Seeing Islam as Others Saw It

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Seeing Islam as Others Saw It

A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam

Robert G. Hoyland

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In Memory of My Father

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	*Analecta Bollandiana.*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift.*
CCSG	*Corpus christianorum, series graeca.* Turnhout, 1971–proceeding.
CE	*Coptic Encyclopaedia*, ed. A.S. Atiya. 8 vols. New York, 1991.
CSCO	*Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium.* Paris, Leuven, 1903–proceeding.
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers.*
EI[1]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. M.T. Houtsma et al. 4 vols. Leiden and London, 1913–34.
EI[2]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, ed. H.A.R. Gibb *et al.* Leiden and London, 1960–proceeding.
GOTR	*Greek Orthodox Theological Review.*
JA	*Journal asiatique.*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society.*
JE	*Jewish Encyclopaedia*, ed. I. Singer et al. 12 vols. New York, 1901–1906.
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies.*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies.*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review.*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.*
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam.*
JSS	*Journal of Semitic Studies.*
MGH	*Monumento Germaniae Historica*, ed. G.H. Pertz *et al.* Hannover and Berlin, 1826–proceeding.
OC	*Oriens Christianus.*
OCP	*Orientalia christiana periodica.*
PdO	*Parole de l'Orient.*
PG	*Patrologiae graecae cursus completus*, ed. J.-P. Migne. 161 vols. Paris, 1857–66.
PL	*Patrologiae Latinae cursus completus*, ed. J.-P. Migne. 221 vols. Paris, 1844–90.
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*, ed. R. Graffin and François Nau *et al.* Paris, 1907–proceeding.
REA	*Revue des études arméniennes.*
RHR	*Revue de l'histoire des religions.*
ROC	*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien.*
ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.*

PREFACE TO THE 2019 EDITION

The sad demise of Darwin Press gives me the opportunity to reflect on the changes in the field of early Islamic history since the first publication of my book *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* two decades ago and in anticipation of its reprinting by Gorgias Press. Some changes in a field would always be expected, but in this case there has been a wholesale transformation. When I approached Patricia Crone in 1990 to supervise a thesis on early Islam, she warned me that there was no interest in the subject and that it would hinder my chances of getting an academic job. Yet the shocking events of 9/11 in the US, plus the subsequent American-led invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the violent reaction of some Muslim groups to it, put a spotlight on Islam and especially on the question of whether it was innately, from its very beginnings, inimical to Western values of freedom and democracy. Suddenly the study of Islam's founder and foundations was in vogue. If the reasons for this upsurge in interest are depressing, the increased attention is welcome and has led to dramatic advances in numerous branches of this field. Whereas a second edition of a book might be a time to add a few new publications and highlight some subtle modifications of the original arguments, I can point to whole new avenues of research and major innovations.[1] This does, however, present me with a problem: there is no way that I can take account of all these developments nor list all the ways in which they have altered or corrected the picture that I presented in my book. I will, therefore, simply highlight the areas that have seen the greatest progress as regards analysis of sources and of historical themes, and I will end by commenting on two major shifts in perspective that affect the thesis of my book.

[1] Among these are numerous books that seek to present a more radically alternative account of the rise of Islam, mostly developing/reinterpreting ideas advanced in Crone and Cook (1977) or recycling the early medieval theory that Islam was a Christian offshoot; fascinating though they undoubtedly are, I do not have the space to discuss them here. See, in particular, Nevo and Koren 2003, Ohlig and Puin 2008, Gibson 2011, Shoemaker 2012, Ohlig 2013, Azzi 2005, Powers 2009.

SOURCES

The Qur'an

I did not accord a separate entry to the Qur'an in my survey of sources, assuming that, as the foundational text of Islam, one surely could not incorporate it into a study of non-Muslim writings. Yet in a sense it is a pre-Muslim text, that is, it was formulated before Islam entered the main centers of the Middle East and became exposed to ancient Near Eastern cultural traditions that shaped it into the Islam that we would recognize today. Or to put it in another way, the Qur'an is a late antique text. This realization, cogently argued by Angelika Neuwirth (2010), has given rise to a number of studies by scholars such as Gabriel Reynolds (2010 and 2018), Emran el-Badawi, (2013) and Holger Zellentin (2013) that have sought to put the Qur'an in dialogue with other late antique texts and that have yielded fascinating new perspectives on the world of this scripture and of those it portrays. This was argued for in a different vein by Christoph Luxenberg (2000), who sought to demonstrate that the Qur'an drew upon late antique Syriac liturgical literature, and Joseph Witztum (2011), who contends that the Biblical narratives mostly reached the Qur'an via the Syriac Christian tradition.

This world of the Qur'an was assumed to be one where a monotheist preacher, Muhammad, encountered a hard-core of pagan opponents addicted to their old gods. However, Gerald Hawting (1999) argued that the idolaters (*mushrikūn*) of the Qur'an were some sort of monotheists, since there they are presented as worshipping Allāh, the one god, though still remaining loyal to some of their former minor deities. This idea has been enthusiastically embraced by some scholars, including Patricia Crone, who published a series of brilliant articles (2016) trying to elaborate further the "theological landscape" of Muhammad's Arabia. If Hawting's thesis is accepted, it changes our perception of Islam's birthplace: from a pagan backwater isolated from the religious developments of the wider Middle East to an interconnected region participating in the religious revolution that saw Christianity, and to a lesser extent Judaism, spread across the Middle East in the fourth to sixth centuries.

In addition to these changes in perspective, there has been intense focus on the materiality of the Qur'an and its transmission: the manuscripts, scribal practices, variations in wording, and so on. This again has changed not just our understanding of details about the Qur'an, but of the development of the fledgling Muslim community. The earliest texts, especially a group of palimpsests, have been radiocarbon dated to the first half of the seventh century, which, if correct, means that Muhammad's followers had collected, edited and distributed the Qur'an quite shortly after his death, so evidently it was important to them from the very beginning. Moreover, variations in wording are minor and consistent, which suggests that transmission was written rather than oral and that there was a central authority able to exert some degree of control over the process. Contributors to our knowledge of the early transmission history of the Muslim scripture are numerous, but see, for example, Michael Cook (2004), François Deroche (2014), Behnam Sadeghi and Uwe Bergmann (2010), Alba Fideli (2011), Nicolai Sinai (2014) and Alain George (2011).

Papyri

Although Islamicists often bemoan the lack of sources from the first century or so of Muslim rule, we are lucky to have a considerable number of papyrus documents, issued by Muslims and non-Muslims, both within their own groups and to one another. Many are dated and the Arabic ones start already in 22 AH / AD 642. I did make use of papyri for some specific data, but I by no means exhausted their potential. Petra Sijpesteijn has done much to promote their value for historians, both in her own publications and research projects and in the part she played in the establishment of the International Society of Arabic Papyrology (2002), which has opened up a narrow specialism to a much wider audience. Papyri are particularly good for insights into the administrative processes of the early Islamic government, and Sijpesteijn's book on Egypt (2013) is a wonderful demonstration of this, as are a series of fascinating articles by Wadad al-Qadi (e.g. 2008). However, this is certainly not the limit of their worth and they have been successfully deployed to explore emotions (Reinfandt 2012), interactions between central and local power (Foss 2009–10, Papaconstantinou 2015), dispensation of justice (Tillier 2014), provincial and fiscal reorganization (Gascou 2013, Legendre 2014) and writing practices (Grob 2010). Moreover, many papyri remain unedited, and so there is reason to be very optimistic about their future contribution to early Islamic history.

Inscriptions

The driver of change in this arena has been the huge amount of material coming out of Saudi Arabia. Some is old material that now circulates more easily in a digital age, some is new material from the increased number of professional surveys by locals and foreigners that have resulted from Saudi's opening up in the last decade, and much has been generated by enthusiastic amateurs cruising around in four-wheel drives looking for epigraphic treasure. Whereas once this material was not published at all or only very slowly in hard-to-obtain books, now it is beamed instantaneously to the world via Whatsapp, Twitter and a variety of internet sites and forums. What to do with this substantial body of new texts is still being thought out, but it has already contributed to such topics as the rise and development of the Arabic language and script (Robin 2006, Nehmé 2010 and 2015, al-Jallad 2012), piety (Imbert 2011), continuity with the pre-Islamic period (Harjumäki and Lindstedt 2016), and warfare and identity (Lindstedt forthcoming).

Non-Muslim sources

There have not really been any major new discoveries of Christian, Jewish or Zoroastrian texts to augment the corpus that I compiled, but many new studies have appeared that have added to or modified the picture that I presented. In particular, there have been new editions and translations (e.g. Sebeos' *History* by Thomson and Howard-Johnston, the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* by al-Kaʿbi, the *Dispute of the Monk of Beth Hale* by David Taylor, Anastasius of Sinai's edifying stories by André Binggeli, the *Life* of Timothy of Kakhushta/the Stylite by Lamoreaux and Cairala), studies on texts in particular languages (Michael Penn on Syriac writings) and pertaining to particular genres (Christian Sahner on martyrologies, David Bertaina on disputations,

Muriel Debié on Syriac historiography), studies on individual authors (Pauline Allen on Sophronius, Peter Schadler on John of Damascus, Bas ter Haar Romeny on Jacob of Edessa, Thomas O'Loughlin on Adomnan/Arculf) and on individual texts (Philip Booth on John of Nikiu's *Chronicle*, Tim Greenwood on Lewond's *History*, Philip Wood on the *Chronicle of Siirt*), and analysis of supplementary materials (e.g. the project headed by Thomas Burman on new versions of the correspondence between 'Umar and Leo, including an Arabic recension published by Seonyoung Kim).

HISTORICAL THEMES

I consider below four of the themes treated in my book that I consider most important and that have developed substantially in the intervening two decades:

Islam and Late Antiquity

Already in 1971, Peter Brown had included Islam in late antiquity, discussing its rise in the last chapter of his book *The World of Late Antiquity*. Crone and Cook concurred, emphasizing in their preface to *Hagarism* that they took very seriously the fact that "the formation of Islamic civilization took place in the world of Late Antiquity". And I followed this lead, stressing that Islam "fitted well into the Late Antique mould" (pp. 15–16). This has continued to be the dominant approach, and many rich and fascinating studies have appeared that emphasize different ways in which Islam is understood as developing within a late antique context (e.g. Sizgorich 2004 and 2009, Morony 2004, Marsham 2011, Fowden 2004 and 2013, Van Bladel 2009, Azmeh 2014, Anthony 2014 and forthcoming). Also important are the volumes in the series in which my *Seeing Islam* appeared (Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam, Darwin Press, shortly to be taken up by Gorgias Press).

Clouding this picture, however, is the persistent specter of the Pirenne thesis: the idea that the Arab conquest was a rupture in the Mediterranean/Near Eastern world and that, in the realm of urban and mercantile life at least, it signaled the end of late antiquity. This debate has raged since the publication of Henri Pirenne's *Mahomet et Charlemagne* in 1939, though Michael McCormick's *Origins of the European Economy* (2001) did do much to demonstrate the continuity of trade and exchange between Europe and the Middle East throughout the early Islamic period. Yet in many ways the issue is not so much whether Pirenne was right or not, but rather whether the framing of the debate is appropriate or not. It is perhaps too binary, too focused on the two blocks of Europe and the Arab world as fixed constants, whereas it might be better to think more in terms of regional variety and difference (applying the vision of Nicolas Purcell and Peregrine Horden's *Corrupting Sea*, which saw the Mediterranean world as a series of connected but discrete micro-regions, to the whole of western Eurasia). There have been some excellent studies on specific areas of the early Islamic world, such as Corisande Fenwick (2013) on northwest Africa, Alan Walmsley (2007) on Syria, Alison Vacca (2017) on the Caucasus, and Khodadad Rezakhani (2010) on Iran/Central Asia.

Muslim/non-Muslim relations

In reaction to rising tensions between Western and Islamic societies, in the wake of the American-led war on terror, there has been greater focus on Muslim attitudes to and relations with non-Muslims, especially in the present, but also in the past. The most impressive academic testimony to this development is the monumental project run by David Thomas and entitled *Christian-Muslim Relations: a Bibliographical History* (2009–) which provides a comprehensive list, with brief description, of texts that shed light on Muslim-Christian interaction, both physical and intellectual, from the seventh to the early twentieth century. There have also been a considerable number of works published on various aspects of this theme, in particular the socio-legal relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims (Friedmann 2003, Levy-Rubin 2011, Simonsohn 2011, Tillier 2017), the socio-religious relations (Griffith 2008, Thomas 2003), the phenomenon of conversion (Simonsohn 2013, Papaconstantinou 2015, Chrysostomides 2018) and theological debates (Griffith 2002, Bertaina 2011). Moreover, an interesting sub-theme has emerged, that of Abrahamic studies (Silverstein 2015), which seeks to find the common ground between the three Abrahamic offshoots, as is overtly signaled by the title of the new Cambridge chair held by Garth Fowden: Professor of "Abrahamic Faiths and Shared Values". There has been dramatically less attention paid to Muslim dealings with Zoroastrians, but the study of Andrew Magnusson (2014) provides an excellent foundation and for the pre-Islamic Iranian context we have now the insightful work of Richard Payne (2016).

Identity

Identity became a hot topic in lots of fields after the collapse of the Soviet Union lifted the lid on a whole host of minor groups that seemed to have retained a distinctive identity despite decades of Soviet rule. It took a while to become fashionable in Islamic studies, but is now being debated from a number of different perspectives. Fred Donner (2012) and Peter Webb (2016) have questioned whether we can simply define the Arabian conquerors as Arab and/or Muslim. The former has argued that Muhammad's community initially defined itself primarily in religious terms, as "believers", and did not think of itself as distinct from Jews and Christians; the disassociation from the latter and adoption of a distinctive identity, as "Muslims", only came towards the end of the seventh century. Webb's theory complements Donner's, postulating that the evolution of an Arab ethnic identity only began in the second half of the seventh century and did not develop out of a pre-Islamic Arab identity. Both theories have strong advocates and opponents, so the matter is far from settled, but the debate that they have provoked has been welcome and productive (Hoyland 2017). Although the nature of Muslim and Arab identity grabs the limelight, other identities of the early medieval Middle East have attracted some attention, such as Eastern Christian (Romeny 2009, Awad 2018), Persian/Iranian (Agha 2003) and Central Asian (de la Vaissière 2007, Karev 2015). And in particular it is starting to be realized that the rise of Islamic civilization did not only result in the shaping of a new Arab and Muslim identity, but led to a reworking

of identities of those who now found themselves living within it (e.g. Kennedy 2009, Savant 2013 and Savran 2017 on aspects of Iranian Muslim identity).

Transmission of knowledge

Within this big and unwieldy subject, there have been a number of key growth areas. First, the transmission of late antique scientific knowledge to the burgeoning Islamic state, especially once it was based in Iraq, has received exceptional attention, at least in part because it provides a 'good news' story of how the Muslims preserved and supplemented ancient science and subsequently passed it on to medieval Europe, stimulating its renaissance. The focus has chiefly been on the Greek input (Gutas 1998), but the Syriac (Tannous 2018), Persian and Sanskrit contributions (Van Bladel 2012 and 2015) have also received some attention. Second, there is the transmission of legal-theological knowledge, and here the main issue at stake is how material was passed from Muhammad and his companions to the compilers of the earliest extant law-books and religious treatises of the early ninth century and the degree of transformation and deformity that it suffered in the process (e.g. Shoemaker 2011 v Görke/Motzki/Schoeler 2012, Gledhill 2012 and Scott Lucas 2008). Third, the transmission of historical knowledge has been substantially investigated; despite much wailing and gnashing of teeth on the part of historians at the relative paucity of such knowledge for the Middle East in the period 630–780 (which was the reason I picked those dates), some fruitful detective work has been carried out with the aim of ascertaining what material was recorded, how it was passed on, to what degree it was reshaped, and so on (e.g. Donner 1998, el-Hibri 1999, Elad 2003, Borrut 2010, Hoyland 2011 and 2018, Scheiner 2012, Conterno 2014, Zychowicz-Coghill 2017).

CONCLUSION

There are numerous minor corrections to my book that I would now make if I had the time and space, but I will end by noting two shifts in perspective that I would in hindsight have adopted or at least explored. Firstly, although in my *Seeing Islam* I tried "to bring out the parallels and similarities between the reports of Muslim and non-Muslim witnesses" (p. 591), I did nevertheless make a strong distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim sources, influenced by Crone and Cook's assertion that it was possible to "step outside" the Muslim tradition (1977, p. 3). I now feel that this is not really an option, as the writings of the different confessional groups were much more interconnected than had previously been thought, if only by virtue of the fact that their authors lived in close proximity to one another and not in ghettos. This was alluded to by Lawrence Conrad long ago (1990, pp. 42–44, and 1992, p. 399), and was expanded upon more recently by Antoine Borrut (2010, pp. 137–66), and I have since incorporated it into my subsequent publications, notably in *In God's Path* (2015, pp. 2–3), where I maintained that "the division (between Muslim and non-Muslim sources) is a false one. Muslims and non-Muslims inhabited the same world, interacted with one another and even read one another's writings" and decided simply to distinguish between earlier and later sources, favoring "the former over the latter irrespective of the religious affiliation of their author".

Secondly, there has been something of a pushback against qualifying the culture and politics of the seventh to ninth-century Middle East as "Islamic", since the Muslims, though the rulers, would have been quite a small minority in demographic terms, and so the Middle East was still a world of Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews and other non-Muslim groups, and in any case Islamic civilization took time to crystallize. This is of course obvious: the distinctive features of a new world order only gain shape and dominance over centuries and large-scale conversion is a slow process – in some regions Muslims only became a majority in the late middle ages. Yet it is true that the implications of this have not really been elaborated into a different approach to writing about what we might more neutrally call the 'early medieval Middle East'. I certainly highlighted the role of non-Muslims in my *Seeing Islam*, but because I was interested in them as witnesses to Islamic history; I did not fully portray them as actors in that history. What is perhaps needed is a more integrative approach, one that takes account of all the different participants in the making of a new civilization in the Middle East from the seventh to the ninth century, for non-Muslims were not only affected by the actions of the new rulers but also had an effect upon the policies of these rulers and contributed materially and intellectually to the religious and cultural transformation of the region. One could achieve this in many ways, by highlighting that this was a "shared world" (Tannous 2018, parts III–IV) or by treating it as an "imperial society" (Weitz 2018, 'Intro'), which, as we know from other empires, tend to be melting pots of peoples, the new rulers drawing on talent from all sectors of their territories without much discrimination. As a somewhat cynical contemporary observer of the Mongol regime put it: "Everyone who approaches the Mongols and offers them any of the mammon of the world, they accept it from him, and they entrust to him whatsoever office he seeks… All they demand is strenuous service and submission" (Morgan 1982, p. 124). The striking thing about the faith of the seventh-century Arabian conquerors was that it did not (overtly anyway) favor or bar any one social group and did not enshrine any hierarchy, making it easy to join and a means by which very diverse peoples could coalesce and coexist (Hoyland 2015, pp. 162–64, 228–29). The label: the 'early medieval Middle East' is unlikely to replace 'early Islam', but we should at least bear in mind that this was a land of stunning diversity, not just in terms of religion, but also in ethnic and linguistic terms, and strive to factor this into our historical narratives.

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{xvii} Many of the authors who feature in this book begin their work by bemoaning the enormity of the task that lay before them and protesting the extent of their own inadequacy. This plea of *mea parvitas* was of course a literary device, which served to forestall accusations of audacity and to aggrandise the subject being treated, but it might also reflect, as is certainly the case here, genuine reservations. Ps.-Joshua the Stylite, when embarking upon his *Chronicle*, had felt "like a man who, not knowing how to swim well, is ordered to go down into deep waters," but was "saved from drowning and drawn forth from the sea" by the prayers of his patron. I have been equally fortunate, rescued from excessive error and confusion by the unstinting generosity and kindness of a number of experts in their fields whom I have continually plagued for information and advice: Sebastian Brock (Syriac), Sidney Griffith (Christian Arabic), James Howard-Johnston and Cyril Mango (Byzantine history and Greek) and Robert Thomson (Armenian). While I was at Princeton University in 1990–91, as a Jane Eliza Proctor visiting fellow and Fulbright scholar, Peter Brown, Michael Cook and Avrom Udovitch afforded me both sure guidance and a warm welcome. And while at Groningen University in 1992, as an Erasmus scholar, Han Drijvers and Gerrit Reinink availed me without demur of their erudition and hospitality. Though in a more intangible way, equally beneficial were the many enjoyable evenings I spent in the learned and provocative company of Peter O'Brien, Shaun Haselhurst and Thierry Labica.

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Robert G. Hoyland
20 June 1997

INTRODUCTION

{1} This book begins its study as the last great war of Antiquity draws to a close. After an epic campaign, the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (610–41) had resoundingly defeated the Persian army that had only two years earlier been poised to capture his empire's heart, Constantinople itself. But in victory he showed himself generous and extended the hand of friendship to the new Persian emperor, who gratefully accepted and expressed his intention "to live in peace and love with you, the emperor of the Byzantines and our brother, and with the Byzantine state." Heraclius returned in triumph to the capital, whose inhabitants "with unrestrained eagerness went out to meet him…, holding olive branches and lights and acclaiming him with tears of joy." One and a half centuries later, at the end of the period treated by this book, a very different image is presented to us. It is of the Arab caliph Mahdī (775–85), ruler of all the lands formerly held by the Persians and much of those once possessed by the Byzantines, riding out from his capital Baghdad, probably the world's greatest city of that time, accompanied by his guards, baggage train, eunuchs and money. On the way he passed by the home of a former Umayyad general near Raqqa and was informed that this man had once shown himself magnanimous to the present caliph's grandfather. Immediately Mahdī summoned the descendants and dependents of this Umayyad and "ordered that 20,000 dinars be given them and that they receive regular allowances." He then proceeded to Aleppo, where he was met by the Christian Arab tribe of Tanūkh, all richly attired and mounted on fine horses. Angered to find that there were still Arabs who were not Muslim, he demanded their conversion and "about 5000 men apostatised."[1]

{2} This, then, is an era which witnessed phenomenal transformations: the end of the 1100-year-long power struggle between the Greco-Roman and Persian empires, the emergence of a new politico-religious entity that realised the dream of Cyrus the Mede and Alexander the Great of uniting the vast region from the western Mediterranean to the Indus, and "the transition from a definably Late Antique world to a Medieval one."[2] Yet it is an era that we do not understand very well. The reason for this is primarily the problematic nature of the literary source material.

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[1] *Chron. paschale*, 736, and Theophanes, 328 (Heraclius); Ṭabarī, 3.494–95 (AH 163/780), and Michael the Syrian 12.I, 478–79/1 (Mahdī).

[2] Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 133.

Byzantinists find themselves faced with a plethora of religious compositions and a dearth of history writing,[3] Judaicists and Persianists suffer a scarcity of texts of any kind,[4] and Islamicists, who once rejoiced that their subject "was born in the full light of history," have recently been discovering just how much apparent history is religio-legal polemic in disguise, some even doubting whether the host of Arabic historical works that appear in the late eighth and early ninth centuries contain any genuine recollection of the rise and early growth of Islam.[5]

One way out of this predicament would be for scholars of each discipline to become better acquainted with each other's source materials. Precisely this point was made to Islamicists more than four decades ago by the French historian Claude Cahen, who was thereby able to paint a picture of eighth-century Mesopotamia quite unlike that given by Muslim authors. Almost two decades ago Patricia Crone and Michael Cook followed his advice in their reconstruction of the rise of Islam, which they attempted to write on the basis of testimony external to **{3}** the Islamic tradition.[6] Yet, with a few notable exceptions,[7] this line of inquiry has not been pursued. This is unfortunate because, as has recently been reiterated, "all of the communities of the Middle East participated in the political, social and intellectual consequences of Arab political hegemony."[8] And surely if one wishes to gain a proper understanding of the events and developments of this age, one must elicit the opinions of all those who participated in them, for each group will offer insights and perspectives not to be found among others. It is this belief and the example of the aforementioned scholars that have inspired this book. Its ultimate aim is to elucidate and ex-

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[3] Though a historical narrativist might wince at this distinction, it is patently simpler to extract a framework of events from a chronicle than from a sermon or the like. As regards cultural history, however, religious texts can be informative, but those reared on Thucydides, Tacitus and Procopius have inevitably found them somewhat unpalateable. See Cameron, "New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature;" *eadem*, "Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages."

[4] See Chapter 7 below for discussion.

[5] The quotation is from Renan, "Mahomet et les origines de l'Islamisme," 1065. Doubts about this were already voiced by Goldziher and Lammens; more recently see Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 3–17, and Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu* (e.g. 49: "specifically, Islamic literature first appeared in Mesopotamia at the end of the second/eighth century").

[6] Cahen, "Fiscalité, propriété, antagonismes sociaux en Haute-Mésopotamie;" Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*. Earlier scholars such as Caetani, de Goeje and Wellhausen had attempted to make use of non-Muslim writings (see under their names in Bibliography II below), but many were not then available to them and they were in any case mostly only interested in historical sources proper (chronicles and histories).

[7] In particular, see under Conrad and Morony in Bibliography II below. And further inter-disciplinary studies will emerge in the series in which this book appears.

[8] Calder, *Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, 244. This is especially important to bear in mind for the seventh and eighth centuries, when the Muslims would have been very much a minority group in the Middle East.

pand what constitutes Islamic history, but since I will chiefly be drawing upon the writings of Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians,[9] many insights into the life of these communities will, I hope, be gained along the way.[10]

{4} The book's strategy is four-pronged. Part I will highlight some of the similarities between the Muslims and the various conquered peoples as regards the situations they faced and the literature they produced. I do not mean thereby to minimise the differences; they are very real and substantial, but this receives attention enough. That all parties mostly faced the same physical constraints, frequently encountered the same problems, were influenced and shaped by like forces and ideas – in short, lived in the same world – is too often forgotten. The sharp line that is usually drawn between Muslim and non-Muslim sources will be shown rather to be somewhat blurred on closer inspection.

Part II provides a survey of non-Muslim writings that have some pertinence to early Islamic history.[11] The criteria for inclusion have been that they were composed in or contain material relevant to the period 630–780, *and* convey information about Islam or its adherents. The starting date of 630 is dictated by the emergence of Islam on the Middle Eastern stage. The deadline of 780 is approximate and represents the point at which Islam had come to exhibit a degree of confidence about its orientation and self-definition.[12] A second reason for choosing these particular bounda-

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[9] I have used this term, though based on an ancient misunderstanding of the name Zarathustra, to designate the adherents of the religion initiated by this Iranian prophet, simply because it is the most widely used in scholarship. They would commonly refer to themselves as worshippers of Ahuramazda (Mazdayasna/Mazdaean), and usually be referred to by outsiders as Magians (from Old Persian *magu*, "priest").

[10] The lands which the Muslims had appropriated were possessed of very ancient cultural traditions and harboured groups of very varied identities and beliefs. And it is clear from the proclamations of various opposition movements of early Muslim times that many ideologies of an earlier age still survived, even if in etiolated form. But the parties which originally espoused them had mostly fallen silent in our period, and it is on the four principal confessional groups – Muslims, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians – that this book is obliged to concentrate (for pagan and gnostic survivals in Iraq see Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 384–430, and the articles of Tucker on late Umayyad rebels listed in Bibliography II below; for the possibility/nature of such survivals in Syria and Asia Minor see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 327–37).

[11] The only major omission that I am aware of is Christian Arab poetry. After deliberation, however, I decided that this material could not be treated separately from the rest of Arab poetry for the period under review here, and that it merited far greater consideration than could be given in a single entry in this book.

[12] It has of course continued to change and develop up until the present day, but by the end of the eighth century a number of the features were in place that would direct and shape this subsequent evolution. Thus by the 780s foundational studies had already been completed on the biography of the Prophet (by Ibn Isḥāq, d. 767), Qur'an commentary (by Muqātil ibn Sulaymān, d. 767), jurisprudence (by Abū Ḥanīfa, d. 767, and Mālik ibn Anas, d. 795),

ries is that they demarcate a time of particularly grave historiographical difficulties:[13] what Cyril Mango has referred to as the "great gap" in Greek historiography,[14] and the **{5}** period for which physical evidence of Muslim literary texts is mostly lacking.[15]

The benefit to Islamicists of this survey will be that it brings together in one place a large corpus of material that is otherwise dispersed over a myriad of publications often difficult of access, and furnishes them with an assessment of its constituents. For the students of Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism in this period there will be an advantage in seeing one another's texts and having them commented upon from an Islamicist's perspective. I have striven to present them as much as possible in their historical and literary context, as well as to consider the more basic questions of date, authorship and authenticity. Otherwise I have simply followed where the texts and their secondary literature have led me; their very diverse nature and the unequal attention accorded them have meant that I was often taken in unexpected directions, which explains the apparently idiosyncratic character of some of the items. The general background and up-to-date bibliographical references are furnished so that individual entries might serve as a springboard to further research in other directions.[16] The two sections of the survey represent the division between those authors for whom mention of Islam or its adherents was central to their purpose (II.B) and those for whom it was merely incidental (II.A). The distinction has its blurred edges, but it is real, and its application yields some interesting insights which will be taken up later.[17]

Part III takes up the question of how one might make use of all these non-Muslim writings to elucidate early Islamic history. It is pointed out that one must first understand the prejudices and theoretical structures that underlie their comments on the emergence of Islam (Chapter 12). Then two different ways of tackling the question are attempted. Chapter 13 adopts an empirical approach: three issues are selected upon which there is disagreement or indifference in the secondary literature, **{6}** then non-Muslim sources are adduced along with archaeological and

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ḥadīth codification (e.g. by ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAwn, d. 768, and Maʿmar ibn Rāshid, d. 770), pre-Islamic poetry (by Ḥammād al-Rāwiya, d. 772) and grammar (by Sībawayh, d. 793).

[13] Cf. Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu*, 99: "Both the quantity and quality of source materials would seem to support the proposition that the elaboration of Islam was not contemporary with but posterior to the Arab occupation of the Fertile Crescent and beyond. To account for the intervening 150 years or so would thus be the task set by historians."

[14] Mango, "The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography," 360.

[15] The earliest literary papyrus fragments are of the mid to late eighth century (*Khirbat al-Mird Papyri*, nos. 71–73; Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri I*, nos. 2, 5–6). The earliest dated literary papyrus is of AH 229/844 (Khoury, "L'importance d'Ibn Lahīʿa et de son papyrus," 11–12).

[16] TO keep manageable what is still a sizeable bibliography, I often cite only the most recent or most useful secondary literature.

[17] See the end of Chapter 2.

Muslim testimony to see whether this will help to shed new light on the problem. Chapter 14 takes a more argumentative approach and tries to outline a procedure for determining when and how one can use non-Muslim sources, as well as providing concluding remarks.

Whereas the survey in Part II presents material which, though often obscure, is already published and to some extent already deployed by historians, Part IV contains six excurses that introduce material hitherto unpublished or untranslated or neglected. Four of these are by myself and two by more qualified scholars. Evidently there remains much more work to be done, and it is hoped that these studies, and the book as a whole, will encourage others to carry on this task and will make their job slightly easier.

NOTE ON CONVENTIONS

References to primary and secondary literature in the footnotes have been abbreviated throughout; they are given in full in Bibliographies I and II respectively. Those wishing to know what editions are being used in this book should peruse the relevant section in Bibliography I before beginning their reading. Secondary literature is cited in the footnotes in chronological order, from the oldest to the most recent publication. As regards primary literature, if a publication includes an edition and translation of a text, the page number of the translation will only be given (after a "/") when this is not indicated in the publication. References to popular alternative editions are given in brackets after the edition used, prefixed by an "=" sign. Full references to translations and editions, whether cited or not, are given in Bibliography I. In references to primary sources: § = paragraph, Roman numerals are used for chapter numbers, otherwise Arabic numerals are employed throughout.

Translations are frequently my own (especially when from Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin or Syriac), not because I think I can improve upon the work of others, but because I wish the translation always to be as close to the text as is stylistically possible. If a published translation has been cited, I will indicate this with the abbreviation "tr." and place this with the author's name in brackets after the reference to **{7}** the edition. In quotations: [ ] is used to indicate word (s) added for clarity but implicit in the sense; ( ) is used to indicate word (s) given in explanation and also to indicate word (s) in the original language.

Transliteration has been effected in the manner most natural to the English speaker. There has been an attempt to maintain consistency both within languages and, to some degree, across languages, but the need to respect long-established practices and conventions has made some inconsistencies inevitable. Middle Persian has been represented in its Sasanian form, save certain personal names usually known by their New Persian rendering. For ease of reading and on the advice of a number of experts, proper nouns are given without macrons, except for Arabic personal names, where their presence is mostly deemed requisite.

Dates refer to the years after Christ (AD) unless otherwise specified, simply because this provides a neutral dating aside from the numerous calendars existing in the Middle East during the period under study. A Hijri year, indicated by AH (*anno Hegirae*), will be equated to a single year AD when most of it falls within that single

year (e.g. AH 15 = 14 February 636–1 February 637, so AH 15/636; but AH 32 = 12 August 652–1 August 653, so AH 32/652–53), unless I wish to be exact. Seleucid years, indicated by AG (*anno Graecorum*), follow the Julian calendar and run from 1 October to 30 September, so again, unless I want to be exact, I will equate them to a single year AD (the part from 1 January to 30 September).[18] I have also occasionally used the Year of the World, indicated by AM (*annus mundi*), which counts from Creation.

[18] To convert an AG date into an AD date, simply subtract 312 and count twelve Julian months forward from 1 October; e.g. AG 933 = 1 October 621–30 September 622.

Part I.
The Historical and Literary Background

CHAPTER 1.
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND[1]

{11} One of the most significant aspects of early Muslim rule was, as noted by the north Mesopotamian monk John bar Penkaye in the 680s, that "there was no distinction between pagan and Christian, the believer was not known from a Jew."[2] This initial indifference of the Muslims to divisions among the peoples whom they conquered, when compounded with the flight and enslavement of an appreciable proportion of the population and with the elimination of internal borders across a huge area extending from northwest Africa to India, meant that there was considerable human interaction across social, ethnic and religious lines.[3] This was especially true for those who sought employment in **{12}** the bustling cosmopolitan garrison cities of the new rulers, where one was exposed to contact with men of very diverse origin, creed and status. In addition, there were the widespread phenomena of conversion and apostasy, of inter-confessional marriage and festival attendance, of commercial contacts and public debate, all of which promoted the circulation of ideas and information.[4] It is, therefore, particularly important for the study of the

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[2] John bar Penkaye, 151/179.

[3] Compare again *ibid*, 147/175: "Their robber bands went annually to distant parts and to the islands, bringing back captives from all the peoples under the heavens." Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat.*, C5, gives us an example of Jewish and Christian prisoners-of-war performing forced labour together at Clysma in Sinai. The removal of borders also permitted the free flow of natural and manufactured artefacts (see Watson, *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World*, and its assessment by Crone, "Review").

[4] On conversion and apostasy see the introduction to Chapter 9 below. The fact of inter-confessional fraternisation may be deduced from the frequent condemnation of its various forms by religious leaders (see the entries on "Athanasius of Balad," "Jacob of Edessa" and "George I" in Chapters 4–5 below for some examples). On public debates see the comment in the introduction to Chapter 2 below. Two likely places of exchange were the public baths (Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry*, 56, notes that the Quinisext Council of 692 forbade Christans to bathe with Jews; Emed i Ashawahishtan, *Rivāyat*, no. 19, bans Zoroastrians from frequenting Muslim baths) and the tavern (see *Synodicon orientale*, 225: canon against Christians who go after mass to Jewish taverns; Kennedy, "Abū Nuwās, Samuel and Levi:"

seventh and eighth-century Middle East that one's approach be equally promiscuous, even if one's interest is in a specific community. By way of example, this chapter will comment briefly upon three issues that are of general import for the history of this time and place.

LATE ANTIQUITY TO EARLY ISLAM: CONTINUITY OR CHANGE?

Since the Arab occupation of the Middle East that began *ca.* 640 proved to be permanent, this date is usually taken to mark a turning point in the history of this region and its peoples. To the degree that domination by a different ethnic group and the emergence of a new religious tradition must have had notable repercussions, this periodisation does have some validity. But it also begs a number of questions. For example, to what extent might these events have consolidated, rather than reversed, processes already under way? Also, did these events have immediate consequences, and if so were they merely superficial – such as the replacement of elites – or infrastructural – such as institutional innovations? These questions acquire a particular significance in the case of Islam, since in the three or four centuries preceding its appearance, a **{13}** period now usually referred to as Late Antiquity, the world it was to inherit had already been subject to major upheaval and transformation.[5]

In the first place, the loose territorial empires of the Romans and Parthians had given way to the integrated ecumenical empires of the Byzantines and Sasanians.[6] Their close proximity, the result of Rome's shift to the east in the second century, and the assertiveness of the Sasanians, compared to their complacent predecessors, led to confrontation. Inevitably, such emulation between states of similar standing engendered large-scale political, social and cultural change. Both moved towards greater administrative centralisation and absolutist government, to the detriment of civic autonomy in the West and of the provincial nobility in the East. Byzantium would seem to have had the upper hand initially, at least in terms of wealth and centralisation, and so the Sasanian emperors embarked upon a vigorous campaign of Byzantinisation, actively setting out to acquire the money, skills and ideas of their rival. This they did by extortion as much as by imitation, using their formidable mili-

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discussion of the famous poet's conversation with two Jewish taverners; Manushchihr, *Dādistān ī dēnīg*, no. 49, permits Zoroastrians to sell wine to non-believers).

[5] On the Byzantine side see especially Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, and Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*. For Sasanid Iran the standard work is still Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*. For an overview of both sides see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 41–70; Garsoïan, "Byzantium and the Sasanians;" Howard-Johnston, "The Two Great Powers in Late Antiquity."

[6] On "the Roman territorial empire" and "the Christian *ecumene*" and the advantages of the latter over the former see Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, 250–340 (esp. 306–307). For simplicity I shall in this book use the term Byzantine to designate that empire which had its capital at Constantinople (330–1453), though the reader should bear in mind that some scholars prefer the term Late Roman for at least the fourth and fifth centuries and that the citizens of this empire always styled themselves as Romans.

tary capacity or the threat of it to extract material, human and intellectual resources.[7] Further, both empires engaged in a scramble for influence, striving to win peripheral peoples over to their side. Thus the peoples of Ethiopia and southern Arabia and the Arabs **{14}** of the Syrian steppe and northern Arabia were all actively courted for their allegiance and support.[8]

In the second place, the ruling elites no longer remained indifferent to the beliefs of the masses. Indeed, the emperors of both realms, now sharing their creed with the majority of their subjects, evinced an interest in the promotion of religious uniformity within their lands, achieving this via a hierarchically organised clergy.[9] As religion and politics became ever more closely related, warfare assumed an increasingly religious character and religious difference frequently became equated with political dissidence, the result being persecutions. This drive towards greater integration and conformity provoked those jealous of their own independence to establish a certain distance between themselves and imperial culture. The result was heresy in the Byzantine sphere[10] and self-administering religious communities under the Sasa-

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[7] Cf. Hall, *Powers and Liberties*, 139, 141 ("The invasion of Italy by the French in the late fifteenth century spread the styles of the Italian Renaissance around Europe, and thereafter rivalry and status-seeking ensured that what was fashionable elsewhere had to be copied at home. This emulation was not confined to artistic matters…. War in European history served as a source of progress"). Likewise, Iran took over from Byzantium mosaics and building techniques, baths, medicine, philosophy and astronomy, as well as tribute and captives.

[8] Smith, "Events in Arabia in the 6th Century A.D."

[9] Zoroastrianism was closer to Judaism than Christianity in that it was chiefly the religion of a nation and had little sensitivity to the problem of the clash between orthodoxy and heresy that so affected Christianity. It was, therefore, more tolerant than the latter in the face of religious difference. The Sasanian emperors did, however, urge some conformity (enacting calendrical and liturgical reforms, outlawing images in favour of sacred fires), suppressed overt dissent (e.g. Mazdakism), were usually hostile to missionary efforts by Christians and occasionally struck a more universalist note (e.g. Shapur II asks a Christian martyr: "What god is better than Ahuramazda? Which one is stronger than Ahreman? What sensible human being does not worship the sun?" – cited by Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation*, 91).

[10] For Eastern Christians the question of orthodoxy/heresy mostly turned on the problem of Christ's nature. The Monophysites (Copts in Egypt, Jacobites in Syria) wished not to dilute the divinity of Christ and so insisted on one divine nature, the human and divine elements having fused at the incarnation. The Nestorians, found chiefly in Iraq and Persia, wanted to hold on to the very comforting fact that Christ had become a man like us and to avoid saying that God had suffered and died, and so stressed two distinct natures, a human and a divine. Trying desperately to eschew the two extremes of denial of Christ's humanity and dualism, the Chalcedonians or Melkites, who represented the imperial position, postulated two natures, united but distinct. Though important in their own right, these confessional divisions were also bound up with regional, ethnic and linguistic affiliations. General intro-

nians. But – and this is perhaps the most distinctive feature of Late Antiquity **{15}** – religion pervaded not only political life, but almost every aspect of existence. This can be seen most clearly in the redefinition of the Classical World brought about primarily through the agency of Christianity.[11] Bishops replaced councillors in caring for the welfare of a city's inhabitants, churches and shrines overtook theatres and temples as the centres of communal life, monks and ascetics became the new heroes of the people, hagiographies and miracle stories dislodged secular writings as the most popular choice of literature, and icons and crosses triumphed as symbols of divine protection.[12]

Seen against this background, it becomes evident that Islam did not, initially at least, "seal the end of Late Antiquity,"[13] but rather continued many of its salient features. The expansionist aims of Justinian, Khusrau II and other Late Antique emperors were pursued with alacrity by the youthful Muslim state. And it was in the latter that Late Antiquity's twins, religion and politics, achieved full union. The Sasanian solution to religious difference, the formation of independent religious communities, was institutionalised in Islam, such communities being designated "people of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*) and being expected to live by laws deriving from their own scriptures.[14] Moreover, Islam, though distinctive in many ways, fitted well into the Late **{16}** Antique mould, being all-pervasive, zealously assertive of its God's

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ductions are given by Atiya, *Eastern Christianity*, and Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought*.

[11] Two recent and very readable studies illustrating some aspects of this transformation are Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity*, esp. 118–58, and Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*.

[12] The spread of Manichaeism and Zurvanism, reforms in Zoroastrian worship and the proliferation of visions of the hereafter all suggest that religion may have played an enhanced role in the Sasanian realm, but this still requires documentation. See Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 101–44, and esp. Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation*.

[13] Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 134, invoking Pirenne. The continuation of Late Antique ideas into Islam was pointed out long ago by Becker, *Islamstudien*, 1.201 ("Der Islam… ist die Weiterbildung und Konservierung des christlich-antiken Hellenismus… Es wird eine Zeit kommen, in der man rückwartsschauend aus der islamischen Tradition heraus den späten Hellenismus wird verstehen lernen"). It is so far non-Islamicists who have begun to recognise this; e.g. Bowersock, *Hellenism in Late Antiquity*, 71–82 (Hellenism and Islam); Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, esp. 138–68 (boldly argues that Islam is the consummation of Late Antiquity by virtue of its achievement of politico-cultural universalism).

[14] The phrase "people of the Book" is found scattered throughout the Qur'an, meaning those possessing a scripture (though seeming primarily to intend Jews and Christians). For hints that the Muslims did from an early date expect their subjects to live according to their Books, see the entries on "Isho'bokht of Fars" and "Patriarch John I" in Chapters 5 and 11 below respectively.

omnipotence,[15] concerned with the hereafter and confident that the gap between heaven and earth could be bridged by people with special gifts and at places of special significance.[16]

But if it is in some measure true that Late Antiquity and Early Islam lay on a continuum, there were nevertheless enough new elements in the latter to determine that it would gradually depart from the former, finally assuming the guise of Medieval or Classical Islam. But what were the junctures along this road? Where, if one were compelled to periodise, would one place the signposts to mark the way? The first indications of the distinctiveness of Early Islam were manifested at the turn of the eighth century in the reigns of the caliphs 'Abd al-Malik (685–705) and Walīd (705–15): aniconic coins, inscriptions condemning Christianity's Trinitarian stance, mosques laid out to uniform specifications, administrative documents all drafted in Arabic and residential estates poised on the desert fringes.[17] The transfer of the seat of government to Iraq by the Abbasid dynasty in the mid-eighth century was actually accompanied by a certain efflorescence of Late Antique forms of life. The presence there of large numbers of willing bureaucrats in the Sasanian mould led to an expansion and centralisation of the administration and cultivation of court manners and etiquette after the fashion of the Khusraus. No more than a stone's throw away from the old Sasanian capital, the caliph's chambers at Baghdad reverberated to discussions of Greek philosophy and medicine, to "the maxims **{17}** of Buzurgmihr and the *Testament of Ardashir*"[18] and to theological debates conducted according to the rules of Aristotelian logic.[19] But after only eight or so decades of unitary rule there occurred a number of events which heralded the second and more significant watershed, namely the withdrawal of the caliph to the isolation of Samarra, the first adoption of the institution of slave soldiers and the beginnings of the fragmentation of the Islamic empire. The Late Antique dream of universal rule coinciding with a universal faith was shattered and the Medieval idea of commonwealth, a group of discrete polities united by a shared culture and history, began to take hold.[20]

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[15] Note, for example, the hostility of Islam, Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism to magic, an alternative source of supernatural power, though of course each had to put up with its persistence.

[16] Some may be surprised to see Zoroastrianism placed on a par with Judaism, Christianity and Islam as a Late Antique religion, especially given its traditional presentation *as* aristocratic, dry and ritual-bound. The glimpse of a more syncretic Zoroastrianism that we get from the early Abbasid prophetic movements in Iran (see n. 63 below) and the recent study of Shaked, *Dualism in Transformation*, should go some way to dispelling this notion.

[17] On these developments see Excursus F, nos. i–iv, below; Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, 45–187.

[18] Jāḥiẓ, *Dhamm akhlāq al-kuttāb*, 191. Buzurgmihr was minister for Khusrau I.

[19] Examples and literature given in the introduction to Chapter 11 below.

[20] Thus, it is with these events in mind that Crone speaks of the "emergence of the Medieval polity" (*Slaves on Horses*, 82–91); see also Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, 100–68, and Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 200–11 ("The structure of politics in the

IDENTITY AND ALLEGIANCE

When the Zoroastrian priests complained to Hormizd IV (579–90) about his pro-Christian tendencies, the emperor is supposed to have replied that just as a throne is supported by two opposing pairs of legs, so the Zoroastrian religion required a counterbalance.[21] Brief episodes of persecution notwithstanding, it is true that the Sasanian rulers were generally tolerant towards the non-Zoroastrian communities of their realm, allowing them to conduct their worship unmolested as long as they paid **{18}** tribute and obeisance. Emperors ensured compliance by requiring the heads of the various religions, in whose election they would often have had a hand, to spend time at court, accompany them on hunting and war expeditions, undertake diplomatic missions and serve as advisers and physicians; but religious matters proper they left alone. Under these conditions, and especially in pluralist Iraq, the various religious groups gradually transformed themselves into communal organisations with their own schools, law courts, places of worship, religious hierarchy and so on. They were effectively socio-legal corporations ordered along religious lines.[22]

This trend continued and was extended under the Muslims, who made little distinction between any of the conquered peoples, designating most as "people of the Book" and offering them freedom of action in return for taxes and loyalty. This was accepted with some relief by many groups formerly under the rule of Byzantine emperors, who had generally pursued a less liberal policy than their Sasanian counterparts with regard to religious difference. Jews had been tolerated, but had been placed under a number of strictures and had encountered increasing hostility in the sixth and early seventh centuries. The Monophysite communities of Egypt and Syria, too, had faced mounting pressure to conform, culminating in the persecution of Heraclius' reign, and indeed, had already begun to take steps towards separate or-

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Muslim commonwealth"). The two periodisations proposed here are confirmed by material culture (e.g. Walmsley, "The Social and Economic Regime at Fiḥl," 256, on ceramics at Fiḥl: "'Two periods of accelerated change, which involved the loss of some wares and the appearance of new types, occurred between AD 600 and 900. The first can be dated to the end of the 7th and early 8th century, the second to the first half of the 9th century"), and are suggested by the progress of the Arabic language, which began to be used as an official language at the turn of the eighth century and as a *lingua franca* in the early ninth century, and of conversion to Islam, which first appears as an issue in non-Muslim sources at the end of the seventh century and starts to gain momentum in the late eighth and early ninth century. The reason for this agreement is that these two times mark the acme of the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties respectively, when they would have been able to affect the greatest change and make the greatest impression.

[21] *Chron. Siirt* XXXVII, *PO* 7, 195–96.

[22] See Morony, "Religious Communities in Late Sasanian and Early Muslim Iraq." For some general comments, based on Palestine, see Stroumsa, "Religious Contacts in Byzantine Palestine."

ganisation.[23] Gradually the Muslim authorities became more involved in the internal affairs of the various communities, largely because of the bribes offered to them and the denunciations made before them by non-Muslims wishing to advance their cause. And in Abbasid times it was once more common practice for the heads of the religions to appear at court and to escort the caliph on expeditions.

The boundaries between communities were patrolled by religious specialists whose task was to reinforce allegiance to the community. This they did by urging exclusive attendance of the institutions of that **{19}** community,[24] by issuing laws prohibiting interaction and intermarriage with non-members, by promoting distinctive insignia and symbols,[25] and by disseminating propaganda against the adherents and beliefs of all other groups. Much of this polemic would have been for internal consumption only, as is clear from the somewhat stale and one-sided Christian anti-Jewish literature of pre-Islamic times, but in our period a considerable proportion of the apologetic writing seems to derive from real debate. This was particularly true in the early Abbasid era, when there were a number of propitious factors: the cosmopolitan nature of Baghdad and its province, the caliphs' patronage of scholarship, the emergence of Arabic as a *lingua franca*, the universal deployment of dialectical reasoning based upon categorical definitions, and the proliferation of converts and apostates, which meant that there were many with a genuine knowledge of two religions and with a real will to champion one over the other. But also, quite simply, there were matters that needed debating. Islam prompted questions that had not arisen before, such as what were the attributes of a true prophet, and challenged long-cherished assumptions, such as that imperial ascendancy confirmed possession of truth.[26] The latter point did put the non-Muslims on the defensive, especially the Christians and Zoroastrians, but for the Muslims too it was to be no easy contest. They were new at the game and entered the arena with only a weakly articulated confessional identity and an underdeveloped battery of doctrine, and it was thus

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[23] Wigram, *Separation of the Monophysites*; Harvey, "Syriac Historiography and the Separation of the Churches."

[24] On the admonition not to seek judgements from the law courts of non-believers, see the entry on "George I" in Chapter 5 below. For examples on the Muslim side against interaction with outsiders, see Kister, "'Do not assimilate yourselves'."

[25] Note, for example, "the attention paid to the cross as a religious and political symbol, which for specific reasons intensified during the seventh century… What we see at this time is the development of a religious discourse focused on a symbol which could be universally accepted" (Cameron, "Byzantium and the Past in the Seventh Century," 261–65).

[26] From the Muslims' point of view, of course, they had corroborated that assumption, but for the non-Muslims it was essential to refute it. See the entries on "Anti-Jewish Polemicists," "ps.-Methodius" and the "Monk of Beth Ḥale" in Chapters 3, 8 and 11 below respectively.

particularly in the sectarian milieu of eighth and ninth-century **{20}** Iraq that communal boundaries were staked out and dogmatic territories delineated.[27]

Nevertheless, though religious allegiance came to be the prime form of identity, other forms of affiliation – political, linguistic, geographical, ethnic, historical, cultural and sectarian – still bore weight. Thus Maximus the Confessor (d. 662) could aver: "I love the Romans because we are of the same faith and the Greeks because we have the same language;"[28] Arab and Armenian Monophysite Christians could fight in the armies of Heraclius all the while that Monophysite ecclesiastics were railing against imperial policies; and East Arabian Christians could secede from the religious suzerainty of Iraq though all professed the same Nestorian creed. It is, however, very difficult in the period of Late Antiquity and Early Islam to assess the extent and significance of these other claims upon a person's loyalty and to estimate the degree to which they might have coalesced.[29] Should we, for example, characterise the ninth-century monks of Mar Saba monastery in Muslim-ruled Palestine, who were assiduously translating Greek hagiographies into Arabic, as Byzantine? Could those Muslim Arabs among the frontier troops of Khurasan, who spoke Persian, celebrated Persian festivals, wore trousers and had Iranian wives, be considered Persian? To what degree was the use of a particular language or script a sign of partiality?[30]

{21} A diligent perusal of the sources with these questions in mind would probably produce interesting results, for even a cursory inspection shows much local pride and old prejudice still to exist.[31] "The Egyptians are an obstinate people,"

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[27] See further the introduction to Chapter 11 below, and Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu*, 98–129. Note how the first Muslim creeds state what we do not believe or what we avoid rather than what we hold to, indicating that they were the product of debates with others (see Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, 2.40, on the attempt of 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak [d. 797] to determine the orthodox sect by a disavowal of the erring sects; cf. Abū Ḥanīfa's *Al-fiqh al-akbar*, discussed in Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 102–24).

[28] Maximus, *Relatio Motionis* §13, *PG* 90, 128C.

[29] Even in the Muslim Arab case, where there was a fair degree of coincidence (compare the words attributed to one general by Lewond, XXIV [tr. Arzoumanian, 116]: "We all belong to the same race, speak the same language and are subject to one and the same rule and, above all, we are brethren"), there were still tribal, factional and sectarian divisions. See Crone, "The Qays and Yemen of the Umayyad Period;" Khalidi, "Aspects of Communal Identity in Umayyad Poetry."

[30] Compare the discussion by Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, 1–18, on what constitutes Islamic art.

[31] Millar, "Empire, Community and Culture in the Roman Near East," 162, argues that "the combined effects of Hellenisation and Roman rule served in the median term to suppress local identities." This is to some degree true, but unfortunately Millar takes Jewish identity as his yardstick, whereas a more subtle gauge is needed. There is no sense of territorial nationalism among non-Jews of our period (Jones, "Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?"), but there is much ethnic chauvinism and this could blend

observes Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem (ca. 634–39); "when they have once decided upon something, whether good or bad, they are not easily diverted from it, and they are all like that."[32] The famous logician and astronomer Severus Sebokht (d. 667) expresses his pride in being a Syrian and often polemicises against Greek cultural chauvinism. Having noted the dependence of Ptolemy on Babylonian science, he adds: "That the Babylonians were Syrians I think no one will deny, so those who say that it is in no way possible for Syrians to know about these matters (astronomy) are much mistaken." And he concludes another work by sarcastically remarking: "Being an unlearned Syrian, I am putting these small queries to you to convey to those who assert that the whole of knowledge exists only in the Greek tongue."[33] When Simeon, Jacobite bishop of Ḥarran (700–34), asked George, Chalcedonian governor of Ṭur 'Abdin, to provide him with workmen for the building of a church, the latter "delayed a little, for he did not have much faith in the holy men of our region, of us Syrians. This was because he had been brought up in the west with the Greeks and had become accustomed [to their ways]."[34] Conversely, Syrian **{22}** ascetics are accused of emitting an evil odour by one Chalcedonian monk; and another, the chronicler Theophanes (d. 818), calls Athanasius, Jacobite patriarch of Antioch (603–31), a wicked man, "filled with the cunning that is native to the Syrians," on account of his part in the religious controversies of the early seventh century.[35] A Jewish taverner named Samuel speaks disparagingly of his Arabic agnomen (kunya): "No Arab kunya can honour me, nor fill me with pride and lend me high rank. Though light and made up of few letters, unlike others, yet it was created as a burden [for me]."[36] And if we turn to ninth-century Iraq we find a vigorous debate

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with religious loyalties. For example, it is said that the Coptic monastery of Metras remained firm against the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus, since "the inmates of it were exceedingly powerful, being Egyptians by race and all of them natives without a stranger among them; and therefore he could not incline their hearts toward him" (*Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 498).

[32] Sophronius, *Miracles* no. 39, *PG* 87, 3573B (= Marcos, 332).

[33] Nau, "Le traité sur les 'constellations' par Sévère Sebokht," 332–33; *idem*, "La cosmographie au VIIe siècle chez les syriens," 251–52. See also Brock, "Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning," 23–24.

[34] Simeon of the Olives, *Life*, 135–36. Compare the use of the expression "the land of the Greeks" by Jacob of Edessa, *Canons to John*, B23 (in Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 244).

[35] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*, CVI; Theophanes, 329. See Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis*, 135–45, on the differences between Chalcedonians and Monophysites as reflected in their hagiography.

[36] Kennedy, "Abū Nuwās, Samuel and Levi," 112–13, citing a wine-poem of Abū Nuwās (d. *ca.* 813). A variant has *ju'ilat* instead of *khuliqat*, which suggests that the *kunya* was imposed on the taverner, though it is possible that he adopted it in the hope of some social benefit.

under way concerning the merits and demerits of various cultural traditions, most notably Arab versus Persian.[37]

This complex tissue of identities and allegiances forms the background to the emergence of Islam and helps explain the very different reactions of the various confessional communities. The hostility of Greek writers to the Muslims (mis)led one scholar into inferring that "the early Islamic conquests were accompanied by persecution, intolerance, massacres, havoc and enslavement."[38] Another scholar, concentrating on the comments of eastern authors, is able to speak of "an eirenic response to Islam."[39] The Muslims themselves appear to have made no discrimination in their attacks nor in their government; complaints about both are heard from all quarters. One is forced to conclude that the differing reactions of Christians reflects not a difference in their treatment at the hands of the Arabs, but rather a difference in their **{23}** perceptions and intentions, which in turn depended upon and mirrored their differing allegiances.

It has often been claimed that the Monophysites of the Byzantine provinces welcomed the Arabs in some measure, based on assumed reaction to the persecutions of Heraclius and on hindsight comments of later writers.[40] Yet the only surviving seventh-century Coptic texts are all hostile to the Arabs.[41] And later observations, such as that by the Jacobite patriarch Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (d. 845): "If, as is true, we have suffered some harm… nonetheless it was no slight advantage for us to be delivered from the cruelty of the Romans,"[42] contrast strongly with the anguish in earlier accounts like the following:

> When the Arabs heard of the festival which took place at the monastery of S. Simeon the Stylite in the region of Antioch, they appeared there and took captive

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[37] This is the so-called Shu'ubiyya controversy, which was largely concerned with the cultural orientation of Islamic civilisation. For some examples of this debate see Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien*, 1.101–76.

[38] Constantelos, "The Moslem Conquests of the Near East as Revealed by the Greek Sources," 356.

[39] Moorhead, "The Earliest Christian Theological Response to Islam," 269; thus also Suermann, "Orientalische Christen und der Islam," 133–34.

[40] Moorhead, "The Monophysite Response to the Arab Invasions," argues against this, but the view is still commonly voiced; e.g. Suermann, "Orientalische Christen und der Islam," 122, 133–34, and Sahas, "The Seventh Century in Byzantine-Muslim Relations," 5.

[41] See the entries on the *Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon* and "John of Nikiu" in Chapter 4, and on "ps.-Shenute" in Chapter 8 below (the latter two survive only in translation); cf. also the two Coptic papyri discussed in the "Dubia" section of Chapters 3 and 4 below. Furthermore, whether in Coptic or Arabic, writings by Copts mostly remained hostile to Islam (see the entry on "Copto-Arabic Texts" in Chapter 8 below, and note that after Isaac of Rakoti the entries in the *History of the Patriarchs* are largely hostile).

[42] Preserved by Michael the Syrian 11.III, 410/413, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.237. What is common to these two sources for the period 582–842 comes from Dionysius; see the entry on him in Chapter 10 below.

> a large number of men and women and innumerable boys and girls. The Christians who were left no longer knew what to believe. Some of them said: "Why does God allow this to happen?"[43]

And behind the casual notices in Arabic sources that such and such a city surrendered without a struggle is not necessarily a welcome of the Arabs, but often a sad recognition that no help was coming:

> **{24}** The people of Ḥimṣ were exhorting one another: "Hold out, they are only bare-footed ones…? An old man stood up and urged them to make peace with the Muslims, but they said: "How can we do that when the emperor is still in authority and power?"[44]

Certainly, the heavy-handed approach of the Chalcedonian patriarch Cyrus must have alienated many Copts, and this is important for explaining why they so quickly came to an acceptance of Muslim rule. For this is where the difference in Christian reactions is most marked. Christians writing in Syriac and Arabic, though wishing to disprove the Muslims' assertions, do so with rational argument and fair characterisation of their beliefs. The Nestorian catholicos Timothy I (780–823) even goes so far as to say that the Arabs "are today held in great honour and esteem by God and men, because they forsook idolatry and polytheism, and worshipped and honoured one God. For this they deserve the love and praise of all."[45] But in Greek writings the Muslims were never anything but enemies of God. They were never to replace the Persians as a topic of learned digressions and diplomatic analyses, but rather to join the ranks of pagans and Jews as an object of attack and ridicule.

There are a number of reasons for this. In the first place, the image that an average Byzantine had of the Arabs was conditioned by more than a millennium of prejudice.[46] Their non-urban style of life rendered them culturally inferior; the observation that "the Saracen tribe is known to be most unreliable and fickle, their mind is not steadfast" betrays all the disdain of a city-dweller for the non-urban barbarian.[47] And their Biblical ancestry, as descendants of the slave-woman Hagar, tarnished them as religiously inferior, as "the most despised and insignificant of the peoples of the earth."[48] Secondly, though Zoroastrianism had made pretensions of being a universal truth, it was too different to be a serious challenge to Christianity. Islam, however, drew **{25}** on the same religious heritage as Christianity. It recognised Moses and Jesus, the Torah and the Gospels, but demoted them in favour of Muḥammad and the Qur'an. When backed with dazzling military success, the Mus-

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[43] Also by Dionysius (Michael the Syrian 11.VI, 417/422; *Chron. 1234*, 2.260), here citing an earlier source rather than giving his own opinion.

[44] Ṭabarī, 1.2390–91; Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 145–46.

[45] Timothy I, *Syriac Apology*, 131/59.

[46] Most recently see Jeffreys, "The Image of the Arabs in Byzantine Literature."

[47] Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, 3.XVII.7 (tr. Whitby, 100).

[48] Chron. 1234, 1.237.

lims' claim to have the latest version of God's revelation was hard to refute. "It is a sign of God's love for us and pleasure at our faith," they said, "that God has given us dominion over all lands and all peoples."[49] This brings us to the crucial point: that whereas the Persians had been evicted from the provinces, the Arabs had stayed and made them their own.

But this is still insufficient explanation. Christians in Sasanian lands had also been overrun by the Arabs, and they would appear to have harboured similar opinions towards pre-Islamic Arabs as their Byzantine co-religionists. "There were many people between the Tigris and the Euprates," comments one late sixth-century writer, "who lived in tents and were barbarians and murderers; they had many superstitions and were the most ignorant of all the people on the earth;" "furious are the wild asses, children of Hagar, and they have laid waste both good and bad," says a late fifth-century poet about the Persian bedouin.[50] The crucial difference was that the Christians of Iraq had no lost or diminished sovereignty to lament. As regards their faith, they had no reason to rue the Sasanians' passing nor to expect deliverance from them. Thus it was both easier and more necessary for them to accept the change of rulers than for their Byzantine counterparts. "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's," advised the catholicos Isho'yahb III (649–59). So when the Muslims replaced the Persians, the Christians simply set about establishing the same pattern of relations and agreements as had obtained in Sasanian times, seeking freedom to pursue their worship unmolested in return for political loyalty and payment of taxes.[51]

{26} It is, then, because the Arabs were to them political as well as religious enemies that Byzantines were so hostile. This affected Greek writings in particular, since by the seventh century the Greek language had become intimately linked with Greek identity and with allegiance to Chalcedon and the empire. Its outpourings were, therefore, dominated by imperial concerns, with an eye suspicious of outsiders and dissenters.[52] But it is also true for Byzantines of other extractions in varying

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[49] Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 2a; cf. Leo-'Umar, *Letter* (Armenian), 330: "You attribute to your religion the success with which heaven favours you."

[50] Nau, "Histoire de Mar Ahoudemmeh," 21–26; Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature," 106 (citing Isaac of Antioch's account of the sack of Beth Ḥur). Arabs could, however, redeem themselves by becoming Christian, and there was much competition between Monophysite and Nestorian missionaries for Arab souls.

[51] See the entries on "Isho'yahb III" and "Ḥnanisho'" in Chapter 5 below. However, though the official line was "the Arabs are good to us," there are hints that there was regret amonth some at the passing of Sasanian rule. Isho'yahb had sharply to rebuke one bishop who had been mourning for the "dead kingdom:" "If you were at this time upholding reverence for God," he chides, "you would not joyfully and lightly show such reverence for what is dead, what has no power and no life" (Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* C7, 237).

[52] See Cameron, "The Eastern Provinces in the Seventh Century." Note that the numerous anti-Jewish tracts that we have from the seventh century, discussed in Chapter 3 below, are all written in Greek. Hayman, *Disputation of Sergius against a Jew*, v, states that "no

degrees. Thus the Coptic writer John of Nikiu (fl. 690s) has only abuse for the Muslims, and Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) speaks of "the harsh yoke of the Arabs," though he is able to give us some objective descriptions of their beliefs and practices. Armenians were bellicosely proud of their identity, both political and religious, and had little love for Arab, Byzantine or Persian rule. Their writings on Islam tend, therefore, to be vitriolic, though Sebeos (wr. 660s) is able to give a dispassionate account of its emergence, perhaps because he lived before the Muslim occupation of Armenia.[53]

APOCALYPTICISM

Already in the late sixth century there were many convinced "that the end of the present world is already near and that the never-ending kingdom of the saints is about to come."[54] In the ensuing two centuries **{27}** such speculation intensified and was rife among all the communities of the Middle East. This mood of apocalypticism, of concern for the end of history and what lay beyond it, expressed itself in a variety of different ways for a number of different purposes. But in each case the chief benefit of apocalypticism was that it could fit contemporary political and social events into a transcendent scheme of meaning, thus giving them religious validation, into a broader explanatory context, thus making them understandable.[55]

For Christians and Zoroastrians it was of crucial importance to account for the successes of the Muslims, who had done so much damage to their respective empires and their self-esteem, and to divine what would be their outcome. In answer to the first question both communities pointed to the laxity of their members, and in response to the second they reinterpreted and recast earlier apocalyptic scenarios. Christians viewed Arab rule as the time of testing before the "final peace" when "the churches will be renewed, the cities rebuilt and the priests set free from tax." To the Zoroastrians it was the age of adversity which closed the millennium of Zoroaster and preceded the millennium of Ushedar in which the Good Religion would flourish. In both cases the ousting of the Muslims and regeneration of the religion was to be achieved by a saviour figure, whether an idealised Christian emperor in the image of Alexander the Great, Constantine and Jovian, or the warrior-king Wah-

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Syriac anti-Jewish literature has survived from the period between the sixth and the twelfth century A.D. except for Sergius' Disputation," though this could be in part due to misfortune (e.g. Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 194, assigns a "disputation against the Jews" to the mid-eighth-century author Abraham bar Dashandad).

[53] See Thomson, "Muhammad and Islam in Armenian Literary Tradition," and the entries on "Sebeos" and "Armenian Texts" in Chapters 4 and 10 below.

[54] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 64, citing Pope Gregory I's letter of 601 to the English king Ethelbert. See also Hillgarth, "Eschatological and Political Concepts in the Seventh Century."

[55] I use apocalypticism in its broadest sense, as argued for by McGinn, *Visions of the End*, esp. 28–36.

ram Warjawand coming from India with an army and one thousand elephants to destroy Iran's enemies. Apocalypses thus offered an interpretation for historical change, thereby rendering it more meaningful, and hope for redemption in the near future, thereby encouraging steadfastness.[56]

As regards the Muslims, their greatest worry was whether they would manage to hold on to their acquisitions. And at certain key times – such as during their various civil wars, when it looked as if they might lose all, and during their siege of Constantinople in 717, when it looked as if they might gain all – these fears and hopes found their voice **{28}** in a veritable explosion of apocalyptic sentiment. The battles with their enemies, chiefly the Byzantines, were identified with the *malāḥim*, the final wars at the end of the world which would eventually, after many setbacks, conclude with the Muslim capture of Constantinople and the appearance of the Antichrist. This construction aided the Muslim warriors to weather any reverses, for they could see that they would ultimately triumph, and gave added meaning to their efforts, since it was no ordinary war they were fighting, but Armageddon itself.[57]

The changes in the life of the Jewish communities brought about by the rise of Islam provoked much messianic speculation among Jews of our period and even led to a number of uprisings. The first occurred in the wake of the Arab conquests and was initiated by a Jew from Beth Aramaye, who "said that the messiah had come. He assembled weavers, barbers and fullers, some 400 men in all, who set fire to three churches and killed the local governor."[58] In the aftermath of the 717 siege of Constantinople and Leo III's forced baptism of Jews in 721, a Christian convert to Judaism from the district of Mardin proclaimed to Jews that he was Moses, "sent again for the salvation of Israel and to lead you into the desert in order to introduce you then to the inheritance of the Promised Land, which you will possess as before."[59] And around the time of the Abbasid revolution "an illiterate tailor" named Obadiah, also known as Abū Īsā al-Iṣfahānī, claimed to be the "prophet and apostle of the awaited messiah" and "led a rebellion against the government."[60] Like con-

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[56] For the information in this paragraph see the entries on "ps.-Methodius" and the *Bahman yasht* in Chapter 8, and on the "Tool of God's Wrath" and the "Age of Adversity" in Chapter 12 below.

[57] For the information in this paragraph see the entry on "Muslim Arabic Apocalypses" in Chapter 8 below.

[58] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 33.

[59] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 173. On this pretender, named Severus, see Starr, "Le mouvement messianique au début du VIIIe siècle." Note that he is the subject of an enquiry put to Naṭronai ben Nehemiah, gaon of Pumbedita (719–30), as to whether and on what conditions those Jews who had followed him might be received back into the orthodox fold (*Gaonic Responsa* [Moda'i], 3.V.10).

[60] Nemoy, "Al-Qirqisānī's Account of the Jewish Sects," 328. There is some confusion as to whether this pretender appeared during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik or Marwān II (744–50). For discussion and bibliography see Wasserstrom, "The 'Īsāwiyya Revisited;" *Elr*, *s.v.* "Abū 'Īsā Eṣfahānī;" Erder, "The Doctrine of Abū 'Īsā al-Iṣfahānī."

temporary apocalyptic writers, the leaders of these insurrections evidently interpreted the momentous events taking **{29}** place around them as heralding the world's end, but they sought not merely to speculate on, but also to participate in, and even to accelerate, this great drama and to enjoy the fruits of the messianic age.[61]

On the fringes of the Muslim empire, in eastern Iran and Azerbaijan, there occurred a number of millenarian revolts in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries. Their participants sought salvation, but of a very terrestrial kind; they hoped not for the end of the world *per se*, but the end of the present evil world with all its inequities, and they wished it to be replaced with an infinitely better one, effectively heaven on earth.[62] So the leaders of these revolts did not merely herald the last days, but announced that "the rule of the Arabs was at an end,"[63] or proclaimed that from the progeny of their hero Abū Muslim there would arise "a man who would take possession of the whole world and wrest the rule from the Abbasids," or even that Abū Muslim himself would reappear to "fill the world with justice."[64] Their goad was the **{30}** intrusiveness of Abbasid rule which, particularly through extension of fiscal controls, was beginning to make its presence felt and to disrupt traditional patterns of life even at a village level.[65] That it was chiefly villagers who were in-

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[61] For Jewish apocalyptic writings of this time see the entry thereon in Chapter 8 below. More generally see Baron, *SRHJ*, 5.XXV; Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 47–89 ("The Jewish Messiahs of Early Islam").

[62] On millenarianism see in particular Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*; Worsley, *The Trumpet shall Sound*, esp. 221–56.

[63] Thus Sunbadh, who is a typical example of what must have been a common phenomenon. In the later stages of the revolution the Abbasids had recruited Zoroastrian villagers in their armies, probably with promises of social advancement, and superficially converted and trained them, only to disband them once they had achieved power. These peasant soldiers, resentful and to some degree experienced in arms, would have been disposed to rebellion. The governor of Rayy had attempted to arrest Sunbadh who, after the death of Abū Muslim, was returning to his home in Khurasan. "Sunbadh killed him, took control of Rayy and returned to Zoroastrianism. Whenever a Zoroastrian came to him making a claim against a Muslim, he (Sunbadh) would judge in favour of him in that… He would kill the Arabs with the wooden club and he wrote to the king of Daylam that the rule of the Arabs was at an end" (Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 3.246–47); "he called himself Fayrūz Isbahbadh" (Ṭabarī, 3.119). Medieval writers tended to view all these Iranian prophetic movements as inspired by Mazdakism or extreme Shi'ism, but from this and other accounts (esp. see Maqdisī, *Bad'*, *s.v.* "Khurramī") it is clear that their basis was Zoroastrianism, here revealing its syncretic potential (there are certainly some elements of gnosticism and Mazdakism).

[64] Maqdisī, *Bad'*, 6.95; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 6.186. It was Abū Muslim who had recruited Iranian villagers, and his execution by the caliph Manṣūr made him a martyr in their eyes and confirmed to them the iniquity of Muslim rule.

[65] Cf. Michael the Syrian 11.XXV, 475/522–23 (increased taxes reported in conjunction with an uprising in Iran). Probably also important were such factors as increased Muslim land ownership and acceleration of conversion to Islam. Note that in this same period peas-

volved is indicated by the large numbers participating in the revolts, by the ease with which these were put down and by the fact that their instigators were themselves of lowly extraction and village origin.[66] Apocalyptic rhetoric served here an integratory function, welding together an otherwise disparate people unaccustomed to political organisation, and provided them with a goal, an era of justice and equity for all, the institution of which was imminent.[67]

On contemplating the great number of apocalyptic movements and writings of the seventh and eighth centuries, one is led to wonder whether this is also the case for other periods or whether ours is in any way unusual. Of course, an interest in the structure and goal of history was central to each of the four principal religions of the Middle East and consequently all produced their fair share of visionaries to interpret the significance of events and to depict the end of times. One must, however, make a distinction here between eschatology and apocalypticism, "between a general consciousness of living in the last age of history and a conviction that the last age itself is about to end, between a belief in the reality of the Antichrist and the certainty of his proximity, **{31}** between viewing the events of one's own time in the light of the end of history and seeing them as the last events themselves."[68] Certainly, eschatological speculation can become apocalyptic, and this is likely if some significant date draws near or some disaster befalls. Thus when it was the 500th anniversary of the Incarnation, supposedly marking the 6000th year since Creation, "the end of the world was awaited as never before;" and when in 557 Constantinople was shaken by a series of tremors, "immediately fantastic and fallacious pronouncements began to circulate, to the effect that the whole world was on the point of perishing. For certain deceivers, behaving like self-inspired oracles, prophesied whatever came into their heads and terrified all the more the populace who were already thoroughly disposed to be terrified."[69] Such calendrical or physical crises could, however, be accounted for by traditional theories of time and meaning, and so they occasioned no

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ant revolts were frequent in Egypt and rural banditry endemic in Sistan (Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 71 and notes thereto).

[66] Many also claimed prophethood, unnecessary for those already endowed with authority by virtue of office or birth. Note especially Ustādhsīs (Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2.457–58) and Muqanna', who was originally a bleacher (Narshakhī, *History of Bukhara*, 65–67).

[67] Most of these revolts are described by Sadighi, *Les mouvements religieux iraniens*. Some comment on them is made by Omar, "The Nature of the Iranian Revolts;" Daniel, *Khurasan under Abbasid Rule*, 125–56; Kennedy, *Early Abbasid Caliphate*, 183–86; Amoretti, "Sects and Heresies." Scholars tend, however, to reduce the role of religion, inflate the social status of the leaders and explain the syncretic nature of their teachings as an attempt to appeal to both Muslims and non-Muslims. Patricia Crone seems to be the only one who has perceived their true significance, namely a nativist reaction to intrusive alien rule, and it is to her that I owe most of my ideas on this subject.

[68] McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 4.

[69] Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses," 5–6, citing the sixth-century writers Simplicius and Agathius.

innovations in apocalyptic writing. The same is true of the outbreaks of bubonic plague in the 540s and 1340s, which must have entailed greater loss of life than the Arab conquests and the Crusades. Yet the latter two events spawned numerous apocalyptic tracts, whereas the former two left little trace in the apocalyptic record. Evidently, it was not the degree of destruction or number of fatalities caused by a catastrophe that counted, but the challenge that it posed to the established understanding of history. Indeed, great challenges might come from a non-life-threatening event, such as the conversion of Constantine to Christianity and the Arabs' active assertion of Islam. Apocalypses served to interpret such epoch-making changes, to make sense of and facilitate adaptation to new developments, and it is in this light that we should see the plethora of such writings in our period.

CHAPTER 2.
THE NATURE OF THE SOURCES[1]

{32} The promiscuity of approach advocated in the last chapter should also be extended to treatment of the literary source material. I do not mean that one must be familiar with all the writings of the different communities of this period, but rather that one needs to be acquainted with the various factors that conditioned and affected many of them. The justification for this is the simple fact that in the cosmopolitan world of Early Islam no one tradition was insulated from the influence of others. Debates, whether held at court, in private houses or outside, were popular, particularly between Christians and Muslims, the former being keen "to hunt down what is contradictory in our traditions, our reports with a suspect line of transmission and the ambiguous verses of our scripture," and "every Muslim thinking he is a theologian and that no one else is more adept at arguing with these deviants."[2] Jews **{33}** and Christians were frequently the tutors of Muslim children and aides of Mus-

[1] As was the case with history, there are no general surveys of the literature of the seventh and eighth-century Middle East (though see Morony, "Sources for the First Century of Islam," for some brief indications, and his *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 537–654, for Iraq), and one must again consult the relevant works for each community. For the writings of Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians see the references that I give in the first footnote to each chapter in Part II. On the Muslim side see Brockelmann, *GAL*, and Sezgin, *GAS*, for a survey of the actual writings; and see Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, Duri, *Rise of Historical Writing*, Radtke, *Weltgeschichte*, Noth, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, and Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, for history writing in particular.

[2] Jāḥiẓ, *Al-radd ʿalā l-naṣārā*, 320 (quoted more fully in the introduction to Chapter 11 below). Cf. *Trophies of Damascus* II.1.1, 215: "A numerous crowd is present: Jews, Hellenes, Samaritans, heretics and Christians, for the place is public and in full view" (further on "many Saracens" are said to be attending). *Chron. Maronite*, 70, mentions a Jacobite-Maronite "inquiry into the faith" before the caliph Muʿāwiya (661–80). Note also the impromptu commencement of debates as portrayed by our sources; e.g. Theodore Abū Qurra (d. ca. 820s), *Greek Opuscula*, no. 19: "Usually when the hypocritical Saracens meet a Christian they do not give a greeting, but say at once: 'Christian, give a witness that the one inseparable God has [appointed] Muḥammad as his servant and apostle'; and it is with this [statement] that one of these hypocrites interrogated Abū Qurra."

lim rulers.[3] Converts, especially among the literary elite, must have introduced something of their native traditions into their newly adopted religion, and those who reconverted must have brought back some knowledge of the latter to their former religion.[4] Moreover, it is evident that books circulated across confessional lines. This is certainly the case in the ninth century and after, when translation into Arabic was common – thus the polymath Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) can cite Persian, Byzantine and Indian works, as well as the Gospels and Torah;[5] but it is also to some extent true of the period covered by this book.[6]

{34} Another reason for an inclusive approach to our sources is that since there were, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, common factors shaping the lives of the people of the seventh and eighth-century Middle East, there are also likely to have been common features in their literatures. Thus, for example, the "drainage of secularity"[7] taking place in Late Antiquity is matched by the permeation of religion into most of the extant writings of our period, whatever their confessional origin. The gaze of our authors tends to be fixed heavenwards. This does not mean that they pay no attention to this world, but rather that they are not interested in it for its own sake. Events and human actions are interpreted in the light of their ultimate significance, not their immediate cause. One consequence of this is that we are seldom given a life-like portrait of any character or a mundane explanation of any happening. Only in the tenth and eleventh centuries did a more anthropocentric bent resurface and reality seep back in.

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[3] Already in the time of Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) the issue of Christians acting as tutors to Muslims had been raised (see the entry on him in Chapter 4 below). For examples of Christian aides see the entries on "Benjamin I" and "Isaac of Rakoti" in Chapter 4, and on "Isho'yahb III" and "Hnanisho'" in Chapter 5. On Jewish courtiers see Baron, *SRHJ*, 3.150–61.

[4] Lawyers of each community debated the problem of what to do about those who apostatised then returned, so one assumes it was a widespread phenomenon (see the entries on "Anastasius of Sinai" and "Jacob of Edessa" in Chapters 3–4 and the introduction to Chapter 9 below). The Arabic *Apocalyptic Chronicle* discussed in Chapter 8 below may well represent the attempt of a Christian convert to introduce this genre into Islam.

[5] E.g. Ibn Qutayba, *'Uyūn*, 1.60, 61, 85, 104, 239, 248; cf. Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 106 (Persian books), 154–55 (Christian books).

[6] For some examples see the entries on "Morienus the Greek" (Chapter 6), the "Monk of Beth Ḥale" and "John of Damascus" (Chapter 11) below; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 21–22 (on the translation into Arabic of Hebrew, Greek and Persian scriptures by Aḥmad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām, fl. 790s); Bosworth, "Persian Impact on Arabic Literature," 486–91 (translations from Persian into Arabic, especially by Ibn al-Muqaffa', d. 759); Pingree, "Greek Influence on Arabic Astronomy," 38–39 (translation of Greek and Sanskrit astronomical texts into Arabic in the late eighth century); Haq, "The Indian and Persian Background" (Perso-Indian influence on early Islamic thought); Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism*, 1–22 ("The Reception of Biblical Materials in Early Islam").

[7] The expression is from Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, 226.

Much effort has been expended in the past on highlighting the similarities and parallels between the literatures of the different communities of the Middle East, especially traits common to Judaism and Islam, but often with a view to ascertaining origins and establishing borrowing. Before such judgements can be made, greater consideration would have to be accorded to the ways in which information was transmitted and to the affects of a shared physical and cultural environment. So here we will simply comment upon three characteristics common to at least some of the writings of each of the communities of our period, but without any suggestion that one tradition serves as a point of influence or origin.[8]

REDACTIONAL IDENTITY AND UNAVOWED AUTHORSHIP

There has recently been a lively exchange of views in the field of rabbinic literature concerning the nature and transmission of texts. A key **{35}** issue is whether we should regard all works as acquiring a fixed redactional identity at a certain point in time (the *Urtext*) and thereafter simply being transmitted,[9] or whether we should speak of several stages in the process of editing before the emergence of a final redaction (the *textus receptus*), the different versions produced along the way being to some extent autonomous.[10] The former view might appear to be right because of the superficially imitative quality of rabbinic redaction, but quite substantial changes are often effected by the self-styled transmitter. In other words, "one authorship goes through motions of copying the work of a prior authorship, even while introducing striking innovations. The fundamental claim of all authorships rests upon the claim of tradition, beginning with Moses at Sinai."[11]

If we accept the idea of multilayer redaction, then the question arises of what constitutes a "text." "Are there texts that can be defined and clearly delimited, or are there only basically 'open' texts, which elude temporal and redactional fixation?"[12] How do the different redactions of a text relate to one another and what does this mean for the redactional identity of a text? Is the search for the original text illusory, no single redactional version of a text being the source of all other redactional versions of the same text? What is the significance of the presence of parts of one work

[8] I am not denying that there was influence and borrowing, but rather doubting that enough groundwork has been done as yet to allow determination of its nature. See the cautions issued by Wansbrough (*Sectarian Milieu*, 51–54) and Calder (*Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, 195–97, 209–14).

[9] Substantial variants may occur, constituting recensions, but according to this view these are to be seen as recensions of a single redactionally identical work.

[10] The latter view is Schäfer's ("Research into Rabbinic Literature: the Status Quaestionis" and "Once Again the Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature"); the former is of Milikowsky ("The Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature").

[11] Neusner, *From Tradition to Imitation*, 223.

[12] Schäfer, "Research into Rabbinic Literature: the Status Quaestionis," 150.

in another more or less delimited work?[13] What is the relation of the individual tradition, the smallest literary unit, to the macroform of the work? How do we distinguish between a "text" and an anthology or a notebook?[14]

{36} Such problems are intimately bound up with rabbinic literature's genesis and development. Numerous parallels found across the Talmudic and midrashic literature of Late Antiquity suggest that the tales and teachings of the early authorities (Tannaim and Amoraim) had come by *ca.* 600 to form a pool of traditions, largely shared by all and out of which rabbinic writings had been slowly surfacing. These were compiled and edited in a gradual cumulative manner until at some point redacted works began to emerge that were treated, at least by name, as single identifiable entities.[15] This process went on throughout the first millennium AD, though the authorities named belong only to the first half of this period.

Though all happened much more quickly in the Muslim case, this dynamic model of the redactional process works very well there too. Within a century or so of the Prophet's death, the sayings and stories of the earliest authorities – the Companions (those who has known the Prophet Muḥammad) and Successors (Muslims of later generations) – had already come to constitute a considerable reservoir of traditions from which all could draw.[16] At this point, although the material continued to develop and expand, the first writings began to appear: for example, the biography of Muḥammad by Ibn Isḥāq (d. 767), the Qur'an commentary of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767) and the juristic compendia of Ibn Jurayj (d. 767), Ma'mar ibn Rāshid (d. 770) and Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795).[17] These early works were then either in

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[13] Neusner, *From Tradition to Imitation*, 224: "Sayings, stories and sizeable compositions not identified with a given, earlier text and exhibiting that text's distinctive traits (i.e. not explicitly a quotation) will float from one document to the next."

[14] *Ibid.*: "The problem is whether or not a rabbinic document to begin with stands by itself, or right at the outset forms a scarcely differentiated segment of a larger uniform canon."

[15] For a discussion of these developments see Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings*, xxvii.

[16] In Jones, "Ibn Isḥāq and al-Wāqidī," 51, the process is described as follows: "The greater part of the *sīra* was already formalised by the second century AH and… later writers shared a common corpus of *qāṣṣ* and traditional material, which they arranged according to their own concepts and to which they added their own researches."

[17] I use the loose term "writing," since this is usually all that our sources say (*kitāb*). But this may designate anything from a notebook or *aide-mémoire* (that is, something unique, private, and subject to change), to a dossier of some kind (i.e. it may enjoy limited circulation and serve as point of reference for other scholars, subject to modification by the owner or by its recipients), to a stable text replicated in multiple editions and distributed. For some recent interesting comments on the book in Islam see Rosenthal, "'Of Making Many Books There is no End': the Classical Muslim View."

{37} corporated, whole or in part, into later compilations,[18] or else redacted anew.[19] This activity goes under the guise of compilation/transmission, but at each stage there is omission, addition and reworking of material. Thus the distinction between compiler/transmitter and author is frequently illusory, the difference being principally one of degree.[20] As scholarship became more professional and court patronage increased, there did begin to emerge texts of fixed form and content, whether the product of single authorship or the culmination of extended redaction, but with very few exceptions this event did not antedate the ninth century.

The redactional process might follow a linear course. Thus the *History of Mecca* by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Azraqī (d. 837) passed through the hands of his grandson Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Azraqī (d. *ca.* 865), Isḥāq al-Khuzāʿī (d. 920) and Muḥammad al-Khuzāʿī (wr. 961).[21] Though here the first is very likely the chief contributor, this need not be the case; the Qur'an commentary of Mūsā ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Thaqafī (d. 805), for example, is mostly the work of ʿAbd al-Ghanī ibn Saʿīd al-Thaqafī (d. 843) and even more so of Bakr ibn Sahl al-Dimyāṭī (d. 902).[22] Otherwise, redaction might proceed in divergent directions that is, a master's work would circulate in a number of different versions, the result of alterations made by the master himself, or his pupils or both. This particularly applies to works intended for educational use, which would be disseminated **{38}** in lecture form and periodically updated, notably legal handbooks,[23] Qur'an commentaries[24] and historical compositions.[25]

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[18] Thus the *ḥadīth* compilations of Ibn Jurayj, Maʿmar ibn Rāshid and Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 778) were taken up by ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Sanʿānī (d. 827), as has been shown by Motzki, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz*, esp. 56–59 (findings summarised in *idem*, "The *Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq"); and the *Kitāb Futūḥ Khurāsān* of ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. 843) by Ṭabarī (Rotter, "Zur Überlieferung einiger historischer Werke Madā'inīs," 122–28).

[19] Examples given in the next paragraph.

[20] Hence one cannot expect that from later redactions and compilations one can recover earlier texts in a form at all close to their original state. See Conrad, "Recovering Lost Texts" (on Newby's attempt to reconstruct Muḥammad's biography); Juynboll, "New Perspectives in the Study of Early Islamic Jurisprudence" (on Motzki's work).

[21] Wüstenfeld, *Die Chroniken der Stadt Mekka I*, v–xviii.

[22] Sezgin, *GAS*, 1.39; pointed out by Rippin, "Al-Zuhrī, *Naskh al-Qur'ān* and the Problem of Early *Tafsīr* Texts," 22.

[23] Calder, *Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, 1–160, gives a number of examples. The rejection by Dutton ("Review," 103–105) of Calder's characterisation of the *Muwaṭṭa'* as "not an authored text" reflects a common misunderstanding and requires clarification. Dutton says: "The biographical literature tells us of numerous individuals transmitting the *Muwaṭṭa'* directly from Mālik, and that several commentaries were written on the *Muwaṭṭa'* well before Calder's proposed date of *ca.* 270 for the book's emergence." But Calder is not saying that there was no *Muwaṭṭa'* before AH 270, rather that this was when its text became stabilised and canonised. Before this there existed a number of different versions, "institutional redactions" in

A similar phenomenon may be observed at the micro-level. An individual narrative unit (*ḵẖabar*/*ḥadīth*) reporting some incident or saying, though its integrity and factuality appear guaranteed by a chain of transmitters going back to an ear- or eye-witness, will be subject to rewording and reshaping in the interests of sundry literary, juristic and socio-political concerns. The self-contained nature of these units, often devoid of any temporal or spatial location, meant that they could be employed in a variety of different contexts and serve a number of different ends. They are preserved for us in compilations, where they are assembled, either simply juxtaposed or sometimes combined, and **{39}** arranged according to some theme or concept, in the process enduring some degree of abridgement, expansion, paraphrasing or recasting. The career of these micro-texts is often fascinating to chart and illustrates well that transmitters/compilers must often be regarded as authors in their own right.[26]

In the Christian sphere we mainly have to do with authored literature, with *Ur-texts* and their transmission histories, but there are still some notable similarities to the situation in Judaism and Islam. In the first place, many of the genres popular in the Byzantine period were much prone to augmentation over time. Apocalypses would be updated to take account of fresh developments in the drama of human history, hagiographies and miracle collections expanded as their saintly subjects increased in stature, and question-and-answer compendia grew in response to the un-

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Calder's words, which would have been used for teaching and may have been commented upon. Many or even most of the variants in these redactions might go back to Mālik himself (i.e. he could modify his own lectures), though certainly some are attributable to his students. But the main point to note is that Mālik was not trying to produce an authored text (unlike Jāḥiẓ or Ibn Qutayba for example), i.e. one that would be faithfully replicated in multiple editions; this does not necessarily mean, however, that the *textus receptus* does not substantially represent the teaching of Mālik.

[24] See Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, esp. 138–44; Gilliot, "Les débuts de l'exégèse coranique;" Leemhuis, "Origins of the *Tafsīr* Tradition;" Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'ānic Exegesis*, 41–95; and numerous articles of Rippin (listed in Bibliography II below). The commentary of Mujāhid ibn Jabr (d. 722) is a good example, for besides there being multiple versions of it directly from Mujāhid, there also exist five versions of it via Mujāhid's pupil 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Najīh (d. 750). Leemhuis, "MS. 1075 Tafsīr of the Cairene Dār al-Kutub and Muğāhid's *Tafsīr*," compares three of these and finds that, besides innumerable differences in wording, up to a quarter of the traditions in one version may be absent from another.

