The Chaldean Catholic Church:
A study in modern history, ecclesiology and church-state relations (2003–2013)

F. Kristian Girling
Department of Theology, Heythrop College, University of London
PhD Theology
2015
Abstract

This thesis provides a modern historical study of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq from 2003 to 2013 with analysis of the origins and ecclesiological development of the Chaldean community from the sixteenth century onwards. I offer an insight into the formation of Chaldean ecclesiological identity and organisation in the context of the Chaldeans as a community originating from the ecclesial traditions of the Church of the East and as an eastern Catholic Church in union with the Holy See. I argue for the gradual if consistent development of a Chaldean identity grounded and incarnated in the Mesopotamian-Iraqi environment yet open to engaging with cultures throughout the Middle East and West Asia and especially since 2003 to Europe, north America and Australasia.

The thesis also provides an assessment of the contemporary status of the Chaldean dioceses of Iraq highlighting the size, influence and historical development of these structures to October 2013. I attempt to increase awareness of the Chaldeans as an essential part of Iraqi society and as to the crucial social "difference" which they established and maintained throughout their history. A "difference" which is only as a result of extreme persecution being removed from Iraq. The thesis concludes by opening up examination for the potential for further ecclesiological developments which may occur in light of events since the 2003 Iraq War and the rise of Da'esh in 2014 and considerations of full ecclesial communion with the Chaldeans' sister community the Assyrian Church of the East.
Copyright and Plagiarism Declaration Form

This form must be completed and submitted at the same time that you submit your Examination Entry Form

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author. A thesis which is accepted by the College for the award of a Research Degree is placed in the Library of the College, and an electronic copy may be placed in an open access institutional e-repository. The copyright of the thesis is retained by the author.

As you are about to submit a thesis for a Research Degree, you are required to sign the declarations below. The declarations will be destroyed if your thesis is not approved by the examiners, being either rejected or referred for revision.

Dean of Research Students

NAME IN FULL FIELD KRISTIAN GIRLING


DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS IS PRESENTED PhD THEOLOGY....................

COPYRIGHT DECLARATION

1. I agree that the thesis presented by me for examination for the MPhil/PhD Degree of the University of London shall, if a degree is awarded, be deposited in the library or electronic institutional repository of Heythrop College and that, subject to the conditions set out below, my thesis will be made available for public reference, inter-library loan and copying.

2. I authorise the College authorities to retain a digital copy of the abstract of my thesis for inclusion in any published list of theses offered for higher degrees in British universities or in any supplement thereto, or for consultation in any central file of abstracts of such theses.

3. I authorise the College Library, or its designated agents, to hold a digital copy of my thesis for the purposes of electronic public access, inter-library loan or the supply of copies.

4. I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

5. I understand that in the event of my thesis not being approved by the examiners this declaration will become void.

Date................................... Signature......................................................................

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

1. I certify that the work presented in this thesis contains no unacknowledged direct copying from the work of another person or close paraphrasing of previous work (including my own which has been presented elsewhere) and that any reference to other sources has been properly acknowledged in the bibliography according to academic custom and practice.

Date................................... Signature......................................................................

1 The University’s Ordinances make provision for restriction of access to a research thesis and/or the abstract but only in certain specified circumstances and for a maximum period of two years. If you wish to apply for such restriction, please enquire about the conditions and procedures.
Acknowledgements

This thesis has been the fruit of work undertaken over a three year period since October 2012. I have been greatly fortunate to have received support from a very wide array of individuals and institutions to ensure its completion.

In the first instance I am particularly grateful to His Grace Bashar Warda CSsR, Chaldean Archbishop of Erbil who provided me with a substantial grant which permitted me to complete this research project. I am also very grateful for the kindness, hospitality, time and resources which His Grace and all the members of the Chaldean Church in northern Iraq offered me during fieldwork in the region in October 2013. Likewise the Chaldean communities in the UK and Jordan were strong supporters of my research during visits in 2012-2014 and May-June 2013 respectively.

Rev. Frs Imad Twal and Khalil Jaar of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and Rev. Fr Raymond Moussali of the Chaldean Catholic Church very generously acted as my hosts during fieldwork in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

My supervisor, Anthony O'Mahony, throughout the research and writing process has offered exacting but essential vital critique of my work along with substantial academic and career advice for which I am very grateful.

I am very grateful to my parents for their care and support over the last three years, their advice during times of reflection on research and the opportunity they have offered to permit me to complete this thesis in a quiet and peaceful environment.

The Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust, the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association and the St Jude's Trust all also kindly supported me through grant funding.

Finally I must recognise the continued direction and sustained substantial support which Dr Suha Rassam has granted during the research, fieldwork and writing of the thesis. Without her interest in and commitment to raising awareness of the Chaldeans both in Iraq, the wider Middle East and internationally research would never have begun and it is to her that this thesis is principally dedicated.

In honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in remembrance and recognition of all the suffering Christians of Iraq

‘For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?’

1 John V: 4-5
# Table of Contents

Abstract ............................................................................................................. 2  
Copyright and Plagiarism Declaration Form .................................................. 3  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................... 4  
Introduction ................................................................................................... 10  
Nomenclature ........................................................................................... 11  
Nestorian ............................................................................................. 12  
East Syriac ........................................................................................... 13  
The significance of church-state relations in East Syriac history .......... 13  
Note on approach ..................................................................................... 15  
The origins and status of the Church of the East to the late medieval period .............................................................................................. 17  

1. The origins and early development of the Chaldean Catholic community (fifteenth–eighteenth centuries) .......................................................... 19  
Chaldean origins ...................................................................................... 19  
First Union ............................................................................................... 20  
Context and status of the Church of the East in 1450 and the development of hereditary succession to the patriarchate ....... 23  
First Chaldean hierarchy .......................................................................... 25  
Sulaqa's status quo and legacy .................................................................... 34  
Early Chaldean identity ............................................................................ 36  
Sulaqa's successors ................................................................................... 37  
Latin presence in Mesopotamia (I) .......................................................... 41  
Legitimist line of patriarchs of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (1591–1700) .......... 43  
Ottoman administrative influence ............................................................ 44  
The establishment of the Josephite patriarchal line in Amid ................. 46  
Why be a Chaldean? ................................................................................ 52  
Latin presence in Mesopotamia (II) and the unification of the Chaldean communities ..................................................................................... 55  
Dembo and Yohannan as opposition figures ............................................ 60  

2. Political change in Mesopotamia and the origins of the modern Chaldean Church (1830–1918) ........................................................................ 61  
Ecclesiological discourse and developments ........................................ 62  
Nicholas I Zaya ........................................................................................ 64  
Changes among the Ottomans ............................................................... 65  
Eastern Catholic consolidation, the Chaldeans and the First Vatican Council ...................................................................................................... 67  
Consolidation prior to the First World War ........................................... 72  
Chaldean missions to the Church of the East .......................................... 73  
Massacre without remorse: 1915–1918 ................................................... 75  
First World War and start of massacres ................................................... 76  
East Syriac-Russian relations ................................................................. 77  
Start of the Massacres ............................................................................. 78  
Impact on the Chaldeans ........................................................................ 81  

3. Re-discovering the Chaldean narrative in modern Iraq (1918–2003) .... 83  
Building on current scholarship ............................................................... 85  
A new political order: 1918–1947 ........................................................... 89  
Chaldean state and inter-communal relations ......................................... 90
Diocesan study overview.................................................................178
Archdiocese of Erbil........................................................................181
  Chaldean ecclesiastical life in Ankawa........................................183
  Ankawa in the twenty-first century..............................................186
  Parishes outside of Erbil..............................................................187
  Conclusion: Archdiocese of Erbil................................................191
Archdiocese of Kirkuk-Sulaymaniya.............................................192
  Ecclesial organisation in Sulaymaniya........................................195
Archdiocese of Kirkuk.................................................................197
  Kirkuki Chaldean population.......................................................198
  Kirkuki ecclesial influence on the Chaldeans of Sulaymaniya.......202
Dioceses of Zakho-Amadiya and Akra........................................203
  Diocese of Akra...........................................................................203
  Zakho-Amadiya ecclesial history..................................................206
  Zakho-Amadiya ecclesial organisation.........................................211
  Villages and towns of Zakho-Amadiya visited during fieldwork....213
  Note on Amadiyan diocesan records..........................................220
  Conclusion: Dioceses of Zakho-Amadiya and Akra.....................220
Diocese of Alqosh..........................................................................221
  Ecclesial Organisation................................................................225
  Teleskef.......................................................................................226
  Conclusion: Diocese of Alqosh....................................................229
Archdiocese of Basra.....................................................................230
  Ecclesial organisation – churches in Basra city..........................235
  Conclusion: Archdiocese of Basra...............................................236
Archdiocese of Baghdad...............................................................237
  Ecclesial organisation in Baghdad.................................................245
  Baghdad and East Syriac ecclesiology.........................................246
  Conclusion: Archdiocese of Baghdad..........................................248
Archdiocese of Mosul....................................................................250
  Ecclesial organisation in Mosul Archdiocese..............................253
  Mosul (city)................................................................................254
  Holy Ghost parish.......................................................................255
  Conclusion: Mosul (city)..............................................................259
  Telkef.........................................................................................259
  Karamles.....................................................................................261
  Conclusion: Archdiocese of Mosul.................................................263

6. The Chaldean community in Jordan............................................265
  Chaldean origins to Jordan..........................................................267
  The status of the Chaldean community in the Jordanian Christian context
  ..............................................................268
  Conclusion: Chaldean presence to Jordan....................................274
Thesis Conclusion.........................................................................275

  Mesopotamia-Iraq and the patriarchal office’s influence on Chaldean
  identity formation.................................................................276
  Zones of Chaldean ecclesial influence in Iraq..............................280
  The Holy See and the Chaldeans.................................................282
  The Chaldean presence to Iraq in the context of the rise of Da’esh....286
Appendix A: Maps, Tables and Graphs..........................................289
  Map 1: Ecclesial provinces of the Church of the East in the tenth
Introduction

This thesis provides a modern historical study of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq from 2003 to 2013 against a background analysis of the origins and ecclesiological development of the Chaldean community from the sixteenth century onwards.

I also attempt to bring the Chaldeans into the full light of Iraqi history. Aiming to move away from a scholarly focus on the Shia-Sunni, Arab-Kurd dichotomies which dominate contemporary Iraqi Studies and also to avoid considering the East Syriac tradition in isolation and merely another aspect of ecclesiastical history: instead considering the tradition and its communities as integral to the pluralistic societies of Mesopotamia-Iraq.

As an ecclesiastical history this thesis is distinctive through considering the Chaldean Church's ecclesiological ethos and maintaining awareness of its status as an eastern Catholic church in union with the Holy See and as one of the descendant communities of the undivided Church of the East. Chaldean identity expressed partly in accordance with the distinctive Syriac ecclesial traditions developing from at least the second century as the ``church across the border'' and outside of the limits of the Roman Empire in Persia. (Healey 2010; Brock 1982) The other major aspect of Chaldean identity linked to the close relationship with the Holy See since the sixteenth century and other eastern Catholic churches especially those of the Syriac traditions.

The origins of the identity of the Chaldean community which emerged from the Church of the East and what it actually means to have entered into union with the Holy See and to become a Chaldean in the early history of the community have not been greatly considered in scholarship nor more widely in the church communities. This study focuses on this issue due to the increased loss of knowledge and awareness among the community, at present,² of Chaldean history in general as a result of enforced migration post-Iraq War of 2003 and the growth of a large diaspora

---

² Outside of a few authors such as Antoine Audo SJ, Petrus Yousif, Suha Rassam, Joseph Yacoub, Louis Sako and Joseph Seferta.
where the strands of historical memory are difficult to bring together to portray the earliest origins of the Chaldean identity and their meaning to the contemporary community.

Even in those works which pursue a modern historical approach to provide an introduction to the history of the East Syriac churches they lack a developed awareness of Chaldean ecclesiastical organisation and identity and the community's origins from the East Syriac, Latin and Eastern Catholic traditions. (Baumer 2006; Baum and Winkler 2003) This is a significant gap in the literature when we consider that the primary basis of Chaldean communal organisation until the early twentieth century was the ecclesiastical structure of the Church with the patriarch perceived to derive much of his ecclesiastical authority from his relationship with the Holy See.

The most recent authors to consider the historical development of the East Syriac churches in detail have been Wilmshurst (2011), Rassam (2010), Murre-Van Den Berg (2009), Teule (2008), Baumer (2006) and Baum and Winkler (2003). Each author has greatly contributed to the increasing academic and popular awareness of Christianity in Iraq and the East Syriac communities especially since the invasion of Iraq in 2003. However, no study has brought together an overview of Chaldean historical development with discussion of the community's status as an eastern Catholic Church in union with the Holy See. Therefore, my contribution to the current scholarship is to develop an ecclesiological study of the development of the Chaldean Church, the status of the ecclesial community in Iraq as of 2013 and the effects of religious and administrative policies of the governors of Mesopotamia-Iraq on the Chaldeans since their formation in the sixteenth century until the installation of the new Chaldean patriarch, Louis Raphael I Sako, in March 2013.

**Nomenclature**

The nomenclature used to describe the Church of the East and the Chaldeans does give rise to some confusion particularly in non-specialist literature.
The principle query nearly universally raised when first encountering the East Syriac communities relates to the title *Nestorian* as applied to the Church of the East and as to the view that the Church throughout its history has consistently pursued an extreme dyophysite Christology and denied that the Blessed Virgin could be described as the "Mother of God". Both issues which aligned with the perceived heresy which the Patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, pursued in the early fifth century – despite correction – until the Council of Ephesus in 431 where he was deposed and subsequently entered exile. (Baum and Winkler 2003, 22–25) As will be seen in the main body of the thesis this association with the Christology which appeared to be expounded and has been termed "Nestorianism" has never been decisively resolved insofar as the East Syriac tradition has been perceived to have remained linked with Christology associated with Nestorius into the contemporary era. This despite either direct rejections from church leaders and researchers, Christological treatises refuting the claims or at the very least attempting to give context to the situation and a comprehensive explanation of the Christology which the churches currently and historically have ascribed to themselves. (Brock 2004; Soro 1996; Chediath 1982) Moreover, scholarship from the mid-twentieth century to the present arguing that neither was the Church of the East Nestorian nor that Nestorius actually professed any un-orthodox notions. (Seleznyov 2008; Brock 1996; Halleux 1993; Braaten 1963; Anastos 1962)

The Christological controversy is not the direct concern of the thesis, but it is vital to be cognisant of the dispute and aware that it has coloured views of the Church of the East by nearly all who have interacted with or studied the community into the present and has been an inhibiting factor in the Church of the East – and the Chaldeans by extension – from gaining greater credence and indeed respect in the contemporary international Christian community. (Cf Thompson 2013) The affects of the association have been unfortunate and in some respects have de-legitimised the achievements of the Church of the East in its missionary work and its
maintenance of distinctive ecclesial traditions in the eyes of external observers. Moreover, causing the Church to be under considered in mainstream academic and popular history of the international Christian community. Indeed, not fitting into a Latin, Byzantine or reformed church paradigm provokes a challenge for the researcher but one which must be met head on and with the intention to bring the East Syriac tradition into mainstream ecclesiastical history and as integral to a full account of global missionary activity.

**East Syriac**

As a collective term for members of the Church of the East and Chaldeans, East Syriac or East Syrian is *du jour* and which fits most appropriately with the non-Christologically focused identity which Chaldeans and members of the Church of the East pursue. During the medieval period the East Syriacs referred to themselves as *Maddenhaye* or Easterners. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005) This as a means to consolidate their identity by way of comparison with those Christians of the West: Miaphysites, Byzantines and Latins and related to their use of the Syriac dialect which developed among the Christian communities from the city of Nisibis eastwards. Self-association and identification with Nestorius did take place – he was venerated as a saint – but was far removed from forming the core of their identity. (Seleznyov 2010) During the missionary efforts of the late antique and medieval period the focus was to gain converts through annunciating the Gospel and the distinctiveness of Christian revelation not on diverting accusations of a perceived heresy among those who had never before encountered Christianity.

**The significance of church-state relations in East Syriac history**

Relations with the contemporary temporal power were and are a strong theme throughout East Syriac history. The leadership of the temporal
powers under whose administration East Syriac communities have resided never converted to their form of Christianity and it was perceived as necessary to engender an amicable working relationship with the lay élites of the day. Such engagements regarded as vital to the effective operation of the East Syriac churches and an opportunity to engage in aggregating a system of client-patron relationships to gain, for example, permission to build churches and monasteries or agreement for the appointment of senior clergy. The head of the Church of the East in the Sasanian period being ratified on a *de facto* basis by the Shah whilst in the Ottoman era the heads of Chaldean and traditionalist East Syriac factions were in competition for recognition by the local governor as the legitimate successor to the patriarchs of the Church of the East.

From the disengagement with the Roman church's Christological narrative from the fifth century the Church of the East was obliged to engage ever more closely with the Sasanian Empire. (Brock 1982) The East Syriac presence in time becoming a defining aspect of Mesopotamian and Persian society and a real competitor for the state Zoroastrian religion. With the Muslim invasions of south-west Asia and the disintegration of the Zoroastrian religion East Syriac élites were key to the sustaining of the Ummayad dynasty's rule in Mesopotamia, for example, and the essentials of running the administrative processes left by the Sasanians. (Morony 2009) In due time East Syriac Christians making themselves indispensable to the Muslim leadership and such a level of interaction gaining no higher status than during the Abbasid dynasty. Dickens noting of patriarch Timothy I:

'Although he lived his whole life in the heartland of the Arab Caliphate and thus never visited most of the extensive territory under his patriarchal authority, Timothy was very conscious of ruling over a jurisdiction much larger than any other on earth, whether civil or ecclesiastical. Not only was he a trusted figure at the caliphal court, the head of the largest *dhimmi* under Muslim rule (those living in "Babel", Persia and Assyria); there were also far-off and exotic territories beyond the pale of Islam that were "under this patriarchal throne", including the lands of the Indians (*Beth Hinduwēē*), Chinese (*Beth Šināyē*), Tibetans (*Beth Tuptēē*) and Turks (*Beth Türkāyē*). This undoubtedly gave him considerable prestige and influence in the eyes of the Abbasid caliphs.'

(Dickens 2010, 120)
The attainment of such a position was maintained under other patriarchs into the Mongol era with only the rise of the Timurids seeing a definitive shift away from a normative working relationship due to the extensive persecution which they enforced upon Christians. With the emergence of Ottoman hegemony in the Middle East a new system of church-state relations developed on more bureaucratic lines of the *millet* but this in effect returned to the same *status quo* as encouraged by the Sasanians for the temporal élite to engage with the leaders of each religious community and that this relationship was the central means for the community to interact with the state. Following Iraq's establishment in 1921 such a relationship was retained with the Chaldean patriarch becoming a member of the Iraqi Senate until 1958. Furthermore, and until 2003, the state deferred to the patriarch during interactions with the community. The sustained position of power which such an arrangement granted to the patriarch added substantially to the influence of his ecclesiastical authority as only he was capable of interceding on behalf of the community on issues of universal concern and of distributing patronage which he derived from the state.

**Note on approach**

My approach to the East Syriac churches is to maintain awareness of them as derived from an international Christian tradition or as Murre-Van Den Berg describes them as a `world church'. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005) I suggest the communities largely lacked such an awareness in the modern era until 2003 with the Chaldean hierarchy able to engage well with the cultural and societal *milieu* of Iraq but faced with the need to engage with Western societies where large proportions of the Chaldean population came to reside.3 This is unfortunate when we consider the precedent for the East Syriac community throughout its history to have established a reputation for engagement with local culture and the acculturation of local tradition to the Church. A Christian tradition which was once capable of appealing to a far

---

3 Perhaps more than sixty percent as of 2015.
wider audience and potential body of converts.

Attempting to approach modern East Syriac ecclesiastical history in a comprehensive manner and placing it in the broader context of the full scope of the international and Mesopotamian history of the Church of the East is a comparatively "young" area of study. This field was largely instigated by the substantial work of Jean Maurice Fiey OP especially from the 1960s who attempted to bring together the known threads of East Syriac history into a contiguous narrative and to provide works which detailed the development of the Church of the East from its earliest origins to his era. (Fiey OP 1959; 1965a; 1980) In attempting to build on Fiey's work I aim to further understand the pragmatic issues with which East Syriac Christians were faced in their day-to-day lives and as to what was understood to be their ecclesiological identity: What did East Syriac bishops in sixteenth century Mesopotamia perceive as their ecclesial relationship with the papacy?; How did the Chaldean communities of northern and southern Iraq relate one to another under the Baath state and how did the No-Fly-Zone in northern Iraq affect their governance?; How did the Chaldean community relate to the patriarch during the Iran-Iraq War?; What was the strength of East Syriac cultural and social contributions to wider Iraqi society under the rule of the monarchy? These are but a few suggested areas of scholarship which could be pursued but have yet to be fully explored if at all in research on the East Syriac tradition.

By way of comparison studying the modern history of the Church of the East and Chaldean Church is often an area of study just as opaque to consider as those who research the East Syriac communities during their "golden" era in west and central Asia (c. sixth–eleventh centuries). Tang and Winkler, for example, particularly picking up on the significant question of how the Christians in Transoxiana related to the patriarch of Baghdad and as to the degree of devolved ecclesial authority the local bishops held. (Tang and Winkler 2013) The opacity they face in answering this question related to limits on source material whether written records or archaeological remains and is paralleled in the opacity scholars face studying the contemporary East Syriac communities derived from the inability to access
some areas of Iraq due to security concerns; the near continuous conflicts which have affected Iraq since 1980; lack of available or extant written records and the recent physical destruction of Chaldean communities and property in Iraq due to attacks by Da'esh. Perhaps the most pressing issue remains, however, the lack of interest or willingness to engage in historical reflection – for whatever reason – from native and non-native researchers to persevere in studies of the modern history of the Chaldean Church and to provide a greater academic context in which to fit this thesis. For the early career scholar it is at least then an area of research in which to become established given the paucity of the scholarship in general terms and in comparison with other Syriac churches or western forms of Christianity in general.

The origins and status of the Church of the East to the late medieval period

The Church of the East is the Christian community which developed in Mesopotamia and Persia from at least the second century and gradually gained a sense of ecclesial distinctiveness apart from the church in the Roman Empire. A distinctiveness shaped by political expediency – being under Sasanian Persian rule from 224; a perception that ecclesiastical organisation should follow a principle of subsidiarity – with the local bishops not necessarily reliant on deference to the five patriarchates of the west and a different emphasis in their annunciation of Christology. On the latter issue following the theological oeuvre of Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Antiochene school: defending dyophysite Christology and the significance of Christ's humanity.

From the early fifth century the hierarchy of the church in south-west Asia having consolidated ecclesiastical organisation at the local Mesopotamian synods of Isaac (410) and Dadisho (424) and perceiving their existing Christology as in accord with the deposit of Faith of the Apostles saw less need to engage with disputes conducted in arenas

---

4 Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Rome
theologically, geographically and politically removed from their community.

There has existed a general perception that the defining cut off point of the Church of the East's relationship with the Roman church took place at the Council of Ephesus in 431 over disputes regarding the human and divine natures of Christ which led to its *de facto* separation from the rest of the Christian oikumene through unwillingness to condemn Nestorius and ratify the canons of the Council. In actual fact as Baum and Winkler note:

> 'the council of Ephesus is not mentioned in the East Syriac synodical records. Since it was a synod outside the Persian empire, the Church of the East presumably did not find it necessary to react. Nevertheless, it should also be emphasized that the Church of the East did not condemn the Council of Ephesus.' (Baum and Winkler 2003, 30)

We should perhaps instead see the re-focusing of East Syriac communities towards the east as a gradual if definitive process of incarnating Christianity in a local Mesopotamian-Persian environment and becoming the church of the Sasanian world.

Nonetheless, Ephesus and its shift away from a sufficiently nuanced Christological paradigm as perceived by members of the Church of the East expedited a reformulation of as to where the future of the East Syriac tradition lay. The reinforcement of East Syriac identity and culture was formed in the ecclesiastical schools of Edessa and Nisibis and by the late fifth century missionary clergy were active in pursuing a policy of expansion into central Asia.

Missionary expansion from the fifth to eleventh centuries saw ecclesial structures established throughout Asia to China.\(^5\) During the early to high medieval periods the Church of the East had the widest geographical jurisdiction of any Christian community in the world and held substantial influence among the Abbasid and Mongol empires. However, the Church entered into a period of gradual decline from the fourteenth century onward.

From a position of at least 100 dioceses in the late thirteenth century the Church was reduced to three occupied sees by the mid-sixteenth century.

---

\(^5\) See Maps 1 and 2. Please note all maps, graphs and tables referred to in the text are provided in Appendix A. Wherever possible I have localised the major pertinent settlements.
Such a relatively rapid reversal of fortune in the face of competing pressure for adherents from Islam, Taoism, Buddhism and the West Syriac church; the destruction of peoples and the built environment under Tamerlane and the socio-economic changes which his invasions brought all very substantial shocks to ecclesiastical structures which had seemed resolute in the face of previous persecution.

Those who were to emerge as the Chaldeans were remnants of the East Syriac community residing in northern Mesopotamia, eastern Asia Minor and north-west Persia. The patriarchs of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries attempted to consolidate what remained of the Church. Likely with strong communal memories of the Church's missionary activities but with limited resources to attempt new expansion or indeed with any feasibility of being able to complete missions in the same way with the socio-religious nature of west and central Asia irreversibly changed from the consolidation of Islam to these regions.

A desire to re-create links with the churches internationally perhaps why engaging with Latin envoys proved attractive to East Syriac leaders with an awareness maintained of the See of Peter's rôle and status and as an opening to reclaiming communion with the wider Christian oikumene. From the thirteenth century onwards such engagements increased in number from which time and from where the following historical narrative begins.

1. The origins and early development of the Chaldean Catholic community (fifteenth–eighteenth centuries)

Chaldean origins

The first creation of an East Syriac community in union with the Holy See and use of the term Chaldean came in the mid-fifteenth century. However, in the two centuries prior to this event encounters with representatives of the Latin church brought East Syriac community members into short periods of
Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) sent Dominican missionaries to meet with the East Syriac patriarch, Sabrisho V ibn al-Masihi (1226–1256). In response Sabrisho V provided a statement of belief in 1247 as evidence of the compatibility of his theology with that of the Latin church and hence the suitability of communion with the Church of the East but nothing further resulted at that time. (Labourt 1908a, 559; Wilmshurst 2011, 238–239) Latin missionary expansion into south-west Asia derived from Innocent IV’s interest in engaging with the Mongol political élites who increasingly dominated the area from the 1240s and appeared open to conversion to Christianity; the desire for aggregating ecclesial communities to formal communion with the pope and the consolidation of the Christian presence in the Holy Land and wider Middle East in the context of the Sixth and Seventh Crusades (1228–1229 and 1248–1254). (Cf Gillman and Klimkeit 1999, 243)

Aside from the direct engagements with the patriarch East Syriac encounters with Latin ecclesiastics and crusader élites from the eleventh century were concentrated in Damascus, Jerusalem, Tripoli, Edessa and Antioch. (Teule 2003b, 108–112) On a popular basis we might suppose that individual members of the East Syriac community were sufficiently interested in the Latin church to consider transferring their allegiance to it or took part in Latin religious life whether through mere curiosity or with a view to gaining influence within the crusader states. (Weltecke 2011, 108; Dauvillier 1979, 642–643) The novelty of living under Christian temporal jurisdiction when for so long they had been governed by largely Muslim élites may have been highly attractive.

**First Union**

The first formal union of an East Syriac bishop with the Holy See was concluded by the Metropolitan of Cyprus in concord with the Council of Florence on 7th July 1445 following the encouragement of the Latin

---

6 Unless otherwise noted dates given after names refer to length of time in office as bishop, king, pope etc
archbishop on Rhodes, Andreas of Colassae, OP. (Labourt 1908a, 559; Finnerty 1907, 474) Andreas pursued a papal directed policy which sought to bring into communion a full sweep of those ecclesial bodies who, it was perceived, remained apart from the pope's oversight and which required necessary re-adjustment of ecclesiastical organisation. Those communities viewed as targets for aggregation to Latin ecclesiastical influence included members of the Maronite tradition on Cyprus (whose position viz. the Holy See was distinct from those in the Levant) `Syrian', `Nestorian', Armenian, 'Jacobite', Coptic, Ethiopian and Byzantine Christians everywhere in fulfilment of a chief purpose of Florence: to secure the reconciliation of Byzantium and all the Christian communities of the east with the Latin west in spiritual as well as temporal affairs. (Gill SJ 1959, 321–327, 335–337)

The choice of the term Chaldean to describe the East Syriac faction in union with the Holy See had approval of Eugene IV and derived from an awareness of the community's use of the Syriac language – referred to as Chaldean in Europe. (Wilmshurst 2011, 303; Cf Galleti 2003, 45–48) This Chaldean province was not maintained as conflict occurred over the extent of Latinisation which was acceptable to the new converts when changes in East Syriac liturgical practices were requested. (Cf Le Coz 1995, 327; Wilmshurst 2000, 64; Labourt 1908, 559)

It appears the Church of the East presence was maintained on Cyprus but was to be vanquished as Pope John XXII (1316–1334) reaffirmed a 1222 bull of Pope Honorius III (1216–1227) which sought to remove a perceived concentration of heresies on Cyprus including apparent Nestorianism. Pope John asking the patriarch of Jerusalem to `extirper les erreurs...du royaume de Chypre'. (Tisserant 1931, col. 225; J. Richard 1977, 196 n. 104) Latin influence was substantial and the then resident East Syriac metropolitan, Elias, entered into communion with the Latins in 1340 but at this juncture the term Chaldean was not used. (Wilmshurst 2000, 63) The noted East Syriac church in Famagusta was built in 1359 and, as such, suggests the community's presence in the Cypriot milieu was maintained even so.

As of 1445 it would seem unlikely that a Chaldean ecclesial identity
to which other East Syriacs could adhere had time to develop distinct from
the Church of the East. The 1445 group existed in isolation and by the mid-
sixteenth century had merged into the Maronite or Latin communities or
returned to their previous religious affiliation. (Wilmshurst 2011, 304;
Tfinkdji 1913, 7) The Holy See was not intending to seek and create an East
Syriac community with which it was to be in union at this juncture, rather
the opportunity arose for bringing East Syriac Cypriots into the Latin
ordinary's jurisdiction.

The emergence of Chaldean communities from the Church of the
East should be seen in context of broader trends in the Latin church and
successive popes' interests in the eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, the
108 year period between the first named Chaldean group's establishment in
1445 on Cyprus to that of Mesopotamia in 1553 was bookended by the
Councils of Florence and Trent (1431–1449 and 1545–1563). Florence
which largely focused on defining the status of papal jurisdiction and the
relationship between the Latin and Byzantine worlds as well as with
Ethiopian, Syriac, Coptic and Armenian churches. Trent affecting virtually
the entire ecclesiological understanding of the Latin church and the
necessity of re-awakening an uncompromising missionary zeal for bringing
all men into union with the Holy See and ensuring they conformed to what
was perceived as orthodox belief. From Trent there was a definitive shift
away from encouraging a plurality of local churches in communion with one
another to a church of a plurality of ecclesial rites under the pope's
leadership and direction.

Tridentine Catholic self-awareness theoretically entailed definitive
juridical separation of identity and of who could and could not be
considered within the church. For those missionaries working to achieve
communion with the East Syriac communities in a post-Tridentine
environment this required their submission to the Holy See's jurisdiction
who in the person of the contemporary pope held authority over all
ecclesiastical affairs for those with whom he was in communion. However,
we should note that Latin engagements with the East Syriacs were on a path
which took several turns prior to settling on a confirmed outlook for gaining
them as adherents. There is a qualitative difference in seeking a metropolitan's allegiance to entering into union with the patriarch of an entire church. The former a head of a diocese, the latter heir to an institution which oversaw the East Syriac Christian tradition throughout Asia.

**Context and status of the Church of the East in 1450 and the development of hereditary succession to the patriarchate**

During the period 1450–1550 the Church of the East was still in an era of recovery from the decline it experienced during and after the Islamisation of the Mongol empires from the mid-thirteenth century and Tamerlane's (b. c.1330 d 1405) invasions during the fourteenth century. (Cf Gillman and Klimkeit 1999, 151, 234–237; Wilmshurst 2000, 19) The paths of Mongol and Timurid expansion mirroring in reverse the East Syriac missionary work of Late Antique and Medieval eras.

Following the Council of Ephesus East Syriac ecclesial life was oriented away from engagement with the Roman church and the patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople through sustained missionary activity throughout central and east Asia for much of the next 900 years. By the end of the early medieval period in the late tenth century the Church of the East likely held the widest geographical jurisdiction of any contemporary church. The patriarch's overall direction of affairs from the early medieval period emanated from his residence in the Abbasid capital Baghdad and later the Mongol Il-Khanate capital of Maragha and was mediated via the network of dioceses extending throughout Asia.

With the conversion to Islam of Mongol élites; the withdrawal of toleration for non-native religious traditions in China and the subsequent brutality of Tamerlane the status of East Syriac Christianity in Asia changed from accepted to persecuted. Those communities far from the patriarchal leadership struggled to contend with the aggressive stance of the temporal

---

7 Something which the aforementioned churches would likely not have been fully aware.
powers and they slowly acquiesced to Islam or moved to the traditional East Syriac heartlands of northern Mesopotamia where the patriarch had retreated.

The Church of the East's decline was characterised by five factors:

1. The gradual tempering of the missionary fervour from the Church ministers and adherents. East Syriac expansion had been nearly continuous from the 430s to c.1300 by which time it had reached its zenith and could no longer continue its activities on the same scale and by the early fifteenth century was exhausted. In the secular world this was paralleled in the expansion and decline of the Mongol empires. The devolution of Ghengis Khan's empire from 1260 was a natural process given the difficulties of ruling such a vast area. (Morgan 2014)

2. A slowdown began in the administration of the community. The lack of capability to efficiently administer the Church saw a draw down of intellectual and ecclesial resources. The monastic candidates upon which the Church had relied for its leadership were beginning to disappear and could not easily be replaced.

3. The levels of persecution directly and the indirect effects of the transformation of Eurasia by the Mongols and Tamerlane prevented recovery at the same time as the community was attempting to consolidate remaining dioceses. These changes attached a psychological burden to the community's daily workings. The Church had been affected by persecution but the era from the end of the fourteenth to the mid-fifteenth centuries was so difficult as to see questions raised as to the East Syriac tradition's extinction in all but name.

4. As identified by Baumer: the lack of consistent support from a major ruling power in the regions where the Church predominated. (Baumer 2006, 266) The Mongol and Chinese élites showed some interest in adopting Christianity under the direction of East Syriac clergy at various times. However, there was never conversion from a
significant ruler or sufficiently large number of lesser nobility or widespread popularity among the lower classes to permit Christianity to become the state religion. The disadvantages being consideration as an only partially licit religion with which to become involved and lacking the means of coercion which the élites had to enforce adherence to one religion or to at least promote it as the dominant religion.

5. Outbreaks of the plague also grievously affected the communities in Central Asia from the thirteenth century and it appears likely this had substantial implications for the community at all levels. Syriac-script tombstones found at Semirache, Kirghizstan, for example, providing indication of the extent of the disease among the faithful. (Missick 1999, 99–100; Cf Dickens 2009, 14–15 ff)

Despite the strong monastic and literary traditions of the Church of the East written records became very scant in the fourteenth to mid-sixteenth centuries. Nonetheless, given the physically destructive nature of military campaigns and anti-Christian persecutions of that period material produced may have been lost rather than not produced. The period 1000–1300 saw a renaissance in Syriac literary production among monastics in south-west Asia and in the context of the benign and often supportive patronage of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad from the eighth century. (See Teule 2002; 2003a) At least up until the second decade of the fourteenth century advanced theological material was produced such as Abdisho of Nisibis’ Book of the Pearl. The text provides a concise outline of contemporary East Syriac Christological thought at a time when the community was at a cross roads in its future and re-engaging with other Christian traditions. (Wilmshurst 2011, 274) It is suggestive that this was a community looking for means to re-establish its identity and organisation.

**First Chaldean hierarchy**

The Church's shrinking geographical remit and decline in the number of qualified candidates for leadership positions afforded the family of Patriarch
Shemon IV Basidi (1450–1497) an opportunity to consolidate control over the remaining dioceses. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 193) One method to ensure control was considered to be via the establishment of hereditary succession to the patriarchal office and it became normative from 1450 for the patriarch to name a nephew as the ‘guardian of the throne’ – *Natar Kursya* – as his successor. (Valognes 1994, 415; Murre-Van Den Berg 1999, 237) A main benefit of this procedure was for clear continuity in church leadership and governance following the patriarch's death.

Murre-Van Den Berg notes how the patriarchs from Timothy II (d. c. 1330) onwards were often drawn from the same family. Nevertheless, this was not enforced in the same way as took place from the fifteenth century. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005, 303–304 n. 8) Hereditary succession in the fifteenth century also extended outside of the patriarchal line to some episcopal sees. We cannot be certain that Shemon IV was desirous of maintaining such a system indefinitely. The position of decline which the church was in, however, suggests the measure was considered acceptable and it was only once increasing nepotism became a sustained procedure that it was viewed as necessary to actively oppose it as detrimental to East Syriac ecclesiology.

By the time of Patriarch Shemon VII (1539–1558) opposition to hereditary succession began to be openly expressed. Shemon VII originally consecrated his nephew, Hnanisho, as bishop when aged twelve in 1539 and later appointed him as a metropolitan. However, Hnanisho died in 1545 and his brother, Eliya, also a minor became Natar Kursya by 1550. (Wilmshurst 2011, 297–298)

Shemon VII’s preferment for his family and their influence in East Syriac affairs was sufficiently opposed among the clergy by 1552 that Yohannan Sulaqa of the monastery of Rabban Hormizd in Alqosh was elected as a new patriarch in resistance with the support of bishops from Erbil, Salmas and Adarbaigan. (Wilmshurst 2011, 302–303) Initially, Sulaqa held the patriarchal office only as an administrator: for the Sulaqite faction to conduct their ecclesiastical administration in a canonical manner and according to East Syriac church tradition Sulaqa required consecration
as patriarch from at least one bishop of metropolitan rank. A bishop of metropolitan rank had greater seniority in church affairs and often had responsibility for a geographically larger or more densely populated see than a bishop of ordinary rank. (Cf Boudinhon 1911) As the bishops who supported Sulaqa had not attained this rank an alternative ecclesiastic of sufficient seniority was sought in the person of the pope – an advantage of which was the distance geographically and politically from the ongoing disputes in northern Mesopotamia.\(^8\)

However, the Sulaqite faction’s interest in the papacy and the pope’s potential interest to support them was only confirmed following meetings with Franciscan missionaries present in the town of Amid (Diyarbakir), in south-east Asia Minor from where they were extending their influence into Mesopotamia. Subsequently they met with representatives of the Custodian of the Holy Land in Jerusalem to determine if they should travel onwards to Rome.\(^9\)

Jerusalem’s significance to Christians is clear and for East Syriacs it appears pilgrimage to the city was tied to a specific salvific purpose. The thirteenth century pilgrim monk Sawma stated prior to visiting Jerusalem ‘we could go...so that we might receive complete pardon for our offences, and absolution for our sins of foolishness’. (Budge 1928, 133) Such a tradition perhaps echoing in the minds of Sulaqa and his coterie. A fruitful meeting we can assume took place in Jerusalem as Sulaqa received advice to meet directly with Pope Julius III (1550–1555) from February–April 1553 in Rome and was subsequently consecrated and received the pallium. (Baumer 2006, 248; Wilmshurst 2000, 22)

It seems unlikely the contemporary actors would have conceived of the significance with which this event would come to be held; what they

---

8 See Map 3 for major sites of East Syriac-Chaldean activity from the sixteenth century.
9 Franciscans were originally established in the Holy Land in 1217 from which time they became the dominant Latin religious order in the Levant and gradually the Middle East more widely. Their influence becoming such that Pope Clement VI (1342–1352) in 1342 gave them the responsibility for guardianship of the Holy Places. The chief Franciscan of the Holy Land gaining substantial oversight in regional Catholic affairs; appointment as the “Guardian of Mount Zion in Jerusalem” and the office of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem. (Labourt 1908b, 231)
considered it to mean for the future development of the East Syriac community or as to whether they shared the same view as to its future development. One aspect which serves as example of this comes from the 1553 papal bull officially outlining Sulaqa's status. Perhaps unremarkable at the time but with possible connotations for the present day Chaldean patriarch's authority the bull set the limits of patriarchal jurisdiction to Mesopotamia and also 'les autres pays soumis a la juridiction habituelle du patriarche et les monasteres situes dans la Chine at dans les Indes.' (Dauvillier 1942, col. 368)

Establishing an East Syriac patriarchate which derived its legitimacy from the Holy See was remarkable given the geographical and practical, if not formal, ecclesiastical separation of over a thousand years between the de facto patriarch of the west and the patriarch with jurisdiction for much of continental Asia. Moreover, Sulaqa's investiture marked out the maintenance of this Latin attempt to reconcile the entire East Syriac community to communion with the pope as a key focus of missionary activity. These efforts continued consistently despite the difficult situation politically and religiously which Latin missionaries encountered and in the face of tribal and familial divisions among the East Syriac communities. It was nearly 300 years later (1838) before a stable unified Chaldean community was consolidated.

From the Chaldean perspective it appears Sulaqa approached the pope with an awareness that the occupant of the See of Rome was known to be the apostolic descendant of St Peter and a validly ordained prelate who could convey legitimate holy orders. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005, 315 n. 42; Wilmshurst 2011, 298) However, it is unclear if there was especial awareness of the Tridentine nature of papal authority by the proto-Chaldeans.

From the Council of Trent's conclusion the Holy See professed its teaching and leadership role to be the supreme ecclesial authority which all other church leaders should acknowledge. In approaching the pope for ecclesiastical faculties such as holy orders a patriarchal candidate would be expected to submit to papal jurisdiction. A formal acknowledgement
procedure of this authority for eastern Christian leaders in union with the pope was the granting of the pallium (an ecclesiastical vestment) and in this instance for Christians associated with East Syriac Christology – perceived as heterodox due to association with Nestorius’ suspected opinions on Christ's humanity and divinity – a confirmation of post-Ephesian orthodoxy and acceptance of the decisions of subsequent ecumenical councils.

The Church of the East since the late fifth century had developed largely outside the ecclesiological discourse maintained in the rest of the Christian world and theological debate was conducted only to a limited degree other than in areas of Christian focus such as Cyprus, Jerusalem and Aleppo. Furthermore, as East Syriac expansion until the fourteenth century had largely been eastward was there still by the sixteenth century an accurate and reliable awareness of the distinctive features of both East Syriac and Latin ecclesiologies and their appreciations of the Petrine ministry? According to the nineteenth century Chaldean patriarch Ebedjesu V Khayyath (1894–1900) there was a consistent awareness of Petrine primacy derived from several Syriac sources. Initially from St Ephrem insofar as he greatly remarks on the significance of St Peter in his works and in Narsai (late fourth–late fifth centuries) who compares the authority endowed on Peter as akin to that of Moses. The editor of Khayyath's collection concludes that `l'Église nestorienne a toujours cru, sans jamais varier sur ce point, à la primauté de juridiction de saint Pierre sur toute l'Église'. Whilst this comes from an author compiling his arguments at a time of consolidating an eastern Catholic Chaldean identity strongly supportive of the Tridentine ecclesiological model of a Catholic Church of rites under the leadership of a Supreme Pontiff it does indicate that Petrine primacy was recognised in East Syriac texts even if there was not widespread awareness or acceptance of these arguments. (Khayyath 1896a, 137–141)

The most well detailed account of interactions between Latin representatives and the Church of the East (prior to the sixteenth century) comes in the thirteenth century travelogue of the monk Rabban Sawma. (Budge 1928 passim) The text provides some indication of East Syriac
ecclesiological concerns regarding the contemporary Petrine office and the Christology of the church in the West.

Sawma was a senior East Syriac monk who undertook a series of travels with his monastic colleague Markos from their residence in northern China throughout Asia with the intention of visiting Jerusalem. Markos was elected patriarch – as Yahbalaha III – during their travels. The new patriarch requested Sawma to continue his sojourn and to travel directly to Rome for meetings with Pope Nicholas IV (1288–1292). (Budge 1928, 172–173 ff; Labourt 1908a, 559)

A key aspect of the meetings was Christological discussion and the summary of proceedings in Budge's translation shows both sides calling into question the accordance of the others' beliefs with their understanding of orthodox Christology as derived from church Councils to the fifth century.10

Murre van den Berg, following a Syriac text of the Chaldean Vincentian priest Paul Bedjan infers that during these meetings the cardinals present largely accepted the rectitude of Sawma's beliefs: (Murre-Van Den Berg 2006b, 383 n. 34, 390, 391 n. 75; Bedjan 1895)

"During that same discussion Rabban Sauma produced a traditional "Nestorian" confession, in which two qnume (besides two natures and one person) are distinguished in Jesus Christ, a statement which surprisingly goes unnoticed by the cardinals' (Murre-Van Den Berg 2006b, 383)

This is curious and indicative that the Latin surprise at receiving an East Syriac cleric perhaps overrode their desire to be very particular about his community's theological persuasion. Discussion also encompassed the filioque clause – the belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son – in the Creed which the East Syriacs traditionally did not include in their professions of faith. This was likewise, according to the account, not aggressively debated.11 Perhaps there was insufficient interest in questioning

10 The East Syriac Christological paradigm also informed by writers from their own tradition not as well considered in the west such as Babai 'the Great' (611–628).
11 The filioque was a Latin emphasised Christological trend which gained traction in the Church in the West as a means to refute Arianism's denial of Christ's Divinity particularly among the Iberian Goths in the sixth century. Its widespread introduction
the Christology of a community whose representatives showed great deference to the pope. Ecclesiological perceptions emerging of a sister church geographically if not theologically distant. The Latin community aware of the distinctiveness of the Byzantine from Latin ecclesiastical identity but this did not necessarily mean a difference with the East Syriac tradition: the perceived remoteness and age of the community beyond Mesopotamia indicative of its holding fast to traditions and Christology from time prior to substantial ecclesial division in the Christian world.

The culmination of the engagement with the Holy See appears to have been a union confirmed in a letter of 7th April 1288 but this did not last. (J. Richard 1977, 109) It may simply have been a pragmatic consideration, friendly gesture or merely granting the benefit of the doubt to Sawma for his acceptance of the pope as head of the church in the West and thus someone with whom normatively the Latin church should be in communion. Yahballah III also sent a profession of faith to Pope Benedict XI (1303–1304) in 1304. This was, however, pursued no further as the patriarch lacked the support of his episcopal hierarchy.

During Sawma's meetings he presumably considered that the pope's authority and jurisdiction could only extend to the church in the west alone. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2006, 390 n. 74) This disavowal of the Petrine primacy of jurisdiction should be seen in the context of the then still extant reach of the Church of the East's ecclesiastical organisation throughout Asia; the geographical distance of these ecclesial provinces from Rome and the limits of papal ability to extend ecclesial influence into those areas in which and use in the Roman See came under Pope Benedict VIII (1014–1015). (Maas 1909) When professing the East Syriac creed to the Cardinals Sawma does not explicitly mention from where the Holy Spirit proceeds whether the Father and the Son or just the Father. However, when queried he does briefly dispute with the Cardinals the Latin belief. Nonetheless, following this conversation there appears to have been little interest in pursuing the matter further. (Budge 1928, 175–182) It may be that the remarkable nature of the Church of the East's missionary endeavours and its spread throughout Asia were perceived by the Holy See as sufficient causes to override concerns about theological points of difference which Sawma represented. Alternatively it is possible that the Latins thought that in due course they could influence Sawma and his companions to alter their beliefs on the filioque and did not regard it as an insurmountable barrier to building an ecclesial relationship with the Church of the East. Indeed, it does not appear to have affected Sawma taking a full part in the Holy Week and Easter celebrations in Rome during his visit – Pope Nicholas IV personally giving the Holy Eucharist to Sawma – with discussions on the East Syriac position on the filioque being put to one side indefinitely. (Budge 1928, 190–196)
the Church of the East was sole bearer of the Christian tradition. The expectation of the Holy See to affect the Church of the East's ecclesiology and its understanding of where the highest authority in the universal Christian oikumene subsisted and the acceptance of the pope as this source of jurisdiction and authority may well have seemed a rather obtuse issue of limited relevance to the day-to-day administration of the East Syriac community.

Furthermore, there does not appear to have been a sustained consensual view of the nature of primacy within the East Syriac milieu. One of the most comprehensive assessments comes from Murre van Den Berg's work on the international nature of the Church of the East. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005) She considers that the Church of the East held to a multiplicity of perspectives on the place of primacy in the universal Christian community and that no-one East Syriac position was defined and maintained from the late antique to early modern periods. However, prevailing themes were consistently present: firstly, the necessity of some form of union with the Roman Patriarchate as one of the great sees of the early Christian world but within this relationship the contemporary Catholicos-Patriarch of Seleucia Ctesiphon retaining the *de facto* if not *de jure* supremacy of honour and authority. Secondly, the framing of their ecclesiastical relationship in a way that the link with the Roman patriarch was perceived to be more significant than with any other such as Antioch or Alexandria perhaps largely due the awareness of the limited ecclesial or temporal influence which these patriarchates held within societies of Muslim numerical majorities. Thirdly, there was no apparent notion that the varying Christological emphases of the patriarchates was a central issue of concern as to permit or deny communion. Nevertheless, these themes and their implementation as essential ecclesiological aspects of East Syriac identity were dependent on the strength of contemporary East Syriac ecclesiastical organisation; the interests of the contemporary religious élite and their ability to enforce these views; the East Syriac patriarch's interests and style of managing the community – whether more monarchical or conciliar in approach – and the degree of interaction with the Holy See and
interest in its ecclesiological model.

With Sulaqa emerging out of an East Syriac community with limited geographic and ecclesial horizons as of the sixteenth century it is unclear as to his level of awareness of the intricacies of the positions which his community held to during earlier eras where greater ecclesiological reflection was possible. Moreover, it seems unlikely Sulaqa would necessarily accept the jurisdiction of the pope over his patriarchal leadership as anything more than a legitimate if convenient method to grant him sufficient ecclesiastical rank to return to Mesopotamia as head of the non-hereditary East Syriac faction. Sulaqa perhaps regarding his engagement with the pope as akin to the rôle which the Roman patriarch had in patristic times as an arbiter in matters of ecclesiological disagreement. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005, 315) If Sulaqa was perhaps not aware of the exact nature of Sawma's interactions with the papacy it is possible he was aware of the extent of the Church of the East having fulfilled the Great Commission throughout Asia since the fifth century apart from Petrine influence. Coming from a tradition which had developed a sense of its ecclesial jurisdiction derived at least in part from its missionary exploits and these as proof of the patriarch's authority Sulaqa perhaps saw little need to accept the juridical authority of the contemporary pope and to defer to him for the indefinite future.

This is disputed by contemporary Chaldean scholars however. Albert Abouna suggests that Sulaqa and his associates were well aware of the expected requirements for communion with the Latin church being `not simple people'. The decision to engage with Latin representatives was preferred to those of the Byzantine church because the Latins were considered to be more similar theologically. (Abouna 2013)\(^{12}\) The contacts between the Byzantines and members of the Church of the East were, by the sixteenth century, likely limited due to geographical distance and the complications of Ottoman occupation. Prior to that time contacts were limited to the Holy Land and Cyprus or perceptions from communal memory of what the other professed to believe. Although Byzantine

\(^{12}\) Abouna is one of the oldest living Chaldean priests – in his tenth decade as of 2015 – and has had a long scholarly career.
expansion in Central Asia was not unheard of so there were some possibilities of connections with the East Syriacs at this juncture. (See, for example, Dauvillier 1979) It may have been that the traditional East Syriac perception of the Catholicos-Patriarch as head of all the churches of the east was considered a similar position as that possessed by the Holy See as patriarch of the Western Christian oikumene and this seems to have been emphasised by Rabban Sawma in his meetings in Rome when `Mar Papa' Nicholas IV himself noted the leadership role which the institution of the papacy purported to hold over the universal Christian community. (Budge 1928, 177–178, 191, 196) This in contrast to Byzantine ecclesiology which affirmed that ecclesial authority was manifested through an Oecumenical council and not in the office of one man.  

Nevertheless, some deference to the papacy as an institution appears to have been believed to be necessary as the pope gave Sawma a bull permitting the East Syriac patriarch to govern the Christians of the East and confirmed Sawma as the Visitor-General in the patriarch's jurisdiction. (Budge 1928, 196) Whether this was from Sawma's perspective a mere formality or expression of good will from the pope may never be known but it shows the inter-relation between the jurisdictions of West and East could be re-affirmed with relative ease and indicates that Nicholas IV, Benedict XI and their advisers assumed the Church of the East as holding to a complementarity view of the other's ecclesial community as at least a partner in international Christian life if not a community which should defer in matters of ecclesiological doubt to the contemporary pope.

**Sulaqa's status quo and legacy**

In attending upon the pope Sulaqa gained a source of legitimisation for clerical rank sufficient to act as head of the East Syriac community. This

---

13 A significant and strong relationship between the Holy See and the Mongol khans emerged in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with hopes for widespread Mongol conversions to Christianity. Such a relationship perhaps also influenced East Syriac perceptions of the papacy and acted as an encouragement to engage more closely with the Latin community. The Il-Khanid rulers Gazan (1295–1304) and his brother Oljaitu (1304–1316) had both been baptised as children, for example, with the latter's baptismal name *Nicholas* given in honour of Pope Nicholas IV. (Ryan 1998, 416 n. 33; Baum and Winkler 2003, 96–97; Cf Morgan 2014, xv–xvii; Budge 1928, 174)
link with the contemporary pope by extension granted Sulaqa and his successors potential partnerships with Latin institutions which became substantial influences upon the development of Sulaqa and his community and of the East Syriac tradition as a whole. Furthermore, it granted him at least theoretically a degree of protection by the Holy See over his activities: he had become the pope's man in Mesopotamia. The granting of senior ecclesiastical rank to Sulaqa was vital to shore up his position for his return home as – unbeknownst to the Holy See at the time of his consecration – the legitimate, if hereditary, patriarch Shemon VII still held office. It had been conveyed to the pope by the Sulaqites that Shemon was incapacitated. (Wilmshurst 2011, 299; Baumer 2006, 248) A situation which implied Sulaqa and his supporters were very determined to wrest authority over the Church of the East away from those who held power.

Nonetheless, I suggest that perhaps the Sulaqites sought a return to a more just and stronger model of church governance as when the number of suitable patriarchal relations declined in the line of hereditary succession the church’s centralised authority could weaken. (Cf Baumer 2006, 233) I also suggest the reduction in the geographical sphere in which the church operated led to altered perceptions of what was attainable for the community with fewer resources. A smaller geographical sphere in which to organise the church also leading to the growth of more intensified and varied personal relationships. Rivalries which only heightened due to hereditary succession and limited the opportunities for clergy to advance to the highest office and senior episcopal positions. (Cf Baumer 2006, 247) The rôle of monastic involvement is also significant as during the church's missionary expansion they were at the forefront of nearly all activities. By the time the church had declined the monks perhaps sought to restore their positions of influence. Moreover, as they were somewhat isolated by nature the opportunity for dissent towards the authority could have been co-ordinated in their more closed monastic environment. Ambitious clergy seeking to gain office to direct the church and unable to avail themselves of the usual opportunity for advancement in the episcopate would at least have a base for personal spiritual and educational advancement within the monastery.
Early Chaldean identity

A separate ecclesial organisational identity among the East Syriac community as so far as such existed from the 1550s was in the process of formation and diffused among those loyal to Sulaqa. The dioceses of Salmas, Urmia and Erbil which supported him were all traditionally strong centres of East Syriac religious life and Sulaqa's position was further reinforced by the fifty doctors of the East Syriac élite who attended him in his travels via Jerusalem to Rome. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2009, 155; Babakhan 1900, 489) However, the construction of a specifically Chaldean religious identity did not take place at the same time as the instigation of the Sulaqite line other than to form in opposition to the Church of the East and to identify with the Holy See as a link of episcopal legitimacy.

The formalisation of the Latin perception about the Chaldeans as a distinct ecclesial identity was held in the context of the term *natio*. It should not be understood as the Holy See as having an awareness of the specific national or ethnic character of those who became Chaldeans if indeed any such character existed. *Natio* was used from a Latin perspective in a manner to describe a group which had a shared ecclesial identity drawn from a distinctive cultural *milieu* and according to the geographical and political circumstances in which it was found. The term was linked also to that of *ritus*, *traditio* and *Ecclesia* which were in the post-Tridentine era used interchangeably. (Faris 2002, 283)

*Natio* had a wider application in the context of the Ottoman Empire which Heyberger outlines: 'le terme de <<nation>> désignait indifféremment des groupes qui se distinguaient par leur costume, leur religion, leur langue, leur organisation sociale, leur mode de vie ou par plusieurs de ces critères' (Heyberger 1994, 63) In this sense it was not a term exclusive to Christian communities and could be equally applied to Kurds, Arabs, Jews etc and it was – if nothing else – an attempt at sociological declension of Ottoman society's plurality to ensure a means to administer such diverse communities. *Natio* becoming reinforced through the millet system under which non-Muslims were governed by the Ottomans
and thus attaining a meaning which in the context of eastern Christians in union with the Holy See aided the adoption of the Tridentine concept of a universal Catholic Church of rites – which were largely coterminous with natio.

**Sulaqa's successors**

Despite the initial enthusiasm for Sulaqa's consecration by his supporters only in Amid and Mardin was support found for Yohannan VII on his return to Mesopotamia. (Baumer 2006, 248) Support was particularly strong in Amid from where the Capuchin Franciscans organised their missions and Sulaqa first established his patriarchal headquarters there on his return. (Teule 2011c) Perhaps in his absence some were found lukewarm in their earlier support for upsetting the status quo and despite the despatch of two Dominicans from Malta to consolidate Sulaqa's work ecclesial separatism declined in popularity. (Tisserant 1931, col. 228–229) Sulaqa came to an ignominious end being murdered by drowning in 1555. It was later alleged that Shemon VII had bribed the Ottoman authorities 200 gold pieces to carry out the deed. (Baumer 2006, 248; Babakhan 1900, 489) Whether this was, in fact, the exact set of circumstances such an accusation is indicative of the strength of feeling and intensity of relationships among contemporary East Syriac factions. The event continues to have resonance with Sulaqa regarded as a martyr by many Chaldeans.

Sulaqa's successors who attempted to maintain a link with the Latin missionaries and communion with the pope were: (Cf Wilmshurst 2011, 345, 477)

- Abdisho IV (1555–1570)
- Yahballah IV (1570–1580)
- Shemon IX (1580–1600)

---

14 Some authors suggest another patriarch – Abraham – led the Chaldeans from 1570–1577. This was, however, disproved by the two most recent scholars to consider East Syriac patriarchal lineages in some depth: Wilmshurst (2011, 345) and Murre van Den Berg (1999, 251–252 ff).
There was a strong Latin missionary interest in maintaining the Sulaqite line and Le Coz indicates Abdisho IV was closely controlled by the Holy See and this was perhaps in recognition of his intelligence and ecclesiological knowledge. Nonetheless, as Abdisho was invited to present his profession of faith at the Council of Trent this would seem to deny any suggestion of disloyalty to the pope either in jurisdictional or theological terms. (Le Coz 1995, 329; Labourt 1908a, 559; Dib 1914, 25)

However, the movement of successive patriarchs to residences in remote locations around northern Mesopotamia inhibited their contacts with Latin missionaries. Abdisho initially established the patriarchal residence in the monastery of Mar Jacob the Recluse near Seert whilst Shemon IX moved to Salmas and his successor Shemon X left for Kochanes in the Hakkari mountains despite expressing a desire to visit Rome to express his loyalty to the pope and to ensure the education of his clergy in the Papal States. (Teule 2011a; Le Coz 1995, 329; Wilmshurst 2011, 317; Labourt 1908a, 560)

Wilmshurst suggests the gradual geographical retreat was to avoid representatives of the legitimist patriarch and the Holy See engaging with the Chaldeans. (Wilmshurst 2011, 322–323) Baumer argues it was to avoid Ottoman persecution for having brought into their Empire agents of the dominant socio-religious actor in Europe and a combination of these factors was likely to have been the catalyst. (Baumer 2006, 248) Labourt's suggestion that the Turco-Persian Wars of the early seventeenth century limited the patriarch's freedom of movement and caused interruptions in communication with Latin representatives is perhaps the most likely. (Labourt 1908a, 560; Wilmshurst 2000, 25; Murre-Van Den Berg 1999, 235)

One effort to retain the Holy See's confidence came from Shemon XI who wrote to Pope Innocent X (1644–1655) in 1653 stating that 40,000 families were loyal to him across twenty-eight 'districts'. (Wilmshurst 2011, 349; Lampart 1966, 233) This attempt to impress the pope does not seem to
have had the desired effect, however, and as the Latins became aware of the illegitimate way in which the Sulaqa line originated, through contacts with the legitimist East Syriac patriarchal line, there was likely far less concern for advancing the Sulaqite patriarchal claimant as the lawful East Syriac leader and in 1672 the Sulaqites finally ended attempts at communion.\textsuperscript{15}

I suggest there was for the Sulaqites no religious reason not to return to the belief patterns of the Church of the East. The development of a separate ecclesial identity was not sufficiently observed to ensure the widespread acceptance of post-Ephesian Christology and Latin ecclesiological beliefs as defined at the Council of Trent. Instead the Sulaqite community retained its traditional position and until their relative resurgence from the nineteenth century following the intervention of Anglican, Latin, protestant and Russian missionaries became a narrowly focused group extremely limited in their geographical reach and religious influence.

It should be emphasised that from 1553 to 1650 the Chaldean ecclesial structures were weakened through little notion of how an eastern Christian community in union with the pope was supposed to develop. The main other example of an emerging eastern Catholic ecclesial community of a Syriac tradition were the Maronites. The example of the Maronites to the best of my knowledge was not formally utilised to develop a Chaldean community which replicated their ecclesiastical organisation. However, what the Maronite example provided was a basic outline for the construction of a Chaldean eastern Catholic rite ecclesiology which could be adapted to the particular requirements of the Mesopotamian Christian \textit{milieu}. (Heyberger 1994, 232–239)

Nevertheless, the creation of ecclesial structures with a Chaldean ethos remained challenging with a lack of interest to maintain ``Chaldeanness'' from those East Syriacs who had initially sought support from the

\textsuperscript{15} The East Syriac communities of India engaged with the Latin church at a different pace to those in Mesopotamia with the context of Portuguese imperial ambitions in south Asia and the Indian Ocean seeing the eventual enforcement of Latin ecclesiological norms from the mid-sixteenth century over resident East Syriacs. This is discussed further below.
pope. (Valognes 1994, 433) The East Syriac leadership's efforts in attaining communion with the pope and pursuing a distinctive Chaldean identity were not always met with support from the laity or other clergy: Shemon XII's correspondence with Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667) in 1658 strongly criticised by his congregations. (Labourt 1908a, 560; Badger 1852a, I:149)

It appears a key stumbling block was the acceptance of Tridentine beliefs on the governance of the universal church and the derivation of ecclesial authority from the Holy See. An issue which detracted from the independence which the East Syriac church had enjoyed for most of its existence. Indeed, if the instructions of Pope Pius IV in 'Romanus Pontifex' (1564) were to be followed the local Latin Catholic ordinary had complete jurisdiction over all eastern Christians regardless of ecclesiastical rank. 16 'Romanus Pontifex' being issued with a view to ensuring that those communities in union with the Holy See were protected from error and deviation in their faith. (O’Mahony 2008, 241)

The acceptance of contemporary Christological and ecclesiological trends by the East Syriac Chaldean faction's leadership was a requirement by the Holy See for their being accepted into communion. Also there was a sense that personal loyalty to the contemporary pope was obligatory as epitomised by the Chaldean patriarchal claimants normative attendance in Rome to receive the pallium. This personal interaction with the pope an opportunity for the Holy See to impress the need for an avowed Tridentine ecclesial identity among the Chaldeans. Nevertheless, was this such an apparently simple procedure and would the Chaldean leadership have viewed affirming a Latin Credo and receiving the pallium as bestowing them authority and communion with the Holy See? If the Chaldean patriarchal claimants were fully aware of the traditional status of their forbears and the influence they wielded throughout Asia did they consider they lacked true apostolicity, valid clerical orders or the authority to assert their own jurisdiction? How could the Chaldeans become in effect a junior partner in an ecclesial community whose leader purported to be the Vicar of Christ on Earth given their forbears had once held a far wider geographical

16 Not to be confused with Pope Nicholas V’s bull of the same name in 1454 concerning the Portuguese Empire’s expansion.
jurisdiction than the Latin church? A leader who, further, viewed the Chaldean community not as a church but as an ecclesial rite under his overarching jurisdiction.

