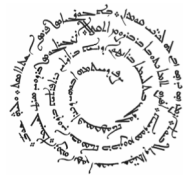


Cyriacus of Tagrit and his Book on Divine Providence



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Cyriacus of Tagrit and his Book on Divine Providence

Volume 1

Mikael Oez



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PREFACE

Who is Cyriacus? What happened to the Syrian Orthodox Church and its literature in the 8/9th century, in the centuries immediately after the arrival of Islam? These are the fundamental questions that have driven my research.

I received an e-mail in September 2005 from my supervisor, Professor David G.K. Taylor, who is lecturer in Aramaic and Syriac at the University of Oxford, suggesting that I write my doctoral thesis about a text entitled the Book on the Divine Providence, produced by Cyriacus who was a Syrian Orthodox Patriarch from 793-817 and a little-known figure amongst Syriac scholars. So I requested a digital copy of the manuscript from David, so that I could read it before making my decision. Having read through it to get a sense of its contents, I immediately replied to David, saying: Yes! I would like to work on Cyriacus and his Book on the Divine Providence.

I would like to thank my Professor, David Taylor, who has constantly supported me in bringing the present work into being. I convey my appreciation for all the time he has taken to proofread my translation of Cyriacus' texts, and for all the improvements and comments he has made throughout the thesis.

Gratitude is also owed to Dr. Assad Sauma-Assad, lecturer in Aramaic and Syriac at the University of Stockholm/Uppsala, who is responsible for the encouragement of my higher education studies, and has always been there for me during all my academic research.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my parents, who have supported me, both morally and financially. For this reason I would like to dedicate the current work to their departed son, and my brother, Mattias Oez, who passed away in September 1984.

Mikael Oez
22/01/2012

ABBREVIATIONS

BDP	Book on Divine Providence; DP	Divine Providence
BHLS	Bar Hebraeus' Lamp of Sanctuaries	
B.L.	British Library	
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Languages	
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium	
CPG	Clavis Patrum Graecorum	
EChR	Eastern Churches Review	
GPS	Clavis Patrum Graecorum	
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society	
JSAI	Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam	
JSOR	Journal of the Society of Oriental Research	
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies	
JCSSS	Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies	
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies	
LM	Le Muséon	
MBKS	Moshe bar Kipho, Book of the Soul	
MBKDP	Moshe bar Kipho, Book on Divine Providence	
NESTTR	Near East School of Theology, Theological Review	
OKS	Ostkirchliche Studien	
OCA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta	
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica	
OLP	Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica	
OrChr	Oriens Christianus	
OrChrA	Orientalia Christiana Analecta	
OrChrP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica	
OrSyr	L'Orient Syrien	
ParOr	Parole de l'Orient	
PG	Patrologia Graeca	
PO	Patrologia Orientalis	
ROC	Revue de l'Orient Chrétien	
VC	Vigiliae Christianae	

PART 1
INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is Cyriacus of Tagrit and his literary remains, with a particular focus on his major composition, **ܟܬܒܐ ܕܥܘܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܘܢܝܢܐ**, *The Book on Divine Providence* (henceforth *BDP*),¹ which has been, for the purpose of this work, edited, translated, and analysed, along with other texts by and on Cyriacus. This work was composed to educate members of his church, often in reply to their questions, and not as a controversial text addressed to outsiders. This study examines the light this throws on his concerns and priorities, in relation both to his theology and to his ecclesiastical political career, as well as his secular politics.

1.1.1. CYRIACUS' LIFE

Studies documenting Cyriacus' life are sparse. Anton Baumstark,² William Wright³ and Arthur Vööbus,⁴ among western scholars,

¹ The manuscript is preserved in St. Mark's monastery in Jerusalem and listed as manuscript no. 129. See Dolabani, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in St. Mark's Monastery*, pp. 289-296; Barsaum, *Scattered Pearls*, p. 377.

² Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 270.

³ Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, pp. 156-7, 196-7.