[25] A good example is the biography of the Prophet by Ibn Isḥāq, which circulated in numerous versions (see the studies of Fück, Samuk, Tarabishi and Muranyi listed in Bibliography II below).

[26] See Landau-Tasseron, "Processes of Redaction: the Case of the Tamīmite Delegation;" Lecker, "Wāqidī's Account on the Status of the Jews of Medina;" and in particular the studies of Leder (listed in Bibliography II below).

certainties and anxieties of a new situation.[27] So though an original text might very well have existed, it was not necessarily later recoverable.[28] Secondly, there is the phenomenon of material from one text being reproduced in another. This is most noticeable for anti-Jewish texts, whose authors would often take over arguments and scenes from earlier examples with little or no editing.[29] Finally, there also occurs something resembling unavowed authorship in the translations of Greek hagiographies into Arabic by monks who would often introduce substantial changes, omitting what they deemed no longer relevant and reworking what they felt unacceptable.[30]

Unfortunately, we are very badly informed about the transmission of Zoroastrian texts. Almost none would seem to have survived intact from pre-Islamic Iran. Religious writings in Pahlavi began to appear **{40}** in the ninth and tenth centuries. These are mostly heterogeneous compilations of older material put together by Zoroastrian leaders out of a desire to preserve and defend the teachings of their ailing faith. Presumably much is of Sasanian origin, but it is difficult to determine how it fared in the intervening centuries, though at least one work can be seen to have undergone a process of redaction and others are likely to have suffered the same fate.[31] The official national history, the *Khwadāy nāmag* ("Book of Lords"), circulated in at least three versions by the late Sasanian period and was continually updated until the death of the last Sasanian emperor in 652. But no Pahlavi example nor the first Arabic translations therefrom have survived, so the nature of the Sasanian recensions and their transmission is difficult to determine.[32] Muslim writers make frequent reference to Persian books,[33] some of which may have derived from Sasanian times, but more research would have to be done before anything sure could be said about the transmission of Sasanian lore in Early Islam.

ORALITY

Though the Late Antique and Early Islamic Middle East was characterised by a literate culture in which a good number learned to write, it also valued oral creativity and oral display. In Judaism the written Torah, though often memorised, had to be

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[27] For examples see the entries on apocalypses (Chapter 8 below), on the *Lives* of Gabriel of Qartmin and Simeon of the Olives (Chapter 4) and of Andreas Salos (Chapter 8), on the miracle collections of S. Demetrius and S. George (Chapter 3), and the question-and-answer collection of Anastasius of Sinai (Chapter 3).

[28] Consider the complex manuscript tradition of John Moschus' *Pratum spirituale*, which two centuries after his death already existed in two versions, one of 304 chapters, one of 342 (see the entry thereon in Chapter 3 below).

[29] See the entry on this genre in Chapter 3 below.

[30] Demonstrated by Leeming, *Byzantine Literature in Arabic*.

[31] See the entry on the *Dēnkard* in Chapter 8 below.

[32] See Shahbazi, "On the Xwadāy-Nāmag."

[33] E.g. Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 104, 106 (including a comprehensive work on Persian science, history and politics seen by Mas'ūdī himself in 303/916).

passed on via writing, and so was read or copied from the text; and the oral Torah, though often preserved in notes, had to be conveyed orally, and so was delivered or repeated from memory.[34] Philosophical and, later, Christological issues would be publicly debated in rival speeches (*logoi*), but frequently written down by stenographers.[35] The Zoroastrian scripture (*Avesta*) was "both spoken in genuine pronunciation and arranged in written form **{41}** [taken] from literary records."[36] And a Muslim scholar such as Mālik ibn Anas might disseminate his knowledge by lecturing (*samā'a*) or having his students recite to him from memory (*qirā'a*), as well as by issuing personally endorsed copies of his teachings (*munāwala*).[37] This is important for understanding what has been discussed above, namely the fluidity and mobility of texts, which would be to some degree inevitable while oral and written tradition coexisted, priority being given to oral communication.[38]

Another consequence of orality, of great interest but little remarked upon, is the circulation of anecdotes across boundaries of time, space and culture. That is, one finds obviously related stories cropping up again and again in diverse places and/or attributed to different persons. Examples are legion and just a very few will have to suffice here. The tale of a Jewish child who becomes shut in a furnace by his father for involvement with Christian boys, yet escapes unharmed, is recounted by a sixth-century historian, who makes the emperor Justinian (527–65) the agent of justice, and features again in an early Islamic recension, which substitutes an Arab governor for the emperor.[39] Of the Persian soldiers sacking Jerusalem in 614 and of the troops of the caliph Marwān II passing through Egypt in 750, it is told that they were about to sully a particularly beautiful nun, who then pretended that she had an ointment able to deflect sword-blows and invited them to test it on her, by which ruse she escaped defilement and gained martyrdom.[40]

The motif of a horse immobilised by divine power at the shrine of the martyr George at Diospolis (Lydda/Ramla) occurs in two early **{42}** seventh-century accounts of very different provenance, one concerning a Persian commander and the

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[34] Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, esp. 19–32; see also Strack and Sternberger, *Talmud and Midrash*, 35–49.

[35] Lim, *Public Disputation*, *Power and Social Order*, see under "shorthand" in the index.

[36] *Dēnkard*, 4.XXVIII; translated by Humbach, *The Gāthās of Zarathustra*, 1.55. See also *ibid.*, 1.56–57, 63–64.

[37] Schoeler, "Die Frage der schriftlichen oder mündlichen Überlieferung in frühen Islam," 210–11. This and other articles of Schoeler (listed in Bibliography II below) present excellent discussions of this subject.

[38] See Werkmeister, *Quellenuntersuchungen zum Kitāb al-'Iqd al-farīd*, esp. 463–69, on the discrepancy between Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi's citations from books and the citations in the books as we have them, best explained by the fact that written and oral transmission result in very different kinds of variants.

[39] See the entry on "John Moschus" in Chapter 3 below.

[40] Strategius, *Capture of Jerusalem*, XII; *Hist. Patriarchs* XVIII, *PO* 5, 163–64 (presumably thence to Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2.493). Cf. Bonner, "The Maiden's Stratagem."

other a Byzantine soldier.[41] The miraculous recovery by intercession with the dead of a sum of money belonging to an Arab merchant is assigned to Gabriel, abbot of Qartmin monastery (d. 648), and to Ḥabīb, bishop of Edessa (d. 707).[42] A report on Manichaeans confining a man for a year, then sacrificing him to demons and using his head for divination and sorcery, is placed in the mid-seventh and also in the mid-eighth century.[43] And a conversation with a courtier at the palace of Khawarnaq near Kufa on the evanescence of all things is imputed to both the Lakhmid ruler Nuʿmān (fl. *ca.* 430) and the Marwanid caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705).[44] Furthermore, it is recorded in both Christian and Muslim sources that the Cross at Jerusalem was buried in a vegetable garden upon news of the imminent approach of the Persian army in 614,[45] that the general Shahrbaraz defected to the Byzantines after some act of insubordination to the emperor Khusrau (591–628),[46] that the emperor Heraclius foresaw via astrology or a dream the invasion of his realm by a circumcised people and so ordered the compulsory conversion of Jews,[47] that ʿUmar I came to Jerusalem *ca.* 638 and was escorted round by the patriarch Sophronius who presented him with clean apparel,[48] and **{43}** that the emperor Leo III (717–41) tricked the Muslim general Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik into thinking that he would help him capture Constantinople.[49]

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[41] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 27 (Persian commander attempts to plunder the shrine of S. George, but his horse's hooves stick to the ground); Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* 3.IV, 291–94 ("at a time when thousands of people were mustering for an expedition" a layman promised before an icon of George in his shrine that if the saint protected him in battle, he would make a gift of his horse. When the man returned safely, he tried to give money instead, but his horse remained immovable until he ceded it to the confessor's shrine). Though the storyline is very different, one feels they are variations on a theme, especially as both sources are of *ca.* 670 (see the relevant entries in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively).

[42] See the entry on "Gabriel of Qartmin" in Chapter 4 below.

[43] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 33; *Chron. Zuqnin*, 224–26 (a longer account).

[44] Ibn al-Faqīh, *Kitāb al-buldān*, 177–78 (Nuʿmān); Ṭabarī, 2.819–21 (ʿAbd al-Malik).

[45] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 25; Ṭabarī, 1.1002. Dīnawarī, *Al-akhbār al-ṭiwāl*, 105, places the event in Alexandria.

[46] Mango, "Deux études," 105–109 (does not use the Arabic sources); Kaegi, "Heraclius, Shahrbarāz and Ṭabarī."

[47] See the entry on "Fredegar" in Chapter 6 below.

[48] Busse, "'Omar in Jerusalem," esp. 106–11.

[49] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 716–18; Ṭabarī, 2.1316 (AH 98). In this book *Syriac CS* refers to the eighth-century Syriac text, probably the work of Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785), that is a common source of Theophanes, Agapius, Michael the Syrian and the *Chronicle of 1234* (see the entries on each of these in Chapter 10 below). When *Syriac CS* is cited in this book, the full reference to each of its four dependents may be found by turning to Excursus C below, where a reconstruction of this text has been attempted, and looking under the relevant year (*s.a.*/*sub anno*).

Within the Muslim sphere this phenomenon is extremely common, with numerous variants of a single narrative theme being found in very different contexts.[50] This is clearly indicative of the work of storytellers, who indeed played a very significant role in the formation of Muslim tradition.[51] But perhaps the most blatant sign of oral activity in early Islam, as well as in the Judaism of that time, is the very terminology of cultural life, which makes heavy use of words to do with saying, speaking, reciting, repeating and so on.[52] It has been stated that there was "an increased oral element" in contemporary Christian writing, an observation based on the popularity of literature either closely linked to the spoken word, such as homilies and disputations, or springing from an oral background, such as miracle and question-and-answer collections.[53] Again, more research will need to be done before any more can be said on this important subject, and in particular it would be interesting to know how information was disseminated **{44}** across this region and the degree to which it traversed confessional divides.[54]

DIALECTIC AND DEBATE

The pagan philosopher Celsus (wr. 168) observed of the Christians that "they are divided and rent asunder, and each wants to have his own party." Centuries later the same charge was laid at Islam's door by a Christian who had become a Muslim and then recanted; called upon by the caliph Ma'mūn (813–33) to justify his apostasy, he

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[50] For example, both Heraclius and the Negus, the ruler of Ethiopia, on receiving news about Muḥammad and his religion, summon their generals (*baṭāriqa*) and indicate to them their approval of the new prophet's teaching, whereupon the generals snort (*nakharū/-at*, *tanākharū /-at*) in contempt (on the Negus see Ibn Hishām, 220–21; on Heraclius see Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* 1.2, 16; Bukhārī, 1.5; Ṭabarī, 1.1565–66; Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 6.95–96). The shared themes of imperial recognition of/military opposition to Islam suggest that the accounts, though very different, are in origin related. On the receptivity towards Islam of Heraclius and the Negus in Muslim tradition see Bashear, "The Mission of Dihya al-Kalbī," esp. 99–103, and Raven, "Islamic Texts on the Negus," respectively.

[51] See Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 215–30; cf. also the literature on the subject cited in *EP*, *s.v.* "Kāss."

[52] Pointed out most recently by Calder, *Early Muslim Jurisprudence*, 166–71, and see Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 71–189.

[53] Cameron, "New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature," 91–92, 101–102.

[54] Not uncommonly one of the authorities for a historical tradition will be a non-Muslim; thus the account of Heraclius' receptivity towards Islam by Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 748) is related from a Christian bishop whom he met in the time of 'Abd al-Malik (see the references to Ṭabarī and Iṣfāhanī in n. 50 above). Note also that Theodore Abū Qurra, *Greek Opuscula*, no. 20, is able to give a summary of "the story [circulating] among them entitled 'the pardon of Aïssa'," a reference to the tradition of the slandering of the Prophet's wife 'Ā'isha (*ḥadīth al-ifk*).

pointed to "the excess of disagreement among you."[55] Christians and Muslims were themselves all too aware of the fissiparous tendencies of their respective communities, and their strenuous efforts to promote orthodoxy and unity caused suspicion to fall on the value of verbal argumentation itself. At the Council of Nicaea in 325, when the debate was at its height, "a certain one of the confessors, a layman and an old man who had good judgement, opposed the dialecticians, and said to them: 'Did Christ and the apostles hand down to us the dialectical art?'"[56] And it was against just such an attitude that the essayist Jāḥiẓ (d. 869) felt compelled to defend this same "dialectical art" (*sināʿat al-kalām*), "despite the aversion of the world to it."[57] But though trammelled by authoritative tradition and curbed by apophatic mysticism, dialectic flourished, not least because it proved itself as a weapon against heresy. **{45}** "It is a frontier," as Jāḥiẓ put it, "and the frontier is protected; and it is a shelter, and the shelter is inviolable."[58]

The question-and-answer dialogue, allegedly originated by Aristotle and popularised by Theophrastus, was perhaps the most prevalent dialectical form in the Late Antique and Early Islamic Middle East. Its usefulness as a medium of instruction meant that it was employed in almost every area of scholarship: the religious sciences,[59] medicine, astrology and so on. This might happen in a live context – a teacher would often, for example, entertain questions after a lecture;[60] or it could serve as a purely literary device, since it offered an effective way of imparting order and clarity to an argument or a body of material.[61] Otherwise, both might be the case: the content being of oral provenance, but the structure secondary. The latter scenario seems

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[55] Lim, *Public Disputation, Power and Social Order*, 20 n. 83 (citing Origen's *Contra Celsum*, 3.XII): Celsus. Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn*, 2.180–81: Ma'mūn.

[56] Lim, *Public Disputation, Power and Social Order*, 200 (citing Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, l.VIII). The confessor's intervention is said to have been of divine instigation, "in order that God may show that the kingdom of God consists not in speeches but in virtuous action" (*ibid.*, 192, citing Ruhnus' *Ecclesiastical History*, l.III).

[57] Jāḥiẓ, *Fī ṣināʿat al-kalām*, 243, 249. Compare the disparagement of the *ahl al-jadal* by the early Abbasid poet Muḥammad ibn Yasīr al-Riyāshī (Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 12.138).

[58] Jāḥiẓ, *Fī ṣināʿat al-kalām*, 244. For an introduction to Muslim dialectic see the relevant articles of van Ess listed in Bibliography II below, and Abdel Haleem, "Early *Kalām*."

[59] The form was particularly common in this field during our period. For some examples see the entries on "Athanasius of Sinai," "Jacob of Edessa," "Ishoʿbokht of Fars" and the "Monk of Beth Ḥale" in Chapters 3, 4, 5, 11 below respectively; de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Literature after the Muslim Conquest," 547–54, 560–62; Motzki, *Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz*, 72–75. In Judaism discourses on religious matters very often begin: "May our master instruct us on… our masters have taught us…" (see, for example, those in *Pesiqta rabbati*).

[60] Lloyd, *The Anatomy of Neoplatonism*, 6–8.

[61] Thus Ishoʿbokht of Fars (fl. 770s) places his discussion of law "in the form of question and answer so that it will be most clear to those reading it" (see the entry on him in Chapter 5 below).

likely for a number of the question-and-answer collections of early Islamic times, for the issues treated, though disparate, are frequently original, evidently occasioned by the difficulties of adjusting to life under Muslim rule.[62]

The division of labour between the protagonists in the question-and-answer dialogue was strictly observed: one posed questions, the other replied.[63] In the argumentative dialogue or disputation, however, there exists, superficially at least, competitive parity. The opponent **{46}** must be allowed the chance to fight back during the contest, if only so that the fallaciousness of his views might be exposed. Again, such works range from exact recordings of staged debates to pure literary fictions, but, also as with question-and-answer dialogues, most are a combination of the two. The form in which the disputation is drafted is contrived, evident from the fact that the disputant of common creed with the author will invariably be the victor. Yet some of the content will derive from real discussion; this is particularly noticeable in early Islamic dispute texts, which are decked out with many previously rare or unknown topics.[64]

The jewel of Muslim dialectical art is the dilemmatic dialogue. Here an opponent is confronted with a number of questions which leave him no room for evasive answering and which eventually lead him either to contradict his own position or to accept that of his interrogator. In its simplest form there may be no more than one stage, as in the following:

> (The anti-Determinists are to be asked:) Tell us about who made men talk and who created speech?
>
> If they say "God," their doctrine collapses. That is because speech consists of [statements of] truth and falsehood, of belief in one God and belief in others beside Him, and the greatest falsehood is the belief in others beside God and calumniation of Him.
>
> And if they say that it is not God who created utterance and speech, that is blasphemy and unbelief and denial of what has come from Him…: "… God has given us speech, Who has given speech to all things" (Qur'an xl.21).[65]

Usually, however, at least two stages will be needed to reduce the adversary to silence:

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[62] De Menasce, "Problèmes des mazdéens dans l'Iran musulman;" Haldon, "The Works of Anastasius of Sinai," esp. 130–31.

[63] Cf. 'Umar ibn al-Farrukhān, *Masā'il* fol. 4b: "Know that questions have conditions which it is necessary for the questioned and the questioner to bear in mind before asking them and passing judgement on them." See also Maqdisī, *Bad'* 1.32–33, 50–54.

[64] For examples and discussion see the entry on "Anti-Jewish Polemicists" in Chapter 3 below and the whole of Chapter 11.

[65] Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, *Radd 'alā al-Qadarīya*, no. 7; on the dating of this work, probably late Umayyad, see Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 137–44 (replying to van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie*, 12–31).

> **{47}** (The anti-Determinists are to be asked:) Tell us about the terms of life (*al-ājāl*)*:* who fixed their times? Are they fixed [in advance] or not?
>
> If they say "God fixed them," they are in agreement with you.
>
> [And if they say that they are not fixed], say [to them]:
>
> "Can someone, then, augment or diminish them so as to advance or defer them as he wishes?"
>
> If they say "no," their doctrine collapses.
>
> And if they say "yes," then say to them: "You claim that people can bring forward what God has deferred and defer what God has brought forward, and this is a denial of what has come from God, namely His saying: 'God reprieves no soul when its term comes (Qur'an lxiii.ll).[66]

The question-and-answer dialogue might be employed for instruction, the argumentative dialogue for edification and entertainment,[67] but the dilemmatic dialogue, as is immediately obviously from the above and other examples, relates wholly to the context of inter-confessional polemic. There it proved itself a powerful instrument, for its exclusion of digressive or evasive tactics made it difficult for the defendent to retaliate. That it arose in a sectarian *milieu* is evident from a glance at its ancestry, which may be traced back to the Christological controversies raging in seventh-century Syria and late sixth-century Alexandria.[68]

{48} In keeping with the inter-disciplinary approach recommended in these last two chapters, the survey of non-Muslim sources that follows will endeavour to highlight similarities between different accounts and also to point out parallels with archaeological and Muslim reports. The very fact that these are such different types of evidence makes it all the more interesting when their testimony coincides, for their agreement often cannot be attributed to shared assumptions.

Part II.A presents those texts that include comments about the Muslims and/or their faith that are tangential to the author's purpose in writing, whether a digression or an offhand remark. The incidental nature of the comments does not guarantee that they will be favourable or objective – one can hardly call Sophronius' characterisation of the Arabs as godless barbarians a detached judgement; but they are free of the direct polemical intent found in the sources assembled in the second

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[66] Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, *Radd 'alā al-Qadarīya*, no. 10.

[67] See the examples from various Middle Eastern traditions adduced in Reinink and Vanstiphout, *Dispute Poems and Dialogues*; and see van Gelder, "The Conceit of Pen and Sword," for the Muslim tradition in particular.

[68] Cook, "The Origins of *Kalām*" and Brock, "Two Sets of Monothelete Questions to the Maximianists" (Syriac dilemmatic dialogues between Monotheletes and Diotheletes); Zimmermann, "*Kalām* and the Greeks" (Greek dilemmatic dialogues of the Chalcedonian patriarch Eulogius, 581–607, against the Monophysites). Zimmermann also sketches the development of the genre from Parmenides to the philosopher Elias (fl. *ca.* 580).

half of the survey – Sophronius' utterance is simply abuse, not an attempt to refute Islam, of which he was certainly unaware – and this can make them valuable.

Part II.B deals with texts that treat Islam in a more deliberate manner. Of course, the division between the two halves of the survey is not totally clear cut, a number of cases certainly being debateable; but it does serve to draw attention to certain points. For example, it is noticeable that almost none of the texts in Part II.B were composed before the 690s. Before this time war had been conducted solely by physical means, and a number of seventh-century sources make it clear that it was by no means obvious who was going to win. Now the battle began to be carried out on other fronts. 'Abd al-Malik's adoption of the role of champion of Islam – evident in the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock and on coinage – probably had more to do with rallying Muslims to his rule after a debilitating and divisive civil war than with making any sort of statement to the non-Muslim population of his realm, but it initiated a propaganda war between the Arab and Byzantine governments that was fought in both the literary and artistic spheres.[69] For by proclaiming Islam as "the religion of truth" which would come to "prevail over all religion," 'Abd al-Malik had demonstrated that the **{49}** Arabs were challenging not only Byzantium's political supremacy, but also its claim to be in possession of the true faith. This inevitably called forth a vehement reaction, as is evidenced by the numerous apologetic works that began to circulate after this date.[70]

Within the pages of the survey there are incorporated discussions of numerous historical and source-critical issues, which, I hope, will make it a worthwhile read as well as a reference tool. However, the reader impatient to learn the results of this foraying exercise may at this point wish to proceed directly to Part III.

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[69] For the information in this and the previous sentence see the entry on "Islam in the First Century AH" in Chapter 13 below.

[70] From the ninth century onwards we also have Jewish and Zoroastrian apologetic works (see the entries thereon in Chapter 11 below, and on Jewish texts in particular see Stroumsa, "Jewish Polemics against Islam and Christianity").

PART IIA.
INCIDENTAL REFERENCES TO ISLAM

CHAPTER 3.
GREEK SOURCES[1]

PRELUDE

{53} When the renowned holy man Theodore of Sykeon (d. 613) came to visit the patriarch Thomas (607–10) in Constantinople, the latter asked him "whether the tale about the extraordinary jumping of the little crosses during processional litanies was really true." Receiving an affirmative answer, Thomas begged for an explanation as to the significance of this wonder. After some hesitation Theodore gave his answer:

> The shaking of the crosses means many pains and perils: it means instability in our faith and apostasy, the invasion of many barbarian peoples, the shedding of much blood, universal destruction and captivity, the desolation of the holy churches, the cessation of the divine service of praise, the fall and perturbation of the empire, and very difficult times and circumstances for the state. Further, it plainly shows that the arrival of the Adversary is at hand.[2]

{54} An equally gloomy forecast was given by a certain George (d. 630s), an ascetic of the monastery of Khoziba near Jericho, who addressed his fellow brothers about the evils perpetrated by the Christians at that time:

> See that the holy Peter spoke well [when he said]: "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they had known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2 Peter ii.21). How then should God not become angry at our people? How should He not avert His face from

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[1] Greek sources of the seventh and eighth centuries are surveyed by Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, 60–67, 187–94, 671–76; Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur byzantinischer Reich*, 430–519; Karagiannopoulos, *Pēgai tēs byzantinēs historias*, 179–214; Geerard, *CPG*, 3.417–553 (nos. 7600–8228), 4.167–84 (9369–9444). One should also consult Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, though there was not much secular writing produced in our period. For clarity I shall in this book always translate *sarakēnos* as "Saracen," *hagarēnos* as "Hagarene," *ismaēlitēs* as "Ishmaelite," *araps* (*arabes*) as "Arab(s)" and *magaritēs*/*mōagaritēs* as "Muslim."

[2] Theodore of Sykeon, *Life* CXXXIV, 1.106. Some account of the *Life* is given by Margoulias, "The Lives of the Saints as Sources for Byzantine Agrarian Life."

> the worthless people who do such things? What should deter him from loosing a flood upon the world or a rain of fire and sulphur to consume the earth like Sodom and Gomorrah? I, my sons, am in fear and tremble at the misfortunes that are coming to the world because of the wickednesses we practise.[3]

The biographers of these saints, George and Anthony, were both at work *ca.* 640,[4] and one suspects that their masters' predictions were to some degree tailored to take account of the events of the 630s, when the Arabs were overrunning the Byzantine provinces. Even more striking, though for its irony rather than its prophecy, are the words of a contemporary of theirs, Theophylact Simocatta, lawyer and historian of the reign of Maurice (582–602). Narrating the plight of Khusrau II (591–628), who was ousted from his throne by insurgents and forced to entreat the help of the Byzantine emperor, Theophylact has the ambassadors of the Persian emperor say to Maurice:

> **{55}** Even if the Persians were to be deprived of power, their rule would immediately transfer to other men, for events will not tolerate lack of leadership… So what prosperity would events devolve upon the Romans if the Persians are deprived of power and transmit mastery to another nation?[5]

A CHRISTIAN APOLOGIST OF 634

One of the earliest indications of stirrings in Arabia is to be found in a Greek apologetic work entitled the *Doctrina Jacobi* ("Teachings of Jacob") and purportedly composed in Africa in July 634. The reason for its composition is closely linked with its historical milieu, namely the forced conversion in Carthage on the day of Pentecost (31 May) 632 of a number of Jews, which was carried out by the governor George on the orders of the emperor Heraclius.[6] The contemporary theologian Maximus

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[3] George of Khoziba, *Life* IV (§18), 117. Some account of the *Life* is given by Olster, "The Construction of a Byzantine Saint: George of Khoziba;" see also Chitty, *The Desert a City*, 143–67, who in the same chapter introduces other Byzantine monastic writings of the period shortly before the Arab conquests.

[4] Theodore of Sykeon, *Life* CLXVI, 1.154, predicts the length of Heraclius' reign, and the biographer says "this happened in accordance with his word." In George of Khoziba, *Life* IV (§16), 115, Modestus is mentioned as patriarch (February–December 631); *Acta sanctorum* "preface to May," l.xii, says that George flourished when "the Saracens occupied the holy city under the leadership of 'Umar, that is, in the year 636," but this may be a little late given the lack of any direct reference to the Arab conquests.

[5] Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, 4.XIII.9–13 (tr. Whitby, 121–22). The death of Khusrau in 628 is mentioned at 8.XII.13, which suggests Theophylact was writing *ca.* 630.

[6] Maximus the Confessor gives us this information in a letter addressed to John, bishop of Cyzicus (Sherwood, *Annotated Date List*, 28–30), and he expresses his anxieties about the repercussions of such a move, which he understands is being applied throughout the empire (Maximus, *Ep.* 8, "end"). Michael the Syrian 11.IV, 413/414, notes: "At this time the emperor Heraclius ordered that all the Jews in all the lands of the Roman empire, wherever they

the Confessor regarded this as a disastrous move and lamented that "apostasy will be favoured by the intercourse of these faithless converts with the Christian people." Our text seems designed to counter any such irresolution on the part of Christians and possibly also to win the souls of wavering compulsorily converted Jews.[7] The nub of the argument is given in the heading, added later: "That one should not observe the sabbath now that the Christ has appeared, **{56}** and that he who is come is indeed the Christ and not another."[8] Once this has been established by means of abundant Biblical citations, talk moves to speculation on what might be expected "now we see Rome humbled," namely the coming of the Antichrist, the tribulations of the End and the Second Advent.

The *mise en scène* is elaborated with considerable care. Jacob, a Jewish merchant from Palestine, had been on a business trip to Africa when he accidentally became embroiled in the events in Carthage and after a period of imprisonment was himself forcibly baptised. By a vision and scrutiny of the scriptures he was led to appreciate the truth of Christianity, and he now reveals the secret of his enlightenment to a number of other "newly baptised" Jews, who confide in him their doubts about their situation. They are convinced by his arguments, but then a cousin of one of them, Justus by name, arrives from Palestine and, angry at finding his relative baptised, promises to prove to them and to Jacob that they are all in error. Yet he too is soon persuaded that the Messiah has indeed come and expresses his wish to return home to convert his family.

Much attention is given to detail, thus imparting realism to the plot. Many in Jacob's audience are given names, the manner of transcription of the debates is carefully explained, and the topography of Jacob and Justus' homeland and the nature of their business ventures is narrated at some length.[9] An atmosphere of tenseness accompanies the proceedings, evoked by the fear of all present that the Christians may discover their vacillating commitment to Christ. The appeal of the tract is further enhanced by skilful development of the characters of Jacob and Justus, apparently known to each other since childhood. Jacob's reprobate youth, when he would harangue Christians at every opportunity, is highlighted and contrasted with his pre-

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might live, should become Christians;" this is confirmed by Muslim sources (see the entry on "Fredegar" in Chapter 6 below), and hinted at by two Hebrew texts which assert that Heraclius "decreed destruction/conversion (*shemad*) on Israel" (see the entry on "Simon ben Yohai" in Chapter 8 below). See also Dagron, "Juifs et chrétiens," esp. 28–32, who discusses the historical background to this text.

[7] Déroche, "Juifs et chrétiens," 268–73; Olster, *Roman Defeat*, *Christian Response*, 158–79.

[8] *Doctrina Jacobi* "title," 71. The Greek original has been preserved in a direct but acephalous version and in an abbreviated version, so the introduction has to be taken from later Arabic, Ethiopie and Slavic translations. For the transmission of the text see Déroche, "Juifs et chrétiens," 47–68.

[9] Noted by Bonwetsch, "Doctrina Iacobi," xv–xvi, and put to good use by Dan, "Shenē sōharīm yehūdīm." The attention paid to Ptolemais and Sykamina in the dialogue suggests that the author is a native of their environs (Dagron, "Juifs et chrétiens," 240–44).

sent temperament, sincere and **{57}** gentle, liking to be alone to pray and peruse the scriptures. Justus is built up as a worthy foe, fiercely attached to and knowledgeable about Judaism, and possessed of a fierce temper, threatening to strangle Jacob if he fails to convince him and to have the others burned if they give him away to the authorities. In addition, Justus provides a link with Palestine: he frequently refers to pogroms in which Jacob took part in earlier years, and tells of the hopes and fears of his countrymen and of the most recent events, particularly of "a false prophet who has appeared."

Justus had heard of this "prophet" and of how the Arabs had killed a certain *candidatus* – that is, a member of the imperial guard – from his brother Abraham in Caesarea, who reported in a letter to him:

> When the *candidatus* was killed by the Saracens, I was at Caesarea and I set off by boat to Sykamina. People were saying "the *candidatus* has been killed," and we Jews were overjoyed. And they were saying that the prophet had appeared, coming with the Saracens, and that he was proclaiming the advent of the anointed one, the Christ who was to come. I, having arrived at Sykamina, stopped by a certain old man well-versed in the scriptures, and I said to him: "What can you tell me about the prophet who has appeared with the Saracens?" He replied, groaning deeply: "He is false, for the prophets do not come armed with a sword. Truly they are works of anarchy being committed today and I fear that the first Christ to come, whom the Christians worship, was the one sent by God and we instead are preparing to receive the Antichrist. Indeed, Isaiah said that the Jews would retain a perverted and hardened heart until all the earth should be devastated. But you go, master Abraham, and find out about the prophet who has appeared." So I, Abraham, inquired and heard from those who had met him that there was no truth to be found in the so-called prophet, only the shedding of men's blood. He says also that he has the keys of paradise, which is incredible.[10]

{58} The Arab killing of a Byzantine official would very likely have roused messianic expectations and hopes among the Jews, particularly at a time when the Byzantine authorities were acting so harshly toward them, and so it is no surprise to find such a view voiced here. The writer's reaction to the news, however, is to dismiss the rumoured prophet as an impostor, a troublemaker, a shedder of blood and even the Antichrist. The passage above was evidently included to allay anxieties among the Christians provoked by Jewish reports of an Arabian prophet, and perhaps to dissuade newly baptised Jews from taking the news seriously.[11]

The apology ends with Justus and Jacob preparing to set sail from Carthage, the former contemplating martyrdom, declaring that "if the Jews and the Saracens take hold of me and cut my body into little pieces, I will not deny Christ, the son of God," and the latter entertaining ideas of a life of asceticism. Jacob finally left Car-

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[10] *Doctrina Jacobi* V.16, 209.

[11] For what else one might infer from this passage see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 3–5.

thage, we are told, "on the thirteenth of July in the seventh indiction," that is, 634.[12] It would seem sensible to take this date, or very soon after, as indicating that of the tract's completion. One could not realistically relay information on the coming of the Arabs in terms of rumours for very long after this time. Already in December 634 Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, can speak of "the wild and barbarous Saracen [sword], which is filled with every diabolical savagery."[13] There are references, common in such texts, to the length of time that the Jews "have been trampled underfoot by nations," namely 600 and 640 years, but since such statistics were usually given in round numbers and often updated by copyists, they can only ever be a rough guide to the date of the text.[14]

{59} Dagron would like to place the text in the early 640s, "when the Arab conquest may already be considered irreversible,"[15] but there is no indication of hindsight in respect of this event. And though his argument that July 634 is too early for "a religious polemic against *jihād* and the Muslim conception of paradise" may be correct, to regard Abraham's letter to Justus as such seems over-interpretation. A more cogent objection would be that the references to Rome being "somewhat diminished," "humbled," "brought low and ravaged by nations" indicate a time subsequent to the first wave of Arab attacks.[16] However, Jacob makes it clear that he is taking a rather longer perspective: "Is it as at the beginning or has it diminished" is his first question to Justus regarding Rome. "The territory of the Romans used to extend until our days from the ocean, that is from Scotland, Britain, Spain, France, Italy…," he continues, "but now we see Rome humbled." Given this perspective, one cannot but agree with him; the empire was diminished in Justinian's time, let alone that of Heraclius. Finally, one must bear in mind that the chief concern of the author and the goad for his writing is the mandatory conversion of Jews and its consequences. To place his work a decade or so after the event is to render it both irrelevant and inexplicable.

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[12] *Doctrina Jacobi* V.17, 213 (Justus on martyrdom); V.20, 215 (Jacob on monasticism); V.20, 219 (date). *Chron. Zuqnin*, 148–49, locates the incident in Jerusalem during AG 928/617, but its entries are frequently misplaced (see Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 65–69).

[13] Sophronius, *Christmas Sermon*, 507.

[14] *Doctrina Jacobi* I.22, 101 (640 years); II.6, 147 (600 years). On the basis of the former reference Nau, "La didascalie de Jacob," 715, dates the text to 640, but the author continues: "For since the Jews our fathers crucified Christ, since then until today, we are the servants and playthings of all nations." If he is counting from the Crucifixion, this would yield a date of *ca.* 680 and might refer to the date of a redaction.

[15] Dagron, "Juifs et chrétiens," 246–47. A number of scholars have, however, accepted 634 as the date of composition, most recently Thümmel, *Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre*, 232.

[16] *Doctrina Jacobi* III.8 (= Bonwetsch, III.9), 167; III.10 (= Bonwetsch, III.9), 169; IV.5 (= Bonwetsch, IV.7), 183.

A rather more intractable problem is the matter of the *candidatus*. He is named by the Slavic version as Sergius and may perhaps be identified with the Sergius in the following account:

> Sergius, who had served (the general) Nicetas, died in the following manner. The Saracens, having flayed a camel, enclosed him in the hide and sewed it up. As the skin hardened, the man who was left inside also withered and so perished in a painful manner. The charge against him was that he had persuaded Heraclius not to allow the Saracens to trade from the Roman country and send out of the **{60}** Roman state the thirty pounds of gold which they normally received by way of commercial gain; and for this reason they began to lay waste the Roman land.[17]

Very commonly this Sergius is asserted to be the Sergius, patrician of Caesarea, who, on learning of the approach of an Arab army, "assembled his own forces and called up 5000 foot-soldiers from the common folk of Samaria" and set out to meet the Arabs, but was quickly defeated and killed.[18] This incident is equated with "the battle between the Romans and the Arabs of Muḥammad in Palestine twelve miles east of Gaza" on 4 February 634, which is in its turn assumed to be the battle of Dathin narrated by Muslim tradition.[19] Since the Sergius who had served Nicetas does not seem to have died in battle, he should be distinguished from the patrician Sergius and is the more likely candidate for identification with the Sergius of our text.[20]

The *Doctrina Jacobi* distinguishes itself by its attention to narrative and topical detail, but it is a common trait of the anti-Jewish treatises of the sixth and seventh centuries that rather than simply rehearse traditional arguments and citations, they dress them up with a storyline and discussion of contemporary issues. They have become "living" literature, reflecting a changed political reality: an empire no longer tolerant of diversity, now suspicious of difference. Disputations served to demonstrate to the faithful the falsity of the dissenter's position, **{61}** whether he be heretic or non-Christian. The *Doctrina Jacobi* is unusual in apparently having the intention to invite the dissenter himself to recognise this fact, and in this respect it is a forerun-

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[17] Nicephorus, §20 (tr. Mango, 69). The notice is undated; events previous to it are the return of the Cross "in the second indiction" and the departure of Heraclius and Martina "to the eastern parts" (they leave Constantinople late April 629); the subsequent event related is the battle of Gabitha (636, if it is to be identified with the battle of Yarmuk).

[18] *Syriac CS*, s.a. 634.

[19] See the entry on "Thomas the Presbyter" in Chapter 4 below. That all these reports refer to the same event was first proposed by de Goeje, *Mémoire*, 30–34, and has been accepted by all subsequent scholars (e.g. Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 115–16; Dagron, "Juifs et chrétiens," 246 n. 105; Gil, *History of Palestine*, 38–39; Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 88). It seems to me that the equation of such heterogenous material requires caution, especially as there are inconsistencies: the Sergius who had served Nicetas does not seem to die in battle; the commander who dies in the encounter near Gaza is called *Bryrdn*, which can in no way be read as Sergius.

[20] This is also the opinion of Mango, *Nikephoros*, 187.

ner of the interconfessional debates of Abbasid times, which frequently adopted this tactic.

JOHN MOSCHUS (D. 619 OR 634)[21]

John was born in Cilicia in the mid-sixth century and first became a monk at the monastery of S. Theodosius near Jerusalem, where he met Sophronius, his life-long disciple, friend and travelling companion. Prompted by the tradition of peripatetic asceticism (*xeniteia*) and later by the incursions of the Persians, the two traversed Egypt, Syria and the Aegean, spending longer periods at Mount Sinai (*ca.* 583–93) and Alexandria (*ca.* 578–82 and 606–15) and ending up in Rome. There John compiled his great work, the *Leimōn* ("Spiritual Meadow") – commonly known by its Latin title, the *Pratum spiritual* – which is a distillation of what he and Sophronius had seen, heard and learned on their travels. When John felt death approaching, he entrusted the manuscript to Sophronius, with whom the work came to be closely associated.[22]

The *Pratum spirituale* seeks to supplement the existing tradition of the "sayings of the Fathers" (*apophthegmata patrum*) and to recall and reinstil the vigour and dedication of the early ascetic movement.[23] Accordingly, most of its 300 or so chapters are devoted to anecdotes of the feats and achievements of holy men, their victories over suffering, temptation and evil, and their acts of virtue and piety. Arabs feature **{62}** but seldom, and then only as predatory creatures whose attacks are foiled by

[21] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*, "prologue," says that John died at the beginning of the eighth indiction, which could be either 619 or 634; the former seems to me preferable (see Halkin, "Review," 287; Chadwick, "John Moschus and his Friend Sophronius the Sophist," 50–53).

[22] John of Damascus (wr. 730s) regarded Sophronius as the author (cf. *De imaginibus oratio* 1, §64; 2, §67). The earliest biography of John is found in a prologue prefixed to the *Pratum spiritual;* see also Vailhé, "Jean Mosch;" Chadwick, "John Moschus and his Friend Sophronius the Sophist;" Pattenden, "Johannes Moschus."

[23] The work is described by Baynes, "The 'Pratum Spirituale;'" for the genre see Bousset, *Apopthegmata*, and most recently Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 76–103.

the anchorite's appeal to God,[24] or at best as impure beings requiring the succour of a holy man.[25]

Since they consist largely of short narratives and were very popular literature, these collections were prone to augmentation over time. Already Photius, patriarch of Constantinople (d. 886), knew of two versions of the *Pratum spirituale*: one of 304 chapters and one of 342.[26] To the Georgian translation there is appended a group of 30 such additional stories. They divide into two distinct but coherent groups: 1–11 treat events on Cyprus and have Greek equivalents; 12–30 relate various miracles, some of which are also found in Greek.[27] The entries of the second section form "a chronological homogeneity," all seemingly falling within a period bounded by the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590–604) and the reign of Constans II (641–68).[28] Number 30 speaks **{63}** of "*our* laura of Mar Saba," and so one might attribute this cycle to a monk of that monastery who collected them *ca.* 670.

Narratives 18 and 19 of this appendix concern Sophronius in his position of patriarch of Jerusalem and are recounted on the authority of a contemporary of his, the archdeacon Theodore. Number 19 tells how:

> the godless Saracens entered the holy city of Christ our Lord, Jerusalem, with the permission of God and in punishment for our negligence, which is considerable,

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[24] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*, XXI (Saracen decapitates an ascetic but is carried off by a bird), XCIX (Saracen tries to slay the monk Ianthus but the earth swallows him up), CVII (some cameleers arrived from Arabia steal the donkey of Abba Gerasimus, but it is later recovered by this holy man's lion), CXXXIII (a pagan Saracen of Sinai goes to rob a monk but becomes paralysed for two days), CLV (three Saracens are made to relinquish their young male captive by the prayers of Abba Nicolas; note that one of the Saracens speaks to Nicolas in Greek and that the incident occurred "in the reign of our believing emperor Maurice when Nu'mān [*Namēs*], the phylarch of the Saracens, made predations"). Brief comments regarding John Moschus on the Arabs are provided by Shahid, *BASIC* 1, 597–602.

[25] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*, CXXXVI (Christian Saracen offers sex to Abba Sisinnius who reproves her and gives her food; note that he speaks to her "in Aramaic," as *ebraisti* should probably be translated).

[26] Photius, *Bibliotheca* CXCIX, 3.96. Migne's edition in the *Patrologia graeca* comprises only 219 chapters, drawn from a limited number of manuscripts. Over 150 manuscripts contain material allegedly belonging to the *Pratum spirituale*; what is genuine and what not is difficult to say until there is a critical edition. The manuscript tradition is discussed by Pattenden, "The Text of the *Pratum Spirituale*" and some examples of the variations between the recensions given by *idem*, "Some Remarks on the Text of the *Pratum*."

[27] The appendix is described by Garitte," 'Histoires édifiantes' géorgiennes," 396–401; the stories presumably reached Georgian from Greek via Arabic (*idem*, "La version géorgienne du 'Pré Spirituel,'" 174–78, 184–85).

[28] Garitte, "'Histoires édifiantes' géorgiennes," 403–406; Garitte (*ibid.*, 400–401, 405) thought that no. 29 was a translation of a story from Paul of Monemvasia (fl. tenth century), but Flusin ("L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des arabes," 19 n. 13) says that it is not an authentic writing of Paul.

> and immediately proceeded in haste to the place which is called the Capitol. They took with them men, some by force, others by their own will, in order to clean that place and to build that cursed thing, intended for their prayer and which they call a mosque (*midzgitha*).[29]

One willing participant in this task was John, archdeacon of S. Theodore the Martyr and a skilled marble-worker. Hearing of this, Sophronius summoned him one Friday and bade him not to take part in "the construction of the place which Christ has cursed," offering him double the salary paid by the Arabs if he would work instead at the church of the Anastasis. John agreed, but was discovered working again at the Capitol two days later, which impelled Sophronius to excommunicate him. Only a short time afterwards he fell from a ladder while working at a monastery and later died from his wounds "in a great distress," for he realised that "this accident only happened to me because I disobeyed the patriarch." The narrator then adduces the moral of the story, "that one should not disobey the word of a priest, which is a benediction, whatever rank he may be, and especially when it is a question of such a great pontiff."

{64} If this tale is correctly associated with Sophronius, it follows that construction on the Temple Mount began before the death of the patriarch *ca.* 639.[30] Several writers concur on the erection of a prayer place by the Muslims on the site of the Jewish Temple soon after their capture of Jerusalem *ca.* 637, but give no precise date.[31] A Syriac chronicle of the mid-eighth century maintains that the work was

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[29] John Moschus (Georgian tr.), *Pratum spirituale*, 100–102 (tr. Garitte, 414–16). Against Mango, "The Temple Mount, AD 614–638," 2–3, and Flusin, "L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des arabes," 26–28, Murphy-O'Connor, "The Location of the Capitol," argues that the Capitoline temple had been located on the site of the Holy Sepulchre and was only later connected with the Temple Mount.

[30] Von Schönborn, *Sophrone*, 97 n. 136, contests the traditional date of March 638 (chiefly based on the comment of Theophanes, 339, that *en toutois* – that is, the capitulation of Jerusalem – *apebiō Sōphronios*) and argues for March 639 (Flusin, "L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des arabes," 29, wrongly cites him for a death date of 641) on the basis of this Georgian tale, the *Passion of the Sixty Martyrs of Gaza* (see the entry thereon in Chapter 9 below) and Eutychius. The date seems plausible, but since we cannot be sure of the reliability of any of these texts, the question remains open. Busse, "Die 'Umar-Moschee," argues that 'Umar's mosque was in the east atrium of the church of the Holy Sepulchre and only later was there construction on the Temple Mount itself, but he relies too heavily on the legendary account of Eutychius.

[31] E.g. *Syriac CS*, s.a. 637–38 and 641; Sebeos, XXXI (tr. Macler, 102–103); ps.-Shenute, *Vision*, 341. Almost every source, Muslim or non-Muslim, puts the capitulation of Jerusalem after the battle of Yarmuk, so after August 636, and it seems likely that after this substantial defeat of the Byzantines Sophronius would not have refrained long from submitting to the Arabs. For what it is worth, *Passion of the Sixty Martys of Gaza*, 301, implies that Jerusalem was in Arab hands by December 637 (see Delehaye, "Passio sexaginta martyrum," 291; Guillou, "La prise de Gaza," 401). Busse, "'Omar in Jerusalem," 111–14, asserts that Jerusalem sur-

commissioned by the caliph ʿUmar when he came to the city, a journey that is assigned by most Muslim sources to AH 17/638.[32] This would fit well with the above account, though the Syriac text may well be influenced by stories told by Muslims in glorification of ʿUmar's role as **{65}** founder of Islamic Jerusalem.[33] The monk Anastasius of Sinai informs us that he had witnessed clearing work (*ekchoïsmos*) being undertaken on the Temple Mount *ca.* 660.[34] Now on Friday, 7 June 659, "there was a violent earthquake in Palestine and many places there collapsed."[35] Very likely the mosque of ʿUmar was one of the edifices affected and it was, therefore, incumbent upon Muʿāwiya to have the structure rebuilt. That both ʿUmar and Muʿāwiya undertook building projects on the Temple Mount is confirmed by certain of our sources.[36]

A fourteenth-century Berlin manuscript contains 85 tales allegedly of Moschan provenance.[37] Of these, ten are not found in Migne's edition and one, situated in Muslim-ruled Palestine, certainly does not belong to the original *Pratum spirituale*.[38]

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rendered in 635, arguing that it would not long have endured the Arab blockade mentioned by Sophronius, *Christmas Sermon*, 506, and noting that the *Chronicle of 1234* dates the city's surrender to AG 946/635. However, Sophronius simply speaks of Arab raids in the vicinity of Jerusalem, not a full-scale siege, and the *Chronicle of 1234*, as Busse neglects to mention, synchronises AG 946 with year 26 of Heraclius and AH 15, so 636. Theophanes, 339, says the Arabs had "encamped beside" (*parakathisas*) Jerusalem for two years, perhaps referring to the period from winter 634, during which there were some skirmishes near Jerusalem, culminating in a siege in winter 636. See also Abel, "La prise de Jerusalem."

[32] Caetani, *Chron.*, 200–201. The Arabic accounts of ʿUmar's visit to Jerusalem are discussed by Busse, "'Omar in Jerusalem."

[33] See Busse, "'Omar's Image as Conqueror of Jerusalem."

[34] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat.*, C3. The incident occurred, says Anastasius, "before these thirty years," and he relates it "because of those who think and say that it is the Temple of God (*naos theou*) being built now in Jerusalem," surely a reference to the Dome of the Rock completed in 691 (or slightly later if Blair, "What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?," is right).

[35] *Chron. Maronite*, 70, which further specifies "at the second hour;" such precision suggests that the report derives ultimately from an eyewitness.

[36] Simon ben Yohai, *Secrets*, 79 (ʿUmar); *Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads*, 178 (Muʿāwiya); Maqdisī, *Bad'*, 4.87 (ʿUmar and Muʿāwiya). See also the entry on "Arculf" in Chapter 6 below.

[37] Nissen, "Unbekannte Erzählungen," 351–52, discusses the place of these narratives in the Moschan corpus. The manuscript is now no. 221 in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin (see Studemund and Cohn, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften*, 1.98); for its career before this see Pattenden, "The Text of the *Pratum Spirituale*," 45–46.

[38] This tale seems to be a reworking and conflation of two earlier narratives. The first is the tale of a Jewish child who participated with some Christian boys in the eating of leftover hosts and was subsequently punished by his father, a Jewish glassblower, who shut him in his furnace. He remains unharmed after three days therein owing to the aid of a lady dressed

The narrator is the anchorite priest Basil, who became a monk at the New Laura where John Moschus had himself once stayed. Basil relates that in a populous town of Palestine, **{66}** inhabited by both Christians and Jews, some children were in the fields playing at being churchmen. A Hebrew child, son of the chief rabbi, wished to join them. When they told him that as a Jew he could not participate in their game, he offered to become a Christian. So they baptised him with some water that was found in that place, whereupon fire came down from the sky and consumed all about them. From fear they fell down and were as dead until their anxious parents discovered them three days later. The Jewish child went home to his father and when served Jewish food, refused it, saying: "I am a Christian and will not eat." His outraged father plotted to get rid of him by arranging with a bath attendant who owed him money that he throw the boy on the fire of the furnace used to heat the baths.

Now the emir (*amēras*) of the region had previously complained to the same bath attendant that the water was cold, and that if it were not hot the next time he came by, the attendant would be beheaded. When the emir arrived that day for his bath, he was furious to find the water colder than ever. The frightened attendant pleaded that he had placed triple the usual amount of wood on the fire, but when they examined the furnace they found the Jewish child in there unharmed and the fire extinguished. On interrogating the boy and learning that he had become a Christian, the emir became angry and ordered that he be put back in the furnace and the fire relit. But again the fire was put out and the boy emerged unscathed, so the emir called in the governor (*symboulos*). The procedure was repeated with the same result, whereupon the governor recognised that a miracle had occurred. He summoned the boy's father and executed him for his inhumanity and for the fact that he had made others an accomplice in his wicked plan. He also had the children who had played with the Jew brought before him and arranged for them to be placed in a monastery with stipends allotted in accordance with their role in their mock play (*dramatourgēthenta*).

These things were intended as a demonstration, concludes the narrator, "to all the pagans (*ethnesi*) who rise against us as a result of the evil intention of the iniquitous Jews towards our Lord and God and His only begotten son."[39] So not only is a Jew the villain of the piece, but as a people they are behind all the ills perpetrated against Christians. **{67}** Just as the Jewish father of the story had caused the Arab emir to move against a Christian, so in general the Jews were considered ultimately responsible for the harm worked by the Arabs against Christians.

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in purple, namely the mother of God (cf. the story of the Three Children of Babylon in Daniel iii). The boy and his mother are converted while the emperor Justinian has the father killed (Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.XXXVI, 185–86). The second is found in John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*, XCVI, and relates how some children, who were acting out the celebration of the sacrament, had their makeshift eucharist and altar consumed by divine fire.

[39] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* (Ms. Berlin gr. 221) VIII, 365.

SOPHRONIUS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM (D. CA. 639)[40]

The city of Damascus seems to have survived as a provincial centre of Hellenic culture, in Christianised form, into the seventh century. It was there that Sophronius grew up and obtained a classical education, attaining the title of "sophist" for his proficiency in rhetoric. A fellow Damascene and contemporary of his, one Isidore son of Dionysius, excelled in philosophy, a subject for which his family had been renowned since the time of their forebear Nicholas of Damascus, the teacher of Herod and of the sons of Anthony and Cleopatra.[41] And it was likewise in Damascus that the theologians and hymnographers Andrew of Crete (d. *ca.* 720) and John of Damascus (wr. 730s) were born and raised.[42] Thereafter, as the latter two authors were also to do, Sophronius set out for Palestine in order to pursue his studies further. He halted first at the monastery of S. Theodosius near Jerusalem where he was befriended by John Moschus, who acted as his instructor (*didaskalos*) and spiritual father (*patēr pneumatikos*) as well as his companion.[43] In Alexandria Sophronius delved deeper into Greek wisdom (ca. 578–83), studying philosophy, rhetoric and maybe some medicine, but subsequently returned to Palestine to become a monk at S. Theodosius. He and John then continued their travels throughout the Near East until the Persian invasion forced them to seek refuge at Rome in 615.

{68} After John's death in 619 Sophronius returned to S. Theodosius monastery, where he revised the *Pratum spirituale* compiled by John, wrote a *Life* of the recently deceased Alexandrian patriarch John the Almsgiver (d. 620),[44] and composed a number of poems in a classical style (*anacreontica*), one lamenting the Persian sack of Jerusalem.[45] At some point in the 620s Sophronius journeyed to North Africa.[46] There he met the monk Maximus the Confessor, and the two formed a deep friend-

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[40] Sophronius' life and works are treated fully by von Schönborn, *Sophrone*, 5398, 99–117, and the identification of Sophronius the sophist with Sophronius the patriarch is confirmed (*ibid*., 239–42), deciding the question considered earlier by Vailhé, "Sophrone le sophiste et Sophrone le patriarche."

[41] Sophronius, *Miracles* no. 54, *PG* 3621D (= Marcos, 368). Sophronius' pride in his native city is illustrated by the laudation which he prefixes to this miracle.

[42] Pointed out by Bouvy, *Poètes et mélodes*, 170–72, and picked up again more recently by Sahas, "Cultural Interaction during the Umayyad Era."

[43] Sophronius so designates John in his *Miracles* no. 70, *PG* 87, 3668B (= Marcos, 396). In the course of this miracle, which records the cure of an eye complaint of Sophronius himself, the latter records his upbringing in Damascus, adoption of monasticism at S. Theodosius and stay in Alexandria (*ibid*., 3665A-B [= 395]).

[44] A paraphrase of this *Life* has survived (see under Sophronius in Bibliography I below).

[45] This poem (no. 14) and two others on Jerusalem (nos. 19 and 20) are commented upon by Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, 226–31. For an analysis of Sophronius' *anacreontica* see Bouvy, *Poètes et mélodes*, 169–82, who points out that some were probably composed in Sophronius' youth.

[46] See Maximus the Confessor, *Diffloratio 74 ex epistola eiusdem*, *PG* 91, 142A.

ship which was to see them through the difficult years ahead, when they were called upon to play leading roles in the disputes then convulsing the Christian world. In the autumn of 633 Sophronius travelled to Jerusalem, where he was subjected to "great constraint and force on the part of the beloved clerics of God, pious monks, faithful laymen and all the citizens of the holy city of Christ," who wished him to fill the patriarchal seat that had now been vacant for two years.[47] In this capacity Sophronius fought the doctrines of Monoenergism and Monotheletism propounded by Heraclius and Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople (610–38).[48] Amidst all this theological controversy, plague and earthquake and invasion assailed the Byzantine world, yet this served little to divert the attention of church leaders. Indeed, it spurred them to greater efforts, for it was precisely because of these false beliefs and schisms that the Christian community was thus afflicted, as is asserted by almost every writer on the subject in this period.[49] Hence, though they may make mention of the Arabs, they do **{69}** so only briefly and only ever tangentially to or in corroboration of the main task in hand.

As patriarch of Jerusalem during the first wave of Arab attacks, Sophronius was directly affected by their activities. His first remarks are found in his long synodical letter. This document unfortunately bears no date. In a letter to Pope Honorius, also undated, Sergius relates that after contesting Cyrus' proclamation of union between the Chalcedonian and Monophysite churches in Egypt on the basis of "a single theandric energy" in Christ (June 633), Sophronius had come to him in Constantinople and they had decided upon an interdiction of any talk of one or two energies of Christ (*psēphos*), which he had then communicated to Cyrus and confirmed by letter to Sophronius. The latter had set off by sea and was now patriarch of Jerusalem, although, says Sergius, "I have not yet received from him the customary synodical letter."[50] Allowing time for travelling, this suggests that Sergius' letter was written in late 633 or more probably early 634, and Sophronius' synodical letter perhaps as late as the summer of 634. The latter communiqué is above all a confession and restatement of the Chalcedonian faith, composed in reaction to the promulgation of Monoenergism. It concludes with an extensive list of heretics requiring to be anathematised, and then in the final paragraph, amid the valedictions, Sophronius expresses his hope that God may grant to "our Christ-loving and most gentle emperors:"

> a strong and vigorous sceptre to break the pride of all the barbarians, and especially of the Saracens who, on account of our sins, have now risen up against us

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[47] Sopronius, *Ep. synodica*, *PG* 87, 3149B–C.

[48] The controversy is documented by Murphy and Sherwood, *Constantinople II et III*, 133–260, 303–12; brief discussion is given by Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 206–10, 213–14, and most recently by Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, 333–73.

[49] For some examples see the entry on the "Tool of God's Wrath" in Chapter 12 below.

[50] *Concilia sacra*, 11.532C–D; the letter occupies 11.529–37.

> unexpectedly and ravage all with cruel and feral design, with impious and godless audacity. More than ever, therefore, we entreat your Holiness to make urgent petitions to Christ so that he, receiving these favourably from you, may quickly quell their mad insolence and deliver these vile creatures, as before, to be the footstool of our God-given emperors.[51]

{70} The patriarch's next comment comes a few months later in December of 634. Arab raids had prevented the usual Christmas pilgrimage to Bethlehem, and Sophronius was forced to give his Nativity sermon in Jerusalem. He first expresses his pleasure that Christmas, a holy day in itself, was this year doubly blessed by its occurrence on a Sunday,[52] and exults that because of the Nativity death was now vanquished. For our part, we should strive to be worthy of God's bounty towards us, he continues, bringing gifts of faith and good works as the shepherds and Magi brought their gifts to Jesus at Bethlehem. This provides the cue for Sophronius to discuss current events and use them to drive home his message:

> We, however, because of our innumerable sins and serious misdemeanours, are unable to see these things, and are prevented from entering Bethlehem by way of the road. Unwillingly, indeed, contrary to our wishes, we are required to stay at home, not bound closely by bodily bonds, but bound by fear of the Saracens.[53]

We are like Adam banned from paradise, though "we do not see the twisting flaming sword, but rather the wild and barbarous Saracen [sword], which is filled with every diabolical savagery."[54] We are like Moses forbidden to enter the promised land. And our plight also resembles that of David:

> As once that of the Philistines, so now the army of the godless Saracens has captured the divine Bethlehem and bars our passage there, threatening slaughter and destruction if we leave this holy city and dare to approach our beloved and sacred Bethlehem.[55]

The answer, Sophronius tells his congregation as he reaches the crux of his homily, is to repent and do God's will, for:

> **{71}** If we were to live as is dear and pleasing to God, we would rejoice over the fall of the Saracen enemy and observe their near ruin and witness their final de-

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[51] Sophronius, *Ep. synodica*, *PG* 87, 3197D–3200A. For an elucidation of the theological content of the letter see von Schönborn, *Sophrone*, 201–24. Olster, *Roman Defeat*, *Christian Response*, 99–115, discusses Sophronius' attitude towards the Byzantine empire and Arab victory.

[52] It is this fact that gives us the date of 634 for the sermon.

[53] Sophronius, *Christmas Sermon*, 506.

[54] *Ibid.*, 507.

[55] *Ibid.*, 514.

> mise. For their blood-loving blade will enter their hearts, their bow will be broken and their arrows will be fixed in them.[56]

For did not God become man for our sake and suffer on our behalf, asks Sophronius, who also takes the opportunity in this sermon to affirm orthodox doctrine:

> He was true God and God's son. His nature was one with the Father, while he showed himself in appearance as a man like us. In two natures did he appear, as God and as man, yet in no way separated. He remains one Christ, no alteration or adulteration touches him, no cleavage or division.[57]

The patriarch's last and most detailed description of the Arab attacks appears in his sermon on the Holy Baptism delivered on the feast of the Epiphany, probably in the year 636 or 637.[58] The bulk of the homily is devoted to elucidating the significance of Jesus' baptism at the hands of John. It was, says Sophronius, an encounter between the Law and the Grace; the former could not cure the disease incurred by mankind in paradise, but it could, for those who looked beyond its literal message, give instruction about Christ. And the latter was the goal of the Law, for Christ took our place in the accomplishment of the Law, which he himself had given, and he alone realised its fulfilment. So "the old and ancient has now passed away and all has become new through God, by the Grace of Christ."[59] The baptism of Jesus is also revealing about the nature of God's omnipotence. Thinking in traditional terms, John worried whether he would not be burned if he came into contact with the divinity, but, as Jesus states in his reply: "If **{72}** you say I am God all-powerful, how would I not be able to do this in such a way that I do not burn you with the fire of my divine power that may burn all, you who baptise at my command and not out of presumptuousness?"[60] Furthermore, Christ's baptism confirms to us that Jesus is both God and man, for the Father himself witnessed that "Christ is of the same divinity as the begetter,"[61] and yet "how could he have been baptised were he incorporeal, and how could he have bowed his head beneath the Baptist's hand had he not a body of like substance to ours?"[62]

After such reflections Sophronius changes tack and proceeds to catalogue the Arabs' atrocities and victories at length, since this gives an additional urgency to his

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[56] *Ibid*., 515.

[57] *Ibid*., 509.

[58] This sermon was usually reserved for Epiphany, the feast of Christ's baptism; repeated Byzantine defeats are mentioned, but not the siege or surrender of Jerusalem, so 6 December 636 or 637 is the most likely, though 635 is also possible.

[59] Sophronius, *Holy Baptism*, 155–56.

[60] *Ibid*., 158.

[61] *Ibid*., 159, referring to Matthew iii.17 ("This is my Son with whom I am well pleased").

[62] Sophronius, *Holy Baptism*, 162.

entreaty to his listeners to rue and eschew their evil deeds, which have occasioned Jesus' displeasure and wrath:

> But the present circumstances are forcing me to think differently about our way of life, for why are [so many] wars being fought among us? Why do barbarian raids abound? Why are the troops of the Saracens attacking us? Why has there been so much destruction and plunder? Why are there incessant outpourings of human blood? Why are the birds of the sky devouring human bodies? Why have churches been pulled down? Why is the cross mocked? Why is Christ, who is the dispenser of all good things and the provider of this joyousness of ours, blasphemed by pagan mouths (*ethnikois tois stomasi*) so that he justly cries out to us: "Because of you my name is blasphemed among the pagans," and this is the worst of all the terrible things that are happening to us. That is why the vengeful and God-hating Saracens, the abomination of desolation clearly foretold to us by the prophets, overrun the places which are not allowed to them, plunder cities, devastate fields, burn down villages, set on fire the holy churches, overturn the sacred monasteries, **{73}** oppose the Byzantine armies arrayed against them, and in fighting raise up the trophies [of war] and add victory to victory. Moreover, they are raised up more and more against us and increase their blasphemy of Christ and the church, and utter wicked blasphemies against God. These God-fighters boast of prevailing over all, assiduously and unrestrainably imitating their leader, who is the devil, and emulating his vanity because of which he has been expelled from heaven and been assigned to the gloomy shades. Yet these vile ones would not have accomplished this nor seized such a degree of power as to do and utter lawlessly all these things, unless we had first insulted the gift [of baptism] and first defiled the purification, and in this way grieved Christ, the giver of gifts, and prompted him to be angry with us, good though he is and though he takes no pleasure in evil, being the fount of kindness and not wishing to behold the ruin and destruction of men. We are ourselves, in truth, responsible for all these things and no word will be found for our defence. What word or place will be given us for defence when we have taken all these gifts from him, befouled them and defiled everything with our vile actions?[63]

The Arabs who were referred to as barbarians and godless (*atheoi*) in the *Christmas Sermon* are now portrayed as God-hating (*theomiseis*)[64] and God-fighters (*theomachoi*), who insult the cross, Jesus and the name of God, and whose leader is the devil. But the polemic comes only at the end of the oration, again serving merely as fodder for the patriarch's homiletic cannon, as a handy and vivid example of why one should repent and reform. The appearance of the Arabs is not of interest in itself –

[63] *Ibid*., 166–67.

[64] It could also be "hated by God," but consider the name of "God-killers" applied by Christians to Jews.

Sophronius assumes it is just another in a very long succession of Arab raids – it is its significance that counts, its indication of Jesus' dissatisfaction with his people.

POPE MARTIN I (649–55)[65]

{74} Martin was born to wealthy parents of Perugia in the province of Tuscany, and they saw to it that he enjoyed an excellent education, which aided his rise through the church ranks to the position of papal legate in Constantinople, and subsequently to pope in Rome. The Roman church had become increasingly resentful of imperial interference in their affairs since the mid-sixth century, and when Martin was elected and consecrated, relations were at an all-time low. Realising the need for greater uniformity of belief in the eastern provinces after a period of Persian occupation (*ca.* 613–28), Heraclius and his patriarch at Constantinople, Sergius, had attempted to find and impose common ground under the banner of one energy (Monoenergism) and one will (Monotheletism) in Christ. Though meeting with some success in the East and initially accepted by pope Honorius I (625–38), the innovations were vigorously opposed by the two influential figures Sophronius and Maximus the Confessor. Popes John IV (640–42) and Theodore (642–49) gave them their support and denounced the new doctrines. Despite the dangers inherent in defying imperial authority, Martin quickly convened a synod at which an anathematisation of Monotheletism and its three main exponents – patriarchs Sergius, Pyrrhus (638–41, 654) and Paul II (641–53) – was drawn up. This Lateran Synod of 649 was another milestone on the road to East-West separation and earned for Martin imprisonment and exile.[66]

In the meantime, Byzantine generals were fighting a losing battle against Arab troops who, using the Syrian and Negev-Sinai deserts as conduits, were able to spread rapidly throughout the Middle East and establish a hold there. Far removed from these events, Martin himself never mentions the Arabs except to deny that he ever had any dealings with them. The rebuttal occurs in a letter composed upon his arrest in June 653 and addressed to his friend Theodore, a monk at **{75}** the Spoudaios monastery in Jerusalem, averring that he was neither a heretic nor a traitor:

> At no time did I send letters to the Saracens nor, as some say, a statement (*tomus*) as to what they should believe; neither did I ever despatch money, except only to

[65] Martin's letter accompanying the Acts of the Lateran Council of 649 was written in Greek (Riedinger, *Concilium Lateranense*, ix, xvii–xviii), *as* may well have been many of those concerned with the East, including the one quoted in this entry. On his life see *Liber pontificalis*, no. 76; Mann, *Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages*, 385–405; Accademia Tudertina, *Martino I Papa.*

[66] The issues and consequences of the controversy are well brought out by Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 183–219, 250–90.

> those servants of God travelling to that place for the sake of alms, and the little which we supplied to them was certainly not conveyed to the Saracens.[67]

The accusation of complicity with the Arabs was of course an obvious one to level at a figure one wished to discredit, since at that time it meant high treason and betrayal of the imperial cause. It was also an easy matter to impute such a charge to Martin, for the Monothelete controversy had compelled him to become heavily involved in the affairs of the Eastern church, writing letters to clerics in what was then Arab-occupied land and even appointing a vicar there – one John, bishop of Philadelphia ('Amman) – to be his agent in the East.[68] Two years later Maximus was called to trial to answer a similar charge, that of having surrendered Egypt and Africa to the Saracens.[69]

Though we are obliged to regard this report with extreme suspicion, it is worth bearing in mind that attempts certainly were made to come to understandings with the Arabs in the same fashion as with other "barbarians." Cyrus, patriarch and governor of Egypt, wished to pay tribute to "Ambros, phylarch of the Saracens" and recommended that: "The Augusta Eudokia or another of the emperor's daughters should be offered in marriage (to Ambros) with a view to his being consequently baptised in the holy bath and becoming a Christian."[70] Again, **{76}** John Kataias, governor of Osrhoene, "sought out Iyad bar Ghanm at Qinnasrin and agreed to give him 100,000 denarii a year for the whole of Mesopotamia if the Arabs would stay on the west bank of the Euphrates," for which action, however, John incurred the wrath of Heraclius and was deposed.[71] For a long time to come, collusion with the Arabs was the worst sort of offence in Byzantine eyes and such words as "Saracen-lover" and "Saracen-minded" entered their vocabulary as terms of abuse and derision.[72]

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[67] Martin, *Ep.* 14, *PL* 87, 199A (= *PL* 129, 587C). Peeters, "Une vie greque du S. Martin I," shows that there are inconsistencies in place and time among the documents concerning Martin's arrest, which makes him suspect tampering by Anastasius the Librarian (wr. 870s), the transmitter of Martin's letters. Devréesse, "Le texte grec de l'Hypomnesticum de Théodore Spoudée," accounts for some of the discrepancies and indicates that the anonymous Greek *Life* relied upon by Peeters is itself often at fault. See further Rotter, *Abendland und Sarazenen*, 182–94.

[68] Martin, *Ep.* 5–8, *PL* 87, 154–67.

[69] Maximus, *Relatio motionis* §1, *PG* 90, 112A–B.

[70] Nicephorus, §23 (tr. Mango, 73). See on this Nau, "La politique matrimoniale de Cyrus," and the entry on the "Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 below.

[71] *Syriac CS*, s.a. 637–38.

[72] "Saracen-minded" (*sarrakēnophrōn*) *was* bandied around during the debate over icons, being applied to John of Damascus (*Concilia sacra*, 13.356), Beser (*ibid.*, 12.269; Theophanes, 414) and Leo III (*ibid.*, 405). Note also how the Muslims' official name for themselves, *muhājir* (*magaritēs* in Greek), soon gave rise to many derogatory terms among Greek and Latin-speakers (Kahane, "Die Magariten").

MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR (D. 662)[73]

Maximus grew up near Tiberias and at an early age entered the monastery of Mar Chariton, south of Bethlehem. The Persian invasion obliged him to flee Palestine, first to Asia Minor and Crete, then to North Africa, where he arrived in the 620s and came into contact with numerous other refugees. In particular, he came under the influence of Sophronius, who awakened in him an awareness of the danger of the new heresy just beginning to be disseminated in the Christian world. Upon the death of his friend and mentor Maximus carried on the struggle, defending "my blessed master, my father and teacher" against those who "murmur here and there that he had wandered into error, whereas he was teaching and preaching with wisdom the divine dogmas of the catholic church."[74] In the end the fight cost him his life; he was twice **{77}** interrogated in 655 and 656, brought to trial in 662 and died in exile in the same year.

Maximus had resided in Africa since *ca.* 628, moving to Rome late 645 or early 646 in order to wage more effectively the battle for right belief, and so was less in touch or less concerned with events in the East than Sophronius. Indeed, out of his voluminous writings we find only one brief reference to the Arab incursions.[75] It occurs in a letter written to Peter, governor of Numidia, then in Alexandria, requesting that the Alexandrian deacon Cosmas may, if need be, avail himself of Peter's good offices with "the God-honoured pope," namely Patriarch Cyrus.[76] The main business of the letter over, Maximus is about to end with a customary note of cau-

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[73] Maximus' biography is complicated by the fact that there are considerable discrepancies between the Greek *Lives* (see Halkin, *BHG*[3], 2.106–107, nos. 1233m–1236d) and a Syriac *Life* of the seventh century (for discussion see the entry on "George of Resh'aina" in Chapter 4 below). Garrigues, "La personne composée du Christ d'après Saint Maxime le Confesseur," and Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, offer a good introduction to Maximus' life and ideas; de Vocht, "Maximus Confessor," 303–304, gives a recent survey of the extensive bibliography on Maximus.

[74] Maximus, *Ep.* 13, *PG* 91, 533A; *Diffloratio 74 ex epistola eiusdem*, *PG* 91, 142A. For Maximus' relations with Sophronius see Sherwood, *Annotated Date List*, 28–30.

[75] Some writers (most recently Olster, *Roman Defeat*, *Christian Response*, 88) have claimed that Maximus makes a reference to Arab incursions in his letter of 632 to John, bishop of Cyzicus (see n. 6 above). However, Maximus is here speaking of carnal thoughts (*Ep.* 8, *PG* 91, 444), which he first compares to the wounds inflicted by robbers in Luke x.34, then to the Arabian wolves in Habakkuk i.8, Arabia being the west, i.e. the flesh, which is the enemy of the spirit. Thereafter Maximus becomes more specific (*ibid.*, 445), asking John to inform him "if it is true that all threat has receded of the physical barbarians (i.e. the Persians) on whose account I travelled such a long distance by sea, attached *as* I was to my life." I am very grateful to Professor Cyril Mango for clarifying this point for me.

[76] Maximus, *Ep.* 14, *PG* 91, 533–44 (the extracts cited are from 537–41). The Arab invasions have evidently begun, but not yet reached Alexandria, which places the letter between 634 and 640 (Sherwood, *Annotated Date List*, 40–41). The following extract is also translated and discussed by Dagron, "Juifs et chrétiens," 39–41.

tion, advising that "in addition to God's commandments, we should be vigilant and pray, lest we are caught by the snares of temptations… for if we persevere in our prayer we shall attract God's saving grace to us… and show ourselves victorious over every contrary power." But then, contemporary events coming into his mind, he goes on to say that such action is particularly required at the present time when circumstances are so grave:

> For indeed, what is more dire than the evils which today afflict the world? What is more terrible for the discerning than the unfolding events? What is more pitiable and frightening for those who endure them? To see a barbarous people of the desert overrunning another's lands as though **{78}** they were their own; to see civilisation itself being ravaged by wild and untamed beasts whose form alone is human.

This angry outburst against the Arabs lasts but a few lines; the sting of Maximus' venom is reserved for the Jews against whom he fulminates for over a page:

> To see the Jewish people, who have long delighted in seeing flow the blood of men, who know no other means of pleasing God than destroying His creation… who deem themselves to be serving God well by doing precisely what He detests, who are the most deprived of faith in the world and so the most ready to welcome hostile forces… who announce by their actions the presence of the Antichrist since they ignored that of the true Saviour… this people who are the master of falsehood, the agent of crime, the enemy of truth, the savage persecutor of the faith… What is more terrifying, I say, for the eyes and ears of Christians than to see a cruel and alien nation authorised to raise its hand against the divine inheritance? But it is the multitude of sins committed by us that has allowed this.

In Maximus' view the fears that he held in 632 over Heraclius' policy of forced baptism of Jews – "that the apostasy expected according to the apostle might well begin with the mixing of these people with the faithful" and "that that might well appear as the clear and sure sign of the famous end of all things"[77] – were now coming ever closer to realisation. The Arabs are simply extras in the eschatological drama with the Jews occupying the leading role.

ANTI-JEWISH POLEMICISTS OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY

As Arab invasion followed Persian occupation, the Christians of the Byzantine Near East must have felt increasingly hounded and demoralised. Political supremacy was their most demonstrative argument for and guarantee of their superiority over other faiths. Without it, the **{79}** jibe they used constantly to aim at the Jews, that they were a subject people with whom God was angry, would lose its sting and could

[77] Maximus, *Ep.* 8, "end;" the expected apostasy is a reference to 2 Thessalonians ii.3.

easily be turned against them.[78] "We have not been condemned to Jewish lamentation nor been reproached by the shame of captivity at the hands of brigands," gloats Domitianus, bishop of Melitene, in 590, when the city of Martyropolis was restored to the Romans.[79] But little more than half a century later this boast had been turned on its head. In a late seventh century Greek apologetic work, known as the *Trophies of Damascus*, the Jewish disputant counters the mockery of his Christian antagonist with the following retort: "If things are as you say, how is it that enslavements are befalling you? Whose are these devastated lands? Against whom are so many wars stirred up? What other nation is [so much] fought as the Christians?"[80] And continuing Arab domination of the Byzantine provinces soon led to the question being posed even by Christians: "How is it evident that the Christians have a faith superior to all the faiths under heaven?"[81]

Churchmen responded with a volley of anti-Jewish tracts designed to redress the polemical balance and to revive the spirits of their disillusioned flock.[82] Their tactic was to reverse the formula that Christian **{80}** truth was validated by imperial victory, stressing instead that the rites of Christianity still prevailed in the holy places and throughout much of the world,[83] that the church remained vigorous, and argu-

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[78] The jibe still features in Anastasius of Sinai, *Dialogue against the Jews*, *PG* 89, 1221A–B = *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo* IX, 59–60; *ibid.* XVI, 78–79; *Trophies of Damascus* II.2, 217–20. These three works are related and have been studied by Thümmel, *Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre*, 253–68, who concludes that Anastasius of Sinai's *Dialogue*, which is effectively a manual for countering Jewish arguments, was composed in the third quarter of the seventh century. Later, but still in the seventh century, it was reworked into a debate, namely the *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo* (another reworking is represented by question no. 137 of the so-called *Questions to Antiochus Dux* in *PG* 28, 684–700), and also was drawn upon by the author of the *Trophies of Damascus*. See further Déroche, "La polémique anti-judaïque," 281–82; Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 221–23, 231–35.

[79] Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, 4.XVI.16 (tr. Whitby, 129).

[80] *Trophies of Damascus* II.3.1, 220. On this text see Bardy, "Les trophées de Damas;" Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 162–66; Waegemann, "Les traités *Adversus Judaeos*," 309–13; Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos Texte*, 449–50; Cameron, "The *Trophies of Damascus*."

[81] Questions to Antiochus Dux no. 42, PG 28, 624B.

[82] Listed in Geerard, *CPG*, 3.463 (no. 7772), 3.465–68 (7790, 7793–7802, 7815); briefly described in Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 151–80, and Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos Texte*, 437–69. They are discussed by Olster, *Roman Defeat*, *Christian Response*, 116–37, as examples of imperial apologetic by Syrian Melkites. An introduction to the general context of sixth-eighth century Byzantine polemic is given by Cameron, "Disputations, Polemical Literature and the Formation of Opinion in the Early Byzantine Period," 99–108; *eadem*, "Texts as Weapons: Polemic in the Byzantine Dark Ages."

[83] E.g. "What place out of those God gave to you do you hold today? Rather all have been taken from you and He has given them to us. For if you say Mount Sinai, where you received the law though took no notice of it, Christ is glorified there today. And if you say

ing that this was proof that the empire would soon recover itself and that God still favoured the Christians. The very first words of the *Trophies of Damascus* – "Of the divine and invincible church of God" – strike this defiant note. The author is aware that "others" hold Jerusalem, but asserts that "as long as the head and the empire remain firm, all the body will renew itself with ease," and he proclaims Damascus as "the illustrious city beloved of Christ."[84] In the face of the Jew's stinging reply quoted above, the Christian is unabashed: "This is the most astounding thing, that though embattled, the church has remained invincible and indestructible, and while all strike out against it, the foundation has remained unshaken."[85] And this same tack is pursued with great **{81}** vigour in two other treatises, Anastasius of Sinai's *Dialogue against the Jews* and the anonymous *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo*:

> Do not say that we Christians are today afflicted and enslaved. This is the greatest thing, that though persecuted and fought by so many, our faith stands and does not cease, nor is our empire abolished, nor are our churches closed. But amid the peoples who dominate and persecute us, we have churches, we erect crosses, found churches and engage in sacrifices.[86]

A second sensitive subject for the Christians was veneration of images, and justification of this practice is another salient feature of the disputations of the seventh century. Leontius of Neapolis' *Apology*,[87] the *Trophies of Damascus*, Anastasius of Sinai's

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the Jordan, where your people then crossed, Christ was baptised there and he is glorified by us there. And if you say Jerusalem and Zion, Christ was crucified there and his sufferings are celebrated there today. Or if you say the Mount of Olives… Bethlehem… But why do I say Bethlehem, Zion and Jordan; traverse the West, survey the East, scan all the [lands] under heaven – the Britannic islands, those furthest western regions of the world – and you will find the [rites] of the Jews and Hellenes antiquated and annihilated, but those of Christ given credence, honoured and confirmed" (Anastasius of Sinai, *Dialogue against the Jews*, 1221B–C = *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo* IX, 60; cf. *Trophies of Damascus* II.2.2, 217–18, and nn. 141–42 below). Note that it is not said that the Christians hold any of these places, but that "Christ is glorified there today."

[84] *Ibid.* II.2.4, 220; II.3.4, 222; "title," 189.

[85] *Ibid.* II.3.4, 222. Cf. also IV.5.8: "Does [not] the church stand to the ends of the earth, yes or no? Are [not] the cross and Christ worshipped in all the nations, yes or no? Have [not] the sick, believing and unbelieving, sat down by the relics of saints and been cured? Has a tyrant or king or ruler or any authority been able to terminate our faith since the advent of Christ? Not at all. Has the foundation fallen since it was placed? Far from it. Has the church been shaken by the hand of man? Far from it."

[86] Anastasius of Sinai, *Dialogue against the Jews*, *PG* 89, 1221C–D = *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo* IX, 60–61. Thümmel, *Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre*, 260–61, argues convincingly that the former text is by Anastasius; on the latter text see McGiffert, *Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew*, 28–47.

[87] Described by Baynes, "The Icons before Iconoclasm," 230–36; Gendle, "Leontius of Neapolis."

Dialogue against the Jews, the *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo*, the treatises of Jerome of Jerusalem and Stephen of Bostra – all include at least a brief defence of worship of the cross and of icons.[88] The thesis is largely the same in each: the images are not themselves objects of adoration, but are reverenced for what they remind one of and for what they signify. That it was felt necessary to repeat this message, however, suggests that Christianity was pushed onto the defensive by its more iconoclastic rivals, Judaism and Islam, and by its own lack of self-confidence.[89]

The *Trophies of Damascus* also treats circumcision and direction of prayer. Both these themes and veneration of objects feature in later **{82}** Christian anti-Muslim tracts,[90] and one wonders whether their presence in the *Trophies of Damascus* indicates that its author already had some knowledge of Islam. It is not necessary that this should be so, since each topic is of relevance to discussion with Jews, but the appearance of all three together is suggestive. And this impression is reinforced by the consideration of the same items by two other writers of the later seventh century, namely Jacob, bishop of Edessa (684–88), and the author of the work entitled *Questions to Antiochus Dux*, which is attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373), but bears evidence of being, in part at least, a product of the seventh century.[91] This unprecedented interest in these three issues is best accounted for by assuming that the inhabitants of the former Byzantine provinces[92] took note of the fact that the newly victorious Arabs were, like the Jews, circumcised,[93] praying towards the south and contemptuous of images, and began to raise questions about the relationship of imperial defeat to Christian practice, and perhaps to ponder whether the Christians

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[88] References given by Déroche, "La polémique anti-Judaïque," 278–80, and see the literature cited in n. 82 above. The relevant sections of each work are edited, translated and discussed by Thümmel, *Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre*, 127–49, 231–40, 340–67 (nos. 70–77).

[89] See the entry on "Germanus" in this chapter.

[90] All three topics already feature in the mid-eighth century *Disputation* of a monk of Beth Ḥale (see the entry thereon in Chapter 11 below); note that they are also treated by John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* 4.XII, 4.XVI, 4.XXV (LXXXV, LXXXIX, XCVIII).

[91] Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 14, fol. 124a (direction of prayer); *Replies to Addai*, no. 96 ("why do we prostrate before images?"); *Questions to Antiochus Dux* nos. 37 (direction of prayer), 38 (circumcision), 39–41 (images), *PG* 28, 617D–624B. For information on the latter text see the entry on "Anastasius of Sinai" in this chapter. The relevant part of Jacob's letter to John the Stylite is translated in the entry on "Sacred Direction in Islam" in Chapter 13 below.

[92] In *Trophies of Damascus* III.7.6–7, 252, *Questions to Antiochus Dux* no. 37, *PG* 28, 620B, and Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 14, fol. 124a, it is asked why the Jews pray south (cf. *Chron. 1234*, 1.230, on the Muslims praying south). Since the Jews pray towards Jerusalem, the questioners must be from Syria, Phoenicia or possibly northern Palestine.

[93] Or at least they were regarded as a people who practised circumcision; cf. the anecdote about Heraclius dreaming that his empire would be laid waste by a circumcised race (see the entry on "Fredegar" in Chapter 6 below).

might not be the ones in error.[94] Modern scholars often ask why Christian authorities **{83}** did not then refute the Muslims directly instead of subsuming them under the rubric of the Jews. It is, however, doubtful whether the Christians considered the Muslims a religious threat from the beginning; rather their military triumphs and their practices lent weight to the arguments of the Jews, who, freed of Byzantine rule, were in a position to go on the offensive.[95] Furthermore, the Jews were both an easier and more familiar enemy; the Christians could at least boast some sort of an empire, and they understood the Jews' scriptural position as well as having a large corpus of disputational material upon which they could draw.[96]

When composing such texts, an author would often simply insert topical references and discussions into earlier treatises or flesh them out with older arguments and citations, frequently with very little editing. Consequently, these writings can be very difficult to date. For example, amidst remarks on Christian defeats the Jewish interlocutor in the *Trophies of Damascus* is invited to consider how the holy places and the extremities of the earth, including Britain, are held by the Christians.[97] All one can hope to do is to search for indications that might allow one **{84}** to isolate the different layers of redaction. Thus Anastasius of Sinai tells us in his *Dialogue against the Jews* that:

> No emperor of the Christians has ever been given up to death by the barbarians, even though so many nations have fought the empire. Not only the emperor [himself], but they also were unable to eliminate his picture with the cross from

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[94] In the course of its reply to the question: "For what reason, when Christ was circumcised, are we not circumcised like him," *Questions to Antiochus Dux* no. 38, *PG* 28, 620C, quotes Galatians v.2 ("If you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing") and continues: "Thus we know clearly that all who are circumcised are alien to Christ, whether faithful or unfaithful, whether Jews or pagans (*hellēnes*), as though glorifying in the Mosaic law, and are not followers of Christ," which sounds like the author is reasoning from Paul's statement to give his opinion about the Muslims.

[95] Olster, *Roman Defeat*, *Christian Response*, 123–25, is the latest in a line of scholars to perceive all as "oblique attacks on the Arabs" and claim "Moslem influence." The Jew's question to the Christian in *Trophies of Damascus*, "why do you pray to the east if not because you worship the sun," which Olster finds "almost unprecedented," was common enough to prompt Tertullian (wr. *ca.* 200) to refute it in his *Apology* (reference given in Smith and Cheetham, *DCA*, *s.v.* "East"); and the reason given in *Questions to Antiochus Dux* for this practice, "in order to face paradise, whence we fell, our ancient land and homeland," is "one of the most frequent" (Smith and Cheetham, *DCA*, *s.v.* "East," which gives examples), not "very unusual" and certainly not a response to "a perceived Moslem obsession with paradise" as Olster asserts. See the entry on the "New Jews" in Chapter 12 below.

[96] Moreover, new genres do not emerge overnight and, as Harris, "A Tract on the Triune Nature of God," has shown, tracts against Muslims developed out of those against Jews. See also Lamoreaux, "Christian Polemics against Islam;" Cameron, "Byzantines and Jews."

[97] *Trophies of Damascus* II.2.2, 218. For the apology's sources see Bardy, "Trophées de Damas," 184–88; Déroche, "La polémique anti-judaïque," 281–82.

> the gold currency (*nomisma*), even though some tyrants attempted it. Do not consider this a trivial and insignificant thing {that our embattled faith has not ceased and is still standing and not blotted out}, for if God had not chosen and loved ours above all the [other] faiths, He would not have kept it intact among the wolf-like nations. Besides, God would not permit a false faith to prevail over all the extremities of the earth.[98]

Anastasius proceeds to give more detail, which is reproduced in the *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo*:

> How was no one able to abolish or take from us the seal of gold? How many kings of the gentiles, Persians and Arabs attempted this and were in no way able? Thus God wished to show that, even if the Christians are persecuted, we reign over all. For the gold sign of our empire is a sign of Christ himself. Tell me, if it is not a sign that the faith and the empire of the Christians is eternal, invincible and indelible, how is it that all you who hate and blaspheme the cross of Christ have fallen away? How are you unable to remove the cross of gold, but even readily receive it?[99]

{85} The reference is again to the Byzantine gold currency, the nomisma, which bore the cross of Christ and was taken by these and earlier writers to symbolise the indomitable might of the empire.[100] By 697 the Muslims had begun issuing coinage that replaced the cross with Islamic inscriptions, so these texts must have been composed before this date and most likely after 640, since the Arabs are included among the challengers of Byzantine rule.[101]

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[98] Anastasius of Sinai, *Dialogue against the Jews*, *PG* 89, 1224A–B. This passage, except for the words in curly brackets (which are, however, in *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo* IX, 61), is also found in *Questions to Antiochus Dux* no. 42, *PG* 28, 624C–D, where it constitutes the second part of the answer to the question: "How is it evident that the Christians have a faith superior to all the faiths under heaven?" The mention that "some tyrants attempted it" has been taken as a possible reference to Mu'āwiya's alleged minting of coins without the cross (see the entry on the "Maronite Chronicler" in Chapter 4 below for discussion).

[99] *Dialogue against the Jews*, *PG* 89, 1224C–D = *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo* X, 61–62. For the numismatic significance of these extracts see Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 223–27, who, however, wrongly states this passage to be only in the *Dialogue against the Jews*.

[100] Cf. Cosmas Indicopleustes (wr. 553), *Christian Topography*, 2.LXXVII: "There exists another sign of the domination of the Romans which God has granted them, I mean the fact that all nations do business with their currency, and that in every place, from one end of the earth to the other, it is accepted and admired by every man and every kingdom."

[101] The statements in Anastasius' *Dialogue* that 800 or more years have now passed since the time of Christ (*PG* 89, 1225D) and since the destruction of the Jews by Titus and Vespasian (*PG* 89, 1237B) must therefore belong to later redactions, as is argued by Thümmel, *Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre*, 258–59 (he also discusses the significance of the dif-

The *Trophies of Damascus* provides four indications of the date of its composition, unfortunately none decisive. Two appear in the title: "the twentieth year of the God-supported Constantine, our emperor after Constantine, in the month of August, of indiction 9." The ruler referred to here could either be Constans (641–68), officially known as Constantine, who ruled after his father Constantine III (641), or Constantine IV (668–85), who succeeded his father Constans. The twentieth year would then be either 661 or 688, but neither year falls in the ninth indiction (651, 666, 681).[102] At one point in the text **{86}** the Christian interlocutor, refuting the idea of a beleaguered Christian realm, states: "The church had been in peace for a long time and our empire had enjoyed a profound peace. And it is not yet 50 years since the present wars were instigated."[103] If "the present wars" intend the Arab campaigns, this would place the date of completion somewhere in the 680s. But one can hardly describe the period before the Arab incursions as a time of "profound peace" for the Christians; possibly the author is regarding the Persian and Arab attacks as one and the same phenomenon – barbarian raids – and is counting 50 years from the entry of the Persians into his region (Damascus was taken in 613). Finally, it is stated that the Jews have been leaderless and dispersed for 600 years, which takes us to 670, assuming the author is counting from the destruction of the Temple; but the figure of 600 is obviously rounded up and can only offer an approximate indication.[104] It is perhaps safer to regard this text as of the mid to late seventh century and not to try to tie it down further.

The author evidently still feels strong allegiance to Byzantine rule. He speaks of "our empire" and "our emperor," and his calendar is still regulated by indictions and the regnal years of the emperor. The Christian kingdom has had, it is true, to contend with several barbarian offensives, but in the end "all the body will renew itself with ease." To us this seems optimistic when, on 31 July 661, Muʿāwiya had been recognised by all the Muslims as their sole ruler and Damascus had become the

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ferent figures for years elapsed since the Jews' loss of independence given in *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo*).

[102] Indiction 9 could be a mistake for indiction 4 (emend *theta* to *delta*), which would then agree with the twentieth year of Constans, 661. Bardy, "Trophées de Damas," 176, suggests that we assume Constantine IV began ruling jointly with his father *ca.* 661 and that the author is counting from this time, the date of composition therefore being 681. Déroche, "L'authenticité de l'Apologie de Léontios de Néapolis," 660 n. 34, favours 661, but offers no justification. Olster, *Roman Defeat*, *Christian Response*, 21, 128, 131, gives "about 690," "early 680s," "674–75," interpreting the phrase "as long as the head and the empire remain firm, all the body will renew itself with ease" as "an oblique reference to the first Arab siege (upon Constantinople) of the 670s," which seems somewhat strained. Thümmel, *Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre*, 264–68, argues that Anastasius of Sinai's *Dialogue against the Jews* was a source for the *Trophies*, which would make a date of composition in the 680s seem more likely than in the 660s.

