CORPVS CHRISTIANORVM

CONCILIORUM OECUMENICORUM GENERALIUMQUE DECRETA

V/2

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V/2

The General Councils of the Eastern Christian Churches

The Synods of the Church of the East

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CRITICAL EDITION OF THE DECISIONS OF THE COUNCILS OF THE SYRIAC CHURCHES

The work of compiling the volumes of the *COGD* began in the early twenty-first century. They sought to create a space for the considerable amount of research conducted since the publication of the *Conciliorum Œcumenicorum Decreta* (*COD*) from Nicaea to Vatican I by the research group founded by Giuseppe Dossetti in Bologna in 1953 (a center that was something between a monastic *didaskaleion* and a bastion of excellence in historical-critical knowledge). That volume, issued by Herder with a yellow cover, had put the *COD* in the hands of Vatican II fathers and scholars of theology and history. Completed in record time and delivered to John XXIII in early October 1962, its abbreviation (*COD*) populated the notes of much of the historical-theological research from then on, allowing for a conscious study of the complexity and long duration of the church's conciliar tradition, even in its Roman Catholic aspect.

The need to update the *COD* initiated a now twenty-year long research project during which eleven volumes have now appeared of the glorious *Corpus Christianorum* editions. Each of them, collected in six volumes that mark the *COGD* series so far in print, has had its own unique history. The history of research, the history of the churches, and the biographies of church authorities are intwined in the *COGD* project, all this while the scholars working on the project were witnessing the radical evil that has manifested itself in so many parts of the world.

I clearly recall when Giuseppe Alberigo passed away. It happened on 15 June 2007. He had slipped into a coma in February of that year, just a few days after an audience with an old friend, a colleague of his from the 1950s at the Catholic Commission for Ecumenical Affairs who, two years earlier, had ascended to the papal throne as Benedict XVI. Alberigo had that audience on 7 February to deliver the *COGD I* – containing the conciliar decisions from Nicaea I to Nicaea II, the Quinisext Council included – to Benedict XVI as a tribute. (1) The ravages of illness saved the master of the Bologna school from

(1) On the conference, see M. Velati, 'Willebrands at the Council', in A. Denaux – P. De Mey (edd.), *The Ecumenical Legacy of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands (1909-2006)*, Louvain 2012, p. 97-116.

having to smile bitterly at the *crassissima ignorantia* of the anonymous writer who had reproached him in the column of a Roman newspaper (and under the shelter of three cowardly asterisks) for the use of that *Generaliumque* in the series titles, as if it were a doctrinal smear with respect to the Catholic faith. In reality, that conciliar qualification 'general' belongs to the Latin and papal tradition, to the Roman editions of the councils, and to the magisterium of the twentieth century papacy. It is a fact that could only have escaped those who wished to confuse or who had confused a Bellarminian manualist reckoning with tradition or history, or both. (2)

Just as sharp is my recollection of the sense of uncertainty that was felt at the end of the Council of Crete in June 2016, which was presided over by Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarch, who had the historic task of bringing the Pan-Orthodox conciliar meeting – the first since 787 – to fruition. For decades the Throne of Andrew had witnessed the thread of that gathering of unity and worship being woven. The absence of the patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and the absence of his church from that synod in Crete (which confirmed the consent Kirill had given by signing every page of the texts submitted to the January 2016 synaxis of patriarchs in Geneva) marked that assembly – published, *pour cause*, as volume IV in the *COGD* – with a void. (3) But the Russian absence, above all, carried with it the germ of the rupture of the communion between the mother church of Constantinople and the largest Orthodox patriarchate. That schism could only be, as ever, a *praeconium* of the war that again in 2014 and then since 2022 has seen Christians kill Christians, Orthodox kill Orthodox, and the various churches fatalistically align themselves with a no less political and cynical agenda than the one for which each reproaches – not entirely wrongly – the others.

It is not a recollection belonging to the *petite histoire* of this *Corpus Christianorum* series and of FSCIRE that promoted it, but a fact present to all: the tragedy of another war in the Middle East that accompanied the birth of this *COGD V* volume. It is a *bellum perpetuum* that truly touches upon the *mysterium iniquitatis*, a deluge of blood and tears that has flooded the lands making up Syria and Iraq in a conflict that has sown mourning, horror, devastation, and immense hatred in the cradle of the other Christian East, east of the Orontes River that is custodian to a form of Christianity that is precious in the polyphony of traditions and faith. Originating as an anti-government uprising against Alawite President Bashar Hafez al-Assad in the aftermath of the Arab Spring of 2011, that insurgency underwent a series of metamorphoses. After the constitutional referendum of 2012, it became a confessional-based civil war. (4) From 2013 – with a convergence between opposition parties that saw the designs of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Kurdish People's Defense Units (YPG) intertwine, the emergence of the Jabhat al-Nusra Janath, and then the establishment of a jihadist army – the conflict turned into a war of internal occupation. Since 5 July 2014, it has been an expression of the bloody and bloodthirsty utopia of the 'caliphate' proclaimed that day by Ibrahim al-Badri, known by the alias of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who had already participated in massacres in northwestern Iraq in the name of the 'Islamic State'. Such a sorrowful and terrorist twisting of an albeit small portion of Sunni Islam reversed centuries of coexistence of Muslims and Christians. Though punctuated by episodes of intolerance, the region's multifaceted Islam had, for centuries, protected the non-Greek and non-Latin Christian traditions of the Levant and prevented them from unification into the institutional and doctrinal ponderousness of the first two Romes. Instead of a cohabitation – not devoid of violence, but which had preserved a Christian polyphony in the lands of apostolic preaching – those years were hammered by ruthless soldiers who had been armed from outside. Under black flags decorated in a twist of fate by a presumed 'seal' of the Prophet put into circulation in 1854, (5) they brought irreparable destruction and perpetrated disgusting crimes, inflicting harm on believers of many faiths, along with the faithful of ancient Syriac Christianity.

The slow pace of such research like that regarding the decisions of the great councils meant that the volumes of the *COGD V* – the first tomes of which were to be devoted to the Syriac tradition – developed along with this war. A lazy suggestion, which some repeated, was that *COGD V* should merely spruce up and update the Jean-Baptiste Chabot's (1860-1948) monumental edition of the *Synodicon Orientale*. In the early twentieth century, that work had rearranged the scholarly work done in the preceding decades at the Vati-

(2) See my 'Concili, ecumenicità, e storia: Note di discussione', *Cristianesimo nella storia* 28 (2007), p. 509-542.

(3) The historical references are in my introduction to the volume and also in *The Pan-Orthodox Council of 2016 – A New Era for the Orthodox Church? Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, edd. V. N. Makrides – S. Rimestad, Berlin 2021. On its preparation, see V. Ionita, *Hotarârile întrunirilor panortodoxe din 1923 pâna în 2009 – spre Sfântul si Marele Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe*, Bucharest 2013.

(4) See F. Balanche, *Sectarianism in Syria's Civil War: A Geopolitical Study Featuring 70 Original Maps*, Washington, DC 2018, available at washingtoninstitute.org, and J. Tinnes, 'Bibliography: Conflict in Syria (part 4)', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13/14 (2019), available at universityleiden.nl.

(5) A. El Shamsy, 'State Fell for a Long-Debunked 19th Century Hoax', *New Lines Magazine*, 28 October 2021.

can Library by Cardinal Jean-Baptiste F. Pitra (6) (1812-1889) at the Institut Catholique in Paris by Jean-Pierre-Paulin Martin (7) (1840-1890), and at Leuven by Thomas Joseph Lamy (8) (1827-1907).

That Chabot edition, unsurpassed and unforgettable, (9) had appeared in 1902 and it was based on two apographs of a *codex unicus* owned by the Notre-Dame de Sémences monastery in Alqosh (labelled as Alqosh 169) and described in 1929 by Fr. Jacques Marie Vöste op. (10) The more complete of the

(6) J.-B. Pitra – J.-P.-P.Martin, *Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi parata*, 4 vols, Paris 1883.

(7) Martin also authored *Actes du Brigandage d'Éphèse: Traduction faite sur le texte syriaque contenu dans le manuscrit 14530 du Musée britannique*, Amiens 1874, and *Le Pseudo-synode connu dans l'histoire sous le nom de Brigandage d'Éphèse étudié d'après ses Actes retrouvés en syriaque*, Paris 1875.

(8) On the syri.ac site, see the introduction in German by O. Braun, in *Das Buch der Synhados oder Synodicon Orientale*, Amsterdam 1900, and *Concilium Seleuciae et Ctespihonti Habitum Anno 410*, ed. T. J. Lamy, Leuven 1868.

(9) The question of the Syriac translations of the empire's great assizes was still unresolved, this was the subject of the research of S. G. F. Perry, *An Ancient Syriac Document, Purporting to Be the Record, in its Chief Features, of the Second Synod of Ephesus, and Disclosing Historical Matter Interesting to the Church at Large*, part. 1, Oxford 1867, along with his *The Second Synod of Ephesus, together with Certain Extracts Relating to it, from Syriac Mss. Preserved in the British Museum*, Dartford 1881. Contemporary to his work was that of G. Hoffmann, editor of *Verhandlungen der Kirchenversammlung zu Ephesus am XXII. August CDXLIX aus einer syrischen Handschrift vom Jahre DXXXV übersetzt von Dr Georg Hoffmann, ordentlichem Professor der morgenländischen Sprachen*, Kiel 1873. There followed: O. Braun – C. Bezold, 'Syrisiche Text über die erste allgemeine Synode von Constantinople', in *Orientalische Studien: Theodore Nöldeke zum siebzigsten Geburtstag (2. März 1906) gewidmet von Freuden und Schülern und in ihrem Auftrag herausgegeben*, 2 vols, Gieszen 1906, vol. 1, p. 463-478; F. Schulthess, 'Die Syrischen Kanones der Synoden von Nicaea bis Chalcedon nebst einigen zugehörigen Dokumenten', *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse* 10/12 (1908), p. 29-44; *Akten der Ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449: Syrisch mit Georg Hoffmann's Deutscher Übersetzung und seinen Anmerkungen*, ed. J. Flemming, Berlin 1917; and the different work of R. B. Rackham, 'The Text of the Canons of Ancyra', in *Studia Biblica et Ecclesiastica: Essays Chiefly in Biblical and Patristic Criticism by Members of the University of Oxford*, 5 vols, Oxford 1891, vol. 3, which has Latin, Syriac, and Armenian versions of the Greek texts (with corresponding English translation).