⁴ Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonensammlungen, Beitrag zur Quellenkunde, I: Westsyrische Originalurkunden 1A-B*, CSCO.S 35, 38, Louvain 1970; Idem., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian tradition, II: 1-2*; CSCO.S, pp. 163-164, Louvain 1975-76; Idem., 'Discovery of the biography of Severus of Antioch by Qyriaqos of Tagrit', *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neellenici*, 12-13, (1975-76), pp. 117-124; Idem., 'Die Entdeckung der Memre des Qyriaqos von Antiochien', *OKS* 25 (1976), pp. 193-195; Idem., 'Neue Angaben über die Regierungszeit des Patriarchen Qyriaqos', *OrChr* 52 (1968), pp. 87-91; Idem., *Syriac and Arabic Documents regarding legislation relative to Syrian Ascetism*, Stockholm 1960.

present minimal information, largely based on the Syriac chronicles of Michael the Great⁵ and Bar Hebraeus.⁶

The exact date of Cyriacus' birth is unknown, but this was almost certainly in the first half of the eighth century. Cyriacus was a patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch between A.D. 793 and 817,⁷ and he is the fifty-second patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal succession, according to the traditional reckoning.

During the seventh and the eighth centuries, patriarchs were always elected from among monks, and not from among bishops as is the more recent practice.⁸ This rule also applied to Cyriacus, who was elected as patriarch from the 'Monastery of the Pillar'. Given his title, one would expect Cyriacus to have had his see in Antioch, but this was not the case, and in fact, since the time of Severus of Antioch the Syrian Orthodox patriarchs were never based in Antioch itself. Prior to the arrival of Islam, the Nestorian and Jacobite churches were in practice divided by the border between the Byzantine and Persian empires, with the exception of a minority population of the Jacobite churches established in the Persian Empire.⁹ When the Arab conquest took place and this border was moved further West and North, the two Syriac-speaking churches came into regular direct contact through population movements. Nestorian churches were to be found in the cities of Edessa, Harran, Damascus, and Jerusalem,¹⁰ and vice versa with regards to the Jacobites: they moved further eastwards, into Persian lands.¹¹ However, the important city of the patriarchate, Antioch,

⁵ Michael the Great, Chabot, J.B. (ed.), *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, v. IV, Paris 1899-1910.

⁶ Abbeloos, J. B., & Lamy, Th. J. (eds), *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vols. I-III, [ed. & tr.], Louvain 1872-1877.

⁷ Michael the Great, *Chronique*, v. IV, pp. 484, 498; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, v. I, pp. 329, 343; Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 270; Barsaum, *Scattered Pearls*, p. 377; Palmer, *Monk and mason*, p. 179; Kaiser, *Die syrische "Liturgie" des Kyriakos*, p. 174.

⁸ See table I in Hage, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche*.

⁹ Witakowski, *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius*, p. 49.

¹⁰ Hage, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche*, p. 81.

¹¹ Witakowski, *Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius*, p. 49.

was in the hands of the Melkites for a long period after the Arab conquest. This is why the Jacobite patriarchs lived in monasteries, and in most cases those of their origin.¹²

1.1.2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Cyriacus' career and influence depend on two geographical accidents. The first is the fact that Cyriacus came from Tagrit, which was an important city at the time, and was a powerful centre of the Syrian Orthodox in the region.¹³ Syrian Orthodox merchants in Tagrit were very wealthy and influential in the church, and were clearly delighted to have one of their own citizens elected as patriarch. Their continued enthusiasm and support can be seen in various literary and artistic remains. One of these is the three madroshe¹⁴ which were written by an anonymous writer about Cyriacus, where much praise is given to Cyriacus, and the city of Tagrit. This type of madroshe praising patriarchs is rare in Syriac literature. The second is an inscription on one of the walls in the monastery of Deir al-Surian in Egypt, which was bought and re-founded by Tagriti merchants, which says in Syriac, ܡܘܨܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܩܝܪܝܘܨܐ ܩܝܫܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܝܪܝܘܨܐ ܕܥܢܬܝܘܨܐ, "Holy Cyriacus, patriarch of Antioch".¹⁵ This was most probably sponsored by a merchant from Tagrit. The last one is extremely unusual, a stylized portrait of Cyriacus in a manuscript of *The book of Holy Hierotheos*, which is preserved in Deir al-Surian.¹⁶ The portrait beside Cyriacus is the supposed author of the book, Hierotheos, and above are two figures possibly to be associated with the monastery and also with the city of Tagrit.

The second geographical accident is that Cyriacus was educated in the city of Al-Raqqah (in Arabic, الرقة), identified as Callinicum in Syriac sources, which is a city in north central Syria located on the north bank of the Euphrates River, about 160 km

¹² Hage, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche*, p. 11.

