

LATIN AND EASTERN CATHOLICISM
IN OTTOMAN ANATOLIA:
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND
RELIGIOUS INQUIRIES
FROM 14th-20th CENTURIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.

<i>Anaïs Massot and Padraic Rohan</i>	9
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PART ONE.

MISSIONS: RIVALRIES AND COMPARISONS

1. Conflicts and Rivalries in the Catholic Mission in Ottoman Anatolia between the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries <i>Theodosios Kyriakidis</i>	25
2. Faith, Diplomacy, & Imperial Rivalries: The Assumptionist Mission in Comparative Perspective <i>Ediz Hazir</i>	49
3. The Kumkapı Mission of the Assumptionist Congregation in Istanbul <i>Elçin Macar</i>	85

PART TWO.

CHURCHES: CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MATERIALITY

4. The Interior World of Armenian Catholics in 1890s Mardin: The Materiality of Sourp Hovsep Church (1894) <i>Alyson Wharton-Durgaryan</i>	115
5. Bursa's Latin and Armenian Catholic Religious and Cultural Heritage, from the 19th Century until Today <i>Vanessa R. de Obaldía & Ersoy Soydan</i>	151

PART THREE.

EASTERN CATHOLICISM: CONVERSION AND POLITICS

6. Conversion, Coercion and Conformity: The Chaldean Catholic Church's Expansion (1804–1914) <i>Nicholas Al-Jeloo</i>	177
7. Russia's Policy Formation toward Armenian Catholics: Focusing on the Role of the Caucasian Viceroyalty/High Commissioner's Office and the Armenian Church (1878–1909) <i>Masayuki Ishimoto</i>	269

PART FOUR.

IZMIR: JURISDICTION, URBAN PRESENCE, SOURCES

8. Ottoman Attitudes Towards the Re-establishment of the Catholic See of Izmir (Smyrna) in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century <i>Radu Dipratu</i>	301
9. Catholic Churches and Convents of Smyrna Before, During, and After the Cretan War: A Political Urban History <i>Alper Metin</i>	335
10. Fin de la mission des Jésuites à Smyrne en 1778 : Après une existence de 155 ans <i>Rinaldo Marmara</i>	377

PART FIVE.

BEYOND ANATOLIA: FROM SYRIA TO THE BALKANS

11. Translation and the Rise of Catholicism in 18th-Century Aleppo <i>Joshua Mugler</i>	391
12. The Apostolic Delegate of Mesopotamia in the Late Ottoman period: Power, Information and Financial Networks between the Holy See, Latin Missionaries and Eastern Catholic Churches. <i>Matthieu Gosse</i>	417
13. Ecclesiastical Education and Social Practices in the Catholic Enclaves of the Ottoman Empire in the 17th Century. A Comparative perspective <i>Cristina Codarcea</i>	447

CONTRIBUTORS' BIOGRAPHIES	469
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CONVERSION, COERCION AND CONFORMITY: THE CHALDEAN CATHOLIC CHURCH'S EXPANSION (1804–1914)

Nicholas Al-Jeloo

Introduction

This chapter examines the historical development and internal dynamics of the Chaldean Catholic Church, focusing on its emergence from the Church of the East and its complex relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, as well as its subsequent expansion and growth through an often contentious process of union, schism, and ecclesiastical diplomacy. This cannot be understood without exploring the complex historical interplay between the Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Middle East's complex religious and political milieu, particularly within the Eastern Ottoman Empire. Key themes in this historical trajectory include the distinct understanding of primacy in both traditions, the Church of the East's historical independence, the controversial Christological condemnations that further separated the Churches, and various attempts at union, often driven by political and social factors rather than purely theological ones. A big part of this is deeply intertwined with the question of Rome's contentious "Petrine theory" of universal papal supremacy, which stood in stark contrast to the historical development of an autocephalous structure within the Church of the East. Rome thus gradually asserted a universal jurisdictional primacy, emphasizing the pope's role and authority in the broader Christian world, and this played a key role in persuading many to shift their allegiances. The Church of the East, on the other hand, consistently maintained an ecclesiology of independent, equal patriarchates, with the pope as *primus inter pares*, and its own catholicos-patriarch holding a status akin to Peter within the Eastern sphere, subject only to Christ. Such significant misunderstandings regarding theological and jurisdictional claims frequently marked the sporadic and often politically motivated contacts between the Church of the East and the Roman Catholic Church from the thirteenth century onward. This fundamental divergence in understanding ecclesiastical authority was a primary driver, culminating in the sixteenth-century schism that ultimately led to a permanent schism and the formal establishment of the Chaldean Catholic Church in communion with Rome, often marked by forced conversions and ongoing disputes over authority and tradition.

Prior to 1804, the Chaldean Catholic Church was mainly confined to the Eastern Ottoman Empire's urban centers and their immediate surroundings, and

was still a small, fledgling institution. In that year, however, significant changes began when the Church of the East's traditionalist patriarchate at Alqosh collapsed, with one of its final heirs already having converted to Catholicism. After Rome's recognition of him as patriarch in 1830, and the Alqosh patriarchate's unification with its Catholic counterpart in Diyarbakır, the majority of the Church of the East's former adherents was involuntarily incorporated into communion with Rome, and the Church was reorganized into a more structured community. In some places, however, believers resisted and, instead, had to be coerced into following suit, either by their own clergy, foreign missionaries, or through relations with local authorities. A notable step toward institutional consolidation was the recognition of "Chaldeans" as a separate *millet* (religious community) by the Ottoman central government in 1844, albeit through French diplomatic intervention. This crucial political endorsement provided the new Church official status and protection, solidifying its position and administrative autonomy, significantly influencing its ability to extend its influence, as well as aiding and facilitating its development and growth. It also intensified internal conflicts and divisions, as well as competition for authority between Catholic and traditionalist communities, reflecting the complex intersection of religion and imperial governance. Furthermore, the new patriarchate had to deal with the reduction of its powers through full communion with Rome, especially in cases of patriarchal privileges, territorial jurisdiction and Latinization.

This chapter shall, therefore, endeavor to extensively discuss the Chaldean Catholic Church's remarkable growth during the nineteenth century, primarily driven by the rival patriarchates' unification, as well as a significant shift of ethnic Assyrians to Catholicism. Moreover, by way of illustration, some reasons for this success will be described, as well as some of the proselytization methods utilized. In order to achieve this, a number of primary and secondary sources have been referred to, including synodical records, papal encyclicals and bulls, correspondences, Ottoman archival documents, and reports from Catholic, as well as British and American Protestant missionaries, in addition to travelogues by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western travelers and diplomats. These sources highlight how the substantial transition of many Assyrian adherents from the Church of the East to the Chaldean Catholic Church was a gradual and continuous process, often marked by coercive measures and resistance, internal strife, and external pressures, rather than solely voluntary conversion. This evolution was further shaped by challenges such as ecclesiastical claims of primacy, geopolitical struggles, and proselytization efforts, set against a backdrop of Ottoman imperial policies and Western missionary activities. Combined with the waves of conversions from the Church of the East, these played a pivotal role in propelling the Chaldean Catholic Church into a period of expansion and prominence as a distinct entity within the region's Christian landscape. This chapter thus synthesizes key historical themes related to primacy disputes, doctrinal divergences, and the socio-political context that underpinned the Chaldean Catholic Church's emergence and expansion at the expense of the Church of the East. These historical narratives thus illuminate enduring challenges of religious identity,

authority, and ecumenism, contrasted with today's efforts toward mutual recognition and theological dialogue, reflecting a growing appreciation for pluralism within Christianity. The Chaldean Catholic Church thus stands as a testament to the complex interactions between local traditions and universalizing religious claims.

Context and Background: Ecclesiastical Primacy and Autonomy

The Church of the East—with roots tracing back to apostolic times—developed within the Sassanid Persian Empire, largely outside the scope of Roman influence.¹ Local bishops naturally looked for leadership within their own country, regarding the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (their capital) as the most important see. At a synod held there as early as 315, Bishop Papa Bar Aggai endeavored to assert his primacy over his peers in the Persian Empire.² The 410 synodical council of Seleucia-Ctesiphon marked a pivotal turning point in organizing the Church of the East as a single religious structure, as well as formalizing its independence.³ It was convened under Catholicos Isaac (399–410) in response to a letter from Patriarch Porphyrios of Antioch (404–14), which suggested the Christians in the East organize as a single Church. The letter, however, made no claim of jurisdiction over Eastern Christians, and the Church of the East's writers never regarded their catholicos as Antioch's delegate or themselves under its authority.⁴ The Church of the East thus made its decisions independently and following its own synodical procedures, understanding itself as an autonomous and autocephalous ecclesiastical body in communion with that in the Roman Empire.⁵ The Bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, referred to as the “Grand Metropolitan,” was consequently recognized to act as their collective head throughout the Persian Empire,

¹ Traditions link the founding of the Church in the Persian Empire with Saints Addai and Mari of the 72 disciples, along with the Apostles Thomas, Nathaniel Bartholomew and Jude Thaddaeus, as well as Simon Peter himself, who is believed to have founded a church at Mosul, Jean-Maurice Fiey, *Mossoul Chrétienne: Essai sur l'histoire, l'archéologie et l'état actuel des monuments chrétiens de la ville de Mossoul* (Imprimerie Catholique, 1959), 110. St. Peter added his blessing to the Church of the East at the time of his visit to the see at Babylon, in the Church's earliest days: “The chosen church which is at Babylon, and Mark, my son, salute you...” (I Peter 5:13–14), “Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East,” *World Council of Churches*, 2025, <https://www.oikoumene.org/member-churches/holy-apostolic-catholic-assyrian-church-of-the-east>.

² Aubrey Russel Vine, *The Nestorian Churches: A Concise History of Nestorian Christianity in Asia from the Persian Schism to the Modern Assyrians* (Independent Press, 1937), 44.

³ Christine Chaillot, *The Assyrian Church of the East: History and Geography* (Peter Lang, 2021), 15.

⁴ William Ainger Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church; or, the Church of the Sassanid Persian Empire 100–640 A.D.* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1910), 92, 94.

⁵ Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar Werner Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2000), 17.

wielding supreme authority as “Catholicos of the East.”⁶ The synod further determined that only he had the authority to confirm or replace bishops, signifying his definitive primacy. Subsequently, Emperor Yazdegerd I (399–421) fully established Seleucia-Ctesiphon’s bishop as “Chief of all the Christians of the East.” Notably, the Council’s decisions were to be final and enforced by imperial authority, formally granting the Church of the East a recognized position in the Sassanid state, subject to its own civil and religious ruler.⁷ This fostered an idea of complete religious autonomy, suggesting the Catholicos of the East had a uniquely unquestioned and clearly defined sway over his diocese, comparable to other patriarchs.⁸

At its third synodical council in 424, which met independently of all outside religious authorizations, the Church of the East explicitly declared itself absolutely independent of all other Churches.⁹ As a result, the council recognized the absolute primacy of Catholicos Dādīsho‘ (421–56) over the Eastern Christians exclusively as “our father, chief, head, and leader of all the bishops of all the East,” resulting in him taking the title of Patriarch and becoming the first Catholicos-Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, regarded as the sole supreme leader of the Church of the Persian Empire. The synod thus proclaimed him as “our leader and caretaker, the giver of all the stores of the divine treasure... who is Peter for us, the head of our ecclesiastical council.”¹⁰ Within his own jurisdictional territory, therefore, he was regarded in the same sense that Peter was head of the apostles, implying that no further Peter was necessary and no other earthly or ecclesiastical authority could be recognized as superior to him.¹¹ This effectively “set up an oriental papacy” over the Church of the East, emphasizing the sole authority of the Catholicos-Patriarch at the helm of its leadership structure.¹² The Council further decided that the “outrage” of supervision or intervention by bishops in the Roman Empire was unnecessary and should cease, declaring it unlawful to bring a charge against the Catholicos-Patriarch, stating, “easterners are not allowed to make an appeal—even before the western patriarchs—against their patriarch. Instead, every contention which is unresolved before him shall be reserved to the

⁶ Michael J. Birnie, trans., “The Synod of Mar ‘Ishaq AD 410,” *Fourth Century Christianity*, 11 February 2025, <https://www.fourthcentury.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/thecouncilofmarishaq.pdf>.

⁷ Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 47–48; Wigram, *Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, 90, 95.

⁸ Wigram, *Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, 100; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 20.

⁹ Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (I.B. Tauris, 2016), 81.

¹⁰ Michael J. Birnie, trans., “The Synod of Mar Dadišo ‘AD 424,” *Fourth Century Christianity*, 11 February 2025, <https://www.fourthcentury.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/thesynodofmardadiso.pdf>.

¹¹ Chaillot, *Assyrian Church of the East*, 17.

¹² Wigram, *Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, 124.

presence of the judgment seat of Christ.”¹³ Subsequently, this Council has been interpreted as a declaration of the Church of the East’s independence, marking the starting point of its autocephaly and self-determination, becoming “completely separated from the rest of Christendom,” administratively but not doctrinally.¹⁴ Notably, no ancient ecclesiastical source claims any dependence of the Church of the East upon Antioch as “mother church,” and no claim of Antiochene jurisdiction over it can be found in its first three synods.¹⁵ Significantly, the Council’s decisions were neither protested nor disputed by Antioch or Rome at the time, and its status was later continued under Islamic rule.¹⁶

Despite not being recognized by Western patriarchates, the Church of the East did not perceive its independence as a schism with the rest of Christendom, viewing the universal Church not in terms of a single, global hierarchy, but rather as an ecumenical communion of independent Churches governed by their own patriarchs.¹⁷ It thus viewed itself as being on “equal footing and rank with those of the West” and its patriarch as equal in dignity to the other apostolic patriarchs of the Pentarchy, or five major patriarchates (Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem), which held significant ecclesiastical authority in the Christian world.¹⁸ This assertion of autocephaly occurred before the Church of the East was wrongly accused and stigmatized as “heretical” and prior to the development of “Petrine theory” in the West. It therefore reflects a conception of Church governance fundamentally incompatible with later Roman claims of papal supremacy that positioned the Pope of Rome as the universal head of the entire Christian Church. Historically, the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches, including the Church of the East, believed in the equality and brotherhood of all apostles and their successors, and the pope’s subordination to ecumenical councils and Jesus Christ, who they perceive as the sole head of the Church.¹⁹ They thus upheld a collegial model of conciliar equality and mutual respect among

¹³ Birnie, “Synod of Mar Dadišo”; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 20.

¹⁴ Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 48–49; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 81.

¹⁵ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 20–21.

¹⁶ Wigram, *Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, 125; Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 49.

¹⁷ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 81.

¹⁸ Francis Dvornik, “Byzantium and the Roman Primacy,” *American Ecclesiastical Review* 144, no. 5 (May 1961): 293–96; Paul Collins, *Papal Power: A Proposal for Change in Catholicism’s Third Millennium* (HarperCollins, 1997), 163; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 23; “Apologetics: The Primacy of Rome,” *The 4 Marks of the Church*, 2020, <https://4marksofthechurch.com/apologetics-the-primacy-of-rome/>. Moreover, in his *Fiqh al-Naṣrānīyah* (“Christian Jurisprudence”), eleventh-century Church of the East canonist Ibn al-Ṭayyib included the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon as the fifth patriarchate of the universal Church, replacing that of Jerusalem, Dietmar Werner Winkler, “Two Letters of Yahballaha III to the Popes of Rome: Historical Context and English Translation,” in *Artifact Text Context: Studies on Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia*, ed. Li Tang and Dietmar Werner Winkler (Lit, 2020), 217.

¹⁹ Théodore Grandérath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican depuis sa première annonce jusqu’à sa prorogation d’après les documents authentiques*, 4 vols. (Albert Dewit, 1907–14), 1:365, 368.

apostolic patriarchal sees, regarding the Bishop of Rome as *primus inter pares* (first among equals). He was thus viewed as just one of many patriarchs, holding a primacy of honor—but not of jurisdiction—within the universal Christian Church.²⁰ The Church’s governance model thus underscored early Christian plurality, as well as an unresolved tension over ecclesiastical independence and self-governance, which challenged the idea of centralized authority under universal papal jurisdiction, illustrating a theological and political divergence that continues to influence Eastern-Western Christian relations. The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, eventually came to consider the Eastern Churches’ independent stance as “schismatic” and their rejection of papal primacy as “heretical” because it negated Rome’s perceived “divine right” to authority.²¹

The Church of the East’s structure was further challenged by the critical rift caused by differing Christological interpretations and political factors, notably the condemnation of Nestorius’ Christological teachings by Western Churches, under the influence of Pope Cyril I of Alexandria, at the “robber synod” of Ephesus in 431.²² The Church of the East, which had not participated, rejected this as a mischaracterization and refused to anathematize Nestorius as it believed that this would mean rejecting the teachings of the Scriptures and the Apostles. Some bishops who could not accept the synod’s decisions thus immigrated to the Persian Empire, where Nestorianism was welcomed to counter Roman influence.²³ The Church of the East consequently distanced itself from the Western Church’s views, openly stating its adherence to the Antiochene teachings of Nestorius, Diodore of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia as the “fount of true doctrine” at synods in 484, 485, and 486, embracing them as part of its Christian identity.²⁴ Despite Catholicos-Patriarch Aba I the Great adopting some of the Council of Chalcedon’s canons in 543, however, the Church of the East maintained its original teachings.²⁵ According to Metropolitan of Nisibis and theologian ‘Abdīsho‘ bar Brīkā (d. 1318),

The Easterners in no way altered their truth, but preserved it unchanged, as they had received it from the Apostles. They are called Nestorians unfairly, because Nestorius was not their patriarch, and they did not understand his language... It was Nestorius who followed them, not they [who] followed Nestorius.²⁶

²⁰ Collins, *Papal Power*, 161.

²¹ Pope Pius VI, “*Super Soliditate*,” 28 November 1786, *Novus Ordo Watch: Unmasking the Modernist Vatican II Church*, <https://novusordowatch.org/pius6-bull-super-soliditate/>.

²² Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 29–30; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 8, 47–48; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 23–24.

²³ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 25; Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 42–43.

²⁴ Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 50–51; Wigram, *Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church*, 161–62, 164.

²⁵ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 30.

²⁶ ‘Abdīsho‘ bar Brīkā, *Kṭābā d-Mitqrē Margānītā, d-‘al Shrārā da-Kristyānūtā* [The Book Named The Pearl, on the Truth of Christianity] (Assyrian Press, 1924), 27; Cf. Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 103.

Notwithstanding the questionable circumstances of Nestorius' condemnation and the Church of the East's continued regard of him as a saint and martyr for true Antiochene Christology, a persistent conflict was sparked that would have lasting implications on the Church of the East's relationship with other Christian denominations.²⁷ As a result, the Western Churches unfairly and derogatorily stigmatized it as 'Nestorian' and 'heretical' for centuries. The Church of the East, on the other hand, never officially referred to itself as 'Nestorian' and having already organized itself as an autonomous Church with sovereign status, never considered itself in schism.²⁸ Modern scholarship and recent ecumenical dialogues, however, question the fairness and legitimacy of Nestorius' condemnation due to the dubious proceedings at the synod, noting that he was denounced "in absentia and without his testimony," in an assembly dominated by Cyril's supporters, further recognizing that the "Nestorian" label was misapplied.²⁹

Early Contacts and an "Unhappy Schism"

The first known direct contacts between the Church of the East and the Roman papacy occurred during the Crusades (around 1233) when mutual curiosity, motivated by geopolitical and missionary considerations, prompted Pope Gregory IX (1227–41) to send a delegation to Catholicos-Patriarch Sabrīsho' V (1226–56), with efforts to establish an "agreement of union."³⁰ In 1288, Pope Nicholas IV (1288–92) recognized Catholicos-Patriarch Yahballāhā III (1281–1317) as "Patriarch of all the Christians of the East."³¹ The latter further engaged in diplomatically effusive correspondence with popes Boniface VIII (1302) and Benedict XI (1304), however, there is no evidence that he fully comprehended, acknowledged or accepted any Western claims of papal supremacy, a concept which "must have been strange for him."³² Despite this

²⁷ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 28–30.

²⁸ Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 21.

²⁹ Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 31, 36; Dvornik, "Byzantium and the Roman Primacy," 296; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 24; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 48. Nestorius was falsely accused of having promulgated that there were two separate human and divine persons in Christ, and that the Virgin Mary was, therefore, only the mother of the human Christ, but not the mother of God. In fact, he had never denied Christ's inseparable divine and human *qnomē* (attributes or characteristics)—which Cyril had misinterpreted as 'persons.' As such, Nestorius favored the term *Christotokos* (Christ-bearer), rather than *Theotokos* (God-bearer), for the Virgin Mary, since he regarded the latter expression as a denial of Christ's humanity—who, at the same time, had two natures (divine and human) united in a single *paršopā* (person) without confusion, change, division, or separation.

³⁰ Samuel David, *The Assyro-Chaldean History* (Chicago, 1923), 128; Kamilo Dočkal, "Povijest kaldejske ili perzijske crkve," *Bogoslovska Smotra* 25, no. 4 (1937): 345.

³¹ Fernando Filoni, *The Church in Iraq* (Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 32.

³² Winkler, "Two Letters of Yahballaha III," 216–27.

early mutual recognition of autonomy, Rome's development of a more aggressive assertion of universal jurisdictional claims, exemplified in the 1302 bull *Unam Sanctam* by Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303), eventually rendered all Churches not under papal authority targets for missionary efforts and Latinization, leading to further misinterpretations and hostility.³³ Pope John XXII (1316–34) was the first to wrongfully denounce the Church of the East as 'Nestorian,' and he initiated vigorous efforts to totally suppress it wherever he could, urging the "extermination" of their exclusive religious establishments.³⁴ The efforts of Pope Eugene IV (1431–47) led the Church of the East's metropolitan in Cyprus—then ruled by the Catholic Lusignan dynasty—to submit to Rome, and agree to condemn Nestorius and his teachings, at the Council of Florence in 1445.³⁵ This union, which lasted only five years, witnessed the first usage of the term "Chaldean" to distinguish those members of the Church of the East who had converted to Catholicism from those who had not.³⁶

A significant turning point came about through the "unhappy schism" within the Church of the East, not over doctrinal differences, but rather triggered by internal disputes over the tradition of hereditary patriarchal succession within the Abūnā family at Alqosh which, although against Church canons, had been established to secure succession.³⁷ In 1552, the faction opposing this practice elected Yoḥannān Sulāqā Ballo as a rival patriarch and sought his recognition and consecration from Pope Julius III (1550–55), who had been deceived into believing that the reigning catholicos-patriarch had allegedly died in 1551, as had his "8-year-old nephew" (*sic*) and designated successor.³⁸ In 1553, Sulāqā made a Catholic profession of faith in Rome and

³³ Pope Boniface VIII, "*Unam sanctam*: One God, One Faith, One Spiritual Authority," 18 November 1302, *Papal Encyclicals Online*, 2000–25, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/bon08/-b8unam.htm>.

³⁴ James Henry Worman, "Nestorians," in *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, ed. John McClintock and James Strong, 10 vols. (Harper & Brothers, 1867–87), 6:964–65.

³⁵ "Magisterium, Council of Basel: Session 14, 7 August 1445 [Bull of union with the Chaldeans and the Maronites of Cyprus]," *The Catholic Library Project: Catholic Source Texts from Scripture, Tradition, Liturgy, and the Magisterium*, <https://catholiclibrary.org/library/view?docId=/Magisterium-EN/XCT.285.html&chunk.id=00000081>.

³⁶ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 112; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 247.

³⁷ James Phillips Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh, and Travels in Mesopotamia, Assyria and Syria* (Lea and Banchard, 1850), 291; Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "Chaldæans and Assyrians: The Church of the East in the Ottoman Period," in *The Christian Heritage of Iraq. Collected Papers from the Christianity of Iraq I–V Seminar Days*, ed. Erica Hunter (Gorgias Press, 2009), 149–50; Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 35. The decision was probably made by the Church's Holy Synod; however, no records of it exist today. This is the reason for a difference in opinion as to when this tradition, later extended also to metropolitan and episcopal sees, was first implemented.

³⁸ In fact, Shim'on VII Īsho'yāḥb died on 1 November 1558, after having served as Catholicos-Patriarch for nearly 20 years, and he was succeeded by his nephew Elīyā VI, who in 1551 was 21 years of age and certainly had not died. At the time, the Vatican was informed that the rebellion's prime instigators were unnamed bishops of Erbil, Salāmas and Azerbaijan, supported by many priests and monks from Baghdad, Kirkuk, Cizre, Nusaybin, Mardin, Diyarbakır, Hasankeyf, "and many other nearby places." Sulāqā had been a monk at Rabbān Hormīzd since c. 1510 and its abbot

was consecrated “Shim‘on VIII, patriarch of Mosul,” thus founding the pro-Catholic line that would evolve into the Chaldean Catholic Church.³⁹ His consecration was declared illegitimate by the very much alive Catholicos-Patriarch Shim‘on VII Īsho‘yāhb, who subsequently influenced Ottoman authorities to arrest, imprison, torture, and murder him after his return to Diyarbakır in 1555.⁴⁰ This event permanently divided the Church of the East into hostile Catholic and non-Catholic factions with their own competing patriarchates—each claiming legitimacy and authority.⁴¹ Canonically, the actions by Catholic converts such as Sulāqā contradicted the Church of the East’s 424 Synod, rendering them anathema and schismatic. The Chaldean Catholic Church, on the other hand, views the actions of Sulāqā—who played a significant role in the schism—as a ‘return’ to the Catholic faith and today considers him a “martyr of unity.”⁴² This further exemplified the stakes at play—union with Rome was regarded by converts as a path to renewal and protection, but as a cause of division and violence within traditionalist circles. A century of hesitations and refusals to submit completely to Rome followed, as the faithful cared little for whether or not the pope recognized their patriarch.⁴³ Internal conflicts thus arose, with some patriarchs being deposed due to their Catholic leanings.⁴⁴ Due to another dispute over patriarchal succession, Shim‘on XIII Dinḥā broke off relations with Rome, reinstated hereditary patriarchal succession and moved to Qudshānis, creating two traditionalist patriarchates.⁴⁵ The largely Arabic-speaking pro-Catholic faction,

since c. 1540, Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “The Patriarchs of the Church of the East from the Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 2, no. 2 (1999 [2010]): 242–43, 250. Cf. Filippo Angelico Becchetti, *Istoria Degli Ultimi Quattro Secoli Della Chiesa Dallo Scisma D’Occidente Al Regnante Sommo Pontifice Pio Sesto* (Antonio Fulgoni, 1796), 10:155; James F. Coakley, “Mar Elia Aboona and the history of the East Syrian patriarchate,” *Oriens Christianus: Heft für die Kunde des christlichen Orients* 85 (2001): 124–26; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 113.

³⁹ Anthony O’Mahony, “Syriac Christianity in the Modern Middle East,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 5 (Eastern Christianity)*, ed. Michael Angold (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 527; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 248. Other sources instead cite his title as John VIII, Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 113; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 248.

⁴⁰ Mar Aprem Mookan, *The History of the Assyrian Church of the East in the Twentieth Century* (St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 2003), 32.

⁴¹ Edward Lewes Cutts, *Christians under the Crescent in Asia* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1878), 173; Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “Classical Syriac, Neo-Aramaic and Arabic in the Church of the East and the Chaldean Church between 1500 and 1800,” in *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting*, ed. Holger Gzella and Margaretha L. Folmer, (Harrassowitz, 2008), 335; Murre-van den Berg, “Chaldæans and Assyrians,” 149.

⁴² Louis Raphaël Sako, “The Church of the East: Two Thousand Years of Martyrdom and Mission,” *Oasis* 11, no. 22 (November 2015): 34–43; Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 36–38.

⁴³ Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 173.

⁴⁴ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 24–25.

⁴⁵ Mār Eliyā d-Bēth-Abūnā, “Ktābā d-Qlēsistīqē d-‘Ēdtā Madnḥāytā d-Kaldāyē w-d-Sharbē d-Pāṭriyārkē Madnḥāyē: Mhadyānā d-Sharwāyē Kaldāyē” [Ecclesiastical History of the Chaldean Church of the East and of the Generations of Eastern Patriarchs: A Guide for Chaldean Novices], original unpublished manuscript, [1935?], Ashurbanipal Library, Lincolnwood, IL, 2:89–96, 123–

which had particularly gained ground in western northern Mesopotamia (Diyarbakır, Mardin, Siirt, Hasankeyf and Cizre), was thus left without a patriarch until the establishment of a new line at Diyarbakır under Joseph I (1681–96).⁴⁶ This line's incumbents, almost all of whom had obtained papal recognition, actively sought to convert the rest of the Church of the East.⁴⁷

A Shift of Centers: From Urban Minority to Rural Majority

The eighteenth century marked a critical period of change and realignment for the Church of the East, characterized by a significant shift in the locus of its geographical and denominational landscape, as well as a profound transformation in the community's theological orientation. By the turn of the century, the hereditary Alqosh patriarchate, long the bastion of traditional belief and independence for the Church of the East's faithful, had lost its dominance in the key urban centers of Diyarbakır and Mardin. Nonetheless, it maintained considerable influence and loyalty in rural districts, where a substantial portion of the faithful preferred to preserve ancestral doctrines and autonomy, resisting the influx of Catholicism.⁴⁸ Several factors, however, led to a decline in this patriarchate's authority, as its entrenched hereditary succession system limited ecclesiastical leadership to the Catholicos-Patriarch and his designated successor. This resulted in the erosion of ecclesiastical structures, with an insufficient number of bishops to perform consecrations and administer wide territories. Such ineffective leadership, marked by nepotism, inaction and lack of initiative, critically undermined the traditionalist cause, since no efforts were visibly made to strengthen loyalty or counteract obvious Catholic advances in many neglected districts, crucially facilitating its ultimate success. Furthermore, synodical decrees required patriarchal consent for new episcopal appointments, making the catholicos-patriarch the sole valid consecrator and allowing for abuses of authority, condemned by Anglican missionary George Percy Badger as "spiritual despotism."⁴⁹ Rather, the only way in which the Alqosh patriarchs countered Catholicism and worked to preserve their influence was through sponsoring and promoting liturgical renewal, manuscript copying and Neo-Aramaic literature that promoted traditional beliefs.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, monasticism, once a vibrant aspect of Church of the East life,

28; Coakley, "Mar Elia Aboona," 127–28, 135; John-Paul Ghobrial, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory," *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies* 222 (February 2014): 81–82; Wilmschurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 25.