To combat any doubts as to the superiority of the Tridentine paradigm and in attempts to align East Syriac with Tridentine ecclesiology, I suggest, rapprochement on issues of ecclesiastical organisation and Christology became the focus of Latin missionary work from the late sixteenth century. A process which through sustained education of the East Syriac communities as to what was considered acceptable ecclesiologically eventually resulted in moulding an eastern Catholic Chaldean rite fully cognisant of such an identity by the late nineteenth century.

However, Latin efforts were complicated because missionaries were unlikely to have been entirely certain of the normative nature of the Chaldean community. The intention was not to create more Latin Christians but to pursue union with those outside of the jurisdiction of the pope whilst ensuring they retained their existing liturgical practices and aspects of ecclesial identity which were in accord with Tridentine ecclesiology. The close ecclesial bond which the Chaldean Church came to have with the papacy was and is a key marker of its identity and suggestive that this originated as a result of a desire to transcend any theological controversies by instead promoting the more simplistic ecclesiological link with the pope as the means to form a union.

**Latin presence in Mesopotamia (I)**

The Latin presence in Mesopotamia derived from two main factors: (1) the expectation of widespread change of allegiance among the East Syriac population during the mid-sixteenth century to union with the Holy See and (2) the increasingly strong Latin Augustinian and Carmelite presences in Persia and along the trade routes through the Indian Ocean to south Asia and China. (F. Richard 1990) The connections with India and Persia reflected the traditional links which the Church of the East had in these regions such as Basra, Isfahan, Pondichery and Kerala the key points on the trade route and
subsequently areas of Latin expansion. (Flannery 2013, 78–81)

The impetus of Latin expansion originating from the post-Tridentine zeal for overseas missions and also Trent's focus upon the *Orient* to revivify native Christian communities. (Heyberger 1994, 227–228 ff) With the foundation of the Propaganda in 1622 we may surmise that the missions took on a more organised manner with the establishment of a Latin ecclesial presence in Baghdad in 1632 related to this. This establishment also segued with the increasing Ottoman military presence and attempts to definitively wrestle control of Mesopotamia from the Safavid Persians. Growing Ottoman dominance and relative openness to western powers meant Latin agents could proceed into Mesopotamia.

Timoteo Perez (1632–1639), first Latin Vicar for Babylon,17 represented the Holy See's interests in Mesopotamia and held tentative oversight for Latin engagements with the East Syriac communities. (Filoni 2008, 24) Latin efforts to gain adherents to a Chaldean ecclesiastical identity were particularly successful in the regions surrounding Mosul and Amid from the mid-seventeenth century. (Wilmshurst 2000, 26) Nevertheless, given the internecine conflicts occurring within the groups and the small number of persons involved low level political clashes and the influence of one cleric over a village affected the the populace's religious affiliation and meant the Holy See's general missionary policy was difficult to direct.

It is not clear what Latin missionary policy was in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and whether adoption of a set of theological views or a different type of ecclesiastical organisation was of greater significance to the East Syriacs. The Propaganda granted support in a general sense and encouraged mutual support between each missionary order but on a practical basis this would in turn vary as those on the ground would be operating largely independently and following pragmatic approaches. (Cf Flannery 2013, 81–82)

One may note from the missionaries' actions, from a post-Tridentine Catholic perspective affirming the Pope's primacy, that it was normative to approach the East Syriac patriarch to convince him of the rectitude of the Catholic Faith. If in failing to attain this goal a focus then shifted to a lower

---

17 The then European appellation for Baghdad.
level of bishops and priests and subsequently to the community at large. (Valensi 1997, 263–264 ff)

**Legitimatist line of patriarchs of Seleucia-Cteisphon (1591–1700)**

The legitimist hereditary line of patriarchs who resided in and around Mosul became as active in contacts with Latin missionaries as their proto-Chaldean peers under Elias VIII (1591–1617).¹⁸ (Baumer 2006, 249) From 1610 Elias VIII's engagements resulted in Franciscans visiting him to investigate the possibility of union with the Holy See. This was followed by an invitation to the Franciscan superior at Aleppo, Tommaso da Novana, to a synod held at Amid in 1616 with the apparent purpose of initiating union. (Murre-Van Den Berg 1999, 244; Abdoulahad and Chabot 1896, 69) If a union was created formally it did not last beyond Elias' death the next year, most likely due to his continued attachment to Nestorius which ended the opportunity for establishing his community as Chaldeans. (Frazee 1983, 143; Cf Badger 1852a, 1:149)

Discussions continued under Elias IX (1617–1660) who accepted a Latin creed but commemorated Nestorius in the liturgy and denied the title of Theotokos to the Blessed Virgin. (Murre-Van Den Berg 1999, 245) In an attempt to curry favour with the Latins Elias IX withheld the appointment of a hereditary successor to demonstrate his desire to alter church governance in conformity with Latin practice in the appointment of bishops. (Murre-Van Den Berg 1999, 245; Wilmshurst 2011, 326) Possibly the nature of church governance could have been overlooked were the legitimists to disavow

---

¹⁸ From the fourteenth century the East Syriac patriarch resided in the vicinity of Mosul. Ecclesiastically Mosul had been a joint metropolitan with Erbil from the ninth century but in the thirteenth these were separated owing to a decline of the Christian presence. Despite Tamerlane's invasions of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries the Mosul region was unaffected as its governor surrendered directly on his advance thus for a time preserving the city's safety. From the mid-fifteenth century the patriarchal residence shifted to the monastery of Rabban Hormizd, about thirty miles north of Mosul in the vicinity of the town of Alqosh. Thus, it is common to find the legitimist line described as the Mosul patriarchate or as resident in Alqosh. (Wilmshurst 2011, 286–288; Harrak 2003, 293–294)
their support for the two Christological points of contention.

Elias X (1660–1700) attempted some contact with the Holy See in 1669 but on the basis of a request for a chapel at the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem but also an East Syriac seminary in the Papal States. (Wilmshurst 2011, 326; Murre-Van Den Berg 1999, 246) This was perhaps an attempt to reclaim the Chapel of the Crucifixion in the Holy Sepulchre which was permitted for East Syriac use at least as of 1607. (Brock 2006, 189–190, 198)

Ottoman administrative influence

As the Church of the East consolidated its position following the attacks of Tamerlane so the Ottomans expanded their empire in the Mediterranean and south-west Asia. The Ottomans occupied Mesopotamia in 1534 remaining in control until 1919 and their political and social influence were lasting upon all the East Syriac factions. However, from 1501–1732 the Shia Safavid dynasty in Persia was sufficiently strong to pose as an existential threat to the Sunni Ottomans. Subsequent wars between the two empires caused a divide in the work of the East Syriac patriarchs as dioceses were split by Ottoman-Safavid jurisdictions. (Baumer 2006, 248) The divide also prevented a contiguous attempt by Latin missionaries to obtain the ecclesial allegiance of the East Syriac communities and develop a Chaldean community homogeneously.

The impetus for Latin advances religiously and politically in the Ottoman Empire were reinforced through the Catholic European military victories at Lepanto (1571), Vienna (1683) and Belgrade (1716). These successes were only partly responsible for these advances, however, as from 1569, with the Capitulations treaty between the French and Ottomans, Latin missionaries were already freely operating within the Empire. The Capitulations were a mutually beneficial series of treaties between the Ottomans and French and later other European powers. The French capitulations granted freedom of movement to Latin missionaries within the
Empire which extended French influence within the Levant and Mesopotamia. (Frazee 1983, 67)

The Ottoman Empire's multi-confessional nature presented the ruling élite with the challenges of maintaining superior legal status for Muslims whilst also providing a framework to administer non-Muslims. The non-Muslim communities were divided according to confession into *millets* and granted the right to govern themselves through their own customs and practices.

The Church of the East was placed under the Armenian millet in 1461. The Armenian millet extending into those areas of the eastern Ottoman Empire where East Syriac communities could be found it perhaps seemed a reasonable administrative alteration especially given the relatively small size of the East Syriac communities. (Le Coz 1995, 311–312) The effects of such a system upon the East Syriac community had been experienced under the Sasanian Empire. In the early fifth century Shah Yazdgard I (399–420) granted the Church of the East status as a `legitimate minority group' and the patriarch the authority to govern the community according to their own customs. (Gillman and Klimkeit 1999, 113) Following the Arab invasions such a system of control for each non-Muslim community continued and was reinforced by the Islamic *dhimma* concept.

The *dhimma* paradigm encompasses those `people of the book' in Islamic jurisprudence whose religious liberties are guaranteed in law following the payment of the *jizya* (poll) tax. Quite apart from the economic disadvantage, the gradual deterioration of Christian communities resulted from the emphasis upon their lower status – being considered qualitatively different in legal matters – and regular if not consistently violent incidents of persecution which they experienced under Ottoman rule.

Ottoman Mesopotamia was divided into three major provinces focused on the cities of Baghdad, Mosul and Basra with the northern area of Ottoman jurisdiction – the province of Sharizoor – administered largely by autonomous Kurdish tribes. (Tripp 2007, 8–9) Ottoman administration should not necessarily be considered as detrimental to East Syriac life with a renewal in Christian literary production from the seventeenth century
perhaps evidence of the benefits which the combination of Ottoman rule and a Latin missionary presence engendered. (Ainsworth 1841, 52; Rassam 2010, 105; Murre-Van Den Berg 2006a, 10–11) Nevertheless, the pressure applied to the churches by the Ottomans who knew of Christian political weakness was exploited. The Chaldeans and other eastern Catholics were protected to an extent as the Holy See's influence via the French diplomatic corps could alleviate the position of the communities. However, at a local level some compromises with the Ottoman authorities were very difficult to escape from and viewed by some Christians as a means of advancement.

**The establishment of the Josephite patriarchal line in Amid**

The era 1670–1750 for the Chaldeans was defined by the establishment of a third line of claim to the East Syriac patriarchate at Amid under Capuchin Franciscan direction. Initially the rejuvenation of the Latin presence in Amid was intended to restore a previously strong Chaldean diocese but which had fallen back under the Church of the East's influence. (Badger 1852a, I:150) With missionary success came the intention of developing a stable patriarchal line for the Chaldeans loyal to the Holy See and under close Capuchin direction. Capuchins were present in northern Mesopotamia from 1636 and having consolidated their mission in Mosul were in a position to expand their activities by the 1670s. (Fiey OP 1965a, I:56)

Shimun XIII Denha (1662–1700) had ended the Sulaqite relationship with the Holy See in 1672. (Baumer 2006, 248; Bello OAOC 1939, 5) Thus, until 1681 with the formal establishment of the new Chaldean patriarchal line a nine year gap existed whereby there was no patriarch, recognised by the Holy See, among the potentially Chaldean parties. The increasing preponderance of Latin missionaries ensured the Chaldeans were not without any spiritual support and direction during this period. It is quite probable that some returned to the allegiance of the Church of the East but the exact nature of this remains unknown. It should not be thought that a Chaldean identity existed only among those who had entered into
communion with the Holy See nor that those who were in communion had completely disavowed their beliefs which accorded with their background in the Church of the East. The Chaldean community was not created ex nihilo but primarily through gaining the allegiance of those within the East Syriac community who were sympathetic to the idea of union with the Holy See and/or the advantages which association with the Latin missionaries might bring them.

Aside from restoring the Chaldean patriarchate the expansion of the Capuchin mission in Amid also took place in the context of the recent centenary of the conclusion of the Council of Trent in 1663 and the consolidation of eastern Catholic populations in the Levant. The perception that it was an opportune time for a rejuvenation of the Chaldean community seems likely to have been a theme not far from the minds of the Capuchins. (Lampart 1966, 87–90) There was perhaps also a level of competition between the Latins working in the Levant, Mesopotamia and Persia to advance the cause of their own religious orders.

The leader of the new patriarchal line was Joseph, the legitimist Metropolitan of Amid. His intention of entering into union with the Holy See is found in a letter he wrote in October 1670 affirming his full accord with Tridentine ecclesiological and Christological views. (Lampart 1966, 95–97) He proved zealous for advocating for a Chaldean community and as of 1672 he was active outside of his own diocese visiting the East Syriacs of Mardin to this end. (Lampart 1966, 98)

Following Metropolitan Joseph's affiliation with a Chaldean identity, he and the Capuchins came into conflict with the legitimist patriarch, Elias X, who sought to overthrow his meddlesome bishop, whether by bribes or the intervention of the Ottoman authorities. Nonetheless, Joseph was granted recognition by the civil power in 1677 as head of the Chaldean community. Ottoman support for Joseph indicative that the approval of the local administration was required to freely operate in the Empire.¹⁹

¹⁹ In 1672 when Joseph's position had been earlier disputed by Elias X, an Ottoman governor in Amid was called upon to discern his legitimacy as the leader of the local East Syriac community. (Abdoulahad and Chabot 1896, passim) In this instance the governor upheld Joseph's position.
Following secular approval Joseph was granted religious authority from the Holy See as "patriarch of the Chaldean nation deprived of its patriarch" in 1681. (Abdoulahad and Chabot 1896, 71–77) The somewhat unclear nature of this title and as to the authority and/or jurisdiction which it granted reflected the contemporary ecclesiological theory particular to the East Syriac situation. It appears to have been based in the notional hope that at a future time the two patriarchal lineages within the sphere of Latin missionary activity – legitimist and Josephite – could be reconciled into a single line. (Wilmshurst 2011, 331) The legitimist patriarch retained the cachet of legitimacy and regardless of disagreement with Tridentine ecclesiology this lawful status was greatly valued by the Latins. Perhaps it was considered that were the legitimist patriarch to die his community could be persuaded to enter into union with the Holy See under the Josephite claimant or alternatively that the legitimist patriarch could himself be brought into union with the Holy See and the need for the Josephite line would cease. (Cf Badger 1852a, I:150)

The patriarchal title also reflects the Holy See's desire to care for those Chaldeans who had previously been loyal to the Sulaqite patriarchal claimant. With Shimun XIII Denha ending his relationship with the Holy See in 1672 those who still desired union with the Holy See were the Chaldean nation deprived of a patriarch. This, however, did leave the Chaldean Josephite patriarchal line lacking legitimacy or at least in the same position which Yohannan Sulaqa had experienced following his own elevation in 1553 insofar as neither had been the legitimate patriarch of the Church of the East before entering into union with the Holy See. Nonetheless, as of the 1670s the Tridentine paradigm imbued and expressed by Latin missionaries appears to have ensured that regardless of the Josephite line's legitimacy it had a greater sense of purpose, self-awareness of what was required of an eastern Christian community in union with the pope and likelihood of success. I suggest this was the time by which it was well understood that the ideal was for the formation of a universal church of a plurality of ecclesial rites as opposed to a communion of churches under the oversight of the pope as had been advanced in Latin ecclesiology prior
to Trent. Joseph I's letter to the pope of October 1670, for example, emphasises especially the union with the Holy See and submission to the pope's authoritative jurisdiction. Albeit written under the guidance of the Capuchins the letter reflects also their awareness of Tridentine ecclesiology:

'Praetera firmiter credo et suscipio quaecumque docet Ecclesia Catholica Romana et tradit circa septem Sacramenta novae legis et amplector omnia Concilia et omnia quaecumque constituerent in eis Patres ex voluntate Summi Pontificis Capitis Ecclesiae...Et tandem ipsum Deum deprecor ut me dignetur adjuvere et faciat ut teneam quod dixi et scripsi firmiter exequendo, et Ecclesia redeat ad gremium matris suae pristinae et oves ad Pastorem qui est Summus Pontifex sedens in Ecclesia Romana.' (Lampart 1966, 97)

The pursuit of a Tridentine influenced Chaldean identity was strongly pursued under the new patriarch and his successors Joseph II (1696–1713) and Joseph III (1713–1757). An identity expressed, for example, through Latin devotions such as the Rosary. (Murre-Van Den Berg 1999, 258) It seems Latin efforts were aided by the Josephite patriarchs' leadership qualities: Joseph I's charismatic personality attracted Christians from as far as Baghdad to hear his preaching; Joseph II was remarkable for his pastoral efforts during an outbreak of plague in 1713 and died whilst ministering among the faithful. (Abdoulahad and Chabot 1896, 86–87; Wilmshurst 2011, 331)

During Joseph II's rule Latin theological trends were firmly established due to his interest in their application to the Chaldeans and he outlined his thought in the Book of the Magnet and the Book of the Polished Mirror works which emphasised a Tridentine approach to ecclesiology and the necessity of East Syriac union with the Holy See. (Teule 2011b, 435–436) Latin influence was also seen in his consideration of sacramental theology where he emphasised the distinction between mortal and venial sins in which had not been common in the Church of the East if at all to that time. (Teule 2004, 235)

Joseph II's expositions were related to the influence of precise delineations in theology which were expected of all clergy in union with the
Holy See after the Council of Trent where a Scholastic approach was considered necessary to defend and uphold the Faith due to protestant attacks and a desire to distinguish between the theology of the Byzantine patriarchates and the Holy See. (Teule 2011b, 436; Heyberger 1994, 435)

The Josephite patriarchs' openness to Latin theological influence extended further than any earlier Chaldean group due to frequent visits of their clergy to Europe especially the Papal states. Joseph I, for example, spent five months in Rome in 1675 as he grew in his position of responsibility for the Chaldeans of Amid prior to his elevation as patriarch and from 1694 until his death in 1707 resided in Rome as he was too ill to conduct his office. (Abdoulahad and Chabot 1896, 84–85) He must have imbibed the culture and nature of Tridentine ecclesiology and would have gained a greater understanding of what was proposed for eastern Catholics.

Whilst Latin efforts focused on the Josephites the relations with the legitimist line continued under the tutelage of the Discalced Carmelites and Dominicans. (Frazee 1983, 210) The Latins presumably maintaining this level of presence throughout Mesopotamia to ensure the Chaldean project succeeded in some form. The ties of family and tribe powerful influences in the retention of association with one or other East Syriac community. It is telling, for example, that in the absence of a key Josephite leader that men should revert back to the Church of the East. Whilst Joseph III toured Europe in the 1720s to gain funds for the church in Mesopotamia the legitimist patriarch was able to gain the affiliation of East Syriacs in Seert. Joseph appears to have made little effort to stamp his authority over the Chaldeans leaving much work up to the Capuchins. (Wilmshurst 2011, 332; Frazee 1983, 210)

This example suggests that the Catholicity of the communities was limited when not directly supported by leaders staunchly in favour of union with the Holy See and the adoption of Tridentine ecclesiology. Moreover, circumstances could change very dramatically: at the death of Joseph III in 1757 only one Josephite Chaldean bishop remained. (Wilmshurst 2011, 332) Another problem for the Josephite line was securing consistent financial support as despite the efforts of Joseph III and his successor Joseph IV
(1757–1780) in extensive fund raising in Europe there was always a shortfall. It is not clear, for example, whether this was a direct result of a shortage of funding from the Holy See or the result of the further payment of taxes and bribes to the Ottoman authorities. Joseph IV, for example, was imprisoned by the Ottomans in the 1780s due to an unpaid debt of 20,000 piastres. (Frazee 1983, 212)

By the 1770s the patriarchal leadership began to stagnate and Joseph IV appears to have lacked the stamina or desire to remain in office, gradually withdrawing from public life and resigning the patriarchate in 1780. The Holy See appointed him patriarchal administrator and he spent the last five years of his life in Rome. This development suited both Joseph IV and the papacy as the latter was permitted to wind down the Josephite line as pressure increased on the legitimist patriarch to enter into union with the Holy See. Due to growing popular support among the legitimists for engaging with the Latin missionaries by the 1720s the Patriarch Elias XII (1722–1778) was persuaded of the viability of pursuing a Chaldean identity. (Frazee 1983, 210–211)

The Josephite line for all its advantages as the first Chaldean community formed under direct Latin instruction lacked numerical strength and legitimacy as the original patriarchal line still occupied the See of Mosul and the contemporary patriarchal residence of Rabban Hormizd monastery. (Wilmshurst 2011, 333) The travels and absences of patriarchs Joseph III and IV across the Middle East to Europe emphasised the very large amount of day-to-day religious work to be carried out by the lower ranking Chaldean clergy and Latin missionaries.

Joseph III’s absence in particular was to the Chaldeans’ detriment who required patriarchal leadership to counter the increasingly effective missionary efforts of the Church of the East under Elias XII. (Wilmshurst 2000, 27) Moreover, despite the Latin missionaries preferences for working with the Josephites, the legitimists at least maintained their patriarch resident in Mesopotamia. However, if we consider the Chaldean project’s success in the long term this period of international travelling helped to emphasise to the Holy See and the Propaganda the vitality and persistence
of the Chaldeans in looking to achieve success for their mission. If Joseph III and IV did not appreciate it at that time they were providing a foundation on which to build the Chaldeans' future as a presence at the heart of the universal church. The importance of supporting a literary revival, for example, should not be underestimated especially in the context of an increasingly cosmopolitan Chaldean population throughout the Middle East from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

**Why be a Chaldean?**

This section considers the continued appeal which the Chaldean identity and union with the papacy had for East Syriac community members. I note three key factors:

1. The argument from authority The Holy See, regardless of whether East Syriacs would accept its jurisdiction in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was considered to have authority derived from the apostolic era. The Roman see held a significant position in the international Christian community which was never disputed even if papal supremacy was questioned. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005, 306–309) Following contact with Latin missionaries and exposition of their beliefs regarding authority in the universal church unity through communion with the contemporary pope grew as an important distinguishing marker and one of pride for those who became Chaldeans. (Khayyath 1896a, 146–148)

   In considering general trends among the East Syriac community I suggest many would have merely followed the authority figures of their priests or heads of family. Furthermore, if liturgical practice and ecclesiastical organisation largely remained the same under Chaldean auspices there were limited objections to be raised. By way of comparison the transfer of allegiance to one or other East Syriac faction in this context a free choice outside of the

---

20 Joseph IV assisting in the publication of liturgical works such as a Syriac-Arabic Chaldean missal. (Joseph IV 1767)
European Reformation *milieu* where alterations in religious identity were enforced with some violence and were popularly opposed.\(^{21}\) Nonetheless, the opportunity for remaining part of a community which one knows rather than which may provide better resources could have been a factor in retaining membership of the Church of the East. Formal distinction between Chaldeans and the Church of the East may have been less common in general as there only latterly developed a notion of defined socio-juridical barriers between ecclesial bodies under the tutelage of Latin missionaries. (Murre-Van Den Berg 2005, 301 n. 3)

2. *The earnest desire for the Catholic Faith* To write on the Chaldeans from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth centuries is to bring to light an extended process of community and identity formation. The maintenance of a Chaldean identity explicitly differentiated from the Church of the East was at least not initially clear for many of those East Syriacs who aggregated to the Chaldeans. For those who had a Western-inspired education and thus more likely an awareness of the Holy See's ecclesiology and Christology the assent to convert to Catholicism may have been more from intellectual conviction than from spiritual, emotional or familial causes. It is evident that many were sincere in their desire to be in union with the pope with a genuine belief in the rectitude of Tridentine ecclesiology. Patriarch Joseph II of the Josephite line is one example. (Cf Teule 2004; Rassam 2010, 111–112) However, with a lack of contemporary accounts and without a window into others' souls one will unlikely ever conclusively prove if a conversion of the heart took place among Chaldean believers on a widespread scale. Such a conversion being the point of no return and the time from which a previous affiliation and identity is shed in favour or a new one. In our present era which places much emphasis on the individual, their desires and interests it is perhaps harder to comprehend the influence which the leaders of a community can have over the belief patterns of a whole

\(^{21}\) For example the various anti-Protestant risings in England such as the ``Pilgrimage of Grace'' (1536) and Western Rising (1549).
group. Indeed, as Maggiolini notes regarding the formation of Syrian Catholic groups: ‘the particularly clannish and tribal social structures were in fact favouring mass conversions sustaining the fast development of new local religious communities.’ (2012, 262) Thus, for the Chaldeans we might not support a conversion of the heart and comprehension of the new faith by the individual as the conversion process most widespread. Whereas, the most likely process was assent by East Syriac leaders to the Catholic faith as preached by Latin missionaries followed by the diffusion of such beliefs widely among the respective tribe/village associated with the leader. Such a process was top-down and was the general but not universal procedure for conversions followed by the Latin missionaries in the Middle East. (Masters 2001, 71) I suggest that the conversion of the heart was therefore restricted to a few individuals with the majority accepting the new status quo for pragmatic reasons. Nevertheless, through the diffusion of Latin missionary teaching it seems likely some would have gradually had an experience related to their personal beliefs about their faith which no longer permitted them to exist in a state of contradiction – either to go with the Latin missionaries and their associated institutions or to remain solely within the religious milieu of the Church of the East.

3. As suggested by Murre van den Berg: a growing separation between Aramaic and Arabic speaking groups within the East Syriac communities in Mesopotamia (Murre-Van Den Berg 2009, 157) Maurice Briere’s translation of a Syriac history of the monastery of Rabban Hormizd gives an example of a monk who is said to have separated from the Church of the East partly as a result of learning Arabic. The distinction in the text from his actually becoming a true Christian (from the perspective of the Chaldean author) by becoming a Catholic is clear: ‘il vécut avec des chrétiens et se mit à étudier la langue arabe; après avoir appris la lecture de l’arabe, il renonça à sa religion et devint chrétien.’ (Gë’dan 1910, 414) This separation has been maintained to the present day as in general Arabic speakers
form a larger proportion among the Chaldeans and Syriac speakers in the Church of the East. (Petrosian 2006, 127) Those eastern Catholic communities in the Middle East which had been established during the eighteenth century were specific conduits of western Christian knowledge via French, Latin and Arabic. These included the Melkite Catholic (1724), Coptic Catholic (1741) and the Syrian Catholic (1781). The spread of the use of a common language such as Arabic or Latin among the Chaldeans to engage with other churches in the Middle East and act as a medium of exchange of ideas was vital for the importation of Latin theological ideas and western cultural and social innovations from other eastern Catholic communities especially the Maronites. The resources which became available and the linguistic link to the European Catholic powers which appeared to be successfully combating the Ottoman Empire were strong influences upon those in the churches aware of wider geopolitical events. (Cf Murre-Van Den Berg 2008, 321–322) These material and intellectual benefits influenced the continued East Syriac engagement with the Holy See despite apparent opposition to accepting the the contemporary pope's authority as head of the universal church. This factor also ties in with the economic advantages which membership of the Chaldean community granted in Mosul. Khoury argues: 'The most prominent among them [Christian urban elites] embraced Catholicism as a marker of affluence' (Khoury 1997, 148) Affluence which was often closely tied to the use of Arabic as a means to expand one's mercantile activities.

**Latin presence in Mesopotamia (II) and the unification of the Chaldean communities**

From the mid-eighteenth century Latin missionary efforts to expand the Chaldean community across Mesopotamia were increasingly successful. Wilmshurst highlights the conversion of the Metropolitan of Salmas,
Shemon (1777–1789): ‘taking with him most of the Nestorians of Khosrowa and the other Christian villages in the Salmas plain [of north-eastern Mesopotamia]. Only one village, Ula, remained stubbornly Nestorian.’ (Wilmshurst 2000, 28; Wilmshurst 2011, 328) The concentration of Capuchins, Dominicans and Carmelites creating an environment in which the Chaldean project could come to fruition. (Cf Habbi 1971, 128–130)

General Latin missionary policy for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Ottoman territory appears to have been directed at improving standards of clerical education among the eastern Catholic communities and a wider appreciation of their history through the collation of existing literature. The confirmation from the Council of Trent requiring every Catholic hierarchy to maintain seminaries and support the professional development of the clergy as an élite class perhaps influencing this development in Mesopotamia and the Levant.22

With the increase in the Chaldean community's size the legitimist patriarchs engaged strongly with the Latins. Elias XII through his contacts with the Dominicans had a profession of faith approved via the auspices of Emmanuel, the Latin Archbishop of Babylon in 1771. (Labourt 1908a, 560) Meanwhile the Sulaqite line patriarch Shemon XV (1740–1780) resident in Kochannes also affirmed a Latin Christology. (Dauvillier 1942, 373) The allegiance of the Sulaqites was not retained beyond Shemon XV's death in 1780. His desire for union with the Holy See perhaps poorly supported among his community.

The next fifty years of East Syriac history focused on familial disputes within the legitimist line and Josephite reluctance to cede leadership of the Chaldeans as required by the Holy See. From the 1770s explicit Christological and ecclesiological disputes whilst used to smear opponents for political advantage seem not to have been at the heart of contentions between the Josephites and legitimists. (Baumer 2006, 248, 250) Disputes instead concentrated on the emerging claims of Yohannan Hormizd as patriarch of a united East Syriac community in union with the

22 An exemplary type of this new clerical class was the Maronite J S Assemani (b. 1687 d 1768) who greatly aided the furtherance of knowledge of the Syriac churches through his work Biblioteca Orientalis. (Assemani 1719)
Yohannan was born in Alqosh in 1760 and rose to influence as the Natar Kursya to Elias XII. Yohannan had replaced the original successor to Elias, Ishoyab, in 1776 who Yohannan asserted:

'joined himself to the holy Church [of Rome], and six times he recanted, and the oftener he left the orthodox faith the more he used to blaspheme, and that from covetousness, and a love of money which were inherent in him' (Badger 1852a, I:151)

Ishoyab also sought to gain the Holy See's support to displace his uncle and after Elias XII's death he became patriarch of the legitimist line as Elias XIII (1778–1804) establishing a line of hereditary succession in his family but gaining favour with the Latin missionaries by asserting a post-Ephesian Christology. (Wilmshurst 2000, 29; 2011, 335) However, his Latin sympathies were merely a façade for advancing his own interests and abandoned them as soon as the Ottomans granted him the civil recognition of patriarchal authority. (Bello OAOC 1939, 11)

Yohannan, meanwhile, became Metropolitan of Mosul in 1780 with the Holy See's approval following his adherence to Tridentine ecclesiological and Christological norms from 1778. Subsequently, those legitimists with sympathies for union with the Holy See supported him as a patriarchal candidate in resistance. Yohannan's efforts to undermine his cousin's patriarchal leadership saw the start of a fractious twenty year period of competition by both leaders for diocesan bishops' loyalties. (Habbi 1971, 134–135; Wilmshurst 2011, 335)

Although Yohannan affirmed an apparently strong belief in post-Ephesian Christology and Tridentine ecclesiology the Holy See declined to grant him patriarchal authority instead naming him as patriarchal administrator. (Badger 1852a, I:152) Following this apparent snub from 1783–1830 Yohannan’s position of loyalty fluctuated from a close relationship with the Holy See to a near complete withdrawal of support with some accusations that he was still ‘nestorien de coeur’.23 (Bello OAOC

23 A first hand account by Yohannan is found as an English translation from the Syriac original in Badger (1852a, I:150–160).
Divisions between the East Syriacs were complicated by the interventions of the local Ottoman authorities who patronised one or other patriarchal claimant with a view to political and financial gain. (Badger 1852a, I:156) Thus, when a Yohannan loyalist visited an area under the control of an Ottoman leader supporting Elias, imprisonment and corporal punishment followed. (Badger 1852a, I:153) Fortunately for Yohannan's ambitions Elias XIII died in 1804. However, his position was not assured and further challenges emerged from within the Chaldean community from the lay leader Gabriel Dembo and the Josephite line patriarchal claimant Augustin Hindi.

Joseph IV had died in retirement in Rome in 1796 and his nephew Augustin Hindi acted as de facto patriarch to the Amidite Chaldeans from that time until his death in 1827. Hindi was a strong threat to Hormizd's potential advancement. Bello presents East Syriac population figures for 1796 with the Josephite adherents at least twenty-five percent of the entire community with a third of the priests.24

Meanwhile, Gabriel Dembo sought to reinvigorate the East Syriac monastic tradition through occupying the monastery of Rabban Hormizd and establishing the religious order of the Chaldean Antonians of the Congregation of St Hormisdas (OAOC) similar to that founded among the Maronites in the seventeenth century. (Gë’dan 1910, 410, 415) The Antonians were a well established group from a similar linguistic environment in whose footsteps it was relatively easy to tread – Dembo having become familiar with their community in Aleppo. (Bello OAOC 1939, 41–45)

The independent work undertaken by Dembo was met with suspicion by Yohannan. Dembo was potentially a very dangerous threat to his position because he was a `new man' with organisational acumen gained from his earlier life as a merchant which, perhaps paradoxically, granted him opportunity to make a success of rejuvenating monastic life.

24 'Patriarcat de Diarbekir [Josephite]' 35 priests and 1,061 families and 'Patriarcat de Babylone' 64 priests and 2,962 families – totalling 99 priests and 4,033 families. (Bello OAOC 1939, 13)
Independent organisation, well planned and with a professional ethos, was difficult to reconcile with the nepotistic control maintained, however unofficially, within East Syriac communities.

From 1808 Dembo’s efforts focused on a pedagogical system which embraced a syllabus of Arabic, logic and liturgical studies. (Badger 1852a, I:162) This was not remarkable per se as East Syriac monasteries had been centres of higher learning during the church's missionary period (c. 400–1300). (Brock 2009, 66–70; Teule 2002, passim) What was remarkable was delivering this quality of education into the East Syriac heartland in the modern era. Despite the clerical formation offered by Latin missionaries and some Chaldean clergy travelling to the Papal States for advanced study these influences were not yet sufficiently diffused for the benefits to be spread throughout the community. Thus, Dembo offered an alternative means of advancement in education for many eager students.

Dembo was founding his congregation at the right time insofar as the local Latin missionaries were in fact limited in activity in the early nineteenth century and not necessarily available to train new clergy:

De 1800 à 1811 il n'y eut que deux PP. Dominicains en Chaldée et le dernier quitta Mossoul en 1815; il n'y revinrent qu'en 1841. À Diarbékir la mission des Capuchins fut abandonnée de 1803 à 1808; elle reprit ensuite pour deux ans, en 1828 pour quelques mois, enfin elle fut reconstituée à Mardin en 1841. Même pénurie de personnel à Bagdad que le dernier Père Carme quitta en 1825.' (Bello OAOC 1939, 25)

The possibility of influence in ecclesial affairs gaining ground outside of the traditional clerical groups was an issue of contention for Yohannan with monks chosen as bishops and thus patriarchs in the East Syriac tradition. (Bello OAOC 1939, 37) Therefore, Rabban Hormizd's re-development was also a threat to maintaining the future premier status of the leading clerical family – the monastery was a historic centre of East Syriac spiritual life and had an aura of respectability to which others looked with interest.  

25 The monastery had been established in the seventh century by the monk Hormizd an influential religious figure among the Church of the East of that time renowned among the community for holiness and also for success in opposing West Syriac expansion. (Bello OAOC 1939, 62; Budge 1902, II., part I:85–90, 117–118, 134–141)
Dembo and Yohannan as opposition figures

Dembo's community expanded rapidly: in 1808 Dembo had two others with him by 1827 there were ninety-three. (Wilmshurst 2000, 263–264) However, these efforts were not free from the injudicious methods which some East Syriac factions were prepared to utilise for political gain: accusations of corruption and misuse of position were made by Dembo's supporters against Yohannan in 1812 which saw him suspended by the Holy See as patriarchal administrator with Augustine Hindi placed in control over both Chaldean patriarchal lines. (Bello OAOC 1939, 17–18) Yet in 1816 the Latin Vicar Apostolic for Mesopotamia wrote to the Propaganda supporting Yohannan which eventually resulted in a formal reconciliation between he and Pope Leo XII (1823–1829) in 1826. (Habbi 1971, 140) Despite the conflict between Dembo and Yohannan the reinvigoration of monastic life at Rabban Hormzid was of long term benefit to the Chaldean community throughout the rest of the nineteenth century with the level of education among the monks of a high standard and saw them raised up as future church leaders such as patriarch Joseph VI Audo (1847–1878).

In an attempt to consolidate his position Augustine Hindi consecrated five new bishops, receiving the pallium in 1818, however, recognition from the Holy See as patriarch did not come. (Habbi 1971, 138) It has been suggested the pallium was instead given as a reward for his administrative efforts during the discord among the Chaldean communities. (Wilmshurst 2011, 333) Nevertheless, Hindi considered it as confirmation of his status as patriarch and from then until his death considered himself Patriarch Joseph V.

Three of Joseph V's newly consecrated bishops attempted the creation of a new clerical group in opposition to Yohannan and it would seem also against Joseph V a situation which continued from 1822–1827 and ended with the Holy See's intervention following the death of Joseph V in 1827. (Badger 1852a, I:163) This the opportunity the Latin missionaries
had sought and as Wilmshurst argues about Yohannan: `despite his many faults, [he] was a good Catholic, or at least could be presented as one' (Wilmshurst 2011, 338) Thus, the apparent patriarchal authority which the see at Amid had been granted was definitively withdrawn and by 1830 and through the intervention of the vicar apostolic in Mesopotamia Yohannan was granted the title of Chaldean patriarch. Yohannan VIII must have had extraordinary ambition to maintain his efforts over the half century which it took him to gain patriarchal office given he was seventy-four at the time of his acknowledgement by the Holy See. (Wilmshurst 2011, 339) It therefore seems likely that his agitation was derived at least in part from a vocational calling and a hope for union with the Holy See and not just a desire for power and advancement within the East Syriac community. Having been named Natar Kursya at the age of sixteen this event surely made a lasting impression on his early psychological and religious formation and as to why he regarded his pursuit of the patriarchate as lawful.

2. Political change in Mesopotamia and the origins of the modern Chaldean Church (1830–1918)

Following the final Ottoman conquest of Mesopotamia in 1704 and until 1831 with the assertion of direct Ottoman rule the Mesopotamian provinces were administered by a series of pseudo-independent Georgian mamluks.26 By 1749 the Georgians had so consolidated their power that the sultan was obliged to accept their effective autonomy. There was little to which the Porte could be opposed as the Mamluks could be relied upon to secure the region against threats from Persia or the Russian Empire. Such was the strength of their leader, Daud Pasha (1816–31), that he refused Sultan Mahmud II’s (1808–1839) request to leave his post when requested in 1830. Direct Ottoman military intervention followed in an attempt to prevent complete political autonomy for Mesopotamia as Mohammed Ali had

26 Mamluks were freed slaves trained originally as a military force by Muslim rulers in the Middle East. The most famous dynasty of which ruled Egypt and Syria during the mid-thirteenth to early sixteenth centuries.
The 1830s was a difficult decade for northern Mesopotamia. A plague of 1831 had severely affected the economy and the Kurds viewed the disruption caused by the changing patterns of rule in Mesopotamia proper as an opportunity to assert their independence via a series of revolts which negatively impacted the surrounding populations including the East Syriac communities. Alqosh was attacked, for example, and severely damaged in 1832. (Bazzi 2008, 11)

This period of political difficulty seguing with the modern Chaldean community's emergence did not see Yohannan VIII usefully employed in consolidating his flock. Nevertheless, Tfinkdji does write highly of him: 'La conversion de Jean VIII Hormez inaugurait une nouvelle phase de prospérité et de bonheur pour l'Eglise chaldeénne' (Tfinkdji 1913, 15) Whereas, Yohannan VIII sought to maintain the practice of hereditary succession and to place his chosen candidate as the next patriarch and continue his feud with Gabriel Dembo. A feud which ended after Dembo's death during a Kurdish raid of 1832. (Wilmshurst 2011, 383; Gë’dan 1910, 410; 1911, 355) However, Bishop Joseph Audo, the future patriarch, Joseph VI, intrigued with Rabban Hormizd's monks to gain their tithes which perhaps should have been paid directly to the patriarch rather than Audo as the local bishop. The ensuing row was brought to the Holy See's attention which sent the apostolic vicar of Aleppo to consider the matter directly. Eventually, the vicar found in favour of Yohannan VIII but by this time, 1835, he was increasingly frail and resided in Baghdad until his death in 1838. (Wilmshurst 2011, 383–385)

Ecclesiological discourse and developments

Any formal relationship between East Syriacs and Latins was complicated by discussions over the juridical authority of the Petrine See and as to what was the East Syriac Christological paradigm and if it was, in fact, an expression of extreme dyophysitism akin to what was perceived to be the heresy of Nestorianism.
If we accept, following Wilmshurst, that the latest and most authoritative Christological statements of the Church of the East come from Abdisho, Metropolitan of Nisibis, in his work *The Pearl* of 1298 we may assume that this remained their standard Christological outline to the nineteenth century and the gradual revivification of their scholarly undertakings via Latin, Anglican, protestant and Russian missionary influence.\(^\text{27}\)

Abdisho's work confirmed the 'formula of [Theodore of Mopsuestia] two natures in two hypostases and one person'. (Wilmshurst 2011, 273–275, 281) It is not clear, however, if the level of knowledge among the community extended far enough to debate on theological disputes apart from the rudiments of their faith. Indeed, as Wilmshurst outlines throughout his work *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East 1318–1913* (2000) at least from the sixteenth century and until the nineteenth scholarly output focused on copying manuscripts and not original works. The protestant missionary Asahel Grant observed in the 1830s that in the Sulaqite community only the patriarch had a complete text of the Bible and this split into several volumes and loaned out to the clergy. (Grant 1841, 65)

From the Latin perspective it is not clear as to whether missionaries acknowledged the variation of depth in theological education prevalent among the East Syriacs or worked from the assumption that all expressed Nestorian Christology – as they perceived it – and based their proselytising efforts from this premise. I suggest that owing to a lack of ecclesial distinctiveness it was at least until the unification of the claims to the leadership of the Chaldean Church in 1830 a relatively informal procedure to move between the East Syriac communities.

It appears that for those converts of who had received a more advanced education there was, for example, acknowledgement of the doctrine preached by the Latins of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. (Smith and Dwight 1833, II:252) However, where a rudimentary level of education was relatively widespread then to approach someone to discourse on papal primacy, ecclesial jurisdiction or Christological nuances would have had

\(^\text{27}\) Badger provides an English translation: (1852b, II:380–422)
little impact. Although the increasingly distinctive liturgical and para-
liturgical practices which the Latin missionaries introduced whether through
praying the Holy Rosary or the celebration of feasts such as Corpus Christi
or the devotion to the Five Sacred Wounds of Christ would have contrasted
the differences between the communities. (Gë’dan 1910, 422)

It appears that until an ecclesial distinctiveness became readily
apparent the Holy See adopted a cautious approach to conclusively
supporting the Chaldean community as indicated by the reluctance to grant
titles to Augustine Hindi and the intention to gain the legitimist patriarchal
line's allegiance. (Cf Labourt 1908b, 230)

From the late 1830s confidence appears to have risen among the
Latins that the Chaldean project was on the right path with the Chaldean
episcopate increasingly free of the parochial culture which appeared to exist
among the community. The Latin confidence was summarised by the
Protestant missionary Asahel Grant:

"The Papists in Mesopotamia have assured me that no effort will be spared to convert
the whole of the Nestorian Church to their faith; and this report is confirmed by letters
since received from Bagdad, one of which says that three bishops and priests, educated
at the Propaganda, were "about going to Mosul to hold a convention to devise
measures to bring over all the Nestorians to the Romish faith!" [sic] ' (Grant 1841,
47–48)

These attempts to gain the adherence of the entire East Syriac population
were complicated by the Latins' desire to do so in a manner which assumed
the existing limits of East Syriac dioceses. A potentially complicated
procedure involving competition with the de jure claims from the Sulaqite
patriarch with one diocese potentially professing loyalty to him and another
to the Holy See. This was never settled and in practice determined on a
village by village basis instead. (Badger 1852a, I:172–173)

Nicholas I Zaya

Nicholas I Zaya (1838–1847) was appointed to succeed Yohannan VIII
directly by the Holy See. This intervention did not endear either him or the papacy in the person of Gregory XVI to the hierarchy of the Chaldeans who regarded this as a grave imposition. (Wilmshurst 2000, 33; Badger 1852b, II:165) Moreover, as Nicholas was a Persian subject there may have been some grumblings as to his suitability to lead what was becoming an increasingly Mesopotamian focused Chaldean community. The monks of Rabban Hormizd under the tutelage of the emerging leadership of Joseph Audo were also antagonistic to Nicholas and he had to work extensively to gain their approval. (Wilmshurst 2000, 33; Cf Badger 1852a, I:168–169)

Nicholas' difficulties were compounded in 1843 following his suggestion to introduce the Gregorian calendar but the level of opposition became so strong that the plans were withdrawn. (Badger 1852a, I:170)

A success arrived in 1845 as Nicholas gained the support of the monks at Rabban Hormizd and together they attempted to improve their financial arrangements by restoring some agricultural properties in and around Alqosh to their ownership. (Badger 1852a, I:171) However, this was opposed by disaffected parties who sought Nicholas’ overthrow via accusations of corruption to the Holy See. (Wilmshurst 2000, 34; Badger 1852a, I:170–172) The Holy See not in a position to have access to a full account of events supported the accusers and sought to investigate Nicholas who instead resigned from the patriarchate in 1847 and died in 1855.

Changes among the Ottomans

From October 1844 the Chaldean-Ottoman relationship altered on an administrative level. The Chaldeans were brought within the structure of the millet system under the aegis of the Armenian Catholic millet with their patriarch working on the Chaldeans' behalf at the Porte. (Gaunt 2006, 13; Maggiolini 2012, 271) Legitimising the Chaldean position came in the context of Ottoman social and legal reform introduced by Sultan Abdulmecid I (1839–1861) referred to as the Tanzimat. The changes were implemented to bring the Empire in line with contemporary military, social, economic and political trends prevalent among the European powers whose
dominance in the Mediterranean was increasing at a rate the Ottomans were nearly unable to match. The most significant trend came in the standardisation in bureaucracy and administrative structures over and above arbitrary use of power in patronage networks. (Ceylan 2010, 69–71)

The greatest benefits to the Empire's Christians came in the pronouncement of the Hatti Serif (1839) and Hatti Humayun (1856) which gave explicit equality in law to all Christian communities with the latter effectively ending the use of sharia and the millet system. However, legal equality brought with it the Muslim populations' ire. The change in social status for Christians threatened Muslim led judicial and statutory paradigms from which most existing Ottoman laws derived. (Movsesian 2010, 2) The reforms saw, amongst other aspects, the prohibition of the slave trade, universal conscription including of non-Muslims, the introduction of a post office system and the establishment of secular law courts. All of which required significant financial backing to follow through, complete and maintain against the recalcitrance of the established power groups. The reforms altered the strength of the ulema and Janissaries who dominated the legal and coercive structures in Ottoman society and led to their disaffection regarding the Empire's overall direction: whether as less determined by a particular religious paradigm and essentially westernised or Islamicised and maintaining the traditional order. The latter which would return Christians to their position of diminution.

The reforms' implementation slowed due to the internal opposition and with the effects of the 1873 international Great Panic financial crisis the Ottomans were unable to sustain the Tanzimat due to insufficient tax revenue. From 1878 Sultan Abd al-Hamed II (1876–1909) re-consolidated the sultanate's powers and re-instituted an explicitly Sunni cultural and social paradigm throughout the Empire.

From the 1870s the Chaldeans were increasingly dependent on how the Ottomans conceived Christian status within the Empire in general. The changing social circumstances moving towards and away from greater social mobility saw Christians throughout the Middle East expedite their efforts to self-improvement in recognition that education, vocational
training and commercial development were vital to ensure they could retain a position of something approaching the higher social status of the Muslim population.

Concurrent with Mesopotamian Christian advancement was the consolidation of the Mesopotamian Shia population which had undergone a revival from the late 1700s following widespread conversions among the southern tribes. (Ceylan 2010, 35; Nakash 2003, 28–29) Such a situation did not necessarily imply a volatile or sectarian situation but as religious affiliation defined community paradigms it also led to reconsideration of the social order and as to who ought to control political affairs. The question of political control was brought to the fore with the Young Turks' accession to power in Constantinople from 1908. Mesopotamia's ethnic and religious plurality did not concur with the views of the Young Turks who fomented a zeal for a supposed Turkish ideal of ethnicity and culture and as the supreme race in opposition to any other within the Empire. Christian engagement with western political ideals through their education or mercantile activities saw them increasingly involved in Arab nationalist groups and in opposition to these Turkish efforts with the foundations of modern Arab nationalist thought constructed by a significant proportion of Christian intelligentsia. This related to opposing the political dominance of Sunni Islam but also through a genuine belief in nationalism's vitality as an ideal to overcome the boundaries of religious communities and Turkish domination of the Arab Middle East.

**Eastern Catholic consolidation, the Chaldeans and the First Vatican Council**

The Chaldean Church's strength from the 1850s onward relied on the ecclesiology which Nicholas I's successor, Joseph VI Audo, developed. Audo asserted a vision of effective church governance through strengthening the apostolic zeal and level of religious education among the Chaldean clergy and laity. (Cf Wilmshurst 2011, 386) Audo was convinced
of a close Chaldean relationship with the Holy See and Christologically distinct from the Church of the East but this did not prevent his desiring ecclesial autonomy and attempting to justify this whenever possible. Valognes appraises Audo’s position thus: `Une personnalité incontestée, sincèrement attachée au catholicisme, mais qui ne fait pas mystère de sa fidélité à la tradition orientale’ (Valognes 1994, 434)

Audo's pursuit of autonomy was brought into focus when in apparent contravention of papal authority he consecrated bishops for the East Syriac congregations in India in 1860 and later also in 1874 and 1875. (Pius IX 1872, passim) Those East Syriac rite Indian Catholic communities came to be known as the Syro-Malabarese which reflected their religious, linguistic and geographic origins.

The Indian East Syriacs had a consistently challenging relationship with Latin missionaries who entered the sub-continent from the sixteenth century under the auspices of the Portuguese Empire. Traditionally the Indians had been under the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon's jurisdiction and reliant upon him for episcopal consecrations. Following the Chaldean community's foundation the Indians looked to Yohannan Sulaqa and his successors for episcopal replacements. The Holy See opposed this arrangement primarily due to the papacy having reserved the right to choose bishops for India since the sixteenth century and, secondly, due to the increasing strength of the Portuguese Padroado28 in India and the assertion of Latin jurisdiction over all the Christians of the region regardless of pre-existing ecclesiastical organisation. (Habbi 1980, 86) The situation was further complicated by the Indians asserting a more independent character than their continuing relationship with the Mesopotamian based East Syriacs would suggest with a strong desire expressed to retain Malabarese cultural distinctiveness. (See, for example, Podipara 1970; Cf Habbi 1980, 84)

By the eighteenth century and despite the long term Portuguese

28 The Padroado was an arrangement formed between the Portuguese Empire and the Holy See. It granted the Empire de facto control over Latin religious communities within its territories. Numerous conflicts of interest arose but it had the advantage, from the perspective of the Holy See, of ensuring the consolidation of Catholicism among one of the largest and most influential Empires of its time. (Cf Teles e Cunha 2011, 53–54)
imperial presence and Latin jurisdiction the significance of receiving bishops from Mesopotamia was not lost on the Malabarese and despite the last Mesopotamian appointed bishop dying at the end of the sixteenth century communal memory remained strong of traditional practices and supportive of their continued implementation. The Malabarese sought the Chaldean hierarchy's assistance in 1796 with a delegation visiting Mosul but the responsibility of the Chaldeans for the provision of clergy – as opposed to their appointment by the Holy See – was not conclusively resolved at that juncture most likely due to the contemporary factionalism prevalent among the Chaldeans. (Habbi 1971, 131–132) Joseph VI when called upon from 1860, however, considered episcopal consecrations for India were within his remit. The Holy See opposed this regarding it as an attempt to impugn the powers of the Indian based and Latin influenced hierarchy.

The right to consecrate bishops may at first appear a somewhat insignificant issue both in relation to Joseph VI and to the status of the Malabarese East Syriac Christians. However, the situation is indicative of the following:

- The contemporary significance of traditional procedures for appointing bishops and relevance to day-to-day ecclesiastical administration.
- Another aspect of the legacy which the Chaldeans assumed from the Church of the East.
- The role of Latin missionaries in defining eastern Catholic ecclesiology as opposed to the desire of eastern Catholics to retain existing customs.
- The identity of the East Syriac tradition could not be confined to the culture and customs of Mesopotamia alone but retained an international aspect.

The Holy See's concern for the situation in India related to the extent to which an eastern Catholic patriarch could unilaterally provide episcopal consecrations for a group operating within an environment dominated by the
Latin clergy. I suggest as the Chaldean situation developed vicariously from the 1550s the implications of the Holy See's rôle in Malabarese and Mesopotamian affairs was likely little considered. Furthermore, in asserting his jurisdiction over the Indian territories Audo perhaps did not realise the extent to which the Holy See considered the appointment of bishops as its own prerogative.

In view of attempting some standardisation of practices among eastern Catholics Pope Pius IX (1846–1878) had implemented changes in ecclesiastical administration. The Chaldeans were affected by the implementation of the ecclesiastical constitution 'Reversurus' through the bull of 1869 'Cum ecclesiastical disciplina'. The latter permitted the Holy See to confirm who was and who was not to be appointed as bishop in every diocese and confirmed to the Chaldeans their position as a community directly reliant on the Holy See in these matters. (Baumer 2006, 252)

In the 1830s with the unified Chaldean community's establishment it is not clear whether this was an issue of discussion and due to satisfaction with the co-operation of the Chaldeans the issue was overlooked. Alternatively it may have been discussed and accepted at the time with less thought given to its future implications.

Audo's relationship with the Holy See came to a head at the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) regarding the extent of papal authority over all other bishops and as to the influence which the dogma of papal infallibility might have over local traditional practices. (Bury 1930, 100) Audo considered it impossible for patriarchal rights to be withdrawn by the Holy See and further argued that the position of the eastern Catholics was in such disarray that any Latin intervention to alter this could cause further difficulties in gaining eastern Christians' allegiance. (Frazee 1983, 235)

On the question of papal infallibility Audo chose not to vote at the Council and instead temporarily departed. (Frazee 1983, 235–236) Pius IX was reportedly extremely angered by this, however, as Audo was of an advanced age – by this time in his eighth decade – we may suppose that Pius was slightly more well disposed to his attitudes than if opposed by a younger and potentially longer living rival. Nevertheless, Audo's reluctance
to conform to the padraodo's conditions and preference for dealing with the situation himself along with his concerns over the status of eastern Catholic rites and the nature of papal infallibility resulted in the publication of the 1872 papal encyclical 'Quae in Patriarchatu' directed at him and the Chaldeans.

The encyclical gave an outline of historical relations between the Holy See and Chaldeans and emphasised the most important factors for Pius IX as to 'what remain[ed] to be done to drive away those dangers threatening Catholic faith and unity'. (Pius IX 1872, para. 1) The pope, in this instance, concerned that despite finally achieving unity among the Chaldeans the patriarch still did not meet with the expected eastern Catholic ecclesiological position. Indeed, the core issues of contention were hereditary succession referred to as 'the disgrace' and the widespread nature of Nestorianism perceived by the Holy See as still present among East Syriac communities and which could influence the Chaldean faithful. (Pius IX 1872, para. 2) Pius IX's aim was to assert that he as pope was the final arbiter in Chaldean ecclesial life and eventually Audo was reconciled with papal policy. (Wilmshurst 2011, 387–388 ff; Pius IX 1872, para. 11) Pius' actions whilst perhaps appearing overly authoritarian especially concerning whether Audo could lawfully appoint his own candidates for bishops were meant to ensure the lasting stability and security of the community which had been so fragile until the early nineteenth century.

Despite Audo's eventual submission to the Holy See in all matters the relationship with the papacy was never essentially resolved until the emergence of the independent Syro-Malabarese hierarchy from 1887. (Pius IX 1872, para. 4–6; Wilmshurst 2011, 388–389) Audo whilst a very able leader was never of one mind with Pius IX. Indeed, shortly before his death Audo was nearly excommunicated, yet, his activities were carried out with a concern for those who came to him seeking assistance and to maintain eastern Catholic rites and customs after the Vatican Council.

Audo's final statement on the matter came at the end of his life:

`Je veux mourir obéissant fils de la Sainte Eglise catholique, soumis au Saint-Siege. Ce
que j'ai fait contre le n'a pas été par Siège St. esprit de rébellion, mais que j'ai cru c'était pour le bien de la nation. J'ai été condamné, je me demande pardon j'en soumets.' (Martina SJ 1990, 107)

Consolidation prior to the First World War

The missionary zeal which Audo had affirmed was supported by his successor Elias XII Peter Abulyonan (1879–1894) who sought the adherence of the Sulaqite East Syriac communities in competition with Anglican and Protestant missions. (Wilmshurst 2011, 391) The Sulaqites it appears were well aware of the variety and nature of the missionaries with Shemon XVIII Rubil (1861–1903) affirming it would be far better to become a member of the Chaldean community than any other Christian group. (Coakley 1992, 172)

Abulyonan after the colourful lives of Joseph VI Audo and several of his predecessors can comparatively be regarded as a more conservative patriarch. He is notable for having been one of the youngest Chaldean patriarchs at the time of his election in 1879 – at most in his late thirties having been born c. 1840. Indicative that he was a talented man especially considering he had only been consecrated a bishop in 1874. I suggest he was selected at the recommendation of the Apostolic delegate for Mesopotamia, Eugène-Louis-Marie Lion (1874–1883), who likely sought a complete break with the influence of a traditionalist East Syriac milieu as exemplified by figures such as Audo.

After his premature death from typhoid fever Abulyonan was succeeded by Georges Ebedjesu V Khayyath. Despite leading the Chaldeans for only five years he made several contributions along with his clergy to an increase in studies of Chaldean history and literary culture. (Tisserant 1931, 247) Khayyath had previously written a defence of papal primacy whilst still archbishop of Amadiya a work which we may suppose was largely formulated as a result of his studies at the Propaganda. (Oussani 1901, 84–85; Khayyath 1870; Tisserant 1931, col. 247) For the Holy See there could
have been little more satisfaction than that found in the rise of an erudite leader supportive of a central pillar of Tridentine ecclesiology. This in the context of having had to contend with Chaldean leaders who were opposed to such ideals and Khayyath's short but significant rule marked the consolidation of a new era of co-operation with the Holy See.

Khayyath's rule was also marked by the start of widespread massacres of the Christian communities in and around eastern Asia Minor and northern Mesopotamia from 1894. These massacres were presaged by a minor Armenian revolt against the levying of a double rate of tax on their community. This was repressed by Kurdish militia and affected nearly the whole of the Armenian community in eastern Asia Minor and northern Mesopotamia. The East Syriacs may not have been affected directly but the situation laid the foundations of an atmosphere of insecurity surrounding non-Muslims' status in the Ottoman socio-political order.

Chaldean missions to the Church of the East

In the early twentieth century the Chaldean hierarchy's support for their communities and continued missionary efforts were extensive. Ratel provides an example of a significant body of converts to the Chaldean community in 1903 resulting from missionary activities begun in late 1899. The group consisted of:

'Mgr Ichoïale, évêque de Douré, du mélik Nemroud, neveu de Mar-Schémoun, de l'archidiacre Joseph et de quatre autres, tous de la famille patriarchale; et, en outre, de quatre prêtres et de trente cheïks, représentants des principales tribus nestoriennes.'
(Ratel 1904, 290)

Indicating that as success builds on success so the Chaldeans were in a position to increase their numbers from influential members of the East Syriac population.

As Chaldean identity strengthened from the nineteenth century we
can note that to return to the Church of the East if one had become Chaldean was considered a grievous incident. One monk of the monastery of Rabban Hormizd who did so is referred to as: ‘Henânisô est mort au milieu des païens après être devenu nestorien’ (Gë’dan 1910, 420) An indication of the level of reaction against those who returned to what was perceived as error and that such devotion to the Chaldean cause was likely popularly held and outwardly demonstrated by the use of easily identifiable Catholic customs such as devotion to the Holy Rosary to which was ascribed miraculous deliverance in times of danger. (Gë’dan 1910, 421)

A study of the Chaldeans highlighting the extent of conversions was providentially undertaken in 1913 by Fr Joseph Tfinkdji and built on the previous work of Khayyath. (Tfinkdji 1913; Khayyath 1896b) An awareness of Chaldean identity was present in Tfinkdji’s mind and he speaks highly of those in leadership positions in the Chaldean community in expressing links with the Holy See. Quite apart from the remarkably comprehensive documentary project which he produced what is particularly notable is his choice of words for the book’s title: L’Eglise Chaldéenne. The purposeful use of the term *Church* to describe the Chaldeans indicates there was some concept of the semi-autonomous nature of the community set apart from the Catholic Church even if not formally acknowledged as such by the Holy See and as would later be officially adopted at the Second Vatican Council.

As of 1913 the Chaldean community consisted of twelve dioceses in Mesopotamia as well as thirteen patriarchal vicariates serving outlying Chaldean communities without regular access to the sacraments. (Tfinkdji 1913, 34–37) The estimates of total population around that time vary but in considering the figures collected on the Chaldeans we should note from Ceylan that the Christian populations were often the most under accounted for in Ottoman census records. (Ceylan 2010, 36) Such a state of affairs not necessarily shared among the Latin and Chaldean clergy who it seems documented their communities in some detail and an overall picture does begin to emerge.

Oussani affirms the Chaldean population as 100,000 strong as of 1901 but later increased this estimate to 150,000. (Oussani 1901, 81; Oussani 1921, xxiv–xxv) Whereas, Paulin Martin in 1867 and Khayyath and Chabot
in 1896 put the figures nearer to 70,000–80,000. (Wilmshurst 2011, 400; Khayyath 1896b, 453; Martin 1867, 205–210) With the discrepancy in the figures it seems likely the aforementioned difficulties of accessing reliable information did have an effect.

The largest areas of Chaldean population were in Mosul and Salmas, with the vast majority based in and around Mosul with approximately 30,000 Chaldeans. (Khayyath 1896b, 436; Wilmshurst 2000, 199) The future of the Chaldean community appeared before the First World War to be assured especially as of 199 "Chaldean" villages approximately 180 had their own priest according to data collated by Wilmshurst: the Church of the East had one priest for every 400 laity, the Chaldeans approximately one priest for every 300 laity. (Wilmshurst 2011, 401)

**Massacre without remorse: 1915–1918**

Ottoman entry to the First World War was a turning point in Chaldean history during which the community experienced a period of extreme persecution under the cover of the conflict and were forced to adjust their ecclesiology to take account of the destruction of dioceses whilst also attempting to forge for the first time a position as the dominant Christian community in Mesopotamia-Iraq. The massacres qualitatively and quantitatively altered the Chaldean status quo yet their experience of the massacres has only of late begun to be assessed.