¹³ Cf. Fiey, 'Tagrit. Esquisse d'histoire chrétienne', *OrSyr* 8 (1963), pp. 289-342.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1.2.2.1. *Three Madroshe on Cyriacus*.

¹⁵ See picture I in chapter 5.3. *Cyriacus in Art*.

¹⁶ Ms. Deir al-Surian, Syr. 20, fol. 4r, *The Book of Holy Hierotheos*; See picture II in chapter 5.3. *Cyriacus in Art*.

east of Aleppo. Al-Raqqah is an ancient Greek city, which was founded by the Seleucid king, Seleucos II Kallinikos (ruled 246-225 BC).¹⁷ The city was destroyed by the invasion of the Sasanians under the rule of Shahanshah Khusrau I Anushirvan (reigned 531-579), but was subsequently rebuilt by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I (reigned 527-565). This city flourished during the rule of Harun al-Rashid (764-809), when it was also called Al-Rashid. The famous caliph, who ruled between 786 and 809, decided to build several palatial residences in 796 in Al-Raqqah, and made it his headquarters against the Byzantines.¹⁸ Since 786, when Rashid became the ruler of the Abbasid Empire, he had led several campaigns against the Byzantines.¹⁹

The city Callinicum is also where we find several major Syrian Orthodox monasteries, the second most important²⁰ of which was the Monastery of the Pillar, in Syriac ܩܠܠܝܢܝܩܘܨ ܕܥܝܠܝܢܝܩܘܨ, also referred to as ܩܠܠܝܢܝܩܘܨ. This is where Cyriacus became a monk and received his theological education during the middle of the eighth century, and which also acted as his official residence when he ruled as a patriarch between 793 and 817.²¹ The fact that Cyriacus was the only patriarch to come from the Monastery of the Pillar, which was not a traditional nursery of patriarchs, may well have been at the root of Cyriacus' later conflicts with certain other monasteries. The dates of Harun al-Rashid's transfer of imperial residence, 796, and the election of Cyriacus being elected patriarch, 793, do not match. Nevertheless, Harun's transfer of power was

¹⁷ The city was named Leontopolis for a short time during the Byzantine period by the emperor Leo (reigned 457-474 AD), but returned to the name Callinicum.

¹⁸ Meinecke, 'Raqa on the Euphrates', pp. 17–32; Heidemann, 'The Citadel of al-Raqa', pp. 122-150.

¹⁹ Cf. El-Hibri, Tayeb. *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Harun al-Rashid and the Narrative of the Abbasid Caliphate*. New York, 1999.

²⁰ The most important monastery of this city was Deir Mār Zakkā, mentioned by various sources up to the 10th century. It dates back to the 6th century when Callinicum became a centre of Syriac monasticism.

²¹ Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 270; Barsaum, *Scattered Pearls*, p. 377; Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, p. 179.

arguably planned for years, since the city was growing in importance as a regional centre prior to the move.

From a historical episode reported by many Syriac scholars, it is clear not only that Cyriacus had to tread carefully in his Muslim environment but also that he had well-placed friends. In A.D. 814 grave accusations were made against Cyriacus before the Caliph, Harun al-Rashid. The Caliph became furious and commanded his men to destroy the Churches in the country of Tagra and to bring Cyriacus for interrogation. But Cyriacus was handed over to the Caliph's secretary, who released him, on account of their good personal relations, and sent him back to his monastery in Callinicum.²² Middle-Eastern Churches have often elected patriarchs and senior bishops with local family links to ruling groups, and whilst it is possible that Cyriacus came to know the secretary after his appointment as patriarch, it is also conceivable that he knew him through earlier family or local connections. This event is discussed in Part II.

The monk Cyriacus became patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church during the key period in which Islam consolidated its religious and political control of the region. As mentioned earlier, the documentation of Cyriacus' life is sparse, and when scholars write articles on his life they go back to the Chronicle of Michael the Great, which in this section was heavily dependent on the Chronicle of Dionysius of Tellmahre.²³ Modern scholars have therefore always overlooked the potential consequences of the fact that Dionysius of Tellmahre was a monk during Cyriacus' rule, and that he was the next patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church. At the very least we should be cautious about presuming that this description of Cyriacus' leadership as patriarch was objective and impartial. For instance, one negative description Dionysius gives of Cyriacus is that he was hot-headed, and this picture has simply been repeated by all subsequent writers, who deplore the hot-headedness²⁴ with

²² Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, v. I., p. 339; Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 270; Michael the Great, *Chronique*, v. IV, pp. 488-9.

