

ANDREW PALMER

## Charting undercurrents in the history of the West-Syrian people : The resettlement of Byzantine Melitene after 934\*

It was Jules Leroy who, in his article, «Deux scribes syriaques nommés Bākōs», *L'Orient Syrien* 7 (1962), pp. 103-20, made an appeal for the methodical study of that neglected genre, Syriac colophons. "Ces petites pièces", he remarked, "sont non seulement les parties les plus personnelles du manuscrit : elles aident aussi à compléter l'histoire générale, à la corriger" (p. 105).

It is suitable, therefore, that this enquiry should begin with a scribe's notice first recorded by Leroy himself in Ḥomṣ (the MS. concerned is now in the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate at Damascus, numbered 12/8)<sup>1</sup>, which does a good deal, in combination with other such notices and various types of evidence, to "complete and correct", that is, to give a more interior and more accurate view of historical events which a leading Byzantine scholar has found worthy of his attention.

Gilbert Dagron's paper, "Minorités ethniques et religieuses dans l'Orient byzantin à la fin du X<sup>e</sup> et au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle : l'immigration syrienne", *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976) (reprinted in G. Dagron, *La Romanité chrétienne en Orient : héritages et mutations* [London: Variorum, 1984]), pp. 177-216, gives the wider historical perspective within which this enquiry must be set. The new prosperity which accrued to the West Syrians through their settlement around Byzantine Melitene resulted in artistic initiatives which spread through their communities elsewhere, and threw up new monasteries and bishoprics which bloomed for a while like desert flowers, then faded. This paper explores the mechanics of that process.

\* The author wishes to acknowledge the advice given him by Dr. S.P. Brock, Prof. A.A.M. Bryer, Dr. J.F. Coakley, Dr. Dr. H. Kaufhold, Dr. R. McKitterick, Dr. S. Mitchell, Dr. L. Rodley, Fr. A. Shabo, and Mr. T.A. Sinclair; he thanks the staff of the British Library, the Cambridge University Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, the Staatsbibliotheken in West and East Berlin, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the late custodian of the Syrian Orthodox Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, Turkey, and the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, in Damascus, for their generous help.

For abbreviations in the notes see page 67.

<sup>1</sup> The patriarch gave me permission to see and photograph it in April, 1984.

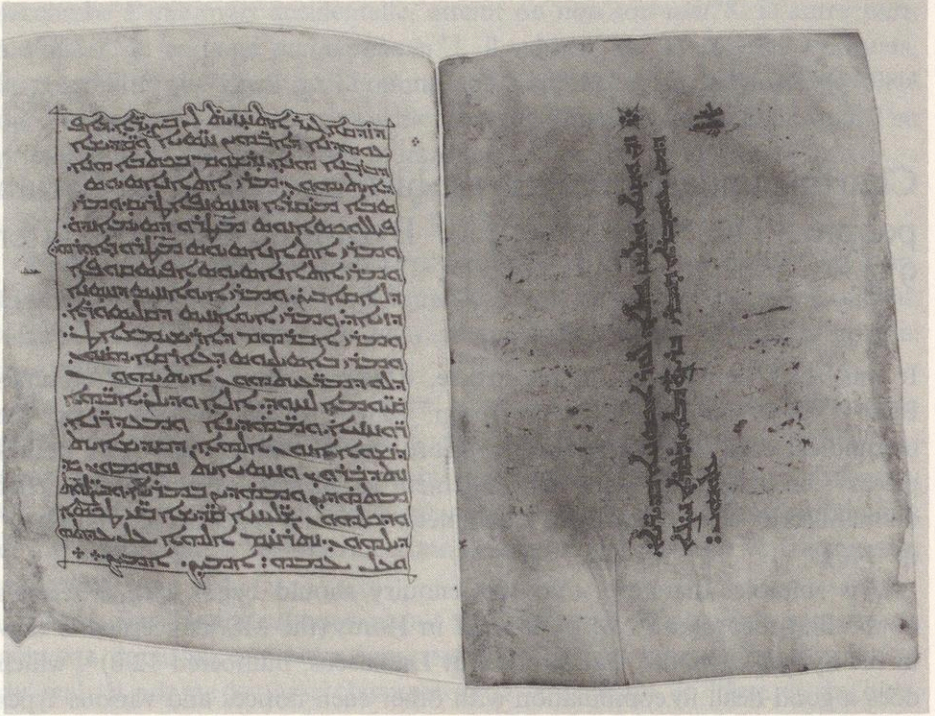


Plate 1

Damascus Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate  
MS. 12/8, foll. 328b and 329a

#### 1. ḤESNPATRĪQ: AN UNOFFICIAL «BISHOPRIC» IN AN ABBEY

Leroy saw in the “patriarchal library of Ḥomṣ” a manuscript, interesting to him on account of the paintings it contains, which has a note on fol. 329a (Plate 1) listing “our holy and venerable Fathers of this time”<sup>2</sup>. The time in question must be shortly before January 1055, for that was when the MS. was completed<sup>3</sup>. The combination of the adjective *ḥsayô* and the noun *âbohotô* (“venerable Fathers”) makes it certain that the persons to be mentioned will be bishops. Yet the first of them, “the honoured elder Mor Athanasius of Ḥesnpâtrîq”<sup>4</sup>, does not appear with this title in the official register of ordinations appended to Michael’s *Chronicle*<sup>5</sup>. The Register (as I shall call it) names only one bishop of Ḥesnpâtrîq, who was ordained in

2 See Leroy, *Manuscripts*, p. 225-33, esp. 227.

3 As the note on foll. 347b-348a informs us (see Leroy, *Manuscripts*, p. 228).

4 The Syriac is: *ܡܪ ܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ ܕܗܥܫܢܦܬܪܝܩ ܐܝܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܩܐ*.

5 Michael, pp. 752-768.

1058<sup>6</sup>. Leroy takes this to mean that Athanasius was not a bishop<sup>7</sup>; but he does not try to explain the fact that he bears a bishop's title ("Mor X of Y") and appears at the head of a list of attested bishops after the introductory phrase, "venerable Fathers", which in Syriac could only have episcopal connotation. Besides, Ḥesnpātrīq is known as an official bishopric within four years from the date at which this note was written.

On the other hand, some explanation must be found for the fact that "Athanasius of Ḥesnpātrīq" is missing from the Register. Certain omissions in the latter have indeed been alleged<sup>8</sup> and some scribal errors are likely to have crept into the only published MS. of the text. Yet in at least one case it is arguable that an allegation of this sort has been too lightly believed<sup>9</sup> and there are other possible explanations for apparent omissions, as Chabot and Honigmann have suggested in reply to Pognon's criticism of the list of bishops present at Michael's own consecration in 1166<sup>10</sup>. At any rate, the Register has generally been found so reliable that one is obliged to doubt it only as a last resort<sup>11</sup>.

The proximity in time of the *presumed* bishop Athanasius of Ḥesnpātrīq and the first and only *registered* bishop of that see, whose name was Timothy,

6 Michael, p. 763 (XXXIV.3).

7 Leroy, *Manuscripts*, p. 227.

8 Honigmann, *Barsauma*, p. 107; many «omissions» might be better explained by the corruption of the numerals representing the sum of the bishops ordained by a particular patriarch.

9 Pognon, *Inscriptions*, p. 47, alleges that a bishop Ezekiel of Tūr 'Abdīn has been omitted from the Register after Nonnus (XVIII.89) and before another Ezekiel (XXI.14) and this is accepted by Chabot (Michael, *ed. cit.*, p. 458 of the translation, n. 2 *ad fin.*) and Honigmann, *Barsauma*, p. 107, n. 2. Pognon's reasons are: i) That an inscription set up by Bishop Shamly of Qartmīn, who was ordained in A.D. 1088/9, lists this bishop's predecessors since A.D. 848/9, beginning with Nonnus — who is followed by two Ezekiels — and totalling 13 names, whereas in the Register Nonnus is followed by only one Ezekiel and the total of bishops from Nonnus to Shamly is twelve; ii) Nonnus was ordained before 845 and was not succeeded until after 887, according to the Register, giving him at least 42 and probably nearer 50 years as a bishop, which is "peu probable". My reasons for reserving judgement on this matter are as follows: a) A reign of 42 or even 50 years is not impossible and might be explained as well by longevity as by the occurrence of a vacancy of some years' duration, of which no sign would appear in the Register. b) The order of names in the earlier part of the inscription, where the oral tradition of Shamly's time could not guarantee exactitude, is quite confused; this shows that Shamly did not have access to a chronological list of bishops. He doubtless had evidence to connect Nonnus with the year 848/9, but for the rest he was dependent on a record which gave names but not dates. Once this is understood, the extra Ezekiel can be identified as Nonnus' predecessor, who is mentioned in the Register (XVII.78).

10 Cp. Pognon, *Inscriptions*, p. 47 n. 1; J.-B. Chabot, *Introduction au Chronique de Michel* (Paris, 1924), pp. xxxvi-xxxvii; Honigmann, *Barsauma*, p. 93 with n. 2, p. 105 and p. 107.

11 Pognon, *loc. cit.*, has some disparaging words about Michael's intelligence, which he blames for the alleged omissions in the Register; a more balanced and a far more thorough study of the Register is made by Honigmann, *Barsauma*, part 2, who admits certain failings, but concludes (p. 107): «Mais ces restrictions ne diminuent guère la grande valeur historique des listes».

is a strong indication that we should look for a link between the two men. Now Athanasius was the name of the patriarch who ordained Timothy; patriarch and bishop were monks of one and the same monastery, that of the Conduit of Mor Aaron<sup>12</sup>. Athanasius, to whom I shall refer by his other name, Ḥoyê, became patriarch in 1058. We are told that he had previously been bishop of Arsamosat; indeed, we find his name attached to that see in the Register, which lists him as one of the bishops ordained between 1004 and 1030, in the reign of John Bar ʿAbdūn<sup>13</sup>. Yet in the reign of Denis IV (1032-1042) a certain Abraham was made bishop of Arsamosat<sup>14</sup>. The explanation of this anomaly is found in the narrative of the *Chronicle*, where Michael tells us that Ḥoyê, at some time unspecified after his ordination, "abandoned his diocese and went into retreat at the Abbey of the Conduit of Mor Aaron", and that it was from there that he was called to be patriarch<sup>15</sup>. For a Syrian Orthodox bishop to spend a good deal of his time in his monastery is not unusual<sup>16</sup>; but Michael actually says he abandoned the diocese, which must be why it was found necessary to replace him in his lifetime.

The MS. note of 1054 belongs to the shadowy period of Ḥoyê's career between his abdication at some date before 1042 and his patriarchal consecration in 1058. "Athanasius of Ḥesnpatriq" could therefore have been an alias adopted by Ḥoyê during his retirement. That there is a connection between the monastery at which he resided and Ḥesnpatriq is suggested by the fact that the only official bishop of Ḥesnpatriq was from the Abbey of the Conduit; and the fact that this appointment was made by Ḥoyê but by no subsequent patriarch argues in favour of the theory that he had a personal interest in the title<sup>17</sup>.

12 Michael, pp. 762 and 763 (XXXIV.3). For my translation, cp. *Life of Aaron*, pp. 725, 737 and 746 and Payne Smith's *Thesaurus*, col. 4057, *sub voce* ܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ. The old confusion with Mt. Singara, found in Abeloos and Lamy's translation of Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, in Chabot's translation of *Chron. 1234* (so indexed by Fiey) and in Wiseman, *loc. cit.* in note 99, was cleared away by Nau (1929-30), p. 208 with note 1, although Kawerau, *Renaissance*, p. 115 returns to it, giving a double reference to Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, col. 497 and thus creating a third monastery of Aaron. MSS. sometimes point the word as if it were ܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ "a mountain source". An alternative form of appellation is "the Abbey of Mor Aaron of the Conduit".

13 Michael, pp. 573 and 762 (XXXI.32 and 33!), with p. 763; cp. Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, col. 437.