Infrequent but brutal attacks against the East Syriacs took place increasingly from the mid-nineteenth century. These events could have been ascribed to inter-communal rivalries resolved through extreme methods of coercion especially as they derived much of their intensity from living in close proximity to the Kurds. In contrast the massacres during and after the First World War were characterised by anti-Christian rhetoric expressing the need to remove their presence and as a threat to Ottoman Imperial security. This basis for attacks also receiving justification from fears of their potential rôle as fifth columnists supporting the Entente powers.
Prior to 1915 the status of the Christian population and their status in the eyes of the Muslim residents of Mesopotamia varied. In areas such as Basra or Kirkuk seemingly amicable relations were built around shared mercantile interests. Contrasting this was the reception received from their Muslim neighbours in Mosul or Amid which were often far more hostile. The British Vice-Consul, Wilkie Young, writing on the Mosul environs in 1909 stated:

'The attitude of the Moslems towards the Christians and Jews, to whom...they are in a majority of ten to one, is that of a master towards slaves whom he treats with a certain lordly tolerance so long as they keep their place. Any sign of pretension to equality is promptly repressed. It is often noticed in the street that almost any Christian submissively makes way even for a Moslem child.' (Wilkie Young 1971, 232)

Young was writing in reference to an area outside of the direct reach of the subsequent massacres yet the treatment even there was extremely harsh and memories among the local population were still strong regarding the persecutions of the nineteenth century. (G. Bell 1909)

The Chaldeans' treatment by the Kurdish and Arab populations were complicated by the commitment among the modernising Young Turk movement towards an exclusive ethnic vision for the Ottoman Empire. Originally the movement had favoured a pan-ethnic notion of Turkish identity. Following a 1913 coup in Constantinople the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) which became the strongest political faction in the Empire altered the position to focusing on Turkification of the entire population and the reduction of the social status of Ottoman subjects of non-Turkish ethnicity. The influence of minorities was to be dispersed through ethnic cleansing. (Gaunt 2006, 40–41) These policies served only to increase more fractious relations between the Kurds and the Christians as both were on the edges of the new political vision.

**First World War and start of massacres**
A *jihad* was declared in conjunction with the Ottoman declaration of war against the Entente. The purpose of the former was to advance the cause of the latter and also based on the pragmatic need to garner support from those subjects of the Sultan increasingly disillusioned by the apparent modernisation and secularisation of the Empire under the direction of the CUP and the potential support of the substantial Muslim populations under British Imperial governance. (Cf Allawi 2014, 48) In northern Mesopotamia the *jihad* gave impetus to the ethnic cleansing of the Christian population and the realisation of Kurdish efforts to expand their autonomy. The creation of an independent Kurdistan, without any alien members, was something which became more realistic the longer the war proceeded due to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. Violence did not begin *en masse* with the declaration of *jihad* in November 1914 but from this time onwards and until to the conclusion of the wars in the region in 1923 consistent intense attempts were made by the Turks and the Kurds to destroy or deport the Christian populations in northern Mesopotamia and eastern Asia Minor. (Baumer 2006, 261)

**East Syriac-Russian relations**

A prelude to the attacks included the increasingly cordial relations between the Church of the East and the Russian Empire and Church. The willingness of the leaders of the Church of the East to engage with the Russians was not unsurprising given the gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire at the expense of Russia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century following Russian victories in the wars of 1877–1878. Contacts with the Russian church and state had been established officially at patriarchal level since a letter of Shemon XVIII Rubil was sent to Tsar Alexander II in 1868 seeking succour if possible. (Joseph 1961, 99) Nothing was formally achieved other than the establishment of a precedent for seeking Russian material and spiritual assistance. The apparent conversion of about 20,000 members of the Church of the East to the Russian church in 1898 after the creation of their mission in Urmia the previous year was the first demonstration of
political and religious loyalty to the Russian Empire and its occupation of the surrounding area in 1909 appeared to create a secure region for the Church of the East. (Baumer 2006, 259–260) However, in the long term this level of co-operation with the Russians gave credence to the Turkish and Kurdish fear of Armenian and other Christian communities seceding entirely from the Ottoman Empire and as a direct threat to the success of the war effort.

We may sympathise with the leaders of the Church of the East at this time if they desired to militarily support their only ally but Russian imperial intentions towards the East Syriacs were never defined. Notwithstanding the apparent conversion of patriarch Shemon XIX Benjamin (1903–1918) and a significant number of the community in 1914 the number of converts to the Russian church was immaterial to the Russian military as to whether they would or would not defend the East Syriacs in the context of war with the Ottomans. The Urmia region immediately bordering Mesopotamia was of relatively low strategic importance to the Russians in contrast with the rest of the Caucasus. (Baumer 2006, 261)

**Start of the Massacres**

Massacres against the East Syriacs began in January 1915 but were effected more strongly following a formal declaration of war by the Church of the East against the Ottoman Empire. (Baumer 2006, 262) The declaration came as a result of overconfidence on the part of the leadership of the Church of the East who concluded that they could expect Russian military support in the near future.

The massacres proceeded from west to east as the Turks gained ground against the Russians during 1915. Even those Christians who were able to escape from the immediate areas of attack fared no better in the mountains into which they were hunted by the Kurds. (Baumer 2006, 261) It must be emphasised the uniform nature of the attacks of the Turks and the Kurds against the Christian populations in eastern Asia Minor. There was no
respite and no alternative but to flee, starve to death, be killed outright or be enslaved. (Bazzi 2008, 12)

Following the withdrawal of Russian protection in 1915 the opportunity to enter Russian territory was taken by many thousands but resulted in the deaths of up 15,000 East Syriac Christians during extremely arduous winter conditions. (Baumer 2006, 261, 261 n. 46) Perhaps the two most badly affected Chaldean groups were in Amid and Seert. In these areas every Chaldean village was destroyed and the Archbishop of Seert, Addai Scher, was beheaded in June 1915. He was a noted scholar and his loss was a great blow to the Chaldeans. (Scher 1910; Brock and Kiraz 2011) The extent of destruction for other dioceses was no less significant and Mardin, Gazarta, 29 Van, Salmas and Urmia 30 were essentially destroyed as ecclesial entities before the end of the massacres. (Wilmshurst 2011, 423; 2000, 83)

Ottoman leaders in permitting the massacres and forced displacements appear to have regarded these actions as a strategic necessity to remove those actively or sympathetically opposed to Turkish hegemony. This was a conventional strategy by the standards of late nineteenth and early twentieth century warfare which viewed forced displacements from areas of operations as a normative procedure – the Russians also conducting a similar process in the Caucasus. However, the Turkish efforts to remove sections of the Christian populations eventually consisted of death squads targeting whole Christian communities and not relocations. (Gaunt 2006, 65) Also as Gaunt highlights, for example, in Amid 1,600 people were offered life were they to convert to Islam indicating there was in this especially badly affected area a specific anti-Christian motive. (Gaunt 2006, 162) Wilmshurst outlines another example from the village of Dilman:

'[this] predominantly Chaldean community...about 800 strong, was massacred when the town fell to the Turks. Some of the Chaldeans were offered their lives if they converted to Islam, and were killed when they refused. Eyewitnesses noted that

29 Phillipe-Jacques Abraham OAOC, Bishop of Gazarta was martyred in August 1915.
30 Of which only Salmas and Urmia were to return to a state of normal ecclesial functioning later in the twentieth century. Amid remains a titular diocese with jurisdiction of all Chaldeans now resident in the borders of the Republic of Turkey.
Muslim villagers joined in the looting, and that while most of the killing was done by
the Kurdish irregulars, regular Turkish officers made no effort to stop them’
(Wilmshurst 2011, 416)

The Holy See was not inactive in attempts to provide some succour to
Ottoman Christians. Pope Benedict XV attempted to influence Sultan
Mehmed V (1909–1918) during 1915. The response and policy of Mehmed
and his government was to continue to favour collective punishment due to
the apparent difficulty of distinguishing between supposed Armenian rebels
and those either ambivalent to the agenda of each side or those actively
involved in fighting the Sultan's enemies. (Cf Gaunt 2006, 151)

Attempts to defend the East Syriac population via military means
were focused around the Syriac leader Agha Petros who had been granted
Russian support in Urmia. It appears Petros was well acquainted with the
different powers in the region having been educated at a European school
and later working for the Ottomans as a civil servant. However, he was a
controversial figure accused of permitting violent excesses by the soldiers
under his command and despite his military successes was unpopular among
East Syriacs as he desired to lead their community instead of the patriarch.
(Wilmshurst 2011, 420–421) Efforts to defend the East Syriacs were largely
welcomed but Petros’ activities further incited the Ottomans and gave
expression to their fears of the Church of the East operating as an
independent power within the region with members of the East Syriac
communities considered to be politically motivated rebels. (Gaunt 2006,
123, 128)

From 1917 the Russian Empire was increasingly internally divided
and the Ottomans succumbing to British military victories in the Arabian
peninsula and Mesopotamia. It was unclear for the Christians whether they
could hope for direct support the Entente. The Church of the East was
forced into a partnership of convenience in March 1917 with the Kurds of
Agha Simko. This partnership was encouraged by the Russians in the region
who sought any means to secure their position from the still active Turkish
forces. Once the Russian Empire had fallen in the winter of 1917 the
provincial areas of the Empire were left to attend as best they could to their own security. In this case the Kurds saw an opportunity to remove their East Syriac enemies and murdered Patriarch Shemon XIX in March 1918.

Impact on the Chaldeans

This period for the Chaldean Church and communities was perhaps the most trying encountered in their history. The Chaldean situation was particularly tragic as they had avoided political agitation prior to the war. The distinctive nature of each Syriac community was not clear to outside observers and the assumption of a collective guilt of all Christians regardless of involvement in any anti-Ottoman activity was transferred into the actions undertaken by the Ottoman and Kurdish forces.

If we accept that attacks by Turks and Kurds against Syriacs (Chaldeans, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic and Church of the East) and Armenians led to either death or emigration for fifty to sixty percent of these populations overall one might have assumed as a contemporary observer that the churches would have had little if any ability to recover with Oussani and Naayem suggesting a total Syriac Christian population pre-1914 of up to 700,000 and affirm up to 250,000 killed. (Baumer 2006, 252; Oussani 1921, xxiv–xxv; Naayem 1921, xxx) Fortunately for the Chaldeans some of their population were quite far removed from the immediate areas of massacre. South of Mosul life was far less affected notwithstanding the ongoing military campaign in Mesopotamia between the British and the Ottomans. As the British Imperial forces firmly established themselves in Basra the Chaldeans were there particularly protected from the depredations of the Ottomans, whilst Suleyman Nazif, Ottoman wali of Baghdad, forbade killing of Christians in his wilayet. (Gaunt 2006, 305)

Wilmshurst who has collated available Chaldean data for this era suggests that approximately ten to fifteen percent of the pre-war Chaldean population were killed (c.10,000–15,000 of 100,000). (Wilmshurst 2011, although, as of 2015, and the rise of Da'esh this is debatable.

32 Even if these figures are overestimates they intimate the proportion of the Syriac community killed.
436–437, 446) After the massacres according to the Holy See's statistics – which Wilmshurst presents – there were approximately 44,000 Chaldeans in 1928. This figure is contrasted with that of Stephen Kajo in 1937 who suggested 140,000. Between the lower figure suggested by the Holy See and the higher figure of Kajo it can be suggested that there were approximately 80,000 Chaldeans present in Iraq just before the start of the Second World War. (Wilmshurst 2011, 444)

It seems unlikely that the figure of 44,000 Chaldeans can be considered authoritative and perhaps can be accounted for by the relative lack of infrastructure in many areas of Iraq and the difficulty of conducting a census.33

Thus, even despite the death of a significant proportion of the community the Chaldeans appear to have begun to recover to pre-massacre levels by the 1930s. Nevertheless, this growth may not have been organic per se – through births – but derived from the necessary readjustments many East Syriacs made after the war to access pastoral care from Chaldean clergy in the absence of those of the Church of the East.34 In 1920 there remained six bishops in the Church of the East including the patriarch. Of the laity perhaps as many as a third were killed during the war.

In making an assessment of this era the variable quality of information which is extant to determine the exact number of Chaldeans affected should be noted. Whilst there is a range of academic and popular literature these works often refer to non-Armenian Christians as Assyrians. (Petrosian 2006, 114, 117) There is no conventional manner to distinguish between Chaldeans or the so-called Assyrian members of the Church of the East. This is largely due to the wide variety of writers, the lack of a definition as to the specific nature of each title and as to whether they are mutually exclusive. Thus, sources from this period can be confused and ignore further the distinction between the Syriac Catholics and Syrian

33 Indeed, this is an issue which continued to affect the Chaldeans into the twenty-first century with the Holy See presenting figures with substantial variations and apparent discrepancies: tens of thousands of persons "appearing" and "disappearing" over a period of twenty years. See, for example, the Chaldean population statistics of 1990, 2000 and 2010 in Roberson CSP (2010).
34 In 1920 there remained six bishops in the Church of the East including the patriarch. Of the laity perhaps as many as a third were killed during the war. (Wilmshurst 2011, 423, 440–441)
Orthodox.

The notion that a comprehensive report should be conducted after the massacres by or on behalf of the Chaldeans may have been an issue. Whilst considered worthy, it was inhibited by the lack of stability in the new Iraqi state – a nationwide uprising occurring in the context of British attempts to assert their rule in 1920 – and the sense of exhaustion experienced by the Chaldeans in the aftermath of the massacres: a perception instead that rebuilding the community and creating a new status quo should come before assessment of the immediate past.


In attempting to outline Chaldean history following Iraq's establishment in 1921 we should recall the novelty of such a study and the lack of pre-existing methodology in the Iraqi case for considering the Chaldeans in the full light of their eastern Catholic status and the relationship between the office of patriarch and the state. This, further, combined with the lack of reflection from Chaldean authors from the perspective of ecclesiastical history offers an emerging scholarly field for original contributions. We may be justifiably surprised at the lack of ecclesiastical history written since 1921 given reflection on relationships with the temporal power and chronicles of church affairs were so strongly engaged with by East Syriac authors in Late Antique and Medieval periods. (See Wood 2013; Becker 2008, 40–45; Brock 1979)

There was perhaps a trend towards a lack of willingness to have pursued ecclesiastical history outside of few authors. The account of Israel Audo, Chaldean Bishop of Mardin, on the massacres and as they affected his diocese and Chaldeans more widely one of the few produced, for example, on this topic.\textsuperscript{35} An absence of self-reflection in this context perhaps unsurprising given the strength and pain of memories and wounds existing

\textsuperscript{35} An English translation of which is currently being prepared by Andrew Palmer, Radboud University, Nijmegen.
so close chronologically. The Chaldean community at the time (1930s–1960s) were in an era which focused on integration into a new Iraqi society with an emphasis on looking forward instead of retrospective glances into painful events of which many by the 1960s would have had no experience or recollection. In what arena would ecclesiology and ecclesiastical history be discussed outside of community members with a particular interest and for the instruction of some students and seminarians? Population displacement, urbanisation and engagement with modern political ideologies all provided distraction from a need or desire to consider Chaldean identity and to pursue a metaphysical understanding of being a Chaldean.

Ecclesiastical history and ecclesiological discussions altered somewhat with the establishment of the Syriac Corporation of the Iraqi Academy and the production of ecclesial journals such as *Fikr al-Masihi* and that of the Syriac Corporation itself. Nonetheless, these developments were reliant upon the driving interests of Iraqi and non-Iraqi Christian intelligentsia (e.g. A Abouna; S P Brock; L Cheikho SJ; J-M Fiey OP; Y Habbi; P Youssif etc) and was largely not popularly led. Moreover, there was and still does exist a lack of widespread interest in the historical experience of the Chaldeans in the era 1921–2003 among the community.

A contiguous Chaldean culture so deeply rooted in northern Mesopotamia and eastern Asia Minor could not easily be reconciled to the new Iraq and its different cultural and geographical environments. The incarnation of Chaldean life having to be re-affirmed, re-constructed and structured so as to meet the needs of a community whose position was irrevocably altered from an ecclesiological identity as central to their lives to multiple and in some instances competing levels of attachments and identities whether to the state, their perceived ethnicity or economic foci.

36 As of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) Thomas Reis, Chaldean bishop of Zakho (1957–1965) noting the religious indifference of the youth and the detrimental affects of Communism and Freemasonry upon the retention of religious practice and identity. (Cherubini 1995a, 46–47)

37 Observed among conversations with a range of Chaldeans – laity, clergy, young and old – during fieldwork in northern Iraq (October 2013), London (2012–2014) and Jordan (May–June 2013). Only very few of the community wanting to or being cognizant of the importance of discoursing on Chaldean history.
This is a wider historiographical issue raised, for example, by Borrut and Cobb in their work on the Umayyad dynasty. They note: ‘Sensitive students inevitably confront the question...how do we know what we think we know about the Umayyads?’ (Borrut and Cobb 2010, 2) A question which may just as easily be applied to the Chaldeans and as to our comprehension of their history leaving us with the answer that in many instances either we just do not know or we will for the present remain uncertain.

**Building on current scholarship**

The modern religious history of Iraqi Christianity especially from the 1930s onwards is a developing genre in scholarship. A lacuna, for example, in the historiography is the lack of studies on Patriarch Emmanuel II Thomas (1900–1947). A surprising gap given the continuance of government which he enjoyed for forty-seven years in one of the longest periods of leadership since the establishment of the Chaldean community. By way of comparison the first European language biography of King Feisel I (1921–1933), the first Iraqi monarch, was only published in 2014. (Allawi 2014)

If Thomas’ rule lacks scrutiny this could reflect the church’s distressed nature during the second decade of his patriarchal career and the political neutrality which he encouraged among the Chaldeans. Engaging in this apparent quietism with the intention of maintaining the community more securely from accusations of treachery and thus persecution. Such a quietist approach to patriarchal leadership similar to that associated with Iraqi Shiite clerics seen, for example, in the life of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. (Petrosian 2006, 125; Rahimi 2004, 12–14) The retention of a low profile resulting from Thomas’ awareness of the tragedy which had befallen the Church of the East during the 1915–1918 massacres as a result of acquiescing to a political narrative which set their community apart from surrounding Ottoman and Kurdish society. Such a path was rejected by Thomas and I suggest his entry
into Iraqi political life through membership of the Iraqi senate was perceived as a more efficacious means to retain Christian influence at the élite level of the state and mirrored the example of East Syriac-lay élite interaction under the Abbasids.

In historiography generally a large body of literature considers Iraqi Christianity from different perspectives of scholarly, personal and professional interests but less discussion on the history of Christian political relationships with the governments of the republican and especially Baath administrations. Most recently Wilmshurst (2011), Valognes (1994), Yacoub (1996) and Rassam (2010) have re-dressed this balance but their works in the former two instances lack a specificity to the Chaldeans or Iraq in one volume whilst the latter two come from quite a partisan perspective towards the East Syriac communities. O’Mahony (2009; 2004a; 2004b) and Audo (2012; 2008; 2005) have made several contributions whilst Teule (2015; 2012; 2008) and Hunter (2014a; 2014b) probably come closest to beginning an assessment of the socio-political involvements of Iraqi Christians but their works in these instances tend to focus on the situation post-2003.

Difficulties have existed in general in pursuing a comprehensive approach to Iraqi historical studies which encompass all religious, political and ethnic communities. A major edited volume to emerge since 2003 which seeks to revivify modern Iraqi historical studies despite being over 500 pages in length with thirty-three articles in total does not provide one piece which focuses on the challenges of writing the history of the non-Muslim inhabitants or that of non-Arabs or non-Kurds. The work is to be greatly welcomed for considering a range of methodological issues but fails to recognise the normative plurality of Iraq and to attempt to encourage a history of Iraq that is a more purely historical account and not conveyed through the lens of political science, political history, sociology or anthropology. This absence is somewhat surprising given that the introduction, co-authored by two of the editors, notes:

‘With Iraq facing the danger of implosion, which groups – or even segments of the population with their own sub-Iraqi and trans-border references – will be able to
impose their visions of history? Is Iraq facing an unavoidable "fragmentation of collective memory"?" (Bocco and Tejel 2012, xiii)

More widely we can note, in one of the standard texts on Iraqi political history, Tripp in his otherwise useful A History of Iraq, refers to Christians on nine occasions – as per the index – with only the briefest explanations of their roles and mainly in relation to the political aims of those who associated with an Assyrian identity. (2007) Whilst Simons, who also offers a very useful broad introductory history of Iraq lacks consideration of more than a passing nature of the Christian segments of the population. (2004) These works are contrasted with the concise but excellent outline of Christian contributions to Iraq in TAJ Abdullah's work which provides an indication of how a history of Iraq can account for its plural character. (2003) Gareth Stansfield also has a good if brief assessment of how the Christian communities were affected by Iraqi political discourse. (2007)\(^\text{38}\)

This trend to avoid mentioning the Christian population is disappointing given the available scholarship on the Christians and the emphasis in recent and contemporary academic studies for considering the place of minorities (so-called) in Middle Eastern societies.\(^\text{39}\) By way of comparison there has been a growing interest in the former Jewish populations of Mesopotamia-Iraq in the last fifteen years which raise awareness of Iraq's former plurality and ensure that a bipolar Sunni-Shia discourse does not solely dominate. (Masters 2001; Rejwan 2004; Snir 2006; Gavish 2010; Somekh 2012)

Among the churches of the western tradition there appears to be uncertainty as to how to treat the scholarship produced by Christians of the East Syriac tradition. This is perhaps due to concomitant difficulties in

---

38 Stansfield has made more effort than most non-specialists to include observations on the Christian communities in Iraq which is also seen in his co-authored monograph (with Liam Anderson) on the modern history of Kirkuk (2009).
39 This section and following will refer to religious minorities in Iraq. It should not be thought that because the Christians, Yazidis, Mandeans etc are numerical minorities that they are in any sense less legitimately or intimately involved in the development of modern Iraq. Their historical contributions to the Mesopotamian region preclude them being considered as a minor influence. The Shia despite their overwhelming majority in the Iraqi population were a de facto minority given their limited political and social roles in modern Iraq.
comprehending what process of theological or ecclesiological engagement should be taken towards the East Syriac churches due to the relative lack of expertise which the dominant Latin and Protestant discourses have concerning them. Nevertheless, through the growth of the modern ecumenical movement, the increasing importance of Iraq to regional and international politics and the growth of diaspora groups in the west practical and theological engagement has increased and saw a boom in studies especially from the 1960s with Brock (1982; 1996; 2004; 2009) and Fiey (1959; 1970; 1993; 1994) leading scholarship in this area. Thus, the Christians of Iraq have come to be well served in general but lacking has been an assessment of their relations with the Baath party and Saddam Husain. It appears from present scholarship there are hints at and awareness of aspects of this relationship but a lack of concentrated discussion. (White 2007, 5–8) There is little if any discussion, for example, on the rôle of Tariq Aziz, his religious identity and the effects of this on Baath policy. The extended interview with Aziz conducted by Bouvet and Denaud contains only a few pages concerning his religious identity and no discussion of how this affected his position in government. (2000) The churches and their relationship to international communities is also lacking. The Holy See’s place within Iraqi history having had limited assessment which is remarkable especially in considering the strong interest with which popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI have had in the Middle East. (Filoni 2008; Toulat 1992)

In considering the Chaldeans in and of themselves we do well to recall how they have been viewed by the Muslim populations. This is important as Christians were often and still are considered as a homogeneous group by the government and many non-Christian Iraqis. The churches largely dealt with via the Chaldean patriarch with his position as primus inter pares among the church leaders resident in the country granting him this rôle. Indicating the Muslim precept that “unbelief constitutes one nation” has had a lasting influence even among more secularised rulers in the Arab Middle East. (Masters 2001, 81)
A new political order: 1918–1947

In the new Middle Eastern order established after the First World War the Chaldeans experienced a period of initial uncertainty but saw a growth of hope for a secure place in Iraq. Uncertainty derived from fears of what future status they would have in an Arab Sunni dominated state and as to how to consolidate their church structures and communities after the massacres. Chaldean hopes for the future also centred on British Imperial influence in Iraq. Iraq's legal system and constitution formulated with British oversight were intended to ensure that in the fullness of time Iraqis would be accepting of pluralism in public life and equal social status in law for all citizens. (Natarajan 2011, 806)

The state of Iraq was formed officially for the first time as a result of the Sykes-Picot agreement and the subsequent distribution of the possessions of the Ottoman Empire outside of Asia Minor nearly entirely by France and Britain. Following the end of the First World War through the Treaty of Sèvres Britain was granted the Mesopotamian region as Iraq and maintained effective control over the state via a League of Nations mandate granted until 1932. The mandate was given legitimacy through the establishment of a constitutional monarchy which was led by Feisel I from 1921 (d 1933), the son of the Sheriff of Mecca, and his successors Ghazi (1933–1939) and Feisal II (1939–1958).

The plebiscite which formally established Feisel as monarch had a return of over ninety percent causing some doubt as to its validity. This doubt unsurprising when we consider Feisel had no geographical or personal ties with Mesopotamia and as he was Sunni would likely bring with him an élite of similar background to secure his rule over a population of which large sections since the late eighteenth century had increasingly converted to Shia Islam and were the numerical majority by the early twentieth century. (Nakash 2003, 13)

The British thinking behind suggesting Feisel for the monarchy was astute, however, and based on the popularity he attained during the First
World War and his family's alleged line of descent from Mohammed. Initially the Christians appear to have opposed Feisal's introduction given his Hijazi origins with Dawisha asserting that 'the thriving Christian and Jewish communities of Iraq [did not] find palatable their incorporation into a Muslim-dominated Kingdom ruled from Mecca'. (Dawisha 2005, 39) However, as the realities of his character and rule became apparent and following his loss of Mecca and his territories in the Hijaz to the Saudis fears of an overtly Muslim state faded.

Thoughts of Iraqi independence were largely quashed by the 1922 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty which saw the creation of a British shadow state for the native government with several areas of administration given British advisers to maintain the economy in line with the financial imperatives of the Empire. (HMSO 1925, 4, 9) The treaty impacted upon the conduct of religious life with Article 12 affirming that the operation of missionary work must be permitted without let or hindrance. (HMSO 1925, 6) A new version of the treaty was made in 1930 which again favoured the British with military facilities made available to their forces for a twenty-five year period and safeguarded their access to Iraq's oil fields. Thus, when considering Iraq from 1918–1930 we should see it as an economic vassal state to the British Empire as opposed to a novel independent Arab constitutional monarchy. (Cf Tripp 2007, 51) The conflicting dynamic between the British imperatives for the Empire's economy in the free flow of oil and the Iraqi élites was only to be effectively resolved following the withdrawal of British military forces in the 1950s. Support for a continued British presence varied with, for example, the population of Basra strongly in favour. (Nakash 2003, 63) However, given the extended British military presence there from 1914 and the benefits which accrued to the local Shia, Jewish and Christian merchants through a ready and secure market to India and British colonies in the Far East this was unsurprising.

**Chaldean state and inter-communal relations**
The new state had been artificially created so it was some time before there began a coagulation of interests to sustain it. Feelings of disconnect from British imperial influence and direction of Iraqi affairs by a monarch from the Hijaz were first manifested during the 1920 rebellion. As the Arab Revolt had been influential to overthrowing Ottoman rule so such a rebellion fuelled the imaginations of Mesopotamian residents who perceived a similar effort could be made to remove the British presence. Despite British military dominance in the southern Levant, Egypt and peninsula Arabia their hold on Mesopotamia appeared tenuous by comparison where their victory against the Ottomans had been extremely costly.

The rebellion which generally focused in mid- and southern Iraq derived justification from Islamic jurisprudence and the question as to whether Muslims – Sunni or Shia – could be justifiably ruled by an infidel power such as the British. (Nakash 2003, 67) Such a state of affairs had long existed for Muslims in other regions whether in the Caucasus under the Russian Empire or French north Africa. That such a state of affairs began to exist in what many Muslims considered the heart lands of their religion was, however, a direct threat to their social dominance in the central Middle East and could be religiously interpreted as an indication of a fatal decline and/or punishment. Therefore, rebellion brought together for a short time the Sunni and Shia Arab populations of Mesopotamia-Iraq. The renewed call to *jihad* considered a very dangerous threat by the non-Muslim populations. Even if such rhetoric was not directed at them it ensured that from the foundation of Iraq in 1921 that Christians, Jews, Mandeans and Yazidis were sensitive to the necessity of a stable Iraqi social order.

Eventual British victory did not rely solely on military intervention but also upon the conservative nature of a sufficient proportion of the native population – there being every hope among tribal and landowning élites to see the restoration of order so as to to begin to rebuild their economic and social dominance regardless of who laid claim as the ruling élite. There also existed a proportion of the population largely disinterested in the coercive attempts by any one faction to establish themselves as dominant. With many residents of Basra and Baghdad having had extended interactions with the British during the mid- to late nineteenth century an awareness existed of
the likely inevitability of British Imperial success in the power vacuum left following the defeat of the Ottomans. No one of the Iraqi factions having sufficient capabilities to emerge victorious with the new Iraq appearing to require – however reluctantly – an authoritative leadership figure and institutions around which the new ideal of Iraqi patriotism could be anchored.

As for the Chaldeans they were not opposed in principle to a co-opted monarchy under British supervision and remained acquiescent to this stabilisation of the social order. (Rutledge 2014, 185) The British recognition of the Chaldean patriarch's influence bolstering this support with Emmanuel II Thomas' position on an advisory council of ministers under British supervision in 1920 and from the formation of the state in 1921 as a member of the Iraqi Senate. (Tripp 2007, 44) The early drafts of the first Iraqi Constitution had also provided for set numbers of minority members in the Chamber of Deputies as an attempt to support their position within a unitary Iraqi state. (Joseph 1983, 115) These proposals were rejected by the Chaldeans, however, for fear of appearing to set themselves apart from the rest of society.

**The military élite and the Assyrians**

Although the monarch was the head of state Iraq's governance – outside of British intervention – was largely determined by the prime minister, his cabinet and the competing factions who held sway among the contemporary ministerial appointments. The cabinet became dominated by the military but their political affiliations were further divided by strength of adherence to nationalism, socialism and Islam. As the military élites came to consolidate control over Iraqi politics from the 1930s the army became the primary means of coercion utilised by Sunnis to maintain their privileged status. The military saw the maintenance of Iraq's borders as established from the Treaty of Sèvres as a foundational principle of the state and would not countenance opposition by any group who attempted to undermine this status quo. Thus during times of perceived or actual threat decisive action
was taken and the Kurds, Yezidis and Shias were all repressed between 1933–1936 and 1936–1941. (Nakash 2003, 123) The acts of force the armed forces’ leadership used to maintain their position derived from the lack of economic or religious influence they could otherwise exert to influence or coerce the population.

In such circumstances the creation of a more secure socio-religious situation for Christians was not aided by British reliance on levies recruited among members of the Church of the East and other numerically minor communities who were used to quell uprisings against British influence especially in northern Iraq. (Petrosian 2006, 120; Bet Shlimon 2012, 95) As some East Syriacs had begun to assert an ethnic and cultural link to the ancient Assyrian empire from the nineteenth century these assertions were transformed into political action in the twentieth century as they agitated for an autonomous Assyrian region. The Levies perceived by Assyrian nationalists as a potential means for assisting this end. It appeared to many Iraqis that the Assyrians acted in cahoots with the British and were favoured through links established between the British High Commissioner and Patriarch Mar Shimun XXIII. (Husry 1974, 166)

Plans for secession culminated in the publication of an Assyrian Officer Manifesto in 1932 outlining the formation of an autonomous region in the Nineveh plain. (Husry 1974, 167) In pursuing such an agenda the Assyrians were in opposition to the the king, the British and Iraq’s Arab population who had little desire to see any form of devolution or the potential loss of a buffer zone with Turkey and Syria. The military élite were particularly concerned given the Assyrian independence movement coalesced concurrent with campaigns against Kurdish separatists. (Husry 1974, 168)

The mutual antagonism between the army and the Levies increased and in 1933 the Simele tragedy occurred which led to the deaths of a large number of Assyrians. The circumstances of the incident became heavily politicised over time and according to authors’ biases have led to either one or other side being blamed for the outcome of events. (Husry 1974, 175; Main 1933, 664)
The essential event leading up to Simele was the release of levies from British service in 1933. The armed Assyrian population totalled nearly 10,000. When we consider the Iraqi army was only 30,000 men in total at this time we can note a potentially serious strategic threat. (Main 1933, 667) Each levy following his demobilisation was permitted to retain a rifle and ammunition and thus a highly trained independent military was established. For many levies returning to their homes in northern Iraq independence in some form was seen as a realistic option. The Iraqi Army sought initially to disarm the ex-levies and following confusion as to how and whether this could take place and Assyrian fears of physical danger it appears plans were made on both sides to intervene militarily against the other. The main incident focused on the village of Simele and involved only the soldiers of each side. However, violence soon extended to surrounding Christian villages which saw the civilian massacres. Estimates as to the total number killed vary but a figure of approximately 1,000 casualties appears to be the most likely. (Main 1933, 672)

Regardless of the extent of the attacks and whatever actually led to and took place during the incident the outcome for Assyrian nationalists and for the Church of the East was deleterious and ecclesiologically decisive. Mar Shimun XXIII was exiled from Iraq in 1933 initially to Cyprus and he later settled in Chicago from 1940. (Baumer 2006, 269) This marked the first time since the consolidation of the Church of the East at the Synod of Dadisho in 424 that its patriarch was not officially resident in or around south-west Asia. The events reinforced the Chaldean position as the senior Christian community in Iraq but gave credence to a popular assumption of the potential disloyalty of Christians. It would be an exaggeration to characterise the nationalist cause of the Assyrians as one inherently unsettling for the majority of Christians and other numerically minor religious groups in their relationship with the Muslim majorities and government of the day. However, through aggrandisement for secession the Assyrians influenced the general perception of and beliefs about what Christians appeared to desire politically: an autonomous region and with limitations on Muslim led political hegemony.
Emmanuel II Thomas (1900–1947)

From the foundation of Iraq Thomas recognised that the future security of the Chaldeans and the Christian population more widely was linked to:

1. Accepting the government of the day – so far as its activities did not interfere with Chaldean religious practices
2. Supporting modernist political ideals of the separation of religion from the state
3. A commitment to an Arab national identity

These three points became the cornerstone of the Chaldean interaction with the contemporary political élite. A type of interaction which only altered following the 2003 invasion of Iraq. This position was in contrast to that of the Church of the East which lost its patriarch to exile and lacked the intellectual and material resources to formulate a coherent plan for their position in the new state. Hindered particularly by the lack of engagement with Arabic culture with even the patriarch lacking more than a rudimentary grasp of the language. (Husry 1974, 166)

Thomas' efforts were not particular to the Chaldeans as for all Iraqi religious leaders during the 1920s–1930s their leadership rôle related to assessing and engineering a secure position in the new political and social environment. (Lukitz 1995, 108) However, Thomas was fortunate to make his mark on political culture through his membership of the Iraqi senate and in his personal relationship with Feisel I. Thomas' privileged position supported the integration of Chaldeans into Iraqi society in general. Integration which was popularly based in the educational and economic advancement which many attained and which the patriarch and hierarchy strongly encouraged. Admiration for Catholic forms of education and the religious communities which maintained schools should not be underestimated given that until the First World War literacy extended to only
five percent of the Mesopotamian population. (Abdullah 2003, 123) Whilst such could change and did in a relatively short space of time the repercussions for the majority of the population in responding to the urbanisation and industrialisation attendant with the discovery of oil were significant and limited their ability to initially respond to economic development. A European observer writing in 1927 noted:

‘How backward the conditions still are...is shown by the fact that one Government secondary school in Baghdad, with a boarding section, is sufficient to meet the demand for secondary education for boys in the capital, and that the total attendance at the five Government secondary schools in the whole of Iraq is 562 pupils.’ (Conway 1927, 334)

However, the Christian advantage gradually began to decline as Muslims grew to compete economically and socially in the professions with significant investment in all levels of state education. (Lukitz 1995, 109–110) Nevertheless, the quality of Chaldean life from 1921–1947 generally improved which related to Thomas' willingness to work within a society in which Sunni and Shia law and custom were cultural and societal norms and to act as a subtle differentiating influence. As a graduate of the Jesuit University of St Joseph in Beirut he had received formative training in a region which had a long standing religious plurality and permitted engagement with the eastern Catholic and Arab literary and cultural revival from the late nineteenth century. The transfer of Thomas' Levantine experiences to Iraq serving to reinforce his commitment to maintaining an Iraqi plural socio-religious status quo united with an openness to Arabic culture.

Thomas' success demonstrated most clearly by the overall expansion of the Christian population which between 1932 and 1957 more than doubled in Baghdad, Basra and Kirkuk. (Betts 1979, 105) The rapid change in demography for the southern cities and especially Baghdad was remarkable with new churches constructed to accommodate the new arrivals. The concentration of Chaldeans in Baghdad changing the focus of a community whose traditions had largely been sustained in and around
Movement to Baghdad entailed some change in identity for Chaldeans. Through participation in urban life in the capital engagement increased with the Iraqi Baath and Communist parties. There was also a shift away from agricultural based employment and towards artisanal, technical or professional roles. There had long existed a core of Christian urban intelligentsia but the population shift from Mosul and the Nineveh plains was the first time since the Abbasid era that East Syriac life had been so far advanced in Baghdad.

The Chaldean position in Baghdad was further reinforced through the departure of the Jewish population during the 1940s and early 1950s. The displacement of the Iraqi Jewish population in the context of the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 with many Muslims pursuing a coercive approach to their removal. This was a significant departure from the views which Feisel I had espoused during his rule concerning the Semitic root of life in Mesopotamia as a common bond between the Jews, Muslims and Christians of Iraq. (Snir 2006, 382) Indeed, given the anti-Zionist and pro-Iraqi discourse pursued by many Jewish Iraqis their departure is even more remarkable. (Snir 2006, 383–384; Ben-Yaacob, Kazzaz, et al. 2007)

With the Chaldeans entering the social gap which the Jews left it was for many Muslim Iraqis a first opportunity to come into contact with Christians on a regular basis and to note how their interventions in public discourse came not in an ostentatious manner but relied on being a humble (but not silent) presence by maintaining a living Christian witness in a challenging majority Muslim environment. Also influencing the Chaldean experience of Iraqi society was the connection with the Shia population. Formerly the Chaldeans had interacted mainly with the Sunni whether Arab or Kurdish who predominated in northern Mesopotamia. As demographic change and geographical foci altered there grew to be a mass new relationship with the Shia and also for those in Baghdad with the large Jewish population until the 1940s. In general terms the relationship with both communities was more amenable than with the Sunni. Though this was
far from uniform with Sunni awareness of the Chaldeans' importance to Iraq's socio-economic development.

A significant feature of Thomas' rule during the inter-war era was the start of Chaldean emigration outside the Middle East. Economic opportunities in urban areas of North America, for example, could not be ignored by those eager to improve their conditions during the Ottoman Empire's decline. Iraqi society did give freedom for Christian communities to expand in areas of public life especially in the professions and skilled labour but some areas of work were limited still by an unofficial bar on Christians entering them such as administrative managerial positions. (Rassam 2010, 140) The draw of emigration also due to the opportunity to reside in what were apparently Christian countries in which religious life would be far less affected by societal pressures.

Eastern Catholics were far from forgotten by the Holy See during Thomas' leadership. Pius XI (1922–1939) re-affirmed the commitment to supporting the eastern Catholics through the Pontifical Oriental Institute and that at every level of the Latin church the facilitation of greater knowledge of the eastern churches should be put in place. (Pius XI 1928, 434–435) The interaction with the Holy See by the Chaldeans was more of a general nature during the 1920s to 1940s than specific interventions regarding the operation of the Chaldean community which had dominated their history in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries.

At Thomas' death the Chaldeans were in a comfortable situation as the latter years of his leadership segued with the consolidation of the Iraqi petroleum industry. The subsequent growth in the economy reached to such a level that Coptic, Armenian and other Christian migrants were keen to move to Iraq to take advantage of the situation where their skills in engineering and medicine were very well received. (Hambye SJ 1968, 84; Cf Rassam 2010, 134–135)
Iraq as a nation and Chaldean involvement in political activity

Regardless of the Chaldean population's involvement in forming a new plural Arab led society the majority of other religious or ethnic communities could not be found to be as strong supporters to the ideal of the new state. It would be hard to describe Iraq as a stable country prior to the late-1920s and in 1932 Feisel I voiced his concerns:

``the inhabitants of Iraq have not sufficient national cohesion to admit of Government agreeing to any differentiation between sects or classes, and that the policy must first be for all classes to realize they are Iraqis'.' (Quoted in Husry 1974, 169)

Such a status quo exacerbated by internal and external powers' actions. The finalisation of Iraq's border with Turkey came only in 1932 with the Turkish state seeking to annex Mosul and its environs from the end of the First World War. These ambitions only prevented through British military intervention and the commitment of the League of Nations to favour Iraqi ownership from 1924. Whilst in Basra the religiously mixed merchant class were unified in their attempts to develop the city as the main port hub in the Persian Gulf in competition with Kuwait. (Visser 2007, 25; Nakash 2003, 63)

A key point of contention was what constituted an Iraqi patriotic identity. Patriotic concepts were split between those who supported an Iraqi particularist paradigm, which was also supported by the British, and those who sought a more pan-Arabist emphasis on union with other Arab peoples in the surrounding region. Thus, the distinction of who could be considered within the state was radically different as for the pan-Arabists the Kurds, for example, could not be fully considered to fit within the future Arab collective. As Ottoman rule had been relatively benign until the mid-nineteenth century and had limited social impact outside urban areas in central and southern Mesopotamia a unifying Mesopotamian identity in opposition to their rule had not developed. (Marr 2010, 18–20)
Implementing a national identity relied on the acceptance of the new political and geographic boundaries and sufficient coagulation of sectional interests to ensure an identity was widely held. Without the enforcement of the Arab monarchy on the state and their support for an Iraqi patriotism however abstract or ill defined the pluralism of the Iraqi milieu would likely have retreated into more regionally based political groupings because no other overarching body existed around which to form a point of unity in the new state.

The Chaldeans' situation was complicated by their location – whether rural or urban – and as to their ability to cope within what became a predominantly linguistically Arab state: rural dwellers were generally Syriac speakers and urban residents Arabic speakers. (Masters 2001, 45) Those who remained resident in more rural northern Iraq were, for example, generally more affected by the challenges of adjusting to the use of Arabic as the state's official language.

**Chaldean political involvement**

Until the 1950s Chaldeans largely avoided political activism and concentrated on economic and social contributions to Iraq. This reluctance and/or lack of interest to engage directly in politics shaped by the dominant role which the clergy had held in determining the relationship of the entire community with the state. I suggest there was substantial reluctance to cede political influence to the laity as the hierarchy had controlled East Syriac relations with the state for nearly 1,500 years and which was strongly re-emphasised by the Ottoman millet system. (Betts 1979, 142)

Thomas' position as a member of the Iraqi senate from 1921 reinforced the dominance of the patriarchal office in determining the community's relationship with the state. Thomas' position in the senate was perhaps not initially conceptualised as that of an essentially political rôle but instead as an advisor with some oversight into the application of new statutes on the Chaldean population. Thus reflecting both the intermediary
rôle of the patriarch between the state and community and efforts by East Syriac patriarchs under the Sasanid Empire and Abbasid dynasty who sought to ensure their community's security by regular engagements with the contemporary emperor or caliph and his court.

The clergy's dominance did not preclude lay Christian involvement in the state with Yusif Ghanima and Rafael Buti as ministers of Finance and State respectively. (Betts 1979, 183) Christian integration into senior positions of state followed a pragmatic approach from successive governments as Christians were in fact appointed to positions where their often more cosmopolitan upbringings could be put to good use with, for example, Najib Sa'igh made Iraqi ambassador to Lebanon. (Betts 1979, 184)

Joseph VII Ghanima (1947–1958) and the end of the monarchy

Joseph VII Ghanima having lived through the massacres era was well aware of the necessity of securing the community's position in Iraqi society via a co-operative relationship with the government. Moreover, he had been present with the League of Nations delegation who were to determine whether Turkey had a right to annex Mosul in the 1920s and was used to the political difficulties consonant with the independent Iraqi state. It was unfortunate that such a well qualified candidate to lead the Chaldeans died in 1958 the same year as the monarchy was overthrown.

Joseph VII's desire to ensure the Chaldeans were not dismissed from political and social life in Iraq influenced the transfer of the patriarchal headquarters to Baghdad from Mosul in 1950, a significant change but one which was not without precedent. (Petrosian 2006, 125; Seferta 2008, 14) The Abbasid dynasty's capital of Baghdad was host to the East Syriac patriarchs on a consistent basis and under Ottoman rule Baghdad had been the de facto centre of administration in Mesopotamia. The Chaldeans returned as the successors to the Church of the East in the Iraqi centre of

40 Not to be confused with Chaldean patriarch Yusif VII Ghanima (1947–1958).
political power and strengthened their claim to the heritage of the patriarchate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Joseph VII was fortunate to lead the Chaldeans during a period of relative political stability in Iraq and to consolidate a neutral and, to a certain extent, privileged position for the community which effectively emerged as the national church of Iraq. (Valognes 1994, 753) Albeit a national church in an Islamicised culture, of a minority of the population and with limited direct influence on the government's political thought.

Joseph VII was also able to further the work of the Chaldeans more widely: he consecrated a new Cathedral in Tehran in July 1950 and a church in Egypt in 1951. (The Catholic Herald 1950; The Catholic Herald 1951) He also took further steps to formalise the priests' education who were, from at least 1952, obliged to finish a formal seminary education. (The Catholic Herald 1952) Ghanima was completing much of the prodigious work which Thomas had instigated.

Thomas had seen the need for further improving the standards of Christian education and with the Iraqi government's and Holy See's support a Jesuit school – Baghdad College – was established in 1932. (MacDonnell SJ 1994, passim) This institution was open to all Iraqis regardless of religion and welcomed for its modern pedagogical style of formation. In starting the school at an early stage in Iraqi history it ensured Christian education if not overt Christianity could be found supporting the new élites. Baghdad College's success permitted the establishment of the Jesuit led al-Hikma University in 1955. Both institutions provided a very high standard of education for many future Iraqi leaders and were a means for Iraqi Catholics to demonstrate their loyalty to the state, that Christianity was not a detrimental influence on Iraqi society and that Christian methods of education could dramatically improve the quality of the professional classes. The naming of the university indicated the traditions which the Jesuits and government wished to pursue with the title chosen for the mutual Christian and Muslim association with King Solomon and that of the ninth century discussions between patriarch Timothy I and Caliph al-Mahdi in the context of the centre of scientific and philosophical research known as Bayt al-
The opportunity for regular debate coming freely with a mixed student body of approximately fifty percent Christian and Muslim from 1956–1968. (MacDonnell SJ 1994, 175)

In 1968 following the Baath government's establishment all non-state schools were closed. In the case of Baghdad College and al-Hikma concerns were expressed in terms of the threat they posed to the maintenance of pan-Arabist ideals in the student formation and the more catholic paradigm which they endeavoured to provide for their education. Not because they were Christian but through accusations of participation in Anglo-American Imperialism led as they were by mostly American Jesuits. (MacDonnell SJ 1994, 251 and 235–237) Until 1968 I suggest the educational contribution which the Jesuits and Catholics more widely made may have offset an emerging politicisation of Iraqi schools dominated by a strong Sunni influence; equipping particularly non-Arabs and non-Muslims to work as political and economic actors with as great legitimacy as Sunni Arabs. (Cf Lukitz 1995, 113)

**Revolt against the monarchy**

As a result of Anglo-German rivalry to take strategic control of south-west Asia the British re-introduced direct rule to Iraq for the duration of the Second World War due to the pro-Axis leanings of Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid Ali. At this time Iraqis were not greatly desirous of supporting either one or other European power but many Arab nationalists believed that a German victory over the British Empire would see Iraq prosper more abundantly and gain independence sooner and worked to popularise this view.

Until the re-affirmation of ties with Britain in foreign and defence policy under the 1948 Portsmouth Treaty there was relatively limited interest in Iraq for agitating towards a change in the method of government from constitutional monarchy to a republic. However, the Treaty's ratification saw the consolidation and popularisation of the views of Iraqi nationalist and socialist factions who regarded the monarchy as little more
than a means to maintain British strategic hegemony in the region and secure access to Iraqi natural resources. (HMSO 1948) By the late 1940s Chaldean involvement in Iraqi political parties had become more common place and the interest in seeing the maintenance of monarchical means of government declined among the politically active groupings. In the 1920s Chaldean social life had been eased by the monarchy's open attitude to the maintenance of their presence, whereas the underlying political instability of the 1930s and 1940s, in the short term, led to vacuums of power with the armed forces acting as guarantors of law and order in periods of change between governments. I suggest the lack of legitimacy with which the monarchy had been regarded – as a Sunni imposition on majority Shia state and as created by the British – left the Chaldean hierarchy in an uncertain position as how to claim the community's legitimate place in public life given their reliance on the support of the King so to do. The monarchy represented stability and authority and provided the basic unifying point for Iraqi national life. To suggest removing this institution implied a generalised loss of societal stability with it far from certain that an alternative means of government would be as open to the Chaldean patriarch's public rôle.

I suggest in this context the Chaldean hierarchy tended more strongly towards favouring retention of the monarchy whilst the laity desired more radical changes which they perceived could come about through involvement with political movements. Nonetheless, the hierarchy's support for the monarchy could not be considered unassailable and did come at some cost as, for example, per an Iraqi law of 1947 the Minister of Justice had the right to oversee the religious courts of Christians and Jews. (Joseph 1961, 216) Furthermore the head of these communities was required to be an Iraqi citizen of good standing. As the Church of the East's patriarch had been exiled in 1933 he was barred from ruling his own church at least in Iraq. (Joseph 1961, 216–217) Such a level of control indicative that the shadow of the Ottoman millet system was not yet removed from Iraqi life.
1958 rebellion against the monarchy and the Chaldean response

Yusif VII Ghanima's death marked the start of a qualitative shift in the Chaldean hierarchy's relations with the government and it is possible that had he encouraged and pursued a more distinctive policy towards the government the Chaldean community could have emerged in a stronger position in Iraqi society and their relationship with the state from 1958. He perhaps neglected societal issues related to the popular desire for a more equitable economic order which were pertinent to Iraqis as a whole and if he had been vocal in annunciating the Chaldean contributions to Iraqi society could have garnered more widespread societal support for the intermediary role of the patriarchal office in political and social affairs and the Chaldean community in general. Nevertheless, his position is understandable when we consider that Ghanima had lived much of his life in Thomas' shadow as his secretary and as a result it was difficult to develop a distinctive pro-active approach as patriarch.

With British imperial influence in Iraq re-impressed through the 1948 Portsmouth Treaty and the 1955 Baghdad Pact the end of constitutional monarchy moved closer. The burgeoning nationalist identity of many Iraqis by the mid-1950s perceiving these agreements as contrary to their interests especially in the context of Nasser's rise in Egypt. (Marr 2010, 24) That the treaties obliged the Iraqi government to maintain their national defence policy in line with British imperatives and to maintain their military infrastructure through links with British industry until 1973 widely regarded as deeply patronising. However, the British failure at Suez in 1956 precluded any further strategic dominance in the region without the USA's support. Moreover, Iran became another focus for Anglo-American intervention with Mossadeq's overthrow in 1953 and Iraq appeared for a time to have an opportunity to attempt independent domestic and foreign policies. The monarchy's downfall could not be prevented, however, as the rise of nationalism, limited efforts to reform land tenure and the economy were not sufficient to sway the army from permitting a republican coup and
the execution of the royal family.

Ghanima died just six days before the murder of King Feisel II and his family in July 1958. It will likely never be known as to the physical and psychological impact the disintegration of the political order had on Ghanima prior to his death but I suggest he was cognisant of substantial changes afoot and likely feared for the future of his community. The monarchy during its existence offering a veneer of legitimacy to the idea of a stable Iraqi social order and which in reality was far more heavily stratified and weaker than realised. The monarch’s rôle a figurehead for authority even if the monarchy wielded little real power and had become used by competing factions for their own personal aggrandisement and advancement. This position of the office of the monarch as somewhat set apart from the real power interactions of the day contrasting with that of the Chaldean patriarch who in real terms could directly influence a segment of the Iraqi population through his office something which the monarch in Iraq other than as a point of union struggled to achieve.

Paul II Cheikho, the Iraqi state and the new Catholic ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council

Ghanima was succeeded by Paul II Cheikho (1958–1989) whose rule was contiguous with much of Baath party rule. As Emmanuel II Thomas had set the tone for the consolidation of the Chaldean community in the 1920s and the creation of a modern bureaucratic state so Cheikho had to contend with the re-creation of political, economic and social life as Iraq was transformed into an authoritarian police state giving expression to the outworking of Saddam Husain’s will. Valognes also rightly emphasises the significant regional and international events which were to affect Iraq during his leadership:

- The petrol boom of the 1970s
• The Kurdish revolts from the 1960s onwards
• The Iran-Iraq War from 1981–1988 (Valognes 1994, 436)

To which should be added the effects of the Second Vatican Council upon Chaldean ecclesial character as a *sui juris* church and the development of a new form of relations with the Holy See.

The new ecclesiology for the universal Catholic church from 1965 was to be a communion of churches in union with the Holy See. (Green 2002, 244) It was an attempt to move toward a model in which the Holy See acts as *primus inter pares* with the pope as chief bishop "presiding in love" over the others.

The change in universal Catholic ecclesiology facilitating a new form of eastern Catholic union with the Holy See with all particular Catholic ecclesial communities becoming *sui juris* churches: self-governing and with the responsibility to determine their ecclesiology insofar as it remained in accordance with existing tradition and in union with the Holy See. Galadza characterises *sui juris* ecclesial identity as:

>`distinguished not only by their worship, but also by indigenous theologies, spiritualities and canonical traditions. Each of them is also to incarnate in unique fashion the unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the one Church, with the Bishop of Rome serving as the touchstone of this unity and continuity.' (Galadza 2007, 291)

This new form of overarching ecclesiology an attempt to grant the devolution of ecclesial power and the restoration of latent jurisdictional powers essential to the authority of the bishop who heads each *sui juris* church. A model perceived to be more in keeping with that which existed prior to the Council of Trent and as perceived to exist in the early centuries of the Christian oikumene.

It appears a new ecclesiological identity took time to develop and many years before all church members grasped the implications of the new
model. The use of the vernacular in the liturgy which some eastern Catholic churches introduced after the Second Vatican Council – including the Chaldeans – having far greater impact in terms of an indication of change to community members in the way in which the church operated and expressed its identity than more abstract ecclesiological theories.

For the Chaldeans the other major change to take place in the aftermath of the Council was the creation of the dioceses of Ahvaz (in Iran), Erbil and Sulaymaniya between 1966–1968. It is unlikely the impetus to do so derived from the Council, however, taking place in the context of general ecclesiastical re-organisation given between 1957–1960 the dioceses of Aleppo, Beirut and Alqosh had also been established.

**Christian involvement with revolutionary movements**

The establishment of republican government did not impact directly on the conduct of religious affairs. Nevertheless, a setback to the Christian position in national affairs was the Chaldean patriarch's removal from the senate and thus a decline in influence over the legislature. Although from 1958 all religious leaders were barred from involvement in legislative affairs the effect on the Chaldeans and by extension all Christians was greater than the Muslim populations. This due to the Christian community's size compared to the Sunni and Shia and the lack of Christian communal cohesion outside of a religious framework – they could not like the Kurds, for example, express unity through ethnic identity. For Christians to retain their voice at the highest level of the state in the Iraqi context obliged them to have one authoritative point of contact with the contemporary political élite. A divergence of opinions expressed via political parties whilst attractive for those Christians interested in pursuing a modern western style parliamentary democracy detracted from the recognition of Christians as an essential part of Iraqi society because they lacked a figure who represented their interests in a comprehensive manner. Whether such a position was desirable the traditional paradigm of Mesopotamian-Iraqi society as divided by religious affiliation which had existed in some form since the Sasanid era and with one figure or a small dedicated group to represent each religious community
was perhaps the most efficacious way in which to ensure the continued presence of the Chaldean *difference* in Iraqi society and popular recognition of such.

In some respects, and due to the republicans' desire to establish a more secularist paradigm for the Iraqi state, the seizure of power by General Abd al-Karim Qasim and Colonel Abdul Salam Arif benefited the Chaldeans. Legal reform, for example, limited the rôle of the *sharia*. It seemed also for a time there might be an end to the dominance of the Sunni minority. (Baram, Rohde, and Zeidel 2010, 6) Qasim's ethno-religious heritage mix of Sunni Arab and Shia Kurd it was initially thought might endear him to a greater cross section of the population and could have acted as a point of unity these were not sufficient to deter his deposition and execution in 1963 in a Baathist supported coup led by his former ally Arif. (Kirmanj 2010, 49)

Qasim's death was not especially to the detriment of the Chaldeans but at times of internal upheaval in the republican era they were often on dangerous ground as political scapegoats due to substantial Christian involvement with the Communist Party. This was exemplified during Qasim's tenure when Christians were implicated in a communist rising in 1959 in Mosul and from 1959–1960 in attacks against conservative pan-Arabist Muslims. Despite the Chaldean Patriarchate's transferral to Baghdad in 1950 and some Chaldean migration to the city a significant Christian population remained in Mosul of which 30,000 were displaced following violent traditionalist Muslim reaction to the rising and Qasim's attempts to introduce socialist socio-economic policies. (Betts 1979, 185) The upset caused at a national and regional level by Christian involvement was strong with many families avoiding attacks by confining themselves to their homes. Rivalries and perceived threats between socio-religious groups in northern Iraq were often more intense than those in central and southern Iraq with a greater number of groups competing for dominance in the social sphere a challenge to stable political order. (Betts 1979, 106)

A significant minority of East Syriac Christians saw the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) as an avenue for radical change in a society which
they viewed as continuing in the traditions of power for the very few and assumed that a Marxist inspired political system would resolve these differences. That those involved in the instigation and maintenance of the party were often middle class urban intellectuals (a group which coalesced with many Christians) was a trend found throughout the Arab Middle East. The first ICP general secretary was Yusuf Salman Yusuf41 of East Syriac heritage who had become involved with Soviet Russian activists during the 1920s and helped form the ICP's first iteration in 1935 but was executed in 1949 as a result of his involvement in anti-government activity. (Betts 1979, 148, 184)

Despite Christian membership of the ICP being as much as ten percent of the total the hierarchy considered involvement highly dangerous. Joseph Gogue, Chaldean archbishop of Basra, and Cheikho all but formally prohibited participation in ICP activities. (Betts 1979, 185) Such condemnations were necessary to disavow Muslim Iraqis of the notion that Christians favoured an anti-religious party gaining influence in government. This was a difficulty shared with the Shia religious leadership as communism appealed to many as a means to alleviate their political minority status. (Nakash 2003, 132–134) Conversely, from the late 1950s, some Shia gravitated towards a rejuvenation of their religious identity as the means to affect change through an Islamic Revolution and, given their proportionate size in the population, this seemed likely to succeed. (Nakash 2003, 135) For the Chaldeans a popular militant religious identity which could aid in affecting such change was not a realistic path given that it lacked historical precedent in the East Syriac tradition and support from a sufficiently large section of the Chaldean population.

**Republican governments and the rise of the IBP**

The party which was to dominate Iraq from 1968–2003 had its origins in Syria in 1943. The Baath was established under the tutelage of a religiously

41 Leading Chaldean communists also included George Telou and Elias Hanna.
mixed group of intelligentsia one of whom the Antiochian Orthodox, Michel Aflaq, was to remain a key Baathist theorist. With its message of Arab unity, freedom from Western influence and a more equitable socio-economic order under a socialist system the party proved very popular and had a captive audience especially among students, young professionals and eventually the armed forces in Iraq. Saddam Husain became involved in the party from the early 1950s and emerged as a militant leader: in 1959 attempting to assassinate Qasim. Spending the next four years in exile he developed the IBP as the chief vehicle of the "Arab Revolution" in Iraq and ensured that mistakes made in pursuing this agenda by other revolutionary parties were overcome and created a hardened cadre of activists to facilitate IBP success. (Sassoon 2011, 19–29 ff)

The Baathists came to predominance initially in the 1963 coup which overthrew Qasim. This ended in failure due to a lack of sufficient military and popular support to maintain their momentum. By contrast their success in 1968 relied on the consolidation of the party membership and a rise in popularity: the Baath viewed as the only party capable of upholding an independent Iraq and which could form an effective counter to the perceived threat of Israel, Iran and the USA to the Arab states. It was also perceived that the IBP would more efficaciously utilise the national petroleum revenues. Despite a rapid increase in the standard of living from 1958–1968 there was continued hope for a more equitable and meritocratic economic settlement especially among the new and growing urban middle class.

After consolidating their initial political success the 1958 coup leaders had sought to remove perceived injustices in Iraq by weakening the influence of socio-economic élites principally through land redistribution. However, as the republicans were unable to break the entrenched patronage networks which the land owners and tribal leaders controlled so were they unable to meet the demands of a rising middle class caught up in a wave of economic development which transformed Iraqi infrastructure and the hope among the peasantry for land re-distribution. (Mansfield 1982, 70)

It should be noted that Baathist control of the government and state
was not conclusively completed on taking power in 1968. IBP control extended gradually and the period to 1979 was reliant on building a broader base of support which involved the Kurdish Democratic Party (PDK) and ICP in government under the grouping titled the National Progressive Front. Efforts were also made to deal with the Kurdish question but a 1974 law granting autonomy was viewed as insufficient to assuage the PDK's aspirations and they began to agitate for separation by military means. Whilst the ICP, as of 1976, was repressed along with a purge of independently minded military officers. (Luizard 2002, 84, 90–91) All served as means to advance IBP status with the purge in the military particularly indicative of the substantial power which the IBP wielded: the army had been the key faction determining the contemporary government since the establishment of the modern state of Iraq. Baathist capability to alter the existing political status quo without alienating the general public determined by the use of petroleum revenues to make good on their ideological promises to create a more equitable socio-economic order. (Luizard 2002, 94–95)

**Political change impacts on the Chaldeans**

The affects of political changes during the 1960s on the Chaldeans varied by geographic location and socio-economic position. However, I suggest an overarching trend was a loss of confidence in the ability of traditionally influential institutions such as the military to restore stability to the state. This was exemplified when, with the loss of authoritative political leadership and societal stability, the Chaldean hierarchy organised for the migration of those in their communities who so desired via Turkey to the West. (Interview, Chaldean community member, Amman, May 2013) Nevertheless, the Chaldean commitment to the ideal of Iraq as a nation state did not disappear and Sengstock indicates the opportune circumstances for the Chaldean community's integration in a national cause facilitated by the IBP. (Sengstock 1974, 201, 202) Until Mesopotamia became Iraq Christians tended towards regionalism with trans-regional identities tied to church
membership. Following the creation of an independent state in which all were expected to contribute to the nation state and its development even if only through the payment of taxes this changed. Chaldean urbanisation and closer interaction with modernist Muslims who shared an outlook of a lay state and a desire for social development were commonly held aspirations. The Baath offered this and the party avoided the potentially dangerous affects of overtly anti-religious socialism favoured by the ICP. However, the overall development for the poorer urban and rural classes which the Christian intelligentsia favoured could still be acted upon. As Mansfield notes:

’The socialist content in Ba'thism is not very specific. It is less a set of socio-economic principles than a rather vague means of national improvement. Saddam says that only certain broad basic conditions need to be fulfilled for a system to be called socialist.’ (Mansfield 1982, 69)

I suggest Chaldean participation in the IBP brought with it an increased respectability for the party and the appearance of a wider base of support. Christian involvement only declining after the increasing prevalence of Baathist identity and ideology to the exclusion of any other in national politics, the militarisation of Iraqi life and the implementation of authoritarian security structures.

