Introduction

On a hill overlooking the city of Mosul from across the Tigris River, in what is today northern Iraq, there stood a building with a very long history. At the time of the Arab Islamic conquests in the seventh century, and for centuries thereafter, it was a Christian monastery dedicated to the prophet Jonah, visited by Muslims as well as Christians.[1] A mosque built adjoining the monastery eventually co-opted the original structure, and when Tīmūr Lang conquered the city at the end of the fourteenth century, he visited the tomb shrine dedicated to Nabī Yūnus, as the prophet came to be known in Arabic.[2] Despite its conversion, the shrine remained accessible to Christians as well as Muslims, until it was detonated in the summer of 2014 by militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. In their quest to eliminate what they believe to be tantamount to polytheism, ISIS has also erased the long history of religious diversity in Iraq's northern metropolis.[3]

Before 2014, Mosul always had been a multireligious city. A Christian priest who took refuge in the city in 1918 recorded a list of fifty-five mosques out of "many without number," as well as seventeen churches (one of which was abandoned) and four monasteries.[4]

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[1] ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Shābūshtī, *Kitāb al-Diyārāt*, ed. Kūrkīs ʿAwwād, al-Ṭabʿah 2 (Baghdād: Maktabat al-Muthannā, 1966), 181; Jean M. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne, contribution á l'étude de l'histoire et de la géographie ecclésiastiques et monastiques du nord de l'Iraq* (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1965), vol. II: 500.

[2] Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, II: 501–10.

[3] Dana Ford and Mohammed Tawfeeq, "Jonah's Tomb Destroyed, Officials Say," *CNN*, July 25, 2014, www.cnn.com/2014/07/24/world/iraq-violence/index.html.

[4] Vatican sir. 592, ff. 93a–94a.

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In 1743, according to an earlier priest seeking the city's refuge during wartime, the Ottoman governor commanded Muslims, Christians, and Jews to prepare the city's defense against the siege of the Persian ruler Nādir Shāh, and when the siege was lifted, the Ottoman sultan permitted the Christians to rebuild their churches, eight within Mosul itself.[5] Two centuries earlier, Mosul was where Christians had gathered from various cities in the region to send an unexpected letter to the pope in Rome complaining about their patriarch.[6] In the last years of the fifteenth century, Mosul had been both the patriarchal residence for one Syriac Christian denomination and the headquarters for the second-highest-ranking ecclesiastical official in a rival Syriac hierarchy, making it not only a major Islamic city, but also the Christian capital of post-Mongol Iraq.[7]

The significance of the city of Mosul to Christians as well as Muslims is not unusual for the late medieval Middle East, where Muslim rulers still governed substantial non-Muslim populations.[8] The Cairo Geniza provides the most spectacular, but not the only, demonstration of non-Muslim diffusion across the medieval Middle East.[9] The fourteenth-century Moroccan traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa noted the large number of Christians in Anatolia, and on his travels he benefited from the hospitality of a Syrian monastery.[10] Nor were Jews and Christians the only non-Muslims in the region: a fifteenth-century Christian author from Erbil in northern Iraq referred to the Yezidi followers of Shaykh ʿAdī.[11] The pilgrimage guide of the twelfth-century traveler ʿAlī al-Harawī gave numerous examples of

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[5] H. Pognon, "Chronique syriaque relative au siège de Mossoul par les Persans en 1743," in *Florilegium; ou, Recueil de travaux d'érudition dédiés à Monsieur le marquis Melchior de Vogüé à l'occasion du quatre-vingtième anniversaire de sa naissance. 18 octobre 1909* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1909), 493, 495, 500, 502–3.

[6] The letter is preserved in a sixteenth-century Latin translation in Giuseppe Simone Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* (Rome: Typis Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide, 1719), vol. I: 526.

[7] BL Add. 7177, f. 321a; Vatican sir. 97, f. 142a.

[8] Daniella Talmon-Heller, "Graves, Relics and Sanctuaries: The Evolution of Syrian Sacred Topography (Eleventh–Thirteenth Centuries)," *ARAM* 18–19 (2006–2007): 601–20.

[9] S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, 6 vols. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967).