14 Michael, p. 763 (XXXII.28); cp. Leroy, *Manuscripts*, p. 227 with n. 7.

15 Michael, p. 573; cp. Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, col. 437.

16 E.g. Severus of Samosat, in the early seventh century, resided throughout the winter at the monastery of Qenneshrê, spending the summer months touring the diocese of Samosat to administer justice and the sacraments (Michael, p. 418); the same phrase (ܡܢ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ) is used of Severus' temporary retreat and of Ḥoyê's permanent retirement.

17 P. Bedjan [ed.], *Nomocanon Gregorii Barhebraei* (Paris, 1898), VII.10, p. 114, contains a

## Proximity of Ḥesnpatriq and the Abbey of the Conduit

The above argument, by which the Athanasius of Ḥesnpatriq mentioned in a MS. note of 1054 is identified as the future patriarch Athanasius Hoyê, places considerable weight on the assumption that a retired bishop living at the Abbey of the Conduit of Mor Aaron could have adopted the title of Ḥesnpatriq. But if Honigmann is right to situate the eleventh-century see of Ḥesnpatriq at Fethiye NW of Old Melitene<sup>18</sup>, then it was separated from the Abbey of the Conduit by the river Euphrates, since the topographically reliable *Life of Aaron* situates the Abbey on the opposite side of the river from Melitene<sup>19</sup>. Are there any grounds for doubting Honigmann's identification, or must we try to accommodate this awkward fact in our scheme by some other explanation?

The only evidence cited by Honigmann for his identification is cartographic: Fethiye is marked on some Turkish maps with the name "Hasanbadrik" printed as an alternative<sup>20</sup>. Since this evidence does not date from before the twentieth century, it is open to us to suppose that the name might have migrated in the interval from a site on the E side of the Euphrates, nearer to the Abbey of the Conduit. The etymology of the name ("Castle of the Patrikios", this being a Byzantine title) suggests a Byzantine fortress, so that such a migration might have occurred when the Byzantines lost the territories they had gained in 934 and the frontier receded to West of Melitene<sup>21</sup>. On the other hand, there might have been two places called by this name in the region of Melitene, one at Fethiye, the other on the east side of the Euphrates<sup>22</sup>.

canon (probably Nestorian in origin: see H. Kaufhold, *Die Rechtssammlung des Gabriel von Başra und ihr Verhältnis zu den anderen juristischen Sammelwerken der Nestorianer. Abhandlungen zur rechtswissenschaftlichen Grundlagenforschung*, 21 (Berlin, 1976), pp. 52-4), declaring that a monastery where a patriarch is buried comes under the direct jurisdiction of the reigning patriarch; it may be that by being entombed at the Abbey of the Conduit, Hoyê secured for it in perpetuity the autonomy which it had enjoyed *de facto* as the residence of a bishop.

18 Honigmann, *Barsauma*, p. 131, followed by F. Hild, *Das byzantinische Straßensystem in Kappadokien* (Vienna, 1977), p. 112, and *id.* with M. Restle, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 2: Kappadokien* (Vienna 1981), p. 190.

19 Cp. Nau (1929-30), pp. 207-8.

20 Honigmann, *loc. cit.*, without a cartographic reference; but cp. *Map of Turkey in Ottoman Script 1: 200,000* (1909), Sheet E.XI (*faihiya - hisnbadrik*); *Harta Genel Müdürlüğü 1: 200,000* (1948), Sheet E.XI (Fethiye - Hasanbadrik at 38.36N, 38.7E).

21 See E. Honigmann, *art.* "Malaṭya", in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 3 (1936) and F. Tinnefeld, "Die Stadt Melitene in ihrer späteren byzantinischen Epoche (934-1101)", *Actes du XIV<sup>e</sup> congrès international des études byzantines*, Bucarest 6-12 Sept. 1971, vol. II (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 435-43.

22 The name is not so unusual as to make this implausible: Barsawm, *KBB*, p. 628, mentions a place called Ḥesn Baṭriq (*i.e.* Paṭriq) between Aleppo and Raqqa and cp. Tell Paṭriq (Honigmann, *Barsauma*, pp. 152-3).



Qlīsūrō wrote a long *hūsoyō* to be read at the feast of Aaron the Ascetic<sup>27</sup>. The *Chronicle* of Michael seems to distinguish the province of Qlīsūrō from that of Hanzīṭ in the tenth century<sup>28</sup>. The region of Hanzīṭ was centred on Harput in the eastern part of what the Byzantines called Anzitene<sup>29</sup>, so that Qlīsūrō presumably occupied the western part of that small, river-rounded region. This agrees with Honigmann's siting of the town of Qlīsūrō at Helezur, 12km. west of Hazar Gölü<sup>30</sup>.

The *Life of Aaron* tells how Aaron, led by an angel, left the Blessed Mountain near Melitene on the west side of the Euphrates, crossed that river, and so came to the site of the Abbey of the Conduit, in a rocky gully or cavern on the side of a steep mountain, a position which eventually necessitated the construction of a flight of stone stairs and of the aqueduct after which the monastery is named<sup>31</sup>. In describing this journey, the *Life* adds: "And that angel led him until nine hours"<sup>32</sup>; it is not clear in the context whether this means "until the ninth hour", or "for as many as nine hours" from the Euphrates crossing, or "for nine hours altogether", but this last is most likely<sup>33</sup>. If the exact position of the Blessed Mountain

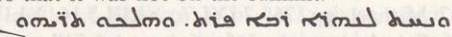
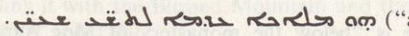
27 Baršawm, KBB, p. 455; a *hūsoyō* is a propitiatory prayer, which the West Syrians developed into a long drawn-out literary form for declamation on a special day. This *hūsoyō* begins: "Glory to that sea of truly existent blessedness, which is past comparison"; the author, Athanasius, was bishop of Qlīsūrō from ca. 970 to ca. 982; cp. Michael, p. 760 (XXIX.11). MS. Dawk. 32 of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, ff. 257b-260b, contains an "office of the holy Mor Aaron, great among the ascetics"; this was examined for me by Alison Salvesen, who found nothing of substance in the text to help with our enquiry. She confirmed my suspicion that the script (described by Payne Smith in his catalogue as "Nestorian") belongs to the West-Syrian family of modified or closed *êšrangêlō* (cp. n. 65), with occasional titles in true *êšrangêlō* and notes in the simple script and in clumsy Greek; the date is 1165-6 but no mention of provenance has survived.

28 Michael, p. 556; Honigmann, *art.* "Malatya", p. 194, interprets this as "Malatya, Hanzīṭ and the passes (*kleisourai*)", but in another place (*Barsauma*, pp. 142-143) he discusses the position of the bishopric of "Qlīsūrō". Baršawm's use of the phrase *ūḥdonō da-qlišūrō*, "the province of Q.", sets it on a par with other civil administrative districts; but cp. n. 26.

29 The town of Hanzīṭ itself is placed by Honigmann, *Barsauma*, pp. 128-129, at Tilenzit, near the Murat Suyu, east of Elâziğ.

30 Honigmann, *Barsauma*, pp. 142-3.

31 *Life of Aaron*, pp. 720-3; cp. pp. 737-8 and p. 746. The word *šqīpō* is translated by Nau as "caverne", but it can also mean "cliff", "ledge", "gully" (Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, col. 4296; Brockelmann, *Lexicon*, p. 801). Brockelmann notes the phrase on p. 746 of the *Life*, where Aaron brings water right up to "the mouth of the *šqīpō*". The phrase "that mountain which is above the monastery" (p. 723) shows that it was not on the summit.

32 *Life of Aaron*, p. 721: .  ("and he went down to the great river Euphrates and both of them walked on the water and the angel took him until nine hours").

33 Nau, (1929-30), p. 208, somehow derives from this phrase the information that the monastery was "about 10km. from the river, opposite Melitene". Let it be observed that one may cross a river and then travel on for many miles beside it, so that Nau's measurement cannot be justified by any interpretation of the words in the *Life*.

were known, this "nine hours' journey" might help to situate the place where it ended.

As it is, however, we know only that we should look for a steep mountain not far from Melitene on the east side of the Euphrates, probably in the western half of Anzitene<sup>34</sup>. This description seems best answered by the mountain called *al-Minšar*, which means "the saw", or Müşer Dağı in Turkish<sup>35</sup>. There is, indeed, a ruined Armenian church on the summit which was dedicated to a St. Aaron. One might suspect that this was the monastery we are looking for, its Armenian character being due to a later change of ownership; but Huntington's photograph and the detailed description by Kuntelian give no hint that the church is surrounded by the ruins of a monastic complex, and, in any case, the Abbey of the Conduit should be half-way up a cliff, not on the summit<sup>36</sup>. Nevertheless, the coincidence is suggestive.

It appears that there was, for about a century after ca. 1085, a second monastery called after Aaron of Serugh in the vicinity of Melitene; it was known as "the monastery in the Blessed Mountain"<sup>37</sup>. This "Blessed Mountain" must be the same as that allegedly visited by Aaron, which was on the west bank of the Euphrates<sup>38</sup>. Yet Gregory treats the mountain above the "castle of Masorô" as identical with the Blessed Mountain, situating there the only monastery of Aaron existing in his time; and "Masoro" is "Minšār", as we shall see, so he must be using the name "Blessed Mountain" for Müşer Dağı<sup>39</sup>.

34 For sketch-maps of this region see Huntington (1902), p. 177; Canard, *Saif al-Daulah*, opposite p. 414; J.D. Howard-Johnston, "Byzantine Anzitene", in *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia (Swansea Colloquium, 1981)*, ed. S. Mitchell (Oxford, 1983), figs. 15.1 and 15.2.

35 Marked, with various spellings, on all the sketch-maps cited in n. 34 and on the maps referred to in n. 20.

36 See Huntington (1901), p. 196 fig. 21; Huntington (1902), pp. 188-9; Kuntelian, "Notes sur les monuments arméniens de la région de Kharput", *Second International Symposium on Armenian Art, Collection of Reports*, vol. II (1978), p. 212-13 (I am grateful to T.A. Sinclair for this reference). Huntington (1902) p. 188, describes a Moslem sanctuary in a cave 950ft. up Müşer Dağı, which may be on the site of the Abbey of the Conduit. He gives the name of the "saint" as Hassan; but Kuntelian (cited in n. 36) speaks of the "mausoleum of Vahap". Honigmann, *Barsauma*, p. 80, followed by Kawerau, *Renaissance*, p. 115 n. 1, treats the monastery and the church as identical.

37 Michael, pp. 765-7 (XL.6, XLIII.5,16, XLIV.8, 19, 53).

38 See above, p. 6; *Life of Aaron*, p. 717.

39 Gregory, *Chron. Syr.*, p. 423 [364] (the castle is "below the monastery of Mor Aaron of the Blessed Mountain"); p. 437 [375] (it is "in the Blessed Mountain"); p. 471, cp. 499 [403, cp. 426] (it is near a place where the river could be crossed); Michael, pp. 606, 607, 625 = Gregory, *Chron. Syr.*, pp. 285 [251], 304 [267] show that the castle is on the east side of the Euphrates near Melitene. On the basis of the above, Honigmann identifies the Blessed Mountain with Müşer Dağı (*Barsauma*, p. 142); he also adduces evidence from

After ca. 1170 there is no mention of the Abbey of the Conduit by that name, only of the monastery of Mor Aaron in the Blessed Mountain; a bishop who took up residence there about 1220 was given jurisdiction over ten villages of the diocese of Qlīsūrô, which would make nonsense if the Blessed Mountain were on the west bank of the Euphrates, as in the *Life of Aaron*<sup>40</sup>. (The *Life of Aaron* adds further confusion by referring to a mountain called Masoro to the west of Țaranda, modern Darende on the far side of the Hakimhan Pass west of Malatya, without apparently anticipating that readers might think he meant Müşer Dağı<sup>41</sup>. This may be because, for the author, evidently an inmate of the Abbey of the Conduit, the context made such a confusion absurd.) We shall see that the *Life of Aaron* was composed late in the tenth century. It is possible that, at that date and until the late twelfth century, the “Blessed Mountain” was situated on the west bank of the Euphrates, but that the monastery there was subsequently merged with that of the Conduit, transferring its monks to Müşer Dağı; from that date (on this hypothesis) the name of the Conduit was suppressed and the combined community was known as the monastery of Mor Aaron in the Blessed Mountain, the latter appellation being transferred to Müşer Dağı. The theory seems contrived, but it is difficult to think of an alternative which gives due weight to the topographical accuracy of the *Life of Aaron* and of Gregory regarding the district of Melitene.