(10) J. M. Vöste, 'Catalogue de la Bibliothèque syro-chaldéenne du couvent de Notre-Dame des semences près d'Alqoš (Iraq)', *Angelicum* 5 (1928), an excerpt of 144 pages. The previous catalogue was that of A. Scher, 'Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Couvent de Notre-Dame des Semences', *Journal Asiatique* 10th series, 7 (1906), p. 479-512. As Paul Mouterde noted harshly, 'Codex CLXIX ... the most important of the whole series, has only been described from the 14th chapter. The beginning, including among other things all the material of Msgr. Chabot's *Synodicon Orientale*, has received merely a mention: *Actes des Concile Occidentaux et Orientaux*. The bulk of documents known under this vast heading is no more inventoried in the present catalogue than it was in Bishop Scher's *Notice*. For a more detailed analysis, one must refer to the existing descriptions of a copy of the *Codex des Semences*, MS 82 of the Vatican's Syriac Borgia Collection. The most precise is that which Msgr. Chabot inserted in the preface of his *Synodicon* on pages 4-7. Father Vösté refers us to it, without warning us that it is not the original, but a copy to which this description refers'. S. Mouterde, in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph Année 1929, n. 14*, Beirut 1929, p. 208-210. Vösté (1883-1949) published *Disciplina caldea (Synodicon orientale: Collectio canonum synodicorum d'Ebedjesus de Nisibe)*, Rome 1931, and *Atti del Sinodo caldeo celebrati nel convento di Rabban Hormizd vicino ad Alqosh dal 7 al 21 giugno 1853*, Rome 1942, which bear witness to his knowledge of the people and place.

copies, made in the early nineteenth century, had arrived in Rome in 1869 through the hands of Msgr. Joseph Clement David. (11) Comprised of two volumes, it had entered the Museo Borgiano of Propaganda Fide (labelled K. VI, 4 and 3) and was later incorporated into the Vatican Library (labelled Borg. Syr. 82 and 819). (12) The other apograph – used by Chabot and containing only the *Synodicon* – was MS Syr. 332, which had become part of the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in 1895.

Although other copies were known, (13) and given that the *codex unicus* had meanwhile been transported from the Kurdish mountains to Baghdad and renumbered as Baghdad 509, the prevailing idea was that one could or should rely on the apographs. Chabot's work and/or its reprint edited by

(11) On this Syro-Catholic prelate (1829-1890), see J. M. Vösté, 'Clement Joseph David, archevêque syrien de Damas, Notes bio-bibliogaphiques', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 14 (1948), p. 219-275. I have been informed that a more recent biography exists in Arabic: B. F. Affas, *Iqlimis Yusuf Daud/Mgr Clement Joseph David*, Baghdad 1985.

(12) Studied by I. Guidi, 'Note miscellanee: La Cronica siriaca di Michele I', *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana* 3 (1889), p. 167-169 and by O. Braun, *Das Buch der Synhados oder Synodicon Orientale*, Amsterdam 1900, with the translation and some essays on previous studies of T. J. Lamy, *Concilium Seleuciae et Ctespihonti Habitum Anno 410*, Leuven 1868, and O. Braun, 'Zwei Synoden des Katholikos Timotheos I', *Oriens Christianus* 2 (1902), p. 283-311.

(13) Hubert Kaufhold, in his review of W. Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht*, vol. 1, in *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 100 (1983), p. 724-735 (here 730-731), points this out, as does Selb's work at p. 64-65. Regarding the Arabic versions, they were already noted by H. Kaufhold, *Die Rechtssammlung des Gabriel von Basra und ihr Verhältnis zu den anderen juristischen Sammelwerken der Nestorianer*, Berlin 1976, p. 24-25.

Sebastian Brock or a selection of the more important councils (14) were repurposed, a practice of which there were some examples on the web before the outbreak of the war.

Yet it was precisely the mounting catastrophe in those Syrian and Iraqi lands, and the habit of pursuing the search for sources with a relentless patience, that kept the Bolognese group from surrendering to a devout plagiarism. Instead, they were compelled to continue wondering whether finding the *codex unicus* was not even more necessary, now that it was more difficult to locate in the midst of a conflict that was reaccustoming the world to endless wars.

Added to this was a consideration on another level: the war and the establishment of the Daesh (the Arabic acronym of ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah fī l-'Irāq wa-sh-Shām, that is, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS) made critical research the *only* way that scholars could speak of their love to a battered and martyred church, to worshippers and faithful of all ages, to monks and clerics, to authorities in monasteries and metropolises without falling into that trap of 'Christianophobia' that right-wingers used, not to defend the persecuted, but to fuel an ideology of the clash of civilizations. That hope of being able to express love and compassion, not alongside study, but *through* study, was the outcome of an interior position that, once perceived as possible or necessary, became inextinguishable in the souls of those who practiced it.

Indeed, the heritage of Syriac churches was being destroyed on a daily basis during the wilder years of the war by three opposing intentions that all, however, sadly produced a similar result.

On the one hand, the artistic heritage and relics of the Syriac spiritual tradition were ravaged by the violence of the militants of what came to be known as the Islamic state. Media reports, the accounts of exiles, even children's drawings of *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* told of the ferocity that the black brigades had unleashed upon lives and property. That this obscene use of force also affected manuscripts was clearly evident.

Likewise, the, albeit noble, efforts of so many institutions to preserve that heritage of manuscripts by producing digital copies that were then sent to the United States so that they could be saved and studied constituted a different, but no less serious, stripping of that Christian tradition, which was thus con-

(14) See L. Van Rompay, 'Synodicon Orientale', in S. P. Brock et al. (edd.), *The Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*, digital edition prepared by D. Michelson – U. Possekel – D. L. Schwartz, Piscataway (NJ) 2011; online ed. B. Marutho 2018, https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Synodicon-Orientale. An English version by M. Reed, 'Synodicon Orientale', 2015, can be found online at syri.ac, *ad vocem*.

demned to a self-memorialization in exile, its very memory sent away. Vestiges of it were saved but elsewhere and far away, as if a disappearance or diaspora were the only possible fates for a tradition whose linguistic imprint was that of Jesus himself.

Finally, there was the fear of a physical misappropriation of manuscripts by common thieves and even by U.S.-led coalition forces. This may seem an unlikely hypothesis, but it was one that the monks in Baghdad entertained when they were confronted with an overnight inspection by U.S. marines arriving at Notre-Dame des Semances ostensibly in search of a hierarch of Saddam Hussein's regime, but surprisingly interested in the library. This convinced them to put the Alqosh manuscripts in the back of a pickup truck, covering them with elementary school textbooks, to bring them back to the caves of St Hormizd, which was by then safe from the threat of Daesh after the recapture of Mosul and the liberation of the Nineveh Plain by the peshmerga.

The hope of finding Baghdad 509, *olim* Alqosh 169, thus nourished the stubborn conviction that it was possible not only to support a broad collaboration of specialists as for any other tome, but also to ensure that *COGD V* documented, with the most rigorous and punctilious study, a love for that history and church that was impossible to communicate in any other way.

This is why FSCIRE has sought, not only the help of the best specialists from Western academies and universities, but also scholarly figures from those lands with the academic requirements to accompany the crucial stages of this research.

The presence in Bologna for a number of years of Isaac Idoniya Timrs of the Assyrian Church of the East – now bishop of Armenia, Russia, and Ukraine, and then bishop of Baghdad with jurisdiction over Ukraine and Georgia since 2019 – as well as Ephrem Aboud Ishac – deacon of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East and disciple of Metropolitan Yohanna Ibrahim (kidnapped in 2013 together with his Greek Orthodox confrere Baulos Yazigi and never released) – has proven an indispensable impetus to not abandoning the search for the Missing Link of this critical-philological operation, namely MS Alqosh 169.

With their arrival came also the smartphone number of the superior of the Alqosh Monastery, Father Abbot Samer Soreshow Yohanna, known to scholars for his doctoral thesis on the Syriac text of Mark's Gospel. (15) A simple but fruitful direct contact was initiated at the end of March 2018. Communicating via Whatsapp, he could clearly see that it was out of a love of

(15) S. S. Yohanna, *Gospel of Mark in the Syriac Harklen Version: An Edition Based upon the Earliest Witnesses*, Rome 2015.

tradition and not the abstract cynicism of preserving an upended cultural heritage that he was being asked for information. Seeing that page – the only ink-stained one of the entire *codex*, actually – it was in turn clear to the Bologna group that he had sent precisely the proof that the sought-after *codex unicus* had been located.

A trip I undertook to Iraqi Kurdistan shortly thereafter, on 3 April 2018, did the rest. Thanks to the abbot and monks' exquisite hospitality and the helpfulness of the Italian consul in Erbil, Serena Muroni, it was thus possible to visit Alqosh, to see the manuscript, and to perfectly capture it in three series of photographs taken with two Canon 600 cameras and Samsung HQ optics.

With those photos, a physical location where Baghdad 509 could be only consulted was established in Bologna. With the abbot's consent, *COGD V* scholars were allowed to read and study it *sur place*, extending every grateful courtesy in hosting them but risking appearing unpleasant when requests to make copies or print pages had to be denied. The agreement and intention were to allow a compilation that would give philological visibility to a precious text while preserving the indivisible propriety of its cultural, spiritual, and geographical context, which had belonged to that tradition and faith for centuries. (16) Unless the images were stolen without FSCIRE's knowledge, it was successful. And the research offered the occasion for launching the proposal of a Scriptorium Syriacum, which has actually been established in Ankawa, where – due to the lack of foresight of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation – a French project of restoration and training restorers has been installed. With the best of intentions, it will perhaps bring the gradually restored manuscripts into the Bibliothèque Nationale's collections and cloud, as was done in the nineteenth century.

The operation of studying the Alqosh manuscript, therefore, allowed for a true and new phase of the Syriac synodal tradition based on direct access to a source by which the specialists who collaborated on this volume were measured.