[103] Trophies of Damascus II.3.2, 221.

[104] *Ibid.* II.6.8, 230.

Muslim capital.[105] Yet, though of momentuous import for the future, this event might not have appeared so significant at the time. Christians still predominated in the city, their churches had not been harmed, the city walls remained intact.[106] Arabs had long constituted a substantial proportion of the region's population and the Ghassanids, the Byzantine empire's Arab allies, had based themselves **{87}** in nearby Jabiya and exerted much influence in the province. The city also enjoyed a cosmopolitan reputation, so the composition of the audience at the debate – "a crowd of Hellenes, many Saracens, some Samaritans, a community of Jews and an assembly of Christians" – was in no way unusual.[107] The Muslims were, of course, the catalyst for all this apologetic literature in that their predations could easily be interpreted as a sign of God's anger towards the Christians, and their successes seriously undermined the Christian claim that their possession of truth was confirmed by their possession of political dominion. But in the texts themselves the Muslims remain very much in the background, and it is the Jews who stand in the line of fire. They effectively became the Christians' punchbag; it was through hitting out against them that the Christians worked out their frustration, and through denigrating them that they salvaged some measure of self-esteem.

THE MIRACLES OF S. DEMETRIUS AND S. GEORGE

One of the most significant developments in Late Antique Christianity was the breaking down of the barrier between heaven and earth, between the divine and the corporeal. And the best evidence for this conjunction was to be found at the spot where rested the body of a martyr. As the inscription stated on the grave of S. Martin at Tours: "He is fully here, present and made plain in miracles of every kind."[108] The belief in the intercessionary power of a saint's relics gave rise to an architecture of the dead, for Christians "filled the whole world with tombs and sepulchres," and also to a literature of the dead, as stories circulating about the posthumous wonders worked at the shrine of its holy occupant were gathered and set down. During the seventh century we can observe a proliferation of such collections of miracle stories relating to the relics of particular saints: of Artemius at Constantinople,[109] of Cyrus

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[105] Ṭabarī, 2.199.

[106] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 126; Shboul, "Umayyad Damascus." And the Muslims remained confined for their worship to a small prayer place outside the Christian basilica until 705 (Nasrallah, "De la cathédrale de Damas à la mosquée omayyade").

[107] *Trophies of Damascus* II.8.2, 233–34; though earlier the Arabs had been absent from the list (*ibid.* II.1.1, 215: "a numerous crowd is present: Jews, pagans, Samaritans, heretics and Christians, for the place is public and in full view"), unless included among the pagans (*hellēnes*).

[108] Cited by Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 4; this book is an excellent study of the phenomenon.

[109] This collection, which provides much topographical detail about the capital, dates from the mid-seventh century since miracles no. 23 and no. 41 are said to take place in the

and **{88}** John at Menuthis near Alexandria,[110] of Ptolemy at Upper Manuf,[111] and of Anastasius the Persian wherever his remains alighted.[112]

Composed just within our period is a collection of miracles associated with the figure of S. Demetrius at Thessalonica. An attempt to gather together some of the relevant material had been made *ca.* 615 by John, archbishop of the city,[113] and this was supplemented **{89}** and updated *ca.* 677, perhaps by a subsequent archbishop. This latter date is provided by one of the miracle stories, which narrates how Perbund, a Slavic king, had been accused of preparing an assault upon Thessalonica and was led off to Constantinople in chains. A deputation on his behalf found the em-

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15th and 18th year respectively of Constans, that is 656 and 659 (see Delehaye, "Les recueils antiques de miracles des saints," 32–38).

[110] 70 of the miracles worked at this shrine are recounted by Sophronius, the last being his own cure from an eye complaint, and prefaced by a panegyric of the two saints. Since John the Almsgiver (611–20) is mentioned as patriarch (*Miracles* no. 8, *PG* 87, 3437B [= Marcos, 253], and no. 11, 3454A [= 263]), Sophronius must have written the collection, or at least gathered the material, during his second stay in Alexandria and before he and John Moschus left for Rome in 615. Sophronius promises in his prefatory encomium (*PG* 87, 3420A) that he will only report the miracles accomplished in his own time, to which he was witness or had heard from eyewitnesses, but Gesius the iatrosophist of Petra (*Miracles* no. 30, 3513C–3520D [= 302–306]) lived at the end of the fifth century (pointed out by Festugière, *Collections grecques de miracles*, 222 n. 1). There are a number of studies on this compilation; in particular see Delehaye, "Les recueils antiques de miracles des saints," 19–32; Nissen, "Medizin und Magie bei Sophronius;" de Jong, "Demonic Diseases in Sophronios' Thaumata;" and Festugière, *Collections grecques de miracles*, 217–37.

[111] Ptolemy was an Egyptian martyr before Chalcedon and so belongs to the universal church, but he is only celebrated by the Copts and the collection of six miracles assigned to him are almost certainly a Monophysite invention. One of the miracles takes place "in the time when the nation of the Muslims took possession of this land and raided many towns within the confines of Fayyum." Some stray as far as the shrine of Ptolemy, who appears to them as an imperial cavalryman and causes them to be blinded and paralysed until they return the church vessels they had stolen. Epiphanius, bishop of Taha, oversaw their return, "then this blessed bishop recorded the marvels of the holy Ptolemy which he had witnessed in his days" (*Miracles of S. Ptolemy*, no. 4). See MacCoull, "Notes on Some Coptic Hagiographical Texts," 14–16.

[112] For Anastasius the Persian (d. 628) and his miracles see now Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse*. For the growth in importance of miracles in early Christianity see the comments of Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 208–14; and for the development of holy sites see Maraval, *Lieux saints et pélerinages d'Orient*, 23–104.

[113] *Miracles of S. Demetrius* l.X, 112/109, takes place "in the reign which followed that of the late Maurice." This suggests that the author is active in the days of Heraclius when the name of Phocas (602–10), Maurice's usurper, was despised. But the events described in this first collection of miracles mostly take place in the reign of Maurice (582–602), so the time of writing must be early in Heraclius' reign.

peror "preparing for battle against the God-forsaking Hagarenes."[114] When it later became evident that Perbund was plotting raids against Byzantium, he was executed, which provoked the Slavs to besiege Thessalonica. "On the twenty-fifth of July of the fifth indiction" they endeavoured to storm the city, but a personal appearance by S. Demetrius saved the day. Since this story makes clear that there had previously been a long period of peace between the Greeks and Slavs of Macedonia, the blockade must have taken place before 688, when Justinian II led a victorious expedition against the Macedonian Slavs. It is also evident that the author is writing at least one generation removed from the archbishop John, and so the most likely date of the miracle is 25 July 677.[115] At this time the emperor Constantine IV was indeed fighting the Arabs, who were conducting a naval campaign against Byzantium. From the emperor's freedom to come and go in and out of Constantinople and his despatch of ships to aid the Thessalonicans, we may deduce that there was no siege of the capital itself by the Arabs, but rather a series of naval operations undertaken in the summer months.

Somewhat more diffuse are the miracles associated with the figure of S. George at Diospolis (Lydda/Ramla). That a number of miracles had been effected posthumously by this martyr is stated by the archdeacon Theodosius in his *De situ terrae sanctae*, composed in the 520s, and by **{90}** Gregory of Tours (d. 594) in the first of his books of miracles.[116] And while visiting Constantinople in the 670s, the pilgrim Arculf heard a detailed account of two further miracles from some knowledgeable men of the city.[117] But a full written collection of miracles does not appear until the sixteenth century, and the earliest manuscripts containing any miracles of S. George at all are of the eleventh century.[118] The first miracle of the collection occurs in Byz-

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[114] *Ibid.* 2.IV, 209/198; literally "the fallen-away-from-God Hagarenes" (*oi theop-tōtoi hagarēnoi*).

[115] The collection must have been composed soon after this date, since the author's intention was to record examples of the saint's protection that occurred "in our times" (*Miracles of Saint Demetrius* 2.IV, 208/198). The chronology of both collections is elucidated by Lemerle, "La composition et la chronologie des deux premiers livres des miracula S. Demetrii," and a thorough commentary on them is given in his *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de saint Démetrius*, vol.2.

[116] Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana*, 139 (in Diospolim… ubi sanctus Georgius martyrizatus est ibi et corpus eius et multa mirabilia fiunt): Theodosius; van Dam, *Glory of the Martyrs*, 123–24 (no. 100): Gregory.

[117] Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* 3.IV, 288–94, recounts these two miracles which Arculf had passed on to him. A contemporary of Arculf, resident in Khuzistan, tells the story of a Persian commander who, during his people's occupation of Palestine (614–28), attempted to enter "the shrine of Mar Giwargis of Lydda," but both he and his soldiers were prevented from doing so "by divine power" (*Chron. Khuzistan*, 27).

[118] Festugière, *Collections grecques de miracles*, 259–67, discusses the manuscript tradition and the likelihood of the existence of an ancient collection. See also Walter, "The Origins of

antine-ruled Palestine at the time when the emperor is building a church at Diospolis in commemoration of S. George, so one must either posit an oral tradition or a number of lost manuscripts.

Six of the eleven posthumous miracles involve the Arabs and most strike an apologetic note, which makes it unlikely that they antedate the eighth century, and some definitely belong to the ninth or tenth century.[119] Of these six, one takes place in Diospolis, the original site **{91}** of the Georgian cult, and is found in two eleventh-century manuscripts linked together with the miracle of Byzantine Diospolis.[120] It does, therefore, have some claim to be considered as early, and the mention that the Saracens had "taken prisoner all whom they encountered" suggests that the setting at least is the Arab conquests or soon after. The story tells how some Saracens rested and encamped in the city of Diospolis. They became drunk and boisterous, some even being so impudent as to eat inside the church of the martyr. When warned by a prisoner to respect the power of S. George, one soldier was provoked to throw his lance at the icon of the saint. But the lance returned and pierced its owner's heart, whilst many of his companions were struck down as they fled, "as though smitten by a sword."[121] Such instances of the capacity of icons to requite attacks are commonplace in the literature of the sixth to ninth centuries, and are meant as both a rebuff to iconoclasts and a demonstration of the efficacy of Christian signs and images, and so of the supremacy of Christianity itself.[122]

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the Cult of St. George," esp. 317 ("we can be fairly sure that an early collection of St. George's Miracula did exist in Greek").

[119] *Miracles of S. George*, nos. 2 (discussed in this paragraph), 3 (a youth working at the martyrium of S. George in Paphlagonia is taken captive during a raid of the Hagarenes and becomes personal servant to the general, but is demoted when he refuses to apostatise, then rescued by S. George), 6 (discussed in Chapter 9 below under *Dubia*), 7 (a Saracen notable enters the church of S. George with his comrades, fires an arrow at the saint's image which returns and strikes his hand; he visits the priest of the church who instructs, heals and baptises him, whereupon he goes out to proclaim Christ and anathematise "the religion of the Saracens" and is subsequently martyred), 8 (tale of a soldier brought back to life by S. George related against the backdrop of a Byzantine incursion into Syria), 9 (a youth of Mytilene seized in a raid by the Hagarenes of Crete is miraculously transported back to Lesbos as a result of his mother's prayers to S. George).

[120] *Ibid.*, no. 2, which begins: "In this same city in which we said that the previous miracle took place," referring back to miracle no. 1.

[121] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat.*, B2 (= Nau, XLIV), tells a similar story, namely of a group of Saracens who commit outrages in the church of S. Theodore near Damascus, one going so far as to shoot an arrow at the icon of the saint, whereupon they are all killed. The protagonist in the first story narrated by Arculf hurls a lance at a stone image of George in Diospolis; the lance and the man's hand become stuck in the stone, but are freed when the man repents (Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* 3.IV, 229–31).

[122] E.g. some Saracens fire an arrow at an icon of S. Theodore and are struck dead (see previous note); Aṣbagh ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (d. 704) spits on an icon of the Virgin with Child

ANASTASIUS OF SINAI (D. CA. 700)

{92} Anastasius was born in the early seventh century at Amathus, a town in the southern part of Cyprus.[123] As a young man, perhaps forced to flee in the wake of the Arab conquest of the island in 649,[124] he set out with Stephen the Cypriot and entered the monastery of S. Catherine on Mount Sinai, where he served as a monk under the leadership of the renowned John Climacus.[125] After a number of years he resumed his travels, spending time in Alexandria, Clysma, Damascus and Jerusalem.[126] Finally, he returned around 680 to the monastery of Mount Sinai, where over the following twenty years he set about distilling the knowledge and experience gained in his itinerant years.[127]

His most well known work is the *Hodēgos* ("Guide") – commonly known by its Latin title, the *Viae dux* – a manual for the refutation of heresies and a guide to the true faith. At the beginning of Chapter III it is stated: "We ask those who read this book that they also take note of the scholia inserted here and there. And if, as is likely, this book contains any small errors, we beg the reader's forgiveness."[128] These

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and dies a few days later (*Hist. Patriarchs* XVII, *PO* 5, 52); some Hagarenes enter a church in the town of Gabala, on the coast of Syria, and one Saracen attempts to gouge out the eye of a saintly icon, but his own falls out (*Concilia sacra*, 13.80A–B: told at the Council of Nicaea in 787); Rawḥ al-Qurashī (d. 799), allegedly a relative of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, shoots an arrow at an icon of S. Theodore in his church near Damascus, which then returns and pierces his hand (Anthony Rawḥ, *Passion*, §2). An example of a Christian aggressor in our period is given by Theophanes, 406, who relates how Constantine, groom of the rogue emperor Artabasdus (741–43), threw a stone at an icon of the Mother of God and the next day was struck by a stone shot from a catapult.

[123] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat.*, C18. For other references to Cyprus see *ibid.*, B7–9 (= Nau, XLIX–LI), C14–15; *Questions*, no. 26 (= *PG* 89, 732D–733A, no. 94). On Cyprus at this time, see Cameron, "Cyprus at the Time of the Arab Conquests."

[124] All the references to Cyprus concern events prior to the Arab invasion except for *Narrat.*, B9 (= Nau, LI), which probably occurred shortly afterwards.

[125] *Ibid.*, A3, A12–14, A18 (= Nau, VI–VII, XXXII, XXXIV, XXXIX); see Nau, "Les récits inédits du moine Anastase," 4–6, for the identification of abbot John with John Climacus.

[126] Anastasius of Sinai, *Viae dux* X and XII, 143–98 and 201–10 (*PG* 89, 149A–193A and 196A–204A): debates in Alexandria; *Narrat.*, C5–6, C8 (Clysma); B1–2 (= Nau, XLIII–IV), C1, C11–13 (at Damascus); B1, B4–5 (= Nau, XLIII, XLVI–VII), C3 (at Jerusalem).

[127] That Anastasius wrote while at Sinai is stated openly once: "I, Anastasius, amonk of the holy mountain Sinai, confess…." (*Viae dux* X.3, 191 [= *PG* 89, 188A]), and earlier he apologises for any errors which may arise from his being in the desert and not having access to certain texts (*ibid.* X.1, 158 [160C]). Elsewhere he uses the phrase "in the desert by us" (*Narrat.*, A9, 28, B3 [= Nau, IV, XVIII, XLV]). The sketch given here is tentative as the only source for Anastasius' biography is allusions in his own works.

[128] Anastasius of Sinai, *Viae dux* III.1, 76 (= *PG* 89, 88D).

scholia, two of which betray their composition in the 680s or later,[129] **{93}** are not simply aside notes, but are integral to and makeup a substantial portion of the text. The explanation of this, argues Richard, is that we have only a revised version of a work composed much earlier.[130] The lack of reference to Monotheletism in the debates held by Anastasius in Alexandria perhaps indicates that they took place during the imperial prohibition of talk of Christ's energy or will in the late 630s, and the vitality of the description suggests they were written up only a very few years later. Maspero made the same observation, and his solution was that the debates occurred before the issue ever arose, so before 630.[131] But Anastasius' potted history of the controversy in a sermon "on the creation of man in God's image," dated *ca.* 700, similarly makes no mention of Sophronius, Maximus, Sergius or any of the star players in the contest. Thus remoteness in time accounts equally well for the omissions, and this view is corroborated by the apparent awareness of certain Muslim ideas in the *Viae dux*. In the absence of any cogent reason for an early date,[132] it would seem better to assume that the work as a whole was compiled *ca.* 690 on the basis of personal memoranda, with the two introductory chapters on intentions and definitions being added last (hence the introductory comments at the beginning of the third chapter).

{94} It is the Monophysites who almost exclusively hold Anastasius' attention, yet he does exhibit some knowledge of Muslim beliefs. In the preface, where he sets out the reasons for his undertaking, he states:

> Before any discussion we must first anathematise all the false notions which our adversaries might entertain about us. Thus when we wish to debate with the Arabs, we first anathematise whoever says two gods, or whoever says that God has

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[129] *Ibid.* XV.1, 264 (= *PG* 89, 257B), cites two festal letters, written "five years ago," of "John, bishop of the Theodosians," usually identified with John of Samanud, patriarch of Alexandria (681–89); *ibid.* XIII.6, 231 (= *PG* 89, 224B), mentions the Harmasites, followers of Harmasius who was anathematised at the Ecumenical Council of 681. See Richard, "Anastasius le Sinaïte," 29–32.

[130] Richard, "Anastasius le Sinaïte," 32–35; accepted by Uthemann (see his edition of *Viae dux*, ccvi–xviii).

[131] Richard, "Anastasius le Sinaïte," 35; Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie*, 339.

[132] Anastasius of Sinai, *Viae dux* X.3, 190 (= *PG* 89, 185C), notes the presence of an Augustalis at a debate, but this title remained in use into the eighth century (*Aphrodito Papyri*, no. 1392). Richard, "Anastasius le Sinaïte," 34–35, attributes "the sixth festal letter… of him who is now bishop of the Theodosians of Alexandria," mentioned in the heading of Chapter XV, to Benjamin (626–65), arguing that John of Samanud's reign was too short to allow that he write a sixth festal letter "five years ago" and be still in office. Richard is thinking of the scholium to Chapter XV which begins: "John, bishop of the Theodosians, five years ago in two festal letters made this statement…," but there is nothing to suggest that either of these two festal letters should be John's sixth.

> carnally begotten a son, or whoever worships as god any created thing at all, in heaven or on earth.[133]

And when later recounting a debate in which he participated at Alexandria, he comments:

> When they (the Severans) hear of "nature," they think of shameful and unbecoming things, the sexual organs of the bodies of men and women. Because of that they avoid this word as if they were pupils of the Saracens. For when the latter hear of the birth of God and of His genesis, they at once blaspheme, imagining marriage, fertilisation and carnal union.[134]

Both passages indicate an awareness of the basic objections to Christianity held by the Muslims: that it reveres Christ as God and says that he was born of God, denial of which is reiterated time and time again in the Qur'an.[135] More specifically, and more significantly, they reveal acquaintance with the very literal way in which the Muslims understood Christ's humanity. The writer Jāḥiẓ (d. 869), for example, reproaches the Christians because they allege "that God is Christ son of Mary and that Christ addressed the disciples 'my brothers', but then if the disciples had sons, God would be their uncle!"[136] Such knowledge was only likely to have come ultimately from real discussion with Muslims. **{95}** Finally, in the seventh chapter, the author sarcastically remarks of the Monophysite Severus of Antioch (d. 538): "What a good student of the Jewish, Greek and Arab teachers is this Severus, who accepts in part the scriptures and rejects a part of them, as do the adherents of the Manichaeans."[137] Unflatteringly ranked with the infidel Jews, Greeks and Manichaeans, the Arabs also join them in being charged with selective belief in the scriptures, an accusation that in time became a standard Christian response.[138]

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[133] Anastasius of Sinai, *Viae dux* I.1, 9 (= *PG* 89, 41A).

[134] *Ibid.* X.2, 169–70 (= *PG* 89, 169B–C).

[135] Most notably in Chapter cxii, which was inscribed on the Dome of the Rock and on Marwanid coins from AH77/696 (see Excursus F, nos. i–ii, below).

[136] Jāḥiẓ, "*Al-radd 'alā l-naṣārā*," 233. Cf. Leo-'Umar, *Letter* (Arabic), 27/13 (" 'Īsā ate, drank, slept, was circumcised, experienced fear and was seen by men… so how can you consider him a god") = *Letter* (Aljamiado), fol. 98a; Wāṣil-Bashīr, *Disputation*, 316 ("Did they not both [Jesus and Adam] eat food and drink, urinate and defecate, sleep and awaken, feel joy and grief?"). Cf. John of Damascus, *Disputatio*, 435 (= *PG* 96, 1345A): "If the Saracen asks you: 'If Christ was God how did he eat, drink, sleep and so forth'…."

[137] Anastasius of Sinai, *Viae dux* VII.2, 113 (= *PG* 89, 120C). Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie*, 337–38, argues that the reference here and in the above two quotes is to Christian Arabs, for Severus is a pre-Islamic authority, but Anastasius is making a general attack on Severus and his followers and should not be taken literally here.

[138] For further discussion see Richard, "Anastasius le Sinaïte," 35–36; Griffith, "Anastasios of Sinai."

Also of great importance among the works of Anastasius is his collection of questions and answers. This is a problematic genre, for writers often draw heavily upon earlier collections and copyists frequently feel at liberty to add new and topical issues and/or to blend material of different provenance, so that dating becomes an uncertain task.[139] As we have it in Gretser's edition in the *Patrología graeca*, the work is an eleventh-century combination of two earlier collections. The first is preserved in a manuscript of the ninth or tenth century and contains 103 questions, which Richard confidently ascribes to Anastasius. The second is a florilegium of 88 questions found in manuscripts from the tenth century onwards, most often attributed to Anastasius, but also to Anastasii of Antioch and of Nicaea. It uses the *Questions* of Anastasius of Sinai, though somewhat freely, and cites authors as late as Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, which places its composition **{96}** in the late, ninth or early tenth century.[140] A mention that the barbarians now hold the holy places and that 700 years have elapsed since Christ's advent suggest that the Anastasian portion of the collection was composed in early Islamic times and probably *ca.* 700.[141]

Another issue is the relation of the Anastasian corpus to the *Questions to Antiochus Dux*, which bears evidence of being, in part at least, a product of the seventh century.[142] The two collections share a considerable amount of common material,[143]

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[139] For a survey and discussion of this genre see Bardy, "La littérature patristique des '*Quaestiones et Responsiones*'" Beck, *Vorsehung und Vorherbestimmung in der theologischen Literatur der Byzantiner*, 112–39; Richard, "Florilèges spirituels grecs;" Dörries, "Erotapokriseis."

[140] Richard, "Les véritables Questions d'Anastase," 40–41.

[141] Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 69 (= *PG* 89, 769B–C, no. 117): "Though barbarians hold the country of the holy places, God has not taken them away from us [permanently]. If, as is natural, you will say that a few years ago the Arians (Persians?) held the holy places, [we will reply:] truly these [only] seized the holy places by imperial force and tyranny. But it was in vain, for God directly handed them to us orthodox once again. And it is now 700 years." At the end one needs to understand something like "from the beginning of Christ's appearance," as occurs in the related passage in *Questions to Antiochus Dux* no. 44, *PG* 28, 625C (*ap' archēs tēs parousias autou*).

[142] Thümmel, *Frühgeschichte der ostkirchlichen Bilderlehre*, 246–51, shows that the *Questions to Antiochus Dux* uses the *Apology* of Leontius of Neapolis (wr. 640s) and is itself used by Anastasius of Sinai (d. *ca.* 700) in his *Dialogue against the Jews*. Thümmel, 252, then narrows down the date of composition to just before the Arab conquest of Palestine on the basis of *Questions to Antiochus Dux* no. 44, *PG* 28, 625C: "If the adversary says that we possess those [holy places] by imperial tyranny, let him know that even if barbarians have often occupied Palestine, Christ did not allow his places to be handed over to heretics. And if they attempted this for a short time, the catholic church quickly drove them away again, like swine, from the holy residences and places of Christ our God." But since the same point is made by Anastasius of Sinai at the end of the seventh century (see previous note), this cannot be the case. Such triumphalist rhetoric abounds throughout the seventh century and it was precisely Byzantium's defeats that provoked it (see the entry on "Anti-Jewish Polemicists" in this

the *Questions to Antiochus Dux* generally being briefer. A conclusion on the relation between the two requires a decision on whether Anastasius is embellishing an earlier version of the *Questions to Antiochus Dux* or the latter is abbreviating Anastasius.[144] For example, the question whether every person in **{97}** authority is appointed by God receives the same affirmative answer in both collections, but Anastasius also recounts two anecdotes about Phocas and a dissolute town in the Thebaid, and remarks that man perseveres in his wickedness even when he is accorded the leaders merited by his sins:

> Believe me when I say that even if the race of the Saracens were to depart from us today, straightaway tomorrow the Blues and Greens would rise up again, and the East, Arabia, Palestine and many other lands would bring slaughter upon themselves.[145]

None of this contemporary detail is given in the *Questions to Antiochus Dux*.[146]

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chapter). Moreover, in this genre of literature old arguments were often reused with little revision.

[143] Bardy, "La littérature patristique des '*Quaestiones et Responsiones*'" (1933), 328–32, 342; Haldon, "The Works of Anastasius of Sinai," 122–23.

[144] Richard, "Les véritables Questions d'Anastase," 55 n. 1, favours the latter explanation, but any definitive answer must wait until there is a critical edition of the two works. In several manuscripts, for example, the *Questions to Antiochus Dux* comprises only 36 or 41 questions; the most complete has 136 (assuming no. 137, a mini anti-Jewish tract, to be a separate entity), many of which may have been culled from other collections by a later compiler. When John of Damascus (wr. 730s) used the work, it had 100 chapters (cited in his *De imaginibus oratio* 3, §59).

[145] Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 65 (= *PG* 89, 476B–477A, no. 16, though lacking the extract quoted, which is given by Richard, "Les véritables Questions d'Anastase," 47); cf. *Questions to Antiochus Dux* no. 121, *PG* 28, 676A. See Haldon, "The Works of Anastasius of Sinai," 135–36 and n. 52 thereto.

[146] The text mentioned in nn. 141–42 above furnishes another example. The question in both cases concerns how to demonstrate to a non-sectarian the truth of the catholic church, and the answer is the same: point out its possession of the holy places. Anastasius, however, gives a short account of a recent debate in Alexandria at which a Chalcedonian had asked the Monophysite participants the question whether a wealthy king should commit his assets to believers or unbelievers; when they replied "to the believers," the orthodox said: "That is why God entrusted to us all the holy places and necessary residences." *Questions to Antiochus Dux* no. 44, *PG* 28, 625C, has only the single sentence: "Just as a king consigns and entrusts the precious rooms and treasures of his palace to all his most believing ministers, so also Christ, since the beginning of his appearance, entrusted to the catholic church all his reverend places." It is extremely unlikely that Anastasius' account is a mere expansion of this sentence. Plausibly the two texts draw upon a common source which Anastasius cites fully, but which *Questions to Antiochus Dux* condenses.

To each query an answer is given by the author, frequently supported by a list of textual witnesses ranging from Deuteronomy to the New Testament to Maximus the Confessor, the response thus taking **{98}** the form of a florilegium. The subject matter is diverse, but most often treats scriptural exegesis, avoidance of heresy and observance of liturgy and sacraments, and there is a distinct corpus of questions on medical-natural science matters. Furthermore, there is an evident attempt to address the dilemmas of everyday living in a very pragmatic way and to stress that wealth and secular involvements do not preclude one from being a good Christian and attaining salvation.[147]

In the course of one answer the author observes that the "present generation" faces a period of spiritual crisis resembling that endured by the Children of Israel during the Babylonian captivity, for "we see our brothers and servants of the faith pressed by great need into nakedness, toils and labours."[148] This sounds like an allusion to the contemporary plight of Christians now living under Arab rule, a situation which indeed appears to have provoked a fresh set of questions. How can one redeem one's sins if, having been reduced to servitude or captured in war, one can no longer attend church, fast or observe a vigil freely and at will?[149] Are all the evils which the Arabs have perpetrated upon the land and the Christian community always a result of God's will?[150] What is one to say regarding Christian women who, as slaves and captives, have given themselves up to prostitution? The answer to the latter is that it depends whether they have done so out of hunger and need, or from wantonness and pleasure.[151] The Muslims are, however, only present as oppressors, and their beliefs receive no attention beyond a note that ideas such as that "Satan fell on account of not bowing down to the man (Adam)" belong to "the myths of the Hellenes and the Arabs."[152]

{99} Anastasius also produced two collections of edifying tales. The first bears the title: "Various narratives of the humble monk Anastasius concerning the holy fathers in Sinai," and comprises the doings and sayings of the more charismatic members of the monastery of Sinai, either witnessed by Anastasius himself or relat-

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[147] For further discussion see Dagron, "Le saint, le savant, l'astrologue;" Haldon, "The Works of Anastasius of Sinai," 129–43.

[148] Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 88 (= *PG* 89, 784C–785C, nos. 132–33; the part referred to here is *PG* 89, 785B, no. 133).

[149] *Ibid.*, no. 87 (the answer, that faith and humility are just as important as good works, is given in Richard, "Les véritables Questions d'Anastase," 48).

[150] Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 101; *PG* 89, 484B, no. 17, has *ta ethnë* not *oi Arabes* and only partially uses the original Anastasian answer.

[151] Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 76 (= *PG* 89, 773A–C, no. 123).

[152] *Ibid.*, no. 80 (= *PG* 89, 776B–C, no. 126); cf. Qur'an ii.34: "When we said to the angels: 'Bow down to Adam,' they bowed down, except Iblis. He refused and behaved arrogantly and came to be among the unbelievers." This tenet is also criticised in Leo-'Umar, *Letter* (Armenian), 301, and *Dënkard*, 3.CCXLI.

ed to him by one who was present. They were put together ca. 660,[153] one year after the death of John Climacus.[154] The pre-Islamic Arabs at Sinai seemed to have lived in relative peace with the monks and solitaries, seeking their help in time of need and acting as message bearers for them, though occasionally proving a nuisance too.[155] Anastasius clearly does not regard the Muslims favourably; he calls them the nation that has sullied and profaned the holy summit. And in an account of a vision of fire that had appeared on the mountain some years earlier, he writes angrily of some Saracens, also present, who had expressed their disbelief and blasphemed the holy place, its icons and its crosses. He jeers at them, saying that no such miracles had occurred "in any other religion, or in any synagogue of the Jews or Arabs."[156]

This tone is more prevalent in Anastasius' second collection, compiled *ca.* 690 and entitled: "Encouraging and supportive tales of the most humble monk Anastasius, which occurred in various places in our times."[157] Its apologetic aim is declared openly by Anastasius, who **{100}** tells us that he has selected only those tales "which concern the faith of Christians and which will bring great comfort to our captive brothers and to all who listen or read with faith."[158] The theme of "our captive brothers" runs through this anthology, and many instances are given of the harsh trials facing Christian prisoners-of-war. Near the Dead Sea in the region of Zoara and Tetraphrygia, Cypriot prisoners worked in appalling conditions on public estates. Christian workers performing forced labour at Clysma in Sinai were refused permission by their Jewish master to attend a mass in honour of the Virgin Mary, though they were granted a reprieve when this Jew was suddenly struck dead by a

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[153] An approximate *terminus post quem* of 656 is set by the narrating of an incident involving Muslims at Sinai that occurred "before these last twenty years" (*Narrate* A4 [= Nau, XXXVIII]). Other indications are the mention of Thalassius (A42 [= XL]), a contemporary of Maximus the Confessor, and Anastasius' attendance at the funeral of the abbot Stephen of Byzantium (A5 [= II]), chief secretary to the general Maurianus (fl. 650s: see Sebeos, XXXV, XXXVIII [tr. Macler, 138, 145–46]; Theophanes, 345; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 199).

[154] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrate* A18 (= Nau, XXXII). Unfortunately there is little agreement on dates for John's life; see Chryssavgis, "John Climacus."

[155] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrate* A20, A22 (George the Arselaite sends a Saracen to Aila with a message for a friend), A34 (= Nau, X, XII, XXIII). See Mayerson, "Saracens and Romans."

[156] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat*., A4–5 (= Nau, XXXVIII, II).

[157] This date is given by *ibid.*, C3, which mentions a rumour that "the Temple of God is now being built in Jerusalem," surely a reference to the Dome of the Rock, completed in AH 72/691 (or slightly later if Blair, "What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock," is right). Nau, "Les récits inédits du moine Anastase," 8, argues that the author of this collection differs from that of the first in being "a stylist and a rhetor" and an important man with his own disciple; this is easily explained by the fact that he is now some 30 years older. That cycles B and C were originally one collection is shown by Flusin, "Démons et Sarrasins," 388–89.

[158] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat*, C4 (= Nau, XLI).

falling beam.[159] Among the individual cases there is Euphemia, Christian maid to a Saracen woman at Damascus who would beat her every time she returned from receiving communion, but Euphemia persevered nonetheless and was finally redeemed by some man who apparently made a habit of such action. George the Black, who apostatised when a child but reconverted on reaching adulthood, was betrayed by one of his own fellow captives and perished by his master's sword.[160]

The spectre of apostasy evidently looms large in Anastasius' mind, and it certainly presented a problem: one Moses son of Azarias, resident near Clysma, had confessed to him that he had passed many times from and back to Christianity.[161] To counter this menace Anastasius puts out the message that the Saracens are in league with demons:

> Note well that the demons name the Saracens as their companions. And it is with reason. The latter are perhaps even worse than the demons. Indeed, the demons are frequently much afraid of the mysteries of Christ, I mean his holy body…, the cross, the saints, the relics, the holy oils **{101}** and many other things. But these demons of flesh trample all that is under their feet, mock it, set fire to it, destroy it…[162]

And he backs this argument with examples. At Damascus a possessed man named Sartabias was told by his demon that he would be taking temporary leave of him while he accompanied the Arab army on its expedition to the straits of Abydos of Constantinople, for "our prince has sent guards in order that we help our comrades the Saracens on the trip to Constantinople." Back in 660 Anastasius had himself witnessed demons participating in the clearing work commissioned by the Muslims on the Temple Mount. And *ca.* 670 a secretary at Damascus, John of Bostra, was sent on a mission by the governor (*symboulos*) to interrogate possessed girls at Antioch. Via the latters' mouths the demons within them inform John that what they fear most from the Christians is their cross, baptism and the eucharist. When asked which among all the faiths of the world they prefer, they reply: "That of our companions… those who do not have any of the three things of which we have spoken and those who do not confess the son of Mary to be God or son of God."[163]

Again, some years earlier a number of Christian sailors "arrived at the place where those who have reduced us to servitude have their stone and their cult," and where they sacrificed innumerable sheep and camels. At approximately midnight they awoke to witness "an indecent and horrible old woman rise from the ground,"

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[159] Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 28 (= *PG* 89, 745A–B, no. 96); *Narrai*, C5.

[160] *Ibid.*, C12 (Euphemia), Cl3 (George: see the entry on him in Chapter 9 below).

[161] *Ibid.*, C8. In this and other tales, it is only ever said that a person denies Christianity, not that he adopts Islam.

[162] *Ibid.*, C1.

[163] *Ibid.*, C1 (Sartabias), C3 (Temple Mount: "thirty years ago"), C11 (John of Bostra: "twenty years ago"); for the latter cf. *Qenneshre Fragment*, 130/118 (discussed in the entry on "Daniel of Edessa" in Chapter 4 below).

gather up the heads and feet of the sacrificed animals and return underground. The sailors exclaim to one another: "See their sacrifice! It did not go up towards God, but down. As for their old woman, it is their erroneous faith." The message of these tales is clear: Christianity is the only true faith and it is dangerous to abuse it, as the Jewish foreman of the Christian labourers found out to his cost, and as also did 22 Saracens who all **{102}** died when one of them shot an arrow at an icon of S. Theodore in the saint's own sanctuary near Damascus.[164]

Finally, Anastasius is credited with the authorship of a number of homilies. That dealing with the "Creation of man in the image of God" is perhaps his last work, written about "twenty years" after the Sixth Ecumenical Council (681).[165] He attempts to give a brief history of the Monothelete debate, but religious convictions and remoteness in time have distorted the sequence of events, the Arab conquests having become linked in his mind with the policies of the emperor Constans II:

> When Heraclius died, Martin was exiled by Heraclius' grandson and immediately the desert dweller Amalek rose up to strike us, Christ's people. That was the first terrible and fatal defeat of the Roman army. I am speaking of the bloodshed at Gabitha, Yarmuk and Dathemon, after which occurred the capture and burning of the cities of Palestine, even Caesarea and Jerusalem. Then there was the destruction of Egypt, followed by the enslavement and fatal devastations of the Mediterranean lands and islands and of all the Roman empire. But the rulers and masters of the Romans did not manage to perceive these things. Rather they summoned the most eminent men in the Roman church, and had their tongues and hands excised. And what then? The retribution upon us from God for these things was the almost complete loss of the Roman army and navy at Phoenix, and the progressive desolation of all the Christian people and places. This did not stop until the persecutor of Martin perished by the sword in Sicily. But the son of this man, the pious Constantine, united the holy church by means of an ecumenical council… This blessed Council… has for twenty years halted the decimation of our people, turned the sword of our enemies against one another, **{103}** given respite to the lands, calmed the seas, checked the enslavement, and brought relaxation, consolation and peace in great measure.[166]

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[164] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat.*, C7 (sailors), B2 (= Nau, XLIV: says 24 Arabs).

[165] Anastasius of Sinai, *Sermo* 3, *PG* 89, 1156D. "Twenty" is obviously a round number, and Anastasius' optimism may mean that he wrote this soon after the Arabs' civil war of 683–92 when they were still reasserting their rule.

[166] *Ibid.*, *PG* 89, 1156C. Stephen the Sabaite (*Greek Life* VIII, 570 = *Arabic Life* L, 249), Cosmas of Jerusalem (see the entry on him in this chapter) and Theophanes, 332 (drawn from Anastasius), also use the term Amalek with reference to the Arabs. The errors in this sketch militate against the suggestion of Eutychius (*Annales*, 2.15) that Anastasius is to be identified with the general Baanes; he surely would not forget that he had served under Heraclius.

Anastasius' application of the name Amalek to the Arabs indicates clearly his conception of their conquest and rule. Like the Amalek of Judges vi.1–5, the Arabs were sent because "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord," in this case Constans' oppression of the orthodox. And like them, the Arabs "came up against them (the Israelites)" and "they destroyed the increase of the earth," for "both they and their camels were without number, and they entered into the land in order to destroy it."

PATRIARCH GERMANUS (715–30) AND ICONOCLASM

As recurrent plague and foreign invasion battered the Christian world in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Byzantines increasingly turned heavenwards for comfort and aid. Icons and relics in particular were called upon to serve as intercessors between God and man, whether in the defence of cities or in the everyday needs and anxieties of individuals. But there were some who viewed this phenomenon with anxiety or suspicion, and "an undercurrent of potential iconoclasm does in fact run through the entire history of the church in the fourth to seventh centuries."[167] This undercurrent was brought to the fore by the sweeping Muslim victories, as is indicated by the sudden proliferation from the 640s onwards of anti-Jewish treatises, which all include a defence of image worship. There was evidently a growing number of Christians who suspected that the present disasters were a punishment for their **{104}** violation of that fundamental Old Testament law, the prohibition of idolatry, in which they were indulging when they adored icons.[168]

Destruction of crosses, construction on the site of the Temple, removal of the cross from the coinage, conversion of the church of John the Baptist in Damascus into a mosque, and outbreaks of apostasy – all these brought matters to a head in the early eighth century,[169] and we begin to hear of acts of vandalism committed by Christians against mosaics containing images.[170] The order of Yazīd II in 721 that "the crosses should be broken in every place and that the pictures which were in the church should be removed"[171] may not have inaugurated the iconoclast controversy among Byzantines, but his edict and that of the emperor Leo III in 730 brought

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[167] Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images before Iconoclasm," 85.

[168] Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis," 23–25. Note how John of Damascus begins his defence of icons (*De imaginibus oratio* 1, §5) by quoting the first commandment (Exodus xx.3–4).

[169] See Griffith, "Theodore Abū Qurrah's Arabic Tract on Venerating Images," 62–64; *idem*, "Images, Islam and Christian Icons," 123–31.

[170] Schick, *Christian Communities of Palestine*, 180–219. DeVaux, "Une mosaïque byzantine a Ma'in," 255–58, had thought that the date of the mosaic floor at the church of Ma'in (719–20) referred to restoration after iconoclastic damage, but Piccirillo, "Umayyad Churches of Jordan," 34, shows that the inscription is part of the original paving.

[171] *Hist. Patriarchs* XVII, *PO* 5, 72–73; see Vasiliev, "The Iconclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II."

imperial muscle into the fray and made it a far greater issue.[172] On the Arab side it was rather an aberrant measure. Public displays of Christian worship had come increasingly under attack, but generally the private domain was one's own affair for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, as was stated by Yazīd's successor Hishām when he abolished Yazīd's edict.[173] For the Byzantines it was a far more protracted and traumatic affair, haunting them for more than a century.[174]

{105} Germanus was patriarch during the reign of Leo III and so became embroiled in the matter of official iconoclasm from its outset. In the early 720s he had occasion to write to bishop Constantine of Nacolia in Asia Minor, with whom "this heresy began" and who apparently "had advocated the scriptural doctrine that no created thing was worthy of divine worship."[175] A little later he chided a bishop of another diocese of western Asia Minor, Thomas of Claudiopolis, who had instigated a purge of icons. His letter to Thomas reads as a plea on behalf of icon veneration.[176] The arguments are largely traditional; interesting, however, is his censure of Jews and Muslims for their rebukes against Christians' use of icons:

> It is worthy of our more special observation that not now only, but very often, reproaches of this kind have been urged against us by Jews and by the actual servants of idolatry, whose intention was to cast a blot on our immaculate and sacred faith… The word of truth stops the mouth of these by the mention of their own peculiar abominations, branding with infamy the heathen with the wickedness and abominations of Gentile sacrifices and fables, making the Jews to blush, not only by reminding them of the frequent lapses of their fathers into idolatry, but, further, of their own opposition to the divine law which they made such a boast of holding… With respect to the Saracens, since they also seem to be among those who urge these charges against us, it will be quite enough for their

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[172] A coincidence of policies had also occurred in the 690s over the issue of coinage in the reigns of 'Abd al-Malik and Justinian II (Breckenridge, *The Numismatic Iconography of Justinian II*, 69–77).

[173] King, "Islam, Iconoclasm and the Declaration of Doctrine," 268–71. Reenen, "The *Bilderverbot*," gives a useful survey of Muslim reports concerning images, but his conclusion (at 69–70) that these emerged in the period 720–75 tells us more about the beginnings of Islamic scholarship than of Islamic iconoclasm. See also Bashear, "The Images of Mecca."

[174] For different facets of the phenomenon see Bryer and Herrin, *Iconoclasm.*

[175] Germanus, *Ep. ad Constantinum episcopum Nacoliae*, *PG* 98, 164B. For iconoclasm in Asia Minor before 726 and consideration of Germanus' letters to Constantine and Thomas see Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 85–93, and Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 331–33.

[176] Germanus' appeal to the iconophile example of "our reverent and Christ-loving emperors" (*Ep. ad Thomam episcopum Claudiopoleos*, *PG* 98, 185A) indicates that the letter was written after 720 when Constantine V was crowned co-emperor, and before 730 when Leo publicly proclaimed his support for iconoclasm, and probably before 726 when a volcanic eruption prompted Leo to replace the icon of Christ in the main entrance of the palace with a plain cross (Nicephorus, §§59–60; Theophanes, 404–405), unless Auzépy, "La destruction de l'icône du Christ par Léon III," is right that no such image existed at this time.

> shame and confusion to allege against them their invocation which even to this day **{106}** they make in the wilderness to a lifeless stone, namely that which is called *Chobar*, and the rest of their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers as, for instance, the ludicrous mysteries of their solemn festivals.[177]

Whether Germanus really knew anything of Muslim worship is difficult to say, though one should note that his mention of "the rest of their vain conversation received by tradition from their fathers" is no more than a quotation from 1 Peter i.18. The reference to a stone called *Chobar* reflects a misunderstanding, most likely wilful, that was perpetuated by John of Damascus, Nicetas and Constantine Porphyrogenitus. The latter gives us the solution to the puzzle when he writes that Muslims "call God *Alla*, and *oua* they use for the conjunction 'and,' and they call the star (of Aphrodite) *Koubar*, And so they say '*Alla oua Koubar*.'"[178] Though probably deriving from knowledge about pre-Islamic Arab practice,[179] this is a deliberate misreading of, or misapplication to, the expression *Allāhu akbar* ("God is most great"), seemingly used by the Muslims from a very early date.[180] There is a kernel of truth behind it – Herodotus relates that the Arabs "deem none other to be gods save Dionysus and the heavenly Aphrodite," and this is noted by subsequent Greek authors[181] – but the jibe was clearly intended as a rejoinder to the Muslim reproof that the Christians worship **{107}** two gods (Qur'an xvi.51, v.116), which Anastasius of Sinai complains was levelled at them by Arabs.[182]

The only other allusion to the Muslims made by Germanus occurs in his sermon commemorating the Constantinopolitans' deliverance in 718 from the Arab

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[177] Germanus, *Ep. ad Thomam episcopum Claudiopoleos*, *PG* 98, 168A–D (tr. Mendham, 230–32).

[178] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, XIV. See also the entry on "John of Damascus" in Chapter 11 below and Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," 118–19.

[179] Meyendorff (*ibid.*, n. 24) mentions the suggestion of G. Sablukov that the Byzantines knew of a pre-Islamic invocation of Aphrodite; that there was such a thing is corroborated by Rotter, "Der *veneris dies* im vorislamischen Mecca," 126–28, who asserts that the Greek *Chobar* / *Koubar* reflects the epithet *al-kubrā* (feminine superlative of "great") applied to Venus by pre-Islamic Arabs.

[180] And its meaning understood by Christians: *Chron. Maronite*, 72.

[181] Herodotus, *Histories*, 3.VIII; other authors quoted by Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature," 112–13. Germanus, and other Byzantines, may also have connected what they heard about Muslim reverence for a stone with earlier knowledge, for it had long been known that the Arabs worshipped a stone (Clement of Alexandria, *Protreptica* IV, 106: *ton lithon*; Arnobius, *Adversus gentes* 6.XI, 222: *informem lapidem*; Maximus of Tyre, *Dissertationes* VIII.8, 87 [= Trapp, 19]: *lithos tetragōnos*).

[182] Anastasius of Sinai, *Viae dux* 1.1, 9 (= *PG* 89, 41 A).

siege of their city.[183] It is a celebration of the role of the Virgin, who "alone defeated the Saracens and prevented their aim, which was not just to capture the city, but also to overthrow the royal majesty of Christ." Throughout the oration the Christians are presented as the Israelites, "who with the eyes of faith see Christ as God and therefore confess that it is truly the Theotokos who bore him." The Muslims, on the other hand, are cast in the role of the impious Egyptians, "who say regarding Christ: I do not know the Lord,' and think concerning his mother: 'She is by nature a woman; she can in no way come to the aid of those who glory in her assistance.'"[184] The sermon ends on a hopeful note, for like the Egyptians the Muslims are cast into the sea and the Christians live to fight another day.

COSMAS OF JERUSALEM (WR. MID-EIGHTH C.) AND HYMNOGRAPHY

When John Moschus and Sophronius visited Nilus, abbot of the monastery of Sinai, in the 580s, they arrived in time for vespers. During this service and the subsequent celebration of matins there were no hymns sung. Astonished at this omission, the two travellers asked Nilus why he did not follow the practice of "the catholic and apostolic church." In response to the abbot's protestations of orthodoxy they pointed out his failure to include the requisite hymns at their times. There had at an early stage been a dislike of singing by monks; "what kind of contrition could there be," asked the fifth-century Egyptian abbot Pambo, "when the monk stands in his church or cell and raises his voice like the oxen?" But evidently by the late sixth century the singing of hymns formed part of the ritual of the church.[185]

{108} In our period the most popular form was the canon which had the character of a hymn of praise, celebrating in an exultant manner the feasts and heroes of Christianity. This consisted of nine odes (though the second was only ever recited at Lent), each comprising at least three stanzas (*troparia*), the first one (called the *heirmos*) setting the pattern for the others. Each ode was based upon and had in some way to allude to one of the nine scriptural canticles. Though this format was in some ways restrictive, it led to much ingenuity in the manipulation of these Biblical types to express a myriad of different situations, ideas and emotions.[186]

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[183] Grumel, "Homélie de St. Germain sur la délivrance de Constantinople," 187–88, infers from the lack of any reference to the emperor's part in the victory that the sermon was composed after 726, most likely on the tenth anniversary in 728.

[184] Germanus, *Homily*, 195.

[185] These two anecdotes are quoted and discussed by Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, 171–74.

[186] The nine canticles are: Exodus xv (Moses' song of triumph after the crossing of the Red Sea), Deuteronomy xxxii (Moses' exhortation), 1 Samuel ii (the song of Hannah), Habakkuk iii, Isaiah xxvi, Jonah iii, Daniel iii (the Three Children of Babylon), the *Benedicite* and the *Magnificat*. Useful introductory works on Byzantine hymnography are Neale, *Hymns of the Eastern Church* (especially the introduction to the first edition); Tillyard, *Byzantine Music and Hymnography*; Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*. Further bibliography can be obtained from Szövérffy, *A Guide to Byzantine Hymnography*.

In a recent article Kazhdan raised the interesting question of whether religious poetry might reflect something of the author's involvement in the political and ideological disputes of his days.[187] Meyendorff had argued long ago that John of Damascus' hymns demonstrate very clearly that "in mind and in heart John still lives in Byzantium." He prays for "the victory of the emperor over his enemies," he hopes that through the intercession of the Mother of God the emperor "will trample under his feet the barbarian nations," he champions "the cross-bearing sovereign" as the shield protecting Christ's inheritance from the "blasphemous enemies" and he entreats the Mother of God to put under the feet of the piety-loving emperor "the Ishmaelite people who are fighting against us."[188] Kazhdan seeks to address his question by recourse to the oeuvre of Cosmas of Jerusalem, whose biography is unfortunately as uncertain and as obscured by legend as that of John of Damascus.[189] **{109}** He detects in Cosmas a militaristic bent. Moses' passage of the Red Sea had been understood by patristic writers as representing man's triumph over the passions of the soul that enslave him, but Cosmas takes it as referring to a real military triumph, the destruction of the might of the Amalek, and the cross for him is a victorious weapon, the tool by which Christ crushes the foe.[190] The tale of the three Jewish children in the furnace is, says Kazhdan, given a political thrust, since attention is focused not so much on their surviving the fire unharmed as on their conflict with a tyrant and their fearlessness in the face of his "beastly wrath."[191] Kazhdan is also able to infer that Cosmas remained lukewarm to the issue of iconoclasm, ignoring icons in favour of whole-hearted reverence for the cross.[192]

The task set by Kazhdan is a formidable one. Aside from frequent uncertainty over manuscript tradition and authorship, there is the further difficulty that the hymns lack any specificity of time and place and are suffused with Biblical imagery.

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[187] Kazhdan, "Kosmas of Jerusalem: His Political Views," 329.

[188] See Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," 117–18, where references are given for these quotes.

[189] See Kazhdan and Gero, "Kosmas of Jerusalem: His Biography." To an even greater extent than John of Damascus there is no real information on Cosmas until the tenth century, by which time it is legendary. The late tenth-century *Suidae Lexicon*, 2.649 (no. 467), simply says of him that he was a contemporary of John of Damascus and "a man of genius, exhaling the harmony of music." In two of his hymns he calls himself a Hagiopolite, so he was in some way connected with Jerusalem.

[190] Cosmas of Jerusalem, *Hymns*, canon 1, ode 6, *troparion* 1 (*Amalēk*); see Kazhdan, "Cosmas of Jerusalem: His Political Views," 332–33, 340–43. As indicated in n. 166 above a number of Greek writers use the term Amalek to refer to the Muslims. Kazhdan seeks to strengthen his argument by showing that Cosmas used a different set of images to John of Damascus, and he concludes that "the concept of the victory over the Arabs permeated his canons while this theme left no traces in the Damascene's poetry" (*ibid.*, 346), but this is in direct contradiction to the conclusion of Meyendorff just cited.

[191] *Ibid.*, 334.

[192] *Ibid.*, 337–46.

Yet he is right that some indication of the author's thoughts should be discernible in his choice of images and manner of handling them, and one hopes that other Byzantinists will pursue Kazhdan's line of enquiry.

STEPHEN THE SABAITE (D. 794)

The *Life* of this illustrious member of the monastery of Mar Saba was written ca. 807 by a certain Leontius of Damascus, who had spent much time with Stephen in his last years. From the Greek a translation **{110}** was made into Arabic in March AH 290/903 and thence into Georgian.[193] The work is too late for our purposes, but I wish to draw it to the attention of Islamic historians,[194] since it presents a lively picture of mid- to late eighth-century Palestine and its links with Syria and Egypt.[195] The Arabs most frequently mentioned are the tribesmen in the Judaean desert,[196] but we hear also of the caliph "in Persia," who has Elias, patriarch of Jerusalem (768–800), arrested and imprisoned; of John, bishop of Kerak, who consults with the governor and judge of Damascus on various matters; of a certain Theodore, who attempts to usurp Elias' seat by using his influence with the governor of Ramla; and of a Muslim who accompanies an ailing Christian to Jerusalem and Mar Saba, where the Christian is cured and the Muslim converted at the hands of Stephen.[197]

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[193] The translation is largely faithful, though the Arabic often uses more Islamic terminology (*Greek Life* IX, 572: *tōn Arabōn sēkos* becomes *Arabic Life* LII, 255: *masjid al-muslimīn*), and has a few quirks (IX, 572: *magaritēs* becomes LII, 255: *mqms*). The only Greek text published to date is acephalous, but is supplemented by the Georgian version (Garitte, "Un extrait géorgien de la Vie d'Etienne le Sabaïte," 78–90) and the Arabic (see next note). Further references are given by Nasrallah, *Mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite*, 155–56, and a study of Stephen's Life, milieu and attitude towards icons has recently been done by Auzépy, "Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène."

[194] Especially now that the Arabic version signalled by Garitte, "Le début de la Vie de S. Etienne le Sabaïte," has been published (see Bibliography I below).

[195] See Mango, "Greek Culture in Palestine after the Arab Conquest," 150–51.

[196] Stephen the Sabaite, *Arabic Life* XV, 93–95 (the dogs of an Arab encampment in the desert are held at bay by Stephen's prayers); *Greek Life* VIII, 569–71 = *Arabic Life* L, 247–49 (two young anchorite maidens with their mother saved from attack of Arab pastoralists by Stephens's prayers); VIII, 571 = LI, 253 (at Stephen's request Arabs agree to spare a stag which they were hunting).

[197] Stephen the Sabaite, *Greek Life* II, 537 = *Arabic Life* XXIII, 131–35 (caliph: *prōtosymboulos* = *amīr al-'arab al-kabīr*)] IV, 545 = XXX, 159 (governor: *symboulos* = *wālī*)*;* V, 549 = XXXIII, 175–81 (governor: *symboulos phosatou* = *amīr*)] IX, 572–73 = LII, 255–59 (Muslim and sick Christian).

DUBIA

John the Eremopolite

An extract of the *Life* of S. John the Eremopolite has its hero reprimand a certain Thomas for calling the "Hagarenes" wicked (*aischistoi*). **{111}** One should rather love them and pray for their conversion and also appreciate them, for they keep the monks on their toes and save them from being the playthings of demons. At the beginning of the extract Thomas became a monk of Mar Saba at the hands of its abbot Nicodemus. An abbot of the same name is said to have received Cosmas and John of Damascus into Mar Saba, and on this basis Halkin assigns John to the mid-eighth century.[198] But there was also a Nicodemus in charge of Mar Saba at the time of the Persian sack of Jerusalem in 614 and, moreover, he was succeeded by a Thomas.[199] It is, therefore, at least as likely that we should place John in the early seventh century.

A Greek-Coptic Papyrus

Preserved on a papyrus now at Madrid is a mixed Greek/Coptic text which comes from Ben Ḥasan in Upper Egypt.[200] The presence of both languages suggests that the town had a mixed population. The Greek part, which comes first, reads as follows: "(recto) For our benefit, in order to wage war together against them, and for them to subdue all that belongs to the enemy host: (verso) we pray on behalf of the citizens living in faith among them." The Coptic text continues: "For our city **{112}** and all the cities, and the land and the villages, and our common faith." Photiades argues that this text is made up of a prayer (on the recto) and a fragment from a liturgy (on the verso) and that it was "sent to the Greek and Coptic cities on the occasion of a war of religion." It is written, he says, in a hand characteristic of the seventh century and therefore most likely refers to the Arab invasion of Egypt in

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[198] Cosmas of Jerusalem and John of Damascus, *Life* XIX, 288; Halkin, "Saint Jean l'Erémopolite," 14. The extract is used by Schick, *Christian Communities of Palestine*, 97, as evidence of bad relations between Palestinian Christians and local Arabs during the Umayyad period.

[199] Antiochus, *Ep. ad Eustathium PG* 89, 1424C (Nicodemus), 1428A–B (Thomas). Sophronius, *Life of John the Almsgiver* (paraphrase), §9 (ed. Lappa-Zizicas, 276), says that this Nicodemus aided a mission sent by the Alexandrian patriarch to ransom twenty captives seized by the Persians. Stephen the Sabaite, *Greek Life* XI, 588 = *Arabic Life* LXIV, 311, mentions a Thomas, deacon of Mar Saba and subsequently patriarch of Jerusalem, who is a skilled doctor and is presumably the same Thomas who tends the martyrs of Mar Saba in 797, but he is probably too late to have any connection with the Nicodemus who receives John of Damascus.

[200] It is edited and translated by Photiades, "A Semi-Greek Semi-Coptic Parchment," who describes it simply as "parchment no. 189 of the Madrid papyri collection" without giving any further reference. For the relative standing of the Greek and Coptic languages in Late Antique Egypt see Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity*, 230–60.

639–40. This is possible, but the Sasanian occupation is an equally plausible contender.

Berlin Papyrus no. 10677

This papyrus originates from Egypt and bears an Arabic-Greek protocol comprising the Muslim profession of faith (*shahāda*), which allows it to be dated to the years 698–733. Before this time the *shahāda* did not feature, and after this protocols were in Arabic alone.[201] Among its contents is a paschal letter in Greek which announces the date of Easter Sunday as 16 April. This narrows the date of the letter to 713, 719 or 724, all of which fall in the patriarchate of Alexander II (705–30). The topic of his missive is God's visibility, and he approaches this subject via the apparent contradiction between John i.14: "And we beheld his glory," and John i.18: "No man has seen God at any time." Alexander's message is that not only was God visible by means of symbols and visions to the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, but he was also fully visible to many in New Testament times in the person of Jesus. He then moves on to Christological definition, reiterating the Monophysite position of one "theandric energy" and one will in Christ and refuting the views of the Chalcedonians and docetists before closing with the proclamation of the date of Easter.

MacCoull argues that the patriarch was "responding to Muslim attacks on the Christian veneration of depictions of that visible God" and in particular to Yazīd II's edict of 721 against images, which allows **{113}** her to date the letter to 724.[202] The point is interesting, but needs qualification. Firstly, the patriarch does not treat the issue of human representations of God, but rather divine manifestations by God. Moreover, many of the supporting examples adduced by MacCoull seem not to be relevant to her claim. For instance, when Aṣbagh, son of the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, spits on an icon of the Virgin with Child, he is not attacking the portrayal of the divinity, but rather objecting to the idea that Christ was divine, hence his words: "Who is Christ that you should worship him as God?"[203] One would agree, however, that Islam's iconoclastic stance was driving Christians onto the defensive and, though dyophysites must chiefly be intended, it is possible, as MacCoull claims, that Alexander may in part have had Muslims in mind when he pronounced his anathematisation of "those who say that the divinity is passible and those who say that the crucified Christ was just a man and not God in his entire person."[204]

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[201] Thus Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period*, 114 (no. 52a). This is generally the case, but not strictly correct; for example, BL Or. 1060 comes with a Greek-Arabic protocol and is dated 132 of "the year of the Saracens," i.e. 749 (Crum, *Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 186–87 [no. 398]).

[202] MacCoull, "The Paschal Letter of Alexander II," 35.

[203] *History of the Patriarchs* XVII, *PO* 5, 52; used by MacCoull, "The Paschal Letter of Alexander II," 34.

[204] *Ibid.*, 38.

Timothy the Stylite

In a survey of Greek literature in eighth-century Palestine, published posthumously, Blake remarked that there were a number of hagiographies which had been preserved only in Georgian translations. He gave as an example "the *Life* of St. Timothy the Stylite, in which the character and the adventures of this last representative of stylitism in Syria (VIIIth century) are described in a quite remarkable manner; the picture which this biography traces of religious life in Syria is without parallel."[205] Despite this glowing recommendation, the text has not attracted any studies. If it were only available in the rare Georgian edition of Kekelidze, this would be understandable, but there has also long been accessible in a Paris manuscript the original Arabic version.[206]

{114} Timothy's life before his stylitehood is given fairly briefly. He was the youngest of four children, born in the town of Kakhshata in the province of Antioch. While still a baby, both his parents died and his sister took charge of his upbringing. At the age of seven he was beaten by his elder brother for failing in the task of guarding some sheep, and he ran away. He was taken in by some villagers who looked after him until his adulthood. Then he conceived the idea of renouncing the world and becoming a monk. A vision confirmed him in this plan and he travelled to Jerusalem to seek blessing from the holy places. With the help of an elderly ascetic, Timothy became an adept of the eremitic life, but after spending a number of years in the vicinity of Jerusalem decided to return to the village of his foster-parents. There he resided for some time in a cell built for him by the villagers. One day he was invited by some monks whom he knew to visit Antioch with them. On the way they passed by his birth place and were persuaded to stay for the celebration of the feast of S. George. Timothy soon became reunited with his family and spent his remaining years in their village as a stylite. The rest of the Life, 70 percent of the Arabic version, is dedicated to the numerous miracles he worked, which made him famous and attracted to him people from all the surrounding countryside as well as from the cities of Antioch, Ḥimṣ and Aleppo.[207]

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[205] Blake, "La littérature grecque en Palestine au Ville siècle," 377.

[206] Slane, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, 71 (no. 259); Graf, *GCAL*, 1.522, 2.474. For the Georgian edition see Garitte, "Bibliographie de K. Kekelidze," nos. 81, 140q. There are a number of small differences between the Georgian and Arabic versions (e.g. the Georgian states that Timothy left for Jerusalem because his foster-parents wanted him to marry their daughter, and specifies that he remained in the Judaean desert for 27 years; neither detail is in the Arabic), but they are substantially the same.

[207] Three of the miracles involve Muslims: no. 1 concerns a Muslim man who was fornicating with a woman of the town and is led to repent by Timothy; no. 9 narrates how a contentious Muslim was brought to recognise the truth of Christianity by an apparition; no. 12 tells how the patriarch Theodoret was saved by the saint's prayers from execution at the hands of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and cured the latter's son with oil blessed by the saint, a deed which earned him concessions for the Christian people from the grateful ruler.

The chronological parameters of Timothy's life are difficult to determine. At the end of the Arabic text it is stated that he died at the age of 85 in the year AH 257/871. Yet, at a time when he could not have been less than 40, the saint met Theodoret, Melkite patriarch of Antioch (ca. 794–811), and aided him when he appeared before the **{115}** caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809) in Baghdad.[208] The death date is perhaps the more likely to be correct and the story of the patriarch at the caliphal court a later addition.[209] But though Blake may have wrongly assigned the Life to the eighth century and perhaps exaggerated its historical value, he was certainly right to draw attention to this overly neglected work and one hopes that it will soon receive more sympathetic treatment.[210]

[208] Timothy the Stylite, *Arabic Life*, fols. 112b (the sister says she has not seen Timothy for 30 years, at which time he was 7), 132a–133a (meeting with Theodoret = miracle no. 11), 133a–137b (Theodoret before the caliph = miracle no. 12).

[209] Eutychius, *Annales*, 2.51–52, and Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. syriacum*, 134, both tell a similar story, where the favourite concubine of Hārūn al-Rashīd is cured by the Melkite patriarch of Alexandria and Gabriel son of Bakhtisho' respectively.

[210] Professor Sydney Griffith informs me that an edition and translation of the Arabic version is being prepared by John C. Lamoreaux of Duke University, America.

CHAPTER 4.
WEST SYRIAN, COPTIC AND ARMENIAN SOURCES[1]

FRAGMENT ON THE ARAB CONQUESTS

{116} On the front fly-leaf of a sixth-century Syriac manuscript containing the Gospel according to Matthew and the Gospel according to Mark are scribbled a few lines about the Arab conquest, now very faint. The following entries are the most readable:

> **{117}** In January {the people of} Ḥimṣ took the word for their lives[2] and many villages were ravaged by the killing of {the Arabs of} Muḥammad (*Mūhmd*) and many people were slain and {taken} prisoner from Galilee as far as Beth…
>
> On the tw{enty-six}th of May the *Saq{īlā}rā* went {…} from the vicinity of Ḥimṣ and the Romans chased them {…}.[3]

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[1] Non-Greek East Christian sources of the seventh and eighth centuries are surveyed by Albert *et. al.*, *Christianismes orientaux*, 144–49 (Armenian), 187–213 (Coptic), 226–28 (Ethiopic), 276–90 (Georgian), 356–58 and 362–73 (Syriac). For Armenian authors see also Thorossian, *Histoire de la littérature arménienne*, 101–12; Inglisian, "Armenische Literatur," 165–77; Etmekjian, *History of Armenian Literature*, 183–241. For Coptic authors see also *C.E.*, *s.v.* "Literature, Coptic," which has a useful bibliography. For Ethiopic authors see also Littmann, "Äthiopische Literatur." For Georgian authors see also Deeters, "Georgische Literatur," 131–37. For West Syrian authors see also Assemani, *BO* 1 and 2; Wright, *Short History of Syriac Literature*, 134–66; Duval, *Littérature syriaque*, 374–79, 383–85; Baumstark, *GSL*, 242–84, 335–43; Chabot, *Littérature syriaque*, 81–93; Baumstark and Rücker, "Syrische Literatur," 190–95; Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia syriaca*, 170–87; Barsaum, *Al-lu'lu' al-manthūr*, 272–323; Brock, "Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History," 18–20, 28, 32–36. As regards Syriac, I shall, for clarity, always in this book translate *tayyāyā* as "Arab," *'arbāyā* as "Arabian," *hagrāyā* as "Hagarene," *ishmalāyā* as "Ishmaelite," *hanpā* as "pagan" and *mhaggrā/mhaggrāyā* as "Muslim" (the vocalisation in early manuscripts and the phrase *haw d-haggar* [n. 170 below] suggest that one should read *mhaggrāyā* [thus Brock, "Syriac Views," 15] rather than *mahgrāyā*, which would seem to be a later formulation).

[2] *Shqal meltā l-hayyhōn*, i.e. they pledged their submission in return for their lives.

> On the tenth {of August} the Romans fled from the vicinity of Damascus {and there were killed} many {people}, some ten thousand. And at the turn {of the ye}ar the Romans came. On the twentieth of August in the year n{ine hundred and forty-}seven there gathered in Gabitha {a multitude of} the Romans, and many people {of the R}omans were kil{led}, {s}ome fifty thousand.[4]

Beyond this only scattered words are discernible. Wright, the first to draw attention to the fragment, wrote that "it seems to be a nearly contemporary notice," a view to which Nöldeke also subscribed.[5] Neither scholar produced evidence to corroborate his assertion, but in its favour is the occurrence of the words "we saw" on l. 13, and the fact that it was a common practice to jot down notes for commemorative purposes on the blank pages of a Gospel. It is of some significance that the fragment accords with one of the dates given in Arabic sources for the battle at Gabitha (assuming this is to be identified with Yarmuk), namely 20 August AG 947/12 Rajab AH 15 (636), and bears resemblance to certain notices in Theophanes, but Donner is right to advise caution given the unknown provenance and frequent illegibility of the text.[6]

THOMAS THE PRESBYTER (WR. CA. 640)

{118} The contents of the eighth-century British Library Syriac manuscript Add. 14, 643 have puzzled and frustrated a number of scholars for their apparent lack of coherence. They consist of an assembly of texts of a rather diverse nature:

1. A geographical treatise (fragmentary).
2. A genealogy from Adam to the sons of Jacob.
3. "A record of various matters" which the author then clarifies: "I have set out in tables the names of the pagan kings from Abraham until the twentieth year of Constantine and the events which occurred in their reigns, and I have written a narrative to show how they were subjected to the Romans."
4. "Chronological tables from Abraham and Ninus, king of the Assyrians, until the twentieth year of Constantine, the victorious king;" in effect, a summary of Eusebius' chronicle.
5. A continuation of Eusebius up to the thirtieth year of Heraclius.

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[3] Cf. Theophanes, 337: "When he (Theodore the treasurer [*sakellarios*]) came to Emesa, he met a multitude of Saracens whom he slew together with their emir and drove the rest as far as Damascus."

[4] *Fragment on the Arab Conquests*, 11. 8–11, 14–16, 17–23; whatever appears in curly brackets is unreadable, so any letters/words given are conjectured.

[5] Wright, *Catalogue*, 1.65 (no. 94); Nöldeke, "Zur Geschichte der Araber," 76.

[6] Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 144; note that Anastasius of Sinai, *Sermo* 3, *PG* 89, 1156C, distinguishes between the battles of Gabitha and Yarmuk.

One might see these sections as forming a single composition, a slightly idiosyncratic world chronicle, for they do exhibit a certain loose unity. Sections 3 and 4 largely overlap, but they are of a different character; the first concentrates on the Old Testament and seeks to demonstrate certain points (Mosaic Law precedes Greek religion, the Romans were heirs to a God-given crown), whereas the second deals more with the history of the church and simply lists events. The problem comes with the last two sections:

6. "Explanation of the years which give information on sundry matters," which proceeds to furnish a medley of theological and historical notices in no apparent chronological or thematic order.[7]
7. A list detailing "at what dates and under which kings the synods were held," ending with a condemnation of Chalcedon.

{119} Land, the first editor of the text, suggested that a mid-seventh century Jacobite author had written a continuation of Eusebius and that this had been revised almost a century later when the lists of synods and caliphs and so on were added.[7] Others have just considered it a collection of miscellaneous documents.[8] Recently, Palmer, picking up on the first word of the sixth section, "explanation" (*sūkālā*), has striven to present it as a covert anti-Chalcedonian reading of history.[9] There are some hints that the whole piece was compiled by one man. Both Sections 5 and 7 conclude with an attack on Chalcedon, and Sections 5 and 6 share a notice in common, which connects an earthquake of 629 with Heraclius' holding of peace negotiations with the Persian general Shahrbaraz and their building of a church together. This man would appear to be the priest Thomas who modestly inserts himself at one point:

> In the year 947 (635–36), indiction 9, the Arabs invaded the whole of Syria and went down to Persia and conquered it. The Arabs climbed the mountain of Mardin and killed many monks there in [the monasteries of] Qedar and Bnata. There died the blessed man Simon, doorkeeper of Qedar, brother of Thomas the priest.[10]

The sequence of events in which this notice is located bears no indiction dates from the year in which Mardin and Resh'aina were taken until Mesopotamia was liberated. This may mean Thomas lived in the area of Mardin near his brother, though indic-

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[7] Land, *Anecdota syriaca*, 1.168; he gives a useful analysis of the text at 1.165–77.

[8] E.g. Baumstark, *GSL*, 182–83, 247; Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 80–81.

[9] See Palmer, "Une chronique syriaque" and *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 5–12, who provides an interesting discussion of the interrelationship of the seven sections. His point that chroniclers were not mere compilers, but wrote "to serve moral, religious and political purposes" (*ibid.*, xxviii) is certainly valid, and has been argued recently by Ferber, "Theophanes' Account of the Reign of Heraclius" (against Krumbacher and Proudfoot), and Crone, "Review of *Kitāb al-Ridda wa'l-Futūḥ and Kitāb al-Jamal*… By Sayf b. 'Umar" (against Noth).

[10] Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 148.

tions are rather patchily given throughout. The mention of Heraclius reigning for 30 years at the end of Section 5 and the lack of any event later than the above suggest that **{120}** the *Chronicle* was completed in 640 when Heraclius was in his final year. The last folio of the manuscript contains a list of caliphs down to Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 724), but, as is emphasised by the curt "it is finished" at the end of Section 7, this list should be seen as a separate item.[11]

The most interesting notice in this text for Islamicists is the following:

> In the year 945, indiction 7, on Friday 4 February (634) at the ninth hour, there was a battle between the Romans and the Arabs of Muḥammad (*tayyāyē d-Mḥmt*) in Palestine twelve miles east of Gaza. The Romans fled, leaving behind the patrician *bryrdn*,[12] whom the Arabs killed. Some 4000 poor villagers of Palestine were killed there, Christians, Jews and Samaritans. The Arabs ravaged the whole region.[13]

This is the first explicit reference to Muḥammad in a non-Muslim source, and its very precise dating inspires confidence that it ultimately derives from first-hand knowledge. The account is usually identified with the battle of Dathin, which Muslim historians say took place near Gaza in the spring of 634.[14]

HOMILY ON THE CHILD SAINTS OF BABYLON

Devotion for these three saintly youths was widespread in Egypt, and there circulated much literature celebrating their courageous refusal to accede to Nebuchadnezzar's demand that all bow down to his idol. One rather wide-ranging Coptic homily treats their story and that of the prophet Daniel, and concludes with the following passage:

> **{121}** As for us, my loved ones, let us fast and pray without cease, and observe the commandments of the Lord so that the blessing of all our Fathers who have pleased Him may come down upon us. Let us not fast like the God-killing Jews, nor fast like the Saracens who are oppressors, who give themselves up to prostitution, massacre and lead into captivity the sons of men, saying: "We both fast and pray." Nor should we fast like those who deny the saving passion of our Lord who died for us, to free us from death and perdition. Rather let us fast like our Fathers the apostles who went out into all the world, suffering hunger and

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[11] See the entry on "Short Chronologies" in Chapter 10 below.

[12] Land, *Anecdota syriaca*, 1.116, and Gil, *History of Palestine*, 38–39, read "in Jordan," which seems implausible geographically and etymologically; Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 12, suggests the Armenian name Vardan (Wardān in Arabic).

[13] Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 147–48.

[14] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 109, and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, 2.514–15, say that Dathin, where occurred the first battle of the Muslims, was "one of the villages of Gaza." Anastasius of Sinai, *Sermo* 3, *PG* 89, 1156C, and Theophanes, 332, mention a Roman defeat at *Dathemōn/Dathesmos*.

> thirst, deprived of all… Let us fast like Moses the arch-prophet, Elias and John, like the prophet Daniel and the three Saints in the furnace of fire.[15]

The author clearly has no love of Muslim rule, and the emphasis on killing and enslaving rather than taxation and tyrannical rule suggest that the sermon was delivered not long after the Arab conquests, perhaps in the 640s. The reference to Saracen fast and prayer is interesting, but the two are so symbolic of piety to a Christian that he may mean no more than that the Arabs claim to be God-fearing.[16]

Gabriel of Qartmin (d. 648)

"When Khusrau conquered Mesopotamia and expelled the Romans from it, he ordered at the same time the Chalcedonian bishops to be expelled from their churches and those churches to be given to the Jacobites."[17] The latter, therefore, became strong in this region and particularly so the abbot of Qartmin monastery, then Daniel 'Uzzaya (614–33), who "became metropolitan over four districts: Tella, Mardin, **{122}** Dara and Tur 'Abdin."[18] He was succeeded in this position by Gabriel from Beth Qustan, "who during his lifetime revived a dead man and performed other wonderful miracles."[19] These are narrated at length in the *Life* of Gabriel, which forms part of a trilogy on the most illustrious patrons of Qartmin, the other two being the monastery's founders, Samuel and Simeon.[20]

Much of the *Life* of Gabriel is either legendary or contrived from other sources, and only the resume of his career at the end strikes one as worthy of credence. It was evidently once separate, for it contradicts elements of the *Life* which, for example, make Gabriel a deacon before he became a monk:

> The sum of the years of lord Gabriel was seventy-four. At fifteen he became disciple under the yoke of the monastic life. At twenty he became a deacon. At thirty-nine he was made head of the brothers. At forty-five he became priest, or

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[15] Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon, §36 (tr. de Vis, 99–100).

[16] A deceiver who operated in the region of Dara in the mid-eighth century urged: "Repent, fast and pray, lest the earth open its mouth and swallow you up" (*Chron. Zuqnin*, 286). And in a homily S. Peter is made to say of the "nations who serve God but do not accept the Son or the Holy Spirit" that even were they to fast and pray rigorously, they would still have no part in the kingdom of heaven (Theophilus of Alexandria, *Arabic Homily*, 393–97).

[17] Chron. 1234, 1.224.

[18] *Chron. 819*, 10; see Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 152–54, for the situation.

[19] *Chron. 819*, 11. In the *Life* Gabriel revives three corpses; this, plus a note that Gabriel's body was exhumed 130 years after his death in order to ward off the plague, tell us that the *Life* was not fixed before the ninth century (Gabriel of Qartmin, *Life* XVI–XVIII, 76–80; XXVII, 90–91).

[20] Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 13–17, discusses the *Qartmin Trilogy*, *ibid.*, 155–59, assesses the *Life* of Gabriel.

> presbyter. At sixty he was ordained a bishop and he sat on the episcopal throne for fourteen years seven months and twenty-three days.[21]

Arabs figure only twice in the *Life*. Once "a certain Arabian" (*gabrā 'arbāyā*) from the desert of 'Arab in the south, a prosperous merchant, deposited gold with a monk of Qartmin while he was away on business. The subsequent death of this monk necessitated Gabriel's intercession when the merchant returned demanding his money.[22] The second incident was Gabriel's meeting with the caliph 'Umar:

> **{123}** This lord Gabriel went to the ruler (*aḥīd shūltānā*) of the sons of Hagar, who was 'Umar bar Khattāb, in the city of Gezirta. He ('Umar) received him with great joy, and after a few days the blessed man petitioned this ruler and received his signature to the statutes and laws, orders and prohibitions, judgements and precepts pertaining to the Christians, to churches and monasteries, and to priests and deacons that they do not give poll tax,[23] and to monks that they be freed from any tax (*madattā*). Also that the wooden gong should not be banned and that they might chant hymns before the bier when it comes out from the house to be buried, together with many [other] customs. This governor (*shallīṭā*) was pleased at the coming to him of the blessed man and this holy one returned to the monastery with great joy.[24]

That Gabriel, as metropolitan of Dara and abbot of Qartmin, met with an Arab general to establish terms is likely, and exemption from taxes was often sought for monks and priests as one of these terms. Ostentatious worship, however, of which the use of the wooden gong and chanting before a bier are a part, did not become a literary theme until the eighth century.[25] This account is, then, a later fabrication and

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[21] Gabriel of Qartmin, *Life* XXIII, 88. *Chron. 819*, 11, has him appointed bishop in AG 945/633–34; *Life* XI, 72, has 965, which must be wrong, since it says that it coincided with the withdrawal of the Persians from Mesopotamia.

[22] Gabriel of Qartmin, *Life* X, 67–71. This story was almost certainly drafted some while after Gabriel's death, since it concludes on an apologetic note: upon Gabriel's prayers the dead monk speaks revealing the location of the money; this so impresses the Arab that he falls prostrate testifying "that there is no God except Christ to whom be glory forever" (*layt Allāhā l-bar men mshīḥā* – note the similarity to the first part of the Muslim profession of faith), and is subsequently baptised. It is possible that this has been lifted from a biography of Mar Ḥabīb (d. 707), bishop of Edessa, about whom the same tale is told (*Chron. Zuqnin*, 160–63).

[23] The manuscript has *pqrtā*. Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 159, suggests reading "vertebrae" (*paqārē*) and taking this as an analogy with the phrase "tax on the neck."

[24] Gabriel of Qartmin, *Life* XII, 72. Ms. Paris syr. 375, fols. 99–102, gives a somewhat expanded version of this passage; Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. eccles.*, 1.123, says: "He (Gabriel) went down to 'Umar bar Khattāb, king of the Arabs, when the latter was at Gezirta of Beth Zabdai, and he obtained a diploma with power over the Christians."

[25] Fattal, *Statut légal des non-musulmans*, 270–74 (exemption from taxes), 203–13 (ostentatious worship); Tritton, *Non-Muslim Subjects*, 217–18, 100–14.

belongs to the genre of documents which sought to delineate the ideal **{124}** Muslim-Christian treaty and endow it with authority by attributing it to famous Muslim figures.[26]

SEBEOS, BISHOP OF THE BAGRATUNIS (WR. 660S)

The most fascinating source for events of the early seventh century is an anonymous untitled history of Armenia. It begins where the fifth-century historian Lazar P'arpets'i left off, namely with the rebellion of Vahan Mamikonian in the 480s.[27] But it then passes over much of the sixth century until the revolt of Vardan Mamikonian in 572. Thereafter the chronicler recounts in detail those events concerning Armenia and its role in superpower politics up until the mid-650s, later adding stoppress news on the conclusion of the Arab civil war in 661.

There has been much controversy over the authorship of this work. Its first modern commentator tried to identify it with the *History of Heraclius* referred to by five medieval historians and attributed to a bishop Sebeos, presumably the "lord Sebeos, bishop of the House of the Bagratunis," who attended the Council of Dwin in 645 and witnessed its canons. This was for a long time generally accepted until the researches of Abgarian, who pointed out that the three surviving excerpts from Sebeos' composition are not found in, or even contradict, our anonymous chronicle. So the two must be considered distinct documents, the one by Sebeos having been lost bar the excerpts.[28] For **{125}** simplicity I have, however, continued to use the name Sebeos in this book, but this must be understood as simply a shorthand for the text of the anonymous chronicle and for its original compiler.

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[26] E.g. "The catholicos Isho'yahb (II) went to find 'Umar and spoke to him about the Christians; 'Umar granted him an edict of which this is the copy…" (*Chron. Siirt* CIV, *PO* 13, 620); see Sako, *Lettre christologique du Īšō'yahb II*, 75–79, and more generally Graf, "Apokryphe Schutzbriefe Muḥammads für die Christen." There are also Jewish (Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 255–58), Samaritan (MacDonald, "An Unpublished Palestinian Tradition about Muḥammad") and Greek equivalents (see under *Diathēkē tou Mōameth* and *Horismos ton Mauia* in Bibliography I below).

[27] Prefixed to the *History of Heraclius* are three sections containing an account of the legendary origins of Armenia and a sketch of the Parthian Arsacids, together called the *Primary History*, and a chronology of Persian and Roman rulers to the end of the Sasanian era (on which see Hewsen, "The Synchronistic Table of Bishop Eusebius [Ps. Sebēos]"). These were probably added later; for discussion see Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i: History of the Armenians*, 53–56. Further comments on Sebeos are given in the entry on "Armenian Texts" in Chapter 10 below.

[28] On the authorship debate see in particular Abgarian, "Remarques sur l'histoire de Sèbèos;" Krikorian, "Sebēos, Historian of the Seventh Century;" Arzoumanian, "A Critique of Sebēos and his History of Heraclius;" Mahè, "Critical Remarks on the Newly Edited Excerpts from Sebēos." For a full bibliography see Thomson, *Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature*, 196–98.

Unlike the question of authorship, studies on dating and reliability have not been forthcoming, and a few comments are therefore necessary. There are indications that Sebeos lived through many of the events that he relates: he maintains that the account of the Arab conquests derives from fugitives "who had been eyewitnesses thereof" and, speaking of happenings in 652, declares that the Armenian faith has prevailed "until now."[29] Gero considers that Sebeos' notice on the launching of a fleet by Muʿāwiya to attack Constantinople must refer to "the great siege in 674–78." But the text describes a single assault rather than a long siege, and the event is clearly to be identified with that reported by a mid eighth-century Syriac source. Both emphasise that a great force of ships was readied and that the expedition took place in the thirteenth year of Constans (654).[30] Sebeos concludes with Muʿāwiya's ascendancy in the first Arab civil war (656–61), and the above points would suggest that the author was writing very soon after this date.[31]

As for Sebeos' trustworthiness as a chronicler, one should note his occasional use of documentary material. This consists of an exchange of letters between the Armenian patriarch Kumitas (615–28) and the deputy patriarch of Jerusalem Modestus (614–31), extracts from a declaration of faith composed in 648 in response to Constantine's request for a rapprochement between the Armenian and Greek churches, the **{126}** substance of the peace treaty concluded by prince Theodore Rshtuni with the Arabs in 653, and possibly a letter from the emperor Maurice (582–602) to Khusrau II complaining of the refractoriness of the Armenian nobles and troops and suggesting a policy of deportation.[32] From the rich information on Smbat Bagratuni we might also infer that Sebeos had at his disposal a biography of this man, who was much honoured by Khusrau II.

Our confidence in Sebeos is further increased by his apparent access to certain privileged information. An example is the Persian sack of Jerusalem in 614, for which he is the only writer to explain why the Persians, who seem to have inflicted little or no damage on towns and cities in Syria and Palestine,[33] ravaged Jerusalem; namely that initially a truce had been arranged, but a few months later some "youths

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[29] Sebeos, XXX, XXXV (tr. Macler, 102, 136).

[30] Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 38 n. 15; Sebeos, XXXVI (tr. Macler, 14042); *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 654. Note that Sebeos' account makes much use of Biblical imagery; e.g. his description of the Arab ships as equipped with "siege engines, flame and stone throwers, men to throw javelins and slings," is taken from 1 Maccabees vi.51.

[31] Brock, "Syriac Views," 9; Thomson, "Muḥammad and the Origin of Islam in Armenian Literary Tradition," 830; Reinink, "Ps.-Methodius: a Concept of History," 157–58, speak of Sebeos writing "at the end of the seventh century." In response to my interrogation, these scholars have informed me that they simply mean "in the second half of the seventh century."

[32] Sebeos, XXV, XXXIII, XXXV, VI (tr. Macler, 70–76, 113–29, 133, 30–31).

[33] See Schick, *Christian Communities of Palestine*, 20–48; the Persians seem to have wrought most devastation in Asia Minor (Foss, "The Persians in Asia Minor and the End of Antiquity").

of the city" killed the Persian governors stationed there and a riot broke out between Jews and Christians which necessitated Persian intervention.[34] The date of May 614,[35] the description of a nineteen-day siege,[36] the undermining of the walls,[37] the removal of the Cross and captives to Persia:[38] all this agrees with sources known to be contemporary. Either **{127}** Armenian pilgrims brought back news of the catastrophe,[39] or Sebeos had before him hagiographic and/or homiletic material concerning the event, which is indeed likely to have circulated after such a misfortune that affected all Christians.

Another instance is Sebeos' tale of the activities of "the rebellious Jews who, finding support from the Hagarenes for a time, conceived the plan of rebuilding the Temple of Solomon:"

> Having located the spot called the Holy of Holies, they constructed there a place of prayer for themselves with the foundations and superstructure. But the Ishmaelites, envious of them, expelled them from that spot and called the same building their own place of prayer. They (the Jews) erected elsewhere another place for their worship.[40]

That Jews were allowed by the Muslims to live and practise their religion in Jerusalem is acknowledged gratefully by a number of Jewish authorities, who contrast this happy state of affairs with their exilic situation under Byzantine rule:

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[34] Sebeos, XXIV (tr. Macler, 68–69). There is a possible allusion to this in the condeination by a Chalcedonian monk of the rowdiness of the circus factions recently arrived in Jerusalem (Strategius, *Capture of Jerusalem*, II.2–4).

[35] *Ibid.*, VIII.5; *Chron. paschale*, 704; Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 146: all agree on 614; Sebeos, XXIV (tr. Macler, 68), specifies 22 May. Antiochus, *Ep. ad Eustathium*, *PG* 89, 1424, says that Arabs raided Mar Saba monastery one week before Jerusalem was taken; these martyrs of Mar Saba are celebrated on 15 May (though this may be their burial rather than death date; see Vailhe, "Prise de Jerusalem," 646–49). Strategius, *Capture of Jerusalem*, X.6 (C) gives 22 May for the Jews' slaughter of 4518 Christians; the carnage lasted 3 days, evidently 19–22 May. This is approximately confirmed by the Georgian lectionary which has 17 May for the decimation of Jerusalem (*Palestinian-Georgian Calendar*, 67, 226–27).

[36] Strategius, *Capture of Jerusalem*, VIII.5, has 20 days.

[37] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 25; Sophronius, *Anacreontica* no. 14, 106/173; see also Clermont-Ganneau, "The Taking of Jerusalem by the Persians," 37.

[38] Strategius, *Capture of Jerusalem*, XIII.6; Anastasius the Persian's *Acta* (cited by Flusin, *Anastase le Perse*, 47); *Chron. Khuzistan*, 25 (cross had been hidden in a vegetable garden).

[39] Modestus' letter to Kumitas written shortly after 614 mentions the visit of Armenian Christians to Jerusalem (Sebeos, XXV [tr. Macler, 70]); see also Stone, "Armenian Pilgrims and Pilgrimages."

[40] Sebeos, XXXI (tr. Macler, 102); the subsequent incident narrated by Sebeos, how Jews killed two pigs in the Muslims' mosque in the hope of getting the Christians into trouble, is not found in any other source.

> The Temple remained with Byzantium for 500 or so years and Israel were unable to enter Jerusalem; whoever did so and was found out, suffered death. Then when the Romans left it, by the grace of the God of Israel, and the kingdom of Ishmael was victorious, Israel was given leave to enter and take up residence and the courtyards of the house of God were handed over to them and they were praying there for a time.[41]

{128} This source also has the Muslims evict the Jews from their place of prayer, though the reason is somewhat different: "Then news of them went up to the Ishmaelite king, how they were engaging in shameful and riotous behaviour, wine-drinking and drunkenness, and calumny; so he banished them to one of the gates." Moreover, Sebeos is the only early Christian writer to note that four parties were involved in the first Arab civil war:[42] one in the east (ʿAlī), one in Syria and the north (Muʿāwiya), another held Egypt (sundry rebels), and the fourth held "the country of the Arabs and a place called Askaron."[43] And he continues: "Those in Egypt and Arabia united and killed their king (ʿUthmān), pillaged the royal treasures and established another king (ʿAlī)," which fits what we know from Muslim writers of the coalition between the Egyptians and the Medinese.

Sebeos is not, however, immune from error. In particular, he conflates the two Persian assaults of 615 and 626 into a single incident, which results in his leapfrogging or misplacing the events of 616–25. The breakdown of the peace between Muʿāwiya and Constans is dated to both the eleventh and the twelfth years of the latter's reign. And a number of descriptions are heavily influenced by Biblical conceptions and terminology, a notable example being the presentation of the beginning of the Arab conquests.[44] Despite these and a few other shortcomings, the novel and often accurate information in Sebeos means that he must be taken seriously.

What makes Sebeos especially interesting is that he is the first nonMuslim author to present us with a theory for the rise of Islam that pays attention to what the

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[41] Thus Salman ben Yeruhim (wr. ca. 950) in his Judaeo-Arabic commentary on Psalm 30 (text given by Mann, *Jews under the Fatimids*, 1.46 n. 1). Further discussion and references are given in *ibid.*, 1.42–47, and by Gil, *History of Palestine*, 65–74; see also the entry on "Jewish Texts" in Chapter 10 below.

[42] Sebeos, XXXVIII (tr. Macler, 148–49).

[43] This may intend the name of ʿĀʾisha's camel, *ʿaskaran*, whose participation gave to an early skirmish the name Battle of the Camel (Bashear, *Al-taʾrīkh al-ākhar*, 306, citing Ibn al-Wardī). Such a slip could easily have been made by a non-Arabic speaker and would indicate an oral source. Otherwise there might be some connection here with the rather odd translation of *en Perside* as *ilā l-ʿaskar* in the biography of Stephen the Sabaite (*Greek Life* II, 537 = *Arabic Life* XXIII, 131–35).

