



MICHAEL THE SYRIAN

MICHAEL THE SYRIAN, Jacobite patriarch of Antioch (1166-99), who wrote a universal chronicle in Syriac, covering events from the Creation until 1195. The main events of Michael's life are known from the details he reports in his *Chronicle* (Chabot, 1899-1910, III, pp. 341-413); from the Syrian historian Bar Hebraeus (see [EBN AL-'EBRI](#)), who has preserved parts of the work which have otherwise disappeared (Abbeloos and Lamy, I, 1874, pp. 535-606); and from the *Chronicon ad annum 1234* (Chabot, 1916; Abouna and Fiey, 1974). Michael was born in 1126 in Malaṭīa (Melitene) and decided to embrace religious life at the monastery of Mār Barṣaumā, where he later became superior. In 1166, he was elected as Patriarch of the Jacobite Church (Chabot, 1899-1910, III, p. 480), a position he held until his death in 1199. His *Chronicle*, of which only one manuscript (dated Urfa, 1598) has survived, is subdivided into two or three columns—for secular history, ecclesiastical history, and anecdotes—and is written following Eusebius's framework; it aims at presenting the succession of empires, with much information concerning the history of Syria, Mesopotamia, and Iran—for instance, persecutions under the Sasanian king Ḳosrow II (10.7); the 6th-century wars between Romans and Persians (10.8; see [JUSTINIAN](#)); or the reign of the Turkmen in Persia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Khorasan (14.4 and 15.9-10). One of its interests lies in the use of now lost works, such as parts of Ya'qub of Edessa's (d. 708 CE) *Chronicle* (Chabot, 1899-1910, III, pp. 122, 452), or John of Kaisoum's ([d. 1171]) *Chronicle*, and it also refers to authors otherwise unknown. A translation into Armenian was made as early as 1248 (Langlois, 1868; Ghazikean, 1909; Tisserant, 1929, pp. 1716-17); another exists in Arabic (B.L., ms. Or. 4402), not yet studied (Coquin,



1993, p. 73; Graf, 1947, pp. 265-67, sec. 87).

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