The V.1/V.2 numbering deliberately represents the linguistic unity of a liturgical universe unified by the language of Edessa, a city that had its own Christian community – even endowed with a founding legend collected by Eusebius of Caesarea (Constantinian, it goes without saying) – when it

(16) When the work was completed, a series of photographs of the manuscript dated to the 1920s (taken by Vösté?) was found in the Pontifical Orientale Institute library, bound in volumes of which the Basilian order also had a copy and which have rightly been archived in both places as a security that will allow, in the event of the volume's restoration, to quantify and locate the damage the manuscript has suffered in the second part of the twentieth century.

became a Roman colony. The city traces its evangelization to a letter from the king of Edessa to the Nazarene himself, which brought the apostle Thaddeus to that land, and which would make Edessa the first Christian kingdom at the beginning of the fourth century. The arrival of theologians from Nisibis at the time of Ephrem had already made the school of Edessa a doctrinal center in dialectical relationship with the other great Hellenophone churches. It was a universe with its own conciliar tradition extending beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Its internal diversity outlined two traditions, which would soon compete in non-Byzantine political worlds only to be absorbed into Dar al-Islam with the Arab conquest of Ctesiphon (in the spring of 637 by Zuhra ibn Al Hawiyaa, one of the Sahabah of the Prophet) and Antioch (in October of that same year by Abu Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah, also a Sahabah).

The two Syriac synodal traditions are parallel and analogous to that of Constantinopolitan Christianity.

The Eastern part is the first we have evidence of, in the council of Mar Isaac (held at Seleucia Ctesiphon on the Tigris River in 410) under the presidency of the Persian sovereign who had established his capital there. This Eastern Syrian synodality replicated the typical functions of a council, but in a different language and arrangement. (17) Since that council of 410, the assembly of bishops and dignitaries were the ones who established doctrine. For example, there, the doctrine of Nicaea, and 'indirectly' (18) the Nicene canons brought by Maruthas, were accepted. This may seem a pure formality and out of place considering that the Nicene discussions took place 85 years earlier. It was an immensely relevant council, however, because it was the first time that the Nicene faith was adopted as the norm outside of the Roman Empire and outside of the 'crisis' that had generated it. The East Syriac council also made

(17) On the typology, see *infra* and E. Vergani, 'Il sinodo di Mar Isaac (410): Appunti e alcune linee di indagine', *Cristianesimo nella storia* 38/33 (2017), p. 655-671.

(18) A. Halleux, 'Le symbole des évêques perses au synode de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)', in *Erkenntnisse und Meinungen (Albert Dietrich zum 60. Geburtstag am 2. november 1972)*, Wiesbaden 1973, p. 161-190, here 183, observes that 'analysis cannot reveal more than allusive contacts between the two legislations'. Of fundamental importance is J. Gribomont, 'Le symbole de foi de Séleucie-Ctésiphon (410)', in R. H. Fischer (ed.), *A Tribute to Arthur Vööbus: Studies in Early Christian Literature and its Environment, Primarily in the Syrian East*, Chicago 1977, p. 283-294. On the philology of the period, see B. H. Cowper, *Analecta Nicaena: Fragments Relating to the Council of Nicea: The Syriac Text, from an Ancient Ms. in the British Museum*, London – Edinburgh 1857, and F. Schulthess, 'Die Syrischen Kanones der Synoden von Nicaea bis Chalcedon nebst einigen zugehörigen Dokumenten', *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse* 10/12 (1908), p. 121-144.

governing choices. Through a series of assemblies over some 60 years (424-486), the East Syriac Church – which had received from Antioch the consecration of its first Catholicos Papa bar Aggai – became a primatial see, (19) with its own physiognomy, its own ecclesiological consciousness, (20) and its own (Persian) body politic. (21)

Even in the Western part of that tradition, led by Antioch, the council constituted an instrument that was politically anchored to the Roman Empire as well as being problematic. The rift that arose in the century following the Council of Chalcedon found its identity marker in the miaphysite doctrine defended by James, the Bishop of Edessa, who benefitted from the protection of Justinian's court. First for missionary reasons and then because of the Arab conquest, this doctrinal difference also pushed the West Syriac Church to look eastward, in a competition with the East Syriac Church that was both disciplinary and doctrinal.

A *pia fraus* would have it that the theological estrangement between the two Syriac churches is a cover for more political tensions; (22) these certainly exist, but they are measured first by two visions of empire.

As can be seen from this volume of council decisions, the West Syriac resistance to the Chalcedonian emperor, in the name of a Christology that it

(19) I do not accept the theory proposed by A. Panaino, 'La chiesa di Persia e l'Impero sasanide: Conflitto e integrazione', in *Cristianità d'Occidente e cristianità d'Oriente (Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, 51), Spoleto 2004, p. 765-869, particularly p. 807-808, which sees the doctrinal issue as preeminent. This is evidenced by the belief that the *catholicos* exercises a Petrine function, S. Gerö, 'The See of Peter in Babylon: Western Influences on the Ecclesiology of Early Persian Christianity', in N. G. Garsoïan – T. F. Mathews – R. W. Thomson (edd.), *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, Cambridge (MA) 1982, p. 48-49.

(20) The East Syriac Church also recognizes a pentarchy, of which Seleucia-Ctesiphon instead of Jerusalem has a place as the church founded by the Lord's brother, see F. Jullien, 'Des "Frères du Seigneur" sur le siege primatial de Perse', *Apocrypha* 14 (2003), p. 225-236.

(21) See C. Chaillot, *L'Église assyrienne de l'Orient: Histoire bimillénaire et géographie mondiale*, Paris 2020.

(22) The polemical virulence can be grasped by the chronological discrepancy that makes Theodore's doctrines heretical in 553 (125 years after his death), then revisits them in 1441 as the basis of an ecumenical 'Assyro-Catholic' Christological statement. On this, see P. Khoshaba, 'L'Église apostolique de l'Orient: De la rupture au rétablissement de la communion avec Rome', *Istina* 65 (2020), p. 271-298. On 553, see P. Blaudeau, 'Sanctionner le pape sans rompre avec le Siège apostolique? Retour sur la condamnation de Vigile prononcée lors du concile de Constantinople II (553)', in G. Cuchet – C. Mériaux (edd.), *La dramatique conciliaire de l'Antiquité à Vatican II*, Villeneuve d'Ascq 2019, p. 133-150.

defended as orthodox, (23) gave way to a conception of its own autonomy, destined to assert itself and interwoven with the expectation of a *basileus* called to restore the (non-Chalcedonian) faith. (24)

The East Syriac Church already had a non-privileged condition in the Persian Empire (25) and thus had to establish its own institutions and procedures while the West Syriac Church, one of those united in opposition to Chalcedon, took time to define its self-understanding and lineage from the myth of Edessa, Mother of the Faith. (26)

Divided over Ephesus but bonded by a disinterest in or an hostility toward Chalcedon, the two Syriac traditions bear evidence to all churches of a

(23) See the two seminal works by P. Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451-491): De l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie*, Rome 2006, and *Le Siège de Rome et l'Orient (448-536): Étude géo-ecclésiologique*, Rome 2012. Blaudeau also provides a definition in 'Qu'est-ce que la géo-ecclésiologie?', in *Costellazioni geo-ecclesiali da Costantino a Giustiniano: Dalle chiese 'principali' alle chiese patriarcali, XLIII Incontro di Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana, Roma 7-9 maggio 2015*, Rome 2017, p. 39-56.

(24) On the moment when they 'no longer saw themselves as an alternative Imperial Orthodox Church in waiting', see D. Taylor, 'The Psalm Commentary of Daniel of Salah and the Formation of Sixth-Century Syrian Orthodox Identity', *Church History and Religious Culture* 89/81 (2009), p. 67-68. This explains, even after the seventh century Arab conquest, the constant hope of the churches of Egypt and Syria in the arrival of a *basileus* who would restore the righteous faith. On this, see P. Wood, *"We Have No King but Christ": Christian Political Thought in Greater Syria on the Eve of the Arab Conquest*, Oxford 2010, p. 263-264.

(25) Cfr G. Herman, The Syriac World in the Persian Empire, London 2018, p. 138.

(26) See N. J. Andrade, 'Syriac and Syrians in the Later Roman Empire: Questions of Identity', in D. King (ed.), *The Syriac World*, New York 2018, p. 157-174, especially 166-167.

very long conciliar tradition whose common Christological foundation appears – and has appeared – as strong as its divisions. (27)

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(27) Note the position of Bar Hebraeus (thirteenth century theologian of the Syriac Orthodox Church), who writes: 'When I had given much thought and pondered on the matter, I became convinced that these quarrels of Christians are not a matter of factual substance, but rather, one of words and terms; for they all confess Christ our Lord to be perfect God and perfect human, without any commingling, mixing or confusion of the natures. This bi-pinnate likeness is termed by one party [i.e. the Oriental Orthodox churches] a "nature", by another [i.e. the Chalcedonian churches] a "*hypostasis* (person)", and by yet another [i.e. the Church of the East] a "prosopon (parsopa, person)". Thus I saw all the Christian communities, with their different Christological positions, as possessing a single common ground that is without any difference. Accordingly, I totally eradicated any hatred from the depths of my heart and I completely renounced disputing with anyone over confessional matters'. Cited by S. Brock in the preface to the translation of the work by C. Chaillot, *The Assyrian Church of the East: History and Geography*, transl. N. Russell, Oxford 2021, p. xiii (thanks to Federico Alpi for the reference).

EDITOR'S NOTE

This volume follows the editorial rules of *COGD* series; in other words, the Syriac critical text editions are following the rules of the *Corpus Christianorum* series, and similarly the bibliographies; while the English introductions and translations are following the norms in the *New Hart's Rules*. Some editorial decisions were taken during the work, especially while working on unique manuscripts: the Alqosh Manuscript 169 [*olim* Baghdad 509] for the East Syriac synods, and on Damascus 8/11 for the Syrian Orthodox synods.