### Site of Ḥesnpatrīq

In looking for a likely site for Êylūn/Ḥesnpatrīq we take as a guide the etymology of the latter name: the site must be associated with a fortifiable position which could have been used by someone with the Byzantine title of *patrikios*. About this last condition there is no difficulty: during the period for which the name Ḥesnpatrīq is attested, that is, in the tenth (Bar Bahlūl?) and eleventh centuries, Anzitene belonged to the territories of the Byzantine emperor. Moreover, it appears that the title *patrikios* was used by the generals set over Melitene and that part of Mesopotamia which was then in Roman hands<sup>42</sup>.

the Arabic translation of Gregory, *Chron. Syr.*, to the effect that Masoro = al-Minšār (*Barsauma*, p. 85). The first mention of “the castle of Masoro” is in 1123; those which link it with the Blessed Mountain and the monastery of Aaron which was there date from 1207 and 1220.

40 Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, II, col. 397.

41 *Life of Aaron*, p. 741-3.

42 Cp. Michael, p. 553, for a Byzantine official of the tenth century in Anzitene with both an adopted Greek and an original Arab name, who is called “the *patrikios* of the place”; cp. G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1884), p. 288: a tenth-

As for a fortifiable position, there is one at Kaleköy, at the foot of Müşer Dağı, very close to the probable position of the Abbey of the Conduit; it commanded a ford over the river Euphrates, which might explain why the author of the *Life of Aaron* brought him from Melitene to the monastery via Êylün/Hesnpatriq. It was first described by Lehmann and Huntington, who were interested in its rock-cut platforms as evidence of Urartian occupation; since their mind was on this early period, they said nothing about evidence of later re-use<sup>43</sup>. There seems, however, to be a good chance of finding such evidence *in situ*: historical geographers agree in identifying the castle with *qal'at Minšār*, a Byzantine fortress so named in a contemporary Arab account of the expedition of Sayf ad-Dawla against Anzitene in the mid-tenth century<sup>44</sup>.

### Conclusion of first investigation

Given, therefore, that a) the Abbey of the Conduit of Mor Aaron is most likely to have stood on Müşer Dağı, b) Hesnpatriq is to be identified with a place near the Abbey of the Conduit mentioned in the *Life of Aaron*, and c) the fortress-rock at the foot of Müşer Dağı is a suitable candidate for

century seal of "Leo, *anthypatos*, *patrikios* and *stratēgos* of Mesopotamia" ("Mesopotamia" included Anzitene). F. Tinnefeld, *art. cit.* (in n. 21), gives a valuable overview, adding certain warnings against drawing conclusions about local administration from the Byzantine titles attested for this area; in note 10 he refers to the letter written by Philetos Synadenos to Nikephoros Balanites, *Patrikios* and *Stratēgos* of Melitene, ed. J. Darrouzès, *Epistoliers byzantins du X<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1960), pp. 251-253.

- 43 The castle is marked on most of the maps cited above, whether as *Qal'a*, *Kale*, *Kaleköy*, or *al-Minšār*; the Euphrates crossing below it was used by Sayf ad-Dawla for his withdrawal from the territory of Melitene in 953 (see Howard-Johnston, *art. cit.* (in n. 34), p. 251). C.F. Lehmann, "Auffindung einer chaldischen Anlage am Euphrat-Knie bei Malatia", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* xxxi (1899), pp. 580-610; Huntington (1902), p. 188. I know of no subsequent publication which might cast light on the later re-use of this rock.
- 44 See Howard-Johnston, *art. cit.* (in n. 34), pp. 251, 253; also M. Canard, *Saif al-Dawlah*, p. 98, note 1 (the last two references given there are incorrect): "al-Minšār — Forteresse située sur la rive gauche de l'Euphrate sur le Jabal al Minšār, le Muşer Dagh actuel, en face de l'embouchure du Qubāqib"; see also: Yāqūt, *mu'ğam al-buldān*, 6 vol., ed. F. Wuestenfeld (Leipzig, 1866-1873) [new impression: 1924], IV, p. 661 ("near the Euphrates"); Suhrāb, *kitāb 'ağā'ib al-aqālīm as-sab'a*, ed. Mžik (1930), p. 119; Abu'l Maḥāsīn ibn Taghribirdī, *an-nuğūm az-zāhira fī mulūk mişr wa'l Qāhira*, 7 vol., ed. W. Popper (Berkeley, California, 1909-1932), VI, p. 371 (troops gather "underneath qal'at minšār", burn some Kurdish houses, then cross the Euphrates); Khalīl ibn Šāhīn az-Zāhirī, *Zubdat kaşf al-mamālik*, ed. P. Ravaisse (Paris, 1894), p. 52 (*mūšār*); V. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1890-95), II, p. 339; W. Tomaschek, *Historisch-topographisches vom oberen Euphrat und Ost-Kappadokien*, in the *Festschrift* for H. Kiepert (1898), p. 138 ("Die ... Burg ḥiṣn el-Minšār bewahrt noch jetzt ihren Namen in der armenischen Klosterruine [sic] Meşar und im sogen. Meşer-Dagh").

identification as Ḥesnpatriq, the hypothesis that a retired bishop resident at the Abbey of the Conduit might have formed a title of convenience from the name of Ḥesnpatriq seems as strong as can reasonably be expected. Contrary indications are absent and no alternative reconstruction is at hand. We may now give full weight to the arguments set forth in the first part of this section, and identify the bishop Athanasius of Ḥesnpatriq mentioned in 1054 with bishop Athanasius Hoyê, who resided at that time in the Abbey of the Conduit.

## 2. THE EARLIEST ATTESTED «BISHOP OF ḤESNPATRIQ»

At this point we must consider another MS. note dated almost exactly fifty years earlier than the one we began with (Plate 2). Br. Lib. Add. MS. 12,165 was written in A.G. 1326 (A.D. 1014/5) at a monastery called after a person lately deceased, whose name was perhaps Simeon. The scribe was called Ṣalibâ (or Ṣlibô) and the expenses were paid by one Athanasius, bishop of a place the name of which is damaged. The first part of the name, which is certainly legible, reads “ḥsnpr...”; after that there seems to be space for two more letters, the last of which finished in an upward-curving flourish<sup>45</sup>.

Wright read this name as “Ḥisn Petros” and suggested that this was a variant of “Ḥisn Kepha” (cp. Gospel of John, ch. 1, verse 42). Hasankeyf (to call it by its modern name) had certainly been a bishopric: the *Life of Jacob the Egyptian Recluse*, set in the fourth-fifth centuries, mentions a bishop Benjamin of Ḥesnô d-Kîphô<sup>46</sup>; the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon (451) record the presence of the “bishop of the *castellum* of Kēphas”, which is Hasankeyf<sup>47</sup>; the see is listed under the metropolitan of Amida in the Chalcedonian *Notitia Antiochena* of 570<sup>48</sup>. Exceptional circumstances led

45 Wright, No. DCCCXXV; the scribe's colophon on fol. 355a, described by Wright, pp. 850-851, is the note in question.

46 For summaries of this *Life*, see Wright, pp. 1135-1136, and F. Nau, “Résumé de monographies syriaques”, part 3, *ROC* Ser. 2, vol. 10 [20] (1915-17), p. 1f.; for a complete text, see Hanna Dolabani, *ḥabobô d-maṣṣaḥ 'al maktbonûtô d-dayrô d-mor ya'qûb d-ṣalaḥ* [i.e. History of the monastery of Mor Jacob at Ṣalaḥ] (Atchane, 1973<sup>2</sup>) (the reference to the bishop of Ḥesnô de-Kêphô is on p. 17); a new edition with German translation is in preparation by Hanna Aydin at Eichstätt.

47 *Acta Conciliorum Œcumenicorum*, ed. E. Schwartz, II.1.1, p. 59 (I.3.139); II.1.2, p. 202 (II.2.131); p. 229 (II.96.149); p. 283 (IV.1.125); p. 341 (VI.9.141); II.1.3, p. 452 (XVII.9.153); cp. VI, p. 92, for further references.

48 See E. Honigmann, “Die *Notitia Antiochena*”, *ByZ* 25 (1925), p. 75; cp. I. E. Rahmani, *I Fasti della chiesa patriarcale d'Antiochia* (Rome, 1920), p. vi; A. Vööbus [ed.], *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*, II (Louvain, 1976) [CSCO 376, Scr. Syr. 164], p. 193.

to the temporary creation of an irregular and unrenovable appointment to the office of “bishop of Ḥesnô d-Kîphô and of Ṭūr ‘Abdîn”, the only occupant of which, Cyriac, signed his name at the schismatic Synod of Tella in 752<sup>49</sup>. After this date Hasankeyf is not found as the whole or part of an episcopal title until the fifteenth century, when Basil Mas‘ūd of Zâz was bishop “of Zarjel and Arzon and S‘ert and Ḥesn Kîphô from 1481 to 1491”<sup>50</sup>. It does not appear as an episcopal see in the official Register of Ordinations covering the period 793 to the reign of Michael I (1166-1199). It therefore seems very unlikely that there was a bishop of Hasankeyf in 1014/5 and even more improbable that “Ḥisn Petros” was an otherwise unheard-of bishopric.

I examined fol. 355a of Add. 12,165 for a long time; the staff at the British Library arranged for me to continue my examination of the word in question under ultra-violet light in a darkened room. There could be no doubt that the last letter of the line which ends with “ḥsnptr...” was QOPH. Ṣalibâ’s hand in this note writes QOPH with four straight lines forming a flattened box with pointed corners, finishing off with the flourish I described above; SEMKATH, on the other hand, is formed with a pair of round loops, titled towards the right and finishing with a similar flourish. The form of the letter as I described it in the MS. was incompatible with such a SEMKATH; the only other letter it could be is QOPH.

In the context of the former enquiry, which showed that one official and one unofficial bishop of Ḥesnpatriq are known in the mid-eleventh century, the restoration of Ḥesnpatriq as the name of the see referred to in Add. 12,165 is inevitable. There is evidence that this name may have become attached at various times to more than one place (see n. 22), but none which points to an association with a bishop except for Êylûn/Ḥesnpatriq near the Abbey of the Conduit.

Two MS. notes, therefore, dated 1014/5 and 1054 respectively, refer to Athanasius bishop of Ḥesnpatriq: should we distinguish two bishops or identify both with Ḥoyê? Three separate considerations make it very probable that we are dealing with two bishops of the same name. If Ḥoyê was already calling himself “Bishop of Ḥesnpatriq” in 1014, he must have become bishop of Arsamosat and then abandoned his diocese before that date. If we suppose this is what happened, we encounter the following difficulties:

- i) Ḥoyê must have reached a great age if he survived his episcopal ordination by more than fifty years;

49 Michael, p. 470: for the full story, see Michael, Book Eleven, chapters 22 to 26.

50 See Barsawm, *Tur Abdin*, p. 75.

ii) his name appears near the bottom of the list of bishops ordained by John Bar ʿAbdūn, whereas we should expect him to come near the top, since on our hypothesis his ordination occurred well within the first ten years of a reign of twenty-six;

iii) the Register does not show another bishop of Arsamosat until after 1031, which might imply a vacancy of eighteen years.

The first of these difficulties is not by nature insuperable, although no such extreme case of longevity is known in the Syrian Orthodox annals<sup>51</sup>. The second and the third are perhaps mitigated by the fact that, on account of Bar ʿAbdūn's exile, many of the bishops he created were not entered in the Register, as is explicitly stated in the Register itself<sup>52</sup>. Yet the cumulative force of these objections is by no means countered by compelling reasons on the other side: only the coincidence of name and title suggests identification. There is even some evidence that the name of Athanasius was popular in and near the Abbey of the Conduit at this time<sup>53</sup>. The balance of probability is heavily weighted against identification. Only the absence of a suitable candidate in the Register for the role of First Bishop Athanasius of Ḥesnpatriq̄ could make us doubt this conclusion.

