

**Martyrs, Saints & Prelates
of
The Syriac Orthodox Church
Volume VI**

Cor-Episcopo K. Mani Rajan, M.Sc., M.Ed., Ph.D.



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Dedicated to the blessed memory of

Mor Julios Elias Qoro

(AD 1927 - 1962)

Delegate of the Holy See of Antioch

**Martyrs, Saints & Prelates of
The Syriac Orthodox Church
(Volume VI)**

Cor-Episcopo K. Mani Rajan

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Foreword

This sixth volume, accompanied by helpful indexes, brings the number of saints and hierarchs covered by Corepiscopo Mani Rajan to 300. Those included in the present volume range in date from Apostolic times to the late fifteenth century. Famous Syriac writers are rather well represented and include Dionysius bar Salibi. Quite a number of patriarchs are featured, all from the three great Eastern sees, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria; among those from Alexandria it is good also to see John the Merciful: although he belongs to the Byzantine Orthodox line of Patriarchs, his long and interesting Life also circulated in Syrian Orthodox circles. Several other saints who are primarily known from the Byzantine tradition are also find a place in the volume, notably Mark the Solitary whose monastic writings were translated into Syriac and were much appreciated by East Syriac monastic authors such as Isaac of Nineveh. Among the several women saints who feature is another Byzantine saint, Martha, the mother of Symeon the Younger Stylite (who is also included) whose monastery was on the Wonderful Mountain,

outside Antioch (its ruins can still be seen today). In view of the current suffering of the Syriac Churches in West Asia, the inclusion of another Symeon, the martyred bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, Simeon bar Sabba'e, is particularly appropriate, as is that of Mor Mathai, whose monastery in north Iraq is still a living presence.

Sebastian Brock

The Oriental Institute, Oxford University

19th March, 2018

Acknowledgement

The sixth volume on *Martyrs, Saints & Prelates of the Syrian Orthodox Church* contains fifty biographies. The volumes I to V were published in 2007, 2012, 2013, 2016 and 2017 respectively. I am grateful to all those who supported me in many different ways in authoring and publishing these volumes.

Although biographies of saints and martyrs are available in Syriac and Arabic languages, only a few have been translated either into Malayalam or English. This volume includes a few saints who are less familiar to the faithful but are commemorated in the Church.

I am grateful to Prof. Sebastian Brock, Former faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford/Wolfson College, UK, for sparing time to write a preface to this final volume.

The draft of the manuscript was edited and corrected by Prof. Usha Skaria, Retired faculty member of Vimala College, Thrissur. Prof. Usha has spared much of her time in helping this publication. I am grateful to her for the suggestions

and corrections. The manuscript was reviewed by Dr. Annamma Joseph, Head of the Department of English (Retired), Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram in spite of her busy schedule.

I am much obliged to JSC Publications, Puthencruz, for taking up the publication of the book. I sincerely thank Mr. Julius C. Abraham, M/s Megapixel Graphics, Kottayam, for the layout and cover design of the book. The printing was done by M/s Mor Julius Press, Puthencruz.

I earnestly wish and hope that the English speaking Diaspora of the Syriac Orthodox Church will find this book useful to understand the life and teachings of our Church fathers. I am happy that I could bring out this volume on the 56th *Dukhrono* of Mor Julios Elias Qoro of blessed memory.

Kunnamkulam Cor-episcopo (Dr.) K. Mani Rajan
19 February, 2018

Abbreviations Used

c.	- Circa, meaning approximately
d.	- death
ed.	- edition
cf.	- compare with
Ed.	- Editor
Eds.	- Editors
Fr.	- Father
H.E.	- His Eminence
H.G.	- His Grace
H.H.	- His Holiness
M. E.	- Malayalam Era
MSS	- Manuscript
n.d	- no date
p.	- Page
pp.	- Pages
rev. ed.	- revised edition
St.	- Saint
Sts.	- Saints
Trans.	- Translator(s)
Vol.	- Volume

1. Mor Dionysius Jacob Bar Salibi

(A. D. ? – A. D. 1171)

Bar Salibi (Jacob) was born in Melitene (Malatya, Turkey) where he studied the sciences of language, literature, history, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology.

He was ordained deacon and later he was recognised as one of the eminent theologians, for his work refuting the argument of the book of John, Metropolitan of Mardin, in which the former maintained that the will of God had nothing to do with the calamities which afflicted Edessa. This work was acclaimed as one which is in conformity with the belief of the Church. As a result, Patriarch Athanasius VII (A.D. 1138-1166) rewarded him by ordaining him priest and then a Metropolitan for the diocese of Mar'ash (Germanicia) in 1148 (1145?), by name Dionysius (Aphrem I, 2003; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2001; Wright, 1894).

In 1155 the diocese of Mabug was annexed to his own diocese. In the following year an Armenian band of robbers attacked Mar'ash and robbed the people including Bar Salibi. He was

transferred to Amid (Diyarbakir) in c. A. D. 1167. He renovated the church of Amid.

Bar Salibi was a very learned man and writer. He was a true Syrian who loved his own people and defended them with his tongue and the writing, until he went to receive his reward, leaving behind him a magnificent legacy. Patriarch Michael the Great (A.D. 1166-1199) and Bar Hebraeus (d. A.D. 1286) spoke highly of Dionysius Bar Salibi: “Bar Salibi was a master and logician. He was the star of his time. He wrote many books and commentaries, . . . The Church was overwhelmed with sadness over his loss” (Aphrem I, 2003, p. 432).

His works include poems, prayers, homilies, liturgies, a treatise against heresies, expositions of the Syrian Eucharistic service and doctrine, and commentaries on the Old and New Testaments (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2001). Bar Salibi wrote polemical treatises against not only the perennial theological enemies of the Syriac Orthodox Church, the Nestorians and Chalcedonians, but also against Jews and Muslims. He was known to his contemporaries as ‘the eloquent doctor, the star of his generation and a philoponus (lover of work) like Jacob of Edessa’. He was one of the most learned and Syrian Orthodox writers of the 12th century (Wright, 1894).

The important works of Bar Salibi are: (1) A commentary on the Books of the Old Testament, (2) A commentary on the New Testament, (3) A

book of Theology which deals with the Trinity, the mystery of the Incarnation, the Tree of Life, celestial beings like angels and devils, the rational soul, priesthood, the sun, the moon, resurrection and judgment, the Cross, the mysteries of the Church and the Chrism, Baptism, etc., (4) A commentary on the Liturgy, which he wrote while in Amid, in response to the request of Ignatius IV of Melitene, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, (5) A compendium of Apostolic canons and the canons of the councils, which he presented to the Patriarch Michael, (6) Two liturgies, the first of which begins with: "Grant us Lord at this time love and harmony." The second begins with: "Lord, who are true and ultimate love grant us, (7) Six husoyos ; for the sanctification of the church, the third hour of the feast of Christmas, the festival of Mor Barsoum, the Wednesday of the commemoration of King Abgar and the commemoration of the Forty Martyrs.

Mor Dionysius Bar Salibi is one of three towering literary figures in West Syriac tradition, responsible for what some scholars refer to as the Revival of Syriac Letters in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, with Michael the Syrian (d. 1199) and Gregory Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286). Bar Salibi composed works of such quantity and erudition that both his younger contemporaries called him "the star of his age" (Kurian, 2011).

Mor Dionysius Bar Salibi departed for his heavenly abode on 28 November 1171. He was

entombed in the great church of Amid (Aphrem I, 2003). The feast of Mor Dionysius Bar Salibi is celebrated on 28 November in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

2. Mor George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes

(c. A.D. ? – 725)

Mor George (Georgi), Bishop of the Arabs was a scholar, a church dignitary, a student of philosophy, an excellent critic and an authority on liturgy. He studied at Qinnasrin under Severus Sabukht(d. A.D. 667) shortly before the latter's death, and later under other professors (Aphrem I, 2003).

Wright (1894), examining the British Museum Manuscript (MS Add. 12154) on the exposition of the rites of baptism, the Holy Eucharist and the consecration of the Chrism, identifies Mor George as “the pupil and friend of Athanasius II and Jacob of Edessa (d. 708).” He studied the Syriac philological sciences as well as philosophical, astronomical, theological sciences and history. He assumed the monastic habit and pursued godliness. He was ordained priest and then a Bishop of the Arab tribes of Tay, Uqayl and Tunukh, on 21 November, A.D. 686. Thus, he came to be known as the Bishop of the Arabs.

Some of the important works of Mor George are the following: (1) Commentaries on some Books of the Bible which were cited by the commentators Patriarch George, the monk Severus, Bar Salibi and Bar Hebraeus, (2) A short commentary in fifteen pages on the Sacraments of the Church concerning Faith, Baptism, the celebration of the Eucharist and the Chrism, (3) A supplement of the Book of the Six Days by the learned Jacob of Edessa in ten pages, (4) Compilation of a large scholion on the homilies of Gregory Nazianzen, (5) Six long homilies in the twelve-syllable meter, the first of which is on the holy Chrism; the second comprising twelve large pages on the life of Severus of Antioch, praising his virtues; the third on solitary monks (in four pages); the fourth on the Calendar; the fifth on Palm Sunday, beginning with: "O Son of God whose glory hath filled the heights and the depths, fill thou mine soul with praise appropriate of thy exaltedness and humbleness;" the sixth on the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, and a charming sughith in heptasyllabic meter on Abraham and his sacrifice.

Mor George has written several letters in reply to questions of contemporaries about heresies and practices of the Church regarding the Holy sacraments of the Church. These letters also exhibit the author's ability, intelligence and erudition.

The seat of his diocese was Aqula, which is the town of al-Kufa. He also had a monastery in which he resided and from where he administered his diocese. He supervised his diocese in the best manner for thirty-two years (?) until he died in February 725 or 726.