Regardless of the new government's secularising and social-nationalist intentions the new 1970 Iraqi constitution established Islam as the state's religion but guaranteed religious freedom. (Yacoub 1996, 28) At the core of Baathist ideology was to accept the advent of Islam as one of the most important events in Arab history. However, it was accepted for its spiritual foundations – the political structures which grew up around Islam were to be ignored. Instead the political order was to be based on modern ideals of nationalism and a self-reliant industrial economic order. (Dawisha 1983, 115) Different religious identities were permitted but were to be derogated for the progression of the greater Arab cause. This Arabist discourse had been influenced and formed by Christian leaders within and
outside Iraq. Michel Aflaq, for example, was an Arab first and a Christian second. (Kelidar 1974, 22)

Religion was not hidden under IBP rule for it was acceptable insofar as it was not political which was suppressed. The state as directed by the party was the only arena in which political development of national policies and national identity was to take place. External to this arena activity could occur as long as ideology derived from alternative religious, political or cultural sources did not attempt to affect change on a national level or which weakened the IBP hold on the means of coercion in the state. Such a separation of the overall direction of Iraqi society going deeper than the English term **secularism** implies which emphasises more attempts to suppress overt displays of religion in public life. The French term **laïcité** is perhaps more appropriate in the context of the IBP’s attempts to separate political direction of society from influence by non-party institutions and to reduce the influence of religious movements determined to affect widespread political change. Moreover, it marks the distinction between the lay element of society and the party élite who assumed the direction of society from all other organisations who previously would have had a voice and influence in the direction of national affairs. The desire to advance such a paradigm of **laïcité** linked not just to fulfilling Baathist ideological imperatives but also due to the need to present a societal mentality which could unite the Iraqi population to oppose the rise of revolutionary Shia groups. (Luizard 2002, 99–103)

The suppression of overt displays of religious identity was challenging to enforce given religion formed a chief distinguishing marker of communities in Iraq. Public and private Chaldean displays of religious practice were discounted as a threat by the government as they were in general disinclined to be involved in political agitation. A point emphasised by Sengstock who notes that the `Chaldeans have lived politically as `marginal men``. (Sengstock 1974, 202; Pacini 1998, 15)
Mesopotamian identity

The Christian rôle in twentieth century Iraqi politics held precedent from earlier periods in Mesopotamia during the rule of the Sassanids, Abbasids or Mongols who permitted Christians to act as integral contributors to developing Arab and Mesopotamian societies. Such pluralistic concerns were supported by Saddam Husain to an extent who was enamoured by pre-Islamic Mesopotamian history. He attempted to consolidate the history of the ancient Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian Empires under the aegis of a unique Arab Iraqi-Mesopotamian discourse. (Baram 1983, 435–437) This was brought into public life through cultural events such as the Mosul Spring Festivals:

"The Festivals were meant to get across to the dwellers of the Mosul district – Arabs, Kurds and Turkomans, Muslims, Christians – and to all Iraqis, essentially three ideas. First, that each part of Iraq, north, centre, and south, had a history to be proud of somehow connected to the dwellers of those regions in present-day Iraq. Second, that all these histories should be regarded as an Iraqi heritage and third, that the recognition of this heritage should encourage everyone "to strengthen internal Iraqi unity"."

(Baram 1983, 429)

Husain, however, only supporting a plural society in the context of attempting to make Iraq unique among Arab countries, the legitimate successor to the Semitic empires of ancient history and to emphasise internally and to the world the superiority of Iraq as the best suited country to lead the Arab peoples. The emphasis on an Arab national identity was implicitly supported by the Chaldeans with those who supported an Assyrian identity setting themselves apart and were exposed to accusations of treachery by the state.
Cheikho, the Baath and Saddam Husain

Cheikho was born in Alqosh in 1906 and ordained priest for the diocese of Mosul in 1930. Like Thomas and Ghanima his background introduced him to the challenge of accommodating refugees from northern Iraq after the Ottoman massacres and the demands for political autonomy raised by the Assyrian nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s. Cheikho received a sound formation for future patriarchal office as Bishop of Akra from 1947–1957 and was a graduate of the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Cheikho also oversaw the establishment of twenty-five new Baghdadi Chaldean parishes and the construction of a new seminary in Dora in 1962 – the region of the capital which would go on to become known as the "Vatican Quarter". (O’Mahony 2005, 29; The Catholic Herald 1962) The continuing growth in the city a remarkable rise given that until the First World War only three Chaldean churches existed there and demonstrating again the rapid ecclesiological and demographic changes with which successive patriarchs had to contend.

Cheikho was also responsible for interpreting and implementing the new *sui juris* ecclesiological identity and having been named a member of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches in 1963 he was at the forefront of the future direction of the development of eastern Catholic identity. (The Catholic Herald 1963) It is possible that maintaining a close relationship with the Holy See was a reason for his pastoral work being largely unhindered during Husain's rule. To too heavily damage this relationship potentially limited the Holy See's voice of mediation in regional and international affairs with which Iraq became entangled.

Saddam Husain became President of Iraq in July 1979 following the resignation of his predecessor Ahmed Hasan al-Bakr. Husain had prepared for his ultimate accession to power since the 1968 coup through extending IBP influence into nearly all Iraqi institutions. Chaldean religious life perhaps one of the least impacted but even in this arena informers and
security service agents were prevalent. Nonetheless, a greater modicum of free action was permitted perhaps due to the Church being perceived as a non-state institution which could be more effectively influenced by the state and partly because the Chaldean patriarch was resident in Iraq unlike the patriarchs of the Syrian Orthodox (Syria), Syrian Catholics (Lebanon) and Church of the East (USA).

The position of Chaldeans in relation to the Baath whilst formally directed by Cheikho was heterogeneous and affected by three main factors: location, social position and strength of adherence to the nationalist ideal of a separate Assyrian region in the north of Iraq. (Rassam 2012b) For Chaldean residents of central and southern Iraq there was a general acceptance of the Baathist status quo especially due to its restrictions on Islamic jurisprudence and customs in public life.

Due to the ongoing conflict between the state and the Kurds those Chaldeans resident in northern Iraq were faced with the need to agitate for their communities' defence. A scenario which was combined with those Christian political exiles who gained relative freedom of operation among the Kurds of northern Iraq and who viewed Christian political autonomy as necessary for their security. Chaldean residents and political exiles brought together under the aegis of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) which emerged as the leading proponent of an independent Christian political and ethnic identity in Iraq. Such Assyrian and Kurdish separatist movements affected the Baathist view of northern Iraq which came to regard the region as the abode of political enemies. Such a state of affairs of great sorrow to Cheikho whose regard for northern Iraq stemmed from his own origins there and tenure as bishop of Akra. Cheikho had to be pragmatic in his leadership as he dealt with radical alterations to Iraqi culture and society. I suggest reluctance to intervene on behalf of the northern Chaldeans during times of Iraqi military incursion was perceived as necessary to ensure stability for the majority who resided in central and southern Iraq but was ultimately detrimental to Chaldean ecclesial identity which was so strongly associated with the north.
The Iran-Iraq War 1980–1988

From the mid-1970s Iraqi foreign policy focused on the traditional rivalry between Arabs and Iranians in the competition between the Baath state and the Pahlavi monarchy to become the leading power in south-west Asia. It is a remarkable coincidence that 1979 saw Husain’s rise to power and the success of Ruholla Khomeini’s Islamic revolution in Iran. The Iranian Chaldean community was challenged by the introduction of a dominant Shiite influence as the formal ideology of the state and society. The Chaldeans lost a large proportion of their support as all foreign Latin clergy were obliged to leave Iran in 1979 and in the space of one month after their departure only six members of their previous 150 Latin clergy and religious remained. (Baumer 2006, 276) Chaldeans in Iraq and Iran had a genuine fear which an expressly Shia political revolutionary ideology could have on their societies were Iran to invade. Youhannan Issayi, Chaldean Archbishop of Tehran (1970–1999), noting in 1983: ” ‘Christians began to feel the need for a religious revision of their lives and a return to God’ ” (Hebblethwaite 1983, 1042) Perhaps indicative of detachment from a traditional Chaldean identity which modernity, urbanisation and engagement with political parties and the state had inhibited away from rural village or town life centred on the parish and ecclesial institutions.

In this context those united by religion were divided by geography and nationality with Chaldeans serving in both Iranian and Iraqi armed forces during the Iran-Iraq War.42 Iraqi Chaldeans were found as committed supporters of the War as any other Iraqi community and their subsequent military service largely reflected that of the general population. (O’Mahony 2004b, 443) The war saw high casualties among the Christian communities which some accord to the purposeful placement of Christian soldiers in exposed positions at the front, however, this could have been a result of Christian attempts to prove their worth to their fellow soldiers than a politically motivated military order. (Petrosian 2006, 128) In general terms

42 An issue affecting Iranian and Iraqi Armenians, Shia and members of the Church of the East.
the War served as a means to improve the Chaldeans' social status as until the 1980s unofficial barriers to Christian progression in state apparatus continued to exist partly as a result of the continued stereotype of Christian desire for separatism and the Sunni reluctance to cede power to any other community. As a result of Christian participation the highest ranks in the military were opened to them which positively affected how they were perceived in other arenas. (O’Mahony 2003, 6)

It is difficult to assess Chaldean beliefs and perceptions about the war as no survey of Christian Iraqi military veterans has taken place. If we are to take the opinions of the highest ranking Chaldean in the political order as popularly held we can note that Tariq Aziz referred to the Iranians as “savages” and stated he would have used nuclear weapons to defeat them if they were available. (Takeyh 2010, 376) Such language indicative of the intense and personal nature of the conflict in Iraqi society and the persistent Christian fear of revolutionary Shia Islam. Such rhetoric and the dehumanisation of the Iranians was a theme pursued under the Baath with Husain's uncle writing in a propaganda leaflet entitled “Three Creatures God never created – Persians, Jews and flies”: ‘The Persians are animals given human form by God. Their morals are bad, they have a mean nature...Brother Arabs, the Persians are the number one enemy!’ (Quoted in Luizard 2002, 100) In Aziz's case his views of the Islamic Republic coloured by its attempted assassination of him in 1980.

**Tariq Aziz**

It has been suggested that those Chaldeans who accepted membership of the IBP were in some way collaborators with the state – viewing Chaldean commitments to the party in an entirely pejorative manner and through the prism of all the actions of the state as directed by Husain. (Cf Wilmshurst 2011, 438) In actuality membership was no more or less a marker of collaboration than party membership of any other authoritarian government such as the Communist in the USSR or the NSDAP in Germany during the
1930s and 1940s, as if one wished to work in the civil service or the military membership was mandatory.

Tariq Aziz rose to prominence during the first Baath coup in 1963 but he along with many other IBP members were forced into exile until their ultimate triumph in 1968. Aziz had been a strong influence on party thought and activity since working as editor of the party newspaper, later rising to become Minister of Information in the 1970s before attaining the position of deputy prime minister and foreign minister and becoming one of the most powerful men in Iraq.

His initial interest in the IBP had come from a desire to reform Iraqi society and to ensure complete independence from the British Empire. This inspiration was later transformed into fulfilling the political aims of Husain and developing Iraq into a modern industrial state. Aziz's Christian origins were never denied during his political career yet paradoxically despite being baptised Mikhael Yohannan he utilised a *nom de plume* to escape the explicit connotations of his name in order to support his political success. (Spencer 2010) Aziz's subsequent career was an unusual but not an impossible trajectory for a Chaldean. Yet it is not clear to what level he associated himself with a Christian faith or a Chaldean identity beyond formalities having stated in 2000 that he does not practice religion but his wife does and that all his children were baptised. (Bouvet and Denaud 2000, 80) Aziz's religious background was not detrimental to Saddam and the IBP's popular support but if on occasion there was criticism towards the government or a failing in Aziz's area of responsibility this could be referred to as the damaging influence of his Christianity. (Interview, Chaldean community leader, Erbil, October 2013)

Prior to Aziz Christians had assumed high office: Dr Hanna Khayat was the first Iraqi health minister and Rafael Butti was propaganda minister in 1953. Chaldeans also still maintained a substantial influence in the

---

43 He was born in 1936 in the northern Iraqi town of Telkef – one of the most culturally Chaldean towns of Iraq.
44 There is a remarkable lack of information in general or academic literature available on Aziz and studies on his religious identity and influence on Saddam Husain and the Baath government would be a very useful contribution to scholarship.
professions from the 1970s onwards and their contributions reinforced the notion of the Christian community's value to Iraqi society. It would be incorrect to consider Chaldeans as enjoying any special place in Baathist Iraq as all Christian groups were considered with the same treatment regardless of size as long as they remained politically neutral. (Rassam 2012b) Aziz did intervene for Christians on occasion but this was never over issues that would alter their social status. In June 1992 the Missionaries of Charity were in difficulty with Iraqi bureaucracy over whether they had a right to continue working in the country. Patriarch Raphael I Bidawid, appealed to Aziz to resolve this issue favourably and the religious sisters were permitted to remain. (Catholic News Service 2010) That he did consent to act following appeals from a church leader indicates he must have retained some sympathy for Christians in general, however far he may have moved away from the Chaldean milieu and likely considered them as his natural constituency within Iraqi society. The Christian communities since 2003 would perhaps not have made such efforts to highlight Aziz's position during trial, sentencing and subsequent imprisonment on death row to an international audience if he had not been in a position to ameliorate their situation during Baathist rule. Georges Casmoussa, the Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Mosul, noted in 2010: ‘Tariq Aziz was not in security, he was a civil minister. Of course he was part of the regime of Saddam, but that does not mean he was responsible for everything that happened.’ (Catholic News Service 2010) That until the 2003 invasion of Iraq Aziz maintained his position as a high profile figure in Husain's immediate coterie due, partly, to the political expediency of a high ranking non-Muslim presence in government to present an image of plurality to the wider world. Aziz's Chaldean identity also facilitated the consolidation of the Iraqi state's relationship with the Holy See and Vatican diplomatic corps under Husain. A relationship which from the 1980s became a means to develop Iraqi interests in a broader context and to consolidate Holy See-Iraqi relations.  

45 Aziz died whilst still imprisoned in June 2015.
The Kurdish rebellions and Christian involvement

If as one contemporary author suggested "it is in Iraq that the Kurds have the fairest treatment [by comparison with other states in which they reside]" (Edmonds 1958, 147) Iraq also presented the most opportune circumstances for a Kurdish rebellion to succeed given the disintegration of the political status quo from 1958–1968. Instability at the executive level inhibited the construction of a sustained policy for dealing with Kurdish aspirations and the Iraqi army was relied upon to contain them. Such a turn of events associating Iraqi policy on Kurdish autonomy to a primarily military solution for most of the next four decades with the formulation of a political resolution for meeting Kurdish demands perceived as a denial of Iraqi territorial sovereignty and nationhood.

Regardless of the Chaldean influx to southern Iraq as a result of the massacres in the First World War and later Kurdish rebellions substantial communities remained in the northern towns of Akra, Alqosh, Erbil, Duhok, Kirkuk, Mosul, Sulaymaniya and Zakho. All key centres of Chaldean presence and from the 1960s and the return of the Kurdish leader Mustapha Barazani from exile in the USSR increasing foci of Kurdish attempts to gain independence.

Some Christians resident in the northern provinces supported Kurdish military and political activities with, it appears, the majority of activists drawn from the Church of the East and a significant minority of Syrian Orthodox. (Donabed and Mako 2009, 75) Betts and Adams Schmidt indicate that at the final dissolution of the Assyrian Levies in 1955 many of the highly trained fighters turned their loyalties from the British to the Kurdish separatists with Schmidt describing one Kurdish military unit he came across: "of 200 Kurds there were, as I recall, about 30 Christians". (Betts 1979, 186; Schmidt 1964, 71) The Kurds were viewed as a suitable body upon which to attach themselves to advance the cause of Assyrian nationalism with both seeking to aggregate their power under a government which had no interest in their political independence. (Hazen 1979, 49) It
was paradoxical, however, to see the ethnic ideal of "Assyrianism" pursued through support from a group which had previously massacred Christians during the First World War – reflecting the rapidly changing pragmatic alliances which existed in the region. (Joseph 1961, 37; Donabed and Mako 2009, 75)

Nevertheless, I suggest through becoming part of Kurdish political discourse Assyrian nationalists detrimentally affected their relations with other Christians. The nationalist approach of the Assyrians contradicted the universalism of the Christian faith with the limits imposed on it by a particular ethnic identity. (Cf Hastings 1997, 185) Furthermore, the Assyrians sought to control the discourse on nomenclature among the Christian communities utilising "Assyrian" as a suitable title for all Christians so that the supposed link to the Assyrian people of the Ancient World could be maintained and give credence to their agitation for an independent state. (Teule 2011e, 313–314)

**Nature of combat and effects on Chaldeans**

During the Iraqi army pacification campaigns no discrimination was made between the intended target – the Kurds – and other Iraqi minority populations with Chaldeans, members of the Church of the East and Yezidis all affected by attacks. With the Chaldeans suffering particular persecution during military operations in 1963 in Amadiya and during the Anfal campaign of the 1980s. (Wilmshurst 2011, 438) Chaldean difficulties continued with the Arabisation policy pursued by the IBP which involved the movement of Sunni Arabs from southern and central Iraq to the villages of Kurdistan. This policy combined with the continuing affects of military activity saw further numbers migrate from the north to central and southern Iraq.

The experience of day-to-day Christian life across northern Iraq was not uniform. The geographic and social variations across the region precluded a consistent narrative developing. Nevertheless, during the
Kurdish rebellions nearly all the Christians of the region were affected in some way. The Chaldean village of Inishke provides a useful example and is indicative of the population's changing fortunes and the long term effects of the clash of Kurdish demands for independence with Arab nationalist ideology on regions ethnic and religious make up.46

The village is presently a small settlement in Duhok province under the administration of the Kurdish Regional Government and is ecclesiastically part of the Chaldean Diocese of Zakho-Amadiya. In the 1950s a stable Chaldean presence was based around the parish church of Mart Shimuni and Her Holy Sons. From the 1958 revolution the situation deteriorated and as military action against the Kurds began the Chaldeans started to migrate. This period was also contiguous with an increase in the number of Kurdish nomads settling and turning to agriculture which appears to have led to competition for the use of land suitable for agriculture. (Edmonds 1958, 149) The Chaldeans becoming so pressurised as a result of residing in the conflict zone that in 1961 a Mosul based priest sent buses to bring the women and children from Inishke to the city. Nearly all Christian villages in the Duhok area faced similar difficulties and it was only in late 1973 that former villagers began to return as re-development began in the area.

What was most striking from the information gained during the interview was the Chaldean community's resilience and attachment to their village. Despite a departure of over ten years for many of the residents every effort was expended at the earliest safe opportunity to return. The sense of stewardship over the village regardless of ongoing political and military conflict emphasising that geographical ties to the land are integral to Chaldean identity.

From the late-1970s onwards the restoration of political order encouraged more families to return and with the Church's support were able to return to the norms of daily life. Indeed, the area became popular with Arab tourists especially from the Gulf states to take advantage of the cooler

46 The following information gathered in an extended interview with the parish priest of Inishke in October 2013.
summer climate which the higher altitudes permitted. The area's reputation grew to the extent that Husain visited in 1979 and built several vacation palaces for his close associates. Husain's favour for the village did not benefit the Chaldeans as it greatly increased the security forces present in the area and complicated the livelihoods of local farmers. Some of the most fertile land being appropriated for Husain's own purposes and other tracts given for use to Arab migrants from central and southern Iraq as the Arabisation policies of the late 1970s and early 1980s were vigorously implemented. 47

Although Arabisation of Iraq had been ongoing since the British mandate the Baathist implementation of the policy was the first time in which population movement had been encouraged so comprehensively to the detriment of the population of northern Iraq. (Marr 2010, 20) The intentions of the policy were through social and economic activities to re-engineer northern Iraqi society which led to three main outcomes:

- the nationalisation of arable/pastoral land
- non-Arabs had no right to their previously owned property
- re-settlement of northern Iraq with Sunni Arabs from the al-Jazira desert (All points from Muscati and Bouckaert 2009, 19)

The difficulties for Christians who lived in and around the areas of Kurdish autonomy were further exacerbated by the violence used during the Anfal campaign from 1987–1988:

'By the end of August [1988], all organised resistance was at an end the Iraqi armed forces were in control of the whole of the Kurdish autonomous region, roughly 80% of all the villages had been destroyed, much of the agricultural land was declared “prohibited territory” and possibly 100,000 people had lost their lives.' (Tripp 2007, 236)

47 We cannot underestimate the effects of displacement as a result of the Iraqi-Kurdish conflict on the residents of northern Iraq with some estimates of up to 1,000,000 people having been forcibly displaced or departing as refugees. (Cf Joseph 2000, 215)
Christians became the "collateral damage" in a campaign prosecuted with extreme violence for defeating a threat to the maintenance of central government power. That many Christians and also Yazidis identified at least officially as Arabs and were at worst politically ambivalent towards the Baath state was ignored. Approximately 150 Christian and Yazidi villages were destroyed along with twenty-four churches, monasteries and an orphanage whilst clergy were not exempt from attack and several were alleged to have been killed either among the civilians in the conflict area or targeted directly by the Baath security services. (FIDH and AIJ 2003, 40–42, 55) A particular concern for the continuation of ecclesial life was the destruction of active monastic property which saw the transferral of personnel to the Chaldean monastery of St Anthony's in Baghdad. (Seferta 2008, 23)

The effects of forced displacement were not just in the immediate aftermath of events. In 1991 up to two million Kurds left northern Iraq and even where this was temporary it created an irruption in the social order. (Luizard 2002, 108) Where were Chaldeans to place themselves as they became more exposed as wider Kurdish society withdrew? Later when Kurds returned and especially after 2003 with the rejuvenation of Kurdish identity how could Chaldeans continue to maintain a place in the social order without being reduced to a group holding to a paradigm of dhimmi status? The Kurdish rise to determine political affairs in northern Iraq preventing another outcome for in advancing their own cause as a minority in Iraq other minorities were reduced in significance and came to exist in Kurdish society as Kurdish subjects and reliant upon their goodwill to maintain an active presence in the region.

The difficulties faced in northern Iraq during the 1970s–1980s were not shared by those Chaldeans resident in central and southern Iraq with those in Baghdad often inclined to discount military attacks and government policies as exaggerated or only affecting those Christians directly involved in anti-government activity. This may seem surprising given the unifying bond of church membership and familial connections with the northern populations. However, these were tempered by the relief for the overall
security situation and the belief that involvement in anti-government activity was a direct threat to the *status quo*. A mentality prevailed that Husain in particular had been ‘good for us Christians’ implying that criticism of government actions or anti-Christian persecutions should be limited if voiced at all. (This paragraph from discussions with Chaldean community members, London, 2012–2014)

The Kurdish situation came to a denouement only after the 1990/91 Gulf War and the Coalition efforts to shackle Iraq's economy and inhibit Iraqi armed forces from continued punitive actions in the north. As a result the Kurds established their *de facto* autonomy and a parliament was formed in 1992. Five of the 105 members were Christians with four seats won by the ADM and the other to the Union of Christians of Kurdistan. (O’Mahony 2003, 7; Teule 2012, 181–182) The Kurdish parliament in 1996 remarkably recognised 7th August (date of the massacres at Simele in 1933) as a national holiday in the region which granted the Assyrian nationalists hope that they were recognised as an accepted community within the Kurdish *milieu*. (Teule 2011e, 315) This success for Christian representation and their social stability was complicated, however, by the continuing political and tribal inspired violence between the PUK and KDP who did not reach a truce until 1998.


Cheiko's time as patriarch can be characterised initially by the difficulty of establishing a new paradigm for Chaldean-state relations under the republican governments of 1958–1968. The political shocks which Iraq experienced until the stabilisation in central government under the Baath from 1968 weakening the patriarch's capability to formulate an effective narrative for church-state relations. Cheikho's rule also marked by his practical inability to comprehensively shield Chaldean residents of northern Iraq from the depredations which they experienced during the Kurdish rebellions. I suggest it was perceived that openly expressing opposition to
Arabisation and the Iraqi army activities and their effects on the Chaldeans would have marked the entire church as a threat to the Baath. A situation which led to the the Church's leadership neglecting the northern communities and instead focusing their concerns on Chaldeans resident in central and southern Iraq and reinforcing the successes of their integration into Iraqi society especially in Baghdad.

Cheikho was succeeded by Raphael I Bidawid. Bidawid was born in Mosul in 1922 and was marked out from a young age for advancement to a leadership position. He entered the Dominican run minor seminary in 1933 and then was sent for further formation at the Vatican for ten years from 1936–1946. Receiving such a thorough formation by 1956 that he had completed two doctorates in theology and philosophy.\footnote{Respectively on East Syriac patriarch Timothy I and Sunni philosopher Al-Ghazali \( b. 1058 d 1111 \)} His further ecclesiastical development derived from experience as the Vice-Rector of the Chaldean seminary in Mosul and six years as chaplain to the Chaldean workers of the Iraqi Petroleum Company before consecration as Bishop of Amadiya in 1957 aged only 35. The extended formation in the Vatican led to accusations later in life of being a partisan of Latin theological and liturgical trends. Yet, this formation also ensured that Bidawid was better able to gain influence within the Holy See and its associated institutions once he had assumed office as patriarch in 1989.

Bidawid spent a long period of his life as Chaldean Bishop of Beirut (1966–1989). His experiences in the Lebanon leaving him with an insight as to how to consolidate the Chaldean status quo within the confines of long term conflicts – an issue with which his time as patriarch was affected. Bidawid's time as patriarch saw the Chaldeans' status begin to radically alter within the Iraqi socio-economic climate. By 1989 Iraq had been at war or on a total war footing for nearly a decade and faced significant economic difficulties having exhausted most of the foreign currency reserves which had been built up from petroleum production in the 1970s. Further, despite extensive and often successful state propaganda persuading Iraqis of the war's necessity the long term effects of the conflict were telling and caused deep social trauma:
`Iraq suffered over 400,000 dead and wounded...By the time of the cease-fire, [in 1988] more than 50 percent of Iraq's males between the ages of 18 and 45 were in the military...Many young men, those who did not qualify for special exemption, spent eight of their most productive years in armed service.' (Mylroie 1989, 61)

A normal sense of inter-personal relations which was not reliant on shared experience of the military life, conflict or socio-economic deprivation was very difficult to restore. An especially problematic issue was the passing on of such disturbed communal experiences to the next generation of Iraqis. Collective communal memory of eight years of war and its effects not limited just to those who died or returned physically or mentally scarred but also their families and children. An issue which owing to Iraq's relative inaccessibility for research can only be estimated but seems likely under assessed.

The Chaldean experience during this period mirrored that of other Iraqis but was tempered by the existence of the wider Middle Eastern and Western diaspora which opened opportunities for migration. Bidawid encouraged Chaldeans to remain even despite difficulties with his working relationship with the government and Husain playing a substantial part in this – aided by his reputedly more charismatic personality than his predecessor. (Seferta 2008, 18) A relationship which the patriarch had to navigate carefully and in the context of another major war from August 1990.

**Second Gulf War 1990–1991 and migration**

Bidawid was strong in his condemnation of the Coalition invasion and at least officially supported Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. A Christian Peace Conference modelled after one held by Iraqi Muslim leaders earlier that year was staged in December 1990. As the title of the conference suggested the Iraqi churches were present to pursue a peaceful resolution and support Husain's plan for a negotiated settlement to the crisis which was couched in terms of defeating foreign threats to the Arab nationalist struggle. (Long
Husain also drew upon religious rhetoric to support resistance to the Coalition forces: contrasting the righteousness of Iraq's cause with the blasphemous betrayal of Christian values which American President George H. W. Bush pursued by attempting to intervene militarily in the situation. (Long 2004, 132)

During and after the war on occasions Bidawid's choice of words may seem to have been injudicious; stating in January 1991 that chemical weapons might be used by Iraq as a last resort if invaded or, for example, calling Husain a "real gentleman". (The Tablet 1991, 110; Corley 2003) Whilst in other instances unequivocally referring to Coalition preparations for entering Kuwait as a crime and that the Baathist annexation of Kuwait was justified in view of the economic warfare (viz. the manipulation of oil prices) by which Iraq was affected in the preceding two years. (The Tablet 1991, 110) Yet he was also realistic about the effects another conflict could have upon Iraqi society with the potential of widespread anti-Christian feeling developing through accusations of proximity to western interests. I suggest Bidawid considered such statements and expressing devotion to Iraq the most utilitarian means to secure and even advance the Chaldeans' position post-conflict. Indeed, it should be recalled that the outcome of the American led war against Iraq was considered to be far from a foregone conclusion at the time with Iraq's military one of the largest in the Middle East with substantial combat experience over the previous decade.

Post-war Iraq

Whilst the immediate effects of the January–February 1991 Coalition invasion were restricted to Iraqi soldiers and the populations of Baghdad and Iraq south of the capital; the entire population of Iraq suffered from the subsequent effects of infrastructure destruction and the state's inability to rebuild following the implementation of comprehensive punitive sanctions. In this context migration external to Iraq was a popular option for the Chaldeans. The professional classes were in the best position to leave the country or, if they remained, escape from the effects of inflation and limited
material resources due to higher salaries. The most severely affected were those Chaldeans too poor to afford the costs of migration or alleviate their position in the face of rising inflation.

It seems likely the loss of a critical mass of Chaldeans in Iraq to the community's long term maintenance was not apparent until after the end of the 1991 Gulf War. Prior to the War the construction of a new Chaldean cathedral in Baghdad had been planned with the capacity for 5,000 persons whilst a new Christian higher education institute, Babylon College, had opened in 1990. (Yacoub 1996, 32–33; Rassam 2010, 175) Thus, despite the Iran-Iraq War the Chaldean presence was regarded as likely to continue and, in general, Iraq was perceived to have sufficient resources to re-develop from 1988. The destruction to infrastructure in 1991 and the status accorded to Iraq as a pariah state in the aftermath radically changed this situation.

Quality of Christian life in Iraq declined further and rapidly from the mid-1990s with four major catalysts: the implementation of a more hard-line state security policy; the decline in quality of healthcare; the bombing of Iraq by Coalition forces during Operation Desert Fox in 1998; and the end of the state's neutrality policy in religious affairs which saw Husain seeking the support of Islamist groups to shore up his loss in support from other sections of Iraqi society.

In response to the new Iraqi reality and the difficulties which Christians throughout the Middle East were facing from economic difficulties Bidawid pushed for greater co-ordination between the churches. He assisted with the foundation of the Council of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops (in the Middle East) and a Council with a similar purpose for the clergy in Iraq. (Rassam 2010, 172) To continue the Chaldean tradition of contributing to wider society Bidawid established Caritas Iraq a charitable organisation to alleviate difficulties Iraqis experienced as a result of sanctions. (Rassam 2010, 172) It seems likely Bidawid's vision for shoring up the Chaldean position can be credited to his time ministering to Lebanese Chaldeans: the awareness he gained of the realities of social and military conflicts in a quasi-functional and multi-confessional state equipped him well to deal with the difficulties which Iraq experienced.
One immediate aspect of the war's aftermath was the defeat of an anti-government rebellion by the Iraqi armed forces. The rebellion's suppression intended as a marker of Husain's re-affirmation of control over the state. It appears Chaldeans were not widely involved in the rebellion but there had existed a widespread assumption that the government would be overthrown and it appears that political forces outside of Iraq and in Kurdistan attempted to influence Chaldeans to become more closely involved with the rebellion in order to gain an advantageous position in a post-Baathist Iraq. (O’Mahony 2003, 7)

Bidawid, to avoid any implications of collusion with foreign powers, the Kurdish nationalist aspirations, an association with a political party or an association with a proposed Assyrian state was opposed to asserting a particular ethnic identity for the Chaldeans. Far rather he proposed that one can have a national affiliation apart from Iraqi Arab – if so desired – and one can also be a Chaldean. (Petrosian 2006, 115–117) This view was based on two factors; political and social difficulties as indicated but also from a recognition of the limits placed on church's ecclesiology by so doing. The Chaldeans could not affirm to belong to a missionary orientated institution if the limits of the community relied on an ethnic connection – something which was alien to the church's missionary history. Moreover, as the Chaldeans grew in size in the diaspora and expanded their work in the modern ecumenical movement a paradigm of mutual aid between the Syriac churches and more widely among the eastern churches began to form which was antithetical to those who asserted a particular ethnic nature of religious identity.

However, Bidawid had to manage the expectations, status and safety of the Chaldeans in what were becoming two distinct state entities the Kurdish administered region and Iraq proper. Joseph relates how during a visit to northern Iraq in 1998 Bidawid stated: ` `"[Christians and Kurds] are the sons of this land; we have a joint history. I can even say, more than this: We have common blood." ' (Joseph 2000, 221) Such a view seems unlikely to have been endorsed by Husain but I suggest there was perhaps recognition within the Baath administration that the patriarch was not just
the President's "man" but a leader of an international community to which he had diverse responsibilities.

**Chaldean migration 1991–2003**

The Melkite priest Jean Corbon identified a process of *delocalisation* during the twentieth century whereby a church has origins or long-term residence in one place but subsequently the community migrates in whole or in part to one or more locations often some distance from their place of origin. (Corbon 1998, 98) The Melkites are a prime example of this: with a global population of 1.6 million nearly half of all Melkites live in South America. Causes of population displacement inherent to delocalisation vary – from economic decline to persecution – and such a process can even be placed in the context of the normative Christian missionary impulse resulting from geographical displacement. The process permitting the revivification of ecclesial life in new environments and the development of an ecclesiological vision which more effectively meets the needs of an international church.

There are strong precedents for the delocalisation of the Chaldeans from their heritage as part of the undivided Church of the East. The missionary impulse which saw the propagation of the East Syriac tradition throughout Asia from the Late Antique to Late Medieval periods and continued in the nineteenth century with Joseph VI Audo's attempts to maintain jurisdiction over the East Syriac communities in India. The difference of conception between delocalisation and that of missionary activity should be one more of terminology than of nature given that migration can provoke interest in the religious identity and practices of a migrant community among native residents much as active missionary work does.

The chief barrier to delocalisation becoming an active missionary process during the internationalisation of the Chaldeans in the twentieth century due to the negative connotations attached to the causes of migration from a context of persecution, extended conflict and socio-political
disenfranchisement in Iraq. By contrast, the spread of East Syriac Christianity in the period fifth to thirteenth centuries came during an era of particularly active propagation of the faith from a community proportionately larger in size and with greater resources during a sustained era of the expansion of socio-economic development throughout Asia. The level of hardening of religious communal boundaries in the twentieth century; the militant Muslim opposition to the spread of Christianity in Central Asia and the Middle East and the ambivalence of populations in the West to Christianity causing active missionary work perhaps to be more challenging than any time since the Apostolic era.

The greatest Chaldean concentrations outside of the Middle East came to reside in the USA with Detroit, Michigan becoming one of the first and subsequently most long lasting diaspora hubs. (Bacall 2014, passim) Detroit was a focus for manufacturing industries for skilled and unskilled labour and appealed to a variety of Catholic migrants from Chaldeans and Maronites to Ukrainians and Irish. The Chaldeans were supported by the Maronites from the outset of their arrival attending their Liturgy before the arrival of their first permanent priest in 1947. (Seferta 2004) The lack of a priest and dedicated religious institutions from the first arrival of Chaldeans to Detroit in 1889 was far from unusual among early Arab migrants to the USA who were reluctant to establish churches and mosques as they had considered their stay to be a temporary one. (Seferta 2004; Kayyali 2006, 87) The possibility of a return to the Middle East not then being far from their minds with perhaps a perception that western social and technological changes would soon have their effect in their homelands. This viewpoint altered as the attachments to the Middle East declined and stronger ties to the West developed in recognition that their position in the West allowed for an explicitly Christian culture to develop more abundantly. (Swan and Saba 1974, 89)

Migration from 1991 continued to favour the USA as a final destination but increased in geographical spread with new concentrations in Scandinavia, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Jordan, Syria, Greece, Britain, Georgia and Australasia.
In the European diaspora and the Middle East (outside of Iraq) the emphasis in ecclesial life has been for shared activity with other Syriac churches (especially the Syrian Catholics and Church of the East) and/or attendance at the Latin liturgy. The Syriac Orthodox Church, Church of the East and Ancient Church of the East all have one or more European dioceses by comparison the Syrian Catholic and Chaldean Catholic churches have only at most patriarchal vicariates. Whereas in North America and Australasia Chaldean jurisdictions have been present since 1982 and 2006 respectively with it is perhaps being easier to establish dioceses in contiguous states – in Europe the Chaldeans are spread widely across a variety of jurisdictional boundaries both ecclesial and national.

Nevertheless, the lack of European Chaldean dioceses is surprising and where Chaldeans are not granted sufficient ecclesial support encourages engagements with other Syriac churches. Across the whole of Britain, for example, there has only ever been one Chaldean priest available to work on a variety of projects to support the community and to form and maintain a sense of Chaldean ecclesiological identity quite apart from the necessity to provide the sacraments.49

Until the 1990s motivation to migrate largely derived from hope for short to medium term social stability and economic advantage and a desire to live within a more Christian cultural environment (if migrating to the West). From the 1990s with Kurdish de facto independence northern Iraq with its many resources and traditional East Syriac ties also proved increasingly popular as a destination for families from Baghdad, Basra and Kirkuk. Migration into Kurdistan was not universally viewed as necessary or desirable by Chaldeans but substantial changes were taking place with Baghdad losing perhaps up to half of its Chaldean population between 1990 and 2000. (Roberson CSP 2014) The ecclesiological and social implications of this cannot be underestimated as for those who remain life becomes harder as the social space left by the departed Chaldeans is filled by other

49 Fr Habib Jajou (from 2014 bishop of the Archdiocese of Basra) had as of 2012 approximately 500 families to minister to, many of whom do not reside near to the main community in London but across Britain. Of those outside his immediate remit many attend the Latin liturgy to fulfil their Sunday obligation. (Interview, London, November 2012)
influences and factions. Whilst ecclesiological attachment to Baghdad which had formed the centre of Chaldean life since the 1950s was reduced and the status of the patriarch weakened – without a sufficiently large community to refer to, the patriarch's ability to represent Christian affairs to the Baath élites as integral and essential to Iraqi society was reduced.

**Meeting the varied needs of the Chaldeans**

Tensions existed between clergy and laity over delocalisation in a strategic context and as to how they should contribute to the Church in the long-term. The hierarchy emphasised from 1991 the need for the community to remain in the regions from where their ecclesiastical culture developed to ensure its character and contributions to Iraqi society was sustained which had been emphasised since the Second Vatican Council. (Cherubini 1995a, 46; Asianews.it 2013) There continues to exist an underlying fear, which is not widely acknowledged, of the switch between ecclesial identities by migrants whether in the West or the Middle East. This is not necessarily a process migrants enter into willingly but does suggest that the Chaldean clergy in the diaspora are unprepared to maintain a Chaldean ecclesial identity because of the context of rapid changes in population which have occurred since 1991. An example of such a challenge is found in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan where perhaps up to 30,000 Iraqi Chaldeans have resided prior to further onward migration from 2003 to 2013 yet there has only ever been one Chaldean chaplain in Jordan at any one time. (Conversations with Latin and Chaldean community members, Amman, May 2013)

The Latin community in Jordan is considered by Iraqi migrants and refugees to have a particularly welcoming atmosphere where to be a Christian is the main aspect of identity. (Conversations with Latin and Chaldean community members, Amman, May 2013) Thus, explicitly Chaldean identity is diluted through taking part in religious life in such a *milieu*. The number of *de facto* conversions to the Latin church by other
eastern Christians appears also to have been and continues to be quite high as a result of the economic and charitable support available but also due to Latin social and educational institutions. However, no statistics are kept even of *de jure* conversions due to the controversial nature of such conversions in the current environment of modern ecumenism and attempts to maintain the survival of churches which are much smaller numerically and financially than the Latin patriarchate in Jordan. Chaldean clergy are right to speak up on migration yet if measures are not put in place to secure an identity more heavily influenced by the East Syriac tradition the number of these Latin-Chaldeans will almost certainly continue to increase.

This is a broader issue than just a religious concern with the Christians becoming lost among the refugee populations in the Levant with those who would normatively be most active in sustaining Iraqi society denied opportunity to commit to the societies in which they came to reside due to difficulties attaining visas or residence status. At the time of their departure migrants are often of a younger age and better qualified (but not necessarily all the young are better qualified and *vice versa*) thus increasing the average age of the community in Iraq with fewer persons able to replace the rôles of adults who travel abroad for work. (Cf Sabella 1998, 152) The Chaldean refugee population in Jordan appears oversupplied with talented and well qualified workers reflected in the variety of professions among the people encountered during research in May and June 2013 including engineers, university lecturers, self made business men and women, architects, and NGO workers. Their available skills being not always possible to put to good use in Jordan where many work as restaurant serving staff, for example, for a minimal salary as low as eighty Jordanian dinars a week.  

The particular difficulties which Christian Iraqis experienced are seen in the disparity between their size in Iraq by contrast with the entire Middle East. As of 1998 3.2 percent of Iraqis were Christian whereas for the whole of the Middle East the Christian population was 6.3 percent. (Pacini 1998, 15, 22) The larger Christian proportion of the populations of Lebanon, Syria and Egypt notwithstanding and leading to a higher average this was

50 Roughly equivalent to £70 as of 2013.
still a significant demographic difference affected by the outcome of the 1991 war and subsequent sanctions. This was reflected in refugee statistics collated prior to the invasion in 2003 which showed in 2001 of those officially registered refugees Iraqis were the third greatest population globally and in 2000 the second largest group seeking asylum in economically developed countries. (Chatelard 2002, 1)

**Final years of Husain and Bidawid**

The Chaldean situation in Iraq and abroad was complicated during Bidawid's last five years in office (1998–2003) due to ill health. In and of itself the Chaldean patriarchal rôle was difficult but when coupled with attempting to restore its status in a declining economic atmosphere and faced with antipathy by major powers in and outside the Middle East this factor became significant. Bidawid absented himself from Iraq and sought treatment in the Lebanon which whilst necessary given the parlous state of healthcare in Iraq was criticised by many in the Iraqi Chaldean community.51

Nevertheless, Bidawid continued his work as far as he was able which included acting as an intermediary – either himself or another senior cleric – between the Iraqi government and the Holy See. This relationship in turn formed a channel to opening Chaldean relations with western political leadership and demonstrated plurality which still existed in Iraq and evidence that not all Iraqi life was determined by Husain which became a popularised point of view in Western media in the lead up to the 2003 invasion.

The strength of goodwill which Husain built up with the Holy See saw plans laid for a visit by John Paul II to Iraq in 2000. (Mostyn 1999) The visit was eventually cancelled due to fears over ensuring the pope's security and the potential for Baathist embarrassment were anything untoward to occur or John Paul to make any statements which could be detrimental to the USA as the force behind the sanctions or critiquing Baathist policies. (O’Mahony 2005, 37) Nevertheless, meetings continued between senior

---

51 Such a situation following him to the grave with his 2003 funeral held in Beirut.
members of the Congregation of the Oriental Churches and Baathist leadership typically Tariq Aziz. The presence of Cardinals in Iraq reflected the Holy See's continued interest in the well being of the Christian population and reinforced to the international Catholic community that Iraqi Catholics were an integral part of the universal church. Their long standing relationship with the Holy See also assisting the Chaldeans in justifying their presence in a western environment when they are so little acknowledged by the western churches in general. The presence of St Thérèse of Lisieux's relics in 2002 in Iraq a sign of the Iraqi Catholic population's continued commitment to the universal and multi-faceted international Catholic community. (ZENIT News Agency 2002b) Given that St Thérèse is also one of the patrons of Catholic missions I suggest this also marked a point of reflection on the challenging environment for the Catholic community's growth in Iraq.

**Modern ecumenism**

Bidawid's engagement with political powers was reflected in his efforts to advance modern ecumenism with other churches as supported by the decrees of the Second Vatican Council 'Unitatis Redintegratio' and 'Orientalium Ecclesiarum'. Bidawid had been an early supporter of such modern ecumenical sentiments stating at the Council:

```
` `Omnes Christifideles in mea Eparchia, precibus petunt et vota faciunt ut hoc Concilium Oecumenicum unitati Ecclesiae praesto sit, ut sint unum ovile et unus pastor." ' (Cherubini 1995b, 14)
```

Modern ecumenical discourse affirmed the necessity of developing relations with eastern Christians not in union with the Holy See and in particular recognising their historic mission and witness. (Paul VI 1964, sec. 5, 24) The purpose of engaging with other Christians changed from one of direct attempts at conversion to the Catholic Faith and submission to the Holy See
to a focus on re-considering theological disagreements with a hope for reconciliation. (Girling 2012, 38–40)

The Chaldeans have pursued ecumenism especially vigorously as their situation in Iraq is unmatched in the Arab Middle East since the Second World War for the rate of decline of a Christian population perhaps with the exception of the churches in occupied Palestine. The encouragement for engagement with other eastern Christians had been, prior to the 1960s, supported in Baghdad at the Carmelite "Centre" under the direction of Frs Robert Beulay and Raymond Charbonnier from 1956. (Hansbury 2007) The appeal of ecumenism was to give Iraqi Christians an apparent means to forge a united front to inform the rest of Iraqi society of their contribution to the country, to consolidate available resources between communities and to act as a mediating influence, however unofficially, between Sunni and Shia.

Regional discussions were formalised from 1974 taking place within the context of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) the chief inter-Christian ecumenical body in the region. MECC had been formed as an extension of the World Council of Churches to pursue debate specifically resonant with the local churches especially regarding the issue of relations with Muslims on a temporal and religious level. The other main arena for dialogue is within the Syriac tradition at the Pro Oriente forum. The forum was founded in 1964 with a view to implementing the principles of ecumenical reconciliation of 'Unitatis Redintegratio' among the eastern Christian communities in particular. From 1993 the Church of the East was invited to take part in dialogue with the Chaldeans and further to share Catholic academic and pastoral resources which resulted in the Holy See granting Church of the East clergy the opportunity to study in Chaldean institutions in Baghdad and Vatican universities. (See, for example, Soro 2004; Youssef 1996)

As a result of these engagements significant changes were brought about in the East Syriac communities' relationship through the completion

---

52 The Church of the East has yet to join the MECC with accusations of heresy related to a perceived Nestorian Christology still raised.
of agreements in 1997 and 2001. The former for the establishment of co-operation at an official level between the two in pastoral areas and the latter for granting permission for inter-communion at the Divine Liturgy between the churches. (Mar Raphael I Bidawid and Mar Dinkha IV 1998, 185–188)

The growth in diaspora communities' size suggests that co-operation between the churches may become a more frequent activity as resources are dissipated so widely in North America, Australia and Europe. The diaspora outside of the Middle East had, as of 2000, become the new homeland for approximately twenty-five percent of Chaldeans and during the 1990s at least one third of all Christians had left Iraq and the numbers only increased following the approach to the Second Gulf War. (Roberson CSP 2010; Petrosian 2006, 114)

**Prelude to the invasion of 2003**

On reflection over a decade after the 2003 invasion it appears war was inevitable once the Coalition powers had determined the need to expand their strategic positions in the Middle East. The strength of anti-war feeling exhibited by the populations of the invading countries ignored: the largest world wide public demonstrations for decades having no impact on the resolve of the Coalition governments to invade Iraq. With such a scenario Bidawid's efforts to shore up the Chaldean population and Iraqi society in the face of war may now appear to have been futile. Yet at the time they were underpinned by belief in Divine Hope that war could be averted and reinforced by the awareness that the removal of Husain presaged not just a change of political order but also a loss of Iraq as a national entity.

Reflections by Christians since the invasion of March 2003 have considered the relative quality of life under Saddam Husain to their present situation as refugees unable for the most part to sustain livelihoods in their own country. One Christian interviewed in 2007 argued that Husain was: "a secular leader especially good for Christians, as long as they stayed out of the way..."When Saddam was in power there was no fighting. Saddam
loved the Christians'' (Sudilovsky 2007) Whilst we may not go so far as to support the interviewee's understanding of Husain's admiration for Christians – his personal Chaldean cook notwithstanding – the human cost of the occupation of Iraq indicates the preference which they had for his rule is not without merit. There appears to have been an understanding that religious and political instability leading to sectarian conflict would destroy their position in society. Nevertheless, Iraqi Christian life during the twentieth century should not necessarily all be viewed in the prism of a decline in well-being, status or near permanent migration and as Betts notes as of the 1970s: 'The combined advantages of affluence, education, higher health standards, and a strong sense of community worked to create an enviable social image for Christians' (Betts 1979, 136) Furthermore, large proportions of Christians remained in Iraq regardless of internal political changes and with no desire to leave. We should recall that in the Iraqi Kurdistan region since the establishment of permanent semi-autonomy from 1992 that the Christians were regarded as net contributors to society. Nevertheless, the overall mindset of Christians and the psychological burden altered sufficiently even in Kurdistan that a communal melancholia developed – quite naturally and understandably – from March 2003.


This section of the thesis provides a history of the Chaldean Church during the ten years following the 2003 invasion of Iraq with analysis focusing on the effects of conflict and socio-economic change on Chaldean ecclesiology and ecclesiastical organisation. Source material having been collated largely during fieldwork in northern Iraq in October 2013 which consists of baptismal, marriage and population records from Chaldean parish and diocesan archives. Information was also provided by Chaldean clergy in central and southern Iraq – regions inaccessible due to constraints on freedom of movement – and who have supplied information from their own
records. Discussions and interviews with Chaldeans were also conducted ranging from political activists and historians to clergy and physicians.\textsuperscript{53}

As this is a growing and unexplored area of study much work remains to be done. However, the fieldwork for this study is fortunate to have been completed in 2013 prior to the rise of Da'esh. Further accumulation of data even via e-mail correspondence from June 2014 proving very difficult due to the direct ethnic cleansing of the Christian populations in northern Iraq. Whether a similar study can be conducted again in the future remains to be seen but the research findings presented here document the Chaldean Church at a crucial cross roads in its history.

**Chaldean identity post-invasion**

From the 1990s Iraqi Christian identity became more fluid and less denominationally bound with a more generic identity beginning to emerge among the communities in Iraq expressed largely either as *Iraqi Christian* or *Assyrian Christian* and confusion as to nomenclature can occur. This can lead to ignorance of the ecclesial differences which do exist still and, in the context of assertions of Assyrian nationalism, Iraqi Christian identity can itself be subsumed. This has not always been consistently recognised in existing secondary literature but it is important to recall as nearly all Iraqi Christians encountered during fieldwork still held a strong attachment to and identification with the church in which they were baptised but, since the invasion, in tension with their identity as Iraqi citizens and as to their perceived ethnic identity whether Arab, Assyrian or other.

I suggest Iraqi Christians in the post-invasion era were obliged to provide a definition of communal and personal identity as a result of residing in a society with competing notions of what constitutes membership of the Iraqi nation. This further complicated by the confines of the Islamic Arab *milieu* in which Shia and Sunni have varied opinions as to how non-Muslim Iraqis should be treated in law. Views which required

\textsuperscript{53}Unless otherwise noted and referenced analysis and information presented below comes from the aforementioned research and fieldwork sources.
creative Christian communal responses and to demonstrate identities which in some way could meet the expectations of their own communities and the external observers who queried their status as fully integrated members of Iraqi society. Thus, in effect, attempting to re-justify the Christian presence despite its heritage and to re-instil confidence in the church as a legitimate influence upon Iraqi society.

**Historical Overview (2003–2008)**

From March 2003–March 2013 Iraq saw an immediate socio-economic and political decline with a gradual growth in stability of a sort in some provinces. This stabilisation especially notable for those, including many Chaldeans, resident in the northern Iraqi provinces of Duhok, Sulaymaniya and Erbil administered by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). By the mid-1990s, the three provinces had effectively become an independent Kurdish led state defended by the Coalition imposed No-Fly Zone over northern Iraq and backed by claims to the oil reserves present in the provinces or in close proximity to the border with Iraq proper. This status quo continued into the twenty-first century with the Kurdish armed forces (Peshmerga) facilitating the 2003 Coalition invasion.\(^5\)

The KRG is largely pro-Western in its foreign and economic policies with commitments from the political élite to protect the numerical minority groups' rights especially Christians. Unofficially these commitments vary by location but the general level of freedom from violence and economic opportunities which the KRG offered saw thousands of Chaldean families move from central and southern provinces to northern Iraq.

---

\(^5\) The Peshmerga (literally translated as "those willing to face death") emerged in the 1940s under the leadership of Kurdish nationalist Mustafa Barzani. For much of the rest of the twentieth century they formed the vanguard of the Kurdish nationalist movement's armed forces in northern Iraq with branches from both the main Kurdish movements: the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Since 2003 the peshmerga have been gradually integrated into the armed forces of the KRG becoming the largest native military force in Iraq with largely better morale and esprit d'corps if not training and equipment than the reformed Iraqi armed forces under Coalition direction. (Lortz 2005, 66–72)
Radical alteration of life expectations

Through removing the rule and state apparatus of Saddam Husain and the Baath Party the Coalition removed those elements which had coerced, regulated and controlled nearly all aspects of Iraqi life. Thus, as for all Iraqis, Chaldeans have seen a radical re-orientation of life expectations. The change from a situation of relative security under Husain to one of apparent freedom in the new republic providing few tangible benefits to the Chaldeans with their perceived proximity to Western ideas and political agendas leading to persecution. A sustained atmosphere of security in which all Iraqi citizens could exercise a normal life remained elusive with regular sectarian violence between radical Shia and Sunni Islamist factions a threat to even the most basic of day-to-day activities.

These difficulties were exemplified once the initial stages of occupation were completed. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) disbanded the Iraqi army and police on 23rd May 2003. The CPA considered it a political imperative to remove IBP influence from the coercive arms of the state but gave little consideration to the impact of such changes. The lack of native security forces was disastrous for the maintenance of law and order and exacerbated the situation for the Christians. They rarely resorted to organising a community militia for self-defence as was the case for many Muslim or even Yezidi groups.

Another difficulty for the Chaldeans at the time of the invasion was a leadership crisis. Patriarch Bidawid died in July 2003 and his successor – Emmanuel III Delly – was ultimately selected by the Holy See after the Chaldean synod of bishops had failed to reach a decision. Antoine Audo SJ, Bishop of Aleppo, emerged as a prominent candidate but was perceived to suffer from a lack of direct contemporary experience of Chaldean life in Iraq. That no decision was reached to choose such a well qualified candidate, I suggest, indicative of the loss of direction towards the end of Bidawid's life and the limited influence he had in the choice of his successor. The Holy See in being obliged to determine the successor and in

55 The CPA was the body which was to act as the Iraqi government in the time prior to which elections could be held for the Iraqi parliament. (Bremer 2003)
choosing Delly also reflected a somewhat surprising lack of forethought in what the Chaldeans required for their leadership at a time of qualitative change in Iraq and the short-sightedness of selecting a leader who was not well integrated with extended church networks in the Middle East with strong understanding of the institutions of the contemporary Holy See.

We should recognise the difficulty legacy which Delly assumed from Bidawid and his own status as a compromise candidate which inhibited developing an authoritative leadership position which a clear victory at the patriarchal election could have granted. Delly was a fortunate choice insofar as he had an excellent knowledge of internal Chaldean affairs and the ecclesiastical organisation of the Church in Iraq down to parish level. Yet he lacked that sense of communal confidence which is derived from successful transitions between leaders. I suggest this was the foundation for a sense of long term disappointment among many Chaldeans in the patriarchal office to outline a comprehensive approach to meeting the demands of the new Iraq. Perhaps also leading to a consolidation of diocesan identities with individual bishops being obliged to become de facto leaders of "churches". It is possible that a patriarch with a stronger personality could have withstood better the competing demands of the Iraqi dioceses, the demands of the increasingly autonomous Chaldean dioceses of the United States and the overall decline of Iraqi socio-economic life. This should be borne in mind when considering the following assessment of recent Chaldean history.

**The effects of the invasion by Coalition forces in 2003 on the Chaldean community and initial attempts to re-construct civil society**

In attempting to enforce democracy on Iraq the CPA followed the same essential processes as the British had attempted in the 1920s in establishing Iraq as a state for the first time which included the creation of new executive, legislative, judicial and military branches of the state. These developments generally dictated by what was perceived to meet the needs of the occupying power than changes which would have been best suited to the
native population. This was seen in the composition of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) established in July 2003 whose twenty-five members were to advise the CPA. Whether this was more than a mere veneer of supposed legitimisation of the occupation is open for question but it at least supposed an attempt to better reflect the ethnic and religious groups who composed the Iraqi nation.\(^{56}\)

The major differences between the two reformulations of Mesopotamia-Iraq were in available technology, highly increased destructive power of weaponry and, as a result of previous Coalition interventions, increased enmity. It would appear, therefore, the potential for the successful establishment of a republican democracy under the United States' tutelage was far less likely than that of a constitutional monarchy encouraged by the British. In the Chaldeans' case at least the British had recognised the significance of including their patriarch within the legislature from 1921.

In 2003 Chaldean cognisance of their vital role in the development of Mesopotamia-Iraq extended to a formal letter of the hierarchy addressed to the CPA's head, Paul Bremer, requesting acknowledgement of this and further, to permit them a formal rôle in re-developing Iraqi national life. (Emmanuel III Delly et al. 2003) This appears to have been ignored and Christians were to be frozen out of making a meaningful contribution to nation formation. It appears the CPA were at a loss as how to engage with the non-Muslim populations and were pursuing a policy of ameliorating communal divisions in Iraq focused on the Sunni-Shia religious and Arab-Kurdish ethnic dichotomies with little awareness of Iraq's plurality.

It may appear in retrospect that the Iraqi situation was without any likely resolution and consider the Chaldean attempts to re-affirm their presence and commitment as futile at this juncture. It was, however, considered even worse were they to do nothing entirely. The bishops' letter was submitted at a time when it was thought that development of a positive nature could still occur prior to the start of intensified Shia-Sunni conflicts, the rise of Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the terminal migration of the Chaldean

---

\(^{56}\) (13 Shia, 5 Kurds, 5 Sunni, 1 Turkmen, 1 "Assyrian". Tripp 2007, 284)
Christians speaking with one voice?

The Chaldeans faced the challenge of protecting their own community and maintaining their leadership role among the Iraqi churches and as the largest non-Muslim community. However, as we have noted in earlier chapters, political and denominational divisions among the churches existed for much of the twentieth century and only with the start of ecumenical engagements was unity of action recognised as a means to consolidate the security of Iraqi Christians into the future. (Lamani 2009, 11)

An attempted consensus among Christians emerged in 2003 when the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) discussed the descriptive term "Chaldo-Assyrian" for use in the new state's constitutional and legal framework when referring to the Christian population. Unified nomenclature was complicated by the requirement to cover so many competing interests and involved conflicting views as to the appropriate future role of the churches and Christian political organisations. The ADM's efforts were initially supported by many churches including the Chaldeans. However, the Chaldean hierarchy later withdrew support largely due to fears that the ADM and their preferred aggregate term would be used as part of a push for the establishment of an autonomous Christian region in Iraq something to which the Chaldean hierarchy remained opposed. (Teule 2011e, 315–316) The situation in Iraq by mid-2003 was such that unity of any kind may have been preferable in order to be better engaged in the state re-formation process. Yet in the context of Bidawid's death and subsequent patriarchal election it was very difficult for the Chaldeans to provide a definitive commitment to such inter-Christian initiatives.

I suggest the churches were reluctant to engage with ostensibly Christian political parties owing to continuing dispute over as to who could better represent the community on a national level and as to whether religiously or politically directed identity was a better means for securing
the Chaldean community in Iraq. The former emphasising Iraqi citizenship and a plural society the latter often emphasising the imperative of an autonomous Christian region and a withdrawal from engagement with wider Iraqi society. Nevertheless Chaldean leaders were obliged to retain working relationships with Christian politicians and their positions within Iraqi representative bodies as they were able to directly assist the Christians through facilitating the provision of housing, the resolution of legal disputes – especially with the KRG – and the granting of government funding. (Teule 2012, 187)

The rise of violence against Christians

Intimidation of Christians began with videos of be-headings left outside homes in Mosul in Spring 2003 whilst Patriarch Delly received, in June 2003, a letter accusing him of collaboration and demanding he leave Iraq. (Rassam 2012a, 13; Gunn 2009, 10) Such a focus on the patriarch three months after the invasion indicating a developed awareness of the Chaldean presence.

The first most comprehensive attack against the Christian population took place on 1 August 2004 when five churches were bombed in Baghdad and Mosul with eleven people killed and fifty injured. (Glatz 2004; Hirst 2004b) The focus of these attacks on Catholic churches (Armenian, Syrian and Chaldean) was justified by blaming ‘the Pope for leading an anti-Muslim crusade’. (Hirst 2004a, 25) The spurious reasoning provided by the Islamist group an attempted justification for ongoing criminal and terrorist behaviour manifested as religiously motivated violence against Christians in general. Bombing attacks against churches continued in October and December in Baghdad with, it appeared, increasingly co-ordinated if short and intense campaigns aimed at removing the Christian presence.

From a regional perspective attacks on the Chaldeans were largely confined to Baghdad, Kirkuk, in and around Mosul and nearby Christian villages of the Nineveh plain. Basra had a significant Chaldean presence but
saw less anti-Christian attacks which can perhaps be accounted for by the lack of an intensified Sunni-Shia conflict due to the Shia dominance in southern Iraq. Regardless of their geographical location the Chaldeans maintained the status quo of their religious life even as it became more dangerous so to do and the growth of migration levels from central Iraq rapidly expanded.

It is notable that anti-Christian actions were undertaken long before Benedict XVI made comments which were perceived to criticise Islam in 2006 and indicates the reasoning for violence was established among Muslim attackers and marks out the papacy and the connected churches in Iraq as a particular target. (Benedict XVI 2006) Moreover, that the Holy See had been one of the leading voices most ardent in opposing the invasion seems to have gone unheeded. (ZENIT News Agency 2002a)

**Social and psychological affects after the end of Baath party rule**

Despite Iraq's socio-economic decline during the Iran-Iraq and Gulf wars the state's security apparatus and general stability remained largely the same and ensured that existential threats to Husain's rule were removed. This was demonstrated most strongly in the defeat of the 1991 popular rebellion and a widespread belief in the longevity and necessity of Husain's rule among many Iraqis existed. Therefore, to go from such a situation to the consistently disturbed society from March 2003 required of Chaldeans a re-assessment of personal, ecclesiological and political paradigms to determine one's place within the new order. Except that the new order brought with it only new competing social tensions with which to contend.

The psychological shock among the Chaldean population was immediate and to an extent paralysing, affecting the Church's ability to cope with the change inflicted and to contend with the ferocity of persecution. In the longer term it imprinted a fear of other Iraqis and a destructive pattern of self-doubt and disassociation of their patriotic attachment to the Iraqi nation.
This psychological development resulting from cultural and social change was highlighted by the Latin Archbishop of Baghdad, Jean Sleiman OCD (2001– ). Speaking in London in September 2008 he referred to the intensification of the outlook of *Dhimmitude* among the Christian population whereby they have been considered less than full members of society regardless of Muslim affirmations to the contrary since the seventh century. Such an outlook which, Sleiman stated, is `not [necessarily] reflected in the laws of the land but it is very present in the culture and psychology of the people.' (Sleiman OCD 2008) Bosworth noting from a longer term historical context:

>`It is surprising that, in the face of legal and financial disabilities...and of a relentless social and cultural Muslim pressure, if not of sustained persecution, that the dhimmī communities survived as well as they did' (Bosworth 2012, 161)

Similar effects and stipulations which began to be implemented in all but name against Iraqi Christians and seeing the emergence of a popular awareness not just of martyrdom of individual Christians or of different churches but a **martyrdom of the Christian narrative and presence in Iraq** and a denial of non-Muslim contributions to Mesopotamian-Iraqi history.