We need a bishop called Athanasius who was ordained to some other see, preferably not at the farthest end of the Syrian Orthodox world, before 1014; further, we need to show that he might have vacated that see before 1014 to reside (probably at the Abbey of the Conduit) near Ḥesnpatriq̄. The latter requirement would be fulfilled if it were shown that the other see was filled again not long after 1014. These conditions are satisfied in the person of a monk from the monastery of Mâdiq, near Singis, in the region of Claudia, some way down the Euphrates from the monastery of the Conduit. He was the sixth bishop ordained by John Bar ʿAbdūn, and he was called Athanasius of Kallinikos<sup>54</sup>; Kallinikos was on the site of modern Raqqa, at a considerable distance from Melitene, yet still on the Upper Euphrates. The next metropolitan of Kallinikos was Peter, the eleventh bishop in the same list. So Athanasius might well have retired before 1014. This makes him the strongest candidate for identification with the first Athanasius of Ḥesnpatriq̄; although it remains a mystery why a monk of Mâdiq should have retired to the Abbey of the Conduit.

51 Athanasius I "the Cameldriver" was patriarch for 45 years (Michael, p. 752); Nonnus of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn appears to have reigned as bishop for about the same length of time (see n. 9).

52 Michael, p. 762.

53 Athanasius of Qlīsūrô (see n. 27) and Athanasius Ṣalḥoyô (Michael, pp. 557-558) were both connected with the Abbey in the tenth century.

54 Michael, p. 762 (XXXI.6).

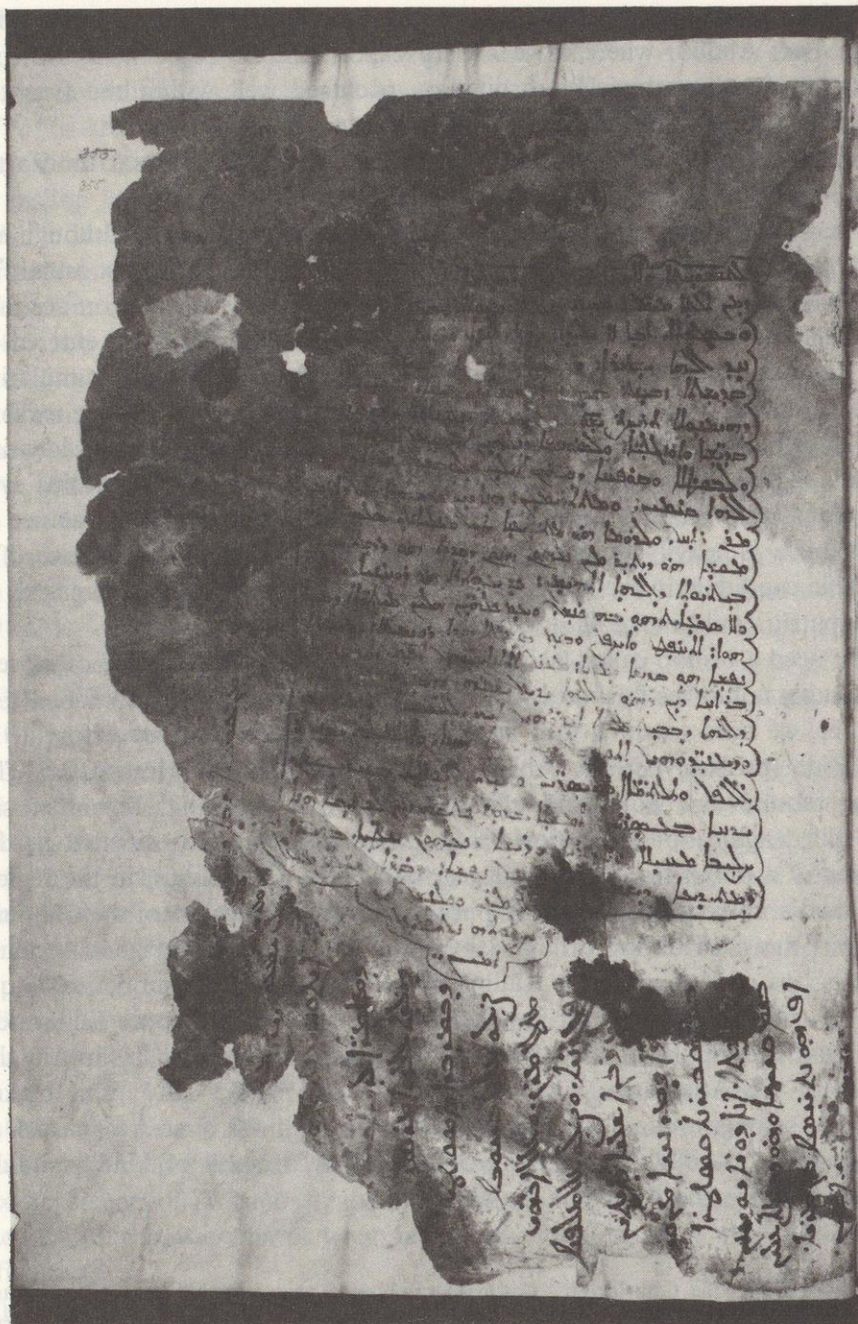


Plate 2

Add. 12,165, fol. 355a

## 3. A LINK BETWEEN THE "BISHOP OF ḤESNPAṬRĪQ" AND QARTMĪN ABBEY

The same folio of Add. 12,165 (Plate 2) promptly supplies another puzzle: the marginal note which runs down the left-hand side of the page, beginning opposite the line below that in which Athanasius of Ḥesnpaṭrīq is named, and which continues with the same vertical orientation across the bottom margin, reads as follows:

"From the great abbey of Mor Gabriel/and Mor Samuel/and Mor Simeon/of Qartmīn [sic]. //

This book/of *Mimrê* belongs to the holy monastery/of the Mother of God, Mary,/in the desert of Skētê./Pray for me in love/for our Lord's sake, and for my fathers/in the flesh. And pray for my teacher,/Rabbān Isaiah: for we are <both>/[from the la]nd? of the east, from the [village]/Bēth Sbīrnā (sic), the [blessed] *qastrum*./I, the wretched John,/in name a priest <and my master>. And he who prays for us,/let him also be pardoned by the Lord!"

In Wright's description of this note a distinction is drawn between the first sentence and the rest, the latter being characterized as "a later note, at the foot of the page"<sup>55</sup>. Small differences in the script might seem to indicate two different hands, but the letter-forms are the same and the two hands are almost certainly contemporary<sup>56</sup>. Perhaps the first sentence was written by Rabbān Isaiah. The two scripts represent a stage between Ṭūr ʿAbdīn scripts of 1305 and 1369 (ṢODHĒ as in the former, GOMAL as in the latter) (Plate 3)<sup>57</sup>; since the scribe (or scribes) of the note in Add. 12,165 was (probably in both cases) a native of Bēth Sbīrīnā in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, this similarity is a good basis on which to determine the date at which he (or they) wrote.

What is in question is the reference of the first sentence: is it Athanasius himself whom the scribe claims as a monk of Qartmīn, or his uncle, who is mentioned after him in the following words:

"Athanasius, bishop of Ḥesnpaṭrīq,/son of the brother of him whose name God knows"<sup>58</sup>?

<sup>55</sup> Wright, p. 851.

<sup>56</sup> MIM in the "second" hand usually has a backward-turning movement at the end of its oblique riser, which is missing in the "first" hand; LOMADH in the "first" hand finishes by trailing off into a thin tail, whereas the "second" hand traces it to the end with the same thickness, sometimes finishing off with a backward turn; in general, the "first" hand is smaller and neater than the "second". Yet all these differences might be found in the writing of a single scribe, perhaps using a different pen, and the similarities are striking, even to the shape of the curl with which the downward stroke of an isolated OLAPH begins.

<sup>57</sup> On fol. 195b of Add. MS. 18,714 of the British Library; cp. Wright, p. 164, col. 2.

<sup>58</sup> Fol. 355a, lines 15-16; cp. Wright, p. 850, col. 2.

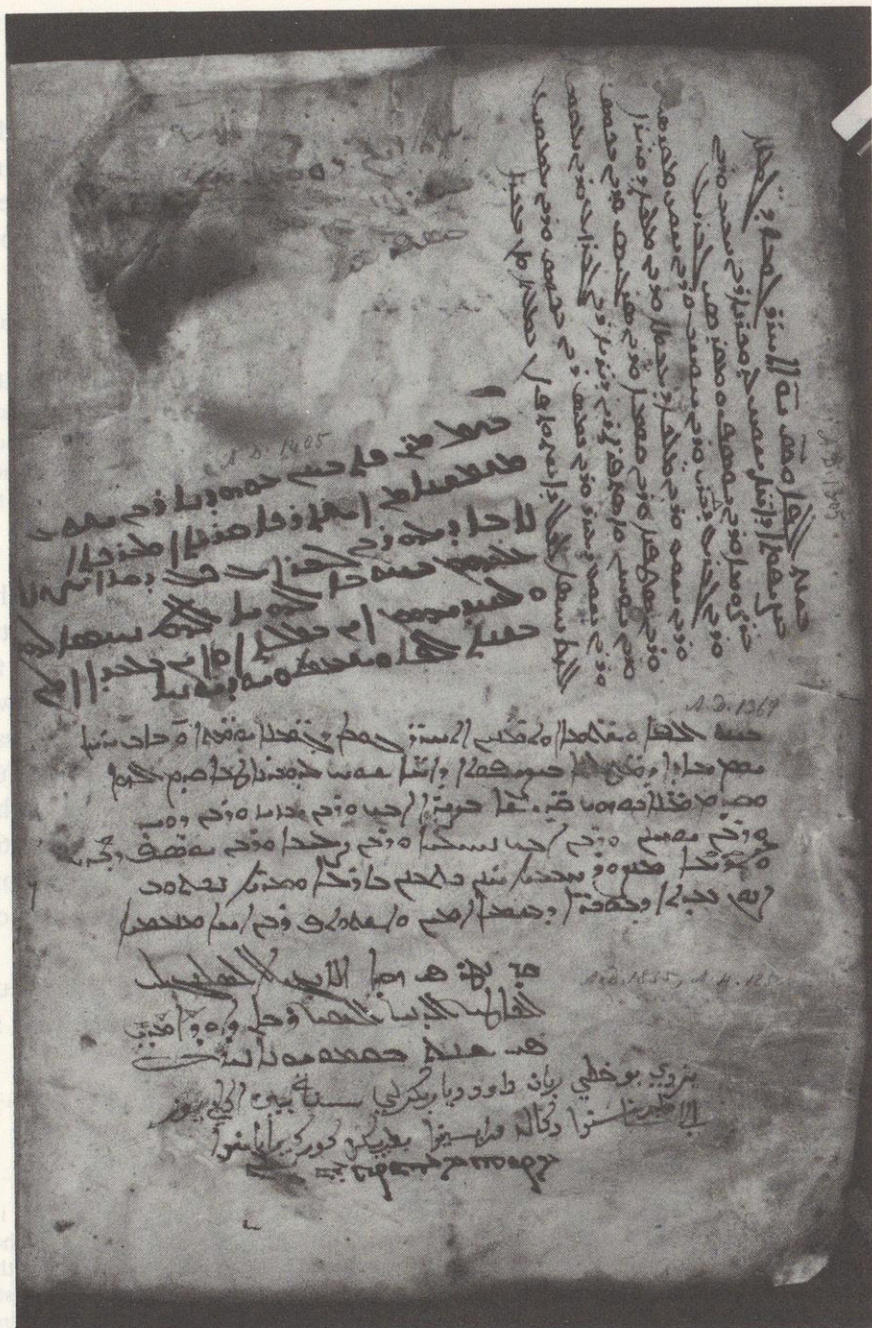


Plate 3

Add. 18,714, fol. 195b

Wright (followed by Nau) thought it was Athanasius; but of all the bishops ordained from Qartmīn around this time none bore the name of Athanasius. The possibility remains that some explanation may be found to salvage Wright's opinion<sup>59</sup>, but, on the face of it, the uncle is the more likely candidate, although he is nameless, because the note begins opposite the line in which he is mentioned. We shall have to bear both options in mind.