3. Patriarch Dionysius I, Tell Mahre

(A. D. ? – 845)

Dionysius Telmaharensis, also called Dionysius of Tell Mahre was born at Tell Mahre to a noble and wealthy Edessene family and became famous for his great contribution to the Church of Edessa.

At Qenneshrin, he studied philology, jurisprudence, philosophy and theology. On the destruction of Qenneshrin by fire and the consequent dispersion of the monks, he went to the Dayro of Mor Jacob at Kaisum in the district of Samosata (Wright, 1894). He was subsequently tonsured a monk. On Sunday the first August A.D. 817 (818?) forty-eight Bishops unanimously elected him to the Apostolic See of Antioch. He held three councils in 818, 828 and 834. He consecrated a hundred Metropolitans whose names are cited by Patriarch Michael, the Great (Aphrem I, 2003).

Moran Dionysius was the fifty-fourth Patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 817-845) and the author of an important source document on Eastern Christianity between the reigns of the Byzantine emperors Maurice (582–602) and Theophilus (829–842).

Dionysius' chronicles, although uncritical and only partly preserved in manuscript, retain their value as source data on life in the pre-medieval Syrian Church. They were included in subsequent Syriac annals and contributed a distinctive stage in the development of its literary culture. The details are available in the work of Wright (1894).

Although Dionysius' position was contested by a rival schismatic group during his entire reign, he succeeded in effectively governing the Syrian community. Through cordial relations with the Muslim rulers, Dionysius prevented violent suppression of the Syrian Christians and wholesale sacking of their property. The persecution, however, resumed till the end of his life. Moran Dionysius departed for his heavenly abode on 22 August 845. The feast of Moran Dionysius is celebrated on 22 August in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

4. Mor Hosius (Ossius), Bishop of Cordova

(c. A.D. 257 - 357)

Mor Ossius (Hosius) was ordained Bishop of Cordova in c. A.D. 296 and suffered persecution under Maximian (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). He has earned the name 'the Athanasius of the West' (Cayre, 1935). From A.D. 313 to 325, Mor Ossius seems to have acted as ecclesiastical advisor to Emperor Constantine. In the early stages of Arian controversy he was sent to Alexandria to investigate the Arian controversy. It was in consequence of his report Emperor Constantine summoned the Nicene Council. In A.D. 355 he was banished to Sirmium for his support of St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria (d. A.D. 373). He had to succumb to the pressure to sign the 'blasphemy' and in return he was allowed to return to his diocese. However, he repudiated his action before his death in c. A.D. 357. The feast of Ossius is celebrated on 1 October in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

5. St. Sabas, Ascetic

(A.D. 439 - 532)

Sabas was a native of Mutalska in Cappadocia. He led a solitary life for many years in several places in the East. Later he founded a monastery in Palestine between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea (the Wadi en-Nar). With reluctance he accepted ordination to priesthood in A.D. 490 (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). In A.D. 492, the Patriarch of Jerusalem appointed him Superior of all the hermits in Palestine. The feast of St. Sabas is celebrated on 27 August in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

6. Patriarch Peter of Alexandria

(A.D. ? – c. 311)

St. Peter was the Patriarch of Alexandria from A.D. 300 to A.D. 311 (Cayre, 1935; Quasten, 1952). Peter is described by Eusebius as 'a model Bishop, remarkable for his virtuous life and for his keen study of scriptures' (Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

The important works of St. Peter are: (1) a refutation of the thesis on the pre-existence of souls, (2) on the resurrection, (3) on the God head and (4) on the coming of Christ (Cayre, 1935). He survived the persecution of Diocletian. He drew up rules governing the readmission of those who abandoned the Church due to the fear of torture. In A.D. 306, Peter went into hiding because of the torture and Bishop Melitius subsequently claimed authority over the Throne of Alexandria. In A.D. 311 Peter came back to his Throne when peace was restored, but was beheaded under the persecution of Maximin. The feast of St. Peter is celebrated on 25 May, 28 October and 24 November in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

7. Mor Macarius Bishop of Jerusalem

(A.D. ? – c. . 334)

Mor Macarius was a strong upholder of orthodoxy against Arianism. He was the Bishop of the Holy City from A.D. 312 to 334. Mor Macarius was present at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. He took a prominent role in drafting the creed (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). Soon after the council he was commissioned by Emperor Constantine to build the church at the Holy sepulchre at Jerusalem after St. Helena's discovery of the cross in A.D. 326.

It is opined that Mor Macarius was with Helena in search of the True Cross in Jerusalem. Later he and his fellow-Bishops were invited to build a church at Mamre. Macarius of Egypt is known as Macarius, the Elder and Macarius of Jerusalem is known as Macarius, the Lesser. The feast of Mor Macarius is celebrated on 20 March in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

8. Paulinus, Bishop of Trier

(A.D. ? – 358)

St. Paulinus was the Bishop of Trier. He was a disciple of Maximin whom he succeeded (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). He was a strong opponent of Arianism. He was banished to Phrygia where he died in exile. His relics were brought back to Trier in A.D. 396. The feast of St. Paulinus is celebrated on 25 August in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

9. Peter II the Fuller Patriarch of Antioch

(A.D. ? – 488)

Peter II, also known as Peter the Fuller (Qassar) is the 34th Patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 468/70? - 488). He had been a monk at Constantinople where he practised the trade of

a fuller. He had been to Chalcedon and later returned and became known to Emperor Zeno the Isaurian whom he accompanied to Antioch in c. A.D. 470. Here, he opposed Martyrius, Bishop of Antioch, a supporter of Chalcedonian definition. He was imprisoned once and later was banished in A.D. 477 (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). He is chiefly remembered for his addition of the Trisagion and the Nicene creed at the Eucharist and the solemn blessing of the chrism (Cross & Livingstone, 1974).

10. Phocas, Bishop of Sinope

(A.D. ? – 117)

Phocas was a Bishop at Sinope in Pontus (Cross & Livingstone, 1974). From youth he led a virtuous Christian life, and in his adult years he became the Bishop of Sinope. Saint Phocas converted many pagans to faith in Christ. At the time of a persecution against Christians under the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117), the governor demanded that the saint should renounce Christ. After fierce torture they enclosed Saint Phocas in a hot bath, where he died a martyr in the year A.D. 117 (<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2011/09/22/102695-hieromartyr-phocas-the-Bishop-of-sinope>). In the year 404, the relics of the saint were transferred to Constantinople (July 22). A homily in his honour was composed

by Saint John Chrysostom (d. A.D. 407) on the occasion. The feast of Phoccas is celebrated on 22 July and 13 October in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

11. Mor Mathai, Monk

(4th Century)

Mor Mathai was born in the early 4th century in the city of Amid or in an adjacent village. Little is known about his early life. Mor Mathai was a monk in that region when the anti-Christian persecution of Julian the apostate took place (<https://www.sor.eua.edu>).

In 361, Mor Mathai and other monks were forced to flee to Nineveh where he founded a hermitage on Alfaf Mountain in the Nineveh plains. It was during that time that he met prince St. Behnam, the son of Sencharib, while on a hunting trip. Mathai taught him the principles of Christianity and Behnam became a disciple of Mattai. Impressed by his teachings, Behnam went back to his mother and persuaded her to let him take his sister Sara, who had leprosy, to the saint. She was cured by the saint and after the miracle, both Sara and Behnam were baptized by the saint along with Behnam's forty companions.

On learning of his children's conversion, King Sencharib became angry and threatened them

with severe punishment if they did not renounce their Christian faith. Behnam and Sarah refused to renounce their faith and tried to escape with some of their friends, but the king's soldiers found them and killed them. They both received the crown of martyrdom.

Later an evil spirit possessed the king. It tormented him with pain and fear. The worried queen sent for St. Mathai, knowing in her heart that the saint had indeed brought about the cure for her daughter. When St. Mathai arrived, he prayed for the king and the Lord immediately healed him. The king was very glad to be free of the terrible evil spirit and he and the queen listened to St. Mathai's words about the all powerful and true God. Both the king and the queen believed in our Lord Jesus Christ and were baptized (Rajan, 2017). Eventually the entire city believed in our Lord Jesus. To show his gratitude, the king built a monastery for St. Mathai in the Alfaf Mountain 35 km northeast of Mosul where Mor Mathai healed his daughter. The bodies of his children, Sts. Behnam and Sarah were entombed in it. Many healings and miracles are attributed to the relics of St. Behnam and Sarah. The feast of Mor Mathai is celebrated on 18 September in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

12. Mor Acacius of Melitene

(5th Century A.D.)

Acacius was a reader in the church at Melitene in Armenia Secunda (Smith & Wace, 1877). He gained the good opinion of the Bishop Otreus by the sanctity of his life. He became famous by his steadfast opposition to Nestorius with whom he had lived on intimate terms. He became the Bishop of Amid.

At the council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, he took an active and prominent role. Several short speeches are reported to his credit besides a homily delivered by him.

He was referred to as 'the great Acacius our father and doctor' by the Bishops of his province. He is commemorated on 17 April in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

13. St. Alexander Patriarch of Antioch

(A.D. ? – 417)

St. Alexander was the 28th Patriarch of Antioch from A.D. 412 to 417. He succeeded Porphyros (Porphyrius) who was the Patriarch

from A.D. 402 to 412. He lived a monastic life before the enthronement. Theodoret praises him for the holiness and the austerity of his life, his contempt for riches, love of wisdom, and power of eloquence (Smith & Wace, 1877). His words were so mild that he could heal the schism which had lasted for years in the the body of the Church. Patriarch Alexander was succeeded by Theodotus in A.D. 417.

14. St. Christopher, Martyr

(3rd Century)

Christopher (Christophoros) who was unable to speak Greek was taken as a prisoner. He prayed and an angel touched his lips and gave him power to speak Greek. So he entered the city and began to preach Christ. And when soldiers were sent out to take him, his staff put forth buds and they believed in Christ. They were baptized with him at Antioch by Patriarch Babylas (Babulas, the Martyr) of Antioch (A.D. 237-251).