[10] Muḥammad Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭa al-musammāh Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār fī gharāʾib al-amṣār wa-ʿajāʾib al-asfār* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1958), vol. I: 49, 179; Muḥammad Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, AD 1325–1354*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb and C. F. Beckingham (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1958–1962), vol. I: 115; vol. II: 415.

[11] Berlin orient. fol. 619, f. 104a.

sacred places shared among Muslims, Christians, and Jews, for example a stone outside the "Jewish Gate" at Aleppo.[12] The late medieval Middle East was diverse but not ghettoized or balkanized, a world in which people of different religions rubbed shoulders on a daily basis.

At the crossroads of Eurasia, the Middle East may well have housed the most diverse society in the premodern world. Indeed, the presence of non-Muslims was so pervasive in much of the medieval Middle East that it "went without saying." Even as prominent an achievement of Islamic culture as the fifteenth-century astronomical manual (*zīj*) of Ulugh Bey b. Shāhrukh, the Timurid ruler of Samarqand, silently drew information from an Iraqi Christian source. The work's discussion of the Seleucid ("Rūmī") calendar included common Christian holidays such as Nativity, Epiphany, Annunciation, and the "Feast of the Cross" (*ʿīd-i ṣalīb*).[13] The distinctive dates given to those holidays unmistakably point to an informant from the Church of the East, with its hierarchy centered in northern Iraq.[14] Yet the *zīj* not only failed to mention the "Nestorian" source: it nowhere explicitly mentioned Christianity. It did not need to, because even in Samarqand, non-Muslim ways of keeping time were presumed to be recognizable.

The range of ethnicities, languages, and religions of the medieval Middle East also reminds modern observers that diversity is not a product of European globalization. Middle Eastern society before 1500 gives scholars an opportunity to analyze the dynamics of diversity before nationalism, liberalism, secularism, global capitalism, or the other -isms that constitute the particularly Europeanized modern world order. Thus

[12] ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al-Harawī, *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage: ʿAlī ibn Abī Bakr al-Harawī's Kitāb al-Ishārāt ilā Maʿrifat al-Ziyārāt*, trans. Josef W. Meri (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 2004), 12–13.

[13] Ulug Beigus, *Epochæ Celebriores Astronomis, Historicis, Chronologis, Chataiorum, Syro-Græcorum, Arabum, Persarum, Chorasmiorum, Usitatæ Ex traditione Ulug Beigi, Indiæ citra extraque Gangem Principis*, ed. Johannes Gravius (London: Jacob Flesher, 1650), 99, 101. This calendar should not be confused with the Rūmī calendar adopted by the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire.

[14] Only this denomination commemorated the finding of the true cross by Constantine's mother Helena on 13 (not 14) September, and the same group uniquely celebrated Annunciation on the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, rather than 25 March. For a discussion of the inaccuracy of the older adjective "Nestorian," which was nevertheless employed by Muslims and other Christian groups, see Sebastian P. Brock, "The 'Nestorian' Church: A Lamentable Misnomer," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 78 (Autumn 1996): 23–35. The phrase "Church of the East," although more accurate, lacks a corresponding adjectival form, for which I have used the approximate adjective "East Syrian."

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the study of medieval Middle Eastern diversity may provide a counterbalance to the alternately comforting or cautionary tales we modern people tell ourselves about the diverse world in which we live today.

DIVERSITY VIEWED FROM WITHIN

Unlike most premodern societies, which supported only a single or a few social groups with the ability to compose texts, the medieval Middle East's social diversity was expressed by a large number of literate classes whose works allow scholars to approach the dynamics of diversity from multiple angles. The Islamic learned elite (ʿulamāʾ) represent only one class of authors, alongside Jewish, Christian, and Zoroastrian religious leaders, and exceptional members of the ruling, mercantile, and professional classes (especially physicians). Indeed, for questions of diversity, the works of the ʿulamāʾ often give a clearer picture of how they thought society ought to function than how in fact difference worked in practice.[15] Histories and chronicles authored by ʿulamāʾ evinced decreasing levels of interest in non-Muslims.[16] Sporadic exceptions are found in travel accounts by such authors as Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, yet his choice of details was haphazard and colored by his own normative interests. The literati of less privileged groups, such as Christians and Jews, recorded in much greater detail how religious difference was lived out in the medieval Middle East.[17] To learn about religious diversity, scholars must attend to non-Muslim voices directly.[18]

Nevertheless, the non-Muslims of the late medieval Middle East rarely inform modern historical scholarship. By convention, Islamic historians

[15] Luke Yarbrough, "Islamizing the Islamic State: The Formulation and Assertion of Religious Criteria for State Employment in the First Millennium AH" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2012), 224–25, 236–37, 257.