### Tūr ʿAbdīn and Melitene: the origins of a revival in calligraphy

The link which this note suggests between Qartmīn and Ḥesnapatriq, whether it resides in the person of Athanasius or in that of his uncle, is borne out by the other evidence of about the same date, beginning with the story of a bishop of Tūr ʿAbdīn, who, curiously enough, shares the same name and origin as the second scribe named in the margin of Add. 12,165: John of Bēth Sbirīnā. The relevant text is from Gregory's entry concerning the patriarch Athanasius V Ṣalḥoyō in the second part of his *Chronicle*<sup>60</sup>:

"The same Mor Athanasius ordained the renowned Mor John, bishop of the Abbey of Qartmīn, in the year 1299 [A.D. 987/8] (actually *ca.* 998), he that renewed the script of *êṣrangiliyā* in Tūr ʿAbdīn, which had been out of use for the duration of a hundred years. The bishop himself learned by looking at books and he taught the sons of his brother; and there was given to Emmanuel the perfect grace of calligraphy and to his brother Niḥē that of painting. The bishop sent their brother Peter to Melitene and he brought back vellum; and Rabbān Emmanuel penned seventy codices, [containing Scriptures in the] Peshittō, Septuagint [*i.e.* Syro-Hexapla] and Harklean [versions], and a *Penqithō* of *Mimrē* [written] in three columns<sup>61</sup>. He gave [them] to the Abbey of Qartmīn, books without their equal in the world."<sup>62</sup>

Vellum had to be obtained in Melitene: this fact can best be understood in the historical context. Melitene was reconquered by the Byzantines in 934; after trying in vain to fill the vacuum caused by the Arab withdrawal with Greek-speaking people from their own empire, they at last had recourse to inviting the Syrian Orthodox, mainly resident in Arab territory, to resettle the city and the surrounding country on the assurance (afterwards betrayed) of freedom from persecution. The Greeks had been scared away by the

59 E.g. he was one of those ordained by Bar ʿAbdūn whose names were not entered in the Register; cp. Michael, p. 762.

60 Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, cols. 417-9; John's village of origin is known from Pognon, *Inscriptions*, No. 14 = Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, *INSCR.* B.13.

61 Reading: ܬܪܝܢܐ; cp. A. Vööbus, *Handschriftliche Überlieferung der Memre-Dichtung des Ja'qob von Serug*, I (Louvain, 1973) CSCO, 344 = Subsidia 39, pp. 138f.: three-columned MSS. of Jacob's homilies in Damascus, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate, 12/13-14 (A.D. 1150).

62 See Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, Excursus on the Syriac letters of Tur ʿAbdin, for a commentary of this passage; Assemani, *B.O.*, II, p. 352, points wrongly the word ܬܪܝܢܐ (MS. Vat. Syr. 166, P. 2, fol. 288b; other MSS. have the singular), whence the corrupt forms in J. P. P. Martin, *Journal Asiatique*, ser. VI, vol. 14 (1869), p. 330, and Leroy, *Manuscripts*, p. 265 n. 1.

insecurity of its position on the frontier, but the Syrians were used to living and dealing with two opposing nations or empires. They had indeed already begun to infiltrate the area at the instance of a local Byzantine official of Arab extraction around 960, some nine years before Nikephoros II Phokas endorsed the policy with his imperial authority. Within a decade from his invitation the Syrians had turned the natural advantages of Melitene to good profit and there were many wealthy families in the region. The church was by no means excluded from the benefits of this prosperity and much was spent on legitimate ecclesiastical investments, such as churches and monasteries and the furnishings for these. The abundance of resources also made it possible to secure plenty of vellum for church books<sup>63</sup>.

This was the essential precondition for the calligraphic revival ascribed to bishop John. Just as the scarcity of parchment had been the chief reason for the decline of Syriac calligraphy, forcing scribes to compress the letter-forms and to leave less space for aesthetic effect, so a plentiful supply inspired a reversal of this process and a return to the generous elegance of the sixth- to eighth-century Gospel-texts.

It also allowed the Syrians to consider illustrating their MSS., as the richer Byzantine and Armenian communities had been doing for some time. Melitene was the ideal crossroads for such cultural interchange and it is hard to see where else the Bishop of Tūr ʿAbdīn might have looked for an example when he encouraged his nephew Niḥê to develop his talent in this direction. The questions raised by this enquiry may provoke art-historians to look again at the evidence of interaction between Byzantine, Armenian and Syriac painters around the year 1000.

If the above considerations make it likely that the role played by the region of Melitene in Bishop John's revival went beyond the supply of vellum, an important witness can be summoned which converts this to a near-certainty: Add. MS. 12,139 of the British Library is a novel type of lectionary devised by the patriarch Athanasius Ṣalḥoyô and written out by his disciple Romanos during the period immediately after that ordination<sup>64</sup>.

63 See Michael, pp. 551-554; Tinnefeld, *art. cit.* (in n. 21), pp. 440-3. Lazarus the son of Joseph of Kayšum is an interesting example of a representative of a family of *nouveaux riches* finding scope for ostentation in the conventional style of the monastic *élite*. Self-styled "the most unworldly of monks" (*âksnoyô b-dayroyê*), he displays his wealth by commissioning a *de luxe* Gospel-book, as a donation to his monastery, which contains several notices, wasteful of space and lavishly coloured or gilded, proclaiming his name, his parentage and his native city. One whole side of a parchment folio of MS. Damascus, Syr. Orth. Patr. 12/8 is used up with seventeen words done in gold by a scribe named Simeon (the rest of the MS. was written by a certain Peter), stating with some emphasis that Lazarus "bought, purchased, and produced this page" (Plate 1) (fol. 328b, facing the note with which this paper began).

64 Wright, pp. 154-159 (No. CCXXIV); in a letter to me dated 10/10/1985, Dr. S.P. Brock

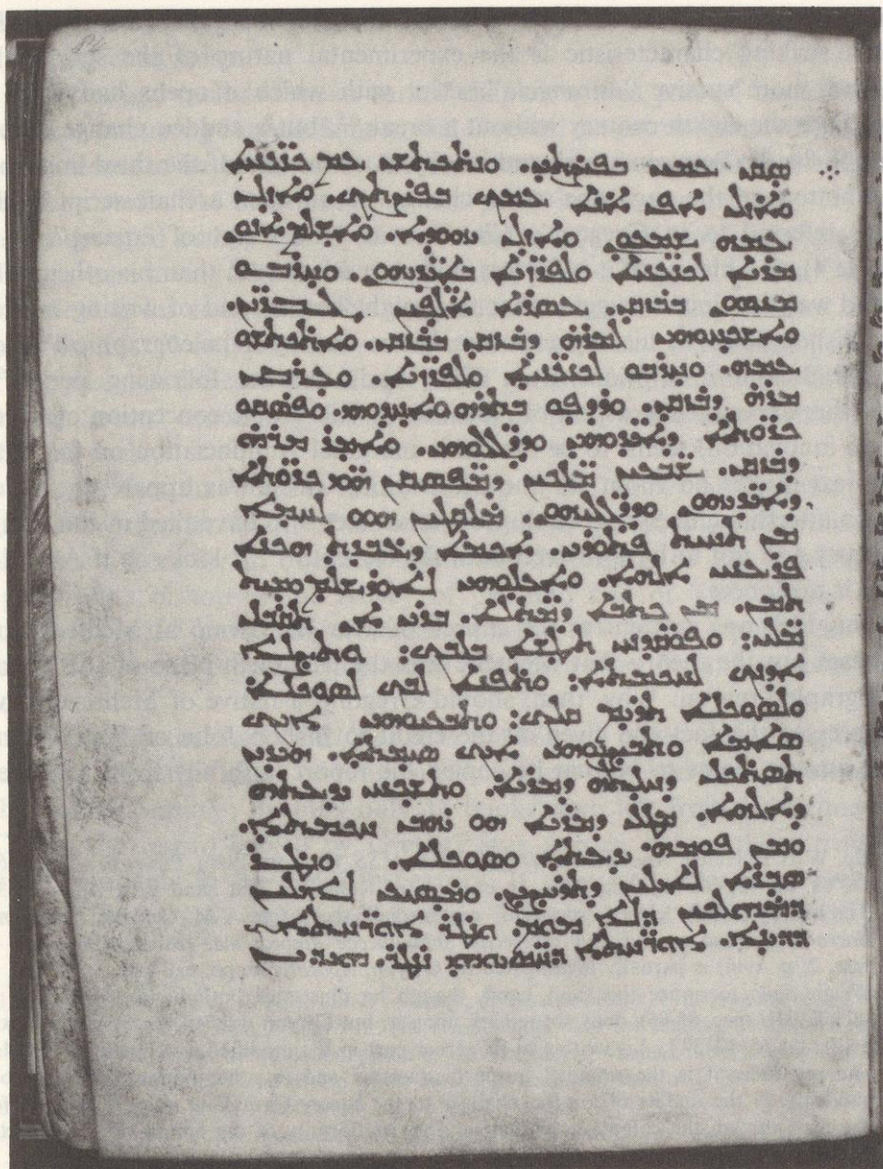


Plate 4

Add. 12,139, fol. 84a

makes the following comment on Romanos: “conceivably the same person as the scribe of Harvard Syr. 31, which if I recall is in this distinctive script (Title: [sic] ܠܒܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ). This also has a marginal drawing f. 116<sup>b</sup>: seated virgin with unicorn (ܠܒܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܡ) approaching her, chased by ?dog. Glossed: ܠܒܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ. In several places ܠܒܝܬ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ ܕܡܪܝܡ, who could be the Bishop of Claudia consecrated by Ath(anasius) V (XXX.24). Also mentioned are the priest YN<sup>(Q)</sup>Y (?Ioanikios) and QSYM aksenāyā. R(omanos) spells his name: RWM’NWS”.

John was probably made bishop in 998; this MS. was finished in 1000. Its most striking characteristic is the experimental nature of the script: the closed, more cursive “*êṣṣrangêlô*” script with which it opens had been in use since the eighth century without a break<sup>65</sup>, but a sudden change occurs on fol. 84a<sup>66</sup>. Between a verb and its object, at the end of the third line from the bottom of the page, the scribe changes to an open archaic script of the kind referred to in Gregory’s *Chronicle* as “the script of *êṣṣrangiliyâ*”<sup>67</sup> (Plate 4), and his use of it is far less skilled and less even than his other style. Land was the first to suggest that this might be the kind of writing revived by Bishop John<sup>68</sup>; his suggestion is borne out by a paleographical study of MSS. and inscriptions from Ṭūr ‘Abdīn in the following period<sup>69</sup>. Another experimental aspect of Add. 12,139 (the whole conception of which is an innovation) seems to be the naive marginal Annunciation on fol. 57a: the text makes no room for the illustration, which was apparently added as an afterthought. Syriac book-illustration seems to have died in the eighth century and not to have revived until the eleventh<sup>70</sup>. It looks as if Add. 12, 139 is a pioneer.

This MS. was written for the church of Mor Barṣawmô at Melitene and it bears out the theory that Melitene was the true birth-place of the Syriac calligraphic revival. Why, then, should Gregory, a native of Melitene, have suppressed this fact and given all the credit to Bishop John of Ṭūr ‘Abdīn? The answer seems to be that he copied the report faithfully from a written

65 Cp. W. H. P. Hatch, *An Album of Dated Syriac MSS.* (Boston, 1946), Plates 51, 53, 63, 64, 66, 68, 71, 72, 74, 75; Plate 77 is an example of Romanos’ first hand from Add. 12,139. The history of this “closed *êṣṣrangêlô*” or “medial” script (cp. A. M. Ceriani, *Monumenta Sacra et Profana ex codicibus praesertim Bibliothecae Ambrosianae* [Milan, 1861], vol. 2, fasc. 2, p. xviii) is partially investigated by Gwynn, *Apocalypse*, pp. cxii-cxiv.