About the year A.D. 250 he suffered persecution under Decius in Lycia (Smith & Wace, 1877). He was scourged with iron rods, his head was finally severed from his body which had been inflicted with arrow-wounds. The feast of St. Christopher is celebrated in the Syrian Orthodox Church on 9 May.

15. St. Seraphion, the Confessor

(? – A.D. 370?)

St. Seraphion (Serapion), surnamed Scholasticus, was the Bishop of Tmuis in Egypt. He was a friend of Athanasius (d. A.D. 373) and St. Antony (d. A.D. 356) and occupied a position of some importance in the theological struggles of the 4th century (Smith & Wace, 1887). He is called the confessor in the time of Arian supremacy under Emperor Constantius. He seems to have been the companion of St. Antony towards the end of his life.

There are two epistles ascribed to Serapion, one to a Bishop Eudoxius, who had been put to torture; the other a long epistle addressed to the hermits dwelling in the deserts praising their peculiar mode of life. Serapion kept up a correspondence with Athanasius which gives an account of the mode of Arius' death. It was written about the year A.D. 358.

Athanasius addressed a series of doctrinal epistles to Serapion, in which he contends against a form of the Macedonian heresy which troubled Egypt. Its followers admitted the divinity of Christ, but asserted that the Holy Spirit was a creature and differed only in degree from an angel.

The date of death of St. Seraphion is not known for certain. The feast of St. Seraphion, the Confessor is celebrated on 19 May along with his companions in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

16. St. Philogonos, the Patriarch of Antioch

(? – A.D. 323)

St. Philogonos (Philogone/Philogonius) was the twenty-second Patriarch of Antioch from A.D. 320 to 323. He succeeded Moran Vitalis (A.D. 314-320). He was married and had a daughter (Smith & Wace, 1887). He had been by profession an advocate, and had gained universal esteem by his powerful advocacy for the poor and the oppressed in the law courts.

The details about the life of St. Philogonos are gathered from a homily delivered at Antioch by Mor Chrysostom on his feast on 20 December. Chrysostom in his homily comments upon the great difficulties Philogonos had to encounter, at the commencement of the episcopate, from persecutions. Moran Philogonos completed the rebuilding of the 'The mother of all the churches in the city of Antioch,' traditionally ascribed to apostolic times, the construction of which had been begun by Vitalis.

The feast of St. Philogonos, the Patriarch of Antioch, is celebrated on 20 December in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

17. St. Sergius, the Patriarch of Antioch

(? – A.D. 546)

St. Sergius was the 38th Patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 544-546). He Succeeded St. Severius, the Great (A.D. 512-538), after six years during which time the control of the See was taken up by Chalcedonians. The original name of Sergius was Beth Chartae. He was a monk of Hola or Arena, and a priest of Tella or Constantina in Osrhoene before his elevation to the See of Antioch (Smith & Wace, 1887). John of Ephesus, the Syrian Chronicler (d. A.D. 587) has recorded that St. Sergius died at Constantinople (where he chanced to be). Moran Sergius was succeeded by Paul II, the Black of Alexandria (A.D. 550-575). The feast of St. Sergius, the Patriarch of Antioch, is celebrated on 1 July in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

18. St. Silvanus, the Martyr

(? – A.D. 305?)

Silvanus was the Bishop of Gaza, a martyr victimized during the persecution of Maximin. He is believed to have served as a soldier before he was ordained priest. He was very successful in the conversion of pagans. He endured his persecution with great courage. Finally, he with thirty-nine others was condemned to the copper mines of Phaeno, in Palestine. Before his martyrdom he was elevated to the episcopate (Smith & Wace, 1887). Eusebius speaks of him with great admiration. He suffered death by decapitation on May 4 (A.D. 408?). The feast of St. Silvanus and his companions is celebrated on 4 May in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

19. Mor Simeon of Persia, the Martyr

(A.D.? – 344?)

Mor Simeon, surnamed Bar-Saboë', was the 9th Catholicos of Seleucia and Ctesiphon on the Tigris. He succeeded Papas in A.D. 326. He probably had been the assistant to Papas (Smith & Wace, 1887). According to Sozomen, The

Magi and Jews excited King Sapor against the Christians, and subsequently the Catholicos was imprisoned. Many Christians suffered martyrdom. Mor Simeon suffered martyrdom on Good Friday (c. A.D. 344?). The feast of St. Simeon of Persia is celebrated on 17 April in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

20. Mor Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza

(c. A. D. 352 – 420?)

According to the biography written by Mark, his disciple, Porphyrius was born at Thessalonica in c. A.D. 352 (Smith & Wace, 1887). His parents were Christians and hailed from a good family. He was educated in the scriptures and secular subjects.

When he was about 25 years, he renounced the world and retired to the desert in Scete, Egypt. At the end of five years, he left for Jerusalem, and spent another five years in a cave near Jordan. Because of his austerities he became ill and again visited Jerusalem where he met Mark who became his disciple and companion.

At the request of Prophyrius, Mark visited Thessalonica and the proceeds of the share of Porphyrius' parental property was distributed to the poor and to various monasteries. Prophyrius supported himself by manual labour.

Porphyrius was ordained priest (against his will) by John, Bishop of Jerusalem, who entrusted the sacred relic of the True Cross with him. After serving as a priest for three years, in the year A.D. 395, on the demise of Areneas, he was ordained Bishop of Gaza by John of Caesarea. At that time the population of Gaza was almost entirely pagan and the presence of a zealous Bishop was a much awaited blessing. The cessation of a severe drought at the beginning of the second year of his episcopate, was attributed to his prayers and those of the Christians. Subsequently a large number of heathen inhabitants were converted to Christianity. This was followed by other conversions, arousing great anger among the heathen population, which vented itself in severe persecution.

Porphyrius endured all the ill-treatment which made the persecutors change their mind. At the same time he sent his deacon Mark and his minister Borocas to Constantinople to obtain the protection of the Emperor, and his sanction for the demolition of idol temples.

Through the power and advocacy of Mor Chrysostom (d. 407) an order was obtained to destroy the idols and close down the temples, which was executed. Still a dominant section of the inhabitants remained idolaters. They kept out Christians from all lucrative offices and forbid them from the enjoyment of their property. At this juncture Mor Porphyrius sought the permission

of Mor John of Caesarea to resign as he could not stand or make good the situation. Mor John consoled him and accompanied him to Constantinople to obtain an order to demolish the temples. After having visited a famous anchorite, named Procopus at Rhodes, on their voyage, they arrived at Constantinople on 7 January A.D. 401 (Smith & Wace, 1887). They with the help of Mor Chrysostom, who was on good terms with Eudoxia, the Empress, obtained orders from Arcadius for destruction of heathen shrines. Moreover, an endowment and other privileges were secured for the Christians of Gaza and Caesarea. A large sum was granted for the erection of a church and a hospice for strangers in the city.

The Bishops reached Majuma, the port of Gaza, on 1 May and Cynegius, the commissioner, executed the imperial orders for the destruction of the temples. A solemn fast was declared by Porphyrius, with the view to understand the divine will in the matter of pillaging the temple of Marnas (known for its architectural uniqueness). The confusion was whether to destroy the temple or convert it into a Christian church. Finally, the temple was destroyed and a cruciform church was built according to the plan furnished by Eudoxia. The church was dedicated by Mor Prophyrius on Easter day (A.D. 405 or 406).

The heathen population of Gaza, who was in majority took revenge on this high-handed

destruction and at the spread of Christianity in the city. Several Christians were killed and Mor Porphyrius barely escaped the massacre. The Bishop's house was pillaged and he took refuge in the house of an old woman. Later, the woman with her grand-daughter embraced Christianity. The young girl, Salaphtha, became a deaconess and subsequently became famous for her asceticism.

Mor Porphyrius in his will directed that a certain sum should be dispensed daily during Lent to the poor of the city according to his custom during his life, and that in default the whole sum should devolve on the church of Caesarea. Mor Porphyrius departed for his heavenly abode on 26 February A.D. 419/420. He is commemorated on 26 February in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

21. Moran Porphyrius the Patriarch of Antioch

(A. D.? – 412)

Porphyrius (Porphyros) was the twenty-seventh Patriarch of Antioch from A.D. 404 to 412. He succeeded Moran Flavian I (A.D. 381-404). For a long period Porphyrius had been in holy orders and he seems to have spent his life in Antioch. Moran Flavian's death occurred almost during the same period of Chrysostom's

deposition and exile (Smith & Wace, 1887).

Constantius, a trusted friend of Chrysostom marked out as Flavian's successor, was accused at Constantinople as a disturber of public peace. Porphyrius was ordained by Acacius, Antiochus and Severianus. The house of Moran Porphyros was attacked by some opponents who wanted to burn it down. Porphyrius got the protection of the general in command and the crowd was dispersed by the army.

The influence of Moran Porphyrius with ruling powers was enough to make the people attend the church. However, there was resistance and Porphyrius obtained a decree, from Arcadius on 18 November 404. Those who opposed Moran Porphyrius were ordered to be expelled from the churches and were forbidden from holding religious meetings elsewhere.

The feast of Moran Porphyrius is celebrated on 1 December in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

22. Paulus I Patriarch of Constantinople

(A. D. ? – 351)

Mor Paulus I (Paulose) is the sixth Patriarch of Constantinople who was elected in A.D. 340. He was a native of Thessalonica, a priest of

Constantinople and was the secretary to the aged Patriarch Alexander (d. A.D. 340), his predecessor in the See (Smith & Wace, 1887).

There were two candidates to contest to the See, Paulose and Macedonius. The two candidates had followers who came into open conflict. However, the orthodox party prevailed and Paulose was elected and ordained in the church of Peace at Constantinople. However, Emperor Constantinus was angry that he was not consulted and he summoned a meeting of the Arian Bishops and Paulose was banished. Eusebius, the Bishop of Nicomedia was transferred to Constantinople and he died in A.D. 341. There was violence subsequent to the restoration of Mor Paulose to the See and many lives were lost.