The volume here has adopted the following decisions in editing the texts: in principal, the reading is faithful to the Alqosh original manuscript, unless there are obvious scribal errors or mistakes from the previous vorlage; in these cases, the necessary corrections were chosen in the critical text, while recording the variants of the manuscripts and editions in the Apparatus. However, sometimes editors preferred other readings or their own conjectures. The section-divisions and their Arabic numbers are not from the original Alqosh manuscript but were added in this edition to provide a logical sequence to the texts. Some punctuation marks were also added in the Syriac texts to end paragraphs. Formatting the texts as in centering titles was done for a better visual presentation, although these are not as depicted in the manuscript. Orthographic variants (such as the verbal forms: ܦܩܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ and ܦܩܥܝܢ) were not considered in the Apparatus, since they do not change the meaning; in this context Alqosh reading was respected, since it can be transmitting an older tradition. Archaic Syriac spellings were kept (such as ܪܒܐ). Dots on the Syriac words were preserved for diacritical remarks, such as for *Syome*, feminine, pronouns, prepositions, enclitics etc. Some vocalization dots were kept for certain names of persons and places since they may reflect older pronunciation for those names. Abbreviated words are resolved (such as ܐܦܣܩ̄ to ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ). When the reading of Alqosh was difficult (because of damage), words are placed into square brackets [ ]. When editors included their own conjectured Syriac words, they are inserted inside angle brackets ⟨ ⟩. When Alqosh has a lacuna, then dots are placed inside square brackets [...].

Concerning the English translations; except for the synods of Yabalaha, Dadisho, Aqaq, Gewargis, where the editors have offered their own annotated translations, the rest of the texts depended on Michael J. Birnie's unpublished translation (of 1995 to Chabot's edition of the *Synodicon Orientale* collection),

which was revised and reworked by Robert Kitchen. The later additional East Syriac synods (starting from Timotheos II) were translated or revised by their editors. The goal of the offered English translations in *COGD* series is simply to offer a helpful instrumental tool for the readers. Considering the complexity of the language of these texts, ambiguity and various opinions in understanding many Syriac pieces sometimes emerge. When the translation was suggesting words which are not in the texts, they were placed inside round brackets ( ). Transliteration of the places and persons' names follow the spelling rules of the *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage*. Some exceptions are made for proper names to use conventional English spellings (such as: Isaac, Joseph, etc).

Although the modern Syriac synods of the 20th century do not include all meetings, choosing some texts gives samples about the continuing synodal life in the Syriac churches.

Finally, a word of sincere thanks should be given to: Robert Kitchen, to whom I am very grateful for reading the English texts in addition to his fundamental help to me during the painstaking task of finishing the volume. A faithful acknowledgement should be presented also to Lucas Van Rompay, Hubert Kaufhold and all the contributors in this volume for their help in precising many of the editorial decisions, which were developed during the work. I would be remiss not to thank: Davide Dainese, Federico Alpi, Isaac Timrs, Samer Yohanna, Mar Aprem, Roger Akhrass, Joseph Mukarzel, Youssef Dergham, George Kiraz, Dietmar W. Winkler, Erich Renhart, Stefania De Nardis, Ilaria Bernini, Sonia Athanasiadou, and Christine Vande Veire for their wonderful collaboration, editorial consultations and especially for their generosity of sharing with me the important sources and texts to prepare this edition.

Ephrem Aboud Ishac

THE SYNOD OF ISAAC

410

ediderunt
M.-J. Pierre et C. Nakano

THE SYNOD OF AQAQ

486

edidit

E. Fiori

THE SYNOD OF AQAQ
486

The present text (1) gathers two distinct synodical documents: a resolution taken at a synod held in Beth 'Edrai in September 485 and the proceedings of the synod held at the patriarchal see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in February 486 under the presidency of the Catholicos Aqaq (485-496). Both mark among other things a correction of a prior synod held in Beth Lapaṭ in 484 by the influential metropolitan of Nisibis Barṣawma (2) and his followers, the proceedings of which are not extant. (3) Barṣawma had led a tough fight against the Catholicos Babowai, Aqaq's predecessor and relative, and the synod of 484 was summoned without the authorization and the presence of the Catholicos. Barṣawma had hoped in vain to be elected Catholicos on that occasion, but he later disowned this synod in a letter addressed to Aqaq. (4) The synod of 485 represents the first official step towards the reunification; the synod of 486 must be understood as an important landmark in the dogmatic and ecclesiological self-definition of the Church of the East in the second half of the fifth century.

As pointed out by Stephen Gerö, (5) the evolution of the theological position of the Persian Church towards its dyophysite stance during the first half of the century is not always well documented, and cannot be traced in its details. The synod of the Catholicos Aqaq can be viewed as the first clear doctrinal statement in this regard, marking a decisive achievement after the con-

(1) I am deeply indebted to Vittorio Berti, whose invaluable support allowed me to finalize this contribution. Many thanks are also due to Davide Dainese for the materials he promptly supplied, and to Ephrem Ishac and Isaac Timts for all the additional work.

(2) He was born in the first quarter of the fifth century and died sometime after 496.

(3) Only fragments are preserved in later sources. The canons of the synod of Beth Lapaṭ, although not preserved in the *Synodicon Orientale* (see *Synodicon orientale*, ed. Chabot, p. 61 text; p. 308-309 transl.) can be partially recovered from other sources: Gerö, *Barṣauma of Nisibis*, p. 3-4 provides a survey thereof.

(4) Braun, *Des Barsaumā von Nisibis Briefe*. For a general presentation of the figure of Barṣawma and of the events leading to the synod of Beth Lapaṭ and the election of Aqaq, see Gerö, *Barṣauma of Nisibis* and, more briefly, Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 2-9.

(5) Gerö, *Barṣauma of Nisibis*, p. 23-24.

troversial period following the council of Chalcedon. In the preface to the synod, the recovered unity of the Church is carefully stressed, so as to underline that it is from ecclesiastical concord that the dogmatic and disciplinary statements spring. The first canon of the synod is devoted to the establishment of a synthetic Christological definition: Christ is confessed in two natures (*kyānē*), which must not be mixed nor confused as to their properties; what the two natures share is the worship (*segdtā*). Their unity is expressed as the unity of *parṣopā*, i.e. *prosopon*, person. This definition is very much dependent on the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia (the unity of worship being particularly telling in this regard). As to its wording, it is still very similar to the Chalcedonian formula; (6) however, it lacks a crucial element of the latter, the unity of *hypostasis*. We cannot know if the missing mention of two hypostases, which will be characteristic of the 'Nestorian' Christology, is intended to correct a prior formulation of the synod held at Beth Lapaṭ (but this is quite an unlikely hypothesis), (7) or if it attests to a phase of the Christological debate in the East during which a proper East-Syrian Christology is not yet established.

Nevertheless, the main body of the text is not concerned with dogma, but with the discipline of monastic behaviour and of marriage. The second canon

(6) See Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus*, p. 614-634 (on Theodore); p. 652-672 and 707-726 (on Nestorius); p. 753-764 on the Chalcedonian formula. On Syriac churches see in vol. 2/3 the chapter by Th. Hainthaler, p. 227-278, in particular p. 271-274 (Die Schule der Perser). On Theodore's Christology in general, see Abramowski, *Zur Theologie Theodors von Mopsuestia*, and Norris, *Manhood and Christ;* more recently Bruns, *Den Menschen mit dem Himmel verbinden;* Jansen, *Theodor von Mopsuestia. De Incarnatione*, and for a shorter introduction McLeod, *Theodore of Mopsuestia*.

(7) Until Gerö's monograph, it was usually believed that Barṣawma had played an important role in the so-called 'nestorianization' of the Church of the East. This assumption was mainly based on Miaphysite sources; but the proceedings of the synod of Beth Lapaṭ are not extant, nor is the main body of Barṣawma's work, so that it is impossible to properly assess his Christological contribution on firm historical grounds. It is very likely, however, that he always professed a Theodorean 'orthodoxy' (see e.g. Gerö, *Barṣauma of Nisibis*, p. 27-31; 45; 48-49). Furthermore, it should also be reminded that L. Abramowski has recently stressed that Nestorius' Christology is more similar than is commonly believed to that of Theodore of Mopsuestia (Abramowski, *Martyrius-Sahdona*). In this regard it is meaningful that in the 8th century the patriarchal vicar Shahdost mentions Aqaq and Barṣawma and projects the 'Nestorian' orthodoxy of the two *qnome*-hypostases upon them; according to Abramowski-Goodman who edited the text of Shahdost, it is unlikely that the synod of Beth Lapaṭ had already produced such a dogmatic formulation, which was clearly reached only in 612. See Abramowski – Goodman, *A Nestorian Collection*, p. 28-29 text, 20 transl. On the development of 'Nestorianism' in the East Syrian Church see now the excellent work of Ebeid, *The Christology of the Church of the East*.

addresses the problem of wandering monks, viewed as hypocrites who deceive simple people by entering the cities and administering baptism and Eucharist, introducing thereby confusion in the hierarchy. If they want to follow the example of those pious men they pretend to imitate, they must stay out of the cities and dwell permanently in the monasteries, situated in desert places. Furthermore, these monks were apparently beggars who lived by the 'helpful hand' of the population, as the canon puts it. The crucial question here is the disorder that a wandering form of asceticism introduces into the urban structure of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. (8) It is difficult not to recall analogous complaints of the first half of the century, voiced for instance by Augustine, John Chrysostom and Nilus of Ancyra within the boundaries of the Roman Empire: (9) the terminology is often the same as in the present synod. The presence of wandering monks was a ubiquitous problem in the fifth century across the frontiers of the Roman and the Sasanian empires, and often overlapped with the much debated problem of Syro-Mesopotamian Messalianism. With this term of Syriac origin (Messalians are 'those who pray'), the heresiologists tended to unify into a single group some forms of radical ascetic sensibility which probably derived from ancient Syrian encratism, in particular the sons and daughters of the covenant (*bnay* and *bnat qyama*). (10) These were people practicing a sort of pre-monastic asceticism, which expressed itself in the abstinence from marriage (or from intercourse within marriage), work and money and in some cases in a wandering life, (11) to different degrees of intensity. They formed an informal class of believers (12) which seems to have been ubiquitous to the communities, and their position within the churches has long been a matter of scholarly debate. In the third and fourth centuries this was by far the most widespread form of ascetic life in the Syriac-speaking

(8) This seems indeed to be the problem at stake, much more than the fact (which is not necessarily excluded) that these wandering pseudo-monks converted people to Miaphysitism (as assumed by Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 18).

