Magundat-Anastasius, one of the last Christian martyrs in the Sasanian empire, was executed by order of the shah Chosroes II on 22 January 628. His biographer reports that the holy martyr at the time of his execution rendered thanks to God that his desire to suffer martyrdom for the sake of Christ was now fulfilled. The seeds of his wish to become a martyr for Christianity were, in fact, already sown before his baptism. After his desertion from the Persian army, Magundat found shelter with a Persian Christian goldsmith in Hierapolis (Mabbug). In this town he visited the Christian churches, where he saw the pictures of the holy martyrs, and, having been informed about the meaning of these representations, Magundat’s interest in these holy men was aroused. Later on, after having received baptism in Jerusalem and having entered the monastery of Anastasius to the north of the Holy City, Magundat, now called Anastasius, read the Lives of the holy martyrs of the Church and began secretly to cherish the desire to become likewise a martyr for

3 AL 38; Flusin, Saint Anastase I, pp. 82–5.
4 AL 8; Flusin, Saint Anastase I, pp. 48–9.
5 ... τὰς ἱστορίας τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων ἑώρα...; cf. Flusin, Saint Anastase II, p. 228, n. 45.
6 AL 9; Flusin, Saint Anastase I, pp. 50–51.
Christ. Just as this wish of Anastasius was realized, forms the subject of the account given by his biographer.

Just as Anastasius’ attention was drawn to the martyrs by looking at their pictures in the churches, and just as his wish for *imitatio* of their lives was kindled by reading their “written pictures” in the monastery, so the hagiographer by writing the *Life of Anastasius* is painting an icon of a holy man, a portrait of spiritual authority, in which the readers or auditors should recognize that the subject of this *Life* occupies a legitimate place in the choir of his holy predecessors.

The *Life of Anastasius*, written in Greek in the Chalcedonian monastic milieu of Palestine, not long after the saint’s death in 628, is not the only surviving representantative of the genre to date from the late Sasanian period. Also in the East Syrian milieu of Persia there were composed *Lives* of converts from Zoroastrianism who suffered martyrdom under Chosroes II. One of these works, the *Life of Mihr-Mah-Gushnasp-George*, is of paramount importance, since it forms a first-class source of information for one of the most crucial periods in the history of the East Syrian Church. Moreover, as compared with the other late Sasanian lives of the martyrs this *Life*...