Emperor Constantius was at Antioch during the above mentioned civil war and he ordered Hermogenes, his general of cavalry, to expel Paulose. This resulted in setting fire to the house in which the general was stationed. He was killed and was pulled out from the burning building, and was dragged in triumph round the city. The Emperor was determined to repay their rebellion by depriving them of half their allowances of corn. Paulose was again driven out of the city.

Paulose with other Bishops went to Rome and consulted Bishop Julius (d. A.D. 352). Julius found them all staunch to the creed of Nicea and accepted them. Paulose recovered his See. He wrote strongly to the Bishops of the East.

They declined to act on his advice. However, Constantinus stood resolutely against the choice of the people of Constantinople and ordered to expel Paulose. Philippus, the prefect of the East, was not ready to risk his life and met Paulose secretly as if to discuss some matter and showed him the Emperor's letter. Subsequently, he was again expelled. Macedonius was ordained in the place of Paulose.

Paulose was chained and taken to Singara in Mesopotamia. Afterwards he was taken to Emesa, and finally to Cucusus in Armenia. Patriarch Mor Paulose I is believed to have been strangled to death by the Arians (supporters of Macedonius) in A.D. 351 after three exiles and two restorations. The feast of this martyr is celebrated on 6 November in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

23. Mor Constantine, Bishop of Edessa

(A.D. ? – 735)

Constantine was the most famous disciple of Jacob of Edessa (d. A.D. 708). He lived with him in the monastery of Ousebuna for a long time (Aphrem I, 2003). In A.D. 699, he was ordained Metropolitan of Bithynia by Patriarch of Antioch Julian II (A.D. 686-708). Although Mor Constantine

was ordained for Bithynia, he was sent to the diocese of Homs. After the death of his master, Mor Jacob, he was transferred to the diocese of Edessa by Patriarch (Elias?) Elijah I in A.D. 709. He administered the diocese for twenty-six years.

Constantine was energetic in the pursuit of knowledge. His questions to his master (Mor Jacob of Edessa) resulted in the composition of two works, viz., *The First Cause* and *The six days of Creation*. He has also composed metrical discourses which were preserved in the library of Mor Abraham monastery in Midyat, Turkey (Aphrem I, 2003).

Mor Constantine passed away on 25 July A.D. 735. The feast of Mor Constantine is celebrated on 25 July in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

24. Mor Kuriakose, Metropolitan of Amid

(A.D. ? – 623)

Mor Kuriakose (Quryaqos) was a doctor of the Church. He became a monk and studied at the monastery of Zakka near al-Raqqa. Later he became the disciple of Patriarch Peter III of Raqqa (A.D. 581-591) who consecrated him Metropolitan of Amid (Omeed or Amida) in c. A.D. 582/83 (Aphrem I, 2003).

In A.D. 609, he was replaced by Metropolitan Samuel for political reasons but was restored to his Bishopric later. Mor Kuriakose was praised for his efforts in bringing unity within the Church of Alexandria. He has prepared six canons which are incorporated in the *book of Hudoye* by Bar Hebraeus.

Mor Kuriakose passed way in A.D. 623 and he is commemorated in the Syrian Orthodox Church on 3 August.

25. Malphono Saliba Bar Khayrun

(c. A.D. 1253 – 1340)

Saliba Bar Khayrun was born in c. A.D. 1253. He was well versed in the Syriac language and proficient in its calligraphy. He is the father of monk Yeshu. When his wife died he became a monk and was ordained priest in A.D. 1323 (Aphrem I, 2003).

Saliba Bar Khayrun was called the ‘Malphono of the East’. Until A.D. 1340 he continued to transcribe manuscripts. He composed a *husoyo* for the festival of St. Ephrem, beginning thus: “Praise to the teacher of divine wisdom.”

The note worthy contribution of *Malphono Saliba Bar Khayrun* is the revision of the calendar of the festivals for the whole year ascribed to

Jacob of Edessa. In the revision, he added festival of a group of saints, particularly the ascetics and martyrs of Tur'abdeen.

26. Mor John, Bishop of Dara

(A.D. ? – 860)

John was tonsured a monk at the monastery of Mor Hananya near Mardin, Turkey. In c. A.D. 825, the Patriarch Dionysius of Tell Mahre (A.D. 817-845) consecrated him Metropolitan of Dara which he administered for thirty-five years (Aphrem I, 2003).

Mor John was a scholar and an illustrious theologian and has many works to his credit (Wright, 1894). The works of Mor John were later cited by authorities such as Mor Moses Bar Kepho (d. A.D. 903), Mor Dionysius Bar Salibi (d. A.D. 1171) and Mor Gregoris Bar Hebraeus (d. A.D. 1286).

The distinguished works of Mor John are: (1) A book on theology which comprises celestial hierarchies, ecclesiastical hierarchies, priesthood, resurrection, Christian doctrine, offering of the Holy Sacraments, etc., (2) A book on Paradise, creation, resurrection, Epiphany, the finding of the Cross and the Acts of our Lord, etc., (3) A commentary on the New Testament (or the Gospels alone) , (4) An eloquent treatise on the

policy of the Church and the settlement of peace in it and (5) A liturgy (*Thakso*).

The commentary on the Eucharist by Mor John (John of Dara, 1999) which is available in English informs us of the many practices extant in the ninth century. However, this commentary contradicts many of the practices contained in the later commentaries of Mose Bar Kepho (1988) and Dionysisus Bar Salibi (1990). The feast of Mor John, the Theologian is celebrated on 11 May in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

27. Prochoros, Bishop of Nicomedia

(First Century)

Prochoros is the name of one of the seven Deacons of the Church at Jerusalem, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 6:5). He is believed to have been one of the seventy-two emissaries and afterwards Bishop of Nicomedia in Bithynia (Smith & Wace, 1887).

There is an apocryphal writing titled "*History of Apostle John*" which is ascribed to Prochoros. The narrative begins with the parting of the Apostles and St. John's mission to Asia. He suffered shipwreck on the voyage but arrived safely at Ephesus accompanied by Prochoros, his disciple. There he restored the life of a man,

who had been slain by a demon, destroyed the image of Diana (Artemis) and expelled the demon which had harboured there.

St. John was sent in exile to Patmos by the command of the Emperor. On the voyage to the Island he restored a drowned man to life, stilled a tempest and healed a guardsman. There are accounts of miracles that he performed while in exile which include his refutation of a learned Jew in a public dispute, numerous miracles of healing and raising the dead.

St. John spent fifteen years in Patmos and he converted almost the whole island. He was given permission to return to Ephesus, but he retired to a solitary place in the island and there he dictated the Gospel to Prochoros. After finishing the Gospel, it was left as a memorial of his work among the inhabitants of Patmos. He then left for Ephesus and spent twenty-six years there where he breathed his last. Prochoros and six other disciples conducted the burial of St. John, the Apostle (Smith & Wace, 1887).

28. St. Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople

(A.D. ? - 446)

Proclus was ordained Reader in the Church in his childhood. He studied in the schools of rhetoric at Constantinople. He became secretary to Atticus, who ordained him deacon and priest. On the death of Atticus, some desired Proclus as the new Patriarch. Some others were in favour of Philippus but the majority wished for Sisinnius who was ultimately appointed the Patriarch (Smith & Wace, 1887). Sisinnius ordained Proclus Bishop for Cyzicus but the people there refused to receive him and he remained at Constantinople.

On the death of Sisinnius, the old rivalry broke out between partisans of Philippus and Proclus. A third person, Nestorius was chosen by the emperor. In A.D. 429, on a festival of St. Mary, Proclus gave a sermon on the incarnation which was later inserted at the beginning of the Acts of the Council of Ephesus. On the deposition of Nestorius, Philippus and Proclus appeared as rivals for the third time. This time again Maximinianus was selected to avoid a crisis.

When Maximinianus died in A.D. 434 (on Thursday before Easter) Proclus was enthroned by Bishops at Constantinople. In A.D. 438,

Proclus transferred the relics of St. Chrysostom, his old master, from Comana to Constantinople and interred them with great honour in the church of the Apostles (Chediath, 2006). It was during the time of Proclus that the Trisagion came into use. Twenty-seven homilies are ascribed to Proclus which include the nativity of our Lord, Epiphany, Resurrection, etc.

Proclus was a wise shepherd and a man of reconciliatory temper but strictly adhering to the Orthodox faith. He won over those who differed from him by persuasion rather than force. Proclus most probably passed away in July A.D. 446 or 447.

29. Procopius, the Great Martyr

(A.D. ? – 303)

Procopius was a native of Jerusalem, but lived at Bethsan (Scythopolis). His earlier name was Neanius. His father, Christopher, was a Roman and a Christian. But the mother, Theodosia, remained a pagan. His father died when he was a child and the young child was raised by his mother. Having received an excellent secular education, he was introduced to Diocletian in the very first year of the emperor's accession to the throne, and he quickly advanced in government service. Towards

the end of the year 303, when open persecution against Christians began, Neanius was sent as a proconsul to Alexandria with orders to mercilessly persecute the Church of God.

On his way to Egypt, near the Syrian city of Apamea, Neanius had a vision of the Lord Jesus, similar to the vision of Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts of the Apostles 9:1-9). At that moment a radiant Cross appeared in the air. Neanius felt an inexpressible joy and spiritual happiness in his heart and he was transformed from being a persecutor into a zealous follower of Christ. From this point in time Neanius became favorably disposed towards Christians and fought victoriously against the barbarians (<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2000/07/08/101966-greatmartyr-procopius-of-caesarea-in-palestine>).

When the Roman Emperor Diocletian (A.D. 284-305) launched the last and the most ruthless of the ten persecutions against the Christians in Palestine in April, A.D. 303 Procopius was the first person who received the crown of martyrdom in that country (<https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/301-600/procopius-first-of-the-palestine-martyrs-11629634.html>). Eusebius, who became the Bishop of Caesarea, was alive at the time. Eusebius has left an account of the martyr which is summarised below.