(9) See Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, p. 158-205.

(10) A select bibliography on early Syriac asceticism and the sons and daughters of the covenant must comprise at least the following references: Vööbus *Celibacy;* Vööbus, *History of Asceticism;* Vööbus, *The Institution of the Benai Qeiama;* Brock, *Early Syrian Asceticism;* Nedungatt, *The Covenanters:* Murray, *The Exhortation to Candidates;* Griffith, *Monks, 'Singles', and the 'Sons of the Covenant';* Murray, *Circumcision of Heart;* Escolan, *Monachisme et Église;* Bumazhnov, *Qyâmâ before Aphrahat;* a recent synthesis in Berti, *Il monachesimo siriaco*.

(11) See the interesting remark of Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, p. 56, who states that 'there are no sure grounds ... for maintaining a hard distinction between ascetic wanderers and covenanters'.

(12) Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, p. 55.

world. (13) As time progressed, the covenanters increasingly fell under 'organization, supervision and control by local church leaders'. (14) The covenant became progressively marginalized as a consequence of the advancing hierarchical structuring of the Church, and sometimes ended up concurring with it by not yet assuming a fully 'monastic' form in an institutional sense, which would have also been economically independent from the support of the laity. The canons of this synod witness then to an ecclesiological shift in progress, which is mainly brought about, as we are going to see, by means of a radical marriage legislation.

The third canon indeed, not by chance the longest one, is concerned with the problem of clerical marriage. (15) The main point, repeated more than once, is that everyone must choose without alternative between perfect (i.e. monastic) life or marriage. Deacons are allowed to take a wife even after their ordination, contrary to the old use; but a candidate to the diaconate must be married and have children. The same is allowed to priests. They can also take a second wife in case of death of the first one: this does not imply bigamy or adultery, which are strictly prohibited. In any case, the marriage must always lead to the begetting of children to be legitimate. Whoever does not want to get married must dwell in a monastery. In turn, no one must be compelled to celibacy or to marriage.

This canon is believed to confirm the foregoing decisions taken in 484. According to later Miaphysite traditions, it was Barṣawma who commanded that every bishop, priest and deacon had to be married. He would have also introduced the possibility of the dispensation from monastic vows. This is not confirmed by the extant fragments, but a slightly later synod of 497 actually attributes this reform to both the synods of 484 and 486. (16) However, it was

(13) The bibliography on Messalianism is vast. The reference study on the problem of the wandering monks and Messalianism is now Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*; Stewart, 'Working the Earth of the Heart' remains fundamental; see also Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus*. The studies of Griffith, *Monks, 'Singles', and the 'Sons of the Covenant'* and Griffith, *Asceticism in the Church of Syria* have marked important steps in the research. Berti, *Il monachesimo siriaco*, p. 164-168 provides a very useful synthesis of these problems. Milestones are obviously Guillaumont's studies and introductions of the 60s and 70s (see for instance Guillaumont, *Le dépaysement*; Guillaumont, *Messalianisme*. On the sons and daughters of the covenant see n. 10.

(14) Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, p. 56.

(15) On the topic of marriage in the East Syrian canonical law, see Dauvillier – De Clercq, *Le mariage en droit canonique Oriental*, and, in particular on this synod and its context, Dauvillier, *Chaldéen (droit)*, p. 308-311. See also Selb, *Orientalisches Kirchenrecht 1*.

(16) *Synodicon orientale*, ed. Chabot, p. 63 text.

suggested (17) that whereas Barṣawma actually contemplated the possibility of clerical marriage in his synod, it was Aqaq who came to the point of imposing the rule on the clergy with the synod of 486. The synod of Aqaq should be viewed then as a radicalizing evolution of Barṣawma's marriage policy. The ideas are the same, which is also confirmed by the biblical repertoire displayed in the two synods: both quote 1 Cor 7:8-9 as the scriptural touchstone. (18) It is through this marriage legislation that the East Syrian Church tried to solve the disciplinary problems outlined above. External pressure from the Sasanian Kings and from the Zoroastrian elites may have been an important reason for the resolution; (19) Peter Bruns has positively reconsidered the hypothesis (20) that making concessions to the Zoroastrian ethics would put the East Syrian

(17) Gerö, *Barsauma of Nisibis*, p. 87-88. The *Chronicle of Seert*, for instance, simply states that Barṣawma allowed monks and priests to get married if they could not persist in their choice of perfection (see Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 14). More in general, Gerö, *Barsauma of Nisibis*, p. 79-88 challenges a *topos* of the Miaphysite historiography, which sees Barṣawma as radically anti-ascetic and imputes his marriage legislation to his perversion and personal will of getting married with an ex-nun. Bruns reaffirms Barṣawma's 'anti-asceticism', but on firmer historical grounds (see in particular the conclusions: Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 40: Die *antiasketische* (our emphasis) Gesetzgebung des rebellischen Barsauma ... wollte das Mönchtum und den zölibateren Klerus aus den Städten in die entlegenen Regionen verbannen. ... Seit sich die ostsyrische Kirche in das weltoffene Milieu des Sasanidenreiches inkulturiert hatte und tatsächlich zu einer persischen Kirche geworden war, suchte sie die Abgrenzung vom Westen nicht nur auf dem Gebiet des Dogmas ... sondern vielmehr im Bereich der Disziplin).

(18) It is the *Chronicle of Seert* that quotes the synod of 484 in this case. See Gerö, *Barṣauma of Nisibis*, p. 81 n. 12.

(19) This rationale for the legislation was early pointed out by different scholars, but its importance was later partially dismissed by Gerö, *Barṣauma of Nisibis*, p. 87 ('it is unlikely that the attendant legislation designed to encourage regular monogamy is simply a concession to Zoroastrian mores ... The direct cause of the reforming movement was hardly a wish to make Christianity more palatable to the outsiders, rather this can be found in the corrupt state of the whole monastic establishment') and Gerö, *Die antiasketische Bewegung*; Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 31-36 stresses once again the importance of this factor (mention is made indeed of the 'outsiders' in the third canon of the synod of Aqaq) and the fact that the following synod of 497, which confirms the marriage legislation of 484 and 486, explicitly states that this was the will of the King Zamasp (see Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 25; *Synodicon orientale*, ed. Chabot, p. 63 text). But Gerö's argument in this case is quite strong ('this does not imply that these earlier canons [i.e. those of 484 and 486] were likewise formulated in conformity with imperial wishes. The possible rationale for Zamasp's action ... should be carefully separated from the church politics of the 480s': Gerö, *Barṣauma of Nisibis*, p. 86).

(20) See the previous note.

Church in a better position within the Persian society. Although we do not intend to rule out this interpretation (21) (the bishops were likely acting on more than one front), we would rather insist on another side of the question, which is less valorised by Bruns, (22) and underline in a different sense the relation between the hierarchical problem of the second canon and the marriage discipline of the third one. The distinction and choice between monastic or non-monastic life overlaps with the choice between celibacy and marriage. The identification of monasticism and celibacy, on the one hand, and any other way of life and marriage, on the other hand, is so radical that whoever is not a monk *cannot* remain unmarried nor without children. It is crucial to remark that the civil state is superior to the hierarchical position, (23) because if a priest is unmarried, he must live in a monastery; (24) it is not allowed to be priest in a city outside a family structure. It could even be supposed that the family was probably considered by the bishops as the only structure which, contrary to the eschatological tension of the wandering monks, could grant the Persian Church an orderly social form in the absence of a Christian State. Even the obligation to beget children can be read in this perspective, since it had already been the practice of some covenanters to live their marriage in abstinence. It is the centrality of marriage, together with the separation of the monks from the family life of the cities, which protects the Church from the risk of the extravagant asceticism originating from what remained of the covenant. An important element in favour of the correctness of this interpretation can be found in the difference between the canons of the present synod and those of the synod of 554: whereas in 486 monastic life is secluded from the cities, in 554 the bishops encourage the presence of monks in the cities. (25) This is a sign that by the middle of the sixth century, since monasticism was well established in Persia and had reached an institutional shape, it was no longer viewed as a danger to an untroubled harmony of Church and urban society.

(21) Which is consistent with Bruns' exegesis of the second canon of Aqaq as reflecting an anti-Miaphysite position.

(22) Although not forgotten: see P. Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 37-40.

(23) In this regard it is very significant that the quotation from I Tim. 1-2 is modified in the canon, by substituting 'episcopacy' to the simpler 'priesthood' of the Peshitta, so that the newly formulated legislation be extended to any rank of the hierarchy.

(24) This is also a solution to the problem of the monks-priests, mentioned in the second canon. On this see P. Escolan, *Monachisme et Église*, p. 298-300, who makes reference to the synod of Aqaq.

(25) See Camplani, *The Revival of Persian Monasticism*, p. 278-280.

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THE SYNOD OF AQAQ

486

CONSPECTVS SIGLORVM

Codices

A	Alqosh, Notre Dame des Semences, 169 [*olim* Baghdad 509] (s. XII-XIII)
F	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Syr. 332 (a. 1895)
R	Città del Vaticano, Vatican Library, Borg. Syr. 82 (a. 1869)
T	Trichur, Collection of the Chaldean Syrian Church in India, Tri. Syr. 65 (s. XVIII)
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Editio

C	J.-B. Chabot, *Synodicon orientale ou Recueil de synodes nestoriens*, Paris 1902, p. 53-60.

ܬܘܒ ܣܘܢܗܘܕܘܣ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܩܩ ܩܬܘܠܝܩܐ. ܕܩܬܘܠܝܩܐ. ܕܒܝܬ ܠܦܛ. ܕܢܨܝܒܝܢ.
ܕܦܪܬ ܕܡܝܫܢ. ܕܐܪܒܝܠ. ܕܒܝܬ ܓܪܡܝ. ܕܦܪܣ. ܕܟܫܟܪ. ܕܦܪܘܡܝܙܕܡܪܘܕ.

