Dr. Grant, in his *Nestorians*, quotes with approval the following passage from *Smith and Dwight's Researches in Armenia*: which is also confirmed by Mr. Badger, in his *Nestorians and their Rituals* (vol. i. p. 177—181). "In 1681, the Nestorian metropolitan of Diarbekir, having quarrelled with his patriarch, was first consecrated by the pope Patriarch of the Chaldeans. The sect was as new as the office, and created for it. Converts to Papacy from the Nestorians" [not from the Jacobites, as Mr. Badger corrects Dr. Grant] "were dignified with the name of the Chaldean Church. It means no more than Papal Syrians, as we have in other parts Papal Armenians and Papal Greeks." (See *Nestorians*.)

metal. The ancient chalices were of two kinds: the greater, which were the same as the chalice of our flagons, containing a large quantity of wine, which was all consumed in them together; and the lesser, which were otherwise called "ministrals," because the priest delivered the wine from them; for communion was not then invented by the Church.—*Dr. Nicholls.* (See *Church*.)

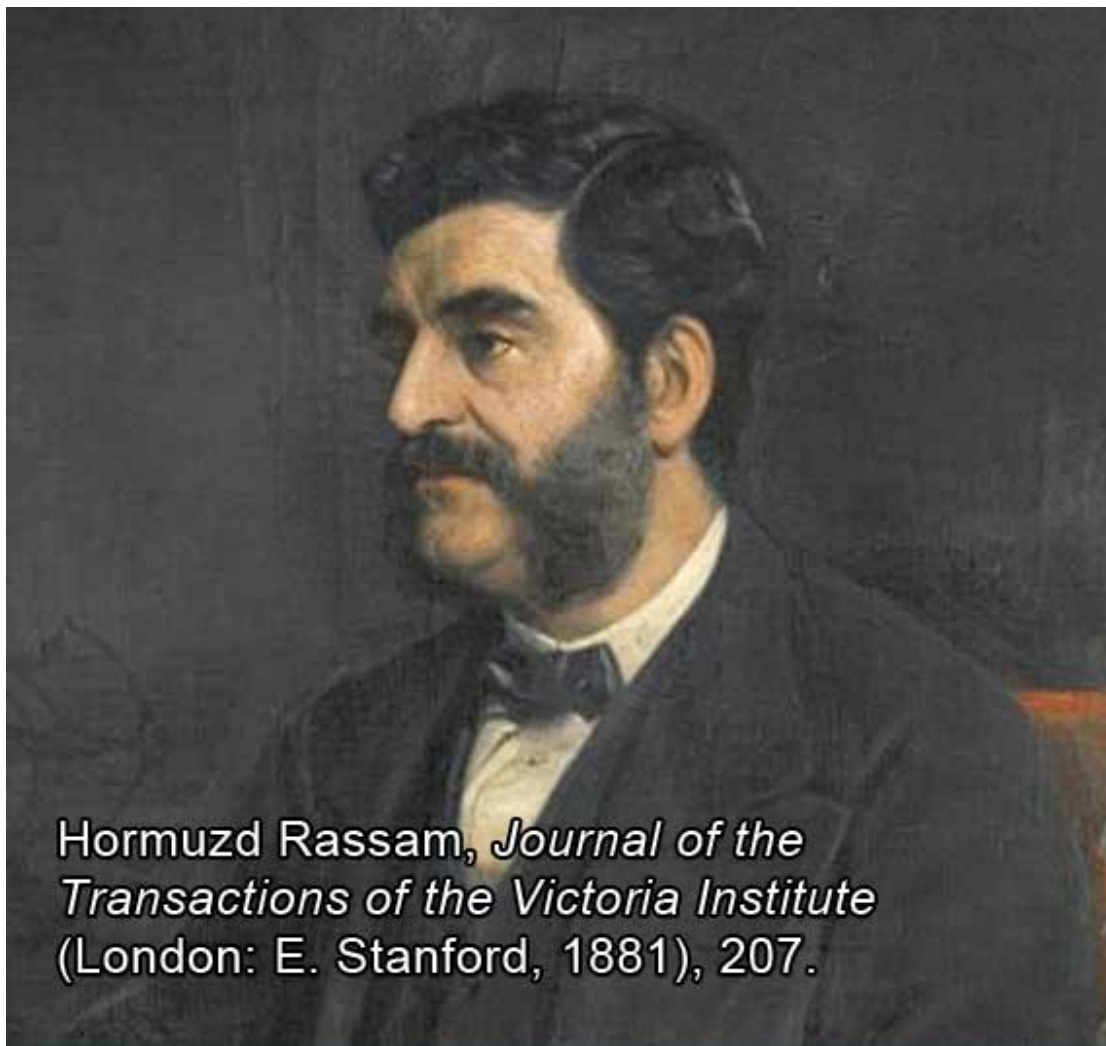
**CHAMFER.** The flat slope cutting away an angle in timber or masonry. The *chamfer* is the first of a moulding, though it can be called one. The *chamfer*, speaking of mouldings, is used to a plane at an angle of 45°, or thereabouts, with the face of the wall, in which the mouldings often, and sometimes, lie. The resolution of the chamfer into the square is called a *stop*.