²³ Subsequent patriarch who ruled in A.D. 818-45. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, v. I, p. 343.

²⁴ Barsaüm, *Scattered Pearls*, p. 377,

which Cyriacus reacted to his Gubite opponents and their eastern friends, apparently provoking instead of sidestepping confrontation.²⁵ But as we will see in Part II, this interpretation is challenged by a comparison of the actions and decisions of Dionysius and Cyriacus.

1.1.3. CYRIACUS' WORK AND THEOLOGY

During Cyriacus' rule as patriarch he produced several interesting works in Syriac, mostly in theology. However, no critical editions of his theological works have yet been published, and modern scholarship is limited to a few scattered articles. Cyriacus is also an important figure in the development of ecclesiastical canons. He is one of the few Syrian Orthodox patriarchs who regularly issued lists of canons. Cyriacus held five synods during his rule as a patriarch, in a number of which he sought to improve clerical discipline.²⁶ In two of the synods, however, much weightier, political issues were addressed. In the second held at the Monastery of Nawawis in the province of Qenneshrin in 797/98 he sought to reconcile the Phantasiasts (Julianists)²⁷ and add them to the church, but his efforts were blocked by internal ecclesiastical opponents.²⁸ This raises the obvious question: after all the debates Cyriacus' predecessors had had with and against the Julianists, why would he agree to a union with them now?²⁹ In the third synod at Beth Go-

²⁵ Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 270; Michael the Great, *Chronique*, v. IV, pp. 484, 488.

²⁶ The canons issued at two of the synods have been published by Vööbus, *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* II, pp. 6-27 (For a new recension of the canons of Beth Botin see fol. 196 of the edition of Cyriacus' BDP); A letter is preserved in Michael the Great, *Chronique*, v. IV, pp. 495-497, See chapter 6.5. *The Letter written at the Synod of Mosul in A.D. 817*.

²⁷ The Julianists were opposed by Severus, patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 464-538).

²⁸ Michael the Great, *Chronique*, v. IV, p. 498; Barsaüm, *Scattered Pearls*, p. 377; Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 270.

²⁹ This is one of the episodes in Cyriacus' life to which a scholarly article has been dedicated. See Chapter 1.2.1.2. *The Creed drawn up at Qenneshrin in A.D. 797*.

brin in 808, he excommunicated the monks at the Gubba monastery, to which they retaliated by excommunicating the patriarch.³⁰

Cyriacus also produced three interesting discourses, filling seven manuscript pages. In the first he praises the virtues of Severus of Antioch. It begins with, "The clear and pure mirror which reflects the wonderful merits of St. Severus, requires a clear mind with great imagination to look through it."³¹ The second discourse, on the Sunday of the priests, begins with, "When we remember the chief priests and priests of the orthodox faith, who departed from this transient world..."³² The third discourse on the "vineyard of the beloved" mentioned by the prophet Isaiah, begins with: "When our Saviour spoke to the descendants of Israel by parables and symbols."³³ Beside these discourses, Cyriacus also produced a homily on Virginity.³⁴

His most important work, however, is his *BDP*, consisting of three volumes and divided into ninety-eight treatises. This is preserved in a single manuscript in St. Mark's monastery in Jerusalem, which dates to A.D. 804. What remains of this book is the third volume, and only twenty-two treatises, some of whose chapters are wanting. Two of these treatises he wrote at the request of Theodosius, bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon³⁵ and Walid and Yeshu' of Tirminaz, in the province of Cyrrhus.³⁶ It is written in a smooth and proficient Syriac, with minimal use of Greek loans and calques. Cyriacus also wrote ten letters in reply to the questions sent to him by the said Yeshu', deacon of Tirminaz. These were added to his book. The treatises cover a wide variety of topics, like Fate, Eschatology and Apocalypse, and each is divided into chapters, in one case up to eight.

³⁰ Michael the Great, *Chronique*, v. IV, p. 484.

³¹ See Chapter 1.2.1.6.1. *On Severus of Antioch*.

³² See Chapter 1.2.1.6.2. *On Sunday of the Priests*.

³³ See Chapter 1.2.1.6.3. *On the Vineyard of the Beloved*.

³⁴ See Chapter 1.2.1.7. *Homily on Virginity*.