1 ܓܒܪܝܠ ܕܗܪܝܘ. ܡܗܪܢܪܣܐ ܕܙܒܐ. ܝܙܕܓܪܕ ܕܒܝܬ ܕܪܝܐ. ܫܡܥܘܢ
ܕܚܝܪܬܐ. ܡܘܫܐ ܕܦܝܪܘܙܫܒܘܪ. ܕܢܝܐܝܠ ܕܟܪܡܐ. ܢܘܚ ܕܒܝܬ ܠܫܦܪ. ܒܓܫ ܕܪܝܡܐ.

2 ܕܦܪܘܡܝܙܕܡܪܘܕ] ܕܦܪܘܡܝ ܙܕܡܪܘܕ *V* 3 ܡܗܪܢܪܣܐ] ܡܗܪܢܪܣܐ *C* 4 ܕܒܝܬ ܠܫܦܪ] ܕܒܠܫܦܪ *F C*

Next, the Synod of the Catholicos Mar Aqaq, catholicos of Beth Lapaṭ, of Nisibis, of Prat d-Mayshan, of Erbil, of Beth Garmai, of Fars, of Kashkar and of *PRUMIZDMRUD.* (1)

1 Gabriel of Harew; (2) Mihrnarsa of Zabe; (3) Yazdgard of Beth Daraye; Shem'on of Ḥirta, (4) Moses of Peroz Shabur; (5) Daniel of Karme, (6) Noaḥ of Belashpar; (7) Bagash of Rima, (8) Eliya of Nhargor, (9)

(1) Here are listed the main metropolitan sees, indicating the provinces on which the Catholicos exerted his jurisdiction.

Beth Lapaṭ is the metropolitan see of the province of Beth Huzaye (corresponding to Elam, in South-Western Iran) On *Beth Lapaṭ*/Gondeshapur as metropolitan centre, see Fiey, *Communautés syriaques* III, p. 227-267.

On Nisibis, the reference work is Fiey, *Nisibe métropole syriaque*.

Prat d-Mayshan is the metropolitan see of the province of Mayshan in southern Mesopotamia: see Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 263-271 (a general introduction on the province of Mayshan p. 263-266).

Erbil is the metropolitan see of the province of Adiabene or Ḥadyāb in northern Mesopotamia, near to the modern Mosul.

Beth Garmai is the province around the city of Kirkuk (Karka d-Beth Slokh) in Northern Iraq. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 11-49.

Fars is in Persia proper, East/South-East of Beth Huzaye, its metropolitan center being Rev Ardashir.

Kashkar, in Beth Aramaye in central Mesopotamia, was not a metropolitan see, but a bishopric which functioned as metropolis of the patriarchal province (that is Beth Aramaye); the bishop of Kashkar substituted the patriarch at his death and had the authority to summon new elections. On Kashkar see Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 151-187.

The strange form 'prwmyzdmrwd' attested here is a corruption of the first member of the list of bishops which opens the text. As Chabot, *Synodicon orientale*, p. 299 transl., n. 2 rightly remarked, it must indicate the bishop Paromai of Merv, who reappears in the list of bishops at the end of the synod.

(2) Harew is the Syriac name of Herat, in modern Western Afghanistan. See Fiey, *Chrétientés syriaques du Horāsān*.

(3) Zabe, situated between Seleucia and Kashkar. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 197-202.

(4) Ḥirta in Beth Aramaye. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 203-230.

(5) Peroz Shabur in Beth Aramaye. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 230-239.

(6) Karme in Beth Garmai. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 112-113.

(7) Belashpar, a diocese in Media, between Azerbaidjan and Beth Huzaye. See Fiey, *Communautés syriaques* IV, p. 360-368.

(8) Rima, in the province of Mayshan. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 277-282.

(9) Nhargor, in Beth Aramaye. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 253-257.

[illegible]

2 [illegible]

3 [illegible]

6 [illegible] F 9 [illegible] R V T 12 [illegible] V 17 [illegible] V T

Moses of Armenia; Abraham of Taḥal; (10) Baṭai of Hormizd-Ardashir; (11) Posai of Shushter; (12) Mina (13) of Lashom; (14) Papa of Maḥoze d-Arewan; (15) Moses of Ḥimyar; (16) Abraham of Beth Madaye; (17) Kozed (18) of Ḥarbglal. (19)

2 In the month of *Ellul* of the second year (20) of the peaceful and sweet Walesh, (21) the King of Kings, at the instigation of the divine grace we convened in this place, (22) Aqaq, bishop, catholicos of the East, Papa, bishop of Beth Lapaṭ, Barṣawma, bishop of Nisibis, Yoḥannan, bishop of Karka d-Beth Slokh; (23) and our other brothers the bishops who came from the eparchies of Beth Aramaye, (24) of Beth Huzaye, of Nisibis, of Ḥadyāb (25) and of Beth Garmai, and Ma'na the bishop of Rev Ardashir. (26)

3 According to God's will we accepted among one another lovingly everything that was done in Beth Lapaṭ in this assembly at the time that we came (was for the purpose of) peace and harmony. According to the teaching of our Lord, we made a pact between us: 'as far as God concedes (it) to us and we bishops of the various regions gather and we establish with an examination and with the concord of us all, in written form and with signatures and seals, the ecclesiastical canons, definitions and admonitions that the holy fathers

(10) Taḥal in Beth Garmai. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 133-136.
(11) Hormizd-Ardashir in Beth Huzaye. See Fiey, *Communautés syriaques* IIIb, p. 130-134.
(12) Shushter in Beth Huzaye. See Fiey, *Communautés syriaques* IIIb, p. 134-140.
(13) The Syriac spelling in the subscriptions is: 'Mika'.
(14) Lashom in Beth Garmai. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 54-60.
(15) Maḥoze d-Arewan in Beth Garmai. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 89-93.
(16) Ḥimyar; only Braun identified the Syriac 'ḥmyr' as Ḥimyar, which is likely correct since the region of Ḥimyar, in south-west Arabia, had had a bishop since the end of the fifth century (see I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, p. 378).
(17) Beth Madaye, a diocese in Media. On the Beth Madaye see Fiey, *Communautés syriaques* IV, p. 368-372.
(18) The Syriac spelling in the subscriptions is: 'Kodnaz'.
(19) Ḥarbglal/Ḥrbat glal in Beth Garmai. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 136-137.
(20) Corresponding to August-September 485.
(21) Sasanian king between 484 and 488.
(22) i.e., in Beth 'Edrai, in the region of Adiabene east of the river Tigris.
(23) Karka d-Beth Slokh in Beth Garmai. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 17-41.
(24) Beth Aramaye was the province of the Catholicos in central Mesopotamia. See Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 147-261.
(25) Ḥadyāb: Adiabene.
(26) Rev Ardashir was the metropolitan see of the ecclesiastical province of Fars; its bishop Ma'na was among the participants of the synod of *Beth Lapaṭ* in 484, and is remembered as a close follower of Barṣawma. See Fiey, *Communautés syriaques* II, p. 179-182.

[illegible]

ܩܢܘܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ.

4 [illegible]

5 [illegible]

6 [illegible]

40/45 [illegible] – [illegible]] I Tim. 4, 1-3

10 [illegible]] [illegible] *R* 15 [illegible]] [illegible] *F* 16 [illegible]] [illegible] *T* 16 [illegible]] om. *V* 17 [illegible]] [illegible] *T*, [illegible] *V*, [illegible] *R* 27/28 [illegible]] om. *V*, [illegible] *R* 34 [illegible]] [illegible] *F* 40 [illegible]] [illegible] *ARVTC*

and the ancient bishops, and those who are now, made. Since the liars have multiplied among our flocks, and trouble with their pretenses the steadfast orders of the Church and corrupt the true, apostolic and orderly faith – let us all teach, instruct and correct, each one in his city, in the diocese of his jurisdiction, the true faith and the steadfast manners that are suitable to it'.

First Canon

4 In the month of *Shbat* of the same second year, (27) while we were in Beth Aramaye and were gathered all together in the city of Seleucia, I, Aqaq, bishop, catholicos, and the virtuous Yoḥannan, bishop of Karka d-Beth Slokh, Abisho', bishop of Kashkar, Paul, bishop of Karka d-Ledan, (28) Gabriel, bishop of Harew, Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, Yazdgard, bishop of Beth Daraye, (29) Shem'on, bishop of Ḥirta, Moses, bishop of Peroz Shabur, Daniel, bishop of Karme, Noaḥ, bishop of Belashphar, Bagash, bishop of Rima and Eliya, bishop of Nhargor.

5 It was said in our presence that there are some people with corrupted thoughts in this province of Beth Aramaye, who are clothed in the garb of ascetic life, and, being distant from the actual meaning of this garb, go around in many places, corrupt the simple minds and harm the orthodox confession of faith of the catholic and apostolic Church. (30) And since they are ill from all the heresies and the perturbation of every heresy is infused in them, they teach against the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and revile the preachers and the teachers of religion.

6 With the force of their blasphemies about the economy of our Lord and the preaching of the apostles, they draw upon themselves the name and appellation of those about whom the Holy Spirit said through the blessed Paul: 'in the last times some will depart from faith and will go after deceiving spirits and the doctrines of demons, they who under false attire deceive and speak falsehood, and are seared in their conscience, and prevent from marrying, and separate those who believe and know the truth from foods that God created for a thanksgiving use'. (31)

(27) Corresponding to February of 486.
(28) Karka d-Ledan in Beth Huzaye. See Fiey, *Communautés syriaques* IIIb, p. 123-130.
(29) On Beth Daraye see Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne* III, p. 187-197.
(30) This language anticipates the upcoming quotation from 1 Tim. 4:1-3.
(31) 1 Tim. 4:1-3.

7 [illegible]

8 [illegible]

ܩܢܘܢܐ ܬܪܝܢ.

9 [illegible]

10 [illegible]

46 [illegible] *R V' T* [illegible] *T* 47 [illegible] *C*
50 [illegible] *T* 51 [illegible] *om. V'* [illegible] *R* 54 [illegible] *R C*
65 [illegible] *C*

7 By common counsel and advice we agreed that, according to the pact we had reached and the covenant we established in Ḥadyāb, we will write down in this book the settlement of the faith and (write) about the right conduct and manners, teaching and admonishing the whole community of the believers that, according to the teaching that is handed down and proceeds into the Church of Christ through the apostles and according to the doctrine that (is handed down and proceeds) through the Fathers. Let the faith of us all consist in one confession of one divine Nature which is in three perfect hypostases (32) of the one Trinity, true and eternal, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, by which heathendom is defeated and Judaism is condemned.