**Henry John Van-Lennep, *Bible Lands: Their Modern Customs & Manners* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875), 344.**

sian empire, in which time the Christian religion was introduced, and was embraced by most of the population of Mesopotamia and Assyria. At the schism on account of Nestorius, the Assyrians, under the generic name of the Chaldean Church, mostly separated from the orthodox Greeks, and, being under the rule of the Persians, were protected against persecution. They engaged actively in the dissemination of the Gospel throughout the continent of Asia, and appear to have met with great success. Monuments are yet standing in China with Assyrian inscriptions in the Syriac character which attest the triumphs of the Nestorian Church in that land. There are Christians in India, on the Malabar coast, who to this day





Hormuzd Rassam, *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* (London: E. Stanford, 1881), 207.

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getting into the fields with their families and cattle, they put on sackcloth, and humbled themselves before God, calling aloud for pardon, and sincerely repenting of their past wickedness. Wherefore God was pleased to forgive them, and the storm blew over."

53. The inhabitants of Assyria consist now of mixed races, Arabs, Turkomans, Koords, Yezedees, Jews, and Christians called Chaldeans and Syrians. The last two-named denominations doubtless belong to one nationality, the Assyrian, and they were only distinguished by these two names when they separated consequent upon the theological dispute of the age, namely, Monophysites or Jacobites, and Nestorians. These were again subdivided into four divisions through the pro-

#### Related Information

 [Hormuzd Rassam \(1826-1910\)](#)