66 Wright fails to notice this, and Land, though he illustrates both hands (*A.S.*, vol. 1, tab. XVIII, spec. 85-86), does not remark upon it; but Gwynn writes (*Apocalypse*, pp. cxii-cxiii): “Add. 12139 [...] is written in its earlier part in the modified estrangelo of our Ms., and resembles it in the rounded forms in question and in other minor details, — but suddenly, in the middle of a page, changes to the square forms and adheres to them for the rest; though the colophon testifies, and the uniformity of the handwriting in all else confirms, that one scribe wrote the whole”.

67 It seems doubtful that the Syrians themselves would at that date have referred to the “medial” script as *esrangêlô*, since there is evidence, admittedly from outside Ṭūr ‘Abdīn, that this style had *not* fallen into disuse before ca. 1000 (cp. n. 65).

68 Land, *A. S.*, vol. 1, p. 81: Land did not question Gregory’s statement that John was the originator of the revival.

69 See Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, *INSCR.* A. 15, 17, B. 12, C. 14 and the Excursus on the Syriac letters of Ṭūr ‘Abdīn.

70 Leroy, *Manuscripts*, p. 421 with Plate 150.3 knows the marginal illustration in Add. 12,139, but does not give it the significance it deserves, considering that he mentions no other MS. painting between Paris Syr. 341 (eighth century: Scher) and a Mossul MS. of 1013 (*Manuscripts*, pp. 219-24).

record at the Abbey of Qartmīn, a source which cannot be absolved of the charge of chauvinism.

Gregory had included in an earlier chapter of this part of his *Chronicle* a notice concerning Samuel, Simeon and Gabriel, the patron-saints of Qartmīn, which seems to be based on a text not widely circulated outside the Abbey at that date<sup>71</sup>. He also recalls at one point in his own person: "I once heard the aged bishop David of the Abbey of Qartmīn say, that when the bishops were taking Mor John the patriarch [1208-1220] around Ṭūr 'Abdīn, they went as far as to put on his vestments for him, at which he cried out in great distress, 'Woe is me, that you have come to treat me like a bear! [...]'"<sup>72</sup>. These passages indicate that Gregory had visited Qartmīn; but the evidence that his record concerning Bishop John is of local provenance comes from the text itself.

It is the fact that John is called "bishop of the Abbey of Qartmīn" that gives away the standpoint of the writer. Only at the Abbey would this style have been used, for to outsiders John was the bishop of Ṭūr 'Abdīn. The appellation "bishop of the Abbey of Qartmīn and of Ṭūr 'Abdīn" may have been in use unofficially from early times, but it is not explicitly attested until the eleventh century, when we find it applied unofficially to John himself<sup>73</sup>.

A record in the *Book of Life of Bēth Sbirinā and of the Abbey of Qartmīn* makes it clear that many of Emmanuel's codices perished in the violence of the twelfth century: by 1169 only 17 books were left from his bequest<sup>74</sup>. Clearly the record copied by Gregory was written before those troubled times, probably in the eleventh century. It may well have been included in the *Book of Life* which also contains a notice dated 1020, recording an

71 Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, cols. 119-21; Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, Prolegomena to the edition of the *Qartmīn Trilogy*: II. The Manuscripts; had the text been widely circulated we should expect evidence of independent MS. traditions, whereas the relatively late Add. 17,265 is the fountainhead of the whole surviving tradition, such as it is.

72 Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, col. 631.

73 Elijah, "bishop of the monastery [of Qartmīn]", is mentioned in the *Life* of Theodotos of Amida on the occasion of Theodotos' visit to Qartmīn; at the end of the *Life* we learn that, when Theodotos died in 698, a certain Aḥō was bishop of Ṭūr 'Abdīn. These two bishops were certainly successors to the same see, but clearly, whereas the latter title was official, the bishop of Ṭūr 'Abdīn might be referred to unofficially as "bishop of the monastery" by virtue of his residence there. Dolabānī, *Qartmīn*, p. 121, goes a step further in calling him "[bishop] of the Abbey and of Ṭūr 'Abdīn", and the double title is probably an anachronism. The earliest attestation is in the colophon of Sachau 304, of the eleventh century (Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, Excursus on the Syriac letters of Ṭūr 'Abdīn [contra E. Sachau, *Verzeichniss der syrischen Hss. der königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1899), No. 14, pp. 27-32]); and this, too, is an unofficial document.

74 Barsawm, *Tur Abdin*, p. 93; on the *Book of Life*, see Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, Introduction ad fin.

inspection of the library made by the “Bishop of the Abbey” (i.e. John) during the excellent librarianship of Solomon of Bēth Sbīrīnā<sup>75</sup>; the *Book of Life* has never been published in full, but the MS. at present kept at Qartmīn shows many *lacunae*, one of which may have contained Gregory’s notice.

### Etymology and Distribution of the name Nihê/Hoyê

Nihê, the name of Bishop John’s painter-nephew, is possibly in itself an index of the “Melitene connection”. The history of the name is convoluted, but it rewards patient study. *Nihê* (from *hy*’) is a Syriac word meaning “he shall/will live”<sup>76</sup> (used also where we should say “bravo!”). Its use as a name may derive from the Arabic version of the name John, *Yahyā*, of which a homophone of slightly different orthography is *yahyā*, the Imperfect of the Arabic verb cognate to Syriac *hy*’<sup>77</sup>. Assemani, a native of the Lebanon, uses a latinized form of this name, *Jahias*, to represent the Syriac name *Hoyê*<sup>78</sup>. Now *Hoyê* is also a Syriac word and it means “he lives/is alive”. Texts from Ṭūr ‘Abdīn in the eleventh and twelfth centuries amply testify that *Nihê* and *Hoyê* were different versions of the same name<sup>79</sup>, the whole thing being an elaborate pun on the name John. From Syr. *Yūhannon* to Ar. *Yahyā*, from Ar. *yahyā*, to Syr. *nihê*, from *nihê* at last to *hoyê*, by means of a witty turn which might be expressed in Latin as “non ‘vivat’, sed vivit”. In Barsawm’s version of the story of Bishop John, his nephews are listed as “Emmanuel, Peter and *Hoyê*”, the last being the same as Gregory’s *Nihê*<sup>80</sup>.

All the bearers of this name were associated with religious orders and (as the philological pun leads us to expect) with the scribal art. The earliest is a contemporary of Simeon of the Olives (d. 734): Mor *Hoyê*, a scribe in the monastery of Kfartebnô close to Ḥarrān<sup>81</sup>. After a long period in which the name is not attested, we find the epitaph of a priest called *Hoyê*, who died in Heshterek/Ēshtrakô in Ṭūr ‘Abdīn in 996/7<sup>82</sup>. Not long after this,

75 *Ibid.*, p. 92.

76 From the verb *hy*’. The orthography of the Imperfect should properly be *nh*’, but the spelling *n’h*’ is often found in W-Syrian MSS., perhaps because the correct form is easily confused with the Active Participle *hy*’: ܢܗܝ → ܢܗܝܐ.

77 The name is written with *’alif maqṣūra*, the verb-form with a true *’alif*.

78 *B.O.*, vol. 2, p. 225; cp. Abbeloos and Lamy at Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, col. 531 n. 1. The text of Vat. Sir. 166, P. 2, fol. 304a, has ܝܚܝܐ (= *Yahyā*), but Assemani writes *Hoyê*; his translation may have been affected by Vat. Sir. 166, P. 2 (cp. n. 83).

79 E.g. Gwynn, *Apocalypse*, p. 32 of the Syriac text, line 25: [i.e. ܢܗܝܐ, ܡܝܚܝܐ] ܢܗܝܐ ܡܝܚܝܐ ܢܗܝܐ ܡܝܚܝܐ.

80 Barsawm, *KBB*, p. 464, followed by Dolabani, *Qartmīn*, p. 170.

81 Dolabani, *Qartmīn*, p. 153; see summary by S.P. Brock in *OstSt* 28 (1979), p. 178.

82 Pognon, *Inscriptions*, No. 101.

it was given to or adopted by the future patriarchs Denis IV (1031-1042)<sup>83</sup> and Athanasius VI (1058-1063), as well as Bishop John's nephew. Dolabânî claims a Bishop John Nîhê of ʿAbdîn in the early eighth century, but his notice is contaminated by the colophon of the *Life* of Simeon of the Olives, where the date is corrupted<sup>84</sup>. The eighth-century bishop was called John, but little else is really known about him; Dolabânî has conflated him with the uncle of a twelfth-century bookbinder, who may well have borne the name Nîhê<sup>85</sup>. Baršawm lists "John Nîhê, son of Peter of Bêth Sbirînâ, sometimes called ʿHoyê, who died a martyr (11th-12th centuries)" as one of the bishops of ʿAbdîn<sup>86</sup>; and an undated notice in the afore-mentioned *Book of Life* commemorates "Mor John Nîhê, who is Bar Paṭriq, bishop of the Abbey"<sup>87</sup>. Since Gabriel, the twelfth-century bookbinder, tells us

83 By Michael, pp. 565 and 762, he is called ʿHoyê and Assemani has the same form. But Vat. Sir. 166, P. 2, fol. 290a, has ܝܚܝܐ as does MS. Dd. 3.8.1 of the Cambridge University Library; this is clearly an alternative orthography for ܝܚܝܐ, the reading of Br. Lib. MS. 7198 Rich in these two places. It is this which gave rise to Abbeloos and Lamy's "Heheh" (Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, cols. 431 and 531, with notes 5 and 1 respectively); however, the positioning of the vocal points favours the reading *yehyêh* YUDH + HETH + YUDH, not HETH + HETH), which must be the equivalent of the Arabic "Yaḥyâ", the final HE representing 'alif maqṣūra (as in عيسى = عيسى) and the short and long *rbošo* representing short and long *fatha* ('e' for 'ä'). This interpretation of Denis' name explains both the pointing of the older MSS. of Gregory and the equivalence with the name ʿHoyê.

84 Dolabani, *Qartmin*, p. 123: "Mor John Nîhê of ʿTūr ʿAbdîn (719-730): This Mor John was of the family of Bêth Paṭriq in Bêth Sbirînâ". MS. 8.259 of the Church of the Forty Martyrs of Sebastê in Mardin, fol. 22b or p. 247 of the Syriac numbering (this MS. was used by Dolabani, *Qartmin*, pp. 157-158): "Pray for Rabbān Gabriel, son of the brother of Mor John, bishop of the Abbey [sc. of Qartmîn], from the family of Bêth Paṭriq in Bêth Sbirînâ, who brought this story and the commemorative office and *hūsoyô* about Mor Simeon of the Olives [to the Abbey]; he copied them in Harrān and brought them to the Abbey in the year 1 <...> 5 of the Greeks"; after this comes a note by a later copyist: "This Rabbān Gabriel and his brother Rabbān Elisha were very conscientious in the service of the Abbey. In their time they repaired 270 bound volumes in the Abbey besides much else". A.G. 1005 was forty years before Simeon's death, so some figures must have fallen out here. Dolabani, *Qartmin*, p. 158, emended the date to A.D. 799, without however signalling the difficulty or justifying his emendation.

85 On the eighth-century John, see Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, ch. 5, sect. 3 *ad fin.*; *The Book of Life* has an entry dated A.G. 1480 (A.D. 1168/9) concerning a conscientious bookbinder called "Rabbān Gabriel of Bêth Sbirînâ, son of the brother of Mor John, bishop of the Abbey [sc. of Qartmîn]". This seems to be the author of the colophon quoted in n. 84.

86 Baršawm, *Tur Abdin*, p. 52. On the same page, using the *Book of Life*, Baršawm records another Bishop John "of Qartmîn and of ʿTūr ʿAbdîn", who was the son of the brother of Rabbān Emmanuel of Bêth Sbirînâ, the famous scribe; Emmanuel's brother was called Peter, and if this Peter called his son Nîhê/ʿHoyê, he would have been following a Syrian custom, by which a child is named after one of his uncles, for another of Emmanuel's brothers was Nîhê. I suggest therefore that these two Bishops John be identified.