Physical and legal persecution has been a consistent threat faced by East Syriac Christians throughout their history. However, aside from events after 2003 martyrdom as a theme in the Chaldean Church had not been so resolutely impressed upon the entirety of the Chaldean communal memory other than during the Ottoman massacres of 1915–1918. For the period 1921–2003 the martyrdom narrative appears to have been suppressed and attempts made to play down the anti-Christian connotations which some events appeared to have. Whether through more senior members of the Church recommending to those affected that issues of contention in business dealings be dropped or that the motivations in the murder of Chaldeans could be ascribed to non-religious reasons. The intention to downplay these events as specifically anti-Christian to ensure that the secure social position
which Iraqi Christians had attained in general terms could be extended indefinitely. Furthermore, Chaldean desire to suppress the martyrdom concept on a level of communal memory among older generations also derived from a desire to forget the traumas experienced during the 1915--1918 massacres and subsequent forced displacement and the severe loss of ecclesiastical, cultural and material heritage.  

The re-awakening of the presence of the martyrdom theme came in the context of the post-2003 scenario of societal collapse and eventual civil war. A fixed narrative of marginalisation of Christians emerged which could not be challenged by the churches: at a society wide level the decline of the Christian presence was ignored, considered acceptable or inevitable. The lack of concern for the Christians by other Iraqis so prevalent it destroyed societal plurality and became indicative of the reinforcement of a sectarian milieu in which the lived reality of Christian life was of consistent social and material deprivation. A means of attempting to redeem this experience was through emphasising the nature of the process as one of martyrdom. In theory providing some comfort with the notion of the Chaldeans experiencing the lived reality of the Christian notion of long suffering in times of extreme trial. Yet for a population which had been in a state of sustained decline since the 1990s and now faced a final push out of wider Iraqi societal consciousness theological reflection offered little practical comfort and deeply affected the psychology of Chaldeans at communal and individual levels – rejection on a nationwide level in Iraq never having been experienced.

Changes in Christians' psychological outlook increased in damage through the lack of resources available to deal with trauma to which the invasion and subsequent persecution were witness. Due to the extent of these difficulties the Chaldean hierarchy looked to support their community as far as they were able and introduced training for seminarians and priests as to how to recognise and engage with community members who were suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other mental health

---

57 One older Chaldean man relating how having visited eastern Asia Minor to see areas once populated by members of the East Syriac churches he could weep for the pitiful status in Iraq to which the Christians of the region had been reduced. (Conversation, Erbil, October 2013)
difficulties. This training becoming vital to deal with the growth in mental health problems among the communities as it is approximated that P-TSD arising from conflict situations often emerges five to ten years after the event which causes symptoms to develop.

**A new constitutional order and Chaldean involvement?**

Regardless of the unstable social situation the implementation of a new constitution, it was hoped, might bring about some normalisation of the irregular status of Iraqi social interactions. Christians were wary of accepting the new constitution due to the limited opportunity which they had to influence the drafting of the document: Christians had only one meeting in August 2005 to air their concerns. (Yacoub 2010, 179) Nonetheless, the new fundamental law of Iraq received approval from the CPA and IGC on 28th August 2005 with a popular referendum later ratifying it in October.

The constitution granted some hope for the historical precedents of non-Islamic contributions to Mesopotamia-Iraq to be remembered. Referring to both the temporal and religious pre-Arab heritage in the Preamble which noted the production of the first law code under the Babylonian king, Hammurabi. (Yacoub 2010, 174, 175 n. 4) Such sentiments are in contrast with the rest of the document which ignore mention of non-Islamic contributors. Overall it is paradoxical, as from the outset, the constitution indicates support for democracy, rights of minorities and freedom of worship but is framed by the assertion that no new law can contradict the *sharia* and that the Federal Supreme Court is to be based around Islamic jurisprudence, a knowledge of which is required for all judges. (Yacoub 2010, 176)

By comparison, the preferences of the Chaldeans from March 2003 were for a lay state, emphasising the importance of citizenship and not submission to the new government; the rights of women and the disabled
and opposition to a state in any way based on ethnic divisions. (Yacoub 2010, 179–180) Themes which struggled to meet the demands of those who sought to create a state which embodied Islamic jurisprudence and gave basis to the interests of many Iraqi Muslims who were partisans of a religious revival in reaction to the lay state and secular culture which Husain had enforced until the last few years of his rule. The Islamic revival in the Middle East and south-west Asia from the 1970s often emphasising the implementation of sharia norms in tension with ‘matters of women, religious freedom, and co-existence with non-Muslims’. (Hefner 2014, 642)

The Chaldean preferences reflecting the precedents set at least officially under the rule of the IBP and by comparison similar to the paradigm still then experienced in Syria under the leadership of another Baathist president Bashar al-Assad. Audo outlines the situation thus:

‘Accustomed to a single and comfortable discourse at every level of the institutions of the state, especially the army, education and the single party, the Syrian people, despite their ethnic, religious and geographical differences, enjoyed a certain stability, with the comfort and progress which that brought. The country's Christians...found in this regime considerable security and a reining in of all religious extremism. We might even say that Christians prospered: in universities, manufacturing, business, etc.’ (Audo SJ 2012, 13)

In principle the new Iraqi constitution provided the opportunity for Christians to exist with a comfortable discourse with the government, its infrastructure and supposed they could remain contributors in Iraqi society with the opportunity to practice their faith. Constitutional articles which are particularly relevant to the Chaldean population include:

- 2 Freedom of worship
- 10 Freedom to worship at places of religious significance
- 35c State guarantee against religious coercion
- 36a Freedom of expression
- 40 Freedom of belief
• 41 State forbidden to interfere in administration of religious groups
• 41b `protection of places of worship' (‘Final Draft Iraqi Constitution’ 2005)

These concepts are further supported throughout the document with guarantees of rights for different ethnic and religious groups to self-administration and cultural and educational independence. (Yacoub 2010, 175) In practice these guarantees have been extremely difficult to maintain because of widely held and ingrained Muslim religious and cultural views on the lower worth attached to Christianity and other non-Muslim religions not just on a spiritual level but on the necessity of their legal status as subordinate to Muslims. (Taneja 2007, 26; ‘Final Draft Iraqi Constitution’ 2005, sec. 1, art. 2) The increasingly assertive Islamic groups which came to dominate Iraqi political and social life reinforced views and actions which had, to a large degree, been kept in check by Saddam Husain's government and were instead freely able to attempt to establish an idealised new Iraq in which significant minorities of the population would be repressed. The revivification of the distinct legal status of Christians in a Muslim dominated country a product of the long term Dhimmi conditioning which they had experienced over centuries and as was derived from Koranic and sharia based stipulations as to their treatment. (Hefner 2014, 639) Stipulations which however loosely enjoined upon the Christians throughout the history of Mesopotamia were never removed from Muslim Iraqi legal discourse into the twenty-first century. (Mallat 1988, 700)

Other difficulties associated with the formal wording of the constitution have also arisen for the Chaldeans. We can note, for example, the greater status in law which groups who have a cohesive and explicitly expressed ethnic identity are granted. (Yacoub 2010, 175–176) As the Chaldean hierarchy did not consistently support the idea that their community was an ethnic group it was not evident how their position as a separate religious group would be protected. This distinction is important for it purports a secondary tier to which the Chaldeans are ascribed – as merely a minority religious group – within the hierarchy of the nation and forms a precedent for future considerations of Iraqi society as delineated by
a sectarian milieu. Whereas, if they asserted a particular Aramaic, Syriac or Assyrian ethnicity they would appear in law to have a stronger claim to the resources of the state and a more "genuine" position in a social order which grew accustomed to a paradigm which suggested an explicit ethnic identity was necessary to achieve this.

A veneer of democracy, rights for numerical minorities and national unity as exists in the new Iraq is dangerous for it presupposes that there is some commitment among the state bureaucracy and government towards the manifestation and maintenance of these political ideals. As the Iraqi situation in 2015 was less unified and more fragmented politically we can share Byman's view that a democracy can exist in theory but often in practice exists with values determined by the faction which has the strongest control over the means of coercion which in practice leads to the exclusion of certain parties. (Byman 2003, 54) Moreover, the decisive influence of leaders who support the implementation of Islamic legal and cultural practices would appear to prevent the development of a lay state type paradigm which had been perceived as a goal in the introduction of representative democracy to Iraq. As noted above the Preamble of the new constitution states that Islamic values cannot be contradicted by any law yet commits Iraq to a republican, federal, democratic, pluralistic system. (Seferta 2005, 10; ‘Final Draft Iraqi Constitution’ 2005, Preamble) Given the multiplicity of interpretations of Islam within Iraq and the further multiplicity within these interpretations of what constitutes the best means of government it seems very difficult for pluralism to be effected in the long term.

The Iraqi civil war (2006–2007) and effects on the Chaldeans

At the end of 2005 Chaldean communities had declined in size due to migration in the face of socio-economic decline but were not yet at a precipitous level appearing to retain a critical mass sufficient to sustain their
presence indefinitely. However, demographic change increased and was brought into perhaps its most destructive phase from 2006–2007 where areas of Christian residence in Mosul and Baghdad were left significantly depleted following specific anti-Christian campaigns. This is particularly evident from the Chaldean parish registers in Baghdad which saw on average a just under fifty percent drop in the number of baptisms between 2005 and 2008. A selection of four parishes from across the city providing indication of this in Table 1.

Anti-Christian persecution in this period operated in the context of a Sunni-Shia civil war which saw unprecedented levels of violence. A situation in which Chaldeans were open to the predations of those inclined to view violence as the only means for societal change. The civil war of 2006–2007 should be distinguished from previous and successive periods of intense intra-societal conflict but as can be noted from Haddad's work the situation for Christians in general was as bit part actors in the unfolding sectarian narrative. (Haddad 2013, passim) These two years saw Sunni and Shia groups for the first time since 2003 seek to remove the other on a country wide scale from posing a threat to the other's implementation of a religiously based social order. The period led to a greater change in mindset of the Chaldeans than any since the invasion period in 2003 with it being widely asserted that not only would they seek security by migrating but that they had no intention of ever returning. (Conversations and observations among the Chaldean communities in northern Iraq, October 2013) This change of mindset is notable for whereas previously migration could occur on a temporary basis this period of violence marked the end of hope for a return to normality in their homeland.

The Chaldean position was compounded by a perceived lack of interest with which the wider Iraqi community held their plight and the lack of interest which the Western mainstream media regarded their situation outside of one-off special reports. A lack of interest which appears to have extended among those NGOs whose role was to alleviate conditions for internally displaced persons and refugees in the Kurdistan region and in Jordan and Syria. In speaking with Chaldean refugees, for example, in
Amman it was strongly emphasised the lack of support which they received from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the limited awareness which they had of the specific difficulties faced by the Christian communities by comparison with Muslim Iraqis which possibly stemmed from the UNHCR's refusal to record the religion of refugees.\textsuperscript{58} This in turn limited the collection of data by NGOs on the proportional effects of the war between the Christian and Muslim Iraqi populations.

Notably in this period quotations from an earlier era of Muslim antagonism towards Christian communities were remarked upon by Benedict XVI during the Regensberg lecture. Remarks which saw an intensification of attacks against Christians over a short period.\textsuperscript{59} However, attacks at the time did not appear to distinguish among the different Christian groups as an Iraqi Presbyterian minister was murdered in November 2006. The reasoning behind this event as 'revenge' for what Benedict XVI had said. (Hanish 2009, 7) This disconnect between the group who supposedly caused the offence and the actual person affected revealing the ignorance of those attacking them. It is unlikely that an average member of an Islamist militia would have a measured perspective on Benedict's remarks. By the time they had been popularised and drawn out of all proportion as to their context they became a convenient means of criticism and advanced the notion that the Crusades and the native Iraqi Christian presence were linked and were, in fact, an excuse to continue to engage in generic anti-Christian violence.

A direct attack to inhibit the future development of the Chaldean Church was launched in September and December 2006 with the kidnap of the rector and vice-rector respectively of St Peter's seminary in Baghdad. (Asianews.it 2006c) These events led to the decision to relocate the

\textsuperscript{58} It was also suggested that there was a deliberate policy by UN refugee agencies of delaying the bureaucratic processes for asylum or supporting their residence in Jordan once it was known that refugees were Christians. This is practically impossible to verify but several separate incidences were reported at length during a research visit in May and June 2013 to Amman.

\textsuperscript{59} The words which appear to have led to a strong Muslim reaction being that of the Byzantine emperor Manuel Paleologus (1391–1425): 'Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.' (Benedict XVI 2006)
institution to the Christian suburb of Erbil, Ankawa, where it re-opened in January 2007. The movement of the seminary though forced due to threat of violence was also pragmatic given the increasing Chaldean population resident in and around Ankawa which grew year on year in the period 2000–2007 from 2,100 to 6,450 families as can be seen in Table 2.

The growing pace of communal change hung heavily over the hierarchy and laity as they increased their efforts to support those in the internal Iraqi diaspora with new churches constructed along with accommodation, medical facilities and schools. There continued to exist a resolution to adapt and prosper as far as the situation permitted and at the establishment of a new church foundation in Erbil, Patriarch Emmanuel III Delly stated:

`And as our fathers have shed their blood for the prosperity of this country and its progress in faith and holiness, we should follow their footsteps. Do not be afraid, O small flock, for the Lord is with us until the end of the world despite all the persecutions that we face whether inside or outside. The interior persecution comes at the time when we are working hard for the good of this country believing that we have all the rights as we have all the duties.' (Emmanuel III Delly 2007)

Delly's remarks reflect the concerns which the hierarchy had for the Chaldean presence in some form to remain in Iraq not just as a token group but as integral to the formation of Iraqi political, social and cultural life. His words, however, failed to resonate with the experiences of Chaldeans outside of the Kurdistan region and the rapidly changing circumstances in which Chaldean families lived. Even those areas of traditional Chaldean concentration were becoming irreversibly weakened. June 2007 was most terribly marked by the murders of Fr Ragheed Aziz Ganni and Sub-Deacons Basman Yousef Daoud, Wadid Hanna and Ghasan Bidawid outside the church of the Holy Ghost in Mosul. These murders were explicitly anti-Christian with demands to the men that they convert to Islam immediately prior to the attacks along with demands for the closure of the church. The ripple effect of the attacks for months afterwards was for many to lead to a re-awakening and strengthening of their faith but also a questioning of the
practicalities of remaining resident in Mosul. The number of baptisms at Fr Ragheed's church had held strong during his ministry but dropped off exponentially following his death and 2008–2013 saw only five baptisms celebrated in the church: 2006 had seen 49 and 2007 15 baptisms. (Baptismal register Holy Ghost parish, Mosul, facsimile copy accessed October 2013) The psychological effects were lasting and changed the Chaldean mindset from one in which it was possible to consider oneself as still part of the Iraqi populace to an alien resident. The new reality appeared to be that as a Christian one could no longer act freely without dissimulation or leading an extremely sheltered life.

The death of Fr Ragheed struck at the heart of Chaldean life in Mosul as he represented the archetype of Christian in Iraq committed and loyal to a unified Iraqi state with a pluralistic social basis. He was well qualified as an engineer and on the way to completing a doctorate in theology in Rome but instead requested to return to Iraq after the invasion to assist in the re-building of the country. A very influential priest within the diocese of Mosul he eventually came to work as secretary to the then bishop, Polos Faraj Raho. Speaking in May 2005 at a Eucharistic Congress in Bari, Fr Ragheed had said:

``The terrorists might think they can kill our bodies or our spirit by frightening us, but, on Sundays, churches are always full. They may try to take our life, but the Eucharist gives it back'' (The Catholic Herald 2007a)

It appears that such faith expressed by the parochial clergy was one of the main means by which the Chaldean hierarchy could be certain of shoring up and keeping the laity strong in resolve to remain resident in Iraq.

Kidnapping as well as physical attacks remained an issue effecting the Chaldean community both among clergy and laity. In many instances kidnap was for purely monetary gain by criminals as opposed to terrorists with recognition of the relative wealth of Iraqi Christians. For those motivated by their religion kidnap was a convenient means to weaken the confidence of the Chaldean community in general and in particular to
weaken the Church's leadership. In the case of Fr Hani Abd al-Ahad who was abducted and tortured for two weeks in July 2007 in Baghdad the central focus appears to have been to attempt to force him to convert to Islam and to weaken the resolve of his congregation to reside in Iraq. Fr Hani when interviewed in January 2008 related the particularly anti-Christian nature of the kidnappers:

“They constantly told me that we Christians were infidels. I got a real lesson on how far their hatred for Christians goes, how it motivates their action. They would not kill me because my Christian blood would have fouled the house preventing them from praying there anymore. [sic] When they talked to me they always referred to me as "piece of filth."" (Rahema 2008)

The kidnappers' remarks evidence that the Iraq conflict was influenced not just by those who desired an explicitly Muslim society but one which excluded all non-Muslim communities especially Christians.

**Regional effects of the war and the Chaldean response**

If the years 2006 and 2007 marked the start of the intensification of attacks against Christians the period also saw the start of large scale national and international responses to the problems encountered with increasing support from the Holy See and Catholic charities. Patriarch Emmanuel III Delly attempted to bring to the fore his requests for the Coalition forces to take on their responsibility of restoring Iraqi society to a more peaceful status insofar as the Coalition having broken Iraqi society were beholden to a very large extent to restore it. (Yacoub 2010, 189)

The Holy See to raise awareness of the Chaldeans' particular difficulties and to recognise the significant role which Christians had in Iraqi life elevated Delly to the rank of Cardinal on 24th November 2007. Perhaps comparison can be drawn here with St John Fisher in sixteenth
century England who was made a cardinal in an attempt to offer some protection from the attacks against the Catholic Church in England by King Henry VIII. Benedict XVI emphasised that:

'he was honouring not just the Patriarch of the Chaldean church, but all Iraqi Christians, and wished to show their plight to the world..."They are experiencing in their own flesh the dramatic consequences of an enduring conflict and now live in a fragile and delicate political situation" (The Catholic Herald 2007b)

The level and intensity of faith and devotion to their religion could not be disputed and the direction of devotion led to some level of rejuvenation in the community with their resolve transformed into restoring or establishing essential social and educational services. The town of Qaraqosh (near Mosul) is a useful example with which to illustrate the situation as it developed from 2003. Whilst the town had historically been and retained a predominantly Syrian Catholic population since the invasion it received 1,372 migrant families of which approximately seventy percent were Chaldean. As of October 2013 485 Chaldean families were still living in the town when previously only a handful of Chaldeans were resident. (Statistics provided by the Centre for Christian Affairs, Qaraqosh, October 2013)

Newly arrived migrants were provided with accommodation in a complex of flats offering basic but adequate facilities with 320 families resident. A municipal building was also purchased which served as a multi use hall for weddings and baptismal celebrations, community meetings etc. As of October 2013 a dispensary was also constructed along with ongoing renovation work on a medical and dental surgery. Another practical activity indicative of the difficulties for higher education was the opening of part of the University of Mosul in Qaraqosh for security reasons with the safety of the Christian students who travelled to Mosul being difficult to ensure.

The administrative hub – the Centre for Christian Affairs – recorded the changing demographics. The Centre, whilst particularly well organised in Qaraqosh, was found throughout other towns and villages in some form with several key personnel working there with a detailed understanding of
the requirements of the local community. The staff often consist of one of the senior community members from a leading family, the sacristan of the local church and secretarial staff in some form. (Conversations, Qaraqosh, October 2013 and general observations, Kurdistan region, October 2013) In speaking with the staff it was clear that Qaraqosh was a preferred place to stay due to it being well served by the churches (Syrian Catholic and Chaldean Catholic) and maintaining a very strong sense of Christian communal security and identity. The popularity of the town was especially demonstrated by the low number of persons who having moved to the town then decided to move abroad standing at only three percent.

The situation in Qaraqosh can be contrasted with that of Telkef which is on the border between ICG and KRG control. The area is significant for its traditional East Syriac presence with several monasteries, convents and theological centres in the surrounding area along with, at times, the patriarchal headquarters based in or around the town. Until the mid-twentieth century it was home to a large Chaldean population of over 5,000 families.

The first large scale migration from the town took place not as a result of persecution but due to the greater opportunities for economic development in Baghdad and Basra and also in the USA especially during the 1960s.\textsuperscript{60} Life for the Telkefi Chaldeans was complicated by the Sunni Islamicisation of the area from the 1990s and since 2003 the growing influence of a Wahabi mosque. The presence of the mosque is a factor leading to greater discontent in their relations with the Sunni Telkefis as for all intents and purposes the Chaldeans became second class citizens unable to openly practice their religion beyond the confines of their own church.

The growth in persecution of the Christian population from 2006–2008 nearby in Mosul saw the maintenance of population levels through refugees replacing those who departed but as of October 2013 the number of families had shrunk to 365 consisting of only thirty percent of the town's total population. Ten families left during summer 2013 with a further twenty-five asserting their intention to depart by the end of that year. It was

\textsuperscript{60} There was a year on year decline between 1960 and 1971 with, in those respective years, 356 and 176 baptisms, (Telkef parish baptismal register, facsimile copy accessed October 2013)
predicted that if conditions remained the same in ten years no Chaldeans would remain in the town. Nevertheless, religious practice remained strong with attendance at daily morning and evening Masses at 350 and 200 persons respectively as of October 2013.

The response of the parish priest, Fr Hadil Louis, was to recognise the particular difficulties with which he was faced and to `take things as they are, this is his reality' with the intention to remain regardless of the situation and to lead those parishioners who remained in the town. He was committed also to helping those who remained to develop a business project of some kind to ensure income can be generated. The town was fortunate to be supported by Dominican Nuns who ran a school and orphanage which aided in the practical unification of the Chaldeans who were dispersed among the Muslim inhabitants. (Conversation, Telkef, October 2013)

The church structures had been looked to as foci of social organisation in twentieth century northern Iraq. Some break in reliance on the churches was affected under IBP rule with the deference for the state to be relied upon in times of difficulty. However, as the state broke down and its ability to extend influence during the Kurdish uprisings weakened, reliance on the church increased and proved increasingly prevalent in successive crises and, as civil relations broke down from 2003, a similar intensified pattern began to emerge throughout areas of Chaldean residence in Iraq. Necessitating the clergy to resolve economic as well as social and religious difficulties.

**Historical overview (2008–2013)**

In response to the civil war the Coalition forces pursued a surge of troops policy: the intention was to flood areas of intense levels of conflict – such as Baghdad and Anbar provinces – with sufficient soldiers to inhibit escalation of further incidents and to defeat elements committed to undermining the new order. The "surge" began in January 2007 and was perceived as the only immediate effective means for inhibiting insurgent and terrorist activities. However, there was little hope for the impact being retained
following the Coalition forces' departure demonstrating that American directed plans for post-war Iraq had lost initiative and a clear method for the long term resolution of Iraqi affairs. Nevertheless, the surge followed a nuanced approach to counter-insurgency operations which focused on a "hearts and minds" approach to ensure the restoration of basic regular services. Such activity going some way to restoring stability with fewer violent incidents by the end of 2007. Yet this derived from effectively holding large swathes of the population at gun point and providing Iraqis with few non-coercive incentives to avoid violence. (Cockburn 2008)

The trend for American policies towards Iraq as of 2008, however, also reflected a pragmatic approach to rebuilding the structures of the state such as permitting former IBP members employment in the government or armed forces. Moreover, with stabilisation of security foreign investment in the oil economy was encouraged leading to some level of optimism. A stumbling block was found in the level of corruption which affected the oil economy. In and of itself not an unusual issue and propensity for fiscal irregularities is far from unheard of in countries producing hard and soft commodities. However, in the Iraqi case with little notion or desire to support a unifying sense of nationhood among political élites corruption was effectively unrestricted and divested among far too wide a group to permit some form of control.

With the tendency towards sectarianism and the desire to please one's own constituents ministerial portfolios became foci of consolidating power and accumulating wealth at the expense of those outside one's own faction. This was particularly problematic in the level of control which Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki gained through his appointments as minister of interior; defence; and national security from 2005. That a Shia political leader held these offices on top of the premiership led to Sunni disenfranchisement with concerns raised over the security forces' impartiality in their duties and ability to meet the needs of the entirety of the population. These circumstances combined with an increasingly strong Shia-Kurdish political alliance at national parliamentary level were concerning to Sunni Arab Iraqis and perceived as a threat to their social
status in Iraq.

Chaldean responses to a new Iraqi society

As of 2008 the restoration of Chaldean life to a recognisable standard such as the pre-2003 status quo was impossible. Political, social and psychological changes were too substantial to overcome outside of Divine intervention. The patriarchate might remain in Baghdad but the focus of Chaldean life in Iraq switched to the Kurdish governed provinces of the north, the city of Kirkuk and the Nineveh plain region with responsibilities derogated to the local bishops to oversee this consolidation.

Chaldean political and social disenfranchisement was most clearly evidenced in the lack of concern expressed by non-Christians following the March 2008 martyrdom of Polos Faraj Raho, Archbishop of Mosul. The Archbishop's murder followed a series of threats of violence towards him and his communities and his refusal to any longer pay the jizya to a Sunni group for the prevention of violence against his congregation. His determination to end the protection racket costing him his life and foreshadowing the strict application of Sunni legal and cultural practices in Mosul.

The 1915–1918 massacres had seen the death of several senior clergy such as Archbishop Addai Scher but Archbishop Raho's death took place in the context of the Iraqi not Ottoman environment. The former having appeared to strongly integrate the Chaldeans as an essential part of society and, as a result, for persecution to take place in this context all the more shocking that the respect they thought they held among other Iraqis no longer existed. I suggest, moreover, the muted response to the murder a defining indication of the loss of society wide interest to see Iraq remain a plural social mix.61

---

61 A similar context also affecting the Yazidis: on 14th August 2007 796 Yazidis were killed and 1,562 wounded in the north-western Iraqi town of Khataniya during successive suicide bombings. This was the second deadliest terrorist attack in modern history – after the 11th September 2001 attacks in the USA – but little if any recognition of this was or has been made in or outside Iraq.
However, Iraq overall was in a state of greater security or at least appeared to be so. The civil war's end in 2007 also saw a move away from ephemeral hopes for "freedom" and "democracy" and instead focus was placed on the basic requirements of medical care, reliable access to potable water and electricity. Whilst January and March 2009 saw the lowest number of civilian and US military casualties respectively since March 2003. (Iraq Coalition Casualty Count 2015; ‘Documented Civilian Deaths from Violence’ 2015) This reduction in violence contemporaneous with al-Maliki's consolidation of position with his political coalition gaining the largest single percentage of the vote in provincial elections and thus in turn 126 of 440 seats in the provincial councils. Such were the continued hopes for relative stability in Iraq that May saw the formal withdrawal of British forces. However, in the second half of 2009 direct threats to the state's integrity re-emerged in the form of large, well planned bomb attacks in Baghdad with terrorist incidents across the country – a pattern of violence which continued into 2010.

**Iraqi electoral process and government formation**

The transitional Iraqi government was created and held administrative power until the first general election in 2006. From which time and into 2013 political life focused on the leadership of the Arab Shia secretary-general of the Islamic Dawa Party, Nouri al-Maliki.

al-Maliki was born in the Iraqi Shia heartland near Karbala in 1950 but had been exiled from Iraq for the period 1979–2003 owing to involvement in seditious activities against the IBP. al-Maliki's position in the spotlight of post-invasion Iraqi politics derived from his links with the governments of the USA and the Islamic Republic of Iran during his time abroad. He became Prime Minister after the 2006 parliamentary election with his success related to political alliances with other Shia parties and the Kurds. However, in consolidating his power base it appears he undermined mechanisms of constraint on the prime ministerial office and actively
pursued a militant approach against opponents via the security services. It is possible these actions took place in the context of removing genuine threats to the Iraqi government but his opponents regarded him as a self-aggrandising authoritarian determined only to support the Shia community. The perceived Sunni exclusion was vocally criticised and, as with the Chaldeans, became a source of disenfranchisement from the ideal of the new Iraq. However, the Sunni population's size and militia organisations permitted direct attempts to challenge Shia hegemony.

In comparison the Chaldean hierarchy regularly met with Muslim political and religious élites for the purpose of representing the community's concerns. These engagements were multifaceted but focused on gaining acknowledgement of their legitimate historical presence to Iraq. Clear supportive public statements for Chaldeans' continued presence and their importance to Iraq were made by Sunni and Shia yet the collective response of the Muslim communities to supporting their presence was minimal. (Asianews.it 2009a) Nonetheless, the Chaldean leadership was obliged to make this effort as to do nothing would signal their acceptance of their removal from Iraqi society and the end of the "difference" which they introduced.62

**Christian political representation**

From 2003 Chaldean political engagement was diversified more widely than ever before with the presence of Christian political parties spreading throughout Iraq.63 Precedent for Christian participation in the national Iraqi electoral process derives from successes in the KRG with a seat in the Kurdish assembly won in 1992 by Sarkis Aghajan Mamendo as a representative of the Christian Union of Kurdistan and latterly Yonadem Yousif Kanna was granted the post of Minister of Public Works, Housing

---

62 In much the same way as the field of Islamic Studies is incomplete without reference to the relationship of Islam to Christianity so Iraq is not truly Iraq if it is not plural and acknowledged as such.

63 Generally all of these parties support the Assyrianist ethnic identity and an autonomous Christian region. For an outline of the post-2003 Iraqi electoral system and political structures see Appendix B.
With the new republic's establishment from 2003 the most prominent national party to represent Christians – the ADM – moved its headquarters to Baghdad. (Teule 2012, 182) The move stressing the ADM's recognition of the necessity to be active in the centre of Iraqi national political life were they to affect change for their supporters. This mirrored the Chaldean patriarchate's move to Baghdad in 1950 yet the ADM's placement in the city did not carry with it the same significance. The ADM's lack of a support base to the same degree which the Chaldeans held from 1950–2003 in the city inhibiting their ability to extend their influence given the majority of their supporters were in northern Iraq. I suggest the patriarch's status as it had existed to 2003 carried with it some political influence and was broadly recognised across Iraqi society even if it was not widely understood as to his rôle and purpose. Inserting an ostensibly Christian party which agitated for an autonomous region, which was perceived to represent explicitly western values and an uncertain relationship with the KRG and ICG were not factors favouring its facilitating Christian interests in the capital. Nor could it be said the ADM represented Christians in the same way as the patriarch given the normative focus of political parties is to gain political ends through political means representing only parts of the entire Christian community – the attempt to act as a universal influence in Iraqi society incomparable with that of the patriarch.

As modern Chaldean ecclesiology is tied to the notion of Iraq and its borders the new structures of government and the electoral processes influenced Chaldean activity with the community's preference for a political balance of parties which ensured the least explicitly Islamic grouping in parliament and at a micro level Christian politicians retaining a voice on provincial councils to engage with local Muslim leaders. This differed to varying levels across Iraq. Under the KRG greater openness to western political ideologies and notions of human rights and equality in law were in accord with Chaldean concerns as to securing a place as a known minority integral to Kurdish society.
Chaldean identity in post-war Iraq

For many Chaldeans as of 2013 in Iraqi Kurdistan their primary and national identity was Iraqi and that to be a Chaldean Christian was that which they would next affirm. This was qualified by the remark that the two – Chaldean and Iraqi – were closely linked and could in no way be separated. (Conversations with Chaldean community members, Erbil, October 2013) It seemed attachment to Iraq was the slightly stronger, however, and this, I suggest, likely caused by the influence of Arab nationalism pursued under the rule of the Baath. The Arab national and ethnic identity permitting Chaldeans to remain a part of an Iraqi plurality as all that made them distinctive was a religious identity. However, this varied among those who favoured Assyrianism as an ethnic and national identity and those who affirmed that they were of Aramaic identity. Being Aramaic a means by which to maintain a specific ethnic origin but which did not lead to agitation for any form of separatism or the pursuit of an autonomous region. Instead asserting a paradigm which fit within the plural social make-up to which Iraq was heir from the earliest development of civilisation in Mesopotamia.

There is a further division of identity for Chaldeans – who have grown up within the Kurdistan region or spent their formative years there – which is an assertion of Christian ethnicity. Indicative of development apart from being Arab or Assyrian and due to their circumstances creating an identity which was considered to more accurately reflect the character of their communities and which is acceptable to Kurdish society. By coagulating their religious and ethnic sense of self they can create a group identity of which the Kurds are already cognisant – popularly viewing the Christians as one homogeneous group – and which avoids the connotations of an Iraqi identity which could be perceived as antagonistic towards an autonomous Kurdish state.

Language also could be a defining factor influencing which identity was asserted. Those urban residents who had migrated to the KRG from central and southern Iraq were predominantly Arab speakers for whom to
return to using Sureth as a vernacular was sometimes viewed as a retrogressive step towards lower socio-economic status. These differences actualised in religious life by the celebration of the liturgy in either Sureth or Arabic or with a mix of both with priests being in a situation of having to ensure the pastoral needs of the entire community are met. That the use of two languages within the liturgy was further complicated by the use of liturgical Sureth does make for some difficulty for priests and seminarians not all of whom necessarily know Sureth well if, for example, they are raised outside of northern Iraq.

The creation and maintenance of a specific identity is useful to legitimise and define status in Iraq and through presenting a communal presence on a national level (via the patriarchal office) inhibits the pursuit of mono-cultural narratives and exclusive claims of one faction to determine the future of Iraq. Moreover, the Christians whether intentionally or not inhibit a dichotomy of Sunni-Shia conflict as the political and social discourses of these groups are obliged to take their contributions into account. This concept of remaining at the heart of Iraqi society one factor in the Chaldean patriarch's continued determination to remain officially resident in Baghdad. The option for leaving the city has been open since 2003 but the patriarchate has been maintained because of the access to the political system and the capital status of Baghdad. To depart would presuppose admitting defeat in the face of those who use coercion to manipulate Iraqi society and undermine Chaldean ability to act as a mediating influence on national events.

**Situating the Chaldean narrative in Iraq and within the wider Catholic community (2010–2013)**

The consolidation of the Chaldeans into northern Iraq saw a concomitant decline to their presence to Iraqi society more widely. Public Chaldean representation derived substantially from the efforts of leading clergy such as the Archbishop of Kirkuk, Louis Sako (2002–2013). At a time when Patriarch Delly's influence was waning through age and ill health Sako was
able to exert a strong influence upon the Chaldean community.

Sako's efforts were focused in four areas:

- Maintaining relations with Muslim leaders in Kirkuk and nationally regardless of the level or type of response
- Maintaining the norms of communal life insofar as was possible
- Emphasising the significance of continued links with the international Catholic community
- Ensuring a wider perspective on events: situating the contemporary Chaldean narrative in the full sweep of East Syriac ecclesiastical history.

The last point significant for vitiating the Chaldean decline and was a reminder to the community that previous experiences of martyrdom and social change had been met stoically and in time were overcome – key to preventing the development of a victim mentality and tied in with the notion of the lived reality of martyrdom. (Cf Col I:24; 2 Tim I:8) Such themes can be lost if we do not take into account the spiritual and theological aspects of Chaldean identity as a Christian church experiencing extended persecution. The Chaldeans from an ecclesiological perspective were not just another sectional interest in Iraqi society or another organization facing violent attacks – merely relating, for example, the number of people killed or church property destroyed insufficient to provide a theological understanding of their situation.

The Holy See was far from ignorant of the realities of the suffering of Iraqi Christians but did not take overt action in Chaldean affairs between 2003 and 2013. The trend in Petrine activity was towards recognising the declining state of affairs for the eastern Catholics in the Middle East with such activity exemplified by the Synods for the Catholic bishops of the Middle East in 2010 and 2012.

Antoine Audo SJ provides an account of the 2012 Synod and the publication of the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente* which the

---

64 Other than as noted above confirming Delly as a compromise candidate to the patriarchate.
2010 Synod had engendered but this covered rather general concerns such as ecumenism, Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim communal relations and liturgical theology. (Audo SJ 2012, 3–7) Neither during his visit to Lebanon in 2012 did Pope Benedict make particular efforts to highlight conflicts affecting Christians outside the Levant and Egypt even despite these being discussed during the 2010 Synod. (Bouwen M. Afr. 2012, 20–21)

I suggest there may have been frustration at the pope's focus to Lebanese and Palestinian affairs and with the lack of awareness raised regarding Syria and Iraq when we consider the spotlight of media attention was focused on the pope's travels. Indicative of a wider context in which the Holy See's concerns for Middle Eastern Christians are genuine but lack a wider plan for their implementation beyond charitable efforts which, whilst vital, do not resolve the long term need to maintain a Christian vision within Middle Eastern societies. The work of the Apostolic Nuncio to the Republic of Iraq, Abp Giorgio Lingua, is, for example, split with his time spent as Nuncio to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This is unfortunate given the level of work required to sustain diplomatic engagements in both countries and is to the detriment of pursuing policies for two states and variegated Catholic communities which whilst similar in many respects also face different socio-economic and political challenges. Looking retrospectively from 2015 it is remarkable to consider why the Iraqi situation was not better comprehended for its volatility and the need for greater and more direct engagement by the Holy See. This, however, fitted with the pattern of activity which many states and NGOs observed with the start of widespread terrorist activity in Syria and concern shifting in focus from Iraq. As will be seen below 2010–2013 was largely a period of consolidation in northern Iraq or migration abroad for the Chaldeans and the situation – aside from serious incidents which greatly influenced the community in general such as the attack on Our Lady of Salvation Syrian Catholic Cathedral, Baghdad in 2010 – was not then perceived to be worse than the previous seven years and was a time of coming to terms with a new and relatively stable if very

65 For a detailed assessment of the impact of the Synod for Christians in Iraq see Teule (2011d)
difficult status quo.

5. Chaldean ecclesiology and ecclesial organisation in Mesopotamia-Iraq

The main aim of fieldwork undertaken in northern Iraq in 2013 was to document the Chaldean Church's contemporary status. Assessment is provided below of the contemporary Iraqi Chaldean dioceses with an historical account of their origins to October 2013. This builds on the research completed by Khayyath (1896b), Tfinkdji (1913), Tisserant (1931), Fiey (1959; 1965a; 1993) and Wilmshurst (2000) particularly and also evident in the works which researchers associated with my home institution have undertaken such as Whooley (2004), Flannery (2008) and O'Mahony (2008). This in recognition that scholarly work does not take place in a vacuum and is necessarily influenced by the works of others and, it is hoped, building on these platforms for the future for others in turn to contribute to Chaldean, eastern Catholic and East Syriac ecclesiological studies.

What is and how has ecclesiology altered?

Ecclesiology can be defined as the study of the relationships between the organisation, theology, liturgy and pastoral practices of a church and as to how these aspects of the church when considered as a whole express the church's identity to the world and its members. At the heart of a church's ecclesiology is its self-awareness of what it means to be a member of that community, individual and communal identities and the implications of this for interactions with other groups. Thus, ecclesiological study seeks to reveal the essence of church life and what it means on a practical and metaphysical basis to "live" as a member of a particular church.

During fieldwork effort was made to record notes on ecclesiastical organisation, social interaction, theological discussions, liturgical and pastoral practices. The necessity to observe and later recall for writing up the research was essential in trying to "get under the skin" of the Chaldeans and ensure their community is accurately but not uncritically described.
Ecclesiology and its study has since the Second Vatican Council become a key focus of academic and general literature on and about Catholicism. This interest derived from attempts to alter the nature of the Church’s borders and organisation. The Church no longer held to be a unified monarchical institution with distinct juridical boundaries but a type of communion in which the Church of Christ subsists. Such changes no more greatly impacted than upon the eastern Catholic communities which since 1965 have been held as churches self-governing and sui juris. Their position in the universal Catholic communion now affirmed through asserting union with the pope as primus inter pares than direct submission to his jurisdiction and authority. For the eastern Catholics this was a push towards virtual autonomy with one of the few limits on independent action being the requirement to defer to the Holy See in the final approval of bishops.

Chaldean ecclesiological change has not taken place in a vacuum and has been determined by the dictates of co-operating in the Catholic communion but also professing commitment to achieving full ecclesial union with the Church of the East which, however, may not necessarily be supported by the papacy or understood by non-East Syriac Catholics. The Chaldeans encountering a tension between emphasising their membership of the Catholic communion and pursuing autonomy on a greater scale emphasising their East Syriac ecclesial identity which draws on the heritage of the community throughout Asia. (Cf Sako 2014) There are few examples of such a scenario in ecclesiological studies with other expressions of eastern Christianity having remained largely limited to those areas in which they originated and only since the nineteenth century spreading in a truly international manner or beyond the confines of the nations and territories which they purport to represent. For in attempting to theorise a modern eastern Catholic ecclesiology which is satisfactory and acceptable to Catholics and non-Catholics one can fall into difficulties from the context of discord between Orthodox and Catholic antagonistic narratives. As the Chaldeans’ East Syriac heritage falls outside of this dichotomy they are apparently able to seek a different path of eastern Christian ecclesiology of novel status and type. Such a model greatly influenced by the relative lack
of contemporary rancour with its progenitor community; by the shared experience of persecution and their relatively small size by comparison with other communities such as the Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholics.

Nevertheless, the development of a closer ecclesiological bond between the East Syriac churches requires a greater theoretical basis than merely a perception that it could be a good or necessary thing given the difficult circumstances with which the churches are faced. Moreover, in outlining such ideals the Chaldean hierarchy have lacked the opportunity to comprehensively engage with these ecclesiological speculations on a theoretical basis at least since 2003. Nevertheless, and despite the war, theoretical underpinnings of the Chaldean-Church of the East relationship have been continued within the successor events to the Pro Oriente fora: the Colloquium Syriacum conferences since 2009.

Such meetings also vital to ensure the affects of migration upon ecclesiology are taken into account. Ecclesiological studies largely did not assess migration from a theoretical perspective until the late twentieth century. As Chaldean ecclesiology was closely linked with their presence within the borders of the Iraqi state and association with the state was a key aspect of Chaldean identity the idea of developing an ecclesiology which reflected the international spread of the Chaldeans was challenging to fit within this paradigm. As to those abroad questions remain open as to how properly to engage with them and as to the best means to retain them as members of the Church as increasing numbers became de facto Latins if arrangements were not provided for by a local hierarchy.

It should also be noted that Chaldean ecclesiology has always been impacted by the necessity to take part in some form of exchange with Muslims whether in Iraq or the diaspora. This process particularly increased in importance following the invasion in 2003 with the church's ecclesiology and ecclesial organisation having to account for Sunni and Shia factions' behaviour as much as the Chaldeans own aspirations for the Church's future.

---

67 An example has been research conducted on the Carpatho-Rusyn (Ruthenian) migrations from eastern Europe and Ukraine to the USA and the affects on their ecclesiology. See Simon (1993) and Marti (2009).
Chaldean status quo in northern Iraq

As of 2013 northern Iraqi Chaldean communities are found in the provinces of Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniya administered by the KRG. Those Chaldean towns and villages on the edge of Nineveh province near to Mosul were also considered a part of the northern Iraqi Chaldean presence such as Telkef and Karamles. The status of these rural villages were complicated by border disputes between the KRG and ICG from 2003 until June 2014. Disputes which in turn led to questions over rightful governmental jurisdiction and Chaldean unease due to residing in areas of particular political tension. Chaldean residents in urban areas were better able to protect themselves and receive support from the hierarchy following the 2003 invasion. Communities of tens of families are far easier to displace than towns in which hundreds or thousands of Christians are resident and often part of a wider multi-religious milieu.

Another point of context to the northern Iraqi region is its geography which affects the relationship between the clergy and the local residents and as to the ways in which the church is governed. The mountainous terrain in which many Chaldean villages in the Diocese of Amadiya-Zakho are located can, for example, inhibit the presence of the bishop during inclement weather conditions in winter. By comparison the Archbishop of Erbil can far more easily engage with his community largely centred in a flat and compact city suburb. The former scenario necessitates a more self-supporting mindset among the community and its parish priest and a different atmosphere in internal diocesan life.

Although I consider the history of dioceses in the light of events in the twenty-first century it should be recalled these territories were once part of a network of ecclesiastical organisation in the Late Antique and medieval periods which covered much of the geographical area of modern Iraq. Thus, in discussing the history of the dioceses we should not see them as appearing ex nihilo or as foreign to their surroundings. Areas of Iraq now empty of Christians particularly the central and southern provinces were
once contiguous with populous East Syriac dioceses and monastic foundations.

Given the total diocesan populations and relative ease of access fieldwork focused on Erbil, Zakho-Amadiya and Alqosh. Mosul diocese (as opposed to just Mosul city) retained a substantial Chaldean presence whilst Sulaymaniya and Akra had only a few hundred Chaldean residents and in most other instances would exist as single parishes. I was fortunate to meet with several senior clerics and Christian community leaders in the dioceses of Alqosh, Erbil and Zakho-Amadiya who aided in understanding their status and plans for the future. The context at that time being that the development of the Chaldean Church and other churches was for the long term to Iraq even despite any difficulties in the execution of their activities. Such qualitative data collected being vital to provide nuance to the quantitative information.

**Diocesan study overview**

This study builds a survey profile of the Chaldean Church in Iraq as of October 2013. The profile with the time and resources available to conduct fieldwork cannot purport to be an authoritative study of Chaldean ecclesiastical organisation similar to that which Wilmshurst (2000) attempted in his work. However, the study provides indication of the effects of the 2003 war and subsequent conflict upon Chaldean ecclesiology and as to how, once again, northern Iraq has become the heartland of the Chaldean Church in the Middle East. There is a general awareness in studies and popularly of the general Chaldean numerical and material decline but the quantitative data collected illustrates, however, the rate of this decline.

The data collected “on the ground” during direct fieldwork via interviews, conversations, general observations and access to archives is supplemented from information solicited among the wider Chaldean community via e-mail, telephone or in person. Data sent via e-mail from

68 See Table 3 for a list of principle towns and villages which were visited during fieldwork.
Baghdad, Basra and Mosul gives a welcome breadth to a survey which seeks where possible to illustrate Chaldean history within the context of the history of the modern state of Iraq. However, gaps exist in the study and this is due to four factors:

1. Data lost or not collected in the first instance and never recorded. This was not an issue encountered on a regular basis with Chaldeans cognisant of the importance of maintaining records in an era of substantial change. Nevertheless, in practice this varied due to the inclination of individual priests and bishops to pay close attention to record keeping in their jurisdiction. For some parishes geographically distant from episcopal oversight there was perhaps an inclination to only reluctantly provide data. Data provided was also split in some instances by diocesan and parish level with all baptisms for an entire diocese recorded but not specified as from which parish they originated. Whilst at times of direct difficulty in parish life such as periods of persecution or population displacement records were disrupted.

2. Data not collected due to inability to access a location or a location not visited due to human/time constraints. As research took place over a four week period gaining a deep insight to the lived reality of every extant village and town with a Chaldean population was impossible. Other areas such as Kirkuk, a key contemporary Chaldean centre, were not sufficiently secure to visit and from a practical perspective the visa granted to British nationals on arrival in the Kurdistan region permitted travel only to those areas under de jure Kurdish control and influence. Security measures at the numerous checkpoints in the Kurdish administered regions were also stringent during the visit in October 2013 owing to a terrorist

69 There was also the question of the reliability and provenance of data which I have utilised from the Annuario Pontifico to supplement my own data. As will be seen below I have used the AP’s data to provide an indication of population size. This is not without caveats and these are discussed below. This data was gained from the online database Catholic Hierarchy and Ronald G. Roberson CSP, ‘The Eastern Catholic Churches 2014’. <http://www.cnewa.org/source-images/Roberson-eastcath-statistics/eastcatholic-stat14.pdf>
bombing taking place in late September in Erbil. Queues at vehicle checkpoints, for example, could last several hours.

3. Unwillingness of persons to take part/assist with the study. In being hosted during fieldwork by the Chaldean Archdiocese of Erbil introduction to the Chaldean communities in northern Iraq was greatly facilitated along with the provision of a driver/fixer/translator for transport, meetings and interviews. Nevertheless, this did not mean all difficulties were removed or that research questions were freely answered. Some, for example, who were at first somewhat suspicious of the research project and would only on second or third meeting or after sustained correspondence be willing to participate. All issues which quite naturally were expected in newly formed inter-personal relations. The Iraqi context, the researcher's British nationality and the study's novelty all producing barriers to an openness to engage in some instances.

4. Questions to which no one knows the answer. During an era in which population displacement and the interruption of regular livelihoods have become norms it was a challenge to find an interlocutor who could be drawn on some issues. There were, for example, limited answers given in discussions to questions on patriarchs Joseph VII Ghanima and Paul II Cheikho. The level of questions might not be particularly taxing – queries about the political views or social origins of the patriarchs – but even here there was limited awareness of or some dispute as to the correct answer. Combined with the lack of awareness was the propensity for opinions in many instances to be given about a question and its subject as opposed to answering it directly with a definitive factual answer. In due course this led to caution with regards to drawing out answers from conversations and interviews and composite answers outlined from a variety of sources were developed.

5. Reluctance/unsuitability to ask questions or collect data due to situation at the time. Given the violence which had marked Chaldean consolidation to northern Iraq and the themes of conflict which had so strongly affected Iraqi society since the Iran-Iraq War it was
necessary to be sensitive to and aware of questions in general but also when asking about events which had directly impacted on those with whom I conversed. It might build a fuller historical record but would it be wise to press a former resident of Mosul on their experience of persecution prior to being forced to leave their home? Some Chaldeans were very open and explicit about their experiences and opinions and were very eager for their story to be related. However, it was made clear that we could end our discussions at any time and without any obligation for the interviewee to explain why they wished to do so.70

Archdiocese of Erbil

The city of Erbil is one of the oldest sites of continuous human habitation in the world dating to at least 6000BC and has long been a principal centre of East Syriac Christianity in Mesopotamia.71 Christian expansion to the city took place by the early second century and was expedited due to Erbil's position on regional and trans-regional trade routes and by the presence of a Jewish community from the first century following the local rulers' conversion about the time of the birth of Christ. (Sellwood 2011; Harrak 2002, 52) At the Synod of Isaac in 410 Erbil was included in the ecclesial province of Adiabene with the metropolitans of the province resident in the city. By the seventh century Erbil had grown to be such a focus of ecclesial activity that it was itself raised to metropolitanate status in the Church of the East but with Mosul's growth as an East Syriac centre the cities were created a joint see. (Wilmshurst 2000, 166–167) Erbil became infamous in Christian memory for the massacre of an East Syriac community resident in 1310 by the local Kurdish rulers and following the invasion of Tamerlane later that

70 It should be noted that this never occurred during fieldwork in Iraq or Jordan and only in one discussion with a Chaldean community member in London was it evident that the conversation should be ended due to the painful memories and emotional response to which a question gave rise.
71 According to one tradition Mari – a follower of Addai, one of the seventy disciples – miraculously healed the ruler of Erbil and delivered a child from demonic possession after which the local élites were converted to Christianity. (Chaumont 1988, 17)
century Erbil and its surrounds were reduced in non-Muslim activity. (Fiey OP 1965a, I:88–91, 93)

Erbil's East Syriac ecclesiastical structure still technically existed into the seventeenth century but from 1318–1607 only four bishops are known by name to have been associated with the town. (Wilmshurst 2000, 167) Whilst legitimist patriarch Eliya VIII affirmed Erbil as within his jurisdictional purview as of 1610 the city itself no longer retained any cachet of substantial ecclesial activity and it was only in the surrounding villages, such as Ankawa, that East Syriac communities were maintained with these entering into union with the Holy See from 1779. (Fiey OP 1965a, I:95–96; Wilmshurst 2000, 166–168) During the nineteenth century Erbil and surrounding villages were included in the jurisdiction of the Chaldean Archdiocese of Kirkuk following its establishment in 1789. (Wilmshurst 2000, 169) From which time the East Syriacs were under the close tutelage of Latin and Chaldean missionaries and foundations were laid for the consolidation of the communities in the region.

Erbil was re-established as an ecclesial body in 1968 under the leadership of Archbishop Stéphane Babaca at which time the Chaldean population was c. 7,000 people. The diocese's re-creation should be seen in the context of the successful Baath party coup of that year and the continued and increasingly intense conflicts between the Kurds and the Iraqi military in northern Iraq: events which indicated the need to provide greater pastoral care to the Chaldeans. By the end of the twentieth century the Archdiocesan population stood at over 11,000 people – approximately less than five percent of the global Chaldean population as of 2000. If the bounds of the Archdiocese were not perceived as the most desirable place of residence for Chaldeans it nevertheless retained an attraction due to the tradition of Christian presence and from 1991 its status as the de facto capital of the increasingly autonomous and prosperous Kurdish administered provinces.

From 2005 the archdiocese lacked direct episcopal oversight until the installation of Archbishop Bashar Warda CSsR in 2010 having experienced a period of sede vacante with the death of the last occupant, Yacoub Denha Scher, in 2005. In the intervening period it was administered
by Rabban al-Qas who was simultaneously bishop of Amadiya. However, Warda's influence in the archdiocese was consolidated from 2007 following the relocation of the Chaldean seminary to Ankawa that year and his appointment as its rector. His subsequent appointment as Archbishop, as a relatively young candidate (aged thirty-nine), in recognition of Iraqi Kurdistan's significance to the Chaldeans and the need for an energetic clerical presence in the Kurdish capital.

**Chaldean ecclesiastical life in Ankawa**

The Chaldean presence has coagulated to form distinctive functions in Ankawa which previously would have been the remit of activities in the Archdiocese of Baghdad. This has elevated Erbil to a greater significance within the diocesan structure and the enmeshing of the future of the Chaldean presence in Iraq with the KRG's success and stability. The Chaldean presence to Erbil Archdiocese becoming unique due to the functions performed there and, I suggest, that the concentration of religious formation and transfer of population means it has gained the status as *de facto* premier ecclesial body even over and above the patriarchate in the Chaldean community's development.

The main Chaldean parishes in the city are Mar Eliya, Mar Gewargis and Mar Qardagh which centre around the cathedral parish of Mar Yusif. Mar Gewargis is the oldest extant church in Ankawa, some aspects of which perhaps date to the tenth century. (Fiey OP 1965a, 1:171–172) From the archival material to which access was available it was evident that Ankawa is regarded as one Chaldean ecclesiastical identity with the different parishes in each area as adjuncts of the cathedral. Population and baptismal figures for Ankawa were not divided by parish for example.

To confer a greater sense of unity among the Chaldeans especially the younger members informal and formal education continues intensively in the provision of youth clubs at the Cathedral to ensure mixing of new migrants and the established population. These are often led by seminarians which presents time for them to gain experience of leadership and engage
with their future congregations. Similar activity is also conducted among the seminarians and clergy with a regular football match taking place each week – a means to maintain and build bonds given the severe strain on the community.

The seminary of St Peter, which is now located in the Archdiocese, sits at the heart of the future of the Chaldean Church as only from 2008 has there been a Chaldean seminary outside of Iraq – Mar Abba in San Diego, USA. As high standards of education are regarded as vital to the Chaldean future and to maintain Chaldean traditions and heritage it was considered imperative to secure the free running of St Peter's following the kidnapping of the rector and vice rector in 2006 in Baghdad. Their eventual safe return notwithstanding it was perceived as more suitable to continue the work in Ankawa.

The seminary's relocation has interfered with clerical formation and I suggest will likely lead to the creation of a new outlook among the clergy formed in an environment detached from the political and cultural surroundings and milieu of the Iraqi capital. This may limit priests' ability to engage with Iraq as comprehensively having been pushed to the edges of society geographically and culturally. The Chaldeans faced also with the loss of the minor seminary in Baghdad which had been able to provide the training of younger men in preparation for the priesthood. Nevertheless, the major seminary has become a well established part of ecclesial life in Ankawa having seen several ordinations and the continuation of an altered but sustained community and sense of discipleship among the priests. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life have suffered, however, with it emphasised in conversation with clergy the difficulties which the Chaldeans may have in the future if a larger number of candidates do not enter the seminary. This it was noted was not solely derived from Iraqi cultural-social problems but also experienced in the USA. A sign of the church's weakening through violence but also the effects of modern irreligious attitudes in the West and the apparent attractions which the world offers and the religious life does not. A difficulty which is shared by Catholic churches worldwide but in the Chaldean circumstances of especial concern.

The archdiocese appears to be well supplied in pastoral and spiritual
support. The provision of training in counselling to deal with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, for example, and the number of other Chaldeans resident in Ankawa creates an atmosphere in which experiences of displacement and persecution can be shared and dealt with on a communal level. The influx of migrants to the community and becoming the largest proportion of residents has affected ecclesiastical identity in the Archdiocese for it is no longer an ecclesiastical body of northern Iraq but encompasses a multi-regional identity of persons from across the country.

From Graph 1 we can note that aside from the First World War era and until 1980 Ankawa saw a trend for growth in real terms for the Chaldeans. The situation in Ankawa during 1914–1918 suggestive of there being little hope for the restoration of the Chaldean presence to the surrounds of Erbil. From 1900–1913 inclusive the average annual number of baptisms and weddings stood at 76.43 and 20.21 respectively. During the War years this dropped to 14.2 and 8.2 but soon was restored and in 1921 saw a swift return to the pre-war levels in baptisms, 88, but with a drop in the number of weddings of which until 1927 there were only 11 in total for that period. This low level of marriages perhaps due to difficulties in coping with the new system of British rule or the propensity for Chaldean men to travel for work or to build up sufficient material support to provide for a family. It is somewhat strange, however, as from 1919–1920 there were 44 weddings. Unless the Chaldeans found the imposition of British rule more disruptive than the effects of the war in Mesopotamia it might be this was due to the greater number of men killed during the massacres proportionate to the number of women.

From the 1920s the Chaldean population grew strongly in Ankawa with major drops in baptisms and weddings coming in the mid-1960s and mid-1990s in reaction to political change and military activities in the surrounding region. The particular spurt in size from 1987–1991 as baptismal figures peaked for the twentieth century at 261 in 1989 having risen from the previous high of 193 in 1985. This difference indicative of change in population growth and reflecting an influx from the northern Iraqi villages as Kurdish-Iraqi army confrontations took place and as the Iran-Iraq War continued to affect the economies and security of Basra, Kirkuk,
Sulaymaniya and Baghdad. It would be useful to compare population statistics of the Archdiocese of Kirkuk and Diocese of Sulaymaniya for the years 1980–1988 to see the extent of change given the proximity of those cities to the border with Iran but unfortunately such information has not been made available.

**Ankawa in the twenty-first century**

The total population of family figures which are available for 2000–October 2013 are provided in Graph 2 and Tables 2, 4 and 5. The population increase from 2000–2002 only marginal when compared to later years but this seen in the context of the sanctions' increasing impact and population transfer from southern and central Iraq and residents of northern villages economically motivated to move to Erbil. The Kurds also experienced a period of infighting with efforts to take control of Erbil by rival factions a focal point of struggle during the mid-1990s. Such instability appears not to have gravely interfered with the Chaldean population which from the above baptismal records we can note remained steady during the entire decade.

The population increases from 2003–2007, however, were significantly larger and pertained to the transfer of communal groups and not just a few families. A terrorist incident in one area of Iraq, for example, could be a cause for the transfer of population to an area perceived to offer greater security. A nearly 3,000 family (c. 13,500–15,000 people) increase in this period cannot be attributed to a drip-drip of population but entails an entire change in communal make up in areas of central and southern Iraq. From 2007 the rate of population change slowed but the overall growth in the population increased steadily. This likely related to the gradual decrease in the number of Chaldeans who transferred to the northern regions with a residual number remaining in Iraq proper. I suggest that those who had family or business connections to Syria (until 2011), Jordan or the Lebanon may have travelled there directly rather than via Erbil. Whilst the city was the "go-to" point for Chaldeans in the Nineveh plains and Mosul this did not necessarily relate to the travel plans of those in Basra or Baghdad.

I suggest, further, that by 2008 of those resident in the Nineveh plain
and Mosul those who were going to leave had left and it was only in the context of specific events that population movement would again increase such as the attacks on the Cathedral of Our Lady of Salvation in 2010 or the murder of Archbishop Paulos Faraj Raho in Mosul in 2008. Indeed if the present rate of change continued and Erbil remained an attractive destination the population was only likely to increase with a subsequent decline in the populations resident in Iraq proper in the long term.

Parishes outside of Erbil

Outside of the Erbil urban area the Archdiocese consists of three other parishes: Shaqlawa the largest by population (c. 240 families), with Armota and Qusenjaq significantly smaller (95 and 35 families respectively). Whilst relatively small these towns are notable along with Ankawa as progenitor Chaldean communities in the region.

Shaqlawa is about thirty miles north-east of Erbil and had an East Syriac presence at least since the fourteenth century and it is possible the establishment of these three settlements in the fourteenth century – Qusenjaq, Armota and Shirawa – that this marked a period of population displacement to more remote locations following the massacre of Christians in Erbil in 1310. (Wilmshurst 2000, 168)

Shaqlawa's ecclesial affiliation shifted to become Chaldean in 1779 through the efforts of Yohannan Hormizd and as of 1913 the town had a Chaldean population of 1,200 with five priests serving the community. (Wilmshurst 2000, 171, 176) As can be seen in Graph 3 the town saw spikes in baptismal numbers from the mid-1950s, nevertheless, all throughout the Kurdish rebellions and Iran-Iraq War there was relatively little change with only 1974, 1982 and 1983 seeing the number of annual baptisms in the town drop to below forty. Even more remarkable when we consider the relative proximity of military operations in surrounding conflicts. The town appears to have entered a period of decline from the mid-1990s only to be gradually restored from 2003 however even since then the population growth has fluctuated.
By comparison and as can be seen in Graph 3 such effects did not necessarily translate to the situations in Armota and Qusenjaq which despite drops have seen baptismal numbers largely remain the same regardless of events with these times of conflict or political unrest the points of change. The baptismal numbers indicative of population growth supported by affirmation of local clergy that ‘replacements’ have filled the gaps in the local population by those who moved to Ankawa or beyond. (Interview with Shaqlawan parish priest, October 2013) Given the distance to Erbil from the towns it is feasible for people to commute for work. Nevertheless, Shaqlawa had a growing tourist industry and there was employment available even if such service roles are not necessarily preferred by Chaldeans.

Armota has a recent history complicated by strained relations with the local Kurdish population and historically had suffered extensive persecution from contemporary ruling powers whether Sassanid, Muslim or Kurdish. I was informed Armota’s English translation is "land of death" and the formidable name reflects the local Chaldean populations dealings with the Kurds. The nineteenth century saw extended periods of persecution which became so consistently strong that the local residents dug a series of tunnels to remain safely hidden in times of difficulty. Nonetheless, by the 1920s the town in terms of its Chaldean population was considered relatively large with 90 families and until the 1960s few difficulties of persecution or interference from the government were faced.72

The local Chaldean relationship with the Kurds was, however, further complicated as during Iraqi army attacks of the 1960s–1970s sympathies were expressed for the Kurdish attempts at separatism which appeared to segue with Assyrian desires for political autonomy. This sympathy extended in some cases to active support of the Kurds and as a result during these decades twenty-three Chaldeans were executed for their involvement in the rebellions. From the parish records we can suggest a decline in the growth of the Chaldean population – as derived from the number of baptisms – which was (relatively) substantial from 1978 with a return to pre-1970s levels only coming by the mid-2000s. The area affected

72 As with Shaqlawa the village had an East Syriac presence in the fourteenth century and was brought within the Chaldean purview under Yohannan Hormizd in 1779. (Wilmshurst 2000, 168).
by the successive wars and the difficulty of operating within the context of
Peshmerga-Iraqi army operations. That the population growth did not again
pick up after the imposition of the no-fly-zone on northern Iraq surprising
but indicative of the strength of the pull of life of the cities of Duhok,
Ankawa-Erbil and Sulaymaniya for Chaldeans by this time. During the
1970s–1980s this also included moving to Baghdad or Kirkuk.