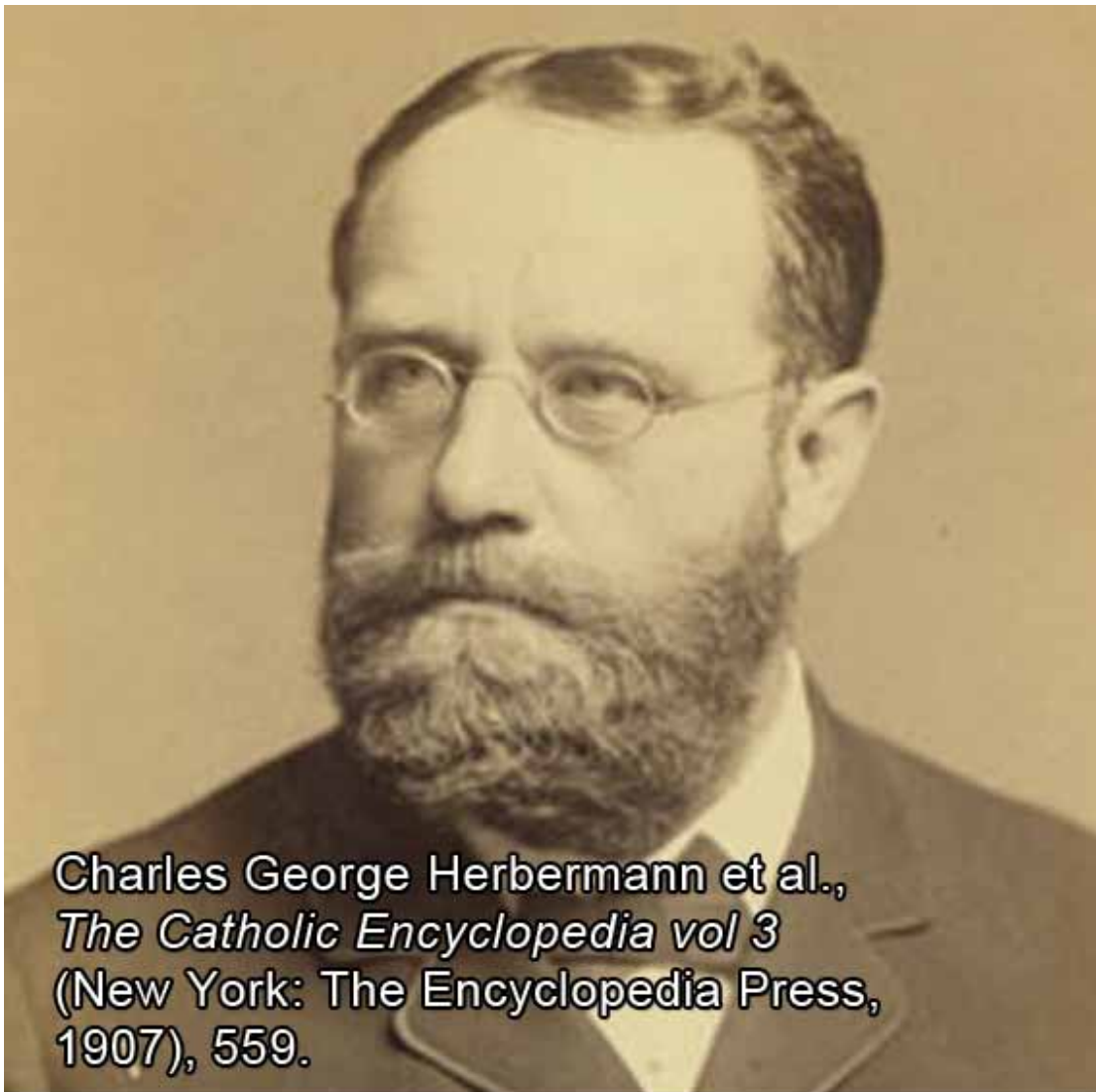


Documentation of relations  
**DOCUMENTA RELATIONUM**

INTER  
between  
**S. SEDEM APOSTOLICAM ET ASSYRIORUM ORIENTALIUM**  
the Holy See and the Assyrians of the Eastern  
SEU  
OR  
**CHALDAEORUM ECCLESIAM**  
Chaldean Church  
TUM JAM EDITA TUM MAJORI EX PARTE  
**NUNC PRIMUM EX ARCHIVO VATICANO PROLATA**  
**NOTISQUE HISTORICIS ILLUSTRATA**

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**I. NAME AND TERRITORY OF CHALDEANS.—Strictly, the name of Chaldeans is no longer correct; in Chaldea proper, apart from Bagdad, there are now very few adherents of this rite, most of the Chaldean population being found in the cities of Kerkuk, Arbil, and Mosul, in the heart of the Tigris valley, in the valley of the Zab, and in the mountains of Kurdistan. It is in the former ecclesiastical province of Atōr (Assyria) that are now found the most flourishing of the Catholic Chaldean communities. The native population accepts the name of Atōraya-Kaldaya (Assyro-Chaldeans)**



late war for having thrown in their lot with the Entente and fought against the Turks. It may not be out of place, therefore, to point out that there were exceedingly few Roman Catholic Assyrians or "Chaldeans" as they are generally termed when they embrace Rome, amongst the refugees at Baqubah. The very large majority of the Roman Catholic Assyrians in the Mosul vilayet did not join the mountaineers and fight against the Turks; and in consequence were permitted by the Turks to continue to dwell practically unmolested in their homes about Mosul. So much was this the case that, after the occupation of Mosul by British





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