

<p>11. Bishop Šeri'a of Arbela (291-316)</p> <p>And following Aha d-Abuhi in the leadership of the people of the Lord was the diligent worker and true priest Šeri'a. This man was from Arbela, son of Christian parents, who loved Christ. And since his youth, he relied on the church and lived off holy service. Also in his time the church had a great victory, the church of God, o pious Pinhes. And after 300 years more or less that it was persecuted and weak and its fundamentals were shaken. They had quiet and victory over all of its enemies through Constantine 172, the victorious basileus 173. But before his time, around a few, Diocletian, the sacreligious Caesar, had tried to exterminate the name of Christendom 174 from the Earth, and for this he fervently strove night and day. And he gave an order, that the churches be destroyed and all Christians slain without mercy. Which fear and which panic won power over the entire world, as this order went out without mercy. And the weren't content with this, that they kill the Christians alone, but rather they killed them in droves or burned them, whereby they also did not have leadership prepared by a judge. And because of it, it was seen that the father was the butcher of his son, and the brother of his brother, and the enclosure of the natural love was ripped out of the midpoint. And as those roman Caesars were stricken with such sin, and as this lust to kill was enflamed in them, they were not once capable of governing the people, as they should rule. And as this was noticed by the grand king of the Persians, Hormizd 175, he took a large army and plundered many Roman cities 176. And as God saw all of this turpitude, "he rose up, and all of his enemies were dispersed, and his haters fled before him. The were dispersed like smoke and melted away like wax". 177 And he gave over to them torture without mercy. But He gave power over his servants to Constantine. And He showed him the sign of the cross over the clouds of lights, on which was written: "In this sign 178 you will be victorious". And he took this sign and gave it to all of his troops. And with it they beat them, the soldiers of the gruesome demons, into scattering like flies. And the cross, which was formerly the sign of shame, became the sign of victory for everyone, for the rich and for the poor, for the nobles and the condemned, the learned and the simple people. In the East, Papa, the bishop of Medinata, which we had mentioned, because he lived in the grand king's city 179 and other bishops required this due to his external business, had the desire, that he obtain the authority over all bishops, as if one bishop-general was needed, which they had to have. And the priests of Medinata along with the people resisted him. And they desired, that they clarify his deposition 180. And also Šem'on, his archdeacon 181, was enraged over these notions and gave notice to Miles of Šašan and to 'Aqeb Allaha of Karka de-Bet Selok. And Mar Papa became very afraid, because Šem'on's parents were very close to the grand king and respected by all people. And he wrote to the bishops of the West and especially to the bishop of Edessa, which had the name Sa'da. And all the bishops answered him, and they promised him, that they would help him through Basileus Constantine. Because they recognized, that case would be measured, if now the bishop of Medinata would become the patriarch 182 of all bishops in the East. And they wrote him a letter about this in their name and the name of the basileus and the patriarchs of the West. And they wrote him, that as in the West, which was under the rule of the Romans, there were many patriarchs, the one from Antioch and from Rome and Alexandria and Constantinople, in the East, which stands under the rule of the Persians, it is necessary, that present there should be nevertheless at least one patriarch. Now God, which ordered due to the sins of Adam, that a savior should come into the world, which is his own son, he, which through plagues of Egypt it was brought about, that there would be freedom for the Benai Israel, he, which from thorns brought fruit and from the thorn bush let roses spring forth, he, which at all times is capable of evoking goodness from the evil, allowed through his godly order and through his venerable providence, that the notions of Papa achieve success. And he became adamant in this matter without his knowledge as universal head of all bishops and all Christians in the land of the East 183. All bishops now consented to that which was ordered from the West, and</p>	<p>12. Bishop Johannan (Daniel Bar Marjam) of Arbela (316-345)</p> <p>And following him, Seri'a, was the vigilant and careful Johannan. This man, because he so much loved Mariam 188, the bearer of the invigorator or the world and our rejuvenator, was named