87 On p. 3 of the copy now at Qartmîn (cp. n. 74), according to the notes taken at my request by Malfono Isa Gülden. I would suggest a further conflation, as in n. 86, explaining "Bar

that he comes from the house of Paṭriq in Bēth Sbīrīnā and that his uncle John was bishop of the Abbey, we may safely conclude that Dolabānī has identified the latter, probably correctly, with John Nihē Bar Paṭriq, but has been deceived by the corrupt date in Gabriel's note. Gabriel claims to have brought back from Ḥarrān copies of the *Life* and the commemorative service of Simeon of the Olives; no doubt Dolabānī thought this must have occurred not long after Simeon's death in 734, but there are other possible explanations of the delay<sup>88</sup>.

As this investigation has shown, the name Nihē/Hoyē was perpetuated in the village and most probably in the family of the famous Bishop John. It is also found in other parts of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn in the tenth and twelfth centuries. In 1165 we read of an anchorite called Yaḥyā/Hoyē who lived near the monastery of Mor Ḥananyō near Mardin<sup>89</sup>; on 1194 died Rabbān Simeon, son of Hoyē, of Mīdūn, who signed his name in MS. Syriac 41 of the Bibliothèque Nationale<sup>90</sup>; before Simeon's death one of his nephews (as Gwynn conjectures) penned a note in the Crawford MS. Syr. 2, written at Ṣālah, in which he mentions among his Masters "Rabbān Mornihē [*i.e.* Mor Nihē] or rather Hoyē"<sup>91</sup>. Outside Ṭūr ʿAbdīn it is not known, except once in Ḥarrān, in the eighth century, and in the area of Melitene, where the two patriarchal bearers of the name seem to have lived: Denis had been abbot of the monastery of Lazarus in the region of Gūbbūs<sup>92</sup>, while Athanasius was at the Abbey of the Conduit of Mor Aaron<sup>93</sup>.

#### Inconclusive result of the third investigation

The history of the name Nihē/Hoyē can be resumed in the general statement that it was a literary variant on the name John, which is found first in a Ḥarrānite scriptorium with close connections in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn and later only in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn and (rarely) in the Melitene area. It was particularly well known in Bēth Sbīrīnā.

Now, if the second "Athanasius of Ḥesnpaṭriq" was the future patriarch Hoyē, and if this was known to the scribe who wrote the first part of the marginal note in Add. 12,165, a native (apparently) of Bēth Sbīrīnā, would it be too ingenious to suppose that he reasoned as follows:

Paṭriq" as a scribal error for "Bar Peṭros of Bēth Paṭriq", were it not that the two are named side by side in the *Book of Life*.

88 See Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, ch. 5, sect. 2.

89 Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, cols. 431 and 531.

90 H. Zotenberg, *Catalogue des mss. syriaques de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1874), p. 14; cp. Gwynn, *Apocalypse*, p. cxvii.

91 See n. 79.

92 Michael, pp. 565, 762; Honigsmann, *Barsauma*, pp. 124-5.

93 See n. 12.

“a) The bishop Athanasius of Ḥesnpatriq who commissioned Add. 12,165 was (contrary to the conclusion of the second investigation above) Athanasius Ḥoyê, the future patriarch;

b) Athanasius Ḥoyê was none other than Nîhê/Ḥoyê, the famous illuminator of MSS., nephew of Bishop John of Tūr ‘Abdîn;

c) John of Tūr ‘Abdîn is the unnamed paternal uncle of Athanasius of Ḥesnpatriq referred to by the scribe of Add. 12,165”?

Certainly, the anonymous uncle was well known (if, perhaps, dead) in 1054; and if any scribe enjoyed privileged knowledge concerning the family of Bishop John some 300 years after his death, we might expect him to be a native of John’s village, Bêth Sbirînâ. Against the crucial identification of John’s nephew and the future patriarch, Ḥoyê, is the silence of our sources, including Gregory’s notice about John and his nephews. On the other hand, John’s attested connection with the Melitene area seems to be focused on the person of the patriarch Athanasius Şalḥoyô, a monk of the Abbey of the Conduit of Mor Aaron; and there are other indications that this Abbey was connected with Tūr ‘Abdîn, as we shall see in the fourth investigation. Nor is it difficult to explain why John’s nephew should have gone from Tūr ‘Abdîn to be a monk on the Melitene region: Melitene attracted settlers at that time and Nîhê needed teachers in the art of miniature painting who could not be found elsewhere in the lands known to the West-Syrians. But these considerations, tantalizing though they appear, leave us without tangible evidence of their truth.

#### 4. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE ABBEY OF THE CONDUIT AND TŪR ‘ABDÎN

##### Composition and influence of the *Life of Aaron of Serugh*

There is little to recommend the *Life* as an historical document, least of all the very exact chronology it gives for insignificant events of the late third and early fourth century<sup>94</sup>. One has to assume that a tradition concerning Aaron existed at the monastery he founded, but it probably preserved few actual facts beyond his name and place of origin<sup>95</sup> and the monastic foundation with which he was credited. Possibly the date and year of his death was preserved in a local calendar of liturgical commemorations. But as for the rest — his journeys to Jerusalem and to Constantinople (pp. 707-17, 725-46), the benefaction granted to his monastery by Constantine (pp. 737-8; cp. p. 746), his repeated encounters with the demon that he chases

<sup>94</sup> *Life of Aaron*, pp. 701-2 (introductory résumé).

<sup>95</sup> These would certainly have been enshrined in the liturgical cycle of the abbey.

around the whole theatre of the Near East (p. 701) — that is pure invention, owing much to the model offered by a highly-developed hagiographical genre. The writer is at pains to furnish circumstantial detail at every turn; where this is derived from his own knowledge of the geography of the Upper Euphrates region it can have a certain value for the historian, as this enquiry has shown<sup>96</sup>. But the verdict on it must be that it is essentially a fabrication, propounded in all probability at the Abbey of the Conduit to give it the credentials of great antiquity.

The Abbey of the Conduit produced its first recorded bishop in the 970s: “Timothy, metropolitan of Amida, from the Conduit of Mor Aaron” was the twenty-first of forty-eight bishops ordained by John VII (965-985)<sup>97</sup>. Before this time, as far as I can tell, nothing is heard of the Abbey of the Conduit. It is true that an entry in the *Lexicon* of Bar Bahlûl, who lived in the mid-tenth century, refers to the *Life of Aaron*; but that *Lexicon* contains several later interpolations, of which this could be one<sup>98</sup>. The obvious inference is that the Abbey emerged from obscurity as a result of the new prosperity of Syrian Orthodox in Melitene, Anzitene and Qlîsûrô following the Byzantine reconquest of the area<sup>99</sup>.

It is probable that the monks of the Conduit did not delay very long the production of the *Life of Aaron*, which must be regarded in a sense as the “charter” of their “second foundation”. The importance in the *Life* of the “Blessed Mountain” near Melitene on the right side of the Euphrates is limited to Aaron’s having dwelt there for a time before he crossed the Euphrates to found the Abbey of the Conduit; there is no mention of a monastery founded by him on the “Blessed Mountain”<sup>100</sup>. Yet there existed such a monastery in the late eleventh century, for it produced a bishop of

96 *Life of Aaron*, pp. 704 (monastery “of Treasures” near Serûg), 710 (church of St Andrew in Amida), 711 (monastery “of the Virgins” near Edessa), 711 and 703 (village of Kafrô Rabô near Serûg and *bêth şlûtô* to north of the village), 717 (“Blessed Mountain” near Melitene on west side of Euphrates not far from that — or possibly another — river), 721ff. (site of the monastery of the Conduit), 728, 730, 732, 733 (LRDYN, NQRWS on the way from Melitene to Constantinople before entry into Roman territory, Caesarea and Qônyâ [Iconium] on same route within Roman territory), 741-743 (Mt. Masoro west of ʿTaranda), 744-745 (Êylûn, village between Melitene and Conduit monastery). Puzzling for the historian is the plausible mention of “Theodore, bishop of Amida”, who made Aaron a priest (p. 710, cp. 749); yet it may well be another invention.

97 Michael, p. 760 (XXIX.21).

98 See nn. 24, 25.

99 MS. Vat. Sir. 152 was drawn up at the Abbey of the Conduit in A.D. 980 (Hatch, *op. cit.* [n. 65], pl. 75; cp. N.P.S. Wiseman, *Horae Syriacae* [Rome 1828], p. 163).

100 *Life of Aaron*, pp. 717-21; Nau (1929-30), p. 207, reads into this passage a gathering of disciples and thus a monastic foundation which simply are not there. Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, col. 87, made the same mistake: “there lived at this time [*i.e.* in the fourth century] Mor Aaron of Serûg, who built two famous monasteries in the region of Melitene”.

Segestan late in the 1080s, himself named Aaron<sup>101</sup>. The *Life of Aaron* was therefore written before this time and perhaps helped to inspire the new foundation, which was probably a colony from the Abbey of the Conduit.

The mention in the *Life* of "Roman territory", *Bēth Rūmoyē*, as distinct from Syria and from "Armenia" (pp. 723, 732), that is the Upper Tigris region, does not show that it was written after Melitene was lost by the Byzantines about 1085<sup>102</sup>. On the contrary, the author's imagination must be given some credit for a plausible invention; if he wrote between 970 and 1080, as I have argued, and earlier rather than later, he knew that the Byzantine occupation of the region in which he lived was of recent date, and that before it, "for time out of mind", the limit of Roman territory had lain to the west of Melitene. The simple-minded monk assumed that this was so in the fourth century, too.

The *Life* seems to have been a successful piece of propaganda. There is no evidence of the cult of Aaron in any liturgical calendar dated before the twelfth century<sup>103</sup>, but thereafter his commemoration becomes universal in the Syrian Orthodox church<sup>104</sup>. This must be due to the publication of the *Life*, because all the commemorations bear some relation to its account of the death of Aaron<sup>105</sup>. With typical particularity, it tells us that this occurred at the ninth hour on May 28, A.D. 337, Pentecost Sunday (p. 749). Most calendars commemorate Mor Aaron on the Monday after Pentecost<sup>106</sup>; but another tradition, represented by the Alepine menologies, prefers to keep May 28 for "the triumphant Mor Aaron of Serūg"<sup>107</sup>. The clearest echo of all is in the calendar compiled about 1300 by Rabbān Šlībō of Ḥaḥ: "May 28: Death of Mor Aaron at the ninth hour on the day of Pentecost"<sup>108</sup>.

101 Michael, p. 765 (XXXIX.6: between 1088 and 1090).

102 Tinnefeld, *art. cit.* (in n. 21), p. 439. The unpublished *Life* of Daniel of Glosh in MS. Syr. 235 (Paris) has a phrase which, by implication defines "the empire of Bēth Rūmoyē" as distinct from "Syria": on fol. 164a the writer makes it clear that he considers the mountain of Glosh, S of Amida, to be in "Syria", whereas on fol. 173b, Daniel's son and disciple, Lazarus, is said to have spent two years in the West touring the **ܡܕܢܚܐ ܕܝܡܢܐ**. If the author was indeed Jacob of Serūg, as is stated on fol. 160b, then this is how Syrians thought even while they belonged to the Roman Empire. (For a summary of this *Life*, see F. Nau, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, Ser. 2, vol. 5 [15] (1910), pp. 55 ff.; I have begun to edit the text.) Cp. Honigmann, *Barsauma*, p. 14.

103 See Nau (1913), pp. 29-53.

104 Nau (1913), pp. 55, 78, 96, 100, 104, 110, 127; a MS. of 1166 has an Office for Mor Aaron (see n. 27).

105 By the thirteenth century Aaron was well established in the "pantheon" of Syriac holy men: *Chron. 1234*, vol. 1, p. 173, and Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, col. 87, mention him as one of the most famous men of the fourth and fifth centuries.

106 Nau (1913), p. 100; cp. *ibid.*, pp. 96, 104, 110 and 127.

107 Nau (1913), p. 78.

108 Peeters, *Martyrologe*, pp. 153 and 184 with n. 8 referring to the Alepine menology of 1547.

This calendar, which represents the liturgical usage of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, especially of the Abbey of Qartmīn<sup>109</sup>, is unique in giving Aaron two other feasts: Oct. 22 ("St. Aaron")<sup>110</sup> and Feb. 3 ("Mor Aaron the solitary", with a marginal addition, "he of <the monastery of> Mor Aaron of the Conduit")<sup>111</sup>. It is also the only Syrian Orthodox calendar that commemorates an Armenian saint of the same name, who died in A.D. 388/9 (Nov. 8)<sup>112</sup>. If, as the tenor of this paper suggests, the extraordinary cult of Aaron in the calendar of Qartmīn reflects a link between this abbey and that of the Conduit, the presence of the Armenian Aaron may be due to contacts with the Armenian foundation of that name on Müşer Dağı. To venture still further in conjecture, the reintroduction of illustrations to Syriac MSS. may be one of the fruits of this contact with the Armenian church; but to weigh this the judgement of the art-historians is required.