⁴⁶ Murre-van den Berg, "Classical Syriac, Neo-Aramaic and Arabic," 345–46; Murre-van den Berg, "Chaldæans and Assyrians," 156–57.

⁴⁷ George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals: With the Narrative of a Mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842–44, and of a Late Visit to Those Countries in 1850; Also, Researches Into the Present Condition of the Syrian Jacobites, Papal Syrians, and Chaldeans and an Inquiry Into the Religious Tenets of the Yezedeeds*, 2 vols (Masters, 1852), 2:150.

⁴⁸ Wilmschurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 28.

⁴⁹ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:160–61, 171

⁵⁰ Murre-van den Berg, "Classical Syriac, Neo-Aramaic and Arabic," 346–47.

declined markedly during this century, with many monasteries such as St. George and Rabbān Hormīzd, which had previously served as centers of anti-Catholic resistance, becoming inactive after their destruction by Iranian forces under Nādir Shāh in 1743.⁵¹

In contrast, the Catholic patriarchate at Diyarbakır experienced almost unbroken success during the early eighteenth century. Starting with a solitary metropolitan see at Diyarbakır, Catholicism expanded rapidly from a minority urban presence to a rural majority through foreign missionary efforts, leading to significant conversions. Notable figures such as the priest Khidr of Mosul (1679–1751) played key roles in converting the villages of the Nineveh Plain, with a pivotal moment occurring on 6 January 1719, when representatives of the local clergy at Tell-Kēpē renounced the “Nestorian heresy,” marking a substantial shift toward Catholicism.⁵² Despite this growth, another significant internal challenge was the process of Latinization within the nascent Chaldean Catholic Church, often prompted by papal influence and pushed by Western missionaries. This involved conformity with or the adoption of Western Catholic practices, traditions, and liturgical rites, as well as doctrinal conformity, resulting in friction with traditionalists who viewed such changes as anathema and alien impositions. In its perspective, the Church of the East had maintained its own apostolic traditions, with little alteration until the nineteenth century. Summing up this view, Qudshānis Catholicos-Patriarch Shim‘on XVII Abraham (1820–60) wrote that,

[The Pope’s] doctrine is new, but ours is old; we never changed our forms of worship, but we keep to, and abide by, what was delivered to us by the Apostles and our fathers; therefore you must know that we never change our doctrine nor our forms of worship.⁵³

Consequently, such tensions highlight the challenges of maintaining ecclesiastical identity and autonomy within a broader universal Church framework. Moreover, the conversion process was often not peaceful. Catholic communities faced ongoing opposition and were regularly subjected to hostility by traditionalist clergy in Mosul, while British diplomat and archaeologist Sir Austen Henry Layard noted that “Chaldæans” of the Nineveh Plain had been compelled to renounce their traditional faith and unite with the Roman Catholic Church through “a system of persecution and violence which could scarcely be credited.”⁵⁴ Notably, many conversions were

⁵¹ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 119–20; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 250; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 205, 263, 358.

⁵² Tell-Kēpē was notably the birthplace of Diyarbakır patriarch Joseph II (1696–1713), Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 26, 28, 190, 210, 224–25, 234.

⁵³ William Francis Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, and Armenia*, 2 vols. (John W. Parker, 1842), 2:247.

⁵⁴ Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains: With an Account of a Visit to the Chaldean Christians of Kurdistan, and the Yezidis, or Devil-Worshippers; and an Enquiry into the Manners and Arts of the Ancient Assyrians* (John Murray, 1849), 1:258.

driven by clergymen and prelates who were often motivated by linguistic, cultural and regional rivalries, as well as promises of extended authority, political power, protection, economic security and financial gain. At this time, much of the rural Christian population was illiterate and loyally reliant on its religious leaders for guidance and decision-making, making ecclesiastical allegiance sometimes contingent on political and economic factors rather than purely theological ones.

In the meantime, the competing claims between the Alqosh and Diyarbakır patriarchates persisted, with each vying for official Ottoman recognition and influence as the ‘Nestorian’ community’s legitimate representative. A notable development was the death of Alqosh Catholicos-Patriarch Elīyā X Mārawgēn in December 1722, leading to a dramatic power struggle between his nephew and successor, Elīyā XI Dinḥā, who had secured an Ottoman imperial edict recognizing him, and Joseph III Moses Timothy Mārawgēn (1714–57) of the Catholic Diyarbakır line.⁵⁵ Seizing an opportunity, Joseph III leveraged having the same name as the deceased Alqosh patriarch (Mārawgēn) to present himself as the rightful ‘Nestorian’ representative and petitioned the Ottoman Supreme Court, deceptively claiming he was “still alive” and had been wrongfully dismissed through “the sedition of some malicious people,” alleging that Elīyā XI had falsely reported his death to secure the imperial edict. The confused Ottoman sultan, unaware there were actually two different rival patriarchs with the same name, ordered a cursory investigation. Based solely on Joseph III’s testimony and a petition from Diyarbakır’s ‘Nestorian’ (*sic*, actually Chaldean Catholic) community, the court ruled in his favor in 1723, confirming his ‘innocence’ and exposing ‘false accusations’ against him by Elīyā XI, concluding that “the death had not occurred” and ordering that Joseph III should “continue in his position.” On 11 March 1724, the sultan issued a new imperial edict recognizing him over Elīyā XI, who was subsequently “dismissed from his post,” labelled “a wicked and harmful person,” and his record erased. Joseph III was thus ‘reinstated’ as the rightful patriarch and ‘reassigned’ the duty of “Nestorian administrator.”⁵⁶ This legal and political victory, achieved through subterfuge, marked a significant moment in the Chaldean Catholic Church’s history, reinforcing the Catholic line’s standing within the community. Following this, Joseph III succeeded in consecrating metropolitans for Mardin and Siirt, helping to strengthen the Chaldean Catholic Church’s organizational structure and facilitating its further expansion through strategic episcopal authority. Around 1730, he additionally managed to secure Ottoman recognition and representation in Constantinople for the Catholic communities in Mosul and the Nineveh Plain.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Bâbiâî Evrak Odası (BEO), 2684.201252.6 (14 Jumādā al-Awwal 1135 = 20 February 1723).

⁵⁶ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Bâbiâî Evrak Odası (BEO), 2684.201252.6 (15 Jumādā al-Akḥirah 1136 = 11 March 1724).

⁵⁷ There is no basis to Wilmschurst’s assumption that the conversion of Mosul and its surrounding area to Catholicism “seems to have been largely peaceful,” *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 190, 210–11, 232.

Further missionary activity, notably the establishment of a Dominican mission at Mosul in 1748, accelerated the pressure to convert to Catholicism in the city and surrounding villages, solidifying Catholic dominance.⁵⁸ As a result, the villages in the Nineveh Plain were gradually converted to Catholicism, eroding the Church of the East's rural majority. By 1757, Metropolitan Timothy Lā'āzār Hindī estimated that just under 20,000 Catholics adhered to the Catholic patriarchal line at Diyarbakır, with 6,000 in and around Mosul. At this time, the traditionalist Alqosh patriarchate had approximately 50,000 adherents, with 10,000 in the Mosul region.⁵⁹ In 1767, Emmanuel de Saint-Albert Ballyet (1742–73) reported that entire villages such as Baṭnāyā had converted, whereas only 30% of Tell-Kēpē's families were Catholic, and Alqosh only attained a Catholic majority between 1791 and 1808.⁶⁰ By the beginning of the nineteenth century, most inhabitants of the Church of the East's surviving villages in the Nineveh Plain and other key areas had become Catholics, leading to a demographic shift.⁶¹ The sheer scale of Catholic penetration undoubtedly pressured Catholicos-Patriarch Elīyā XI Dinḥā to resume negotiations regarding a new union with the Vatican in 1751 and 1772, despite previously having had minimal contact with Rome. Although he sent letters, some with confessions of faith, no formal recognition resulted. Such negotiations were further aggravated by instances of conversion among his family members.⁶² For instance, his nephew and designated successor Īsho'yāhb faced allegations of wavering toward Catholicism, and was accused of being influenced by potential personal gain or ideological shifts. In response to these concerns, Elīyā XI replaced him with another nephew, Yoḥannān Hormīzd, in 1776.⁶³

Upon Elīyā XI's death during a plague on 29 April 1778, however, he was succeeded by Īsho'yāhb, who immediately made a Catholic profession of faith to win the support of Latin missionaries and, perhaps, in reaction to Yoḥannān Hormīzd's own conversion to Catholicism the day after his

⁵⁸ Murre-van den Berg, "Chaldæans and Assyrians," 156; Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 63; Chaillot, *Assyrian Church of the East*, 32. The pro-Catholic faction only acquired its first church at Mosul in 1756.

⁵⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 39, 88, 127, 186, 359.

⁶⁰ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 225, 232. According to Ballyet, there were 60,000 Catholics of all rites when he arrived in Mesopotamia in 1729 and this had risen to almost 100,000 by 1753 (with 300,000 non-Catholic Christians). The highest concentration of Catholic converts was in Mosul and its nearby villages, Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 64, fn. 48. This appears to have been an exaggeration, however, since apostolic delegate Henri-Victor Altmayer (1884–1902) estimated only 65,000 Catholics in Mesopotamia around 1870, Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 78.

⁶¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 190, 219, 226, 228, 235–37, 252.

⁶² Elīyā XI Dinḥā sent letters, some with confession of faith, to Rome in 1735, 1749, 1750, 1756, and 1771, but no formal recognition resulted, Murre-van den Berg, "Patriarchs of the Church of the East," 247. Cf. Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 28–29; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 120; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 250.

⁶³ Yoḥannān Hormīzd reported Īsho'yāhb as having become a Catholic and recanted six times due to greed and "love of money," Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:151.

predecessor's death.⁶⁴ Once firmly in power though, and having been recognized by Pope Pius VI (1775–99), the new patriarch retracted this statement in May 1779.⁶⁵ Consequently, his pro-Catholic opponents turned to Yoḥannān Hormīzd, whom they elected patriarch in 1780.⁶⁶ Because this election was irregular, however, the pope only confirmed him as metropolitan of Mosul and patriarchal administrator, but not as patriarch, despite the fact that five bishops had recognized him as such.⁶⁷ Vatican approval, therefore, far from having any theological significance, increasingly became an asset in power politics and questions of succession.⁶⁸ That same year, Catholic Patriarch Joseph IV of Diyarbakır resigned and was appointed patriarchal administrator until his death at Rome in 1796. His nephew Augustine Hindī, metropolitan of Diyarbakır, succeeded him in this position from 1802 onward. He was also not given the title of patriarch, however, because the Vatican was considering the possibility of uniting the Alqosh and Diyarbakır patriarchates under Yoḥannān Hormīzd's leadership at Mosul.⁶⁹ A struggle for influence ensued, in which the latter was supported by the governors of Mosul and Baghdad, and Catholicos-Patriarch Eliyā XII Īsho'yāh by that of 'Amādiyah (in both cases, of course, this support was often paid for). According to Badger, Latin missionaries had played the two cousins against each other in order to more effectively establish papal supremacy. Eliyā XII became a Catholic again on 7 April 1783, but consecrated his nephew Ḥnānīsho 'metropolitan of 'Amādiyah in September 1784, with the intention of preserving the patriarchal succession within his family.⁷⁰ Ḥnānīsho 'made a Catholic profession of faith in 1795, although Latin missionaries felt it to be insincere. In 1801, the Vatican subsequently informed them that he could not be received as a bishop in the Catholic Church without "manifest signs of penitence."⁷¹

In the meantime, Yoḥannān Hormīzd worked on converting a number of villages in the 'Amādiyah and 'Aqrah districts to Catholicism and, for a brief period between 1791 and 1793, the Vatican appointed him patriarchal administrator of the Diyarbakır patriarchate, but this was rejected by the local faithful who doubted the sincerity of his conversion.⁷² In defiance of the order, Augustine Hindī had a priest from Siirt named Michael Shawrīz consecrated metropolitan of Mardin by Qudshānis Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XVI

⁶⁴ Murre-van den Berg, "Patriarchs of the Church of the East," 248–49.

⁶⁵ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 120.

⁶⁶ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:151.

⁶⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 29–30, 196.

⁶⁸ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 120; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 250.

⁶⁹ Vine, *Nestorian Churches*, 175.

⁷⁰ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:152–53, 161. It should be noted here, however, that Badger, as an Anglican missionary, was naturally predisposed to having an anti-Catholic stance.

⁷¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 89, 128–29, 196.

⁷² Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 30.

Yoḥannān (1780–1800).⁷³ In the meantime, the ongoing conflict with Elīyā XII led to murder attempts and the imprisonment of Yoḥannān Hormīzd and his two brothers, as well as their public beating, at ‘Amādīyah between 1 June and 13 September 1791. The Carmelite superior absolved Elīyā XII and Ḥnānīsho ‘in 1794, leading to the pope’s brief suspension of the priests at Diyarbakır, along with that faction’s prelates.⁷⁴ A general consistory of 23 September 1801 even considered the possibility of appointing Yoḥannān Hormīzd patriarch, but this was immediately undermined by complaints from his opponents the following year, which questioned his orthodoxy and accused him of embezzling monastic property. The bitter power struggle between the two cousins continued until Elīyā XII’s death in 1804, after which Ḥnānīsho ‘appears to have reconciled with Yoḥannān Hormīzd.⁷⁵ This brought an end to the traditionalist line of patriarchs at Alqosh, and Rome now had a free hand to set up a single, united Catholic patriarchate.⁷⁶

While Ḥnānīsho ‘was senior to Yoḥannān Hormīzd, and continued to govern the ‘Amādīyah diocese, he was still unable to do anything without the latter’s approval. Although he sympathized with a new monastic order established by Gabriel Danbo, his state of dependence occasionally forced him to act rashly. In 1808, for instance, he asserted himself by delivering Danbo the Rabbān Hormīzd Monastery, at the instigation of Mosul community leaders and in defiance of Yoḥannān Hormīzd’s wishes.⁷⁷ There had been conflict between them because Danbo and his monks had passively submitted to the authority of the pope and Latin missionaries.⁷⁸ Moreover, they were aided by the Dominicans and two priests in Alqosh and Tisqopā to acquire a rival influence over the faithful, consequently laying claim to a large proportion of the patriarchal family’s properties, arguing that they had originally been owned by the monastery.⁷⁹ They additionally accused Yoḥannān Hormīzd of instigating the Pasha of ‘Amādīyah’s Kurds against them and trying to lead Catholics back to the traditional faith, thus being unfaithful to Rome.⁸⁰ In 1811, his opponents at the monastery, led by Abbot Danbo, had him imprisoned and, upon his release shortly afterward, he had several of them imprisoned in retaliation. After this, Yoḥannān Hormīzd instructed Ḥnānīsho ‘to return to ‘Amādīyah and “become a Nestorian,” upon which he expelled Danbo and his monks from the monastery with the civil authorities’ assistance. This quarrel

⁷³ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:155–56, 158–59; After being excommunicated by the Vatican, he was absolved by Pope Pius VI in 1795 and confirmed as metropolitan of Mardin, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 74.

⁷⁴ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:156–59.

⁷⁵ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 30–31, 129.

⁷⁶ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 120.

⁷⁷ Yoḥannān Hormīzd had instead wanted them to occupy St. George’s Monastery opposite Mosul, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 129, 263.

⁷⁸ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 137.

⁷⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 31.

⁸⁰ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:162.

led to the former's suspension by the Vatican on 15 February 1812, and the appointment of Augustine Hindī as "Apostolic Delegate for the affairs of the patriarchate of Babylon."⁸¹ As a result, the Diyarbakır and Mosul patriarchates were effectively governed as a single entity, and Danbo was sent to Diyarbakır to be ordained a priest by Hindī, thereafter accepting the latter as his patriarch.⁸² In 1813, Ḥnānīsho' fell mortally ill and, while on his deathbed, he made amends for treating the monks harshly by returning them the keys to the monastery.⁸³ In 1816, British journalist James Silk Buckingham found that the Assyrians of Mosul were still divided into two factions, with the Catholics possessing five of the city's churches, and the anti-Catholic faction controlling the Mār Esha'yā complex, containing four churches.⁸⁴

At a meeting held in Alqosh on 20 February 1818, Yoḥannān Hormīzd came to terms with his opponents, but the Vatican, ignorant of this, renewed his suspension on 24 May for another eight years. He refused to accept the validity of this, however, and continued to assert his authority wherever he could, aided by Ottoman civil authorities at 'Amādiyah. Augustine Hindī, on the other hand, was rewarded with the pallium in recognition of his service, which he chose to interpret as recognition of his patriarchal status and, for the rest of his life, he used the title Joseph V. Consequently, he consecrated five monks of Rabbān Hormīzd as metropolitans for Kirkuk and Baghdad, 'Amādiyah, Mosul, Siirt, and Mardin between 1824 and 1826, with Danbo's authorization. The Vatican confirmed these consecrations in 1827. Instead of proceeding to their dioceses though, three of the newly-consecrated metropolitans returned to their home villages in the Nineveh Plain, where they began to ordain priests and deacons in a direct challenge to Yoḥannān Hormīzd's authority. One of these, Metropolitan Joseph Audo, who had previously been his coffee-maker at Alqosh, even created a brief schism at Mosul and Alqosh.⁸⁵ After Hindī's death in 1827, Yoḥannān Hormīzd made peace with the Vatican, ending the division in the Chaldean Catholic Church. As part of the terms, the metropolitan of 'Amādiyah was transferred to Diyarbakır and the energetic Metropolitan Audo took his place. Due to another round of intrigues, this time by Audo, which led to his third imprisonment, the

⁸¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 27, 31, 129, 197.

⁸² Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:162; Murre-van den Berg, "Patriarchs of the Church of the East," 249, 259; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 122.

⁸³ He died shortly afterward and was buried among the tombs of the patriarchs in the monastery, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 129, 196.

⁸⁴ James Silk Buckingham, *Travels in Mesopotamia: Including a Journey from Aleppo to Bagdad, by the Route of Beer, Orfah, Diarbekr, Mardin, & Mosul; with Researches on the Ruins of Nineveh, Babylon, and Other Ancient Cities*, 2 vols. (Henry Colburn, 1827), 2:32.

⁸⁵ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 28, 31, 75, 197, 266–67; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:163. Joseph Audo was born at Alqosh in 1790 and became a monk at the Rabbān Hormīzd Monastery in 1814. He was ordained a priest in 1818 and consecrated bishop of Mosul on 25 March 1825 by Augustine Hindī in Diyarbakır. From 1830 to 1847, he served as metropolitan of 'Amādiyah, before being appointed Chaldean Catholic patriarch, David M. Cheney, "Patriarch Joseph VI Audo," *Catholic Hierarchy*, 12 January 2025, <https://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/audug.html>.

charges made by his opponents were investigated in Mosul between 1828 and 1829 by the pope's apostolic vicar, Mgr. Pierre-Alexandre Coupperie (1820–31), who sided with him and had him reinstated.⁸⁶ Yoḥannān Hormīzd was finally confirmed as patriarch on 5 July 1830, fifty years after his original election, and he also received an imperial decree acknowledging him as “Patriarch of the Nestorians (*sic*).” The Diyarbakır patriarchate was at last united with that of Alqosh, which now became based in Mosul. Yoḥannān VIII Hormīzd's descent from the old patriarchal family gave the united patriarchate at Mosul prestige (fully appreciated by the Vatican) which its rivals could never have hoped to match.⁸⁷ However, conditions were imposed and the official title of the Catholicos-Patriarch of the East was changed to that of the “Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon.” Sometime before 1836, Yoḥannān VIII was conveyed to Baghdad and kept at the apostolic vicar's house, where he was to live out the rest of his life in order to ensure a change in patriarchal succession. Anglican missionary Horatio Southgate (who naturally would have had an anti-Catholic perspective), significantly reported that the Patriarch never acknowledged the pope as anything more than Christendom's “first Bishop,” and never granted him the right to interfere in his Church's internal jurisdiction.⁸⁸

Growing Pains and the Abolition of Hereditary Patriarchal Succession

When Yoḥannān VIII was finally named Chaldean Catholic patriarch, he had to comply with the pope's order not to consecrate any relatives as bishops or designate one as his successor, in an effort to impede any possibility of hereditary patriarchal succession.⁸⁹ However, his nephew, the priest Manṣūr Safāro, declared himself opposed to this system's abolition and revolted against Rome in 1831. He subsequently travelled to Urmia in Iran, where Qudshānis Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XVII Abraham (1820–61) consecrated him as bishop for 'Amādīyah and 'Aqrah, giving him the traditional patriarchal name of Elīyā.⁹⁰ He had hoped to be elected as patriarch in order to re-establish the traditionalist Alqosh patriarchate.⁹¹ According to American missionaries Dr. Asahel Grant and Justin Perkins, Elīyā was bringing over to his side many people who had formerly converted to Catholicism:

⁸⁶ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 67.

⁸⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 28, 31–32, 39, 53, 130, 190, 198, 267, 354.

⁸⁸ Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Visit to the Syrian [Jacobite] Church of Mesopotamia; With Statements and Reflections upon the Present State of Christianity in Turkey, and the Character and Prospects of the Eastern Churches* (Dana and Company, 1856), 142.

⁸⁹ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:167.

⁹⁰ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 32, 152.

⁹¹ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:167; Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 122; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 251.

They [...] stated that the Nestorians of Oróomiah would now again recognize that Patriarch more particularly as their spiritual head, having been attached from time immemorial to the see of Elkóosh, until they revolted from it on account of its becoming Papal...⁹²

This return, however, was short-lived. When the Kurdish ruler of Rawāndūz overran Alqosh the following year, the Catholic faction had Elīyā imprisoned by him until—fearing that he might lose his life—he made a Catholic profession of faith and, renouncing his claims to the patriarchate, “was absolved, and received into the bosom of the Chaldean Church.”⁹³ Moreover, he was now actively engaged in converting people to Catholicism.⁹⁴ Yoḥannān VIII most probably hoped that Elīyā might one day enjoy sufficient support to become patriarch, preserving the patriarchal succession in his family, but the scheme was detected by the Vatican, which refused to recognize his consecration and suspended him.⁹⁵ Apparently, a considerable number of his followers in and around Alqosh remained steadfast in their traditional beliefs since, “having been reluctantly drawn away from the fold of their fathers by compulsory means, [they] are changed, not in fact, but only in name.”⁹⁶ In 1835, Elīyā was absolved and sent to Baghdad as a simple priest.⁹⁷ There, he was kept under strict watch lest he return to the Church of the East, which equally mistrusted him on account of his equivocation.⁹⁸

To prevent further trouble relating to hereditary succession, the Vatican appointed Nicholas Zay‘ā, metropolitan of Salāmas in Iran and former student at the Propaganda Fide College in Rome, as Yoḥannān VIII’s coadjutor with the right of succession. Thus, when he died at Baghdad on 16 August 1838, Zay‘ā succeeded him without an election.⁹⁹ This was resented by most of the Chaldean Catholic hierarchy, and he had to deal with bitter opposition from several bishops and the monks of Rabbān Hormīzd. They disliked that he had been chosen by Rome rather than having been elected, also perceiving his character as doubtful.¹⁰⁰ It again divided Mosul’s Chaldean Catholics into two main factions—one of which recognized Zay‘ā and sanctioned any order from

⁹² Justin Perkins, *A Residence of Eight Years in Persia, among the Nestorian Christians; with notices of the Muhammedans* (Allen, Morrill & Wardwell, 1843), 174–75.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 199; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:167–68; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 152.

⁹⁴ Asahel Grant, *The Nestorians; or, the Lost Tribes: Containing Evidence of their Identity; an Account of their Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies; together with Sketches of Travel in Ancient Assyria, Armenia, Media, and Mesopotamia; and Illustrations of Scripture Prophecy* (John Murray, 1841), 27–28.

⁹⁵ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 171; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:167; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 32, 152, 198.

⁹⁶ Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 199.

⁹⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 152–53, 186.

⁹⁸ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:198.

⁹⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 32, 198.

¹⁰⁰ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:199; Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 171; Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 141.

Rome, while the other absolutely rejected him and was secretly loyal to the patriarchal household, the destruction of which they perceived as an invasion of their ancient rights and privileges.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the latter party was privately hostile to papal authority and determinately loathed the reforms introduced by the Catholics, which they felt were not supported by scripture, canon or tradition, and had been forced upon them through the foreign missionaries' maneuvers, "contrary to the relations which the late Patriarch had wished to maintain with the Pope..."¹⁰² As a result, such dissenters were excommunicated "and a curse denounced against those who should converse or have any dealings with them."¹⁰³

‘I denounce him,’ cried one in the bitterness of his zeal against the Pope; ‘what business of his to send his minions to break up the ancient order of our Church, and require us to bow to his pleasure? Who gave him authority or dominion over us? For one, I will none of him.’¹⁰⁴

Upon acceding to the patriarchate, Nicholas Zay‘ā ordered Metropolitan Audo to return to ‘Amādīyah, and allowed as many as 45 monks to retire from Rabbān Hormīzd due to the conflicts that existed among them.¹⁰⁵ In 1843, after unpopular attempts to reform the Church calendar and establish a seminary at the newly restored St. George Monastery, a movement to depose him was sparked, with one party in favor of Elīyā Safāro and another urging Qudshānis Catholicos-Patriarch Shim‘on XVII, then a refugee at Mosul, to lay claim to the patriarchate himself—while he was simultaneously being offered large sums of money to convert to Catholicism by the Dominicans and Chaldean Patriarchate.¹⁰⁶ According to Badger, many Chaldean Catholics at Mosul, including clergymen, even expressed a wish to join the Church of England until a reformed Church could be organized independent of Rome. Their main concerns were innovations in doctrine and discipline, and they hoped to restore their Church to its “original purity” (of which ‘Nestorianism’ was always an exception!).¹⁰⁷ On 23 September of that year, Badger reported that Safāro had encouraged him to conduct missionary work among his people but refrained from going as far as claiming the patriarchate. Nonetheless, many of those who

¹⁰¹ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:167–68.

¹⁰² Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 142.

¹⁰³ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 172.

¹⁰⁴ Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 143.

¹⁰⁵ Only 17 monks were left at the monastery in 1847, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 268.

¹⁰⁶ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 33, 222.

¹⁰⁷ In a similar vein, since 2016, four ‘Old Chaldean’ congregations have been formed in France, the USA, Australia and Canada. Rather, than returning to the Assyrian Church of the East, however, they have practically all joined the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX)!

did attempt to join the Anglican mission had their taxes doubled and suffered other humiliations.¹⁰⁸

Local authorities refused to interfere because Zay‘ā could not prove that he was recognized by the sultan, since the only political approval he possessed in exercising his patriarchal authority over the Chaldean Catholics was the imperial decree recognizing Yoḥannān VIII as “Patriarch of the Nestorians,” whom and which he was not. Fearing the defection of some Chaldean Catholic prelates, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon began paying them a yearly salary.¹⁰⁹ It would also appear that Zay‘ā’s success in having himself recognized as Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic *millet* by the Ottoman Government in 1844, through the influence of the French embassy at Istanbul—the first official recognition of this new community—had little effect on his unpopularity.¹¹⁰ At any rate, he was upheld by Ottoman civil authorities and intrigues against the old patriarchal family continued.¹¹¹ Elīyā Safāro was not allowed to function as bishop and the remaining monks of Rabbān Hormīzd persisted in claiming the family’s properties. In the end, they succeeded through the support of Mosul’s French consul who had recently been appointed to extend protection over the Dominican missionaries, Chaldean patriarchate and local Catholics, as well as to control British activities in the region.¹¹² Eventually, Zay‘ā grew tired of interference by the missionaries, who constantly criticized his actions, and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (hereafter Propaganda) charged him with corruption in a letter of 7 July 1845.¹¹³ Fearing imprisonment at Rome, he refused to proceed there to face the charges and instead retired to his native Khosrāwā in early 1846, and was forced to resign in May 1847. Afterward, he became a bitter opponent of Catholicism, trying to have the Lazarist mission expelled from Iran and having many leading Catholics imprisoned and beaten by local authorities, submitting only a year before his death in 1863.¹¹⁴ After Zay‘ā’s resignation, apostolic vicar and “delegate to the Chaldeans” Mgr. Marie-Laurent Trioche (1837–50) sent letters from Baghdad, in which he assumed patriarchal authority and styled himself “Ruler and Director of the Chaldeans,” ordering that they should be publicly read in Mosul’s churches. This divided the community into three, with

¹⁰⁸ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:192, 268–69, 281–82.

¹⁰⁹ As such, the Patriarch received £200, the metropolitan of Diyarbakır £80, that of ‘Amādīyah £50, those of Kirkuk, Siirt and Mardin £45 each, and Elīyā Safāro £20. These only lasted a few years, however, and were suspended by 1847, Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:168–71, 177.

¹¹⁰ At the insistence of popes Leo XII (1823–29) and Pius VIII (1829–30), and relying on the support of the Catholic rulers of Austria and France, Ottoman Emperor Mahmud II (1808–39) had recognized the distinction between Catholics and non-Catholics, removing the former from the latter’s civil power and decreeing that they should have their own head or prefect, Pope Pius IX, “*Quartus Supra*: On the Church in Armenia,” 6 January 1873, *Papal Encyclicals Online*, 2000–25, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9quartu.htm>.

¹¹¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 33.

¹¹² Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:171; Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 77.

¹¹³ Jean-Michel Hornus, “Un rapport du consul de France a Erzeroum sur la situation des chrétiens en Perse au milieu du XIXe siècle” (III), *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 21 (1971): 308–09, fn. 111.