[16] For Ottoman Syria, the point was made by Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 28. For the paucity of references to non-Muslims in fifteenth-century sources from al-Jazīra and Iraq, see Chapter 3, fnn. 9–11.

[17] Even synthetic works on earlier periods are often forced to rely almost exclusively on non-Muslim sources. Such are Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton University Press, 2008); Franklin, *This Noble House: Jewish Descendants of King David in the Medieval Islamic East* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 2013).

[18] A comparable point was made by Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation: Zoroastrian Subalterns and Muslim Elites in Medieval Iranian Society* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 11.

briefly acknowledge the existence of non-Muslims under Islamic rule, at least for the first millennium CE, while ascribing no historical signif- icance to their continued presence.[19] Almost forty years after his death, Marshall Hodgson's work is still characteristic of most of the field: after conceding that "of course, non-Muslims have always formed an integral, if subordinate element" of "Islamicate" society, he proceeded to tell a story of Muslim rulers and Muslim intellectuals.[20] Jonathan Berkey's *The Formation of Islam* gives much greater attention to non-Muslims than most scholars, yet even his treatment segregates them into chapters apart from his main story, and only discusses them before the year 1000 CE.[21] The result is that the study of the Middle East after 1000 CE often becomes almost exclusively the history of Islam and of Muslims, while silently excluding the many others who were in fact present.[22]

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[19] Studies of Middle Eastern Jews, by contrast, not uncommonly move into the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries: for example, Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, 2nd edn. (Princeton University Press, 2008); Moshe Gil, *Jews in Islamic Countries in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Marina Rustow, *Heresy and the Politics of Community: The Jews of the Fatimid Caliphate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Franklin, *This Noble House*. Such studies increasingly draw connections with "Islamic society," yet are often not consulted by Islamic historians.

[20] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. I: 58.

[21] Jonathan Porter Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91–101, 159–75.

[22] In addition to the studies mentioned in fnn. 8–9 above, a few exceptional studies of "Islamic society" during the "Middle Periods" (c. 950–c. 1500) integrate non-Muslim populations, such as John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, rev. edn. (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1999). See also Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Seta B. Dadoyan, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction: Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, 3 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2011–2014). On this last, however, see Sergio La Porta, review of *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction, Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, vol. III: *Medieval Cosmopolitanism and the Images of Islam, Thirteenth to Fourteenth Centuries*, by Seta B. Dadoyan, *American Historical Review* 120 (2015): 1144–45. In addition, a few unpublished PhD dissertations have situated Christians and Jews within "Islamic society": Tamer el-Leithy, "Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293–1524 AD" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005); Yarbrough, "Islamizing the Islamic State"; Oded Zinger, "Women, Gender and Law: Marital Disputes According to Documents of the Cairo Geniza" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2014). Compare the remarks on the earlier period in Jack B. V. Tannous, "Syria between Byzantium and Islam: Making Incommensurables Speak" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2010), 2–3, 8–12. Non-Muslims in the early Islamic period have been more integrated into social history; in addition to the works by Berkey and Tannous, see the works cited in Christian C. Sahner, "Christian Martyrs and the Making of an Islamic Society in the Post-Conquest Period" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2015), 16–17.