There are certain similarities between the *Life of Aaron* and the *Lives* of the three patron-saints of Qartmīn which might go beyond what can be attributed merely to the common genre<sup>113</sup>. If there was influence one way or the other, internal evidence favours the primacy of the *Qartmīn Trilogy*, which contains several nuggets of historical information and which had existed in some form at least since the early ninth century<sup>114</sup>. Yet the evidence of the MS. tradition suggests these *Lives* were never widely known outside Ṭūr ʿAbdīn<sup>115</sup>. This may be another indication that the Abbey of the Conduit, where the *Life of Aaron* was probably composed<sup>116</sup>, was on familiar terms with the monks of Qartmīn.

#### CONCLUSION

Narrative historians tell us of the Syrian settlements in the region of Melitene after its reconquest by the Byzantines in 934; from their accounts we know

109 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

110 *Ibid.*, pp. 140 and 166 with note 5.

111 *Ibid.*, pp. 147 (with *apparatus* n. 5) and 175, where n. 5 is to be corrected.

112 *Ibid.*, pp. 141 and 167.

113 Close verbal parallels to *Life of Aaron*, pp. 703<sup>6-7</sup>, 723<sup>5</sup>, 724<sup>7-8</sup>, 733<sup>9-10</sup>, 748<sup>7-8</sup> at *Qartmīn Trilogy* (ed. Palmer in *Monk and Mason*), VI.7, XXX.16-17, XXVIII.12-13, LXXIX.19-20, L.6-10.

114 See Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, Introduction 2b.

115 See n. 71.

116 The whole history of the abbey and the likely date of the *Life* make this probable, as does the close knowledge which the author displays of the site and buildings of the abbey; add the phrase on p. 723, which seems to bring us into the time and place of the writer: "No-one has seen any [demons] in the monastery of the saint and [no-one] shall see [any] until the end of it".

that this resulted in the foundation of new monasteries, the creation of what Dagrón calls “satellite bishoprics”, and a reflowering of the scribal arts. But these phenomena appear disjointedly and without a hint of how, in detail, they developed. If anything, we are left with the impression that the Tagritans from northern Iraq were the prime movers among the settlers. Only the study of scattered scribal notices, of liturgical calendars and of interdependent hagiographical compositions has enabled us to piece together a more connected picture of one aspect of these events, or, to use another metaphor, to chart some of the undercurrents which helped to direct the surface flow.

The Abbey of the Conduit of Mor Aaron may have existed before the tenth century, but it had been of no importance. Events following the Byzantine re-conquest of Melitene and Anzitene brought its monks into the vanguard of church history. The expanding community may well have recruited monks in Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. Under the eye of Athanasius Ṣalḥoyô, the first patriarch produced by the Abbey of the Conduit and himself perhaps a native of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, a calligraphic revival took place, owing something to the abundance of resources such as vellum and something to the influence, probably, of Armenian book-illustration. The experiment, begun in Melitene, was exported to Ṭūr ʿAbdīn by Bishop John (ca. 998-ca. 1035), who may well have been more adventurous than Ṣalḥoyô. At any rate, he has monopolized the credit for the revival through a notice supplied by his monastery, the Abbey of Qartmīn, to the chronicler Gregory. One of John’s gifted nephews, Nîḥê/Ḥoyê, may conceivably be that Ḥoyê who became successively a monk of the Conduit, bishop of Arsamosat, unofficial “bishop of Ḥesnpatriq” (a place named after the Byzantine fortress near his monastery), and patriarch. There is evidence that the connection between the two Abbeys was prolonged and close.

When Ḥoyê became patriarch he made a monk of the Conduit the first and last official bishop of Ḥesnpatriq; if he hoped thus to prolong the *de facto* episcopal status which he had conferred on his Abbey by his own (and his mysterious predecessor’s) residence there in retirement, he did not trust his successors in the patriarchate to preserve this privilege. Instead he made it permanent by a last act of typically Syrian monastic self-interest: he directed that he should be buried there, and so conferred upon it patriarchal status in perpetuity<sup>117</sup>.

117 But see n. 17.

## APPENDIX

After writing the above, I was able to make a brief visit to the area discussed in section 1; I append this account of the visit in the hope of encouraging and guiding a more thorough exploration, for which I had no time. From Malatya we hired a van from the village of Sinan or "Sinanlı", on the far side of the ancient 18-arched bridge (the so-called "Kırkgözlü Köprü") over the river Tokma or Tohma, which stands a few miles to north-east of Byzantine Melitene (Eski Malatya). Near Sinan we crossed the Euphrates on a ferry and so came to the village of Hassan Basri (perhaps a corruption of Hesnpatrîq — although I continue to identify ancient Hesnpatrîq with Kaleköy, a little further upstream on the same bank of the Euphrates). There we were shown the shrine of Sheykh Hassan, locally considered, from the name of the village, to have been a native of Basra in Iraq. At this point we realised that there had been a misunderstanding, due to Huntington's mistake, on which see note 36; the shrine we wanted to see is known as that of Abdul Vahap. It would have been better to cross the Euphrates with another ferry a little further upstream (anyone wishing to do this had better go soon, before the area is flooded by the second great Euphrates reservoir in Turkey). However, we were able to drive along to Kaleköy in about twenty minutes and, leaving the van where the road became too muddy, we followed a fork in the road, leaving Kaleköy on the left, and so came, after a few minutes of steep ascent, to the *ziyaret* of Abdul Vahap. The long turban-crowned tomb is in a small cave giving onto a ledge near the bottom of a cliff. Candle-wax, coloured rags tied to the window-grids, graffiti on the white wall closing the cave, sheep-bones, fireplaces, and a gibbet for ritual slaughter attest the frequency of Alawite pilgrimage to this shrine; I was told a legend concerning a large block of stone, bearing the imprint of a giant hand, which Abdul Vahap hurled across the Euphrates in the course of some prehistoric battle of the Heroes — and the stone can still be seen ... But there was nothing to support my idea that Abdul Vahap might be occupying the site of the Abbey of the Conduit, nor was there time to search the mountain for a suitable ruin. From the shrine we had a good view of the castle-rock at the foot of which Kaleköy clusters; it consists of a long ridge, sharply indented, just like a saw. I remembered that the Arabic name for it was Qal'at al-Minšār, "the castle of the saw". The ferryman on the Euphrates was a native of Kaleköy and he told me that there were ancient walls on the riverward side of the ridge. I omitted to ask him if his village another, non-Turkish name, which might have derived from Êylün or Hesnpatrîq. There was not time to visit both the

castle and the ruined church on the summit of Abdul Vahap's mountain (as Müşer Dağı seems to be known today); our company voted to visit the church, which we found as described by Kuntelian, although he does not mention the vaulted buildings to the south of the church. Almost certainly there was a community in residence beside, perhaps also above, the church of St. Aaron on the summit; but this was not the monastery of Mor Aaron of the Conduit, which was in some sense *below* the mountain (see note 31).

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- Assemani, *B.O.* = J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vols. 1-3i, ii (Rome, 1719-1728);  
 Bar Bahlul = *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano bar Bahlule*, ed. R. Duval, 3 vols. (Paris, 1888-1901);  
 Barsawm, *KBB* = E. Baršawm, *ktobô d-bērûlê bdîrê* [i.e. History of Syriac Literature: a Syriac translation of *al-lu'lu' al-man'ûr fî târiḳ al-'ulûm wa-l-âdâb as-suryâniya* (Aleppo, 1956<sup>2</sup>)] (Qamishly, 1958);  
 Barsawm, *Tur Abdin* = E. Baršawm, *maktbonûtô d-'al âtrô d-tûr'abdin* [monograph concerning the region of Tûr 'Abdin], Syriac edition (Juniyah, 1964);  
 Canard, *Saif al-Daulah* = M. Canard, *Receuil de textes relatifs à Saif al-Daulah* (Paris, 1934);  
 Chron. 1234 = *Anonymi auctoris chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, ed. J.-B. Chabot, 2 vols. (Paris, 1916-1920) [CSCO 81,82 = *Scriptores Syri* 36,37];  
 Dolabani, *Qartmin* = H. [or P.Y., or Y.] Dolabânî [or Dolapönü], *maktabzabnê d-'ûmrô qaddîšô d-qarṭmîn* [History of Qarṭmîn Abbey] (Mardin, 1959);  
 Gregory, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, II = *Gregorii Barhebraei chronicon ecclesiasticum*, ed. J.-B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy, 3 vols. paginated [and here referred to] as 2 vols. (Louvain, 1872-1877);  
 Gregory, *Chron. Syr.* = Barhebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, ed. J. Bedjan (Paris, 1890) [citing also, in square brackets: trans. E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Chronography of ... Barhebraeus*, vol. 1 (Oxford-London, 1932)];  
 Gwynn, *Apocalypse* = J. Gwynn [ed.], *The Apocalypse of St. John in a Syriac Version Hitherto Unknown* (London, 1876 [Reprint: Amsterdam, 1981]);  
 Honigmann, *Barsauma* = E. Honigmann, *Le Couvent de Baršaumâ et le patriarcat jacobite d'Antioche et de Syrie* (Louvain, 1954) [CSCO 127 = *Subsidia* 7];  
 Huntington (1901) = E. Huntington, "Weitere Berichte und Forschungen in Armenien und Commagene", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 33 (1901);  
 Huntington (1902) = E. Huntington, "Through the great cañon of the Euphrates river", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* xx (1902);  
 Kawerau, *Renaissance* = P. Kawerau, *Die jakobitische Kirche im Zeitalter der syrischen Renaissance. Idee und Wirklichkeit* (Berlin, 1960<sup>2</sup>);  
 Land, *A.S.* = J.P.N. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, 4 vols. (Leiden, 1862-1875);  
 Leroy, *Manuscripts* = J. Leroy, *Les Manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient* (Paris, 1964);  
*Life of Aaron* = F. Nau [ed.], *Les légendes syriaques d'Aaron de Saroug etc.*, *PO*, vol. 5 (1910), fasc. 5;  
 Michael = *Chronique de Michel le syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche 1166-1199*, ed. J.-B. Chabot (Paris, 1899-1910);  
 Nau (1913) = F. Nau [ed.], "Un Martyrologe et douze ménologes syriaques", *PO*, vol. 10, fasc. 1 (1913);  
 Nau (1929-30) = F. Nau, "Sur Aaron de Saroug et ses deux monastères", *ROC* 27 (1929-30);  
 Palmer, *Monk and Mason* = A. Palmer, *Monk and Mason on the Tigris Frontier*, forthcoming in Cambridge Oriental Publications (since writing this article, I have been compelled to extract from the manuscript of *Monk and Mason* the philological apparatus: now the

inscriptions and the excursus on letter-forms will appear in *OC*; is not yet clear where the *Qartmin Trilogy* will appear).

Payne Smith, *Thesaurus* = R. Payne Smith [ed.], *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford, 1879-1901);

Peeters, *Martyrologe* = P. Peeters (ed.), "Le Martyrologe de Rabban Sliba", *AnBoll* 27 (1908);

Pognon, *Inscriptions* = H. Pognon, *Les inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie, et de la région de Mossoul* (Paris, 1907);

Wright = W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac MSS. in the British Museum* (London, 1870-1872).

The following principles govern the transcription of Syriac words: Consonants are transcribed without the aspiration of *b g d k p t*. The semivowel is not written. Vowels are shown with the western pronunciation, with *o* for *zqopô*; circumflex over a vowel indicates *ôlap* in Syriac; makron over a vowel indicates either *yûd* (*i, ē*) or *waw* (*û*).