Bar Mariam. He also taught many heathen people and the lhudaj. And therefore they hated him with deadly hate. And upon their prosecution they forced him from Arbela. And they sent foot-soldiers after him, which should kill him. But he hid himself and saved himself from their snares and wandered a long time around in the hamlets and mountains. But his love for God was enflamed more and more. And he strengthened it by staying busy with work. And he succeeded in brining many lambs into the sheep pen of Christ. In this time, as a Christian basileus ruled the world, and the matters of the church were eminent, Hades furthered its honor and let loose its stinking mouth and put out words, which stood in contradiction to the orthodox faith. And it found an unfaithful worker, which spread their teaching; the keen and astute Arius 189 the Wicked. He, who already did not recognize His grandeur and counted on the superfluosness, that was happening, that if even the son of God the creator, returned for our salvation, he would deny the godliness of Christ and proclaim falsely, that Christ is not the savior, but a creation, and that his nature was not the son of God, but rather just pretend. And there was great uproar because of him in the entire known world. And the bishops gathered in order to impeach his lies in the city of Nicea 190, in all 318, and through the willingness of Basileus Constantine, whose memory is blessed. And these fathers execrated Arius and everyone who accepted his opinion. And they affirmed that the son, Christ, was of one nature with the father, and equal with him in being 191.</p> <p>And at this time Šapur II, the grand king of the Persians, moved into the mountains, in order to annihilate the enemies, which were from the mountains near the sea, erupted, and decimated many hamlets. And his plan was, that he lay waste to many Roman cities. That, what also happened, we will see afterwards.</p> <p>And everyone could reckon that namely the time was near, that the church would be destroyed and the sanctuaries desecrated. But God, before whom everything arises, knows well, saw and silenced and delivered to us the scorching heat of his scorn. As namely it was seen by Šapur the second king, who ruled seventy years, more or less, from the year 620 of Jaunaj to the year 690 192, after the death of Constantine, the victorious basileus, who filled the world with fear of him, and after him the Roman Constantius 193, his son, was made basileus of the lands of the East, who thought, that the time came for him, in which he can dare to take the leadership of the lands of the Christians without hindrance.</p> <p>And he moved out and laid siege to Nisibis, the border city. He did not namely know, that it, the city, was not destroyed and stood "like a rose out of the thorns" 194, only through the strong arm of the Lord, the King of Kings. Meanwhile God, which through Judith, a weak woman, threw down and destroyed the pride and the legions of Elparna 195 and through the prayers of Esther, a humble woman, and hung Haman, the evildoer, up on the gallows 196. He, who through Šem'on slew thousands of Philistines, he distanced Šapur, the grand king, from the city through the prayers of the bishop, the pious and called Jacob 197, the famous. And as he, the people's father, saw it, that the children now became distraught after every page a laughter became for the impure demons "like Moses, the Lord's chosen one, he stood in the breech" 198 before them, he stepped up to the city wall and begun to bid the Lord, that either he kill him or save his people from the hand of the heathens and from death. And the Lord heard this. And see, an army of yellow insects 199 appeared from heaven. And it came and descended upon Šapur's army. And one of the swarms pushed into the nostrils of the horses and made them wild and robbed the men of visibility. And there was no time to do anything except to flee. They feared namely this unnatural blindness, and that the Roman army would suddenly fall on them and would annihilate them, while they were in this illness. And a few of them went and let Constantius know about that, which was. And they said praise and believed in God because of his grace,</p>			
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they feared the bishops, which were there, that they not cause it, that they wedge themselves between two powerful enemies, from the West the Christian Basileus of the Romans, and from the East the grand king of the Persians. Šem'on, the archdeacon of Papa, however, did not want at all to accept this new government, but rather wanted, that through his parents they would be removed in the name of the grand king. Papa managed to reconcile with Šem'on's father, and promised him, that upon his death, he will appoint him to be Patriarch after him.