¹¹⁴ Hornus, “Un rapport du consul de France,” 308–15.

some supporting his actions, others demanding the patriarch's return and a smaller group rejecting what they perceived as Rome's encroachments. This continued for several months until Pope Pius IX (1846–78) appointed Metropolitan Audo as apostolic vicar of the Chaldean Catholic patriarchate.¹¹⁵ He was later elected patriarch, and the pope confirmed this in a consistory of 11 September 1848. Upon his consecration, Audo promised faith and obedience to the pope and his successors in a "sacred oath," as per the custom of all Catholic patriarchs.¹¹⁶

"Saving Souls" through Coercion and Forced Conversion

With the death of the last traditionalist Alqosh patriarch, the newly united Chaldean Catholic Church, under the leadership of his cousin Yoḥannān VIII, practically inherited all of the territory previously under his jurisdiction, including the plains and mountain areas that were under direct Ottoman rule. As a result, the Church now set its sights on consolidating its power through establishing new dioceses and reorganizing existing ones, as well as ensuring the complete Catholicization of all Assyrians formerly adhering to the Alqosh patriarchate.¹¹⁷ Despite internal turbulence, this was a period of considerable growth, in which the Church's territorial jurisdiction was extended, its hierarchy strengthened, and its membership nearly doubled. During Yoḥannān VIII's patriarchate, Catholic metropolitans were consecrated for 'Amādiyah, Kirkuk, Salāmas, and Cizre. The total hierarchy of eight dioceses under the newly recognized patriarch further included Diyarbakır, Mardin, Siirt and Mosul, each with their own Catholic prelates.¹¹⁸ The Church's subsequent task was to reinforce its position in the regions of Cizre, 'Amādiyah and 'Aqrah, in the former Kurdish-ruled emirates of Bohtan and Bahdīnān, which bordered on the Qudshānis patriarchate's jurisdiction in Hakkāri.¹¹⁹ This was further aided by the fact that many of the Assyrian villages in these districts that remained loyal to the traditional faith had no resident clergy and were often dependent on a single priest who travelled from place to place to serve their spiritual needs. At the same time, several Catholic priests were abroad among the 'ignorant and helpless' villagers with the aim of converting them.¹²⁰ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Chaldean Catholic clergy were generally of a higher caliber and were more plentiful than those of the Qudshānis patriarchate, which

¹¹⁵ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:172.

¹¹⁶ Pope Pius IX, "Quae in Patriarchatu: On the Church in Chaldea," 16 November 1872, *Papal Encyclicals Online*, 2000–25, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9quaein.htm>.

¹¹⁷ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:173, 195.

¹¹⁸ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 359–60.

¹¹⁹ Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 140–41.

¹²⁰ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:195.

did not possess an active monastery or seminary.¹²¹ Danbo's revival of monasticism in 1808 had partly been intended to supply the Church with a well-educated and disciplined clergy, and this was of great significance for its future. Yoḥannān Hormīzd initially opposed the revival, harassing Danbo and his monks during the 1820s, but a settlement was eventually reached between the two parties in 1830.¹²² Rabbān Hormīzd thus became a seminary for educating Chaldean Catholic priests, as an alternative to the Propaganda Fide College, laying the foundations for the Church's growth and development in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹²³ In the 1820s, several of the Monastery's monks became bishops. In 1825, Danbo was able to send twenty-eight monks out in pairs (normally one priest and one deacon) to several Assyrian towns and villages in the Mosul and 'Amādiyah districts in order to consolidate Catholicism. They were better educated than most traditional priests, having learned both Syriac and Arabic at the Monastery, and probably more enthusiastic too, making a deep impression on the children and adults whom they taught.¹²⁴ Often, the opportunity would be taken to send monks to villages in which the traditionalist priest was elderly or had already died.

The missionaries employed a carrot and stick policy to convert traditionalist believers, and were often aided by zealous laymen, who frequently proved efficient papal agents. Among the reported intrigues were rewards such as large sums of money or favors obtained from authorities through their mediation, as well as threats to have them oppressed by Muslims if they refused to yield.¹²⁵ A main pressure tactic applied was bribery—whether of clergy or laymen.¹²⁶ In 1832, American missionaries Eli Smith and Harrison Gray Otis Dwight reported that a Chaldean Catholic priest at Khosrāwā had been receiving an annual remittance of a hundred dollars for his work.¹²⁷ Sometime before 1836, a Catholic missionary had offered Qudshānis Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XVII \$10,000 if he would, "declare himself and

¹²¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 34, 165. To illustrate this, in 1911, the village of Erdil, which counted 12 Church of the East families with a church, had not been served by a priest in more than thirty years! However, upon learning of this, Qudshānis Patriarch Shim'on XIX Benjamin sent them a priest shortly afterward, William Ainger Wigram and Edgar Thomas Ainger Wigram, *Cradle of Mankind: Life in Eastern Kurdistan* (Adam and Charles Black, 1914), 154.

¹²² Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 190.

¹²³ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:104. By 1827, the monastery had ninety-three monks, nine of whom were already in holy orders. In a series of ordinations between 1810 and 1823 at least fifteen other monks were ordained as priests. Several others must have also been ordained deacons during this period as, by 1825, the monastery had at least fourteen deacons, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 263–66.

¹²⁴ Not only were these pairs of monks sent to Mosul and the Nineveh Plain villages of Alqosh, Pīyoz, Nuṣayrīyah, Tisqopā, and Baṭnāyā, but some were also sent further afield to more distant Catholic communities in Ma'althā, Dohuk, Qaṣr-Yazdīn, Mēzē, and Tillā, and two pairs were even dispatched to Baghdad and Basra! Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 126, 265.

¹²⁵ Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 32, 442.

¹²⁶ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 255.

¹²⁷ Eli Smith, *Researches of the Rev. E. Smith and Rev. H.G.O. Dwight in Armenia: including a journey through Asia Minor and into Georgia and Persia, with a visit to the Nestorian and Chaldean Christians of Oormiah and Salmas*, 2 vols. (Crocker and Brewster, 1833), 2:191.

his people subjects of the Pope,” and even told him that the pontiff would make him his “lieutenant in all the East.” Of course, these offers were refused, and the missionary then resorted to convincing an old French lady, who was the Governor of Urmia’s foreign language instructor, to use her influence on him to coerce local Assyrians to submit through oppression. In February 1837, Nicholas Zay‘ā—then bishop of Salāmas—came to Urmia to gain converts, proclaiming that he had \$25,000 at his disposal to educate and aid those who would oblige. A number of families complained to the local traditionalist bishop that they were being hard-pressed to convert and were too ignorant to discuss with the intruder, who was reported as having told an influential local Assyrian, “Turn Catholic, and we will load you with money; we can well afford to do so; because if you turn, a multitude will follow you.” Financial benefit thus appears to have been a great incentive for conversion. The following year, during a discussion at Urmia between traditionalist priests and a Catholic deacon from the Mosul region, the latter remarked, “that he would ‘turn’ for money; and on being farther pressed, he repeated, that he would not ‘turn’ without money; but for ten tomans (\$25)... and he would probably afterward ‘turn’ back again for a much smaller sum.” Later on, missionaries even suggested that the pope would canonize Nestorius—whom every Catholic had been required to curse for centuries—but this was perceived by Perkins as a fabrication. Perhaps the strongest argument made by missionaries, however, was the idea that all Western Christians were Catholics, whereas the ‘Nestorians,’ along with some Armenians, were the only exception in the world. Being “few, poor and despised,” they could change their predicament for the better and become more respectable, “by becoming allied to ‘his holiness’ the Pope, the vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter, the head of the church and of the world.”¹²⁸

Indeed, protection from the politically powerful France against the tyranny of their enemies was the most practical incentive for the Eastern Christians’ conversion to Catholicism. French Vincentian Eugène Boré attributed Ottoman hesitation to oppose France’s strong claims to their having been weakened by Greece’s independence and recent wars with Russia. French diplomats thus operated in tandem with Catholic missionaries and were engaged in supporting and fighting for the converts’ most mundane concerns, among them disputes with local government and litigations against rival denominations.¹²⁹ In some quarters, this was seen as a necessity, in order to garner devoted support to French interests from local Christians whose aid was considered valuable in the event of the Ottoman Empire’s downfall.¹³⁰ The isolated Church of the East was not in communion with any other Church and, being non-Catholic and not recognized as Orthodox, could neither rely on

¹²⁸ Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 23, 277–78, 301–303, 348.

¹²⁹ Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 442; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:4, 24–25.

¹³⁰ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 80, 225.

France and Italy nor Russia for support against oppression and persecution.¹³¹ In at least two similar cases from 1835 and 1841, this privilege of French protection for Catholics was abused by diplomats to effect conversion. In both narratives, a priest—one from the Church of the East and another Syriac Orthodox—tried to have a daughter who had forcibly been taken captive by Kurdish Muslims returned. The French consul at Baghdad and his Chaldean Catholic associates, however, would only liberate those who promised to convert to Catholicism upon their release. In both cases, the priest in question refused such a condition, preferring his daughter to die or remain in slavery (including forced marriage to a Muslim) than convert to Catholicism. In one narrative, the consul falsely accused the priest to Ottoman authorities, having him seized and beaten in order to violently coerce him into submission. On the other hand, many of those who were abducted agreed to the terms and became Catholics.¹³² Moreover, British major, writer and occasional intelligence agent Ely Bannister Soane reported that Roman Catholics even collaborated with Ottoman authorities to persecute “Chaldeans” in the foothills and plains near Mosul in order to convert them.¹³³

On the other hand, Anglican missionary James Phillips Fletcher found Catholic converts cleaner and more intelligent than adherents of the Churches they had formerly belonged to, due to their visits to and education in France and Italy. By extension, he also noticed that their churches were neater and cleaner.¹³⁴ Badger described them as, “superior in civilisation, general intelligence, and ecclesiastical order...” having “learned something of European advancement...”¹³⁵ Fletcher additionally noted that Diyarbakir’s Chaldean Catholic metropolitan, a former student of the Propaganda Fide College, “seemed to approve of the Roman interference, as tending to improve and civilize the East.” According to him, Catholic converts were afforded a number of other benefits. For instance, French aid and influence contributed to the construction of new churches (which was forbidden under the *sharī‘ah*, or traditional Islamic law code upon which both the Ottoman and Persian legal systems were based) with funds from France and Italy.¹³⁶ Moreover, it was

¹³¹ Hormuzd Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod: Being an Account of the Discoveries made in the Ancient Ruins of Nineveh, Asshur, Sepharvaim, Calah, Babylon, Borsippa, Cuthah, and Van, including a Narrative of Different Journeys in Mesopotamia, Assyria, Asia Minor, and Koordistan* (Curts & Jennings, 1897), 158.

¹³² Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 442–43; Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 237–38.

¹³³ Ely Bannister Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise: With Historical Notices of the Kurdish Tribes and the Chaldeans of Kurdistan* (Small, Maynard and Company, 1912), 155.

¹³⁴ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 69, 140.

¹³⁵ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:176.

¹³⁶ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 332–33. Ottoman law was an amalgamation of Islamic, imperial and customary law, and stipulations regarding the construction of new churches became more lenient from the Tanzimat reforms onward. For legal application see: Vanessa R. de Obaldía, “Santa Maria della Purificazione: the First Capuchin Church in the Black Sea Region,” *Eurasian Studies* 17 (2019): 10–11, and Vanessa R. de Obaldía, “Notre-Dame Du Rosaire: Insights into the Construction and Contestations of the First Dominican Church of the post-Tanzīmāt Period,” in

often French diplomats who obtained the necessary authorizations from Muslim authorities—without trouble or delay—for Latin missionaries and Catholic converts.¹³⁷ On the other hand, Badger noted that traditionalist communities were incapable of reconstructing their ruinous churches because they were unable to pay the large sum of money demanded in return for this favor. He further remarked on the establishment of schools in several Chaldean Catholic dioceses, which he perceived to be an improvement on the lack of education that existed in the Nineveh Plain before its conversion to Catholicism. In the mountain districts, however, the Catholic converts were still without schools and benefitted only from the promise of French protection, as well as occasional gifts of ecclesiastical vestments, church ornaments, pictures of saints and rosaries, which they did not know how to use.¹³⁸

Slowly but surely, the Latin missionaries gained increasing power and influence. Around 1830, they incited recent Catholic converts to throw many thousands of ancient manuscripts from Mosul's library into the Tigris River.¹³⁹ At 'Ankāwā in 1842, Grant found that the local Assyrians had been forbidden to read any book that did not bear the pope's imprimatur.¹⁴⁰ The following year, Fletcher noted that it was the Italian Dominican Friars who superintended the affairs of the Chaldean Catholic Church at Mosul. As such, it was they who would instigate the local clergy to refuse the burial of people whom they considered 'heretics,' curse such undesirables from their altars, and prohibit their faithful from having anything to do with them, under pain of excommunication. Indeed, this threat was used frequently and unsparingly by Chaldean Catholic bishops in order to force dissenters into line.¹⁴¹ While many

Latin Catholicism in Ottoman Istanbul: Properties, People and Missions, ed. Vanessa R. de Obaldía and Claudio Monge (The Isis Press, 2022), 139, 142–43. For comparison with pre-Tanzimat Ottoman policies, see also: Rossita Gradeva, "Ottoman Policy towards Christian Church Buildings," *Etudes balkaniques* 4 (1994): 14–36, Rossita Gradeva, "On Zimmis and Church Buildings: Four Cases from Rumeli," in *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and Black Holes, Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber*, ed. Eugenia Kermeli and Oktay Özel (The Isis Press, 2006), 203–37, and Rossita Gradeva, "From the Bottom Up and Back Again until Who Knows When: Church Restoration Procedures in the Ottoman Empire, Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries (Preliminary Notes)," in *Political Initiatives "From the Bottom Up" In the Ottoman Empire: Halcyon Days in Crete VII, A Symposium Held in Rethymno 9–11 January 2009*, ed. Antonis Anastasopoulos (Crete University Press, 2012), 135–63. See also: Radu Dîpratu, *Regulating Non-Muslim Communities in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire: Catholics and Capitulations* (Routledge, 2022).

¹³⁷ Since 1500, France had been working to secure recognition of the protection of Christian rights through a series of concessions, first under the Mamluk Sultanate of Cairo and later the Ottoman Empire, where French subjects obtained protected status in 1673. In 1709, France was recognized by the Persian Emperor as the protector of Catholic missions in his realm; in 1740, it concluded a treaty with Sultan Mahmud I (1730–54) that its bishops and religious in the Ottoman Empire would be protected and unobstructed from practicing their faith; and, in 1888, Rome reconfirmed it as the protector of the Christians in the East, Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 56, 77, 108.

¹³⁸ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:24, 176, 380.

¹³⁹ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 8, 253.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Laurie, *Dr. Grant and the Mountain Nestorians* (Gould and Lincoln, 1853), 220.

¹⁴¹ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 102, 150, 162, 170.

Assyrians were refugees in Mosul and its environs after the destruction of their villages by the Kurdish princes of Bohtān and Hakkāri, therefore, the Chaldean Catholics refused them burial in their cemeteries and they were instead buried in those of their former rivals the Syriac Orthodox.¹⁴² At the same time, the refugees were being harassed by the Dominicans to accept Catholicism. The French ambassador at Istanbul sent a large sum of money to relieve their needs, and this was given to the priests who distributed it at the doors of their churches to encourage the ‘Nestorians’ to attend their services. Furthermore, the pro-Catholic faction proposed that the government should settle the refugees in the Nineveh Plain, and French intervention strongly supported this scheme to bring them under their political influence and ecclesiastical control.¹⁴³

While Catholicos-Patriarch Shim‘on XVII was staying with Badger at Mosul, Nicholas Zay‘ā sent him a message through two emissaries, offering to abdicate in his favor and granting him jurisdiction over all the “Chaldeans,” as well as a payment of £800 if he would submit to Rome.¹⁴⁴ Already in October 1841, while Grant was residing at the Lower Ṭyārē village of Āshītā, in the Hakkāri highlands, Metropolitan Audo and a Dominican missionary had held a long meeting with Shim‘on XVII and several clergymen, lasting several days, in order to persuade the patriarch to submit to Rome, promising 2,000 Francs, which had been supplied by the Society of Lyon, as well as French political aid. Badger reported Boré, whom the Society had assigned to report upon such a scheme’s possible success, as noting that if the patriarch, in whose hands was the key to Hakkāri, were to convert to Catholicism, all the mountain people, his spiritual flock, would imitate this submission. Nevertheless, the meeting was broken up by Bishop Yoḥannān of Gāvīlan (1826–74) and the missionaries were obliged to leave, lest they would have been forcibly expelled. Such examples of opportunism were not lost on the Qudshānis catholicos-patriarch who, in a letter from Mosul dated 13 January 1844, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury that, “The heart of our adversaries, namely the Romanists or Papists, rejoiced when they saw what had befallen us...”¹⁴⁵ In 1877, Vatican legates again approached Shim‘on XVIII Rūbēl (1861–1903) with another offer of financial and political advantages if he and his people would join the Catholic Church, which was again refused.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Ironically, these had been each other’s’ coreligionists only decades previously, Laurie, *Dr. Grant*, 385.

¹⁴³ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:279.

¹⁴⁴ Recently, after the death of Catholicos-Patriarch Dinkha IV of the Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Raphaël Louis Sako offered to resign in order to reunite the Church of the East—with the caveat that Catholicos-Patriarch Addai II of the Ancient Church of the East do the same, so that the prelates of the three Churches could meet to choose a new patriarch. His main condition, however, was “communion of faith and unity with the Holy Roman See,” without which there would be “great loss and cause of weakness,” Staff Reporter, “Patriarch calls for Iraqi churches to unite after centuries of division,” *Catholic Herald*, June 26, 2015, <https://catholicherald.co.uk/patriarch-calls-for-iraqi-churches-to-unite-after-centuries-of-division/>.

¹⁴⁵ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:186–87, 290.

¹⁴⁶ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 149.

Catholicism's triumph over the Alqosh patriarchate and pretensions toward that of Qudshānis tended to polarize opinions and, around the mid-nineteenth century, several villages around Cizre and 'Aqrah asserted their allegiance to traditionalist bishops dependent on Qudshānis Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XVII, abandoning three centuries of loyalty to the Eliyā line of patriarchs.¹⁴⁷ This was abetted by his period of refuge at Mosul, which offered them frequent opportunities to consult him in Church affairs—something which they were largely unable to do when he was at the remote Qudshānis. As Badger noted:

... the greatest confusion exists with respect to the extent of the two patriarchates, and the only rule now obtaining is this: such villages as still adhere to Nestorianism look up to Mar Shimoon as their head; and, on the other hand, those who join the seceders place themselves under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Chaldean Patriarch.¹⁴⁸

To illustrate this point, a metropolitan of Cizre named Joseph, consecrated in around 1760 by Eliyā XI, resisted Catholic missionaries' activities in his diocese and, in the nineteenth century's early years, withdrew to the village of Shākh, where he remained effectively dependent on the Qudshānis patriarchate until his death in 1846.¹⁴⁹ With his two suffragan bishops in Shākh and Ātel, he was responsible for about twenty-three Assyrian villages in the Bohtān region. Their influence, however, was gradually restricted to the more remote mountain villages. Most of Cizre's Church of the East community remained traditionalist until 1833, when a stable Catholic diocese was established.¹⁵⁰ British geographer William Francis Ainsworth noted, however, that there were no Catholics there in 1840.¹⁵¹ Catholic converts had already been made in Shākh and a number of other villages by Dominican missionary Campanile before 1815.¹⁵² Nevertheless, Rassam found that Shākh's Assyrians were still largely traditionalist in 1880, despite being so close to Ottoman-controlled Cizre, where French protection had empowered the Chaldean Catholics to try bullying them into submission through their influence on local authorities.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 360.

¹⁴⁸ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:173.

¹⁴⁹ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:69; Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 141.

¹⁵⁰ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 39, 83, 101, 104–06, 112.

¹⁵¹ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:345.

¹⁵² Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 112.

¹⁵³ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 389. In 1914, only 140 of Shākh's 300 Assyrian inhabitants were Chaldean Catholic, Joseph Tfinkdji, *L'église chaldéenne catholique autrefois et aujourd'hui* (Bureaux des études ecclésiastiques, 1913), 57; David Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors: Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastern Anatolia during World War I* (Gorgias Press, 2006), 258, 426.

Shortly after 1852, a new Chaldean Catholic diocese was established for Zākho and the villages in the Khābūr valley, most of which were already Catholic, their “submission to Rome” having taken place only a few years earlier.¹⁵⁴ The more remote mountain villages, on the other hand, were all Catholic in 1875, with some already having been converted since 1788. By 1913, only one Assyrian village in the region appears to have been without a Catholic community.¹⁵⁵ Siirt, on the other hand, had a regular succession of Catholic metropolitans between 1730 and 1915, with a stable hierarchy finally established in 1801. In 1823, the Vatican deposed its metropolitan Peter Shawrīz for encouraging Henry Leeves of the British and Foreign Bible Society to contact the traditionalist Hakkāri Assyrians when he had met him the previous year in Istanbul.¹⁵⁶ Despite a certain amount of resistance to the growing dominance of the Chaldean Catholic Church in the surrounding region during the nineteenth century, most of its ethnic Assyrians had converted by the beginning of the twentieth century. Notwithstanding, the Catholic missionaries’ progress was by no means complete. French Syriacist Jean-Baptiste Chabot mentioned fifteen “semi-Nestorian” villages in the Siirt diocese in 1896 and, in 1913, not only were eleven villages listed by Chaldean Catholic priest Joseph Tfinkdji still “semi-Nestorian,” but twelve villages additionally lacked their own Catholic priests, making them prone to returning to the “Old Church.”¹⁵⁷

According to Badger, all the villages of the Şapnā valley, around ‘Amādīyah, were inhabited by ‘Nestorians’ at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Yoḥannān Hormīzd, on the other hand, reported that ‘Amādīyah had a Catholic community as early as 1783, and he established a Catholic diocese there, consecrating his nephew Mattai Shim’on as its first metropolitan on 5 May 1790, in direct opposition to his cousin and rival Elīyā XII.¹⁵⁸ Shim’on made a determined effort to convert a number of villages in Şapnā and the Zēbar district to Catholicism, succeeding at Mangēsh in 1791.¹⁵⁹ A few months later, the opposing party complained to the Pasha of ‘Amādīyah, who had village’s

¹⁵⁴ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 100, 111–112, 353, 736; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:70; Southgate noted that one village was still ‘half Nestorian’ in 1844, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 170.

¹⁵⁵ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 101, 108, 112.

¹⁵⁶ Shawrīz died of an epidemic at Tabriz in 1831, Smith, *Researches in Armenia*, 2:189–90. Although officially ecumenical, the Roman Catholic Church perceived the Bible Society as Protestant. Pope Gregory XVI in his 1844 encyclical letter *Inter praecipuas* condemned both Bible societies and “the publication, dissemination, reading, and possession of vernacular translations of Sacred Scriptures” which did not abide by the Catholic Church’s general rules and decrees. Culling Eardley Smith, trans., *The Encyclical Letter of our Lord Pope Gregory XVI to all Patriarchs, Primate, Archbishops, and Bishops, issued May 8, 1844* (John Snow, 1845), 9–34.

¹⁵⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 82, 84, 89; Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 48–49.

¹⁵⁸ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:154–55.

¹⁵⁹ Mattai Shim’on, originally named Yoḥannān, was the son of Yoḥannān Hormīzd’s brother the priest George. He was killed by Kurdish brigands in 1811, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 129, 134.

priest and leading men imprisoned, releasing them only after receiving a gift of money from Yohannān Hormīzd.¹⁶⁰ During Joseph Audo's metropolitanate, which lasted until his appointment as patriarch in 1848, he was able to convert several traditionalist villages in the Şapnā valley's western half and in the 'Aqrah region to Catholicism.¹⁶¹ His success was particularly marked in Şapnā, where seven or eight flourishing traditionalist villages were deserted during this period because of the oppressive policies of 'Amādīyah's Muslim governor, who systematically plundered them—once in the 1830s and again in the 1880s. On both occasions, many Assyrian villagers fled their homes, never to return. The demoralized Christians of three large villages that remained in the western part of the valley converted to Catholicism under Audo and the Dominican missionaries' influence.¹⁶² Measures taken to convert people were often not so peaceable and the traditionalist priest Mando of 'Amādīyah recounted to Grant in 1839 that his own father had been bastinadoed, presumably by Kurdish tribesmen at Metropolitan Audo's instigation, "to compel him to become a Roman Catholic!"¹⁶³ In 1843, Badger found that this priest's brother, whose abject poverty had been previously mentioned by Grant, had recently become a Catholic because Audo had permitted him to marry a woman forbidden to him by his own Church's canons and, when he visited the town once a year, he would celebrate mass in his house, wearing ecclesiastical garments that were of much better make and quality than those of the local traditionalist clergy.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the traditionalists of Şapnā, Nērwā and Raykān payed Audo their tithes and contributions by virtue of an arrangement between the Catholics and the Ottoman Government, who wanted to ensure their portion of the revenue thus obtained. This policy of extortion and opposition to improvement severely impaired the traditionalists' ability to educate their children or appoint priests for the villages. As a result, they had only one priest at 'Amādīyah, whose duties extended over a more than 104-square-kilometer area.¹⁶⁵

After 1847, due to the Society of Lyon and the Propaganda suspending their annual financial grants to Eastern bishops, and especially after Audo became patriarch, the Catholics relaxed their missionary efforts in Şapnā, with many of those who had previously converted returning to the Qudshānis patriarchate. Nevertheless, they continued to struggle with poverty, oppression by Kurds, and many of their churches were in ruins—with local authorities

¹⁶⁰ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:155.

¹⁶¹ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:173.

¹⁶² Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 126, 130, 133–34.

¹⁶³ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:196.

¹⁶⁴ Laurie, *Dr. Grant*, 300; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:199–201. This brother later became a Chaldean Catholic priest, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 136.

¹⁶⁵ It was thus suggested that the Church of the East's bishop of Barwārī-Bālā would not have ensured the Ottoman authorities their portion of this money because the Catholics acknowledged the sultan's supremacy and paid tribute, while the traditionalists only acknowledged the authority of their own patriarch, who was not recognized by the sultan, Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2: 196, 198–99.

refusing to allow their reconstruction unless they obtained the sultan's permission, which they had no means of procuring.¹⁶⁶ By 1850, while there were 133 Chaldean Catholic families in the Şapnā valley, only 94 still belonged to the Church of the East.¹⁶⁷ According to Anglican missionary Athelstan Riley, the Qudshānis patriarchate's jurisdiction in 1886 ended at 'Amādīyah, however, "the line is not exactly drawn..." Moreover, there was great temptation to convert to Catholicism due to the fact that Dominican missionaries extended considerable protection to the Chaldean Catholic villages from the ravages of Kurdish tribes and their chieftains. Nevertheless, a single priest was reported as having kept eight villages in Şapnā loyal to the Qudshānis patriarchate and most of them remained so until the outbreak of the First World War.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, while most of the 'Aqrah district's villages were still traditionalist at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Zēbar villages of Arēnā and Barzān had already converted to Catholicism in late 1790.¹⁶⁹ Between 1830 and 1848, Metropolitan Audo was able to convert several traditionalist villages in the 'Aqrah and Shemkān districts to Catholicism and, around 1835, Yoḥannān VIII consecrated a new bishop for 'Aqrah named Abraham.¹⁷⁰ The villages of Khordapnē and Bestāvā had also converted to Catholicism by 1843, after the former's priest converted to Catholicism and was followed by his flock.¹⁷¹ As many as ten villages, however, refused to submit, so Badger sent a traditionalist priest from Tell-Kēpē to visit them with letters from the Qudshānis catholicos-patriarch.¹⁷² He found the inhabitants impoverished due to exactions by the local government while, at the same time, Audo was there to collect tithes and influence them to become Catholics. Although one village complied, the other nine sent assurances of their obedience to the Qudshānis catholicos-patriarch and begged him to quickly consecrate them a bishop. The unwavering efforts to convert Assyrians to Catholicism, however, led more of them to resist and, together with Bishop Abraham, they transferred their loyalty to Shim'on XVII in 1847, while he was still a refugee at Mosul.¹⁷³ In 1850, this bishop was in charge of a

¹⁶⁶ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:24, 380.

¹⁶⁷ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174, 393.

¹⁶⁸ Francis Nicholson Heazell and Jessie Margoliouth, eds., *Kurds and Christians* (Wells Gardner, Darton and Company, 1911), 10; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 135.

¹⁶⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 152, 163. This had been achieved by Mattāi Shim'on, who brought their priests to Yoḥannān Hormīzd to receive vestments, chalices and patens, Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:155.

¹⁷⁰ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 153.

¹⁷¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 135; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:254.

¹⁷² This priest, named Stephen, had been a monk at Rabbān Hormīzd, but had been expelled from the Chaldean Catholic Church due to his bold condemnation of perceived Vatican intrusions and novelties that had been introduced into the ancient rituals. Qudshānis Patriarch Shim'on XVII had married him to an Assyrian refugee girl from Hakkāri and, despite much opposition from his fellow villagers, he maintained a living by making sieves and packsaddles, Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:165.