A gradual return of the population took place after the 2003 invasion
but this was tempered by Armota not having been a particular focus for the
building of accommodation and instead Qusanja has seen more
Nevertheless, there was some feeling of distance emotionally from
Qusenjaq with those migrants who arrived in fact preferring to move to
Armota. Indicating the link with the place in which one has familial links is
for the Chaldeans, perhaps, of greater import than being provided with
accommodation. As a result of forced displacement Armota has returned to a
level of population not seen since the 1920s what might be considered a
``traditional'' size of population with by 2013 95 families resident.

Qusenjaq has and had a somewhat smaller Chaldean population than
Armota with 60 families resident by the 1920s following their settlement in
the nineteenth century.73 The population appears to have remained at a
similar size in the aftermath of the massacres as 300 Chaldeans were
resident in 1912. (Chevalier 1985, 44; Wilmshurst 2000, 174) A population
shift occurred during the Kurdish rebellions with half the population
estimated to have moved to Mosul during the 1960s. (Interview with
Shaqlawan parish priest, October 2013) Such a proportional change in
population marking a turning point in the village's Chaldean presence with
only thirty-five families (c. 150 people) resident in 2013.

It is possible that population recovery to pre-1960s levels has still
not taken place due to the population's unwillingness to take advantage of
traditional local vocations around which life in the town was based in the
agricultural economy. The lure of a better material standard of living a great
draw to the cities and given the shift which the Kurdish wars had caused the

73 I am unable to provide greater and more detailed context to the village as parish
records of baptisms and weddings were unavailable for years prior to 1938.
under development of the rural economy became a lingering problem inhibiting a return to Qusenjaq and a loss of the skills necessary to be able to return to working the land.

It is quite common for northern Iraqi Christians to live and work in agricultural industries or related occupations in small towns and villages. However, this is changing as they engage in areas of economic expansion such as in IT and there remains a consistent effort to push for Chaldeans to become members of the professions in accord with a view of what their social status should be like. There having developed a view as a result of the shift of the population to southern and central Iraqi cities during the twentieth century that this necessitated aspiring to a career as a physician, engineer, dentist or academic.

This is a more general issue than that which just affects Qusenjaq. That many achieved such positions in a time when Iraq was relatively flourishing (1940s–1970s) so it has been difficult to maintain expectations of younger generations who desire to achieve the same. This has the knock on effect of interrupting the Chaldean presence and leading to a decline in Chaldean economic activity in Iraq as the choice for many is to leave the country or at least move to Iraqi Kurdistan. I suggest that those who have relocated from Baghdad can to an extent overwhelm the social make-up of areas of Christian residence in northern Iraq. There being no quantitative data to reflect this but from conversations and observations in and around Ankawa, for example, it was apparent in the concentration of medical surgeries and the offices of relevant professions. If this is the case it is significant in the long term as it is unsustainable for all Chaldeans to attain to professional status and/or an urban centred lifestyle when in reality the majority of the long-standing Chaldean population in northern Iraq has always tended to come from lower social classes, residing in rural locations and living agrarian lifestyles in contrast. It would seem beholden on the Chaldean hierarchy to provide further encouragement for more realistic aspirations if they wish to ensure that Chaldean families can remain in Iraq and that they choose to do so because there are sufficient economic prospects for their residency.
Conclusion: Archdiocese of Erbil

The Archdiocese acts as a focal point of safety in the insulated world of Iraqi Kurdistan set apart from the rest of Iraq and from June 2014 a particular point of refuge for those fleeing attacks by Da'esh. It is remarkable that one archdiocese has been faced with sustaining the Chaldeans as an ecclesial institution in some form in Iraq and has become relied upon to secure the safety of a large proportion of those Chaldeans still resident in the country. The advantages of being at the heart of Kurdish political and national life also providing a greater level of security than found in other cities with it implicitly understood among Iraqi and international observers that Erbil's security is vital to the maintenance of stability in the region in the long term.

The protection which the Archdiocese offers is enmeshed with the political stability of the KRG. However, this can detract from the particular Iraqi Chaldean identity which developed in the twentieth century and around which the Chaldean Church focused its ecclesiology as central geographically and spiritually to the Iraqi state. Thus, with the distancing from Iraq proper – in the Kurdish administered provinces – a new identity expressed through desire for autonomy has in some instances grown among the laity in terms of Assyrian nationalist political aspirations and a disassociation from Iraqi national life.

Comparison can be drawn here with those Chaldean residents of the Islamic Republic of Iran or the Syrian Arab Republic who whilst similar in religion and ethnicity have become separated through political and geographical constraints and aggregated their identity to the local regions in which they have come to reside. In the instance of the Iraqi Chaldeans the impermanence of the situation as of 2013 and awaiting the establishment of full Kurdish independence undermining resilience to remain in the country. The Church's ecclesiology and organisation reflecting the new political order through reducing reliance on dioceses in Iraq proper and especially the patriarchate. Instead Erbil Archdiocese meets the demands of the local Chaldean population whether through the construction of a new hospital,
new accommodation for families and as noted above the consolidation of the Chaldean seminary to the city and outside of the purview of the patriarchal office and the patriarch's direction. The autonomy of the Kurds in the structures of the Iraqi state mirrored to an extent in the autonomy of the Erbil Archdiocese in the structure of the Chaldean Church.

Archdiocese of Kirkuk-Sulaymaniya

To July 2013 Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya were diocesan centres in their own right with the joint archdiocese formed to consolidate available resources given the Chaldean population's numerically minor size in Sulaymaniya. Kirkuk's Christian community can be dated earliest to the second century following the arrival of a bishop, Theocritos, who was fleeing persecution at a time when the city was still known as Bet Selok – a reference to its use as a fortress by the Seleucid Empire – and constructed a church. (Fiey OP 1968, III:20) As with Erbil the city was likely ripe for Christian expansion as it was on a key east-west trade route and formed part of the then Jewish led Kingdom of Adiabene. The ecclesial foundation in the city eventually grew such that Kirkuk was the metropolitan see of the ecclesiastical province of Bet Garmai from the early fifth century.

Kirkuk lost its ecclesial prominence from the second half of the ninth century. (Fiey OP 1968, III:42) The entire Church had from the third decade of the ninth century been in a period of flux inhibiting attempts to provide contiguous ecclesiastical administration: Timothy I had died in 823 after an over forty year period as patriarch – the following forty years would see six patriarchs enthroned and two three year periods of sede vacante one of which (850–853) saw the successive deaths of three of the patriarch-elect. (Fiey OP 1968, III:38) Furthermore, also faced with the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–861) pursuing a much more restrictive set of policies towards the non-Muslim residents of Mesopotamia whilst bands of

74 Bet Garmai was the fifth province in seniority of the five named "Mesopotamian provinces" of the Church of the East affirmed at the 410 Synod of Isaac. The others in order of seniority were Bet Huzaye, Nisibis, Perat d'Maisan and Adiabene (Wilmshurst 2011, 19–20)
marauders had pillaged much of the Mosul and Bet Garmai region in the 830s. The extent of the decline was such that Kirkuk lost its status as the metropolitan see and was merged with the adjacent dioceses of Khanijar and Shahrzur during the tenure of patriarch Sergius I (860–872). It appears that Kirkuk continued to be at least a titular diocese into the fourteenth century with it named jointly with the see of Daquq. (Fiey OP 1968, III:36–37 ff, 47, 62) Kirkuk returning to prominence, in a Chaldean context, from the 1550s with some of Yohannan Sulaqa's supporters originating from the city. (Wilmshurst 2011, 163, 298)

It appears the first Chaldean ecclesiastical presence to Kirkuk was established in 1789 following Yohanan Hormizd's successful attempt to bring the majority of the town's East Syriac community into union with the Holy See. (Fiey OP 1993, 64) However, a Chaldean see – if indeed one was actually established at this juncture – was not physically occupied by a bishop until 1826. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 175–176) The years between creation and episcopal appointment being the period of intense political and familial rivalry in the Chaldean community preceding the unification of Josephite and legitimist patriarchal lineages under Yohannan VIII Hormizd in 1830.

By 1913 the archdiocesan population stood at 5,840 Chaldeans served by nine parish churches with the geographical remit of the archdiocese extending north-westwards to Ankawa and incorporating those towns which from 1968 were part of Erbil Archdiocese i.e. Shaqlawa, Armota etc. (Wilmshurst 2011, 401; 2000, 175–176)

In contrast Sulaymaniya is a modern ecclesial and geographical creation. The city was established under the Kurdish Baban dynasty in 1784 who dominated north-eastern Mesopotamia from the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries experiencing a great deal of autonomy from the Ottoman and Safavid empires. (Behn 2011) This may have been a cause for the development of the more independent spirit among the Sulaymaniyan population set apart from Iraqi governing powers. Sulaymaniya is also one of the least Islamicised of all Kurdish cities. The proximity of the Shia power in Persia-Iran possibly leading to the dilution of a militant expression
of Islam in the city with a notably plural culture. Until the 1950s, for example, a significant minority of Jews were resident. (Ben-Yaacob 2007, 304; Ben-Yaacob, Cohen, et al. 2007, 16) With the Jewish departure and the creation of a social vacuum the Chaldeans take their place as the largest non-Muslim population. The primary Chaldean motivation for settling in Sulaymaniya having been the expansion of the petroleum industry in close proximity to the city from the 1940s–1970s and the diocese established in 1968 to response to this. However, the diocese only ever received one bishop until its merger with Kirkuk Archdiocese in 2013. Bishop Abdul-Ahad Rabban OSH led the see 1982–1998 being preceded and succeeded by priests who acted as apostolic administrators.

Sulaymaniya’s more recent history of the city has been challenging for the population with the aftermath of the 1990/1991 Gulf War seeing the city besieged, politically independent, occupied and eventually granted autonomous rule by Husain. This despite it being effectively separated from the rest of the Kurdish controlled Iraqi territories through an Iraqi army blockade. All events which hampered the sustainability of the urban Chaldean population which could facilitate a far more amenable standard of living either in Kirkuk (until 2003) and/or Erbil the next nearest large city under control of the Kurds. This was seen in the subsistence level of population which resided in the city in 1990 standing at 70 families which dropped still further to 35 families by 2003. Nevertheless, as Sulaymaniya recovered in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion and returned to a relative level of economic stability the Chaldean population stood at c. 1,200 persons (250 families) as of October 2013. However, the population still not viewed as sufficiently large to maintain a separate diocese and giving justification for merging it with the Archdiocese of Kirkuk in July of that year.

Unfortunately, baptismal, marriage and population figures were not

75 I have not been able to gain a clear awareness of the Chaldean population size for that time. Anecdotal suggestions have put the total figure as c. 10,000 Chaldeans in and around Sulaymaniya in 1968. However, AP figures are much lower – in the hundreds – as can be seen in Table 6.
made available during fieldwork in Sulaymaniya and it was not made clear as to the wider context of the causes of this situation in the diocese. However, several key figures were given during discussions with clergy – as indicated above and below – which demonstrate the extended and intense displacement of population.

Ecclesial organisation in Sulaymaniya

The Chaldean presence to Sulaymaniya grew only gradually and, it appears, was not at the time of its foundation particularly attractive as a place of residence with the first church – Mart Mariam – constructed in 1862 with by 1913 only 200 Chaldeans resident. (Wilmshurst 2000, 176) It is possible that a draw of the city had been the relative security which the Baban dynasty was able to provide and relative freedom from anti-Christian persecution which was experienced by comparison with residents of the Nineveh plain which in several instances in the latter half of the nineteenth century saw direct attacks on the Christian residents. Mart Mariam continued in use until 2003 when it was damaged by fire. It is not known if any wider context can be attached to this event but it seems unlikely given the lack of antagonism towards Chaldeans from the Kurds in Sulaymaniya. Subsequently, a new church – Mar Yusif – was used exclusively having been finished in 2001. The ties to Mart Mariam remain strong, however, with it being used as a shrine on a regular basis by the local residents.

The size of the new church – able to accommodate over 400 persons comfortably – would appear to predispose its use by a far greater population than that present in the city in the early 2000s. However, it has come into more active use with the consolidation of the population during the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. That being said the parish priest indicated concern for the future of the Chaldean presence to the city specifically in regard to the effects of secularist Western inspired culture upon the younger members of his congregation. The draw of reducing religious identity and expanding a more laicised outlook permitting greater integration into a milieu of the Kurds and wider Middle Eastern society. Also for those
intending to migrate the desire to “fit in” to the new western societies in which they often reside serves as impetus to avoid association with religion in social contexts where religion has less and less role to play in public life.

It is notable that Chaldean identity is often more solidified within areas which face greater threat of direct physical persecution and that the safety net of a weaker Islamic *milieu* lends itself to the infiltration of an ambivalent attitude to the practice of religion. Notably, Sulaymaniya was the only location in which such an attitude was evident during fieldwork. This attitude difficult to counter in Sulaymaniya given only one priest is present to minister to the entire Chaldean congregation. Even with the support of nuns resident in the city who run an orphanage and encourage community involvement it is a challenging apostolate.

The unity of the Chaldean community in Sulaymaniya can neither be taken for granted which hinders further the stability which is hoped for. Over half the population are migrants who have either returned to the city of their family origins or with the hope of taking advantage of the city's political stability. This has led to some friction with long standing city residents and has only been resolved gradually due to ten “mixed” marriages. Showing the difficulties with which Chaldean migrants’ social integration is faced. Remembering that despite religious similarities bringing Chaldeans together that human, political, social and economic differences remain regardless of circumstances.

We would be wrong to regard Sulaymaniya's Chaldeans as a forgotten group but they appear to struggle for recognition of the particular issues with which they are faced: relative geographical isolation to Kirkuk in the south and Erbil to the west; the growth of religious indifference among the community and the lack of formalised episcopal oversight. Issues which are difficult to respond to in a creative manner or with the support of former residents as the Sulaymaniyan Chaldeans and their culture have been dispersed throughout Iraq and the diaspora abroad. Indeed of those who travelled to the city having previously been resident in key centres of Chaldean cultural and social life such as Baghdad or Mosul and its surrounds greater onward travel has been registered with fifty percent
estimated to have left Sulaymaniya following their arrival. The dissipation of the community has, however, slowed to some extent since 2003 and is evidenced in the few families who left the city to go abroad during 2011–2013 with only seven to eight on average stated as having departed. (Interview, parish priest, Sulaymaniya, October 2013)

**Archdiocese of Kirkuk**

The twentieth century history of the Chaldean Archdiocese of Kirkuk is intrinsically tied to the development of the city as one of the major oil producing hubs of Iraq. The city also a key focus of Kurdish political aspirations with hopes for its integration into a future Kurdish state and a point of strategic focus during the Iran-Iraq War.

Chaldean aggregation to the city came as part of the communal migration to Iraqi cities from the 1930s and the desire to utilise those vocational skills which they held in proportionately greater quantities than many Arab Muslim and Kurds. Nevertheless, we should not overestimate the Chaldean influence to Kirkuk but recognise it for what it was: a key part of a multi-religious population in which all were seeking to assert the best possible position for their community. Such a process of integration complicated by the Arabisation policies which were pursued by successive Iraqi governments this with a view to undermining Kurdish political and economic claims to the city.

The Chaldean position in this context was to follow the path of least resistance in terms of ethnic identity in order to ensure they could maintain their religious and social freedom in the city an issue which come to be acute under Saddam Husain because Arab national identity for all Iraqis was the basis of a political paradigm. During the Husain era Kirkuki Chaldeans were discouraged from pursuing an Assyrian identity or any other apart from Arab. The level of adherence to this identity unclear on a person-by-

---

77 300 families migrated/moved from Mosul and Baghdad, only 150 remained.
78 We do well to note the third “ethnic” presence to Kirkuk – the Turcoman population which ensured that until at least the mid-twentieth century Turkish dialects were common in the city.
person basis but from 2003 Arab ethnic identity began to be discarded in favour of Chaldo-Assyrian. It is not clear how widely supported this was in Kirkuk but we may suggest it proved popular because of the re-emergence of attachment to particular national/ethnic groupings which had been forbidden for such a length of time i.e. Turkmen, Kurdish etc. (This paragraph derived from discussions with Chaldean Kirkuki migrants to Ankawa, October 2013)

**Kirkuki Chaldean population**

Fiey noted the numerical decline of Kirkuki Chaldeans to the early twentieth century and as to how the population was holding on to the heritage of the East Syriac tradition:

`Un maximum de mille Chaldéens survivra dans tout le B. Garmaï en 1914, petit reste de la grande cinquième province de l'Église syrienne orientale, mais aussi levain pour un avenir meilleur dont nous voyons déjà les commencements.' (Fiey OP 1968, III:145)

The earliest estimate for the twentieth century is for 1913 with 800 Chaldeans in Kirkuk at which time the city had the third largest Chaldean population in the Archdiocese behind Ankawa (3,000) and Shaqlawa (1,200) with a total population of 5,840. (Wilmshurst 2000, 176) The population presumably grew in Kirkuk following migration post-massacres and assimilation to the Chaldean community by members of the Church of the East with the next estimate for the entire Archdiocese given as 7,620 in 1937.79 (Wilmshurst 2011, 445) Such was the perceived need to aid in consolidating the city's Chaldean population over the next decade that a substantial new church was built in 1949 – St Joseph's – which remained in use until the 2003 invasion, was subsequently refurbished and reopened in

---

79 That Kirkuk and not Erbil had been named the chief city of the Archdiocese was due to historical precedent in ecclesial organisation but also likely due to the Ottoman administrative organisation in north-eastern Mesopotamia in which Kirkuk was the administrative centre of the ayalet of Sulaymaniya and because at the time of its establishment the Chaldean population of Erbil was relatively small. (Kramers and Bois 1986)
According to the Iraqi national census of 1957, 1,509 persons of Syriac ethnicity were present in the city. (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, 43) This should perhaps not be viewed as indicative of the Chaldean population who by that time were asserting an Arabic linguistic and ethnic identity. Furthermore, the number seems somewhat low given the development of the petroleum industry in the area and that the *Annuario Pontificio* gives the total Chaldean population of the Archdiocese as 9,000 in 1949. If the proportion of the diocesan population resident in Kirkuk remained similar to that from earlier eras it seems likely the Chaldean population almost certainly rose in real terms. Nonetheless, we must note also the countrywide migration of Chaldeans to Baghdad which had increased in the intervening period and may have caused a drop in population.

Anecdotal estimates gained during fieldwork suggests an increase in population to c. 10,000 Christians by the time of Husain's rise to power in 1979. This may have declined during the Iran-Iraq War as was suggested above in the discussions of Erbil's change in population size. Nevertheless, and again based on anecdotal evidence the population appears to have rebounded to c. 10,000 Christians (of all denominations) after the end of the war and remained about this size until 2003. As of 2013 the Christian population was broken down as:

- 1,500 Chaldean families
- 300 Church of the East families
- 100 Armenian families

A total Christian population of c. 7,500 people out of a total population of c. 750,000.

The level of violence which Chaldeans have faced in Kirkuk is substantially lower than in Mosul or Baghdad but no less consistent in its long term effects upon the population. It might be thought that the level of violence which Chaldeans have faced in Kirkuk is substantially lower than in Mosul or Baghdad but no less consistent in its long term effects upon the population. It might be thought that the level of

---

80 These figures and from the preceding paragraph come from information provided by Chaldean migrants from Kirkuk who, as of October 2013, were resident in Ankawa.
sectarian division is not as strong in Kirkuk because of its historical plurality but because of the loss of an overriding sense of Iraqi national unity. Since 2003 the spread of more intense inter-communal relations has become a concern given the competing claims of Turkomen, Kurds and Arabs for control of the city.

During the period 2003–2013 the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart was the focus of Chaldean life in the city with five other active parishes. (‘Msgr Yousif Mirkis, OP Speaks on the Chaldean Church’ 2014) The Cathedral had faced a bomb attack in September 2012 but this did not cause major damage, more it would seem in an attempt to reawaken an atmosphere of fear in the city which despite a number of attacks since 2003 had seen signs of consolidating the Chaldean presence with a new church dedicated to St Paul opened in 2011 to meet the needs of migrant Chaldeans who had moved to the city. (Al Arabiya News 2011)

The Chaldean presence to the city was strengthened through Louis Sako's appointment as Archbishop of Kirkuk from 2002–2013.81 During his Kirkuki apostolate Sako ensured that the Chaldean voice was represented in local society and attempted to provide an ideal type of Chaldean presence in a post-war Iraqi environment. Sako's efforts aided due to the greater societal plurality of Kirkuk; his openness to engagement with Muslims and of the need to link the current situation of the Chaldeans to the historic traditions of the East Syriac community.

Sako was cognisant of the subtle differences which the Chaldeans present to and in Iraq society and as to why these differences are of importance. He noted in a 2012 interview that the Chaldean Church "\"which, having never been a State Church, carries a rich memory of interaction with Islam and openness towards the East, from Iran to China". (Agenzia Fides 2012) This point highlights the integral nature of the Chaldeans to Iraq and that the Chaldeans in principle retain no ideological pretensions of prior associations with particular political systems and that the East Syriac tradition should be a normative partner with Muslim

81 Sako born in Zakho in 1948 trained for the priesthood at the seminary of St John in Mosul and was ordained priest for Mosul Archdiocese in 1974. Prior to his appointment to Kirkuk he had been Rector of St Peter's Seminary, Baghdad for five years.
residents of Iraq having incarnated its presence in Mesopotamia in the context of predominantly Islamic societies since the seventh century. Such annunciation of the East Syriac societal position can be lost in the context of substantial civil conflict and the coercive power which violence grants to whoever wields it.

Sako's efforts to sustain engagements with the Muslim communities a practical concession driven by the need to act as a persistent reminder of the Chaldean presence – for if Chaldeans do not formulate publicly their status in Iraq there is no other group which will be inclined to annunciate their integral importance to the country. Sako's most practical encouragement to incarnating a Chaldean engagement with the surrounding Islamic culture came with an invitation to Fr Paolo Dall'Oglio SJ to establish a religious community in Sulaymaniya modelled on that of Deir Mar Musa, near Nabk in Syria. Dall'Oglio had for many years encouraged the extension of Christian pastoral and spiritual hospitality to Syrian Muslims. The extension of such a religious experiment to Iraq something which perhaps other Chaldean bishops would have struggled to comprehend or cope with in their jurisdictions especially following Dall'Oglio's expulsion from Syria by the government owing to his perceived proximity to members of the Syrian opposition. Nevertheless, it appears Sako's invitation was presupposed by the necessity of radical engagement with Islam and the desire to pursue alternative practical means for resolving societal conflicts: the desire to put into practice Christian precepts of reconciliation even in extremely difficult situations.

Christian culture also continued to be exposed to the wider community of Kirkuk with for example the 1600th anniversary celebrations in 2009 of the martyrs in Bet Selok in 409 under the Sasanians. Sako choosing to celebrate such an occasion an astute choice given the lack of connotations of Islamic persecution from which other martyrdoms had been caused. (Asianews.it 2009b) Yet at the same time bringing with it a sense of the permanence of the Chaldean community to the city and a reminder to the Muslim communities of the precedence for East Syriac Christian presence and their capabilities to survive in spite of a sustained atmosphere of
cultural tension, legal and physical persecution.

Kirkuki ecclesial influence on the Chaldeans of Sulaymaniya

The extent of Chaldean Kirkuki control over Sulaymaniya was not clearly evident at the time of fieldwork in Sulaymaniya in October 2013. This in large part due to the vacancy of the see for just under a year between January 2013–January 2014 until the appointment of Yousif Thomas Mirkis OP as the new archbishop. The situation should take on more structure and in harmony with the plans of the Chaldean community overall as a result given the merging of the dioceses in July 2013 when the see was vacant. Although this is dependant on the capability of the Chaldeans to recover from difficulties arising subsequent to the de facto destruction of the dioceses of Alqosh and Mosul from June 2014. A longer and lasting trend may also be the implications for the Chaldeans in the context of Sulaymaniya's historical irrelevance to the development of Chaldean ecclesiology or culture in general until the 1960s and subsequent difficulties in fully incorporating it into mainstream Chaldean ecclesial life. If we consider that it was only from 1982 that a bishop was actually installed in the diocese we can comprehend why stagnation of the management of the diocese may have occurred.

In the wider context of Chaldean influence in Iraqi Kurdish society there is a key rôle to play in Sulaymaniyan life. The Chaldeans are the only permanent ecclesial presence in the city and as such whether explicitly welcomed or not are obliged to give example of Christian life well lived and the bonus or onus of being the link with the local Kurdish governor for Christian social and political concerns. An issue which may be complicated by the merging of the diocese with that of Kirkuk. The Archdiocese head-quartered in Kirkuk and thus beyond formal Kurdish political influence or control.

82 Mirkis is a contemporary of Louis Sako: born a year after Sako in 1949 in Mosul, studying at St John's seminary in Mosul and superior of the Dominican community in Baghdad during Sako's time as rector of St Peter's seminary. These links likely causes for Mirkis' appointment as Sako's successor in Kirkuk.
Dioceses of Zakho-Amadiya and Akra

The northern and north-western regions of Mesopotamia in which the Zakho-Amadiya and Akra dioceses are located became a focus of very active Chaldean life from the late-eighteenth century and battlegrounds for control by the competing East Syriac patriarchates. These regions had been long associated with the East Syriac tradition: Akra, for example, had previously been part of the Diocese of Marga with Thomas of Marga recording the ecclesial life especially of the monasteries to the area as of the ninth century in his work *The Book of the Governors*. (Wilmshurst 2000, 125) Nonetheless, there is little available assessment or written evidence of activity during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries and it is only with the establishment of the Sulaqite line of patriarchs and competing claims to jurisdiction of East Syriac dioceses that we once again become definitively aware of the Christian presence across these far northern regions of Mesopotamia. (Wilmshurst 2000, 125, 128; Cf Budge 1893, II:296–297)

Diocese of Akra

The Chaldean see of Akra originated in the nineteenth century as a result of attempts by Yohannan VIII Hormizd to consolidate his position as patriarch and his family's prominence in the church hierarchy. Hormizd appointed one of his nephews as the first Chaldean bishop of Akra in 1834 as part of an attempt to assert his authority over a region in which the Christian residents largely supported those attached to the traditionalist Sulaqite patriarchal line. (Wilmshurst 2000, 153) The first bishop appointed with the acquiescence of the Holy See and apart from accusations of nepotism was Eliya Sefaro (1852–1854), subsequently, the diocese became infamous as being led by Yohannan Elias Mellus (1864–1889) who later led the eponymous schism of the 1870s caused by the development of an independent line of clergy to serve the Malabarese East Syriacs. 83 Despite these circumstances the diocese had stabilised by the turn of the century and

83 Mellus was resident in India 1874–1882.
was consolidated under the leadership of Bishop Yacoub Yohannan Sahhar (1893–1909). (Wilmshurst 2000, 153)

The town of Akra, like Zakho and Amadiya, served as garrisons for the Ottomans and had a numerically minor Christian population of Chaldeans and Syrian Orthodox totalling 250 of the 4,700 residents in the late nineteenth century. In 1913 the entire Chaldean diocesan population was estimated at 2,390 people across nineteen villages served by sixteen priests and ten churches. (Pétridès 1907; Wilmshurst 2011, 351) For a time Akra was united with the diocese of Amadiya (1895–1909) but they were later separated and from 1909–1947 Akra was administered by a patriarchal vicar. Akra diocese presumably not retaining a Chaldean population which would ordinarily be suitable for episcopal oversight. More contemporary data on population size emerges from 1958 in the Annuario Pontificio which has figures available from 1958–2012.84

From 1947 the diocese had stable leadership until 1998 with one of its bishops, the future patriarch Paul II Cheikho, leading the diocese (1947–1957).85 Cheikho's previous experience of the diocese perhaps a reason for his ordering the expansion of the cathedral in Akra in the 1960s and this despite the relatively small number of Chaldeans then resident in the town: only around 250 in 1961. (Fiey OP 1965a, I:265–266) In 1958 at the end of Cheikho's episcopal tenure the diocesan population stood at 1,636 but by 1970 this had dropped to 550. Why the diocese was not formally amalgamated with another bordering it is unclear: it is possible the continued political instability in the region prohibited considerations of re-organising ecclesial structures or that it was desirable to retain an appearance of ecclesial strength in the region. The lack of data for the period 1913–1958 inhibits our critiquing Cheikho's pastoral oversight but given the cathedral's re-construction we may suppose he had consolidated the Chaldean community with, for the first time in forty years, permanent episcopal direction. The population decline after Cheikho might be accounted for by the contemporaneous Iraqi army pacification of Kurdish

84 See Table 7 and <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/dioce/dagrap.html>.
85 The other bishops were André Sana (1957–1977) and Abdul Ahad Rabban OAOC (1980–1998).
rebels and the general trend for Chaldean urbanisation in Iraq. Yet, the *Annuario Pontifico* figures for total population of Akra diocese (Catholic and non-Catholic) show a nearly trebling of persons in the region (1958 32,723; 1970 85,000). The Chaldean departure for urban areas perhaps then expedited by the effects of losing their stake in the local social order. The Chaldean Akran population continued to decline from 1970–1990 – briefly increasing during the Gulf War – and then again from 2000 onwards and as of 2012 reached 1,190. In the ecclesiastical organisation as a whole and on a purely numerical basis Akra has not in the modern era held importance but its continued operation suggests it holds some ecclesiological significance to and among the Chaldean community.

As of 2013 the remaining centres of population were Akra itself (fifty families) with the rest of the population split between two other villages (c. 120 families). (Senior cleric of Erbil Archdiocese, October 2013) One of these, Hezarjot, is a relatively new settlement established following the displacement of the Church of the East population during the First World War. (Wilmshurst 2011, 437) As the total population of the diocese thus amounts to less than c. 1,000 persons it is a diocese in name only in a modern ecclesial context. Nonetheless, we should recall that this matches the style of governance historically used in the East Syriac community with a lack of communications infrastructure and a more insular focus of rural life requiring sufficient local clergy to deal with matters arising with the hierarchy doubling as the civil power on a *de facto* basis in such relatively remote areas.

It is possible that in the Iraqi context since 2003 and increased levels of persecution that attempts to alter Chaldean ecclesial organisation may be perceived as a sign of weakness whether by the persecutors, non-Christian Iraqis in general or among the Chaldean community itself. Such perceptions can lead to ecclesiological change because they can re-define the way in which the community as a whole responds to physical threat. Nevertheless, it would appear to be from the point of view of ecclesial organisation sensible for the Akra diocese to be formally subsumed into Erbil whose archbishop has current responsibility for the community.
Zakho-Amadiya ecclesial history

The geographical region now largely covered by the Chaldean diocese of Zakho-Amadiya and the East Syriac communities resident there had to the late thirteenth century been within the jurisdiction of the dioceses of Bet Nuhadra or Bet Dasen and Ture. Both dioceses had been named suffragan sees of the Metropolitan of Adiabene at the 410 Synod of Isaac from which time they were occupied to at least the mid-thirteenth century with the last known Bishop of Bet Dasen, Mattai, present at the consecration of patriarch Yahballah III in 1281. (Wilmshurst 2000, 125; Cf Budge 1893, II:296–297)

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there were no known bishops for either Bet Dasen or Bet Nuhadra. With the revivification of East Syriac life especially from the sixteenth century we find the Amadiyan communities largely loyal to the legitimist patriarchal line with Yohannan Sulaqa having been killed for his attempts to gain the affiliation of the East Syriacs of Amadiya in 1555. Owing to the concentration of East Syriacs and the ecclesial dependency of Amadiya on Alqosh the legitimist patriarchal line competed with the Sulaqites for control of the region and in 1784 legitimist patriarch Elias XIII Ishoyab consecrated one his nephews, Hnanisho, as bishop of Amadiya. (Wilmshurst 2000, 128)

There had been some earlier success for the Chaldeans with East Syriac residents of Duhok persuaded of the benefits of union with the Holy See from the seventeenth century but it was only from the 1780s that concerted efforts were made to gain East Syriac loyalty more widely in the Amadiyan region with a Chaldean ecclesial structure established in 1785. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 125) The town of Amadiya and the village of Mangesh emerging as principle centres of Chaldean activity. (Wilmshurst 2000, 134) The historical existence of a strong monastic presence to the area presumably gave it an impression of significance to the Latin missionaries and its relative proximity to Mosul where the Dominicans were based made

86 The Amadiyan region in ecclesiastical terms also included the diocese of Marga which is largely contemporaneous with the present Chaldean diocese of Akra.
it an attractive focus for expanding evangelisation. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 125) There was perhaps a desire for the reinvigoration of East Syriac monasticism – which appeared a very real possibility in light of Gabriel Dembo's project at Rabban Hormizd from 1808. To the fourteenth century at least five major monastic centres were active in the region but by the early seventeenth century only one was still in operation. (Wilmshurst 2000, 132)

The emerging leadership of Yohannan Hormizd as a potential patriarchal successor for the Chaldeans and competition with Hnanisho for control of the Amadiya region formed a major aspect of local ecclesiastical life to Hnanisho's death in 1813. 87

The competition between East Syriac leaders Elias XIII; Hnanisho; Yohannan Hormizd; Augustine Hindi – titularly Patriarch Joseph V – and Gabriel Dembo from the 1780s–1820s seemingly a severe barrier to gaining the sympathy of the Holy See and the Latin missionaries. 88 With Amadiyan residents caught in the middle of these events it seems likely there existed a strong awareness of the instability pertaining to the leadership of the community, a fluctuating sense of Chaldean identity and to the sense of purpose of the patriarchal office. With no one clear patriarchal leader of the East Syriac communities from the death of Elias XIII in 1804 to Yohannan's patriarchal appointment in 1830 to what would East Syriacs be converting or switching their ecclesial affiliation? That the ecclesial functioning of the communities continued testament to the subsidiarity of action among the East Syriacs in the operation of their affairs and I suggest a lack of concern as to jurisdictional boundaries as borders between Chaldean, legitimist or

87 Yohannan as Metropolitan of Mosul consecrated one of his own nephews as bishop of Amadiya in 1790 as a rival to Hnanisho who was then still also the legitimist bishop of Amadiya. It seems Yohannan's nephew was in a far more influential position than that of Hnanisho with the support of the Latin missionaries a decisive factor in his favour and led to his gaining the affiliation of the East Syriacs in the Sapna valley and Zibar district (eastern Amadiya). (Wilmshurst 2000, 128)

88 The competing East Syriac patriarchal lines, the patronage from the Ottomans, the Latin missionaries and the Holy See in such a relatively small geographical area comparable with the factionalism present in the Ukrainian Orthodox community which to the present has three main patriarchal lines claiming the heritage of the Metropolitanate of Kiev established in the tenth century. The Latin influence of strong missionary activity and the adherence of some residents in the Ukraine region to a Russian led church and the historical influence of the Russian monarchy's patronage in the region similar to the role of Ottoman and non-native religious and temporal administrators facilitating the rise of one or other East Syriac factions.
Sulaqite communities. An overarching sense of East Syriac identity broadly prevailing among community members still at this time with loyalty to one faction not necessarily implying an exclusive relationship with it and its clergy.

Amadiya's history, then, strongly linked to the Chaldean Church's foundation and its status and significance in the ecclesial order never higher than during this era. The competition between the Church of the East and the Chaldeans for control of the East Syriac populations in the area only saw an end in the aftermath of the massacres of the First World War when displaced members of the Church of the East from Asia Minor migrated to northern Mesopotamia and assumed membership of the Chaldean community due to a shortage of their own church infrastructure and clergy. An attraction of Amadiya town itself to new residents was its historical reputation and geographic location as a key point of economic exchange between the Kurds of the highland regions and the merchants of Mesopotamia-Iraq proper. (Streck 1913, 324)

A Chaldean episcopal presence to the Zakho region was established in the 1830s and consolidated in 1851 through the aggregation of villages which had been within the remit of the neighbouring dioceses of Gazarta and Amadiya. The creation of Zakho diocese likely with the intention to limit the remaining influence of legitimist clergy opposed to the Chaldean project. The appointment of new bishops to a region or the formation of new dioceses was a traditional means to influence the local communities and practically extend administrative control. In the period 1569–1596, for example, the legitimist line had at least two bishops appointed for Gazarta as the Sulaqite patriarchs had established their own see of Gazarta in 1554. (Wilmshurst 2000, 102–103)

Gazarta had been an active see from at least the fourth century only undergoing an apparently inactive era from the mid-fourteenth to the late fifteenth century from which time it was extant to 1918. (Wilmshurst 2000, 101) The credibility of clerical claims to hold influence with the civil power were to an extent reliant on a willingness to support structures which at least gave an appearance of communal strength which was in part why Chaldean
influence to Gazarta was titularly at least present from the formation of the Sulaqite Chaldean hierarchy. (Wilmshurst 2000, 102) In the context of Ottoman administration the need to affirm a reputation as the true East Syriac community was vital. However, Chaldean influence to the Gazarta region was undermined by the traditionalist patriarchal line which promoted a more active apostolate among its local clergy for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Only the early nineteenth century resolution of Chaldean patriarchal leadership led to comprehensive efforts to induce conversions which proceeded very effectively and by the immediate pre-First World War era remaining influence of the Church of the East (through the Sulaqite line) was nearly nil with the newly established Chaldean dioceses and attendant missionary led education programs proving attractive to many East Syriacs. (Wilmshurst 2000, 102–106)

Following its initial Chaldean establishment Zakho diocese was combined with those of Akra and Amadiya until the 1850s. Zakho again became an independent diocese from 1851 but a bishop, Basil Asmar, was only appointed from 1859. (Fiey OP 1993, 93) As with Amadiya in the aftermath of the massacres, the diocese held significance for bordering the new state of Turkey and in close proximity to the former dioceses of Gazarta and Seert became a point of entry into Iraq for East Syriac refugees. The diocese declined in ecclesial significance over the course of the twentieth century with the movement of Chaldeans southwards or abroad yet by way of comparison since the establishment of the modern state of Iraq, the city of Zakho has been a key strategic position being less than thirty kilometres from both the Syrian and Turkish borders. The diocese was in difficulty from the 1960s–2000s due to incidents of persecution from the Kurds, Iraqi republican governments and during the rule of Saddam Husain all of which greatly interrupted religious life.

Zakho was an occupied see from 1859–1987 with no gap in the episcopal succession longer than three years. However, at the death of Stephen Kajo in 1987 Zakho did not receive another bishop until 2001. Given the proximity of Amadiya diocese and its bishop, Hanna Kello (1973–2001) it appears that he took on responsibility for both dioceses
which is supported by the fact that on his death new bishops were appointed for both Zakho and Amadiya: Hanna Issa al-Harboli (2001–2010) and Rabban al-Qas (2001– ) respectively. Further ecclesial reform taking place in July 2013 when the dioceses were again united this time officially and under al-Qas' leadership.

During the period 1987–2001 it is possible that the urbanisation of Iraqi life and Chaldean migration proved an inhibiting factor to the patriarchal focus for Chaldeans north of Mosul with – it seems – only events from 2003 ensuring that a re-awakening of comprehensive concern for the northern dioceses occurred. Be that as it may the Chaldean leadership's response was difficult to formulate or implement given that Iraqi Kurdistan was faced with intermittent conflict and the disruption of normal social interactions for months at a time. The northern dioceses to an extent reliant on self-sufficiency owing to this relative isolation.

Perhaps it should be queried as to what extent the long term effects of conflict and geographical distance from Mosul and Baghdad have had upon each of the dioceses? It is notable, for example, that none of Zakho's bishops have ever gone on to attain senior postings in the Chaldean hierarchy – such as Archbishop of Mosul or as an auxiliary bishop in Baghdad – and yet this is in contrast to the bishops who were appointed to Amadiya of which at some point three patriarchs had been the contemporary bishop.89

Zakho's diocesan population has remained substantially larger than Amadiya's at least since the 1950s and as table 8 from AP figures indicates the Amadiyan population has been four or more times smaller than that in Zakho.

These figures provide some evidence of the dioceses' remarkably changing fortunes and the particularly strong effects of the Kurdish rebellion in its geographical remit. I suggest the sharp decline from 1970–1980 only increasing as a result of the migrations post-Gulf War. These figures ought

89 They were and their years in office in Amadiya: Joseph Audo (1833–1848); Georges Ebed-Jesu Khayyath (1860–1879) and Raphael Bidawid (1957–1966). Bashar Warda CSsR was briefly appointed apostolic administrator of Zakho (2012–2013), however, he had already been consecrated Archbishop of Erbil by this time.
also to be seen in context of our own research data of baptismal and marriage records for the Diocese of Amadiya. These support the latter trend in the AP figures for a restoration of growth from 1996. The earlier years 1959–1970 according to the AP saw a growth in population whereas the lacuna in our data leaves us little conclusion to draw other than that it is possible that the 1960s saw overall population stability and that although violent incidents occurred they were not uniform to the area and that in fact the 1970s was a far more disruptive decade. The lacuna in the figures for 1963–1969 should not be overstated for it could indicate merely the particular filing cabinet in which records were kept was in a fire or similar incident. Yet that every other year has been collected even during times of political and social turmoil suggests more than one incident prohibited the collection of data.\textsuperscript{90}

**Zakho-Amadiya ecclesial organisation**

As with Kirkuk-Sulaymaniya the diocese of Zakho-Amadiya was formed as a merger in July 2013. Despite this re-organisation a separate diocesan identity was still apparent in the two zones of ecclesial activity during fieldwork with it presumably taking some time for the clergy and communities of Zakho to be reconciled to rule from Amadiya. Such an identity perhaps related to the extended period of formal ecclesial self-sufficiency which the Chaldeans of Zakho diocese have experienced.

Zakho diocese centres around the city of the same name whilst Amadiya has its administrative centre in the city of Duhok an arrangement retained under the Zakho-Amadiyan ecclesiastical structure. The diocesan population is spread across twenty-seven villages in this north-western region of Iraq with 400 Chaldean families resident in Zakho (city) as of 2013 and c. 500 in the city of Duhok as of 2012.\textsuperscript{91}

The cities are far from Chaldean or Christian majority centres with

\textsuperscript{90} I do query the collection process of the AP figures which appear to suggest often estimations as opposed to an attempt at a census. Indeed, the appearance of just under 6,000 people between 2001–2002 and the disappearance of c. 13,000 between 2009–2010 is questionable as to exactitude. Nonetheless, the figures do reflect the trend for very large population movements which Chaldean residents of northern Iraq have faced during the twentieth century and the proportional size of diocesan populations.

\textsuperscript{91} See tables 9 and 10. Wherever possible I have localised these villages in Map 5.
residents mostly Sunni Kurds. Such a scenario akin to the situation for the Chaldeans of Ankawa. However, the more explicitly Sunni cultural views of the local Kurds have seen cases of anti-Christian activity especially in Zakho. In 2011 following inflammatory sermons by local Muslim leaders groups of young men attacked Christian businesses with the suggested basis of the attacks being the widespread sale of alcohol by Christian merchants. The riots lasted for four days with attacks spreading throughout Iraqi Kurdistan as far east as Sulaymaniya. Whilst the KRG took a strong approach to restoring law and order and arrested the purported ring leaders it seems that Islamic inspired violence can be easily stoked when desired by unscrupulous leaders and adds a dimension to Chaldean life which is far less commonly experienced in more secure settings such as Ankawa.

Unlike most of the other Chaldean dioceses worldwide the current bishop of Zakho-Amadiya does not reside in either of the towns related to the name of the diocese. Nevertheless, the movement of the bishop from Amadiya was not without precedent as he, when Amadiya, Zakho and Akra were a united diocese in the nineteenth century, would alternate residence in these locations. Residence has been subsequently transferred to Duhok which, as with Erbil, is a centre of Kurdish political and economic power with greater resources available supporting the running of a modern diocese and increased opportunity to impress the Chaldean presence into Iraqi Kurdish society. This evidenced in the work of the contemporary bishop, Rabban al-Qas, whose primary and secondary school complex is highly regarded by the local Kurdish population and seen as a marker for what can be achieved by the Chaldeans if such efforts are conducted in an environment relatively open to public manifestations of Christian works. It was notable during fieldwork that such an atmosphere to Duhok ensured that the city was affirmed along with Ankawa as a preferred place of residence in Iraqi Kurdistan by Chaldeans. Such level of Christian culture further evidenced by the presence of a Syriac publishing house in the city which offers support to the building up of a Christian culture.

A senior cleric in the diocese noted that the working relationship

92 Duhok's population is 300,000 and Zakho's 350,000.
with local administrators is characterised in his words as ‘they always respond positively’ when a request is made for assistance. (Conversation, Duhok, October 2013) Indeed, this was exemplified during a visit to one of the local Chaldean schools which displayed KRG symbols and posters throughout its buildings. The support of and from the KRG a practical concession and entirely in keeping with the historical experience of the East Syriac tradition in making accommodation in practical matters in order to be able to sustain their community in its religious life.

KRG support of the Chaldean population in the diocese in direct terms is limited with between ID40,000–60,000 (about £50) given to each Christian family per month. This is only a fraction of what is realistically required for the sustenance of the communities but understandable in the Kurdish context where the government has had to attempt to accommodate the migrant and existing populations. Nevertheless, the responsibility of the KRG to the Chaldean migrants should technically be as comprehensive as any other group given that they are also Iraqi citizens.

Due to time constraints fieldwork visits could not be conducted to all twenty-seven settlements with a Chaldean presence in the diocese and only limited access was gained to archival material. However, as will be outlined below population data and baptismal records were collected in several instances permitting some assessment of the situation to be made along with comparison of earlier periods. Population figures as of 2012 for every town and village in Zakho diocese; baptismal records for Amadiya diocese as a whole 1950–2014 and baptismal records for the parish of Mar Gewargis church, Zakho.

**Villages and towns of Zakho-Amadiya visited during fieldwork**

The village of Araden is situated in the Sapna valley an area long associated with East Syriac Christianity. Even into the early seventeenth century religious life was still active in the village despite two preceding centuries of relative decline among the East Syriac communities. Perhaps part of this
resilience was due to its connections with the wider East Syriac network throughout the Middle East. Wilmshurst, for example, notes a local monk donating a manuscript to the East Syriac community in Jerusalem in 1605. (Wilmshurst 2000, 69) As with the rest of the Amadiyan area ecclesial affairs were largely directed by the legitimist patriarchal line and such was their strength that it was only in the 1830s that the Chaldean influence began to be extended into Araden with Joseph Audo obtaining its allegiance and the latter half of the nineteenth century saw the community grow strongly from fifty Chaldeans in 1850 to 650 by 1913. (Wilmshurst 2000, 131, 134) It further grew into the twentieth century and by the 1950s over 300 families were resident. (Interview with parish priest, Araden, October 2013) The status of Araden increased such that it was used as an alternate residence by the Chaldean bishop of Amadiya.

It is unfortunate that data is not available for Araden's particular population or baptisms which would serve to indicate the rate of change in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, from the overall baptismal marriage records for the entire diocese of Amadiya we can see a rapid drop from the high of seventy-four baptisms in 1955 down to five in 1961. This era and the local area were the point of rapid dissolution of political power for the Iraqi central government which struggled to contain the growing Kurdish rebellion with a coherent counter-insurgency strategy. Local residents in 2013 ascribed Chaldean migration from the town during that period as a result of this violence and in particular the overthrow of the monarchy and not to urbanisation. It appears in the years preceding the Kurdish risings the Chaldean population was in fact growing in Amadiya contrary to the general trend for the passage of Chaldeans to urban areas.

That the violence of the conflict was intense is further emphasised in baptismal and marriage records in the archive recording that the data for 1963–1969 inclusive was 'lost due to events in the north'. The data suggesting that a return of stability and thus the population who had initially departed coming from 1975 onwards. The spike in baptisms in 1974 seems likely to have been caused by residents returning after the area's gradual pacification and the desire for parents to have their children baptised in their
In Araden's case the Church with the acquiescence of the state attempted to restore the Chaldeans' position with houses constructed through the intervention of the contemporary bishop, Hanna Kello, to support the return of some migrants in 1992–1993. This is not reflected in the diocesan baptismal figures with the numbers declining year on year 1991–1996. Though it is perhaps the case that a return of a more normal life could only occur a few years after resettlement in the Amadiyan region and this is seen from 1997. Nevertheless, it proved difficult to return Araden to its former status or size and as of 2013 only forty-six families were resident, a decline of about eighty percent from the 1950s.

A similar situation to that of Araden can be found in the village of Inishke. A village which also used to be associated with a substantial monastic presence again reflecting the vitality of the region in East Syriac terms. The village's East Syriac community enjoying particular strength in the tenth century with the *Life of Rabban Joseph Busnaya* providing an account of this. (Wilmshurst 2000, 132)

It is possible the textual sources for the later history of Inishke as presented by Wilmshurst (2000) may be at odds with the version of historical events which was stated in interview with the parish priest. The priest asserted that a Chaldean foundation in the village dated from 1785 and was related to the entry of members of the Nwyia family into the local area.  

By 1880 the village had grown in size to over forty families based around the church of Mar Shimon and Sons.

Wilmshurst asserts, following Badger, that the village initially entered into union with the Holy See in the 1850s but was not secured as a Chaldean centre until the 1870s. (Badger 1852a, I:198–200, 283) Given that the Amadiya region was a focus of, if not always successful, Chaldean missionary activity co-ordinated by resident Dominican missionaries from the mid-eighteenth century we can suggest that the exact date of the entirety of the population assenting wholeheartedly to a Chaldean led East Syriac

---

93 One reason why baptismal figures should not necessarily be taken to represent the birth rate.
94 Whose descendants included the notable Chaldean scholar Fr Paul Nwiya SJ (b. 1925 d. 1980). (Nwyia 1970)
ecclesial affiliation was some time after their initial efforts. Moreover, when we recall the absence of many previously strong Latin missionary presences across Mesopotamia and eastern Asia Minor in the period 1800–1840 we can recognise why conversion may have slowed at this time. This may explain the wavering of East Syriac communities between their traditional ecclesial affiliations and that of the Chaldeans with no necessarily confirmed date for formal conversions. Indeed, given that Amadiya and Mangesh had Chaldean communities from 1783 and 1791 respectively it is far from inconceivable that Inishke likewise had a group at least sympathetic in their ecclesial persuasions towards the Chaldeans from around that time. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 134)

As we have outlined above Inishke’s fate was closely tied to the proximity of Kurdish rebel and Iraqi army engagements particularly from the 1960s as well as the aesthetically pleasing nature of the surrounding area. The restoration of stability in the region related to the particularly authoritarian attempts at restoring central Iraqi government control. These efforts saw an amelioration of security in Inishke with direct support from Saddam Husain for the reconstruction of homes and encouragement to rebuild the local tourist industry. This period of peace was interrupted again by the wars of 1991 and 2003 and their consequences: the former particularly complicating the lives of the Chaldeans as they gradually exchanged Arab rulers for Kurds. Fortunately Inishke was at least far removed from the main areas of operations during these conflicts and proved an attraction for refugees and returning migrants who more than doubled the pre-2003 war population of fifty families to 113 as of October 2013.

The success of the town in attracting a growing population has seen the construction of a new school with the local residents keen for their children to attain to as high a social status as possible. In this instance there has arisen perhaps unrealistic expectations relative to the local situation. Aspirations to train in the professions or to start a business to be welcomed

---

95 The Dominicans were absent from Mosul 1815–1841; the Capuchins from Amid (Diyarbakir) from 1803 only to re-establish in Mardin in 1841 whilst the Carmelites in Baghdad departed in 1825. (Bello OAOC 1939, 25)
but not fitting to the requirements or traditional agricultural vocations with which the area's geography is suited. This if it continues likely leading to a denuding of rural areas once considered Chaldean due to the willingness of Kurds to utilise the land more productively. The issue is further complicated by the competition with which all farmers in northern Iraq are faced from Iranian and Turkish producers who can undercut their prices. It appears in general the clergy encourage Chaldeans to return to traditional vocations with the overarching concern for retaining territorial influence in northern Iraq as a result – through a widespread network of personal claims to working the land. Resentment towards this attitude was not noted per se but seen as another instance of the Church not being sufficiently aware or willing to accept the realities of life in “the world”. It is, however, a wider issue more generally of attempting to reconcile aspirations for material improvement with the ability to satisfy those desires in a way which can be accommodated in the social order. For Chaldeans in rural Iraq this appears to necessitate migration to or direct involvement in urban life.

Prior to the twentieth century Zakho itself had a small Chaldean population with approximately ten to fifteen families resident from 1837–1913. (Wilmshurst 2000, 115) The community as of 2012 stood at 400 families (1,725 people). Without our own population data for the intervening period (1913–2012) we can only infer from anecdotes, baptismal numbers and the Annuario Pontificio that this figure was likely much higher at times especially during the 1920s–1970s with the population moving southwards or emigrating from Iraq when the predations of internal civil conflict undermined resilience to remain.

Data available for Zakho comes from one of the two parishes in the city – Mar Gewargis. The overall decline from 1989–2013 even after 2003 is clear with only a brief rise in baptisms from 2006 to 2008 which was contiguous with the Iraqi Civil War. As of 2012 the parish population stood at 908 people (220 families), which will likely see that a population of this size can be maintained in the long term with between 10–20 new baptised

96 Graph 5
members of the community each year.\textsuperscript{97} The Zakho bishopric retains its \textit{de facto} use as the focus of ecclesial administration in the local area with pastoral work reliant largely on the efforts of three priests who are responsible for twelve of the surrounding Chaldean communities, with one serving six parishes. A state of affairs not unusual in the Chaldean context where the relatively small size of villages and their remoteness precludes the permanent residence of a priest.

Aside from Zakho town a research visit the same day took place to the villages of Deir Abon and Feshkhabur both located close to the Turkish and Syrian borders. Feshkhabur is only separated from Syria by the river Tigris with a shrine to Our Lady Protector of Crops built into the cliff at the river's edge.

An East Syriac presence to Feshkhabur likely dates from at least the seventh century and it appears the local region – the Khabur valley – became more densely populated by East Syriac communities in the sixteenth century especially with available manuscripts mentioning settlements to the area from this time period onward.\textsuperscript{98} (Wilmshurst 2000, 120–121) The village was notable as site of substantial Chaldean population growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1850 it was then part of the Diocese of Gazarta and 60 people were resident\textsuperscript{99} but by 1913 had 1,300 Chaldean residents. (Wilmshurst 2000, 107) This increase can perhaps be put down to the attraction of the village as a centre of agricultural production but also from the efforts of Latin and Chaldean missionaries to gain the affiliation of members of the Church of the East in the region and this would fit with the pattern of general Chaldean expansion in this era through the work of Joseph VI Audo. As of 2012 the village retained a population of 584 which was one of the larger Chaldean settlements in the diocese.

During the visit to the villages it was related that relative socio-economic stability had been experienced from the foundation of modern

\textsuperscript{97} The number of births lower, however, than the national Iraqi birth rate which was 26.85 births per 1,000 population in 2014. (‘Iraq’ 2014)
\textsuperscript{98} Including Deir Abon in 1671.
\textsuperscript{99} Yet despite this small size the village was the only one in the diocese to have two churches.
Iraq until the mid-1970s. Given the region's proximity to Turkey and Syria it is possible the Iraqi army sought to avoid any internal conflicts spilling over to cause disputes with neighbouring states and viewed a peaceful locale as an absolute necessity to maintain stable borders. Particularly important as the Turkish government had historically viewed the region as within its purview. From the mid-1970s the Kurdish wars impacted more heavily on Chaldean socio-economic life and a process of relocation and abandonment of villages began which segued with Kurdish occupation of settlements. It is unclear as to whether this had specifically religious and/or national-political justification. That the villages were Christian perhaps of little account to Kurdish farmers who perceived fertile agricultural land was going to waste.

Although the KRG and Kurdish political élites have emphasised a secular and co-operative vision with other residents of northern Iraq the historical memory of Kurdish persecution is still strong and Kurdish Islamist antagonism towards Christianity and non-Kurdish residents still exists. Therefore even if Kurdish occupation of villages was not perceived as specifically anti-Christian by the Kurds it holds a very particular concern for Christians who see it as a return to persecution and the de-legitimisation of their presence to northern Iraq. Perhaps in recognition of Christian fears from 2003 the rebuilding of long abandoned Chaldean villages has been undertaken with the KRG’s support and during the visits to the Zakho area it was emphasised as to the co-operative nature of the KRG when attempting to resolve issues such as property disputes with local Kurdish residents. Accommodating Chaldean interests has little material cost to the KRG given the relative size of the Chaldean population but whether KRG élites truly wish for equanimity for the Chaldeans is unclear with Chaldeans cognisant of all the advantages – political and economic – which the Kurds hold and aware of the broader historical context of Christian-Kurdish relations at times relatively amicable but often violent.
Note on Amadiyan diocesan records

Amadiyan diocesan baptismal and wedding records are entirely blank for 1964–1969 inclusive perhaps reflecting difficulties faced during the Kurdish rebellion's intensification including the destruction of the Amadiyan bishopric in 1961. (Wilmshurst 2000, 12) Such a shock to the administration of the dioceses could not realistically have been predicted and as with events from 2003 onwards ecclesiastical structures have been destroyed and struggled to contend with changes. The effects of the attacks having reached the level that it was only with population migration to the north from 2003 that baptismal numbers indicate that population growth returned to previous levels. The knock-on effects of the conflicts perhaps also affecting the way in which management of dioceses was conducted. For the 1960s as we have noted, saw the restructuring and creation of Chaldean dioceses such as that of Sulaymaniya and Erbil. It must also have been difficult to restore Amadiya when the then bishop, Raphael Bidawid, was transferred in 1966 to the Lebanon. His replacement Curiacos Moussess dying in 1973 at the age of only 51. To what extent his death brought about by the stress of his time in office in a very difficult situation unclear.

Conclusion: Dioceses of Zakho-Amadiya and Akra

The creation of these dioceses was a key point in the formation of what was to become the normative Chaldean ecclesiastical structure for most of the twentieth century. With the destruction of the Chaldean dioceses of Mardin, Seert, Amid and Gazarta during the massacres Zakho-Amadiya and Akra became the home for an influx of refugees and migrants. The dioceses becoming also the representation of Chaldean presence to this region of Iraq and were key to the securing the East Syriac tradition to a region which had once been so heavily associated with the Church of the East, the monastic

100 See Graph 4
life and an active Christian presence.

During fieldwork through conversations and observation one gained a sense of the loss which was still felt by Chaldeans after the massacres. I suggest for those in close proximity to the Turkish border there was also an understanding that the border was not only a geographic expression but a dividing point in communal memory and perception between a sense of completeness of the Chaldean Church and the gap in the Chaldean community for what might have been had the community retained a more diverse population through incarnating its presence in the Turkish state and being a difference in that milieu as well as Iraqi society from 1918.

**Diocese of Alqosh**

Alqosh and the Nineveh plain region has been a traditional focus of East Syriac life since the third century and a focus of Semitic religious activity for at least 3,000 years. Whilst it is challenging to assert a comprehensive account of East Syriac history in Alqosh itself prior to the sixteenth century it appears that only during the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries was there a period of substantial inertia and a qualitative deterioration in East Syriac ecclesial and communal life.

As of the mid-sixth century the Mosul-Nineveh plain region was East Syriac in its religious character and formed part of the dioceses of Bet Nuhadra and Nineveh. (Wilmshurst 2000, 188) Although members of the West Syriac community directed concerted and often successful efforts to gain the adherence of Christian settlements in the Nineveh region Alqosh remained an East Syriac stronghold. (Wilmshurst 2000, 189) The thirteenth to fourteenth centuries saw a general decline of Christian presence with East Syriac settlements altering their religious allegiance. With the social benefits of converting to Islam or desire to reside in a more secure location likely prominent reasons for this change and with other groups such as the Yazidis emerging to take the place of East Syriacs in local society. (Wilmshurst 2000, 189)
The sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries largely saw the crystallisation of the East Syriac Christian geography of the region to the present with the main exception being the decline of the monastic presence which was reported in 1610 to consist of five active sites with only one as of 2013 (and this effectively a new foundation in 1859) still continuing this tradition of East Syriac monasticism.\(^\text{101}\) (Wilmshurst 2000)

Alqosh and its immediate surrounds as a specific site for monastic activity dates from the early seventh century establishment of the eponymous monastery of Rabban Hormizd. (See Budge 1902) What marked out Rabban Hormizd during the formative years of the Chaldean community was its position as the patriarchal headquarters of the legitimist line for the period c. 1600–1800 and its status and that of Alqosh as a centre for manuscript production. (Wilmshurst 2000, 241–243, 248)

Owing to Rabban Hormizd's heritage, geographic and strategic location to the patriarchal office its control was marked as an identifying feature of the legitimacy of its holder. From the 1720s onwards Latin efforts and interest among local East Syriacs in the Chaldean project increased the Latin presence to Mosul with the See of Mosul and Rabban Hormizd becoming definite targets for by the Latin-Chaldean factions. Alqosh and Rabban Hormizd's significance especially from the eighteenth century was perhaps not as great in the era seventh–fourteenth centuries when both sites formed a part of the wider network of East Syriac ecclesiastical organisation and monasticism diffused throughout Asia. By the sixteenth century, however, much importance can be ascribed to Rabban Hormizd and the Mosul region as centres of the greatest extant concentrations of East Syriac activity in the Ottoman Empire. Northern Mesopotamia the area in which the East Syriac tradition was maintained in its strongest form and evidencing its heritage from its "golden era". Nonetheless, association with Rabban Hormizd as a means for justifying legitimacy to the patriarchal office gradually disappeared with the establishment of the "lower

\(^{101}\) Alqosh town is currently served by Notre Dame des Semences monastery the continuation of Rabban Hormizd as well as a Dominican convent which serves as a girls orphanage. The latter of great importance but distinct from the male monasteries and the pre-existing sites dedicated to the contemplative and scholarly life.
monastery" of Notre Dame de Semences which became a new Chaldean site of priestly formation; the emergence of the legitimist line as the Chaldean patriarchal successor and the limited influence of the Sulaqite patriarchs to the area.

The monastery site – of Rabban Hormizd – quite apart from its present significance from an East Syriac cultural heritage perspective offers some evidence as to the ecclesiological identity which the legitimist line advanced in the sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries and as the Chaldean presence to the region strengthened. The monastery served as the burial site for the majority of the legitimist patriarchs between 1497–1804. Harrak has offered the most recent English translation of the funerary inscriptions of the entombed patriarchs and begun to develop an historical analysis of the inscriptions which are written in the first person and detail the patriarchs' Christological beliefs. (2003)

The ecclesiology of the patriarchs develops in emphasis with those who were buried there from 1497–1558 noting their status as Catholicos but otherwise only outlining their Christology. In 1591 with the burial of Elias VII the patriarch notes his desire to see `amen' said throughout `the entire church'. (Harrak 2003, 297). Elias VII entered office in 1558 three years after Sulaqa's death and six after the start of the first Chaldean patriarchal line. I suggest this desire for `amen' was an indication of a hope for unity in the East Syriac community which had become factionalised but without connotations as yet to Christological or theological distinction between the communities. With Elias IX (d 1660) the patriarchs from then on preface their description of the `church' with `orthodox'. (Harrak 2003, 298 f) This change presumably with a desire to clearly mark out their position as apart from the Chaldean faction owing to increased awareness of the distinctiveness of the Tridentine Christological views and ecclesiastical boundaries which Latin missionaries pursued and encouraged. The inscriptions are thus notable for being a point from when the revivification of East Syriac Christological awareness began. A Christology which for some time prior to this, perhaps since the Christian revival in the twelfth to

---

102 Shemon IV Basidi; Shemon VI Denha and Shemon VII Ishoyab
fourteenth centuries had not been broadly reflected upon within the community. Moreover, East Syriac Christology or ecclesiology had not perceived the Church of the East as set apart from the Latin ecclesial community. The engagement with the Latins in a post-Tridentine environment creating opportunity for the creation of a more well defined ecclesiological and Christological position and one which the legitimist patriarchs perceived as necessary to defend. `orthodox' implying also that outside of this frame of reference and community that there was something lacking in the heterodox community. Such a notion framed and announced by the patriarch and the hierarchy but would be increasingly diffused among the community to ensure the retention of members apart from Chaldean efforts.103

Although the monastery is now unoccupied except for a caretaker it casts a metaphorical shadow over the running of Alqosh diocese and is linked to the perceived necessity to retain a strong Chaldean presence regardless of events. As the spiritual and previously temporal home of the East Syriac tradition in Mesopotamia and a remnant of the great network of monastic centres throughout central and west Asia it is a tangible reminder of past glories.104

Until October 1960 and the growth of population in Mosul archdiocese overall the Chaldean hierarchy did not perceive a need for further administrative declension in the region with Alqosh to that time within the archdiocese.105 We may imagine that the leadership of Abdul-Ahad Sana as bishop of Alqosh from its foundation until December 2001 left a particular identity upon the diocese. Given that Sana had been consecrated in 1961 with the purpose of his leading the diocese we can

---

103 It is interesting that such a definite ecclesiological position should evolve after the irruption of Latin directed efforts to the region. Given the proximity of the West Syriac communities in Mesopotamia and eastern Asia Minor one wonders as to why self-definition of orthodoxy was not perceived as necessary. It is perhaps most likely the case that differences were less fresh and real at that time with the disputes last having been affirmed some generations previously.