At this time, in the border city 184 a god-fearing man, Jacob 185, became known for the miracles he worked like the apostles and powerful deeds of the prophets. This man spent often the entire night in prayer like his Lord, and his vigils and fasting were known everywhere. And because truly he was a godly man, we will especially handle the news about him later 186. And also our Šeri'a, because he glowed in zeal in the love of God, he went often to him, that with it he visit him and became blessed through him. And both spoke to one another. And after great ado and countless adversities he died on a Friday in the summer of the year 627 of Jaunaj 187. And he was buried in the church with great celebration.

166 Line 15 has Radgan, and line 18 has 𐭪𐭫𐭬 Dargan. They are undoubtedly the same person, yet it is unknown which is correct.

167 Is this some colloquial idiom?

168 Psalm 51:17;

170 Susa, the winter residence of the Persian king.

171 The first bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was ordained in 291

172 Constantine I, the Great

175 Hormizd II (302-309)

176 A war between Hormizd II and Rome does not appear in any other source, including the Cambridge History of Iran.

177 Psalm 68:1 178 The Christian monogram Chi-Ro.

180 removal from office

182 this text implies he would be in addition to the patriarchs of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and New Rome (Constantinople).

183 His patriarchate included not only the Persian Empire, but also the Christians in southern India, the Christianized Turks of central Asia, and the emerging Christian populations in Mongolian China.

184 Nisibis

185 Jacob Episcopus, bishop of Nisibis (308-338)

186 If this was truly handled later, it might signify a missing part of the Chronicle, as it does not appear here.

187 Meant here is the Seleucidan era. 627 S.E.=316

188 Mary, the mother of Jesus.

which he had poured over his servant Jacob. And he turned back to the grand king, in that he threatened him and he decided that the religion of the Romans would be weeded out of his lands. But Johannan, the bishop of our land, was then not among his sheep, but rather since the year 640 of Jaunaj 200 he had moved to Medinata, he with other bishops, that with it they elect a man, a Christian and a sage, for the office of patriarch 201.

189 Arius (260-336) was a priest in Alexandria, who taught that Jesus was not of the same body with God, but only his elegant creation, as he was begat by God and had therefore a beginning. His faith, Arianism, was so wide- spread that it reached from southern Ethiopia to the north with the Goths and Vandals.

190 The First Council of Nicea (19 June–25 August 325) was the first imperial synod. It was concerned with the Arian heresy, and actually only about 250 bishops took part.

191 οὐσα

192 620-690 S.E.=309-379

193 Basileus Constantius (337-361)

194 Song of Solomon 2:2

195 Judith 13-16

196 Esther 7

197 Jacob of Nisibis

198 Psalm 106:23

200 640 S.E.=329

Empty was namely the seat of Seleucia's patriarch by the lamentable death of Mar Papa, which was taken too soon before. They say that he spent two years there in Medinata. And then he went to Bet Huzaje because of the affairs of the church. And he was there, as the merciless orders went out to the Mahupats of the land, in which it was ordered, that all Christians should be killed without sympathy and that their churches should be destroyed, and on the sixth of the month of Nisan, as the grand king was in Bet Huzaje, and in the thirtyfirst year 202 of this evil, which never had known in his life, what mercifulness is, the sword began to rule without sympathy. And everyone, who dared to say, that he was Christian, was slain. But Johannan, the bishop of Arbela, left thereupon Bet Huzaje and came to his herd, that he pastured the lambs and the cattle, which were given into his hands, and that he watch them. But his heart was filled with joy, as he saw, that the sword, which was ready, that it should slay the Christians of the land, was still hidden in its sheath. Pagrasp 203 namely, the Mauhapta of the land, was in agreement with the city elite, that he not kill the Christians outside of the month of Ilul 204 at the time of the vintage and the harvest. And it is said, that the grand king felt remorse over the fact that he gave this hard order of persecution and planned to lift it then.

But the Ihudaj and the Manicheans, which are enemies of the name of Christ, pressed the Meguſes and brought them in, that they not allow the king of kings to do it. And they explained to him, that all the Christians were spies of the Romans. And nothing happens in the kingdom, that they do not write to their brothers who are there. And they all were rich and found themselves in a comfortable life, while the king of kings is entwined in an excruciating life of war and battle. They, however, lead no war, and always live in peace. So the Meguſes changed the mind of the grand king through their lying. And the king gave an order, that the head tax be doubled for all the Christians and strengthened his order that they be again killed without mercy. 205 We became thereupon the laughter of the heathens and the faithless. The Ihudaj mocked us and said: "Where is your god? Rising now should be your Christ, he, who was crucified in shame on Galgatha, and should destroy your persecutors. Has he not said to you: "See, I am with you until the end of the world?" But the Manicheans curse us more than the Ihudaj and they regard us as the scum of the people. "And the shepherd was slain and the herd was scattered". 206 It was namely the time of darkness, and the light was hunted. It was the time, when the meek and perishable creatures were forced, that they are prayed for with violence instead of the creator. So the sun, which was made as a servant for the god of the people, sacrifices and gifts were brought to it. And the fire, which was made for the need of the children of Adam: one temple 207 was made for the children of light, which they built. One fire-temple,