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Yet this confessional definition of the field is unwarranted: at no point before 1461 were all Middle Eastern rulers Muslims, and we do not know when Islam became the religion of a demographic majority even in lands under "Islamic rule."[23] The only significant study of demographic Islamization remains Richard Bulliet's *Conversion to Islam*, which attempts to extrapolate demography from the "Who's Who" of Muslim ʿ*ulamāʾ*, somewhat akin to trying to determine American population dynamics based on professors at Christian seminaries.[24] As Tamer el-Leithy points out, our ignorance regarding the process of Islamization largely stems from the fact that medieval authors saw no political relevance in the relative demography of religious groups.[25] In fact, such indications as do exist suggest that non-Muslims were almost as numerous as Muslims in portions of eastern Anatolia and northern Iraq into the fifteenth century.[26] The confessional demarcation of Middle Eastern history as "Islamic" misrepresents the experience of ethnic and religious diversity in the medieval world between the Nile and the Oxus Rivers.

When historians do consider Middle Eastern Christian populations, they often privilege the more familiar European forms of the religion.[27] Studies comparing Islam and Christianity often take a narrowly European definition of the latter.[28] Islamicists continue to deploy categories of Christian "orthodoxy" (and, by implication, "heresy") to Middle Eastern Christians from the normative perspective of European Christendom, which only slowly became the dominant form of Christianity in Eurasia over the course of the Middle Ages.[29] Thus Middle Eastern Christians

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[23] The Christian empire of Trebizond continued until 1461.

[24] Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[25] El-Leithy, "Coptic Culture," 27, especially fn. 71. Although the use of the term "minorities" and its political implications date from modern liberal politics, el-Leithy acknowledges a descriptive use of the term, and it is in this sense that the word is employed in this book.

[26] See below, fnn. 35–36.

[27] Murre-van den Berg likewise challenges what she identifies as the tendency to present post-ʿAbbasid Middle Eastern Christianity "as uninformed and out-of-place variations of Western Catholicism and Protestantism": Heleen Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures: The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces (1550–1850)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 13.

[28] Most recently, see David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[29] Vernon Egger, *A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The Making of a Civilization* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 9–10, 13, 30, 38; Berkey, *The Formation of Islam*, 20, 23, 63, 74, 93, 168. Berkey critiqued the terms as applied to Islam: ibid., 83, 147. Most recently, a comparative analysis of notions of "heresy" among medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims considers only Greek and Latin varieties of Christianity: Christine Caldwell Ames, *Medieval Heresies: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 15, 23, 192–93.

often find themselves in a "catch-22" of scholarly expectations. To the
degree that their society and culture agreed with that of their Muslim
neighbors, they are regarded as "authentically" Middle Eastern, but also
as adulterating their (Western) religion.[30] To the degree that their theol-
ogy and religious practice agreed with those of European coreligionists,
they are regarded as "authentically" Christian, but also as foreigners in
their native lands. The discourse of authenticity is a dangerous yardstick
for judging social and cultural integration, precisely because of the canon-
ical status conferred upon Middle Eastern Arab Muslims and European
Christians. To the Muslim inhabitants of medieval Iraq and Syria, however,
European Christianity was bizarre compared with Middle Eastern forms
of the religion.[31] The study of the late medieval Church of the East, prob-
ably the largest non-Muslim population in Iraq, challenges Eurocentric
definitions of Christianity and suggests the possibility of framing the late
medieval Middle East as a diverse society mostly ruled by Muslims.

EAST SYRIAN CHRISTIANITY AND THE WIDER WORLD

The breadth of terrain inhabited by the Church of the East is not read-
ily designated by regional or national boundaries, whether medieval or
modern. Mosul, the geographical center of this regional study, is now
part of Iraq. Medieval Arabic geographers divided regions differently: to
the south of Mosul along the Tigris River was the smaller region of Iraq,
while to its west and northwest, as far as the headwaters of the Tigris, lay
the region of al-Jazīra, as Mesopotamia was then known.[32] Further east
and northeast of the Mosul plain lay the region of Ādharbayjān, and due

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[30] For an alternative explanation of Middle Eastern historians' neglect of non-Muslims, see
Heleen Murre-van den Berg, "The Unexpected Popularity of the Study of Middle Eastern
Christianity," in *Christsein in der islamischen Welt: Festschrift für Martin Tamcke zum
60. Geburtstag*, ed. Sidney H. Griffith and Sven Grebenstein (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz,
2015), 8–9.