104 As of 2015 Rabban Hormizd, like the Syrian Orthodox monastery of Mar Mattai near Mosul, stands virtually on the front line of the war between Iraqi and Kurdish forces against Da'esh. The monasteries existing as a living rebuke to the terrorists and in Mar Mattai's case as a spiritual anchor in the unseen warfare which the remaining monks conduct through their prayers. (Cf Ephesians 6:10–18)

105 For an overview of the region see Map 7.
wonder at the influence which he had in implementing ecclesiological changes after the Second Vatican Council. The seguing of the Council with Iraq’s rapid economic development a remarkable coincidence and for the speed with which it necessitated organisational change among the Chaldeans. Ecclesial modernism’s influence upon eastern Catholic life in Iraq therefore closely tied to modern political and economic changes in general. Furthermore as Alqosh had been predominantly a town associated with the Church of the East until the early nineteenth century a Chaldean identity had to be consolidated. Sana was succeeded by Mikha Polo Maqdassi (2001– ) who has had to contend with maintaining East Syriac heritage and also creating means to support and retain the character of the modern Chaldean Church. The geographical territory is a challenging environment for the current bishop as the population whilst largely Chaldean is heterogeneous with numerical minorities of Sunni Arabs and Kurds as well as Yazidis resident.

**Ecclesial Organisation**

The main communities of the diocese consist of Alqosh itself, where the bishop has his residence, and the towns of Teleskef, Baqofa, Batnaya and Sheikhan.106

Residents of Alqosh in 2013 strongly affirmed that continued residence in the town was preferred to migration. Although Alqosh has been a point of departure for many it retains a proportion of population who will likely never leave evidenced in the return of a few families from the USA who had attempted to settle there – the cultural and social barriers being too great to overcome. The strength of feeling about the local identity such that Alqoshis are renowned locally for refusing to sell their properties to non-Alqoshis with such a strength feeling also extending to other villages in the diocese.

The extent of patronage which the Kurdish governors provided to

106 See table 12. NB the town of Naseriya should not be confused with the town of Nasiriya in southern Iraq.
the bishop was not clear. However, Alqosh as a strategic location close to Mosul and under KRG control presumably led to the cultivation of a strong working relationship. Furthermore, the bishop for his part was attempting to advance social bridges with the local non-Christian communities with the construction of a new school which Yazidis and Kurds had indicated they would be pleased to attend on completion. Although Alqosh has a mixed community it was evident from observing the day-to-day life in the town that the Christian presence was the strongest. Local Chaldean youths had erected a large cross on the side of the most prominent hill in the north of the town which is illuminated every night. It is unlikely this would have been permitted without at least tacit permission of the local authorities.\textsuperscript{107}

\textbf{Teleskef}

The date of the first East Syriac presence to Teleskef is not certain. A Christian presence of some kind possibly dates to around the sixth/seventh centuries given the settlement's position between Alqosh and Mosul whose own East Syriac communities were certainly present from at least that era. Nonetheless, and perhaps more likely, Teleskef could have been of later foundation, Wilmshurst argues, with a confirmed textual reference for an East Syriac community coming only from the thirteenth century in an account detailing the sacking of the town by the Mongols. (Wilmshurst 2000, 202, 234) The community was of sufficient – if unknown – size and status by the late fifteenth century to warrant two churches: Mar Giwargis and Mar Jacob the Recluse. (Wilmshurst 2000, 234)

With the trend for the patriarch to reside outside of Baghdad\textsuperscript{108} at times of persecution or conflict – especially during the initial phases of the Mongol occupation of Mesopotamia – it is realistic to suggest also a trend

\textsuperscript{107} The level of security at checkpoints into and out of the town appeared also to be more substantial than other locations visited. This partly relates to Alqosh's relative isolation from surrounding settlements but also its aforementioned strategic location in any potential conflict scenario.

\textsuperscript{108} Denha I (1265–1281); Yahballah III (1281–1317); Timothy II (1318–1336) and Denha II (1336– 1380) for whole or parts of their time in office resided in northern Mesopotamia or north-western Persia.
for East Syriac communal movement to areas perceived to be likely safer or more remote such as the Mosul-Nineveh plain and Erbil regions. This would correlate to the consolidation of the East Syriac presence between Alqosh and Mosul in the period twelfth to fifteenth centuries and as to why Teleskef and other nearby villages emerge in the written record.

The town gained prominence as one of the Christian settlements sacked during the raids of the Turkish leader Bar Yak in 1508 – Teleskef along with Alqosh, Rabban Hormizd and Telkef all affected. Scribal activity later became notable from the end of the seventeenth century and an interest in the religious life appears to have been evident among the inhabitants with vocations to the monastic life sent to Rabban Hormizd during Gabriel Dambo's tenure, of whom one, Thomas Choa, became Chaldean Archbishop of Kirkuk in 1853. (Wilmshurst 2000, 235–236) As of 1867 approximately 1,800 Chaldeans were resident; in 1913 the population had risen to c. 3,500 which increased further to 5,705 in 1965. (Fiey OP 1965b, II:381; Wilmshurst 2000, 199) It seems very likely Teleskef was a beneficiary of the migrants and refugees who after the First World War wished to resettle in Iraq. The town proving an attractive site for those who wished to continue their work in agriculture – as refugees were largely previously living agrarian lifestyles – and benefited from the close proximity of the religious and economic links to Mosul. The less substantial increase in total population size between 1913 and 1965 compared with 1867 and 1913 can be accounted for in Chaldean migration to central and southern Iraqi cities from the 1930s.

Bishop Maqdassi's 2013 figure of 1,450 families in Teleskef equates to c. 6,525 people – at an average family size of 4.5 persons. The retention of population despite its proximity to conflict in Iraq proper and the challenging economic situation compared with the population in 1965 is notable. As with other towns in northern Iraq it is frustrating not to be able to form a more comprehensive estimate and determine causes of population change for intervening years from 1965–2013 when we are aware numerous events of economic, political and social significance took place. As will be seen below we can draw some conclusions from available data on baptisms.
and weddings.  

For those who look to depart Teleskef in 2013 the greatest evidence of the desire to leave comes via the collection of baptismal and marriage certificates which act as the onward ecclesial passport for entry into the next diocese or parish location. Whilst the parish priest did not specify the total numbers to have departed since 2003 he indicated very large numbers had left. This, however, balanced by his assertion that those who depart are replaced by migrants from southern and central Iraq. This is indicative overall of the decline of the Chaldean population and with the concurrent drop in the number of baptisms points to a long term inability to replace those who make the final decision to leave Iraq.

The rate of Chaldean departure from Teleskef, as of October 2013, was stated as 1–2 families per week or an average of 78 families per year. Whilst as of 2013 such a rate is not yet terminal such a consistent pattern of decline if it continues means that were no other families to settle as replacements that by 2018 twenty–thirty percent of the population will have left. In numerical terms a substantial amount and, furthermore, ideologically problematic for a town which was once so strongly Chaldean in culture. Moreover, a thirty percent population reduction has a far wider impact insofar as the community’s bonds and its social cohesion are fundamentally weakened. It is also of concern due to the loss of skills which the local economy requires to survive. Despite the town centre being dominated by shops and tradesmen the majority work in agriculture. Such a transfer out of the population likely to result in a concomitant decline which is largely irreplaceable in the short term as an array of skills are lost required to maintain farming. Such a scenario adding further strain on the community which few external bodies are able to comprehend or assist in resolving.

The community further strained because of the general insecurity of their situation and an issue which was re-enforced during 2005 and 2007 when there were bomb attacks in the town and as a result a spike in

109 See Graph 6
110 The return of Chaldeans of Teleskefi origin from Basra, Baghdad and Mosul has totalled 250 families (c. 1,200 people) after 2003. Such estimates are welcome as a guide to the status quo but this type of record keeping completed to varying degrees of formality and often not in writing. The “knowledge” of the local priest often being the basis for accounting for statistics in his parish.
departures. However, this appears to have been only temporary in effect with baptismal and marriage numbers for those years 130/64 and 161/66 at a consistent level and in keeping with numbers in years both before and after. The Chaldeans remain resilient despite persecution and socio-economic decline with the majority of the population choosing in the short term to return after displacement given the transitory nature of so much of the violence in the years prior to 2014 and the emergence of Da'esh.

Available records from Teleskef consisted of baptismal and marriage data from 1950–October 2013. Graph 6 suggesting the relative strength of Teleskef as a place of Chaldean life maintained throughout political events in modern Iraqi history. Perhaps most notable is the drop in baptisms in 1960 to nearly half of its level in the previous year. This may be an anomaly or could be related to the intensity of conflict of the Kurdish rebellion that year. Given the number of marriages did not decline at a similar rate in following years I am inclined to see this as an effect of the Kurdish war as there is a general drop in baptisms until 1973 from which time the population again grew. This in part likely due to the migration of population during the Iran-Iraq War to northern towns and the gradual cessation of violence after the Kurdish rebellions. In comparison the marriage numbers have remained far more consistent. It may be the case that for women when pregnant it is desirable to reside in an area more amenable to the difficulties associated with such events and that in contrast weddings continue regardless because they are events of short duration and traditionally conducted in the home parish of the bride. Overall, however, if we follow the lines of the graph we can see the wedding figures largely mirror baptismal figures by a gap of c. 1–2 years as might be expected.

**Conclusion: Diocese of Alqosh**

I have noted the importance of Alqosh and the towns within the diocese to the modern Chaldean Church. Da'esh's advance into the Nineveh plain poses a severe threat to the Chaldean community's viability at the regional level for the diocese but also to Chaldean identity more widely. With the removal
of the Chaldean presence to the Nineveh region the incarnation of the East Syriac Christian tradition, its communities and ecclesiastical structures has to begin again elsewhere and take into account new social, cultural and religious paradigms. The physical destruction of people as well as material culture a set of circumstances which point to the removal of the Chaldeans from the historical and living record. What is also severely detrimental to the Chaldeans, however, is the loss of resilience and capability to remain in the area – something which even despite persecution since 2003 has not previously been encountered. The level of purposeful and systematic removal of non-Sunni culture by IS’s forces, brutality and criminality matched only by the massacres of the First World War.

A psychological shift has occurred among the Chaldeans whereby even in Alqosh they are alienated from the land in which they have incarnated their presence. In combination with the ambivalence of non-Christian Iraqis to their situation and the ineffectiveness of Coalition, Iraqi and Kurdish military responses the Nineveh plain becomes very doubtful as a place where even those who previously expressed sentiments of being willing to stay or die in their lands can remain and when a fuller life can be found abroad why should residents choose a life in Iraq? For a community whose preceding generations have contended with persecution under a variety of rulers from Sasanian to Baathist and survived, the intervention of IS has an air of complete finality about its ability to alter the social make-up of northern Iraq. Were Alqosh and Rabban Hormizd to be lost it could be compared to the loss of Kosovo for the Serbs in terms of the spiritual, religious and cultural heritage which the two regions have respectively for the Chaldean and Serbian churches.

Archdiocese of Basra

We turn now to an outline of the dioceses in Iraq which were beyond the reach of direct fieldwork visits. Apart from two parishes in the Diocese of

---

111 For reference please see Map 6.
Mosul I was unable to travel due to security constraints. That being the case the following provides a discussion of the Chaldeans of the Archdioceses of Baghdad, Basra and the Diocese of Mosul grounded in a somewhat less nuanced perspective than that which I was able to gain in regions where fieldwork was conducted and where I was able to draw on more detailed information.

The Basra region is one of the oldest and was one of the most prestigious centres of East Syriac life in Mesopotamia-Iraq with an episcopal presence in the area from the late third century. (Hansman 2011) The region was designated as the metropolitan province of Perat d'Maysan at the Synod of Issac in 410 having been named after the local Sasanian administrative district. (Fiey OP 1968, III:263–264) Substantial missionary activity took place between the fourth and sixth centuries and notwithstanding periodic Sasanian persecution a secure East Syriac foundation was attained in southern Mesopotamia. With the Arab invasion of 637–638 to southern Mesopotamia the city of Maysan fell into disuse and instead an army encampment was developed into the permanent settlement of Basra on the site of the Persian town of Vaheshtabad Ardashir. The prominence of the burgeoning city due to its position on the route to Persia and further Muslim invasions of south-west and central Asia and from an ecclesial perspective as a maritime point of departure to the dioceses in the Gulf: Bet Qatraye (Qatar); Rev Ardashir (Bushehr) and Bet Mazunaye (Oman) and further afield to East Syriac communities in India and China.

The East Syriac community of Basra faced the destruction of their churches twice during the rule of the Abbasid Caliphs in the first and fourth decades of the ninth century. Abbasid antagonism towards the Church of the East varied, however, as in the intervening period the churches were rebuilt. (Fiey OP 1968, III:269) The weakening of centralised rule over Basra brought with it instability with the city notably being sacked by the Karmatians in 923 and the Mongols in 1258. (Donner 1988) Basra sustained some form of active Christian presence and intellectual life into the thirteenth century as is evidenced in the collation of literature by the then metropolitan of Perat d'Maysan, Shlemon of Akhlat, in his work on Christian history The Book of the Bee (c.1222). (Budge 1886, I/2:iii)
Shlemon is the last known named metropolitan and it appears the province entered into a period of substantial decline by the mid-fourteenth century at the latest. (Fiey OP 1968, III:265–266) The reduction of the East Syriac presence in terms of ecclesiastical structure ties in with the overall disruption of ecclesial life in Mesopotamia in the era 1300–1400 and a northward geographical shift in activity.

The city's close proximity to the Persian border, Mesopotamia's only sea port and position on the Gulf all saw it maintain continued strategic importance and the Ottomans with their expansion into the region were keen to bring it into their sphere of influence doing so in 1534. It is likely the East Syriac community was largely sustained through Basra's economic significance as a continued point of mercantile interest eastward to India, south-east Asia and China. Encounters with western traders as well as political and religious agents increasing from the seventeenth century when the port was formally opened to European traffic. (Hartmann 1913, 673)

The Chaldean ecclesial presence was formally established in 1860 to provide pastoral care for the Chaldean communities who were involved with the river transport businesses which grew in significance as Ottoman administrative control was consolidated in Mesopotamia with a concurrent desire to modernise its infrastructure. Wilmshurst notes Basra was created as a diocese in his text but refers to it as of 1913 as a patriarchal vicariate which is practically what it was given there were c. 500 believers resident in its jurisdiction at that time. (Wilmshurst 2000, 361) The pastoral oversight of the community varied, however, with patriarchal vicars named for only fourteen years of the period 1860–1953 until a bishop was installed. (Fiey OP 1993, 60) We may suppose the parochial clergy had responsibility for the community without direct episcopal oversight during the gaps and, moreover, given the relative security of Basra during the aforementioned era and the independence of the Chaldeans owing to mercantile success it was perhaps thought unnecessary to provide any further pastoral guidance.

From 1867 when baptismal records become available we can see the Basrawi Chaldean population appears to have generally increased until the
start of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980. Nonetheless, population growth especially from 1914–1970 was likely unsteady as is indicated by the spikes then subsequent rapid declines in the number of baptisms. Some might be ascribed to natural trends for the number of births to fluctuate or as anomalies but it appears the population was particularly badly affected during the mid-1930s with Mar Toma, Mart Mariam and the church in Amara all seeing substantial drops in baptisms. This is particularly surprising in the context of wider events. Basra had experienced a period in the 1920s of hope for independence inspired by a Shia regional political identity as well as sympathy towards the British Empire as a patron of such a new arrangement. Relations to be secured through Imperial access to southern Mesopotamia's oilfields. Such a scenario did not come to fruition but Basra was during the 1930s incorporated socially, economically and politically into Iraqi national life. It is possible that Chaldeans in the 1930s–1940s saw Baghdad as a potentially better place for economic opportunity and migrated. Alternatively, as Chaldeans had concentrated in Basra during the First World War era to avoid the effects of conflict and persecution so they now departed but even this does not seem to explain the average forty--fifty percent drop in baptisms during the 1930s by comparison with the preceding decade. (Cf Visser 2005, 138–142 ff)

Aside from this era the growth and decline of the Archdiocese was as might be expected tied to the vicissitudes of the Iraqi state in general. The large drop in the late 1960s attached to the knock-on effects of the economy due to political instability prior to the assumption of the Baath party to power. However, migration to Baghdad to take advantage of the increase in opportunities in the city likely played a key role in the substantial change in population in Basra. It cannot be underestimated as to the cultural, social and economic attraction which Baghdad had over Chaldeans especially from 1950 and the transferral of the Patriarchate to the city from Mosul. To be Chaldean and to live a Christian life in Baghdad was eased by the concentration of population whereas it was far more challenging to do so in a strongly Shia cultural environment in southern Iraq and in which the numerical size of the Chaldean population was proportionately smaller than

---
112 See Graph 7
which developed in Baghdad in the second half of the twentieth century. Migration from Basra was also expedited by the onset of the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and the desire to find relative safety in the capital which was beyond the reach of the vast majority of military operations during the conflict. Whereas, Basra's strategic value and position placed it firmly as a target for Iranian attacks and Iraqi defensive actions.

Chaldean life was further disrupted in 1990/1 and 2003 as Basra was a main invasion corridor of the Coalition forces in these years and during the First and Second World Wars for British imperial forces. However, this has had the benefit of seeing the rapid re-development of Basra following conflict because it is so vital to the stabilisation of Iraq's economy overall.

As of 2013 the Archdiocese had one of the largest geographical territories in Iraq with the towns and cities of Kut, Amara, Diwaniyah and Nasariya all included within its boundaries.

The main churches serving the Basrawi Chaldeans were Mar Toma, Mart Mariam and from the mid-1960s Mar Ephrem. We can note a very substantial Chaldean presence in Basra in the 1960s with baptismal figures peaking in Mar Thoma at 69 in 1962 and 183 in Mart Mariam in 163. A rapid growth considering average annual baptisms in the 1950s had stood at 42.6 and 97 respectively for these churches. The latter years of the 1960s, however, saw a decline in baptisms and population size. We should also note that between 1959–1969 the total population within the archdiocesan geographical territory – including all the non-Catholic populations – increased from 1,338,225 to 2,124,931. The Chaldean population thus decreasing as a proportion of the population from 6.1 to 0.4 percent and as can be seen in table 13 also in real terms to roughly 10 percent of its former size.

This change in size – if the AP figures are correct – notably in the context of overall population growth and with the increase in the number of priests it would seem ecclesial intentions had been to support the population and consolidate the Chaldean presence. However, due to the attraction of moving to areas of even greater concentrations of Chaldeans in Baghdad,

113 Source AP
for example, this choice was taken instead. The rate of population change also likely impacted due to the consolidation of the Shia presence and identity in southern Iraq and the weakening of Chaldean socio-cultural affiliation with the region. Chaldean population change perhaps also affected by the departure of the Jewish population in the 1940s and 1950s which led to a lessening of the plurality of the country as a whole. Through migrating to Baghdad where the concentration of Chaldeans was that much greater it was easier to retain one's cultural identity and to live in a less sectarian milieu than existed in other areas where the boundaries between communities were more readily apparent.

The first Archbishop of Basra following its change of status from a diocese in 1953 was Joseph Gogué (1954–1971). He had been born in Seert in 1886 and had seen the full gamut of ecclesiological, political and economic changes with which the Chaldeans had had to contend following the end of the Ottoman hegemony and given his life experience appeared as a reputable choice. Gogué's time in office saw the consolidation, if overall numerical decline, of the Chaldeans even in the outlying parts of his Archdiocese. A consolidation for which he was not necessarily responsible directly but a pastoral atmosphere conducive to good family life it seems must have been noted for people to settle in the respective locations and to start families.

**Ecclesial organisation – churches in Basra city**

Normal conduct of ecclesiical affairs was challenging during the Iran-Iraq War. Chaldean life continued, however, as we can note from the data for the Chaldean cathedral (Mart Mariam) records ended abruptly in 1980. This lacuna is perhaps unsurprising when we consider the city was a particular focus of Iranian military engagements during the war especially during the battles of Operation Ramadan (1982) and Operation Karbala 5 (1987). The latter which was the biggest military operation of the war perhaps involving up to a million soldiers and led to very substantial population displacement in the Basra region.
The 2003 invasion of Iraq again interrupted the conduct of regular religious and social life, nevertheless, if we speak in general terms the level of religious persecution has been little evidenced by comparison post-2003 with those Chaldeans resident in central or northern Iraq. This should be tempered somewhat as it appears the Chaldean presence faced some level of opposition with the then apostolic administrator, Mgr Iman al-Banar, requesting for his communities to celebrate Christmas in 2009 in an unostentatious manner citing the need to show ‘``respect for Muslims, especially Shi’as, on the occasion of Muharram.’’ which coincided with the Feast of Our Lord’s Nativity that year. (Gisick 2009)

Various figures have been communicated during the course of research related to the total population of Basra archdiocese which appear to vary in accuracy especially from year to year with one estimate stating 5,000 in 2009 and another 1,000 in the same year. Through direct contact with Chaldean community members, however, an estimate of 400 people was given as of 2013. Assuming this to be accurate the loss of population from even the lower end of 1,000 in 2009 is fatal to the continued Chaldean presence and their ability to maintain sufficient communal cohesion for a presence to remain.114

**Conclusion: Archdiocese of Basra**

As we will see below whilst the Chaldeans of Baghdad faced very intense levels of persecution the community was able to retain a degree of cohesion because of the mass concentration of Chaldeans in the city from the 1930s. Conversely Basra is sufficiently tied to a local regionalist identity that separation from the majority of the Chaldean population in this milieu is to be expected. Subsequent to this loss of communal attachment, however, has been the return of Basrawis to the north, many Chaldeans from Teleskef having settled in Basra for example, which demonstrates the northern towns retain the loyalty of the East Syriac population at heart. (Interview, Teleskefi

---

114 It is possible this figure may have risen since May 2014 given Basra's relative security in the context of the rise of Da'esh in western and northern Iraq.
parish priest, Teleskef, October 2013) Such a transfer of population not unusual in Basrawi history given that from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries the East Syriac community appears to have existed practically in name only in the region which the archdiocese presently covers.

**Archdiocese of Baghdad**

Baghdad was the chief see and home of the East Syriac patriarchs for much of the eighth–thirteenth centuries. The city was founded in 762 by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur as the dynasty's capital where the majority of his successors resided until the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century. The city's construction marked the Abbasid's attempted assumption of authority over the Muslim community from the Ummayads (661–750) who had centred the caliphate's administration in Syria.

Although our contemporary views of the East Syriac patriarchal office to the Mesopotamian capital may relate to perceptions of Louis Raphael I Sako's status in Baghdadi society as a minority influence in political affairs and Iraqi life generally, until the late-fourteenth century the rôle of East Syriac patriarch in Mesopotamian society was of one among many religious leaders under Sasanid, Ummayad, Abbasid and Mongol rule with whom the shah, caliph or khan was obliged to productively engage. Iraqi society's current trend for the denial of religious plurality only developing in the late twentieth century.\(^\text{115}\)

The patriarch's relationship with the state was far from without problems as the persecutions of various eras attest but was sufficiently consistent to see the patriarch's inveiglement with the civil power to gain position and influence for himself, his family and the Church. The onset of dhimmi status from the Ummayad period setting the relationship as one of qualitative disadvantage for the Christians but in which by virtue of their size, the wider plurality of south-west Asia, their involvement in civil administration and commitment to scholarship in a very broad sense ensured

\(^{115}\) Perhaps up to a third of Baghdad's population was Jewish prior to the First World War, for example.
they retained a significance to the civil power. East Syriac status altering substantially as they became a numerically minor community and lacking the weight of numbers which obliged the lay élite to acknowledge their significance. Instead becoming a sectional group who had a reduced importance to the conduct of rule and state administration. Indeed from the Ottoman era they were to an extent outside of the concerns of the general administration because of the self-governance by communal laws and customs which the millet system encouraged.

Prior to Baghdad's foundation East Syriac patriarchs had resided in Veh Ardashir (Seleucia) a suburb of the Sasanid capital Ctesiphon. Following the move to Baghdad, Veh Ardashir was retained as the traditional site for patriarchal enthronements and is from where the title associated with the patriarch ``of Seleucia-Ctesiphon'' is derived. Given that Ctesiphon was also the site of Sasanid coronations the patriarch likely sought to emulate and associate himself with themes of sacred kingship which were personified by the Shah and to ensure that his manifestation of Christian authority and jurisdiction aligned with that of the temporal power.

(Cf Kröger 2011)

A noted period of especially high status for the Church of the East in the city and recognition from the Muslim communities of its significance came during the life of patriarch Timothy I who was known for his theological engagements with caliph Al-Mahdi (775–785). (Fiey 1980, 38–39)

The Mongol invasion of western Asia saw a new dynamic of church-state relations set for the Church of the East but which varied over time and by locality in Mesopotamia. In Baghdad, at least, the initial Mongol occupation of the city in 1258 saw no adverse effects upon the East Syriac residents or Christians more widely. The intervention of Mongol élites well disposed to their new Christian subjects or of Christian belief themselves saw the Baghdadi Christian population spared from the widespread massacres and looting in the city with tens of thousands of people estimated to have been killed. (Fiey OP 1975, 22) During the 1260s Muslim ire was raised against the Christians who temporarily in the ascendant and
appearing to break from the strictures and cultural boundaries of their dhimmi social status through Mongol patronage were perceived to be a threat to maintenance of Muslim dominance. The East Syriac position became so difficult that the then patriarch Denha I (1265–1281) left the city for Erbil – returning later in his reign and dying in Baghdad in 1281. (Fiey OP 1975, 35; Wilmshurst 2000, 184)

Further Christian persecution took place in 1295 in Mesopotamia and Persia following the conversion to Islam of the Il-Khanate Mongol ruler Gazan Khan who was initially zealous in advancing his new religion through active persecution of his Jewish, Buddhist and Christian subjects.116 (Amitai-Preiss 2012) Despite Patriarch Yahballah III's previously close relationship with some Mongol rulers and extensive knowledge of their culture he departed from his residence in Baghdad, following the confiscation of church property and appears not to have returned to the city and at his death in 1317 was buried in the Il-Khanate capital Maragha in north-western Persia. (Wilmshurst 2000, 184) Islam had become increasingly popular among the non-Muslim lower classes under Mongol rule (both Mongols and natives) in the second half of the thirteenth century although a substantial minority of the élites retained their Christian, Buddhist or Shamanist religious affiliation. (Fiey OP 1975, 54, 63–65) As Yahballah's successor, Timothy II, was consecrated in Baghdad in 1318 and moved to reside near Erbil so his successor Denha II (c.1336–1380) had limited connections with the city and it is not known if he was enthroned in Baghdad. (Wilmshurst 2000, 185)

The Christian emir Haggi Togai had some influence in preserving what East Syriac community remained in Baghdad in the 1330s, for example, ensuring that previously occupied churches were returned to East Syriac ownership. (Wilmshurst 2000, 184) However, the East Syriac presence other than a token community likely did not continue beyond 1401 following the widespread destruction which Tamerlane caused in Baghdad. (Wilmshurst 2000, 185)

116 Shamanism as the traditional Mongol religion was for pragmatic reasons not directly attacked.
The accession of Mongol dominance in south-west Asia presented a challenge to how church-state relations should proceed. The relief which Mongol protection offered an indication of the possibilities which the East Syriac patriarch and hierarchy could pursue at societal level and to increase their influence in Mesopotamian society. Christian actions did not take into account the resilience of Islam which was embraced by Gazan Khan in 1290. I suggest this marked a turning point also and the aftermath of Gazan Khan's conversion clarified that Islam was set for the indefinite future as the religion of choice for the temporal rulers of societies in which the Church of the East was present. The Mongols appeared as the final potential hope for the elevation of East Syriac Christianity to the level of at least a if not the state religion – with their turn towards Islam the Church of the East resigned itself to dhimmi status indefinitely. Ecclesiologically significant also for dislodging the patriarch's position to Baghdad and creating a situation which increased difficulties in cultivating a client-patron relationship with the ruling power.

The status of the Church at the macro level reliant on forging some form of relationship which enabled the legitimisation of the East Syriac community in Mesopotamia. Since its foundation the "state" had been a presence to the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs and from the Synod of Isaac (410) held in Seleucia-Ctesiphon the "capital" had been linked with the headship of the Church of the East and the contemporary ruling power. Therefore, how should the patriarch navigate the position of disconnection even temporarily from a link with the temporal élite and the loss of legitimation in Mesopotamian society which this entailed? In the longer term into the fifteenth century leading to the geographical retreat to northern Mesopotamia and disintegration of the East Syriac presence south of Mosul. In the shorter term weakening the ability of church leaders to present a broader vision of scope for the East Syriac community's involvement and a de facto renunciation of their position in the ostensibly plural societies of west Asia. The loss of Christian presence to Baghdad then perhaps not necessarily viewed as or leading to the likely end of the East Syriac relationship with the state in this era but an inhibiting factor to the continued status of the Christians as viewed as an essential part of Mesopotamian
society and lowering the confidence of the community in its leadership to provide a sense of security and protection to the population which it represented. The community outside of the level of societal stability and security which the temporal power could provide largely reliant on the protection offered by the ecclesiastical organisation and its patronage networks. If these networks were disrupted or suspended self-reliance on a communal wide scale became of key significance for the functioning of ordinary life. With the Church of the East largely unable to call on the support of the coercive or restricting power of the state following the end of the Mongol empires from the 1330s and until the Ottomans their position was precarious. The movement of the patriarchs away from Baghdad perhaps also a policy of following their communities into an exile from the temporal order. Without a sustainable and active participation at the level of headship there was less need or benefit of retaining their presence to the city. Also signalling a loss of a cosmopolitanism to the Church of the East and for the future a challenge to the re-integration and re-creation of intra-societal networks: day-to-day interactions and successful engagements with the authorities taking time to form.

The establishment of a Latin diocese for Baghdad in 1632 probably aided the East Syriac restoration to the city and from contemporary observers it appears there was an East Syriac community of about 500 people in the early seventeenth century. (Wilmshurst 2000, 185–186) The Latin presence in Baghdad drew in interested parties from northern Mesopotamia and a consolidated East Syriac community sympathetic to union with the Holy See seems likely to have appeared by the late seventeenth century given the Amidite line patriarch Joseph III (b. ? d 1757) was from Baghdad. (Wilmshurst 2000, 186)

The Archdiocese of Baghdad is of great heritage in the Chaldean ecclesial structure. It appears the archdiocese was founded with the creation of the Chaldean community in union with the Holy See under Yohannan Sulaqa in 1553 as the titular see named Babylon. The formation of the Archdiocese of Baghdad took place simultaneously and was united with the patriarch's jurisdiction despite his residence in the Mosul region. Suggestive
of the continued memory of Baghdad's former status as one of the centres of East Syriac religious life and as one of the centres of Islamic rule in Asia throughout the Medieval era and a nexus of church-state relations. Nonetheless, the see of Baghdad only began to be permanently and physically occupied when it was given over to an auxiliary bishop in 1938, Souleyman Kutchouck Ousta (1938–1939), from which time one or more auxiliaries have been associated with the city due to the concentration of Chaldeans from the mid-twentieth to early-twenty-first centuries.

From the 1950s onwards Baghdad's position as the centre of Chaldean life in Iraq was strengthened by the sharp rise in the construction of churches to cope with the demands of the community. When we consider that until the First World War there were only two churches in the city for c. 7,000 Chaldeans we can note the radical transformation of ecclesial life as by the end of the twentieth century there were twenty-one parishes serving a population of possibly as many as 300,000 Chaldeans. (Khayyath 1896b, 433; Wilmshurst 2000, 186; Roberson CSP 2010) This movement of population tied into the context of Iraqi urbanisation during the twentieth century and the enmeshing of Chaldeans in this milieu. This a significant change when we recall for much of the era fifteenth to nineteenth centuries Chaldean ecclesiology and organisation had been built around rural village and small town life in northern Iraq.117 This change in the dynamic of relationship with the bishop whose world was geographically reduced in size but responsible for a far greater number of community members within their jurisdictional remit. Whereas during the Ottoman period the divisions in the East Syriac community by factions – Sulaqite, legitimist and Josephite – saw a proliferation of bishops to a particular region in an effort to wield greater influence among the community and an aura of respectability and legitimacy which could facilitate greater support from within the confines of the Ottoman administrative order.

With the re-construction of churches on a large scale for the first time in nearly 1,000 years the Chaldeans came particularly to coagulate around the area of Dora but there were churches spread across the centre of

117 Notwithstanding the communities in Kirkuk and Mosul.
the city. Combined with St Peter's Seminary, various religious foundations, schools and St Raphael's hospital, the Chaldeans were integrated in all levels of Iraqi cultural and social life and were by far the strongest in terms of influence on Iraqi life among the non-Christian populations especially following the departure of Iraqi Jews in the 1940s.

The work of the clergy in this context aided by Chaldean cultural engagement throughout Baghdadi society which led to a very strong sense of attachment to the city and the expansion of publications in literature, poetry, ecclesial magazines and journals with much of this led by the laity. Thus, when the Chaldean situation began to decline from the mid-1980s the sense of loss was significant to the ecclesiological identity of the whole church which had come to rely on the success or failure of the Chaldean presence in Baghdad to produce, lead and maintain the Church throughout the world. Indeed, at the time which Chaldean cultural and social influence in Iraq was reaching its highest level since the Abbasid era the population in Iraq began to dissipate becoming once again and for the first time since the fourteenth century an international presence beyond the borders of the Middle East and south-west Asia.

Despite the intensity of fighting which was manifested during the Iran-Iraq War the capital was little directly affected even during the so-called "War of the Cities" aerial bombing campaign. Nonetheless, the era was one in which the intensification of identity also took place with the popular fear of Iran among many Iraqis and especially the implications of its Islamic Revolutionary government upon the non-Muslim population were it to win the war. Despite the departure of some Chaldeans from Baghdad during the 1980s to avoid conscription or the general effects of the war the overwhelming majority remained with the final decline of the Baghdadi population only beginning as a result of sanctions post-1991. To deal with these circumstances the clergy of the Archdiocese were in great difficulty with limited practical means with which to strengthen the coherence of the Chaldean population beyond their attachment to Iraq and the gradual growth of hope for a better future. It was only from 2003 that churches began to close in the face of violence. In the context of the persecution which swiftly followed the invasion of March 2003 we can note the population's
dissipation and the inability due to violence and loss of economic opportunity to remain in the city. Most strikingly brought to light in the decline of the number of baptisms as can be see in graphs 8 and 9.\footnote{I was informed the vast majority of the twenty-three Baghdadi Chaldean churches remain open, however, I was only able to access baptismal data from thirteen parishes.}

As we have noted in our remarks on Erbil the effects of an event in one place can lead to knock-on effects in others which was seen in the relationship between the Chaldeans of Baghdad with those of Mosul and the Nineveh plain. As of 2013, however, the level of decline appeared to have plateaued at least for a time with those who remained the very determined, the poor or the disabled. In speaking with clergy in 2014 who were previously resident in Baghdad the sense of attachment to the city remained extremely strong even despite their difficult situation. Desiring if at all possible to return and this in part related to the twentieth century Chaldean association with the city but also the awareness of an East Syriac presence in the city from its foundation under the Abbasids. This it is felt is something which cannot be lost as it is so integral to the sense of East Syriac and Chaldean identity. Quite apart from the persecutions which Chaldeans have faced there is a sense of injustice extending to the contributions which Iraqi Christians have made to the development of Baghdad and their subsequent rejection by the wider population. A sense that Chaldeans should have earned their right to live in the capital and have fulfilled a debt to society and/or completed obligations which even the most biased of Islamist should see as granting them leave to remain in the city.

In terms of comparative examples for the twenty-first century situation and the levels of ethnic cleansing of the Chaldean population we might look back to Tamerlane's invasion of 1401 to see similar levels of destruction. If in the twenty-first century this is not affected in such a directly destructive manner more recent events still have had the same long term impact upon the Christians of the East Syriac tradition: departure. Possibly a better comparison is the situation for the East Syriac communities in China from the eleventh century where under the Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties anti-Christian campaigns of some violence along with legal repression and the ambivalence of the population at large contributed to the
gradual decline of the East Syriac community. (Yuanyan 2013, 292)

**Ecclesial organisation in Baghdad**

As of October 2013 the vast majority of parishes remained open in Baghdad with only the church of St Joseph the Worker having closed. We can note the records of baptisms for the communities largely follow the wider trends of Chaldean life and, as the northern dioceses declined in population, so Baghdad expanded particularly from the 1950s–1970s. Without having visited the city it is difficult to provide as good a “feel” for the diocese as others discussed above. Thus, this attempt at assessing the growth and decline of the Archdiocese must be seen in this light. Concurrent with this is the knowledge of the Chaldean position in Baghdad as distinct from that anywhere else in the world. We note, for example, the patriarchal residence; the unique status which the city held as a hub of connection with the western political and religious worlds and a level of social, material and cultural advancement and cohesion for Chaldeans found in few other cities of Iraq in the twentieth century.

As reflected in table 15 and graphs 8 and 9 the patriarchal cathedral of Our Lady of Sorrows enjoyed pre-eminence in the city prior to the 1960s. From which time there was a gradual movement to other parishes as they were established and the population dispersed to those churches nearest their homes. Nevertheless, Mar Yusif in the Karrada area retained a substantial level of support and, even as of 2013, a large proportion of baptisms still took place in the Cathedral.

If we compare data of those churches in use prior to 1958 (in table 15) for which we have data we can see although Our Lady of Sorrows exceeded all other churches by far Mar Yusif, Karrada saw an increase in baptisms at a proportionately greater rate in the 1950s. Such a change of focus far from being unprecedented and with the influx of Chaldeans in this era an understandable spread of population. The number of churches permitting choice not just in favoured architectural style and liturgical

119 NB data was not available in this instance on a per year basis.
expression but in preference of priest and associated social and cultural activities.

That data for the most part is unavailable prior to 1958 is not especially concerning given the population was largely based around the three aforementioned parishes. The only church for which we do not have data prior to 1958 and which was in use was St John the Baptist. As we might expect the pattern of baptisms largely follows events in Iraqi society:

- The trend for significant growth at least from 1958 with an equally significant decline coming from the 1990s.
- The concentration of the Chaldean population to the capital during the Iran-Iraq War and in most parishes either a relatively stable population or which appears to have grown during the conflict.
- Perhaps most surprising or anomalous baptismal record is that of Mar Yusif (Karrada) which saw a rapid drop in the 1970s from which it never really recovered. As it was one of the older churches in Baghdad by the 1970s it is possible it either underwent renovations during the decade or there was an appeal to becoming a member of one of the newer churches.
- The decline of parish life especially since 2003 strongly indicative of Chaldean migration. Also suggestive of the practical difficulties in sustaining a community which has lost so many members and the feasibility of the Chaldeans' continued presence to Baghdad. Much like Baghdadi Jews their fate perhaps to be slowly ground down socially, culturally and physically until there is no longer any room for them to manoeuvre in Iraqi society or to manifest the East Syriac tradition and popularly incarnate Christ's presence in Baghdad.

**Baghdad and East Syriac ecclesiology**

The consolidation of the patriarchal see in Baghdad in the eighth century with the foundation of the new Abbasid capital was an attempt by patriarch
Timothy I to deliberately link the two institutions – Caliph and Patriarch – and to emphasise a paradigm of the normative nature of an East Syriac presence to the centre of temporal power.\textsuperscript{120} Through the knowledge of the former `golden' era of the East Syriac presence to Baghdad under Timothy’s direction it seems likely that this model of proximity to the temporal élite was present in the mind of Joseph VII Ghanima when he confirmed the transfer of the Chaldean patriarchate from Mosul to Baghdad in 1950.

Such a consolidation close to political power in both instances under Timothy and Joseph influenced by four main factors:

- The patriarch had an understanding that he was leading a significant community integral to the future development of Mesopotamia-Iraq and to most effectively represent its interests required maintaining a substantial if not leading official presence to the city.
- Having lost or been uncertain of a place in new societies – whether Ummayad, Abbasid, Mongol or under the Iraqi monarchy – to enter the centre of political power in Iraq offered an opportunity to recreate or develop patronage networks and influence with the ruling élites. This combined with the aggregation of Christians to the city necessitated that to have influence over the majority of the community also required them to be resident in close proximity to the majority.
- The notion of utilising a connection with the state to ensure that the church hierarchy in the person of the patriarch can consolidate control over the community. This was perhaps of greater import in the post-Sasanian era as with the East Syriac community forming such a relatively large proportion of Mesopotamian society that it was necessary to re-legitimate the patriarch’s ecclesial authority through the Abbasid caliphs as the Shah ratified ecclesiastical decisions during Sasanian rule. It likely still played a rôle in the Iraqi

\textsuperscript{120} Patriarch Henanisho II (773–780) transferred the see to Baghdad in 775 and along with this movement it is quite possible that Timothy assumed the credit for some other aspects of Henanisho’s work such as the codification of East Syriac canon law and the missionary efforts in central Asia and China. (Wilmshurst 2011, 115)
monarchist era as the Chaldean patriarch emerged as the *de facto* leader of all Iraqi Christians – especially with the departure of the Church of the East’s patriarch, Mar Shimun XXIII in 1933 – through cultivating a relationship with the kings of Iraq expediting requests for Christian advancement could take place the church building programme which occurred in the city under Ghanima being one example.

- Moving the patriarchate to Baghdad permitted the patriarch to shape the ecclesiological model and provide a vision for the future of the church through being in close proximity to a large proportion of his community. This was significant for influencing how the East Syriac community over six decades (1950s–2010s) and six hundred years (eighth–fourteenth centuries) would view the significance of Baghdad and as to why East Syriac communities chose to remain in the city even throughout persecution.¹²¹

To conclude I can further suggest that the entry into Baghdad for Ghanima was an attempt at a deliberate break with a pre-existing vision of Chaldean ecclesiology as necessarily related to northern Iraq. Through situating the church geographically and in its ecclesiastical organisation in central Iraq Ghanima was reacting to the political changes in the state and wider Middle East which necessitated that Christians become increasingly urbanised and in proximity to the political power of the day to ensure the safeguarding of the community. Were there any doubts to the wisdom of such a policy Ghanima was in a position to defer to the precedent which Timothy had established and was practically supported by the majority of Chaldeans in Iraq becoming resident to the city.

**Conclusion: Archdiocese of Baghdad**

The displacement of the Chaldeans from Baghdad since 2003 has historical precedent in the East Syriac context and that on more than one occasion the

community has been revivified to the centre of temporal power in Mesopotamia-Iraq should not necessarily imply events of the last twelve years have been fatal to the long term recovery of the community to the city. Nevertheless, the recovery previously having taken nearly 600 years to be fulfilled indicating a contemporary recovery is it would appear but a hope at this time. How the break between the main body of the community, dispersed internationally, and the patriarch still resident in Baghdad can be reconciled could follow the precedent for the substantial distance between those who were resident in China during the Middle Ages. Yet, with the near destruction of the community to Baghdad and the persistent undermining of those who remain what can be done? Ecclesiological imperatives to retain the Baghdadi Chaldean presence may seem of little import when the safety of the community as a whole people is threatened by violence. Nonetheless, the physical environment in which a church incarnates its presence, community and culture does matter and for however long a recognisable East Syriac community has been in Mesopotamia it has been substantially linked with the sites of Seleucia-Cteisphon and Baghdad. The core of Chaldean ecclesiological identity would seem to be unsustainable in the face of such a loss. Without a sufficient critical mass of community members to represent the church in the city the Chaldeans are no longer able to act as the Christian difference in Baghdad and the de facto national church of Iraq. Whereas, for the period 1921–2013, proximity to the leadership of the Iraqi state permitted the development and maintenance of patronage relationships with the political élite and popular representation of the Chaldean community to Baghdadi society.

The decline of a Baghdadi Chaldean presence from 2003 and since June 2014 lost from Mosul denuding the Chaldeans of essential aspects of their identity and causing a necessary readjustment of expectation to what the church means to Iraqi society and as to how the Chaldean patriarch can, though still resident in Baghdad, administer the community and retain its ecclesial unity in an international and globalised context. By way of comparison for Timothy I his leadership of the East Syriac community was at least over contiguous territories – one could theoretically walk from Baghdad to Khan Balik – and this entailed also a varied if contiguous spread
of shared ecclesial culture.

For Louis Sako the geographical spread of the contemporary Chaldean community and its socio-economic diversity inhibit announcing a unified and easily shared ecclesial culture. Sako is obliged to maintain a Chaldean ecclesiology which meets the distinctive needs and expectations of Chaldeans from San Diego to Aleppo whilst also sustaining an East Syriac ecclesial identity which draws on its origins and continued incarnation in the Mesopotamian-Iraqi environment.

**Archdiocese of Mosul**

Mosul's significance and that of the Nineveh plains region to the East Syriac community can hardly be overstated. For much of the period 1553–1950 the Nineveh plain was the focus of Chaldean life and even following the patriarchate's transferral to Baghdad in 1950 it retained its place as a heartland of religious life with Mosul home to the Chaldean seminary of St Peter \(^1\) and the joint Chaldean-Syrian Catholic seminary of St John. Yet Mosul was not always a site of fixed allegiance to the East Syriac tradition with the West Syriac community making inroads to popular religious commitment to the modern era and until the invasion of Iraq in 2003 the city retained substantial communities of Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholics. (Wilmshurst 2000, 189; Fiey OP 1959, 18, 25)

As we have noted above regarding Alqosh and Rabban Hormizd we should be careful not to retroactively apply importance to the Mosul-Nineveh region when its status in the late antique and early medieval era to the East Syriac church was not necessarily then as high as it was to become. The spread of East Syriac Christian culture, monasticism and intellectual life was not confined to Nineveh and was one among many normative aspects of Mesopotamian Christian society.

Certainly we can speak of a concentrated and long established East Syriac community to the Mosul region from the middle of the seventh

---

122 Until the institution's transfer to Baghdad.
century when the noted theologian and spiritual writer Isaac was appointed bishop of Nineveh.\footnote{Latterly known as Isaac “of Nineveh”. For further biographical detail see the introductory chapter in Brock (2014).} It appears the diocese continued into the ninth century with Mosul itself gaining importance as the residence of the metropolitans of the ecclesiastical province of Adiabene from the ninth to twelfth centuries.\footnote{With regards to the nomenclature of ecclesiastical structures in and around Mosul it is possible that the Church of the East's diocese of Mosul was never formally created. Instead with the loss in size of the Church's jurisdiction and population the diocese of “Nineveh” changed in status and name to that of “Mosul” reflecting the new reality and the relative extent of jurisdictional claims of the church in the region. In the context of the decline of Mesopotamian East Syriac ecclesiastical organisation in the fourteenth century we can perceive as to why \textit{de facto} changes were incorporated into diocesan structures.} (Wilmshurst 2000, 191)

From the twelfth century East Syriac bishops continued to reside in Mosul to the contemporary period with only the invasion by Da'esh bringing to an end an uninterrupted East Syriac presence.\footnote{The presence of East Syriac bishops to the city cannot be directly confirmed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but given surrounding activity such as Patriarch Denha II's residence in Karamles in the mid-fourteenth century and known scribal activity in manuscript production it is quite possible a bishop was present to the city. (Wilmshurst 2000, 207–208)} The Moslawi ecclesiastical structures became a focus of competition from the mid-fifteenth century as a result of being closely linked with the institution of the patriarchate as the diocese became the responsibility of the Natar Kursya. This arrangement continued from the late fifteenth to late eighteenth centuries and as such appointment to the diocese was a sign of high favour and which granted influence over local ecclesial affairs and within the Church more widely. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 193–196)\footnote{Mosul retained such a status into the twenty-first century with the Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul considered the second most important figure in the Church after the patriarch.} The office of bishop of Mosul becoming of even greater significance during the competing claims between East Syriac factions in the three centuries between the formation of the Chaldean East Syriac faction under Yohannan Sulaqa in the 1550s to the unification of East Syriac factions around Yohannan Hormizd as Chaldean patriarch in the 1830s. Occupation of the see and the affiliation of its inhabitants becoming a marker of the legitimate patriarchal successor's status in the East Syriac community. In the eyes of the Latin missionaries Mosul was also significant for its being considered the chief “prize” in the
East Syriac ecclesiastical organisation.

Even from the presence of Latin missionaries to the city from the 1630s it took some time before the city itself was brought entirely into affiliation with the Chaldean East Syriac faction. The start of the Chaldean movement in the city came via the interest of one `Heder, son of Maqdassi Hormizd' who likely started along the path of union with the Holy See as result of Capuchin missionary influence and whose order had a mission station in the city from 1636–1724. (Fiey OP 1959, 56) Notably the East Syriac communities external to the city were all in union with the Holy See by the end of the eighteenth century but it was only with the resolution of the competition for patriarchal leadership between the legitimist and Josephite factions in the nineteenth century that the Chaldeans began to make inroads among the East Syriacs of Mosul itself. (Wilmshurst 2000, 190) The long term consolidation of the Chaldean project becoming tied to the city with it retaining one of the final communities of the non-Chaldean East Syriac faction in the region.

In a move which appears to have been intended to consolidate the Chaldean presence in central Mesopotamia Baghdad's ecclesial structures were absorbed into that of Mosul from 1863. (Wilmshurst 2000, 199) Given the relatively small size of the Baghdadi Chaldean community at the time this was a pragmatic change and brought Chaldeans in the city into a more normal ecclesial arrangement as the diocese of Baghdad had had limited use to that time in the Chaldean context. On a practical basis the two zones within the ``patriarchal archdiocese'' were administered separately.

There was perhaps a difference in leadership style between successive patriarchs as to how they viewed their responsibilities in diocesan and ecclesial administration. There was a twenty-four year gap between the first and second patriarchal vicars' appointments for Mosul from 1870–1894. Joseph VI Audo being involved in controversy with the Holy See in the 1870s perhaps in reaction asserting a more direct style of control over his communities in Mesopotamia. His successor Eliya XIV Abulyonan only appointing a patriarchal vicar four years prior to his death suggesting that regardless of Audo's concerns the communities may have
been comfortably able to govern themselves without the need for external oversight or that administering his archdiocese was well within his capabilities.\(^{127}\)

Moslawi Christian life was complicated by the often less than hospitable nature of local Sunni administrators, the relative independence of local governors from Ottoman central rule at times and the more modern controversies as to the lawful governing power: whether Turkey or Iraq after the First World War. Such a set of circumstances further complicated by the strength of the Kurds and the Iraqi army campaigns in opposition to their presence. Further complicated by the 1990s and the Kurdish capability to project influence over the territory in and around Mosul. The parishes of the contemporary diocese being no stranger to this with churches in Telkef and Karamles under KRG authority, for example, whereas the other parishes remained under ICG control.

Modern Chaldean identity and connections to Mosul whilst crucial even after 1950 were gradually weakened. The élite factions of the modern state of Iraq and the Chaldean Church came to fruition in general through their presence in Baghdad with Mosul missing out on the flourishing of Chaldean life which was so strongly developed in the capital.

**Ecclesial organisation in Mosul Archdiocese**

The archdiocese since 2003 has become the epitome of Christian decline in Iraq with the situation in the city particularly challenging and faced with difficulties related to the conduct of Christian life in the context of very rigorous expressions of Sunni law and culture. The resilience of the Chaldeans to remain deliberately weakened through violent persecution more destructive than any other city of Iraq with the exception of Baghdad evidenced most clearly in the martyrdom of Archbishop Paulos Faraj Raho and Fr Ragheed Ganni and his sub-deacons.

\(^{127}\) By way of comparison in 2013 the Archbishop of Erbil had responsibility for c. 35,000 Chaldeans (a figure similar to the Chaldean population of the Nineveh region in 1913) and had no appointed auxiliary or suffragan bishops for assistance in administering the community.
In this context, we are fortunate to have data from Mosul, due to the many difficulties with which parish life is associated in and around the city. The earliest figures for the Archdiocese come from 1870 in the town of Telkef which has held a pre-eminent position in Chaldean life. The lack of data from Mosul itself in this period owing to the relative youth of some of the parishes in Mosul city – as Chaldean institutions – due to the long term dominance of the Church of the East in the city until the nineteenth century.

The increase in the number of baptisms in the city as seen in graph 10 was tied to economic growth in Mosul but also a feeling of relative security with which the city was associated in terms of freedom from violence during the Iraqi-Kurdish wars. Nonetheless, Chaldean life in Mosul was not straightforward. The context of residing in an area which was staunchly and actively Sunni restricted Christian social life. It being related, for example, how during the 1940s and 1950s that certain areas of the city were avoided by Christian students when walking to school as an openly hostile reaction could be expected from the Muslim inhabitants.

**Mosul (city)**

As of 1959 the following Chaldean churches were in use in the city:
- Mar Isha'ya
- Mar Shemon as-Safa (St Peter the Apostle)
- Mar Gewargis
- Mar Meskinta the Martyr (Chaldean cathedral and patriarchal seat to 1950)
- Mar Pethyon
- Mar Yusif
- Umm al Ma`una (Our Lady of Perpetual Succour)

The convent church associated with the Dominican religious

As of 2013:
- Mar Ishya

---

128 For an in-depth historical and architectural account of all the churches see Fiey (1959, *passim*)
The parishes in Mosul appear to have had generally stable populations until the invasion of 2003 from which time they have trailed off to subsistence level. It is notable that even at times when population expansion might be expected it is not uniform across the city with, for example, Mar Ephrem, Mar Yusif and Mar Ishiya's baptismal rates declining after the Gulf War yet those of Perpetual Succour and Mar Polos increasing. A state of affairs for which an explanation is not readily forthcoming as direct fieldwork could not be carried out to the city. It is possible as Perpetual Succour was a very well known centre of Chaldean activity and Mar Polos the archdiocesan cathedral that resources were especially concentrated in these parishes.

**Holy Ghost parish**

The growth and decline of Holy Ghost church from 1997–2008 in large part due to the inspirational leadership of some of the clergy including Fr Ragheed Ganni but whose martyrdom in 2008 marked the *de facto* end of the use of the church and it appears in the following years the departure from Mosul by a substantial proportion of the then remaining Chaldean population. As available information about Fr Ragheed and his parish are more well developed than any other his experience and the church of the Holy Ghost will be used as a brief case study for the Chaldean community in Mosul.

---

129 Source: clergy of the Diocese of Mosul
native Christians of Mosul was in August and December 2004 where the cathedral of Mar Polos and the bishop's residence were attacked. The wider context for Moslawi Chaldeans was the city's rise to prominence as the main hub for the organisation of Baathist and Islamist anti-Coalition forces following the March 2003 invasion. Mosul's Sunni Arab character coalesced with these two groupings and one fed off the other creating an environment in which the Islamists could be relied on as the "muscle" and the Baathist element as the "brains". That both were willing to work together indicative of the loss of secularist mentality among the Baathists during Husain's final years in power and a *milieu* in which party stalwarts such as Tariq Aziz could not comfortably have mixed.

The pressure on the Christian presence and identity as a whole to Mosul became increasingly intense. The campaign against Fr Ragheed and his parish being pursued in a consistent and combative manner suggesting that his leadership qualities and charisma were acknowledged as a threat and obstacle to advancing an Islamist paradigm. Yet even in a context where the payment of *jizya* was established there continued efforts to see the violent diminution of the Christians and the obligation for the Sunni population to become involved in a seemingly widespread ambivalence to their removal. Facing persecution from a section of the population even violent attacks are in some respects incomparable with the withdrawal of normal social interaction by neighbours and the demonisation of your community on an ideological basis which weakens social bonds to the point where violence against you is regarded as a normative means for conducting social relations and the resolution of difference.

The church of the Holy Ghost was seriously damaged by terrorists to the point of closure in August 2004. The damage sustained it was hoped could be repaired and within a year the church could be back to full use. However, at the time at which parish activity was returning to a more normal state in 2006 it faced four attacks during September and October with Mass being celebrated in the basement under police protection. One Chaldean stating in September 2006 after one of the attacks, "Our faith is a challenge to violence. The militias fear us because our faith is stronger

---

130 A group of protestant missionaries had earlier been murdered in 2003.
than their bullets". (Asianews.it 2006a) Such a response characterising a redemptive approach to the suffering which was experienced through claiming the difficulties which they experienced the Chaldeans in a position to offer their spiritual action with a Faith that could overcome the world. (1 John V:4–5). Moreover, exhibiting in a very strong way the characterisation of martyrs and witnessing their Faith – and bravery – to those who sought their removal.

October 2006 also saw a particularly distressing incident which brought into focus the difficulties facing priests: Fr Polos Eskander of the Syrian Orthodox Church was kidnapped and beheaded in Mosul. The manner of his death to become an increasing method of murder used by the Islamist forces and was a brutal manifestation of the policy which the Islamists would use to destroy the community from the top in highly publicised incidents ensuring that any feelings of security were entirely destroyed among the Christian population. Another method was to weaken the institutions which supported the churches in their contributions to Moslawi society and to deny the Christians opportunity for presenting the significance of their presence to wider society. Caritas Mosul was forced to close in November 2006 following demands for the payment of protection money with the implication that refusal would result in violence. Despite the focus of the work being on supporting the homeless and clients of whom ninety percent were Muslim Caritas faced little alternative option but to suspend its work indefinitely. (Asianews.it 2006b)

The situation continued to be tense into the next year. On Palm Sunday 2007 a police station near to Holy Ghost church was attacked and shots could be heard by those inside the church. Fr Ragheed described the situation: ```At this point we felt like Jesus when he entered Jerusalem knowing that the Cross would be the consequence of His love for man...So we offered our own suffering as a token of love for Jesus."' (Asianews.it 2007) Meeting persecution in this way one of the few means by which the Chaldeans could still positively respond to their situation. Entering into the Passion of Christ and sharing in this a mentality which could strengthen the Chaldeans spiritually if not materially resolve their situation. Union with
Christ being that element of their lives which the faithful could not be denied by their attackers and permitted them to enter into the suffering of Christ in a very particular and real manner.

It was also enough for attackers to act violently if infrequently to alter the conduct of Christian life. We should recall violent incidents did not necessarily happen every day but were sufficiently regular and serious for a sense of normality to be impossible to retain and ecclesial life becomes obliged to alter as a result.

The perceived necessity to expedite Mosul's transformation into a Sunni enclave through territorial expansion and the expulsion of supposedly alien persons also underlay efforts to weaken the Christian presence. As the lay and religious elements of being a Chaldean are inseparable it was not the case that simply by hiding their religious activities or closing all the churches the Chaldeans could maintain their livelihoods in the city. The option with which they were being presented was to leave or remain and suffer until Islamists effaced the Christian ethos, culture, people and material heritage of the city.131

In the aftermath of Fr Ragheed's death and then that of Abp Raho attacks on churches but also harassment, assaults, kidnappings and murders of community members increased in number and the deterioration of life led only the very resilient to remain. If your culture and presence is being effaced and less than fifty miles away is relative security in the Kurdish administered provinces in which a Chaldean ecclesial culture in which you can take a full part is being developed other than with a very strong ideological belief in the necessity of staying and heroic fortitude what will you do?

Such degree of persecution far from without precedent in Sunni contexts. Muslim violence against Christians for an indefinite period with the purpose of eradicating their presence a feature of Tamerlane's campaigns, the rule of some Abbasid and Mongol leaders and exemplified in the 1915–1918 massacres. Suggesting that violent methods for Sunni expansion in territory and the alteration of culture to a Sunni paradigm are

131 To my knowledge the majority of Moslawi churches – of all denominations – were attacked at least once from March 2003–June 2014.
effective – the loss of an East Syriac presence in eastern Asia Minor the clearest testimony. Whether Mosul's Islamists in 2003 were fully cognisant of these precedents and their significance to the Chaldeans is not known but the manifestation of violence to rub away an irritation to the sacred space in which Sunni culture could be enforced was the practical outcome of their actions and in accord with these historical attempts to deny a Christian difference in Mesopotamian-Iraqi societies inspired by religious motivations.

**Conclusion: Mosul (city)**

As has been noted above the deaths of Raho and Ganni should have been more concerning to external and interested powers to Iraq. The lack of response or ambivalence to their fates seemingly making their deaths a justifiable aspect of the new Iraq. Removing Chaldean leaders consequently brutalising the Church as a whole and denigrating the ecclesial offices, archdiocese and parish which the two men represented. The assumption that Chaldeans as Christians and as Catholics are not only inferior but that their inferiority permits such treatment and grants legitimacy to Sunni led actions and the cultural victory of *sharia* inspired principles and the territorial expansion of the Sunni umma.

**Telkef**

Telkef may be a relatively young East Syriac community to the Nineveh plain with the town's foundation perhaps only taking place in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century possibly owing to the trend of patriarchs from Yahballah III onwards to reside in northern Mesopotamia and the consolidation of the East Syriac communities in the region. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 205) In a Chaldean context the town had its status inflated to that of a diocese by Sulaqite patriarch Abdisho IV in 1562 who compiled a list of East Syriac sees supposedly loyal to him in an attempt to impress the Holy See of the vitality of his ecclesial organisation. (Fiey OP 1965b,
II:359) It seems unlikely Telkef held Chaldean diocesan status at that time in actual fact but perhaps Abdisho named a cleric as titular bishop of the town and Chaldean sympathies seem to have stuck with it being the first East Syriac community in the Nineveh region to become majority Chaldean in its ecclesial affiliation with several Chaldean patriarchs subsequently originating from the town. Joseph II of the Amidite line, for example, was born there in 1667 and a Chaldean inclined group of clergy signed a document rejecting their supposed "Nestorian" errors in 1719 presumably with the intention of impressing local Latin missionaries of their desire for recognition in the Chaldean community. (Wilmshurst 2000, 224–225; Cf Fiey OP 1965b, II:360)

Certainly we can recognise Telkef's significance to the Chaldeans in the nineteenth century with it providing a range of clergy to the community: lay and monastic. (Wilmshurst 2000, 223, 226) The town's position between Mosul and Rabban Hormizd a convenient "halfway point" between two centres of East Syriac activity. Moreover, as Mosul's East Syriacs largely retained their allegiance to the legitimist faction into the nineteenth century whereas Telkef acted as a point of Chaldean concentration in the East Syriac heartland and the consolidation and expansion of the community in union with the Holy See in Nineveh took place at this juncture.

