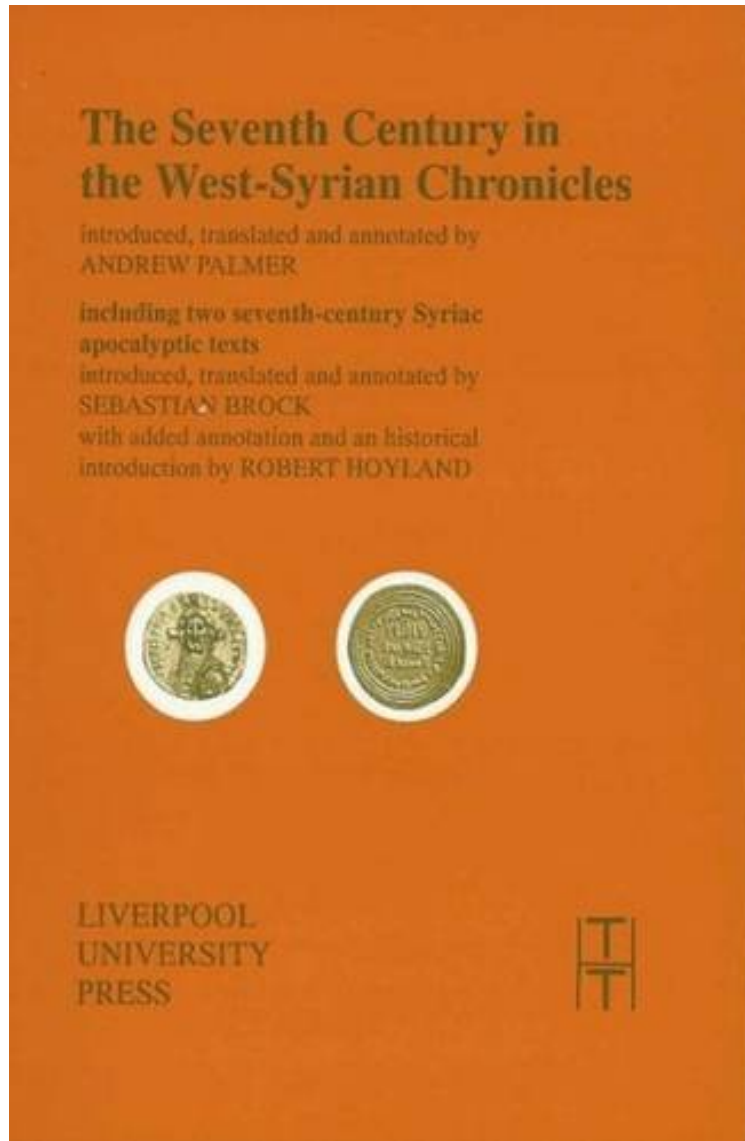


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The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles (Translated Texts for Historians LUP)

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From Liverpool University Press : The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles (Translated Texts for Historians LUP) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles (Translated Texts for Historians LUP):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Jacobite Explanation for the Rise of Islam and the Decline of