[31] For an example in the domain of medicine, included by a twelfth-century Muslim author
on the authority of a Middle Eastern Christian physician, see Usāma Ibn Munqidh, *The
Book of Contemplation: Islam and the Crusades*, trans. Paul M. Cobb (London: Penguin,
2008), 145–46.

[32] For example, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī, *Cosmographie de
Chems-ed-Din Abou Abdallah Mohammed ed-Dimichqui*, ed. C. M. Fraehn and A. F.
Mehren (Saint-Petersburg: Académie impériale des sciences, 1866), 185, 190; Shams
al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī, *Manuel de la cosmographie du Moyen Âge*,
trans. A. F. Mehren (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1874), 251, 257. The late medieval
region of al-Jazīra transgresses the modern national boundaries of Iraq, Syria, and Turkey,
and hence the name sees little use today.

north lay the mountains of Armīniya.[33] The late medieval region of Syria, which ended at the Euphrates, was at that time across an imperial boundary, under the control of Egypt's Mamlūk Empire. This study ranges from Baghdad in the south to the Kurdish and Armenian mountains in the north, and from Āmid (modern Diyarbakır in Turkey) in the west as far as Tabriz (today in northwest Iran) in the east.[34]

The Christian minorities of these regions were not negligible, although they have been neglected. John Woods cites European travelers' accounts demonstrating "[t]he large number of Christians relative to Muslims in the urban centers of Arminiya and Diyar Bakr" in the fifteenth century, a phenomenon also visible in early Ottoman defters.[35] In the following century, Ottoman records indicate that the population of Mosul and its hinterland was around one-third Christian.[36] Although no systematic information about the proportion of the region's population that belonged to Christianity or other religions is available from the fifteenth century, these limited data indicate that in certain areas the Christian population was substantial, to say the least. Despite this fact, the literary histories produced for Muslim rulers very rarely mention these subject populations. The modern historical narrative of this period, basing itself on these literary histories, has told the story of two nomadic Türkmen confederations: the Qarāqūyunlū, or "Black Sheep Türkmen," ruling Iraq from bases in Mosul, Tabriz, and Baghdad, and the Āqqūyunlū, or "White Sheep Türkmen," ruling what is now eastern Turkey from the area around Āmid and later Tabriz, after the Āqqūyunlū defeated the Qarāqūyunlū.[37] The

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[33] For example, al-Dimashqī, *Cosmographie*, 187–90; al-Dimashqī, *Manuel*, 254–57. The southernmost mountains north of Mosul are also labeled the Hakkārī mountains.

[34] I follow fifteenth-century usage by terming the city Āmid and the region Diyār Bakr, although today both are named Diyarbakır.

[35] Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 246 n. 156; Ahmet Özkılınç et al., eds., *998 numaralı muhâsebe-i Vilâyet-i Diyâr-i Bekir ve ʿArab ve Zü'l-Kâdiriyye defteri (937/1530)* (Ankara: T. C. Başbakanlık, Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, 1998), 15, 20, 22–25, 30.

[36] Slightly different assumptions lead to different calculations based on the same sources. Gündüz reported non-Muslim totals (both in the city and the villages) slightly below one-third in 1523 and slightly above one-third in 1540, but only around a quarter of the whole province's population if one includes nomadic tribes: Ahmet Gündüz, *Osmanlı idaresinde Musul (1523–1639)* (Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi Basımevı, 2003), 238–39. Khoury calculated a percentage of 37 percent Christian among the rural population in 1541: Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 29.

[37] Faruk Sümer, *Kara Koyunlular: Başlangıçtan Cihan-Şah'a kadar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevı, 1967); İsmail Aka, *İran'da Türkmen Hakimiyeti: Kara Koyunlular Devri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevı, 2001); Woods, *Aqquyunlu*. There is no synthetic treatment of Qarāqūyunlū rule in the English language.

scholarly account of Muslim rulers and Islamic religious leaders ignores the large non-Muslim population, and thus misses the social and cultural dynamics of what was in fact a very diverse society.