Procopius was a godly man, for even before his confession he had given up his life to great

endurance. He ate only bread, and drank water; and he took nothing else other than these two. Occasionally he took food every second day, and sometimes every third day; oftentimes he passed a whole week without food (also, see, Butler, 1866). He was well skilled in the sciences of the Greeks, but much more in that of the holy scriptures. He was admirable in all virtues, particularly in heavenly meekness and humility (Butler, 1866). He ministered in the orders of the Church in three ways: First, he had been a Reader; and in the second order he translated from Greek into Aramaic; and in the last, which is even more excellent than the preceding, he performed the function of an exorcist.

“Now it happened that he was sent from Baishan (Bethsan or Scythopolis) to our city Caesarea, together with his brother confessors. And at the very moment that he entered the gates of the city they brought him before the Governor: and immediately upon his first entrance the judge, whose name was Flavianus (Flavian), said to him: ‘It is necessary that you should make sacrifice to the gods’: but he replied in a loud voice, ‘There is no God but one only, the Maker and Creator of all things.’

Then the judge commanded him to offer sacrifice to the emperors (Diocletian, Herculius, Galerius and Constantius), who were four in number; but the holy martyr of God laughed still more at this saying, and repeated the words of

the greatest of poets of the Greeks [Homer], ‘the rule of many is not good: let there be one ruler and one sovereign.’

“And on account of his answer Flavian sentenced Procopius to be beheaded. And this took place on the seventh day of the month Heziron (June), in the first year of the persecution in our days. This confessor was the first who was consummated in our city Caesarea.” By night Christians took up his much-tortured body, and with tears and prayers, they buried him.

There is another account which describes that his mother, went to the emperor to complain that her son did not worship the ancestral gods. Neanius was summoned to the procurator Judaeus Justus, where he was solemnly handed the decree of Diocletian. Having read through the blasphemous directive, Neanius quietly tore it up before the eyes of everyone. This was a crime, which the Romans regarded as an “insult to authority.” Neanius was held under guard and was sent in chains to Caesarea of Palestine, where the Apostle Paul once suffered. Struck by the great faith and courage of the Christians, and seeing the firmness of her son in bearing terrible sufferings, Theodosia became repentant and subsequently she was also executed. The feast of Procopius is celebrated on 1 June in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

30. Morth Shirin, the Great Martyr

(Sixth Century)

Shirin was born in a noble Persian family. She had the intensive 'Magian' education that had 'always brought forth fruit for the devil'. Shirin was raised under the close protection of her father, a Zoroastrian master (teacher of a Persian religion founded in the sixth century B.C. by the prophet Zoroaster) perfectly versed in the doctrines of Zoroaster (Walker, 2006, pp. 231-232). In an effort to shield his daughter from the influence of the Christian villagers of Beth Garmai, Shirin's father entrusted her to a Persian foster mother who instructed her in the Zoroastrian yashths (tenets?). Shirin's conversion at the age of eighteen places her in open revolt against their 'magian' family.

The hagiographer meticulously chronicles the abortive efforts of Shirin's extended family to bring her back to their 'paternal religion'. Shirin's family calls first on her foster mother to persuade her. Masquerading as a Christian, the Persian woman urges Shirin to have consideration for 'her own brothers' and at least to restrict her Christianity to private worship. Instead the young convert grows bolder in her rejection of the pagan error. Her brothers and other relatives confine her to the house. Shirin's relatives threaten her and

implore her not to 'do offence to their family' by abandoning their ancestral faith. Subsequently she received the crown of martyrdom. The feast of Shirin (Sheerin), the Persian martyr is celebrated on 8 February in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

There is another virtuous woman by name Shirin, who lived in the sixth century A.D. The details of the life of Shirin (sixth century, who is not a martyr) come from the Martyrios, an East Syrian monastic writer, who himself testifies that Shirin had a major influence on his own spiritual formation (Brock & Harvey, 1998).

Shirin was a laywoman and was under monastic vows, a descendant of the early Syriac Church. She lived in the village known as Halmon, in the Beth Nuhadre district, Iraq. She was a spiritual advisor to monks as well as to laywomen. She lived a perfect life of asceticism in all its vigour. Each evening she sustained herself with a small cake made out of pulse and some boiled vegetables. Along with this food she drank water and subsisted herself while her face was radiant with the grace of the Holy spirit.

For much of the time, Shirin ate only once every four days, or even just once a week. She stood continuously for long hours in prayer and meditation in spite of her fatigue and old age. She spent most nights without any sleep, being occupied with continual singing of the Psalms and recital of prayer. During day time she read scriptures and the lives of holy men. She was very

happy to receive strangers and to see to their comfort. Monks and other strangers visited her from different places to receive her blessings.

31. St. Agabus, The New Testament Prophet

(First Century)

St. Agabus is one of the seventy disciples, and a martyr. The seventy disciples were chosen by the Lord to go before Him to preach the gospel (Luke 10:1). St. Agabus was with the twelve disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (<http://www.ucatholic.com/saints/saint-agabus-the-prophet/>).

The Scriptures will confirm that since the apostles and disciples were not being appreciated in Jerusalem, they decided to leave and head to the church of Antioch (Acts 21:3-4). Antioch at this time was the capital of Syria, and was considered an awesome commercial center (<http://www.christian-resources-today.com/biblical-prophets-5.html>). This great capital had the title - "Antioch the Beautiful and the Golden." It was at Antioch where the first gentile church was founded and the first time that followers of

Jesus were called, Christians (Acts 11:26). The apostles arrived in this great city hoping to be of some service to a flourishing church.

Agabus received the gift of prophecy, as the Acts of the Apostles tells us, “And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’” (Acts 21:10-11) This prophecy was fulfilled (Acts 21:17-36).

He also prophesied about a famine on all the earth, and this was fulfilled during the time of Claudius Caesar, the Roman Emperor (Acts 11:27-28). He preached the gospel together with the holy apostles. He went to many countries, teaching and converting many of the Jews and the Greeks to the knowledge of the Lord Christ. He sanctified them by the life-giving baptism.

This moved the Jews of Jerusalem to arrest him. They tortured him by beating him severely, and putting a rope around his neck, dragged him outside the city. They stoned him there until he gave up his pure spirit. At this moment, a light came down from heaven. Everyone saw it as a continuous column between his body and heaven. A Jewish woman saw it and said, “Truly this man was righteous.” She shouted in a loud voice, “I am a Christian and I believe in the God of

this saint.” They stoned her also and she died and was buried with him in one tomb. The feast of St. Agabus is celebrated in the Syrian Orthodox Church on 8 April.

32. St. Alexios, Martyr of Rome

(A.D. ? – 430)

Since the 10th century the story of Saint Alexis (Alexius or Alessio), called the “Man of God” by his unknown biographer, has been popular throughout the West. It was introduced from the East by some Greek (<http://www.soc-wus.org/ourchurch/St.%20Alexis%20of%20Edessa.htm>).

Though much of the legend is probably apocryphal, there is no doubt that there was a man of God called Alexis and that he achieved a great reputation for holiness at Edessa. It is, however, likely that he lived, died, and was buried at Edessa.

Alexios died at Edessa in Mesopotamia about A.D. 430. He had lived by begging, and shared the alms he received with other poor people. After his death, it was learned that he was the son of a Roman patrician, who left a wealthy bride on his wedding day and gone to live in poverty in Syria. An account of Alexis, was written in Greek, and an additional narrative was produced in Latin.

Alexis was the only son of Euphremian, a Roman senator of enormous wealth and influence, and his wife Aglae (Agloe). They were devout Christians and the son was brought up in the spirit of the Gospel. Even as a child, Alexis was known for his charity.

When Alexis reached manhood he allowed himself to be betrothed to an heiress who was related to the imperial family, though he had already determined to give his life to God. Their wedding took place with great pomp and dignity. As soon as the ceremony came to an end, Alexis took off the gold ring that had just been placed on his finger, and returned it to his bride. They separated by mutual consent and he fled from his home disguised as a beggar.

He set sail for Syria and then made his way on foot to the church of Our Lady of Edessa, famous as a shrine for pilgrims, where he lived in a hut adjoining the church. The Syrian text of his legend says: "During the day he remained steadfastly in the church and in the martyrion, refusing alms from those who offered them, for he wished to do without food during the day and thus forced himself to fast until the evening."

"In the evening, he stood in the doorway of the church and held out his hand, receiving the alms of those who entered the church. But as soon as he had received what he needed, he closed his hand and would take no more. Nor did he ever cease to live among the poor. Such

was his life every day. Of his earlier condition and status he said not a word, nor did he even wish to reveal his name.”

After living this life for 17 years, his identity was revealed; some say that he was recognized by a sacristan, others that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to the people and said: “Seek the man of God.” To avoid discovery, Alexis fled and embarked a ship for Tarsus, but a tempestuous wind drove his ship to Italy.

He went to Rome and to his father’s house, where he found that his parents were still living. He did not make himself known, nor did anyone recognize him, and when he asked for lodging he was given permission to sleep under the staircase of his own luxurious home; and so he lived, begging his bread in the streets and working in the kitchen, where he was often insulted by the servants and sharing crumbs of what was rightly his.

Seventeen years later while Pope Innocent I was celebrating Mass before the emperor, he heard a voice saying: “Seek the man of God.” Guided by the selfsame voice, he and the emperor went to the house of Euphremian, but when they arrived they found Alexis dead. The feast of St. Alexios is celebrated on 17 March and 17 July in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

33. Moran George I Patriarch of Antioch

(A.D. ? - 790)

Moran George (Gewargis or Geevarghese), is the fifty-first Patriarch of Antioch. He is one of the most famous Patriarchs of Antioch, distinguished in his age for his knowledge, understanding, literary productions and sober opinions. Moreover, he was amiable, humble and patient in overcoming hardships. He was born at B'altan near Josya in the province of Homs, and studied and mastered Syriac and Greek as well as philology, theology and jurisprudence at Qinnésrin. There he was ordained a Deacon and led an ascetic and pious life. He also corresponded with Theodore, Bishop of Samosata, who predicted that God would entrust him with a high position in his church (Aphrem I, 2003).