[44] Sebeos, XXVI, XXXV, XXX (tr. Macler, 77–84, 132 and 139, esp. 96–97).

Muslims themselves thought they were doing.[45] **{129}** In his view – and his source is stated as escaped prisoners-of-war – the Arabs had been awakened by some Jewish refugees and a merchant named Muḥammad to a knowledge of the "living God who had revealed himself to their father Abraham" and to an awareness of their descent from Abraham. The fifth-century church historian Sozomen, a native of Gaza, tells a similar story regarding the Arabs, how they had lapsed in their Abrahamic monotheism, but had heard once more of their true origin from the Jews and returned to the observance of Jewish laws and customs "up until the present day." Thus this genealogical lesson had cultic ramifications.[46] But for the Arabs of Muḥammad's time it also had, according to Sebeos, territorial implications:

> Muḥammad preached, saying: "With an oath God promised that land to Abraham and his posterity after him forever… Now you, you are the sons of Abraham, and God will realise in you the promise made to Abraham and his posterity. Only love the God of Abraham, and go and take possession of your country which God gave to your father Abraham, and none will be able to resist you in battle, for God is with you."[47]

Echoes of this reconstruction are found in a mid-eighth-century Syriac chronicle:[48]

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[45] I.e. as opposed to the widespread notion that the Arabs had come at God's command and to serve His purpose of chastising the sinful Christians (see the entry on the "Tool of God's Wrath" in Chapter 12 below).

[46] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica*, 2.671–72 (6.XXXVIII); for the background to this report see Millar, "Hagar, Ishmael, Josephus and the Origins of Islam." One might note also the mention in *Mishna*, Nidda 7.3, of converts to Judaism in Reqem who, if this is to be identified with Petra (Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine*, 2.436), would presumably be Arabs; and the appearance of the name Abraham 74 times on sixth-century inscriptions at Nessana near Gaza (Negev, *Greek Inscriptions from the Negev*, 76). The question of *dīn Ibrāhīm*, the cultic corollary to Abrahamic descent, is complex; for discussion see Shahid, *BAFIC*, 167–180; Rubin, "Ḥanīfiyya and Kaʿba." Against Rubin see Dagorn, *La geste d'Ismaël*.

[47] Sebeos, XXX (tr. Macler, 95–96). Other indications of early Islam's Abrahamic orientations are noted in the entries on the "Chronicler of Khuzistan" and on "Abrahamic/Primitive Monotheism" in Chapters 5 and 13 below respectively. For a fuller treatment of Sebeos' ideas on Islam see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 6–8; Arat, "Bischof Sebeos und die ersten Aussagen der Armenier zum Islam;" Hoyland, "Sebeos, the Jews and the Rise of Islam."

[48] The following has been reconstructed from Michael the Syrian 11.II, 405/403–404, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.227–28, who are both drawing on Dionysius of Tellmaḥre. The latter, together with Theophanes and Agapius, rely upon the mid-eighth-century *Syriac CS* for many notices on events in the East. Regarding Muḥammad, however, their accounts differ considerably. That it is Dionysius who best preserves for us the account of *Syriac CS* is argued in the entry on "Theophilus of Edessa" in Chapter 10 below. It is interesting that *Syriac CS* was composed by a native of Edessa (see the entry on "Theophilus of Edessa" in Chapter 10

> **{130}** This Muḥammad, while in the age and stature of youth, began to go up and down from his town of Yathrib to Palestine for the business of buying and selling. While so engaged in the country, he saw the belief in one God and it was pleasing to his eyes.[49] When he went back down to his tribesmen, he set this belief before them, and he convinced a few and they became his followers. In addition, he would extol the bountifulness of this land of Palestine, saying: "Because of the belief in one God, the like of this good and fertile land was given to them." And he would add: "If you listen to me, abandon these vain gods and confess the one God, then to you too will God give a land flowing with milk and honey." To corroborate his word, he led a band of them who were obedient to him and began to go up to the land of Palestine plundering, enslaving and pillaging. He returned laden [with booty] and unharmed, and thus he had not fallen short of his promise to them.

That religion and conquest went hand in hand in Muḥammad's preaching is clear from many passages in the Qur'an which command: "Fight those who do not believe in God and the Last Day… until they pay tribute" (ix.29) and the like. But there is also an indication that the lands which they were about to conquer were their inheritance: "He made you heirs to their land (of the "people of the Book") and their dwellings and to a land which you have not yet trodden (xxxiii.27)."[50] **{131}** And Arab generals are heard to justify their invasion to their Byzantine and Persian counterparts by saying that the lands were promised to them by God (*mawʿūd Allāh*).[51] It is easy to see how the Muslims might portray their conquests as the taking of what was rightfully theirs, but it is less obvious why Christian sources would do so. The Bible has Ishmael father many offspring who are to become a great nation (Genesis xvii.20, xxi.13), but there is no specific mention of an inheritance.

Sebeos can also tell us of the laws which Muḥammad prescribed for his followers, and these are paralleled in the Qur'an, though Sebeos makes no reference to Muḥammad bearing a scripture: "He legislated (*awrinadrē*) for them not to eat carrion (v.3), not to drink wine (ii.219, v.90), not to speak falsely (xxxix.3, xvi.116, xxxiii.24 etc.) and not to commit fornication (xvii.32, xxiv.2)." Most of Sebeos' attention is, however, directed to an account of the Arabs' wars with the Persians and Byzan-

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below), a city with close links to Dwin and the departure point in Sebeos' account for the Jews who take refuge in Arabia and seek to inform the Arabs of their Abrahamic descent.

[49] Michael has: "While engaged with the Jews, he learnt from them the belief in one God, and seeing that his tribesmen worshipped stones and wood and every created thing, he adhered to the belief of the Jews, which was pleasing to him;" he most likely specifies Jews for polemical reasons.

[50] Commentators on the Qur'an often consider this verse a reference to the Prophet's seizure of the lands of the Jews of Qurayẓa, but other writers say it intends "whatever the Muslims capture until the day of Resurrection" (e.g. Yaḥyā ibn Ādam, *Kharāj*, 18).

[51] Ṭabarī, 1.2160, 2254, 2284, 2289.

tines, particularly their impact on Armenia. Though the chronology is sometimes unclear and events are occasionally given a Biblical interpretation, the account is informative and is valuable for having been composed in the second half of the seventh century. It confirms to us, for example, the existence of some sort of caliphal figure at a very early date, for it distinguishes between the general or prince (*ishkhan*) Mu'āwiya, based in Damascus, and the king (*arkʿay*), who resides elsewhere but still seems to formulate at least the more major decisions.[52] Sebeos certainly does not welcome the Arabs or their conquests: he speaks of "the horror of the invasion of the Ishmaelites" and likens them to the fourth beast of Daniel vii.7, which is more terrible than all the rest. And he refers to the Muslim commander who concluded **{132}** a treaty with Theodore Rshtuni as "the great ally of the Antichrist."[53] Nevertheless, his tone is generally matter-of-fact and unhostile, which cannot but add weight to his testimony.

Benjamin I, Patriarch of Alexandria (626–65)

The years of Benjamin's patriarchate were turbulent ones for himself and his flock. He came to office during the Persian occupation of Egypt (619–28) which, with only a brief respite, was followed by the heavy-handed attempt of Cyrus, Chalcedonian patriarch and governor of Egypt (631–42), to bring the Copts within the pale of the imperial church; then came invasion and rule by the Arabs. During the Chalcedonian persecutions and the Arab conquests Benjamin remained in hiding in Upper Egypt. But with the death of Cyrus and flight of much of the Chalcedonian elite, he was now in a good position to establish himself as the spiritual head of Egypt. The commander (*dūks*) Shenute informed the general 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ (d. 663) of the patriarch's situation, and 'Amr obligingly wrote a letter guaranteeing him protection and inviting him to "come forward in peace and security to manage the affairs of his church and the government of his people." So Benjamin returned to Alexandria and 'Amr "ordered him to be brought before him in honour, reverence and friendship. When he saw him, he treated him with deference and said to his companions and intimates: 'In all the countries which we have taken until now, I have not seen a man of God the like of this one.'" With good relations thus established, Benjamin was

[52] E.g. Sebeos, XXX (tr. Macler 101): "When the sons of Ishmael headed from the desert of Sin to the east, their king 'Umar did not go with them… The king gave the order to assemble ships and to equip them with many sailors in order to set out over the sea to the south and to the east;" *ibid.*, XXXV (tr. Macler, 139): "The peace was broken that existed between Constans and Mu'āwiya, the general of Ishmael. The king of Ishmael gave the order to assemble all the soldiers from the west and to make war against the empire of the Byzantines, to seize Constantinople and crush that kingdom."

[53] Sebeos, XXXII, XXXV (tr. Macler, 104–105, 133).

able to devote himself to "the return of the members of the church who had deserted in the days of Heraclius" and the rebuilding of churches and monasteries.[54]

Two exploits are attributed to Benjamin. The first is a debate with 'Amr, which is inferred from the above encounter and continues as follows:

> Then 'Amr turned to him and said to him: "Take your churches and your people and govern their affairs. And if **{133}** you pray for me that I may go to the west and Pentapolis and take possession of them like Egypt and return safely and promptly, I will do whatever you ask of me." So the holy Benjamin prayed for him and gave a fine speech which astonished 'Amr and those present with him, for in it was exhortation and much profit for those who heard it. And he revealed certain matters to 'Amr and departed from him honoured and respected.[55]

This, however, hardly merits its inclusion in a list of Muslim-Christian dialogues.[56]

Benjamin's second deed is, conversely, proposed by our sources but ignored by modern historians. It is most clearly set out by the Jacobite patriarch Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (818–45):

> Concerning the land of Egypt we have found in histories that Benjamin, the patriarch of the orthodox, gave Egypt to the Arabs. The Copts handed over Alexandria and Egypt to the Arabs because they were oppressed by the persecution of the Chalcedonians. Cyrus, the Chalcedonian patriarch, who tied the red slipper of kings to one foot and the sandal of monks to the other, like one who has royal and religious authority, drove out the patriarch Benjamin. He left and went to the Arabs and promised that he would hand over to them Alexandria, if they would expel Cyrus and restore the churches to him. When he had promised and they had confirmed it with oaths, he returned and informed his people and they surrendered Alexandria to the Arabs.[57]

{134} Since this is reported by a co-religionist of Benjamin, it cannot necessarily be dismissed as hostile and, interestingly, it is echoed by certain Arabic sources, as in the following account:

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[54] *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 495–500. On Benjamin's life and works see the articles by Muller listed in Bibliography II below. Amèlineau, "Fragments coptes," 368–78, 386–89, presents a surviving fragment of a Coptic *Life* of Benjamin.

[55] *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 496–97; some discussion is given by Müller, "Koptische Patriarchen des 7. Jahrhunderts," 203–204.

[56] As is claimed by Nau, "Un colloque," 230–32; Fritsch, *Islam und Christentum*, 1; Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 40; Cameron, "Disputations, Polemical Literature and the Formation of Opinion," 104.

[57] This represents the material common to Michael the Syrian 11.VIII, 422– 23/432–33, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.251–53. The latter always speaks of 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ instead of Arabs and adds: "He (Benjamin) permitted them (the Copts) to have themselves circumcised to provide them with a distinguishing mark so that they might not be killed along with the Chalcedonians."

> When we (Muslims) arrived in Balhib (village in the Delta), the ruler of Alexandria sent a message to ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ that ran: "O Arabs, in the past I used to pay a poll-tax to people who were more hateful to me than you, namely Persians and Byzantines. If you want me to pay the poll-tax, I am agreeable on the condition that you will return to me all those people from our region whom you have captured."[58]

And the earliest Muslim historian of Egypt, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 871), relates:

> There was in Alexandria a bishop of the Copts called Abba Benjamin. When he heard of the coming of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ to Egypt, he wrote to the Copts informing them that the Romans would [soon] have no rule and that their kingdom was at an end, and he instructed them to receive ʿAmr. And it is said that the Copts who were in Farama (Pelusium) were that day helping ʿAmr.[59]

But both John of Nikiu and the biographer of Benjamin agree that the latter only returned to Alexandria after thirteen years in exile, "of which ten were in the reign of Heraclius and three under the Muslims," so in 644.[60] This is too late for Benjamin to have established contact with ʿAmr prior to the conquest and one should perhaps rather assume that the above sources preserve a confused memory of an incident recorded **{135}** in a number of Arabic histories, namely the visit of a certain *Muqawqis* to ʿAmr during the siege of Alexandria and offer of help on three conditions. This should then be understood as referring to a measure taken by Benjamin during the Byzantine recapture of Alexandria in 646 to maintain the agreement concluded between himself and ʿAmr in 644.[61]

A Maronite Chronicler

Folios 2–14 of the British Library Syriac manuscript Add. 17,216 comprise a chronicle, based on that of Eusebius, which covers events from Alexander the Great to the 660s. The flyleaf of a St. Petersburg manuscript of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* once belonged to this British Library manuscript and contains a garbled version of the beginning of the chronicle, including a computation of the years from Adam to

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[58] Ṭabarī, 1.2581; the *isnād* is Ibn Isḥāq from Qāsim ibn Quzmān, a man of Egyptian origin, from Ziyād ibn Jaz' al-Zubaydī, who reported that he was a soldier in the army of ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ when Miṣr and Alexandria were conquered.

[59] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, 58, cf. 73; the manuscript has *Myāmīn* for *Bnyāmīn* (see Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 514). The *isnād* is: "Other than Ibn ʿAdīr from the elders of the people of Egypt."

[60] John of Nikiu, CXXI.1 (tr. Charles, 200) – though the chapter heading has fourteen years (tr. Charles, 14); *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 493–95. See Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 440–42.

[61] *Ibid.*, 475–80 (on the identity of the *Muqawqis*); see the entry on the "Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 below for more discussion.

Seleucus.[62] The chronicle is often defective and the part treating the late fourth century to the mid-seventh is entirely missing, but the final two fragments impart some very interesting notices for the years AG 969–75/658–64:[63]

> AG 969: Muʿāwiya has his sister's son Hudhayfa killed. ʿAlī was slain "while praying at Ḥira." Muʿāwiya went down to Ḥira and received allegiance from all the Arab forces there.
>
> AG 970: There was an earthquake in Palestine. A dispute was held between the Jacobites and the Maronites "in the presence of Muʿāwiya." When the Jacobites were defeated, Muʿāwiya ordered them to pay 20,000 denarii. "So it became a custom for the Jacobite bishops that every year they give that sum of gold to Muʿāwiya so that he not loose his hand upon them." There was another earthquake. The emperor Constans had his brother Theodore put to death, then went to fight the northern peoples in order to avoid the protests his action had provoked.
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> **{136}** AG 971: "Many Arabs gathered at Jerusalem and made Muʿāwiya king and he went up and sat down on Golgotha and prayed there. He went to Gethsemane and went down to the tomb of the blessed Mary and prayed in it. In those days when the Arabs were gathered there with Muʿāwiya, there was an earthquake;" much of Jericho fell, as well as many nearby churches and monasteries.
>
> "In July of the same year the emirs and many Arabs gathered and gave their allegiance to Muʿāwiya. Then an order went out that he should be proclaimed king in all the villages and cities of his dominion and that they should make acclamations and invocations to him. He also minted gold and silver, but it was not accepted because it had no cross on it. Furthermore, Muʿāwiya did not wear a crown like other kings in the world. He placed his throne in Damascus and refused to go to the seat of Muḥammad."
>
> AG 972: A severe frost. Once Muʿāwiya had consolidated power, "he reneged on the peace with the Romans and did not accept peace from them any longer, but said: 'If the Romans want peace let them surrender their weapons and pay the tax (*gz̲īta*).'"
>
> (Folio Missing)
>
> AG 974: Raid of Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya upon Constantinople.[64]
>
> AG 975: Raid of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid, commander of the Arabs of Ḥimṣ, into Byzantine territory.

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[62] Wright, *Catalogue*, 3.1041 (no. 915), who says the manuscript is of the eighth or ninth century.

[63] Chron. Maronite, 69–74.

[64] On the problems with the date of this raid see Nöldeke, "Zur Geschichte der Araber," 82, 89 n. 2; Roncevalle, "Lā Qays wa-lā Thāwufīl," 455–56.

The text halts rather abruptly at this point, and it is likely that it originally continued further. How much further is difficult to say since the work is anonymous. The notice under AG 970 suggests that the author was a Maronite, and this limits somewhat the range of candidates. Lammens proposed the Qays al-Mārūnī commended by the Muslim scholar Mas'ūdī (d. 956) for his "fine work on history, which began with Creation, [and continued with] the prophets, the books, **{137}** the cities, the nations, the kings of the Romans and of others and their histories, and finished its compilation with the caliphate of Muktafī" (902–908).[65] This description does not, however, suit our chronicle, which omits Creation and the prophets and which is confined by palaeographic considerations to the eighth or ninth century.

Others argue that the author was Theophilus of Edessa (d. 785), astronomer to the caliph Mahdī and a Maronite. Besides astronomical treatises and translations of Homer into Syriac, Theophilus is indeed famed for having written "a fine work of history."[66] And the clinching proof of his identification with the Maronite chronicler for Brooks and Breydy is that both give the number of years from Adam to Seleucus as 5197.[67] But though the dating is usually in terms of Christ's birth date 312 years later (AM 5509),[68] the belief that there was a difference of 5197 years between Adam and Seleucus is a standard feature of calculations according to the Byzantine era which had first been used in the seventh century.[69] Moreover, Conrad has persuasively argued that Theophilus is the common source of the chroniclers Theophanes, Dionysius of Tellmaḥre and Agapius, and since the common source and our text share no entries, they are unlikely to share the same author.[70]

Finally, Brock and Palmer consider the chronicler to be a near contemporary of the events that conclude the work as we have it, pointing to his provision of accurate times and weekdays for the first two earthquakes **{138}** and the frost.[71]

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[65] Lammens, "Qays al-Marūnī," 265–68; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 154, who adds: "I have seen no other book of the Maronites composed in this vein," but this may reflect his ignorance of Syriac (the following works he cites are all in Arabic).

[66] See the entry on "Theophilus of Edessa" in Chapter 10 below.

[67] *Chron. Maronite*, 43–44; it is Bar Hebraeus (*Chron. syr.*, 37; *Mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, 98) who cites Theophilus' era. See Brooks, "Sources of Theophanes," 585; Breydy, *Literatur der Maroniten*, 93 n. 12, 132–38; *idem*, "Das Chronikon des Maroniten Theophilos ibn Tuma." Theophilus' authorship of the *Maronite Chronicle* was first proposed by Shemaly, "Thāwufīl b. Tūmā al-Mārūnī," 356–58.

[68] Creation itself occurred on 31 March 5508 BC, but since the Byzantine year began on 1 September, the first year of the world (AM 1) corresponded to 1 September 5509–31 August 5508 BC.

[69] See Cumont, "L'ère byzantine et Théophile d'Edesse;" Grumel, *Chronologie*, 111–28. This era was not, however, in common use until the ninth century, which casts doubt on a seventh-century date for this chronicle.

[70] Conrad, "The Conquest of Arwad," 322–36.

[71] Brock, "Syriac Sources for the Seventh Century," 18–19; Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 29. See also Roncevalle, "Lā Qays wa-lā Thāwufīl," who felt it safer to leave open the

Nöldeke, who first presented the text, also felt the original work must be early, for the manuscript was of the eighth or ninth century and the text betrayed signs of having suffered at the hands of copyists.[72] Bates, however, has recently cast a doubt on an early date for this chronicle, declaring the notice about Mu'āwiya striking coins to be an anachronism. Silver had not been minted for centuries in Syria before 'Abd al-Malik's issue in the 690s and there is no firm evidence of Muslim minting activity before that caliph.[73]

Our chronicler seems very well-informed on Arab affairs. For instance, he knows that 'Alī was killed in a mosque, though naming the venue as the old Arab capital of Ḥira rather than the nearby new city of Kufa, and placing the incident too early.[74] And he agrees with Muslim sources on the coronation of Mu'āwiya in Jerusalem and later proclamation of him to all as king "in July of the same year."[75] He again dates the event too early, but this is to have it coincide with the earthquake of 659, the latter being in his mind a clear sign of God's disapproval for Muāwiya's prayer in the Christian holy places. The narrative of the sorties against the Byzantines is anecdotal, but again **{139}** very well-informed and gives such details as how the Arabs frightened off some Constantinopolitan youths when "they cried out in the way of their language 'God is great.'"[76] In the course of the account of 'Abd al-Raḥmān's defeat by a lake in southern Asia Minor in 664 we are told that "the Arabs have not attacked that lake again up to the present day." From this statement one might infer that the author is writing not long after the raid and also that he is a resident of the region. This, however, is not conclusive, since writers frequently add emphasis to their descriptions of a situation by affirming that it has remained so

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question of authorship. Palmer says that the author was a supporter of the Byzantines and so was likely writing before the Sixth Council (680–81), which the Maronites rejected; but though he may be anti-Arab, this does not mean he is pro-Byzantine (cf. his criticism of Constans and his description of the foolhardiness of the Byzantine soldiers during Yazīd's campaign).

[72] Noldeke, "Zur Geschichte der Araber," 82–83.

[73] Bates, "Commentaire," 319–20, arguing against Morrisson, "Le monnayage omeyyade," 312. However, note must be made of a hoard found at Daphne near Antioch. This contains an imitation of a Byzantine solidus with the crossbar of the crosses removed; otherwise the coins are regular issues of the emperors from Maurice to Constantine IV (668–85), the latter appearing on two coins together with his brothers, who were deposed in autumn 681. There is good reason, therefore, to assume that the imitation with deformed crosses was minted before 681. See Metcalf, "Three Seventh-Century Byzantine Gold Hoards," 97–101, for discussion.

[74] Ṭabarī 1.3456 (on 'Alī's death). The acknowledgement of Mu'āwiya at Jerusalem by the Syrians in Dhū l–Qa'da AH 37/April 658 (*ibid.*, 2.199) may have made a western Christian assume 'Alī was already dead.

[75] Ṭabarī, 2.4 (allegiance given in Jerusalem after the death of 'Alī), 2.199 (recognised by "the people as a whole" after the surrender of 'Alī's son Ḥasan on 31 July 661).

[76] Chron. Maronite, 72.

until the present day.[77] And it also conflicts with the conclusion drawn by scholars from the numerous notices on Palestine that the chronicler was from that province.[78] One solution would be to assume that the chronicler was a native of northern Syria who spent some time as a pilgrim in Palestine. But it is equally probable that the work originally continued much further, and so we have to do with a later compilation that draws on earlier local records.

George of Resh'aina (d. ca. 680)

A tract written in Syriac and entitled "a narrative concerning the wicked Maximus of Palestine who blasphemed against his Creator and whose tongue was cut out" presents us with a rather novel account of this saint's life. It differs from its Greek counterparts chiefly in its description of the early life of Maximus, crediting him with a Palestinian rather than Constantinopolitan background and casting him as the mastermind of the whole controversy over Christ's will.[79] At one point the author tells us:

> **{140}** All this I have diligently set down, I, George from Resh'aina, a disciple of Sophronius, bishop of Jerusalem; I have set down these records for the faithful. They represent what I have seen, heard and taken over from persons who are worthy of credence.[80]

Elsewhere he is again at pains to stress the veracity of his words, "for I have taken great care to write down this history truthfully."[81] There are grounds, however, for doubting certain elements of his reconstruction or that of his informants. Much, one suspects, is spawned by polemic; to say Maximus was born of the adulterous union of a Samaritan man and a Jew's Persian slave-girl is to attribute to him the worst imaginable origin; to portray Maximus as the inspiration behind dyothelete doctrine

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[77] Even when not in a position easily to verify such an assertion; e.g. *Chron. Khuzistan*, 27 (silver model in S. George's church in Lydda); Theophanes, 357, 358 (both times about the Bulgar chief Batbaian).

[78] Roncevalle, "Lā Qays wa-lā Thāwufīl," 455–56; Nöldeke, "Zur Geschichte der Araber," 82.

[79] Lackner, "Zur Quellen und Datierung der Maximosvita," shows that the most commonly cited Greek *Life* (Halkin, *BHG*[3], 2.106, no. 1234) is a compilation of the tenth century modelled on a *Life* of S. Theodore the Studite and contains almost no historical fact. But Bratke, *Ad Sancti Maximi vitam*, argues that another Greek *Life* (Halkin, *BHG*[3], 2.106, no. 1233m) is a product of the first half of the eighth century and reflects the earliest recension written between 680 and 700, so about the same time as the *Syriac Life*. For further discussion see Sansterre, "Les biographies de Maxime le Confesseur," and Brock, "Syriac Life of Maximus," 340–46.

[80] George of Resh'aina, *Syriac Life of Maximus* V, 304–305. The text has Gregory here, but elsewhere it has George (*ibid.* XI, 307), and Brock, "Syriac Life of Maximus," 332–35, argues that the latter is more likely.

[81] George of Resh'aina, *Syriac Life of Maximus* XXII, 312.

is to belie his own stated deference to Sophronius in such matters.[82] There are also certain factual details that seem doubtful: the accession of Constans II (641) is sited in the time of Gregory's rebellion in Africa (648), and it is implied that Maximus did not go to Africa until 648, whereas we know he was there in 632.[83]

But for our purposes it is enough to note that the manuscript containing this account is of the seventh-eighth century and "it is certainly not the author's autograph."[84] Whatever the truth of his narrative we can, therefore, be sure that we have the view of a Monothelete bishop of the later seventh century. His opinion on the rise of the Arabs is made clear in the following paragraph:

> **{141}** After Maximus went up to Rome, the Arabs seized control of the islands of the sea and entered Cyprus and Arwad, ravaging them and taking captives. They gained control over Africa and subdued almost all the islands of the sea; for, following the wicked Maximus, the wrath of God punished every place which had accepted his error.[85]

The Arabs are the tool of God's ire, sent to all places which had welcomed Maximus' "blasphemy." Thus the Arabs themselves, their actions and beliefs, require no explanation. The author can simply say that "the Arabs appeared and took control of Syria and other areas," and that "heresy is accustomed to join forces with paganism."[86]

One interesting comment is given, however, which, though only an offhand remark, betrays something more than mere polemic:

> When Maximus saw that Rome had accepted the foul mire of his blasphemies, he also went down to Constantinople at the time when Mu'āwiya made peace with the emperor Constans, having started a war with Abū Turāb, the emir of Ḥira, at Ṣiffin and defeated him.[87]

Abū Turāb is the nickname of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and its appearance here suggests derivation ultimately from an Arab informant.[88] In most Muslim acounts the battle of Ṣiffin (657) led only to an agreement between Mu'āwiya and 'Alī to seek arbitration on their dispute; 'Alī's defeat came later. The casual mention here that Ṣiffin was where Mu'āwiya defeated Abū Turāb may be a telescoping of events, but there

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[82] Asked for information by Peter the Illustrious, Maximus refers him to Sophronius, "a wise advocate of the truth and an unbeatable defender of the divine teachings. He is able with citations and arguments to refute any heresy" (Maximus, *Ep.* 13, *PG* 91, 533A).

[83] George of Resh'aina, *Syriac Life of Maximus* XVIII, 310; see the entry on "Maximus the Confessor" in Chapter 3 above for more biographical information.

[84] Brock, "Syriac Life of Maximus," 300 (i.e. it is a copy of an earlier original). See also Wright, *Catalogue*, 3.1206 (no. LI, Add. 7192).

[85] George of Resh'aina, *Syriac Life of Maximus* XXIII, 312–13.

[86] *Ibid.* XVII–XVIII, 310.

[87] *Ibid.* XXV, 313.

[88] For the possible meaning of the name see Kohlberg, "Abū Turāb."

are hints on the Christian and Muslim side that it is right.[89] Finally, there is the observation that ʿAlī was emir of Ḥira. In the classical Muslim accounts he is the fourth legitimate ruler of the Arabs, though early Syrian sources, Christian and Muslim, portray him as a rebel **{142}** leader with support only in the East.[90] Moreover, he is usually connected with Kufa rather than Ḥira, though the two were close enough for confusion or identification to be possible.[91]

Daniel, Bishop of Edessa (665–84)

The monastery of Qenneshre in north Syria remained active throughout the seventh century and turned out such respected scholars as Thomas of Heraclea, who revised the New Testament in Syriac, the philosopher and mathematician Severus Sebokht, and the polymath Jacob of Edessa. In the mid-660s, however, it suffered a brief aberration when afflicted by a horde of demons. The anonymous Syriac *Chronicle of 1234*, probably relying on the patriarch Dionysius, tells us that in a nearby village a stone slab inscribed with Median characters was discovered, under which was a bronze cauldron containing a bronze figurine. Sorcerers were then summoned, "for surely," people said, "it was sorcerers who buried this in days of old."

> When they (the sorcerers) whispered their spells over the little idol, it spoke with them saying: "Sixty thousand demons are imprisoned in this figurine." And the demons asked: "How do you command us? Where shall we go?" At this the sorcerers undid the chain from the neck of the figurine and said: "Go, enter into the monks of the monastery of Qenneshre!" Just then the monks of that abbey began to suffer many misfortunes and ailments. Many became possessed by demons. They began to crow like cocks and to bleat like goats. They insulted the icons of the saints, calling Peter "Fool-Fisherman," Paul "Skinhead," Thomas "One-Ball," John bar Aphtonia "Long-Beard" (*daqnānā l'āshā*), Saint Ephraem "Dried Up (*yabīshā*), Beardless One" and Saint **{143}** Theodore "Blind Man." And many more perversities did these monks speak.[92]

The twelfth-century patriarch and chronicler Michael the Syrian gives further details of this incident, which "cannot be doubted for they are in the book of that truthful man, the patriarch Dionysius:"

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[89] Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 203 n. 30. Theophanes, 347, says that Muʿāwiya "obtained victory without any toil."

[90] He does not feature at all in Christian lists of Muslim rulers; see the entry on the "Zuqnin Chronicler" in Chapter 10 below.

[91] Thus *Chron. Maronite*, 69, has ʿAlī assassinated at Ḥira, rather than at Kufa as Arabic sources maintain. Besides the proximity of the two places, the close association of Ḥira, the former Lakhmid capital, with the Arabs may be significant.

[92] *Chron. 1234*, 1.267; one cannot be sure if this is from Dionysius since Michael the Syrian gives a related, but not identical, story. It would seem that both accounts and the fragment adduced below are all drawn from a much larger narrative about demons at Qenneshre.

> In the time of lord Daniel, bishop of Edessa, demons took possession of certain brothers in the monastery of Qenneshre. The abbot sent and called upon Daniel to find some relief for those unfortunates. He told them to go to Saint Jacob's (at Kayshum) and fetch the body of bishop Severus (of Samosata). They (the monks of Kayshum) did not want to give him up, but under pressure they granted a part of him. When this was brought near, the demons began to wail: "Alas for us! That Broken One (*mtabbrā*) has come! It was not enough for him to drive us from the region of Samosata, but he must come here also!" The demons said this (i.e. called him "Broken One") because the saint had once fallen from a beast of burden and been lamed in one foot. One of those possessed by a demon had formerly been a disciple of the bishop, and they threatened the demon in him saying: "Now this man's master has come to expel you!" The demon answered: "I did not enter this man of my own volition, but under compulsion. He killed our master's dog in the upper vineyard and for that reason he sent me to torment him. My friends he sent to enter into these monks, because they would leave the church at the time of the Offering and go out to swim and play in those pools of water outside the monastery" – "our master" was what the demons called some sorcerer – As soon as the monks stood those youths in front of the right hand of the saint, the demons wailed aloud and came out of them.[93]

{144} More information is given by a fragment in the defective Berlin Syriac manuscript Sachau 315.[94] The piece is composite, but its first and third sections clearly relate to this same incident. The first describes how demons insult the saints of Qenneshre, John bar Aphtonia and Ephraem among them,[95] and narrates seven exorcisms worked by the relics of the saints, one by the hand of Severus of Samosata as in the extract quoted by Michael the Syrian. "This lasted for two months."[96]

The third section begins by explaining that Chalcedonians had occupied the monastery of Qenneshre in the time of Domitianus, bishop of Melitene (578–602), and that then, as now, the Chalcedonians there were claimed by demons. It continues with a report of how at a later date "the king" ordered the Jacobites to bring the demoniacs and the sorcerer before him for adjudication:

> We took the Dyophysites and entered before 'Abd Allāh bar Darrāg, emir and governor of Mesopotamia, who was a Muslim (*gabrā mhaggrāyā*). When the sorcerer and the possessed stood before the emir, they (the possessed) blamed the sorcerer and made known that he had sent the demons there (to the monastery) and that these demons had suffered many torments and afflictions from these Broken

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[93] Michael the Syrian 11.VII, 420–21/429.

[94] Fols. 58a–63b; the manuscript is described in Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, 2.521–30 (no. 167).

[95] They are called *daqnānā* and *yabīshā* respectively, as in *Chron. 1234* above.

[96] *Qenneshre Fragment*, 124–29/114–18 (first section).

> Ones (*mtabbrē*), the Bearded One (*daqnānā*) and from their fellow saints.[97] The emir asked the head of the demons: "Are you many?" He replied: "I am the leader of 40,000 demons." The emir then said: "Is Jesus son of Mary your friend?" The demon answered: "He is my enemy. Today he has no power over me; once he had power over me and he will again have a time to prevail over me." The emir said to him: "Are you his servant?" He answered: "No, rather I am the servant of **{145}** God. Now I am in revolt against him, but in the end he will have authority over me."[98]

Bishop Daniel of Edessa is then introduced in the first person and proceeds to exorcise one of the demons by means of a saint's purse. After two days in torment the demon cried out in the presence of the crowd that had now gathered: "That Broken One (Athanasius or Severus) protects this emir so that one of us cannot enter his heart and give the victory to our master, Satan." More exorcisms are carried out when a young man appears with a ring containing a fragment of the Cross. The emir's attempt to use his own ring fails, for as the demon asserts: "In that one there is no cross, it is the other one we fear."[99] The apologetic intent of this passage is obvious. First it is pointed out that it is only the Chalcedonians who are tried by demons and it is only by the relics of Monophysite saints that they are freed. Next there is a dig at the Muslims, the emir being likened to the chief demon as a servant of God (*ʿAbd Allāh*/*ʿAbdā d-Allāhā*) rather than of Christ. The inferiority of the emir's faith is then demonstrated by the inefficacy of his ring in contrast to that of the Christian youth.

The correct synchronisation between the patriarch Theodore (649–67), mentioned at the beginning of the first part, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Darrāj (660s) and Daniel of Edessa (665–84), and the fact that ʿAbd Allāh is correctly described as governor for Muʿāwiya,[100] suggest that these events were recorded not long after their occurrence. From the fragment and Michael the Syrian's quote from Dionysius it appears that Daniel played a key role in the drama. This and his appearance in the first person in the text make it plausible that he was a major source of the fragment and that some account was written down, either by him or at his behest, in the 670s or 680s.

The second section of this fragment, however, reveals later reworking. It comprises the interrogation of demons by a saint sandwiched between two brief conversations between Daniel, bishop of Aleppo, and a demon. The saint asks the demons whom they prefer: the pagans **{146}** (*hanpē*) or the Jews, the Nestorians or the Chalcedonians, the Nestorians or the Julianists, and whether they attended the Council of Chalcedon. To the first question the demons reply:

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[97] This refers to Athanasius the Cameldriver (d. 631) and his brother Severus of Samosata (d. 641), and John bar Aphtonia, all mentioned in Section 1 and the latter two in the extracts from Michael the Syrian and *Chron. 1234* cited above.

[98] Qenneshre Fragment, 131–32/120.

[99] *Ibid*., 132–33/120–21.

[100] Balādhurī, *Ansāb* 4.1, 427; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 160 n. 57.

> The pagans are more dear and beloved to us {in that they do not believe that Christ is God, but say that he is a created man}, for the Jews know a little Him who lives in Heaven. But we are very pleased with them and love them more than the pagans because they have crucified God their lord.[101]

The sentence in curly brackets was incorporated by the editor into the text, but it actually only appears in the margin. It plainly does not belong here; it makes no sense, since the Jews also do not believe Christ to be God, and it obscures what is simply the resurrection of an old argument: the pagans are like demons as they do not know God.[102] The marginal note was evidently penned at a time when the term "pagan" (*ḥanpâ*) had come to be used most commonly to refer to Muslims.[103] In addition, regarding Daniel of Aleppo, the latter word is struck out and "of Edessa" written in the margin. Though this second section is not discordant with the other two parts and with the events at Qenneshre, it is also possible that it relates to another incident involving a Daniel of Aleppo and was incorporated by a later compiler, who assumed it to refer to the Qenneshre episode and so "corrected" Daniel's diocese.

Nau and Sachau accepted the emendation and posited Daniel of Edessa as the author of the whole composition.[104] But even if the alteration is correct, and this requires some scepticism since it occurs twice,[105] Daniel is unlikely to be the sole author. He appears in the **{147}** third as well as the first person, and he is hardly likely to have got his own diocese wrong, nor a later copier to have miscopied it twice. Other factors – the defectiveness of the manuscript, the occasional use of Arabic loanwords in the margin, the composite nature of the fragment[106] – also invite caution. Daniel may well be the main source for the episode of the demoniacs of Qenneshre, but in this fragment we have only a reworked excerpt of the original narrative.

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[101] *Qenneshre Fragment*, 130/118. Section 2, including this passage, is repeated with minor alterations further on in the manuscript at Sachau 315, fol. 72b (Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, 2.526).

[102] See Reinink, "Die Muslime in einer Sammlung von Damonengeschichten," where this fragment is discussed at length.

[103] This seems to have been the case by the late eighth century; see the entry on "Athanasius of Balad" in this chapter.

[104] Nau, "Notice historique," 112, 118 n. 1; Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, 2.523.

[105] Though note *Qenneshre Fragment*, 135/123: "It (Raqqa) is to the south of Aleppo;" "south of Edessa" would make more sense.

[106] A second fragment in the manuscript (fol. 64) gives biographical details about Athanasius the Cameldriver, which led Sachau (*Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, 2.523–24) and Baumstark (*GSL*, 186) to consider both fragments as part of a *Life* of Athanasius by Daniel of Edessa. Reinink, "Die Muslime in einer Sammlung von Dämonengeschichten," 337, warns that a large number of folios, now missing, once separated the two.

Athanasius of Balad, Patriarch of Antioch (683–87)

Athanasius studied under Severus Sebokht at the monastery of Qenneshre and then retired to a convent of Ṭur ʿAbdin to occupy himself with the translation of Greek works, philosophical and theological. Most notable among his translations is that of the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, completed in 645 with an introduction, and of select epistles of Severus of Antioch, which he undertook in 669 at the request of Matthew, bishop of Aleppo, and Daniel, bishop of Edessa. We hear little of him until his appointment to the office of Jacobite patriarch in 683 and even from his three-year seven-month stint in this high office we have only one encyclical letter.[107]

This missive was evidently copied at an early date, since among the nine manuscripts that contain it, two date from the eighth century. The first copyist made two minor additions, which are found in almost all the later versions. He wrote a note in the margin that "this was in the year 995 of the Greeks," so in the first year of Athanasius' term in office. And he supplemented Athanasius' modest title, "a written memorandum," with the heading: "A letter of the blessed patriarch Athanasius regarding that a Christian should not eat of the sacrifices of the Muslims (*mhaggrāyē*) who now hold power."[108] Nau thought **{148}** that this may have been added by Jacob of Edessa, because in the manuscript from which he edited the letter there were a number of items written or translated by that scholar.[109] The eighth-century provenance of two versions of the text lends some weight to this suggestion.

Athanasius' letter is addressed to the archbishops and inspectors, reqesting them to put an end to "the evil and sin of this wickedness which, we hear, is practised now in the church of God." He then explains what particular wrongdoing he has in mind:

> For a terrible report about dissipated Christians has come to the hearing of our humble self. Greedy men, who are slaves of the belly, are heedlessly and senselessly taking part with the pagans in feasts together, wretched women mingle anyhow with the pagans unlawfully and indecently, and all at times eat without distinction from their sacrifices. They are going astray in their neglect of the prescriptions and exhortations of the apostles who often would cry out about this to those who believe in Christ, that they should distance themselves from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood, and from the food of pagan sacrifices, lest they be by this associates of the demons and of their unclean table.[110]

In the heading that he gives to the letter the copyist indicates that he believes Muslims to be meant here. Yet the term "pagans" (*hanpē*), which appears in the text of

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[107] For his dates of office see Schrier, "Chronological Problems," 78–80.

[108] For the manuscripts and additions see Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1A.200–202.

[109] Nau, "Littérature canonique syriaque inédite," 2–3 n. 1, using the ninth-century Ms. Paris syr. 62.

[110] Athanasius of Balad, *Letter*, 128–29.

the letter, tended to denote non-believers in general and was not commonly employed to designate the Muslims until the late eighth century. Syriac writers before this time usually referred to their overlords as Arabs (*ṭayyāyē*), and then used *mhaggrāyē* if they wanted to specify Muslims as opposed to Christian Arabs.[111] If the **{149}** report relayed to Athanasius came from Iraq, then pagans might be meant, for, as the catholicos Isho'yahb III (d. 659) tells us, in certain regions of Iraq these "were more numerous than the Christians."[112] But it is more likely that, though he may in general intend all non-Christians, Muslims were uppermost in Athanasius' mind.

Marriage between adherents of different confessions and attendance of each others' festivals was a common enough occurrence before Islam – as is evident from the numerous rebukes of, and exhortations to eschew, such actions made by church canons – and it is bound to have continued in Islamic times as well. Indeed, what to do about Christian women who consorted with Muslims was a problem that often preoccupied contemporary Christian authorities.[113] That Muslims made sacrifices is also noted by Christians from an early date, but of what kind or on what occasion is not explained.[114] It must be borne in mind, however, that instead of the rather loaded term "sacrifice" one could translate here "ritually slaughtered meat." Then the issue, though still important, becomes the more familiar one of whether one should eat meat that had been killed according to the procedure of another religious community.[115]

ISAAC OF RAKOTI, PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA (689–92)

The work of restoring the fortunes of the Coptic church, begun by Benjamin, was continued by his successors Agathon (665–81) and John **{150}** of Samanud (681–

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[111] See Griffith, "Muḥammad's Scripture and Message," 118–21. For some examples of the seventh-century use of these terms see the entries on "Daniel of Edessa," "Theodotus of Amida" and "Jacob of Edessa" in this chapter, and on "Isho'yahb III" and "George I" in Chapter 5 below; see also Mouterde, "Inscriptions en syriaque à Kāmed," nos. 10, 28 (two inscriptions from south Lebanon written "in the year 96 of the *mhaggrāyē*").

[112] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 14C, 251. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 396–430, makes it clear that paganism was still alive in seventh-century Iraq. On pagan survivals in northern Syria and Byzantium see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 327–37.

[113] Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 76 (= *PG* 89, 773AC, no. 123); Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, no. 75 (translated in Excursus A below); *Synodicon orientate*, 223–24 (see the entry on "George I" in Chapter 5 below).

[114] See Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 12–13, and the entry on the "Monk of Beth Ḥale" in Chapter 11 below.

[115] Cf. Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to John*, A15 (= Vööbus, 254 [no. 17]): "Is it right for a Christian to eat of flesh which was killed by a pagan when it was not killed for the sake of the sacrifice (*dbīḥā*)?" Abū Yūsuf, *Radd*, 115: "The sacrifice (*dhabīḥa*) of the apostate is not to be eaten whether he is a Jew or a Christian" (citing Abū Ḥanīfa).

89).[116] They were, however, often obstructed in this by their Chalcedonian rivals. For instance:

> In those days a man named Theodore governed Alexandria, and he was a leader in the community of the Chalcedonians and was an opponent of the orthodox Theodosians. He went to Damascus to the foremost of the Muslims, named Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya, and took from him a diploma empowering him over the people of Alexandria and Maryut and all its environs and [declaring that] the governor of Egypt had no authority over him, for he had paid him (Yazīd) much money. He returned and tyrannised the father, Abba Agathon, and troubled him.[117]

And when John of Samanud did not go out to meet the new governor of Egypt, 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Marwān, not knowing of his visit to Alexandria, he was denounced by Theophanes, brother-in-law of the aforementioned Theodore, and accused of arrogance, for which he was heavily fined by the emir.[118] Thus much feuding went on between the two communities, with the Muslims courted by both sides for the power they wielded.

The arrival of 'Abd al-'Azīz in 685 brought about a number of changes. The *History of the Patriarchs* says almost nothing of Muslim governors before him and it may be that he, as brother of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik, was the first to bring Egypt under effective central control. He came with two secretaries, Athanasius and Isaac, "trustworthy and orthodox, whom he set over the whole land of Egypt, Maryut, Marakiya and Pentapolis which is Libya." On account of his brother's youth 'Abd al-Malik had decreed that "Athanasius should be not only his scribe, but the manager of his affairs and that authority and administrative direction should be his."[119] Naturally this greatly strengthened **{151}** the position of the Copts. And by their mediation, abetted by the patriarch's own honesty and frankness, John was forgiven his initial *faux pas* and gained "acceptance and favour with the emir, who commanded in all the city that none should address the patriarch except with good words nor say any evil of him, and that none should hinder him in what he desired nor in his going in and out of the city."

Equally good relations obtained in the time of John's successor Isaac, who owed his place on the patriarchal seat to the intervention of 'Abd al-'Azīz. With the latter's patronage he was able to repair the church of S. Mark, restore the liturgies in the churches and erect a church at Ḥulwan. This last act he effected "because in that place he used to go to the emir 'Abd al-'Azīz, who had commanded the governors of Upper Egypt and of the rest of the provinces that each one of them build for

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[116] General discussion is given by Müller, "Koptische Patriarchen des 7. Jahrhunderts."

[117] Hist. Patriarchs XV, PO 5, 5.

[118] *Ibid.* XV, *PO* 5, 13–14; Theophanes is called governor of Maryut (*ibid.*, 18), which office he had presumably received from Theodore.

[119] *Chron. 1234*, 1–294; Hist. Patriarchs XV, PO 5, 12.

himself a residence at the city of Ḥulwan."[120] In the Coptic *Life* of Isaac, written to commemorate his death by Mina the bishop of Pshati, it is said rather that "the king built churches and monasteries of monks around his city, for he loved the Christians."[121] The governor also undertook, however, some promotion of Islam:

> He ordered the breaking of all the crosses which were in the land of Egypt, even the crosses of gold and silver. So the Christians of the country of Egypt became troubled.
>
> Then he wrote a number of notices and placed them on the doors of the churches in Miṣr and the Delta, saying in them: "Muḥammad is the great messenger (*al-rasūl al-kabīr*) who is God's, and Jesus too is the messenger of God. God does not beget and is not begotten."[122]

And Isaac twice averted conflict with him only very narrowly. On the first occasion "some Saracens, hating our faith," complained to ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz that Isaac detested "us and our faith," and said that if the emir did not believe them he should invite Isaac to dinner and request him not to make the sign of the cross before eating. Isaac wriggled out of this dilemma by asking the emir, before they partook, should he eat to **{152}** the left or right, up or down, gesticulating and thus making the sign of the cross, to the bewilderment of the poor governor. The second time he was summoned before the governor for having written to the king of Nubia, allied to the Muslims, and Abyssinia, still hostile, "that they make peace and that there be no ill will between them," but he was exculpated by a ruse of the governor's secretaries.[123]

JOHN, BISHOP OF NIKIU

A chronicle relating in brief events from the Creation to the end of the Arab conquest of Egypt claims as its author a certain John, bishop of Nikiu, a town a few miles to the northwest of Fusṭaṭ. Of this man we have only two notices, first that he was present at the election of the patriarch Isaac of Rakoti in 689; second that he was deposed from the office of chief administrator of monasteries for excessive punishment of a monk, which occurred during the patriarchate of Simon the Syrian (692–700).[124] The preface appended to the chronicle by its Arabic translator adds little to the picture, characterising John simply as an administrator and ascetic (*madabbir wa-mastagaddal*).[125]

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[120] *Ibid.* XVI, *PO* 5, 24.

[121] Isaac of Rakoti, *Life*, 368.

[122] Hist. Patriarchs XVI, PO 5, 25.

[123] Isaac of Rakoti, *Life*, 372–76 (sign of cross incident), 377–84 (letters: though having Mauritania and Makouria; *Hist. Patriarchs* XVI, *PO* 5, 24–25, has Nubia and Abyssinia).

[124] *Ibid.* XVI, *PO* 5, 22, 32–34.

[125] John of Nikiu, "preface" (tr. Charles, 1). The Ethiopic word *madabbir* is a borrowing from the Arabic; this may be so for *mastagaddal*, then signifying "sophist" (the Arabic root

The original work was written in Coptic and translated into Arabic at an unknown date.[126] Both these versions are lost, and there only survives an Ethiopic translation, which was rendered from the Arabic in 1602. Extensive use is made of Greek sources, primarily the world chronicle of John Malalas, and John of Nikiu then continues up to his own time, as he tells us in his introduction:

> We will begin to compose this work from many ancient books, which deal with the [various] periods and the historical events which we too have witnessed in the times to **{153}** which we have come. And I have been honest in order to recount and leave a noble memorial to the lovers of virtue in this present life.[127]

The events witnessed by John are presumably the incursions of the Arabs culminating in the capture of Alexandria in 641, since this is where his chronicle ends. It is generally thought that John wrote while administrator in the 690s, a view which was first postulated on the basis of the statement in the preface that "these accounts were put together by John the administrator."[128] Yet one cannot infer from this that John compiled them *while* administrator, and though the Arab conquest perhaps marks an obvious place to finish, one baulks at assuming a half century hiatus between the events and their narration. Moreover, the absence of any reference to monastic activities suggests that John may have composed this work before he had entered the church hierarchy, probably *ca.* 650.

The chronicle is a fairly mediocre piece.[129] It reproduces a standard version of the history of the Roman empire, simply relates events rather than discusses them, and concentrates on the legendary and the anecdotal: who was the first to do so and so (eat human flesh, dye garments, play the flute), who built or named such and such a place. Church matters and battle scenes are eschewed in favour of such tales as "Paulinus the magician who sacrificed to demons in a silver bowl," "the apple which they brought as a present to the emperor Theodosius" and "the manifestation of the towel and cloth of our Lord Jesus Christ, which were found in the house of a Jew who lived in Alexandria." John's Monophysite affiliation means no more than that he reverses the Chalcedonian judgements on the merits of the successive emperors, denouncing the likes of Marcian, Justinian and above all Heraclius the arch-persecutor, but praising Anastasius and even the only grudgingly tolerant Tiberius.

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means "to dispute") rather than "ascetic." This would explain the lack of reference to monastic activities and John's good knowledge of Greek, but it is only a very tentative suggestion.

[126] John's Monophysitism and lack of reference to the *Chronicle* in Byzantine tradition make it unlikely that it was written in Greek; see *CE*, *s.v.* "John of Nikiou."

[127] John of Nikiu, "intro." (tr. Charles, 15). John's sources are discussed by Zotenberg, "Mémoire sur la chronique byzantine de Jean de Nikiou."

[128] *Ibid.*, 456.

[129] Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 2.219–20 (n. 30), gives a brief assessment of John's *Chronicle*, and concludes that it is only to be relied upon for events in Egypt, and chiefly events before the Arab occupation.

{154} As regards the conquest of Egypt John does try to outline the movements of the Arabs, though our assessment of his account is hampered by the fact that there is a gap in the manuscript for the years 611–39. He offers some unique information, in particular that the Arabs, "paying no attention to the fortified cities," initially raided the Fayyum, an important agricultural oasis to the south of Fusṭaṭ, whereas Muslim sources say the Arab commander ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ "advanced directly to Fusṭaṭ."[130] John's reconstruction, that the Arabs first took possession of the surrounding districts before proceeding to the city with its defensive fortress, makes much sense and also accords with what we know of Arab warfare from other sources.[131]

John's general attitude towards the Arab conquest is summed up in the words which he says were being voiced by everyone: "This expulsion (of the Byzantines) and victory of the Muslims is due to the wickedness of the emperor Heraclius and his persecution of the orthodox through the patriarch Cyrus."[132] Regarding the actions of the Muslims themselves John laments that: "The yoke they laid on the Egyptians was heavier than that which had been laid upon Israel by Pharaoh… They despoiled the Egyptians of their possessions and dealt cruelly with them."[133] And he furnishes his readers with a catalogue of their atrocities, though very occasionally he lets us glimpse a different picture:

> ʿAmr became stronger every day in every field of his activity.
>
> And he exacted the taxes which had been determined upon, **{155}** but he took none of the property of the churches and he committed no act of spoliation or plunder, and he preserved them throughout all his days. And when he seized the city of Alexandria he had the canal drained in accordance with the instructions given by the apostate Theodore.[134]

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[130] John of Nikiu, CXII.3, CXI.4–11 (tr. Charles, 180, 179); Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 212; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, 59–61; presumably John had some Fayyumi source. See further Jarry, "La conquête du Fayoum par les musulmans."

[131] E.g. Procopius, *Buildings*, 2.IX.4–5 (tr. Dewing, 157): "The Saracens are naturally incapable of storming a wall and the weakest kind of barracks, put together with perhaps nothing but mud, is sufficient to check their assault." Compare Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 50, who has Abū Bakr advise the Arab troops to avoid besieging cities, but rather to go first into the countryside and villages and to cut off roads and supplies to hamper the Byzantine forces. Of course, the Muslims soon learned how to stage a siege once they were in a position to win/compel the cooperation of local inhabitants.

[132] John of Nikiu, CXXI.2 (tr. Charles, 200); cf. CXV.9 (184) where John speaks of "the hostility of the people to the emperor Heraclius because of the persecution which he had visited upon all the land of Egypt."

[133] *Ibid.*, CXX.32, CXV.7 (tr. Charles, 195, 184).

[134] *Ibid.*, CXXI.3 (tr. Charles, 200).

Among the Christian population of Egypt the invasion occasioned much confusion and panic. Some fled, "abandoning all their possessions and wealth and cattle;"[135] a few resisted and made plans "with a view to attacking the Muslims;"[136] a number even "apostatised from the Christian faith and embraced the faith of the beast."[137] Others were conscripted to repair roads and bridges, "and people began to help the Muslims."[138] The military initially put up a fight, but a run of defeats made them pursue a more conciliatory line. The people of Antinoe wished to take the offensive, but John their prefect refused, "for he knew he could not resist the Muslims and [he feared] lest he should meet with the same fate as the garrison of Fayyum."[139] Soon the authorities conceded defeat, at least temporarily, and the emperor Constans empowered Cyrus "to make peace with the Muslims and check any further resistance against them, and to establish a system of administration suitable to the government of the land of Egypt."[140]

John provides interesting details on the Arab conquest of Egypt, but he reveals little of worth concerning the conquerors themselves. **{156}** Because the chronicle has been through two translations one has to be wary of distortion and tampering. The list of chapter headings provided by the Arabic translator is frequently in disaccord with the chronicle as we have it, in terms of both numbering and content of chapters. The Arabs are called Ishmaelites or Muslims; since the latter appellation does not figure elsewhere in Christian texts until 775, one wonders whether the original Coptic was not Saracens or Arabs. Muḥammad is mentioned once, but only in explanation of the term "beast" so that one again suspects it to be a later gloss.[141] Expressions such as "the king of Ḥijaz," "the religion of the Muslims" and "the

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[135] *Ibid.*, CXIII.6, CXV.6, CXX.28 (tr. Charles, 182, 183, 194).

[136] *Ibid.*, CXV.3 and 10, CXX.24 (tr. Charles, 183–84, 194).

[137] *Ibid.*, CXIV.1, CXXI.10 (tr. Charles, 182, 201).

[138] *Ibid.*, CXIII.2 (tr. Charles, 181); Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 73. The latter and many modern scholars say that this was "because they wanted to fight the Byzantines." Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 236, and Moorhead, "Monophysite Response," argue strongly against this; but note John of Nikiu, CXIX.1 (tr. Charles, 189): "A great strife had broken out between the inhabitants of Lower Egypt, and these were divided into two parties. Of these one sided with Theodore, but the other wished to join the Muslims."

[139] *Ibid.*, CXV.10 (tr. Charles, 184).

[140] *Ibid.*, CXIX.22 (tr. Charles, 191). Jarry, "L'Egypte et l'invasion arabe," tries to distinguish the various Christian factions of Egypt at the time of the conquest and their respective reactions to the Arabs; for the part played by Cyrus see the entry on the "Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 below.

[141] John of Nikiu, CXXI.10 (tr. Charles, 201): "Many of the Egyptians who had been false Christians denied the holy orthodox faith and life-giving baptism, and embraced the religion of the Muslims, the enemies of God, and accepted the detestable doctrine of the beast, this is, Muḥammad."

faith of the beast" are equally questionable.[142] It is interesting to note that John quotes the same figure as Arabic sources for the reinforcements sent by the caliph 'Umar to Egypt.[143] Yet the number 4000 occurs so often in Muslim army estimations that one again hesitates to accept it.[144]

THEODOTUS OF AMIDA (D. 698)

"The story of the brave deeds of the holy lord Theodotus, bishop of the city of Amida," was, so we are told at the end of his biography, written down by one "Simeon, a priest and precentor from Samosata, … as it was dictated to me by lord Joseph the priest, disciple of the saint." This Theodotus was born in the region of Amida and at an early age became a monk at the monastery of Qenneshre. He remained there until the death of the patriarch Theodore (649–67), then set off "to obtain a blessing from the holy places," visiting Sinai, Jerusalem and Egypt. After five years in the latter country he returned to north Mesopotamia, where he roamed for a number of years with his bag of saints' relics and his companion Joseph before reluctantly taking on the post of bishop of Amida *ca.* 690. He was consecrated in this office by **{157}** the patriarch himself, Julian the Roman (687–708), but left it shortly afterwards to spend his last years at Qenneshre, where he began his spiritual life, and finally to found his own monastery before he died:[145]

> The death of the holy lord Theodotus occurred in the year 1009 (698), in the month of August, on the fifteenth day, on the anniversary of our Lady Mary, the holy Mother of God, in the days of the patriarch lord Julian, of lord Gabriel of Dara, lord Matthew of Amida, lord Sergius of Mardin, lord Aḥay of Ṭur 'Abdin and lord Elijah of Mayferqat. These bishops and their cities honoured the commemoration of the holy man and in their country he took his final repose. He was buried near Qeleth in the monastery which he loved and in the land which he held dear.[146]

Theodotus' life was given over to the enactment of two of his favourite sayings: "Intercourse with humans interrupts the miracle of God's presence," and "Remember those that are in trouble as if you yourself were suffering with them" (Hebrews xiii.3). Accordingly, his biography is almost entirely taken up with tales of his severe

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[142] *Ibid.*, XC.79 (in reference to the Lakhmid king "Alamundar"), CXXI.10, CXIV.1 (tr. Charles, 142, 201, 182).

[143] *Ibid.*, CXII.6 (tr. Charles, 181): note that 'Umar is said to have been in Palestine at the time; cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 59, 61.

[144] Conrad, "Chronology and Literary *Topoi*," 230–32.

[145] I am very grateful to Dr. Andrew Palmer for allowing me to see the unpublished text and his translation of the *Life* of Theodotus; the numbering of the sections of the *Life* is according to his future edition. For more information about this text see the various articles by Palmer (listed in Bibliography II below) and *idem*, *Monk and Mason*, 88–91, 165–68.

[146] Theodotus of Amida, *Life* CVIII, fol. 68b (Palmer's translation).

ascetic practices and of his exorcisms, healings and ministrations to the poor and needy. Since the demands of the latter conflicted with the former, he wandered much from place to place, seeking to avoid the crowds that would gather upon rumours of his approach and the church authorities who would pressure him to accept ordination and some official post. Though Joseph greatly admired his master's "voluntary exile" and regarded him as a saint, such vagabonds were often viewed with suspicion. "We have ruled under [penalty of] anathema," wrote Theodotus' younger contemporary George, bishop of the Arabs (d. 724), "that wandering monks bearing bags and reliquaries of saints should not be welcomed."[147]

{158} The world in which Theodotus moved was still predominantly Christian. As a Syriac chronicler noted, referring to the time of Muḥammad ibn Marwān's overlordship in Mesopotamia (692–708), "Christians were still the scribes, leaders and governors of the lands of the Arabs."[148] "In the land of Samosata was a certain governor (*arkẖōn*) whose name was Elustriya; this man was from Ḥarran," and the tax-collector for the region was one of his servants, Sergius by name.[149] We hear of an Estarti, governor of Mayferqat, who unsuccessfully sought an interview with Theodotus; a governor of Ṭur 'Abdin who "had received an arrow wound in the battle which the Arabs fought over Nisibis" in 640 and who bore witness to Theodotus' sanctity; and another Elustriya, governor of Dara, who promised that if the holy man would stay in his region, his favourite monastery, that of Mar Abay near Qeleth, "shall not give poll-tax (*gzīṯâ*) to the king all the days of your life; I shall give it out of my own house."[150] These were most likely Melkites, and sanctity would appear to have been able to cross confessional boundaries, for "when he went into the house of heretics he would associate with them just as freely as with the orthodox." Theodotus, whose letters "spread throughout the land like [those of] the apostle Paul," corresponded with the Byzantine commanders in the castles on the Arab-Byzantine frontier, and "would send to the governors of Beth Ḥesne with instructions, threats and hard words to frighten them that they might not act aggressively with those poor people who lived with them," "for I know that the Romans persecute them to [make them] change their faith."[151] The only Jacobite personalities we encounter are clergymen, often seeking to ply the saint with responsibilities, other solitaries like Thomas the Stylite of Telia, or lower officials such as John the *epitropos* of Claudia.[152]

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[147] Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, 99.

[148] Dionysius of Tellmaḥre as preserved in Michael the Syrian 11.XVI, 449/474, and *Chron. 1234*, 1–294.

[149] Theodotus of Amida, *Life* XXVII, fol. 61a.

[150] *Ibid.* XLIII–VI, fols. 63a (Estarti), 63b.

[151] *Ibid.* XXIII, fol. 60b; XXXV, fol. 62b.

[152] *Ibid.* XXIV, fol. 60b ("The episcopal fathers together with the blessed patriarch of Antioch decided to seat the holy lord Theodotus on the apostolic see of a bishopric…"); XCVII, fol. 67a (Thomas: also mentioned by *Chron. Zuqnin*, 156, and *Chron. 819*, 13); XXXI, fol. 62a (John). The term *epitropos* is also used by Ḥnanisho', *Rulings* XVII, 32.

{159} The Muslims tend to be no more than a hostile background presence, as when Theodotus and his disciple, hearing of the plight of the orthodox people "who flee the dearth and the hardships brought about by the Arabs," headed for "the lake which is called Hure and they found the Syrians assembled all together by the castles, because they had heard that the Arabs intended to invade that region."[153] When ordained bishop of Amida, however, he had more direct dealings with them, for there, unlike the other places he frequented, Muslims had settled and a unit of Arab cavalry been stationed. Almost as soon as he was appointed, the Arab "who was in authority over the city and its district" arrested him and "dragged him to their mosque," "in order that he might judge him on account of a letter that he had written to Beth Romaye, for he accused him of being a friend of the Romans."[154] But "that evil man" was struck blind and had to beg forgiveness of Theodotus, who then cured him. A second encounter occurred when he sought to redeem some captives of the city, and he gained money for this purpose from "both Christians and Muslims (*mhaggrāyē*)."[155] In general, Theodotus seems to have been respected by all confessional groups; thus "Christians, Arabs (*ṭayyāyē*) and pagans (*ḥanpē*) came to obtain a blessing from him" upon his appointment as bishop of Amida, and fear of him "took hold of the Muslims, the heretics and the orthodox and they agreed to everything that he ordered."[156] The "viceroy of all the East" was even supposed to have written to Amida concerning Theodotus, saying: "I command that the laws of the city of Amida and of all the region be given into the hands of that righteous man who holds the office of bishop in it. I have heard that he does not give preference to any persons, and for this reason I have given the laws of the Christians into his hands."[157]

{160} The Syriac *Life* is well acquainted with numerous Christian personalities in northern Mesopotamia of the second half of the seventh century. It can give a full list of the bishops of Amida of that period: Thomas, Athanasius, Theodotus himself, and finally Matthew.[158] It reveals an intimate knowledge of the area, its vil-

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[153] Theodotus of Amida, *Life* XXXV, fol. 62b.

[154] *Ibid.* LVIII, fol. 64a; though he had previously been accused of being a spy for the Arabs by some thieves who threatened to hand him over to the Byzantines (XXXIX, fol. 63a).

[155] *Ibid.* LXVI, fol. 64b.

[156] *Ibid.* LVIII, fol. 64a; LXVII, fol. 64b. Only twice is *mhaggrāyē* used as opposed to *ṭayyāyē*, which could mean Christian as well as Muslim Arabs.

[157] *Ibid.* LXXIV, fol. 65a; one suspects, if true at all, that a lower official than Ḥajjāj is meant, perhaps the governor of Mesopotamia, who was then Muḥammad ibn Marwān.

[158] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 156, has under AG 1024/713: "The holy lord Thomas, bishop of Amida, died; he was succeeded by lord Theodotus." This chronicler is, however, rather slapdash (see the entry on him in Chapter 10 below) and is likely to have muddled either the dates or the people (a Theodotus and a Thomas, both bishops, are mentioned as instrumental in the election of Simeon of the Olives to the bishopric of Ḥarran in 700; see Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 163).

lages, monasteries and so on. And so there seems no reason to doubt that it was composed in the early eighth century from the memoirs of Theodotus' disciple, Joseph.

Jacob of Edessa (d. 708)

An anonymous biography of Jacob informs us that he was born and educated in the village of Ayndaba near Antioch, thence proceeding to the monastery of Qenneshre and later to Alexandria in order to further his studies, notably of Greek. He returned to Syria, taking up residence in Edessa for a time before being appointed its bishop in 684. His refusal to relax church rulings and regulations brought him into conflict with the patriarch Julian and fellow bishops, and he resigned his post after four years. He retired to the monastery of Mar Jacob at Kayshum to polemicise against "certain people who transgress the Law of God and trample upon the canons of the church,"[159] then accepted a commission to rejuvenate Greek studies at the monastery of Eusebona. Problems with Grecophobe brothers prompted him to leave and he spent the next nine years at Tel'ada abbey "revising the Old Testament."[160] The Edessans sought him to be their bishop once **{161}** more, to which he assented, but died after only four months in office in 708.[161]

As his *Life* suggests, Jacob was well known, almost notorious, for his legislative activity, and he produced seven cycles of legal decisions. Two exist as simply a list of rulings on various issues, but the other five take the form of judgements of Jacob given in response to questions posed by some correspondent.[162] His stint as a bishop (684–88) and his authority make it likely that much of the material reflects real problems encountered by and put to Jacob, but the question-and-answer style which these cycles adopt is also a popular literary device.

The largest collection is that addressed to the priest Addai, which comprises almost 120 questions "together with the replies to them." Two collections, of 27 and 18 items, appear as letters to "John the Stylite of Litarb;" then there are two short cycles written for the priests Thomas and Abraham. A question will often vary

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[159] This is the title of a tract by Jacob found in Ms. BL Add. 12, 154, fol. 164b (see Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.984 [no. 860]).

[160] This is confirmed by the colophon of two manuscripts containing revisions of the Bible – BL Add. 14, 429 (Wright, *Catalogue*, 1.38 [no. 60]) and Paris syr. 27 (Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, 11) – which claim to have been completed by Jacob at "the great convent of Tel'ada" in AG 1016/705.

[161] The biography is preserved by Michael the Syrian 11.XV, 445–46/471–72; his life and works have most recently been surveyed by Drijvers, "Jakob von Edessa," and the dates of his life established by Schrier, "Chronological Problems," 72–77.

[162] Vööbus calls the former "canons" and the latter "resolutions" (*Entscheidungen*). This distinction has some validity, especially for the form of the material, but note that what was once a resolution may appear in later collections as a canon (this is true for almost all the material from Jacob in Bar Hebraeus' *Nomocanon*).

in length in different manuscripts, for their pithy nature meant they could easily be compressed, amplified and transposed.[163]

The subject matter is diverse, but a large proportion is taken up with the issue of purity, both in liturgical and social practice. In the social sphere this meant caution in one's dealings with heretics and unbelievers. Thus one should not make altar coverings, priests' garments or drapes from cloth on which is embroidered the Muslim profession of faith (*tawdītā hāgāraytâ*);[164] and one should lock the church doors **{162}** during a service lest "Muslims enter and mingle with the believers, and disturb them and laugh at the holy Mysteries."[165] Jacob does, however, recognise that one must sometimes bow to constraint, and nowhere does he recommend martyrdom. Usually one should not eat with a non-orthodox, but if a Chalcedonian or Muslim governor orders it, then "need allows it."[166] If in dire need a deacon may serve soldiers on campaign, and if compelled by the Arabs, a monk or a priest may participate in battle, though he faces suspension if he kills someone.[167] And Jacob is willing to be lenient in matters that "do no harm." Priests may give the blessing of the saints to Muslims or pagans (*mhaggrāyē aw hanpē*),[168] and may teach the children of Muslims, Ḥarranians and Jews.[169] They may pardon and give the eucharist to (presumably repentant) apostates[170] in danger of dying, and bury them after their death,

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[163] All these cycles are described and references given in Excursus A below. Note that though most of the material in these cycles is concerned with church law, there are a few questions, especially in the Addai cycle, about Bible commentary and medical-natural science matters, such as would be commonly found in question-and-answer collections (compare with that of Anastasius of Sinai described in Chapter 3 above).

[164] Jacob of Edessa, *Canons* (*BH*), 12 (= Kayser, 6/37). Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 498–99, may well, then, be right that it was 'Abd al-Malik who first had Muslim slogans printed on cloth as well as on coins and documents.

[165] Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to John*, B9 (in Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 237).

[166] Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, nos. 56–57 (= de Lagarde, 139–40; = Lamy, 154–57).

[167] *Ibid.*, nos. 79–80 (translated in Excursus A below). No. 80 appears abbreviated and without its question in Jacob of Edessa, *Canons* (*BH*), 42 (= Kayser, 13/39).

[168] Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to John*, A6 (= Vööbus, 249; = Rignell, 52).

[169] Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, nos. 58–59 (= de Lagarde, 140; = Lamy, 158–59).

[170] The text has "*haw d-haggar w-aḥnep*;" one could see this as a hendiadys, the whole phrase meaning "apostate to Islam," but Vööbus translates it as "a Muslim *or* a pagan," and the same distinction is made elsewhere (see the previous sentence and the next quotation) so that one should probably read "*aw*" here. Since new converts to paganism, as opposed to die-hard pagans, are unlikely around Edessa at this time, one assumes that indulgence in pagan (i.e. generally reprobate) beliefs/practices is meant (e.g. Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, no. 36, on those who murmur incantations, tie knots, make amulets etc.; though they say they pray, they are not Christians).

if no bishop is in the vicinity.[171] And in the thorny area of apostasy Jacob also shows himself accommodating, probably wishing to play down the problem:

> We should not rebaptise a Christian who becomes a Muslim or pagan (*krištiyānā da-mhaggar aw maḥnep*) then returns, **{163}** but the prayer of penitents is to be said over him by the bishop and a period of penance enjoined upon him.[172]

> A woman who is married to a Muslim and who says that she will convert to Islam (*thaggar*) unless she is given the host, should be granted it, but with a penalty that is appropriate for her to receive.[173]

These two rulings demonstrate how early apostasy to Islam became a serious issue, a fact vividly illustrated by a contemporary apocalypse which laments that "many people who were members of the church will deny the true faith of the Christians, along with the holy cross and the awesome Mysteries, without being subjected to any compulsion, lashings or blows."[174] But though he probably wished to declare to renegades that they would be taken back, Jacob was not advocating a policy of "anything goes." Around the first case he drapes a veiled threat, intimating that such apostasy may deprive one of the grace of baptism; and in the latter instance he insists that "even if there is not fear of her apostatising" some "rebuke" was necessary "so that other women fear lest they too stumble."

Besides legislation, Jacob busied himself with grammar, translation from Greek, Biblical exegesis, natural science and chronography.[175] His contribution to the latter field was a chronicle which revised and continued that of Eusebius, as he explains in his introduction:

> Just as he (Eusebius) compiled a chronological canon including in brief the events of the time and the years of the **{164}** empires, which he placed facing each other so that it might be easy for those coming to it [to see] who were at a certain time the kings, generals, scholars, writers… Likewise, on that model, I will establish, starting from year twenty of Constantine, a canon which will comprise subse-

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[171] Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, no. 116 (in Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 261).

[172] Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to John*, A13 (= Vööbus, 253 [no. 15]); also in *idem*, *Canons* (*BH*), 22 (= Kayser, 8/37). I give Bar Hebraeus' version, but note that it is shorter and exists simply *as* a judgement rather than in answer to a question.

[173] Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, no. 75; also in *idem*, *Canons* (*BH*), 41 (= Kayser, 13/39). I give Bar Hebraeus' version here, except that I correct Muslims (*mhaggrāyē*) to Muslim (*mhaggrāyā*), as appears in Ms. Harvard syr. 93 (translated in Excursus A below) where there is mention of the woman's husband. Again, Bar Hebraeus' version is considerably shorter and omits the question.

[174] Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XII.3.

[175] In addition to the survey works listed at the beginning of the chapter see Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, 64–74; 'Iwas, "Mār Ya'qūb al-Ruhāwī." Two recent specialist studies are Brock, "A Calendar of Jacob of Edessa," and Reveil, "A Grammar of Jacob of Edessa."

> quent times and I will arrange in succession, one beside the other, the years of the empires which have existed… and the events which have taken place during each one, as well as the men who have become famous in some way.[176]

Elias of Nisibis informs us that Jacob composed his chronicle in AG 1003/692, and this is confirmed by a comment of Theodosius of Edessa:

> Jacob, of the city of Edessa, who translated the book (of Eusebius) from Greek into Syriac, added the times and arranged the events not only from Adam to Abraham, but also from Constantine to his own period in which there ruled over the Romans Justinian (685–95) and over the Arabs ʿAbd Allāh (ibn al-Zubayr; 683–92).[177]

Michael the Syrian, who claims to have incorporated "all the chronicle relevant to this subject," states that Jacob halted at AG 1021/710, and concludes that either Jacob did not die in 708 or, as is surely correct, that one of his disciples continued his master's project until this later date.[178]

{165} The British Library manuscript Add. 14,685 contains a work entitled: "A chronicle in continuation of that of Eusebius of Caesarea composed by Jacob 'lover-of-toil' (*rāḥem ʿamlâ*)." That this is Jacob's chronicle has been demonstrated convincingly by Brooks, with the qualification that it "is not the full work, of Jacob but only a series of extracts from it."[179] Unfortunately the manuscript has several gaps and the part after 631 is entirely missing. All we have regarding Islam are the notices that "Muḥammad (*Mḥmṭ*) went down for trade to the lands of Palestine, Arabia and Syrian Phoenicia," that "the kingdom of the Arabians (*arbāyê*), those whom we call Arabs (*ṭayyāyê*), began when Heraclius, king of the Romans, was in his eleventh year

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[176] Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 263, and cited by Michael the Syrian 7.II, 128/254.

[177] Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 2.99; Theodosius is cited by Michael the Syrian 7.II, 128/255.

[178] Michael the Syrian 11.XVII, 450/482–83. The anonymous author of a work on the marvels of the six days of Creation cites Jacob of Edessa during his account of the fourth day, saying: "Jacob of Edessa wrote that in the year 1004 of the Greeks (692–93), ten days after the incursion of the Arabs into the territory of the Byzantines, the heavenly spheres were pierced by fiery bows and rays like spears in a straight line from south to north all night long without cease" (Ms. Cambridge Add. 2017, fol. 119b). Bar Hebraeus uses the same quotation as evidence for how comets portend disaster (in Ms. Paris syr. 346, fol. 167a, edited by Nau, "La cosmographie au VIIe siècle chez les syriens," 247). Since it also appears in Michael the Syrian 11.XVII, 450–51/480–81 (though wrongly placed under the year 1019/707–708), it might have been in Jacob's chronicle, perhaps the concluding notice, which he included as he considered it a sign of God's disapproval for the Arabs' incursion of 1003, or even as an eschatological harbinger.

[179] Brooks, "The Chronological Canon of James of Edessa," 261–64.

and Khusrau, king of the Persians, was in his thirty-first year" (620–21), and that "the Arabs began to carry out raids in the land of Palestine."[180]

Jacob was also an avid correspondent and replied to enquiries of a remarkably diverse nature, as is illustrated by the 30 or so letters which have come down to us from him.[181] Only two make any mention of the Muslims, and in each case the reference is incidental. The first occurs in a letter answering sundry queries of John the Stylite, one being why the Jews pray south. Jacob points out that his question is based on a misconception, for the Jews, like the Muslims, pray to a particular cultic object, not in a fixed direction.[182] The second mention is again found in a letter to John, which demonstrates that the Virgin Mary is of the house of David. In the course of his exposition Jacob presents the Muslim view of Jesus and Mary:

> **{166}** That, therefore, the Messiah is in the flesh of the line of David… is professed and considered fundamental by all of them: Jews, Muslims and Christians… To the Jews… it is fundamental, although they deny the true Messiah who has indeed come… The Muslims, too, although they do not know nor wish to say that this true Messiah, who came and is acknowledged by the Christians, is God and the son of God, they nevertheless confess firmly that he is the true Messiah who was to come and who was foretold by the prophets; on this they have no dispute with us… They say to all at all times that Jesus son of Mary is in truth the Messiah and they call him the Word of God, as do the holy scriptures. They also add, in their ignorance, that he is the Spirit of God, for they are not able to distinguish between word and spirit, just as they do not assent to call the Messiah God or son of God.[183]

This passage shows remarkably close fit with the portrayal of Jesus in the Qur'an. There too he is referred to as Jesus son of Mary, as the Messiah,[184] and as the Spirit of God and Word of God (iv.171). Like Jacob's letter the Qur'an stresses that Jesus is not God nor the son of God (v.72, 75). And in general Jesus is a prominent figure

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[180] Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 326. A central column counts off the years since Constantine and the regnal years of the Byzantine and Persian emperors, and historical notices are placed on either side. But a notice may straddle a number of years, so it is difficult to be sure of its exact date. Muḥammad's trading is placed beside years 293 and 294 = AG 929/617–18 and 930/618–19, but before the mention of a solar eclipse which seems to be that of 4 November 617 (Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 115–17). The Arabs' raids are placed beside years 301 and 302 = 937/625–26 and 938/626–27.

[181] Extant letters are listed in Bibliography I below; Barsaum, *Al-lu'lu' al-manthūr*, 300–305, lists 46 letters, which includes lost letters and cycles of canons in the form of a letter.

[182] The relevant part of the letter is cited in the entry on "Sacred Direction in Islam" in Chapter 13 below.

[183] Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 6, 518–19/523–24; see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 11–12.

[184] In the Qur'an, however, the term is devoid of the redemptive significance that a Christian would understand by it; see Graf, "Wie ist das Wort Al-Masiḥ zu übersetzen."

in the Qur'an: though a mortal (iii.58), he works miracles (iii.48), both confirms (iii.49) and receives scripture (lvii.27) and, most importantly, he foretells the coming of Muḥammad (lxi.6).

After setting out a proof by logic – the prophets said the Messiah will be of the lineage of David; the son of Mary is the Messiah; so Mary is descended from David – Jacob writes:

> It is by means of such a compelling and true syllogism that we should show to any Christian or Muslim who inquires that Mary the holy Virgin and begetter of God is of **{167}** the race of David, although this is not illustrated by the scriptures.[185]

Muslims then, more so than Jews, are to be engaged in debate. The reason is found in the passage quoted above: whereas the Jews deny that Jesus is the Messiah, the Muslims actually call him such as a matter of course and say much about him that accords with Christian sentiments, yet stop short of saying he is the son of God. That this frustrated Jacob is clear from his repeated reference to it in the first passage above and elsewhere,[186] and some Christians may well, as Jacob implies, have tried to win the Muslims round to their view of Jesus.[187]

ZACHARIAS, BISHOP OF SAKHA (D. 720S)

The Coptic patriarch Simon is credited with the policy of seeking out "spiritual men, brilliant in their deeds, steeped in the scriptures, wisdom and sciences, and he appointed them bishops in every place."[188] The first of his protégés were Zacharias and Ptolemy, ordained bishops of Sakha and Upper Manuf respectively. We learn more about these two characters from the Coptic synaxary, which contains an entry for Zacharias.[189] His family had a tradition of serving in the administration, and he too, once versed in "foreign and ecclesiastical wisdom," was enrolled as a secretary in the Muslim administration (*dīwān*). It was there that he met and became friends with Ptolemy, who was then prefect (*wālī*) of Sakha. The two conceived the idea of going off to become monks together and, though obstructed in their plans by the authorities, were finally spurred into action by the vision of an angel who reprimanded them for their procrastination. Heading towards Scetis, they encountered a

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[185] Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 6, 519–20/525–26.

[186] In a commentary on 1 Kings xiv.21–22 Jacob says that, like the Jews handed over to Pharaoh for the wickedness of Reheboam, "so also the Messiah has surrendered us, because of our many sins and perversities, and subjected us to the harsh yoke of the Arabians who do not acknowledge him to be God and the son of God, and the Messiah to be God His son" (Jacob of Edessa, *Scholia*, 27/42).

[187] See the entry on "Anastasius of Sinai" in Chapter 3 above.

[188] Hist. Patriarchs XVI, PO 5, 46.

[189] *Coptic Synaxary*, "21 Amshīr" (= *Ethiopic Synaxary*, "21 Yakkātit"); the edition of Michael abbreviates the following account.

monk who escorted them to the monastery of S. **{168}** John Colobos, where they became disciples of its two most illustrious members of that time, Abraham and George.

When the bishop of Sakha died, its people petitioned the patriarch Simon to set over them Zacharias. This request was granted and the latter sat there for 30 years. Since Simon was in office for the period 692–700, Zacharias must have held his see for the first quarter of the eighth century and died by 731. During this time, the synaxary tells us, "he composed many canons and articles, sermons and treatises," and indeed, a number of his writings are still extant today. Preserved in the original Coptic are his *Life* of John Colobos, a homily on penitence and another on the entry of Jesus to Jerusalem; a discourse on the coming of the holy family to Egypt and a *Life* of Abraham and George, his teachers at Scetis, exist only in Arabic.[190]

SIMEON OF THE OLIVES (D. 734)

This holy man was born to a certain Mundar of Ḥabsenus in northern Mesopotamia. After being initiated in writing and the scriptures by "the teacher attached to the village church," Simeon went on at the age of ten, in accordance with the local custom,[191] to attend the monastic school of Qartmin convent. At the age of fifteen he became a monk at this establishment, spent some time there as a stylite and eventually was appointed its abbot. A nephew of his, named David, came upon a treasure which he made available to his uncle, who lavished it upon the needy and used it to buy property and equipment for the monastery. He established olive tree plantations, whence his sobriquet "of the olives," and "from their produce lighting was provided for all the churches and monasteries of Tur 'Abdin." With the permission of "the great king of the Arabs" and the help of the Melkite governor of Ṭur 'Abdin, he built a magnificent church at Nisibis, securing a Monophysite foothold in an otherwise Nestorian bastion. In the year 700 he was consecrated bishop of Ḥarran, in which position he converted the Manichaeans, **{169}** pagans and Jews of the city and its environs. He continued, however, to maintain close ties with the monastery of Qartmin, and would visit it every year after the feast of Pentecost, accomplishing wonders there and distributing largesse, and when he died in 734 he donated to it his still considerable wealth.[192]

The Syriac *Life* which furnishes us with these biographical details of Simeon claims to have been written "by lord Ayyūb, nephew of lord David, Simeon's neph-

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[190] Details given by Albert *et al.*, *Christianismes orientaux*, 204 (though there is also a Coptic fragment of the *Life* of Abraham and Georges).

[191] "According to the custom that had long been established throughout the whole region of Ṭur 'Abdin, that every male child who had attained his tenth year should be brought by his parents to the school of the holy monastery, after which, if he wished, he might become a monk or a priest" (Simeon of the Olives, *Life*, 125).

[192] *Ibid.*, 130–31 (investments at Qartmin), 133–37 (building at Nisibis), 139–40 (consecration as bishop), 142–43 (conversions), 144–53 (visits to Qartmin).

ew,"[193] whom one would expect to be writing some time in the second half of the eighth century. In the text, however, we hear how Simeon was crushed to death as a boy at the funeral of Gabriel of Qartmin in 648 and subsequently revived;[194] how he healed the Persian general Shahrbaraz, conqueror of Jerusalem in 614; and how he debated with Arabs, Jews and Nestorians before the caliph Ma'mūn (813–33).[195] Clearly the *Life* has acquired numerous accretions since Ayyūb's first draft, many probably taken from "the account of lord Simeon written in Arabic," to which the copier refers us for "the whole of his disputation" with the "teachers and sages of Baghdad."[196] The rebuilding of the castle of Ṭur 'Abdin in 972 is reported, and a note appended to the text says that the *Life* was copied in Ḥarran and brought to the monastery of Qartmin by one Rabban Gabriel, nephew of John of Beth Svirina, the latter possibly to be identified with a bishop of Qartmin *ca.* 1170.[197] As we have it, then, the *Life* is a product of at least the late tenth and more likely the twelfth century.

{170} A historical kernel is nevertheless discernible.[198] The Qartminite *Chronicle of 819* has Simeon ordained bishop in AG 1011/700, in agreement with the *Life*. There is also sufficient acquaintance with local places and personalities to inspire a measure of confidence. The Melkites at the village of Anḥel, the "headmen" of the region of Ṭur 'Abdin, fit well into the picture given by Theodotus of Amida's biographer. The brothers Zachariah and Cyril of 'Ayn Warda, featuring in the *Life* as disciples of Simeon, appear on an inscription of 777 at the abbey of Qartmin.[199] The Melkite author Constantine of Ḥarran, to whom the *Life* has Simeon address a treatise, is known to have written a number of apologetic works in the early eighth century and quotations from his "reply to Simeon" have survived.[200]

Simeon's building activities in Nisibis are also confirmed by the *Chronicle of 819*:

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[193] *Ibid.*, 157.

[194] Also told in Gabriel, *Life* XXIV, 88–89, which goes on to give a brief summary of Simeon's life (*ibid.* XXV, 89–90).

[195] Simeon of the Olives, *Life*, 127 (Gabriel's funeral), 128–29 (Shahrbaraz). The meeting before Ma'mūn is not in Dolabani's edition, but does appear in other manuscripts.

[196] This incident seems to result from a confusion or conflation of Simeon with Theodore Abū Qurra, a later bishop of Ḥarran; see Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.901 (no. 850), who says that Ms. Orient 1017, fol. 206a, contains "a notice of Simeon of Olives, called by the Arabs Abū Qurra, who was at Baghdad in the year 1135" (AD 824).

[197] Michael the Syrian, "Register 44," 767; Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 161.

[198] Further discussion in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 159–65, and *idem*, "Two Jacobite Bishops."

[199] See Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 159–65, which gives more discussion.

[200] A list of Simeon's writings comes at the end of the *Life*. On Constantine of Ḥarran see van Roey, "Trois auteurs chalcédoniens syriens," 129–32; his letter to Simeon is cited in *ibid.*, 144/152.

> AG 1018/707: Lord Simeon, bishop of Ḥarran, built and completed the church of the orthodox in Nisibis, all the necessary expenses and outlay for it being provided by the same bishop out of the monastery of Qartmin. He built it three times over, for what he built during the day the Nestorians and Jews tore down by night, with the result that the church was with difficulty completed.[201]

In the *Life*, however, this event is narrated at much greater length. Seeking permission to build at Nisibis, Simeon went to the authorities there, and "he was honoured by their head whose name was Peroz," evidently a Persian like his predecessor Mardanshah son of Zarnosh.[202] For construction outside the city, Peroz's consent was sufficient; but when Simeon resolved to erect churches and monasteries inside Nisibis, higher authority was needed. Obtaining a document from the governor **{171}** (*shallīṭā*), Simeon approached "the great king of the Arabs," bearing gifts, and was granted "an exalted document ordering that the rites and laws of the Christians be upheld in all the dominion of the Arabs."[203] Encouraged by this, Simeon embarked upon his project. "He was hindered in the building by the Nestorians, whose priests anathematised anyone who went to work there, whether as hired labourers or not." But with the aid of 300 workmen despatched by the governor of Ṭur ʿAbdin, the task was soon completed. Moreover, "in order to honour the great king and to make the Arabs well disposed towards him," Simeon built adjacent to the church "a large and beautiful mosque" and a school. "For all this he was held in affection and respect by the Arab rulers, and they gave him gold, silver and presents to distribute in the path of what is good."

Dubia

A Coptic Papyrus

Coptic papyrus no. 89 in the British Library contains a sermon or letter of which twenty lines are preserved, if somewhat fragmentarily. The text explains that the raids of "the Saracens and Blemmyes" who cannot be stopped (1. 12) are a sign of God's wrath against those who "spurn His holy body and revered blood" (1. 19). The author brings home his point by quoting Isaiah lxvi.24 (inexactly): "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men who have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die…" (1. 14), and John iii.36: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who believes not in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Revillout feels that the writing suits best the period of the fifth-century ascetic Shenute, if indeed it is not from his pen, whereas Crone

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[201] *Chron. 819*, 13–14.

[202] Simeon of the Olives, *Life*, 133 (Peroz); *Chron. 1234*, 1.294 (Mardanshah).

[203] Perhaps intended here is Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, then governor of Mesopotamia, or one of his subordinates.

and Cook take it to refer to the time of the Arab conquests. Both opinions are conjectural.[204]

Theophilus of Alexandria (ps.?)

{172} Preserved in Arabic, possibly as a translation from Greek,[205] is a homily which claims in its heading to have been given by Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria (385–412), on the occasion of the feast of "the two brilliant stars Peter and Paul." At one point S. Peter predicts that:

> After some more time God will remove the yoke of the Byzantines from the country of Egypt for the sake of the orthodox faith and He will establish a strong people who will have compassion on the churches of Christ and will not offend the faith in any way, and God will chastise the people of Egypt for their sins.[206]

This sounds like a comment in hindsight about the Arab occupation and the homily should be assigned, in its present form at least, to the late seventh century at the earliest,[207] and very likely much later.[208]

A Letter of Bishop Jonah

In a bibliography of Christian-Muslim dialogue there is an entry on John of Tella, attributing to him a "letter to the periodeutes Theodosius on monogamy," in which "John replies to the demand which had been made to Theodosius by an unknown Muslim: why is a man not permitted to have two wives?" It is further alleged that John died in the mid-seventh century and that his letter is preserved in a British Library manuscript.[209]

{173} This is a very misleading entry. John of Tella was born in 483 and died in the mid-sixth century, and in any case the text speaks of Jonah (*Yōnān*) not John (*Ywḥnn*).[210] The manuscript referred to is in the Cambridge, not the British, li-

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[204] Revillout, "Les Blemmyes d'après divers documents coptes," 2, and *idem*, "Les Blemmyes à propos d'une inscription copte," 404; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 155 n. 28.

[205] Fleisch, "Une homélie de Théophile d'Alexandrie," 375, argues this from the occurrence in the text of *arkhun* for *archōn* and *arghun* for *organon*, but these could easily be loan words.

[206] Theophilus of Alexandria, *Arabic Homily*, 393.

[207] Thus Frend, Rise of the Monophysite Movement, 354–55.

[208] Fleisch, "Une homélie de Théophile d'Alexandrie," 375, suggests the ninth century, taking the last clause of the above quote to refer to the caliph Ma'mūn's repression of an uprising in Egypt; the date is possible, but the argument is weak.

[209] Caspar *et al.*, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1984), 278.

[210] Brock, "Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning," 21, gives a résumé of John's life and further references.

brary.[211] It is entitled: "A letter of the holy lord Jonah, bishop, to Theodore the periodeutes (*sā'ōrā*)," and begins as follows:

> To our revered and pious brother, lord Theodore, [from] the humble Jonah: Since I took as my starting point the conversation which, as you said, you had with certain people, I was zealous to learn [more] so that with these words we might well press those who are enquiring, or rather demanding [of you]: "Why is it that you declare to us that it is not fitting that a man take two wives at the same time, even though we do not have a single demonstration from the sacred scriptures nor from the holy fathers?"

