

opened their land to the Arabs, had raised objection to the measures of 'Amr.⁸⁷ It is also interesting to see that the bishop of Tûr 'Abdin pretends to have 'the authority over Tûr 'Abdin to Babylon' from 'Umar, because that was very much the demand of these bishops since the time of the Patriarch Severus bar Mosqa (668-680); they wanted to ordain the bishops of Mesopotamia themselves, cf. Michael, *Chronicle*, II, 456, and caused many schisms. Bar Hebraeus summarizes our history, *Chron. eccl.*, I, 122 (including his anachronism),⁸⁸ without contesting them: 'Gabriel, Archimandrite of Qartamin, was consecrated as bishop in the year 965 of the Greeks (654); he went down to 'Umar b. Khattab,⁸⁹ the King of the Arabs, as he was in Gezirta of Bayt Zabdê, and he received a document (Sigilion) [with] authority over the people of the Christians.' "

This is the summarization of the events which we will transmit and translate. Since Bar Hebraeus saw this as authentic, it is certain, that it — in truth or supposition — had an influence on the fate of Tûr 'Abdin, and that it deserves to be published. One will compare it to the much harder conditions which were laid upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem by 'Umar. (Lebeau, *Histoire du bas Empire*, LVIII, 47.)

[The Syriac text has been deleted.]

TRANSLATION

(M) In the year 965 (654, read: 629)⁹⁰ — in which the Persians left Mesopotamia and Heraclius came to Edessa — the holy Mar Gabriel was consecrated as bishop by the Patriarch Athanasius, in the monastery of Mar Jacob, which is on the mountain of Qoros. And later the holy Mar Gabriel went to the Caliph of the Hanafi,⁹¹ who is 'Umar bar Khattab, in the city of Gezirta, and (this one) received him with great joy. When he was with him for a while, he requested from the Caliph a pergament seal (concerning) the canons with respect to the laws of the Syrians and with respect to the bells and with respect to the processions, which they perform on the feasts of the Lord, and with respect to the crosses,⁹² (to know) whether they would be hindered,

and with respect to the churches⁹³ and the monasteries and with respect to the priests and with respect to the deacons, so that they would not be subject to tribute, and with respect to the monks, so that they be free to speak the litany (*ma'nioto*) before the dead, when they come out of the house to accompany them and to read the litany and the hymns before the (chapels of the) martyrs and to speak before the bishop when he visits his flock,⁹⁴ and everything which they wanted to have according to their rites, so that no one would harass them and that they would not be robbed of their laws.

(N) And the Caliph rejoiced over the arrival of the Mar Gabriel and gave him his signature, so that he could build churches and monasteries as he wished, and he gave him authority from Tûr 'Abdin to Babylon, and he honored him very much, because Mar Gabriel was on the side of the Arabs,⁹⁵ and as they came to this land he let them rule over it, and he made (it so) that the bad Romans disappeared from these regions. And 'Umar knew that the holy Mar Gabriel was an elect of God and that his prayer was heard of God — everything which he requested of God, He gave him — and he accepted his words with favor and came with him into this land, and he subjected it to him and said to the saint: "Demand whatever you will." And he requested mercy from him for all of the Syrians, for the churches and for the monasteries and above all for his monastery. And he gave him a document signed by himself, and behold, it remains to this day, and it was written within that the priests and the deacons did not have to pay any tribute and that the wealthy farmer (each) man had to pay four *zouzes*.⁹⁶ He also ordered in his writing, that if one of the *Hanife* (pagan = Arab) would find a Syrian on a mountain or on a road, that he should go with him to his house, he who would sleep on the mountain or in a vineyard or in the field, he should remain with him and protect him up to his house.⁹⁷ He issued many other ordinances concerning the orphans, the poor and widows, so that one might have pity on them, and for the occasions of the church and the feasts: if one went out at the time of a funeral and one made a procession,⁹⁸ on the feast of Psalms and on Good Friday and at the feast of the Resurrection, if one went out with crosses and the priests and the deacons wore their ornaments, that no

one should hinder them. "And everyone who did them harm, should come under a curse: here (below) he would (experience) the judgment and the beatings, and there (above) he would (experience) hell and torment, because he has trampled under foot our commandment and the commandment of the Prophet of God, Muhammad." And then Mar Gabriel took the writing which (contained) these orders, and he received it and returned to his monastery with great joy, in that he prayed for 'Umar, and he thanked God that He let him find grace before him. Honor be to God! who exalts His servants, who honor His name. To Him be glory, honor and praise, now and forever, in the century of centuries! Amen.

Notes:

[1] Add., ms. 17193. - This is a volume of collections titled "Volume de démonstrations, de collections et de lettres". The extracts are, in general, very brief: 125 different subjects on 99 leaves. The only subjects which we show are the historical ones, and the following catalogue "of the kings of the Tayyâye": Muhammad came to earth (hagira) in the (year) 932 of Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian (621 A.D.), then he reigned 7 years (d. 7 June 632 ?). After him Abu Bakr reigned two years (d. 22 August 634). After him 'Umar reigned 12 years (d. 3 Nov. 644 ?). After him 'Uthman reigned 12 years (d. 17 June 656) and they were without leader in the war of Safa (Siffin) five and a half years. After this Marwan reigned 20 years (d. April 680). After this Yazid the son of Marwan reigned three and a half years (d. 11 November 683). After Yazid they were without a leader for one year. After him 'Abdulmelek reigned 21 years (d. 8 October 705). After him his son Walid began to reign 1017 in the beginning of the first Tichri (October 705). See the text of Land, "Anecdota Syriaca," II, Leyden, 1868, p. 11, and the dates (according to Weil). *Ibid.*, I, 41-42. One will notice that Jacob of Edessa (ed. Brooks) also ascribes Muhammad seven years, from 621-628.

[2] We are quoting the translation of this passage (p. 16), below.