¹⁷³ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:168, 283–84; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 126, 152–53.

diocese of fifteen villages. At the same time though, five other villages in the district were included in 'Amāḏīyah's Chaldean Catholic diocese.¹⁷⁴

Southgate remarked that Latin missionaries had initially gained possession of the patriarch's title deeds (presumably through the monks at Rabbān Hormīzd) and forced him into submission to avoid financial ruin, demanding only acknowledgement of the pope's primacy as a way in. Once this had been achieved, they then had him accept the Council of Ephesus, in which Nestorius was excommunicated as a heretic. On the other hand, the illiterate masses knew of no other change other than their acceptance of papal supremacy. This paved the way for the introduction of holy water, the rosary, a profusion of images and statues, and exaggerated veneration of the Virgin Mary, as well as the doctrine of Purgatory, which was not taught in the Church of the East. Moreover, pictures of the Virgin printed on calico and to be hung around the neck, were distributed in Mosul and those who wore them were taught that they would be rescued from Purgatory if they died, and sent to Paradise the following Saturday.¹⁷⁵ According to Layard, the "Chaldæans" he visited at the village of Bē-Bozē in 1846 were a very common example of how conversions took place:

In the church I saw a few miserable prints [...] miracles of saints and of the blessed Virgin, and a hideous infant in swaddling clothes, under which was written "l'Iddio, bambino." They had recently been stuck up against the bare walls. "Can you understand these pictures," I asked. "No," was the reply; "we did not place them here; when our priest (a Nestorian) died a short time ago, Mutran Yusuf, the Catholic bishop, came to us. He put up these pictures, and told us that we were to adore them [N.B. this is unknown in the Church of the East's religious expression and contrary to its teachings]. We pulled them down again; but for doing so our Kiayahs (heads of the village) were bastinadoed by Mahmoud Agha, the chief of Missouri, and we got our heads broken. We now, therefore, leave them where they are. And as the Kurds have been bribed not to allow a Nestorian priest to come to the village, we are compelled to hear the Catholic priest, whom Mutran Yusuf occasionally sends us."¹⁷⁶

Similarly, a certain Latin missionary in Urmia, prior to 1834, would enter churches belonging to the traditionalists, in places where part of the congregation had converted to Catholicism, and declare them Catholic property, hanging their walls with images (a forbidden practice abhorred by the Church of the East)—which the latter would tear down and destroy. Upon entering the church at Guṭtāpā, he thus began adorning it when local traditionalist bishop Elīyā (d. 1863) entered what was essentially his cathedral and ordered him to stop. The missionary replied that the church was not his, but

¹⁷⁴ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 135; Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174, 392.

¹⁷⁵ If they died on Saturday, however, they would immediately go to Heaven! Often these pictures, statues and books were directly imported from Rome, Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 143–45, 177.

¹⁷⁶ Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, 1:154–55.

the pope's, and commanded him to leave. Realizing the emergency, the prelate beat the intruder, who, "was glad to escape with broken images and torn pictures..."¹⁷⁷ In another episode also narrated by Perkins, which took place in 1839, traditionalist bishop Gabriel Ismā'īl of Ardishaï (1824–71) was so annoyed by missionaries' attempts to convert him and the faithful of his diocese to Catholicism that he went into the church which they had occupied in his village, and stripped it of every image they had placed therein.¹⁷⁸ In a similar vein, Audo had supplied the traditionalist priest at 'Amādīyah a brass crucifix made in Rome, which brought him into disgrace when he, in turn, offered it to the Qudshānis catholicos-patriarch as a gift in 1840.¹⁷⁹

During this early period, Latinization had not yet set in or been implemented, so "the change was more nominal than real."¹⁸⁰ In 1840, Ainsworth observed that the conversion was not yet deep enough to modify the people's character and practices to any great extent.¹⁸¹ Three years later, Fletcher remarked that the Chaldean Catholics' rites externally differed little from those of their independent kin, except for the Latin missionaries' insertion of the Words of Institution into the liturgy and their introduction of Eucharistic Adoration, not to mention confessionals in churches—the latter for practicing auricular confession, which traditionalists considered unnecessary.¹⁸² In fact, the missionaries and their superiors tolerated what they had no strength to immediately change and generally preferred being content with an empty act of homage to enforcing greater uniformity.¹⁸³ In one case, however, the pope had sent the Chaldean Catholics an indulgence to mitigate the severity of their traditional Lenten fast.¹⁸⁴ On his part, Layard further described how liturgical books used by the converts at Bē-Bozē had not been changed—save for carefully blotting out the name of Nestorius—and their worship remained as it had been before their forced conversion, except for some prostrations to pictures. Initially, this was the main practice that distinguished Catholic

¹⁷⁷ Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 278.

¹⁷⁸ Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 393.

¹⁷⁹ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:249–50.

¹⁸⁰ Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, 1:258.

¹⁸¹ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:128.

¹⁸² Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 137, 149. On 17 January 2001, and with the approval of Pope John Paul II, the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith concluded that the Anaphora of Sts. Addai and Mārī can be considered valid, even without an Institution Narrative. Moreover, for the period of the Sulāqā line's union with Rome (1551–1662), no document exists to prove that the Vatican insisted on the Institution Narrative's insertion, Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East," *Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity*, July 20, 2001, <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-orientale/chiesa-assira-dell-oriente/altri-documenti/testo-in-inglese.html>.

¹⁸³ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 190, 197. As such, the Roman Catholic Church approved clerical marriage and vernacular translations of scripture among the Eastern Christians while openly condemning them in the Western Church.

¹⁸⁴ However, they decided not to take advantage of this because it was perceived as an infringement of their ancient customs, Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 161.

converts from traditionalists, and it became a point of contention since the Church of the East largely views the veneration of images and statues as a form of idolatry.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, their installation by Catholic missionaries, in a way “marking their territory,” visually modified the aspect of traditionally modest church interiors and the visible practice of bowing or prostrating to them was thus an unwelcome innovation. According to Layard, “[...] the people retain their old forms and ceremonies, their festivals, their chronology, and their ancient language [...],” and that they were engaged in a struggle with Rome to maintain such last relics of their faith.¹⁸⁶ Smith and Dwight had observed the same at Khosrāwā in 1832, noting that, “all the Nestorian church books are used by the Chaldeans, with scarcely any other alteration than the substitution of the names of papal for those of Nestorian saints, and the expunging of a few sentences that savor of Nestorianism.”¹⁸⁷ Eventually, Fletcher noted, “it was even announced that a Latin liturgy was to be substituted for the old Chaldean missal.”¹⁸⁸

Simultaneously, Latin missionaries and local Catholic leaders endeavored, with considerable success, to fix the title of “Chaldeans” as a designation exclusively for those who converted to Catholicism.¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, they introduced the habit of contemptuously using the appellation “Nestorians” as a pejorative when speaking of those who held fast to their traditional faith and refused to convert.¹⁹⁰ This internalized distinction between the Catholic “Chaldeans,” who gained legitimacy through their unity with the “Holy and Universal” Church of Rome, and the “heretical Nestorians” thus gained significance. Indeed, “so much odium attaches to the name, that many have joined the Catholic party to avoid it.”¹⁹¹ As indicated in Yoḥannān Hormīzd’s autobiography, published in translation by Badger, Catholic

¹⁸⁵ In doing so, the Church of the East faithfully and quite literally follows the second of the Ten Commandments, namely, “You shall not make for you any image, or any likeness that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the Earth; You shall not worship (or bow to) them nor serve them...” (Exodus 20:4–6). It should be noted that the *Peshīttā* translation accepted by the Church of the East simply employs the words *šlim* (ܫܠܝܡ, meaning image, portrait, figure, form, picture, face, statue or idol) and *dmū* (ܕܡܘܐ, meaning form, shape, figure, type, example, resemblance, image, exemplar or likeness), and does not specify that only graven images are prohibited. In fact, both in theory and in practice, the Church of the East bans all of these from its churches and worship.

¹⁸⁶ Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, 1:155, 259.

¹⁸⁷ Smith, *Researches in Armenia*, 2:191.

¹⁸⁸ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 171.

¹⁸⁹ Grant, *Nestorians*, 27, 170; Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 85; Arthur John Maclean and William Henry Browne, *The Catholicos of the East and his People: Being the Impressions of Five Years’ Work in the “Archbishop of Canterbury’s Assyrian Mission;” An Account of the Religious and Secular Life and Opinions of the Eastern Syrian Christians of Kurdistan and Northern Persia (Known also as Nestorians)* (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1892), 7–8.

¹⁹⁰ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:272; Abraham Yohannan, *The Death of a Nation; or, The Ever Persecuted Nestorians or Assyrian Christians* (G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1916), 4.

¹⁹¹ Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, 1:236.

converts often called themselves “Christians,” while denying this appellation to those who remained faithful to the Church of the East, instead referring to them as “heretics.” The latter, on the other hand, would refer to the former as *Prangāyē* (“Franks”), either because of their connection with France or because they had been “bought with Francs” (the French currency).¹⁹² This division further led to animosity between the two parties, as Perkins relates: “... family quarrels are usually the most violent, so the Nestorians are separated from those “Chaldeans” by a hostility even more rancorous than that which divides them from the Jacobite [Syriac Orthodox] Christians.”¹⁹³ Such externally applied enmity thus embedded itself within the formerly united Church of the East community, manifesting itself in personal arguments and squabbles. Layard twice witnessed heated debates that took place between a traditionalist in his party and hosts who had converted to Catholicism, regarding the differences between their beliefs. In one case, when the converts insisted on the benefits of recognizing and being under the pope, their traditionalist interlocutor proceeded to insult the pontiff. This almost led to violence and, as a result, the archaeologist’s party was forced to depart.¹⁹⁴ Even nuclear families were not spared, as recounted by Rassam in 1880; the chief of the traditionalist village of Dēhē, in the Šapnā valley, had had fallen in love with a pretty lady from the neighboring Chaldean Catholic village of Dāwūdīyah, and she refused to marry him unless he converted.¹⁹⁵ Although he

¹⁹² Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:151–60, 223–24.

¹⁹³ Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 4–5.

¹⁹⁴ At Bē-Bozē and Ma’althā, Layard, *Nineveh and its Remains*, 1:155–56, 232.

¹⁹⁵ Rome had always condemned and forbidden the marriage of Catholics with ‘heretics.’ Pope Urban VIII (1623–44) wrote that these were to be altogether avoided and he aimed to keep them “far from the Catholic Church.” Pope Innocent X (1644–55) ordered that no dispensations should be granted for such marriages at all, unless there was authentically documented proof that the heresy of the heterodox contracting party had been rejected under oath. Pope Clement XI (1700–21), expressed that he considered it “most important not to transgress the rules of the Church of God, of the Apostolic See, of our predecessors and of the holy people, all of whom shrink from the marriage of Catholics with heretics...” He later stated that “... the Church shrinks from such marriages which present so many proofs of deformities and spiritual danger,” and ordered that no permission or dispensation should be given for marriages between a Catholic and a ‘heretic’ unless preceded by the heresy’s abjuration. Pope Benedict XIV (1740–58) considered such marriages detestable and, as early as 1741, he praised “those bishops who strive to restrain Catholics from marrying heretics by imposing more severe penalties” and seriously admonished “... all bishops and Vicars Apostolic, parish priests, missionaries, and other faithful ministers... to frighten away Catholics of both sexes from entering upon such marriages to the destruction of their souls, and to impede these same marriages by every good means, and to strive effectively to prevent them.” According to him, “The Catholic spouse... ought to resolve to do penance for the grave crime committed, to beg God for pardon, and to strive to bring back to the Catholic Church the spouse wandering from the true faith and so to win his soul; this could obtain remission for the crime committed because... he will be forever bound by the chain of that marriage.” On 29 June 1748, he issued the bull *Magnae Nobis*, in which he decreed that mixed marriages were permissible only by special dispensation from the pope and under certain conditions. Preeminent among them were the abjuration of the heresy by the contracting parties, so that both were presumed to be Catholics, and the raising and education of children from such unions as Catholics. Moreover, the Catholic spouse was encouraged to strive for the conversion of the ‘heretical’ one and resist being ‘perverted’ by them, Benedict XIV, “*Magnae Nobis*: On Marriage Impediments and

agreed to the terms, the two were the only Catholics in the village. This caused an unhappy religious division in the family, which led to at least one of his sons from a previous marriage moving out of home, hoping that his father would revert before his death.¹⁹⁶

From various accounts, it appears that the Roman Catholic Church, during this period, had a desire to subject all other forms of Christianity, including the Church of the East in its entirety, to the pope.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, this was something supported by the prelates and clergy of the Chaldean Catholic Church. Writing in hindsight, Sir Harry Charles Luke noted the unfair advantages that Rome had to offer converts, namely, financial support, better schools and educational facilities and, especially, French protection from Ottoman pashas and Kurdish Aghas. In return, the proselytes brought their churches and endowments with them.¹⁹⁸ This alienation or division of their churches and church property resulted in the parent Church's subsequent depression and impoverishment.¹⁹⁹ In this vein, Southgate further pointed out that no Eastern Christian Church had been so much affected by changes from outside of it, and in none had such a large schism been created, than the Church of the East.²⁰⁰ In Qudshānis Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XVIII's point of view, the Chaldean Catholic faction had been "seduced" by the pope's "emissaries."²⁰¹ In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, dated 11 August 1843 at Mosul, he styled these missionaries, "ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing." In another letter from Mosul dated 21 April 1844, he described them as, "spies among us... using every species of intrigue... to deceive the hearts of the simple, and these come to us without our asking them."²⁰² Indeed, the feeling of resentment among the Church of the East's faithful was so strong that the pope was called "the Mohammed of the West" in an 1868 petition to the Archbishop of Canterbury signed by three bishops, 32 priests, 12 deacons and five chieftains from eight Hakkāri districts:

... through the agency of his crafty emissaries he deceives the ignorant of our community, promising them protection if they will but join their Church... when the aforesaid missionaries see any of our poor oppressed by the tax-gatherer, they come forward to aid them by way of charity; others they indirectly cause to be oppressed in order that they may relieve them...²⁰³

Dispensations," 29 June 1748, *Papal Encyclicals Online*, 2000–25, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/ben14/b14magna.htm>.

¹⁹⁶ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 367.

¹⁹⁷ Fletcher, *Notes from Nineveh*, 197; Perkins, *Residence of Eight Years in Persia*, 405, 442.

¹⁹⁸ Harry Charles Luke, *Mosul and its Minorities* (Martin Hopkinson, 1925), 27–28.

¹⁹⁹ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:2.

²⁰⁰ Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 45–46.

²⁰¹ Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:247.

²⁰² Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:272, 295.

²⁰³ Cutts, *Christians under the Crescent*, 5.

In all cases, it was suggested that the illiterate of this unprotected Church were easy prey to such tactics which induced them to accept Catholicism. While conversing with a group of Chaldean and Syriac Catholics in 1841, Southgate noted that: “They all agreed that they had never known of conversions to Popery, but from mercenary motives... for what can people wholly uninstructed understand of the differences between the Church of Rome and themselves.”²⁰⁴ According to Soane, the Roman Catholic missionaries were “unscrupulous” and “pursued a Machiavellian policy,” with this idea being supported by a number of regretful Chaldean Catholics. For instance, the converts at Khosrāwā asserted that the missionaries had adopted underhanded and deceitful methods, such as intimidation and exploiting personal disagreements. Moreover, they secured for themselves the best gardens and buildings, and came in charge of the local water supply. This they made available to the town’s five thousand other inhabitants only after they had used enough to ensure their own extensive crops’ success. Consequently they would raise the price of their harvest if those of the surrounding villages failed, creating an agricultural monopoly.²⁰⁵

Conflict with Vatican: The Issue of the Malabar Christians

As patriarch, the combative Joseph VI Audo is best remembered for his frequent clashes and often strained relations with the Vatican whenever he felt that his Church’s oriental character, traditions or sovereignty were being slighted.²⁰⁶ One of his first acts was to establish a stable Chaldean Catholic diocese at ‘Aqrah in 1852, consecrating Eliyā Safāro to the office, which he held until his death in 1863.²⁰⁷ Despite codifying Chaldean Canon Law in the Latin form at a council in 1853, albeit under the influence of the Jesuit apostolic delegate Benoit Planchet (1853–59), and the Chaldean bishops forming a notable group in the procession through St. Peter’s on the occasion of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception’s promulgation in 1854, Audo wholeheartedly opposed the Propaganda.²⁰⁸ An early sign of his independent attitude occurred when he held a synod at the Rabbān Hormīzd Monastery between 7 and 21 June 1858, the validity of which was not recognized by Rome. Particularly significant were his attempts to assert his right to send bishops to India’s Malabar Christians, which had historically depended on the Church of the East’s patriarchs and been under their spiritual jurisdiction and authority alone (and not that of any other Church, patriarch or pope).²⁰⁹ This had been the

²⁰⁴ Southgate, *Visit to the Syrian Church*, 182.

²⁰⁵ Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan*, 122, 163.

²⁰⁶ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 252; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 34.

²⁰⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 126, 153.

²⁰⁸ Cutts, *Christians under the Crescent*, 174; Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 35.

²⁰⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 34. This tie to the St. Thomas Christians had already been formalized around 410 or 420, Baumer, *Church of the East*, 26.

case long before the country's sixteenth-century colonization by the Portuguese and their unjust usurpation of its existing Christian communities, forcing them to convert to Catholicism. As the Catholic counterpart of the Church of the East's patriarch, it is only natural that Audo would see himself as having spiritual jurisdiction and authority over its Catholicized former adherents elsewhere in the Orient, including India, despite being outside the confines of the Ottoman and Persian Empires. Since the Church of the East was an independent and autocephalous Church, such territorial considerations never applied to it, and it seems that the Chaldean Catholics did not realize the jurisdictional limitations legally applied to uniate subordinates of Rome.

In fact, the Chaldean Catholic Church's right to jurisdiction over the Catholicized St. Thomas Christians of Malabar was something that had been asserted by its patriarchs from the beginnings of the schism.²¹⁰ In 1599, however, Portuguese Catholic Archbishop of Goa Aleixo de Menezes convoked the so-called Synod of Diamper under pain of military force, dispossession and excommunication, and after he had ordained over one hundred priests in order to ensure himself a majority. As a result, the sole primacy of the pope was enforced, subjecting the entirety of India to Roman central authority and removing it from that of the patriarchate in Mesopotamia.²¹¹ Later, the East Syriac (Chaldean) rite Christians of Malabar were placed under a Latin apostolic vicar directly subordinate to the Pope.²¹²

²¹⁰ In 1555, Joseph, the brother of Yoḥannān Sulāqā, was sent to India as a metropolitan. Despite acting on the authority of a papal bull and being accompanied by the two Maltese Dominicans sent by Pope Julius III, the Portuguese refused to cooperate with his superior's plans to control the Indian Church. He was detained in Goa then sent to Mozambique and later to a Franciscan Monastery near Mumbai in 1556, where his faith was found satisfactory. In 1562, Pope Pius IV (1559–65) solemnly approved the traditional dependence of the Indian Church on that in Mesopotamia. After struggling for several years to maintain his authority in the face of harassment by the Inquisition and deportation by Portuguese authorities, Joseph died at Rome in 1569, Mooker, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 32–33; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 238; O'Mahony, "Syriac Christianity," 528; Chaillot, *Assyrian Church of the East*, 46–47. In 1798, Yoḥannān Hormīzd also consecrated a bishop for Malabar before receiving the Vatican's consent, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 30, 50, 55–56, 87.

²¹¹ The aim of this was to eliminate every trace of a presumed 'Nestorianism' and affect the St. Thomas Christians' complete Latinization. During this one-week 'blitz-synod,' 267 decrees were forced through and signed by 150 priests and 660 laymen under duress. These included the Council of Ephesus' decisions, and the condemnations of Church Fathers Theodore, Diodore and Nestorius, as well as their own patriarch. The Council of Trent's decrees were declared binding, the Roman calendar was introduced, and the liturgy was revised on the Roman model, the sacraments adapted to the Latin forms, belief in purgatory and the Virgin Mary's characterization as 'Mother of God' were acknowledged and priestly celibacy was instituted, meaning that those married priests who wanted to stay in office had to divorce their wives. Those who resisted were imprisoned. Finally, all the St. Thomas Christians' manuscripts, considered to be heretical, were systematically collected and burned, amounting to the cultural destruction of a 1,300-year-old Christian tradition. This devastating work was continued by Menezes' successors, Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 115; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 238–39; Chaillot, *Assyrian Church of the East*, 47.

²¹² This process had already begun in 1542, with Roman Catholic missionaries forcing local Christians to change their local customs and Latinizing their rite, Chaillot, *Assyrian Church of the East*, 47. Another synod held in 1585 already attempted severing the St. Thomas Christians' contact with the Catholic Chaldeans, Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 115. In 1701, however, the

Nevertheless, the Malabar Christians constantly requested bishops of their own rite from the Chaldean Catholic patriarch, whether in writing and through emissaries, bringing complaints and accusations against the Latin missionaries and bishops carrying out their work in the pope's name. On each occasion, Patriarch Audo wrote to the Propaganda and withheld from sending any bishops so as not to offend Vatican authorities. Although the Indian faithful's complaints were confirmed, the pope conferred the patriarch "no power of jurisdiction" among them and repeatedly warned him, through his apostolic delegate, to not dare by interfering in their spiritual needs and concerns.²¹³ Rather, he stressed that those complaints should be "carefully considered" so that Rome could "minister effectively" to them and began an investigation to determine what course of action to take.²¹⁴ After unhappy and desperate members of this 'Syro-Malabar Catholic Church' made a renewed appeal to him in 1856, threatening to join the Syriac Orthodox Church if he failed to comply, and pressured by some of Mosul's community leaders, Audo saw this as an opportunity to expand his jurisdiction.²¹⁵ On the other hand, Pius IX depicted him as disobediently insisting that the Malabar Christians rightly came under his authority, arousing their desires, fostering their hopes and advising them to "vex the Apostolic See with complaints against the missionaries and with numerous requests."²¹⁶

In 1860, Patriarch Audo established the small diocese of Basra to enable Thomas Rocos Khanjar-Khān, previously a monk at Rabbān Hormīzd, to be consecrated as visitor for Malabar's Chaldean-rite Christians in defiance of the Vatican's fervent protests through its new apostolic delegate at Mosul Henri-Marie Amanton (1860–69).²¹⁷ Amanton subsequently censured the patriarch and his bishops, and Audo responded with two encyclicals to his Church's clergy and laity on 21 December 1860 and 4 January 1861. Despite the new metropolitan being well-received in Thrissur, he was accused of falsely stating that the patriarch had sent him on the pope's command, 'usurping' the ecclesiastical jurisdiction and promoting many "unworthy people" to holy orders. Consequently, Apostolic Vicar of Ernakulam Bernardino Baccinelli (1859–68) warned him to leave and, upon his refusal, excommunicated him on the Vatican's orders.²¹⁸ The patriarch was similarly threatened with excommunication. As a result, he was called to Rome to give an account of his actions, arriving at the end of June. There, the pope seriously censured him for his deeds and ordered him to recall Rocos, write a letter of apology to

Vatican did send a Chaldean Catholic metropolitan named Shim'on to India to consecrate the Latin apostolic vicar, and he died there in 1720. Moreover, in 1801, the Vatican recognized the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Īsho'yāh̄b Gabriel of Salāmas over the Chaldean rite Christians of Malabar, Wilmschurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 313, 317.

²¹³ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 163.

²¹⁴ Pius IX, "Quae in Patriarchatu."

²¹⁵ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 242.

²¹⁶ Pius IX, "Quae in Patriarchatu."

²¹⁷ Wilmschurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 53, 75, 361.

²¹⁸ Pius IX, "Quae in Patriarchatu."

the Propaganda, and make an act of submission. He complied with the first and third demands, and the pope received him on 14 September. Nine days later, Audo issued a third encyclical to his Church. In it, he admitted his mistakes and revoked measures he had taken against the apostolic delegation and Dominican missionaries, returning to Mosul on 2 December.²¹⁹ In the end, papal pressure forced him to apologize, and Rocos returned in failure to Baghdad in June 1862.²²⁰

Nevertheless, the affair did not end there. Metropolitan of Siirt Peter Michael Bar-Tatar, one of the members of the synod which had given Rocos his mission, refused to accept the apostolic delegate's censures. The patriarch was again entangled with the Dominicans, and issued an interdict on all the places where he arrived to celebrate in the presence of the Chaldean Catholics. On 5 June 1864, Audo consecrated Yoḥannān Elīyā Mellūs for the 'Aqrah diocese, but the new bishop omitted passages relating to the Councils of Florence and Trent from his profession of faith. This was directly reported to Rome, and despite the patriarch defending his suffragan and the affair being resolved, animosity continued to grow on both sides. At the pope's command, a meeting of the Propaganda's cardinals, concerning the affairs of the Oriental rite was held on 6 March 1865 to consider the matter. In this meeting, the Latin prelates 'unanimously' decided not to allow the Chaldean Catholic patriarch's jurisdiction to be extended to the Malabar Christians. At the same time, many other issues were settled "in order to bring about the safety of the Malabars and to quiet the discords which were aroused among the Chaldeans because of those things which the patriarch had done heedlessly." According to Pius IX, Audo "sadly agreed, or at least seemed to agree, to these apostolic orders... even if We were grieved that he had not acted rightly, he showed himself to be obedient to Us and respectful of Our authority." The patriarch thus feigned obedience to the pope's published decree in which he abrogated his censures, as well as his refusal of episcopal consecration to Indian priest Anthony Thondanat, which many "proponents of new ideas in that region" continually requested.²²¹

Renewed Conflicts: Drama at the First Vatican Council

Patriarch Audo's reign was set for a renewed series of confrontations, both within the Chaldean Catholic Church as well as with the Vatican, in response

²¹⁹ Giacomo Martina, *Pio IX: 1851–1866* (Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1986), 372–74.

²²⁰ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 164.

²²¹ Pius IX, "Quae in Patriarchatu." Anthony Thondanat (d. 1900) was a local priest who returned with Rocos and requested Patriarch Audo to consecrate him a metropolitan. When the latter's Latin advisors did not allow this, he went to Qudshānis, where he was consecrated metropolitan under the name 'Abdīsho' by Shim'on XVIII, Mookan, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 35. Upon returning to India in 1863, an objection was raised to him and he was forced to live as a simple Catholic priest. In 1882, he succeeded Mellūs as metropolitan of the 'Chaldean Syrian Church' at Thrissur, Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 116; Chaillot, *Assyrian Church of the East*, 49–50.

to a number of disciplinary reforms instituted by the authoritarian Pope Pius IX, who appears to have decided to seek every opportunity to remind the former of his subordinate position. Traditionally, Eastern Catholic communities had, in addition to their own particular rites, their own special constitution and were independent of each other, each with a supreme pastor, patriarch or catholicos at its head.²²² Uniate patriarchs were thus elected by a synod of all their bishops and confirmed by the pope with the pallium upon sending him a profession of faith. According to Pius IX, this had been done “because their districts were so distant or because the journey was dangerous or because of the reverses threatening more and more frequently from the predominance of schismatics of the same rite.”²²³ Their rights had been summed up by a Constitution of Pope Benedict XIV (*Apostolica*, 14 February 1742) and were namely: to convene and direct patriarchal synods (the acts of which had to be confirmed at Rome), ordain, confirm or depose all bishops and metropolitans within their recognized jurisdictional territory, receive appeals made against their judgements as well as tithes of all episcopal income, and consecrate chrism. They were allowed to wear their patriarchal cross everywhere, even outside their own territory — with the exception of Rome, where they were to have a permanent representative. Additionally, they could not resign without the pope’s consent.²²⁴ By virtue of the *millet* system established under Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror (*ca.* 1444–81), however, patriarchs became temporal leaders, to a large extent, the State considered them civil functionaries. As such, they judged certain civil and criminal cases, as well as intervening in tax distribution and several specific administrative affairs. In return, the sultan required that patriarchs be nominated by their own communities, without any foreign intervention, including that of the pope. Bishops were thus chosen by the priests and faithful, and patriarchs by the bishops, with the assistance of the priests and faithful. The latter were then consecrated and installed without recurrence to Rome, immediately exercising all the rights attached to the patriarchal dignity and only having to ask the pope to ratify their election, as well as taking an oath of fidelity and obedience to him.²²⁵ The Council of Florence had judged it inappropriate to modify this practice, allowing Eastern Catholics considerable freedom and accepting union “without prejudice to the rights and privileges of patriarchs.”²²⁶

Later on though, the Roman Catholic Church concluded that “serious abuses” had crept into these elections, to the great disadvantage of the Eastern Catholic Churches, deciding to modify this practice to work for their unity

²²² Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1: 410.

²²³ Pius IX, “Quartus Supra.”

²²⁴ Adrian Fortescue, “Patriarch and Patriarchate,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, ed. Charles George Herbermann *et al.* (Robert Appleton Company, 1911), 11:553.

²²⁵ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:410–11; Cuthbert Butler, *The Vatican Council, 1869–1870, Based on Bishop Ullathorne’s Letters* (Newman Press, 1962), 193.

²²⁶ Fernand Mourret, *Le Concile du Vatican D’Après des Documents Inédits* (Bloud et Gay, 1919), 231–32.

around Rome, as well as “their own independence and dignity.”²²⁷ To contest the pope’s right to do so was to “deny his primacy.”²²⁸ On 26 November 1853, Pius IX issued the bull *Ecclesiam Christi*, in which he formed the general principle of “unity in diversity.”²²⁹ With the apostolic constitution *Romani Pontifices* (6 January 1862), he divided the Propaganda’s missionary work into that “for the nations” and that “for the Easterners,” creating a separate section “for Eastern rite business.” This was part of a more general reform process to be undertaken across the Eastern Churches, “about whom there was a growing uneasiness concerning their administrative and ecclesiastical practices.” In his apostolic letter *Amantissimus* (1863), Pius IX requested an in-depth study of the state of the Eastern Catholic Churches, believing that their bishops and clergy had given in to a “culture of mediocrity and authoritarianism in patriarchal and diocesan governance,” and that pastoral initiatives had completely withered in the face of clerical quarrels and willingness to behave dishonestly in exchange for money.²³⁰ His intention was to achieve the gradual modification of Eastern discipline “without conflict,” by means of a series of slowly progressive measures, rather than abolishing the Eastern clergy’s electoral system with one stroke. He chose to start this with the Armenian Catholic Church, which “seemed the best prepared to receive the reform.” In 1846, he chose the Armenian Catholic major archbishop of Istanbul and, after the latter had been elevated to the rank of patriarch in 1866, he decided that the time had come to reform that Church’s discipline.²³¹

On 12 July 1867, Pius IX published the bull “*Reversurus*: On the Right Election of Bishops,” which rebuked the Eastern Rite churches for their ‘schismatic’ tendencies, insisted that close papal supervision was for their good, and reorganized the procedure for future Armenian Catholic episcopal and patriarchal elections and appointments according to Western practices, excluding involvement of the laity and lower clergy. As such, “bishops, to the exclusion of any lay or simple priest, would propose to the Pope three candidates, from among whom the Pontiff would make his choice, reserving the right and power to reject the entire list of candidates and choose someone who had not been proposed.”²³² The patriarch-elect, however, was prohibited from consecration or assuming his powers before having received the pope’s confirmation and pallium.²³³ The pope further announced that a similar change in the mode of electing bishops, with modifications, would soon be imposed on the other Eastern Catholic rites. The bull was generally met with resistance, since it restricted the Eastern Catholic Churches’ independence on points that

²²⁷ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 232.