Jonah then continues by presenting proofs from scripture and from rational argument in favour of monogamy. The mention that "*we* do not have…" indicates that the petitioners are Christians and not "an unknown Muslim." It is possible that the question was prompted by observation of polygamy among Muslims, but this is not definite, since the issue had also concerned Christians before Islam,[212] and we know nothing of the provenance of the letter.[213]

[211] Cambridge Add. 2023, fols. 254b–259a; the manuscript is described by Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in Cambridge*, 2.600–28.

[212] At the synod of Mar Aba I in 544, for example, it was stated that men should not take a second wife (*Synodicon orientale*, 82–83).

[213] The manuscript is of the thirteenth century and of very varied contents.

CHAPTER 5.
EAST SYRIAN SOURCES[1]

ISHOʿYAHB III OF ADIABENE (D. 659)

{174} As early as the third century we hear of a Christian church in Sasanian territory, many of its members having been deported there by the Persian ruler Shapur I (240–71) during his wars in Byzantine lands. This community was later augmented by refugees from Byzantine persecution, expelled for their support of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428–31) and eponymous father of the Nestorian church, who had opposed the growing cult of Mary as "Mother of God" and the concomitant reduction of emphasis on Christ's humanity. The Christology of Nestorius and particularly of his teacher Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) was championed in the Sasanian empire by Aramean and Persian students of bishop Ibas of Edessa, and became popular particularly as a result of the efforts and skilled exposition of the catholicos Mar Aba I (540–52).[2] A sense of Nestorian identity was engendered by the development of a distinctive liturgy and law, by the organisation of schools, **{175}** notably that of Nisibis, and by the establishment of monasteries, most of them founded in the half century before the Arab conquests. A *modus vivendi* was also gradually worked out with the Sasanian government, whereby the state was expected to enforce the decisions of Nestorian synods and to ratify elections, new construction projects and promulgation of ecclesiastical rulings, and the church was expected to ensure the payment of taxes and show loyalty to the Sasanians by praying for the monarch and outlawing rebellious Christian subjects.[3]

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[1] East Syrian sources of the seventh and eighth centuries are surveyed by Assemani, *BO* 3.1 (which is an annotated edition and translation of the catalogue of Nestorian authors compiled by 'Abdisho' of Nisibis [d. 1318]); Wright, *Short History of Syriac Literature*, 166–95; Duval, *Littérature syriaque*, 370–74, 380–83; Baumstark, *GSL*, 194–242; Chabot, *Littérature syriaque*, 96–109; Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia syriaca*, 139–53; Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'église en Iraq*, 9–11, 17–28; Brock, "Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History," 23–27, 29–33.

[2] For the general picture see Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide*, and Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'église en Iraq*.

[3] On church-state relations see Brock, "Christians in the Sasanid Empire;" Morony, "Religious Communities in Late Sasanian and Early Islamic Iraq."

But though the Nestorian church was well established by the end of the Sasanian period, it was not free from dissension and experienced both intra- and inter-confessional conflicts. Their complexities are to some extent unravelled by examining the movements and writings of Isho'yahb of Adiabene, an energetic defender of Nestorian orthodoxy who had blazed a trail through the church ranks, becoming bishop of Nineveh in the 620s,[4] metropolitan of Arbela by 640,[5] and then catholicos, head of the Nestorian church, from 649 until his death in 659.[6] He had demonstrated his conviction at a very young age when, with 300 other students, he had resigned from the school of Nisibis as a stand against the victimisation of Gregory of Kashkar, metropolitan of Nisibis. **{176}** The latter had been forced to leave his post and abode for having spoken out against Ḥnana of Adiabene, famous teacher of the school, who "had interpreted things differently to Theodore" of Mopsuestia.[7] A second doctrinal dispute racked the church in the 640s when Sahdona, upon his appointment as bishop of Maḥoze *ca.* 645, published his ideas on the unity of the hypostasis of Christ.[8] Isho'yahb was particularly aggrieved, since they had been fel-

[4] Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 2. IV, 69, says he was elected bishop when Isho'yahb of Gadala was appointed catholicos in 628, and emphasises (*ibid.* 1.XXVI, 51) that as a result of the order of Khusrau II no bishops or metropolitans had been consecrated since the time of the catholicos Gregory (605–609). There was, however, a *locum tenens* in Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the person of archdeacon Mar Aba (*Chron. Khuzistan*, 22), and Babai exercised some sort of authority over monastic communities (Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 1.XXVII, 51–52), so it is possible that Isho'yahb III acted unofficially as bishop of Nineveh before 628.

[5] This date is a *terminus ante quem* given by the report in *Chron. Siirt* CVIII, *PO* 13, 629–30, that the bishop who opened Nineveh to the Arabs was Maremmeh (i.e. Isho'yahb had already left to become metropolitan of Arbela); Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 331, has 'Utba ibn Farqad come to Nineveh in 641.

[6] His life is thoroughly dealt with by Fiey, "Īšō'yaw le Grand," and more briefly by Budge, *Book of Governors*, 1.lxxxiv–xcvii. His letters, 105 of which survive, are listed with addressee and summary of contents by Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 140–43, and discussed by Fiey, "Īšō'yaw le Grand," and Young, *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph*, 85–99. See also Müller, "Stellung und Bedeutung des Katholicos-Patriarchen von Seleukeia-Ktesiphon," esp. 237–39.

[7] *Chron. Siirt* LXXIV, *PO* 13, 507–13; for a discussion of the theological issues involved see Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, 27–51.

[8] Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra, *Book of Chastity*, 67–69/56–57 (= Bedjan, no. 128). The significance of Sahdona's thesis is clearly set out by de Halleux, "La christologie de Martyrios-Sahdona," and *idem*, "Martyrios-Sahdona: la vie mouvementée d'un 'hérétique.'" Bar 'Idta (d. *ca.* 630) is alleged to have seen Sahdona's work before its publication (see n. 57 below), in which case the prophetic comment therein which Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 156 n. 28, say "refers to what must be the Arab invasion" may rather intend the Byzantine-Persian wars (Sahdona, *Book of Perfection* III.50, 1.40: "Great declarations of prophecy had been revealed to them [the holy men of our day] concerning devastation of cities, hardship on the land, deportation and massacre of the population, enduring famines and terrible plagues, strife and perturbation of the whole world, and all these things did indeed come to pass." Note that at

low monks at the convent of Beth ʻAbe and he had used his influence to procure Sahdona's bishopric for him. He visited him personally and wrote to him, entreating him to abandon his stance, but when this failed he opposed him resolutely and fought for his anathématisation and exile.[9]

After the enemy within, the second bane of Isho'yahb's life was the enemy without, the Monophysites. Frequent resort by Byzantine emperors to persecution forced many of them to flee to the East, and they were joined by large numbers deported there by Persian rulers.[10] Conversion of pagan Arabs and Zoroastrians also helped to swell the community.[11] Soon they began to organise themselves, establishing **{177}** sees and building churches and monasteries. Just as the Nestorians have a school in each of their towns which teaches their rites, hymns and liturgy, so the Jacobites now do the same, relates Maruta, first metropolitan of Tagrit (629–49), the head Monophysite seat in the East.[12] Inevitably, disputes arose between the two communities as they encroached more and more upon each other's territory. Both sides would try to bribe local governors for privileges for their people, and would slander their adversaries; they even went as far as to intercept each other's mail.

The first three decades of the seventh century were a particularly difficult time for the Nestorians. Annoyed that his choice of a successor to the catholicos Sabrisho' (596–604) was passed over, Khusrau II swore that "as long as I live I will never have another patriarch in the country of the East," and after Gregory I (605–609) the seat was vacant until the emperor's death.[13] He also, whether intentionally or not, strengthened the position of the Monophysites when he allowed them to replace Chalcedonian bishops whom he had expelled from their sees in the Byzantine lands he had conquered.[14] A further blow was the death of Yazdin shortly after 620, for he had been responsible for the finances of Khusrau and had used his influence to the benefit of the Nestorian church. Then followed the defection to Monophysit-

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ibid. XIV. 16, 3.154, Sahdona states that he is 28 years old, so, if this is true, he wrote in his youth).

[9] The controversy can be followed in Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 6–7M, 123–38; 28–30M, 202–14 (no. 6 is translated by Budge, *Book of Governors*, 1.lxxxix–xcv).

[10] In 574 Khusrau I took captive 90,000 from Dara and 292,000 from Apamea "who were all sent into Persia" (Michael the Syrian 10.IX, 349/312). About 35,000 suffered the same fate after the sack of Jerusalem in 614 (Sebeos, XXIV [tr. Macler, 69]; cf. Strategius, *Capture of Jerusalem*, XVIII.1–2).

[11] For an example of such activity see Nau, "Histoire de Mar Ahoudemmeh" (d. 575).

[12] Maruta, *Life*, 65–66; *Chron. Siirt* LXXXVIII–IX, *PO* 13, 542–45. The holder of this office was referred to as "maphrian."

[13] Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 1.XXVI, 51.

[14] *Chron. 1234*, 1.224–25. At Edessa Khusrau had initially tried to impose a Nestorian candidate, considering them the most un-Byzantine of Christians in his realm. But in the face of fierce Monophysite opposition he instead chose from those of their number in the region of Moṣul, deeming them at least to some degree persicised and perhaps also wishing to court the Monophysites in his newly won lands (Michael the Syrian 10.XXV, 389–90/379–80).

ism of Gregory of Sinjar who, after his excommunication for bigamy, exploited his position as imperial physician to persecute his erstwhile co-religionists. Isho'yahb describes in angry and bitter tones how "with silver incantations and golden supplications" the Monophysites won the indulgence of the present-day governors, and had even gained permission to build a church at the gates of Nineveh in view of the latrines, causing the people to groan and be in torment whenever they go to empty their **{178}** bowels.[15] He appears to use the same tactics himself, however, for a victory against the impious of Tagrit which he claims to have won by the grace of God, another source says he achieved by means of bribes.[16] Many instances are given of losses and gains of souls and there is one, born of a Nestorian father and a Monophysite mother, who oscillates between the two.[17]

As catholicos, Isho'yahb's chief concern was the attempted secession of the Christians of Pars and East Arabia, whose metropolitan at that time was Simeon of Rewardashir. The Persian seat had always been reluctant to submit to Seleucia-Ctesiphon, where the catholicos resided, believing that with a history going back to Cyrus the Mede they constituted the real centre of the Nestorian church. In 497 the metropolitan Yazdad had boycotted the synod of Babai, and in 585 Gregory and his bishops refused to attend the synod of Isho'yahb II (628–46).[18] Between 551 and 566 the catholicos Joseph had harshly treated Malka, bishop of Darabgard, which prompted a show of solidarity from all Persian Christians and Joseph's name was struck off the diptychs.[19] In this seventh-century episode the rebels had tried to obtain the support of the region's new rulers, as Isho'yahb complains:

> Not satisfied with their wickedness against the church of God, your so-called bishops made a demonstration of their rebellion to the rulers there and to the chief ruler who is above the rulers of this time. They rose up against the primacy of the church of God, and they have now been scorned by the rulers as befits their insubordination.[20]

{179} By alternately entreating and threatening the Christians of Qaṭar and visiting Simeon personally, Isho'yahb managed to heal the division and achieve a secure ar-

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[15] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 44B, 82.

[16] *Ibid.* 49B, 97–98; Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. eccles.*, 2.127.

[17] *Ibid.*, 64–65, 163.

[18] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 44B, 83. This example of inter-confessional fraternisation is not isolated: a synod of 585 forbade Christians to celebrate festivals with Jews, heretics and pagans, to seek marriage with them or to accept their offerings; another in 676 chided those who after mass would go to Jewish taverns to drink despite the existence of adequate Nestorian establishments (*Synodicon orientale*, 157–59, 225).

[19] *Chron. Siirt* XXXII, *PO* 7, 178–79.

[20] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 18C, 266; cf. *Ep.* 17C, 261: "You took the statement of your rebellion to the court of the secular rulers." Since Isho'yahb was catholicos from 649 to 659, the references must be to the Muslims.

rangement, giving India and Qaṭar – formerly under the control of Fars – their own metropolitans.[21]

Of the Muslims we hear very little in the writings of Isho'yahb, and they are only ever conceived of in terms of their dealings with the Christians, never as a separate phenomenon.[22] Their first mention comes in a letter in which Isho'yahb had been urging some monks not to simply act like "senseless stones" in the face of Monophysite attacks, but to show more "zeal for the faith of our Lord." Then he continues:

> The heretics are deceiving you [when they say] there happens what happens by order of the Arabs, which is certainly not the case. For the Muslim Arabs (*ṭayyāyē mhaggrē*) do not aid those who say that God, Lord of all, suffered and died. And if by chance they do help them for whatever reason, you can inform the Muslims (*mhaggrē*) and persuade them of this matter as it should be, if you care about it at all. So perform all things wisely, my brothers; give unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.[23]

The interest of this passage is twofold. Firstly, it is our earliest reference to Christian dealings with Muslims, and it is clear that the Monophysites and Nestorians vied for privileges from their new masters much as they had done in Sasanian times. As far as what should be rendered to Caesar, bishops and monks alike sought tax concessions and other such favours for their people; in matters concerning God they simply requested the freedom to conduct their own affairs unmolested. Secondly, it gives us our earliest reference to the term *mhaggrē*. The equivalent Greek form *magaritai* is found in a bilingual papyrus **{180}** of AH 22/643,[24] which is a receipt from the commander of the Arab forces in Egypt to the local inhabitants for goods provided, and it was probably from such documents or from the scribes that copied them that the Christians learned the term. In turn, the Greek derives from the Arabic *muhājir*, which is the name by which the Arabs are designated on all official documents of the first century of Islam.[25] But what exactly did the Christians make of it? It is pos-

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[21] The quarrel is documented in Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 14–21C, 247–83; and see Young, "The Church of the East in 650," 64–71.

[22] For a brief survey of early Nestorian-Muslim relations see Landron, "Relations entre chrétiens de l'Est et musulmans."

[23] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 48B, 97. According to the heading, Isho'yahb writes this when bishop of Nineveh, giving a *terminus ante quem* of 640; but the letter may be misplaced (for some comments on the ordering of the letters see Fiey, "Īšō'yaw le Grand," 315–20).

[24] *Papyri ERF*, no. 558; the term is found in numerous papyri, but this is the earliest with Arab and Greek dating. There is no difference in meaning between the forms *mhaggrā* and *mhaggrāyā* (plural: *mhaggrā*/*mhaggrāyē*).

[25] For the significance of this see Crone, "First-Century Concept of *Hiǧra*." Griffith's doubt whether *mhaggrāyā* and *magaritēs* are connected with *muhājir* seems perverse ("Muḥammad's Scripture and Message," 122–23; "Free Will in Christian *Kalām:* Moshe bar Kepha," 151–53). Did Greek and Syriac-speaking Christians just happen to invent simulta-

sible that, turning instinctively to scripture for inspiration, they simply connected it with Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, common ancestor of all Arabs. Yet terms denoting such a connection already existed in Greek and Syriac (*hagarēnoi*/*hagrāyē*), and in his use of expressions such as "the Muslim Arabs" and "the Arabs to whom God has given dominion over the world."[26] Isho'yahb demonstrates his awareness of a definite distinction between the "then" and the "now," a seeming appreciation that the old world order was changing.

A second reference to the Muslims occurs in a letter addressed to Simeon of Rewardashir, whom Isho'yahb desperately exhorts to remain within the fold of the church. He argues that the only possible explanation for the disasters which have been afflicting the Persian and East Arabian Christians under Simeon's authority, in particular the successes of some religious pretender, is their attempt at secession:

> You alone of all the peoples of the earth have become estranged from every one of them. And because of this estrangement from all these, the influence of the present error came to prevail with ease among you. For the one **{181}** who has seduced you and uprooted your churches was first seen among us in the region of Radan, where the pagans (*hanpē*)[27] are more numerous than the Christians. Yet, due to the praiseworthy conduct of the Christians, the pagans were not led astray by him. Rather he was driven out from there in disgrace; not only did he not uproot the churches, but he himself was extirpated. However, your region of Persia received him, pagans and Christians, and he did with them as he willed, the pagans consenting and obedient, the Christians inactive and silent. As for the Arabs, to whom God has at this time given rule (*shūlṭānā*) over the world, you know well how they act towards us. Not only do they not oppose Christianity, but they praise our faith, honour the priests and saints of our Lord, and give aid to the churches and monasteries. Why then do your *Mrwnaye*[28] reject their faith on a pretext of theirs? And this when the *Mrwnaye* themselves admit that the Arabs have

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neously a new word for Arabs at the same time as Arabs themselves came up with one very similar (note that the Greek and Syriac do not transliterate the Arabic, but use the same grammatical form of *nomen agentis*)? The idea proposed by Colpe, "Die Mhagrāyē," of a Judaeo-Christian background to the term is very doubtful.

[26] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 48B, 97 (*mhaggrē*); *Ep.* 14C, 251 (*shūlṭānā*).

[27] This clearly does not refer to Arabs, who are designated *ṭayyāyē*, and would in any case not be numerous in this area at such an early date. Either Zoroastrians or pagans must be intended; on these communities in this period see Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 280–305, 384–430.

[28] This term has been explained as inhabitants of Merw by Assemani, of Mazon (modern Oman) by Braun and Chabot, and of Mahrah (so Maranites) by Nau; for references and discussion see Nau, "Maronites, Mazonites et Maranites." Isho'yahb's letter seems very much to have Persia in mind (cf. Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 14C, 248: "Where are that great people, the *Mrwnaye*… where also are the churches of Qaraman and of all Persia?"); see also n. 43 below.

> not compelled them to abandon their faith, but only asked them to give up half of their possessions in order to keep their faith. Yet they forsook their faith, which is forever, and retained the half of their wealth, which is for a short time.[29]

The mention of Muslim warmth towards the Nestorians in this passage must be taken with a pinch of salt, for, as is shown by the remark of Isho'yahb cited above, the Monophysites also claimed that the Arabs **{182}** favoured them; apparently both sides alleged this in order to win adherents and reassure their own community. Isho'yahb is said to have been on good terms with the Muslims:

> He was a respected man to whom the governors of the region were beholden, and one of them gave him a diploma assuring him a free hand with regard to his monasteries, his seat, his revenue and exemptions of his intimates; and only a small charge exacted for those things. He would go every week to ask for what he needed and for whatever he might thereby benefit the affairs of the Christians.[30]

But when some Christians pointed out his considerable wealth to an Arab governor, he suffered imprisonment and torture for refusing to part with any of it. Still obtaining nothing, the governor pillaged several churches in the vicinity of Kufa and Ḥira.[31] Inter-confessional politics were evidently a dirty business, with the leaders of each party vying with those of the other for the governor's favour, which alone conferred the power to sanction and persecute.[32]

A CHRONICLER OF KHUZISTAN (WR. CA. 660S)

A short Nestorian chronicle, purporting to convey "some episodes from the *Ecclesiastica*, that is, church histories, and from the *Cosmotica*, that is, secular histories, from the death of Hormizd son of Khusrau to the end of the Persian kingdom," makes no mention of the identity of its author. Because of its anonymity it is known to scholars either as the *Anonymous Guidi*, after the name of its first editor, or as the *Khuzistan Chronicle*, after its most plausible geographical provenance (Beth Huzaye/Khuzistan). The work follows a chronological order, tracing the succession of the Persian emperors and heads of the Nestorian church, **{183}** culminating in entries on Yazdgird III (632–52) and Maremmeh (646–49).[33] There then follows an account of the miraculous conversion of some Turks by Elias of Merw (d. after

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[29] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 14C, 251. Earlier on in the letter he states that "two alone… escaped the fire of impiety" (*ibid.*, 248).

[30] Mārī, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 62/55.

[31] Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. eccles.*, 3.130–32.

[32] E.g. the Jacobite patriarch Severus bar Mashqa (668–80) acted harshly in his execution of church affairs, "for he was a severe man and he had the support of the king of the Arabs" (Dionysius of Tellmaḥre in Michael the Syrian 11.XIII, 436/456, and *Chron. 1234*, 2.263). His predecessor Theodore "bequeathed his estate to Mu'āwiya, so that out of fear of that man all the Jacobites would be obedient to him" (*Chron. Maronite*, 70).

[33] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 31 (Yazdgird's death), 34 (Maremmeh's death).

659), a list of towns founded by Seleucus, Semiramis and Ninus son of Belus, a portrayal of the Arab conquests (630s–40s) and a short survey of Arabian geography.

Among those present at the deathbed of Isho'yahb III in 659 was this same Elias, metropolitan of Merw.[34] His high standing in the Nestorian church and ease of access to church records put him in a suitable position to compose an ecclesiastical chronicle, and that he did so is attested by later authorities.[35] This coincidence, along with certain other features of style and content,[36] has led one scholar to argue that in the *Khuzistan Chronicle* we have the latter portion of the original chronicle of Elias[37] to which a later figure, most likely a close acquaintance of the metropolitan, appended a few editorial comments, beginning with a short note on a miracle worked by Elias.[38]

It is certainly true that there is a disjuncture after the report of Maremmeh's death, if only in terms of chronological sequence. However, after the mention of Elias and of the cities founded by Seleucus and others, the text continues: "At the time of which we have been speaking, when the Arabs conquered all the territory of the Persians and the Byzantines, they also entered and overran Beth Ḥuzaye," which seems to be picking up from where an earlier entry on the conquests **{184}** had left off.[39] The entry, chiefly concerned with the capture of Shush and Shushtar, is very detailed:

> He (the general Hormizdan) sent numerous troops against the Arabs, but they routed them all, and the Arabs dashed in and besieged Shush, taking it after a few days. They killed all the distinguished citizens and seized the House of Mar Daniel, taking the treasure that was kept there, which had been preserved on the king's orders ever since the days of Darius and Cyrus. They also broke open and took off a silver chest in which a mummified corpse was laid; according to many

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[34] 'Amr and Ṣalība, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 56.

[35] *Chron. Siirt* LXXIV, *PO* 13, 513, notes that Elias spoke in detail of Gregory, bishop of Nisibis; 'Abdisho' specifies that Elias' *Ecclesiastica* were "succinct" and contained in "a single book" (Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 148). Both comments do fit our text.

[36] None, however, decisive. The topographical interest pointed out by Nautin (see n. 38) as characteristic of the redactor is evident throughout the work. E.g. "Nisibis, which is the same as Antiocheia Mygdoniae, being so called because of the gardens and parks in it…" (*Chron. Khuzistan*, 18); "the Persian forces headed for Alexandria, sealed by walls and with the waters of the Nile all around; it also had strong gates and had been built by Alexander on the advice of Aristotle his master" (*ibid.*, 25).

[37] That we do not have a complete chronicle is clear from the way it abruptly begins: "Hormizd reigned 12 years…" without even specifying which Hormizd is intended, and from its lack of a colophon.

[38] Nautin, "L'auteur de la 'Chronique Anonyme de Guidi:' Elie de Merw."

[39] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 35 (tr. Brock, §48); cf. *ibid.*, 30–31. In this entry I use the forthcoming translation of this text by Dr. Sebastian Brock, which he very kindly made available to me.

> it was Daniel's, but others held that it belonged to king Darius. They also besieged Shustar, fighting for two years in order to take it. Then a man from Qaṭar who lived there became friends with someone who had a house on the walls, and the two of them conspired together and went out to the Arabs, telling them: "If you give us a third of the spoil of the city, we will let you into it." They made an agreement between them and they dug tunnels inside under the walls, letting in the Arabs, who thus took Shustar, spilling blood there as if it were water. They killed the Exegete of the city and the bishop of Hormizd Ardashir, along with the rest of the students, priests and deacons, shedding their blood in the very [church] sanctuary. Hormizdan himself they took alive.[40]

Amid the following brief report on Arab successes in the west it is recorded that "they also killed Isho'dad, bishop of Ḥira, who was staying there with 'Abd al-Masīḥ, who was undertaking an embassy between the Arabs and the Byzantines." And then there is the excursus on Arabian geography. It may be, then, that the disjuncture is not **{185}** an indication of a change in author, but of a change in focus and/or source. The text now concentrates on Khuzistan and East Arabia. This presumably reflects the author's sphere of interest and he may be relying in this part of the chronicle on direct informants, maybe even his own knowledge. This is also suggested by his comment that "regarding the dome of Abraham we have been unable to discover what it is," and may explain the less-ordered character of the notices coming after Maremmeh's death.

In either case, one would not wish to date the text's completion later than the 660s. The title declares the finishing point to be "the end of the Persian kingdom," and certainly there is no clear reference to any event after 652.[41] If, as seems likely, the narrative on the siege of Shush and Shustar derives from eyewitness testimony, then one would not wish to place its composition, given its vividness, much more than two decades after the event. It is not stated that Elias of Merv was already dead, but it is perhaps implied, and this probably occurred not long after 659, when he witnessed Isho'yahb's demise.

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[40] *Ibid*., 36–37 (tr. Brock, §50). Note that there are similarities between this account and that found in Muslim sources (e.g. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 380–81); see further Robinson, "The Conquest of Khūzistān."

[41] Nöldeke dates the text to the 670s, linking the mention of the capture of Africa to the founding of Qayrawan in 670 ("Syrische Chronik," 2, 45 n. 5). However, the statement that "the Arabs could only with difficulty enter and capture Egypt, the Thebaid and Africa" (*Chron. Khuzistan*, 37) could as easily refer to the raids into Africa beginning in AH 27/648 (Ṭabarī, 1.2814; Khalīfa, 159–60). And the comment that "God has not yet let them take Constantinople" (*Chron. Khuzistan*, 38), which Nöldeke connects with the 674–80 assault upon the Byzantine capital, may well relate to the probing expedition of Mu'āwiya to the Bosphorus in 654 (Sebeos, XXXVI [tr. Macler, 140–42]; *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 654) or simply mean that though other cities have been taken, not so Byzantium's capital.

Events, sacred and profane, are recounted concisely, and eminent personalities of the era are noted at intervals. Political and theological matters are dealt with, but in an anecdotal and gossipy vein, much of the material perhaps being of oral origin.[42] Thus we are treated to accounts of the poisoning of the Arab chief Nu'man by Khusrau II; the Persians' search for the Cross at Jerusalem, buried in a vegetable garden; a Babylonian Jew's rallying together of weavers, barbers and fullers to welcome the messiah and burn churches; and a Manichaean ritual group insemination of a pre-selected virgin and breadmaking from **{186}** the consequent offspring. The text is partisan in that the hostility of the Jews and Persians to "us" faithful is highlighted and the machinations of the heretics against "us" are emphasised, but the narrative is nevertheless very informative and told in a straightforward and matter-of-fact style.

Amid his entry on the reign of Yazdgird the chronicler gives a brief account of the Muslim invasions:

> Then God raised up against them the sons of Ishmael, [numerous] as the sand on the sea shore, whose leader (*md-abbrānâ*) was Muḥammad (*mḥmd*). Neither walls nor gates, armour or shield, withstood them, and they gained control over the entire land of the Persians. Yazdgird sent against them countless troops, but the Arabs routed them all and even killed Rustam. Yazdgird shut himself up in the walls of Mahoze and finally escaped by flight. He reached the country of the Ḥuzaye and *Mrwnaye*, where he ended his life. The Arabs gained control of Maḥoze and all the territory. They also came to Byzantine territory, plundering and ravaging the entire region of Syria. Heraclius, the Byzantine king, sent armies against them, but the Arabs killed more than 100,000 of them. When the catholicos Isho'yahb saw that Mahoze had been devastated by the Arabs and that they had carried off its gates to 'Aqula (Kufa) and that those who remained were wasting away from hunger, he left and took up residence in Beth Garmai, in the town of Karka.[43]

This subject is taken up again later, when more detailed knowledge is imparted.[44] For example, the chronicler knows that "an Arab general called Abū Mūsā (al-Ash'arī)… built Baṣra to settle the Arabs… just **{187}** as Sa'd son of (Abū) Waqqāṣ had built as another place for the Arabs to live the city 'Aqula, named Kufa." And in his summary of the Arab campaigns in the west we are told of the victories of Khālid (ibn al-Walīd), of the despatch by Heraclius of "a great army" under the

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[42] Compare his frequent use of such expressions as "it is said that" (*Chron. Khuzistan*, 16, 19, 27), "they say that" (*ibid.*, 18), "as the story goes" (*ibid.*, 20) etc.

[43] *Ibid.*, 30–31 (tr. Brock, §§36–37). The *Mrwnaye* in this passage are presumably the same as those mentioned in Isho'yahb's letter to Simeon of Rewardashir (see n. 28 above). Since Yazdgird died in or around Merw, it is tempting to connect this group with this city (the root letters are the same). In any case, it makes the reading Mazonaye unlikely (note that Mazon is correctly given in the description of Arabian topography further on in the chronicle).

[44] The ensuing details are all taken from *ibid.*, 36–38 (tr. Brock, §§49–53).

command of *Saqīlārā*,[45] its subsequent defeat with the loss of more than 100,000 men and the death of its commander. He is also aware that the Arabs experienced difficulties in invading Egypt, "because the boundary was guarded by the patriarch of Alexandria with a large and strong army" and this man had erected high walls along the Nile. The section concludes with a note on the death of Heraclius and the observation that "the victory of the sons of Ishmael who overpowered and subdued these two strong empires, came from God."

The chronicler then continues with a short piece on Arabian geography, beginning with a speculation about the origin of the Muslim sanctuary in Arabia:

> Regarding the dome of Abraham, we have been unable to discover what it is except that, because the blessed Abraham grew rich in property and wanted to get away from the envy of the Canaanites, he chose to live in the distant and spacious parts of the desert. Since he lived in tents, he built that place for the worship of God and for the offering of sacrifices. It took its present name from what it had been,[46] since the memory of the place was preserved with the generations of their race. Indeed, it was no new thing for the Arabs to worship there, but goes back to antiquity, to their early days, in that they show honour to the father of the head of their people.
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> Ḥaṣor, which scripture calls "head of the kingdoms" (Joshua xi.10), belongs to the Arabs, while Medina[47] is named after **{188}** Midian, Abraham's fourth son by Qeṭura; it is also called Yathrib. And Dumat Jandal [belongs to them], and the territory of the Hagaraye, which is rich in water, palm trees and fortified buildings. The territory of Ḥaṭṭa, situated by the sea in the vicinity of the islands of Qaṭar, is rich in the same way; it is also thickly vegetated with various kinds of plants. The region of Mazon also resembles it; it too lies by the sea and comprises an area of more than 100 parasangs. So [belongs to them] too the territory of Yamama, in the middle of the desert, and the territory of Ṭawf, and the city of

[45] This is presumably the treasurer (*sakellarios*) Theodore Trithourius, who appears in Byzantine and Arab sources (some references given by Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 132, 137, 145–46).

[46] One wonders whether the chronicler had heard of the term Kaʿba (Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 14, fol. 124a, writes it *Kʿbtā*), and thought that it derived from the dome (*Qūbtā*) of Abraham.

[47] Cahen ("L'accueil des chrétiens d'Orient à l'Islam," 53–54), Moorhead ("The Earliest Christian Theological Response to Islam," 267) and Suermann ("Orientalische Christen und der Islam," 130) read Ḥaṣor = Medina, Cahen thinking that this indicates "a certain justification of the Arab domination," Moorhead assuming the author to be confused. The connection is not borne out by the text.

> Ḥira, which was the seat of king Mundar, surnamed the "warrior;" he was sixth in the line of the Ishmaelite kings.[48]

In the Qur'an we read: "Take the place where Abraham stood [to worship] for a place of prayer" (ii. 125) and: "While Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, [Abraham prayed]… O our Lord, make us submissive to you and [make] from our offspring a people submissive to you" (ii.127–28).[49] Both accounts share the same fundamental assumptions: that Abraham, the fount of the Arab people, built a sanctuary which is still used as such by his ancestors. For the details, however, we must turn to Genesis where we find all the ingredients of our chronicler's concoction: Abraham makes frequent wanderings southwards (xii.9, xx.1), he displays a certain apprehensiveness regarding the Canaanites (xii.6, xiii.7), he is "very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold" (xiii.2), "he pitches his tent… and there built an altar to the Lord and called upon the name of the Lord" (xii.8) and God promises both to Abraham (xii.2) and to Ishmael (xvii.20) to make of them "a great nation." Moreover, the etymological suggestion regarding Medina is only possible as a result of the synonymity of Ishmaelites and Midianites assumed in Genesis xxxvii.25–28, and it is in Genesis xxv.1–2 **{189}** that Midian is named son of Abraham via Qeṭura.[50] But though the components of the above passage are culled from the Old Testament, the impetus to blend them at all must have come from outside. The chronicler can only be using Biblical antecedents to make sense of the information, albeit rather vague, that he has gleaned about Muslim worship.

RABBAN HORMIZD (D. CA. 670)

With his words to the paralytic: "So that you may know that the Son of man has the power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto you: 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'" (Mark ii.10), Jesus gave a vivid illustration of the link between the agency of God and works of healing, and demonstrated to future Christian missionaries how best to establish one's divine credentials. Particularly when attempting the conversion of pagans, acts of healing were almost a *sine qua non*. The Arab leader Zocomus gratefully entered with his whole tribe into Christianity when a certain monk rendered his barren wife fertile.[51] The Lakhmids held out as pagans until 593, when the king Nu'man made his conversion as a result of being relieved by three Nestorian churchmen of a demon. And "when God wished in his bounty and generosity to save the pagans of 'Ayn al-Namir and turn them from error, the son of the chief's sister fell ill and drew near to death," thus giving the Nestorian monk Mar 'Abda the

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[48] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 38–39 (tr. Brock, §§54–55). The Hagaraye are the people of Hajar, modern Bahrain. The final words imply that the author regarded the Arab kings ruling in his day to be a continuation of Lakhmid rule.

[49] For the Muslim view of this event see Firestone, "Abraham's Association with the Meccan Sanctuary."

[50] *Chron. Siirt* CI, *PO* 13, 600, also knows Yathrib as the city of Qeṭura.

[51] Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.XXXVIII, 2.673.

chance to assert the supremacy of, and win round the chief's followers to, the true faith.[52]

Respect for the curative powers of Christian holy men was a *sentiment* that carried on into Muslim times. When ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ziyād, the governor of Iraq, had a problem with his foot, he sought the prayers of the same Mar ʿAbda, who sensibly despatched his stick, two weeks' use of which cleared up the malady. Similar recourse was made by ʿUtba, governor of Beth Garmai, to Sabrishoʿ, metropolitan of the region, regarding two of his daughters possessed by demons. Monks were often in a position to give useful advice since many had studied medicine at school, as was the case with Rabban Khudahwi, **{190}** who was able to cure and subsequently baptise a daughter of the caliph Muʿāwiya.[53]

Although tales of the healing of Muslims by Christian holy men abound, reports of conversions are very rare and one would imagine that proselytising was curtailed by the Muslims' status as conquerors and the severe consequences for them of apostasy. One alleged success story is that of Rabban Hormizd, a native of Khuzistan who spent all his monastic life in northern Iraq. The names and careers of his fellow monks, particularly John the Persian,[54] Rabban Yozadak[55] and his disciple Abba Simon,[56] all founders of monasteries and disciples of Bar Tdta (d. *ca.* 630),[57] tell us that Hormizd was active in the early to mid-seventh century.[58] The extant prose *Life* claims as its author the same "Simon, the disciple of Rabban Mar Yozadak," who, like Rabban Hormizd, was one of the "company of fiery men" that left Beth ʿAbe for the monastery at Risha where he spent seven years in proximity to

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[52] *Chron. Siirt* LX, *PO* 13, 468–69 (Nuʿmān); XCVII, 586–89 (Mar ʿAbda).

[53] *Ibid.* XCVII, *PO* 13, 589 (Mar ʿAbda); CIX, 632 (Sabrishoʿ); XCVIII, 594 (Khudahwi).

[54] He wrote a *Life* of Rabban Bar ʿIdta (Baumstark, *GSL*, 203; Fiey, "Autour de la biographie de Bar ʿEta," 4; Rabban Bar ʿIdta, *The Histories* "preface," 115), in which he refers to Ishoʿyahb III's expulsion of Sahdona *ca.* 650 (*ibid.* XXIV, 156).

[55] Ishoʿdnaḥ of Baṣra, *Book of Chastity*, 49–50/42 (= Bedjan, no. 91).

[56] *Ibid.*, 40/34 (= Bedjan, no. 68); Baumstark, *GSL*, 205.

[57] Ishoʿdnaḥ of Baṣra, *Book of Chastity*, 9–10/10 (= Bedjan, no. 15); *Chron. Siirt* XLV, *PO* 13, 446–47. The traditional death date of Bar ʿIdta is 612, whereas Scher argues for 622 ("Analyse de l'histoire de Rabban bar ʿEdta," 12 n. 3). A probable allusion to him being alive at the time of the battle of Nineveh in 627 (*The Histories* XXX, 167–68) and meeting with Sahdona after the death of Jacob, first abbot of Beth ʿAbe (*ibid.* XXIV, 156), suggest a slightly later date. Fiey, "Īšōʿyaw le Grand," 21 n. 3, says 629, basing himself on a letter of Ishoʿyahb III to the monks of Beth ʿAbe which chides them for not electing a leader despite the testament of the former abbot Jacob in favour of John the Elder. Ishoʿyahb implies that he has recently become a bishop (*Ep.* 18B, 31); if this occurred in 628 (see n. 4 above), then Jacob died *ca.* 627, which fits with the comment of *Chron. Siirt* LVI, *PO* 13, 463, that he lived "until the end of the days of Khusrau II." Bar ʿIdta would have been an old man by this time, so his death must have occurred shortly afterwards.

[58] ʿAmr and Ṣalība, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 55, say he flourished under Ishoʿyahb II (628–46).

Hormizd.[59] There is no particular reason to dismiss this pretension, **{191}** but subsequent accretions and distortions are almost certainly present in the work.[60] An example of such an addition is the consecration of Hormizd's monastery by an unknown catholicos, Tomarsa II; the incident is either wholely fictitious, invented for legitimatory purposes by an inmate of the monastery, or an inflation of an originally lower-key event, such as the visit of a local bishop.[61]

On delving into the biography of Rabban Hormizd, one finds oneself in a world where miracles and magic, sorcerers and demons are omnipresent, and where the true believers are in a perpetual state of warfare with the treacherous infidels. Hormizd showed himself "hot with zeal against the heretics, and he burned with fervent desire for the utter destruction of their worship of error;" "he was anguish and a terror unto the heretic village of Arsham and a tribulation and affliction unto the wasted tavern of Bezqin of the teachers of heresy."[62] He was an uncompromising man, both in the conduct of his own ascetic life and in his dealings with others, forbidding the use of amulets and charms and the adornment of children's foreheads with crosses, beads and the like; and insisting on re-baptism for heretics who wished to join the faithful.[63] He made no attempt to be conciliatory, and despite being assaulted and slandered, he consecrated a church in the Jacobite village of Arsham and razed their monastery of Bezqin, erecting his own nearby.

In all of this he was helped by the Muslim governor of Moṣul, "the emir 'Uqba," who, upon witnessing Hormizd raise his son to life, had **{192}** requested that he be baptised by the holy man together with his ten Arab companions.[64] What they may have converted from is evidently of no interest and is not even alluded to, the principal concern of the narrative being to demonstrate the superiority of the

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[59] Rabban Hormizd, *The Histories* "title," 3; VII, 43–52. Besides the prose *Life*, probably first drafted soon after Hormizd's death, there are a number of metrical versions, the earliest composed by Emmanuel of Beth Garmai (d. 1080), which draws on the same traditions *as* the prose *Life* but need not be textually dependent. Syriac sources are listed by Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, 2.535–37 (who wrongly states the prose *Life* to be still unedited; see Baumstark, *GSL*, 205, for manuscripts); late Arabic versions are given in Graf, *GCAL*, 1.527.

[60] See Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, 2.534–41; Gero, "Cyril of Alexandria, Image Worship and the *Vita* of Rabban Hormizd," 90–92. Gero's suggestion of a *terminus a quo* of 886 (*ibid.*, n. 78) is not likely for the *whole* work since the basic outlines of the *Life* are already well known to Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra (*Book of Chastity*, 48–49/41 [= Bedjan, no. 89]).

[61] Rabban Hormizd, *The Histories* XVIII, 84–89.

[62] *Ibid.* XX, 92; VIII, 54.

[63] *Chron. Siirt* XCIX, *PO* 13, 596–97; cf. Rabban Hormizd, *The Histories* XI–XII, 69–71.

[64] *Ibid.* XI–XII, 65–71. Nöldeke identified this 'Uqba with 'Uqba ibn Muḥammad al-Khuzā'ī, governor of Moṣul in 886 ("Review," 532); certainly no governor named 'Uqba is listed before this date by Forand, "Governors of Mosul." The conqueror and first governor 'Utba ibn Farqad may be meant, which would fit well chronologically, but see next note.

Nestorian over the Jacobite form of baptism.[65] The only reality that one can discern in this and similar passages is the intense competition between the rival groups for the favours of the authorities, as when Ignatius, abbot of Mar Mattai monastery, came to ʿAlī, ʿUqba's successor, and "made bitter complaints against the holy man Rabban Hormizd and calumniated him," which the latter defused by defeating Ignatius in a supernatural contest and exorcising ʿAlī's son.[66]

GEORGE I (661–81) AND THE SYNOD OF 676

"The son of rich and noble parents," George was sent at a young age to take charge of their estates in the country of Marga. Once there he became attracted to the monastic life and entered the convent of Beth ʿAbe. Ishoʿyahb, then bishop of Nineveh, "saw the intelligence, good disposition and humility of the young George… and brought him to be his disciple." When catholicos, Ishoʿyahb made him metropolitan of Arbela in his place, and on his death bed he named him as his successor. George took up this post in the same year as "Ḥasan began to reign" (660–61) and died about twenty years later. Little is known of George's activities during this long term of office except for his dispute with the metropolitans of Nisibis and Mayshan, who were also called George and had been intimates of Ishoʿyahb and so felt the latter had had them in mind for the catholicate. This information on George's life, such as it **{193}** is, has come down to us from the *Ecclesiastical History* of Mar Athqen of the monastery of Mount Izla, who wrote in the eighth century.[67]

The only other records of George's term in office that we possess are the minutes of a synod that he held on the island of Diren in East Arabia and a letter addressed to a "priest and chief bishop in the land of the Persians" named Mina. The latter had written to George "in the year 59 of the rule of the Arabs (*shūlṭānā d-ṭayyāyē*)" asking for a clear and succinct "exposition of the orthodox faith," and "in this year 60" George gave his reply.[68] The synod was held in May "of the year 57 of the rule of the Arabs" (676)[69] and attended by the metropolitan of Qatar and five

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[65] The tale is told with the same moral in *Chron. Siirt* XCIX, *PO* 13, 596, but the setting has changed and Arabs do not feature, which makes one suspect that their involvement is secondary.

[66] Rabban Hormizd, *The Histories* XXIII, 98–104. One suspects this ʿAlī to be fictitious; he is not recorded in Arabic sources and is probably just a memory that ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib was powerful in the East at this time (cf. the entry on "John of Daylam" in this chapter).

[67] Cited by Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 2.XII–XIII, 80–85; 2.XVI, 88–89; see Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 217. Athqen says George died "in the same year as Ḥasan," perhaps meaning Ḥusayn (d. 680); ʿAmr and Ṣalība, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 57, say he held office for twenty years.

[68] The letter is preserved in *Synodicon orientale*, 227–45; it was most likely composed originally in Persian.

[69] It is interesting to note how often and at how early a date the Nestorians made use of the Muslim era. One finds it used in a colophon to a Nestorian manuscript of the New Testament completed "in the year 993 of the Greeks, which is year 63 of the Muslims (*mhaggrāyē*), the sons of Ishmael son of Hagar [and] son of Abraham" (Wright, *Catalogue*, 1.92 [no.

bishops of East Arabia. George's principal objective in convening this assembly was probably to heal the rift in relations between this province and the catholicate that had occurred in the time of Isho'yahb.

Nineteen canons of diverse content were established, a few of which hint at problems of interaction with the new rulers. Canon 6 urges that "legal cases and disputes between Christians be judged within the church" and that "those to be judged should not go outside the church before the pagans and non-believers." Though the wording is vague, the Muslims must chiefly be meant, and we find the same concern **{194}** in rulings by contemporary Jacobite and Jewish leaders.[70] Canon 14, "that it is not appropriate for Christian women to consort with the pagans, who are strangers to the fear of God," is similarly unspecific; in a general way it probably intends all non-Christians, but again it is likely that Muslims were uppermost in the minds of those at the synod, and indeed, we find this issue commanding the attention of a number of contemporary Christian authorities.[71] It is, however, true that there were still pagan vestiges in East Arabia, as is indicated by Canon 18, which forbids Christians to bury their dead "in the manner of the pagans," "for it is a pagan custom to wrap the deceased in rich and precious clothes and, in weakness and despair, to make great lamentations for them."[72] Canon 19 stresses that bishops should be held in honour and respect by their flock, and that "believers who hold power are not authorised to exact poll-tax and tribute (*ksep rīshā w-madattā*) from him as from a layman." This ruling gives us our earliest literary reference to a poll-tax

142]), by John bar Penkaye, 160/187 (year 67), and by Hnanisho', *Rulings* IV, 6 (year 69). The Jacobites, however, mostly continued to use the Seleucid era; an early exception to this are the inscriptions in Lebanon written "in the year 96 of the *mhaggrāyē*/of the rule of the Arabs" (Mouterde, "Inscriptions en syriaque à Kāmed," nos. 10, 20–21, 28), but then these are connected with building work at 'Ayn al-Jarr commissioned by Walīd I. Though less popular than local eras, dates were often given "according to the Arabs" in Egypt and Palestine (Meimaris, "The Arab Era mentioned in Greek Inscriptions and Papyri;" Worp, "Hegira Years in Greek, Greek-Coptic and Greek-Arabic Papyri").

[70] *Synodicon orientale*, 219–20. Jacob of Edessa, *Canons*, no. 30: disputes should not be brought "before the leaders of the world (*rīshānē d-ālmā*) or before the pagans (*ḥanpē*)." Sherira Gaon, *Letter*, 35, mentions that when Rabba was head of the academy in Pumbedita and Huna in Sura (*ca.* 660s), an amendment was passed ordering that the husband give the wife an immediate divorce, for "the daughters of Israel were relying on the gentiles to forcibly obtain a divorce" (elucidated by Mann, "Responsa of the Babylonian Geonim" [1919–20], 121–22). For why non-Muslims might sometimes go to Muslim courts, at least in Egypt, see Frantz-Murphy, "Settlement of Property Disputes in Provincial Egypt."

[71] *Synodicon orientale*, 223–24. Cf. Anastasius of Sinai, *Questions*, no. 76 (= *PG* 89, 773A–C, no. 123); Athanasius of Balad, *Letter*, 128–29; Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, no. 75. Cf. Emed i Ashawahishtan, *Rivāyat*, no. 42 (on intercourse with non-Zoroastrian women).

[72] *Synodicon orientale*, 225. Excessive mourning for the dead is labelled a pagan Arab practice by Muslim legal manuals (see the *janā'iz* section of almost any *ḥadīth* collection, and *EI²*, *s.v.* "Niyāḥa").

imposed by the Muslims, and illustrates that the latter made use of local inhabitants to collect taxes.[73]

JOHN BAR PENKAYE (WR. 687)

All that we know about John is that he was a native of Fenek in northwestern Mesopotamia and a resident of the monastery of John Kamul. **{195}** It is to the abbot of this convent, one Sabrisho', that he dedicated his *Ktābā d-rīsh mellē* ("Book of Salient Points"), "a chronicle of the world composed by John bar Penkaye."[74] Though extending from Creation to "the severe chastisement of today," the work seeks only to treat "the salient points" of history and "in a brief fashion" (*ba-psīqātā*). Its real goal is set forth at the outset:

> In this book we set out in brief a history of the events which did and will occur in this temporal world, such as we have learnt from the holy scriptures and such as our weak mind is able to comprehend… We begin to make manifest those things which He has done for us in His goodness and those things which our ingratitude has effected against Him and those wondrous works which His Providence has renewed for us in all generations so that He might return us to His side.[75]

This theme, which pervades the work, is most clearly brought out in the fifteenth and last chapter, where the Arab conquests and the devastating famine and plague of AH 67/686–87 are depicted as proddings by God "to arouse our minds little by little to repentance." The Arabs, too, are shown to endure God's wrath in the form of a division of their kingdom (*malkūtā*), a reference to their first civil war (656–61).[76]

The work's theological stance led its first Western reviewer to characterise it as "without importance as a historical source."[77] This judgement is certainly too harsh, particularly as regards its comments upon Muslim times. In the first place, John is noticeably unhostile towards Arab rule. Despite a sprinkling of stock abusive phrases such as "a barbarian people" and "hatred and wrath is their food," John notes the **{196}** leniency of the Arabs towards the Christian population. The Christian religion and its members were respected: "Before calling them, (God) had prepared them beforehand to hold Christians in honour; thus they also had a special

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[73] *Synodicon orientale*, 225–26. Other early references to poll-tax are: Theodotus of Amida, *Life* XXVII, fol. 61a; *ibid.* XLVI, fol. 63b; Ḥnanisho', *Rulings* X, 18.

[74] For his life and works see Scher, "Notice sur la vie et les oeuvres de Yoḥannan bar Penkayê" (which includes an edition and translation of a short *Life* of John at 162–67); Jansma, "Projet d'édition du Ketaba de Resh Mellé;" Albert, "Une centime de Mar Jean bar Penkayē" (briefly considers another of John's works). *Rīsh mellē* is difficult to translate into English; Baumstark (see n. 77 below) gives "Hauptredepunkte" which is very apt.

[75] John bar Penkaye, "intro." (from Ms. Mingana 179, fol. 2r).

[76] This chapter is discussed by Young, *Patriarch*, *Shah and Caliph*, 99–105, and Suermann, "Das arabische Reich in der Weltgeschichte des Bar Penkàjē."

[77] Baumstark, "Eine syrische Weltgeschichte des siebten Jahrh.s.," 273.

commandment from God concerning our monastic station, that they should hold it in honour."[78] No attempts were made by the Arabs at forced conversion: "Their robber bands went annually to distant parts and to the islands, bringing back captives from all the peoples under the heavens. Of each person they required only tribute (*madattâ*), allowing him to remain in whatever faith he wished."[79] And of Mu'āwiya's rule John says: "Justice flourished in his time and there was great peace in the regions under his control; he allowed everyone to live as they wanted;" and he later adds that crops were bountiful and trade doubled. In fact, his only criticism was the lack of persecution: "There was no distinction between pagan and Christian," he laments, "the faithful was not known from a Jew."[80]

Secondly, though the coming of the Arabs is conceived of in Biblical terms and as part of God's dispensation, John does use a number of non-scriptural notions. For example, he presents Muḥammad as a guide (*mhaddyānâ*) and instructor (*tar'â*), as a result of whose teaching the Arabs "held to the worship of the one God in accordance with the customs of ancient law." John also makes him out to be a legislator, observing of the Arabs that "they kept to the tradition of Muḥammad… to such an extent that they inflicted the death penalty on anyone who was **{197}** seen to act brazenly against his laws (*nāmōsawh*)."[81] The term "tradition" (*mashlmānūtâ*) implies something handed down, but one doubts that a fixed corpus of rulings from Muḥammad is meant. Most likely John is simply relaying the message given out by the Muslims themselves, that they adhere to and enforce the example of their Prophet.

Finally, he is acquainted with a number of news items of internal Muslim affairs, especially those relating to the second Arab civil war, which was taking place as he wrote. He is aware of the characterisation of the caliph Yazīd, circulated by his opponents, as profligate and corrupt, and of the claim of the rival caliph 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr to be a champion of the House of God:

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[78] John bar Penkaye, 141 (tr. Brock, 57).

[79] *Ibid.*, 147/175 (tr. Brock, 61). Cf. *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 494, which mentions a "covenant" (*'ahd*), a guarantee of the safety of indigenous peoples, "which Muḥammad their leader gave them and which they call the law (*al-nāmūs*)." And cf. *Chron. 1234*, 1.240, which has Abū Bakr say in a cautionary address to his generals on how to conduct war: "Let them bring tribute (*madattâ*) as determined between you and let them be left in their faith and their land;" a similar speech is found attributed to Muḥammad or Abū Bakr in a number of Arabic sources (see Hoyland, "Arabic, Syriac and Greek Historiography," 220–22, and see Excursus E, n. 20, below). Note also Qur'an v.82: "You will find the nearest of mankind in affection to the believers [to be] those who say 'we are Christians.' That is because there are among them priests and monks, and because they are not proud."

[80] John bar Penkaye, 146/175 (tr. Brock, 61): Mu'āwiya; *ibid.*, 153/181: crops and trade; *ibid.*, 151/179: lack of persecution (Brock omits the passages in which the latter two references are found).

[81] *Ibid.*, 146–47/175 (tr. Brock, 61).

> One of the Arabs, by name Zubayr, made his voice heard from a distance. He made it known about himself that he had come out of zeal for the House of God and he was full of threats against the Westerners, claiming that they were transgressors of the law. He came to a certain locality in the south where their sanctuary was and lived there.[82]

His reconstruction of events also follows remarkably closely the traditional Muslim account of how the rebel leader Mukhtār ibn Abī ʻUbayd, disillusioned with the Kufan Arabs, "gave orders that all their slaves should be liberated and go into battle in their masters' stead."[83] These slaves then rallied round him in their thousands, and "all that they had in their hands was either a sword or a spear or a stick."[84] They were, says John, "slaves of captive origin" and "include among themselves all the peoples under heaven."[85]

John then takes us to a theatre of action paid scant attention by the Muslim sources: to Nisibis, a focal city, subsequently seized by these slaves who thus "gained control over the whole of Mesopotamia." They **{198}** slew the general appointed over them by Mukhtār's right-hand man, Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ashtar, along with all his comrades, for "they preferred to have someone from their own ranks as commander, and Ibrāhīm and his brother belonged to the Arabs." "Others of captive origin collected together and joined those who were in the city of Nisibis. Every day more would turn up from every quarter and join them. They captured a number of fortresses, and the fear of them fell on all the Arabs."[86] The Muslim sources confirm that a kind of slave revolt was taking place, though they are only concerned with the Arab reaction to this: "Our slaves are rebelling against us," complain the Kufan notables, "yet they are our booty which God has granted us together with these lands."[87]

John makes it clear that we have here a rebellion of men wrenched from their homelands and forced into a life of servitude in the strange environment of the Arab garrison towns, and who have now seized the opportunity afforded them by Mukhtār to rebel against their masters. I say *a kind of* slave revolt, because not all in Mukhtār's forces were slaves as opposed to freedmen still serving their masters (the

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[82] *Ibid.*, 155/183 (tr. Brock, 64). In Muslim accounts, too, Ibn al-Zubayr is particularly associated with the sanctuary (*al-ʻā'idh bi-l-bayt*).

[83] *Ibid.*, 157/184 (tr. Brock, 65); cf. Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 5.267: "Every slave who joins us is free."

[84] John bar Penkaye, 157/185 (tr. Brock, 65); cf. Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 5.155: "These men are just slaves with sticks in their hands."

[85] John bar Penkaye, 157/184, 167/194 (tr. Brock, 65, 73).

[86] *Ibid.*, 158/185–86 (tr. Brock, 66–67). The Arabic sources (Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 5.155; Masʻūdī, *Murūj*, 5.241–42) simply say that Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufra and later ʻAbd al-Malik besieged Nisibis, which was held by Abū Qārib Yazīd ibn Abī Ṣakhr and the *Khashshābīya* ("wielders of wooden clubs"). See Rotter, *Der zweite Bürgerkrieg*, 214–16.

[87] Ṭabarī, 2.649–50.

Arabic sources usually refer to *'abīd wa-mawālī*); but those in possession of Nisibis were clearly all prisoners-of-war, resentful against their Arab captors and seeking their freedom. John further hints that there was a religious dimension to the slaves' mutiny, for he explains their name for themselves, *shurṭē*, as an indication of "their zeal for righteousness." On consulting the Muslim sources, we find that whilst in the service of Mukhtār they had been addressed as "chosen men (*shurṭa*) of God," which term they had then presumably applied to themselves when they broke away.[88]

{199} The appalling suffering and devastation occasioned by this internal strife and the "unparalleled plague and famine" prompt John to conclude on an apocalytic note, musing on the – as it seemed to him – impending "destruction of the Ishmaelites" at the hands of these *shurṭē*. And he wonders whether the end of all the world might not also be in sight: "For here is a people against a people and a kingdom against a kingdom; here are famines, earthquakes and plagues; only one thing is missing for us: the advent of the Deceiver."[89]

The lurid and graphic detail with which John describes these natural disasters and their devastating consequences upon the local population makes one feel that he must have penned them only a very short time after their occurrence "in the year 67 of the rule of the Arabs" (686–87).[90] And that he was an eyewitness of these events is corroborated by his characterisation of various disasters as "of today" (*d-yawmānā*).[91] The only obstacle to such a hypothesis is the mention of the death of a Zubayr, assumed to be 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and thus yielding a *terminus post quem* of 692.[92] John asserts that this Zubayr died in an incident involving the burning of the Arab sanctuary and was then succeeded by his son. This is evidently an allusion to the episode of October 683 when a confrontation between 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and Ḥusayn ibn al-Numayr culminated in a conflagration at the Meccan sanctuary. In the course of this, 'Abd Allāh's brother Mundhir ibn al-Zubayr was killed.[93] The presence of the two brothers, or the general proliferation of

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[88] Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 5.246; see Lane, *Lexicon*, *s.v.*, for this meaning of *shurṭa*. Brock, "Book XV of Riš Mellē," 66 n., makes a connection with *al-shurāh*, a name used by the Kharijite sect meaning those who have sold their lives to God for the reward of heaven (Qur'an iv.76); but the roots of the two words are different and such an explanation does not suit the Shi'ite context of Mukhtār's revolt.

[89] John bar Penkaye, 165/192–93 (tr. Brock, 72).

[90] *Ibid.*, 160/187 (tr. Brock, 68). He continues: "In this year 67 the accursed plague began; there had been nothing like it and I hope there will be nothing like it again." Khalīfa, 265, mentions a recurrence of the plague in AH 69, though this may be a confusion with the earlier bout, or it may have to do with a different region.

[91] John bar Penkaye, 165/192, 167/194, 170/196 (omitted by Brock).

[92] *Ibid.*, 155/183; Sachau, *Syrischer Rechtsbücher*, 2.vi; Brock, "Book XV of Riš Mellē," 52; Suermann, "Das arabische Reich in der Weltgeschichte des Bar Penkàjē," 64.

[93] Ṭabarī, 2.426.

Zubayrs, surely lies at the root of John's confusion, so we can dismiss the 692 *terminus post quem* and proceed to a more accurate dating.

{200} The last securely dateable event recorded is the death of Mukhtār in April AH 67/687.[94] After this John begins to wax apocalyptic and it becomes difficult to determine whether he is talking fact or eschatological fiction. He mentions a withholding of rain "for three months prior to the harvest" which, if it is the same drought remarked by Muslim observers, would take us to summer 687.[95] Since he closes with the speculation that the victorious rebels at Nisibis may well overturn Arab rule, an obvious *terminus ante quem* for John's writing is the suppression of the revolt at Nisibis. Though the Arabic sources are not specific, this most likely occurred in the summer of 690, and in any case before the defeat of Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr, which occurred in the autumn of either AH 71/690 or 72/691.[96] In the year AG 1002/690–91, says one Syriac source, "there was peace and the entire land submitted to the authority of ʿAbd al-Malik."[97] The latter was achieving some success in the assertion of his authority from the summer of 689 onwards, which one would also expect John to have commented upon were he writing at or after that time. John must, then, have composed his book between the summers of 687 and 691, and most likely in late 687 or 688.

ḤNANISHOʿ THE EXEGETE (D. 700)

Almost immediately after the capture of Nisibis in 639 its Muslim conqueror was called upon to adjudicate in the affair of Cyriacus, metropolitan of that city, and allowed the opponents of Cyriacus to plunder the cell and the residence of the metropolitan.[98] In the 640s some Monophysite monks of the monastery of Bezqin in northern Iraq murdered a woman whom they had made pregnant and imputed the crime to Rabban Hormizd, a Nestorian monk of the nearby monastery of Risha. By means of a miracle Hormizd convinced the enraged local **{201}** governor of the true situation, whereupon the latter threw the Monophysite monks into prison "and wrote to the governor of Moṣul of their crimes. But this governor of Moṣul took a large bribe from the heretics of Balad and Moṣul and told them to return to their monastery."[99] In his fight against the mutiny of Persian and East Arabian Christians in the 650s, Ishoʿyahb III appealed to "the local governors and also to the governor

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[94] John bar Penkaye, 158/186; Ṭabarī, 2.750.

[95] John bar Penkaye, 162/189 (tr. Brock, 69); Ṭabarī, 2.765 (AH 68).

[96] Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, 5.241–42; Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 131–34. See the entry on "Islam in the First Century AH" in Chapter 13 below for an argument for the earlier date.

[97] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 154, though this may be one year out. ʿAbd al-Malik's minting of Muslim coinage in AH 72/June 691–May 692 must be of some significance here (see Bates, "The First Century of Islamic Coinage," 243–49).

[98] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 31; *Chron. Siirt* C, *PO* 13, 599, says Cyriacus was hated due to "his excessive love of money and desire to hoard it."

[99] Rabban Hormizd, *The Histories* X, 61–64.

of that time who was over the local governors."[100] Finally, only two years after his elevation to catholicos, George I was facing charges brought before the Muslim authorities against him by a disgruntled metropolitan.[101]

Religious leaders of former Sasanian lands apparently all but bullied their new rulers into taking notice of them, demanding the bargain of recognition and ratification in exchange for taxes and loyalty that they had worked so hard to conclude with the Sasanian government. This meant, however, that they also ran the same risk of occasional unwanted intervention in their affairs. This first occurred during the second Arab civil war in the catholicate of Ḥnanisho' I (686–93). Based at Mada'in, Ḥnanisho' found himself under rebel rule from Kufa, first that of Mukhtār (685–87), then that of Muṣ'ab ibn al-Zubayr (687–90).[102] The pro-Umayyad governor of Iraq 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Ziyād wooed John of Dasen, metropolitan of Nisibis, promising him that "if you will accompany me, I will depose him (Ḥnanisho') and establish you as patriarch in his place."[103] John was presumably courted for his connections at Nisibis, which was a hive of sedition during the civil war. Certainly Bishr ibn Marwān, then governor of Kufa (692–94), seems to have made some agreement with him, for he forcibly installed him in place of Ḥnanisho'.[104] Subsequently John's partisans in Nisibis, led by an aristocratic Persian Christian physician named Mardanshah, aided Muḥammad ibn Marwān, another brother of 'Abd al-Malik, to recapture **{202}** the city. The party of Ḥnanisho' was driven out and Mardanshah was entrusted with the administration.[105] After the death of John in 695 the new governor of Iraq, Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, forbade the election of a new catholicos, thus instigating a Sasanian-style policy of government involvement in church affairs.

Ḥnanisho' himself retired to the calm of the monastery of Mar Yunan near Moṣul, exercising a kind of shadow patriarchate. We know almost nothing about his life, but he appears to have been an assiduous fellow. He wrote numerous letters on legal matters, particularly relating to inheritance, and was the author of a four-volume work "on the exegesis of the pericopes of the Gospel" which still exists in fragments.[106] At one point, commenting upon Matthew xxi.9, which tells of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and reception as the Son of David, Ḥnanisho' indulges in some polemic against the Jews:

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[100] Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 18C, 266.

[101] Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 2.XIV, 85.

[102] Once he had entered upon the governor only to find him "in agitation, for he was making ready for battle" (Ḥnanisho', *Rulings* XVI, 30).

[103] John bar Penkaye, 156/184 (tr. Brock, 65).

[104] Mārī, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 63/56, states that John bribed 'Abd al-Malik and his brother Bishr.

[105] *Ibid.*, 63–65/56–57.

[106] Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, 2.xvi–xvii, 1–51 (legal work); 'Amr and Ṣalība, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 58 (exegesis).

> Why, when Israel has not celebrated people nor priests nor kings nor illustrious prophets so exclusively as it has Jesus, do the quarrelsome Jews, who hate God, stubbornly oppose that Jesus should be known as God? For if he were a deceiver, as they have shamelessly maintained, who of this ilk would be honoured by the people as God? And if he were a deceiver, why would he then become known as one who came in the name of the Lord and be immediately praised and proclaimed as King of Israel? And if he were [only] a prophet, as idly says some new folly (*ayk da-mpaqqa lelūtā ḥdattā*), [like those who said]: "*this is Jesus the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee*" (Matthew xxi.11), when and to which of the prophets did the people cry out Hosannah, both as adults (Matthew xxi.9), and as children whose reason is not yet mature (Matthew xxi.15)?[107]

The "new folly" clearly designates Islam, which stressed Jesus' place in a long line of prophets culminating in Muḥammad: "We inspire **{203}** you as we inspired Noah and the prophets after him, as we inspired Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon, and as we brought to David the Psalms" (Qur'an iv. 163; cf. ii.136). Like his contemporary, Jacob of Edessa, Ḥnanisho' was evidently frustrated that, though respecting Jesus, the Muslims stopped short of admitting his divinity, and this remained the sticking point between the two religions throughout centuries of polemic.

The disparaging tone of Ḥnanisho''s comment is reflected in a conversation he allegedly had with 'Abd al-Malik on the occasion of the latter's visit to Kufa in 691:

> When 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, king of the Arabs, came to the land of Shin'ar, Ḥnanisho' went to meet him to offer his greetings according to custom. He ('Abd al-Malik) asked him: "What do you think, catholicos, of the religion of the Arabs?" Ḥnanisho' promptly replied: "It is a religion established by the sword and not a faith confirmed by miracles, as the Christian faith and the old Law of Moses." Indignant, the king ordered his tongue cut out, but friends interceded for him and he was sent away unharmed. The king, however, ordered that he should never again appear in his presence.[108]

That we only have this account from a thirteenth-century source does not invite confidence in its authenticity, but it is worth noting that this objection to Islam as a religion, which was to receive much usage ever after, was first put forward in the earliest writing on Islam: "The prophets do not come armed with a sword."[109]

JOHN OF DAYLAM (D. 738)

During the catholicate of Timothy I (780–823) the Nestorian church witnessed considerable expansion and six new metropolitan provinces were created. Timothy cor-

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[107] Cited and discussed by Reinink, "Fragmente der Evangelienexegese des Katholikos Ḥnanisho' I," 89–90.

[108] Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. eccles.*, 2.136.

[109] Doctrina Jacobi V.16, 209.

responded with Turks and Tibetans, and he despatched a number of missionaries who "travelled to the ends of the **{204}** East" in pursuit of new souls.[110] A pioneer in this field was John of Daylam.[111] Born *ca.* 660 at Ḥadatta in northern Iraq, he yielded to the call of the monastic life when a mere thirteen years old and was taken under the wing of one Simon the Beardless at Beth 'Abe. Soon after the death of the latter, John was seized by some Daylamite bandits and taken to their country.[112] Enthusiastically he rose to the challenge, and by a display of healing, tree-felling, dragon-slaying and other marvels, "he cleansed them of all paganism and they became true Christians, zealous for the faith."

At the turn of the century, receiving instruction from God, he went to pray in Jerusalem and "he visited the king of the Arabs, 'Abd al-Malik bar Marwān, who was residing in Damascus at that time." Curing the caliph's daughter earned him a royal missive which announced to the governor of Beth Aramaye and Persia: "Let this holy man build churches and monasteries in our realm wherever he should wish to do so, and let him be given the expenses out of my royal treasury." So John went to Ḥajjāj in Iraq and, receiving similar guarantees,[113] proceeded to Fars to live out his days in combat with paganism, founding two monasteries and a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary before his death on 26 January 738.

The verse panegyric invites us to place our confidence in the veracity of its contents, often claiming to convey the actual words of John: "Thus did our master Mar John relate, and his children wrote it all **{205}** down afterwards in books."[114] Certainly, at a very early date traditions circulated and were set down in writing, and only a century after John's death Thomas of Marga could say that "very many and great things are written concerning him" and that "many have written histories about this blessed man, especially Abū Nūḥ."[115]

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[110] Yahbalaha and Qardag were sent to Gilan and Daylam by Timothy (Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 5.VII, 265–70), and Elijah to Moqan (*ibid.* 5.X, 278–81); see Young, *Patriarch*, *Shah and Caliph*, 118–27.

[111] John's *Life* exists in Syriac (prose and verse panegyric), Ethiopic (*Ethiopic Synaxary*, "19 Ṭeqemt"), Soghdian (see *Elr*, *s.v.* "Deylam, John of") and in numerous Arabic versions (see Fiey, "Jean de Dailam").

[112] The prose *Life* adds: "Since the king of the Arabs, 'Alī bar Abūṭālib, was lax and slack, the Daylamites used to plunder his territory mercilessly" (John of Daylam, *Syriac Life* X, 136). This is omitted by the verse panegyric and contradicts the other chronological data, so one imagines that the author was simply hazarding a guess here.

[113] The prose *Life* narrates only briefly John's encounters with 'Abd al-Malik and Ḥajjāj (*ibid.* XXVII–XXXI, 139–40). The verse panegyric gives much more detail (*ibid.*, 187–89/165–68), furnishing a reason for the meeting with the caliph (news of miracles performed by John in Damascus had reached him and he summoned John to exorcise his son) and relating how John cured Ḥajjāj of cancer.

[114] *Ibid.*, 183/154.

[115] Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 2.XXV, 101; 2.XXIII, 97. Thomas has additional material on John's early life, but relates nothing subsequent to his capture by the Daylamites, pre-

Though the Muslim world briefly appears in the background, that is where it remains. No attempt is made to elucidate any of its aspects. Feelings towards the Muslims are neither hostile nor friendly, but rather indifferent. It is interesting to note that Muslims, unlike the pagans, are not a target for conversion – perhaps reflecting a knowledge of their monotheism as well as respect for their power – but neither are they a target of explanation or curiosity – perhaps because Islam posed no threat to Christianity in this region at this time.

ISHOʿBOKHT, METROPOLITAN OF FARS

In his catalogue of Syriac literature ʿAbdishoʿ of Nisibis assigns to Ishoʿbokht "a book which is entitled *ʿAl hānā kull* ("On This Universe"), one of ecclesiastical laws and a tract on the signification of the winds (*shūdāʿ aʾeras*),"[116] but makes no comment about the man himself. A ninth-century Muslim treatise, dedicated to the demonstration of God's existence and unity from the order manifest in terrestrial and celestial phenomena, cites among its sources "a book composed in the days of the Umayyads, which Ishoʿbokht, metropolitan of Fars, put together and which he wrote in Persian."[117] Evidently being alluded to here is the first title in ʿAbdishoʿ's entry. This is unfortunately **{206}** no longer extant, but the second item is so – though only in a Syriac translation – and gives us further information on Ishoʿbokht. The translator adds a short preface of his own in which he pays homage to his spiritual leader Timothy I (780–823), who had commissioned the work, and notes that Ishoʿbokht had been consecrated metropolitan by the catholicos Ḥnanishoʿ.[118] This could be either Ḥnanishoʿ I (d. 700) or Ḥnanishoʿ II (773–80); Sachau opts for the latter, arguing that a contemporary of Timothy would immediately think of Ḥnanishoʿ II, Timothy's immediate predecessor, and so the translator would have added a clarifying epithet if he had meant Ḥnanishoʿ I.[119] In this case Ishoʿbokht's *ʿAl hānā kull* must have been written in his younger days, if the Muslim treatise is right in placing its composition in Umayyad times.

The legal tract by Ishoʿbokht, called simply *Maḵtbānūtā dʿal dīnē* ("Composition on the Laws") by its Syriac translator, is a substantial work comprising six books and 82 chapters. It is not merely a collection of canons, but an attempt to systematise

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sumably because he felt the other "histories" treated this adequately. For the transmission and credibility of the *Life* see Brock, "Syriac Life of John of Dailam," 125–33. Concerning the late eighth-century scholar Abū Nūḥ al-Anbārī see Baumstark, *GSL*, 218.

[116] Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 194–95.

[117] Jāḥiẓ (attrib.), *Al-ʿibar wa-l-iʿtibār*, fol. 4b. The name given is actually Ishoʿyahb (though the two letters preceding the *ba* have no diacritical marks), but given the similarity of the two names in Arabic and the fact that Ishoʿbokht was metropolitan of Fars and himself the author of a cosmological treatise, then one should read Ishoʿbokht. In addition, the copy I use (BL Or. 3886) was clearly made in haste. See Gibb, "A Muʿtazilite Treatise Attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ;" Daiber, *Muʿammar ibn ʿAbbād as-Sulamī*, 159–61 (who discusses authorship).

[118] Ishoʿbokht of Fars, *Corpus iuris* "preface," 2–4.

[119] Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, 3.ix–x, 3.289.

and codify the Christian law, and its originality prompts Isho'bokht to proffer an explanation for his undertaking. He begins by reviewing the motives that impelled men of earlier times to write on history, metaphysics, natural science and the liberal arts, then emphasises that such factors played no part in his decision to take up his pen:[120]

> Rather I came to this composition for the following reasons:
>
> I have observed that there are many differences among people in the matter of laws, not only from religion to religion, **{207}** from language to language and from nation to nation, but also in one and the same religion, nation and language, as in the religion of Christianity. While the Jews in every place have one law, as also the error of the Magians and likewise also those who now rule over us, among the Christians the laws which are determined in the land of the Romans are distinct from those in the land of the Persians, and they in turn are distinct from those in the land of the Arameans, and different from Ahwaz, and different in Mayshan, and likewise also in other places. Thus also from district to district and from city to city there are many differences in the matters of laws. And though the religion of the Christians is one, the law is not one and the same and we shall speak of the reason for that later. Moreover, we have learnt that in the same place the laws determined by earlier generations are other than the later generations, each man according to his knowledge and according to his wish. Because of this I desired that I assemble, as far as possible, those things which I have learnt from the tradition of the earlier generations, whether from those fathers who were in our churches or from those who were in other churches, and also what I arrive at from straight thinking, and [then] to put it in this book for the education of myself and of those who, like me, felt in need of such instruction.[121]

Yet it was not only his own wishes that had spurred him to write, but also the demands of many friends and bishops similarly distraught at the heterogeneity of Christian law and who sought unity in their province at least, if it could not prevail in the whole church. Isho'bokht now proceeds to discuss, "in the form of question and answer, so that it will be most clear to those reading it," what is civil law (*dīnâ*),

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[120] And he adds: "I do not consider myself an instrument that would be useful to the working of the Holy Spirit such that I would be roused by him to come to write of things beneficial for the instruction of mankind, and I am not trained in the knowledge of nature, nor do I intend to acquire all the education that would allow me to elucidate the meaning of those things which are not clear to everyone" (Isho'bokht of Fars, *Corpus iuris* 1.I, 8). This casts doubt on the attribution to him of the first and third works on 'Abdisho"s list, but it may be only a literary ploy.

[121] *Ibid.* 1.1, 8–10.

what is rectitude (*trīṣūtā*), what is ideal law (*nāmōsā*),[122] how do they differ from each other, why the civil laws are not the same for mankind, "why **{208}** when the ideal laws of the Christians are the same, their civil laws are not the same?" The whole of the first book is devoted to such questions of jurisprudence.[123]

Interest in this subject is not found in pre-Islamic Christian legal writings. There are some hints of related activity by authors of the late seventh and early eighth century,[124] but it is the work of Isho'bokht which first embarks upon a proper treatment of the matter, and so he is something of a pioneer. What spurred him to this innovation is clear from the above introduction: the variations in Christian law as compared with that of Jews, Zoroastrians and Muslims ("those who now rule over us"). But he and his friends did not reach this conclusion simply by observation, rather it was pointed out to them, as we see from the heading of one of the chapters of Isho'bokht's first book: "Concerning what is said by the Jews and the *ḥaripē* that the Christians have no laws and it is not possible that their lives be conducted without laws."[125] The usual Jewish accusation had been that the Christians did not hold to the law of Moses, not specifically that they had no laws. So the question must have originated with the *ḥaripē*, which can here only mean the Muslims, as is evident from the occurrence of the same question in a Christian-Muslim disputation:

> The emir then moved on to ask about the laws of the Christians, what and after what fashion were they and if they were written in the Gospel or not… And the illustrious emir said: … "Show me that your laws are written in the **{209}** Gospel and that you conduct yourselves by them, or submit to the law of the Muslims."[126]

The Christian interlocutor's reply is that "we Christians have laws which are right and just and accord with the teachings and prescriptions of the Gospel, the canons of the apostles and the laws of the church." Isho'bokht's response is to deny the

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[122] This is Isho'bokht's tripartite definition of law; *nāmōsā* means the ideal principles found in the New Testament (e.g. see Matthew v) and so is the same for all Christians (see the last question of this paragraph).

[123] The other five books treat the law of marriage (2–3), of inheritance (4) and of contract (5–6). For a consideration of the whole work see Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, 3.x–xiv.

[124] The whole of catholicos George's preamble to the synod of 676 is taken up with a discussion of mankind's need for laws and the provision of them by God and the church (*Synodicon orientate*, 215–16). Note also that the Armenian patriarch John of Ojun (718–29) became the first to codify Christian law in his country (see Albert *et al*, *Christianismes orientaux*, 146), and Leo III (717–41) compiled one of the very few Byzantine legal codes, his *Ekloga* (see Freshfield, "Official Manuals of Roman Law of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries"). Crone, "Islam, Judeo-Christianity and Byzantine Iconoclasm," 71–73, argues that Leo's *Ekloga* was a response to Islam; see also *eadem* and Cook, *Hagarism*, 180–81 n. 18.

[125] Isho'bokht of Fars, *Corpus iuris* 1.XIV, 20.

[126] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 251–52/261–62.

need for civil laws, arguing that the Christian community is more virtuous than its rivals. Simeon of Rewardashir, probably writing soon after Isho'bokht,[127] also considers this issue. His solution is to stress the non-literary modes of transmission of Christian law: "We have found many other things which, though they have not been handed on to us from the earlier generations in writing, they have come from them to us in their practices."[128]

THE ABBOTS OF THE CONVENT OF SABRISHO'

A verse history of the convent of Sabrisho' at Beth Qoqa in Adiabene, north Iraq, describes the times in office of the abbots of this monastery from its founder Sabrisho' (d. 650) to Sabrisho' bar Israel (fl. 820), after whom the place was destroyed and the monks dispersed (though they later returned and rebuilt the convent). The author's frequent use of the phrase "*our* convent" indicates that he himself was a monk of this **{210}** establishment, and of his history of the abbots he tells us that "it is from their biographies that I have compiled it."[129]

The part concerning Sabrisho' is chiefly taken up with accounts of wonders worked by or for him. While a hermit in a cell near Arbela "the Arabians came out in force," but a divine power kept them at bay from his abode. At this point the narrator remarks aside: "This was the beginning of the kingdom of Qedar son of Ishmael, and it was the end of the kingdom of the Persians, the scion of Nimrod."[130] Later, when Sabrisho' was abbot, "the Arabs invaded the land and the brothers fled to a certain village named Beth Hniq and the fortress was shut off from the marauding sons of Hagar." The monks were soon in need of water, whereupon Sabrisho'

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[127] This Simeon has traditionally been identified with the Simeon of Rewardashir who corresponded with Isho'yahb III, but Sachau, *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, 3.xix–xxi, points out: (a) there must have been more than one Simeon holding the metropolitanate of the Persians at Rewardashir; (b) Isho'bokht of Fars, *Corpus iuris* 1.I, 10, states that no one had as yet made any codification of the civil law among the Persian Christians; (c) Simeon shows no interest in Zoroastrianism, whereas it does concern Isho'bokht. This suggests that Simeon wrote after Isho'bokht, but since a number of their ideas are similar it is likely that Simeon was writing not much later.

[128] Simeon of Rewardashir, *Canons* "intro.," 233. Simeon wrote the introduction to his collection of 22 canons on inheritance law in reply to four questions: "Why did our Lord not confer them (ecclesiastical laws) by his own legislation, what is the reason that we do not make *dīnē* according to the *nāmōsā* of Moses, from where did we receive the legal tradition which has reached us, and how are certain special cases of laws in the practice we follow to be treated?"

[129] *History of the Convent of Sabrisho'*, 216/264. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, 1.130–57, gives details about the monastery and its abbots, and briefly discusses (132) the verse history. Scher, "Analyse de l'histoire du couvent de Sabrišo de B. Qoqa," makes the point that the anonymous author, Thomas of Marga and Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra draw upon the same sources for their information about the convent.

[130] History of the Convent of Sabrisho', 176–77/226.

prayed and it came in abundance; he prayed again and the Arabs were stopped in their tracks and then rained upon with flaming stones. A Persian governor (*marzbānā*), captured by the Arabs and ordered to surrender his wealth, came to Sabrisho‘ requesting his prayers and asking him to predict his future. The abbot foretold that there would be no hope unless he renounced his false religion, but that his family would not be harmed in any event, “and thus it happened.”[131]

A phenomenon observable from this and other sources is the movement of groups of Arab pastoralists across the upper Tigris east into Adiabene and neighbouring districts, caused ultimately by the entry of new tribes into the region between Syria and Iraq in the wake of the Arab conquests. When John was head of the monastery of Sabrisho‘ (675–92), some Arabs came and pitched their tents nearby. Though respectful of John, their chief was something of a nuisance, occupying monks’ cells and the like. The encroachment became more serious under John’s successor Shubḥalmaran (693–729) when the Arabs forced neighbouring people off their lands and the monks had to conceal their books. Despite this, the Arabs would frequent the abbot for his miraculous **{211}** cures.[132] Most of these Arabs were probably still Christians, like Iyās al-Shaybānī, who was employed as a storekeeper in the 720s at the monastery of Rabban Bar ‘Idta in Marga. Having been granted permission to build a hostel alongside the old royal highway on land belonging to the monastery, he went on to seize the surrounding fields and even to kill the steward and put to flight the abbot.[133]

ISHO‘DNAḤ OF BAṢRA (WR. CA. 850)

Among the works of Isho‘dnaḥ, metropolitan of Baṣra, there is recorded “a book of chastity in which he assembled the accounts of all the holy men and founders [of convents].”[134] This text is preserved only in a late nineteenth-century manuscript which bears the heading:

> By the power of our Lord Jesus Christ we begin to write the stories (*sharbē*) in brief[135] of all those fathers who founded convents in the kingdom of the Persians and Arabs, of all those fathers who composed books on the ascetic life, of the holy metropolitans and bishops who founded schools or composed books on the

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[131] *Ibid.*, 179–81/229–30.

[132] *Ibid.*, 198/247–48 (John), 201–202/250–51 (Shubḥalmaran).

[133] Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 2.XLI, 130–33 (Arabs pasturing in western Adiabene); 2.XXIX, 104–105 (Iyās). See also Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 229–32; Young, *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph*, 106–27 (using Thomas of Marga).

[134] Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 195, citing ‘Abdisho‘ of Nisibis, who includes among Isho‘dnaḥ’s other publications “three volumes of ecclesiastical history, a treatise on logic and some consolatory discourses.”

[135] It is not clear whether this means that the scribe is copying “a brief history of those fathers…” or if he is summarising “a history of those fathers…;” i.e. was the original work of Isho‘dnaḥ a summary or was it later summarised?

> ascetic life or founded convents in the eastern regions, and of virtuous lay people, men and women, who founded convents and monasteries, as composed by the God-loving Mar Isho'dnaḥ, metropolitan of Perat d-Mayshan, which is Baṣra.[136]

What follows is effectively a monastic history in which some aspects of the career of the East Syrian church are related with reference to and **{212}** in the framework of the individual lives of its most virtuous members. We do not, however, have the original composition of Isho'dnaḥ, for there are numerous glosses and some reworking has taken place. In particular, several Jacobite founders, listed in an epitome of this work, do not feature in the present text and were probably omitted at a later date to make it a wholly East Syrian history.[137]

Nothing is known about Isho'dnaḥ outside of his writings. His *Ecclesiastical History* is cited five times by Elias of Nisibis, for the last time in AH 95/714. If the "Dnaḥ Isho' the Nestorian" cited by Michael the Syrian as the author of a notice on the conversion of a pagan construction into a convent by Ḥnania, bishop of Mardin and Kafartuta, is our Isho'dnaḥ, then he is writing later than 793.[138] And if the references to Timothy I, whom one assumes is dead from the absence of any honorific titles assigned to him, and to the translation of the corpse of Isho'zeka "in the third year of Ja'far bar Mu'taṣim, king of the Arabs" (849–50), are not later glosses, then he flourished in the mid-ninth century.[139]

In only one of the 140 entries of the *Book of Chastity* is reference made to the Arabs.[140] This concerns Joseph Ḥazzaya, a native of the town of Nimrod and son of "a leader (*rabbā*) of the Magians:"

> At the time when 'Umar[141] held the reigns of the kingdom of the Arabs and had sent an army to make war with the **{213}** Turks, the town of Nimrod – the one

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[136] Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra, *Book of Chastity*, 1 (= Bedjan, "title"). A number of copies are known, but all derive from the same late nineteenth-century manuscript; the title *Book of Chastity* is only found in 'Abdisho's catalogue, not in the manuscripts (see Fiey, "Ichô'dnah, métropolite de Baṣra," 435–38).

[137] See *ibid.*, 438–47.

[138] Michael the Syrian 12.V, 488–89/20, followed by Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. eccles.*, 1.333. The date is given by the fact that the patriarch Cyriacus (793–817) ordained this Ḥnania a bishop shortly after his own consecration as patriarch.

[139] Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra, *Book of Chastity*, 66–67/55–56, 29–30/26 (= Bedjan, nos. 126–27, 47). See Fiey, "Îchô'dnah, métropolite de Baṣra," 431–35; at 447–50 Fiey tries to elicit some details about Isho'dnaḥ from the *Book of Chastity*.

[140] Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra, *Book of Chastity*, 64–65/54 (= Bedjan, no. 126), on Joseph Ḥazzaya. Otherwise there is mentioned "Ḥira, city of the Arabs" (*ibid.*, 11/12, 28/25, 69/58 = Bedjan, nos. 19, 46, 133), "Nu'mān, king of the Arabs" and "Ja'far son of Mu'taṣim, king of the Arabs" (*ibid.*, 29–30/26 = Bedjan, no. 47).

[141] The text has 'Umar bar Ḥaṭṭāb, but 'Umar II must be intended, as was pointed out by Chabot, "Eclaircissements sur quelques points de la littérature syriaque," 266–67. This is

> built by king Nimrod and named after him – held out against him and did not open its gate to him. Joseph was outside the gate and they took him captive along with 130 persons, and it was when he was seven years old that he was captured. An Arab man from the town of Singar bought him for 370 silver coins (*zūzê*), circumcised him along with his [other] children and made him a pagan (*'abdeh ḥanpâ*).[142]

His master later died, and the children sold him to a Christian named Cyriacus who introduced him to the monastic life. He was baptised in the convent of John Kamul, and thereafter had a glittering monastic career, all the while "never ceasing to work on the composition of books."[143] He died "in great old age" some time in the late eighth century.

Thomas of Marga (wr. 860s)

Thomas was born to a certain Jacob in the village of Nehshon, in the district of Beth Sharonaye in northeastern Iraq. He became a monk at the convent of Beth 'Abe in 832 and then secretary to the catholicos Abraham II (837–50), who appointed him bishop of Marga.[144] Three works would seem to have been written by him: a now lost composition on the lives of certain holy men,[145] an account of the monks Cyprian and Gabriel and a history of the holy men of Beth 'Abe. The latter two are extant and at some point became combined and presented as a single piece. This is evident from the fact that at the end of the **{214}** first five books a note says: "Here ends the history of the holy men who lived in the convent of Beth 'Abe," and a new work begins with the title: "The histories of Rabban Cyprian and Rabban Gabriel, holy abbot [of the monastery] which is in the district of Birta in the country of Marga, composed by the pious Thomas."[146] In the first five books there are a number of references to the sixth, which must therefore be a separate and prior publication.[147]

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indicated by Isho'dnaḥ's statement that Joseph entered the convent of Abba Ṣliba under a certain Cyriacus who was ordained bishop of Balad by Cyprian of Nisibis (d. 767).

[142] Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra, *Book of Chastity*, 64/54 (= Bedjan, no. 126).

[143] On his writings see Scher, "Joseph Ḥazzâyâ, écrivain syriaque du VIIIe siècle," who looks at his *Book of Questions and Answers* and his *Chapters of Knowledge*, both unedited; Albert *et al.*, *Christianismes orientaux*, 358–59, gives further references.

[144] Thomas of Marga, *Governors* 3.III, 152 ("our village of Neḥshon"); 2.XXXII, 109 ("Jacob my father… in the district called Beth Sharonaye"); 2.XL, 125 ("When a young man, I came to this holy monastery, in the year 217 of the rule of the Arabs"); 1.XXXI, 59 ("When in the days of my youth I was copying letters before the patriarchal throne of the holy Mar Abraham"). Thomas is described as bishop of Marga in all the manuscripts of the *Book of Governors*.

[145] Which he refers the reader to in *ibid.* 6.XV, 385.

[146] *Ibid.* 5.XVII-6.I, 324–25.

[147] Pointed out by Fiey, "Thomas de Marga." In this article Fiey draws attention to the erroneous identification that has been made by virtually all scholars since Assemani between

Thomas' history of Beth 'Abe is entitled *Ktābā d-rīshānē* ("Book of Governors"), which is apt insofar as the material is arranged according to the succession of abbots, but the biographies of many other figures – officials of the church, nobles and ascetics – are also described, as the colophon indicates:

> Here ends, by the help of our Lord and the support of His strength, the writing of this book called the *Book of Governors*, which consists of the histories and feats and excellent stories concerning the holy men and solitaries who lived in the holy convent of Beth 'Abe, with discourses in [the form of] separate chapters which make manifest all their histories. It was composed by the pious man of God and spiritual philosopher Mar Thomas, bishop of Marga.[148]

Through these various biographies we are given a lively portrait of the fortunes of the East Syrian church from the late sixth to the mid-ninth century. It is nevertheless a very introverted picture which excludes almost all reference to the world of Byzantium and Islam, and focuses on the trials and tribulations, machinations and intrigues, attainments and triumphs endured, conducted and achieved by the illustrious past devotees of the author's own confession. Muslim Arabs only begin to be mentioned in Abbasid times,[149] and we may assume that before this **{215}** their rule was scarcely felt in this region. Since he speaks of his ex-employer and master as "of holy memory,"[150] Thomas must be writing after Abraham II's death in 850. And the fact that he remembers himself as a youth when he worked for the catholicos in the 840s suggests that he is writing considerably later, probably about the 860s.

Thomas, bishop of Marga, and Thomas, metropolitan of Beth Garmai and brother of the catholicos Theodosius (852–58).

[148] Thomas of Marga, *Governors* "colophon," 407.

[149] Maran'emmeh, metropolitan of Ṣalaḥ, prophesied *ca.* 750 that "the time is near, my children, when all these villages will be taken by the Arabs and all these landed nobles (*shahrīgān*) will go away, for a man by the name of Ḥātim bar Ṣāliḥ will persecute them and uproot them and you will all become subject to him" (*ibid.* 3.III, 152). Thereafter we do begin to hear of interference by Arabs: *ibid.* 3.IV, 153–55 (some Arabs lay claim to a mill which is part of the estate of the catholicos, but a miracle proves that it is his property); 4.X, 207 (a governor of Moṣul extorted extra taxes from those building a new church for Beth Abe); 4.XXI–II, 239–44 (the frustration of 'Imrān bar Muḥammad's evil designs by the catholicos Cyriacus); 5.XVI, 314–15 (a man named Ya'lā bar Ḥimrān troubled the monks of Adiabene until killed by a local governor). See further Young, *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph*, 106–27.

[150] *Ibid.* 4.XIX, 232.