³⁵ The city Seleucia-Ctesiphon is located in today's Iraq, on the Tigris River.

³⁶ The province of Cyrrhus is in the territory of Antioch.

The focus of previous scholarship on the Syrian Orthodox Church has been the period before the middle of the seventh century. This period has been seen as an idealised ‘golden age’ of Syriac literature, in which the Christological controversies and the use of Greek philosophical ideas in Philoxenus of Mabbug and others represents a crucial moment in the separation of the Syrian Orthodox from the church of the Roman empire. The interest of these scholars has largely been in how Syriac writers interacted with the intellectual debates of the Greek-speaking world: their focus has not been on Syriac theology for its own sake.

A lack of interest in the period in general and in Syriac churches in particular has often prevented historians and theologians from using the writings of later Syriac writers. In the period that followed the Arab conquests there was much continuity with earlier Syriac theological traditions. Thus symbolic theology may have continued to be just as important as philosophical theology in Syrian Orthodox Christology. From this perspective, Cyriacus was a continuator of a tradition that goes back to Ephrem, Aphrahat and Jacob of Serugh.

At the same time, it will also be emphasised that Cyriacus represented himself as an ‘orthodox’ theologian through his use of florilegia. We know for a fact that florilegia were already being widely used by Syriac writers in the fifth century, at the latest, and that subsequent writers continued to use and expand such texts, but there has been little written about this activity. Comparing the citations of Cyriacus’ *BDP* with the florilegia and the original texts of the citations, I have established that Cyriacus nearly always made use of florilegia, rather than consulting the original texts. This has also made me go further and see if there are any links between Cyriacus (*BDP*),³⁷ Moshe bar Kipho (in his *Book on the Soul*,³⁸ ‘henceforth *MBKS*’) and his work on *Divine Providence*,³⁹ ‘henceforth

³⁷ Microfilmed by: Brigham Young University, Roll 2, Item 7, Ms. No. 129. Date filmed: 14 March 1988. See William F. Macomber, *Final Inventory of the Microfilmed Manuscripts of St. Mark’s Convent in Jerusalem*, Brigham Young University 1995.

³⁸ *MBKS*, VatSyr 147, fol. 1b-90a.

³⁹ B.L. Add. 14731, Wright, *Catalogue*, v. II, pp. 853-5.

MBKDP), Anton of Tagrit (the work on *Divine Providence*)⁴⁰ and Bar Hebraeus (*The Lamp of the Sanctuaries*, 'henceforth BHLS').⁴¹ Interestingly, they have all either consulted similar florilegia, or they have taken their citations from each other (which is certainly likely in the case of Bar Hebraeus, who made heavy use of Moshe bar Kipho)⁴² and so in many cases they not only have the same citations, but also the same introductory rubrics. One can argue that Cyriacus' use of florilegia of earlier patristic writings is essentially an assertion of Cyriacus' orthodoxy and his connection to an unchanging canon of earlier theologians, even if his actual ideas are often very original and do not rely on his florilegium citations. This makes it very hard to identify Cyriacus' actual sources, since some of his ideas are unidentified after comparison with other Christian writers.

It is very hard to prove direct Islamic influence on Cyriacus, and I have found no evidence to suggest that he was reading any Islamic authors (unlike Bar Hebraeus, 400 years later), but he was clearly a man of his age, and he was forced to respond to controversial issues raised by members of his church, and these, as always, were stimulated by larger debates within society. This is particularly visible in his concentration on such issues as fate and on the relationship between life and the afterlife. He approaches these ideas through his discussion of life (free will and the causes of death), eschatology (the fate of the soul after death, the knowledge and location of the soul after death and before the resurrection) and apocalyptic treatises about the end of the world. He intersperses this with a discussion of the Bible, which anticipates the questions of the members of his community in response to his more general theology, and avoids the more didactic style of a pupil posing questions to his master.

Many of these issues were not novel, but Cyriacus' focus on Divine Providence as a single topic is unprecedented within Syriac literature. This does not seem to have been the direct result of de-

⁴⁰ B.L. Add. 14726, Anton of Tagrit, *Divine Providence*.

⁴¹ Bar Hebraeus, ed. Çiçek, Y. Y., *Lamp of Sanctuaries*, Holland 1997.