²²⁸ Grandérath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:411.

²²⁹ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 79, fn. 74.

²³⁰ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 79–80.

²³¹ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 233–234.

²³² Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 235.

²³³ Butler, *Vatican Council*, 193.

were very sensitive to them.²³⁴ In a spirit of “discipline and deference to the Sovereign Pontiff,” Patriarch Audo, “a prelate distinguished by his zeal and piety,” informed the pope that he was prepared to accept this new regime. However, he had not sufficiently taken into account his adherents’ attachment to their ancient customs and age-old liberties.²³⁵

That same year, the patriarch faced backlash from his community due to the presence of an apostolic delegate alongside him at Mosul. On 5 August, his vicar general wrote on his behalf to the Propaganda’s Prefect:

I humbly beg the Congregation to be kind enough to make it clear to the bishops and priests, so that they may instruct the people, that the apostolic delegate is not there to destroy, but to preserve the Chaldean patriarchate and rite.²³⁶

In fact, many Eastern Christians mistrusted Rome’s intentions and were fearful that the pope wanted to withdraw past privileges and rights from them, abolish their national rites and ecclesiastical independence, and assimilate them entirely to the Latin rite.²³⁷ In German Jesuit Theodore Granderath’s opinion, Eastern Christians were stubbornly faithful to their “ancient customs.”²³⁸ On the other hand, while Fr. Fernand Mourret called these “ancient prejudices” and “regrettable misunderstandings... unfortunately stirred up by malicious or clumsy minds,” he also admitted that the zeal of certain Latin missionaries had sometimes been “imprudent,” since “some of them seemed convinced that one could not be pleasing to God outside of Latin customs.”²³⁹ Rome’s chief concern in securing the “return” of “Oriental schismatics to the Catholic religion” had always been “to pluck completely from their minds” what it perceived as errors, such as those of Nestorius and others, “into which they had wretchedly fallen.” On the other hand, Benedict XIV stressed that the rites and ancient liturgical practices, as well as rituals observed and professed by them “before the schism,” had always been left unchanged.²⁴⁰ In his 6 January 1848 encyclical letter *In Suprema Petri Apostoli Sede* (also titled *Litterae ad Orientales*, i.e., Epistle to the Easterners), Pius IX pointed out that only those things found in their ancient liturgies that were “contrary to Catholic faith and unity” would be “subject to correction,” but once “remedied in this regard,” they would remain unchanged. In regard to those Eastern prelates and clergy who ‘united’ with the Roman Catholic Church, he further promised to “confirm them in their rank and dignities” and “count on them to maintain and spread the practice of the catholic faith amongst their peoples.” Thus, whereas Rome

²³⁴ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:412.

²³⁵ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 235.

²³⁶ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 229–30.

²³⁷ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 86.

²³⁸ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:411.

²³⁹ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 228–29, 233.

²⁴⁰ Pope Benedict XIV, “*Allatae sunt*: On the Observance of Oriental Rites,” 26 July 1755, *Papal Encyclicals Online*, 2000–25, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/ben14/b14allat.htm>.

nominally respected Eastern Church rites and clerical ordinations, it found certain disciplinary customs relating to ecclesiastical organization, especially the election of members of the high clergy, “less respectable and even quite reprehensible.”²⁴¹ According to Pius IX, certain issues in these structures remained either uncertain or inappropriately resolved and, by virtue of his “apostolic authority,” he was eager to make orderly changes to conform them to “the sacred canons and the traditions of the Holy Fathers.”²⁴²

On 13 August 1867, Metropolitan of Diyarbakır George Peter Yaldā died at Rome and the diocese of Mardin also fell vacant with the death of Bishop Ignatius Dashto on 12 July 1868. The first opportunity that presented itself to Pius IX in carrying out his project of reform, therefore, was provided by the Chaldean Catholic Church and he personally led an “examination” of it in order to “restore the ecclesiastical discipline which was in a state of ruin.” The Propaganda made this known to Patriarch Audo on 3 September 1868, sending him a copy of the bull *Reversurus*. In order to remedy certain ‘abuses,’ Audo had made it known through Bishop Mellūs, then residing in Rome, and by a letter he himself wrote to the Propaganda, that he would not be unhappy to see a system for the election of bishops, similar to that imposed on the Armenian Catholics, introduced into his own.²⁴³ According to Pius IX, the patriarch was optimistic about arranging episcopal elections (which had been omitted) if it seemed useful and appropriate, and notified him that he wanted what was “pleasing” to him “to be accomplished at all times.”²⁴⁴ Then, according to Granderath, without waiting for this system to be established, he sent the pope two lists of candidates for the vacant sees of Diyarbakır and Mardin so that, by his authority, he could judge which ones were worthier.²⁴⁵ Pius IX noted that he was “moved by these manifestations of devotion and obedience.”²⁴⁶ Because of the discontent that had arisen among Chaldean Catholics soon after the pope’s prescriptions, Audo then hesitated, wondering if he had not been imprudent and hasty in his initially favorable reaction to the 1867 papal bull.

On his own authority, and as per Patriarch Audo’s request, however, the pope nominated a new metropolitan for Diyarbakır and a new bishop for Mardin on 22 March 1869. To appease popular irritation and not to appear as if he was handing his Church over to Rome, the patriarch began expressing the desire that the two nominees should change dioceses, which the pope permitted. The former, however, soon realized that this half-measure was not enough to

²⁴¹ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 231.

²⁴² “Pope and Patriarchs: The 1848 Letters of Pope Pius IX and the Orthodox Patriarchs,” *Orthocath: Musings by a revert to the Orthodox Catholic faith*, <https://orthocath.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/pope-and-patriarchs-letters-of-pope-pius-ix-and-orthodox-patriarchs.pdf>.

²⁴³ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 81–82.

²⁴⁴ Pius IX, “Quae in Patriarchatu.”

²⁴⁵ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:412–13.

²⁴⁶ Pius IX, “Quae in Patriarchatu.”

reassure public opinion and thus refused to consecrate them, protesting strongly to the Vatican that his traditional rights had been infringed upon, but these protests were ignored.²⁴⁷ He was particularly aggrieved that the Maronite, Melkite and Syriac Catholic patriarchs had not yet agreed to accept the 1867 bull's provisions. The Eastern Catholic Churches were under the Prefect of the Propaganda who, at that time, was the uncompromising and despotic Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò (1856–74), and it was to him that all matters concerning them first reached. It was he who advised Pius IX regarding the whole affair, and who inspired his decisions when, on 31 August 1869, he issued the bull *Cum ecclesiastica disciplina* to the Chaldean Catholic Church, in which he reorganized its discipline on some points and, in particular, prescribed the method to be followed for the election of the patriarch and bishops with a regulation roughly similar to that which he had prescribed for the Armenian Catholics.²⁴⁸ Moreover, it stipulated that if anything should be attempted contrary to these instructions, it should be declared null and void.²⁴⁹ According to Granderath, Patriarch Audo declared himself “satisfied” with these new arrangements. It was in the midst of such troubles then that the Eastern Catholic prelates were summoned to the First Vatican Council, by the same bull as the Latin bishops, their minds full of forebodings of what might be in store for their privileges, customs, and even their rites.²⁵⁰

The pope had additionally written to ten heads of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches on 8 September 1868, through Cardinal Barnabò, inviting them to attend the Council. He further declared that he would cover their travel and accommodation expenses, the patriarchs and bishops would receive all the honors deserving of their rank, interpreters would be placed at their disposal, and they would enjoy complete freedom of speech.²⁵¹ In doing so, he had optimistically hoped for them to unite with Rome, thereby affecting a possible “Reunion of Christendom.” However, the letter strongly asserted the Petrine and papal position, which differed from the principles of apostolic equality and brotherhood emphasized by the non-Catholic Eastern Churches, who viewed the pope's letter as dictatorial in form and imposed by him as a lord and master.²⁵² As such, all ten of the religious leaders declined the invitation. This was probably made worse by the fact that the patriarchs had been invited in the same way as Latin-rite Catholic bishops, without any special consideration or treatment. In May 1869, the Apostolic Delegate in Mesopotamia Archbishop

²⁴⁷ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:414; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 34; Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan*, 158.

²⁴⁸ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 235; Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 82.

²⁴⁹ Pius IX, “Quae in Patriarchatu.”

²⁵⁰ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:410, 413; Butler, *Vatican Council*, 193.

²⁵¹ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 119, 121. These included the Greek Orthodox patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria, the Armenian Orthodox patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, as well as the catholicos of Etchmiadzin, the Coptic Orthodox pope of Alexandria, Syriac Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, and the catholicos-patriarch of the Church of the East.

²⁵² Butler, *Vatican Council*, 74–75.

Nicolás Castells (1866–73) charged Dominican Father Lemée to deliver the invitation to Catholicos-Patriarch Shim‘on XVIII Rūbēl, accompanied by several servants and Ottoman soldiers, “who preceded him with swords raised”(!). The account of this by Dominican Father Chéry described the number of the Church of the East’s adherents at this time as being “no longer considerable,” despite it being numerically greater than that of its Catholic counterpart, with about two hundred thousand faithful belonging to the ‘Chaldean nation,’ and nine dioceses in Ottoman Kurdistan and Persia governed by between five and seven bishops. He further described the catholicos-patriarch as “a young man of twenty-two years (*sic*), of fine intelligence, but who has received no culture. He exercises a considerable influence throughout the nation and the bishops themselves are before him only like little children.” In Chéry’s opinion, this was a form of ‘absolutism’ undeserving of “a man who has arrived at the patriarchal dignity by way of heredity and who often has none of the titles that these high functions require.” Nevertheless, he described Qudshānis as being entrenched in the mountains like “an impregnable fortress... in the midst of very warlike tribes,” which the catholicos-patriarch would withdraw to when threatened and pressured by Ottoman authorities. There, he was able to defy all troops sent by the pashas, who would have had to put at least 200,000 men on campaign to overcome the intrepid mountaineers. His entire household was also under arms, as he sat on his divan surrounded by his priests, various family members and numerous servants who stood daggers in hand.²⁵³

The catholicos-patriarch had already been informed about the Council through a letter from the Armenian Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople. As expected, he hesitated to accept the invitation despite Lemée’s promises that the opportunity offered to him of ‘reunion’ with the Roman Church would “restore the true faith to his country with independence, by assuring it the interest and protection of the Christians of the West.” Rather, the catholicos-patriarch noted his difficult position, since “for several years, my nation has been under the protectorate of England, and I can do nothing without the English consul.” Taken aback by this response, Lemée replied that he could not report it to his superiors, as it might not do honor to his patriarchal dignity, which is far above all the British government’s consuls and representatives.²⁵⁴ That evening, however, at a private audience between the two, Shim‘on XVIII apologetically admitted that:

... I am surrounded by people devoted body and soul to England, and I have many affairs to keep with her. The English are the only ones who protect us. I have written twice to the French ambassador in Constantinople; I have not received any response, and I have been forced to rely on England. The English look after our interests, but they Protestantize our populations. I detest Protestants: because Protestantism is the ruin of all religion. If, between the

²⁵³ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 1:385–87.

²⁵⁴ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 1:387–88.

Catholics and us there is the thickness of an image, between us and the Protestants there is all the height of these mountains. They do not have liturgical prayer, we have prayer books and a very ancient liturgy; they have no fasts, and we regard fasting as one of religion's holy things; they have no veneration for the Holy Virgin, and we have preserved her cult; they blaspheme the cross, and we adore it... It would be much more pleasant for me to be under the hand of the pope than under the dependence of the Protestants. I feel very inclined towards Rome, but I am not free.²⁵⁵

In lieu of his attendance, the catholicos-patriarch promised to write a letter to the pope in which he would adhere to all that would be done at the Council, in concert with the other Eastern patriarchs – who, conveniently, were also not in attendance.²⁵⁶ Chéry thus portrayed him as being sincere, but “very weak,” and in need of powerful support and encouragement. Only the previous year, however, Patriarch Audo had written to him urging him to convert to Catholicism. His response, dated 5 June, was stern:

What! You invite us to kiss the slippers of the Bishop of Rome! But is his dignity superior to yours? [...] You live under the yoke of the cardinals and the Reverend Fathers. You have placed your flock and your patriarchate in their hands; you rely on them for the care of administering it.²⁵⁷

The question such a message raises, therefore, is whether this was actually his true position and he was only being polite with the Latin missionary or, rather, displaying a façade of proud strength to his Catholic counterpart, who was about fifty years his senior. At any rate, it seems improbable that he could have had such a profound change of heart within a year, and had most likely never planned on travelling to Rome for the Council.

Patriarch Audo and all of the ten Chaldean Catholic prelates had been among those with the right to vote at the Council, and he was in attendance at its first session on 8 December 1869 with two metropolitans, two bishops, and the superior-general of the Chaldean Antonian Order of St. Hormīzd. Eventually, they were also joined by two more metropolitans and another bishop. Added to these were the two papal nominees that Audo would later consecrate metropolitan of Diyarbakır and bishop of Mardin.²⁵⁸ The Council's second session was held on 6 January 1870 and began with a ceremony of profession of faith, attended by nearly 700 Catholic prelates from all over the world.

²⁵⁵ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 1:389.

²⁵⁶ Pope John XXIII (1958–63) again invited non-Catholic Churches, this time to send observers, to the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). In response, Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XIX Eshai (1920–75) sent two delegates in 1964, Baumer, *Church of the East*, 271. This was the first time that East Syriac Christians had actively taken part in a Western Church Council since Nicaea.

²⁵⁷ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 229.

²⁵⁸ Only one Chaldean Catholic prelate was completely absent from the First Vatican Council, Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 4:10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 28, 33, 39, 52, 59, 72, 75, 78, 80. Of those who attended, one metropolitan was on the Deputation of Religious Orders, while another was on that of Eastern Rites and Missions, Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:98–99.

Solemnly, they recited the profession of the same faith in Latin, Greek, (West) Syriac, 'Chaldean' (East Syriac), Arabic, Armenian and Bulgarian, testifying to their unity. But not everything was as it seemed. The Council Fathers soon realized that they enjoyed no freedom there, not even in their speeches.²⁵⁹ As a result, Patriarch Audo was chosen as a spokesman by the 50 Eastern Catholic bishops in attendance.²⁶⁰ On 25 January 1870, he was the last speaker in the debate *De episcopis* (On bishops) and had asked Archbishop Victor-Félix Bernadou to read a speech that he had written in Syriac, which had been translated into Latin. The Council's undersecretary, Bishop Luigi Jacobini, had been concerned about this speech and warned Bernadou that the patriarch should not speak on the matter of episcopal elections, which had already been "settled by the pope."²⁶¹ In this speech, and in light of the schema that had been read as the subject of the General Congregation's discussion, Audo submitted some observations to the Fathers' consideration.²⁶² As such, he stressed that the Eastern Catholic Churches' customs should be respected and noted that many decisions proposed for the Council's approval in the schema could not be applied to them; even those that would concern them he asked to be put into force only with great care, since they were "incapable of supporting a discipline too perfect for them."²⁶³

It would seem that a plan is afoot to establish one and the same discipline for the Western and the Eastern Churches, and to enact one and the same corpus of canon law for both. Perhaps the illustrious consultors thought that there is little or no difference between the laws, customs, rites of the two Churches. But in reality they differ as far as the rising of the sun is from its setting, as far as a convalescent sick man is from a robust warrior. Bishops, priests, people are, many of them, raw converts from Nestorianism; churches, schools, seminaries are lacking; in many places Christians are slaughtered or transported, and churches are destroyed. Yet are the Chaldeans wonderfully faithful to their Catholic Religion. Judge then if it be possible to legislate for such a desolated church the same as for the flourishing churches of the West. In the things of Faith, whatever may be decreed by the Council will be accepted as a matter of course; but concerning canons of discipline the like cannot be said. The Orientals are so tenacious of their ancient discipline that even small things cannot be changed without tumult and scandals and danger to souls.²⁶⁴

In view of the circumstances, he therefore urged that not all the Council's disciplinary canons be indiscriminately applied to all the Catholic Churches and begged the pope to take into account the Eastern Catholic patriarchs' diversity. As a practical solution, he proposed that each patriarchate

²⁵⁹ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:142, 416.

²⁶⁰ Butler, *Vatican Council*, 193.

²⁶¹ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 238.

²⁶² Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:419.

²⁶³ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 238.

²⁶⁴ Butler, *Vatican Council*, 193–94; Cf. Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:419–20.

be allowed more time, with any attempted reformation made in view of actual conditions and considered by national synods after the Council, examining what might be suitable and what should be modified. As such, he advocated for the composition of a corpus of canon law for the Eastern Catholic Churches combining the Council's prescribed canons with their old legislations and constitutions, proposing that this new code be submitted for the pope or the Council's approval.²⁶⁵

In his own words, the patriarch thus admitted the introduction of changes in his Church and declared himself prepared to adopt a new canon law for the Chaldean Catholics.²⁶⁶ He ended by protesting that, as patriarch, he was obligated to insist that his request be accepted. This was because the patriarchate had been transmitted to him as it had been to his predecessors, and he had sworn at his consecration to preserve it and hand it on intact with all its rights and prerogatives, and he must remain faithful to this oath until death.²⁶⁷ The patriarch concluded therefore that the violation of such a contract, changes made to their rites, and the disrespect of their particular customs and laws, would be unjust and scandalous to both Uniate and independent Churches, and would increase the distance separating them from one another, stressing that his predecessors on the patriarchal throne had themselves "returned to the Roman Church" only on the condition that nothing would be changed in their rites and customs.²⁶⁸ Although there was nothing in it that should have offended the pope, Patriarch Audo's intervention immediately gained the reputation of being a revolutionary speech, consequently provoking the pontiff's anger and reproach.²⁶⁹ Despite his pretension of appearing to remain foreign to the Council's deliberations, the pope had been moved by it and exhibited extreme distress.²⁷⁰ In all probability, he had been informed of it immediately after the Congregation by Cardinal Barnabò—the prime mover in the effort to overrule the Eastern Catholic Churches' independent customs, and to whom the patriarch's speech must have been "greatly displeasing."²⁷¹ At any rate, that very evening, the patriarch was invited to an audience with the pope. He was asked to appear in the pontiff's presence alone, with only Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Giuseppe Valerga (1847–72), whom Propaganda had sent to Latinize the East, acting as interpreter.²⁷² When introduced to the pope the following day, however, Audo found him "trembling with anger like a reed shaken in the wind." He did not expect the scolding he was to receive: "It is you," the pope

²⁶⁵ Butler, *Vatican Council*, 194.

²⁶⁶ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:421–22.

²⁶⁷ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 238–39.

²⁶⁸ Butler, *Vatican Council*, 194–95.

²⁶⁹ Butler, *Vatican Council*, 195; Mourret 239; Cutts, *Christians under the Crescent*, 174; Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 35–36; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 252; Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1: 419.

²⁷⁰ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1: 417.

²⁷¹ Butler, *Vatican Council*, 195; Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 239.

²⁷² Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 239–40; Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:417.

told him, “it is you who are this stubborn and intractable man, who for a long time has caused me so much pain! I will know how to reduce you to obedience!” Thus, after having sharply rebuked him for his speech and having overwhelmed him with insults, he immediately handed the patriarch two documents: one containing the resignation of his office, the other concerning the two prelates that he had nominated the previous year, but whom the patriarch had not consecrated due to the agitation this had caused.²⁷³

The message was clear: the pope was ordering him, under pain of deposition, to sign then and there the document undertaking to consecrate the two nominee bishops. If he refused to consent, he would have been considered as having resigned, even if he did not sign the other document. In vain, the patriarch invoked his Church’s ancient prerogatives and procrastinated, but he was forbidden from leaving the Vatican until he had made a commitment to submit.²⁷⁴ When faced with his previous acquiescence to *Reversurus*, he replied that, in agreeing to the reform, he had not understood at that time the scope of what Rome was proposing to him, and what was being asked of him. When it was pointed out to him that he himself had taken the initiative, on the bull’s prescriptions, to send the pope the two lists of candidates, he backed down, replying: “In this case, I have exceeded my powers, I have illegally sacrificed the rights of my nation and of my successors, and I retract.”²⁷⁵ Thus, faced with having to choose between renouncing his rights and immediately resigning as patriarch, he signed the promise to consecrate the two nominated bishops.²⁷⁶ Upon leaving the audience, however, he remarked to the Eastern Catholic bishops that he did not consider himself bound by the signature that he had just given.²⁷⁷ The consecration of the nominated prelates took place at Rome on 30 January.²⁷⁸ This incident of the pope’s odious cruelty toward an almost octogenarian patriarch was considered an unjustified intervention by him in the Council’s progress: “If a patriarch has been treated in this way,” certain bishops said, “it is no longer possible to consider the apostolic vicars under the Propaganda, nor the bishops who are subjects of the pope, as free and having the right to vote.”²⁷⁹ Emotions were greater among the Eastern Catholic

²⁷³ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:417; Butler, *Vatican Council*, 192, 195.

²⁷⁴ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:416; Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 240.

²⁷⁵ In fact, similar agitations had spread to all the Eastern Catholic patriarchates as the laity and lower clergy had not intended for their bishops to go to Rome “to abdicate their rights at the feet of the pope.” The Armenian Catholics accused their patriarch of having betrayed their Church’s secular rights for the benefit of Rome, and the Melkites and the Maronites notified their patriarchs that, if they consented to the sacrifice of their customs, they would expel them and appoint replacements for them. As a result, the Maronite patriarch did not attend the First Vatican Council and only sent four bishops, to whom he gave no power and the Syriac Catholic patriarch declared that he would rather resign his office than “betray his people,” Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:414–15; Cf. Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 236–37.

²⁷⁶ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 240.

²⁷⁷ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:416; Butler, *Vatican Council*, 195.

²⁷⁸ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 30, 34.

²⁷⁹ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:417–18.

episcopate, since the Armenian Catholic patriarch and Cardinal Barnabò had gone around threateningly notifying them of the incident.²⁸⁰ In Mesopotamia, however, the troubles were less serious thanks to Patriarch Audo's more conciliatory policy. He had notably managed to obtain an official declaration from Barnabò, assuring that the pope's immediate rights over the Chaldean Catholic Church would always be exercised "taking into account the particular circumstances." After this, Rome did not attempt to apply *Reversurus*, but the pope's rights persisted and it was believed that he would eventually do so "when providential circumstances indicate to him that the hour has come."²⁸¹

On the other hand, not all of the Chaldean Catholic hierarchy agreed with their patriarch. In a letter to Bishop Jacques-Marie-Joseph Baillès dated 22 May 1870, Metropolitan of 'Amadiyah (and future patriarch) George 'Abdisho' Khayyāṭ informed that the Chaldeans united with Rome "held firmly to the infallibility of the Pope, and that they were deluding themselves into believing that the definition would alienate the non-Catholics of their country from the Church." According to him, the Chaldean Catholics had largely embraced the Roman religion in light of the greatly esteemed book *Maḥẓītā Mrīqtā* ("The Clear Mirror"), composed by Diyarbakır Patriarch Joseph II (1696–1713).²⁸² The first chapter of this work develops the thesis that the Church of Rome is the mother of all other Churches. Consequently, it argues that the pope is the universal father of all Christians, and it is therefore impossible for either him or his Church "to err in matters of faith." In Khayyāṭ's reasoning, the doctrine of papal infallibility was familiar to Chaldean Catholics and they had received it at the time they united with Rome. As for the 'united Chaldeans' (i.e., the Church of the East), the definition presented no difficulty, since the dogma was not new to them and had been part of all theological discussions between the two factions. Moreover, they themselves viewed their catholicos-patriarch as St. Peter's true successor and the supreme judge of disputes over articles of faith. In his opinion, "They could not therefore reproach the Catholics for acknowledging in the supreme pastor of their Church [i.e., the pope] the privileges which they themselves have the 'impudence' to attribute to their patriarch."²⁸³

Patriarch Audo was clearly against such views and was warmly welcomed as a member of the party at odds with the papal infallibility doctrine, joining in the opposition to the controversial Constitution on the Church of Christ titled *Pastor aeternus* (Eternal pastor). This gave the pope the "the utter

²⁸⁰ The Armenian Catholic patriarch telegraphed the leaders of the faction that had separated from him, informing them that Rome had rejected their claims; and, on February 18, Cardinal Barnabò sent them a telegram announcing that the pope was going to "make use of his rights." A violent revolt broke out, the bull *Reversurus* was publicly burned, the Armenian Catholic patriarch was deposed and exiled by the Ottoman grand vizier and another elected in his place. This schism lasted until 1874, Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 240.

²⁸¹ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 241–42.

²⁸² It is believed that Patriarch Audo had been brought to the Catholic faith after reading this book in his youth, prior to becoming a monk.

²⁸³ Granderath, *Histoire du Concile du Vatican*, 2.1:398–99.

fullness of supreme power,” not only in governing the Church but also in faith and morals, without any limitation from bishops, synods, or local communities.²⁸⁴ As a result, Audo was notably absent from the Council’s fourth session at which this was promulgated on 18 July 1870. Then, just as he was about to leave Rome, the pope ordered him to make a declaration of support and submission to the constitution, reminding him that other bishops who had not attended the session did not hesitate to do so. The patriarch first delayed his response and evaded the matter, in order to avoid openly expressing his opinions, then refused to abide by it on the pretext that he could only take such a serious step after he had returned to his See and had consulted his own congregation.²⁸⁵ At the same time, he promised that he would not omit anything that would satisfy the pope and, while he professed his faithfulness to the civil laws, he suggested that these apostolic constitutions were opposed to them. On 16 September that year, he met Sultan Abdulaziz (1861–76) at Istanbul and denounced the new constitution as infringing on the Church’s traditional customs, as well as damaging the Ottoman Empire’s interests. As such, he declared that he had not accepted its provisions and never would. At the same time, he refused to acknowledge the pope’s extraordinary legate in the city and celebrated the Eucharist with Armenian Catholic priests who had separated themselves from their patriarch, refusing to reply to the Propaganda’s letters of warning. Accusing the patriarch of “infidelity,” Pius IX wrote that, upon his return to Mosul, he “consorted with promoters of novelties and said many things rashly which... could be reconciled neither with the office of a Catholic bishop nor with the orthodox faith.”²⁸⁶ Alarmed at these actions, the Vatican used every means at its disposal to recall him to obedience and avert a threatened schism.²⁸⁷

In the meantime, the new metropolitan of Diyarbakır faced Patriarch Audo’s hostility and the “deceptions” of certain people in his diocese who refused to recognize his authority, claiming to be the latter’s supporters.²⁸⁸ After sorrowfully complaining to the pope and requesting to be allowed to resign his office, the pontiff accepted this and commanded his Apostolic Delegate at Mosul, Bishop Zachary Fanciulli (1871–73), to establish him as Apostolic Delegate of Diyarbakır.²⁸⁹ Fanciulli was also told to persuade Audo to take the required oath of loyalty and finally submit himself to the decrees of the Vatican Council’s fourth session. At last, on 29 July 1872, after all the other Eastern Catholic patriarchs had already acquiesced, the patriarch was forced to write a letter declaring acceptance and support for the Council’s decisions, recalling

²⁸⁴ This notion of primacy is heresy for Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Christians and meaningless for Protestants, whose emphasis is on the local community, Collins, *Papal Power*, 159.

²⁸⁵ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 89.

²⁸⁶ Pius IX, “Quae in Patriarchatu.”

²⁸⁷ O’Mahony, “Syriac Christianity,” 528–29.

²⁸⁸ Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 41, 61.

²⁸⁹ Eventually, Rome transferred Metropolitan ‘Aṭṭār to Mardin, after death of Bishop Farso on 27 June 1873.

his long-standing faith and submitting only with the reservation of his patriarchal rights and privileges. Pius IX suspected that this was done insincerely, however, considering the “power which the wicked exercised” against Audo, the pope accepted this “act of loyalty,” preferring to see it as “a legitimate desire of the patriarch, rather than an adverse situation or a restriction of his profession of faith.” At any rate, the Vatican decided to teach him a lesson. In Pius IX’s stinging encyclical *Quae in patriarchatu* of 16 November 1872, addressed to the Chaldean Catholic bishops, clergy and faithful, he stated the many examples of Patriarch Audo’s intransigence, deplored his disobedience and welcomed his eventual submission. Through this encyclical, moreover, he admitted that he wished to “communicate Catholic teaching concerning the primacy of the pope and the rights of patriarchs.” Audo’s adherents were thus left in little doubt as to who had been in the wrong in the Vatican’s perspective.

The Malabar and “Mellusian” Schisms: Patriarch Audo’s Final Years and Legacy

In 1874, Patriarch Audo clashed with the Vatican’s orders once more by asking Pope Pius IX to restore the Church of the East’s traditional jurisdiction over the Chaldean-rite Catholics of India to the Chaldean Catholic Church. The pope delayed his response to this request and the patriarch decided not to wait, sending Bishop Mellūs to India as metropolitan. Upon his arrival, however, he was promptly excommunicated by the Vatican. The patriarch, on the other hand, refused to comply with Rome’s decisions, which he declared arbitrary.²⁹⁰ On 24 May of that same year, without consulting the Vatican, Audo consecrated new metropolitans for Cizre and ‘Amādiyah. On 1 May the following year, again in defiance of the Vatican’s instructions, he consecrated a new metropolitan for Zakho and Philip Ya‘qob Abraham Mannī as metropolitan for India to assist Metropolitan Mellūs.²⁹¹ On its part, the Propaganda declared these consecrations to be “illegitimate and sacrilegious,” and the patriarch’s mission to Malabar “null and void,” while the pope gave powers to his apostolic delegate to intervene with censures and even depose Audo if he persisted. In response, the patriarch denounced Rome to the Ottoman grand vizier and declared himself a subject of the sultan, calling for action against the apostolic delegate, missionaries, French consul, and the clergy who had sided with the pope against him.²⁹² In this second crisis, referred to by later writers as the “Malabar schism,” Audo only recalled his bishops under threat of his and their excommunication and separation from the Church unless they “returned to obedience” within 40 days in an encyclical letter of 1

²⁹⁰ Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 241.