CHAPTER 6.
LATIN SOURCES[1]

FREDEGAR, A FRANKISH CHRONICLER (WR. 650S)

{216} A Latin chronicle in 90 chapters, which extends from the twenty-fourth year of Guntram, king of Burgundy (584), to the death of Flaochad, mayor of the palace in Burgundy (642) – though with occasional references to later events – has been known as the chronicle of Fredegar ever since the sixteenth century, when a French scholar ascribed it to one "Fredegarium archidiaconum" for reasons never ascertained.[2] In his prologue the author makes clear his intentions. "From the beginning of the world to the declining years of Guntram's reign" he copied and abridged the works of five earlier chroniclers. From 584 onward, he tells us, "I have not fallen silent but have continued on my own account," narrating "facts and deeds of later times, finding them wherever they were recorded, and relating of the deeds of kings and the wars of peoples all that I have read or heard or seen that I could vouch for."[3]

{217} The earliest manuscript which contains this text is dated 715 and is itself a copy, so the orginal was certainly composed in the seventh century. The latest, but not last, event described is as follows:

> It is said that for three years and more Constans paid one thousand gold solidi a day to the Saracens; but then he somewhat recovered his strength, little by little won back his empire and refused to pay tribute. How this came about I shall set down under the right year in its proper sequence.[4]

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[1] Latin sources of the period from Justinian to the mid-tenth century are surveyed by Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittlelalters I*; for texts from Isidore to Bede consult also Dekkers, *Clavis patrum latinorum*. For clarity I shall always translate *saracenus* as "Saracen" and *aggarenus/agarrinus* as "Hagarene."

[2] A good introduction to this work is given by Hadrill, *Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, ix–lxvii; Kusternig, *Quellen zur Geschichte des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts*, 3–41. A general assessment of Fredegar is given by Hadrill, "Fredegar and the History of France," and his views on the Arab conquests are considered by Rotter, *Abendland und Sarazenen*, 145–82.

[3] Fredegar, *Chronicle*, 123 (tr. Hadrill, 1–3).

[4] *Ibid.*, 162 (tr. Hadrill, 69).

This notice tells us that the author was writing at a time when the Byzantines were making gains. Constans seems to have begun paying tribute *ca.* 652,[5] but the civil war of 656–61 distracted the Arabs; around 658 Constans achieved success against the Slavs and soon thereafter the caliph Mu'āwiya was forced to sue for peace, having "to pay the Byzantines a daily tribute of 1000 gold coins, one horse and one slave."[6] Most likely, then, this entry was penned in the late 650s and one may infer from it that Fredegar intended to bring his work up to this time, but was prevented from so doing, perhaps by his own death.[7]

The chronicle deals almost exclusively with the affairs of Frankish Gaul and its relations with the Visigoths of Spain, the Lombards of Italy and other kingdoms of the West. The sporadic notices regarding the East are a fascinating illustration of how knowledge percolated through the spatial and cultural distances in an often exaggerated and distorted form.[8] An example is Fredegar's account of how Shirin, wife of the Persian emperor Khusrau II, came to Constantinople to convert to Christianity at the hands of the patriarch John (582–95). She refused to return to Persia until her husband had converted as well, which he **{218}** did "with 60,000 of his subjects, and it took John and other bishops two weeks to deal with the total number of Persians." The Byzantine emperor Maurice gave his Persian counterpart bishops and clergy, "and all Persia was speedily converted to Christianity."[9] The occasion for this report was very likely the arrival of Khusrau at the imperial city in 591 to conclude an alliance with Maurice,[10] but in Fredegar's portrayal it has become a demonstration of Christian ascendancy.

The description of the Arab conquests[11] begins with Heraclius discovering by means of astrology that "his empire would be laid waste by circumcised races," whereupon he ordered the baptising of Jews throughout the empire and requested the Frankish king Dagobert to do the same.[12] But then,

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[5] Sebeos, XXXIII (tr. Macler, 110–11); *Syriac CS*, s.a. 652; *Chron. Zuqnin*, 152.

[6] On the raid against the Slavs see Theophanes, 347, and Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 1.140–41 (from Isho'dnah of Baṣra). For the peace see *Syriac CS*, s.a. 659.

[7] Goffart, "The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered," 220; Erikson, "The Problem of Authorship in the Chronicle of Fredegar." Both scholars refute previous theories of multiple authorship and argue convincingly that Fredegar is one author, any differences in style/content being accounted for by his use of earlier materials.

[8] Probably mostly oral reports, but use of written Byzantine sources cannot be ruled out; cf. Cameron, "The Byzantine Sources of Gregory of Tours."

[9] Fredegar, *Chronicle*, 125–26 (tr. Hadrill, 7–9); for Shirin's philo-Christian acts see Sebeos, IV (tr. Macler, 28).

[10] *Chron. paschale*, 691; *Chron. Khuzistan*, 15. Fredegar calls the Persian ruler "Anaulf," probably a corruption of Aparviz, the regnal name of Khusrau II.

[11] Ensuing quotations are from Fredegar, *Chronicle*, 153–54 (tr. Hadrill, 54–55).

[12] The tale of Heraclius' astrological prediction/dream and his decree against the Jews appears in *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO*1, 492, and *Coptic Synaxary*, "8 Tūba" (both relying on the *Life* of the patriarch Benjamin, probably composed soon after his death in 665, as also is the

> The Hagarenes, who are also called Saracens… – a circumcised people who of old had lived beneath the Caucasus on the shores of the Caspian in a country known as Ercolia – had now grown so numerous that at last they took up arms and threw themselves upon the provinces of the emperor Heraclius, who despatched an army to hold them. In the ensuing battle the Saracens were the victors and cut the vanquished to pieces. It is said that the Saracens killed in this engagement 150,000 men. Then they sent a deputation to Heraclius with an offer to send him the spoils of battle, but he would accept nothing because of his desire for vengeance on the Saracens.

{219} An account of what appears to be the Battle of Yarmuk (636) follows, in which Heraclius releases the demonic hordes locked up above the Caspian behind brass gates by Alexander the Great, "and through them poured 150,000 mercenary warriors to fight the Saracens:"

> The latter, under two commanders, were approximately 200,000 strong. The two forces had camped quite near one another and were ready for an engagement on the following morning. But during that very night the army of Heraclius was smitten by the sword of God: 52,000 of his men died where they slept. When on the following day, at the moment of joining battle, his men saw that so large a part of their force had fallen by divine judgement, they no longer dared advance on the Saracens, but all retired whence they came. The Saracens proceeded, as was their habit, to lay waste the provinces of the empire that had fallen to them.

It is a wonderful narrative of truly mythical proportions, ending on a note of pathos, a picture of Heraclius "prey to inconsolable grief… finishing his days in agony, tormented with fever." The Arabs are placed in their standard role of irreligious pillagers; they come forth simply because they have become very numerous and they ravage the land "as was their habit." The reference to "a deputation sent to Heraclius" may be based on actual correspondence, but as it stands it is a popular theme and appears twice in an Armenian chronicle, where Khusrau II and Mu'āwiya offer to Heraclius and Constans respectively the chance to partake of the spoils of their victories.[13]

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sixteenth-century Ethiopic source described by van Donzel, "The Dream of Heraclius and Islam," 206); *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §4 (= Pereira/Wolf, §5); 'Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 5.343; Bukhārī, 1.5; Ṭabarī, 1.1562; Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 6.94–95; Ibn 'Asākir, *TMD1*, 473; cf. *Chron. Siirt* CI, *PO* 13, 600, and the Georgian source quoted in Excursus E, n. 19, below. On the forcible conversion of Jews at this time see Dagron, "Juifs et chrétiens," 28–38.

[13] Sebeos, XXVI, XXXVI (tr. Macler, 79–80, 139–40). Both letters end with the question: "How can this Christ who could not save himself from the Jews save you from my hands?"

ARCULF (FL. 670S) AND EARLY ISLAMIC JERUSALEM

The rise of Christianity to the status of imperial religion was accompanied by a physical proclamation of this fact in stone. Constantine and Helena erected glittering new structures at Bethlehem, Mamre, Golgotha and the Mount of Olives to celebrate the triumph of Christendom and soon, so Eusebius tells us, people were coming from the **{220}** ends of the earth to marvel at the sights and walk in the footsteps of their Lord. For reasons of prestige, fashion, health and the opening of "the eyes of faith" these tourists of antiquity – "men of every race and a great congestion of both sexes," in the words of Jerome – traversed the places newly made holy. They often expressed their appreciation in the form of generous donations, which permitted the further proliferation of churches, monasteries and charitable institutions. Trade in guides, souvenirs (*eulogiae*) and lodgings expanded and flourished; debates were held and tales of miracles and wonders exchanged, and the pilgrim might return home, armed with *ampullae* and a fragment of the Cross, content to have "reverenced the place" and able "to gaze more clearly upon the holy scripture."[14]

Though most of the visitors were eastern Christians, a trickle of hardy Westerners did brave the then seemingly immense distances and austere travelling conditions to bear witness to their faith. An example is Arculf:

> A holy bishop, a Gaul by race. He had experience of various faraway places and his report about them was true and in every way satisfactory. He stayed for nine months in the city of Jerusalem and used to go round all the holy places on daily visits. All the experiences described below he rehearsed to me, Adomnan, and I first took down his trustworthy and reliable account on tablets. This I have now written out on parchment in the form of a short essay.[15]

Bede, the Venerable Anglo-Saxon monk (d. 735), tells us that Adomnan, abbot of Iona (679–704), then presented the finished work to King **{221}** Aldfrith of Northumbria (685–705), "through whose generosity it was handed on to be read by lesser people."[16] A *terminus ante quem* for Arculf's journey is 683, for while he was still in Jerusalem he heard a story involving Mu'āwiya (d. 680) which had occurred "three

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[14] On early Christian pilgrimage see Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage* AD *312–460*; Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient*, 105–243; Wilken, *The Land Made Holy*, 101–25. On the genre of early travel writing and the problems of translating one's travels into a written record see Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, 33–45 (compares the accounts of Egeria and Arculf).

[15] Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* "intro.," 183 (tr. Wilkinson, 93). Adomnan indulges in some editing: on the next page he states that "I shall leave out the things which may be gathered about the disposition of the city from other authors;" elsewhere he supplements with his own reading on the Holy Land (e.g. *ibid.* 2.XI.3, 211, where he cites S. Jerome).

[16] Bede, *Opera historica*, 317 (= *Historia ecclesiastica*, 5.XV). This chapter in Bede and the *De locis sanctis* itself are our only sources on Arculf. For discussion of the latter's account see Rotter, *Abendland und Sarazenen*, 31–42; 'Imran, "Kitābāt al-raḥḥāla Arkūlf."

years earlier." Adomnan visited King Aldfrith in 686 and 688.[17] Since there is no reason to suppose a large passage of time either between Arculf's return and his visit to Adomnan or between Adomnan's writing of the book and his presentation of it to King Aldfrith, a date in the 670s would seem the most plausible for Arculf's pilgrimage, and in the early 680s for its recording by Adomnan.

Although his description of Jerusalem is almost wholly taken up with Christian sites, Arculf does comment upon the "numerous large stone houses" which are "wonderfully well-built," and the fair held there every year, which is attended by "almost every country and many nationalities." Further, he volunteers the following information:

> In that famous place where once stood the magnificently constructed Temple, near the eastern wall, the Saracens now frequent a rectangular house of prayer which they have built in a crude manner, constructing it from raised planks and large beams over some remains of ruins. This house can, as it is said, accommodate at least 3000 people.[18]

This observation suggests that Jerusalem, and the Temple Mount in particular, was of some cultic significance to the first Muslims. This is borne out by a considerable number of other sources, both Muslim and **{222}** non-Muslim.[19] 'Umar I allegedly travelled to Syria to make a treaty with the city's inhabitants in person, and once there he commissioned the erection of a house of prayer on the Temple Mount.[20] Work was also carried out on this site during Mu'āwiya's reign,[21] and with particular fervour in the time of 'Abd al-Malik, who ordered the construction of the Dome of the Rock.[22] There would seem no doubt, then, that Jerusalem played a crucial role in

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[17] Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 10; Donner, *Pilgerfahrt ins heiliger Land*, 318–19, and see 330–31 for a discussion of the date.

[18] Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* 1.1.14, 186. The mention of a "house of prayer" (*orationis domus*) suggests that a mosque is meant, namely an antecedent of the Aqsa, and this seems to be confirmed by archaeological evidence (see Raby, "Aqsa and the Anastasis," who also discusses this passage).

[19] See the entries on "John Moschus" and "Anastasius of Sinai" in Chapter 3 above, on "Sebeos" in Chapter 4 above, on "ps.-Shenute" in Chapter 8 below and the next three notes.

[20] See the entries mentioned in the previous note for the primary evidence. For discussion see Busse, "'Omar in Jerusalem;" Gil, *History of Palestine*, 65–74; Flusin, "L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des arabes."

[21] *Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads*, 178 ("he will restore the walls of the Temple"); Maqdisī, *Bad'*, 4.87 (*'amarahu 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb thumma Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān wa-bihi bāya'ūhu li-l-khilāfa*). And Anastasius the Sinaite, *Narrat.*, C3, describes clearing work being undertaken on the Temple Mount *ca.* 660.

[22] Van Ess, "'Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock;" Elad, "Why did 'Abd al-Malik build the Dome of the Rock?"

Muslim religious life from a very early date and vied with Mecca and Medina for the position of prime cultic centre in Islam.[23]

But the city apparently held political importance as well. It was in Jerusalem in 658 that Muʿāwiya and ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ, the first rulers of Syria and Egypt, signed a pact allying against ʿAll ibn Abī Tālib, their rival in the east.[24] There, too, Muʿāwiya was proclaimed caliph and received the oath of allegiance, whereupon he proceeded to make a tour of the Christian holy sites of the city.[25] The new ruler is said to have minted coins without crosses,[26] and it was perhaps he who initiated construction of the administrative headquarters adjacent to the Temple Mount on the south and southwest where six large buildings have so far been unearthed, including the caliph's own palace (*aulētou amiralmoumnin*).[27] **{223}** New roads were laid and old ones repaired so as to link Jerusalem and Damascus.[28] Evidently, Jerusalem was not only a cultic centre, but initially the capital of Muslim Palestine.

During Arculf's stay some "Christian residents of Jerusalem" related to him a story concerning "a sacred cloth of the Lord."[29] It had been stolen from the sepulchre immediately after Christ's resurrection by a certain right-believing Jew and it had been handed down for generations, first within this Jew's family, then by non-believing Jews who nevertheless treated it with respect. However, the believing Jews (*Iudaei credentes*) began to argue with the unbelieving Jews (*cum infidelibus Iudaeis*) over the ownership of the cloth. The two factions (*Iudaei Christiani… increduli Iudaei*) appealed to "Muʿāwiya, king of the Saracens," who commanded a fire to be made and, invoking "Christ the saviour of the world," cast the cloth into the flames whence it floated upwards, then descended and landed among the Christians. The use of New Testament/patristic terminology and of the widespread narrative motifs of worthy/unworthy inheritors and test by fire render this account suspect,[30] but it is inter-

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[23] Goitein, "Sanctity of Jerusalem and Palestine in Early Islam;" Kister, "You Shall only Set out for Three Mosques;" Busse, "Jerusalem and Mecca;" Bashear, "Qur'ān 2:114 and Jerusalem;" *idem*, "Abraham's Sacrifice of his Son;" and especially Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship*. For further reading consult Purvis, *Jerusalem, the Holy City: a Bibliography*, 1.368–87, 2.370–88.

[24] Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt* 4.2, 2 (*bi-bayt al-maqdis*); Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, *Waqʿat Ṣiffīn*, 217.

[25] Ṭabarī, 2.4; *Chron. Maronite*, 71.

[26] *Ibid.*, 71; but see the entry on the "Maronite Chronicler" in Chapter 4 above.

[27] *Aphrodito Papyri*, no. 1403 (giving a *terminus ante quem* of 710 for the palace), which also mentions the "mosque of Jerusalem" (*masgida Hierosolymon*); the buildings are described by Rosen-Ayalon, *Early Islamic Monuments of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf*, 8–10. See also Küchler, "Moschee und Kalifenpalaste Jerusalems nach den Aphrodito-Papyri;" Busse, "Zur Geschichte und Deutung der frühislamischen Ḥarambauten in Jerusalem."

[28] Indicated by seven milestones dating to the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik (see Excursus F, no. iii).

[29] Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* 1.IX, 192–94.

[30] Donner, *Pilgerfahrt ins heiliger Land*, 351 n. 36; Pines, "Arabic Christianity and Judaeo-Christianity," 145–47, uses this anecdote as evidence for Judaeo-Christians.

esting to note Mu'āwiya's presence in Jerusalem and his participation in the settlement of non-Muslim disputes.

WILLIBALD (FL. 720S) AND OTHER PILGRIMS

Arculf travelled extensively throughout the Holy Land, seeking out the places of Old and New Testament fame, even reaching Damascus, "a large royal city," where "a king of the Saracens seized power and reigns" and where "a kind of church" (*quaedam ecclesia*) had been built for **{224}** "the unbelieving Saracens;"[31] and Constantinople, "the metropolis of the Roman empire" where sits "the emperor of the world."[32] He seems to have been able to move about freely from city to city and from country to country, having little contact with Muslim authorities. S. Reinelde (d. 680), too, though later molested and killed by Huns, spent a serene two years in Jerusalem;[33] as did her contemporaries Thomas, later abbot of Farfa,[34] and the monk Epiphanius.[35]

S. Willibald, bishop of Eichstatt in Bavaria (740–87) and a relative of S. Boniface, did not fare so well and clashed with the Muslim authorities, who are more in evidence in his narrative. The description of his pilgrimage is presented to us by Hugeberc, a nun of the monastery which he founded with his brother Wynnebald in 751. "We should realise," she declares to us, "that this account is given not on the basis of legends or untrustworthy stories but… under his own watchful eye, as he told it to us by word of mouth. We decided to listen to him and take it down at his dictation. With me were two deacons who heard it on Tuesday 23 June."[36] Whether

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[31] Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* 2.XXVIII, 220. Note that the church of S. John the Baptist is mentioned separately from the Muslim "church."

[32] *Ibid.* 3.1.2, 226; 3.III.7, 228.

[33] *Acta sanctorum* 16 July, 4.177–78; in the mid-eighth century two unaccompanied women from Damascus go regularly on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Sinai (Stephen the Sabaite, *Greek Life* XI, 586–87 = *Arabic Life* LXIV, 309). On the appeal to women of pilgrimage see Brown, *Body and Society*, 272, 328.

[34] Acta sanctorum. 10 Sept., 3.605.

[35] The account of this monk is composite, but one layer would appear to go back to the period after 635 ("the Patriarchum is a church without a throne; it was to have been given a throne at the time of the Saracen invasion") and before 690 ("To the east of these buildings is… the holy of holies… and the hanging rock and the Temple of Solomon with its own special wall," i.e. rock still exposed). For the texts and discussion see Donner, "Die Palastinabeschreibung des Epiphanius Monachus," 66–82.

[36] Willibald, *Life*, 87. The dictation must have taken place after 761 when Hugeburc arrived at Heidenheim, and it was probably Wynnebald's death in 777 that motivated her to write biographies of her two brothers (23 June was a Tuesday in 778); this gives us a date of *ca.* 780 for the final composition. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 206–208, asserts that the core dictated by Willibald can be distinguished by its short simple sentences from the ornate surround given it by Hugeburc. For some discussion of the text see Rotter, *Abendland und Sarazenen*, 43–65.

because of his character or the length of time elapsed since the journey, Willibald tells us less about the sights **{225}** he visits than of the problems encountered, the anecdotes heard and the strange spectacles observed along the way.

In 720 he had set out from England as a young man and travelled through France on to Rome, where he remained for three years "under monastic rule." "Then Willibald… asked his friends and companions to help him by their prayers to… reach the… walls of the city of Jerusalem," and on Easter day, 28 March 723, he departed with seven comrades for the Holy Land. But on reaching "the land of the Saracens at a city beside the sea called Tartus" and walking as far as Ḥimṣ, "the pagan Saracens, who had discovered that some strange travellers had arrived, suddenly arrested them and took them prisoner. Not knowing what country they had come from, they took them to be spies." They were brought before a rich old gentleman who said: "Many times I have seen people coming here, fellow countrymen of theirs, from those parts of the world. They mean no harm. All they want to do is to fulfil their law." Nevertheless, the governor "ordered them to be kept prisoner till he discovered from the king what he should do about them." But their confinement was not a harsh one. A merchant, though unable to ransom them, made sure that they had food, that they bathed on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and took them to the church and market on Sundays. "And the people of that city were interested in them and liked coming to look at them there." A Spaniard, whose brother was royal chamberlain, and the captain, who had brought them from Cyprus, then accompanied the governor to "the Saracen king whose name was *Mirmumnus*," by which is presumably meant the title "commander of the faithful" (*amir al-mu'mimn*). Once informed of their case, the caliph replied: "Why should we punish them? They have committed no crime against us. Give them their permit and let them go!"[37]

In the course of his narrative Willibald makes numerous informative remarks. No harm is ever done to Cypriots, he notes, for "there was absolute peace and relations between the Saracens and Greeks were excellent." Not so in Nazareth, where "the Christians often had to pay a ransom for the church to the pagan Saracens when these wanted to **{226}** pull it down."[38] As seen above, the caliph became involved in affairs at a relatively trivial level and Willibald's companions, wishing permission to travel, had first sought out the Saracen king. Because of plague and famine, however, he had taken refuge and they asked the governor at Emesa to give them a letter. "He divided them into pairs and gave each pair a letter since… in that way it would be less difficult for them to obtain food."[39] Travel permits seem to be important and regarding the coastal region to the south of Tyre, "no one arriving

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[37] The account of Willibald's journey and imprisonment occupies Willibald, *Life*, 92–95.

[38] Cypriots and Nazareth: *ibid.*, 95.

[39] *Ibid.*, 100; *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 726, mentions a plague in Syria. This may be considered as an additional *raison d'être* for Umayyad desert castles, for we often hear of caliphs sheltering in them from the plague (many instances, including the above, are adduced by Conrad, "Historical Evidence and the Archaeology of Early Islam," 269–72).

there without a permit can pass through the district since it is a security area and sealed off." On coming to Tyre itself, they were searched "in case they were concealing something, and if they had found anything they would at once have had the death penalty inflicted upon them."[40]

LATER TESTIMONIA

The attention paid by Western writers to Islam and its adherents waxed and waned in accordance with the degree to which the latter impinged, whether physically or ideologically, upon the Western world. But since the Muslims first entered the Western stage in the guise of conquerors, the tone of the literary response inevitably tended to be hostile.[41] Writing from his vantage point in north England shortly after the Muslim occupation of Spain in 711–13, Bede begins his commentary upon Genesis xvi.12 with the standard exposition of the Arabs as descendants of Ishmael, condemned by birth to roam the desert,[42] then continues:

> But that was long ago. Now, however, so much is his hand against all and the hand of all against him that they press **{227}** the length and breadth of Africa under their sway, and also the greater part of Asia and, hating and inimical to all, they try for some of Europe.[43]

The threat came even closer in 729 when "a plague of Saracens wrought wretched devastation and slaughter upon Gaul," an event which Bede connects with the appearance of two comets, "presaging grievous disaster for East and West."[44] Citing Psalms cxx.5: "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech and dwell in the tents of Kedar," he is prompted to observe that "this represents the Saracens, who are in general all the particular enemies of the church;" and the "star of Remphan" of Acts vii.43 means in Bede's eyes "Lucifer, to whose cult the Saracen people was given up because of their reverence for Venus."[45]

With the defeat of the Muslims at Poitiers in 733, the military threat posed by Islam receded somewhat for non-Iberian Europe, though its spectre continued to flit about the fringes of Western consciousness. S. Boniface, the great missionary and papal legate to Zachariah (741–52), informed King Aethelbald of Mercia that it had been the ungodliness and sexual misconduct of the people of Spain, Provence

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[40] Willibald, *Life*, 101. Willibald was actually smuggling balsam, which he had ingeniously concealed in a hollow cane.

[41] On such writings see Daniel, *The Arabs and Mediaeval Europe*; Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*; Rotter, *Abendland und Sarazenen*.

[42] On the transmission of traditions concerning the Arabs in the West (generally based on Jerome) see Ogle, "Petrus Comestor, Methodius and the Saracens."

[43] Bede, *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, 8.185 (written *ca.* 720). On Bede and Islam see Hadrill, *Early Medieval History*, 60–75.

[44] Bede, Opera historica, 1.349 (= Historia ecclesiastica, 5.XXIII).

[45] Bede, *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, 8.185 (written 716), 12.36 (after 709); Saracen worship of Lucifer is mentioned by Jerome, *Commentary on the Prophet Amos* 2.V, *PL* 25, 1055B.

and Burgundy that had obliged "the almighty Judge" to allow the Saracen invasions.[46] To an abbess who consulted him as to visiting Rome, "the former mistress of the world," Boniface wrote advising her to wait at least until the recent Saracen menacings against the Romans had diminished; and to Pope Zachariah he confided his anxieties about "affliction by the Saracens, Saxons and Friesians."[47] Paul the Deacon (d. ca. 799), monk of Monte Cassino and historian of the Lombards, says no more of the Muslims than that they are "a faithless people and inimical to God."[48] Two English synods of 786 forbade clerics to eat in secret during fasts "because it is hypocrisy and (after the fashion) of the Saracens;" and **{228}** a poem composed by Ermold the Black *ca.* 826 has Charlemagne's son Louis the Pious deliver the following speech to the soldiers about to besiege Muslim Barcelona in 801:

> Had this people (the Saracens) worshipped God, pleased Christ and received holy baptism, we should have made peace with them and kept that peace in order to bind them to God through religion. But this people remains detestable; it spurns the salvation we offer and follows the commandments of the demons.[49]

The only indication of any genuine interest in Islam in the non-Iberian West is Charlemagne's request to his court theologian Alcuin in 799 to obtain for him the "disputation of Felix with a Saracen" which, Alcuin confesses, "I have not seen, nor is it found with us, nor have I heard that title before."[50] Not until the twelfth century, the era of the Crusades, were Europeans again to seek out writings on Islam.[51]

The situation was very different, however, for the Christians of Spain who lived under Muslim occupation.[52] It is true that the conquerors introduced their rule very gently: Christian counts were initially permitted to retain their power and property in exchange for recognition of Muslim overlordship and a yearly tax; an independent emirate was only established in 756, no new Muslim towns were built, and only in 785 was the first part of Cordoba's mosque constructed. Nevertheless, assimilation to Islam proceeded apace, particularly among those who worked for or wished to rise in the ranks of the new Muslim government. Mixed marriages were

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[46] Boniface, *Ep.* 73, 343 (written 745–46).

[47] *Ep.* 27, 278 (written ca. 725); *Ep.* 60, 324 (written 745).

[48] Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 6.X, 168.

[49] Cited by Kedar, *Crusade and Mission*, 30 (synods), 215–16/7–8 (poem, ed./tr.).

[50] Alcuin, *Ep.* 75, 284. In 790 Alcuin wrote to Master Colcu of Clonmacnoise in Ireland and gave news of various events including a small victory against the Saracens, though he acknowledges sadly that the "accursed Saracens, who are also called Hagarenes" and about whose emergence he had already written to him, dominate all Africa and the greater part of Asia (*Ep.* 31, 32).

[51] Thus Daniel begins his *Islam and the West* with Peter the Venerable (d. 1156) and his contemporaries.

[52] Their first comments about Islam are considered by Wolf, "Earliest Spanish Christian Views."

common at a very early date;[53] Christians **{229}** adopt circumcision, Arabic names and attire, laments one writer, they seek wealth and position in the new regime, zealously study Arabic language and learning, "while they are ignorant of the beauty of the church and look with disgust upon the church's rivers of paradise as something vile… Christians do not know their own law nor Latins their own tongue."[54]

A reaction was not long in coming. In the 820s a Córdoban abbot and lecturer named Speraindeo composed a refutation of Muslim beliefs, of which only the following fragment survives:

> In the next life, they (the Muslims) say, all the faithful shall be carried off into paradise. There beautiful women will be granted to us by God, far more exquisite than the mortal kind and laid on for our delight.
>
> Response: By no means will they obtain the state of blessedness in your paradise if both sexes indulge freely in the flow of desire. This is not paradise but a brothel, a most obscene place.[55]

His students Eulogius and Paul Albar both composed major polemical works against Islam, prompted by the actions of a number of monks and penitent apostates who had sought martyrdom in Córdoba by publicly denouncing Muḥammad and his followers.[56] The movement was generally unpopular among the Christians in the city since it disturbed the pattern of relations and co-existence built up over the decades, and Eulogius was forced to defend "these young soldiers of our times" against **{230}** those who say that they suffered at the hands of "men who worship God and adhere to a law."[57]

Besides its material advantages as the religion of a ruling elite, the most attractive aspect of Islam for Christians, and the most difficult to refute, was the extreme simplicity of its creed. Over in Palestine Eulogius' contemporary Stephen of Ramla (wr. 877), writing in Arabic, observes that: "The doctrine of this community about God is in plain language which the common people may understand. I mean their

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[53] In 785 Pope Adrian condemned the marriage of Spanish Christians with "infidels" (*Codex Carolinus*, 636–37).

[54] Paul Albar, *Indiculus luminosas* §35, *PL* 121, 554–56; see Wasserstein, "A Latin Lament on the Prevalence of Arabic." This major polemical work against Islam is thoroughly discussed by Colbert, *Martyrs of Córdoba*, 266–304.

[55] Quoted by Eulogius, *Memoriale sanctorum* 1.VII, *PL* 115, 745A–B. On Speraindeo see Colbert, *Martyrs of Córdoba*, 157–63.

[56] There are a number of theories as to what provoked such action; most recent are: Cutler, "The Ninth-Century Spanish Martyrs' Movement" (apocalyptic expectations); Waltz, "Significance of the Voluntary Martyrs of Cordoba" (a reaction to erosion of Latin Christian culture); Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (spiritual insecurity), who gives a useful summary of previous scholarship (36–47); Coope, *Martyrs of Córdoba* (increased Islamisation), who discusses Eulogius and Albar's polemical tracts (45–54).

[57] Eulogius, *Liber apologeticas martyrum* §17, *PL* 115, 860–61.

statement 'there is no god but God;'" but what they mean, he continues, is "a god other than the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit… Theirstatement, 'There is no god but God,' and our statement are one in words, but different in meaning."[58] And it is exactly this point that Eulogius wishes to make when he writes: "He (Muḥammad) teaches with his blasphemous mouth that Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit, and indeed a great prophet, *but* endowed with none of the power of the deity."[59] The intended audience of both polemicists are those accommodationist Christians whose stance Stephen of Ramla describes as follows:

> If you ask them about Christ our Lord, they maintain that he is a messenger like one of the messengers (cf. Qur'an v.75); they do not favour him in any way over them, save in the pardon he brought and in the taking of precedence.They are not concerned to go to church…; in public they avow the opposite of the Trinity of the oneness of God and His incarnation, they disparage the messengers, the fathers and the teachers of the New Testament. They say: "What compels us to say Father, Son and Spirit, and to maintain that the Messiah is God? We are content with that which the Israelites were content, God is one!" … Answer, believe and say: Since you have come to this state of affairs, watch **{231}** out for yourselves! The society which you applaud is too smart for you, too transparent for your arguments. It is Judaism they enjoin, that with which Moses and the prophets after him were in accord – no more, no less.[60]

DUBIA

Historia miscella

This work, attributed to Paul the Deacon by Migne and included in his *Patrologia latina*, is not an original text, but simply a transcription of a Vatican manuscript bear-

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[58] Stephen of Ramla, *Wajūh al-īmān*, fol. 5v; the work may only have been copied by Stephen and been composed a few decades earlier. For further information see Samir, "Date de composition de la 'Somme des aspects de la foi;'" Griffith, "Stephen of Ramla;" *idem*, "Islam and the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*."

[59] Eulogius, Liber apologéticas martyrum §19, PL 115, 861.

[60] Stephen of Ramla, *Wujūh al-īmān*, fols. 7b–8a (cited by Griffith, "The First Christian *Summa Theologiae* in Arabic," 23). The problem had arisen at least a century earlier; cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 388–89: "It has happened in accordance with what we were saying to you, that many peoples have returned to paganism and denied Christ, baptism, the eucharist and the cross… and are solely professing that Christ is the Word and Spirit of God… These [words] they have not understood nor comprehended because they walk in darkness. Then when someone asks them what is this Word and Spirit… they blaspheme saying: Like Moses, Elias and Muḥammad, their prophets;' the one who has instituted for them a faith is a prophet, they say, like one of the prophets, a man like me or you."

ing the translation of Theophanes' *Chronographia* by the pontifical librarian Anastasius (wr. 870s), as even a very cursory comparison will show.[61]

Morienus the Greek

From the late twelfth/early thirteenth century onward there began to appear in Europe a number of manuscripts containing a Latin text, allegedly a translation from Arabic made in 1144 by Robert of Chester, of "the matter which came to pass between Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya **{232}** (*Calid filius Iezid filii Macoia*) and Morienus the Greek (*Morienus Romanus*)."[62] This relates how Khālid, an Umayyad prince, had sought out Morienus, an aged recluse (*senex heremita*), who lived in the mountains of Jerusalem whence he had gone "four years after the death of Heraclius" (i.e. in 645). The reason for this was that Khālid was very eager to find the Major Work (*opus maior*) and he had been informed that this ascetic "had in his possession the spiritual riches handed down from Stephen of Alexandria (*Adfar Alexandrinus*)."[63] Once they had gained each other's amity and confidence, Morienus proceeds to instruct Khālid in the alchemical knowledge of the Ancients.

Turning to the Arabic sources, we find that the littérateur Jāḥiẓ says of Khālid that he was "an orator and poet, of eloquent style and broad learning (*faṣīḥan jāmi'an*), perspicacious and cultured (*jayyid al-ra'y kathīr al-adab*); and he was the first

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[61] See the discussion of de Boor, *Theophanis chronographia*, 2.426–31. The text itself appears in *PL* 95, 743–1144; I am grateful to Dr. Lawrence Conrad for drawing it to my attention.

[62] Morienus the Greek, *Liber de compositione alchemiae*, 2. It is probable that "Romanus" is a (mis-) translation of the Arabic *al-Rūmī*, used to signify Byzantine; note also that such phrases as *non est fortitudo nisi cum deo summo magno et alto* (*ibid.*, 8) most likely reflect Muslim formulae (cf. *la ḥawla illā billāh ta'ālā*). The attribution of the preface of the work and the translation itself to Robert of Chester, once rejected, has recently been well defended by Lemay, "L'authenticité de la préface de Robert de Chester à sa traduction du *Morienus*" (see also Kahn, "Note sur deux manuscrits du prologue attribué à Robert de Chester"). For the background to the early reception of Arabic works on the occult in the West see Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, 38–53.

[63] Morienus the Greek, *Liber de compositione alchemiae*, 6, 2. That Khālid gained his knowledge about alchemy from a certain Stephen is mentioned by numerous Arabic sources; e.g. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 244: "He (Stephen the Elder) translated books on alchemy for Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya;" see Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten I*, 9–11. Stephen of Alexandria (see the entry on him in Chapter 8 below) would have been dead by Khālid's day, so either a different Stephen is meant or, more likely, Stephen of Alexandria's name is being claimed by later legend; Morienus might then be an invention to make chronologically plausible the link between Stephen and Khālid. *Short Chron. SIS*, 63, mentions that in the seventh year of Constans (675–76) "Stephen the philospher of Alexandria interpreted the (astronomical) canon (*ton kanona*)," but this is probably due to an error in the date or a false attribution to Stephen.

to have translated books on astronomy, medicine and alchemy."[64] The bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm **{233}** (d. 990) reproduces this report almost verbatim and adds the following notice:

> Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiya was called "the Wise Man of the family of Marwān." He was upright in his personal conduct (*fāḍilan fī nafsihi*) and had an interest and fondness for the sciences. The Art (alchemy/*al-Ṣan'a*) attracted his attention and so he ordered a group of Greek philosophers who were living in a city of Egypt to be brought to him. Since he was concerned with literary Arabic, he commanded them to translate the books about the Art from the Greek and Coptic languages into Arabic. This was the first translation in Islam from one language into another.[65]

Both Ruska and Ullmann have pronounced Morienus' book of alchemy to be a piece of pseudepigraphy and the Khālid-Morienus encounter to be no more than a legend.[66] Ullmann argues that the fable of Khālid's interest in alchemy is the result of elaborations upon accusations of impotence levelled at Khālid after his failure to become caliph. In particular, the comment of one writer that Khālid was "striving for what he could not achieve" (*mā lā yaqdiru 'alayhi*) was later taken to refer to alchemy (*ya'nī al-kīmiya'*).[67] The idea is interesting, but it does not account for the diversity of traditions regarding Khālid's erudition and pursuit of alchemy in the late ninth/early tenth-century **{234}** sources, especially the report of Jāḥiẓ which is markedly different from, and half a century earlier than, that of Balādhurī (d. 892), Ullmann's earliest source.[68]

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[64] Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 1.328. Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 352, says of him: "He was the most learned of Quraysh in the various fields of knowledge and he used to compose poetry," and his interest in the sciences is noted by Balādhurī (*Ansāb* 4.1, 359–60: "He was a poet and paid attention to alchemy, astrology and other sciences"), Ṭabarī (2.1429: "It is said that he succeeded in the practice of alchemy"), Iṣfahānī (*Aghānī*, 16.88: "He occupied himself with the study of alchemy and devoted his life to that") and numerous later writers (see Ullmann, "Ḥālid ibn Yazīd und die Alchemie," 185–93, 213–14).

[65] Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 354 (Jāḥiẓ's quote), 242 (the piece translated above). To Jāḥiẓ's quote Ibn al-Nadīm adds the comment that failure to attain the caliphate prompted Khālid to seek solace in the pursuit of knowledge.

[66] Ruska, *Arabische Alchemisten I*; Ullmann, "Ḥālid ibn Yazīd und die Alchemie" (also *idem*, *Die Natur- und Geheimniswissenschaften im Islam*, 192–95, and *EI²*, *s.v.* "Khālid b. Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya"). Part of the problem is that, as Stavenhagen points out ("The Original Text of the Latin *Morienus*," 12), too much attention has been paid to late versions of the work, which are padded out with demonstrations of Morienus' piety, etc.

[67] Ullmann, "Ḥālid ibn Yazīd und die Alchemie," 214–17.

[68] Balādhurī and Iṣfahānī are drawing upon the earlier historian Madā'inī (d. 843), but Jāḥiẓ too could be drawing upon earlier material. Besides alchemy, prophetic knowledge is attributed to Khālid by the two early authors Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād (d. 843), *Fitan*, fol. 9a, and Fasawī (d. 890), *Ta'rīkh*, 1.571–72, 578 (neither included in Ullmann's survey), and the

The conviction of both scholars that the Umayyads were indifferent to foreign learning led them to pass over the question of what scientific legacy there might have been for Khālid to acquire.[69] When Sophronius and John Moschus stayed in Alexandria in the early seventh century (*ca.* 608–15), the intellectual scene in the city still seems to have been lively. There was Theodore the philosopher and Zoïlus Lector, "two remarkable men and of great virtue," who lived very simply, possessing little beyond their clothes and a few books; Nemesius, an ex-prefect and astrologer; "a man called Peter, who had gone to Alexandria from Beth Qatraye as a young man to be trained in philosophy;" Cosmas Scholasticus, who owned innumerable books and spent his days composing treatises against the Jews, and of course Stephen of Alexandria, who lectured in mathematics and rhetoric.[70] At about the same time **{235}** Tychicus, later professor at Trebizond, came to study there; and Paul, bishop of Constantina, and Thomas of Heraclea, worked on their revisions of the Bible at nearby monasteries.[71] In the mid-seventh century there flourished in the city Paul of Aegina, a doctor who specialised in gynaecology and who was in the city when it was captured by the Arabs;[72] Anastasius of Sinai went there to hold debates with Monophysite luminaries, and it was still worth the while of Jacob of Edessa to

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Muslim astronomer Ibn al-Sinbādī says that he saw in the royal library of the Fatimids in Cairo in 1044 a bronze globe which bore an inscription testifying that it had been in the possession of Khālid (Ibn al-Qiftī, *Ta'rīkh al-ḥukamā'*, 440).

[69] Cf. Ruska, "Alchemy in Islam," 36: "Anyone acquainted with historical possibilities knows that an Umayyad prince at the time of 'Abd al-Malik would no more have thought of concerning himself with medicine or alchemy than the caliphs 'Umar or 'Ali… In no branch of learning is real interest in the Greek sciences evident before the time of the Abbasids." For some indications to the contrary see Meyerhof, "Transmission of Science to the Arabs;" Mackensen, "Arabic Books and Libraries," 55–57, 153–55; Goodman, "The Greek Impact on Arabic Literature." Some consideration must also be given to Grignaschi's thesis that Sālim Abū l-'Alā', secretary to Hishām (724–43), translated from Greek for his master a number of pseudo-Aristotelian epistles (Grignaschi, "Les 'Rasā'il Aristātālīsa ilā-l-Iskandar' de Sālim Abū-l-'Alā'," and "Le roman épistolaire classique conservé dans la version arabe de Sàlim Abû-l-'Alâ';" commented upon by Latham, "The Beginnings of Arabic Prose Literature," 155–64).

[70] John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale*, CLXXI (Theodore and Zoïlus), CLXXII (Cosmas), LXXVII (Stephen); Sophronius, *Miracles* no. 28, *PG* 87, 3501A–508A (= Marcos, 294–98): Nemesius; *Chron. Khuzistan*, 25 (Peter, whom the chronicler says was responsible for the loss of Alexandria to the Persians). For Stephen see also the entry on him in Chapter 8 below.

[71] Ananias of Shirak, *On Easter*, "preface" (tr. Conybeare, 573): Tychicus; Wright, *Short History of Syriac Literature*, 14–16: Paul and Thomas.

[72] Bar Hebraeus, *Mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, 176. Bar Hebraeus (*ibid.*, 175), following Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, 254–55), mentions a John the Grammarian who was patronised by 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ; this is a mistake for John Philoponus, who flourished in the first half of the sixth century (see Peters, "The Origins of Islamic Platonism," 24). On Paul of Aegina and his writings see Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, 18.2386–98.

go and further his studies there *ca.* 660.[73] After that the curtain closes on Alexandria and we have only the testimony of a late Muslim tradition that Greek science continued to be studied and taught there.[74]

As for alchemy itself, though mostly confined to the preservation of earlier works, it did live on in Byzantium, as is attested by a tenth/early eleventh-century manuscript containing exclusively treatises on this subject.[75] Of course, even if Khālid's alchemical investigations did have **{236}** some basis in fact, this would not mean that the *Liber de compositione alchemiae* gave any true account of them. Nevertheless, the Arabic accounts of the Khālid-Morienus meeting do show some interesting parallels with the Latin version.[76] At the very least, then, it is likely that a simple form of the work existed in Arabic in the ninth or tenth century and that this was translated into Latin in the twelfth century and subsequently embellished, but no further judgement can be given until the Arabic versions have been examined.

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[73] Anastasius of Sinai, *Viae dux* X.1, 143–44 (= *PG* 89, 149A–B); Michael the Syrian 11.XV, 445/471 (Jacob). Jacob himself states that he spent time in Alexandria in his *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 14, fol. 124a.

[74] It is recorded by Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 122, and by the eleventh-century physician Ibn Riḍwān in his *Useful Book on the Quality of Medical Education* (cited by Iskandar, "The Late Alexandrian Medical Curriculum," 249); both say until the time of 'Umar II when the school was transferred to Antioch and Ḥarran, perhaps following the philosopher Farābī (see Zimmerman, *Al-Farabi's Commentary*, xcii–cv, esp. ciii, who points out the mythical nature of the report). See further Saffrey, "Le chrétien Jean Philopon et la survivance de l'école d'Alexandrie au Vie siècle," and Meyerhof, "La fin de l'école d'Alexandrie." *Hist. Patriarchs* XVII, *PO*5, 51, relates that a deacon named Benjamin became the intimate of Aṣbagh ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 704), son of the governor of Egypt, and made available to him many Christian writings, including *kutub al-qiyāma*, which the editor has amended to *kutub al-kīmiyā'* ("books of alchemy") with no explanation.

[75] Namely Ms. Marcian gr. 299; at the head of this manuscript is a list which does not correlate exactly with the contents and may represent an older redaction (see Berthelot, *Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs*, 1.173–79). For Byzantine alchemy in this period see *ibid.*, 3.378–82; Taylor, "A Survey of Greek Alchemy," 121–22; Tihon, "L'astronomie byzantine;" Vereno, *Studien zum ältesten alchemistischen Schrifttum*, 16–21.

[76] Ritter, "Arabische Handschriften in Anatolien und Istanbul," 100, notes that Ms. Şehid Ali Paşa 1749, fols. 61a–74b, contains "the questions of Khālid to Maryānus the monk." Just from the *incipit* we can see that the Latin and Arabic agree on the format of the conversation (questions of Khālid answered by Morienus), the name of Khālid's servant (Ghālib, variously written in the Latin as Galib, Galid, Calich etc.), and on Khālid's being informed about Morienus while at Dayr Murran (again variously spelt in the Latin; note that this was indeed an Umayyad haunt).

CHAPTER 7.
JEWISH, PERSIAN AND CHINESE SOURCES

JEWISH SOURCES[1]

{237} "Within the whole gate of my people there has not yet arisen a historian in Israel like Josephus… they ceased, the writers of memorials, they ceased, until I arose, even I, Joseph."[2] So wrote Rabbi Joseph ha-Kohen **{238}** (d. 1578), the author of a history of the kings of France and Ottoman Turkey. As regards straightforward historical writing by Jews, he is largely correct. This does not mean, however, that there was no interest in history. The rabbis in the academies[3] of Palestine and Iraq turned to scriptural history for the raw material wherewith to construct "the four cubits of the Law" as a means to living in the Diaspora. And many scrutinised the ancient prophetic messages for an interpretation of contemporary events

[1] I say Jewish sources, because those that might shed light on our period are in Aramaic and Judaeo-Arabic as well as Hebrew. Those of the Gaonic period (*ca.* 650–1200) are surveyed by Winter and Wiinsche, *Geschichte der rabbinischen Literatur*, esp. 1–63; Waxman, *History of Jewish Literature*, 155–469; Assaf, *Teqūfat ha-ge'ōnīm ve-sifrūtāh*; Baron, *SRHJ*, vols. 6–7. For useful discussion of Jews in our period see Starr, "Byzantine Jewry on the Eve of the Arab Conquest;" Sharf, "Byzantine Jewry in the Seventh Century;" *idem*, *Byzantine Jewry*, 4281; de Lange, "Jews and Christians in the Byzantine Empire;" Cameron, "Jews in Seventh-Century Palestine;" Wasserstrom, *Between Muslim and Jew*, 17–46; de Lange, "Defining Jewish Identity in the Late Antique and Early Islamic Near East." And more generally see Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, 62–211; *idem*, "Jewish Society and Institutions under Islam;" Swartz, "The Position of Jews in Arab Lands;" Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, 3–106; Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, esp. 52–74; Reif, "Aspects of Mediaeval Jewish Literacy." For Jewish and Samaritan chronicles see the entry thereon in Chapter 10 below. Secondary literature on the Gaonic period is reviewed by Cohen, "The Reconstruction of Gaonic History."

[2] Quoted by Kochan, *The Jew and his History*, 1. The omission had not passed unnoticed before this; thus Moses ibn Ezra (d. *ca.* 1140) had complained that the Jews "did not succeed to polish their language, to write their chronicles, and to remember their histories and traditions" (quoted by Yerushalmi, *Zakhor. Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, 33; this work offers some useful relections on the Jews' relation to their history).

[3] I follow customary practice and translate *yeshīva* as academy. One must understand, however, that these were centres of government and legislation as well as of scholarship.

wherewith to describe the messianic future as a means to providing hope for those living in the Diaspora. Thus one might turn back in yearning to the glorious past and look forward in anticipation to the redemptive future, but the present "valley of tears" was merely to be endured.

Even allowing for a far broader definition of history writing, the seventh and eighth centuries remain woefully deficient in sources for Jewish history. Scholars of the third to sixth centuries may avail themselves of the Talmud to elucidate the life and thought of the Jewish communities of Palestine and Babylon.[4] From 800 onwards we can call upon the *Chronicle* of Ahima'as, which traces the pedigree of a Jewish family, nominally from the time of the Roman emperor Titus who allegedly brought a number of Jews to Italy, but principally through the two centuries of the Byzantine Macedonian dynasty which precede the author's own day (866–1054).[5] There is also the corpus of replies (*responsa*) to diverse questions addressed by various diaspora communities to the geonim, the leaders of the rabbinic academies of Sura and Pumbedita in Iraq,[6] together with the lists of sages that accompany **{239}** them and elucidate the chains of transmissions of learning.[7] After 1000 there is the vast hoard of documents found in Cairo known as the Geniza,[8] numerous travelogues (notably those of Benjamin of Tudela and Petahia of Ratisbon in the twelfth century), martyrologies, letters, and the like.[9] But the Jewish sources which might shed light on the history of our period are remarkably few.[10]

This paucity of historical sources should not, however, be taken to reflect a dearth of scholarly activity among Jews at this time. The emperor Hadrian's ban on Jewish access to Jerusalem, renewed by Heraclius, was lifted by the Arab conquerors and Palestinian Jews were once more free to live in the holy city and to base their

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[4] As does Neusner's *A History of the Jews in Babylonia* which, however, stops in 650.

[5] See the introduction to the edition and translation of Salzman, *Chronicle of Ahimaaz*.

[6] The best introduction is still Mann, "Responsa of the Babylonian Geonim;" more introductory is Freehof, *The Responsa Literature*, and *JE*, *s.v.* "She'elot u-teshubot." The first gaon from whom we have some *responsa* is Rabbi Sheshna of Sura (ca. 670–89), and we have a few from Natronai ben Nehemiah of Pumbedita (719–30) and more from Yehudai Gaon of Sura (ca. 757–61), but they remain few or very brief until the ninth century. Related to, and sometimes composed of, the *responsa* were the legal codes that began to appear in the mid-eighth century, the first being the *She'iltōt* of Rabbi Aha of Shabha (d. 752) and the *Halakhōt pesuqōt* of Yehudai Gaon (for which see under their names in *JE*)

[7] See the entry on "Jewish Texts" in Chapter 10 below.

[8] Hopkins, "The Oldest Dated Document in the Geniza," surveys the dated or dateable Geniza manuscripts from the first millennium AD; of course, material written later than this may still have a bearing on the seventh and eighth centuries, but most does not.

[9] Adler, *Jewish Travellers*; Tcherikower, "Jewish Martyrology and Jewish Historiography;" Kobler, *Letters of Jews through the Ages*, 1.2.

[10] In the catalogue of sources given by Starr, *Jews in the Byzantine Empire 641–1204*, there are none of Jewish provenance prior to 800.

academy there.[11] And in Iraq the Arabs revived the exilarchate by which Babylonian Jewry governed itself, but which had been suspended by Khusrau II on account of the support given by many Jews to the rebel Bahram Chobin.[12]

So conditions were in no way unfavourable for scholarship, and we can discern activity in a number of different fields. The wish to establish a definitive text of the Bible led to intensive study of the Hebrew language and orthography. Legal, homiletic and eschatological **{240}** treatises, both high and low-brow, were produced in considerable number.[13] Liturgical poetry developed in Palestine from the midsixth century onwards and attained such a degree of popularity and sophistication under Yannai, Eliezer ben Qilir and Pinhas ha-Kohen that the province became the centre of Hebrew letters in the seventh and eighth centuries.[14] Since each poem (*pīyūt*) was generally linked to the Biblical lesson of the week or to the special theme of a feast day, the subject matter could vary considerably and, though precise information is rare, historical descriptions were not excluded.[15] The fierce debate that broke out over the status of the oral tradition in the mid-eighth century between the rabbis and the Karaites spawned much polemical writing. And the transfer of the Muslim capital from Syria to Iraq brought the academies of the latter province into prominence as major centres of Jewish learning in the ninth and tenth-century Muslim world, and made their geonim the object of innumerable enquiries on matters of law and conduct from as far afield as North Africa and Spain; these are frequently revealing about Jewish communal life and the outside world insofar as it impinged upon it.[16]

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[11] On the Palestinian gaonate and the academy of Jerusalem see Mann, *Jews under the Fatimid Caliphs*, 1.41–74.

[12] The first exilarch in Muslim times was a certain Bustanai, but the sources about him (see under *Bustanai Legend* in Bibliography I below) are legendary and tendentious. See Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 5.458–81 (nn. 11–13); Tyckocinski, "Bustanāy Rōsh ha-Gōla;" Goode, "The Exilarchate in the Eastern Caliphate;" Baron, *SRHJ*, 3.270 n. 20; Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia*, 5.124–27; Gil, "Ha-mifgāsh ha-bavlī;" *idem*, "The Exilarchate."

[13] Cf. Baron, *SRHJ*, 6.154: "The fifth to the ninth centuries, far from being, as is often alleged, an era of intellectual sterility, were the heyday of midrashic literature." These *midrashīm* are, however, extremely difficult to date; see Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash*, 52–54, 254–393, for discussion of dating and presentation of the main texts.

[14] Schirmann, "Hebrew Liturgical Poetry and Christian Hymnology," 126–46; an easy introduction is given with translations of a number of poems in Wallenstein, *Some Unpublished Piyyutim*, and Carmi, *Hebrew Verse*.

[15] E.g. an apocalyptic poem composed in response to the Persian occupation of Jerusalem (see under Eliezer ben Qilir in Bibliography I below) and a poem lamenting the death of Jews in the earthquake of 749 in Syria (references given by Tsafrir and Foerster, "The Dating of the 'Earthquake of the Sabbatical Year, '" 231–35).

[16] An overview of the subject is given by Fawzi, "The Jewish Academy in Abbasid Iraq."

PERSIAN SOURCES[17]

{241} Internal crises in the late fifth and early sixth century and the escalating conflict with its rival Byzantium had impelled the Sasanian empire towards greater administrative and ideological entralisation focused on the capital at Ctesiphon and the person of the emperor. When the capital was seized by the Muslims, the front-line province of Iraq occupied and the dynasty ousted, resistance organised from the centre was made impossible and could only take the form of scattered local rebellions and thrusts from the eastern fringes. Accustomed to close association with and support from the Sasanian state, the Zoroastrian establishment foundered and very soon became marginalised. Assimilation to Arab Muslim society and culture was rapid and thorough,[18] and almost nothing of the religious tradition of Persia made its way into Islam. So although the influence of Iran upon Muslim civilisation was great, it was precisely within the framework of Islam that this influence operated.[19]

{242} Historiography in Sasanian times was chiefly represented by national epics, notably the Khwadāy nāmag ("Book of Lords"), which, though they may themselves have survived excerpted in later works, were presumably not continued.[20] Persian culture enjoyed a certain resurgence in the later ninth and tenth centuries

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[17] The Persian language between ca. 300 BC and AD 950 is designated by the term Middle Persian. Pahlavi properly means "Parthian," but came in time to imply "ancient, heroic" and so became used in the Islamic period to refer to Middle Persian, the only ancient Iranian language then still known. Middle Persian was gradually replaced by New Persian, which is phonetically and grammatically very similar, but was written in Arabic script and borrowed many words from other Iranian dialects and Arabic (see Lazard, "The Rise of the New Persian Language").

Persian texts of the early Islamic period are surveyed by Tavadia, *Mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur*; Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature;" Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, 25–60; de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Literature after the Muslim Conquest." For writings by Persians in Arabic see Spuler, "The Evolution of Persian Historiography;" Danner, "Arabic Literature in Iran;" *EIr*, *s.v.* "Arabic iv. Arabic Literature in Iran." Sources for early Islamic Iran in general are reviewed by Spuler, *Iran in frühislamischer Zeit*, xv–xxxii.

[18] Bosworth, "The Tahirids and Arabic Culture."

[19] In the field of literature the principal contribution lies in mirrors for princes and manuals of statecraft (Bosworth, "Administrative Literature," 165–67), and wisdom writings (see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Andarz," and Shaked, *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam*, Part 2); see also Bosworth, "Persian Impact on Arabic Literature." Note that the mediators of the Persian tradition in Islam were chiefly secretaries at the Abbasid court, who were in general Aramean Christians rather than Iranian Zoroastrians. An overview is given by Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 108–12.

[20] See Yarshater, "Iranian National History." It is usually thought that Arabic writings on the Sasanids were based on these works, either directly or via the translation of Ibn al-Muqaffa' and others (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, xx–xxiii; *idem*, *Das iranische Nationalepos*, 14–16; Shahbazi, "On the Xwadāy-Nāmag").

once Persian dynasties had been established,[21] and this was no less true of history writing. Largely, however, this consisted in the translation of Arabic models such as Ṭabarī (effected in 963 by Abū ʿAlī Baʿamī, a Samanid vizier), and the composition of local chronicles. The latter are, for the most part, Islamic history. The Tārīkh-i Sīstān, for example, speaks of the birth of Muḥammad as the most significant event for his province and, as far as the seventh and eighth centuries are concerned, details the actions of Muslim governors, the campaigns of Muslim rebels and the progress of Islam in the region. In addition, the sources of these works are chiefly Muslim records and histories, otherwise local oral tradition.[22] Thus Narshakhī, who completed a history of Bukhara in 943 for a Samanid ruler, imparts information about the grand mosque of Bukhara on the authority of his teacher, "an old man," and of "trustworthy friends."[23]

Zoroastrian lore continued to be transmitted, and in the ninth century it began to be set down; but it represented the literature of an already moribund society and so was concerned with preserving the glorious tradition of the past, not recording the decadence of the present. **{243}** And except for question-and-answer collections, which frequently discuss such issues as apostasy and relations with non-Zoroastrians,[24] this literature is largely inward-looking, concentrating on the life and heritage of its own community. The frustration and anguish felt by the native population of Iran as a result of the loss of its suzerainty and traditional way of life is intimated by apocalyptic expressions and frequent uprisings, but it is nowhere documented.[25]

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[21] See Frye, "Die Wiedergeburt Persiens um die Jahrtausendwende;" Richter-Bernberg, "Linguistic Shuʿubiyya and Early Neo-Persian Prose." Political and even religious restoration was also attempted, but by this time most of the Iranian nobility and clergy had already gone over to Islam and one mostly sees only Muslim successor states using Sasanian titulature and making occasional displays of anti-Muslim zeal; see Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title Shāhānshāh." The importance of the emergence of Iranian dynasties for history writing is noted by Spuler, "Evolution of Persian Historiography," 128–29.

[22] Lambton, "An Account of the *Tdrikhi Qumm*," 587.

[23] Narshakhī, *History of Bukhara*, 49, 51.

[24] Examples of such are given by de Menasce, "Problèmes des mazdéens dans l'Iran musulman;" Choksy, "Zoroastrians in Muslim Iran;" see also Kreyenbroek, "The Zoroastrian Priesthood after the Fall of the Sasanian Empire." The earliest composed in Islamic times are the *Dādistān ī dēnīg* ("Religious Judgments") of Manushchihr, high priest of the Persian Zoroastrian community in the late ninth century, and the *Rivāyat* of his nephew and successor Emed i Ashawahishtan from the mid-tenth century (see de Menasce, "La 'Rivāyat de Ēmēt i Ašavahištān;'" *idem*, "Zoroastrian Literature after the Muslim Conquest," 547–53; *EIr*, *s.v.* "Dādestān ī Dēnīg").

[25] This point is also made by Spuler, *Iran in frühislamischer Zeit*, 25. See the entries on "Persian Texts" and on the "Age of Adversity" in Chapters 8 and 12 below respectively; for some aspects of the impact of the Muslim conquests upon Iraq and Iran see the articles by Morony listed in Bibliography II below.

CHINESE SOURCES[26]

The Chinese had hardly even heard of the Arabs before the seventh century, but then in 638 the T'ang emperor T'ai-tsung received a plea from the Persian ruler Yazdgird III for help in repelling the Arabs who had invaded his realm, and in 651 an embassy arrived from the king of the Arabs bearing tribute and gifts. Until as late as 737 various offspring of Yazdgird frequented the T'ang court in the hope of obtaining aid to oust the Arabs, and the latter's continual advance eastwards was accompanied by a number of missions to the Chinese capital intended to demonstrate their friendship.[27] By the mid-eighth century **{244}** an Arab military presence was established in Tukharistan, Transoxania and the Farghana region. And it was here, in 751, that Arab troops finally clashed with a Chinese army on the Talas river and soundly defeated it. Both forces were considerably over-extended and so the encounter was not in any way decisive, but Arab-T'ang relations now became more prominent and it was most likely in the aftermath of this encounter that the following two Chinese accounts of the Arabs were composed.

T'ung tien

In 801 Tu Yu presented his encyclopaedic administrative tract, the *T'ung tien*, to the throne. He had begun it as long ago as 768 while serving at Yang-chou on the staff of his patron Wei Yiian-fu, military governor of Huai-nan. Tu Yu was a political thinker on a grand scale, and this original draft dealt with the whole history of human institutions from earliest times down to the end of the reign of emperor Hsian-tsung (712–56). Over the years he continued to add material on new and important developments. Large sections of the work were not written by Tu Yu himself, but were taken over integrally from the *Cheng tien* of Liu Chih (d. *ca.* 760), a political treatise in historical form, and from the *K'ai-yiian li*, the official ritual code completed in 732.[28]

One of the additions is a piece on "the western barbarians" (*Hsi jung*), five chapters that provide a history of China's relations with those peoples on its western frontiers. At the very end there is an entry on the Arabs, which contains two introductory paragraphs found also in the official *T'ang History* (see next entry) and a pas-

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[26] For a recent and readable overview of China at this time see Ebrey and Gregory, *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, 1–44 ("the Religious and Historical Landscape"); the standard reference work is Twitchett and Fairbank, *Cambridge History of China 3*. On early Arab-Chinese contacts see Broomhall, *Islam in China*, esp. 5–21; Mason, "The Mohammedans of China;" Drake, "Mohammedanism in the T'ang Dynasty." Further literature can be obtained from Israeli, *Islam in China: a Bibliography*.

[27] For relations between China and Yazdgird and his scions see Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue occidentaux*, 171–73; Harmatta, "The Middle Persian-Chinese Bilingual Inscription," 373–76. Gibb, *The Arab Conquest in Central Asia*, gives a good account of the Muslim advance to the east in the early eighth century.

[28] This paragraph is based on Twitchett, *Official History under the T'ang*, 104–107.

sage from the *Ching-hsing chi* of Tu Huan. The latter was taken prisoner after the battle of Talas and incarcerated in Iraq for some time before being allowed to return to China in 762. His account is, therefore, based on **{245}** personal experience, but from the few extracts from it given by Tu Yu we cannot tell whether it was a book or simply a travel diary:[29]

> During the Yung-hui reign period (650–56) of the Great T'ang, the Arabs (*Ta-shih*) sent an embassy to the court to present tribute. It is said that their country is west of Persia (*Po-ssu*). Some [also] say that in the beginning there was a Persian who supposedly had the help of a spirit in obtaining edged weapons [with which] he killed people, subsequently calling for all the Persians to become his followers. There were eleven Persians who came and, according to their rank as *mo-shou*[30] were transformed into kings. After this the masses gradually gave their allegiance, and subsequently Persia was extinguished and Byzantium (*Fu-lin*) was crushed, as were also Indian cities; [the Arabs] were everywhere invincible. Their soldiers numbered 420,000 and by this time their state was 34 years old.[31] When the original king had died, his office passed to the first *mo-shou*, and now the king was the third *mo-shou*.[32] The royal surname is *Ta-shih*.
>
> The men of this country have noses that are large and long, and they are slender and dark with abundant facial hair like the Indians; the women are graceful. [The Arabs] also have literature that is different from that of Persia. They raise camels, horses, donkeys, mules, and sheep. The soil **{246}** is all sandy and stony, unfit for cultivation and without the five grains. All they have to eat is the flesh of camels and elephants. After having crushed Persia and Byzantium, for the first time they had rice and flour. They solemnly worship a celestial spirit. It is also said that their king once sent men to take a ship loaded with provisions and set sail across the sea. When they had sailed for eight years without reaching the western shore, they saw in the middle of the ocean a squarish rock on top of which was a tree with red branches and green leaves. Up in the tree, in clusters, grew little mannikins six or seven inches long. When these saw the men, they did not speak, but

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[29] The following is from Tu Yu, *T'ung tien*, CXCIII, as translated by Wakeman, *Western Barbarians*, 892–925. I have incorporated a few of his explanations, but those terms of which he was unsure I have left in transliteration. Those wishing commentary should consult Wakeman's work.

[30] Wakeman, *Western Barbarians*, 901–904 n. 420, says that this word has the sense of "most senior." Since the ancient pronunciation of *mo-shou* would have been *mua-hsieu*, he suggests that it might originally have been a transcription of the Arabic *mu'adhdhin* ("prayer announcer"). This in no way suits the context; possibly meant is *muhajir* ("emigrant"), a term applied in the Prophet's biography to those who followed him in emigrating from Mecca to Medina.

[31] That is, by the time of the embassy, but this occurred in 651/AH 30–31; see n. 43 below.

[32] That is, 'Uthmān (644–56).

they all were able to smile and move their arms and legs. Their heads were attached to the branches of the tree. If a man picked one and put it in his hand, it would wither and turn black. [The king's] envoys took one branch and brought it back and today it is in the Arab royal residence.

Tu Huan's *Ching-hsing chi* says: Another name [for the capital] is Kufa (*Ya-chii-lo*).[33] The Arab king is called *mti-men*,[34] and his capital is located at this place. Both men and women are handsome and tall, their clothing is bright and clean, and their manners are elegant. When a woman goes out in public, she must cover her face irrespective of her lofty or lowly social position. They perform ritual prayers five times a day. They eat meat, fast and they regard the butchering of an animal as meritorious. They wear silver belts about the waist from which they suspend silver daggers. They prohibit the drinking of wine and forbid music. When people squabble among themselves, they do not come to blows. There is also a ceremonial hall which accommodates tens of thousands of people.[35] Every seven days the king comes out to perform religious services; he mounts a **{247}** high pulpit and preaches the law to the multitudes. He says: "Human life is very difficult, the path of righteousness is not easy, and adultery is wrong. To rob or steal, in the slightest way to deceive people with words, to make oneself secure by endangering others, to cheat the poor or oppress the lowly – there is no sin greater than one of these. All who are killed in battle against the enemies [of Islam] will achieve paradise. Kill the enemies and you will receive happiness beyond measure."

The entire land has been transformed; the people follow [the tenets of Islam] like a river its channel, the law is applied only with leniency and the dead are interred only with frugality. Whether inside the walls of a great city or only inside a village gate, the people lack nothing of what the earth produces. [Their country] is the hub of the universe where myriad goods are abundant and inexpensive, where rich brocades, pearls and money fill the shops while camels, horses, donkey and mules fill the streets and alleys. They cut sugar cane to build cottages resembling Chinese carriages. Whenever there is a holiday the nobility are presented with more vessels of glass and flasks and bowls of brass than can be counted. The white rice and white flour are not different from those of China. Their fruits include the peach and also thousand-year dates. Their rape turnips, as big as a peck, are round and their taste is very delicious, while their other vegetables are like those of other countries. The grapes are as large as hen's eggs. The most highly esteemed of their fragrant oils are two: one called jasmine and the other called myrrh. The most esteemed of their fragrant herbs are [also] two… Chinese arti-

[33] Presumably a transcription of 'Aqula, that is, Kufa, which would have been the Abbasid seat when Tu Huan arrived in Iraq.

[34] Presumably an attempt to render *amīr al-mu'minūn*.

[35] That is, the congregational mosque at Kufa.

sans have made the first looms for weaving silk fabrics and are the first gold and silversmiths and painters[36] also have camels and horse-drawn vehicles. Of their horses tradition says that those born of union between dragons and mares on the coast of the Persian Gulf have the belly small and the feet and ankles long; the good **{248}** ones do 1000 *li* in a day.[37] Their camels are small and fast, have a single hump, and the good ones can do 1000 *li* in a day. There are also ostriches four feet tall and more with feet resembling those of camels; a man can ride on its neck a distance of five or six *li* and its egg is as big as three pints. There is also the *chi* tree which has fruit like summer dates that can be used to make oil for food and to cure malaria.

The climate is warm and the land is without ice and snow. The people all suffer from malaria and dysentery; in the space of a year five out of ten die. Today [the Arabs] have absorbed forty or fifty countries, all of them reduced to subjugation, [the Arabs] parcelling out their troops so as to secure their territory all the way to the Western ocean. It is also said that Zarang is over 700 *li* southwest of Amul. Those Persians whose surname is Chu are from this country. Their city is fifteen *li* square and they have used iron to make the gates of their city. In the city there are salt ponds and also two Buddhist establishments. Its territory measures 140 *li* east to west and 180 *li* north to south. Villages come one after another and there are trees so close together that they cast interlocking shadows circling them completely; there is quicksand everywhere. To the south there is a large river which flows into their territory and is divided into several hundred canals which irrigate the entire region. The land is fertile and its people clean. The walls [of the buildings] are tall and thick and the bazaar is level; the wood is carved and, further, the floors are painted. There are also fine cotton fabrics and lambskin coats, the value of the best of which is estimated at several hundred pieces of silver. The fruits they have include red peaches, white crabapples, white and yellow plums, and melons, the big ones being called *hsun-chih* of which but one is enough to make a meal for ten men, and *yüeh-kua* which are over four feet long. Vegetables include turnips, radishes, long onions, round onions, cabbage, Asian wild rice, creeping beans, in **{249}** digo, *tan-ta*, sweet fennel, shallots, bottle gourds and grapes which are especially abundant. There are also oxen, wild horses, ducks and rock chickens.

It is their custom to take the fifth month as [the beginning of] the year. Every year they give each other gifts of painted jars. There is a bath festival and a swing festival. The Arab governor of the eastern marches resides here and from here all the way to the Persian Gulf Arabs and Persians dwell mixed together. As to their customs, they worship Heaven and do not eat the meat of animals dead of natural causes or meat kept overnight. They smear their hair with fragrant oil.

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[36] See Pelliot, "Des artisans chinois à la capitale abbaside en 762."

[37] A *li* is just over half a kilometer, about a third of a mile.

> It is further said that Syria (*Shan kuo*) is on the western border of the Arabs and has a circumference of several thousand *li*. They build houses with tile roofs and pile up stones to make walls. Rice and grain are very cheap. There is a large river flowing eastward which enters Kufa. Merchants are constantly going and coming, buying and selling grain. The people are large in stature and their clothing is voluminous, somewhat resembling the gown of a Confucian scholar. Syria has five military governorships with over 10,000 soldiers and horses. On the north it borders the Khazar Turks. North of the Khazars are other Turks whose feet resemble those of oxen and who like to eat human flesh.

The Official T'ang History

History writing suffered as a result of the break up of the T'ang empire in the late ninth and early tenth century. The Later T'ang (923–36) achieved a measure of stability, but though in 926 a commissioner was appointed by the emperor Ming-tsung to seek records, an official history could not be written as this would have invalidated the claim of the Later T'ang to be a continuation of the T'ang dynasty proper. With the rise of the Chin dynasty in 936 this objection was removed, and in **{250}** 941 the emperor Kao-tsu ordered the compilation of a full-scale dynastic history of the T'ang. The work was completed and presented to the new emperor Shao-ti in 945 by the chief minister and director of the National History, Liu Hsü. This is the *Chiu T'ang shu* ("Old T'ang History"), which contains some 200 chapters and is made up of basic annals (bare records of reigns, appointments and events), monographs on various subjects and biographies. A century later the imperial decree went out for a revised version, the result of which was the *Hsin T'ang shu* ("New T'ang History"), compiled chiefly by Ou-yang Hsiu and presented to the throne in 1060.[38]

One section of one chapter is devoted to the Arabs.[39] This has much in common with Tu Yu's account in the *T'ung tien*, but is also able to supplement it with other material. There is no event mentioned later than the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809), so the whole chapter may have seen its first draft at that time, but later editorial activity is almost certain to have taken place. Furthermore, the two versions of the *T'ang History*, the old and the new, though containing much the same information, present it in different order with numerous subtle changes in wording, omissions and additions. The section in the new version is cited here, since the corresponding one in the old version has not yet been translated, but it must be borne in mind that a detailed comparison between the two as well as with the *T'ung tien* would be necessary before a verdict on their sources on the Arabs could be given:

> The Arab country was originally part of Persia. The men have high noses, are black and bearded. The women are very fair, and when they go out they veil the

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[38] The sources and methods of redaction are described by Twitchett, *Official History under the T'ang*, 191–236.

[39] There are also a few scattered references to the Arabs in the rest of the work, for which see Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue occidentaux*, *s.v.* "Ta-che."

face. Five times daily they worship God. They wear silver girdles with silver knives suspended [from them]. They do not drink wine nor use music. Their place of worship will accommodate several hundreds of people. Every seventh day the king sits on high and speaks to those below saying: "Those who are killed by the enemy will be born in heaven above; those who slay the **{251}** enemy will receive happiness." Therefore they are usually valiant fighters. Their land is sandy and stony and not fit for cultivation, so they hunt and eat flesh. They cut sugar cane to build cottages resembling carriages, and they give presents to the nobles every year.[40] There are large grapes the size of hen's eggs. They have excellent horses, born from dragons and which can travel 1000 *li* in one day.

In the middle of the Ta-yeh reign period of the Sui dynasty (605–17) there was a Persian shepherding on the hills of Medina. A beast spoke to him saying: "On the western side of the hill there are three caves in one of which there are sharp swords and a black stone with an inscription in white saying that whoever possesses it will become king." The man went and found everything as stated. The inscription on the stone said that he should rebel, so he gathered followers together at the stream *Hen Ko*. They robbed merchants and built a stronghold in the western parts, and the man made himself king. He removed the black stone there and regarded it as precious. The people went to punish and suppress him, but they were all badly defeated. From this time he became still stronger and destroyed Persia and Byzantium, thereby for the first time gaining access to abundant stocks of millet and wheat, and invaded India and other countries. He had even as many as 400,000 soldiers. The territories of Samarkand and Tashkent were tributary to him. His lands embraced an area of 10,000 *li*. To the east they reached as far as the Turgesh; to the southwest they were bordered by the sea.[41]

{252} In the second year of the Yung-hui reign period (651) the Arab king, Kan-mi-mo-mo-ni,[42] first sent an envoy to the Chinese court with tribute, who said that the kings of the Arab country had possessed the rule for 34 years and that he was the second king.[43] In the beginning of the K'ai-yüan reign period (713–42) an envoy was again sent, with a present of horses and a magnificent girdle. At the

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[40] Behbehani, "Arab-Chinese Military Encounters," 94, makes a connection between the two parts of this sentence: "…and present them to the nobles every year," in which case the "carriage-shaped huts" made of sugar-cane are probably some sort of sweet.

[41] The *Hsin T'ang shu* continues with an account of a race out in the sea called *Po-pa-li*, which is not found in the *Chiu T'ang shu*. The latter includes the account of the discovery of a tree with mannikins in its branches found in the *T'ung tien* (cited above), and this is absent from the *Hsin T'ang shu*.

[42] Most likely an attempt to transliterate *amīr al-mu'minīn* ("commander of the faithful"); thus Mason, "The Mohammedans of China," 66.

[43] The date suggests 'Uthmān; for the idea that he was the second king and that Abū Bakr had a different function see Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 111–13. This oddity and the fact that AH 34 is not 651 is noted by Mason, "The Mohammedans of China," 66.

audience the envoy stood without doing obeisance. The civil officials were about to impeach him, but the Grand Secretary Chang-shuo said that it was a difference of custom, and to desire to observe one's own rites was not to be counted a crime, so [the emperor] Hsüan-tsung forgave him. When the envoy came to take leave, he said that in his country they only worship God and do not do obeisance when seeing the king. The civil officials reproved him and then he did obeisance. In the fourteenth year [of the K'ai-yüan reign period = 726] another envoy was sent, named Sulayman, with presents of local products, who did obeisance and was given a red robe and girdle.

It is said that there was among the Arabs a tribe called *Ku-lieh* (presumably Quraysh) with hereditary chieftains, who were known as the white-coated Arabs. They comprised two clans, the Banū Marwān (*P'en-ni-mo-huan*) and the Banu Hāshim (*P'en-ni-hsi-shen*). There was a clever, valiant man named Muḥammad (*Mo-ho-mo*), and the people chose him for their ruler. He extended his possessions 3000 *li* in area and conquered the town *Hsia-la*. The fourteenth ruler was Marwan (*Mo-huan*), who killed his brother Yazīd (*I-chi*) and seized the throne. He was very cruel and his subjects were consequently discontented. A person from *Mu-lu* in Khurasan (*Hu-lo-shan*), called Abū Muslim (*Ping Po-si-lin*), **{253}** plotted to overthrow Marwān. He announced to the people that whoever was on his side should put on black clothes. He soon collected an army of several thousand men and slew Marwān. Abū l-'Abbās (*A-po-la-pa*), of the clan of Hāshim, was chosen king, and henceforward they were known as the black-coated Arabs. After his death his brother Abū Ja'far (*A-p'u kung-fo*) ascended the throne. In the early Chih-te reign period (756) the king sent an embassy to China. [The emperor] Tai-tsung retook with the help of [the caliph's] army both capitals [of China].[44] Mahdī (*Mi-ti*) succeeded Abū Ja'far, and he was followed by his younger brother Hārūn (*Ho-lun*). During the Chen-yüan reign period (785–805) the black-coated Arabs began a war with Tibet, and the Tibetans were obliged every year to send an army against the Arabs. On this account the Chinese frontier enjoyed more peace. In the year fourteen of the Chen-yüan reign period (798) the Arabs despatched three ambassadors to the Chinese court.[45]

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[44] This refers to a rebellion led by An Lu-shan, which took the two capitals Luo-Yang and Ch'ang-an and obliged the emperor Hsüan-tsung to flee. With the help of mercenaries, among them Arabs, his son Su-tsung (756–62) regained the capitals and his successor Tai-tsung (762–79) finally quashed the revolt (see Mason, "The Mohammedans of China," 67).

[45] Ou-yang Hsiu, *Hsin T'ang shu* CCXXIb, 6262–64 (this text continues with a long ethno-geographical excursus, but Liu Hsu, *Chiu T'ang shu* CXCVIII, 5315–16, stops here). The translation of the first three paragraphs is from Mason, "The Mohammedans of China," 66–69, supplemented by Bretschneider, *The Knowledge Possessed by the Ancient Chinese of the Arabs*, 6–10, which I cite for the translation of the last paragraph. I have also made occasional recourse to the translation of this section by Behbehani, "Arab-Chinese Military Encounters," 93–98, which includes the ethno-geographical excursus (note that his translation is

Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei

Having achieved stabilisation and reunification, the early Sung emperors sought to exercise their patronage over the scholarly elite and so **{254}** sponsored a series of massive official compilations, the great literary enterprises later known as the "Four Great Books of the Sung Dynasty" (*Sung-ch'ao ssu ta shu*). The fourth of these, the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei*, was an afterthought. Commissioned by Chen-tsung in 1005 and completed in 1013, it is an enormous historical encyclopaedia extending to a thousand chapters and covering the whole sweep of history to the end of the Five Dynasties in 960. Amongst the reams of information is a useful list of embassies to the T'ang court. Many were sent by the Arabs in the period 715–51, usually to present gifts or to attend a New Year ceremony, and many came from Central Asian rulers asking for help against the Arabs.[46]

from the *Hsin T'ang shu*, not, as he claims, from the *Chiu T'ang shu*). I am very grateful to Dr. Naomi Standen for advice on a number of points to do with this section.

[46] The work is described by Twitchett, *Official History under the T'ang*, 117–18. For its notices relevant to the Arabs see Chavannes, "Notes additionnelles sur les Tou-hiue occidentaux," *s.v.* "Ta-che;" Gibb, "Chinese Records of the Arabs in Central Asia;" Behbehani, "Arab-Chinese Military Encounters," 75–77 n. 55.

PART IIB.
DELIBERATE REFERENCES TO ISLAM

CHAPTER 8.
APOCALYPSES AND VISIONS[1]

{257} The first writings to deal specifically, rather than incidentally, with the Muslim challenge come in the form of apocalypses. These constitute a cognitive and consolatory enterprise, an attempt to render meaningful and endurable a traumatic situation, notably cultural and political oppression by a foreign power, but also the suffering inherent in everyday existence; they therefore remain popular long after the original crisis has passed. Apocalypses may, in addition, serve a paraenetic function, a plea to the faithful not to weaken in the face of present-day trials, but to hold out for impending deliverance.

Such texts take the form of prophecies or visions of the future, and are often attributed to some past figure renowned for piety and/or learning, who is portrayed as actually beholding "what men are to suffer in the last times," a device which lends both authority and immediacy to the prediction. Their principal theme is the age-old struggle between the agents of Light and the servants of Darkness, between the kingdom of God and the realm of Satan, the drama of which is conveyed by **{258}** an extravagant use of stock images and metaphors, most frequently relating to animals, numbers and celestial beings, much of this having its origins in scripture and ancient Greek and Near Eastern mythology. The conclusion is the victory of the forces of Good over those of Evil, and the onset of the Messianic era. Within these bounds, however, much variation of form and content is possible.

The arrival of the Millennium is heralded by a number of signs and events, the first of which, though presented as still to come, are from the writer's own time (*vaticinia ex eventu*). Thus he gains the reader's confidence that the end really is near

[1] For an illustration of the scope and variety of this genre see Volume 14 of the journal *Semeia* and Hellholm, *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East* (the second edition has a supplementary bibliography at 795–825). A good general introduction is provided by Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 132, and see the entry on "Apocalypticism" in Chapter 1 above for a discussion of the prevalence of apocalyptic in the seventh and eighth-century Middle East. There will be no attempt made to separate texts into genuine and *dubia* as in other chapters, since all the examples here, even if some concern a later time, contain elements of apocalypses composed in our period.

and that the ensuing prophecy is genuine. Dating an apocalypse depends upon whether one can recognise contemporary references and distinguish the point at which their mention leaves off and eschatological history commences. This task is hampered by use of obscure imagery and ambiguous allusions, the intrusion of stock *vaticinia* such as plague and invasion and tyrannical rule, and by the subtle play that takes place between historical reality and religious fiction, the latter impinging upon and shaping the former. Expectations about what should be happening on the eve of the end, known from various authoritative works of the past, have repercussions upon an apocalyticist's account of what is happening. Moreover, texts were frequently reworked, their prophecies brought up to date, their character and motifs adapted to changed situations. But though their usefulness in reconstructing events is limited, particularly as one needs to know the historical context in order to be able to site and interpret them, apocalypses are extremely effective and sensitive indicators of a people's hopes, fears and frustrations.[2]

As a response to the Arabs apocalypses served two aims. Ranged as they were with the sons of Darkness, the Arabs were kept at a distance, presented as an object of vilification rather than a subject for study, and were to be opposed by all who would consider themselves on the side of the angels. Secondly, by their emphasis on the imminence of the day when Good will triumph, apocalypses made clear the advisability of steadfastness and the risk implicit in selling out, lurid descriptions **{259}** often being given of the horrible fate in store for those who defect to the godless.

SYRIAC TEXTS[3]

Eastern Christians had a shared eschatological heritage that was a simple but powerful blend of a few core ingredients. Most important was a small selection of ideas and prophecies from the Old and New Testaments, especially Daniel's four world kingdoms and Christ's description in Matthew xxiv of the events preceding his Second Coming, as well as the notion that the earth had a limited and calculable term corresponding to the six days of Creation, a day being a thousand years in God's sight. Yet out of these same basic themes and constituents the various Christian groups of the East fashioned visions of the future of a remarkably diverse nature and which themselves varied over time as the present followed paths unforeseen leading to situations unpredicted.

The Syriac apocalypses of the seventh century are very much concerned with presenting a particular conception of history, one that is largely inspired by the Old Testament books of Judges and Daniel. These both elaborate a highly schematised world view: Daniel posits a succession of four world empires culminating in the arrival of the Antichrist and then the Son of Man; Judges draws up a picture of the

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[2] See Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources," whose characterisation of apocalypses as chronicles written in the future tense seems to me rather optimistic.

[3] The texts discussed here appear in the survey of Brock, "Syriac Sources for Seventh-Century History," 33–36.

children of Israel being alternately overrun by a barbarian people, when they provoke God's anger by their iniquity, and rescued by a deliverer, when they secure His pity by their entreaties to Him. By the seventh century the Christians were understood as the children of Israel and the pattern of four kingdoms had largely stabilised as Babylonians, Medes/Persians, Greeks and Romans, the last a Christian kingdom that would last until the Second Coming of Christ.[4] The Arabs challenged this traditional outlook, claiming themselves to be God's most favoured people and, by their military successes, making a mockery of Byzantium's pretensions to invincibility. The need to write the Arabs into apocalyptic history, while reserving for Christians the position of **{260}** primacy, called forth much creativity and ingenuity, the most imaginative product of which was the figure of the Last Emperor, an idealised Christian ruler in the image of Alexander the Great, Constantine and Jovian, who would come to oust the Arabs, champion the faith and usher in the Millennium.[5]

Ps.-Ephraem

The first Syriac apocalypse to appear in Islamic times is a very short composition entitled "a sermon of the holy lord Ephraem on the end and completion, the judgement and exaction, on Gog and Magog and on the false messiah." This attribution to the famous fourth-century writer and hymnist Ephraem the Syrian is suspect, as is indicated by the inclusion of a section on the Arabs, which begins:

> A people shall rise up from the desert, the offspring of Hagar, handmaid of Sarah, who hold to the covenant (*qyāmâ*) of Abraham, the husband of Sarah and Hagar. They are awakened to come in the name of the Ram (*dekrâ*), the messenger (*izgadâ*) of the Son of Perdition. And there will be a sign in the sky as says our Lord in his Gospel (Matthew xxiv.30)… The plunderers (*shabbāyê*) will spread over the earth, in the valleys and on mountain tops, and they will enslave women, children and men, old and young… (much emotive description of killing, looting and enslavement ensues)… They open roads in the mountains and paths in the valleys. They will plunder to the ends of creation and take possession of the cities. Lands will be ravaged and corpses abound upon the earth. All peoples will be laid low before the plunderers. And just when the peoples had endured long on the earth and were hoping that now would come peace, they (the plunderers) will exact tribute and all will **{261}** indeed fear them. Injustice will increase upon the

[4] See de Boer, "Rome, the 'Translatio Imperii' and the Early Christian Interpretation of Daniel II and VII," together with the emendment of Casey, "The Fourth Kingdom in Indicopleustes and the Syrian Tradition."

[5] On the inspiration for this character see Reinink, "Die syrischen Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende von römischen Endkaiser," and *idem*, "PseudoMethodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser;" also of relevance is Kazhdan, "'Constantine imaginaire.'"

> earth and obscure the clouds. Wickedness will grow thick in creation and rise up to Heaven as smoke.[6]

This is a prompt for "the end of days" which fast ensue, signalled by the unleashing of the northern hordes imprisoned by Alexander, the re-establishment of the Roman empire, the coming of the Antichrist, of Enoch and Elias, and finally of the end of time itself. Bousset regarded the part concerning the Arabs as an interpolation into an otherwise fourth-century – or even earlier – text, chiefly because it seemed to him totally unrelated to the rest of the work.[7] But links could be found: the fighting described between the Romans and the Assyrians prior to the Arab incursions might intend the Byzantine-Persian wars of the early seventh century, and "the clamour of the persecuted" could be an allusion to the Chalcedonian persecution of the Monophysites in the 630s which the Arabs are meant to requite. It is, therefore, difficult to be certain whether we have here to do with the introduction of a new situation into old materials or with a reworking of old materials to suit a new situation.[8]

As regards the invading Arabs there is little interest in their character or motives. They come not for reasons of their own, but in response "to the clamour of the persecuted." And they are cast in their familiar Biblical role of descendants of Abraham via the slave woman Hagar, their servility and backwardness emphasised by the fact that they still hold to the covenant of Abraham, namely circumcision (cf. Genesis xvii.9–15, 23–26), from which the Christians as offspring of the free woman have been liberated (Galatians v.1–6). The designation of the Arabs as lackeys for the messenger of the Son of Perdition has no Biblical parallel, but that the Antichrist would have a herald is assumed by contemporary and earlier writers.[9] The only positive statement about **{262}** the Arabs, though unlikely to have been intended as such by the author, is the mention of their construction of roads and passes, suggestive of greater organisation than mere raiding.

For the rest of the passage the Arabs are portrayed simply as plunderers and their acts are described in particularly vivid and detailed terms:

> They take the wife away from her husband and slay him like a sheep. They throw the babe from her mother and drive her into slavery; the child calls out from the ground and the mother hears, yet what is she to do? And so it is trampled under

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[6] Ps.-Ephraem, *Sermon on the End of Times*, 61–62 (= Suermann, 15–17).

[7] Bousset, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Eschatologie," 116; followed by Suermann, *Geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 111–12.

[8] Reinink, "Pseudo-Ephraems 'Rede über das Ende, '" argues for the latter case and cites all relevant earlier literature. Some discussion is also given by McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 60.

[9] The term had first been applied to Arians, and in our period to Jews and iconoclasts as well as to Muḥammad (see Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 68–69). In the 620s Antiochus, monk of Mar Saba, applied the term (*prodromos tou antichristou*) to Athanasius, Jacobite patriarch of Antioch (*Pandecta*, *PG* 89, 1844B–C, Homily no. 130).

> the feet of the horses, camels and infantry… They separate the children from the mother like the soul from within the body, and she watches as they divide her loved ones from off her lap, two of them to go to two masters, herself to another… Her children cry out in lament, their eyes hot with tears. She turns to her loved ones, milk pouring forth from her breast: "Go in peace, my darlings, and may God accompany you."[10]

The concentration on killing and enslavement and the absence of references to acts of oppressive government beyond the introduction of taxation have led scholars to favour a date of composition soon after the first bout of conquests, *ca.* 640.[11] However, that the Arabs took large numbers of captives was remembered vividly by, and indeed continued to affect the lives of, non-Muslims into the eighth century.[12] Moreover, the author's statement, cited above, that "just when the peoples had endured long on the earth and were hoping that now would come peace, **{263}** they (the invaders) will exact tribute," suggests that the conquests had seemed to come to an end and were followed by a respite, perhaps intending Muʿāwiya's reign or the second Arab civil war. Might then the imposition of taxes refer to ʿAbd al-Malik's fiscal innovations in 692 and the opening of roads and paths relate to this caliph's well-known activities in that field?[13] This is a tempting hypothesis, since ps.-Ephraem could then be explained as a response to Islam's assertiveness like the various other apocalypses composed in the late seventh/early eighth century, but it is true that this text is far less detailed in its polemic than its hypothetical contemporaries.

Ps.-Methodius

The reign of Muʿāwiya is remembered as a time of peace and prosperity by Christians and Muslims alike, but the calm was not long to outlive him.[14] The second Arab civil war (683–92) and a devastating plague and famine (686–87) ushered in a number of years of turmoil, which in turn evoked fears and hopes of the end of the

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[10] Ps.-Ephraem, *Sermon on the End of Times*, 62 (= Suermann, 17–19).

[11] Thus Nöldeke, Sackur, Kmosko and Suermann; references are given by Reinink, "Pseudo-Ephraems 'Rede über das Ende,'" 456, who argues (*ibid.*, 455–62) that the text must have been written after 640 (conquest of north Syria and Mesopotamia) and before 683 (no reference to the second Arab civil war).

[12] See the entries on "Anastasius of Sinai" and "John bar Penkaye" in Chapters 3 and 5 above respectively, and the following two entries in this chapter.

[13] See Excursus F, no. iii, below. I owe this last suggestion to Dr. Lawrence Conrad.