The significance of the town to the Chaldeans in the early twentieth century was seen with major reconstruction work started on the main Telkefi church of Mar Kyriakos which on completion, in 1931, meant it was one of if not the largest church in Iraq at that time. (Fiey OP 1965b, II:367) The necessity of expansion of church facilities both to reinforce Chaldean identity, to incarnate the Chaldean presence in Telkef and to meet the needs of the population which was steadily expanding. Nonetheless, a striking feature of the baptismal data from Telkef is the inconsistency of the number of baptisms for much of the era 1870–1940 even if the growth of the community is clear in general terms with it peaking by the 1950s. This is partly tied to the violence which marred life during the era: direct persecution, wars and their knock-on effects but also, it seems likely affected by the agricultural economy around which so much of life in
Mesopotamia-Iraq revolved particularly prior to modern urbanisation. We do well to recall the significance of the conduct of day-to-day life when affected by the success or failure of crops each year with subsequent knock-on effects on the number of children born. That being said the Chaldeans, of all the Christians in Iraq, were in the most stable position with regards to ecclesial structures during the early twentieth century which suggests why Telkef was expanding at such a rate in the years prior to the First World War. This then may be a cause for the restoration of the level of population relatively rapidly even during the difficult years of Iraqi risorgimento which the new state underwent in the 1920s and 1930s. By contrast the decline of the Telkef parish has been far less volatile with the 1960s signalling a rapid change with only the Iran-Iraq War era indicating something of a revival and this only transitory. In 1957 there were 7,307 inhabitants of which the majority were Chaldean – Fiey noting that there were 900 Chaldean families in the town in 1961 which likely accounted for well over half the total population. (Fiey OP 1965, II:355 n. 1) This, however, a decline from the population size at the end of the Ottoman era (8,000 Chaldeans in 1913) reflecting migration to Mosul and further afield. (Wilmshurst 2000, 199) A demographic change in this instance driven by the free choice of the community and not a reactionary policy driven by conflict or persecution with Telkef’s baptismal rate beginning to rapidly decline from the start of the community wide transfer of population to central and southern Iraqi cities in the 1960s.

**Karamles**

I do not have data for Karamles prior to the 1960s so it is difficult to determine if it was affected in the same way as Telkef but given it retained a relatively stable baptismal rate to the 1990s I suggest the population of Karamles perhaps had less of a tradition of migration among its community. Telkef having been famous for the entrepreneurial nature of its community and propensity for migration. One example being the substantial control of riverboat transport services in central and southern Iraq by former residents.
of the town since the nineteenth century.

Karamles is of some significance as one of the earliest known East Syriac communities in the Nineveh plain from at least 562. (Fiey OP 1965b, II:401) The town was brought to prominence during the leadership of Patriarch Denha II (1336–1381) who moved the patriarchal see there from Baghdad and it is possible that Denha was himself consecrated patriarch in the town. (Cf Wilmshurst 2000, 184) Whatever position Karamles may have held in the East Syriac ecclesiastical order its relegation from the extant written records until the 1560s perhaps suggestive of a loss of significance and reflection of the general East Syriac qualitative decline in the fifteenth century. The re-emergence in the written record due to the copying of manuscripts in the town especially from the early eighteenth century with Chaldean manuscripts at least from the 1720s with a Dominican missionary, P. Lanza OP, arriving in Karamles in 1765. (Wilmshurst 2000, 219; Fiey OP 1965b, II:405) The mid-eighteenth century marks a consolidation of the Latin and Chaldean presence to the town with the church of St Barbara – possibly the first explicitly "Catholic" church in Mesopotamia – dating from the mid-eighteenth century. (Fiey OP 1965b, II:405) As of 2013 this church was largely no longer used except as a shrine with local people having a strong devotion to the martyr. The current main church is that of St Addai which was built in 1963.132

As of 2013 Karamles is recognisably a Chaldean dominated settlement and has since 2003 not faced an overt difficulty in sustaining a Chaldean culture. Departing migrants have been replaced by new arrivals with the town in fact growing in size over the ten year period from approximately 500 families (c. 2,500 people) to 820 families (c.4,000 people).133 Karamles political status was related to its geographical position as being on the border of KRG and ICG spheres of influence. The town's budget is granted by the ICG governor of Mosul but allowances are also received from the KRG. The efforts by the Kurds to gain further influence

---

132 Other extant, if little used, churches include Mart Mariam and Mar Gewargis. The churches of Mar Yonan, Mar Youkana and the Church of the Forty Martyrs were destroyed by the Persian ruler Nadir Shah in 1743.
133 Chaldeans are not the only religious community with about 35 Shabak families also resident. A community which largely describe themselves as following a type of Shiism.
among the Christians come through permitting Syriac to be taught in local schools but also including Kurdish in the curriculum. There was no especial opposition to Kurdish language instruction expressed and it is entirely pragmatic to take on the language of the dominating temporal power and something which the East Syriac community have always done. However, in so doing in the immediate the Chaldeans are unsettled because their political allegiance is theoretically still to the Mosul governorate which has an Arab Sunni ethos strongly opposed to alternative foci of linguistic, cultural or religious expression.

In 2013 for the Chaldeans of Karamles until there was a lasting resolution in political control over the town their identity remained in flux – inhibited in adhering to an official allegiance to either ICG or KRG. As we have seen a situation far from uncommon in the Chaldean communities across the borders of the Kurdish and Iraqi administered provinces. The situation is similar as for those East Syriacs who were resident on the border of empires during periods of Roman-Sasanian conflict and diplomatic intrigue – both empires holding points of contention for the Christians who could identify with both through culture, religion and language. The Chaldeans of Karamles in 2013, for example, looking to Mosul and Baghdad as historical centres of their religion and yet separated from them in a similar way perhaps to Christians who having fled theological disagreements in the Roman world entered the Sasanian Empire and looked back to Antioch or Nicaea as once great bastions of their religious culture and beliefs yet finding a degree of security for their Christology under the Sasanians in the same way that Christians under KRG influence gained physical security.

**Conclusion: Archdiocese of Mosul**

In not having had the opportunity to visit Mosul itself the portrayal of the Archdiocese is far from complete. Yet in documenting the Mosul region even without Mosul we are able to illuminate the reality of East Syriac life and Christians' radical and enforced separation from Iraqi society as a whole
which is largely so alien to Mesopotamian-Iraqi history. Indeed, the
approach to the progressive exclusion of Christians from supposedly
Muslim ``lands'' is unusual outside of specific mosques or some cities in the
Arabian peninsula. This cleaving of the Christian presence in Mosul itself
completed by Da'esh's expansion from June 2014. An expansion ending the
region's continuous Christian presence since at least the sixth century.

The Mosul-Nineveh region is one of contrasts with the
sectarianisation of society and then its homogenisation by Sunni
communities to one religious culture incapable of meeting the challenge of
or incorporating difference. Such a set of circumstances reflecting both the
resilience and weakness of the East Syriac communities. Resilience insofar
as it has taken nearly 1400 years for the East Syriac communal presence to
be extinguished and weakness in the realisation that Sunni Islam without
some acquiescence to difference or sense of restraint can become a vehicle
for violent transformation of society – something which the Chaldeans are
unable to oppose. East Syriacs able to freely organise and operate with the
assumption of Muslim temporal powers having appreciation of their
difference but in the contemporary era with reduced populations have no
means of materially securing their position (via a militia) nor the support of
an external power sufficiently sympathetic to physically defend them. When
the assumption of Sunni superiority became actualised through the
implementation of sharia and encouragement to jihad by Da'esh the
Chaldeans of Mosul discovered the Muslim population's ambivalence to
their situation was transformed quickly into acceptance of their removal and
complicity in the re-ordering of the social order.

It will be challenging to recover the Chaldean ecclesial identity
which was created and developed in Mosul in its fullness. The city used to
be looked to for leadership, now it represents a material Chaldean defeat and
withdrawal from Iraqi society. A resurrection of Chaldean life to the
Nineveh region for the time being impossible, however, this does not mean
the community's historical contributions will be extinguished from East
Syriac life and ecclesiology. Intangible metaphysical notions of what it
means to be a Chaldean of Mosul cannot be so easily excised from history
as church buildings. St Athanasius whilst writing during the Arian crisis
referred to the true victory which his faithful could expect over those who had materially occupied ecclesial property:

"May God comfort you. I know moreover that not only this thing saddens you, but also the fact that while others have obtained the churches by violence, you are meanwhile cast out from your places. For they hold the places, but you the Apostolic Faith. They are, it is true, in the places, but outside of the true Faith; while you are outside the places indeed, but the Faith, within you. Let us consider whether is the greater, the place or the Faith. Clearly the true Faith. Who then has lost more, or who possesses more? He who holds the place, or he who holds the Faith? Good indeed is the place, when the Apostolic Faith is preached there, holy is it if the Holy One dwell there."  
(Athanasius 1891, 550–551)

Is such a scenario so alien to those Chaldeans now forced into exile and pushed to the borders of Iraqi society because of their Christianity?

6. The Chaldean community in Jordan

As we have noted Chaldean population movement on a large scale has been a constant factor in the community's history in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Consideration will now be given of migration external to Iraq to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Iraqi Christian migration to Jordan has been mentioned in studies by Sassoon (2009) and Chatelard (2002) but without consideration of the particular Jordanian context and its importance to the eastern and Latin Catholic communities nor the ecclesiological significance of the Chaldean presence to Jordan. Estimates have been given to as many as 30,000 Chaldeans transferring through or residing in Jordan since 2003 but to my knowledge no study has considered the importance of Jordan to the Chaldeans. This lack of study is reflected in the lack of attention with which the Chaldeans of Jordan have been afforded by their own hierarchy with only one Chaldean chaplain resident in the country at any one time and this despite the spread of the population throughout the country and not just to Amman where the chaplain is resident.

Studies on the effects of Iraqi Christian migration to north America
and continental Europe have been completed and it seems an optimum time to provide an opening for studies of eastern Catholic migrants to Jordan and to introduce a widening of the scope of studies undertaken by Atto (2011), Hanoosh (2008) and Sengstock (1974) and to place migration into the context of church history rather than allowing it to remain purely considered from an anthropological or sociological perspective.

A sense of ecclesiological self-awareness even if not explicitly understood as such is nourished through the built and natural environment in which one resides. To be removed from this and to traverse significant distances geographically and culturally the sense of self and attachment to religious identity can be altered. In instances where Chaldeans migrate to North America and Australasia and to a lesser extent Europe this displacement appears not to entail as extensive separation from the community or Chaldean religious identity. The overall size of the Chaldean presence and its incarnation in the American environment very strong, for example, in Detroit and San Diego with California also home to the only Chaldean seminary (Mar Abba in El Cajon) outside of Iraq.

In Jordan the population is faced with the challenge of retaining its cohesion as a Chaldean ecclesially oriented group when several other more easily accessible communities can be attended. The situation is compounded by the lack of an ecclesial structure and proximity of trauma to the conduct of day-to-day life in refugee camps to the humiliation of being obliged to accept low paid jobs despite formerly higher socio-economic status in Iraq. The lack of structure in the immediate term and having been faced with relocation weakens the ability to maintain an expression of identity in an often alien environment. When the reason for leaving Iraq is primarily due to religious identity to find a lack of structure with which to uphold religious identity in the diaspora is a substantial issue of concern and for the continuance of or desire to remain part of the Church and express a Chaldean identity.

Jordan has historically served as a transfer point for Christian migrants and in the aftermath of the 2003 Iraq war an increased trend began for families to travel there either directly from Iraq or via Syria prior to onward travel to the West. Overshadowing the Chaldean presence in Jordan
is the sense that the community is foreign by never having seen an established Chaldean ecclesiastical organisation and the complicated relationship which has existed between Iraqi and Jordanian governments since the foundation of each state after the First World War. Both countries ruled by members of the Hashemite family but Jordan, unlike Iraq, retaining its monarchy to the present. Despite the sometimes fractious relationship between the two countries a substantial minority of Iraqis have resided in the Kingdom with Jordan becoming a prominent home for Iraqi political exiles during the rule of Saddam Husain. The geographical proximity and Western influenced culture of Jordan with less strongly enforced paradigms of Arab nationalism meaning it was perceived as a more "liberal" option than Iraq for those whose views and personal ties clashed with that of Husain and the Iraqi Baath Party.

Shared by Jordan and Iraq was a broadly sympathetic attitude towards the maintenance of their Christian populations among the political élites. Seen, for example, in the affection which the present monarch, King Abdullah II, continues to hold the work of the churches in Jordan which contribute large cultural, economic and educational influence to Jordanian society with Christians forming about five percent of the total population. There is also an awareness that the Jordanian monarchy is one of the de jure guardians of the Holy Land and its various shrines – notwithstanding the state of Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem – a rôle which the monarchy takes very seriously and widens his interest in the Jordanian Christian constituency. The stake which the Jordanians have in this rôle is bound up with maintaining the Christian population of Jordan and another reason for resolving to defend a type of religious pluralism in the Kingdom.

**Chaldean origins to Jordan**

Prior to the late nineteenth century no Chaldean presence to the Transjordan region is recorded and an East Syriac presence to the Holy Land, particularly to Jerusalem, appears to have lost an ecclesiastical structure by the early eighteenth century. (See Brock 2006) However, it seems unlikely
that East Syriac pilgrims would have perceived this as a reason not to travel.

The first arrival of Chaldeans seems to have been from the late nineteenth century and consolidated with the establishment of a Patriarchal Exarchate in 1908 by Emmanuel II Thomas. It is possible an increase in the Chaldean population took place at the end of the First World War with the opportunity for a complete break with the tragic events in northern Mesopotamia and eastern Asia Minor during the war provoking some to travel to Transjordan. The familiarity with British Imperial influence to and in Mesopotamia also perhaps a cause of increased interest in migrating there.

Whether the Chaldean patriarchal vicar of Jerusalem would have responsibility also for the Chaldeans in Transjordan is unclear. Following the loss of East Jerusalem to the state of Israel it seems plausible he would have split his duties as required.\(^\text{134}\) Certainly until 2002 there was no formal Chaldean ecclesial structure in Jordan with those resident either attending Latin or other eastern Catholic communities. It is unclear when the regular celebration of the Chaldean liturgy began but I presume at least from the 1990/91 Gulf War that a priest would visit to minister to the community.

April 2002 saw the establishment of the Chaldean Patriarchal Vicariate for Jordan under the leadership of Fr Raymond Moussali who has remained as the incumbent priest to the present. The community is focused on the parish of the Sacred Heart in Jebel al-Weibdeh, Amman out of which is operated the usual liturgical services; Sunday school and more regular informal educational classes and serves as a point of contact for Chaldeans resident in Amman and Jordan more widely.\(^\text{135}\)

---

\(^{134}\) There were four patriarchal vicars for the period 1908–2011. Bishop Ishaq Khoudabash initially, followed by Fr Boutros Sha'ya (1955–1978). His successors were not Chaldean: Fr Henri Gouillon (1980–1990) and Fr Paul Collin (1990–2011). Please note that owing to the extremely limited information on this subject area I have been unable to confirm the dates of Bishop Ishaq’s time as patriarchal vicar other than some period of 1908–1955. Even the usually comprehensive directory maintained by the Latin community from where some information was gained is not clear on this matter. *(Directory of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land 2012, 110)*

\(^{135}\) It was notable that there were no members of the Church of the East encountered during fieldwork. In discussion with NGO workers it was stated that they did not have a presence at least in Amman. This is possible but with the size of the Chaldean population I would suggest it is more likely there was a limited awareness of ecclesial difference than that the Church of the East is absent entirely. The Christian culture of
The status of the Chaldean community in the Jordanian Christian context

The situation for Chaldeans in Jordan is difficult. Heavy reliance on their continued presence is placed on the hospitality of the monarchy; Christian Jordanian society and the general trend for the Hashemite Kingdom to be viewed as a point of transfer for Christian communities. The situation is also aided by the tradition of Jordan acting as a point of refuge for large numbers of displaced persons in the Levant especially Palestinians. That being said a wider concern is as to the physical capability of Jordanian society to retain its cohesion through introducing any more people. There is a fear of repeating problems which occurred with Palestinian population movement to the Kingdom in 1948 and 1967 and to the growth of stateless groups within Jordan's borders and over which the Jordanian state has de facto responsibility. (Jaar 2008)

The general culture of Jordan is towards permitting the presence of migrants on a substantial scale. In practice and when faced by the competing influences in the region of surrounding governments and the demands of refugee groups each of which has specific requirements to be met the social and geographical space which the Kingdom has to offer can appear to be close to being overwhelmed. The situation of the state in holding together Jordanian society and its response to the refugees is alleviated to some degree by the preponderance of related NGOs to Jordan and through the assistance of the churches in pastoral and material needs.

To ensure a Jordanian identity to the nation disincentives for migrants to arrive and/or incentives for migrants to become Jordanian must be employed. Inhibiting a narrative which portrays Jordanian society as the home for migrants in general in the Levant is key. It seems likely that Jordanian society – by its openness to Christianity and recognition of the anti-sectarian nature of most Christian migrants – would be capable to hold

Jordan can be perceived as very Latin/"Catholic" in atmosphere so this is possibly a reason why members of the Church of the East would prefer to travel to Syria or Lebanon in the first instances where a greater plurality of Christian culture exists or if travelling to Jordan to swiftly migrate onward (if possible) to the diaspora hubs in the USA, Europe and Australasia.
all those Christian Iraqis who wish to reside there. Opening the border in an unrestricted manner to large new populations of Shia and Sunni migrants from Iraq and Syria by way of comparison would likely not be so compatible to the efforts of the King and the state to foment a Jordanian society relatively accepting of distinctive groups who are accepting of religious plurality.

The Jordanian situation in general is not hopeful for the Chaldeans in the long term if they are unable to depart for another location. In the short term Jordan is a safe haven for Iraqi Christian refugees, however, if they remain beyond six months–one year in the country their opportunities decrease and a loss of momentum to move onwards is engendered. Legal residence to Jordan after a six month period requires payment of a fine on a daily basis to remain. As noted above the economic opportunities even for those who could strongly contribute to Jordan are limited with an atmosphere of killing time underwritten by a sense of hopelessness – at least on a natural level – to their situation. To rejuvenate their presence in Jordan then not practically a solution given the lack of a pre-existing community on such a scale or ecclesial structure on which to build and a reason for Chaldean submergence into other churches in the Kingdom.

Insofar as the Kingdom is a generous host the ability or interest in grasping the differences of need for Iraqis and in turn for Iraqi Christians is limited. Indeed, what more could be expected of the Kingdom given that which it has already given. The situation such as it is would appear to require sufficient funds to support those displaced but the basic material requirements even were they accomplished do not provide a solution to the societal issues which the migrant presence creates. A Jordanian attempt to retain the coherence of its population is to not give the legal classification of "refugee" to forced migrants. This insures the Jordanian population against losing their own sense of identity. Yet, it inhibits the migrants from seeking to place themselves as Jordanian subjects which Chaldeans in Iraq have sought to do reflecting their belief in the importance of a natural level of patriotism and a desire to support the society in which they reside. The rapidity of change is also something with which the Chaldeans in Jordan and Jordanian society has been ill equipped to deal. The Chaldean
ecclesiastical presence never having had to contend with such a large community has on balance not been able to incarnate a Chaldean ethos and distinctive contribution to the Kingdom.

The Chaldean community is sustained largely through the efforts of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Jordan. Whereas the Chaldean ecclesial presence is sustained through the office of the Chaldean patriarchal vicar. The distinction is important for it notes the theoretical and practical aspects which can lead to the inflating of the ecclesiastical appointments with power and influence they do not possess. Also suggestive of the crisis which the Chaldean diaspora in Europe will face if efforts are not made to regularise their situation through the creation of a clearer ecclesiastical organisation which provides a basis around which identity – communal, cultural and ecclesiological – can be founded. For the organisational situation to remain as it presently exists inviting stagnation and likely a solely reactionary approach to events instead of grasping the initiative to secure a future for Chaldean ecclesial identity (as an abstract concept) and the interest of the community to remain wholly Chaldean in religious identity than becoming submerged into a Latin Catholic-Western Christian milieu.

The status of "refugee" would also imply the Jordanian state has a duty of care for the populations which "migrant's" implication of choice in movement does not necessarily imply. This division enforced through severe limits on employment and higher than normal fees for medical treatment. These are pragmatic policies adopted by the Jordanians if not popular ones. The physical restrictions of Jordanian geography and the limited material resources such as water, which is an issue of increasing concern, regulate in a very clear manner how Jordan can meet the needs of its refugee-migrant populations.

Church involvement in support for Iraqi Christian migrants has become necessary due to the lack of distinction made by secular NGOs of the particular difficulties with which Christians are faced. In collating the number of migrants entering Jordan the UNHCR, for example, makes no record of each person's religion. Without an awareness of the causes of migration and forced displacement NGO responses focus on alleviating the
material conditions in what might be thought of as a neutral manner. Yet given the disproportionate numbers of Iraqi migrants who are Christians the lack of specific understanding of at least their broad narrative is to the detriment of a long-term resolution of their status in Jordan and a basis for Christian communities responding to their needs.

Jordan’s Christian environment from the Catholic perspective is an anomaly in the Middle East. Surrounding countries’ Catholic populations largely part of one of the eastern Catholic churches whereas most Jordanian Catholics are Latin. The balance of population has altered with the arrival of refugees but the Latin ecclesial structures and associated charities remain very strong contributors to addressing the needs of Christian refugees beyond the purely basic needs of housing and food.\textsuperscript{136}

The variety of NGOs/charities involved varies in size and in the apostolate which they pursue. The more well established organisations include Caritas and the Jesuit Refugee Service but vary also to more personal initiatives such as the Messengers of Peace (MoP) led by Fr Khalil Jaar a priest of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem which was formed in early 2007 to aim at alleviating the particular circumstances of the Iraqi refugees in Jordan. At which time the situation in Iraq – civil war – determined the Iraqi presence to Jordan was in the first place of concern and also a time before which the rebellions in Syria had begun and which would later lead to a shift in regional and international focus on to the displaced Syrian populations.

Reliance on the initiative of individuals or small groups to relieve their situation as a result of the weak ecclesial presence which the churches predominate to Iraq have in Jordan. The Syrian Catholic population in Jordan, according to AP figures jumping from 960 in 1990 to 10,298 in 2000 before dropping again in 2013 to 1,506. Such a change of population in such a relatively short space of time emblematic of the difficulties which eastern Catholics were faced with and without a readily available solution to meet those needs unless hierarchical intervention occurred. For the Chaldeans this appears to have been lacking with the change of population

\textsuperscript{136} Material support for non-Christians is also provided to those who approach Christian led charities.
to Jordan at least as great. Collected during fieldwork from May–June 2013 estimates from the Chaldean chaplain were 20,000 (2002–2006); 40,000 (2007); 5,000–7,000 (2008–2012) and 5,000 (2013). The rapid change in population size from 2008 accounted for by resettlement outside of the Middle East.\textsuperscript{137}

The MoP rôle has been to alleviate physical need but also to attempt to ensure the issue of persecution of Christians is acknowledged by secular NGOs and to ensure Iraqis are equipped to navigate the UNHCR and Jordanian state bureaucracies. The former and engagement with it the cornerstone of movement outside of Jordan and asylum in the West. Other charitable work also included summer and holiday programmes for young people to provide some type of normality of schedule to be extended and alleviate the trauma which many have experienced. This is combined with services to alleviate psychological difficulties with which young people have been affected leading also to developmental and speech disorders and/or arising due to missing out on a more normal educational pattern and experience of social relations.

With the introduction of the Syrian crisis to the regional status quo of the Levant the situation for the Iraqi displaced persons at a time when their situation was beginning to be better understood was deprecated.\textsuperscript{138} The immediate needs once MoP began operating in April 2007 was the provision of extra food, heaters and blankets – basic supplies – for six months to 1,600 Iraqi families. A number which increased to 2,000 families by February 2008. Of those who approach the charity, Fr Khalil states seventy-five percent are Christian who have not found succour from Muslim led NGOs or awareness of the particularities of their situation from the UNHCR. Some effort has been made by UNHCR representatives to better comprehend the Christian scenario through meeting with refugees and Christian charities but this does not appear to have impacted upon the day-to-day operations.

\textsuperscript{137} In this instance I suggest AP figures for the Chaldean Patriarchal Vicariate in Jordan are indicative not definitive with the population rising from nought to 7,000 between 2000 and 2010. It may simply have been a case of the AP’s figures taking some time to be collated prior to establishing a more accurate record. (Roberson CSP 2014)

\textsuperscript{138} The change again in the Iraqi situation from June 2014 re-emphasising the persecution of Christians but not having conducted fieldwork in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan since mid-2013 unknown as to the exact effects.
Through the, noted, refusal to record the religion of the displaced the UNHCR continues to restrict the narrative of forced displacement to universal causes of movement such as war or economic hardship as opposed to the reality of a layered narrative determined by a variety of factors including anti-Christian persecution and criminal behaviour. As average resettlement time (i.e. onward migration from Jordan) can be up to two years the intervening period requires support of charities such as MoP to ensure the survival of refugees until they are able to secure asylum. The length of time to reach resettlement dependent on the willingness to accept refugees and the capability of UNHCR to expedite the administrative process. Suggestions of deliberate delay in this process by UNHCR have been variously raised and were noted as an issue arising even prior to the start of the Syrian crisis.¹³⁹

Conclusion: Chaldean presence to Jordan

Attempting to write a basic historical outline of the Chaldean Church in Jordan can be a tangential process whereby discussion of the migrant-displacement overrides what earlier aspects of this thesis have focused on: ecclesiastical organisation, dioceses and bishops and more definitive numerical outlines. Where the ethos of the church resides for Chaldeans in Jordan is diffused throughout the community because the Chaldean ecclesial presence to Jordan is weak. Nonetheless, it is important to avoid portraying the community as weak without a hierarchy because the survival of Chaldean religious identity is reliant on community adherence to the essential aspects of the Church. However, a hierarchy provides a definitive outline to the community and a clear point of recognition and establishes a place for the Chaldeans in Jordanian society.

Political considerations may be a leading cause to prevent this with the creation of an Iraqi led Christian community in Jordan likely of concern to the Jordanian state which if open to the Christian presence is still desirous of managing this presence and the creation of other constituents in the

¹³⁹ Waiting time for some has been up to seven years.
manifestation of further Christian plurality. Outside of this issue there seems little necessary cause for not elevating the vicariate to diocesan status given its size by population equals or far exceeds other dioceses in Iraq: Basra once one of the five major ecclesiastical provinces of the East Syriac church in Mesopotamia as of 2013 reduced to a few hundred people. The relative ease of establishing a Chaldean diocese in Australia or Canada by way of comparison due to the lack of religious literacy which Western states have and the limited awareness of the significance of eastern Christian communities in their borders.

The Chaldean Church, however, in administering its community in the Kingdom seemingly at a loss as to the most effective means to respond. This also forms part of the context in which the Jordanian and Iraqi states have acted through avoiding acknowledging in public the scale of the changes in their respective populations. Insofar as both have to retain wider political and societal stability their implicit denial of population movements effects the Iraqi state as it demonstrates the failings of the new Iraqi government to retain a plural culture and instead to be driven by a sectarian milieu with limited interest in effecting real change to support non-Muslims to remain.

**Thesis Conclusion**

This study has been a wide ranging survey of the Chaldean Catholic Church highlighting in particular its ecclesiological identity and historical development. Through outlining the Church's ecclesiastical organisation in Mesopotamia-Iraq I have reflected on the incarnation of Chaldean ecclesiology in that environment and the significance of Chaldean ecclesial structures to the realisation of a Chaldean difference within the plural societies of west Asia to the early twenty-first century.

Even in the context of the original research which is expected of a thesis in presenting a Chaldean ecclesial history it has been challenging to build on the few foundations for this exact area of study. I am aware also of
the thesis' limits and even despite presenting an overview of Chaldean ecclesiology and ecclesiastical organisation much work remains to be done not least of which is a far more comprehensive historical study of Chaldean parishes in the Dioceese of Zakho-Amadiya and the Archdioceses of Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk-Sulaymaniya and Mosul. In the latter case such a study certainly impossible for the indefinite future.  

Nevertheless, in noting these limits it is especially important given the circumstances since June 2014 and the advance of Da'esh to represent the Chaldeans in academic research: one has to start making observations from some vantage point at some time. The material destruction which has been experienced perhaps, even if only in a limited manner, may be ameliorated by documenting the community and widely realising the historical strength of Chaldean culture and the East Syriac Christian tradition in and to Mesopotamia-Iraq.

**Mesopotamia-Iraq and the patriarchal office's influence on Chaldean identity formation**

The Mesopotamian environment has been fundamental to the formation of Chaldean identity with the languages, cultures, settlements and peoples integral to the Chaldean sense of being and the manifestation of Chaldean ecclesiological thought. Would the Chaldean Church be the same without, for example, having been present to Baghdad and Mosul and at the centre of the transformations of civilisations in west Asia? The East Syriac tradition and the patriarchal office in particular has been fortunate to have had a seat at the window of history affording a view of societal change and often the opportunity to influence and be a part of implementing change. Indeed, if the patriarch had not been present to Baghdad and within the *milieu* of Sasanian, Abbasid, Mongol, Ottoman and Baathist élites Christian influence would have been severely curtailed. By way of comparison we can consider

---

140 Another useful line of enquiry would be to investigate the processes which took place in the incorporation of pre-existing East Syriac dioceses into the Chaldean ecclesiastical structure: how exactly, for example, how did the see of Mosul become Chaldean?
the negligible status in the political order which the Yazidis or Turkmen have had owing to their geographical concentrations outside of central Mesopotamia-Iraq and this despite both groups having populations roughly equal to or larger than the East Syriacs to the twenty-first century.

Running through Chaldean history the use of Syriac has also bound together the community and its identity even to the present and maintained a boundary around Chaldeans apart from the surrounding population. A boundary necessary to defend and uphold their community but also consolidating the Church's status as a bearer of some of the most ancient liturgical traditions of the apostolic churches and increasing its significance to external observers.

Yet it was not always apparent what features of the Chaldeans made the community distinctive within the East Syriac tradition for at least the first 150 years of its existence. It is perhaps easier to circumscribe the Chaldeans from the post-First World War era because "to be a Chaldean" became more clearly delimited: it was to be largely Arab linguistically, Catholic in a broad sense, increasingly urban and acquiescent to the contemporary government. During the Chaldeans' formative period there was no definitive point of coagulation around which the community formed beyond the figure of the patriarch and a notion of being in union with the episcopal successor of St Peter in Rome. Once a clearer particular sense of Chaldean-ness developed through the direction of the Josephite patriarchs and latterly figures such as Joseph VI Audo did a Chaldean identity emerge as a distinct aspect of the East Syriac tradition. This is not to say that distinctive communal formation and the separation of Chaldean and Church of the East factions in the East Syriac community did not exist. These did form and as I have suggested from the evidence of the patriarchal funerary inscriptions at Rabban Hormizd an awareness of Christological difference was present following the establishment of the Sulaqite patriarchal line. This, however, is distinct from the creation of a Chaldean identity and as to what was a Chaldean ecclesiological model.

I have largely avoided the use of the term "Catholic" in the thesis in describing the Chaldean process of ecclesiology and identity formation. It is a difficult term to apply to communities who I suggest likely never viewed
themselves as distinct from the Latin West or juridically broken away from the See of Peter. This is why I would characterise Sulaqa's intentions and those of many of the East Syriac patriarchal claimants to the late seventeenth century as re-engaging their relationship with the Pope as Patriarch of the West than perceiving the need to rectify their situation through the creation of an eastern Catholic rite. It was only with the establishment of the Josephite line and Latin missionary instruction that the Holy See's Tridentine perception of itself and its view of extending jurisdiction over all apostolic Christian communities that East Syriac communities were fully recognizant of the implications of becoming Chaldean and by implication reliant on the contemporary pope as the chief source of ecclesiastical authority.

Furthermore, as I have indicated, it was Joseph VI Audo that first grasped and held to an awareness of the notion of the Chaldeans as an eastern Catholic community in union with the Holy See and with sufficient will to defend the notion of the Chaldeans as an ecclesial body with the rights and prerogatives of the successor to the Church of the East and for the patriarchal office representing the contemporary successor of the Catholicos-Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of such an ecclesiology and as a key aspect of Chaldean identity only fully manifested once it was widely held by the community and at least assumed as part of their heritage. As for the church to function ecclesiology also had to have a basis from the bottom up even if the ideals which Audo pursued were encouraged from the top down.

In these efforts in creating a Chaldean ecclesiology inclusive of the East Syriac tradition the Chaldeans became the chief maintainers of this ecclesial culture to Iraq. The four characteristics suggestive of this position are the following:

1. The Chaldeans' ecclesiastical organisation assumed the legitimist patriarchal lineage and the institutions of the community such as Rabban Hormizd monastery. In so doing imbibing the resources of the Church of the East and through gaining the legitimist patriarchal lineage becoming the inheritor of the successor to the see of the
Catholicos-Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.

2. The celebration of a diverse cultural heritage which predates the Chaldean origins of the 1550s and the belief in the continuation of East Syriac tradition among the Chaldeans. The ability to embrace a variety of ideals, sub-ecclesial identities and cultures within the Chaldean ecclesial community resulting from, I suggest, a dual inheritance: from the East Syriac tradition's spread across Asia and incarnation in local contexts and also that of the Tridentine missionary zeal which if seeking to convert the world also sought to engage with local cultures and peoples and assimilate them into the Holy See's jurisdiction.

3. Chaldeans have largely eschewed narrow ethnic identities alien to the East Syriac tradition's international and heterogeneous nature. Where there have been identities adopted this has not prevented incorporation of other nations and cultures into the incarnation of Chaldean life: one does not have to be an Assyrian to be a Chaldean nor is the Chaldean Church an ethnically defined ecclesial community.141

4. The Chaldean patriarchs have followed the precedent for a model of church-state relations in existence since the Sasanian era. Recognising the importance of engaging with the established political order and not a withdrawal from it. Furthermore, largely retaining a presence in the centre of political power in the states which have governed Mesopotamia. The Ottoman era, however, a notable exception to this, yet, even during this era residing close to or in Mosul the chief provincial city in the area in which the majority of East Syriacs resided.

141 Patriarch Bidawid responding to a question regarding ethnicity in the East Syriac community stated the following: 'I personally feel once you lock a church into a single ethnicity, you end that church. My church and the church of the Assyrians are one church. If I come today and state that this is an Assyrian church or a Chaldean church, I am in effect terminating this church. In our history, our church did not stop among Assyrians, but spread Christianity in Turkey, Afghanistan, China, Southern Asia, Tibet, among others, and had millions of followers. So a person, who is a Christian and is a member of our church cannot be necessarily called an Assyrian, but they can all be called sons of the Church of the East. We have to separate what is ethnicity and what is religion. This is very important.' (Quoted in Petrosian 2006, 116–117)
Zones of Chaldean ecclesial influence in Iraq

I turn now to conclusions regarding the fieldwork and study of the Chaldean situation in Iraq and especially the northern dioceses in 2003–2013.

I have opened up discussion of the notion of zones of Chaldean ecclesial influence in Iraq as a result of the 2003 invasion. All the bishops of the northern dioceses have seen the expansion of their pastoral remits and none more so than Bashar Warda of Erbil. Through the combination of political and social factors his rôle has become the second most influential office in the Chaldean hierarchy in Iraq. This is not a position for an East Syriac bishop in Erbil to be entirely unprecedented – we recall the city was home to metropolitans of the ecclesial province of Adiabene from the fifth century. It is novel in the Chaldean community with since its foundation in 1968 to 2003 the proximity of Alqosh and Mosul limiting Erbil's ecclesial influence. The enmeshing of the city as the Kurdish capital and status as the premier settlement under KRG administration since 2003 raising its importance in the economic and political order to the same status as Baghdad is to the ICG. As a whole parallel context the Erbil and Baghdad Archdioceses reflect the separation of the KRG and ICG’s paradigms generally.

Whilst it is difficult to ascertain an exact figure for those Chaldeans remaining resident in Baghdad the largest proportion of Chaldeans now reside outside Iraq or in the northern dioceses with ecclesial influence to a large extent following the population out of Baghdad. Aside from the status which is attached to the patriarchal office Baghdad as an archdiocese retains a weakened status in the Chaldean ecclesiastical organisation aside from properties and remaining religious institutes. The transfer of population and hence material resources to the north along with the seminary reducing reliance on the patriarch's oversight and the attendant influence which the patriarchal office holds. The north now as the chief zone of Chaldean ecclesial influence having to adjust to the realities of this situation. Nevertheless, the patriarch still retains the key access to the centre of political power and the ecclesiological significance of the link to the See of
Seleucia-Ctesiphon through his presence. Moreover, the patriarch is still *the patriarch* with key links to the resources of the Holy See and the wider Syriac communities which his office affords. Since the expansion of Da'esh from 2014 the challenge has been to maintain the office away from a position of redundancy in the face of violence and to formulate a response to the entire removal of the Christian presence from the area of Iraq north of Baghdad to just south of Alqosh.

The distance whether geographical or from the patriarch's jurisdictional influence an issue which is not unusual to the East Syriac tradition. In many circumstances the devolution of decision making powers to the local bishop was obligatory when immediate methods of communication were impossible. This principle of ecclesial subsidiarity was historically as important to East Syriac communities in Akra as to Khan Balik in their day-to-day management. In the modern Iraqi Chaldean context it also became more apparent during the final years of Bidawid and Delly's leadership which saw a substantial loss of patriarchal oversight. Sako as patriarch appears to want to re-affirm a stronger rôle for his office but as the northern bishops since the Gulf War (1990/91) have been obliged to act to an extent on their own initiative in the resolution of ecclesial affairs this is a difficult trend to alter.

There is no active attempt within the Iraqi clergy to instigate a schism but owing to force of circumstances declension of the Church even within Iraq's borders is becoming manifest. The emergence of northern Iraq as an enclave in which the majority of Iraqi Christians now resides very challenging to Sako's participation in the direction of Chaldean life and working relationship with the state in an as intimate manner as many of his predecessors such as Emmanuel II Thomas.

A key aspect of effective East Syriac church governance in the majority Muslim context has also been access to patronage via the state or an external supporter such as the Holy See or British Empire. Without an "in" to the civil power East Syriac patriarchs struggled to maintain their communities – we consider the qualitative decline of the Sulaqite patriarchate and community by the early nineteenth century and its relative revival with British imperial and ecclesial support. With the decline of the
Chaldean population size and thus influence less can be requested by the patriarch from the state whilst expectations by the state for Chaldeans to contribute to Iraqi society are also lessened. Different circumstances have emerged for those under KRG administration with the appropriation of some of the patron-client relations by Christian political parties previously within the church hierarchy’s domain. With the relatively new status of the KRG and its de facto independence emphasised from 2003 its ability to deal with other institutions I suggest saw a preference for engaging with other explicitly political bodies similar in organisation and background. To engage with a Christian ecclesial body as the chief representative group of the community may have been something which KRG officials were challenged by and sought instead the realisation of a different level of engagement. This altering over time through recognition of the more comprehensive nature of ecclesiastical structures to sustain the Chaldean communities on a day-to-day basis and likely an occasion for re-assessment of how the KRG was to engage with non-Muslim communal organisations.

The Holy See and the Chaldeans

I have indicated that the Holy See since the Second Vatican Council has largely withdrawn its interventionist rôle in Chaldean affairs which characterised the two ecclesial bodies' relations to the end of the nineteenth century. We can note how the Chaldeans have turned to the Holy See for pastoral oversight during the difficulties of electing Patriarch Bidawid's successor and looked to the contemporary pope as a figure to highlight their situation especially since 2003 within the western Christian milieu.

This withdrawal of direct action in Chaldean affairs in accord with the ecclesiology of a Catholic communion of sui juris churches focused upon the institution of the Holy See as the visible head of the communion and arbiter in ecclesial affairs. This new ecclesiological model distinct from the Tridentine paradigm which had proposed a Catholic Church of rites with the pope as leader of this church.

John Paul II and Benedict XVI both demonstrated an awareness of
the importance, however, of retaining a close fraternal relationship with the Chaldeans whereas it is as yet difficult to discern how Francis I views his responsibilities to the eastern Catholic churches – having made no particular or general statements beyond seeking to alleviate difficult circumstances for those in the Middle East and Ukraine-Donbass it remains to be seen what he envisions as the rightful place for his oversight in their affairs.

I suggest the Chaldeans despite their *sui juris* status are somewhat uncomfortable with the lack of more resolute direction from the Holy See on the particular issues with which they are faced given the precedent for a close relationship between the community, Latin missionaries and the papacy. We could perhaps regard the Chaldeans as a prototype Tridentine eastern Catholic community at their foundation with over time increasingly direct Latin guidance as to their ecclesiology and identity. With the change following the Second Vatican Council to a more "hands-off" approach by the Holy See and Latin institutions the Chaldeans have struggled to regain a clear working relationship and as to the limits of the remit of the Chaldean patriarch in ecclesial affairs and as to how much reliance should be placed upon the pope for guidance and decision making. On a day-to-day basis the patriarch leads the church but with any intentions to radically alter the relationship between the East Syriac communities perhaps reliant on the acquiescence of the Holy See. We note, for example, Louis Sako's suggestion in June 2015 for a united East Syriac patriarchate of the Church of the East and Chaldean Church going so far as to state his willingness to resign his own position to make way for a preferred unity candidate were it to engender the security of the East Syriac Christian communities and support their long term survival to the Middle East. (Valente 2015)

Sako's five point plan is as follows:

1. The current Patriarchs: Louis Raphael Sako, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, and Mar Addai II, Patriarch of the ancient Church of the East, would submit their resignations without any conditions, but their desire for unity.

2. The Bishops of the three churches would meet to choose a new Patriarch.

3. The elected Patriarch should have assistants from each branch to enhance the “weft”
4. The Patriarch and the Synod would leave national interests to the laity, because the church should be open to everyone and concerned with the best interests of all.

5. The Patriarch and the Synod would prepare for a General Synod to develop a new road-map for The One Church of the East.' (Sako 2015)

Sako's suggestions raise numerous issues not least of which is whether the Holy See would perceive there to be no remaining theological or ecclesiological difference between the Church of the East and the Chaldeans and therefore assent to a new arrangement. Furthermore, how would the Holy See form a clear relationship with a *sui juris* church with which it is in communion if the chief source of communion – the patriarch – radically alters the existing model of church governance? Does an eastern Catholic patriarch have the canonical right to resign his office with the intention of ecclesiially uniting with another community of the same ecclesial tradition? Is the situation in Iraq so acute for East Syriac Christians that this is acceptable from the perspective of the Holy See?

Given the current vacancy (as of August 2015) in the patriarchate of the Church of the East perhaps this is an optimum time to effect such a change and it is not without a precedent of sorts. We may compare the unification of the legitimist and Josephite patriarchal lineages in the 1820s taking advantage of the death of the Josephite claimant to advance the cause of Yohannan Hormizd's patriarchal claim.

What is perhaps most notable about Sako's proposal is not necessarily the implication of the *de facto status quo* of the same ecclesiology of the churches but the willingness to deprecate his own position in time of crisis and restore the structures of the Church of the East under a united patriarch. The overall proposal and its implications requires an extended academic assessment which we cannot offer in a thesis conclusion. Nevertheless, we are fortunate that Mar Awa Royel, the Church of the East's bishop of California has offered an extensive and erudite response to Sako's proposal and its connotations for East Syriac ecclesiology and begins to explore whether such a union of the churches is practically possible given their respective views on East Syriac
ecclesiastical organisation. (Royel 2015) Royel whilst open to discussing a possible resolution concludes that Sako's parameters are not yet acceptable to the Church of the East in its contemporary form and that his proposal cannot fully fit with what he perceives as traditional East Syriac ecclesiology primarily due to Sako's view of the necessity for any future united East Syriac church to be in full communion of unity and faith with the Holy See. (Royel 2015, 1, 6)

We are presented with two differing versions of East Syriac ecclesiological thought: (1) Sako perceiving the Chaldeans to be an heir to the East Syriac tradition and in no way outside of it or that formal union with the Holy See contradicts in any way Chaldean or East Syriac ecclesial independence. Indeed, the ecclesial link with the Holy See is normative and not a novelty. (2) Royel regarding his community as effectively the principle true maintainer of the East Syriac traditions with the Chaldeans having detracted from this through union with the Holy See and their willingness to "submit" to the jurisdiction of the papacy. Royel keen to maintain and sustain the identity and character of the East Syriac tradition in the Church of the East and as he perceives it to secure it from errors which an authoritative rôle for the contemporary pope and ability to intervene in East Syriac affairs may present. (Royel 2015, 2–3)

Certainly Royel provides sustained and well reasoned argument for his position and that of the Church of the East throughout his article highlighting, for example, the fractious relationship between Patriarch Audo and Pope Pius IX. Nonetheless, and despite Royel's long standing involvement in modern ecumenical discourse on behalf of the Church of the East with the Holy See and education in Latin Catholic universities and institutions he does not appear to suppose that the authoritarian rule which the papacy may once have asserted over eastern Catholic communities has been in considerable decline since the Second Vatican Council and the primus inter pares papal rôle he perceives as acceptable for any Church of the East-Holy See formal relationship and in accord with East Syriac ecclesiology is already in de facto existence. (Royel 2015, 5–6)

We must, however, consider that Royel perceives that he has a duty
to defend and uphold the traditions he regards as essential to East Syriac identity and ecclesiology – full ecclesial independence for the community as led by the Patriarch as integral to all its actions and its very existence.\textsuperscript{142} Indeed, his article makes evident a strong belief in the independent missionary activity of the Church of the East throughout Asia as divine in origin and that he is looking to defend and uphold the Church from good intentions and a well formed intellect and conscience than a notion of being desirous of retaining traditional ecclesiology for its own sake. It will be crucial to the future of the East Syriac community as a whole whether Chaldean or Church of the East to see how the new patriarch of the Church of the East will choose to advance ecclesial reconciliation or indeed Sako's response to Royel's critique. As Royel notes without a patriarch he is not in a position to determine and speak on behalf of his community in a definitive manner and that any decision will perhaps take far longer to be reached than may have been possible in early eras when the community was far more geographically concentrated and centred and incarnated in a Mesopotamian environment. (Royel 2015, 6) With the diaspora growing ever stronger and more diverse with a plurality of opinion as to the proper future course of the Church of the East and with the political and economic difficulties in Iraq itself the contemporary reconciliation of the churches of the East Syriac tradition may face a far longer and more challenging journey towards unity than was possible in the 1820s.

\textbf{The Chaldean presence to Iraq in the context of the rise of Da'esh}

The Chaldean situation since June 2014 has been perilous in the extreme. The events which have seen the extinction of the Christian presence in Mosul and much of the surrounding Nineveh plain and horrifying physical persecution of a truly brutal type revealing the worst excesses of man's

\footnote{\textsuperscript{142} Nonetheless, it is possible that in fact Royel is perhaps far more sensitive to the potential advantages which a relationship with the Holy See could bring to a united East Syriac patriarchate. Although he titles the article as a personal reflection he is also obliged to defend the formal ecclesiological position of the Church of the East regardless of his own perceptions as to a suitable resolution.}
fallen nature. Formulating an effective response to Da'esh aside from through physical military engagement seemingly impossible. At a fundamental level how ought you to constructively engage with a group who seeks to kill you with society at large broadly ambivalent or opposed to your continued presence?

The events for the Chaldeans are one among many persecutions of a similar type insofar as a Sunni power has aimed at the denigration of their position and violent removal of their community from society but also different as since 2014 one entity has aimed at a coerced transformation of society from one paradigm – with a relative openness to societal plurality – to another with the loss of or inclination to resolve "difference" in any way but through violence. For the Chaldeans their position is compounded by the widespread ambivalence of the Muslim population both Sunni and Shia, the instability which the community experienced prior to these events – we must recall Iraq has been at war or under economic sanctions since 1980 – and the lack of an external power with the will or capability to intercede on their behalf.

A comparative context was the removal of the Chaldeans from Asia Minor in 1915–1918 and the coerced delocalisation of the church then experienced. The response to this broadly similar to the outcomes so far in the expansion of Da'esh with it appears the ancient see of Mosul becoming a titular diocese in partibus infidelium much like those of Mardin, Gazarta and Seert with the making and un-making of the existing Middle Eastern political order since the Arab Spring beginning to appear on the same scale and level of impact as the loss of the Ottoman order after the First World War. If this is such an epoch shattering set of circumstances the subtleties and niceties of social relations are easily lost. Those such as the Chaldeans who offered a distinctive and often subtle difference unable to extend a response which secures their community through force and instead reliant on the good will and co-operation of those who can accommodate them such as the KRG.

The Chaldeans were fortunate under the Iraqi monarchy to find leaders willing to involve them in the creation of the new state. From the start of republican rule in 1958 this was gradually lost with a loss of
awareness to the particular qualities which they contributed as a Christian body to Iraq. The lack of a reliable ally within Iraqi society and the factionalisation of Iraq into a society of conflict instead of stability fundamental in weakening their ability to respond. The Chaldean openness to being diverse, vertically integrated members of society something which sectarian cliques could not cope with nor comprehend. These qualities from 2003 typified by their communal willingness to live within a predominantly Islamicised and political unstable environment accepting the restraints which this placed on them but still to offer their contributions and qualities in a process of communal and individual self-sacrifice.
Appendix A: Maps, Tables and Graphs

The maps, tables and graphs referred to in the text are provided below.

Maps 1 and 2 are taken from
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Church_of_the_East_in_the_Middle_Ages.svg>
and
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:Hoodinski#/media/File:Church_of_the_East_provinces_10_c.svg>
with both having been licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license (CC BY-SA 3.0)
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>
and most recently updated by the Wikipedia user `Hoodinski'.

I developed Maps 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 from data available at Open Street Map
<http://www.openstreetmap.org> and made available in this thesis under the Open Database License (Odbl). For further details of this license and use of map data please refer to: <http://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright> and
<http://opendatacommons.org/licenses/odbl/1.0/> The original map data is
© OpenStreetMap contributors and available under the Open Database Licence and the cartography is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 license (CC BY-SA).
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>
Map 1: Ecclesial provinces of the Church of the East in the tenth century
Map 2: The Church of the East at its greatest extent in the Middle Ages
Map 3: Northern Iraq, eastern Turkey, northern Iran and principle sites of East Syriac-Chaldean activity from the sixteenth century
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mar Bethune</th>
<th>Sacred Heart</th>
<th>Holy Ghost</th>
<th>St Joseph (Karrada)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Baptismal records from selected Baghdadi parishes, 2005–2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>4,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6,450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Number of Chaldean families in Ankawa 2000–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Erbil</th>
<th>Mosul</th>
<th>Zakho-Amadiya</th>
<th>Alqosh</th>
<th>Kirkuk-Sulaymaniya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ankawa-Erbil</td>
<td>Telkef</td>
<td>Aradin</td>
<td>Teleskef</td>
<td>Sulaymaniya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaqlawa</td>
<td>Karamles</td>
<td>Duhok</td>
<td>Alqosh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armota</td>
<td>Qaraqosh</td>
<td>Zakho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qusenjaq</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feshkhabur</td>
<td>Inishke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deir Abon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mangesh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Principle villages/towns (by diocese) visited during fieldwork in October 2013 in which a Chaldean presence was found

143 Facsimile copy accessed in Ankawa, October 2013
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>7,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>9,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>12,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>11,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>11,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>11,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Chaldean population in the Archdiocese of Erbil (1969–2012)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>8,670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5: Total number of Chaldean families in Ankawa by year 2008–2013*

144 Source *AP*
145 Source Erbil Archdiocesan records
Graph 1: Number of Chaldean baptisms and weddings in Ankawa 1885–2012
Graph 2: Ankawa Chaldean population growth 2000-2013
Map 4: Erbil and surrounding region
Graph 3: Number of baptisms in Armota, Shaqlawa and Qusenjaq 1950–2012
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kirkuk</th>
<th>Sulaymaniya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>6,150</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4,256</td>
<td>861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>5,470</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>5,050</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5,115</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5,050</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>5,095</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5,040</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>5,600</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7,831</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: Chaldean population in the dioceses of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniya 1949–2013*

146 Source AP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Catholics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7: Chaldean population in the Diocese of Akra 1958–2012*[^147^]

[^147^]: Source AP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Zakho</th>
<th>Amadiya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>11,300</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>11,165</td>
<td>8,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>6,548</td>
<td>2,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>6,048</td>
<td>2,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>12,555</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 8: Chaldean population in the dioceses of Zakho and Amadiya 1949–2010*

148 Source AP
Graph 4: Number of baptisms and weddings in Amadiya Diocese 1950–2013
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church, Settlement</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar Gewargis, Bir Sivi</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>1314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart, Beidar</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Gewargis, Shakfdale</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Keryakos, Sharanesh</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Mary, Zakho</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Gewargis, Zakho</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Auraha, Livo</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Mary, Dashta Takh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Yusif, Badja</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Ithalaha, Duhok</td>
<td>c. 500</td>
<td>c. 4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakhoulia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al, Mansouri, Mansour</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Gewargis, Mangesh</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 9: Chaldean population of the Diocese of Zakho by settlement (Group A), 2012*  

149 Source Zakho Diocesan records
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church, Settlement</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar Yusif, Nefkendala</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Auraha, Merga Soor</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Mary, Hezaywa</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Tishmooni, Berga</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Mary, Feshkhabur</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansour Depol, Avzerouk</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart, Deir Abon</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgin Mary, Qarayola</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Martyrs, Suriya</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar Gewargis, Sheuze</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother of Mercy, Simele</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals (Groups A &amp; B)</strong></td>
<td><strong>2, 573</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,697</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 10: Chaldean population of the Diocese of Zakho by settlement (Group B), 2012*

---

150 Source Zakho Diocesan records. Other settlements now under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Zakho-Amadiya and principally from the Amadiyan area of ecclesial influence include: Komane (320 people); Araden (c. 240 people); Inishke (c.450 people); Amadiya; Romta; Korrabin; War; Adna; Dawoodia; Tinna; Martabiya; Hamzikh; Sorka and Beydano. Without estimates for these settlements in the Amadiyan area I cannot provide a complete estimate derived from fieldwork for the Chaldean populations of northern Iraq as of October 2013. That being said through utilising AP figures for that period and preceding years an approximation can be made and which is outlined in Appendix C. As we have seen, however, AP figures are not always to be relied upon for complete accuracy. It is my impression that the overall quality of accounting for population by those responsible among the community for providing population data has improved since 2003 with the intention to realise a more comprehensive picture of the Chaldeans and to document their situation.
Graph 5: Baptisms at Mar Gewargis parish, Zakho 1989–2013

Source: Zakho Diocesan records

151 Source Zakho Diocesan records
Map 5: Zakho-Duhok and surrounding region
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>16,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>17,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>17,487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>32,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Total Chaldean population in the Diocese of Alqosh, 1970–2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alqosh</td>
<td>1,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleskef</td>
<td>1,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baqofa</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batnaya</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikhan</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jambur</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharifiya</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet Handawiya</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naseriya</td>
<td><code>a few families</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>c. 3,963 (c. 18,000 people)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Chaldean population in the Diocese of Alqosh, October 2013 by settlement

152 Source AP
153 Source Bishop Maqdassi of Alqosh
Graph 6: Number of baptisms and weddings in Teleskef 1950–October 2013

154 Source Alqosh diocesan records
Map 6: Central and southern Iraq
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>82,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>9,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 13: Chaldean population in the Archdiocese of Basra 1959–2012*<sup>155</sup>
Graph 7: Baptisms in the Archdiocese of Basra 1867-2012

Source: Basra Archdiocesan records
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>481,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>151,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>151,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>155,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>145,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>140,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>145,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>135,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 14: Chaldean population, Archdiocese of Baghdad, 1980-2012*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Our Lady of Sorrows</th>
<th>Our Lady of the Rosary</th>
<th>Mar Yusif (Karrada)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900–1910</td>
<td>2,172</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911–1920</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921–1930</td>
<td>3,673</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931–1940</td>
<td>4,112</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941–1950</td>
<td>5,973</td>
<td>Not possible to read figure</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951–1960</td>
<td>9,558</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>1,720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 15: Baptisms in Chaldean parishes in use prior to 1958 – Archdiocese of Baghdad*  

---

157 Source *AP*  
158 Source Baghdad Archdiocesan records
Graph 8: Baptisms Baghdad parish group A 1958–2012

Source Baghdad Archdiocesan records

159 Source Baghdad Archdiocesan records
Graph 9: Baptisms Baghdad parish group B 1958-2012

Source Baghdad Archdiocesan records

160 Source Baghdad Archdiocesan records
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>18,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>19,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>20,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>21,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>20,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>16,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>14,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 16: Chaldean population, Diocese of Mosul, 1969–2013*

161 Source AP
Graph 10: Baptisms - Archdiocese of Mosul, 1870 - October 2013

Source: Mosul Archdiocesan records

Graph 10: Baptisms - Archdiocese of Mosul, 1870 - October 2013

162 Source Mosul Archdiocesan records
Map 7: Mosul and surrounding region
Appendix B: Overview of the Iraqi political system post-2003

Iraq is in principle a "federal parliamentary representative democratic republic" with an elected head of state (the President) with an executive consisting of the Prime Minister and a Council of Ministers. The legislature which elects the President and Prime Minister is formed of two parts in the Iraqi Parliament:

The Council of Representatives (i.e. the lower house)
The Federation Council (i.e. senate/upper house)

The Council of Representatives initially had 275 members from 2006–2010 but from the 2010 Parliamentary elections was expanded to 325 MPs.

The majority of MPs are elected via the greatest percentage of votes received with additional compensatory seats for those who may otherwise not be represented due to not attaining sufficient votes. For example, numerical minorities such as the Christians or Yazidis.

Iraq has over 40 active political parties but not all are represented in parliament. The main political blocs in the Iraqi parliament as of 2014 were:

- State of Law Coalition (Islamic Dawa Party)
- Al-Muwatin (Shia Islamist)
- al-Wataniya (Secularist)
- al-Ahrar (Shia Islamist – following the religio-political direction of Muqtada al-Sadr)
- KDP (Kurdish nationalist)
- PUK (Kurdish socialist nationalist)
- Gorran – Movement for Change (Kurdish liberal secularist)
- Muttahidoon (Suni conservative)
- al-Arabiya (Suni conservative)
Within the Iraqi parliament the political blocs often (but not always) represent a coalition of parties with shared interests. For example in the parliamentary election of 2010 the State of Law Coalition had al-Maliki's party the Islamic Dawa Party as well as smaller ones such as the Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkomen.

On the ballot paper each person votes for parties in their order of preference within the bloc. Parliamentary seats are then assigned in proportion to their ranking as per the electors' ballot papers – a so called open list electoral system. This may seem a somewhat complicated system by comparison with the first past the post system used in Britain, for example, but it is perceived to grant voters more chance to influence election outcomes and a fairer representative spread of the parties in parliament.

Below parliamentary level political power is further devolved upon the 19 provinces of Iraq each of which has its own elected representative council and which are further split into the 120 districts of Iraq. Three of the provinces are officially under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and also --- until June 2014 --- large parts of Kirkuk, Sulaymaniya and Nineveh provinces.

Another layer of political representation in Iraqi Kurdistan is the Kurdish Parliament which has 111 members and in which Christian political activity is particularly closely engaged. The Kurdish President is Massoud Barzani (also leader of the KDP) and the Prime Minister is Nechirvan Barzani (a senior member of the KDP).

Elections for the Kurdish parliament most recently took place in 2013 with the KDP, PUK and Gorran gaining the largest share of the seats (80/111) with the Assyrians having five reserved seats and the Armenians one. This compares, for example, to the Turkomen who between them are reserved five seats.

- Assyrian Democratic Movement 2 MPs
- Chaldean Syriac Assyrian Popular Council 2 MPs
• Sons of Mesopotamia 1 MP
• Armenian independent candidate, Berunt Nissan Markos, 1 MP
Appendix C: Chaldean population estimate in northern Iraq, 2013

Total number of families/persons by diocese (October 2013)

- Alqosh c. 3,913 / 17,069
- Akra 165 / 743
- Erbil 8,610 / 38,745
- Mosul 3,539 / 15,926
- Zakho 2,721 / 12,245 (in 2012)
- Sulaymaniya 195 / 878
- Amadiya c.850 / 3,800 (estimates from AP figures)

Total from figures obtained **19,143** Chaldean families. Assuming average family size as 4.5 persons**163** = total Chaldean population c. 89,500 in northern Iraq.

If we consider total population (not families) figures from Roberson in the AP (2010) for the years 1990, 2000, 2010 and our own data from 2013 we can estimate the following approximated comparisons in table 17.**164**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diocese</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alqosh</td>
<td>13,500</td>
<td>16,190</td>
<td>32,070</td>
<td>17,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akra</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>1,051</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erbil</td>
<td>12,314</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>38,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosul</td>
<td>19,800</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>16,815</td>
<td>15,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakho</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>6,548</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>12,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amadiya</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,452</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>3,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulaymaniya</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55,344</td>
<td>57,766</td>
<td>100,486</td>
<td>89,407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 17: Number of Chaldeans in northern Iraqi dioceses 1990–2013*

---

163 A figure given by several priests during my visit to northern Iraq.
Bibliography

List of Abbreviations

CSCO  Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium

EI  Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1st edn, ed. M. Th. Houtsma et al.
(Leiden: Brill 1913–1938)

EI2  Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd edn, ed. P. Bearman et al.


HMSO  His/Her Majesty's Stationery Office

OCA  Orientalia Christiana Analecta

OCP  Orientalia Christiana Periodica

OLA  Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta

ROC  Revue de l'Orient chrétien

TCE  The Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. Charles G. Herbermann et al.


Atto, Naures. 2011. Hostages in the Homeland, Orphans in the Diaspora:


Benedict XVI. 2006. ‘Faith, Reason and the University Memories and Reflections’. In Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg. 

http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2587519346&v=2.1&u=imcll1111&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=ab149cb70826b441eb5a9ee8857749e0.

http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2587509571&v=2.1&u=imcll1111&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=6d4d8bdd959f3cae09bb28574ea77302.

http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX2587501872&v=2.1&u=imcll1111&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w&asid=0457988c18ce05ff7afcc15a7d8c796c.


Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd.

https://archive.org/details/historiesrabbanan00budggoog.


Edmonds, C. J. 1958. ‘The Place of the Kurds in the Middle Eastern Scene’. 


———. 1975. Chrétiens syriaques sous les Mongols (Il-Khanat de Perse, XIIIe-XIVe s.). CSCO, v. 362; t. 44. Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO,.


———. 1994. ‘The Spread of the Persian Church’. In First Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, edited by


Glatz, Carol. 2004. ‘At Least 15 Die in Bomb Attacks on Five Iraqi Catholic
Churches’. The Catholic Times, August 8.

Grant, Asahel. 1841. The Nestorians; Or, The Lost Tribes: Containing Evidence of Their Identity, an Account of Their Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies; Together with Sketches of Travel in Ancient Assyria, Armenia, Media, and Mesopotamia; and Illustrations of Scripture Prophecy. London: John Murray.  https://archive.org/details/nestoriansorlos00grangoog.


Hartmann, R. 1913. ‘Al- Baṣra’. EI.


Healey, John. 2010. ‘“The Church across the Border” The Church of the East and Its Chaldaean Branch’. In Eastern Christianity in the Modern Middle East, edited by Anthony O’Mahony and Emma

Hebblethwaite, Peter. 1983. ‘The Synod on Social Sin’. The Tablet, October 22.


———. 2004b. ‘The Terror Came as They Gathered for Mass’. The Tablet, August 7.

HMSO. 1925. ‘Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and Iraq, Signed at Bagdad October 10, 1922; and Protocol to Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and Irak of October 10, 1922, Signed at Bagdad, April 30, 1923; Together with Agreements Subsidiary to the Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and Irak of October 10, 1922 Signed at Bagdad, March 25, 1924.’
———. 1948. ‘Treaty of Alliance between His Majesty in Respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and His Majesty the King of Iraq’. His Majesty’s Stationery Office, London.


Typrographia.
Lamani, Mokhtar. 2009. ‘Minorities in Iraq The Other Victims’.


Beyrouth 49. Beirut: Dar el-Machreq.


———. 2011e. ‘Christianity in Iraq: The Development of Secular Christian


———. 1951. ‘Church near Home of Holy Family’, February 16.