²⁹¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 34, 106, 153. According to Cardinal Filoni, Audo had been urged on by some of his clergy, including the superior of Rabbān Hormīzd Monastery and Metropolitan Mellūs, *Church in Iraq*, 94, fn. 99.

²⁹² Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 95–96.

September 1876 by the pope.²⁹³ On 1 March 1877, Audo wrote to Rome expressing his full submission, along with that of the vast majority of his clergy and faithful, and recalled metropolitans Mellūs and Mannī from India.²⁹⁴ The pope absolved Patriarch Audo from censure and commended him for his compliance in the encyclical letters *Solatio nobis fuit* and *Iucundum nobis* on 9 June and 11 July respectively, and his episcopal appointments outside India were recognized.²⁹⁵ Metropolitan Mannī was then recalled by the Vatican after making his own submission.²⁹⁶ Mellūs, on the other hand, refused to return to Mosul due to the mutual affection that he shared with his adherents, some of whom had been pressured by Latin missionaries to defect from his jurisdiction.²⁹⁷

This situation divided the community in and around Mosul, with a smaller faction submitting unconditionally to the pope's orders.²⁹⁸ On the other hand, those who were against foreign interference in their Church's affairs revolted, leading them to form a splinter group named the "New Chaldeans" under the new metropolitans of Zakho and 'Amādīyah who, in turn, excommunicated Patriarch Audo.²⁹⁹ These further turned out of the churches which they controlled all clergy who supported Audo's submission and their example was mimicked in many rural communities which preferred to break off all ties with Rome rather than submitting to its interference in their rights. After initially supporting the latter party, Ottoman authorities not only switched sides due to the influence of French and Austrian diplomats, but also engaged in persecuting and withdrawing protection from them at the local level. Latin missionaries additionally began to bully the independent faction to compel them into complying with the patriarch, and this led to their being mistreated and beaten up by the smaller papal faction's members. Patriarch Audo died on 14 March 1878 as an "obedient son of the Holy Catholic Church, in submission to the Holy See," having failed to pressure the splinter group into embracing the dogma that he had begrudgingly assented to.³⁰⁰ On his deathbed, he forgave all the laymen who had opposed him and "prayed for their conversion," but excommunicated all the clergy who were persistent in "adhering to the old principles." While the former insisted upon the latter humbling themselves to

²⁹³ Cutts, *Christians under the Crescent*, 174.

²⁹⁴ Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 36.

²⁹⁵ O'Mahony, "Syriac Christianity," 528–29.

²⁹⁶ He was transferred to the diocese of Cizre in 1882, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 106.

²⁹⁷ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 164.

²⁹⁸ The anti-patriarchal faction outnumbered their opponents nineteen to one! Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 155, 162.

²⁹⁹ Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 10–11; Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan*, 157; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 229; Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 96.

³⁰⁰ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 97.

him, the dissenters insisted that they would have nothing to do with someone “who acted as a slave to the Vatican.”³⁰¹

In the long run, Patriarch Audo’s assertiveness provided the Chaldean Catholic Church’s members with a valuable, shared feeling of pride and mutual loyalty, but its immediate effect was to create bitter divisions within its ranks — between traditionalist sympathizers who asserted the authority of their own patriarchate and apostolic traditions, and those more prone to conformity with Rome and Latinization. Nevertheless, his real achievement was as an administrator, since he laid the foundations for the Church to grow and flourish in the decades that followed. As metropolitan of ‘Amādīyah, he had converted the Ṣapnā valley’s villages to Catholicism, but only after personally educating his priests in the mission field. This convinced him that the Catholic faith could crucially only be spread and consolidated by educated priests, and one of his greatest achievements as patriarch was to reduce his Church’s dependence on Rome for the education of its bishops, ensuring that it was able to train and educate its own clergy and faithful. Encouraged by the renewed vigor at Rabbān Hormīzd, and with the monks’ co-operation assured, the patriarch did his best to ensure that Danbo’s original vision was at last realized. Other monasteries were revived around Mosul, while a new one, Our Lady Protectress of the Crops, was founded in a more convenient site near Alqosh in 1858, with financial assistance from the Vatican. This was built to replace Rabbān Hormīzd, which had come to symbolize a turbulent time best forgotten, and thus quickly eclipsed it as the Church’s principal seminary. In Mosul, Patriarch Audo also opened a publishing house in 1860 and established two other important centers for educating Chaldean Catholic clergy.³⁰² These were the patriarchal seminary of St. Peter in 1866, directed entirely by the Chaldean Catholic Church, and the Syro-Chaldean seminary of Saints John the Beloved and Thomas Aquinas, which trained priests for both the Chaldean and Syriac Catholic Churches under the direction of the Dominicans, completed shortly

³⁰¹ This split even extended to remote villages such as Arādēn in the Ṣapnā valley, where the majority, however, considered it unacceptable to disobey the pope, Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 155, 157, 159–61.

³⁰² The publishing house at first operated in direct competition with that of the Dominican Fathers, established in 1857. The latter catered for both Chaldean and Syriac Catholics and was influential in introducing many Western Catholic ideas and practices into the two Eastern rite Churches. This reinforced the distinction between the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Church of the East, and homogenized beliefs and practices within the Catholic converts. Apart from scripture and liturgical texts, they also published five catechisms in Arabic and Neo-Aramaic between 1857 and 1908, a treatise on papal primacy in the East Syriac tradition (1895), manuals concerning the Rosary (in 1884 and 1897), meditations for the Month of Mary (1907), and a book regarding the “Way of the Cross.” Latin works were also translated into Syriac, among them *Balance of Time* by Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1884) and *Instructions for Church Ministers* by Louis Togni (1895), James F. Coakley and David G.K. Taylor, “Syriac Books Printed at the Dominican Press, Mosul,” in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. George Anton Kiraz (Gorgias Press, 2008), 72–73, 78–109. Finally, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was introduced into Mesopotamia’s Eastern-rite Churches by apostolic delegate Henri-Victor Altmayer, Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 109.

after his death in 1878.³⁰³ Significantly, although a number of Chaldean Catholic bishops and priests continued to be trained at Rome or elsewhere in the decades before 1914, most of them came from one of these three centers.³⁰⁴

Prior to Patriarch Audo's death, while the French consul had taken control of the Chaldean Catholic patriarchate, he had appointed a vicar to carry out his temporal duties until a successor was elected—something which he had no legal or ecclesiastical power to do. This was ostensibly done to ensure the influence of the Latin missionaries, the interests of whom he acted in and protected, as well to control the subsequent actions of the Chaldean Catholic prelates, ensuring that they aligned with these. As a result, the Latin missionaries and apostolic vicar convened a meeting of the those prelates who had accepted the infallibility dogma and acknowledged the pope's supremacy in all ecclesiastical matters, curtailing community members who had thought that they would be free to choose one to their own liking. The elected successor was Metropolitan of Cizre Peter Elīyā 'Abūlyonān. A few days later, the French ambassador obtained the necessary imperial recognition for him, along with a decoration from the sultan, sending them through the consulate at Mosul—both of which were publicly presented to him. On 28 February 1879, he was confirmed by Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) under the title Elīyā XII. After being bullied and promised financial benefits, the metropolitans of Zakho and 'Amādīyah returned to the Chaldean Catholic Church, briefly leaving the “New Chaldeans” without a leader.³⁰⁵ As a result, some of Tell-Kēpē's inhabitants approached British orientalist Wallis Budge, while he was visiting in 1881 with a petition to have an Anglican mission established there.³⁰⁶

In 1882, Mellūs returned to Mosul to lead the “New Chaldeans,” which were subsequently referred to as the “Mellusian schism,” but fell short of uniting himself with the Qudshānis patriarchate.³⁰⁷ By 1886, four of the six East Assyrian churches in Mosul, one of which had its own printing press, and two nearby monasteries had joined the schism, along with 12 priests and many of the city's chief families. Nearby Tell-Kēpē—containing a thousand households at the time—formed a stronghold of this movement, which controlled the village church, while their opponents worshipped in the village's Dominican-

³⁰³ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 24, 35, 190, 271, 274; Baumer, *Church of the East*, 253. According to Cardinal Filoni, these had been established after a request from Cardinal Barnabó on 23 March 1865, *Church in Iraq*, 101.

³⁰⁴ By 1913, four bishops and 40 priests had graduated from the patriarchal seminary of St. Peter, as well as two metropolitans and 36 priests from St. John's Syro-Chaldean seminary, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 213–14.

³⁰⁵ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 160–62.

³⁰⁶ Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge, *By Nile and Tigris: A Narrative of Journeys in Egypt and Mesopotamia on Behalf of the British Museum between the Years 1886 and 1913* (John Murray, 1920), 2:247–48. Since 2014, a group of Chaldean Catholics in Vancouver, Canada, has actually joined the Anglican Church, “Chaldean Community,” *The Anglican Parish of the Church of the Epiphany*, <https://www.epiphanysurrey.org/about/chaldean-community>.

³⁰⁷ His Indian faithful had made him promise to return as soon as he had found suitable replacement, Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 164.

run school.³⁰⁸ In other villages, the inhabitants had outwardly conformed to the pressure and their churches were in the hands of the pro-Roman faction.³⁰⁹ Also attached to this movement was the community in Thrissur under Metropolitan ‘Abdīsho (Anthony) Thondanat.³¹⁰ Gradually, however, through opposition from the patriarchate and Latin missionaries, as well as threats from local authorities, a large portion of this community began to drift back to the mainstream Chaldean Catholic Church. Mellūs remained under suspension until 1889 when, seeing that the pro-Vatican faction was too powerful for him and with no chance of Ottoman authorities granting him the necessary authorization due to foreign political pressure, he was forced to make his submission to Pope Leo XIII.³¹¹ The following year, Patriarch ‘Abūlyonān transferred him to his native diocese of Mardin and “peace and unity” were restored in the Chaldean Catholic Church.³¹² Having been deprived of the long-desired bishop that Audo had provided them, some of the embattled Chaldean-rite Indian Catholics finally broke away from their brethren to re-join the Church of the East through its traditionalist Qudshānis patriarchate in 1907, forming what has subsequently come to be known as the “Chaldean Syrian Church.”³¹³

Missions to the Urmia and Hakkāri “Nestorians”

The nineteenth century was further marked by the Chaldean Catholic Church’s expansion in the Urmia region, where there were a number of small Catholic communities prior to the French Lazarist mission’s arrival in 1840. The unnamed bishops of Salāmas and Azerbaijan (Urmia) had been the two main supporters of the schismatic movement against hereditary patriarchal succession that formed the Chaldean Catholic Church in 1552, and the Lazarist Fathers of St. Vincent de Paul discovered small numbers of Catholics in Urmia and a number of its surrounding villages.³¹⁴ They established a mission station at Khosrāwā, the main Assyrian village in Salāmas, in 1840, followed by one at Urmia in 1843.³¹⁵ These persisted until the outbreak of the First World War, making a number of converts in Assyrian villages of the Salāmas, Urmia and

³⁰⁸ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 229.

³⁰⁹ Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 11; Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan*, 158.

³¹⁰ Baumer, *Church of the East*, 242.

³¹¹ Rassam, *Asshur and the Land of Nimrod*, 162, 164.

³¹² Mourret, *Concile du Vatican*, 241; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 75, 153.

³¹³ Robert J. Taft, “Between east and west: the Eastern Catholic (‘Uniate’) churches,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 8 (World Christianities c. 1815–c. 1915)*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 422.

³¹⁴ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 315, 320–21.

³¹⁵ Heleen Murre-van den Berg, “The American Board and the Eastern Churches: the ‘Nestorian Mission’ (1844–1846),” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 65, no. 1 (1999): 120; Jean-Michel Hornus, “Un rapport du consul de France” (III), 296, fn. 85.

Suldūz plains, in addition to several hundred Assyrians in villages of the mountainous Tergāwar district during the nineteenth century's second half. In the Salāmas district, which had a Catholic metropolitan as early as 1575 and an unbroken line of Catholic bishops since 1709, the last traditionalist bishop joined the Chaldean Catholic Church in 1833. In fact, between 1854 and 1896, the Chaldean Catholic population had grown from 2,000 in Salāmas and 1,500 in Urmia, to 10,000 and 6,000 respectively. Moreover, the success of Catholic proselytization led to the creation of a new archdiocese for Urmia in 1890, for which Patriarch Audo's nephew Thomas was consecrated as its first metropolitan.³¹⁶ By 1913, there were 10,460 Chaldean Catholics in 12 villages of Salāmas with 24 priests and 12 churches and 11 chapels, as well as 7,800 in at least 21 locations governed by the Urmia archdiocese with 43 priests, 13 churches and 15 chapels.³¹⁷

During this period, the Chaldean Catholic Church additionally set its sights on the Assyrians of Hakkâri, with Patriarch 'Abūlyonān sending missionaries to the region's distant villages.³¹⁸ In 1884, Dominican missionary Bonvoisin reported in the journal *Année dominicaine* that sentiments among them in favor of uniting with Rome were increasing.³¹⁹ In the summer of the following year, Chaldean Catholic priests Samuel Giamil and Andrew 'Abdīsho' were sent on a missionary tour of Assyrian villages in the western and northern Hakkâri districts of Brādost, Gardīyan, Shamsdīnān, Gāwar, and Albaq. They noted that many of the clergy and faithful in Brādost and Gardīyan were especially willing to join the Chaldean Catholic Church.³²⁰ In October 1885, Bonvoisin visited Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XVIII at Qudshānis and, along with the Anglicans, was trying to win over his loyalty.³²¹ The following May, Fr. Giamil was named patriarchal vicar and administrator of the mission to the 'Nestorians' of Hakkâri based at Baṣkale, where a makeshift church was opened in a rented house on 12 September. He was joined by the priest George Israel Būyā Maqdisī. While there, they discovered that many Assyrian community leaders were already Catholics, among them *Malik* (chief) Wardā of Greater Jīlū, who had been converted by Patriarch Audo at Our Lady

³¹⁶ Wilmschurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 287, 310, 314, 321, 326.

³¹⁷ Tfinkdji, *L'église chaldéenne catholique*, 50, 67.

³¹⁸ Chaillot, *Assyrian Church of the East*, 108.

³¹⁹ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 129.

³²⁰ Dīnhā Ḥannā Tūmā, trans., *Riḥlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl al-Tabshīrīyah (Awākhīr al-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar)* [The Abbot Samuel Giamil's Missionary Journeys (Late Nineteenth Century)], (Manshūrāt Markaz Jibrā'il Danbū al-Thaqāfī, 2008), 11, 13–14, 20–51. In 1869, Giamil had accompanied his Abbot and Patriarch Joseph VI Audo to the First Vatican Council. There he attended the Propaganda Fide College and continued his studies until 1879, when he was ordained a priest, Tūmā, *Riḥlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 6; Cf. George Anton Kiraz, "Jamīl, Shmū'el," in *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, ed. Sebastian Paul Brock et al. (Gorgias Press, 2011), 226.

³²¹ R. Bonvoisin, "Voyage de Mossoul a Van," *L'Année Dominicaine* 26, no. 316 (October 1886): 461.

Protectress of the Crops Monastery in 1867.³²² Catholic schools were also opened at the Bāz village of Shwāwūtā (Şenocak), where there were two local Catholic priests, in 1886 and the Tkhūmā village of Gundikthā in 1887. On 12 July of that year, the mission's headquarters moved to a house rented at Dizzā d-Gāwar (Yüksekova).³²³ In late 1887, Bonvoisin wrote to his superiors describing his negative interactions with *Malik* Bābo and the villagers of Tkhūmā, who did not welcome his presence there. He blamed the indignation he had faced there on the presence of Anglican missionaries William Henry Browne and Arthur John Maclean, who had only recently arrived in the region, which the Dominican Superior at Mosul, Father Duval, described as an “ambush.” Browne later took up residence in Qudshānis.³²⁴ During this time, *Malik* Shim'on of Bāz sent his son and the priest Samuel of Shwāwūtā to study at Catholic educational institutions in Mosul. They were joined by 'Abdīsho 'Qillaytā of the border village of Mār-Bhīshū, who was later ordained a priest and had returned to serve the Catholic families there by August 1892. The mission was led by Fr. 'Abdīsho 'between 22 October 1888 and 25 August 1889. Fr. Giamil was recalled to Alqosh in 1889 to serve as Superior-General of Chaldean Antonian Order of St. Hormīzd and Fr. Maqdisī remained with the mission until 1893.³²⁵ In 1890, a second mission house was opened at Julāmerk (Hakkāri), maintained by the priest Phillip Qashā-Ḥannā, and the 'Nestorian' mission was later given over to secular priests in May 1895.³²⁶

In 1891, Catholicos-Patriarch Shim'on XVIII sent a message to the pope by way of the Dominicans, requesting help to build schools and seminaries. The following year, the Propaganda sent a letter addressed to him and Bishop Joseph Sergius of Jīlū (1839–99) regarding unity with Roman Catholic Church. On 14 September 1892, a joint synod to negotiate papal recognition was supposed to have taken place at Āshūtā between the Church of the East and Chaldean Catholic Church. The participants were to be Shim'on XVIII and Bishop Sergius, as well as Patriarch 'Abūlyonān and Patriarchal Vicar Michael Naamo. This was cancelled because the priest Joseph Kattūlā and Tomāt Lāwandā of Tell-Kēpē had complained to the catholicos-patriarch about his Catholic counterpart, the Latin apostolic vicar and Dominican fathers, and he had subsequently changed his mind.³²⁷ Even if he had seriously entertained the

³²² Tūmā, *Rihlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 108–09, 111–12, 121, 117, 127–28. While in Rome, Fr. Giamil also tried to bring about the conversion to Catholicism of *Malik* Benjamin, son of *Malik* Wardā, who visited the city in 1897 and 1902, Tūmā, *Rihlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 166, 170–71.

³²³ Tūmā, *Rihlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 125, 129.

³²⁴ M. Bonvoisin, “Attaque d'un Missionnaire en pays Nestorien,” *L'Année Dominicaine* 28, no. 333 (March 1888): 128–37.

³²⁵ Tūmā, *Rihlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 132–35, 143. Between 1895 and 1902, Giamil additionally served as Procurator-General of the Chaldean Patriarchate at the Vatican, Tūmā, *Rihlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 151–72; Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 271, 651, 676, 684–86.

³²⁶ Tūmā, *Rihlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 137–38, 150.

³²⁷ Tūmā, *Rihlāt al-Anbā Shmū'ayl Jamīl*, 137–38, 147–48.

idea of communion with Rome, one of traditionalist *maliks* or tribesmen of Ṭyārē or Tkhūmā might have even killed him for such a “betrayal”:

... it is doubtful whether the meeting could have been held without an attack by them upon the Roman Catholics. Mar Khnan Eshoo, the Metropolitan of Nochia [Shamsdīnān], whose prerogative it is to consecrate each new patriarch, was prepared to issue his anathema of excommunication against the Patriarch in case he had carried out this plan and would have convened an assembly of the people to elect a new patriarch.³²⁸

French newspaper *Le Figaro* reported that the Shim‘on XVIII had arranged with the pope that no successor would be elected after his death and that his Church would be merged with the Chaldean Catholic Church, however, he rejected this accusation.³²⁹

On 24 April 1893 and 29 May 1895, new Chaldean Catholic patriarch ‘Abdīsho‘ V Khayyāt sent Shim‘on XVIII profusely flattering letters addressed also to his clergy and adherents, advocating their union with Rome and stressing the idea of accepting papal primacy and infallibility as the only hurdle preventing this.³³⁰ With the second letter, as well as attacking the Protestants, he had attached a Syriac translation of Pope Leo XIII’s *Orientalium Dignitas*, dated 30 November 1894, which guaranteed the right of Eastern Catholic Churches to preserve their non-Roman liturgies and customs.³³¹ Patriarch Khayyāt concluded his letter with the following proposal: “As for us, O our dear brother, we are ready to be with you the second in the patriarchate... in all union and agreement of charity.”³³² In his reply, written on 27 June, two days after receiving the letter, the catholicos-patriarch made it clear that the Church of the East had “... neither project nor design on this point and we do not think about it in any way.” He continued his response in the following manner, stressing the Church of the East’s independence and his own primacy:

... the Church of the East has preserved, without modification and without change, such as the Apostles and its Doctors have taught it, its rites and its canons. This is certain according to the books of our Orthodox fathers which are also yours. You speak of a harmful sect, of an ancient schism! It is you who

³²⁸ John Haskell Shedd, “The Reported Conversion of the Nestorians to the Catholic Church,” *The Independent* 45, no. 2320 (18 May 1893): 17.

³²⁹ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 129–30.

³³⁰ Jean-Baptiste Chabot, trans., “Lettres du Patriarche Chaldéen aux Nestoriens,” *Revue Anglo-Romaine* 1, no. 10 (1895): 470–80, and no. 11 (1895): 513–24.

³³¹ Baum and Winkler, *Church of the East*, 130; Coakley and Taylor, “Syriac Books Printed at the Dominican Press,” 93; Cf. Pope Leo XIII, “*Orientalium Dignitas*: On the Churches of the East,” 30 November 1894, *Papal Encyclicals Online*, 2000–25, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/113orient.htm>. On 20 June 1894, Leo XIII had also issued the apostolic letter *Pareclara gratulationis*, in which he stressed the need for the unity of all Christians and gave assurances that Rome would respect the other patriarchs’ rights and privileges, as well as their Churches’ liturgical customs, revoking Pius IX’s encyclical *Reversurus*, Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 103.

³³² Chabot, “Lettres du Patriarche Chaldéen,” 523–24.

have fallen into it. What is the harmful sect? It is the one that modifies the word of the Apostles. For us, we will keep until the end the word of the Apostles, the foundation of the Eastern Church... You speak of union! But... the unity of the East lasts until today, directly by itself, and without confusion; and those who have come out [of this union] are like the prodigal son who ate the swine's pods. If there are people who persist in these things, let them read the books and understand. As for worldly and diabolical goods and possessions, those who seek them are carnal [men].³³³

Bishop Sergius, on the other hand, who was present in Qudshānis, was in disagreement with his superior's harsh response and privately gave his own note to the Chaldean Catholic patriarch's messenger. In his words: "... I and those of our nation who were present felt a great chill because of the blame contained in his reply, which is certainly not true, but pure imagination."³³⁴ Nevertheless, other Orthodox Churches similarly rejected the premise of unity in the form of a "return" to the Catholic Church.³³⁵

The Catholic missionary effort was further aided by Nimrod, Shim'on XVIII's ambitious first cousin, who must have felt a sense of betrayal since 1890, when the catholicos-patriarch had been compelled to turn against him and his brother Bishop Abraham. Around 1896, the latter had been replaced as designated successor by the catholicos-patriarch's much younger nephew Benjamin.³³⁶ By 1898, Nimrod was already a self-professed Catholic and had moved to the village of Khanānis, which he allowed to be used as a base, contributing to a number of intrigues aimed at effecting conversion.³³⁷ Dominican Father de France, who was also French vice-consul at Van, was instrumental in tempting Assyrians with the prospect of relief and convincing them of his country's protection of them if they converted. According to an August 1898 report by Browne:

The inducements offered by the French Consul-Friar are small sums of money by way of alms, and the promise of protection from the Kurds. There is I believe no pretence of conversion by religious reasoning... Mar Shimun was greatly alarmed by the Dominican's invasion of his country, and wrote on two or three separate occasions to complain against it, denouncing its methods as bribery and exposing the hollowness of its results and the characters of its adherents.³³⁸

³³³ Chabot, "Lettres du Patriarche Chaldéen," 524–25.

³³⁴ Chabot, "Lettres du Patriarche Chaldéen," 525.

³³⁵ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 103.

³³⁶ In October 1890, Nimrod's daughter Susan (Sanjani) was married to *Malik* Qambar, son of the abovementioned *Malik* Wardā and brother of *Malik* Benjamin, who had already been reported to have converted to Catholicism, Isabella Lucy Bishop, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan: Including a summer in the Upper Karun Region and a Visit to the Nestorian Rayahs*, 2 vols. (John Murray, 1891), 2:305–09; William Henry Browne, "Mountain News," *Assyrian Mission Quarterly Paper* 27 (1896): 154; James F. Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England: A History of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission* (Clarendon Press, 1992), 131–32.

³³⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 35.

³³⁸ Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England*, 257–58.

In September 1898, a Dominican missionary (probably de France himself) made a complaint to the Ottoman governor of Van, alleging that a Kurdish tribal leader, acting in league with Shim'on XVIII, had stolen sheep from some Assyrians and forced them to state that they would never become Catholics, "under pain of forfeiting their lives and property." Actually, the tribal leader had retaliated for a raid on his own sheep by other Assyrians that had been lured in by locals whom Nimrod had convinced that they were under French protection.³³⁹ This episode eventually resulted in his imprisonment at Başkale and the general compromising of the Qudshānis patriarchate and Church of the East in the eyes of the Ottoman Government and Kurdish tribal leaders.³⁴⁰ By the end of 1899, American missionary Frederick Gaylord Coan reported that Bishop Abraham had opened his diocese to the Catholic missionaries, who had succeeded in making around 1,000 converts. Many of them had been enrolled without their own knowledge by the village head or parish priest, who pocketed ninety cents per head. Around the same time, an article appeared in one of the prominent Catholic English papers, misleadingly relating that 50,000 'Nestorians' had become members of the Catholic Church within a year.³⁴¹

Converging Allegiances and Attempts to End the Independent Church of the East

Once the conversion to Catholicism of the former Alqosh patriarchate's adherents had been secured, the Chaldean Catholic Church turned its attention to the dissolution of the territorially smaller Qudshānis patriarchate in Hakkâri through renewed major missionary efforts. This was a hallmark of the early years of Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Joseph-Emmanuel II Thomas (1900–47).³⁴² While previously metropolitan of Siirt, he had already overseen the conversion to Catholicism of the last traditionalist bishop of nearby Ātel "with all his flock" in 1896.³⁴³ In 1902, the Chaldean Catholic Church established a new diocese at Van to cover Catholic converts made in Hakkâri, consecrating the priest Jacob-Eugene Mannā, formerly professor of Syriac at Mosul's Syro-Chaldean seminary, as its bishop on 30 November of that year. During his episcopate, which lasted until the diocese was suppressed in 1915, he also served as patriarchal administrator of the "Nestorian missions," largely attempting to undermine the work of Anglican missionaries who were active in

³³⁹ The National Archives, British Foreign Office (424/197), "Asiatic Turkey: Further Correspondence," July–December 1898, 84–85.

³⁴⁰ Henry Algernon George Percy, *Highlands of Asiatic Turkey* (Edward Arnold, 1901), 167–70.

³⁴¹ Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *The Sixty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions* (Presbyterian Building, 1900), 199.

³⁴² Baumer, *Church of the East*, 253; Wilmschurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 35.

³⁴³ Wilmschurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 83–84, 101, 105; Tfinkdji, *L'église chaldéenne catholique*, 49.

reviving and strengthening the Church of the East in the villages around Van.³⁴⁴ These people had already been targeted by the Chaldean Catholic Church through the establishment of a mission station at Van in 1881 by Dominican Father Jacques Rhétoré and another at Saray in the 1890s, which attempted to convert them to Catholicism.³⁴⁵

Often, mission work was accompanied by the distribution of money to poor villagers, as in the case of Khinnū in 1898, where only four out of 35 households refused to convert. Moreover, taking advantage of the fact that the village church was nearly in ruins, the Catholics had another one built and “were sucking up all the people from it.” When the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Assyrian Mission reached them in 1908 and began reconstructing the old church for the traditionalist families, however, Mannā and the four local priests who were on his payroll petitioned the government to halt the campaign. They alleged that it was a new church, being built without imperial authorization in the name of the English, with English funds, and with the aim of establishing an English *millet* there. Furthermore, they declared that one church was enough for the village, hoping to prevent the reconstruction of a functioning traditionalist church in order to force all the villagers to attend their own services. The authorities sent a civil servant to stop the project, but a priest who had returned to the “Old Church” went to Van with some village elders and ensured its completion.³⁴⁶ Catholic expansion was further abetted by the Qudshānis patriarchate’s neglect, as one Assyrian related to Shim‘on XIX Benjamin’s brother Hormīzd in 1908:

Had you not come, Kesi, we should have turned Chaldean, or perhaps Protestant; we have been left alone by our Patriarch for so long, and we thought that he had quite forgotten us. Now we know that; Mar Shimun cares.³⁴⁷

By 1913, Mannā had established 12 stations that worked in close cooperation with the Dominican mission in the city, as well as four schools, served by ten priests.³⁴⁸ In some cases, although the priest in a certain village was nominally Catholic because he received a salary from Bishop Mannā, its

³⁴⁴ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 238, 283, 324. This had been the Church of England’s policy since at least 1840, and they hoped to achieve that through educating youths, printing books and other means to induce self-reform, thereby encouraging “free and amicable” relations between the sister Churches, Ainsworth, *Travels and Researches*, 2:247–48.

³⁴⁵ Jean-Baptiste Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses formant le Patriarcat Chaldéen de Babylone au 1^{er} janvier 1896,” *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien* 1 (1896): 442, 453; Coakley and Taylor, “Syriac Books Printed at the Dominican Press,” 74.

³⁴⁶ Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 179–82.

³⁴⁷ Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 176.