[14] John bar Penkaye, 146/175 (tr. Brock, 61): "Justice flourished in his time and there was great peace in the regions under his control;" Lewond, IV (tr. Arzoumanian, 54): "There was a lasting peace during his reign." Ps.-Samuel of Qalamun (*Apocalypse*, 378/394), ps.-Pisentius of Qift (*Letter*, 302/446) and Baḥira (Syriac), 217/217 and 238, speak of an initial period of Christian-Muslim peace. For the Muslims it was a time when "wealth will abound among you" (Nuʿaym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, fol. 8a).

world. The Nestorian chronicler John bar Penkaye, a witness of these events, says that he "is aware that the end of the ages has arrived for us… Here are famines, earthquakes and plagues; only one thing is missing for us: the advent of the Deceiver."[15] And in the same year Jacob of Edessa felt compelled to translate from Greek into Syriac the *Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ*, a compilation of ecclesiastical canons introduced by a description of "the end of times."[16]

{264} It was against this background that our second Syriac apocalypse, attributed to Methodius, bishop of Olympus (d. 312), was composed, most likely in North Mesopotamia by a Melkite or Monophysite author and around the year 690, very near the expiry of the 70 years of rule which it allots to the Arabs.[17] It is a treatise, we are told in the preface, "about the succession of the kings and the end of time… about the generations and the kingdoms, how they were handed down in succession from Adam until today." Sure enough, we are taken on a trek through six millennia of history on to the "last millennium, namely the seventh, in which the kingdom of the Persians will be uprooted, and in which the sons of Ishmael will come out from the desert of Yathrib." The latter have been summoned by God "to be a chastisement in which there will be no mercy," a punishment for the unparallelled dissoluteness into which the Christian community had fallen. In performing their task, the Arabs commit the most heinous atrocities against the Christians: "captivity and slaughter," "exacting tribute even from the dead who lie in the ground;" "they will not pity the sick nor have compassion for the weak," "they will ridicule the wise, deride the legislators and mock the knowledgeable;" "wild animals and cattle will die, the trees of the forest will be cut, the most beautiful plants of the

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[15] John bar Penkaye, 165/192–93 (tr. Brock, 72).

[16] The work claims to be "translated from the Greek language to Syriac by the humble Jacob in the year 998 of the Greeks." That this Jacob should be identified with Jacob, bishop of Edessa, is suggested by the latter's proficiency in Greek, keen interest in ecclesiastical canons and time in office (684–88). See Drijvers, "The Testament of our Lord," who argues that the legal corpus is simply a translation, but that the apocalyptic part was added by Jacob himself; the indications in the text are too vague to permit confirmation of this.

[17] Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, X.6, XIII.2, XIII.4 (according to Ms. Vatican syr. 58). Baḥira (Syriac), 211/213, 211/236, also has "ten weeks of years," but the Mardin recension of the Syriac ps.-Methodius, the Greek translation and Baḥira (Arabic), 261/131, 264/134, have "seven weeks of years," i.e. 49 years (see also Excursus E, n. 19, below). This has been used as evidence for an earlier date of composition by some scholars (see Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 24–25), but the substitution is easily explained as the preference for a more charismatic number and symmetry with the seventh millennium. Note that the idea circulated among Muslims that their rule would expire after 70 or 71 years (Bashear, "Muslim Apocalypses and the Hour," 88; Ibn Hishām, 377–78; Maqdisī, *Bad'*, 2.156), and this was also known to the Mandeans (Lidzbarski, *Ginzā*, 414, 416). A brief discussion of ps.-Methodius is given by McGinn, *Visions of the End*, 70–76, and a thorough one by Reinink in the introduction to his translation of the text (see under ps.-Methodius in Bibliography I below).

mountains **{265}** will be ravaged,[18] opulent cities will be laid waste;" "they will make the sacred garments into clothing for themselves and their sons, they will tether their cattle in the shrines of the martyrs and in the burial places of the saints." The magnitude of the horrors is explained by the fact that "these barbarian rulers are not men, but sons of destruction and they set their faces toward destruction."[19] God's purpose in allowing all this to happen to his chosen ones is to sift the wheat from the chaff. "Not all those who are from Israel are Israel" says the author, citing Romans ix.6, and indeed, "a great many of those who are sons of the church will deny the true faith of the Christians, the Holy Cross and the lifegiving Mysteries. Without compulsion, torments or blows, they will deny Christ and put themselves on a par with the unbelievers (*kapure*)," "they will separate from the assembly of the Christians of their own accord." It is the worst of the Christians who will be believed and hold high rank, whereas "the trustworthy, the clerics, the wise and the good will be held in contempt."[20]

Then comes the tenth and last week. The Christians will suffer even greater hardship, persecution and oppression, whilst "those tyrants will be enjoying food and drink and rest, and they will be boasting of their victories… They will dress up like bridegrooms and adorn themselves as brides, and blaspheme saying: 'The Christians have no saviour.'" But suddenly, "the king of the Greeks will come out against them in great anger," and the Arabs will be made to endure one hundredfold what they inflicted upon the Christians. "There will be joy on the whole earth; men will dwell in great peace; the churches will be renewed, the cities rebuilt, and the priests set free from tax." This "final peace" is disrupted by an onslaught from the northern peoples and the emergence of the Antichrist. As soon as the latter is revealed, the king of the Greeks will go up and stand on Golgotha, and the Holy Cross will be put in that place where it had been erected when it bore Christ. And this Last Emperor will put his crown on top of the Holy Cross and **{266}** stretch out his hands to heaven, and he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father."[21]

This last portion of the apocalypse makes clear the chief concerns of its author. Patently he wishes to defend the traditional conception of history in which the Roman Empire is destined to last until the end of the world and to return the kingship to its divine owner.[22] Four chapters (VII–X) are devoted to reiterating Daniel's

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[18] Kedar, "The Arab Conquests and Agriculture," 7–8, adduces these last two *vaticinia* in his argument for the detrimental effects of the Arab invasion on agriculture. They do sound specific, but general lack of respect for God's creation may be intended.

[19] The Arab onslaught is described in ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XI.

[20] Apostasy is the subject of *ibid.*, XII.

[21] *Ibid.*, XIII.2–6 (afflictions of the tenth week), XIII. 11–13 (king of the Greeks), XIII. 14–17 (final peace), XIII. 18–21 (northern peoples), XIV (Antichrist and king of the Greeks).

[22] This point is made by Martinez, "The Apocalyptic Genre in Syriac," 341 ("the response to a crisis in the traditional understanding of history"), and by Reinink, "Ps.-Methodius: a Concept of History," 149–87.

schema of four empires and stressing that Christian Rome is the final one: "For what is the power or the kingdom or the nation under heaven that is mighty and strong enough to overcome the great power of the Holy Cross, in which the kingdom of the Greeks, which is that of the Romans, has taken refuge?" To preserve this view, the author had to prove that Muslim rule was merely a temporary phenomenon, and this he attempts to do in a number of different ways. He deliberately likens the fifth-millennium Ishmaelite predations (the Midianite wars of Judges vi–viii)[23] to the contemporary outbreak, so as to emphasise that just as at that time the Arabs conquered all nations and yet were expelled after 60 years, so too now, at the end of ten weeks of years, "they will be overcome by the kingdom of the Romans and be subjected to it, because it will have prevailed over all the kingdoms and will not be overcome by any of them, for it truly possesses the invincible weapon that conquers all."[24] Furthermore, the author never speaks of the "kingdom" (*malkūtā*) of the Ishmaelites, but only of "the chastisement of the sons of Ishmael;" they have no *raison d'être* of their own, but are merely a tool of God's ire. The evidence was mounting for a revision of the Danielic format, **{267}** to include the Muslims as one of the kingdoms. Unable to countenance and unwilling to conceive, however, of such a radical reordering of the prevailing world view, the writer opted for a strong restatement of the traditional theory, embellished with the innovative idea of a saviourlike Christian emperor who would any moment evict the Arabs and welcome God's rule on earth.

The spur to apocalyptic feelings was Islam's successes and assertiveness in the religious as well as the political sphere.[25] Since they had conquered the world, the Muslims could very persuasively argue that they were now God's chosen people and that "there is no saviour for the Christians."[26] This taunt immediately precedes the intercession of the Last Emperor, and from the long tirade in ps.-Methodius against renegades of Christ we may infer that the taunt was striking a nerve. The author neatly defuses the predicament by presenting the apostasy as all part of God's divine plan, a ferreting out of the pusillanimous and the irresolute: "For what reason will God turn away his sight from the help of the faithful so that they will have to endure these calamities? It is so that they might be tested and that the faithful might be separated from the unfaithful, the tares and the chaff from the choice wheat."[27] In

[23] Midianites and Ishmaelites are mentioned together in Genesis xxxvii.25–28 and Judges viii.22–28; an identification between the two was made by Josephus Flavius and then by Christian writers (e.g. Jerome, *Commentary on the Prophet Ezekiel* 8.XXV, *PL* 25, 233C).

[24] The fifth-millennium Ishmaelite incursion is treated in ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, V; for its typological use here see Reinink, "Ismael, der Wildesel in der Wüste."

[25] Reinink, "Ps.-Methodius: a Concept of History," 178–87, points to the coincidence of 'Abd al-Malik's reassertion of Arab rule, institution of tax and monetary reforms and completion of the Dome of the Rock, all in AH 72/691–92, as the most likely goad to the author's pen.

[26] Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XIII.6.

[27] *Ibid.*, XIII.4.

addition, apostasy is made out to be futile since the Arabs are to be extirpated any day now, and also downright dangerous, for "all the fierce anger of the king of the Greeks will run a full course with those who have denied [Christ]."[28]

The Edessene Ps.-Methodius and John the Little

Springing from the same background and exhibiting the same concerns are two Edessene apocalypses, one existing only as a fragment, the other – that of John the Little – forming part of a larger work entitled **{268}** the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*. Of the former there remains less than one folio dealing with pre-eschatological time, and we are given a glimpse merely of the last ten years and a half of Arab rule. It is a time when "their oppression will increase," when "the living will pass by the dead and say: 'Blessed are you who are not alive at this time,'" when "the rainfalls will decrease, the waters of the springs come to an end and the fruits of the trees and all the bounty of the ground fail from the impiety of the sons of Ishmael." But at the end of those years, "at the end of 694 years, then the king of the Greeks will come out" and the final drama begins. If one assumes that the author is counting from the birth of Christ and according to the Edessan era, then 694 years would take us to 691–92.[29] Despite divergence on numerous details the fragment is heavily dependent upon ps.-Methodius and it would seem to have been composed very shortly after it.[30]

The second text comprises three short revelations introduced by a résumé of the Gospel story: the first, by Simeon Kepha, laments the wretched state of the church and of the faith, particularly because of those who "divide our Lord" (i.e. non-Monophysites), but predicts a time when "they shall return and become one true flock and one holy church." The second, by the apostle James, narrates the career of Jerusalem, chiefly its transformation into a Christian city by Constantine, and the coming of one from his seed who shall govern the earth "in great peace." The final revelation, by John the Little, is the most elaborate of the three and attempts a revision of the Danielic drama, the four world empires now given as Rome, Persia, Media and Arabia.[31] Under Constantine, "a man who subdues all the peoples by the marvellous **{269}** sign that appeared to him in Heaven," Rome had flourished, but

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[28] *Ibid.*, XIII. 15.

[29] In the Edessan chronology Christ was born in AG 309 (Thomas the Presbyter, Chronicle, 97, following the mid-sixth-century Chronicle of Edessa\Jacob of Edessa, Letter to John the Stylite no. 7, 585–87/591–96); adding 694 = AG 1003 = 691–92.

[30] The text is discussed by Reinink, "Der edessenische Pseudo-Methodius" (36–38 for dating); for editions and translations see under ps.-Methodius (Edessan fragment) in Bibliography I below.

[31] John the Little's revelation, from which are drawn the ensuing quotes, is found in *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 15[*yh*]–21 [*ka*]/34–39 (I use the translation of Harris, which is largely faithful). The work is discussed by Drijvers ("The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles" and "Christians, Jews and Muslims in Northern Mesopotamia," 70–74), who suggests a date of composition at the end of 'Abd al-Malik's reign (d. 705).

thereafter the kings are "insolent, evil, idol-worshipping, godless" and "the Romans fall into fornication and adultery." To chastise them, God sends Persia, who "shall take away government from the earth," but who in their turn are delivered over to Media, a kingdom which, "because of their evil sins," "shall perish and cease to be."[32] And then suddenly:

> God shall send forth a mighty wind, the southern one, and there shall come forth from it a people of deformed aspect and their appearance and manners like those of women. And there shall rise up from among them a warrior and one whom they call a prophet, and they shall be brought into his hands… And the South shall prosper, and by the hooves of the horses of its armies it shall trample down and subdue Persia and devastate Rome.

As in ps.-Methodius, the Arabs are charged with taking many captives and much spoil and exacting heavy tribute, and there is contempt expressed for those Christians that collaborate with this "people of the land of the South:"

> All who take refuge with them shall prosper alongside them and they shall enslave to them men renowned in race; and there shall be among them hypocrites and men who know not God and regard not men except prodigals, fornicators and men wicked and vengeful.

Also as in ps.-Methodius it is described how, "in the end of their times," "all the more will they afflict those who confess our Lord Christ, for they shall hate to the very end the name of the Lord."

Among the Arabs there then breaks out civil war, towards the end of which the "man of the North" – clearly a hero in the image of Constantine, who was described earlier in the piece as one from among "the kings of the North" – shall join in the fray:

> **{270}** After these things the Lord shall be angered against them… and they shall be lifted up one against another and they shall make and become two parties and each party shall seek to call himself king and there shall be war between them… When the man of the North shall hear this report, … he shall summon to himself all the peoples of the earth and he will go forth… and the Lord shall cause the southern wind to return to the place from whence it came.

There the relation of John the Little ends, choosing not to elaborate any eschatological themes such as the final peace or the Antichrist, content simply to note that the Arabs shall thereafter be plagued with natural disasters and never wage wars again.

Baḥira

The Latin version of this apocalypse, which existed at least as early as the thirteenth century, opens as follows:

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[32] Media seems only to be included to make up the number of world empires to four.

> There begins the book of the monk Mariaon concerning the revelations made to Sergius Baḥira (*Barrīs*) on Mount Sinai and his entry into the wilderness of Qedar that he might make predictions to the sons of Ishmael and convert them to the faith.[33]

Mariaon (Syriac: Isho'yahb; Arabic: Marhab) is the narrator, who had met the monk Sergius, nicknamed Baḥira by the Arabs, in the desert of Yathrib and had heard from him his story. This continues, after the vision on Sinai and its interpretation by an angel of the Lord, with an order from the latter to Sergius that he appear before the emperors Maurice and Khusrau and inform them of their future defeat at the hands of the Arabs. This done, Sergius travelled to the "wilderness of the sons of Ishmael:"

> **{271}** And I found them barbaric and rude; some of them were worshipping stones, some trees, and others demons. So I taught them to worship God and brought them to the faith. Moreover, when I prophesied to them concerning their future reign and its duration for nine and a half weeks, they built for me that cell there and dug for me that well.[34]

The one Arabic (A) and two Syriac recensions (SI, S2) that have come down to us convey this same account, but they add to it an excursus on Sergius' initiation of Muḥammad into monotheism and writing for him of a scripture,[35] and a repetition of the Sinai vision, though with slight modifications. The Latin version (L) has none of this and one must conclude that the Baḥira apocalypse originally existed as an independent composition, only later being combined with the Baḥira-Muḥammad encounter. Since the apocalypse is recounted twice in the Syriac and Arabic recensions, we have seven versions to consider (Sl.i–ii, S2.i–ii, A.i–ii, L). All, however, adhere to very much the same outline and very often the same wording. The basic schema is as follows:

1. A white beast (A.i has "white lion") with twelve horns, which is the kingdom of the sons of Ishmael, comes on the south wind and settles in the West.
2. A black beast[36] with seven horns,[37] which is the kingdom of the sons of

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[33] Baḥira (Latin), 139. For information on the Latin version see Bignami-Odier and Levi della Vida, "Version latine de l'apocalypse de Serge-Baḥira." *Baḥīrā* means "proven" or "expert" in Syriac, "chosen" or "select" in Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic; Dr. Sebastian Brock tells me that it is not generally encountered as a name or epithet outside of this legend.

[34] Baḥira (Latin), 147.

[35] On this and the work as a whole see the entry thereon in Chapter 11 below.

[36] Gottheil in Baḥira [Arabic], 255/126, translates *ddba* as she-wolf (i.e. *dhi'ba*) instead of beast.

[37] S1.i has "seven horns of iron, one of gold and two (each) of silver and copper." Baḥīrā (Latin), 141, allows us to correct this to "seven horns: two of iron, one of gold, two

Hāshim son of Muḥammad, comes on the north wind and settles in Babylon, wreaking much havoc.

3. A bull with five horns, which is the kingdom of Mahdī son of Fāṭima, comes on the south wind and settles in Assyria; during its rule there is great peace and strict observance of the laws of Muḥammad.
4. **{272}** A "panther (*nemrâ*) clad in the clothing of blood (*dmâ*),"[38] which represents the sons of Sarfīn (Sūfīnī, Safan, Sufyān) – the red kingdom, comes from the West and destroys the sons of Ishmael, driving them back to Yathrib.
5. A goat,[39] which is the seed of Yoqtan who are the inhabitants of Qatar, comes from the North[40] and goes to the Land of Promise (S1.ii, S2.ii, A.ii).[41]
6. A lion, which is the Mahdī son of 'Ā'isha, comes from the South/desert and destroys all.
7. A man dressed in green[42] comes from the East; this is the last king/kingdom, who/which "will come at the end of the kingdom of the sons of Ishmael and uproot them;"[43] during his reign there will be peace, churches and monasteries will be rebuilt, and Christian renegades punished.
8. Then comes a resplendent chariot, which is the kingdom of the Romans and it will rule the world for one and a half weeks, whereupon the Last Days will unfurl.

The interpretation of this text is difficult due to the presence of extraneous elements. Thus Baḥira first informs the Arabs that they will rule for ten weeks of years

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(each) of silver and copper." S2.ii says Hāshim has eight sons, but lists only seven; A.i has "three horns," but A.ii mentions seven kings.

[38] Baḥira (Syriac), 206/209 (S1.i), Miṣreads *emrā* ("lamb") and *dhi'bā* ("she-wolf").

[39] Baḥira (Arabic), 87 (A.ii), is corrupt, but comparison with *ibid.*, 255 (A.i), shows that *dyn/dy* should be read *tays* and *mgḥrby* as *ma'ẓī*.

[40] A.ii reads "West," presumably confusing Syriac *grb* and Arabic *ghrb*.

[41] Baḥira (Latin), 144, has *ad terram regni*; perhaps at some stage in the transmission there was a misreading of *malkūtā* for *mūlkānā*. Baḥira (Arabic), 256/127 (A.i), has *ilā bayt al-maqdis* ("to the Temple").

[42] Gottheil always translates *yūrdqā* as yellow; it can be either, but the Arabic (*akhdar*) and Latin (*viridis*) indicate that green is meant.

[43] Baḥira (Syriac), 236–37/229 and 248 (S1.ii and S2.ii); Baḥira (Latin), 145. S1.i and A.i describe him as "the last kingdom/king of the sons of Ishmael," which makes no sense since he destroys them and brings about the renewal of Christianity. Green is the colour of Christ, so he should be regarded as a Christian king.

(A has seven, L nine and a half), recalling the **{273}** prediction of ps.-Methodius;[44] whereas the second apocalyptic section opens with the statement:

> In the year 1055 of Alexander son of Philip the Arabs will rise and kill their king. After this there will be a great disturbance for one week. In that year was fulfilled the word of God to the Ishmaelites, that "twelve great men will he beget, and behold, twelve kings will come forth from his loins" (cf. Genesis xvii.20, xxv.16).[45]

The allusion here is to the killing of Walīd II in April 744 (AG 1055) and to the seven years of strife that ensued before the establishment of the Abbasids. It is possible that these are vestiges of earlier apocalyptic speculations, referring to *ca.* 690 and *ca.* 750 respectively, but the main body of the work clearly concerns a later period. At the end of the entry on the kingdom of Mahdī son of Fātima it is asserted by S2.i, A.i and L that "with it the rule of the Arabs will come to an end."[46] S1.ii, S2.ii and A.ii note that the number of kings (signified by horns) totals 24 at this point and state that this is the number of rulers that will arise from the Arabs before the demise of their sovereignty.[47] Indeed, it is suggested that this figure was Sergius' own invention: "In that year… was fulfilled the word of the prophet that twelve great men will he beget…, but Sargis added twelve others."[48]

The Baḥira apocalypse principally intends, then, to document the first three kingdoms of the Arabs and their 24 kings. The white beast obviously represents the Umayyads, who favoured white and settled in the west. Exactly which twelve rulers are meant is not certain; there were fourteen Umayyad caliphs in all, but those of short reign would be excluded and maybe Muḥammad, Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were **{274}** included even though not Umayyads. The black beast is also easy to identify, namely the Abbasids who wore black, had their capital in lower Iraq (Babylon) and called themselves sons of Hāshim. The seven kings pertaining to this dynasty are described as follows: "Hāshim will beget seven kings, one with two names, two with one name, two are in the Law, one with three signs and one with six signs to his name."[49] The "one with two names" is probably Saffāḥ (750–54), who is known to non-Muslim sources as Muḥammad and as Abū l-ʿAbbās.[50] The "two with one

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[44] Baḥira (Syriac), 211/213 (S1.i), 211/36 (S2.i); Baḥira (Arabic), 261/131, 264/134 (Ai); Baḥira (Latin), 147.

[45] Baḥira (Syriac), 229/243 (S2.ii), 229/223 (S1.ii); Baḥira (Arabic), 81/153 (has AG 1050).

[46] Baḥira (Syriac), 206/233, cf. 234/227 (S1.ii); Baḥira (Arabic), 255/127; Baḥira (Latin), 142.

[47] Baḥira (Syriac), 234/227 (S1.ii), 234/246 (S2.ii; same wording as S1.ii and A.ii, but has 25 kings); Baḥira (Arabic), 86/156.

[48] Baḥira (Syriac), 229/223 (S1.ii).

[49] Baḥira (Arabic), 85/155 (A.ii); Baḥira (Syriac), 232–33/226 (S1.ii), 232–33/245 (S2.ii); Baḥira (Latin), 142.

[50] For example, Theophanes, 428 ("Muḥmamad, also known as Abū l-ʿAbbās"). Or else Manṣūr, who is known as ʿAbd Allāh and as Abū Jaʿfar (*Chron. 1234*, 1.332).

name" could be Manṣūr (754–75) and Ma'mūn (813–33), both known as 'Abd Allāh.[51] The "two in the Law" are Hādī (785–86), known to Syriac and Greek sources as Mūsā,[52] and Hārūn (786–809), so Moses and Aaron. It is unclear how the three and six signs are to be calculated, but it seems sure that Mahdī (775–85) and Amīn (809–11) must be the last two, since this then gives us the first seven Abbasid caliphs.

In the reign of the third kingdom, that of Mahdī son of Fāṭima, there will be unparalleled peace and close observance of the laws of Muḥammad. Both the name and the description make this seem an ideal rather than a real Muslim dynasty, in which case one might accept Abel's dating of this text to the reign of Ma'mūn.[53] There is much to recommend this solution. Whereas the other kingdoms only receive brief treatment, the evils worked by the sons of Hāshim and the natural signs and disasters that will occur in their time are depicted at length, as though these were the trials before the end. There are also plausible allusions to the fourth Arab civil war, which took place during Ma'mūn's rule:

> **{275}** When these (seven kings) will have ruled and died, know that the kingdom of the sons of Hāshim will be ended. Then the sons of Ishmael will awake, as if from a sleep. They will fight with one another and everyone will say of himself: "I am the king." They will have leave from God [to do this] and he will incite them against each other so that their end and their destruction will be from and by themselves.[54]

Civil war would be a likely breeding ground for apocalyptic speculations, and Ma'mūn himself is said to have expected the end of the world.[55] The prophecy about the Mahdī son of Fāṭima could have been prompted by Ma'mūn's designation of an Alid as his heir or by revolts in the name of Alids, such as that led by Abū l-Sarāyā on behalf of Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Tabātabā.[56] The only difficulty is that the third kingdom is supposed to comprise five kings; these could either be fic-

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[51] E.g. Theophanes, 428–30 and 484, though this is complicated by the fact that 'Abd Allāh was also an epithet used of caliphs (for examples see Excursus F, nos. 7, 9, 16, 19, below). Another possibility is Ṣaffāḥ and Amīn, both known as Muḥammad (e.g. Theophanes, 428 and 484).

[52] E.g. *ibid.*, 457.

[53] Abel, "Apocalypse de Baḥira."

[54] Baḥira (Syriac), 233/226 (S1.ii), 233/245–46 (S2.ii); Baḥira (Arabic), 85–86/156 (A.ii); Baḥira (Latin), 142.

[55] Madelung, "New Documents concerning al-Ma'mūn," 345–46; see also Ebied and Young, "An Unrecorded Arabic Version of a Sibylline Prophecy," on a Christian apocalyptic text possibly dating to this time.

[56] Note that the last Arab king is stated to be named Muḥammad: Baḥira (Syriac), 234/227 (S1.ii), 234/246 (S2.ii); Baḥira (Arabic), 86/156 (A.ii); Baḥira (Latin), 143.

titious, as their names – Servant, Beneficent, Listener, Worshipper – suggest,[57] or they might belong to a later continuation of the original apocalypse.

The panther in red garb, the kingdom of the sons of Sarfīn, is taken by Abel to signify the Khurramīya, who held Azerbaijan for a number of years under the leadership of a certain Bābak. But though these were a thorn in the Abbasid side for a long time (816–37) and caused a fair degree of consternation among the Muslims, they were local rebels and did not make any attempt to march on Iraq. The clue to the panther's identity is provided by the Judaeo-Persian Daniel apocalypse which also attributes 24 kings to the Arabs, whereafter will come "a king from among the Romans who will wear red clothes and will break **{276}** the empire of the Ishmaelites."[58] That a Greco-Roman king is meant is confirmed by the task the panther performs, namely driving the Arabs back to Yathrib, which is also undertaken by the Last Emperor in ps.-Methodius.

The key to the interpretation of the Baḥira apocalypse is realising that it has a very extended eschatological section. The goat is the king of Ethiopia, who features in ps.-Methodius; the all-devouring lion, who is the Mahdī son of 'Ā'isha, seems an Antichrist figure; the green man is evidently a Christian champion, for he comes from the East, dresses in Christian colours, and truth and Christianity flourish in his time; the chariot is openly stated to be the Last Emperor. This is repetitive and either some of these figures belong to the earlier vestigial apocalypses of *ca.* 690 and *ca.* 750 signalled above, or they represent later reworking. If, as seems likely, the primary text was composed during the latter part of Ma'mūn's reign, then the reworked form that we have could not antedate the mid-ninth century and would very probably be much later.

Ps.-Ezra

Ezra the scribe had asked God to inform him "concerning the last days of the Ishmaelites." The response was a bewildering succession of animal images. First comes a "serpent of the desert" arising in the East with ten horns on its head and nine small, cruel ones on its tail, "an eagle from the South," a viper from the East, and then are unleashed "the four kings who are imprisoned by the great Euphrates river."[59] This would seem to conclude this series, and a new scenario commences:

> The bull was afflicting the western region with many evils, for he was king of the ravens and he gnashed his teeth at the lion cub. There were three horns on his head; with the **{277}** right he fights, with the left he destroys, and with the middle he lays waste… The bull will conceive evil designs against the seven hills, the

[57] Though they are only named in Baḥira (Syriac), 234/227 (S1.ii), and only four are given.

[58] Ps.-Daniel (Judaeo-Persian), *Apocalypse*, 412/416; see the entry on this text in this chapter.

[59] Ps.-Ezra, *Apocalypse*, 200–201/205 (= Chabot, 244–45/334–35); cf. Daniel vii.1–8, and 4 Ezra (eagle vision).

> great city of Constantinople… The lion cub will become violently angry and will go out after these ravens and will rout them… And a leopard will emerge from the North, with him a numerous people… and he will come to the aid of the lion cub and both will go down into the country of Persia. The bull will go out to meet them with a great army; the lion cub will enter between and break its horns. He will ravage, pillage and waste the land by fire, and the ravens will flee before him and go down into their country… The lion cub will go up with a great army to the Land of Promise and will subject it to tribute, and there will be severe and unparalleled want in the land. He will build the encompassing walls of Phoenicia and raze Damascus for its revolt. And he will go up to Jerusalem in great ceremony, and from there he will return and go up to the city of his kingdom.[60]
>
> After three and a half weeks there will come out from the South a warlike man with a numerous people and his rule will extend over the Land of Promise. He will make great peace and effect great benefits in the land for three years and seven months. Then the four winds of heaven will be set in motion, peoples will rise up one against another and destroy themselves until the earth will be hidden by the blood spilled upon its face. And I, Ezra, fell to the ground, all of me filled with tears.[61]

Thereupon the angel of the Lord returns to console Ezra with a description of the last days in which the Ishmaelites will be destroyed.

{278} Assuming its unitarity, previous commentators have had difficulty with this text.[62] A too liberal use of John's Revelation and Daniel has distorted it, but it appears to contain elements of two distinct apocalypses which a later redactor has tried to weld into a whole. The first is too terse to be sure of its meaning, though Bousset suggested it represented the sequence of Islamic dynasties: Umayyads (serpent), Abbasids (eagle), Fatimids (viper) and Turks (four kings).[63] The second section is more interesting; despite corruption by elements from the first part and elsewhere, it would seem to have originally portrayed the struggle between Khusrau II

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[60] This part is very similar to the Petrine apocalypse (see the entry thereon in this chapter), where the lion cub also destroys Damascus (cf. ps.-Daniel [Judaeo-Persian], *Apocalypse*, 416 [= Darmesteter, 412/416]) and goes up to Jerusalem. Note that the entry of the Roman king (lion cub) into Palestine is described in negative terms, perhaps an indication of Jacobite authorship.

[61] Ps.-Ezra, *Apocalypse*, 201–202/206–207 (= Chabot, 245–48/336–39); one would expect the warlike man from the South to intend the Arabs, but the description of his reign is uncharacteristically positive.

[62] Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 282, assigned it to the time of the fall of Constantinople; Chabot, "L'apocalypse d'Esdras," 345, opted for the first century of Islam; Iselin, "Apocalyptische Studien," argues that it is a late Christian reworking of an early Jewish apocalypse.

[63] Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 47–48, who says the lion cub represents the Crusaders; the destruction of Damascus does not fit in with this, but it may hark back to an earlier redaction or be a genuine prophecy (see the entry on the "Judaeo-Persian Daniel" in this chapter).

(bull) and Heraclius (lion cub) allied with the Turks (leopard).[64] The redactor probably included it since its account between armies of the East and West suited events of his own time, most likely the contest between the Fatimids and Seljuk or Mamluk Turks in the late eleventh and late twelfth centuries respectively. The recurrent mention of Egypt and the use of John's Revelation, which does not otherwise feature in Syriac apocalypses until medieval times, lend weight to this suggestion.

COPTO-ARABIC TEXTS

All the texts in this section were written by Monophysite Christians of Egypt, and so belong to Coptic literature; but though very likely based on Coptic originals, some now only exist in Arabic (ps.-Shenute, ps.-Samuel, ps.-Pisentius, ps.-Peter) and the others exist in both Arabic and Coptic (ps.-Athanasius, ps.-Daniel).[65]

{279} Whereas Syriac apocalypses are frequently interested in reviewing and systematising history, their Coptic counterparts are chiefly concerned with direct exhortation of the faithful, cajoling them to remain true to the church and its teachings. They are, therefore, chiefly to be found either in the form of homilies or inserted into the text of preexisting homilies. Events – past, present and future – are adduced not to elaborate any schema of history, but to reinforce the case for care and caution in one's observance of the Christian faith.

Ps.-Shenute

A vision ascribed to Shenute, a fifth-century ascetic of Upper Egypt, takes the form of a prophecy on the world's end.[66] It has been worked into a homily commemorating the saint's death and delivered by his disciple Visa, bishop of Athribis. The latter first expounds the teachings of his master, then gives instances of "the marvels and signs which God had manifested at his (Shenute's) hands for the glorification of the Holy Trinity and for the benefit, gain and profit of all who hear them and act according to them." To this original sermon of Visa subsequent copyists have made their own additions, one such being the *Vision*, which begins:

> One day my holy father came out with a gloomy face; so I said to him: "O my father, what has come upon you that you frown so?" He said to me: "Let us cry for ourselves and for all men; it would be better for man if he had not been born into

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[64] See Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 48–49; cf. the entry on the "Petrine Apocalypse" in this chapter. The seventh-century clash between Byzantium and Persia and Heraclius' snatching of victory from ignominy's jaws gave rise to a number of apocalyptic writings; see Mango, *New Rome*, 205; Reinink, "Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende," esp. 275–76.

[65] For a survey of and brief comment on such texts see van Lent, "Les apocalypses coptes de l'epoque arabe."

[66] For later visions attributed to Shenute see Grohmann, "Die im äthiopishen, arabischen und koptischen erhaltenen Visionen Apa Schenute's;" Troupeau, "De quelques apocalypses," 79–83; van Lent, "An Unedited Copto-Arabic Apocalypse of Shenute." On Shenute himself see *CE*, *s.v.* "Shenute."

> the world, for our beloved Lord Christ has informed me today of the hardships and miseries [which man shall suffer]," and he said: "Tell your children of them, and write them for them so that they may all be vigilant and be guided and be on their guard, and so that they will not be negligent and surrender their souls to the devil."[67]

{280} Shenute then discloses to Visa what Christ had revealed to him of the future:

> The Persians… will go down to Egypt and much killing will accompany them. They shall seize the wealth of the Egyptians and sell their children for gold, so harsh is the persecution and oppression of the Persians. Many masters will become slaves and many slaves masters. Woe to Egypt on account of the Persians, for they will take the church vessels and drink wine from them before the altar without fear or anxiety. They will rape the women before their husbands. There shall be great distress and anguish, and of those that survive a third will die of grief and misery.
>
> Then after a while the Persians will depart from Egypt and there shall arise the Deceiver, who will enter upon the king of the Romans and will be entrusted by him with headship of both the military commanders and the bishops. He shall enter Egypt and undertake many tasks; he shall take possession of Egypt and its provinces, and build ditches and forts, and order that the walls of the towns in the deserts and wastelands be [re-]built. He shall destroy the East and the West, then he shall combat the pastor, the archbishop in Alexandria entrusted with the Christians resident in the land of Egypt. They will expel him and he will flee southwards until he arrives, sad and dispirited, at your monastery. And when he comes here, I shall return him and place him on his seat once more.
>
> After that shall arise the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Esau,[68] who hound the Christians, and the rest of them will be concerned to prevail over and rule all the world and to [re-]build the Temple that is in Jerusalem. When that happens, know that the end of times approaches and is near. The Jews will expect the Deceiver and will be ahead of the **{281}** [other] peoples when he comes. When you see the [abomination of] desolation of which the prophet Daniel spoke standing in the holy place, [know that] they are those who deny the pains which I received upon the cross and who move freely about my church, fearing nothing at all.[69]

There then follows a description of the atrocities that will occur in the time of the Antichrist, his exposure and eventual demise at the hands of Enoch and Elias, and the onset of the second resurrection.

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[67] Ps.-Shenute, *Vision*, 338–39.

[68] Both terms refer to the Arabs, each suggesting subordinate status; cf. ps.-Pisentius, *Letter*, 308/319: "The king of the Greeks will arise with the remainder of his army and go up to Egypt to fight the sons of Esau."

[69] Ps.-Shenute, *Vision*, 340–41.

The *Vision* deals with a period of great unrest and anguish for the Copts of Egypt. The Persian occupation (619–28) was, as indicated above, attended by much loss of life, desecration, and destruction of monasteries.[70] Cyrus' rule (631–42) as both governor and Melkite patriarch of Egypt was perhaps conceived of as a contingent measure to oversee the refortification of the war-torn country and its reconciliation with the Byzantine church. By the Copts, however, it was remembered only as a period of gross cruelty and tyranny, which resulted in the flight of their spiritual head, "the pastor" Benjamin, and the defection of many to the Chalcedonians "some through torture, some by gifts and honours, some by persuasion and deceit."[71] The Christians are allowed almost no respite, but are next afflicted by the incursions of the Arabs. No mention is made of any aspect of their occupation, not even heavy taxation, the most ubiquitous complaint of the apocalypses of the early Islamic era.[72] However, the statement that they "will be concerned to prevail over and rule all the world" may indicate that Arab rule is already entrenched. The rebuilding of the Temple and the appearance of the "[abomination of] desolation… in the holy place" both relate to Christ's predictions about the signs of the end (Matthew, xxiv.2, 15) and so need not intend any concrete incident, but it is possible that **{282}** the author was provoked to write by news about Arab construction on the site of the former Jewish temple, a task which would seem to have been initiated *ca.* 638.[73]

Ps.-Athanasius

Our second Coptic apocalypse again occurs within a homily, this one allegedly given by patriarch Athanasius of Alexandria (d. 373) on the occasion of the feast of the archangel Michael.[74] At the outset we are told that the sermon has as its theme Leviticus xxi.9: "If a priest's daughter fornicates she shall be burnt alive, for she brought shame on her father in his priesthood," and Exodus xix.22: "The priests who approach God should purify themselves lest the Lord destroy some of them." And indeed the chief concern of the work is to emphasise to church officials the need to fulfil their duties and heed their responsibilities with regard to both God

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[70] *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 484–86; Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 81–89.

[71] *Hist Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 491.

[72] This might suggest a date before, or certainly not long after, the arrival in late 644 of 'Abd Allāh ibn Sa'd, "the first who set up the tax registry at Miṣr and ordered that all the country's revenues should be collected there" (*ibid.* XIV, *PO* 1, 501). Demand notices and receipts on papyri are known from December 642 onwards (see Excursus F, no. 1, below). If the mention of the return of Benjamin to his seat is a *vaticinium ex eventu*, then this gives us a *terminus post quem* of 644.

[73] See the entry on "John Moschus" in Chapter 3 above.

[74] The text, existing in Coptic and numerous Arabic versions, is discussed briefly by Orlandi, "Un testo copto sulla dominazione araba in Egitto," and Witte, "Der koptische Text von M602 der Pierpont Morgan Library," and fully by Martinez, *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, 248–74. Arabic versions are listed by Graf, *GCAL*, 1.277–79.

and their flock. This message occupies the first six sections of the homily, and it is driven home forcefully in the next five sections where the speaker relates the trials of the end of time, which happen, he insists, "on account of the sins of the priests and monks who will corrupt their way before God." In the twelfth and concluding part there is a final plea to eschew evil, "so that we shall inherit the kingdom of heaven forever by the prayers and advocacy of the great archangel whose feast we celebrate today."

The signs of the end do have a recognisably historical basis to them and, like the *Vision* of Shenute, begin with the Persian assault:

> After these things the good God will become angry, because they had altered His true faith. He will divide the unity of the kingdom of the Romans and of their empire in return for their having divided His great Might into two natures… He **{283}** will give the power to the kings of Persia for a little while and they will afflict the earth in their days… After this, God will remove the kingdom of the Persians and will stir up upon the earth a mighty people, numerous as the locusts. This is the fourth beast which the prophet Daniel saw. That nation will rule over many countries and they will pay a tax to it. It is a brutal nation with no mercy in its heart… (numerous iniquities detailed)… Many Christians, Barbarians, Greeks, Syrians and from all tribes will go and join them in their faith, wanting to become free from the sufferings that they will bring upon the earth. They will dwell in many countries and become the masters of them, and they will inherit them. Their leader shall live in the city called Damascus They will gather all the gold, silver, precious stones, bronze, iron, lead and the beautiful garments. The name of that nation is Saracen, one which is from the Ishmaelites, the son of Hagar, maidservant of Abraham.[75]

The Persian and Arab occupations are thus depicted in very general terms, bar the notices on apostasy of Christians to the Arab "faith" and on the location of Arab government at Damascus, a fact which yields a *terminus ante quem* for the work of 744, when Marwan transferred the capital to Ḥarran. Four specific charges are then made against the Arabs:

> First, that nation will destroy the gold on which there is the image of the cross of the Lord our God in order to make all the countries under its rule mint their own gold with the name of the beast written on it, the number of whose name is 666. Afterwards they will count the men and write their names in their documents, and set upon them high taxes… Afterwards they will measure the whole earth with the fields and the gardens, and they will count the cattle… At their end… they will take the strangers in **{284}** the cities and the villages, and wherever they find them, they will call for their return and they will throw them into prison, for

[75] Ps.-Athanasius, *Apocalypse*, IX.1–8 (tr. Martinez, 523–29); where the Coptic is defective, I have supplemented from the Arabic version.

> many at that time will leave their cities and their villages and go abroad because of the violence of the oppression of that nation.[76]

Thereafter the author waxes eschatological, telling of ten-year-old children defiling themselves with dumb animals, of death and pestilence, of empty churches and evil hearts – a reflection perhaps of historical incidents, but too closely bound up with "the labour pains of the end" to be discernible.

The above four complaints are, however, of a more concrete nature. The minting of coins with the name of the beast, that is, Muḥammad,[77] refers to the monetary reforms of ʿAbd al-Malik in AH 77/696, when the Muslim profession of faith began to replace images on the gold and silver currency.[78] No census is known after this date until that of ʿUbayd Allāh in 724, but the actions of Aṣbagh, who taxed monks for the first time, and of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, who gathered all youths of twenty years and under, may be intended.[79] A land survey was carried out at the outset of Usāma ibn Zayd's stint as governor (715–17), which merited note, for "he requested a description of all the districts and inscribed it in Arabic."[80] And the problem of fugitives bedevilled the terms in office of Qurra ibn Sharīk (709–14) and Usāma to the extent that Qurra had to appoint a man "to gather the runaways from every place, take them back and bind them, punish them and return them to their place."[81] Usāma took even tougher action:

> **{285}** He ordered that no one should shelter a stranger in the churches, inns or wharves, and the people were afraid of him and drove out the strangers who were in their houses. And he directed the monks not to make monks of those who came to them. Then he counted[82] the monks and branded each one of them on his left hand with an iron ring that he might be known, imprinting on each one the name of his church and monastery without a cross and with the date of the rule of Islam. Thus there was in the year 96 of the Hijra anxiety among the monks and anguish among the faithful. If an unbranded monk was found, they

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[76] *Ibid*., IX.9–10 (tr. Martinez, 529–31, 577–78).

[77] The value of the letters in the Coptic spelling (MAMETIOC) is 666, the number of the beast according to Revelation xiii.18; Orlandi, "Un testo copto sulla dominazione araba in Egitto," 229, suggests the caliph Marwān (744–50), but cf. John of Nikiu, CXXI.10 (tr. Charles, 201).

[78] Grierson, "Monetary Reforms of ʿAbd al-Malik," 244–47; the changes may not have been implemented immediately in Egypt.

[79] *Hist. Patriarchs* XVII, *PO* 5, 51 (Aṣbagh), 56 (ʿAbd Allāh).

[80] *Ibid.* XVII, *PO* 5, 67; accompanying this were a "great dearth," a "great abundance" and a recurrence of the plague.

[81] *Ibid.* XVII, *PO* 5, 64. Qurra's preoccupation with runaways is attested by *Aphrodito Papyri*, nos. 1333, 1343–44, 1381–82, 1384.

[82] The editor gives *aḵhsā* ("castrate"); I read *aḥsā* ("count").

> brought him before the governor who would order one of his limbs to be cut off.[83]

This is the first occurrence of a Hijri date in the *History of the Patriarchs*, earlier reckonings being according to the era of Diocletian. This suggests that it was significant, and indeed, it is also the date given for the end of Arab rule in the *Vision* of Enoch the Just, described below. These two points, plus the coincidence of a land survey with tough new anti-fugitive measures, make AH 96/715 a very likely date for the composition of the ps.-Athanasius, and it is certainly to be placed within a very few years either side of that year.

Like the *Vision* of Shenute, the ps.-Athanasius looks forward to no earthly redeemer, no salvific emperor, but concerns itself with calling the faithful to virtue and observance of the precepts of Christianity. Both conclude with the exhortation to the faithful to "be on your guard," "lest God bring you in this generation," continues ps.-Athanasius, "sufferings such as this."[84]

Samuel of Qalamun and Pisentius of Qift

Samuel, inmate of the monastery of Qalamun in the district of Fayyum, and Pisentius, bishop of the town of Qift near Thebes, were both **{286}** monks and churchmen highly regarded for their piety, and both died at about the time of the Arab conquest of Egypt.[85] This made them ideal candidates for the ascription to their name of prophecies regarding the consequences of Muslim rule, and both are indeed accredited with sermons narrating the iniquities that will occur in those times.

When asked about the future course of Arab hegemony in Egypt by his brother monks, Samuel consents to impart to them "some details for the profit of your souls" in the hope that "every man with a vigilant heart will keep himself from imitating the practices of the Arabs, and so save his soul." Besides the monks, present were his disciple Apollo, who writes everything down, and one Gregory, bishop of

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[83] *Hist. Patriarchs* XVII, *PO* 5, 68; the situation was analagous to Medieval Europe, where peasants would become monks to escape serf obligations.

[84] Ps.-Athanasius, *Apocalypse*, XII.2; cf. ps.-Shenute, *Vision*, 346.

[85] On Samuel see van Cauwenbergh, *Moines d'Egypte*, 39–50, 88–122; *CE*, *s.v.* "Samū'īl of Qalamūn, saint." His *Life* exists in Sahidic (Alcock, *Life of Samuel*), Bohairic (Crum, *Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 381–82 [no. 917]) and Ethiopie (Pereira, *Vida do abba Samuel*).The Sahidic *Life* was composed, says its author, at four generations remove from its subject (Alcock, *Life of Samuel*, 1/74, 27/105), and continued to grow; a second Sahidic version, existing only in fragments (Amélineau, *Monuments*, 770–89; Alcock, *Life of Samuel*, 67–73), is, in the estimation of Alcock (*ibid.*, viii and 73), "about 30 pages longer."

On Pisentius see van Cauwenbergh, *Moines d'Egypte*, 29–39, 159–66; *CE*, *s.v.* "Pisentius, saint." His *Life* exists in Sahidic (Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha*, 75– 127/258–330), Bohairic (Amélineau, *Un évêque de Keft*), and in Arabic (O'Leary, "The Arabic Life of S. Pisentius"); see also Abdel Sayed, *Untersuchungen zu den Texten über Pesyntheus.*

Qays, who had come seeking a cure from Samuel.[86] The first part **{287}** of the apocalypse is homiletic, recording the mires of wrongdoing into which the Christians will slip during the period of Arab dominion, and urging the audience not themselves to be so negligent. After this comes the eschatological section, recounting the pains of the world's end. The author is generally concerned to halt Christian assimilation of Muslim practices, but in particular he objects to the adoption of Arabic and neglect of Coptic. That this was happening at the time of his writing is indicated by the amount of space devoted to it and by the detail and passion with which it is described. Priests and monks will preach in Arabic, parents will give Arabic names to their children and teach them Arabic, "thus making them forget the language of their ancestors;" books will fall into disuse as people turn to foreign literature and the few biographies of saints that survive will lie unread, as no one will understand their language; those in Upper Egypt who still know and speak Coptic will be abused and mocked by their fellow Christians who speak in Arabic.[87] The evidence of papyri makes clear that into the ninth century Greek and Coptic remained the daily language of the administration and Arabic names with Coptic patronymics are almost unseen.[88] The first Coptic theologian to write in Arabic was

[86] Gregory's visit is mentioned in the Sahidic *Life* (Alcock, *Life of Samuel*, 25/101–102). *Hist. Patriarchs* XV–XVI, *PO*5, 9 and 22 and 42 and 49, mentions a Gregory, bishop of Qays, in the time of the patriarch Agathon (665–81) and the governor 'Abd al-'Azīz (685–704). On the basis of this and a summary at the end of Samuel's *Life*, it has been concluded that Samuel died at the end of the seventh century and that his apocalypse belongs to the early eighth century (Nau, "Note sur l'apocalypse de Samuel," 405; van Cauwenbergh, *Moines d'Egypte*, 88–89, whose reconstruction has been followed by all subsequent writers).

The summary is not, however, to be trusted; for example, it says that Samuel became a monk at 18 whereas the *Life* says he was 22 (Alcock, *Life of Samuel*, 34/114, 3/77). At the end of the narrative of Samuel's encounter with the patriarch Cyrus, it is stated that Cyrus "has not been back to the mountain to this day" (Alcock, *Life of Samuel*, 10/84), a note that would only be made by someone writing before the death of Cyrus in 642. It would seem preferable, then, to accept the apocalypse's claim that Samuel died about the time of the Arab conquest of Egypt (thus Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2.505) and to assume that there was a second Gregory, bishop of Qays (thus Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 185 n. 2). See also *Coptic Synaxary*, "8 Kīhak;" Amélineau, *Monuments*, 518; *idem*, *Samuel de Qalamoun*, 32.

[87] For these views and predictions, see ps.-Samuel of Qalamun, *Apocalypse*, 379–81/394–96, 384/398.

[88] Simonsen, *The Caliphal Taxation System*, 124; Morimoto, "Land Tenure in Egypt during the Early Islamic Period," 127. Cf. Muqaddasī (wr. *ca.* 980), *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 203 (the non-Muslims in Egypt speak in Coptic). See also MacCoull, "The Fate of Coptic" and "The Strange Death of Coptic Culture," where the tenth century appears crucial. Graf's suggestion of the late eighth century seems, therefore, too early (*GCAL*, 1.281–82).

Severus ibn al-Muqaffa‘, who flourished in the mid-tenth century. This work is not, therefore, likely to antedate the tenth century.[89]

{288} Probably roughly contemporary is the letter allegedly dictated by Pisentius on his deathbed to his secretary John and addressed to the people of his diocese.[90] "I shall inform you," he says at the outset, "on how to save your souls and on what will edify, fortify and strengthen your hearts." And he proceeds to delineate right belief and right practice and to urge adherence to them. The oppression of the Arabs is then briefly catalogued before the author moves on to eschatology. Three events stand out as being historical: "a nation will be roused from the West and fight the king of Babylon in Egypt for a short time," "another king will arise, having the same name as their prophet," "then the Turk will stir from the East and make war for a short time. Afterwards they will make peace and eat and drink at the same table, and the Turk will hold sway from Acre to Yemen."[91] This sounds respectively like the Fatimid attacks from Tunisia upon Egypt in 913–15 and 919–21, the reign of Aḥmad ibn Kayghalagh (933–35), and the rise to power of the Ikhshidids, beginning with Muḥammad ibn Tughj (935–46), who held Syria and Egypt.

These writings attributed to Samuel and Pisentius are closely related. Both were originally composed in Coptic and belong to that tradition, both being primarily homilies which then culminate in an apocalypse.[92] Both also draw on ps.-Methodius, chiefly eschatological themes such as the role of the Last Emperor and the king of Abyssinia, but also tyranny motifs such as a man waking to find three tax collectors at his door and the Muslims tethering their animals in Christian holy places.[93] The borrowings are, however, creatively adapted to an **{289}** Egyptian context, particularly in Pisentius' letter, where the king of the Greeks makes Babylon in Egypt his capital and comes to reject Chalcedon, embracing with the king of Abyssinia the

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[89] The constant use by ps.-Samuel of the term *al-hijra* to designate the Arabs may reflect the fact that for a hundred years or so most Copts only knew the Arabs as *muhājirūn*, stationed troops to whom they rendered provisions (*rizq*) and taxes. Compare *Coptic Synaxary*, "8 Kīhak" (= *Ethiopic Synaxary*, "8 Takhshash"), where it is said that Samuel prophesied "concerning the *umma* who are the *muhajirūn*."

[90] The *Life* does cite a letter of Pisentius, in which he rebuked his flock for their moral laxity (Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha*, 94–96/284–87; Amélineau, *Un évêque de Reft*, 118–20); presumably the apocalypse grew out of this.

[91] Ps.-Pisentius of Qift, *Letter*, 307–308/318–19.

[92] MacCoull, "The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Pesyntheus," argues that the original Coptic version should be dated to the 760s at the time of the first Coptic revolts against Abbasid rule. It is true that grievances such as the inclusion of Muḥammad's name on the coinage and the hunting down of fugitives (ps.-Pisentius, *Letter*, 307/318) would suit better the eighth century, but these could simply have been drawn from earlier works like the borrowings from ps.-Methodius noted in the next sentence.

[93] Demonstrated by Martinez, "The King of Rüm and the King of Ethiopia in Medieval Apocalyptic Texts from Egypt."

orthodox faith. The two texts indicate the survival of a Coptic Christian identity at least into the ninth and tenth centuries.[94]

Coptic Daniel, XIV Vision

This work was composed originally in Coptic, then translated into Arabic. Presumably the original was later lost, for the Coptic version that we have announces itself as a translation from Arabic and asserts that "it is not extant in Coptic."[95] It first narrates Daniel's vision of the four beasts (vii.1–28), the last possessing nineteen horns instead of the usual ten. An angel of the Lord then appears in order to give an interpretation. The four beasts are explained as the empires of the Persians, the Romans, the Hellenes (Byzantines) and the Ishmaelites, and the nineteen horns as nineteen Ishmaelite kings. The tenth through to the ninteenth of these are described and they have been identified with the Umayyads by Becker and with the Fatimids by Macler, each dating the *Vision* to the time of the fall of their preferred dynasty.[96] Meinardus suggested that the text represented a Fatimid reworking of an Umayyad apocalypse and this has been followed by Suermann, who attempts a reconstruction of the original.[97]

{290} There is good reason, however, to be sceptical about exact historical interpretations of this text. The kings themselves are depicted in terms so cursory and obscure that it is impossible to be sure who, if anyone historical, is intended. Of the twelfth ruler, for example, there is mention of the 110th year of his reign, and at the end of his time "there shall be a king who shall trouble all the kingdom of the sons of Ishmael for 147 years."[98] There may be some reuse of earlier materials, but most strikes one as late. There is much talk of the Egyptians and Syrians as though they were governed separately, which would take us at least to the time of the Tulunids in the late ninth century. Four distinct Nubian invasions of Egypt are recorded, which are unlikely to have taken place before the ninth century, when the Christian king-

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[94] Kasser, "Reflexions sur l'histoire de la littérature copte," 384, says that though the decline began as early as the mid-eighth century, a majority remained attached to their Coptic identity until the end of the eleventh century. See also Bishai, "The Transition from Coptic to Arabic," though this is rather vague.

[95] Becker, "Das Reich der Ismaeliten im koptischen Danielbuch," 9–10. That the original was in Coptic is suggested by the use of the Greco-Coptic counting system in assigning numerical values to names.

[96] Becker, "Das Reich der Ismaeliten im koptischen Danielbuch," 29–34; Macler, "Les apocalypses apocryphes de Daniel," 163–76.

[97] Meinardus, "Commentary on the XIVth Vision of Daniel," 397; Suermann, "L'apocalypse copte de Daniel." Meinardus, "New Evidence on the XIVth Vision of Daniel," decides firmly in favour of the Fatimids, but his new evidence – namely that the biographer of the Alexandrian patriarchs Mark III (1166–89) and John VI (1189–1216) cites the apocalypse of Daniel and applies it to the Fatimids – gives us no more than a *terminus ante quem*.

[98] Ps.-Daniel (Coptic), *XIV Vision*, §§29–30.

dom of Nubia had gained in political and military strength. One could, with Suermann, dismiss such references as Fatimid interpolations into the Umayyad original, but they do not appear in any way out of place.[99]

The next eleven paragraphs (§§65–75), which precede the intervention of the Last Emperor, narrate the encounter between Sarapidos and the Pitourgos. The former, an allusion to the Greco-Egyptian god Sarapis, must be Egypt, and so probably the Fatimids; the identity of the Pitourgos, however, is unclear. They are a "nomad nation" who "dominate all Syria and its boundaries" and are "of the nation of the Romans;" they "shall gather together for their wars, wishing to take the kingdom from the hand of Sarapidos."[100] If the original really was written in Coptic, one would not wish to place its composition much later than the eleventh century, when Arabic was becoming established as the principal language of Egypt. In this case one might suppose the Pitourgos to intend the Seljuks, who made advances against the Fatimids in the late eleventh century.

The Apocalypse of Peter/Book of the Rolls

{291} In a letter dated 1219 Jacob of Vitry, bishop of Acre, informs Pope Honorius III of "a very ancient book written in the Saracen language," which the Syrians had shown to him and which bore the superscript: "Revelations of the apostle Peter by his disciple Clement bound in one volume." This work, usually known as the *Apocalypse of Peter* or the *Book of the Rolls*, exists in three principal recensions in Arabic:[101]

1. A résumé of Biblical history from Creation to the birth of the Virgin Mary, intending to show "that without doubt she is of the lineage of Judah the son of Jacob and his tribe." This is largely the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* equipped with an introduction.[102]

2. A book in approximately 90 chapters which divides into two sections. The first begins with the history given in the first recension, and continues with "the mysteries which our God and Saviour Jesus the Christ committed to

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[99] *Ibid.*, §§30–32, 36–38, 41, 43, 50; Suermann, "L'apocalypse copte de Daniel," 340.

[100] Meinardus ("Commentary on the XIVth Vision of Daniel," 442–45, and "New Evidence on the XIVth Vision of Daniel," 302–305) identifies the Pitourgos with Salāh al-Dīn (d. 1193), but goes on to state that he was not "of the nation of the Romans."

[101] More detail and a bibliography are given by Nau, "Clémentins (Apocryphes) II," and Graf, *GCAL*, 1.283–92. This work must be distinguished from the Greek Petrine apocalypse known to Eusebius, as is demonstrated by Bratke, "Handschriftliche Überlieferung der arabisch-aethiopischen Petrus-Apokalypse," 475–76, 493 (in the absence of any editions of the Arabic manuscripts of the second and third recensions, this article provides a very helpful survey).

[102] Demonstrated by Bezold, *Schatzhöhle*, viii–ix (the work includes the Syriac and Arabic texts placed side by side); the oldest witness to this recension is Ms. Sinai arab 508, probably of the late ninth century, published by Gibson, *Apocrypha Arabica*, 1–58 (for date see *ibid.*, x).

his disciples:" the Trinity, the Creation, the fall of Satan, the angels, Paradise and the future course of Christianity, which includes a list of heresies from Simon Magus to Apollinarius and Peter's vision concerning future kings, peoples and calamities. In the second section Peter details at length the laws, duties and regulations which Clement must transmit to the officers of the church. A copyist states in the introduction that he found this book in the possession of the bishop of Nicosia in Cyprus.[103]

3. **{292}** A, book in eight parts which largely reproduces the first section of the second recension, but vastly expands Peter's vision into a full apocalypse (Parts 5–7). Part 8 contains the history of the Apostles and of their evangelisation, and a number of commandments concerning church discipline and practice given by Peter to Clement.

The outline of the apocalyptic section remains the same in the second and third recensions: the king of the South will come and reign in peace, but for his arrogance he will be killed by the king of the East, who goes on to fight the king of the West, despoil Egypt and dominate all the world. Then God will be merciful and despatch the lion cub, who will arise "as if from sleep." His armies will capture all regions and he will rule from east to west. He will go to Jerusalem and rebuild what has been destroyed, and all the faithful will rejoice. Damascus will be destroyed, then he will return to the capital of his kingdom and reign for many years in accomplishment of God's command. All these ingredients are also to be found in ps.-Ezra, and the description of the king of the Greeks bears close resemblance to that in ps.-Methodius. Clearly we have here another reworking of the Heraclius/Last Emperor romance. Within this framework, however, is an attack upon Heraclius, who "will not be firm in orthodoxy," in whose days "there will appear another dispensation which is not correct and is like the way of the devil," and on account of whom God will send his wrath upon His people.[104] And, again as in ps.-Ezra, a second apocalypse would seem to have been worked in, which follows closely the pattern of Daniel vii.1–8. Four beasts are described: a lion/eagle,[105] a wolf/serpent,[106] a tiger and a

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[103] Nicoll, *Catalogi*, 49–54, summarises the 89 chapters of the version of this work contained in Ms. Bod. Or. 294. This recension exists also in an Ethiopic translation (see Bibliography I below). The concept is similar to the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (also known as the *Octateuch* of Clement), which is a treatise on church ordinances and practices with an apocalyptic introduction.

[104] Ps.-Peter (Ethiopic tr.), *Apocalypse*, 2.IX.23–24; the Last Emperor arises at 2.IX.18 and 2.IX.26.

[105] Ps.-Peter, *Apocalypse*, 300/232, has "lion;" ps.-Peter (Ethiopic tr.), *Apocalypse*, 2.IX.28, has "eagle." They perhaps wish to convey Daniel vii.4: "The first was like a lion and had eagle's wings."

[106] Same references as previous note; possibly instead of "wolf" (*dhi'b*) one should read "bear" (*dubba*) in accordance with Daniel vii.5.

lion cub; and these are explained as **{293}** Babylon, *al-ʿAbūs/al-Diyon*,[107] Greece and Rome. Then the rule of the second kingdom is selected for elaboration: there shall issue from it twelve kings who rule with justice, who are succeeded by nine little kings. Of these latter, two "will perish in the centre of the earth," four "will guard their kingdom"[108] and of the last three, who are from the same family, one will be murdered in his bed, the second will reign one and a half (in the Ethiopic five and a half) years and the third "will prepare for wars" and will travel to and be acknowledged by Syria.

Dillman, followed by Bousset, took the two apocalyptic pieces as one whole and argued that they referred to the time of the Abbasid revolution, when a battle between forces of the East and West was taking place. The twelve kings intended Muḥammad and the caliphs to Sulaymān, the next two were ʿUmar II and Yazīd II, Hishām reaffirmed the regime, and the last three were Walīd II, Yazīd III and Marwān II. The lion cub represented Constantine V (741–75), and the attention given to the plight of Egypt makes clear that the text was composed in that country some time in the 750s.[109] All scholars agree that Arabic was the original language,[110] yet we have no Christian Arabic writings from such an early date. The attack on Heraclius as "not firm in orthodoxy" and the apocalyptic passages concerning his fight against the Persians indicate that earlier materials are being used.[111] But the **{294}** attention paid to the plight of Egypt suggests that the author was from that country and that it was ruled independently, which would make the most likely setting the Seljuk attack upon the Fatimids in the second half of the eleventh century.[112]

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[107] Same reference as previous note; Mingana, "Apocalypse of Peter," 213, 232 n. 2, suggests that *al-Diyon* in the Ethiopie translation is a mistake for "the wolf," but we are expecting here the name of a people, not another animal symbol. Before Islam the second kingdom was usually understood as the Medes/Persians, so a Muslim dynasty that ruled in the East is probably meant here, such as the Abbasids (which suits *al-ʿAbūs*) or the Seljuks.

[108] Thus ps.-Peter, *Apocalypse*, 301/233; ps.-Peter (Ethiopic tr.), *Apocalypse*, 2.IX.28, simply has: "The kingdom of one of them will be strong," which Dillman, "Das äthiopische Buch Clementinischer Schriften," 194, 202, takes to refer to Hishām, seeming not to notice that there are supposed to be nine kings in total.

[109] Dillman, "Das äthiopische Buch Clementinischer Schriften," 201–205; Bousset, *Der Antichrist*, 45–47.

[110] Dillamn, "Das äthiopische Buch Clementinischer Schriften," 205–207; Nau, "Clémentins (Apocryphes) II," 218; Graf, *GCAL*, 1.283.

[111] Wasserstrom, "The Īsāwiyya Revisited," 69–70, proposes that the comment: "When you see the children of Ishmael with the children of Persia, and when you see the Jews learning the art of warfare" (ps.-Peter, *Apocalypse*, 339/272), refers to the revolt of the Jewish pretender Abū ʿĪsā al-Iṣfahānī, which occurred about the time of the Abbasid revolution.

[112] The earliest manuscript is Paris arab 76, a copy of a manuscript of 1177 (Bratke, "Handschrifliche Überlieferung der arabisch-aethiopischen Petrus-Apokalypse," 463–66). But any firm decision would have to wait until some of the numerous Arabic manuscripts

GREEK TEXTS[113]

The cataclysmic events of the early seventh century provided the raw material for numerous apocalypses for centuries thereafter. The six-year campaign of Heraclius against Persia, mirroring the six days of Creation, resulted in the humbling of Rome's ancient enemy and was crowned by the emperor's journey to Jerusalem to give thanks to God and restore the Cross to its rightful place. Only seven years later all these victories had been reversed by the terrifying scourge of the Arabs and the patriarch of Jerusalem had now to receive "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place." The Byzantines could do no more than hope, as the Arabs suffered a number of setbacks – especially their unsuccessful assaults upon Constantinople (674–78, 716–18) and their civil war (683–92) – that the "southern beast"[114] would soon subside and the Arabs be returned whence they came.

{295} The translation of ps.-Methodius into Greek in the late seventh or early eighth century greatly facilitated the elucidation of such calamities and the articulation of such hopes. The idea of a Christian ruler who would reconstitute the Roman empire and defeat its present enemies was particularly well received, coming at a time when Asia Minor was subject to a sustained Muslim onslaught in the early eighth century, which culminated in a prolonged siege of the capital itself. The motif continued to gain in popularity and influence, in the West as well as the East.[115] Abbreviated, interpolated and refashioned versions of ps.-Methodius appeared in Greek as *Visions* of Daniel, which differed from their Syriac prototype chiefly by their concern for Constantinople, the "seven-hilled" city, by their depiction of not just one, but a series of eschatological emperors, often modelled on past and contemporary rulers, and also by the incorporation of the figure of the lion cub, who assists his parent in the fight against the Arabs in accordance with the prophecy that "lion and whelp will jointly pursue the ass."[116] The idea for this character may have come from ps.-Methodius, where the sons of the king of the Greeks aid him in sub-

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have been studied; at present there has only been published the Ethiopic translation and the rambling Garshuni version edited by Mingana, "Apocalypse of Peter."

[113] Byzantine Greek apocalyptic texts are surveyed by Mango, *Empire of New Rome*, 201–17; Kariotoglou, *Hē peri tou Islam hellēnikē chrēsmologikē grammateia*, 32–56; Brandes, "Die apokalyptische Literatur," 305–22. Studies of the subject are provided by Podskalsky, *Byzantinische Reichseschatologie*; Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*; Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses." I shall not here discuss Book 14 of the Sibylline Oracles, which has been seen by some to refer to the Persian and Arab invasion of Egypt (esp. see Scott, "The Last Sibylline Oracle of Alexandria;" Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," 459–60), since I consider it too vague and corrupt to permit any interpretation at all.

[114] This expression (*notion thēros*) is used by Cosmas of Jerusalem, *Hymns*, canon 1, ode 6, *heirmos*.

[115] Alexander, "The Legend of the Last Roman Emperor;" *idem*, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 151–84.

[116] Some references are given by *ibid.*, 152 n. 4. Note that in the apocalypses attributed to Ezra and Peter the lion cub appears on its own (see entries above).

jugating the Arabs, and then received more concrete inspiration from the crushing defeat inflicted by Leo III (the lion) and his son Constantine on the Muslim armies at Akroinon in Phrygia in 740. It may have subsequently been hoped that this victory would be followed up by a more thorough rout of the enemy, and such anticipations came to feature in contemporary and later apocalypses.[117]

Ps.-Methodius, Greek Translation

The first Greek redaction of ps.-Methodius is a largely faithful rendering of the Syriac original with only minor errors, omissions and changes.[118] **{296}** There is, however, one major addition coming just before the appearance of the Last Emperor:

> Then the sons of Ishmael will go with countless chariots and horses. They will come out in the first month of the ninth indiction and will seize the cities of the East, overwhelming all of them. They will be divided into three bodies of troops: one division will march in the direction of Ephesus, another toward Pergamon and the third toward Malagina. Woe to you lands of Phrygia, Pamphilia and Bithynia! When it becomes cold, Ishmael will seize you… The whole cavalry of Ishmael will arrive, and the first among them will set up his tent against you, Byzantion. He will start fighting and he will smash the gate of Xylokerkos and enter as far as Bous. Then the Lord God will remove the cowardice of the Romans and cast it into the hearts of the Ishmaelites and the courage of the Ishmaelites into the hearts of the Romans. Turning round, the Romans will chase them away from their property, striking without mercy. Then what is written will be fulfilled: "How could one man chase a thousand and two pursue ten thousand" (Deuteronomy xxxii.30). Then also their sailors will be brought to an end and will be annihilated. Then suddenly the king of the Greeks will come out against them…[119]

A very similar account is found in Daniel's *First Vision* discussed in the next entry, and the part on exchange of cowardice and courage is identical. The quotation from Deuteronomy is applied in the *First Vision* to the Last Emperor and his two sons, who together rout the Ishmaelites. In the above, however, it makes no sense, since the Last Emperor is only mentioned subsequent to the defeat of the Arabs. This passage was almost certainly, therefore, inserted at a later date, which would explain why it is not found in the Latin version and not in all Greek redactions. The close parallels between the interpolation and the **{297}** *First Vision* make clear that their

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[117] A number of *Visions* of Daniel are collected in Schmoldt, *Die Schrift vom jungen Daniel und Daniels letzte Vision*, and are studied by Bousset, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Eschatologie," 261–90, and Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 61–122, 170–74 (where he discusses the lion cub).

[118] The primacy of the Syriac was proposed by Kmosko, "Das Rätsel des Pseudomethodius," and demonstrated by Reinink, "Ismael, der Wildesel in der Wüste," 342–44. The first Greek redaction is discussed by Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 52–60 (but he does not mention the interpolation).

[119] Ps.-Methodius (Greek tr.), *Apocalypse*, XIII.7–11.

authors were motivated by the same concerns, the Arab thrust towards Constantinope in the years 709–17. However, whereas the *First Vision* is still nervous about the outcome, the interpolation, presumably written a short while after the event itself, simply wishes to record it and so to update the ps.-Methodius prophecy.

The Syriac ps.-Methodius speaks of the Last Emperor as "awakened against them (the Arabs) like 'a man who has shaken off his wine,' as one who had been considered by them as dead." This image is reminiscent of the sleeping Alexander legend, but is more directly inspired by Psalm lxxviii.65 ("Then the Lord was awakened like a sleeper and like a man who shakes off his wine"), which comes after a long period of hardship for the Israelites and indicates that God has at last arisen to smite their enemies.[120] The Greek version slightly expands the Syriac to "one whom men considered as dead and utterly useless."[121] These epithets, "as dead" and "utterly useless," recur in numerous later *Visions* of Daniel and become stock attributes of the Last Emperor.[122] They contrast sharply with, and so emphasise, the fact that he comes "with great anger" and achieves no less a feat than the revitalisation of the Christian empire.

Greek Daniel, First Vision[123]

This text opens with a description of an attack upon Constantinople by "three sons of Hagar:"

> All these will slaughter a host of Romans (from two and three years old and younger). They will gather together **{298}** toward the sea and the number of that people will be a myriad myriads… (And in that place many will deny our Lord Jesus Christ and the holy gifts, and will follow the apostates. Every sacrifice will cease from the churches, the liturgy of God will be mocked and the priests will be as laymen.) And Ishmael will cry out in a loud voice, boasting and saying: "Where is the God of the Romans? There is no one helping them, for we have defeated them completely."[124]

But just as the Byzantines are despairing of their plight, "the Lord will raise up a king of the Romans," who "will engage in a great war with the nation and the sons of Hagar." He will be victorious and during his 33-year reign "there will be great

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[120] The Syriac version of Psalms is being used (see Reinink, "Die syrische Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende vom römischen Endkaiser," 199–200). See also Wortley, "The Warrior-Emperor of the Andrew Salos Apocalypse," 57.

[121] Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XIII.11 (Syriac and Greek).

[122] For some references see Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 167 n. 62 (though his misreading of the Syriac invalidates his explanations).

[123] Taken from the title given to the text by the Venice Ms. (Bibliotheca Marciana): "The first vision of Daniel: the vision and apocalypse of Daniel the prophet." For a thorough treatment of this apocalypse see Berger, *Die griechische Daniel-Diegese*.

[124] Ps.-Daniel (Greek), *First Vision*, III. 1–5; the section in curly brackets is only found in the Oxford manuscript.

peace."[125] Two wicked rulers will succeed him, a king from the North and "a foul and alien woman," under whom impiety and injustice will prevail. Constantinople will be destroyed, "only one pillar of Constantine the Great" remaining, and "the kingdom will be taken up from it and given to Rome." Next will come a leader from Judaea named Dan and then the Antichrist, both accepted as king by the Jews, who proceed to afflict the Christians. Three men go forth, repudiating the Antichrist, and finally "the great day of the Lord draws near when there will be judgement and recompense."

Only one historical event is recorded by the author, namely the Arab siege of Constantinople begun in 716. The exact routes taken by the Arab generals are given, though unfortunately we cannot verify these. It is related how they "will make a bridge in the sea with boats" and how the Byzantine nobles flee to the mountains and islands.[126] Thereafter there is a shift to eschatological time with God despatching a champion to relieve the Christians. This liberator is inspired by the imaginary figure of the Last Emperor of ps.-Methodius, whence his being thought "dead and useless" and his establishing peace on earth with the help of his sons. But it is also modelled on the historical figure **{299}** of Leo III, who was crowned in the autumn of 716 and who was, as is described in the *First Vision*, from "the inner country of the Persian and Syrian nations" and the bearer of a name beginning with "K" (his baptismal name was Konon).[127] The author was thus writing at the outset of Leo's reign, in the winter of 716–17, when the Arabs were outside the walls of Constantinople itself.[128]

The Vision of Enoch the Just

This text survives only in Armenian, but since it deals solely with Byzantium it is most likely a translation from Greek. It begins with a cherubim appearing to Enoch on Mount Lebanon, and disclosing to him what he had heard from the Lord of Hosts:

> And behold, above the sea there was an eagle, haughty and flying above it, and he had eight wings and three heads… And lo, the head of a dragon appeared, with

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[125] *Ibid.*, V–VI.

[126] *Ibid.*, IV.5–7. Mango, "Life of St. Andrew the Fool," 312, may be wrong to dismiss this as fictional; *Chron. Zuqnin*, 158, states that Leo "severed the bridge of ships, destroying the latter."

[127] Ps.-Daniel (Greek), *First Vision*, V.5–7. The Oxford manuscript has "H," perhaps intending a Heraclius figure. Mango, "Life of St. Andrew the Fool," 312, takes the numerical value of the letter and suggests Leo's predecessor, Theodosius III, whom he deems more suited to the description "dead and useless," but does not consider the stock usage of these epithets.

[128] Thus Mango, "Life of St. Andrew the Fool," 310–13, convincingly refuting Berger, *Die griechische Daniel-Diegese*, who places it *ca.* 802, seeing in the mention of transfer of rule to Rome a reference to Charlemagne.

> nine eyes and his feet were like the claws of a lion, and his running like that of a leopard. And he overtook the eagle between the wind and the waves, and opened his mouth to swallow him; and the eagle cried unto the most High, but his prayers were not heard on account of his violence. Then the eagle turned his face and fled to the ends of the North, but there he found no rest. And the dragon devoured all the peoples and burnt them as with fire, but in his belly remained nothing; and he held the dominion of the earth sixteen times six, that is 96 years. And at the end of that time the eagle, driven on by the south wind, returned with mighty power to the same place to resist the dragon. And the head of **{300}** the dragon lay upon an ash-heap; and the eagle stood on a chariot with white horses, and he caught the dragon on the top of the ash-heap and beat him violently; and the dragon had no more his former strength and his head was scattered throughout all the nations… And six men sat each on a throne; three of them were ill favoured to look upon and black, and two were white and fine to look on, and the sixth was oppressed and afflicted, and was mourning for his wives and children, and all of them distrusted the dragon that was lying upon the ash-heap, and they said: "A fire shall come out of that dragon and shall consume the earth."[129]

Here ends the vision, whereupon the cherubim returns to elucidate "the meaning of it all." The eagle is "the king of the Romans and the Greeks" which "shall consume all the kingdoms of the earth." The dragon's head is "the first prince of the people of Ishmael," its nine eyes mean that "after him shall arise nine kings and they shall conquer the earth."[130] They shall take away, but not destroy, the power of the Romans, "they shall not be able, because this kingdom is the guardian of the seat of the Great King." That "the eagle cried unto the Most High" and was not heard signifies that God forsook him on account of his iniquity…; and he shall escape and flee to the ends of the North, and there shall he make an alliance with the prince of the North, and the name of that king is Bergia."[131] After 96 years the eagle "shall march against the prince of the South with great strength, at the head of the northern nation and of all the remnant of the peoples, and he shall strike him with great slaughter." The white horses are "the troops of the Romans…, which shall scatter the greatness of the people of the South throughout all the remnant of the nations."[132]

{301} As for the six men enthroned, "the three being ill favoured to look upon and black, this shows the time of the people of the South; three chiefs of tribes, that is three times 30, which makes 90 years, and six more years of their dominion in which the tribulations shall be increased." Of the two men sitting, white and well

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[129] Enoch the Just, *Vision*, 309–11.

[130] Note that the Armenian prince Ashot Bagratuni tried to dissuade the Armenian nobles from rebelling against the Arabs in the 770s with the words: "You are unable to resist the power of the multi-headed dragon…" (Lewond, XXXIV [Arzoumanian, 132]).

[131] There is good precedent for this: Heraclius allied with the Turks, Justinian II with the Bulgars (Theophanes, 317, 374).

[132] Enoch the Just, *Vision*, 311–16.

favoured, the first, after smiting the Arabs on sea and land, "shall make peace, and he shall live twelve years more." The second "is Tiber and he shall rule 33 years." "In their days shall be peace and abundance." "Concerning the sixth man who was mourning for his wives and children, he represents the end of the time of the life of the world," for now succeed two bad kings, Hertzik and the Rebel, ruling three years and 1265 days respectively. Finally, "a pious king shall arise in Rome and all the remnant of the faithful shall gather together unto him." The Rebel shall be destroyed, the trumpet blown, "and all the nations shall arise to present themselves before the Lord."[133]

The *Vision's* historical allusions are rather vague,[134] but its immediate inspiration would seem to be the siege of Constantinople and its aftermath. The 96 years allowed for Arab rule take us to 717–18,[135] the year in which the Arabs were driven away from the capital in ignominy. If we discount the disputed reigns of ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya II, the ninth king of the Arabs is Sulaymān (715–17), whose death marks the failure of their siege. Moreover, it is said how, "when the Romans shall destroy the southern people, they shall smite them first upon the sea and the Lord shall cause a storm to rise and drown them," which **{302}** describes exactly the fate of the Muslim fleet on that occasion.[136] Jubilation at their victory appears to have given some Byzantines hope that the final defeat of the Arabs was at hand. Like ps.-Methodius, the *Vision* of Enoch stoutly defends the Roman empire's status as the last empire, which will endure until the end of time, when it will hand over custodianship to God. "It shall be diminished for the reproving of its sins," but "the people of Ishmael… shall not be able to exterminate them." And in the end "there shall remain no more strength in the dragon as before."

Enoch was presumably selected here simply because of his visionary credentials, for there is no borrowing from the Books of Enoch. The eagle vision is familiar from Fourth Ezra, and Daniel xi is the ultimate source for the "king of the North" and his battle with the "prince of the South." The five emperors bear re-

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[133] *Ibid.*, 316–23.

[134] Who, for instance, is intended in the following passage: "When the king of the North shall strike the people of the South and shall carry them away captive, he shall carry away captive with them the ungodly prince, young in age, born in the town of Bishana, whose name is Oumd, and his mother with him. He shall go to Byzantium and there shall dwell 30 years, and learn among the Greeks the science of philosophy. And he shall distinguish himself in it more than all the others, and he shall be honoured by the kings. He shall become a general and shall perform acts of valour in war, and shall receive honour from the king" (*ibid.*, 320). One is reminded of the career of Beser (see Griffith, "Bashīr/Bēsēr," 294–98), who appears first as a Christian captive in Syria, becomes intimate with both Muslim and Byzantine kings, is the supposed instigator of iconoclasm and serves as a general, but his period of activity, *ca.* 720–42, is too late for our text.

[135] I.e. counting 96 solar years from AH 1/AG 933/621–22.

[136] *Ibid.*, 318. The storm and the destruction of the Muslim fleet is recorded by *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 716–18.

semblances to those found in various *Visions* of Daniel, but the sequence is altered and their attributes differently distributed. For example, like the Warrior Emperor, Tiber reigns for 33 years in great peace, but unlike him he initates no reconquest, that being performed by his predecessor. The problem may be that the author has tried to harmonise two distinct themes, the six men enthroned and the five eschatological emperors. Thus there is a certain overlap in the roles of the Warrior Emperor and of the first white and well-favoured man, who both rout the Arabs.

Stephen of Alexandria

Besides a number of commentaries on Greek writings, especially Aristotle,[137] Stephen (d. *ca.* 630),[138] teacher of philosophy and the sciences **{303}** at Alexandria and possibly also at Constantinople,[139] is credited with the authorship of five scientific treatises:

1. An alchemical work with the title: "On the great and sacred art, on the making of gold."[140]
2. A commentary on the *Simple Tables* of Ptolemy. But only one manuscript attributes this to "Stephen the great philosopher of Alexandria;" others are acephalous or assign the work to Heraclius, though maybe only on the basis of the following comment on dating which comes in the first chapter: "There are from the first year of Philip until the present seventh year of the indiction – which is, by the grace of God, the ninth year of our reign – 942 years" (i.e. 618–19).[141]

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[137] On which see Blumenthal, "John Philoponus and Stephanus of Alexandria."

[138] Having just mentioned the peace agreement of 628 between Shiroi and Heraclius, Agapius, 465, says: "Famous among the philosophers at that time was Stephen, sage of Egypt and Alexandria." For information about Stephen see in particular Usener, *De Stephano Alexandrino*; Wolska-Conus, "Stéphanos d'Athènes et Stéphanos d'Alexandrie."

[139] From the designation of Stephen as *oikoumenikos didaskalos* in some manuscripts and from the comment of Theophylact Simocatta (*History*, "intro.") that Heraclius renewed the study of philosophy, Usener (*De Stephano Alexandrino*, 3–5) concludes that the emperor established a new chair of philosophy in Constantinople, which he invited Stephen to occupy. Lumpe, "Stephanos von Alexandrien und Kaiser Heraklios," points out that the epithet *oikoumenikos* was also applied to provincial professors and that Theophylact may have been exaggerating in the interests of rhetoric and blandishment. Lumpe (*ibid.*, 158–59) does, however, offer alternative evidence for Usener's claim: in the ninth part of an alchemical work attributed to Stephen it is stated that the latter had treated the subject at the express wish of Heraclius.

[140] Papathanassou, "Stephanus of Alexandria," gives discussion and references, and lists (128 n.4) scholars arguing for/against the attribution of the work to Stephen.

[141] Thus Nau, "La didascalie de Jacob," 742–44 (appendix); Usener, *De Stephano Alexandrino*, 36, suggests that it was written by Stephen under the close supervision of Heraclius. For the manuscripts containing this work see under Stephen of Alexandria in the index of

3. "By Stephen of Alexandria on the statement of the conjunctions of the stars of Saturn and Jupiter," as concerns both Arabs and Byzantines. No date is given, but the two peoples are presented as having had a long history of interaction.[142]

4. **{304}** "By Stephen the philosopher on the art of mathematics," an apology for astronomy.[143]

5. "By Stephen the philosopher of Alexandria, a definitive treatise for his student Timothy, having as its pretext the recent appearance of the godless legislation of Muḥammad (*atheon nomothesian tou Mōamed*) and foretelling many other things to come."[144] This work contains two distinct parts: a theoretical introduction to astronomy presented in a Christian vein and the horoscope proper. They are linked by the account of one Epiphanius, an Arab merchant, who has just returned from "Arabia Felix" and hastens to Stephen's place of teaching in order to inform him of the "new" and "strange" events taking place in that country:

> In the desert of Ethrib there had appeared a certain man from the so-called tribe of Quraysh (*Korasianōv*), of the genealogy of Ishmael, whose name was Muḥammad and who said he was a prophet. He appeared in the month of Pharmuti, which is called April by the Romans, of the 932nd year (from the beginning of Philip). He has brought a new expression and a strange teaching, promising to those who accept him victories in wars, domination over enemies and delights in paradise.[145]

Stephen then brings out his astrolabe in order to cast a horoscope and find out the future of this self-proclaimed prophet and his followers. From this he learns the length of Arab rule and is able **{305}** to produce a list of 21 of their kings, from Muḥammad to Mahdī (775–85), with a description of the nature of their person and reign. It is possible that the first part on astronomical theory is an authentic writing

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Tihon, *Le 'Petit Commentaire' de Théon d'Alexandrie*, who accepts Usener's attribution of it to Stephen (*ibid.*, 190–92).

[142] Ed. Pingree, "Historical Horoscopes," 501–502.

[143] Cumont, *CCAG*, 2.181–86 (*ibid.*, 182, mentions "the Saracen years" and states that the Hagarenes took over the art from the Romans). There is a brief description of the work by Beck, *Vorsehung und Vorherbestimmung in der theologischen Literatur der Byzantiner*, 68–69, who assumes that there was a real Stephen the philosopher writing in the mid-eighth century (but see n. 146 below).

[144] This is presumably "the canon which Stephen the astrologer cast from the stars concerning the exodus of the Saracens" cited by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, XVI. *Short Chron. 818*, 63, says that Stephen the Philosopher "interpreted the canon" in the seventh year of the rule of Constantine IV (676), so perhaps there was more than one version of this work.

[145] Stephen of Alexandria, *Horoscope*, 21.

of Stephen to which a later author appended a prediction about the course and demise of Arab rule, but more probably the whole work is a late composition.[146]

The Andreas Salos Apocalypse

The *Life* of Andrew the Fool is a long rambling work, set in Constantinople during the reign of Leo I (457–74), which narrates the deeds of Andrew, a Scythian slave turned holy fool, and his protégé Epiphanius, future patriarch of the capital (520–35). The author pretends to be a contemporary of his subject, but anachronisms and reliance upon later texts betray him as writing at a considerably later date.[147] The biography was very popular, not least because of a number of interesting digressions, on whence the clouds get their rain, why snow is white, the composition of the soul, the nature of Heaven and Hell, and an account of "the beginning of the birth-pangs and about the end of the world and the rest."

This apocalyptic section is rather difficult to date, for no *vaticinia ex eventu* are given. Andrew first stresses that Constantinople shall **{306}** never be captured, then immediately proceeds to discuss the succession of eschatological emperors. The first "will turn his face towards the east and humble the sons of Hagar… The whole of Illyricum will be restored to the Roman empire and Egypt will pay her tribute. He will… tame the fair-haired peoples and subdue his enemies."[148] His 32-year reign of "joy and gladness" will be replaced by that of two bad emperors, one an incarnation of the Antichrist, the other an apostate. These are followed by two good rulers, one from Ethiopia who will reign in peace for twelve years, the second from Arabia who, after one year's government, will go to Jerusalem and surrender the insignia of power to God. A period of confusion ensues before the end: three evil young men who destroy themselves in civil war, a wicked woman from Pontus holding power, all Constantinople bar the column in the forum deluged and government moved to

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[146] Cumont, *CCAG*, 2.181, suggested that the author was the same Stephen the philosopher who composed the treatise on the art of mathematics *ca.* 800; this theory presumes there was a distinct Stephen the Philosopher, rather than that the two works were attributed to Stephen of Alexandria. Sahas, "The Seventh Century in Byzantine-Muslim Relations," 15, signals another oracle attributed to Stephen to be found in Stephanitzes, *Syllogē* 57–67. The title indeed states the piece to be "an oracle of Stephen of Alexandria" and "about the emperor Heraclius," but it is in demotic Greek, focuses on Constantinople and speaks of the Turks "who have enslaved the new Israel." Each line of text is treated to a lengthy exegesis by Pantazes of Larissa who perhaps has reworked an older text, but as it stands the oracle must be assigned to a much later period than the seventh century.

[147] Mango, "Life of St. Andrew the Fool," places him in the late seventh century (see also *idem*, *New Rome*, 208–11); Rydén, "The Date of the *Life of Andreas Salos*" argues for the mid-tenth century (at 129 n. 6 he lists previous opinions). For a subtle elucidation of the assumption by Andrew and others of the role of Fool for God see de Certeau, *La fable mystique*, 48–70.

[148] Andreas Salos, *Life* XXV, *PC* 111, 856A. Wortley, "The Warrior-Emperor of the Andrew Salos Apocalypse," argues that this figure is modelled on Basil I (867–86).

Rome and Thessalonica and Syllaion, the arrival of the "72 filthy nations" and finally the Antichrist.

There are a few parallels with Daniel's *First Vision* studied above, particularly the foul woman, Constantinople sinking into the sea bar one pillar,[149] and the transfer of power to Rome. Mango cites this to advance his case for a late seventh-century dating of the *Life* of Andreas Salos. However, such themes as the Last Emperor's sojourn in Jerusalem and the unleashing of Alexander the Great's "filthy nations," present in Andreas Salos but not in Daniel's *First Vision*, betray the influence of ps.-Methodius. This dictates a *terminus post quem* of about 710, when the first Greek redaction was made. The absence of any anxiety about an Arab military threat would necessitate extending this limit to at least 740, when Leo III and his son Constantine V rout Muslim forces in Asia Minor and civil war among the Muslims brings respite for Byzantium.[150] Furthermore, the succession of emperors, an **{307}** essential element in Andrew's apocalypse, is only weakly elaborated in Daniel's *First Vision*. As Rydén has demonstrated, these represent the legendary history of the first Byzantine emperors: Constantine the Great, Constantius II, Julian and Jovian, with an Alexander the Great look-alike inserted in fourth place.[151] The closest parallels to such a schema are in later *Visions* of Daniel, belonging to the ninth and tenth centuries.[152] The lack of *vaticinia ex eventu* will always make the Andreas Salos apocalypse difficult to date, but the emphasis on Constantinople and allowance of only one line for the reconquest of former territories suggest a Byzantium that has accepted and grown accustomed to its narrower horizons. The earliest date one might admit is the 740s, and it is probably much later.

HEBREW TEXTS[153]

By the first century AD the Jews had become a "people of the Book," holding to a set of scriptures and oral elucidation thereof, which they believed to embody divine revelation. Being an expression and medium of God's will, these writings were

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[149] Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses," 6–7, notes that this originates from a prophecy recorded in the *Chronicle* of John Malalas and made by a woman of Constantinople in 541, when bubonic plague struck the East, that the capital was about to sink into the sea.

[150] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 740 (esp. Theophanes, 411); in 745 Constantine invaded Syria and took Germanicea, "taking advantage of the internecine war among the Arabs" (*ibid.*, 422).

[151] Ryden, "Zum Aufbau der Andreas Salos-Apokalypse."

[152] Comparison of Andreas Salos and other apocalypses is made by Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse," 226–60; see also Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 123–30, 155–64.

[153] Relatively little is written on the course of Jewish apocalyptic after the intertestamental period, but see the surveys in *JE*, *s.v.* "Apocalyptic Literature, neo-Hebraic," and Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation*, 36–57; also useful are Baron, *SRHJ*, 5.XXV, and Even-Shmuel, *Midreshē ge'ullā*. Russel, *Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, is the classic introduction to the subject.

turned to for an answer on all questions of life and for the understanding of events, both present and future. Apocalyptic authors scrutinised the books of the prophets for clues to the destiny of Israel and the machinations of the gentiles, creatively recasting old promises and predictions. Such interpretations are found scattered throughout the Talmud, the repository of Jewish learning and lore compiled in the third to fifth centuries, and continued to be produced thereafter. In particular, there was a demand to know when the Messiah would appear and how one might recognise his approach.[154] To this end the Book of Daniel engendered an enormous amount of **{308}** speculation regarding the actions of the empires and rulers of the day. Would the Roman and Persian powers last until the time of the Messiah? If the destroyers of the first Temple, the Assyrians, were defeated by the Persians, must then the latter vanquish the destroyers of the Second Temple, the Romans, before the Messiah would come? Rather, countered another scholar, the Persians would be defeated by those who had demolished the Temple, and the Messiah would then come after domination of the whole world by the Romans for nine months.[155]

In the early seventh century, as the Persians achieved astonishing successes against the Byzantines, as the latter staged a miraculous comeback and as the Arabs brought both to their knees, previous speculations seemed about to be fulfilled and apocalyptic feelings could not but proliferate. The increasing intolerance of Byzantine Christians from the mid-sixth century towards the Jews in their lands further encouraged many to see in the invading Arab armies a sign of their imminent deliverance. Thus in the following apocalyptic writings we discover the hopes and expectations, disillusionment and anguish experienced by at least a portion of the Jewish community of this period.

The Secrets of Rabbi Simon ben Yohai

The renowned second-century rabbi Simon ben Yoḥai is credited with a number of related apocalyptic works. The *Tefillā* ("Prayer") pertains to Crusader times in its present form, but draws indirectly upon the *Nistarōt* ("Secrets") and *Midrash 'aseret melākhīm* ("Midrash of the Ten Kings"), also ascribed to Rabbi Simon, which deal with the career of Islam until the fall of the Umayyad dynasty and the rise of the Abbasids respectively.[156] In their turn, these two, and the *Secrets* in particular, make use of an earlier apocalypse, seemingly contemporary with the Arab conquests.[157]

{309} At the opening of the scene we are introduced to Simon, who has been "hidden {for thirteen years} in a cave from the emperor, the king of Edom, {who

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[154] Though the activity of estimating the time of the end was frowned upon by rabbis.