the Roman empire in the EastBy JasonLiverpool University Press has done fine service in making Medieval texts in Latin, Greek, Armenian, Syrian and other languages available to people who do not have the appropriate background. Andrew Palmer gives us a varied collection of chronicles from Syria during the seventh century. The work is divided into three sections. The first is a series of "minor" chronicles. These are mostly contemporary with events they describe. The second section is an extract from the Chronicle to 1234, which Palmer sees as the closest we have to the writer Dionysius of Tel Mahre. The last section are extracts to two apocalypses from the late seventh century. This book makes a nice companion to the Liverpool translation of Sebeos as well as other works like the Chronicle of Theophanes. The chronicles vary from bare lists of rulers to full textual accounts of events. Most are written by Jacobite churchmen, but one is a Melkite source and another comes from the Maronite church in Syria. All the texts are translated well and there are footnotes noting problems in the text. The translation of the Chronicle to 1234 includes parallel translations of Michael the Syrian in the footnotes, since both sources referenced Dionysius. I like the first section the best, since you get a lot of raw information on the seventh century. The second section has more of a Jacobite agenda behind it and tries to portray the Romans as sinners being justly punished for their Chalcedonian theology. The last section is fun to read and perhaps gives readers an insight into the mind of Romans and Syrians during the seventh century. The work is very well supported with maps, lists of rulers, and timelines. There is also a mini essay on the different systems of dating: indictions, Syrian year, Lunar year and so forth. I recommend this book for anyone interested in the history of the seventh century, whether from a Roman, Syrian or Muslim perspective.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A necessary work but a flawed oneBy David Reid RossThis book provides, as best I am aware, ALL the chronicles in Western Syria from Phocas up to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-Aziz. I would critique it thus: It ends several of its accounts arbitrarily, I am guessing at 100 AH / 720 AD; the words "Extract from" appear often in the table of contents. We do not see the chronicles extending to Yazid II and iconoclasm. In addition the typeface is ugly and hard to read. Most of this book is the "reconstruction" of Dionysius Telmahrensis; this is basically the 1234 Chronicle with footnotes from its parallels in other chronicles. I am glad to have it, but it is also hard to read. I cannot make head or tail of the James of Edessa fragment. Be warned that this book doesn't have John bar Penkaye or the Guidi Chronicle, and remember that this is the book for WEST Syria. It sits somewhat uneasily between the general overviews of such as Hoyland's "Seeing Islam" and a full translation of individual texts, like Harrak's of the Zuqin Chronicle. When I got it, it was cheap and available; based on the used-book prices I'm seeing, this seems no longer the case. As for its usefulness: yeah, you need it. It has the Maronite Chronicle, and the 1234, and the 819, and several other works not available easily elsewhere. I hope that Robert Hoyland (say) will drop by to overhaul this thing.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A gem of a collectionBy Paul StevensonThis book is one of the very helpful series "Translated Texts for Historians," published by Liverpool University Press. It brings together many chronicles and extracts from chronicles written in the Syriac language about the 7th century AD, that is, the century in which Islam emerged and rapidly spread throughout the Near East and North Africa. The translations and the introductions to individual texts were done by Andrew Palmer. A historical introduction and occasional historical comments throughout the book were done by Robert Hoyland. Two apocalypses, which finish out the collection, were translated and introduced by Sebastian Brock. The translations are very readable, and the introductions and notes provide useful information for understanding how these texts relate to the history they narrate and how, in many cases, they relate to each other. This book provides valuable insight into how Christians in the Near East viewed and reacted to the series of Arab incursions which eventually led to the establishment of the Muslim empire. From our perspective, we often do not realize that in AD 632 (the year of Muhammad's death), the Arabs did not know that their raids would actually lead to a viable empire, and the Byzantines and Persians (the superpowers of the time) had no idea that the annoying behavior of a group that they regarded as ragtag barbarians would actually produce a lasting polity. As awareness of this reality set in, Syriac Christians produced some small historical works that documented the events fairly close to the time they occurred. Later many of these documents were incorporated into larger histories written by men who could see the course that events had taken over the long term. In addition to histories, the desperate times (from the Christian perspective) produced a flood of apocalyptic literature, as many became convinced that the "end times" were upon them. This is the reason for the inclusion of the two apocalypses at the end of the book. There was a widespread expectation among the first generations under Islam that the Byzantine Empire would rebound and throw off the Muslim yoke. As time went by and it became clear that the Byzantine recovery was not imminent, hope began to move to the "Last Greek King" and an end-time release of twenty or so barbaric nations supposedly walled up somewhere in "the north" by Alexander the Great. It makes for fascinating reading and provides an interesting parallel to modern mythologies developed to deal with contemporary anxieties about the "end times."

The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles makes accessible to a wide public sources vital for the reconstruction of events in the first Islamic century, covering the period which ends with the unsuccessful Arab siege of Constantinople, an event which both modern historians and Syriac chronographers see as making a decisive caesura in history. The general introduction enables a newcomer to the field to establish his bearings before tackling the texts.

Language NotesText: English (translation)About the AuthorAndrew Palmer came down from Oxford in 1977 with a Double First in Classical Greats. He spent 1977-8 in Tur Abdin and Munich, preparing himself to write a thesis in the history of Syriac monasticism. With a D. Phil. from Oxford (1983), he went on to write *Monk and mason on the Tigris Frontier: The early history of Tur Abdin* (Cambridge 1990). Since then he has published more than a hundred articles on the history of Mesopotamia and on Syriac literature. In 2009, for example, in *L' historiographie syriaque*, ed. M. Debie [acute accent on the last {e}], appeared his 'Les chroniques breves [grave accent on the first {e}] syriaques', which expands on what he (and Robert Hoyland) wrote on the Syriac minor chronicles in *The seventh century in the West-Syrian chronicles* (1993). Recently he has specialized in editing and translating Syriac texts, including *The Life of Barsawmo the Northerner* and *Bishop Israel's chronicle of the Ottoman Genocide*. From January 2016 he will be employed at the Research Centre for Aramean Studies, University of Constance, to edit, translate and elucidate the *Universal Chronicle* by Gregorius Barhebraeus (died 1286).