It is probable that the largest non-Muslim population of Iraq and southern al-Jazīra was the Church of the East, a Christian denomination whose patriarchs lived in Mosul or the surrounding plain at the end of the fifteenth century.[38] Before the rise of Islam, this group had been the most prominent branch of Christianity in the Sasanian Persian Empire.[39] It claimed a first-century foundation by the saints Addai and Mārī, disciples of the apostle Thomas, although evidence for the existence of the church in the first three centuries of the Common Era is very sparse. In the Christological controversies of the fifth and sixth centuries, the Church of the East gained a reputation for "Nestorianism" by virtue of its refusal to condemn Patriarch Nestorius of Constantinople as a heretic, although in fact their theology was influenced less by the ideas of Nestorius himself than by those of his teacher, Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428). Under the early ʿAbbasid caliphate, the patriarchal residence of the Church of the East moved from Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital of the defunct Persian Empire, to Baghdad, and this community contributed to the intellectual culture of the caliph's capital with translations of Greek philosophical and medical works into Arabic. From the seventh century they sent missionaries to Central Asia and China, expanding so significantly among the steppe nomads that when Hülegü, the grandson of Genghis Khan, conquered Baghdad and destroyed the ʿAbbasid caliphate in 1258, his chief queen Doquz Khātūn was a member of the Church of the East. She persuaded the Mongol commander to spare the Christians of the city. Under Mongol rule, Middle Eastern Christians of all varieties enjoyed royal patronage again, and the Mongol rulers of Persia sometimes sent them as ambassadors to the Latin states of Europe.[40]

The Church of the East was socially and culturally at home in the Middle East, even as it confronted the chronic political instability of the

[38] See Chapter 1, fnn. 93–96.

[39] For overview histories of the Church of the East, see David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church: A History of the Church of the East* (London: East & West, 2011); Christoph Baumer, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006); Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

[40] The basic evidence for the Mongol period was assembled by Frédéric Luisetto, *Arméniens et autres Chrétiens d'Orient sous la domination Mongole: l'Ilkhanat de Ghâzân, 1295–1304* (Paris: Geuthner, 2007); J. M. Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Mongols (Il-Khanat de Perse, XIIIe–XIVe s.)* (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1975).

fifteenth century under Türkmen rule. Seemingly incessant wars were punctuated by bandit raids, mob violence, and insatiable tax-collectors, the symptoms of a society under stress. In this context, the Church of the East saw itself primarily as a Christian community, but it defined that in a Middle Eastern (and specifically Iraqi) manner rather than based on Western assumptions. They defined their Christianity by theology and ritual, through prayers to Christ as God, as well as socially and histori-cally through their ecclesiastical hierarchy and their saints. Their under-standings of Christianity reveal complex dimensions of diversity in the late medieval Middle East.

THE DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

This study examines multiple social and cultural dimensions to religious diversity in al-Jazīra and Iraq under Türkmen rule, from the conquests of Tīmūr Lang (d. 1405) to those of the Safavid Shāh Ismāʿīl starting in 1501. To understand how social diversity functioned, it is necessary to understand the varieties of diversity present. Since the fifteenth-century history of these regions is unfamiliar to most scholars, Chapter 1 sketches the independence of local Türkmen and Kurdish rulers, lays out the dif-ferent Christian groups present, and documents the social structure within the Church of the East itself. The next two chapters explore how social relations functioned across religious boundaries, first between Muslim rulers and their Christian subjects, and secondly among subjects both Muslim and non-Muslim. While scholars have typically studied the "sta-tus" of Christians in Islamic society through the framework of the Pact of ʿUmar's regulations on *dhimmī* (non-Muslim) populations, Chapter 2 suggests that there was no overarching framework structuring rulers' relations with their subjects in late medieval al-Jazīra and Iraq. This lack of a shared script led to both unexpected opportunities for and extreme violence against fifteenth-century Christians. Chapter 3 includes the dis-course of *dhimmī* status within the broad range of ways in which Muslim subjects (including *ʿulamāʾ*) and Christian subjects interacted, relations which were occasionally violent and occasionally friendly but more often distrustful.

The cultural dimensions of this diversity include the ways in which different groups shared – or alternatively diverged in – ideas and values, as well as the broad-based concepts used by the people of the past to understand the diversity of the society in which they lived. To access these