Theodore also encouraged him to be faithful to his monastery. As George was a man of virtue and noble character, he was chosen by the Holy Council to ascend the Apostolic See of Antioch. He was consecrated a Patriarch in A.D. 758. Soon after his consecration, he had to put up with envious and malignant Bishops like John, Bishop of Callinicus and David, Bishop of Dara and others, assisted by a wicked and intriguing monk to whom they yielded.

Consequently, both John and David usurped the See of Antioch. In A.D. 766 Mor George suffered in prison, went to Baghdad and for nine years he and other captives had to bear with patience the injustice of Abu Ja'far al-Mansour, the stingy and greedy Abbasid Caliph. With him was also imprisoned the Patriarch of the Malkites and the Nestorian Catholicos. They were all released after the death of Abu Ja'far in A.D. 775. He was honored and received by the Church as if he were an angel descending from heaven. Immediately, he began gathering scattered flocks and repairing the damage which had befallen the church. He journeyed to Antioch where, in the same year, he ordained ten Bishops. In A.D. 785, he held a synod at Kfar Nabu near Sarug, in which he enacted twenty-two canons, preceded by a universal letter.

Mor George wrote an eloquent commentary in two volumes on the Gospel of St. Matthew, in which he cited Ignatius, Africanus, Eusebius of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Chrysostom, Jacob of Sarug, Philoxenus of Mabug, Severus of Antioch and George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes. There is also a distinguished letter written by him, mentioned by Michael the Great, addressed to Gauriya, the deacon of Beth Na'ar, a village in Lebanon, on the phrase, "we break the heavenly bread."

He wrote poetry, characterized by clarity and charm. During his imprisonment, he composed

beautiful hymns and metrical discourses, some of which, we believe, were added to the Church services. Of these hymns, we find one to the tune of "Rise up, O! Paul," in which he laments his condition. It is in "*Qum Phaulos*" tune, and starts like this: "May it do me much good, if I am informed that Babylon, city of the giants, has fallen and that the gates of prisons have been opened in order to go out victorious like Peter, and like Zachariah sing with delight: 'Behold, the sun shines over the blind from on high'. O, daughters of Zion, weep for Daniel, and O, monasteries weep for George."

Moran George administered the Church wisely until his death on 1 December, A.D. 790. He was buried in the Monastery of Mar Barsoum in Melitene and is commemorated by the Church on 7 December.

34. St. Sabina, Martyr

(A.D. ? – 126)

Sabina was a noble pagan, the widow of Senator Valentinus and the daughter of Herod Metallarius (<http://www.monstrousregimentof-women.com/2015/08/saint-sabina-martyr.html>). She lived in Rome and was converted to Christianity by her female slave (servant?), Serapia (Seraphia). Seraphia was, a native of Antioch in

Syria, who was a zealous Christian, and served God in the holy state of virginity (Butler, 1866). Serapia had come to Rome with her parents. After their death, she gave everything she owned to the poor and then had sold herself into slavery, thus entering Sabina's household.

The persecution of Adrian beginning to rage, Beryllus, governor of the province, caused Sabina and Seraphia to be apprehended, and the latter was beaten to death with clubs in c. A.D. 119 (126?). Sabina was discharged out of regard to her quality and friends. Sabina retrieved Serapia's remains and buried them in her family's tomb.

Sabina was accused of being a Christian by the Prefect Elpidius. She was beheaded because she publicly embraced the new religion, courageously professing her faith in Christ. Sabina underwent martyrdom on 29 August in the year 125 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Hadrian. (<http://www.stsabina.org/history.html>). In A.D. 430, Sabina's relics were brought to the Aventine in Rome, where a basilica was built in her honor (<http://antiochian.org/node/19405>). The feast of Sabina is celebrated in the Syrian Orthodox Church on 13 March.

35. St. Eudocia, Martyr

(Second Century)

The venerable martyr Eudocia lived in the Phoenician city of Heliopolis (Baalbek in present-day Lebanon), during the reign of Trajan. Eudocia was an idolater and led a licentious life (<https://www.goarch.org/chapel/saints?contentid=446>). She was very beautiful and had many lovers, and had acquired great riches.

Coming into the city on an assignment, Herman, a monk, resided at the home of a Christian whose house was adjacent to that of Eudocia. In the evening and according to monastic tradition, he began to recite the Psalter and to read a chapter on the dreadful judgment. Eudocia heard him attentively. Fear and terror overcame her, and she remained awake until dawn. At daybreak, she sent her servant to beseech the monk to come to her.

Through God's Providence the monk Herman (Germanus?) came and a lengthy conversation took place between them about faith and salvation in general. As a result of the conversation, Eudocia petitioned the local Bishop to baptize her. She repented and was baptized by Bishop Theodotus. Following her baptism, Eudocia distributed her wealth and entered a convent, giving herself

up completely to the monastic life, obedience, patience, long vigils, prayer and fasting. (<http://www.orthodox.net/menaion-march/01-the-venerable-martyr-eudocia.html>).

After thirteen months, Eudocia was elected abbess. Eudocia lived in the convent for fifty-six years and was found worthy before God. He endowed her with much grace so that she raised even the dead. When the persecution of Christians began under (Governor?) Prince Vincent, St. Eudocia was beheaded. According to some, it was under Trajan, who reigned from A.D. 98 to A.D. 117. Meanwhile some others believed that it happened during the reign of Hardrian from A.D. 117 to A.D. 138 (<http://www.gometropolis.org/orthodox-faith/feast-days/the-righteous-martyr-eudocia-the-samaritan/>). Eudocia is a glorious example of how a vessel of impurity can be purified, sanctified and filled with the Grace of the Holy Spirit. The feast of Eudocia is celebrated in the Syrian Orthodox Church on 1 March.

36. John (Ivannis) of Edessa, Priest

(Fifth Century?)

Bishop Paul abandoned his Bishopric in Italy and travelled to Edessa desiring to lead an ascetic life (Arneson, Fiano, Marquis & Smith, 2010). There, he met John. Not knowing a trade, Paul earned a

meager living as a day laborer, but gave most of his money to the poor and prayed everyday in the caves and mountains near the city. John realized that Paul was a wonderworker, and so he begged Paul to accompany him on his travels. Soon, the two friends left Edessa to visit the monks on Sinai, but instead of reaching the site of their intended pilgrimage they were abducted and taken to Yemen by tree-worshipping Arabs. After a battle with a tree-god, they succeeded in converting the Arabs to Christianity. During the long journey home, they encountered some unusual ascetics: a dendrite living in a mountaintop tree; and a band of wandering monks among whom was a woman disguised as a man.

The life history of John of Edessa translated by John C. Lamoreaux from an anonymous Sinai manuscript provides some details about John (<http://www.johnclamoreaux.org/cv.html>). The Life of John of Edessa recounts the debate with a certain Phineas, the Jew, in the presence of the Caliph Haran al-Rashid. The text opens with a description of the wicked Jew Phineas, a courtier of the caliph, and how he turns the caliph against the Christians. When John learns of this, after praying before the image of Christ in Edessa (mandylion), he travels to al-Raqqa to meet with the caliph. Upon John's arrival, the caliph summons him and Phineas to take part in a debate. The debate focuses on passages from the Hebrew Bible that support the doctrine of the Trinity. The caliph eventually finds himself convinced of

the truth of the Christian position, and proceeds to present philosophical arguments in favor of the Trinity. Finding himself on the losing side, Phineas challenges John to perform miracles. The text recounts that John cast out a demon, caused Phineas to lose his ability to speak, drank poison without harm, caused Phineas' hand to wither, and lastly raised the caliph's daughter from the dead. Not surprisingly, the caliph was seized by fear and wonder, with the result that he ordered a cessation of hostilities against the Byzantines, permitted Christians to practice their faith openly, relieved them of their taxes, and allowed churches to be built throughout his kingdom. The feast of John is celebrated on 31 January and 14 February in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

37. Sisinnius the Patriarch of Constantinople

(Fourth/fifth Century)

Sisinnius was a priest in the area of Elaea and had become known for his virtues and piety, as well as for acts of charity (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sisinnius_I_of_Constantinople). After the death of Atticus, Patriarch of Constantinople, the Patriarch's throne lay vacant for some time, as there was controversy about the choice of a

successor. According to the dominant view, this period was about four months and ended with the election of Sisinnius in February 426. For the consecration and its establishment, Emperor Theodosius II convened a meeting chaired by Theodotus of Antioch (d. 428).

Sisinnius passed away on 24 December 427. The calendar of the Syrian Orthodox Church contains the name of Sisinnius who is commemorated on 23 November. However, it is not certain whether the two are one and the same person.

38. Eleuthrius of Nicomedia

(Fourth Century)

Eleuthrius was a soldier in the army of co-Emperor Diocletian in Nicomedia (Butler, 1866). He was accused of setting fire to the emperor's palace and was burned to death after being tortured with his companions (http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=3082). There is another description that he was arrested for converting an imperial official. He was clubbed to death. The feast of Eleuthrius is celebrated on 2 October in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

39. Eusebius of Samosata, Martyr

(A. D.? – 380?)

Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata (Shmeshath), stood firmly for the orthodox confession of faith proclaimed at the first ecumenical council at Nicea in the year 325. For this he underwent persecution by the Arians, being repeatedly deprived of his See and was banished (<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2008/06/22/101779-hieromartyr-eusebius-the-Bishop-of-samosata>). Emperor Constantius (337-361), patron of the Arians, learned that Eusebius has the custody of the synodal acts (decree) regarding the election of the Orthodox Patriarch Meletius to the See of Antioch (d. 381). Patriarch Meletius was elected since Arians believed him to be a supporter of their heresy (Butler, 1866). Emperor commanded him to give up the decree. The saint boldly refused to do as ordered. The enraged emperor sent a message that if he did not give up the decree, then his right hand would be cut off. Saint Eusebius stretched out both hands to the emissary saying, “Cut them off, but I will not give up the Decree of the Council, which denounces the wickedness and iniquity of the Arians.” Emperor Constantius marvelled at the audacity of the Bishop, but did not harm him (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Eusebius-of-Samosata>).

During the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363), even more difficult times ensued. Saint Eusebius, having concealed his identity, went about in the garb of a soldier across the whole of Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, urging Christians to the Orthodox Faith. He established priests and deacons in desolated churches, and he consecrated Bishops who renounced the Arian heresy. On his journey from Thrace to Samosata he was instrumental in the appointment of numerous orthodox Bishops, among whom were Acacius at Beroea, Theodotus at Hierapolis, Isidore at Cyrrhus, and Eulogius at Edessa. After Julian the Apostate's death, he was succeeded by the pious emperor Jovian (363-364), during whose reign the persecutions stopped. Returning from exile, Saint Meletius convened a local Council at Antioch in the year 379 on the advice of Saint Eusebius. Twenty-seven Bishops participated, and it reaffirmed the Orthodox teaching of the First Ecumenical Council.

After the death of Jovian the Arian Valentinus (364-378) came to power. The Orthodox were again subjected to persecution. Saint Meletius was banished to Armenia, Saint Pelagius to Arabia, and Saint Eusebius was condemned to exile in Thrace. Having received the imperial decree, Saint Eusebius left Samosata by night so as to prevent tumult among the people that esteemed him. Having learned of the Bishop's departure, believers followed him and with tears entreated him to return. The saint did not heed to the entreaty of those who had come, saying that he had to obey the authorities. The saint urged his flock

to hold firmly to Orthodoxy, blessed them and set off to the place of exile. The Arian Eunomios became Bishop of Samosata, but the people did not accept the heretic. The Orthodox would not go to the church and avoided meeting with him. The heretical Arian perceived that it was impossible to attract the independent flock to him.

Emperor Gracian (375-383) ascended the throne, and all the Orthodox hierarchs banished under the Arians were brought back from exile. Saint Eusebius also returned to Samosata and continued with the task of building up the Church. In the year A.D. 380 he arrived in the Arian city of Dolikhina (Dolicha) to establish the Orthodox Bishop Marinus (Maris?) there. An Arian woman threw a roof tile at the holy Bishop's head (thrown from the roof of her house). As he lay dying, he asked her for wine and requested those around not to do her any harm. He died of his wounds a few days later.

The body of Saint Eusebius was taken to Samosata and was buried by his flock. The saint's nephew, Antiochus, succeeded him and the Samosata Church continued to confess the Orthodox Faith, firmly spread through the efforts of the holy martyr Eusebius. It is on account of this untiring zeal of Eusebius that St. Gregory Nazianzen calls him "A pillar of the Church" and "a gift of God", (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05614c.htm>). The feast of Eusebius of Shmeshath is celebrated on 24 May and 21 June in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

40. St. John the Merciful the Patriarch of Alexandria

(A. D. 555 – 619)

John was born on the island of Cyprus in the city of Amathus in c. A. D. 555. His father, Epiphanius, was the ruler of Cyprus. At the wish of his parents he got married and had two children. When his wife and children died, he became a monk. He was zealous in fasting and prayer, and had great love for those around him (<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2000/11/12/103286-st-john-the-merciful-Patriarch-of-alexandria>).

When the Patriarchal throne of Alexandria fell vacant, emperor Heraclius and all the clergy begged John to occupy the Patriarchal throne. St. John considered his chief task to be charitable and to help all those in need. At the beginning of his Patriarchal service in A. D. 608, he ordered his stewards to compile a list of all the poor, needy and downtrodden in Alexandria (http://sanctoral.com/en/saints/saint_john_the_almgiver.html). The saint ordered that all of these unfortunates be provided for each day out of the church's treasury.

Twice during the week, on Wednesdays and Fridays, sitting on a bench on the portico of the Patriarchal cathedral, he received everyone

in need. He settled quarrels, helped the needy and aggrieved, and distributed alms. He would not permit his servants to have food until the grievances were redressed. A man whom he had helped thanked him for his assistance one day, but he interrupted him, saying: My brother, I have not yet shed my blood for you, as Jesus Christ, my Saviour and my God. The saint never refused suppliants. One day, when the saint was visiting the sick, he met a beggar and commanded that he be given six silver coins. The beggar changed his clothes, ran on ahead of the Patriarch, and again asked for alms. Saint John gave him six more silver coins. When, however, the beggar sought charity a third time, the servants began to chase the fellow away, the Patriarch ordered that he be given twelve pieces of silver, saying, "Perhaps he is Christ putting me to the test."

Three times a week he visited the house of the people who are sick, and rendered assistance to the suffering. It was during this period that the emperor Heraclius led a tremendous army against the Persian emperor Chosroes II. The Persians ravaged and burned Jerusalem, taking a multitude of captives. The holy Patriarch John gave up a large portion of the church treasury in ransom for their release.

Saint John the Merciful was known for his gentle attitude towards people. Once, the saint was compelled to excommunicate two clergymen for a certain time because of some offence. One

of them repented, but the other became angry with the Patriarch and fell into greater sins. The saint wanted to summon him and calm him with kind words, but it slipped his mind. When he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy, the saint was suddenly reminded by the words of the Gospel: "If you bring your gift to the altar and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift before the altar ... first, be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt. 5:23-24). The saint left the altar, called the offending clergyman to him, and falling down on his knees before him in front of all the people he asked forgiveness. The cleric, filled with remorse, repented of his sin, corrected himself, and afterwards was reinstated to priesthood.

Saint John was persuaded to accompany the governor, Nicetas on a visit to the emperor in Constantinople. While on his way to visit the earthly king, he dreamed of a resplendent man who said to him, "The King of Kings summons you." He sailed to his native island of Cyprus, and fell asleep in the Lord while praying on his knees at Amanthos in A. D. 619 at the age of sixty-four (<http://antiochPatriarchate.org/en/page/john-the-merciful-Patriarch-of-alexandria/865/>). The feast of St. John, the merciful is celebrated on 12 November in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

41. St. Martha, mother of St. Simeon, the Stylite (Younger)

(A. D. ? - 551)

St. Martha, mother of St. Simeon the Stylite (Younger), was a native of Antioch. From her early years she yearned for monasticism, but her parents persuaded her to marry. Her husband, John, soon died, and righteous Martha with all her strength devoted herself to the raising of her son. She was an example of high Christian temperament for her son. She often visited the temple of God, she attended church services attentively and with piety, and frequently received the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

Saint Martha rose up to pray each night, and her prayers were offered with heartfelt warmth and tears. She particularly venerated St. John the Forerunner, who was for her a protector, frequently appearing to her in visions. St. Martha was charitable towards the poor, she fed and clothed them, she visited the convalescent and she attended to the sick, she buried the dead, and for those preparing to receive holy Baptism she made the baptismal garments with her own hands.

Saint Martha was a model of chaste and pious life and by her example she guided many

on the pathway to salvation. When her son, Saint Simeon, had become a renowned ascetic, she urged him not to exalt himself for his own efforts, but to thank God for everything.

The time of her death was revealed to St. Martha. (<https://oca.org/saints/lives/2008/07/04/101895-venerable-martha-the-mother-of-the-venerable-simeon-stylites-the>). St. Martha died in A. D. 551 and her body was buried at the place which witnessed the ascetic deeds of her son, St. Simeon the Stylite (<http://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/11702887>). The feast of Morth Martha is celebrated on 6 July in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Note: The period of St. Simeon, the Stylite (Elder) is from A. D. 390 to A. D. 459 (Wright, 1894; Smith & Wace, 1882; Ferguson & Wright, 1988).

42. St. Sabas, Abbot and Martyr

(A. D. 334 – 372)

St. Sabas (Sava, Sabbas, Savva, Saba) the Goth was born in the Buzau river valley and lived in what is now the Wallachian region in Romania, which was a Gothic territory at the time (http://freya.theladyofthelabyrinth.com/?page_id=646).

In the year A.D. 370, the Gothic king Athanaric set about to persecute the Christian section of the Gothic population. He ordered religious ceremo-

nies that the Christians would find unacceptable. In refusing to participate, the Christians would reveal that they were neither part of the community nor interested in its well-being. Arthanaric thought that this would bring down their Heathen neighbors' enmity upon them.

But among them were the two most illustrious Saints Nicetas and Sabas. The latter was by birth a Goth, converted to the faith in his youth, and a faithful imitator of the obedience, mildness, humility, and other virtues of the apostles. He was affable to all men, yet dignified; a lover of truth, modest, of few words, and a lover of peace; yet zealous and active. He took delight in singing the divine praises in the church, and adorning the altars (Butler, 1866).

Sabas often spent whole days and nights in prayer, and devoted his whole life to the exercises of penance. Christians were compelled to eat meat which had been sacrificed to idols. Some heathens who had Christian relations, desiring to save them, prevailed upon the king's officers to present them ordinary meat which had not been offered to the idols. Sabas condemned this impious collusion, and not only refused to eat such meat, but protested aloud that whoever should eat them would be no longer a Christian, having by that scandalous compliance renounced his faith. He was banished from his town, though was recalled later. The next year the persecution was renewed, and a commissary of the king arrived at

St. Sabas's town in search of Christians. Some of the inhabitants offered to swear on the victims that there were no Christians in the place. Sabas appeared, and stepping up to those who were going to take that oath, said: "Let no man swear for me: for I am a Christian." The commissary commanded that he should present himself and Sabas boldly did so. The commissary asked the by-standers about his material possessions: and being told he had nothing besides the clothes on his back, the commissary despised him, saying: "Such a fellow can do us neither good nor harm."