8 But let our faith in the economy of Christ consist also in the confession of two natures: of divinity and of humanity. Let no one of us introduce mingling or mixture or confusion concerning the differences of these two natures, but, the divinity remaining and being preserved in its own properties and the humanity in its own ones, we combine in one Lordship and in one worship the exemplars (33) of the natures, because of the perfect and inseparable conjunction that the divinity has towards the humanity. If anyone thinks or teaches others that passion and change apply to the divinity of our Lord and does not keep, as to the unity of the *prosopon* (34) of our Savior, to the confession of a perfect God and of a perfect man, let him be anathema.

Second Canon

9 As to those liars that we mentioned above, who wear the false garb and deceiving sign of black garments and deceive simple people with an appearance of holiness, of abstinence, of self-denial and of voluntary poverty: these are things according to which the ancestors conducted themselves. They made their dwelling place in a wasteland, far from the society of men and of the dwelling in cities and villages, and served and pleased God. So we command that if they truly are disciples and sons of those blessed ones, and follow them with the appearance and the manners, let their life, like those ones, be in places that are suitable to their garb.

10 They are not allowed to enter cities and villages where there are priests, bishops, elders and deacons in order to dwell there, lest they are the cause of contention and provoke trouble between the priests and their flocks,

(32) Syr. *qnome*.
(33) 'Exemplars', Syr. 'ܦܪܨܘܦܝܗܘܢ'. See Brock, 'The Christology of the Church of the East', p. 133-134.
(34) Syr. *parṣopā*, the 'face'.

ܘܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܒܝܬ ܥܡܐ ܠܡܠܦܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܘܐܦ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܝܗܘܢ. ܘܠܐ ܢܕܒܪܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܢܩܪܒܘܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܘܠܐ ܢܥܡܕܘܢ ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܘܢܒܛܠܘܢ ܛܟܣܗ̇ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܥܒܕܘ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܗܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܢܐܙܠܘܢ ܠܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ ܘܠܕܘܟܝܬܐ ܕܪܚܝܩܢ ܡܢ ܝܫܘܒܐ: ܘܢܣܝܡܘܢ ܬܡܢ ܡܥܡܪܗܘܢ ܘܫܘܒܗܘܢ.

11 ܟܕ ܡܫܬܥܒܕܝܢ ܘܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ ܠܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܘܠܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܠܦܪܝܕܘܛܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܝܢ: ܘܫܠܝܛܝܢ ܥܠ ܕܝܪ̈ܬܗܘܢ ܘܥܠ ܕܘܟܝܬܐ | ܕܥܡܪܝܢ ܒܗܝܢ. ܐܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܬܪ ܗܕܐ ܬܚܘܡܬܐ ܘܬܘܚܡܐ ܕܐܬܟܠܝܘ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܡܥܡܪܐ ܕܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܘܒܩܘܪܝܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗܝܢ ܟܗܢܐ: ܥܠܝܢ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܢܥܡܪܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܥܡܪ ܘܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ ܒܩܘܪܝܐ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܘܟܝܬܐ ܕܡܥܡܪܐ ܘܡܩܪܒܝܢ ܒܗܝܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ: ܘܟܢܫܝܢ ܥܡܐ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ: ܘܡܥܡܕܝܢ ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ: ܐܠܐ ܠܐ ܓܘ ܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ ܘܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ ܕܡܢܝܢ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ: ܢܗܘܘܢ ܡܢܕܝܢ ܘܡܚܪܡܝܢ ܡܢ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܟܘܡܪܘܬܐ ܘܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܟܪܝܣܛܝܢܐ.

12 ܘܟܠ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܐܘ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܐܘ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܐܘ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܥܠܡܝܐ ܕܡܩܒܠ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܝܗܒ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܕܐ ܡܥܕܪܢܝܬܐ ܕܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܒܗ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܟܠܝ ܒܡܕܝܢܬܗ ܐܘ ܒܩܘܪܝܬܗ ܐܘ ܒܒܝܬܗ ܘܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܫܓܘܫܝܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܡܢܕܐ ܘܡܚܪܡ ܐܢ ܟܗܢܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܬܫܡܫܬܗ ܘܐܢ ܥܠܡܝܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܘܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܐܘܟܪܝܣܛܝܐ.

ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܬܠܬܐ.

13 ܥܠ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܘܠܝܢ ܠܫܪܪܐ ܘܫܘܝܢ ܠܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ: ܗܕܐ ܬܚܘܡܬܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܢ. ܕܡܢ ܗܫܐ ܘܠܗܠ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܠܐ ܢܥܒܕ ܩܛܝܪܐ ܘܥܨܝܐ ܥܠ ܙܘܘܓܐ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܕܡܕܒܪ ܘܒܥܕܬܐ ܕܡܫܡܫ. ܣܦܩܢ ܓܝܪ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܕܐܬܡܠܠ ܠܡܘܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܥܠ ܡܪ̈ܥܝܬܢ ܒܓܘܪܐ ܘܒܙܢܝܘܬܐ. ܥܘܠܐ ܕܒܝܫܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܘܦܪܝܣܐ ܠܐܕܢܐ ܕܒܪ̈ܝܐ ܘܐܬܥܝܪ ܒܬܐܪܬܐ ܕܟܠ ܥܡܡܝܢ ܒܘܙܚܐ ܘܡܘܡܩܐ ܕܠܢ.

78 ܕܟܘܡܪܘܬܐ] ܕܟܘܡܪܘܬܐ *R V T C* 81 ܐܘ] ܘ *C*

and the teachers and their disciples, (35) and conduct gatherings there and celebrate the *Qurbana* and impart baptism and spoil the orders of the church as they have done so far, but (they must) go to monasteries and places that are removed from the inhabited land, and establish there their dwelling place and life.

11 submitting themselves to and obeying the bishops, the elders and the visitors (36) who govern and have authority over their monasteries and the places where they dwell. If after this prescription and limitation by which they are forbidden to dwell in cities and villages where there are priests, they still enter the cities to dwell there and are found in villages which they make (their) dwelling places and in which they celebrate the *Qurbana* and gather the people outside the church and administer the baptism, but not inside the monasteries and the places named above, let them be excommunicated and anathematized from the ministry of priesthood and from the society of Christians.

12 And every bishop, elder, deacon, and lay believer who from now on receives them and gives them a helpful hand, so that they do in his city, hamlet or house any of the forbidden things and produce trouble in the Church, let him be excommunicated and anathematized, if he is a priest, from his ministry, if he is a layman from the Church and the sharing in the Eucharist.

Third Canon

13 About the ways of life that are suitable to the truth and agreeable to the faith in Christ, let this definition be valid for us: that from now on let no one of the bishops employ compulsion or coercion regarding marriage in the diocese that he governs and in the church that he serves. The evil things that have been said until this day about our flocks, regarding adultery and fornication, are enough: the iniquity of these evil things was spread out and came to the ears of outsiders, and stirred up in the conscience of all peoples mockery and scorn towards us.

(35) As Camplani, *The Revival of Persian Monasticism*, p. 180 rightly remarks, the bishops express their concern about the trouble that these 'pseudo-monks' introduced not only into the communities, but also into the Christian schools, perhaps having in mind Edessa in particular.

(36) *Peryādewṭe* in Syriac, a loanword from the Greek *periodeutai*, the visitor priests in monasteries.

14 [illegible]

15 [illegible]

16 [illegible]

17 [illegible]

100/101 [illegible]] Matth. 19, 11 102 [illegible]] Matth. 19, 12 104/106 [illegible]] I Cor. 7, 1-2 109/111 [illegible]] I Cor. 7, 8-9 120/122 [illegible]] cfr I Tim. 3, 1-2

101 [illegible]] [illegible] C 108 [illegible]] [illegible] C 109 [illegible] C, [illegible] T

14 Let none of us impose (37) this engagement coercively among his clergy or among the priests of the villages or among the *bnay qyama* who are under his jurisdiction, but let the teaching about this matter be like the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and let him understand the infirmity of the others from his own weakness. Our Lord Christ replied to the apostles, who asked him whether their abstention from marriage was of help to them, by saying: 'not everyone is able to receive this word'; (38) and shortly thereafter he left the matter to the apostles' will, by saying: 'let anyone receive it, who is able to receive it'. (39)

15 According to the teaching of our Savior also the blessed Apostle taught the Corinthians, who had written to him to let them know whether they had to refrain from marriage, by saying: 'about the things you wrote to me, it is good for a man not to touch a woman; but because of fornication, let the man take his wife, and the woman take her husband'; (40) in another passage the Apostle, considering the human weakness and the difficulty of the matter, formulates this teaching for those who by their own will were predisposed to this promise, by saying: 'I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is better for them if they remain like me. But if they cannot endure, let them marry, for it is much better to take a wife than to burn with concupiscence'. (41)

16 We too then, each one of us, since now we know the harm we acquired for ourselves and for our flock through the dissoluteness of the intemperate ones, who scandalized the conscience of many, let us reveal our sufferings and disclose our sins, and not be ashamed of the manifest remedy that was offered to the sick in conduct who were among us, and of the change of our conduct and the return to correction that we carried out for ourselves and for our people, and let us bear witness in actual practice to the saying of the great teacher: that truly 'it is much better to take a wife than to burn with concupiscence'. (42)

17 Let us choose, each one of us, one of the two: either to abstain completely, or to approach (a woman) honestly, and rely upon the teaching of the blessed Paul, who commands Timothy in his letter about the conduct suitable to the episcopacy, by speaking thus: 'if one desires the episcopate, he desires a

(37) Chabot proposes to read here the *pael* form of the verb *nt'* ('to give the preponderance'), instead of the verb *ntl* ('to give') attested by the MSS.
(38) Matt. 19:11.
(39) Matt. 19:12.
(40) 1 Cor. 7:1-2.
(41) 1 Cor. 7:8-9.
(42) 1 Cor. 7:9.