³⁴⁸ Bēth-Abūnā, “Ecclesiastical History,” original manuscript, 2:243–44, 281; Gaunt, *Massacres, Resistance, Protectors*, 410; Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 69.

entire population remained loyal to the Church of the East and refused to attend his services.³⁴⁹

On 10 January 1902, the prefect of the Propaganda, Cardinal Mieczysław Halka-Ledóchowski, had issued new instructions giving “the means by which the missionaries should proceed for the evangelization of the Nestorians.” This was because, although the Dominican fathers had worked zealously and with “holy diligence” to convert traditionalist Eastern Assyrians to Catholicism, the results had been “unhappy, because their burning desire to achieve this coveted goal has prompted some of them to use less than appropriate means...” and it was Rome’s desire that such conduct be abandoned. Among the tactics admitted to were missionaries making political promises, or “attempting to satisfy temporal ambitions or interests, which are foreign to their religious ministry.” Moreover, converts were no longer to be accepted if they affixed conditions, manifested “earthly needs,” or were suspected of political aims or interests. As such, they were now required to present definite proof of “truly religious and supernatural motives.”³⁵⁰ It does not appear, however, that these instructions were faithfully followed in all cases. That same year, Pope Leo XIII gave Joseph-Emmanuel II the title “Apostolic Delegate for the Conversion of the Nestorians,” due to his “zeal and devotion,” since their complete conversion was his “life’s ambition.”³⁵¹

Subsequently, the Chaldean Catholic Church made more determined efforts to win over the Qudshānis patriarchate’s clergy and laity. This reached its peak when Nimrod, Bishop Īsho‘yāh̄b of Barwārī-Bālā, and several other influential figures were received into the Chaldean Catholic Church in a well-publicized ceremony at Mosul on 31 March 1903, followed shortly afterward by Bishop Abraham.³⁵² The reaction was immediate; Shim‘on XVIII had died two days earlier, and influential adherents of the Qudshānis patriarchate (encouraged by Russian Orthodox and Anglican missionaries) took advantage of Abraham’s absence in Mosul to rally support for the recently-consecrated Benjamin who, as expected, was elected catholicos-patriarch in his place on 12 April.³⁵³ Abraham subsequently became a Chaldean Catholic bishop for Hakkāri and a new cathedral church was planned to be built for him at Khanānis, but his absolute failure to secure patriarchal succession put an end to hopes that the Qudshānis patriarchate’s Assyrians could be persuaded to convert to Catholicism *en masse*.³⁵⁴ In 1907, patriarch Shim‘on XIX Benjamin

³⁴⁹ This was exactly the case in this writer’s ancestral village of Nahrā, in Hakkāri’s Jīlū district, where the local priest was being paid a salary by Bishop Mannā, as recounted by the deacon Yosip Zia (1906–2005) at Chicago in September 2004.

³⁵⁰ Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 105–07.

³⁵¹ This was part of the pope’s policy of ending Latin missions in the Middle East and entrusting the conversion of non-Catholics to the well-established presence of the Eastern Catholic Churches, Filoni, *Church in Iraq*, 103–05.

³⁵² Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 20–21, 68.

³⁵³ Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 165.

³⁵⁴ Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England*, 266.

deposed Bishop Īsho‘yāhb of Barwārī-Bālā and replaced him with his eighteen-year-old nephew Yaldā. Abraham, on the other hand, continued his mission work in the Hakkāri region until his death in July or August 1915, under Bishop Mannā’s supervision.³⁵⁵ In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury from Rev. Dr. William Ainger Wigram at ‘Amādīyah dated 3 May 1911, it was alleged that Rashid Bey, the Kurdish prince of Barwārī-Bālā, received a regular subsidy from the Chaldean Catholic patriarch’s mission funds to destroy seven Assyrian villages in Hakkāri’s Ṭyārē district, in order to bring them into submission.³⁵⁶ Notwithstanding this, conversions were on a much smaller scale than anticipated since, in 1913, there were only an estimated 3,850 Chaldean Catholics in Hakkāri and Van.³⁵⁷

On the other hand, the Catholic missionaries’ nineteenth century successes encouraged traditionalists in the Nineveh Plain to assert their unwillingness to submit to Rome. This had already been noted by Anglican missionaries at Alqosh in 1902 where, despite the “great educational work being done by the Dominicans” and the fact that the locals “seemed more prosperous and better cared for,” some priests complained about their “new ecclesiastical rulers” and the liturgy that “had been imposed on them.”³⁵⁸ On 3 February 1909, a group of disaffected Assyrians left Alqosh for Qudshānis to persuade Shim‘on XIX to consecrate a bishop for them.³⁵⁹ After discovering their plan, Joseph-Emmanuel II tried to have them apprehended by authorities, and finally succeeded in their imprisonment for a week at Julāmerk. After a friendly Kurdish Agha had them released, and Shim‘on XIX obtained the necessary government permission to allow them to proceed, they were welcomed at Qudshānis where two of the group were ordained priests on Sunday 2 May. The following Sunday, the priest George Abūnā, a member of the old patriarchal family and former student of the Chaldean Patriarchal Seminary at Mosul, was consecrated “bishop of Assyria,” taking the traditional patriarchal name Elīyā.³⁶⁰ Soon afterward, the two new priests returned to Alqosh, where they opened up a traditionalist house of prayer. While at Qudshānis, Bishop Elīyā himself ordained two more priests for Alqosh as well as another three from Tisqopā and one from Baṭnāyā, to serve the traditionalist communities in their villages.³⁶¹ Since the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Mission realized that the Church of the East had once more begun to gain traction in the Mosul region, it decided to leave Van, to which its missionaries had moved their headquarters from Urmia in 1903.³⁶² In 1910, the Mission closed its

³⁵⁵ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 35–36, 126, 149, 283, 296.

³⁵⁶ Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 95–96.

³⁵⁷ Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 69.

³⁵⁸ Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 152.

³⁵⁹ Bēth-Abūnā, “Ecclesiastical History,” original manuscript, 2:244.

³⁶⁰ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 192.

³⁶¹ Bēth-Abūnā, “Ecclesiastical History,” original manuscript, 2:245–46.

³⁶² Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England*, 254, 301; Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 81.

deacons' school and chapel in Van and, at a loss, sold a six-acre plot of land where they had planned build their new compound.³⁶³ The school, which was meant to be where the nation's elite would be educated, was moved to the village of Bē-Bēdē, near 'Amādīyah.³⁶⁴ There, a large new station was built between 1911 and 1912, in order to be close to Assyrians from the Nineveh Plain who wished to return to the Church of the East.³⁶⁵

In January 1910, Bishop Elīyā returned to Alqosh with Wigram who, at the time, led the Van station.³⁶⁶ The bishop continued to Mosul, to meet with the Ottoman governor and British consul. Despite opposition from the Chaldean Catholic Church, Dominican Fathers and French vice-consul in Mosul, who did not want to see a return of Catholic converts to their original Church, Ottoman authorities recognized this group as a separate community and Elīyā was accredited as their bishop.³⁶⁷ While in Mosul, a mob stirred up by the patriarch's agents, and endorsed by him, attacked the house of the British Consulate's Dragoman and threatened to kill Elīyā, who had been staying there. Later, the patriarch openly threatened two English ladies, who assisted in sheltering the bishop.³⁶⁸ Due to complaints the Ottoman Government had received, however, that this was a schismatic group which would cause them unceasing headaches due to Christian interdenominational fighting and strife, an order came from Istanbul that Bishop Elīyā could not stay where there were no 'Nestorians.' Meanwhile, the traditionalist party fervently requested to be separated, with their names removed from Chaldean Catholic registries and transferred to a new registry for the Church of the East, which was their legal right. Local officials in Mosul (including the governor), however, refused to do so since they had been bribed by Joseph-Emmanuel II who, according to Wigram, also bribed members of the faction themselves and "employed terrorism for the same purpose."³⁶⁹ For instance, his agents falsified registers and swore to false information to ensure that those who insisted would be enrolled as soldiers while long past the legal age for military conscription.³⁷⁰ Bishop Elīyā had only spent about a week in his diocese before being driven out through the intrigues of the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch and French vice-consul that February. Having escaped for his life disguised as a servant lady,

³⁶³ This had been purchased in 1907 and was the planned location of the permanent mission station, chapel and deacons' school, Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 167.

³⁶⁴ Heazell and Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, 171–72; Bēth-Abūnā, "Ecclesiastical History," original manuscript, 2:242–43; Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 83.

³⁶⁵ Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England*, 300, 303, 306–09, 313–14.

³⁶⁶ Bēth-Abūnā, "Ecclesiastical History," original manuscript, 2:248.

³⁶⁷ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 192.

³⁶⁸ As already noted, Joseph-Emmanuel II had been a constant opponent of all British Mission work in Mosul and its environs, and he was particularly against the Church Missionary Society and Archbishop of Canterbury's Assyrian Mission, Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 96–97.

³⁶⁹ Bēth-Abūnā, "Ecclesiastical History," original manuscript, 2:249.

³⁷⁰ Mookken, *History of the Assyrian Church of the East*, 96.

he returned to Qudshānis in April of that year and remained without a diocese for more than four years, despite Shim'on XIX's constant efforts to have him returned. His supporters at Alqosh, led by a priest, remained for some time, but they too were stifled by the Catholics. Consequently, Eliyā was transferred to the newly created diocese of Saray in September 1912—an appointment that continued for less than three years due to the region's destruction during the First World War.³⁷¹ He returned to Alqosh and submitted to the Chaldean Catholic Church in 1921. At first deprived of the right to a diocese, he served as patriarchal vicar of 'Aqrah (1924–26), and died at Kirkuk in 1955.³⁷²

In the final decades before the First World War, the Chaldean Catholic Church was able to consolidate Joseph Audo's work in the 'Amādiyah district and convert most of the Assyrian villages in the 'Aqrah district. On the whole, these had been decades of substantial Catholic achievement. No traditionalist villages remained in the Khābūr valley or elsewhere in the diocese of Zākho, and in other parts of the 'Amādiyah and 'Aqrah districts only small communities remained in a dozen or so villages, outnumbered by their Chaldean Catholic neighbors.³⁷³ The Church of the East, therefore, consisted of the patriarchal archdiocese based around Qudshānis, two other archdioceses in Shamsdīnān and India, and six dioceses for the districts of Jīlū, Gāwar, Saray, Barwārī-Bālā, Urmia and Sulduz, forming a modest synod of nine prelates. The only religious school for training future clergymen had been established by the Anglican mission, first at Van in 1903 and later at Bē-Bēdē in 1910.³⁷⁴ The Church's adherents at this time are believed to have probably numbered between 85,000 and 120,000 at most, not including the nominally Russian Orthodox converts in the Urmia region and the Caucasus.³⁷⁵ At the same time, the Chaldean Catholic Church consisted of the patriarchal archdiocese of Mosul and Baghdad, four other archdioceses—Diyarbakır, Kirkuk, Siirt and Urmia—and eight dioceses—'Aqrah, 'Amādiyah, Cizre, Mardin, Salāmas, Sanandaj, Zākho, and Van. The hierarchy also included three former traditionalist bishops in Barwārī-Bālā, Hakkāri and Bohtān. Apart from these 15 prelates, there were fourteen patriarchal vicariates established for Aleppo, Istanbul, Cairo, Adana, 'Amārah, Damascus, Beirut, Tehran, Kermanshah, Kūt, Dayr al-Zawr, 'Ashshār, Ahwaz and Rome between 1872 and 1913.³⁷⁶ The 1914 *Annuaire Orientale* noted other areas to which the Chaldean Catholic Church had expanded to at the time. New patriarchal vicariates are noted at Jerusalem, Antioch, Mount Lebanon and Izmir. Additionally, there were episcopal vicars at Sinjar, Şirvan, Siverek, Harput, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Mersin, Kayseri, Ankara, and Bursa, and patriarchal representatives are listed at Muş, Erzurum,

³⁷¹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 192, 256.

³⁷² Coakley, "Mar Elia Aboona," 119–20.

³⁷³ In 1896, 11 villages in the 'Aqrah diocese were still 'semi-Nestorian,' and this number had been reduced to nine by 1913, Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 126, 154.

³⁷⁴ Coakley, *The Church of the East and the Church of England*, 301, 303, 306–09, 313–14.

³⁷⁵ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 368–70.

³⁷⁶ Tfinkdji, *L'église chaldéenne catholique*, 30, 35–37, 77.

Erzincan, Trabzon, Sivas, Tokat, Amasya, and Tarsus.³⁷⁷ The Church's adherents at this time are believed to have numbered over 101,610 in 177 villages.³⁷⁸ Its congregations were concentrated in far fewer villages than those of the Qudshānis patriarchate, and with 296 priests (roughly one for every 343 believers) it was rather more effectively served by its clergy.³⁷⁹

Conclusions and Final Thoughts

The history of the Chaldean Catholic Church is inextricably linked to the complex interplay between the Roman Catholic Church's evolving doctrine of papal primacy and the Church of the East's deeply entrenched autocephaly under the primacy of its own recognized catholicos-patriarch. The narrative underscores a centuries-long struggle over divergent understandings of primacy, ecclesiastical authority, identity, and theological interpretation between the Church of the East and the expanding influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Rome consistently viewed union as a "return to the unity of the ancient Church" and insisted on the recognition of the pope's universal jurisdictional authority and control of all Christians, codified in its supremacist Petrine theory, coupled with the belief in the superiority of its own Latin rite. It consequently conceived of a divinely mandated 'manifest destiny' for itself, aimed at bringing about the full submission of all other apostolic Churches under the pope's authority, in the name of "union" with the "See of St. Peter." This clashed fundamentally with the Church of the East's historical independence and autocephaly, as well as its understanding of the pope as a "primacy of honor, but not of jurisdiction." Following a brief period of politically-motivated cordial relations with the Church of the East in the thirteenth century, the next seven centuries witnessed the latter's deliberate targeting by Western Catholic missionaries, beginning with Pope John XXII. The "unhappy schism" of 1552, and the uncanonical defection of monk Yoḥannān Sulāqā to the Roman Catholic Church, however, were a direct consequence of an internal patriarchal succession dispute within the Church of the East, rather than initial doctrinal rifts, exacerbated by political motivations, misunderstandings, and external pressures, as well as Rome's assertive missionary efforts. As a result, Sulāqā was consecrated and recognized as patriarch over a pro-Catholic faction that would eventually grow within the Church. On the one hand, this move gave those clergymen opposed to hereditary patriarchal succession a new way to access power, bypassing the established hierarchy. It additionally gained traction among the largely

³⁷⁷ Another four in India and one in Sri Lanka were most probably misattributed and instead belonged to the Chaldean-rite Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, *Annuaire Orientale: Commerce, Industrie, Administration, Magistrature de l'Orient* (Imprimerie Autrichienne Ferd. Walla., 1914), 87–88.

³⁷⁸ Tfinkdji, *L'église chaldéenne catholique*, 77.

³⁷⁹ Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 363.

Arabized urban segment of the Church's adherents, who were at odds with a patriarch that lived in a rural setting and could not speak any language understood by them. The eventual establishment of the Chaldean Catholic Church within the Roman communion formalized this division, ultimately leading to a distinct ecclesiastical body that embraced communion with the Holy See while retaining its specific liturgical traditions. These intricate dynamics shaped centuries of relations between different factions within the Church of the East, leading to power struggles, forced conversions, and enduring theological debates and disagreements, as well as failed attempts at reconciliation.

It is highly likely that the Vatican regarded large populations of faithful Catholics within the Muslim Ottoman and Persian empires as an opportunity to exert Christian European political influence over them, and therefore funded well-equipped missions, tasked with bringing about the Church of the East's complete submission to Rome, as had already occurred to the Maronite Church during the Crusades. Intrinsically, the prospect of protection by international Christian powers, particularly France, became a major reason for many clergy and laypeople to convert to Catholicism—in addition to bribery, psychological manipulation and advantages such as political power, better educational facilities or the facilitation of church construction. In many cases, even when only part of a congregation had converted to Catholicism, foreign missionaries perceived this as giving them the right to take ownership of its place of worship. The resulting transfer of historic churches and affiliated properties, as well as priceless manuscripts, relics, and artefacts, only led the Church of the East to further destitution. The early “converts,” however, and those patriarchs who initiated negotiations aimed at union with Rome, had only wished to profit from the financial and political benefits offered through such ties, and they further used their relations with the Vatican to bolster their own legitimacy and prestige. As such, nominal obedience to Rome was considered Catholicism's only criterion, and their self-perception as Catholics differed from a top-down interpretation to one based on shared communion with a strong Church linked to politically powerful Western nations. While traditionally, the independent Church of the East viewed the pope as being equal in rank to its own catholicos-patriarch, he had no right to interfere in its internal affairs. Again, the Chaldean Catholics had not realized that they were now legally bound to being a subordinate Church to that of Rome and, as such, were subject to the pope's final say in a number of crucial matters. It is quite clear that they had no intention of changing their rites, customs or traditions to conform to those of the Western Church and, whenever Latin missionaries would attempt to impose this, in a top-down manner bypassing the patriarch's authority, tensions would often flare up.

As the original Catholic patriarchate drifted out of communion with Rome, and asserted its independence—even from the primal line at Alqosh—Sulāqā's old base at Diyarbakır was revived by the Vatican instead. This, however, was a means to an end—namely, the overwhelming of the more vulnerable and prestigious Alqosh patriarchate. The eighteenth century was thus a period of profound transformation for the Church of the East. The

traditionalist Alqosh patriarchate's internal stagnation, weak leadership, and institutional shortcomings—marked by nepotism, centralized power, and numb inaction—created a vacuum that the proactive and often aggressive Catholic movement from Diyarbakır readily filled. Supported by Latin missionaries and Vatican directives, the Chaldean Catholic Church successfully expanded its influence, particularly in the Nineveh Plain and Mosul, eventually achieving a numerical majority in these crucial areas. In 1724, the Catholic patriarchate at Diyarbakır managed to deceive Ottoman authorities into withdrawing their recognition from its traditionalist rival at Alqosh. As a result, they continued to willingly masquerade as 'Nestorians' (although they later stigmatized that appellation) until the official recognition of the 'Chaldean' *millet* in 1844—40 years after the last traditionalist patriarch of Alqosh had died and 14 years after the patriarchal lines of Alqosh and Diyarbakır had been unified. Certainly, the Church of the East's traditionalist faction was divided and in decline, with poor schools, no active monasteries after 1743, no political protection, and not enough prelates to administer its large dioceses, rendering its adherents fair game. This contrasted sharply with the Catholic faction's dynamic expansion, as it made significant progress through a combination of direct missionary zeal, religious conversion and legal acumen, as well as political savvy and maneuvering. This effected lasting transformations which fundamentally reshaped the region's religious landscape, starting from urban centers and later permeating to rural districts.

By the early nineteenth century, the Catholic Chaldean Church emerged as a significant religious institution in the region, marking a decisive victory. Its growth and survival thus reflect a complex interplay of theology, politics, culture, and imperial power, illustrating how Eastern Christianity navigated the challenges of maintaining identity amid shifting religious and political landscapes. With the death of Catholicos-Patriarch Elīyā XII Īsho'yāh̄b in 1804, the traditionalist Alqosh patriarchate's jurisdictional territory came under the full sway of missionary efforts as his Catholic cousin and rival Yoḥannān Hormīzd took the opportunity to assert himself, despite Rome not recognizing him as patriarch until 1830. He also faced firm opposition from the monks of Rabbān Hormīzd Monastery, who had their sights set on the patriarchal family's properties, which they instead believed should have belonged to them. Furthermore, in order to ensure the hereditary patriarchal succession's discontinuation, as well as guarantee patriarchs more open to conformity with Western Church customs and practices, the Vatican itself appointed Yoḥannān Hormīzd's first two successors—despite his attempts to continue his family's dynastic line. Of course, this was supported by prelates and clergy who also wished to see the end of the Abūnā family's hegemony and demanded a greater role in governing the Church. Nevertheless, this period sowed the seeds for the unprecedented expansion of the newly unified Chaldean Catholic Church, at the expense of the Church of the East. With funding from Rome and France, as well as on-the-ground support from foreign missionaries, the once minority Catholic faction in the Church extended its territorial jurisdiction, strengthened its hierarchy and doubled its membership. Far from being a 'honeymoon

period' though, this was one rife with internal turbulence as competing factions struggled to maintain dominance in the important city of Mosul at the same time as consolidating control over all the faithful within the former Alqosh patriarchate's territory, primarily through Catholicization. It was thus ensured that the newly-converted adherents became sincere Catholics, and their faith was integrated with that of the more established communities in Diyarbakır and Mardin.

Apart from synodical acts, archival documents and reports by Roman Catholic, as well as British and American Protestant missionaries, sources written by common people regarding the question of conversion to Catholicism and the introduction of new religious practices are unfortunately rare, if not practically non-existent. At any rate, it does not seem likely that the laity were the ones making most of the decisions relating to such issues. The patriarchate which they owed allegiance to had come under Catholic domination and began to send them new, specially-trained priests, so most people faithfully—and fatalistically—followed suit. One would assume that most of the rural laity, eking out an existence as they were among predatory Kurdish tribes and living as a persecuted minority ruled by Muslims, did not have the intellectual capacity to appreciate the “new relation to faith” or “link to a larger Catholic world” offered by submission to Rome. Neither would they have had the time or ability to express exactly how they “imagined their community,” but it is quite clear that they were eager not to be ostracized as ‘Nestorian heretics.’ On the other hand, one would assume that the archives of the Propaganda or Society of Lyons would not portray Catholic proselytization efforts negatively, despite drawing a defenseless people away from their native Church and playing upon local internal divisions to shore up a strong Catholic foothold among them.

Between 1830 and 1850, the territorial boundaries between the jurisdictions of Alqosh and Qudshānis witnessed a gradual conversion to Catholicism aided by the monks of Rabbān Hormīzd, which acted as a seminary for producing educated and disciplined clergy. Indeed, the organization and availability of well-trained and refined clerics on the Catholic side was definitely a game changer. Nevertheless, another factor which helped was relations with Ottoman authorities and Kurdish tribal chiefs, who could be paid to scare helpless villagers into submission by raiding them or torturing their leaders, with Catholic prelates or clergymen playing the role of “savior” from persecution through offering them their protection. Often, when a village priest persistently refused to convert, missionaries would wait until he passed away, since the Qudshānis patriarchate was slow to replace them as it did not have an active monastery or its own seminary. In many other cases, conversion was further achieved through the necessity to conform, coercion or intimidation. The role of foreign missionaries as a support network, however, cannot be overemphasized. By 1840, the Church of the East's historical territory in the Middle East had been divided between the Carmelites in southern Mesopotamia, Capuchins in northern Mesopotamia, Dominicans in the Assyrian heartland, and Vincentian Lazarists in Persia. These brought over increasing numbers of traditionalists to Catholicism through their educational

infrastructure, in cooperation with the efforts of local Catholic clergymen. It should be noted that there was less focus on Latinization at this early stage as the priority was on Catholicization, whether nominal or genuine, and submission to Rome. After 1843 though, one local faction was encouraged by Shim'on XVII Abraham's presence as a refugee at Mosul and expressed its desire to come under his leadership, with at least one diocese reverting to the traditional faith, but it had become Catholic again by 1850. During this period, those who became Catholics were identified as 'Chaldeans,' while their traditionalist brethren were stigmatized as 'Nestorian heretics.' A 35-year lull followed, during which these identities fermented and were internalized while, simultaneously, the border between the two rival Churches was drawn in the Şapnā valley, where communities belonging to both – formerly coreligionists! – existed practically side-by-side.³⁸⁰

Yohannān VIII's first successor Nicholas Zay'ā was controversial because he was disliked by different factions for various reasons—whether for having been appointed to the position rather than elected, for not being from the patriarchal family, or for being considered a foreigner since he was from Iran. After 1850, under his successor Joseph VI Audo, the Chaldean Catholic Church worked on taking advantage of the printing press and strengthening its educational institutions in order to lessen its dependence on importing books from and educating clergy at Rome. Its ambitions of independence or autonomy, however, were eventually shattered and patriarchal rights and privileges were removed. Matters came to a head in 1860 and 1874, when he asserted his authority to maintain links with Chaldean-rite Catholics in India, as well as to send them prelates of his liking, without first obtaining Vatican permission. He eventually recalled them under threat of excommunication. Meanwhile, Pope Pius IX reformed the Eastern Catholics Churches' mode of episcopal election, stepped in to nominate two bishops in Audo's own Church, and had him come to Rome to consecrate them in 1870 while, at the same time, attending the First Vatican Council, where the dogma of papal infallibility was introduced. After speaking strongly against this, the patriarch refused to implement the Council's reforms until he was forced to by Rome in 1872. The Vatican additionally managed to assert its authority by having all Chaldean Catholic prelates accept the papal infallibility dogma by 1878. Such actions eventually led to increased Latinization of the Chaldean rite, bringing it more

³⁸⁰ Since the early twentieth century, the pejorative term 'Nestorian' has gradually been replaced with the more politically correct 'Assyrian,' in reference to the Church of the East's ethnic identity, and in opposition to 'Chaldean,' which had been used as a buzzword to refer to Catholics since the 1830s. In the same way, therefore, 'Assyrian' has become a catchphrase to simply refer to someone from the Church of the East (instead of 'Nestorian'). In addition to the enmity generated between the two Churches and their adherents as a result of their rivalries and ideological differences (namely, union with Rome or not), this has recently led to the belief that these people—who speak the same language, live in the same geographical area, share kinship ties and were once adherents of the same Church—actually belong to two separate ethnicities: one Assyrian from Nineveh, and the other 'Chaldean' from Babylon. It has further led to a myriad of complex political and social problems for both groups in Iraq and the diaspora, especially since the 1990s.

into conformity with the Western Church. Often though, such instances of submission and rebellion were part of a complex negotiation process, and came to be used as tools by patriarchs and prelates—in the same way that Rome could use excommunication (or the threat of it)—to negotiate over resources and authority. Such intrigues led, in 1874, to the “New Chaldeans” schism, which ended in 1889. Those who rebelled against patriarchal authority in the Alqosh patriarchate’s former heartland, however, not only refused to unite with that of Qudshānis, but they also rejected traditional teachings regarding Nestorius and his theology, making them something of a hybrid middle-group that was simultaneously both anti-Catholic and anti- ‘Nestorian.’ Despite such controversies, the Chaldean Catholic Church continued to witness considerable growth during the nineteenth century’s second half and, after 1890, there were no major divisions, as the patriarchs who succeeded Audo accepted papal infallibility and were more submissive to Rome.

Despite isolated attempts to convert the Qudshānis catholicos-patriarch to Catholicism through bribery in c. 1835, 1841, 1843–47, 1877, and c. 1885, efforts to bring about this Church’s submission to Rome had largely been put on hold and only regained momentum in the 1890s, once the Chaldean Catholic Church had achieved internal discipline and uniformity. Generally, this intense activity had only been met with the traditionalist patriarchates’ inertia, demonstrating the absolute obsolescence of the practice of hereditary succession—by which candidates were chosen due to pedigree rather than merit and had no incentive for improvement. Nonetheless, the Church of the East was also beginning to regroup through the vital support it had been receiving from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Assyrian Mission since 1883, and without which it might not have been able to withstand Catholic advances. These reached a highpoint during the patriarchate of Joseph-Emmanuel II Thomas—the pope’s “Delegate to the Nestorians”—who unscrupulously thwarted an attempt by inhabitants of the Nineveh Plain to return to the Church of the East in 1909–10. By the beginning of the First World War, the urbane Chaldean Catholic Church possessed better educational infrastructure and facilities, functioning convents and monasteries, well-educated clergy and prelates that more effectively served their congregations, was wealthier and had more political clout, despite being only slightly smaller in population than the impoverished Qudshānis patriarchate. At the same time, however, it had been heavily Latinized; it had lost its independence and autonomy, as well as its historic jurisdiction over its faithful in India, and its patriarchs had become practical hostages of the Vatican. The rural and isolated Church of the East, on the other hand, while desperately poor, without a powerful European protector, and lacking even the most basic schools, managed to preserve its apostolic traditions and faith, as well as its dignity and independence through sheer faith and, fortunately, a brief boost from the Anglican Church. Luckily, the Catholics’ attempt to completely subsume this Church failed, and the traditionalist faction continues to this day—thankfully without hereditary

succession. Nevertheless, the continued push to convert traditionalists to Catholicism, however, has never ceased.³⁸¹

The historical trajectory detailed here thus continues to resonate with contemporary issues faced by many minority faith communities navigating between leadership legitimacy, doctrinal identity, unity, and diversity in a globalized world. For many such communities, the enduring question of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and cultural preservation remains salient, along with the critical challenge of adaptation to shifting socio-political realities. Additionally, the interplay between tradition and reform, the role of external influences, and contested tensions between centralized authority and local autonomy continue to shape communal narratives today. To a large extent, therefore, the complex legacy of autonomy, union, and schism within the Chaldean Catholic Church and the broader Assyrian community reflects general inter-Christian relations in the modern Middle East. In a world increasingly marked by cultural and religious interconnections, understanding this past offers valuable insights into how deeply political, linguistic, and doctrinal issues intertwine with questions of communal belonging and spiritual leadership. Moreover, these historical wounds and divisions ultimately serve as valuable reminders, underscoring the importance of informed dialogue founded in mutual respect and charity. They are furthermore essential to enriching our recognition and appreciation of ongoing diverse Christian traditions' legitimacy, as well as their struggles for religious self-definition and survival amid shifting centers of power and influence. Such lessons are hence crucial to inter-Church relations and the broader quest to foster Christian unity, without erasing identity in today's pluralistic religious landscape.

