

Appendix 11 Various Jacobite Syrian accounts

Collated from different Jacobite sources (summarised and translated, relating to key elements of the narrative history of the Jacobite Syrians)

The Mesopotamian migrations

The sources are consistent in the name, titles and authority of the hierarchs that sent the party as the Patriarch of Antioch (Eustedius in Pukadiyil 1969:113-4), in conjunction with the Catholicos of the East and the Patriarch of Jerusalem. While the narrative is foreshortened in some of the sources to: 'Episcopos Mar Joseph was sent, accompanied by priests (kassisho), deacons (shemmashe), Christians, children (paithangal=small children) and women'. MV relates the location of the Christians settling in houses facing North and South in 131-33. This relates to the distinct communities created on the north and south sides of the street, which have been interpreted in different ways, and described in Malayalam as Thekkumbhagar (Southerners) and Vadakkumbhagar (Northerners). The sources also clearly indicate that with this settlement, the two ethnically distinct groups, i.e., the indigenous 'Nasranis' of Malabar and Mesopotamian Nasranis, merged to form one Christian community. Kandanad (2008:30-31) gives details on how they were settled:

'Occupying this position of honour, prestige and doctrinal truth , they instructed us on the way of the True Path. (Those of noble birth from among) the Nasranis who came from Jerusalem and (those of noble birth from among) the Nasranis of Malayala (united in marriage) and became relatives. In the same way, so as not to lose caste, those of a lower estate from among the newly arrived, and those of a lower estate or bonded to the native Nasranis were united (as another group of) relatives together. And one row of four-hundred shops were constructed for the 'Greater' Ones on the northern range, and another row of seventy-two shops (were constructed) for the Lesser Ones on the southern range, and this was instituted for as long as humanity existed'.

This is supported by a list of particularities of rites and practices set into place that would become the 'traditions' of each group, i.e., the nobles and their dependants, and would 'set them apart in perpetuity', such as occupations and laws of inheritance. Each community was also prescribed distinct cultural practices to follow, such as those relating to marriage ceremonies, so as to distinguish them in perpetuity. This, the SCM believe, was the reason for there being two distinct communities among them, though bound by the same faith, religious practices and episcopal provenance, and it was in this state that the Portuguese found them in the 16th century.

Episcopal provenance until the 16th century

Niranam (pp.116-7) provides the names and dates of the bishops who arrived between 905 and 1407, all bearing the title of Metropolitan. Some inconsistencies in the dates provided by Zachariah are also noted:

- 905: Denha, Raban, Yaunan and Mar Aavan.
- 988: Yohanan
- (gap of 68 years)
- 1056: Yousep (Thoma in Zachariah:1973:52)
- (gap of 66 years)
- 1122: Yackob
- (gap of 99 years)
- 1221: Yousep (1231 in Zachariah :52)
- (gap of 64 years)
- 1285: Dawid
- (gap of 85 years)
- 1370 Yohannan (only in Zachariah:52)
- (gap of 37 years)
- 1407: Yab Alaha

[NB Remainder of Appendix 11 not included as relating to later events]