namely they built for the demons, that with it, they bring the churches of the heavenly father into the land of the forgotten. Oh the godlessness! O the disobedience and the insurgency of the people! And as when a man, who wants to destroy a tree, to ruin his seeds and throw them away, and then rip out its roots and throw them away, so the Megušes and the heathens wanted to make and end of the bishops 208, and the metropolitans 209. And immediately Mar Šem'on Bar Sabba'e, who sat in the seat of the East, together with a large number of priests 210 and deacons 211 were seized and brought to the grand king in Karka de-Ledan 212. And after much torture, as the powerful man of the Lord and his great patriarch were not sheltered from his menace for not being willing to pray to the sun, a creature, Šapur turned over the torture to his associates, who were in a number of 102. However, they cut his head off, all those athletes of Christ. He strengthened them, all of them, and stood by them with courage in this battle for a short time. This happened on a high Good Friday. And from then until the Sunday of the White Garments 213 the sword did not stop throughout the East. And to the ends of heaven groups of Christians were tied up like a group of sheep being led to slaughter, with exception of them, who were killed right there in their homes. But in our land of Hedejjab, through the thoughtfulness of the mauhapta, the sympathetic Pargasp, only a few, it was said, were killed, those whose names are unknown. But in the following year, as Pargasp 214, the mauhapta, died, after him they made Peroz Tamšabor his successor, the blood of the Christians began to flow in our land and flood the Earth, which was filled with injustice and evil due to the evil students of Satan, the cursed, who live off it.

There he cleansed them through a flood of pure and innocent blood of all dross and of all vice, that with it they would be the bride in truth, which adorns and beautifies herself for the heavenly bridegroom 215, who through his cross and his dishonor wed them on the hilltop of Galgatha through torture and through agony, which is unspeakable, whereby it is said to all of his students and their successors after them and to all members of his church: "Blessed are you, when they taunt you and they persecute you and say against you every evil word against me in lies. Then be happy and rejoice, because your wage is great in heaven. Even so have they persecuted the prophets who were before you." 216 It is hence

202 309+30=339

204 September/October (340)

205 Cambridge History of Iran: Shapur II needed money for his army to attack the Romans, so the taxes on Christians were doubled to provide extra revenues. The Christians naturally objected and the persecutions resumed.

206 Matthew 26:31

209 president, prefect, princeps

212 =Susa

213 =White Sunday (Easter Sunday), when the baptized wore white to show their purity.

214 possible misspelling

215 Ref. Ephesians 5:25-27

216 Matthew 5:11-12.

difficult for me, oh my beloved Pinhes, that I enumerate for you one after the other all of those, the names of the Christians, which were killed in the entire land of the East. Uncountable and even incalculable are the simple sheep, which through the butcher's knife were brought as living sacrifices for God and became worthy for the kingdom of heaven. If I only now count those, who saturated the dirt of our city and our country –because it is your request-, so that through this you know, which godly men truly have gone before you, and that you are able to follow their footsteps without difficulty. They truly were lieutenants for us and the leaders on the way to perfection, on which all of them are followed with joy. In the 35th year of Šapur 217, the grand king, Johannan, the bishop 218, with Jacob, his priest 219, were seized by order of Piroz Tamšabor. And the mauhaptas imprisoned them, without sympathy, first in Hesna da-Bedigar 220. And they remained in Hesna one year. And the heathens let loose many tortures which are not to be counted. And they suffered it, these brave warriors of Christ with patience, which cannot be described, whereby they were cheerful and overjoyed, that they were

held as worthy, to suffer such for the sake of the love of Christ. And on this day 221 men and women and daughters of the alliance 222 of all classes were killed, flock among flock. And among them Narsai, the priest 223, and Hananja and Rehima, deacons of the church. And after all interrogations and adulatory convincing attempts, as Satan could not diminish their steadfastness, thereupon they were brought out of the house out of the city were crucified as the life-giver, their Lord. Their corpses, however, were taken away during the night by the Christians. And see, their bones are a fountain, which lets the godly grace flow for all, which took asylum in those of the errant children of Adam 224. And from that day until the end of the year the sword was drunk with blood without satiation. And the collected Megušes 225, were like butchers for our land, although they did not become fat. And like wild dogs they daily licked the coagulum of our blood, which like a bog colored red the markets and alleys of our city. And they rampaged out more and more and became rabid.

<https://www.sasanika.org/wp-content/uploads/ChronicleofArbela.pdf>