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³⁸¹ As late as May 2008, Bishop Bawai Soro of California was received into the Chaldean Catholic Church with about 1,000 families from his former diocese, “Assyrian bishop explains his journey into communion with the Catholic Church,” *Catholic News Agency*, 5 June 2008, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/12844/assyrian-bishop-explains-his-journey-into-communion-with-the-catholic-church>.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Statistics of the Chaldean Catholic Church (1757–1913)

Total Number of Chaldean Catholics (1757–1913):

Region/ Diocese	Hindī (1757) ³⁸²	Badger (1850) ³⁸³	Martin (1867) ³⁸⁴	Chabot (1896) ³⁸⁵	Naṣrī (1906) ³⁸⁶	Tfinkdji (1913) ³⁸⁷
	Population	Families	Population	Population	Population	Population
Mosul	6,000	1,160	21,030	23,700	23,700	31,900
Basra	---	?	1,500	3,000	3,000?	1,110
Vicariates	---	---	---	2,060	2,060?	2,780
Baghdad	?	60	2,000	3,000	3,500	7,100
Diyarbakır	8,000	150	2,000	3,000	3,000	4,180
Mardin		60	1,000	850	900	1,670
Siirt	5,000	300	11,000	5,000	7,400	5,380
Salāmas	?	150	8,000	10,000	10,000	10,460
‘Amādīyah	---	466	6,020	3,000	3,000	4,970
‘Aqrah and Zēbar	---	---	2,718	1,000	1,000	2,390
Cizre	---	157	7,000	5,200	5,200?	6,400
Zakho	---	22	3,000	3,500	3,500	4,880
Kirkuk	---	150	4,000	7,000	7,000	5,840
Sanandaj	---	68	1,000	700	70	900
Urmia	---	---	---	6,000	6,000	7,800
Van and Hakkâri	---	---	---	1,780	1,700	3,850
Total:	c. 20,000	c. 2,643*	70,268	78,790	81,030?	101,610

* Badger estimated the total Chaldean Catholic population at the time as not exceeding 20,000.

³⁸² Wilmshurst, *Ecclesiastical Organisation*, 359.

³⁸³ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174–76.

³⁸⁴ Paulin Martin, *La Chaldée: Esquisse historique suivie de quelques réflexions sur l’Orient* (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1867), 205, 207.

³⁸⁵ Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

³⁸⁶ Bītris Naṣrī, “Lam‘ah fī al-Ibrāshīyāt al-Kildānīyah wa-Silsilat Asāqifat`ha,” *al-Machriq* 9: 14–16 (15 February–15 March 1906): 639–47, 683–91, and 744–50. Since much of Naṣrī’s statistics and information agree with those of Chabot, his figures have been used to fill in the former’s lacunae.

³⁸⁷ Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

Towns and Villages with Chaldean Catholic Inhabitants (1850–1913):

Region/Diocese	Badger (1850) ³⁸⁸	Martin (1867) ³⁸⁹	Chabot (1896) ³⁹⁰	Nasri (1906) ³⁹¹	Tfinkdji (1913) ³⁹²
Mosul	9	8	10	10	10
Baghdad	1	1	2	1	2
Basra	?	1	5	1	3
Vicariates	---	---	9	8	12
Diyarbakır	2	2	6	4	9
Mardin	1	2	5	2	6
Siirt	12	35	37	37	37
Salāmas	1?	20	23	21	12
‘Amādiyah	16	27	14	14	17
‘Aqrah and Zēbar	---	19	13	15	19
Cizre	5	20	17	17	18
Zakho	2	15	15	15	15
Kirkuk	4	10	14	6	9
Sanandaj	3	2	2	1	1
Urmia	---	---	70	70	22
Van and Hakkâri	---	---	12	13	10
Total:	56	162	254	235	179

Statistics of Chaldean Catholic Priests (1850–1913):

Region/ Diocese	Badger (1850) ³⁹³	Martin (1867) ³⁹⁴	Chabot (1896) ³⁹⁵	Tfinkdji (1913) ³⁹⁶
Mosul	20	26–40	71	45
Baghdad	2	3	3–4	9
Basra	?	?	3	3
Vicariates	---	---	6	14
Diyarbakır	4	6	7	12
Mardin	4	2	3	6
Siirt	9	20	17	21
Salāmas	3	10	10	24
‘Amādiyah	8	10	13	19
‘Aqrah and Zēbar	---	10–17	8	16
Cizre	5	15	14	17
Zakho	0	?	15	13

³⁸⁸ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174–76.

³⁸⁹ Martin, *La Chaldée*, 205, 207.

³⁹⁰ Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

³⁹¹ Naṣrī, “Lam‘ah fī al-Ibrāshīyāt al-Kildānīyah,” 639–47, 683–91, and 744–50.

³⁹² Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

³⁹³ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174–76.

³⁹⁴ Martin, *La Chaldée*, 205, 207.

³⁹⁵ Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

³⁹⁶ Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

Kirkuk	6	10	22	19
Sanandaj	3	1	2	3
Urmia	---	---	40	43
Van and Hakkâri	---	---	14	32
Total:	64	113–34	248–49	296

Statistics of Chaldean Catholic Places of Worship (1850–1913):

Region/Diocese	Badger (1850) ³⁹⁷	Chabot (1896) ³⁹⁸	Tfinkdji (1913) ³⁹⁹
Mosul	15	31	27
Baghdad	1	1	3
Basra	---	2	3
Vicariates	---	3	9
Diyarbakır	2	4	9
Mardin	1	1	3
Siirt	12	21	48
Salāmas	2	12	23
‘Amādiyah	14	16	15
‘Aqrah and Zēbar	---	12	15
Cizre	5	17	14
Zakho	1	20	20
Kirkuk	4	16	11
Sanandaj	4	2	2
Urmia	---	18	28
Van and Hakkâri	---	1	14
Total:	61	177	234

Statistics of Chaldean Catholic Schools (1867–1913):

Region/Diocese	Martin (1867) ⁴⁰⁰	Chabot (1896) ⁴⁰¹	Tfinkdji (1913) ⁴⁰²
Mosul City	7	3	5
Nineveh Plain	3	?	12
Baghdad	1	1	2
Basra	---	2	4
Vicariates	---	--	4
Diyarbakır	1	5	10
Mardin	1	1	3

³⁹⁷ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174–76.

³⁹⁸ Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

³⁹⁹ Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

⁴⁰⁰ Martin, *La Chaldée*, 205, 207.

⁴⁰¹ Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

⁴⁰² Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

Siirt	5	8	9
Salāmas	10	--	14
‘Amādiyah	1	6	10
‘Aqrah and Zēbar	1	2	7
Cizre	4	13	7
Zakho	---	4	6
Kirkuk	2	5	7
Sanandaj	---	2	1
Urmia	---	---	12
Van and Hakkâri	---	---	17
Total:	36	52	130

Appendix II: Statistics of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Urmia and Salāmas, Iran (1825–1913)

Total Number of Chaldean Catholics:

Region / Diocese	Wolff (1825) ⁴⁰³	Badger (1850) ⁴⁰⁴	Martin (1867) ⁴⁰⁵	Chabot (1896) ⁴⁰⁶	Naṣrī (1906) ⁴⁰⁷	Tfinkdji (1913) ⁴⁰⁸
	Families	Families	Population	Population	Population	Population
Salāmas	c. 142	150	8,000	10,000	10,000	10,460
Urmia	10	---	---	6,000	6,000	7,800
Total:	c. 152	150	8,000	16,000	16,000	18,260

⁴⁰³ Joseph Wolff, *Missionary Journal of Rev. Joseph Wolff, Missionary to the Jews*, 3 vols (London: Duncan, 1827–29), 3:144–46, 155.

⁴⁰⁴ Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174–76.

⁴⁰⁵ Paulin Martin, *La Chaldée: Esquisse historique suivie de quelques réflexions sur l’Orient* (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1867), 205, 207.

⁴⁰⁶ Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

⁴⁰⁷ Bitris Naṣrī, “Lam‘ah fī al-Ibrāshīyāt al-Kildānīyah wa-Silsilat Asāqifat`ha,” *al-Machriq* 9: 14–16 (15 February–15 March 1906): 639–47, 683–91, and 744–50. Since much of Naṣrī’s statistics and information agree with those of Chabot, his figures have been used to fill in the former’s lacunae.

⁴⁰⁸ Tfinkdji, *L’église chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

Towns and Villages with Chaldean Catholic Inhabitants:

Region/ Diocese	Wolff (1825) ⁴⁰⁹	Badger (1850) ⁴¹⁰	Martin (1867) ⁴¹¹	Chabot (1896) ⁴¹²	Nasri (1906) ⁴¹³	Tfinkdji (1913) ⁴¹⁴
Salāmas	11	1?	20	23	21	12
Urmia	1	---	---	70	70	22
Total:	12	1?	20	93	91	34

Other Statistics Pertaining to the Chaldean Catholic Diocese of Salāmas
(1825–1913) :

Source	Priests	Places of Worship
Wolff (1825) ⁴¹⁵	2	3
Badger (1850) ⁴¹⁶	3	2
Chabot (1896) ⁴¹⁷	10	12
Tfinkdji (1913) ⁴¹⁸	24	23

⁴⁰⁹

Wolff, *Missionary Journal*, 3:144–46, 155.

⁴¹⁰

Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174–76.

⁴¹¹

Martin, *La Chaldée*, 205, 207.

⁴¹²

Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

⁴¹³

Naṣrī, “Lam‘ah fī al-Ibrāshīyāt al-Kildānīyah,” 639–47, 683–91, and 744–50.

⁴¹⁴

Tfinkdji, *L’eglise chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

⁴¹⁵

Wolff, *Missionary Journal*, 3:144–46.

⁴¹⁶

Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, 1:174–76.

⁴¹⁷

Chabot, “État Religieux des Diocèses,” 433–53.

⁴¹⁸

Tfinkdji, *L’eglise chaldéenne catholique*, 37, 77.

Table: The Church of the East's Rival Traditionalist and Catholic Patriarchal Lines Between 1553 and 1918					
Sulāqā Line (1553–1662)	Qudshānis Line (Since 1662)	Alqosh Line (Until 1804)	Diyarbakr Line (1681–1828)	‘Chaldean’ Church (Since 1830)	
[Catholic]	[Traditionalist]	[Traditionalist]	[Catholic]	[Catholic]	
Sulāqā started a new pro-Catholic line in 1553		Shim'on VII Isho'yāḥb bar Māmā (1538–1558)	In 1681, after pro-Catholic faction had been without a patriarch for 10-20 years, Metropolitan of Diyarbakr converted to Catholicism and started a new Catholic line. In 1724, they deceitfully obtained Ottoman recognition, delegitimising Alqosh line and uniting with its remnant after 1828. Joseph V was never recognised by Rome.		
Shim'on VIII Yohannān Sulāqā Ballō (1553–1555)		Elyā VI, son of the Priest George (1558–1591)			
‘Abdīsho’ IV Yohannān Mārion (1555–1570)					
Yahpallāhā IV Shim'on (1572–1580)		Elyā VII ‘the Catholic’ (1591–1617)			
Shim'on IX Dīnḥā (1580–1600)					
Shim'on X Elyā (1600–1638)		Elyā VIII Shim'on (1617–1660)			
Shim'on XI Isho'yāḥb (1638–1656)			Joseph I (1681–1696) Joseph II Sībā Ma'rūf (1696–1712) Joseph III Moses Timothy Mārāwḡn (1714–1757) Joseph IV Lazarus Hindī (1759–1781) Joseph V Augustine Hindī (1781–1828) Yohannān VIII [Elyā] Hormizd (1780–1830–1838) Nicholas I Zay'ā (1839–1846) Joseph VI Audo (1847–1878) Elyā XIV ‘Abūyōnān’ (1878–1894) George ‘Abdīsho’ V Khayāt (1894–1899) Joseph VI Emmanuel II Thomas (1900–1946)		
Shim'on XII Yahpallāhā Yawnān (1656–1662)					
Shim'on XIII	Shim'on XIII Dīnḥā (1662–1700)	Elyā IX Yohannān Mārāwḡn (1660–1700)			
Dīnḥā (estranged from Alqosh line)	Shim'on XIV Shlēmōn (1700–1740)	Elyā X Mārāwḡn (1700–1722)			
joined Sulāqā line, but cut off ties with Rome and settled at Qudshānis in 1672; Present Assyrian Church of the East.	Shim'on XV Michael Mukharras (1740–1780)	Elyā XI Dīnḥā (1722–1778)			
	Shim'on XVI Yawnān (1780–1820)	Elyā XII Isho'yāḥb (1778–1804)			
		Yohannān VIII Hormizd (estranged from Alqosh line) consecrated as Catholic patriarch in 1780, but not recognised by Rome until 1830.	United Alqosh and Diyarbakr lines; Present Chaldean Catholic Church.		
	Shim'on XVII Abraham (1820–1860)				
	Shim'on XVIII Rūḇel (1860–1903)				
	Shim'on XIX Benjamin (1903–1918)				

- Explanatory Notes: Prior to 1553, the Church of the East had only one traditionalist patriarchal line at Alqosh.
- 1553–1662 (109 years): Two patriarchal lines – one traditionalist at Alqosh, one Catholic (their See was constantly moving).
 - 1662–1681 (19 years): Two patriarchal lines – both traditionalist, at Alqosh and Qudshānis.
 - 1681–1781 (10 years): Three patriarchal lines – two traditionalist ones at Alqosh and Qudshānis, one Catholic at Diyarbakr.
 - 1781–1804 (13 years): Four patriarchal lines – two traditionalist ones at Alqosh and Qudshānis, two Catholic at Diyarbakr and Mosul.
 - 1804–1828 (24 years): Three patriarchal lines – one traditionalist at Qudshānis, two Catholic at Diyarbakr and Mosul.
 - 1828–1918 (87 years): Two patriarchal lines – one traditionalist at Qudshānis, one Catholic at Mosul.

Figure 1. (Source: Nicholas Al-Jeloo)

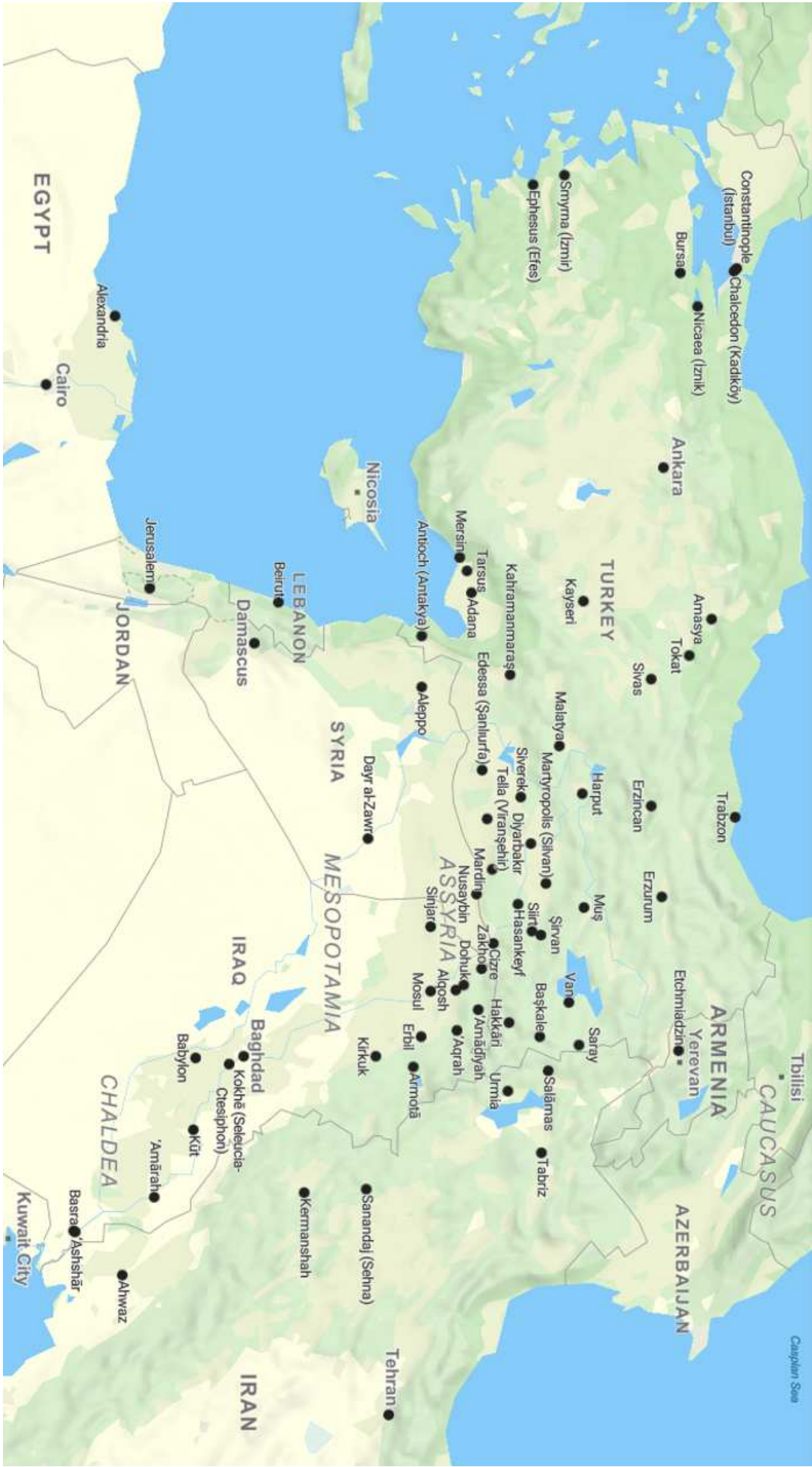
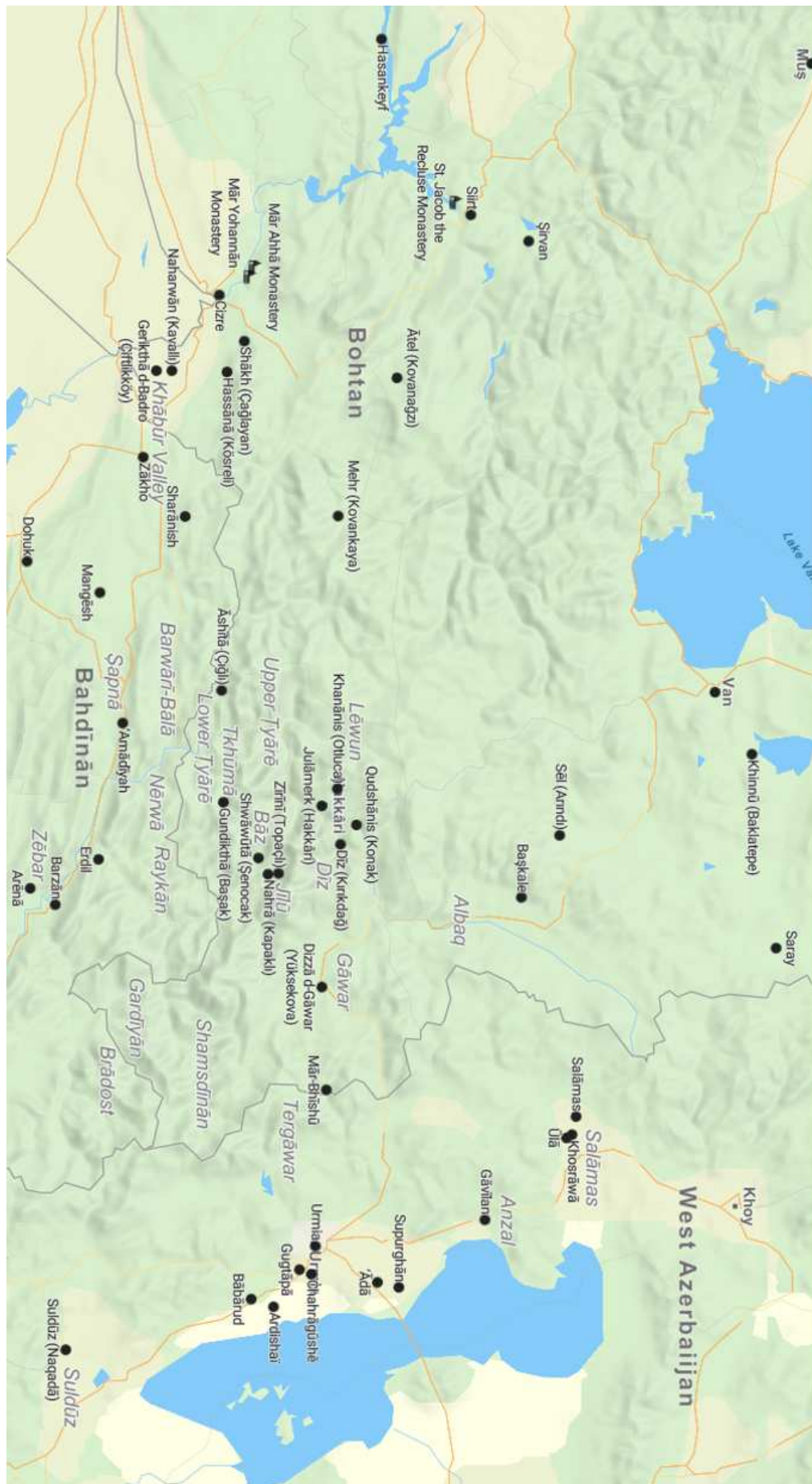


Figure 2. General map of the Middle east illustrating many of the places mentioned in the text (Source: Nicolas Al-Jeloo).



Bohtan (Source: Nicholas Al-Jeloo).

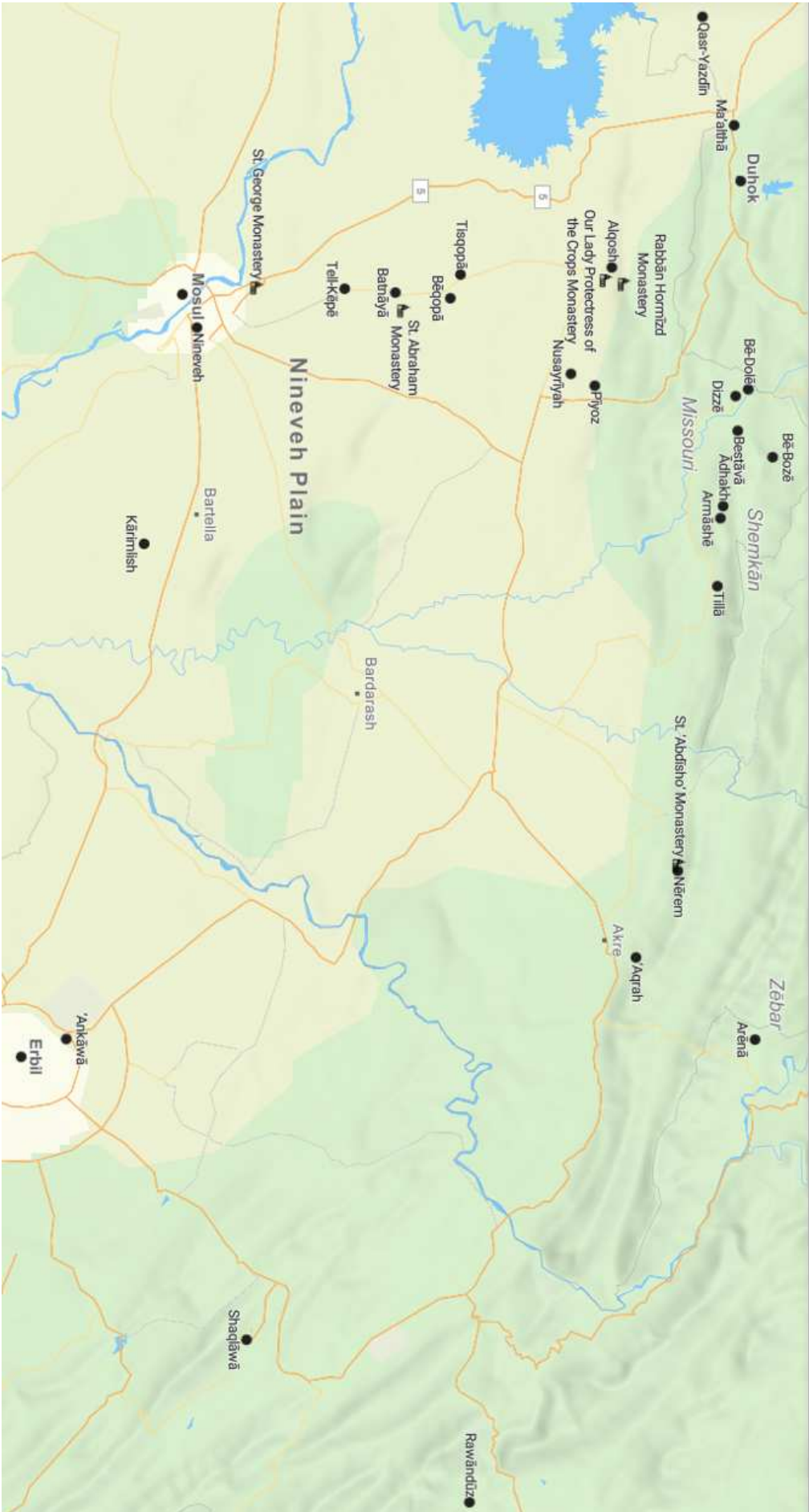
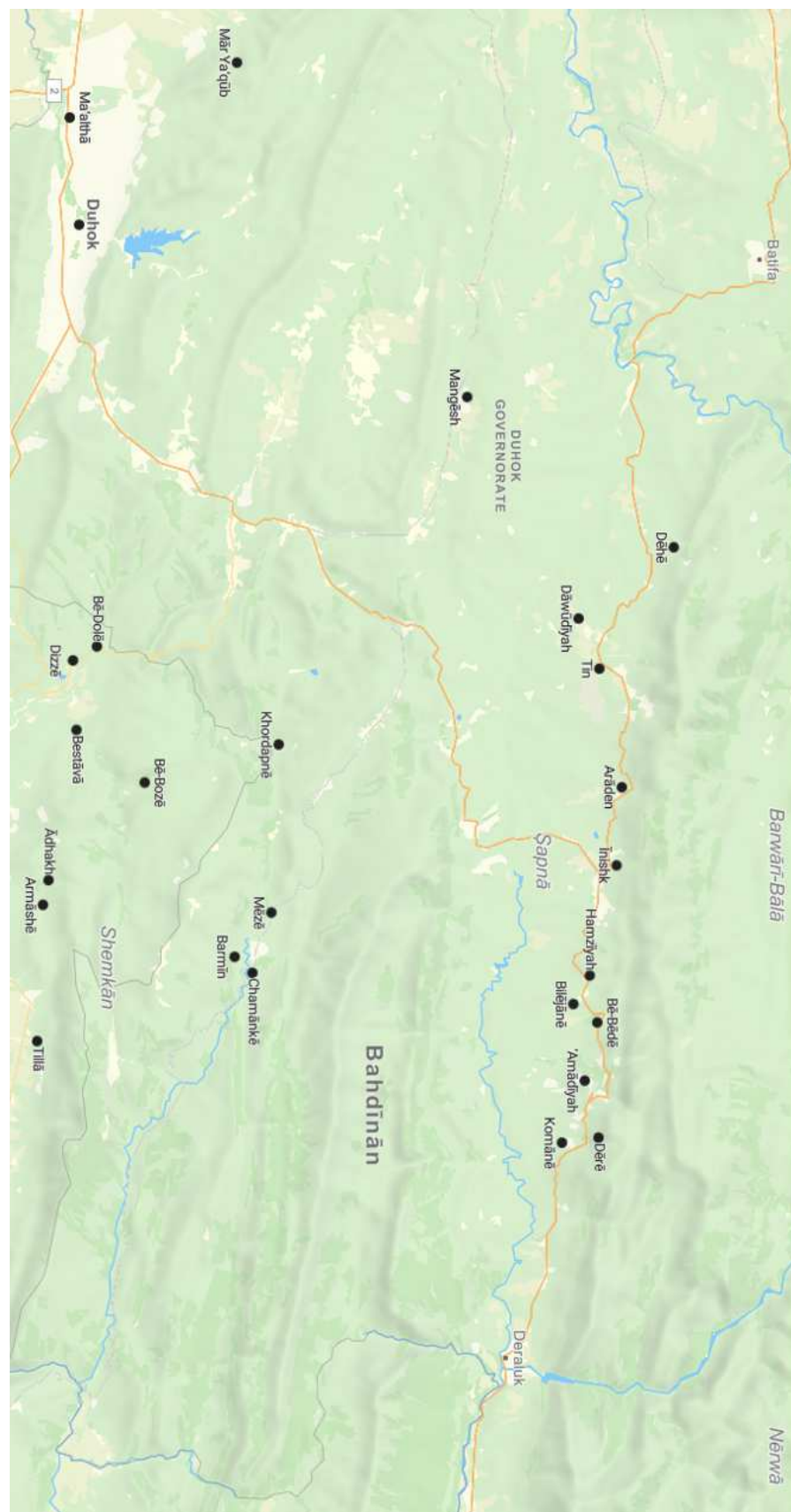


Figure 4. Map of the Nineveh and Erbil Plains, illustrating locations mentioned in the text (Source: Nicholas Al-Jeloo).



(Source: Nicholas Al-Jeloo).



Figure 6. Group of 'Nestorians' Converted in 1904

In the first row, from left to right: the subdeacon John, of the patriarchal family, Nimrod, notable, of the converted 'Nestorians,' Fr. Samuel Giamil, superior and general abbot of the Chaldean monks, H. B. Mgr. Emmanuel II, Patriarch of Babylon, the bishop Īsho'yāh̄b, in his 'Nestorian' costume (newly converted), Joseph, archdeacon priest of the 'Nestorians.' – The rest is a group of converts.

Source: Joseph Tfinkdji. *L'église chaldéenne catholique autrefois et aujourd'hui*. Paris: Bureaux des études ecclésiastiques, 1913, 21.

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- Comparative studies of the role of the Church in community life in Europe. Interventions of the clergy and the religious hierarchies in civil and penal law. The use of spiritual sanctions in official documents produced by temporal power holders.
- The application of methodologies developed in social sciences and the humanities in contemporary historiography.
- Pilgrimage as form of Christian devotion and meeting place for different religions in the Balkans.
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