⁴² Cf. Taylor, 'L'importance des Pères de l'Église dans l'oeuvre spéculative de Barhebraeus', pp. 63-86.

bates with Muslims, but it does seem to reflect broader intellectual trends within the caliphate and the contemporary interest in fate and free will. Significantly, earlier Syriac authors such as John of Phenek⁴³ and pseudo-Methodius⁴⁴ had written apocalyptic texts in response to Arab conquests and in anticipation of a Roman counter-attack, which they saw as a prelude to the end of the world. It is notable that Cyriacus' own use of apocalypse is focused upon his discussion of free will (e.g. on why God will allow the Antichrist to come and the unimportance of the material world) and is much more de-politicised and spiritual than these earlier writers. And instead of using contemporary history as a context for his apocalypse he uses the Bible itself.⁴⁵

Many of the arguments which Cyriacus advances in his discussion of Divine Providence are extremely distinctive and personal. His stress on God's role in providing discipline for men, through biblical catastrophes and natural disasters, and his parallel idea that Satan was given a period of time to repent, and that Gehenna is a support for the kingdom of heaven, is an incentive for men to choose good and repent. Cyriacus explains how the Accuser and his angels were created as angels and that Gehenna was prepared for them as support for the Kingdom. That is to say, so that man would fear Gehenna and humble himself in repentance so as to be worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. He claims that Gehenna is supportive of the Kingdom for man, and not for the Accuser and his angels. The Accuser and his angels were given the chance to repent from the time of their fall until the crucifixion of Christ. They too died at the crucifixion and became the inheritors of Gehenna, since they did not repent during the time between their fall and the crucifixion of Christ.⁴⁶ These personal arguments remind us that Cyriacus was, in some respects, an outsider, educated outside the traditional patriarchal nurseries, and that his ideas may thus

⁴³ Brock, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', pp. 35-6; Harris, *The Gospel of the XII Apostles together with the Apocalypses of each one of them*.

⁴⁴ Brock, 'Two Apocalyptic Texts of A.D. 691', p. 222; Idem, 'Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History', pp. 34-35.

⁴⁵ See Cyriacus, *BDP*, XIX.

⁴⁶ See Cyriacus, *BDP*, XXI-XXIII.

reflect original approaches to established problems to a greater degree than other writers.

1.1.4. AIM AND METHOD

Very few post-seventh-century Syrian Orthodox theological texts have been edited, and so Cyriacus' text provides a fascinating window into the theological concerns and training of the Syrian Orthodox in the early Islamic world. Comparative material has largely been based on unpublished Syriac manuscripts which are widely cited. Hopefully, this will be a beginning for modern scholars to take an interest in Cyriacus and other contemporary writers, and will stimulate further detailed study.

No scholar has yet attempted to link Cyriacus' writings together, or to show how these controversies and debates were related one to another, or to analyse Cyriacus' role in them. This study seeks to fill this gap in scholarship, making particular use of the long-neglected *BDP*, and examining the light this throws on the theology and political career of Cyriacus, and his impact on the Syrian Orthodox Church.

The structure of this work is divided into six parts. Part I, *Introductory Considerations*, contains data on all of Cyriacus' works, plus writings composed in his honour, and information on chronicles and other literature referring to him. Part II, *Historical Impact*, tells the narrative of Cyriacus in detail, by combining different sources, by consulting his works and by using the different perspectives of later Syriac chronicles, such as those of Michael the Great and Bar Hebraeus. Part III, *Cyriacus' BDP within the Syriac Tradition*, contains a commentary on key aspects of the largest work of Cyriacus, which is on Divine Providence. Comparisons and contrast have been made with other contemporary writers and especially with authors mentioned in Part IV. Part IV, *Named Theological Sources in Cyriacus' BDP*, places it in the context of previous and subsequent Syriac authors who have discussed similar topics, and also Cyriacus' use of patristic citations. Part V, *Concluding Reflections*, contains a concluding chapter with bibliographies, and a chapter containing Cyriacus in Art. Part VI, *Texts and Translations*, contains the text and translation of Cyriacus' *BDP*, plus various other texts by him, or about him.

The following method has been chosen to perform the analytical studies on Cyriacus' and his writings. In order to understand

the ecclesiastical as well as the political context and his relations with contemporary religions during Cyriacus' reign, an edition of the Syriac text and an English translation with a detailed examination of its theology has been provided. To this is added the surviving fragments of his other writings, collected from a wide range of manuscripts in the hope that they will throw further light on this remarkable author, about whom very little has been written.