The persecution was renewed with much greater fury in A.D. 372, before Easter. They pulled Sabas out of bed and dragged him naked. When it was day, Sabas said to his persecutors: "Have not you dragged me, quite naked, over rough and thorny grounds? Observe whether my feet are wounded, or whether the blows you gave me have made any impression on my body:" and indeed they could not perceive any marks. The next day Atharidus commanded his hands to be tied, and caused him to be hung upon a beam of the house, and soon after ordered his servants to carry him and the priest certain meat that had been offered to idols. They refused to eat it, and Sabas said: "This pernicious meat is impure and profane, as is Atharidus himself who sent it." One of the slaves of Atharidus tortured him but he felt no more pain. Atharidus, being informed of these particulars, gave orders that he should be put to death.

Hereupon they threw him into the river and strangled him in the water, which happened on 12 April. The Christians of the place guarded his body from birds and beasts and sent it to his country, Cappadocia. The feast of Saba(s) is celebrated in the Syrian Orthodox Church on 13 April.

43. Athanasius II (of Balad) the Patriarch of Antioch

(A D. ? – 686)

Athanasius was born in the city of Balad in Upper Mesopotamia (on the right bank of Tigris) and studied sciences, Syriac and Greek, with his friend Jacob, under the tutelage of Severus Sebokht (d. 667) at the Monastery of Qennashrin (Wright, 1894). He moved to the Monastery of Beth Malke, near Antioch, (Aphrem I, 2003) and became a monk. Athanasius studied philosophy and translated several Greek theological and philosophical works into Syriac, such as Porphyry's *Isagoge* in January A.D. 645.

Athanasius later became a priest and moved to Nisibis, where he continued to translate Greek texts into Syriac. In A.D. 666-667, he translated nine treatises of the *Hexameron* (Book of the six days) of Basil of Caesarea, as suggested by Matthew, Bishop of Aleppo, and Daniel, Bishop of Edessa. Matthew and Daniel later requested a translation

of several letters of Severus of Antioch into Syriac which was completed in A.D. 669, under the pen-name of "Athanasius of Nisibis". Athanasius also translated Severus' Second Discourse against Nephalius, several homilies by Gregory of Nazianzen, and the Corpus Areopagiticum by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

Athanasius was consecrated Patriarch at the end of A.D. 683 and issued a ten-page proclamation, and four canons on Christian conduct with Muslims. He condemned the consumption of sacrificial meat, participation in Muslim festivals, and relationships with Muslims. In A.D. 684, he ordained his friend Jacob as Bishop of Edessa (d.708).

Athanasius also wrote a number of supplication prayers, three of which were to be used at the celebration of the Eucharist. The first begins thus: "Thanks to the Good Shepherd by whose body the flock is fed;" the second begins: "O Lord by whom exists and lives everything;" and the third one begins: "O God, the Word and most high" (Aphrem I, 2003, p. 333). He also composed prayers for the dead and a couple of sedras. He died at the end of the year 686. The feast of Moran Athanasius is celebrated on 27 July and 11 September in the Syrian Orthodox Church.

44. Elias (Elijah) I Patriarch of Antioch

(A. D. 641 – 723)

Elias was born in A.D. 641 into a Greek Orthodox family, but later embraced Syrian Orthodox faith (Aphrem I, 2003) after reading the works of Severus of Antioch (d. 538). He became a monk at the Monastery of Gubba Barraya, near Edessa, and was ordained as Bishop of Apamea in A.D. 691. He served the Church as Bishop of Apamea for eighteen years (Wright, 1894). Elias was consecrated as Patriarch in A.D. 709 following the death of Julian II (A.D. 686 – 708), and presented himself to Caliph Al-Walid I in the same year. The Patriarch financed and consecrated a new church in the city of Antioch in A.D. 721, and another church in Sarmada in A.D. 722. Elias led the Syriac Orthodox Church as Patriarch until his death in A.D. 723 at the age of eighty-two.

45. Theodosius the Patriarch of Antioch

(A.D. ? – 896)

Theodosius (original name was Romanus) was born at Tikrit and became a monk and

studied at the monastery of Qartmin (Aphrem I, 2003; Wright, 1894). He was a physician and was the author of a medical Syntagma. He was consecrated Patriarch of Antioch in A.D. 887. He consecrated 32 Metropolitans and Bishops.

The important works of Moran Theodosius are: (1) On the hidden mysteries of the house of God, (2) A compilation of 112 Pythagorians Maxims and proverbs, and (3) A synodical epistle and (4) A Lenten homily in Arabic. Patriarch Theodosius departed for his heavenly abode at his monastery in A.D. 896.

46. St. Simon, the Stylite (Younger)

(A.D. 521 – 596)

Saint Simeon the Stylite (Younger) was born at Antioch. His father was a native of Edessa (Smith & Wace, 1887). His mother, Martha, was a native of Antioch (d. 551).

Simeon joined the monastery at a very young age. He attached himself to a community of ascetics living within the enclosure of another pillar-hermit, named John, who acted as their spiritual director (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simeon_Stylites_the_Younger). It is believed that he lived upon a pillar for 68 years. For eight years until John died, Simeon remained near his master's column, so near that they could easily

converse. The ascetic practices were similar to that of St. Simon, the stylite (Elder) who departed for his heavenly abode in A.D. 459.

After John's death Simeon gave full rein to his ascetical practices. Evagrius describes that he lived only upon the branches of a shrub that grew near Theopolis, where his monastery was situated. Simeon the younger was ordained priest and was thus able to offer the Holy Sacrifice in memory of his mother. On such occasions his disciples one after the other climbed up the ladder to receive Communion at his hands. As in the case of most of the other pillar saints a large number of miracles were believed to have been worked by Simeon the Younger. He was credited with the gift of prophecy (Smith & Wace, 1887).

Towards the end of his life the saint occupied a column upon a mountain-side near Antioch called the "Hill of Wonders", and it was here that he entered eternal rest in A.D. 596.

47. St. Markos, the Solitary

(Fifth Century)

Marcus, the Ascetic (hermit/solitary), was a Christian theologian, saint, and ascetic writer of the fifth century AD (https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Mark%20the%20Hermit&item_type=topic).

His interest was in the spiritual life as it should be led by monks. He belonged to the Antiochene School and shows himself to be a disciple of John Chrysostom (d. 407).

Various theories about his period and works have been advanced. He probably spent his time in the desert east of Palestine (near St. Sabas) or at Egypt (Eapen, 2006). He was a contemporary of Nestorius. He has written on baptism and repentance, and a refutation of the teaching of Nestorius. His writings dealt with the grace of God through baptism and an analysis of the nature of temptations. He departed for his eternal rest probably before the Council of Chalcedon (451).

Two feast days are mentioned in the Calendar of Saints (Rajan, 2004) - - of Marcos (hermit) on 5 March and Markose (Solitary) on 27 October. It is not certain whether the feast day is of the same saint.

48. Moran Dionysius II, the Patriarch of Antioch

(A.D. ? – 909)

Dionysius II was the Patriarch of Antioch, and head of the Syriac Orthodox Church from A.D. 896 until his death in A.D. 909.

Prior to becoming Patriarch, Dionysius was a

monk and studied at the Monastery of Beth Batin (Aphrem I, 2003). Soon after his consecration in April A.D. 896, Dionysius held a synod at the Monastery of Mar Shila, which was attended by thirty-five Bishops. During the synod he issued twenty-five canons.

During his tenure as Patriarch, Dionysius ordained forty-nine Metropolitans and Bishops before his death at the Monastery of Beth Batin on 18 April A.D.909.

49. Metropolitan George of Basibrina

(A.D. ? – 1495)

George became a monk at the Qartmin Monastery (Aphrem I, 2003). In 1450, he was consecrated a Metropolitan with the name John. He was the most prominent among the Bishops of his time. Twice he went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and bought a house for two hundred golden dinars and made it an endowment for our St. Mark's Monastery in Jerusalem. He died at Mor Hananya Monastery in 1495.

In 1462, he compiled a liturgy from nine liturgies by doctors of the church, all of whom share the name John, including him. To this compilation he contributed five pieces. The compiled liturgy begins thus: "O Lord the giver

of safety and the Lord of peace.” It contains four prayers by a Bishop named John Bar Butahi, who may be a fourteenth-century Bishop from Tur ‘Abdin. The compositions of both [John (George) of Basibrina and John Bar Butahi] are good. John also compiled a liturgy from seven liturgies written by seven fathers of the church, all of them named Jacob.

50. Mor Jacob of Bartelli

(A. D.? - 1241)

Jacob is son of ‘Isa, son of Mark Shakko (Aphrem I, 2003). He was born at Bartelli near Mosul and became a monk at St. Matthew Monastery. There he studied to become a member of the religious order and was elevated to the priesthood. He became famous for his erudition. Bar Ma’dani, Maphryono of the East, consecrated him a Metropolitan for his own monastery and named him Severus in 1232. He died in 1241 and was buried in his monastery. Bar Hebraeus praised his intelligence and learning.

The important works of Mor Severios Jacob are: (1) The Book of Treasures, in four parts, which he wrote in 1231 in response to the request of Matthew, the monk. It is a concise theological book containing a discussion of the Trinity, the Incarnation, opposition to heresies, the mysteries

of the church and its rituals, the substantiation of the true Christian religion, Divine Providence, fate and destiny, the angels, the creation of the world, the soul, paradise, the resurrection and eternal punishment. It also contains profound information on geography and the shape of the universe, (2) An exposition of church offices, prayers and church mysteries, (3) The Book of Evident Truth on the Authenticity of Christianity in which he expounded the Nicene Creed, (4) The Book of Church Music in which he discussed hymns, church melodies, their types, composers and the dates from which they were in use in the church.

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