[illegible]

18 [illegible]

19 [illegible]

20 [illegible]

131/132 [illegible] – [illegible]] cfr I Tim. 3, 12 134/135 [illegible] – [illegible]] Eph. 4, 19

121 [illegible]] [illegible] *T C* 131 [illegible]] *add.* [illegible] *A* 134 [illegible]] [illegible] *R V' T C* 137 [illegible]] [illegible] *V'* 146 [illegible]] [illegible] *T* 147 [illegible]] [illegible] *T*

good thing: therefore it is necessary that the bishop be without blame, husband of only one wife'. (43) It is evident indeed that this teaching applies to every man, because if each one of them who is married, his marriage should be with one wife, he is fulfilling the law of the Apostle. (44)

18 Also, as to the deacons who have already received the ordination to the diaconate, it is permitted to each of them to be joined to one woman in regular and legal marriage, and to be delivered from the ancient custom, which as a result of the dissoluteness of the lascivious, is mocked and reviled by the outsiders. As to those who come newly for the ordination to the diaconate, let their legal marriage be investigated together with their other manners, and if they are regularly married, let them receive the ordination to the diaconate, so that they may fulfill the apostolic teaching which says: 'let the deacons be husbands of one woman, standing well at the head of their sons and their daughters'. (45)

19 But now, in order that those who are sick among us may be completely healed even if they do not want, those who according to the saying of the Apostle have despaired and committed themselves to lasciviousness and to the practice of every abomination in their cupidity, to whom fornication and adultery pleased, who were not joined regularly (to a woman) nor generated nor raised (children) legally according to God's will, to this canon we also add the following: from now on, let none of the bishops ordain to the diaconate anyone from his city or from the villages that are under his jurisdiction, unless beforehand he has investigated whether (the candidate) has good conduct which is worthy of the ordination to which he presents himself, and together with such (conduct) he also possesses a legal marriage and generation of children, so that may be accurately effaced from Christ's Church every pride and ostentation of those mistaken doctrines which call marriage and generation 'evil' while they satisfy their concupiscence with adultery, fornication and evil deeds.

20 Let us all, with a strong intention which reproves vainglory, with one common harmony, abrogate from our flocks notorious (46) and noxious traditions and impose upright and correct limitations upon married and unmarried people who are in the dioceses that have been entrusted to us by the divine grace, teaching that whoever chooses for himself, by his own will,

(43) 1 Tim. 3:1-2.

(44) The translation here is tentative, being complicated by the syntactical oddness of the original which clearly lacks one or even two conjunctions.

(45) 1 Tim. 3:12.

(46) This is very likely the correct reading: in Syriac, one should substitute the adjective *qrībātā* to the reading of the manuscripts *qrābātā* ('bald').

[illegible]

21 [illegible]

22 [illegible]

162 [illegible] R V T 166 [illegible] A [illegible] T
167 [illegible] F

abstinence from marriage, will remain in a solitary and unattractive dwelling place chastely and strenuously: and whoever chooses for himself to please Christ with service in chastity and humiliation as regards all earthly things, if he is found guilty – after this open permission regarding the regular marriage and the generation of children – of having indulged in adultery and fornication, let him receive punishment according to the censure of the canons; and if he has the title of priest, until he demonstrates the repentance that is appropriate to his transgression and appears worthy of forgiveness, let him be estranged from the ministry of priesthood.

21 Again, if he engages in legal marriage, but outside of the relationship with one woman he dares to be familiar with others, or if one who is regularly married withholds the fruits of the marriage, except for the natural disease of barrenness, let him be a stranger as well from the communion of the Church and from the rank of priesthood. Whoever is a priest and is not yet married but wants to get married regularly and to generate legally, or one whose first wife has died and wants to take a second wife and to maintain the stability of the marriage with the second one as well as with the first one, his bishop shall not have the authority to prevent him from this will: for a regular marriage and generation of children, either before the priesthood or after the priesthood will be pleasing and acceptable for God. Furthermore, a marriage with one woman, even in the case of a change caused by the constraint of death as well as by the necessities that occur in the world, is reckoned to the brother who practices it, even when (marriage) is experienced twice in succession, one after the other. (47)

22 We, therefore, prescribe and teach that these things should be thus, in order that the choice of the abstention from marriage as well as the legal intimacy and generation of children be free from any coercion and compulsion. If anyone quarrels against this true teaching, and in his arrogance thinks that this is a deficiency, and chooses to do and teach the things which fit with the false appearance – which with the help of Christ we have removed and expelled from among us – and does not consent to stand in the truth of our faith that we are outlining in this document, and truly do one of the two things, either perfect holiness or a legal marriage which has the chaste ornament of the begetting of children, and does not agree with the decision that

(47) The syntax is quite awkward here, although the sense is clear: it is permitted to take a second wife after the death of the first one (or because of other 'natural constraints'). P. Bruns, 'Barsauma von Nisibis', p. 22, n. 107, seems to be correct in stating that there must have occurred a corruption during the tradition of the text, probably due to the embarrassment of later copyists for this law, which could pose the problem of bigamy.

[illegible]

23 [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

we have inscribed above about those deceivers who are called ascetics in name, but are far from its reality, and does not ratify the agreement with these things, with good will and with an intention in which there is no deceit, by means of his seal and signature, whether he is a bishop, an elder or a monk, or teaches against these things and does not accomplish all that was indicated above and is defined in this document, let him not have communion with us. We refuse his acquaintance and interdict the priesthood that he ministers, and he is not allowed to serve in any of the ranks of the Church; and if he is a layman, let him be excommunicated and anathematized.

23 We confirm the truth of all that is written above with our seals and signatures.

I, Aqaq, bishop catholicos of the East, assent to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Papa, bishop of Beth Lapaṭ, metropolitan of Beth Huzaye, agree to what is written above, and have signed and sealed.

I, Ḥai, bishop metropolitan of Prat d-Mayshan, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Paromai, bishop of the city of Merv, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Yoḥannan, bishop of Karka d-Beth Slokh, metropolitan of Beth Garmai, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Baṭai, bishop of Hormizd-Ardashir, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Abisho', bishop of Kashkar, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Shem'on, bishop of Ḥirta, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Yazdgard, bishop of Daraye, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Shila, deacon and notary of Mihrnarsa, bishop of Zabe, have been commanded to sign on his behalf in this writing that he affirms and agrees to what is written above and seals it with his seal.

I, Narsa, deacon and notary of Bagash, bishop of Rima, have been commanded by Bagash to sign on his behalf in this writing that he agrees to all that is written above and seals it with his seal.

ܐܢܐ ܦܘܣܝ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܫܘܫܛܪܐ. ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܟܬܝܒܢ. ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܡܝܟܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܠܫܘܡ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܟܬܝܒ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܡܕܝ̈ܐ. ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܟܬܝܒ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܝܘܣܦ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܢܘܛܪܝܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܠܝܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܢܗܪܓܘܪ ܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܬܦܩܕܬ ܡܢܗ ܕܫܠܡ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒܢ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܘܚܬܡ ܒܚܬܡܗ܀

ܐܢܐ ܢܘܚ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܒܠܫܦܪ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܐܝܣܚܩ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܟܪܟܐ ܕܡܝܫܢ. ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܛܚܠ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܦܦܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܪܘܢ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܕܐܟܣܕܢܩܪܐ ܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܚܠܦ ܡܪܝ ܝܘܣܦ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܪܝ، ܕܐܬܦܩܕܬ ܡܢܗ ܕܫܠܡ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܟܬܝܒ ܘܚܬܡ ܒܚܬܡܗ܀

ܐܢܐ ܡܘܫܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܦܝܪܘܙ ܫܒܘܪ. ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܕܢܝܐܝܠ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܟܪܡܐ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܩܘܕܢܙ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܚܪܒܓܠܠ. ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܟܠܡܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܟܬܝܒ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܐܦܪܗܛ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܒܝܬ | ܒܓܫ ܫܠܡܬ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܟܬܝܒܢ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ܀

ܐܢܐ ܗܘܫܥ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܓܢܙܟ ܕܐܕܪܒܝܓܢ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܟܠܡܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܟܬܝܒ ܘܐܪܫܡܬ ܐܢܐ ܘܚܬܡܬ.

ܫܠܡܬ ܣܘܢܗܘܕܘܣ ܕܐܩܩ.

208 ܕܫܘܫܛܪܐ] ܕܫܘܫܬܪܐ *T* 223/224 ܘܚܬܡܬ – 'ܐܢܐ] *om. V* 230 ܕܟܪܡܐ] ܕܟܪܡܝ *V T C* 234 ܒܓܫ] ܒܓܫ *C* 236 ܕܐܕܪܒܝܓܢ] ܕܐܕܘܪܒܝܓܢ *F*

I, Posai, bishop of Shushter, agree to these things which are written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Mika, bishop of Lashom, agree to everything which is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Abraham, bishop of Beth Madaye, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Yawsep, elder and notary of Mar Eliya, bishop of Nhargor, have signed in this book – for I have been commanded by him – that he agrees to those things which are written above and seals them with his seal.

I, Noaḥ, bishop of Belashpar, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Isḥaq, bishop of Karka d-Mayshan, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Abraham, bishop of Taḥal, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Papa, bishop of Arewan, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Abraham, elder of the great church of the Aksadnakre, have signed in this writing for Mar Yawsep, bishop of Ray, for I was commanded by him, who agrees to what is written above and seals it with his seal.

I, Mushe, bishop of Peroz Shabur, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Daniel, bishop of Karme, agree to what is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Kodnaz, bishop of Ḥarbglal, agree to everything which is written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Aphrahat, bishop of Beth Bagash, have agreed to these things which are written above and have signed and sealed.

I, Hosha', bishop of Ganzak of Azerbaijan, agree to everything which is written above and have signed and sealed.

The end of the synod of Aqaq