[155] *Talmud*, Sabbath 151b, Yoma 10a, 'Avoda Zara 2b.

[156] This was demonstrated by Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 5.489–97 (n. 16); Steinschneider, "Apocalypsen mit polemischer Tendenz," 635–46, was sceptical, but his objections have been met by Braslavski, "Hat Welīd den Jordan ablenken wollen," and Lewis, "An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History," 327–29.

[157] Thus Even-Shmuel, *Midreshē ge'ullā*, 167–69, 175–77; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 4.

had decreed destruction on Israel}."[158] He has been fasting and praying for a number of days, and he calls upon God to answer his prayer for enlightenment:

> At once the secrets of the end and the mysteries were revealed to him, and he sat and began to expound: "And he saw the Kenite" (Numbers xxiv.21).
>
> Since he saw the kingdom of Ishmael that was coming, he began to say: "Was it not enough what the wicked kingdom of Edom has done to us, but [we deserve] the kingdom of Ishmael too?" At once Metatron, the foremost angel (*sar ha-penīm*), answered him and said: "Do not fear, son of man, for the Almighty only brings the kingdom of Ishmael in order to deliver you from this wicked one (Edom). He raises up over them (Ishmaelites) a prophet according to His will and He will conquer the land for them, and they will come and restore it to greatness, and a great dread will come between them and the sons of Esau." Rabbi Simon answered him and said: "How [is it known] that they are our salvation?" He (Metatron) said to him: "Did not the prophet Isaiah say that 'he saw a chariot with a pair of horsemen etc.'?[159] Why did he put the chariot of asses before **{310}** the chariot of camels when he should rather have said 'a chariot of camels and [then] a chariot of asses,' because when he (Ishmael, i.e. the Arabs) goes forth [to war], he rides upon on a camel, and when the kingdom will arise by his hands he rides upon an ass? [Given that he said the reverse of this], the chariot of asses, since he (the Messiah) rides upon an ass, shows that they (the Ishmaelites, represented by the chariot of camels) are a salvation for Israel, like the salvation of the rider on an ass (i.e. the Messiah)."
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> Another exegesis: Rabbi Simon used to say that he heard Rabbi Ishmael [say], when he had heard that the kingdom of Ishmael was approaching: "They will measure the land with ropes, as it is said, 'And he shall divide the land for a price' (Daniel xi.39). And they will make cemeteries into a pasturing place for flocks; and when one of them dies, they will bury him in whatever place they find and

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[158] Simon ben Yoḥai, *Secrets*, 78; the words in curly brackets are only in *Midrash of the Ten Kings*, 465. The word for destruction, *shemad*, can also mean conversion, so this may be a reference to Heraclius' decree ordering forced baptism of Jews (the same word is used by Eliezer ben Qilir, *Apocalyptic Poem*, 415, cited in the entry on "Deliverance from the Wicked Kingdom" in Chapter 12 below).

[159] The reference is to Isaiah xxi.7, which is usually translated: "And he saw a chariot with a pair of horsemen, a chariot (*rekhev*) of asses and a chariot of camels." However, this could also be read: "a pair of horsemen, one riding (*rōkhēv*) on an ass, one riding on a camel," and it seems that this is meant here. The Aramaic Bible opts for the latter reading (Stenning, *Targum of Isaiah*, 66–67, using *rkīb*) and Crone and Cook (*Hagarism*, 153 n. 13) therefore suggest that the author of the apocalypse was working from the Aramaic. This is possible, but some commentators on the Hebrew text do also favour this reading. Note that this verse came to be used by Muslim writers as well, the rider on a camel being understood as Muḥammad (see the entry on "Timothy I" in Chapter 11 below).

> later plough the grave and sow thereon. Thus it is said: 'The children of Israel shall eat their bread defiled (Ezekiel iv.13),' because the unclean field should not be encroached upon."[160]
>
> Again: "And he saw the Kenite:" and what parable did the wicked one (Balaam) take up, except that when he saw the sons of his (the Kenite's) sons who were to arise and subject Israel, he began to rejoice and said: "Strong (*ētān*) is your dwelling place. I see that the sons of man do not eat save according to the commandments of Etan the Ezrah-ite."[161]

In the above passage it is clear that the Arabs (Kenites, Ishmaelites) were expected by the author to play a significant role in the messianic drama. The first section outlines their mission, namely to eliminate the Byzantines (Edom, sons of Esau) and to restore the land of Israel to its former glory and to its former owners. The second section, however, **{311}** goes further, comparing the Arabs' mission to that of the Messiah. The exegesis of Isaiah aims to demonstrate that the Arabs are not simply heralds or forerunners of the Messiah, but are themselves liberators, perhaps having in mind Isaiah lx.6: "The caravans of camels shall cover (protect and redeem) you."

The increased hostility of the Byzantine empire towards its Jewish communities during the late sixth and early seventh century, which culminated in Heraclius' decree ordering their compulsory baptism, make it unsurprising that a number of Jews should hail the Arab conquerors as deliverers. What our author is trying to do is to justify and find confirmation for such a conclusion from scripture, and to place the affair in the grander context of God's plan for Israel. The use made of Isaiah is fairly explicit. Rather abstruse in the text as we have it is the recourse to Numbers xxiv.21: "And he (Balaam) saw the Kenite and took up his parable and said: 'Strong is your dwelling place and you put your nest in a rock.'" The Kenites are sons of Jethro, Salamians, identified in Byzantine inscriptions and literature as an Arab tribe.[162] Balaam is the Biblical "prophet of the gentiles" sent to Moab and the Midianites, and so an appropriate figure to prophesy about the Arabs. His first words advance a favourable verdict upon the future of their dominion: "Strong is your dwelling place." And the second part seems bound up with the favourable description of 'Umar I in the *Secrets*:

> The second king who arises from Ishmael will be a lover of Israel. He restores their breaches and the breaches of the Temple. He hews Mount Moriah, makes it

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[160] This quotation from Rabbi Ishmael is given in a longer form in Rabbi Eliezer, *Chapters*, XXX (cited below).

[161] Simon ben Yoḥai, *Secrets*, 78–79; Etan the Ezrahite appears in the Bible as a sage of the East, but was commonly identified in rabbinic writings as Abraham.

[162] Gil, "The Origin of the Jews of Yathrib," 217–18.

> level and builds a mosque (*hishtahawāyā*) there on the Temple rock, as it is said: "Your nest is set in the rock."[163]

After this, however, Balaam's prophecy takes on a polemical aspect, for we see him rejoicing at the coming of the Kenite's sons "who were to arise and subject Israel."

It would seem, then, that the *Secrets* contains a number of messianic interpretations of the Arab conquerors, dating to and prompted by **{312}** 'Umar's building activity on the Temple Mount.[164] But it is equally evident that the original version has been reworked. The anti-Arab twist of Balaam's prophecy and Rabbi Ishmael's account of the evils to be perpetrated by the Arabs in the land contrast oddly with the exegesis on Isaiah. And the entry on 'Umar has become confused with the biography of another ruler, probably Mu'āwiya, for he is said to "die in peace and with great honour," whereas 'Umar was murdered. The refashioning of the *Secrets* has obscured many details, but not the anticipation felt by certain sectors of the Jewish population at the prospect of liberation from "the wicked kingdom" at the hands of the invading Arabs.

Pesiqta rabbati

The rabbinic composition known as the *Pesiqta rabbati* is a collection of discourses expounding the Biblical lessons prescribed for reading on the festivals, fasts and special Sabbaths of the Jewish year.[165] Language and the rabbinic authorities cited indicate that it was composed in Palestine, and a notice that 777 years have elapsed since the destruction of the Temple reveals that the work was copied or revised in 845, though clearly drawing on earlier Talmudic material and having undergone a long process of development and redaction.[166]

Among those discourses intended to be read on the seven Sabbaths of Consolation which follow the Fast of the Ninth of August, there are four (XXXIV–XXXVII) which by their style and content form a **{313}** distinctive unity. They treat the coming of the Messiah and present him as one who will suffer to bring about

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[163] Simon ben Yoḥai, *Secrets*, 79. *Hishtahawāyā* literally means a place of prostration; cf. *Talmud* (*Jerusalem*), Avoda Zara 4.43d.

[164] These interpretations need not have been independent compositions, as is asserted by Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 35–37; they fail to take into account the style of midrashic exposition whereby a Biblical quotation will be adduced, then various digressions indulged in before the quotation is again considered.

[165] For discussion and further references see Braude, *Pesikta rabbati*, 1–26; Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash*, 322–29. Each midrashic discourse is called a *pisqa* (usual plural is *pesīqdtā*), which literally means "section" or "division;" *rabbati* simply means "large" and was probably applied to this work to distinguish it from a similar compilation entitled *Pesiqta* or *Pesiqta d-rab Kahana* (the two works are compared by Neusner, *From Tradition to Imitation*).

[166] Braude, *Pesikta rabbati*, 3, 20–26; Kern-Ulmer, "'Arīkhā ve-qanōnīzaṣiya be-Pesīqtā rabbatī."

the redemption of his people, and there is also mention of the "Mourners for Zion" who are mocked by fellow Jews, but on account of whose ceaseless prayers the Messiah will appear. Further, there is some description of the events that will accompany the Messiah's arrival:

> In the year in which the Messiah reveals himself, all the kings of the nations of the earth will be at strife with one another. The king of Persia will make war against a king of Arabia, and this king of Arabia will go to Edom to take counsel from the Edomites. Thereupon the king of Persia will again lay the whole world waste. All the nations of the world will be agitated and frightened, they will fall upon their faces and they will be seized with pangs like the pangs of a woman in labour.[167]

On the basis of this passage Bamberger argues that chapters XXXIV–XXXVII must have been written in the years 632–37, for only then were the empires of Persia, Byzantium and Arabia simultaneously in existence.[168] The saying seems, however, to be general eschatological speculation rather than a response to a specific historical situation. The figure of the king of Arabia could easily be modelled on a Lakhmid or even Ghassanid ruler, which would allow a date anywhere from the fourth to the sixth century, but some time in the first half of the seventh century remains a possibility.[169]

The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer

Another important example of rabbinic pseudepigrapha are the *Pirqē* ("Chapters") attributed to the famed first-century scholar Eliezer ben **{314}** Hyrcanus. The work is a narrative midrash reviewing the most noteworthy events of the Pentateuch from Creation to Exodus. It is clearly composite, for there is much repetition and contradiction, and a lack of consecutive order in the arrangement of the material.[170] One section, which describes how "our father Abraham was tried with ten trials," betrays evidence of composition or redaction in Muslim times. In the course of the seventh trial, which concerns God's revelations to Abraham, the verse: "Take me a heifer three years old, a she-goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove and a young pigeon" (Genesis xv.9) is explained as follows:

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[167] *Pesiqta rabbati*, XXXVI (tr. Braude, 681–82); attributed to a Rabbi Isaac.

[168] Bamberger, "A Messianic Document of the Seventh Century."

[169] See Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs before Islam." Braude's objection (*Pesikta rabbati*, 24) that Persia did not contend with Arabia in the seventh century is incorrect. Shortly before the major encounters of the 630s there was the battle of Dhu Qar (see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Dū Qār"), and *Chron. Siirt* LXXXVII, *PO* 13, 539–40, says there was constant strife between them at this time.

[170] Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, xv–xviii. On this work see *JE*, *s.v.* "Pirke de-Rabbi Eli'ezer;" Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash*, 356–58.

> "A heifer three years old" refers to the kingdom of Edom, which is like the heifer of a sheep. "A she-goat three years old" refers to the kingdom of Greece… "A ram three years old," this is the kingdom of Media and Persia… "A turtle dove," this refers to the sons of Ishmael… "And a young pigeon," this refers to the Israelites, who are compared to a young pigeon, as it is said: "O my dove, you are in the clefts of the rock."[171]

These four kingdoms are to endure "one day," a thousand years "according to the day of the Holy One." More specifically, "all the day except for two thirds of an hour," that is, except for 28 years, assuming a millennium to represent 24 hours. This has been taken by many scholars as an indication of the time of writing: Friedlander counts from the persecution of Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC, arriving at 832; Silver begins with the rebuilding of the Temple in 352 BC, which brings him to 648. The last age, the two thirds of an hour, is meant to be one of disturbance, which would in the first case be the fourth Arab civil war (809–33), in the second the Arab invasions.[172]

Abraham's ninth trial pertains to Sarah's insistence that he "cast out this bondswoman and her son" (Genesis xxi.10). During this chapter **{315}** we again meet the prophet Balaam, who warns that the similarity between the names Israel and Ishmael bodes ill for those alive in the days of the latter, as it is said: "Alas who shall live when God establishes him" (Numbers xxiv.23).[173] The exact ills are then stated on the authority of Rabbi Ishmael:[174]

> Fifteen things are the children of Ishmael going to do in the land [of Israel] in the latter days, namely, they will measure the land with ropes, and make the cemetery into a dunghill where the flock rests, and they will measure them and from them upon the tops of the mountains.[175] Falsehood will multiply and truth will be hidden; law will be removed from Israel and sins will multiply in Israel [with] scarlet crimson [accounted] as wool;[176] papyrus plant and reed pen will wither, and imperial coinage will be withdrawn. They will build the desolate cities and clear the roads; they will plant gardens and orchards, fence in the broken walls of the Temple and erect a building in the Temple. Two brothers will arise over them,

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[171] Rabbi Eliezer, *Chapters*, XXVIII (tr. Friedlander, 198).

[172] Friedlander, *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, 200 n. 6; Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation*, 39–40.

[173] Rabbi Eliezer, *Chapters*, XXX (tr. Friedlander, 221); the usual rendering is "when God does this."

[174] Note that the first part of this paragraph is quoted, also on the authority of Rabbi Ishmael, in the *Secrets* of Simon ben Yoḥai (cited above).

[175] Mayerson, "P. *Ness.* 58 and Two *Vaticinia ex Eventu* in Hebrew," asserts that "measuring the land with ropes" signifies a land survey, the like of the *geōmetria tōn Sarakēnōn* recorded in *Nessana Papyri*, no. 58.

[176] Cf. Isaiah i.18: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

> princes in their body. And in their days the Scion, the son of David, will arise, as it is said: "In the days of those kings, the God of Heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed (Daniel ii.44)."[177]

Rabbi Ishmael then continues with a more vague prediction: "Three wars of trouble will the sons of Ishmael in the future wage on the earth in the latter days… one in the forest of Arabia… another at sea… and **{316}** one in a great city which is in Rome." Again, scholars are divided over what date is being signalled here. A clue is the mention of two brothers, who have been identified as Amīn and Ma'mūn by Graetz, as Mu'āwiya and Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān by Silver, and as Saffāḥ and Manṣūr by Lewis.[178] One could make a good case for the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, which coincides exactly with that of his brother 'Abd al-'Aziz, governor of Egypt. Both initiated many building projects and 'Abd al-Malik of course constructed the Dome of the Rock, located on the Temple Mount itself. Inscriptions on a number of milestones attest his attention to road building, and he indeed withdrew the Byzantine coinage, circulating a Muslim type with no cross, which must surely have impressed the Jews. Coming back to the millennium for which the four kingdoms will last, it is possible that the Greek calendar is being used as a gauge, which would then take us to the end of the seventh century, AG 1000 falling in 688–89. But it is perhaps safer to assume that no specific timescale was intended.

Other small details, such as the names of Ishmael's wives being 'Ā'isha and Fāṭima,[179] confirm the idea that the episode of the trials of Abraham was composed in Muslim times. It is unclear when the final redaction of the *Chapters* of Rabbi Eliezer was made, but the trials were very likely added *ca.* 700.

Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads

This text survives only as a fragment, comprising a brief list of the Arab caliphs, of which the latter part is missing. Since it begins with the death of 'Uthmān and passes thence to Mu'āwiya without mentioning 'Alī, its subject may have been a review of the Umayyad dynasty concluding with the reign of Marwān II (744–50), though it may mean no more than that it originated in Palestine or Syria, where 'Alī had not been regarded as a legitimate ruler. It resembles the Judaeo-Persian **{317}** Daniel

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[177] Rabbi Eliezer, *Chapters*, XXX (tr. Friedlander, 221–22); Friedlander's translation has been modified in the light of the comments of Krauss, *Studien zur byzantinisch-jüdischen Geschichte*, 145, and Kedar, "The Arab Conquests and Agriculture," 3–4.

[178] Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, 5.223 n. 1; Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation*, 40–41; Lewis, "An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History," 331. The first two seem too late and too early respectively; Lewis' suggestion is plausible, though the passage implies that the brothers rule simultaneously.

[179] Rabbi Eliezer, *Chapters*, XXX.

apocalypse in being a cryptic enumeration of kings narrated in the future tense, and like that work it most likely ended on an apocalyptic note.[180]

The first Arab civil war is alluded to as a time when "the sun became obscured from one end of the sky to the other and a great terror fell upon men." Then will rule Mu'āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān who, "at God's instigation," "will restore the walls of the Temple. He will live long and prevail over the islands of the sea," a reference to his capture of Cyprus and Arwad. The author is well informed, for he even includes Mu'āwiya II, who governed only forty days or so. The conflict during the second civil war is somewhat confused, but 'Abd al-Malik is easily recognised as the man "whose four sons will be kings" and who "will rebuild the Temple of the eternal God of Israel." There then follow Walīd, a great oppressor and builder, and Sulaymān, warrior and amasser of wealth, before the text breaks off in the middle of its description of 'Umar II as "an honest king, loving justice and hating…"[181]

Signs of the Messiah

A Geniza fragment enumerates the following signs that must occur before the Messiah son of David will appear:

1. … (missing)
2. Purification of Israel;
3. Three rainbows remaining three days and nights;
4. Rain of blood for three days and nights;
5. Dew for three days and nights to wipe away the blood;
6. Solar eclipse over all the peoples except Israel;
7. **{318}** The king of Edom will arrive at Jerusalem and the Ishmaelites will flee. They will raise a large army under Manṣūr and defeat the Edomites at Bostra. When Manṣūr withdraws, the king of Edom will go and hand over his crown at the sanctuary, saying: "Lord of the Universe, I return to you what my ancestors took." And Israel will be cruelly oppressed at that time.
8. Nehemiah ben Housiel, the Messiah son of Joseph, arises, kills the king of Edom and dons the crown deposited by the latter.
9. Armilus, born of Satan, will come out from the land of the Romans, destroy Alexandria and all the coast, establish himself in Emmaus, beguile the Romans and Ishmaelites, and have Nehemiah killed. The Israelites will be in distress, hiding in caves and fleeing to the desert of

[180] See in this chapter below, though the *Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads* supplies the names of most of the kings.

[181] *Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads*, 178.

Moab and Ammon.[182]

10. Menahem ben Ammiel, the Messiah son of David, will arrive to take charge of all countries and to vanquish Armilus, thus redeeming Israel.

On the basis of Sign 7 and identifying the Ishmaelites with the Persians and "Manṣūr" with Khusrau II, Marmorstein dates this work to "between 628 and 638."[183] Leaving aside the lack of precedent for the first assumption and the implausibility of the second, one must bear in mind that this composition is an exercise in eschatology and need not have any anchor in history. A pre-Islamic date seems unlikely, for the Ishmaelites are depicted in Sign 9 as having a law and scripture. If compelled to give a date, one would have to assign it to the late eleventh century, for only in the time of the Crusades did the Muslims flee before Romans from Jerusalem.

On That Day

{319} In very much the same spirit as the above text is a Jewish apocalyptic poem, preserved in a Geniza fragment, which opens: "On that day when the Messiah son of David will come to a downtrodden people, these signs will be seen in the world and will be brought forth." A list then follows of natural marvels, a battle between "the king of the West and the king of the East" at which the former holds firm, the emergence of a king "from the land of Yoqtan" whose "armies will seize the Land," Gog and Magog, Israel "freed of all their sins" and no more "kept far from the house of prayer," the kings of Edom "will be no more," "the people of Antioch will rebel and make peace," "Ma'uziya and Samaria will be consoled," "Acre and Galilee will be shown mercy," "Edomites and Ishmael will fight in the valley of Acre,"[184] "Gaza and her daughters will be stoned," "Ascalon and Ashdod will be terrorstricken," and finally the Messiah will be revealed and Israel "will be consoled."

Not only is this an eschatological venture, but also a poem, so its link with historical reality is doubly tenuous. Nevertheless, opinions on its date have not been unforthcoming. Marcus found that the first line, which gives the piece its present name, corresponded with that of a poem ascribed to the early seventh-century poet Eliezer ben Qilir, and proposed common authorship.[185] There must surely, howev-

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[182] Armilus, the last enemy of Israel, first appears in certain early seventh-century texts, including the *Book of Zerubbabel*, a poem of Eliezer ben Qilir, and the *Doctrina Jacobi* (see *JE*, *s.v.* "Armilus," and Berger, "Three Typological Themes in Early Jewish Messianism," 155–62).

[183] Marmorstein, "Les signes du Messie," 177–80.

[184] Cf. Simon ben Yoḥai, *Prayer*, 122 (a Crusader-period text): "The sons of Ishmael make war with the Edomites in the plain of Acre."

[185] Cited by Lewis, "On That Day: a Jewish Apocalyptic Poem," 198, who advances his own arguments for a seventh-century date. This time of writing is also proposed by Yahalom, "'Al toqpān shel yeṣīrōt sifrūt," 128, who provides a new edition (*ibid.*, 130–33) based

er, have been numerous poems with this beginning, and so this argument seems particularly weak. Lewis, too, favours an early seventh-century setting on the grounds that "the battle of the king of the West and the king of the East refers to the last great war between Byzantium and Persia, … then comes the invasion of Palestine by the Arabs and the defeat and eviction of the Byzantines." Ginzberg felt that it pertained to the time of the Crusades, and the preponderance of names of Palestinian **{320}** coastal cities certainly suggests this.[186] That Israel would no longer be "kept far from the house of prayer" does, however, sound like a reference to the Muslims' relaxation of Hadrian's ban on Jewish access to Jerusalem renewed by Heraclius, and so is a point in favour of a seventh-century date. But if the author were really a witness to the events of the Arab conquest, as Lewis claims, one would have expected greater detail, vividness and verisimilitude in his narration. Instead we have a work that plays with eschatological motifs, conjuring up a vision of the march of armies and the proliferation of supernatural events, and promising times when fear kindles "in the hearts of the gentiles" and when "blessings and consolations will be showered on" Israel. If one does not fully agree with Gil that this poem "has no reliable foothold on which to determine its date," one should at least exercise caution.[187]

A Judaeo-Byzantine Daniel

A Hebrew text describes itself as "the vision of Daniel which was revealed to him in the days of Khusrau, king of Persia, and it is the vision of the fourteen." There follows a review of fourteen rulers who are characterised in allusive terms and from a Jewish perspective. The second entry reads as follows:

> The sign of his name will be the two Bs…, He will become surfeited with his goodness and will turn his face against the holy ones of the Most High. He will baptise them by force and with much woe… He will pass his sceptre into his son's hand for an inheritance, whose name will be the sign of royalty for beasts, Leo.[188]

This has been interpreted, plausibly, as a reference to the emperor (*basileus*) Basil I (867–86), who did order compulsory baptism of Jews, **{321}** and his son Leo VI (886–912), and the whole work to be a commentary on the Macedonian dynasty of emperors.[189]

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on six Geniza pieces, the fullest version found among poems of Eliezer ben Qilir for Tish'at be-Av.

[186] Ginzberg, *Genizah Studies*, 1.310.

[187] Gil, History of Palestine, 63 n. 65.

[188] Ps.-Daniel (Judaeo-Byzantine), *Vision*, 313 (tr. Sharf, 304).

[189] Krauss, "Un nouveau texte pour Phistoire judéo-byzantine;" Sharf, "A Source for Byzantine Jewry under the Early Macedonians" (includes a translation); Meinardus, "A Judaeo-Byzantine 14th Vision of Daniel."

PERSIAN TEXTS[190]

The apocalyptic view of history, which sees the latter as a narrative of the past and future course of the cosmic struggle between Good and Evil, would seem to have been present in Zoroastrianism since the days of its prophet.[191] Although Persian apocalypses did not acquire a definitive form until the ninth century, citations by Greek and Latin authors as early as the fourth century BC illustrate their antiquity.[192] Oral preservation meant that these works could easily be updated, recording the most recent developments in the throes between Light and Darkness and the fate of Iran. A major development was of course the subjugation of the Persian realm to the Muslims, and this has left its mark in the apocalyptic writings, a vivid illustration of the anguish felt by much of the Iranian populace at the loss of their sovereignty and rapid demise of their former way of life.

Bahman yasht

This text has only survived as a summary of a Middle Persian commentary (*zand*) on the Avestan *Bahman yasht.*[193] It recounts two visions of the prophet Zoroaster, of a tree with four and with seven branches of different metals, the second vision being an expanded version of the first. This is explained to Zoroaster by Ahuramazda as signifying the different periods of his, the tenth, millennium. The fourth/seventh age, **{322}** the age of Iron, which comes after that comprising the reign of Khusrau I (531–79) and which closes the millennium of Zoroaster, is one of adversity, when "a myriad kinds of demons with dishevelled hair, of the race of Wrath, rush into the country of Iran from the direction of the east," when religion and people will suffer, and when "sovereignty will come from those leather-belted ones (Turks) and Arabs and Romans."[194] After hearing the catalogue of woes to be endured by his people, Zoroaster asks: "Whence do they restore the Good Religion of the Mazdaeans and by what means will they destroy those demons with dishevelled hair, of the race of Wrath?" In reply, Ahuramazda relates to him that after the upheavals and disturbances of the fourth/seventh age the warrior-king Wahram Warjawand and the prince Pishyotan, coming with 150 righteous men, will defeat Iran's enemies and usher in the millennium of Ushedar in which the Good Religion will flourish. Finally, there will arrive the twelfth and last millennium, that of the Saoshyant, who "makes the creatures again pure, and the resurrection and future existence occur."

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[190] Persian apocalyptic texts are briefly surveyed by Tavadia, *Mittelpersische Sprache und Literatur*, 121–26; Collins, "Persian Apocalypses;" *EIr*, *s.v.* "Apocalyptic."

[191] Cumont, "La fin du monde selon les mages occidentaux;" Boyce, "On the Antiquity of Zoroastrian Apocalyptic."

[192] Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l'Iran ancien*, 343–54.

[193] Though see Gignoux, "Sur Pinexistence d'un Bahman Yasht avestique." For an introduction to this text see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Bahman Yašt."

[194] *Bahman yasht*, IV.2–3, IV.59 (tr. West, 201–202, 210).

This eschatological sketch features with only minor changes in the two other major Middle Persian apocalypses discussed below, the *Jamāsp nāmag* and Chapter XXXIII of the *Bundahishn* ("Creation"), and it has been argued that all three draw upon an apocalypse composed in 590 around the heroic figure of Bahram Chobin. He successfully fought against the Turks in the east and laid claim to the Sasanian throne (590–91), but was removed by Khusrau II with the help of the Byzantines.[195] Certainly, though comprising Avestan and legendary elements,[196] its pretension to apocalyptic knowledge has made the *Bahman yasht* a candidate for continual revision and elaboration. Thus what probably began as a lamentation over the predations of the Macedonian conquerors, "the demons with dishevelled hair," became in the final redaction directed against the invading Arabs. That these "demons" come from the East suggests that the Abbasid revolution may also have become incorporated. The Pazand version would seem to confirm this, telling that "those men of basest lineage will rush from **{323}** the region of Khurasan upon the land of Iran, with banners uplifted and banners all of black."[197]

The mention of Turks was taken by West to refer to "the Ghaznavids and Seljuks of the eleventh and twelfth centuries," but the Turks were old foes of Iran.[198] And in the *Bahman yasht* and other apocalyptic texts the Turks commonly appear with Arabs and Romans, the trio simply representing Iran's chief antagonists through the ages. Indeed, it is a part of the eschatological drama that "Turk and Arab and Roman will come together."[199] The *Bahman yasht*, though obviously revised in the wake of the Arab occupation, need not, then, be later than the ninth century, when so many Zoroastrian books were finally given definitive form.[200]

Jāmāsp nāmag

This apocalypse is presented as a prediction of Jamasp, minister and recipient of omniscience from Zoroaster, which was given in reply to the king Wishtasp's question: "How many years will this Pure Religion endure, and afterwards what times and seasons will come?" Jamasp answers the king:

> It will endure a thousand years. Then those men who are at that time will all become covenant-breakers. One with another they will be revengeful and envious and false. And for that reason the nation of Iran will be delivered up to the Arabs

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[195] Czeglédy, "Bahrām Ċōbīn and the Persian Apocalyptic Literature," postulates an apocalypse of 590 that was a source of all three texts.

[196] Widengren, "Leitende Ideen und Quellen der iranischen Apokalyptic," 104–19.

[197] *Bahman yasht*, IV.4 (tr. West, 202 n. 2). Pazand refers to transcription of Middle Persian from the ambiguous Pahlavi script into the clear Avestan alphabet, an activity that was common in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

[198] West, *Pahlavi Texts*, 1.liv; Bailey, "Iranian Studies," 945–51.

[199] *Jāmāsp nāmag*, I.15, II.6 (tr. Bailey, 584). Cf. *Bahman yasht*, VI.10 (tr. West, 218); *Bundahishn*, XXXIII.24–27; *Dēnkard*, 7.VIII.2 (tr. West, 5.94).

[200] For this point see Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 152–56.

> (*tājīkān*), and the Arabs will daily grow stronger and will seize district after district. Men will turn to unrighteousness and falsehood… Much royal treasure and wealth will pass into the hands and possession of enemies… Anērān and Ērān will be confounded so that the Iranian will not **{324}** be distinguished from the foreigner; those who are Iranians will turn back to foreign ways.[201]

In general, all that was previously held dear would be profaned and what was debased and despicable would prevail. As in the *Bahman yasht* above, we have here an account of the millennium of Zoroaster, its end marked by foreign invasion and turmoil. Similarly, numerous conflicts follow and battles are fought before "Pishyotan will come with 150 disciples" and "Ushedar, son of Zoroaster, will appear to reveal the faith, and evil will be at an end, joy and gladness and happiness will have come."[202] It has been suggested that "the insignificant and unknown man who will bring by his valour… the country under his rule," and who appears in Khurasan, is a reference to Ya'qūb ibn Layth the Coppersmith, who appropriated much of Iran in the late ninth century and founded the Saffarid dynasty.[203] This is unlikely in that the figure of this upstart pretender is found in other apocalypses,[204] but it is possible that Ya'qub's career affected his role and character. And certainly a late ninth-century date is again the most plausible for the text's final redaction.

Bundahishn

The first 30 chapters of this compendium-style text treat the origin and nature of Creation. The final six chapters, most likely added at a later date, review the history of Iran's ruling dynasty, the Kayanids, and "the abodes which the Kayanids made with splendour." Chapter XXXIII is entitled: "On the calamities which millennium by millennium have come upon the country of Iran," and contains the following entry:

> **{325}** When the sovereignty came to Yazdgird, he reigned twenty years; then the Arabs entered Iran in great numbers. Yazdgird did not contend with them in battle. He went to Khurasan and Turkestan and asked for the assistance of horses and men. They killed him there. Yazdgird's son went to India and brought an army and troops. He was slain before coming to Khurasan. The army and troops were destroyed and Iran remained with the Arabs. They promulgated their own laws of irreligion, dissolved the bonds of the institutions of the men of old and weakened the Mazdaean religion. They brought into use the washing, burying and

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[201] *Jāmāsp nāmag*, 1.2–3 (tr. Bailey, 55–56).

[202] *Ibid.*, 1.21 (tr. Bailey, 585–86). The text is discussed by Benveniste, "Une apocalypse pehlevie: le Ẓāmāsp-Nāmak;" Olsson, "Apocalyptic Activity: the Case of Jāmāsp Nāmag."

[203] See Modi's introduction to his edition of the *Jāmāsp nāmag*, xxxviii–xxxix. On Ya'qūb himself and his significance, see Stern, "Ya'qūb the Coppersmith."

[204] See Czeglédy, "Bahrām Chōbīn and the Persian Apocalyptic Literature," 33–34, who says that Bahram is intended.

> eating of polluted matter. From the beginning of creation till this day no evil more grievous than this has come, since by reason of their evil deeds distress and desolation and lamentation have made their abode [in Iran]. By reason of their wicked laws and wicked faith, [there is] pestilence and want and other evils. It is stated in the Religion that there shall come an end of their accursed rule.[205]

Then commences the eschatological drama, once more following a similar pattern to the previous two works, ending with the arrival of the Saoshyant and the resurrection of the dead.

Chapter XXXV lists the Zoroastrian priests. At the end one "Farr-bay whom they call Jadagih son of Ashawahisht" speaks of himself in the first person. He names as his contemporary a certain Zadspram, who is known as the author of a similar compendium.[206] From an epistle of his elder brother Manushchihr, dated to AD 881, Zadspram may be inferred to have been active in the late ninth century. The earliest recension of the *Bundahishn*, complete with the additional chapters, is likely, then, to have been made about this time. Since the attempt at a comeback by Yazdgird in 651 and by his son Peroz in 678 are noted, but not that of his great-grandson Khusrau in 728,[207] it is possible that **{326}** this apocalyptic section derives from the late seventh century, but this cannot be proven.

Dēnkard

This text is effectively an encyclopaedia of Zoroastrian religion and lore. It is both an exposition and a defence of the faith and of the principles that give it cogency and life. The first to work on its compilation was Adurfarnbag i Farrokhzadan, who was high priest of Fars in the time of Ma'mūn (813–33) and to whom the material in Books 4 and 5 is explicity attributed. His son suffered a "terrible calamity" and the text "was rent and scattered, and fell into a state of bad repair, deterioration and corruption," but "I, Adurbad i Emedan, head of the Mazdaeans, … by questioning and searching and after much trouble I rediscovered this writing… brought it together… composed some [additional] chapters… and named it… 'the Acts of the Religion (*Dēnkard*) in 1000 chapters.'"[208] This Adurbad is very likely the same whose

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[205] *Bundahishn*, XXXIII.20–23. For an introduction to this text see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Bundahišn."

[206] *Bundahishn*, XXXVA.8; namely, the *Wizīdagīhā* ("Selections") of Zadspram, on which see Gignoux and Tafazzoli, *Anthologie de Zadspram*.

[207] Ṭabarī, 2.1518 (AH 110): he sets out with the Khāqān "to restore my kingdom to me." Chinese sources menton that this prince came to pay homage at the im perial court in 730 and 737 (see Harmatta, "The Middle Persian-Chinese Bilingual Inscription," 375).

[208] *Dēnkard*, 3.CCCCXX (tr. de Menasce, 380).

son Isfandiyar, also high priest, was killed by the caliph Rāḍī in AH 325/937,[209] so Adurbad himself must have lived in the late ninth/early tenth century.[210]

The standard outline of eschatological history can also be found in this compendium. Book 7 is largely a biography of Zoroaster; it ends with a survey of the future career of Iran, including a description of how things will be at the end of the prophet's millennium, "after the collapse of the sovereignty of Iran" and before "the arrival of Ushedar:"

> The state of affairs now evident is indicative of how Iranian rule has come to an end in the country of Iran, and of the **{327}** destruction of justice and customs and classes, and of the rule of those with dishevelled hair (Arabs) and the haughty (Turks) and the churchmen (Byzantines). And of the mixing together of all three of them, of the being trusted and attaining the highest station with them of the inferior, the petty, the transient and the undistinguished of the age, and the destruction and downfall of excellent and notable men in their time.[211]

Book 9 contains a collection of commentaries or reflections on three Gathic treatises (*nask*), and at one point speaks of the four periods of the millennium of Zoroaster, the fourth being characterised by "much propagation of the authority of the apostate and other villains…, the weakening of every kind of goodness and virtue, and the disappearance of honour and wisdom from the countries of Iran."[212]

A Pahlavi Ballad on the End of Times

This lament on the sorry state of Iran is a rare example of a Pahlavi poem with rhyme, but its contents are unremarkable. It bewails that the Arabs "ruined the Religion and killed the kings," that "they have taken away by force from men their wives and wealth, parks and gardens," that "they have imposed capitation tax" (*gazītak*). And it looks forward to when "we will bring vengeance on the Arabs," "their mosques (*mazgitīhā*) we will cast down, we will set up fires, their idol-temples we will eradicate and blot them out from the world." It is a late piece, as is indicated by the appearance of traces of New Persian usage and of a few Arabic words.[213]

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[209] Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 104–105; assuming that we should emend *'nmyd* to *'ymyd*.

[210] Further confirmation is given by *Bundahishn*, XXXIII.11, which mentions him as a contemporary of Zadspram. See West, *Pahlavi Texts*, 4.xxx–xxxviii; de Menasce, *Une encyclopédie mazdéenne*, 8–12. On the work itself see *idem*, "Zoroastrian Literature after the Muslim Conquest," 544–45, 553–60; *EIr*, *s.v.* "Dēnkard." For what may derive from Sasanian times see de Menasce, "Zoroastrian Pahlavi Writings," 1170–76.

[211] *Dēnkard*, 7.VIII.2–3 (tr. West, 5.94–95).

[212] *Ibid.*, 9.VIII.5 (tr. West, 4.181).

[213] See under *Pahlavi Ballad on the End of Times* in Bibliography I below.

The Prophecy of Rostam

{328} The *Shāhnāme* ("Book of Kings") of the poet Firdawsī (d. *ca.* 1020) is the Iranian national epic, recounting the history of Iran from Creation until the Arab conquests. Almost at its end it tells the tale of the general Rostam, who was appointed by Yazdgird to face the invading Muslims. "He was a man of alert mind, sagacious, warlike and one who had been a conqueror," and "he was a calculator of the stars." On the eve of the Persian defeat at the battle of Qadisiyya Rostam brought an astrolabe and cast a horoscope. This revealed that "there is no propitiousness for this combat," and Rostam wrote a long letter to his brother foretelling calamity for Iran and the end of the Sasanian dynasty.[214] The whole natural and moral order would be turned upside down, and "new men would rule in the land," who "shall seek the loss of others for their own gain, but shall masquerade in the name of religion." Though writing in New Persian, Firdawsī is likely drawing on earlier Middle Persian apocalyptic literature, with which the *Prophecy of Rostam* shows certain parallels.[215]

A Judaeo-Persian Daniel

This work is composed in New Persian, but written in Hebrew characters and in archaic style,[216] and puts into the mouth of Daniel an account of Israel's fate from his own times to those of the Messiah. It opens with a few words in Aramaic – "I, Daniel (*enā Danyāl*)…" – which made its first commentator think that it might derive from a lost *Targum* of Daniel.[217] The events occurring in Daniel's lifetime are narrated in detail and form a distinctive section.[218] Then comes the **{329}** apocalypse proper, a list of 24 kings with some remarks on the reign and/or appearance of each one, which is revealed to the prophet by God to console him in his grief at the destruction of Jerusalem. The description is always vague, and the identity of most is obscure. The third king, whose 400-year rule is characterised by good relations with Israel, marriage of men to their mothers and sisters and worship of the sun, may be meant to symbolise the Sasanian dynasty (226–636).[219] The fifth figure is somewhat clearer, presumably signifying Muḥammad:

> I, Daniel, I saw that in their days there was to arise a king of small stature and red hue. He will have no fortune and will not consider the scripture of the Lord. He will take for himself the title of prophet. He will go forth and come upon a camel

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[214] The prophecy is found in Firdawsī, *Shāhnāme* "reign of Yazdgird," verses 88–155 (partial tr. Levy, 413–14).

[215] Argued by Krasnowolska, "Rostam Farroxzād's Prophecy." Perhaps relying on the same Middle Persian writings are a number of Arabic sources which also speak of Rostam's predictions and knowledge of astrology (e.g. Ṭabarī, 1.2252).

[216] As is common with Judaeo-Persian; see *JE*, *s.v.* "Judaeo-Persian."

[217] Thus Munk whose comments on this work are cited in full by Darmesteter, "L'apocalypse persane de Daniel," 406–407.

[218] Ps.-Daniel (Judaeo-Persian), *Apocalypse*, 386–402.

[219] *Ibid.*, 404–406 (= Darmesteter, 409/413).

> and will be a camel-driver. He will come from the South and call the men to worship him. Much evil will come from him to the Israelites. Among the Israelites some will go over to his religion and his law. But you, Daniel, write a testament to the Israelites so that they do not go over to his religion nor abandon the law of Moses, but observe the law of Israel.[220]

Darmesteter suggested that the twenty-first king, who "will massacre the men of Israel," "make war with the Romans," "have three sons," "reign for 23 years and die in the East," was Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809).[221] Except for the slaughter of Jews these features are applicable to Hārūn, and some of the activities of the sons would fit those perpetrated by Hārūn's offspring. Residence in the East, proscription of wearing black, capture of the West from his brother and a twenty-year reign would, for example, accord with what we know of Ma'mūn (813–33), who seized power from his elder brother Amin. The son in Babel who "will not reign" could be Qāsim al-Mu'taman, whom Hārūn appointed governor of Mesopotamia and third in succession, though his turn never **{330}** came to hold the caliphate.[222] The king who comes from the West and wages war against the kings of the East and of the Maghrib was taken by Darmesteter and others to represent the Fatimids, and the red-clad king of the Romans who goes to Damascus, "breaks the empire of Ishmael" and oppresses Israel, as the Crusader leader Godfrey of Bouillon, which would take us to the late twelfth century; but it may well be that this red-clad king is meant as an eschatological rather than a real figure.[223]

MUSLIM ARABIC TEXTS

Muslim interest in this genre is illustrated by the existence of numerous versions of the apocalypse of Daniel, one allegedly translated from a Greek manuscript at the behest of Muʿāwiya I, and also by the report that the caliph Marwān II was very pleased at an "apocalypse of Enoch" compiled for him by Cyriacus, bishop of Sistan, for it showed him being succeeded by his son. Further, Liudprand, bishop of Cremona (961–72), informs us: "The Greeks and Saracens have certain writings

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[220] *Ibid.*, 406 (= Darmesteter, 409–10/413–14).

[221] Darmesteter, "L'apocalypse persane de Daniel," 418–20. He identifies the three sons as Ma'mūn, Muḥammad and Amīn, seemingly making two people out of Muḥammad al-Amīn.

[222] Ṭabarī, 3.651–53, describes Hārūn's succession arrangements.

[223] Darmesteter, "L'apocalypse persane de Daniel," 420, followed by Macler, "Les apocalypses apocryphes de Daniel," 47–48, and Silver, *History of Messianic Speculation in Israel*, 48. Lewis, "An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History," 335, and, more cautiously, Kedar, "Yehūdīm ve-Shōmrōnīm," 387–90, suggest that the Syrian campaign of John Tzimisces (969–76) may be meant, since the Crusaders did not go to Damascus. Bousset, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Eschatologie," 125–26, points out that this Christian king who oppresses Israel and rules for nine months is a standard feature of Jewish apocalyptic literature from Talmudic times.

which they call the visions of Daniel… In them is found written how many years each emperor shall live, what crises will occur during his reign, whether he shall have peace or war and whether fortune will smile upon the Saracens or not… And both peoples pay serious heed to these dates."[224] Though they are Muslim documents, apocalyptic writings in the Islamic tradition deserve a brief mention here for two reasons: they **{331}** are often demonstrably early,[225] and they frequently draw heavily on Christian models. They are found scattered among numerous *ḥadīth* works, but much of the most interesting material is concentrated in the early collection of Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād (d. 843), the *Kitāb al-fitan*.[226]

Signs of the Hour

The Qur'an abounds in eschatological imagery and frequently proclaims that "the Hour is coming" (xx.15, xxii.7, xxxiii.63, xl.59, xlii.17), even alluding to itself as "Knowledge for the Hour" (xliii.61). There soon arose a genre of *ḥadīth* dealing with the signs that indicated the approach of the Hour (*ashrāt al-sā'a*),[227] analagous to the "travails of the Messiah" found in Jewish eschatology. One example will have to suffice here:

> The Messenger of God said: "Count six [signs] before the Hour. The first of them will be my death, … the second will be the conquest of Jerusalem (*bayt al-maqdis*), … the third will be a plague (*mawtān*) that will be like a fatal sheep disease (*qu'ās al-ghanam*) among my community, … the fourth will be internal strife (*fitna*) among my community, … the fifth will be that wealth will abound among you to such an extent that were a man given a hundred dinars he would be displeased, … and the sixth will be a truce between you and the Byzantines (*banū l-Aṣfār*), but

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[224] Sezgin, *GAS*, 7.312–17, and Pingree, "Astrology," 291–92 (apocalypses of Daniel); Michael the Syrian 11.XXII, 465/507 (Marwān); Wright, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 257–58. Note also the document found in the possession of a client of the Umayyad prince Ghamr ibn Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik which predicted the number of years of Mahdī's reign, presumably being some sort of apocalypse (Ṭabarī, 3.496–97). See further Casanova, *Mohammed et la fin du monde;* Blichfeldt, *Early Mahdism*; Cook, "Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihād."

[225] Illustrated by Cook, "Eschatology and the Dating of Traditions."

[226] Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ in the Umayyad Age," gives many examples from this collection.

[227] Or else calculating the number of years of Muslim rule that would elapse before the Hour. The approach of AH 100 caused particular anticipation (see Bashear, "Muslim Apocalypses and the Hour," 89–93), especially as the siege of Constantinople was reaching its climax in AH 99/717–18, and 'Umar II was initially regarded by some as the Mahdī. News of this may have reached non-Muslim ears; while petitioning for troops in 719 at the Chinese court, the king of Samarkand pointed out to the emperor: "As regards these Arabs, they are only supposed to be in power for a total of 100 years; it is in this year that this portion is exhausted. If Chinese soldiers come here, together we will certainly succeed in destroying the Arabs" (Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue occidentaux*, 204–205).

> they will then [break it **{332}** and] march upon you and fight you, and the Muslims that day will be in a land called the Ghuta and in a city called Damascus."[228]

The report was clearly put about during the second civil war after the Arabs were forced to sue for peace from the Byzantine emperor in 685 and when their rule in the Middle East seemed to be crumbling. It expresses the anxieties of the Muslim population, then still a small minority in the Middle East, regarding the precariousness of their hold over the territories they governed, and their fear of a Byzantine comeback.[229]

'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and the Mahdī

Also originating at the time of the second Arab civil war is the following piece of apocalyptic propaganda. It is no vague speculation like the previous example, but traces the career of the rival caliph Ibn al-Zubayr and intends to rouse support for him and to prepare his followers for a campaign against the Umayyads:

> There will arise a difference after the death of a caliph (Mu'āwiya), and a man of the people of Medina (Ibn al-Zubayr) will go forth fleeing to Mecca. Then some of the people of Mecca will come to him and will make him rise in revolt against his will. They will pledge allegiance to him between the *rukn* and the *maqām*.[230] An expedition will **{333}** be sent against him from Syria but will be swallowed up in the desert between Mecca and Medina.[231] When the people see this, the righteous men of Syria and the troops of the people of Iraq will come to him and pledge allegiance to him. Thereafter a man of Quraysh will arise whose maternal uncles are of Kalb (Yazīd's mother was of Kalb). He will send an expedition against them, but they will defeat them… He (Ibn al-Zubayr) will then divide the wealth and act among them according to the *sunna* of their Prophet, and Islam will settle down firmly on the ground.[232]

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[228] Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, fols. 7b–8a, 11a–b, gives five variants of this *ḥadīth* – of which the one quoted here is the first – all on the authority of 'Awf ibn Malik (d. 693). The sequence of events is: the death of the Prophet, the conquest of Jerusalem, the plague of 'Amwas, the first civil war, the reign of Mu'āwiya and the truce with the Byzantines. This same order is found in the versions given by Wāsiṭī, *Faḍā'il*, 52–53 = Ibn al-Murajjā, *Fadā'il*, 43 (*'an* 'Awf ibn Mālik), and Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 5.228 (*'an* Mu'ādh ibn Jabal), 6.22, 25 (*'an* 'Awf ibn Mālik). There are, however, deviant versions in *ibid.*, 2.174, 6.27, and Bukhārī, 2.297–98 (*Jizya* XV). For further discussion see Conrad, "Portents of the Hour."

[229] Other examples are given by Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars."

[230] Two different parts of the Muslim sanctuary at Mecca.

[231] A reference to the army dispatched by Yazīd which disbanded on hearing of his death in November 683.

[232] Quoted and discussed by Madelung, "'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr and the Mahdī."

Tiberius, Son of Justinian

A number of traditions in Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād's collection revolve around the Heraclian dynasty:

> Heraclius will rule, then after him his son Constans, then his son Constantine, then his son Justinian, then the kingship of the Byzantines will leave the family of Heraclius for Leo and his son after him. But the kingship will return to the fifth of the family of Heraclius, at whose hands the final wars (*malāḥim*) will take place.[233]

This character is spelled out elsewhere as "Tiberius, son of Justinian the slit-nosed."[234] He was murdered as a small child together with his father **{334}** in 711, but is here predicted to return and instigate the eschatological wars between the Byzantines and Muslims.

One lengthy account relates how a well-dressed youth claiming to be Tiberius approached Maslama, who honoured him but also checked his credentials with a certain Abū Muslim al-Rūmī, who declared him an impostor and outlined what would be the career of the true Tiberius. Briefly, he would lead a determined assault to rid the Byzantine realm of "the camel-eaters," which would only barely be repulsed by the Muslims, but after which the latter would be able to march upon and destroy Constantinople.[235] The background to these reports is the concluding stages of the siege of Constantinople, when Leo was emperor and the Muslims were experiencing severe difficulties in maintaining their blockade of the city. Such apocalyptic traditions served to encourage the Muslims to hope and hold out for eventual victory. Since Heraclian emperors had been their traditional enemies until the death of Justinian, it is understandable that a Heraclian might be expected to be the instigator of the final battle against the Muslims. Why Tiberius should be chosen is unclear; perhaps he died in mysterious circumstances, and indeed we do hear of someone later impersonating him.[236] In any case, we again have an example of apocalyptic material that is broadly dateable.

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[233] Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, fol. 130b. Justinian II held office twice (685–95, 705–11), which probably explains the omission of the intervening Leontius (695–98) and Tiberius III (698–705). Also omitted are the short reigns of Philip (711–13), Anastasius II (713–15) and Theodosius III (715–17), which come between Justinian and Leo III (717–41). For discussion of these traditions see Cook, "The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology."

[234] Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, fol. 141a. Justinian's nose was slit upon his deposition in 695 (see Theophanes, 369).

[235] Nuaym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, fol. 115.

[236] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 737; identified with or confused with Bashīr/Bēsēr by Michael the Syrian 11.XXI, 462–63/503–504.

An Apocalyptic Chronicle

One tradition in Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād's collection, which provides a cryptic enumeration of the caliphs up to early Abbasid times, is an attempt at an apocalypse in the Judaeo-Christian style. Thus it is attributed to a sage of the past, one Nath; it periodises history into "weeks" of years and epochs, and first reviews past generations before launching into the eschatological future. Some of its terminology is drawn from Syriac apocalyptic and it often betrays Christian interests, such as the depiction of Yazīd II as a "corrupter of images," an allusion to his iconoclastic venture, which is mentioned by numerous Christian, **{335}** but no Muslim, sources.[237] That the piece was not written by a Christian is evident from the favourable description of Muḥammad:

> The angels will rejoice at his emergence and he will prevail over all nations. Whoever accepts him is a believer, whoever denies him is an unbeliever. He will prevail over Persia and its sovereign along with Africa and Syria. There will be three weeks less a seventh of a week, then God will take him.[238]

This is perhaps the attempt of a Christian convert to introduce the genre of narrative apocalypses into Islam.[239]

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[237] The very few Muslim sources that do mention it are late and very likely derive their knowledge from Christian sources (see the entry on "Germanus" in Chapter 3 above for relevant literature).

[238] Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād, *Fitan*, fol. 198b; Muḥammad is allotted 20 years (3x7 - 1), presumably meaning his 20 years as a prophet (613–32) at Mecca and Medina.

[239] It is discussed by Cook, "An Early Islamic Apocalyptic Chronicle."

CHAPTER 9.
MARTYROLOGIES[1]

{336} The Qur'an informs us that when Abraham and Ishmael were laying the foundations of their sanctuary, they prayed to God requesting that He appoint from their seed "a nation submissive to You" (*ummatan muslimatan laka*) and "a messenger from among them who will recite to them Your revelations and teach them the scripture and wisdom" (ii. 128–29). This introduces a two-part definition of Arabs: descent from Abraham via Ishmael and submission to God and His messenger, that is, belief in Islam. There are indications that the Arabs initially tended to think along genealogical lines: in order to be an Arab and so to share in the immense privileges conferred on Arabs since the conquests, one must be born as one. But the numerousness of the non-Arabs who wished to enjoy the same benefits as their new masters and the Qur'an's stress on the belief side of the definition meant that the refusal to admit into their ranks anyone who lacked the right descent was not so easy for the Arabs.[2] And in general it was accepted that one could become a member of the conquest society by adopting the Arab **{337}** faith, a fact that constitutes one of the most important preconditions for the emergence of Islamic civilisation.

That the conquered peoples could join the ruling elite does not explain how, why and when they availed themselves of this option, and these are difficult questions to answer.[3] Here I shall present such indications as are offered by non-Muslim writers, whose testimony has so far mostly been ignored.

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[1] There are no surveys of martyrdom stories composed in early Muslim times, and one must simply scan Halkin, *BHG*[3], and Peeters, *BHO*, for examples. Zayyat, "Shuhadā' al-naṣrānīya fī l-Islām," looks at some later Christian Arabic accounts; Delehaye, "Greek Neo-Martyrs," is chiefly concerned with the Ottoman period and is highly apologetic.

[2] The Qur'an emphasises that it was revealed in Arabic (xii.2, xiii.37, xvi.103, xxvi.195, xxxix.28, xli.3, xlii.7, xliii.3, xlvi.12), but otherwise does not mention the Arabs except for the fickle bedouin (*a'rāb*) among them. Appeal is most commonly made simply to "those who believe."

[3] The most important studies to date are Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, esp. 45–101; Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax*; Lapidus, "The Conversion of Egypt to Islam;" Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*; *idem*, "Conversion Stories in Early Islam;" Morony, "The Age of Conversions: a Reassessment;" Schick, *Christian Communities of Palestine*, 139–58,

Some idea of the procedure for converting to Islam, in the early Abbasid period at least, is given by a late eighth-century chronicler who was a monk at the monastery of Zuqnin in northern Mesopotamia. While he was at Edessa, writes the author, he heard about a deacon of that district who, despite the entreaties of "all the notables and priests," made up his mind to apostatise and sought out "a certain man from among the Arabs there," asking that "he become a Muslim (*nhaggar*) by his hands." The Arab attempted to dissuade him, fearing for him should he repent the next day, but the deacon insisted on his sincerity. So the Arab asked whether he denied Christ, baptism, the cross, the eucharist and "all that the Christians profess." After the deacon had abjured each item in turn, the Arab instructed him to confess belief in Muḥammad as the messenger of God, "the book which came down from heaven upon him" and Jesus as the Word and Spirit of God, that "he was a prophet and not God," then to ungird himself and pray to the south. As he did so, a white dove emerged from his mouth, and the deacon, perceiving the loss of his soul, bewailed his folly. Further on the chronicler records that whole groups of people would apostatise and "they would write their names in the register (*dīptūkon*)."

Though this information features in a tirade against apostasy, there are reasons to give it credence. Its author lived in the same time and place as the events he narrates, and secondly, he seems remarkably fair. He notes that the deacon uttered "shameful words" which "were **{338}** not required by the Arabs," and he emphasises that this man's desertion of Christianity was of his own free will, "for none of them were brought by constraint to deny their faith." Indeed, the chronicler refrains from any censure or abuse of the Arabs, placing the responsibility on the Christians themselves, for he wrote so that "all those believers who read this account will see what happened to this wretch and take care of the gift which they have received lest the like happen to them."[4]

Turning to the reasons for conversion to Islam, one should first stress that compulsion was very rarely among them, as stated above and by a late seventh-century apocalyptic author.[5] Only residents of frontier areas and Christian Arabs would seem to have ever faced pressure to convert.[6] The decision to leave the reli-

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171–77. Further bibliography and comments are given by Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 273–83.

[4] The deacon's story is told in *Chron. Zuqnin*, 389–92.

[5] Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XII.3, XII.6. The comparatively small number of martyrdom accounts composed in Muslim times, compared to Roman and Sasanian times, reinforces this impression.

[6] Tanūkh qualified on both counts and were ordered to convert by the caliph Mahdī (see the entry on the "Christian Arab of Sinai" in this chapter); Qutayba ibn Muslim (d. 715) used a variety of methods to encourage conversion among the people of Transoxania (Narshakhī, *History of Bukhara*, 47–49). Muslim nervousness about their borders, especially that with Byzantium, meant that non-Muslims living there, even if not asked to convert, would face hostility and suspicion in time of conflict (see Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides*, 48–50).

gion in which one had been brought up was never one to be taken lightly, since it meant breaking ties with one's family, friends and neighbours. When Dioscorus of Alexandria became a Muslim, his sister wrote informing him that she could have no further association with him, and a Jewish woman who became a Christian was declared by her husband to be as good as dead.[7] So why did people convert? Spokesmen of the non-Muslim communities impressed upon their flock that the only advantages Islam had to offer were social and economic advancement, fame and gain.[8] Thus martyrologists never failed to present their heroes as being tempted **{339}** with offers of high office and wealth by some Muslim notable if they would only convert.[9]

Though this has been widely accepted by scholars and contains some truth, it does require qualification. As regards admission to high office, one's religious persuasion was generally no bar, at least not in the first two or three centuries of Islam when the administrative and medical professions were dominated by non-Muslims.[10] And as long as conversion still entailed becoming a client (*mawlā*) of an Arab and so placing oneself on an equal footing with all other clients, those endowed with status in their former community were unwilling to risk finding themselves working alongside their former servants and subjects.[11] Moreover, the term *mawlā* had a certain stigma attached to it:

> They (the apostates) had lost the [name] of Christ, but not taken on that of Muḥammad; rather with their denial they had found a name for [all] times, being

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[7] *Coptic Synaxary*, "6 Barmahāt" (Dioscorus); *Gaonic Responsa* (Müller) no. 87, 20b (Jewish woman).

[8] The argument was of course an old one; for example, the conversion of a priest to Zoroastrianism in the days of Khusrau II was deemed the result of "his fierce attachment to the world and his desire for its pleasures" [*Chron. Siirt* LIX, *PO* 13, 467).

[9] Examples are given in the course of this chapter; for further discussion see the entry on "A Worldly Religion" in Chapter 12 below.

[10] Theophanes, 430–31, says that in 758 the Arabs tried to "expel the Christians from government chanceries, but were once again obliged to entrust the same duties to them because they were unable to write numbers." In the late tenth century Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 183, observed that in Syria and Egypt the physicians and scribes were mostly Christians. And there were still enough Christians in positions of power in Mamluk Egypt for Muslims to write tracts decrying this fact (Gottheil, "An Answer to the Dhimmis;" Perlmann, "Anti-Christian Propaganda in the Mamlūk Empire"). See also Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides*; Cheikho, *Les vizirs et secrétaires arabes chrétiens*; Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 255–83 (which gives further bibliography); Holmberg, "Christian Scribes in the Arabic Empire," 106–10.

[11] It was, therefore, mostly those of low social status (esp. peasants), or those who had lost their status (esp. prisoners-of-war), who converted to Islam in Umayyad times (see Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 49–54).

> called *mawālī*, so that by their name they would be distinguished from [all] nations and from the [true] faith.[12]

As for taxation, in the first century of Islam it was not specifically Muslims who enjoyed fiscal benefits, but rather Arabs and those who **{340}** fought on their behalf.[13] Taxes were something that the conquered paid for the upkeep (*rizq*) of the conquerors in return for protection (*dhimma*). Only with ʿUmar II (717–20), and only with any consistency under the Abbasids, was there an attempt to base the tax system on a distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim,[14] and even then the practice was often much messier than the theory:

> Nominally they (the tax collectors) were to levy one tenth, yet even when those Arabs had sold all they possessed, it was not sufficient [to pay] what was demanded of them. They were entreating them to take according to the law laid down by Muḥammad, their guide and legislator (*mhaddyān-hōn w-sā'em nāmōsayhōn*), and by the first kings, and to take from each one of them what they had: if [he had] wheat [take] wheat, if cattle so cattle. But they did not accept that, saying to them: "Go and sell your possessions however you like and give us our gold."[15]

Furthermore, the desire to avoid taxation did not generally lead directly to conversion, but rather to flight from the land. In Egypt this would most often mean seeking refuge in a monastery or some rural retreat, but in Iraq and Mesopotamia it usually meant escape to a city where increased contact with Muslims made the chances of conversion high:[16]

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[12] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 387. The reading *mawālī* seems to fit the sense, but is tentative; the text has *'ydwly*.

[13] Thus the Mardaites of Lebanon were to be exempted from poll-tax as long as they fought for the Muslims (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 159).

[14] See Simonsen, *The Caliphal Taxation System*, esp. 140–50. The fact that decrees exempting converts to Islam from poll-tax were commonly issued – e.g. by ʿUmar II (*Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 716–18), Ḥafṣ ibn al-Walīd (*Hist. Patriarchs* XVIII, *PO* 5, 116) and Saffāḥ (*ibid.*, 189) – indicates that it was not a consistent policy. Rather it was done when there was a need to mobilise support (ʿUmar after the disastrous Muslim defeat at Constantinople, Ḥafṣ to usurp the governorship of Egypt, Saffāḥ in the wake of the Abbasid revolution), for it was well-known that "it will be enough for you to have a herald announce that taxes will be removed from whoever becomes a Muslim and 50,000 praying men will come to you" (Ṭabarī, 2.1024).

[15] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 299; this concerns land-tax but illustrates that the theory was not always applied. Cf. *ibid.*, 341: "They imposed them (extraordinary taxes) on the Muslims as well as on the Christians, for their motivation was not concern for the tradition (*mashlmānūtā*) [of Islam], but to sate their avid desire for money."

[16] If fugitives wished to avoid being rounded up and returned to their village (cf. Ṭabarī, 2.1122, 1435), then they needed to find a Muslim patron. This plus greater interaction with Muslims made conversion likely; see the example of Elias of Damascus discussed in this chapter.

> **{341}** In the days of the Arabs tribute became heavy upon them, beyond their capacity. Suddenly bitter evils and exactions kindled upon them so that they fled from the land… and the gate to paganism was opened to them. Gradually all the wanton and weak slid toward the deep pit of perdition and destroyed their souls together with their bodies.[17]

Probably more significant in the long run for conversion was the erosion of the prestige and influence of the leaders and institutions of the non-Muslim communities, which followed on from the late Umayyad decision to promote individual responsibility for payment of taxes over lump sum payments collected by mediating bodies, and gradually to replace local officials by government-appointed Muslim agents.[18]

The Arabs' military successes must have indirectly promoted conversion to Islam, in part because they led to the transfer of peoples from their homelands to the overwhelmingly Muslim environment of the garrison cities where conversion was correspondingly more likely, and in part because they challenged other religion's claims to enjoy God's exclusive favour. This latter point, coupled with the receptivity towards interfaith discussion of the early Abbasid rulers, must have provoked much soul-searching and certainly produced a number of converts among the literate elite. The problem is succinctly stated by one Christian apologist:

> We see diverse peoples professing different religions. In their possession are scriptures that differ about command and prohibition, laws and statutes, the mention of the Last Day and Resurrection, of the Reward and the Punishment. Each sect of them claims that their book is God's covenant for His creation, which His messengers have brought to them, and that He has manifested by their (the messengers') agency His signs and His proof in [illustration of] that.[19]

{342} The rate of conversion must have varied substantially from community to community. The Jews, who had long been used to living as a minority under foreign rule, probably fared best; the Christians had a history of persecution by the infidel upon which they could draw strength; but Zoroastrians, who had always enjoyed state patronage, were unable to cope with being political and religious underdogs, and so more quickly succumbed to Islamisation.[20] The speed of the latter process was also linked to the potential for interaction and intermarriage with Muslims. In Egypt, where the Muslim presence was meagre for the first two centuries of Islam,

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[17] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 381–82.

[18] See Frantz-Murphy, "Conversion in Early Islamic Egypt."

[19] 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Masā'il wa-ajwiba*, 135–36.

[20] For some indications see Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, 206–17; Spuler, "Der Verlauf der Islamisierung Persiens;" Bulliet, "Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of a Muslim Society in Iran;" Morony, "Conquerors and Conquered: Iran;" *idem*, "The Effects of the Muslim Conquest on the Persian Population of Iraq;" *EIr*, *s.v.* "Conversion: ii. Of Iranians to Islam."

conversion was very slow; but in Khurasan and Iraq, which bore the brunt of early Muslim settlement, opportunities for social intercourse were numerous and conversion more frequent.

Finally, there is the question of when apostasy first occurred and when it became widespread. We hear of defections to the Arabs already at the time of the conquests, though our sources frequently make no distinction between conversion and collaboration.[21] One Syrian Melkite monk states to his Jewish disputant: "We Christians, though enslaved for many years and worn down by troubles, shall not deny God. And if some Christians have denied Him, they are not as many as [did so among] you in Babylon."[22] And the Coptic author John of **{343}** Nikiu laments that "many of the Egyptians… denied the holy orthodox faith and the lifegiving baptism, and embraced the religion of the Muslims."[23] By the late seventh century apostasy had become an important issue in Christian writings, demanding the attention of church authorities.[24] And in the second half of the eighth century we begin to hear of incidents of large-scale apostasy to Islam. In the days of the patriarch Michael (743–67) "those who denied Christ numbered 24,000."[25] A couple of decades later a similar outbreak occurred in Mesopotamia according to the Zuqnin chronicler. "Had those who were performing an action like this been one or a hundred or a thousand, I would have been silent," he tells us, but depravity on such a scale could not pass unrecorded:

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[21] E.g. the Persian cavalry corps called the Asāwira are said to have converted in AH 17/638, but fight in the 680s under a certain Māh Afrīdhūn; those transferred from Baṣra to Antioch by Muʿāwiya appear as non-Muslims, and their leader in the time of Hishām, Hassān ibn Māhawayh, is obviously a first-generation convert (references given by Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 237–38 n. 362). It is perhaps because they were exempted from poll-tax that later Muslims assumed they had converted. But it is also true that for some – e.g. for the 15,000 Muslim soldiers of Egypt who "believed in Christ and were baptised" during the first Arab civil war (Sebeos, XXXVIII [tr. Macler, 149]) – collaboration and conversion went hand in hand.

[22] *Dialogue against the Jews*, *PG* 89, 1236A–B; cf. *Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo* XIII, 75 (which ends "they are not as many as you have had apostatise," implying that some Jews had also converted to Islam). John bar Penkaye, 147/175 (tr. Brock, 61), says of the Arab conquerors that "among them were also Christians in no small numbers: some belonged to the heretics while others to us."

[23] John of Nikiu, CXXI.10 (tr. Charles, 201); cf. *ibid.*, CXIV.1 (182).

[24] See, for example, the entries on "Anastasius of Sinai," "Jacob of Edessa" and "ps.-Methodius" in Chapters 3, 4 and 8 respectively.

[25] *Coptic Synaxary*, "16 Barmahāt" (= *Ethiopic Synaxary*, "16 Maggābit"). This was probably due chiefly to the decree of Ḥafṣ ibn al-Walīd, who was trying to gain support for his recapture of the governorship of Egypt, that all who converted would be exempted from the poll-tax (thus the synaxary entry continues: "The patriarch was in very great distress because of that, until God caused the one responsible to perish").

> For without blows or torture they slid down in great eagerness toward denial. Forming groups of twenty, thirty and a hundred men, two and three hundred, without any kind of compulsion to this, they went down to Ḥarran to the governors and became Muslims (*mhaggrīn*)… So acted numerous people from the regions of Edessa, Ḥarran, Telia, Resh'aina, Dara, Nisibis, Shengar and Callinicum, and from these places both error and the devil gained immeasurable strength among them.[26]

Only a very few years later the caliph Mahdī decreed that all converts who subsequently returned to their former faith were to be put to death,[27] confirming that it was indeed the second half of the eighth century that saw apostasy reach significant proportions.

{344} Though the prospect of the death penalty must have put a brake on the number of those forsaking Islam, legal writings illustrate that all religious communities of Muslim lands were afflicted by the phenomenon of apostasy and had to make provision for it in their legislation. A fundamental question was whether renegades should be admitted back into the fold, to which the answer was generally affirmative as long as the offender did some form of penance.[28] Those who refused to recant were either ostracised or, in the case of those defecting from Islam, put to death,[29] a sentence justified on the basis of the two widespread sayings attributed to the Prophet: "Whoever changes his religion, kill him," and: "The blood of a Muslim is not licit except in one of three cases: murder or adultery or apostasy."[30] Another key issue was inheritance, the essential point here being to prevent the haemorrhage of property out of the community. Accordingly, legislators of the various confessions

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[26] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 385.

[27] Elias of Damascus, *Passion*, 181 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 52). Not only out of regret did people reconvert; 'Alī put it to one Christian who had become a Muslim, then apostatised, that he was merely doing so to qualify for an inheritance or marriage, then would return to Islam ('Abd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 6.104 [*Ahl al-kitāb* LV]).

[28] The earliest Christian witness is Jacob of Edessa; e.g. *Replies to John*, A13 (= Vööbus, 253 [no. 15]) = *Canons* (*BH*), 22 (= Kayser, 8/37). On the Zoroastrian side see Manushchihr, *Dādistān ī dēnīg*, no.40, and Emed i Ashawahishtan, *Rivāyat*, no. 26. The earliest extant Muslim authority is probably Mālik (d. 795), *Muwaṭṭa'*, 2.737 (*Aqḍiya* XVIII), who adduces a report in which 'Umar I reprimands Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī for not offering an apostate three days to repent before beheading him. But Mālik does not accord this opportunity to those who outwardly feign to be Muslims while secretly denying Islam ("such as the *zanādiqa* and their likes"), for one would not be able to be sure of the sincerity of their repentance (*ibid.*, 2.736); cf. Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 179–80; Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, 1.228–29, 6.145–46, 155–56 (*Istisqā' Ḥudūd*). Muslim views on apostasy are discussed by Kraemer, "Apostates, Rebels and Brigands," 36–48; Ayoub, "Religious Freedom and the Law of Apostasy in Islam."

[29] Manushchihr, *Dādistān i dēnīg*, no. 40, opines that apostasy by an adult is "worthy of death," but presumably this was not applied.

[30] References given in Wensinck, *Concordance*, 1.153 (*man baddala dīnahu*…), 1.492 (*lā yaḥill dam umri' muslim*), and *EI*², s.u. "Murtadd."

ruled that apostates may not inherit from their former correligionists,[31] and that their estate was forfeit and to be divided **{345}** among their heirs.[32] Then there was the question of what to do in the eventuality of one's spouse apostatising, an action which was widely held to constitute grounds for divorce.[33] Beyond this there were numerous special cases to consider, such as the apostasy of the unfree or of the inebriated and insane, what to do about criminal offences committed by or upon an apostate, and so on.[34]

Shortly after the matter of apostasy begins to feature in our sources, accounts of the trials endured by individual Christians at the hands of Muslims become increasingly common.[35] These martyrs could be of **{346}** various types:[36] Christian

[31] For instance, the juridical ruling that a son who is of a different religion to his father may not inherit from him is found in Simeon of Rewardashir, *Canons* XVIII, 3.249; *Gaonic Responsa* (Müller), no. 11, 4b; Emed i Ashawahishtan, *Rivāyat*, no. 4.

[32] The wealth of an apostate from Islam, were he executed or in Byzantine territory, went to his Muslim heirs. An example of each case – the former adjudicated by ʿAlī and transmitted by Aʿmash *ʿan* Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī, the latter by ʿUmar II and transmitted by Maʿmar – is reported by Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr, *Sunan*, 1.100–101 (nos. 311–12); ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *Muṣannaf*, 6.104–105, 10.338–39 (*Ahl al-kitāb* LV, *Ahl al-kitābayn* XII); Dārimī, *Sunan*, 2.478 (*Farāʾid* XL). *Gaonic Responsa* (Müller) no. 87, 20b, records an argument over whether the estate belonging to a woman who converted to Christianity should go to the husband or to the family. Emed i Ashawahishtan, *Rivāyat*, no. 4, states that if the apostate possesses property, "whoever from among the people of the Good Religion seizes it first, is entitled to it," though accepting that "in our era this is difficult to practise."

[33] Ishoʿbokht of Fars, *Corpus iuris* 2.XI, 3.56; Ishoʿ bar Nun, *Canons* CXIV, 2.168; Shāfiʿī, *Umm*, 6.149–51. For Muslim lawyers there could be no divorce until the woman's waiting period (*ʿidda*, three menstrual cycles) had expired, up till which time either could still repent and then remain married. In Zoroastrianism there was also the question of the social status of a married woman whose brother had converted to Islam (Emed i Ashawahishtan, *Rivāyat*, nos. 1–2).

[34] These and many other questions are posed and answered in the *Aṣl* of Shaybānī (d. 805), an annotated translation of which is given by Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations*, 195–229; Zwemer, *The Law of Apostasy in Islam*, 33–54, is of some use, but it is a highly polemical work. On the non-Muslim side some other rulings are: someone who betrays a convert to Islam who has returned to Christianity is excommunicated (Ishoʿ bar Nun, *Canons* CXXIV, 2.172); a priest or deacon who apostatises then returns to Christianity must do a long atonement (*ibid.* CXVII, 2.170); incitement to apostasy is a sin (Manushchihr, *Dādistān i dēnīg*, no. 40); dissuading someone from apostasy is a meritorious act (*ibid.*, no. 41); one may make an invocation for the soul of an apostate who returned to Zoroastrianism (Emed i Ashawahishtan, *Rivāyat*, no. 26).

[35] Muslim sources do mention Jewish and Zoroastrian converts to Islam who subsequently renege and are martyred, but no accounts of them seem to have been composed in their own tradition. These examples in Muslim sources tend to be only adduced in support of a legal point and few details are ever given, so it would be problematic to use them for an excursus on conversion to Islam.

Arabs, converts to Islam who subsequently repented and returned to their former religion, Christians who unilaterally provoked Muslim retribution, child captives or children of converts to Islam who were brought up as Muslims but later reverted to Christianity, Christians who fell foul of Muslim authorities, victims of raids and prisoners-of-war,[37] and even Muslims who converted to Christianity. Just as it is in the second half of the eighth century that apostasy becomes more frequent, so it is at this time that martyrdom stories begin to abound: Cyrus of Ḥarran (769), Christopher of Mar Saba (778), Elias of Damascus (779), Romanus the Neomartyr (780),[38] Hamazasp and Isaac Artsruni (786),[39] Abo of Tiflis (786),[40] Bacchus of Mar Saba (787),[41] twenty monks of Mar Saba (797),[42] Anthony Rawḥ (799),[43] **{347}** Isaac and Joseph (808),[44] and many more. And, significantly, it is also in this period that we witness increased hostilities between the Muslim and Byzantine empires, such as the campaigns sponsored by Mahdī and Leo IV (775–80).[45]

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[36] Examples of each type are found in this chapter; see also Fattal, *Statut légal des non-musulmans*, 163–68.

[37] E.g. Eustathius and his fellow prisoners-of-war at Ḥarran, who were executed on the order of Hishām when it was heard that Leo III had massacred Arab prisoners (*Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 740). Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (preserved in Michael the Syrian and *Chron. 1234*) says there was some debate as to whether they should be considered martyrs or not.

[38] There are entries on Cyrus, Elias and Romanus in this chapter. On Christopher see Stephen of Damascus, *Passion of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba*, 14/178 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 40–41), who says he was a convert to Christianity and came from Persia; see also *Palestinian-Georgian Calendar*, 198–99.

[39] Peeters, *BHO*, 121 (no. 544); Dulaurier, *Chronologie arménienne*, 248–52.

[40] Lang, *Lives of the Georgian Saints*, 115–33; Schultze, *Das Martyrium des heiligen Abo von Tiflis*.

[41] He was originally called Ḍaḥḥāk and was the son of a Christian convert to Islam, who upon maturity became a Christian and fell foul of the Muslim authorities for trying to convert his brothers (see *Palestinian-Georgian Calendar*, 197; Loparev, "Vizantijskie ẓitiya svyatykh," 33–35; Halkin, *BHG*^{3}, 1.75 (no. 209); Bréhier, "La situation des chrétiens de Palestine à la fin du Ville siècle," 71–72).

[42] This *Passion* was written by Stephen Manṣūr of Damascus (on whom see the entry on "Romanus the Neomartyr" in this chapter), and dated by him to the 20 March AM 6288, which corresponds to 797 in the Alexandrian era of Annianus. See Halkin, *BHG*^{3}, 2.96 (no. 1200), for editions, and Blake, "Deux lacunes comblées dans la Passio XX monachorum," for discussion.

[43] Allegedly a relative of the caliph Hārūn enticed by miracles to Christianity. See Peeters, "S. Antoine le néo-martyr;" *idem*, "L'autobiographie de S. Antoine;" Graf, *GCAL*, 1.524; Dick, "La passion arabe de S. Antoine," 109–18; Samir, "Saint Rawḥ al-Qurashī." Anthony's story is also told by Michael the Syrian 12.V, 487–88/18–19, and is alluded to by Theodore Abū Qurra (d. *ca.* 820s), *Mīmar fī ikrām lī-īqūnāt* XVI, 173, who describes him as *min ahl al-barrānīyīn min ahl al-sharaf al-a'lā*.

[44] Dulaurier, *Chronologie arménienne*, 252; Peeters, *BHO*, 122 (no. 545).

[45] Theophanes, 449–53.

The purpose of these works was twofold: to provide role models and heroes to further the fight against apostasy, and to serve as antiMuslim propaganda. Thus, whether repentent apostates or committed Muslim converts to Christianity, many of the martyrs are portrayed as having purposefully sought out their fate and as having been deliberately provocative towards the Muslim authorities. And in the interview between the martyr and the prosecuting Muslim which commonly features in these accounts, the former disdains the material advantages of wealth and status which are the only inducements of Islam, and he is shown to choose the gifts of Christianity which consist in virtue, truth and redemption. That this choice is right is confirmed by the miracles which frequently attend the martyr's death. The first examples of such writings, like those in Anastasius of Sinai's collection of "edifying tales," are little more than reports of how the martyr died. Gradually, however, they become more developed, borrowing themes and ideas from earlier martyrdom literature, incorporating miracles and other signs of divine approval, establishing plots and conventions and so on until, by the end of the eighth century, they have become a fully fledged literary genre and achieved great popularity.

GREEK TEXTS

Sixty Martyrs of Gaza (d. 638)

A Vatican manuscript of the tenth or eleventh century preserves for us an account of the martyrdom of the Byzantine garrison of Gaza at the time of the Arab conquests. It is written in crude Latin, but many of its expressions reveal it to be a translation from Greek.[46] It informs us **{348}** that the incident occurred "in the Christ-beloved city of Gaza… in the twenty-seventh year of the God-crowned emperor Heraclius" (636–37), then continues:

> It happened at that time regarding the godless Saracens that they besieged the Christ-beloved city of Gaza and, driven by necessity, the citizens sought a treaty. This was done. The Saracens indeed gave to them a pledge, except to the soldiers who were captured in that city. Rather, marching into the city and seizing the most Christian soldiers, they put them in prison. On the next day 'Amr (*Ambrus*) ordered the Christ-holy soldiers to be presented. Once brought before him, he constrained them to desist from the confession of Christ and from the precious and life-giving cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Since they would not consent, 'Amr ordered their wives, children and weapons to be separated from them, and again to put them in prison.[47]

[46] Asserted by Delehaye, "Passio sexaginta martyrum," 289.

[47] *Passion of the Sixty Martyrs of Gaza*, 301.

Thirty days later they were transferred to a prison in Eleutheropolis for two months, then to a prison in "Theropolis"[48] for three months before being taken to Jerusalem. There they are urged by the patriarch Sophronius to stand firm and accept martyrdom. After a further ten months incarceration ʿAmr wrote to "*Ammiras* who was commander in the holy city," recommending that he execute a number of them if they still refused to deny Christ. Finding them obdurate, *Ammiras* has their chief Callinicus and nine others beheaded on 11 November 638 "outside the city in front of the gates," where they are buried by Sophronius.[49] The rest are sent back a month or so later to ʿAmr in Eleutheropolis and given a final chance to comply. Unanimously, however, they witness that they are "servants of Christ, son of the living God" and "prepared to die for him who died and rose for us," thus sealing their fate. Their **{349}** bodies were bought for 3000 solidi and the church of the Holy Trinity was erected over their burial place at Eleutheropolis. The date given for their martyrdom is Thursday 17 December (which tallies for 638), indiction 13 (639–40), year 28 of Heraclius (September 637–September 638).[50]

Since the choice of conversion or death seems mostly to have been reserved for Arab Christians and apostates from Islam, one is immediately suspicious of this account. It may be that these soldiers were made an example of for some particular cause, but there are other reasons for being wary of this text. In the first place, its provenance is unknown, since the Vatican manuscript containing it is our only witness. Secondly, it is very likely that we have merely a summary of a much longer piece. The changes of venue occur at a bewildering pace and with no explanation or elaboration, ʿAmr's identity is not indicated, and the manner of death of the 50 remaining soldiers is not mentioned at all, even though this is usually a subject of much interest in martyrologies. Furthermore, one would expect the impassioned exhortation to martyrdom by the revered Sophronius and the emotive scene of him burying the martyrs to be accorded more than the paltry eight lines found in our version.

Finally, the cast of the text does not inspire confidence in its reliability. In the Muslim sources ʿAmr is linked with a raid near Gaza in early 634, but the siege of the city itself was conducted by ʿAlqama ibn Mujazziz in 636.[51] *Ammiras* simply conveys *amēras*, Greek for emir, and one should not, as did the Latin translator followed

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[48] Delehaye, "Passio sexaginta martyrum," 301, reads "{Eleu}theropolim" and assumes a lacuna, "for we see the martyrs return to the city without having learnt that they had left it" (*ibid.*, 290); Guillou, "Prise de Gaza," 399 and n. 1 thereto, avoids the need for a lacuna by reading "Nicopolis (or Diospolis)."

[49] Though it is stated that nine were beheaded, twelve names are listed; Sophronius is said to have founded the oratorium of S. Stephen on the site of their burial.

[50] The inconsistencies in the chronology are noted by Delehaye, "Passio sexaginta martyrum," 291. Again, though there should have been 50 soldiers remaining to be martyred, 51 names are listed.

[51] Ṭaban, 1.2398 (AH 15). Most historians only mention the earlier raid, probably conflating it with the conquest of Gaza (see Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 115–117).

by modern scholars, suppose that the author knew the identity of the "commander of the holy city."[52] Sophronius is usually considered to **{350}** have died on 11 March 638 and so would not have been able to bury the martyrs in November 638, though it is argued that he may have died in 639.[53] It may be that these characters were selected not for their historicity, but because they were well-known personalities: ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ as the conqueror of Egypt and Sophronius as the champion of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. The martyrs themselves, or at least their names, seem equally unreal. There are 13 Johns, 8 Theodores, 7 Georges, 5 Pauls and 3 Stephens. In other words, 22 percent have the same name and 60 percent share just five names, and this is assuming that those we cannot read do not also bear these names. This compares unfavourably with the diversity one finds in the inscriptions of Gaza.[54]

It is also worth noting that this is the only reference we have to a garrison at Gaza in any Roman or Byzantine source.[55] But the agreement of the date of Gaza's capitulation, after making allowances for corrupt indiction and regnal dates, with that given in Muslim sources might indicate that the *Passion*, albeit adapted for polemical purposes, is nevertheless based on a historical incident. Was, then, the garrison martyred? In Ṭabarī's account of the siege ʿAlqama had only narrowly escaped assassination by the "patrician" and this would have ill-disposed him towards the garrison, though the incident itself is also told of ʿAmr in Gaza and of ʿAmr in Alexandria, and so may not be historical.[56] Otherwise the act could have been retaliatory; thus Muʿāwiya is reported to have said before the conquest of Caesarea: "Whatever Michael (governor of Caesarea?) does to our prisoners we shall do to theirs."[57] Perhaps most likely of all is that the garrison was put to death simply for resisting the Muslims, a fate meted out to **{351}** Byzantine soldiers elsewhere,[58] and that this was taken up by a later writer and recasted as a tale of martyrdom. So a kernel of truth may well lie behind the text, but later reworking and crude translation into Latin has obscured it beyond recognition. The only feature still clear in our epitome is the

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[52] Thus Bacchus of Mar Saba, *Passion*, 106, is interrogated by *ho kai Amēras onomazomenos*.Guillou, "Prise de Gaza," 399 and n. 2 thereto, suggested ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb, and de Goeje proposed ʿĀmir ibn Ghaylān in a personal communication to Delehaye ("Passio sexaginta martyrum," 290); neither are known to have governed Jerusalem.

[53] It is, however, this *Passion* along with two other dubious texts which furnish von Schönborn, *Sophrone*, 97 n. 136, with the evidence for his argument that Sophronius died in 639.

[54] For a reconstruction of most of the names see Pargoire, "Les LX soldats martyrs de Gaza." A list of personal names in Roman and Byzantine inscriptions of Gaza is given by Glucker, *The City of Gaza*, 157–61.

[55] *Ibid.*, *58*.

[56] Ṭabarī, 1.2398 (ʿAlqama); Eutychius, *Annales*, 2.10–11 (ʿAmr in Gaza), 2.25 (ʿAmr in Alexandria).

[57] Ṭabarī, 1.2398; on Michael see de Goeje, *Mémoire*, 168.

[58] E.g. John of Nikiu, CXV.11 (tr. Charles, 184): "They put to death all the Roman soldiers whom they encountered;" *Syriac CS*, *s.v.* 641 (slaughter of the garrison of Caesarea).

apologetic intent. For example, ʻAmr is labelled as "impious," "devil," "hateful to God" and "most cruel," and the Arabs themselves described as "impious" and "godless."

George the Black (d. 650s)

In the first decades of Muslim rule those who apostatised to join the conqueror's faith were most commonly prisoners-of-war. Wrenched from their native land and brought into the overwhelmingly Muslim milieu of a garrison town, there was much pressure to convert, particularly if the captives were very young. If they became household servants, they might also establish close and amicable relations with their master and this would increase pressure or even desire to convert. An example is George the Black, who was taken prisoner as a child and became the servant of a Saracen in Damascus. At the age of eight he denied the Christian faith, but on attaining adulthood and discernment "he returned again and became a true Christian." One day a fellow servant, "a Christ-hating apostate," went into the mosque (*masgida*) and denounced him to his master. The latter summoned George and asked him to pray with him. Despite entreaties and threats George refused to renege on his faith in Christ, whereupon his master commissioned four Saracens who were gathered there to hold the servant by his hands and legs while he cut him in two with his sword. The remnants were taken away by the inhabitants of Damascus and buried in a special tomb.

Unlike the previous text, which is patently a literary fiction even if based upon a concrete incident, this report about George's passion is an apparently circumstantial anecdote. Nevertheless, it was written down with the same purpose in mind: to champion the superiority of Christ's religion over Islam and to discourage apostasy, as is made abundantly **{352}** clear by its narrator, namely Anastasius of Sinai.[59] The latter, who records this tale in the 680s, tells us that "it is told even now around Damascus." The phrase "even now" suggests that it happened at some remove from its time of composition. George was captured during the conquests, so *ca.* 640, and was an apostate for ten years. One assumes he was exposed not long after his reconversion, and hence his death most likely fell in the 650s.

A Christian Arab of Sinai (d. ca. 660)

Christian Arabs do seem to have sometimes been the targets of Muslim missionary efforts and occasionally to have faced the choice between conversion to Islam and great hardship, even death. The Muslim general Khālid ibn al-Walīd told a chief of the tribe of Shaybān: "No Arab who refrains from our religion do we leave alone,

[59] For this point see the entry on "Anastasius of Sinai" in Chapter 3 above, where also will be found the reference to the report and information on the collection in which it appears.

rather we kill him."[60] And we observe this sentiment put into practice on a number of occasions. ʿUmar I allegedly said of the tribe of Taghlib that "they are a people of the Arabs and not from the people of the Book, so they must become Muslim," and he stipulated that they should not baptise their children as Christians.[61] A few decades later two chiefs of Taghlib, Muʿādh and Shamʿ Allāh, were subjected to blandishments and threats at the hands of Muslim authorities eager for them to apostatise. Frustrated by Muʿādh's refusals, Muḥammad ibn Marwān, governor of Mesopotamia, eventually had him executed. Though allowing him to live, Walīd emphasised to Shamʿ Allāh: "While you are a chief of the Arabs, you shame them all by worshipping the cross."[62] Later again, **{353}** a tribesman of Iyād captured during a raid of Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik in Byzantine territory was brought before Hishām at Ḥarran and beheaded for refusing to adopt Islam.[63]

When pressured, Arab tribes usually converted *en masse*. Threats of torture prompted 5000 of Tanūkh to become Muslims when Mahdī appeared among them near Aleppo in 780; only a certain Layth held fast to Christianity.[64] Similarly, the Arabs of Sinai put up little struggle when the Muslims arrived on the scene:

> When, in accordance with the just judgement of God, the nation (*ethnos*) of the Saracens came out of their native land to the holy mountain of Sinai to occupy this place and to dislodge from the Christian faith the Saracens who were found there and who were formerly Christians, these latter, who had their abode and tents near the fort and the holy bush, heard of this and went up with their families to a secure spot up on the holy summit, from there to combat, as from a height, the approaching Saracens. They did thus, but being powerless to resist

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[60] Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 60; cf. also 61, where Khālid says: "We do not allow Arabs to be in a religion other than ours."

[61] Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 121. In matters of tax, however, they were granted the concession that they pay double the Muslim tax rather than the humiliating poll-tax (*ibid.*, 120–21; Yaḥyā ibn Ādam, *Kharāj*, 46–49; Abū ʿUbayd, *Amwāl*, 39–42, 72023), though the significance of this is usually played down by the Muslim sources (see Fattal, *Statut légal des non-musulmans*, 274–75).

[62] Michael the Syrian 11.XVII, 451–52/480–82. Shamʿ Allāh's story is also told by Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 10.99 (when told to become a Muslim by "one of the caliphs of the Umayyads," Shamʿ Allāh replied: "I will never, by God, become a Muslim unwillingly; only willingly, if I wish, will I become a Muslim," whereupon the angry caliph had a chunk of his thigh cut off, roasted and fed to him).

[63] His tale is narrated at length by Yāqāt, *Muʿjam*, 1.869–70 (*s.v.* "Tall Mahray"). There are several slight inconsistencies in this account; the tribesman is supposed to have been captured during *ghazwat al-Qusṭanṭīnīya*, implying Maslama's campaign of 717; Hishām (724–43) is more connected with Ruṣafa, Marwān (744–50) with Ḥarran. On Christian Arab conversion to Islam see further Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens*, 100–13.

[64] Michael the Syrian 12.1, 478–79/1; the incident is confirmed by *Ehnesh Inscription*, *s.a.* AG 1091. Further discussion of the position of Arab Christians is given by Tritton, *Non-Muslim Subjects*, 89–92.

> much the oncoming host, they surrendered and went to live with them and to believe with them.[65]

As happened with the Tanūkh, one of the Christian Arabs of Sinai did remain loyal. At his wife's bidding he kills her and his children rather than let them fall into the invaders' hands, and himself flees. He wanders in the mountain desert, "living for years like Elias, Elisa and **{354}** John, a hermit and citizen of God." Then he entered the monastery of Sinai where, while lying ill in its hostel, he received a vision of the sixth-century Sinai martyrs, who escort him to his Maker.

It is not certain when the assault upon Sinai took place. It has been suggested that the Greek chronicler Theophanes' reference to a place *Hēran*, captured in 633, should be understood as Pharan in Sinai, but this seems tactically and linguistically implausible.[66] The full-scale invasion of Egypt in 640 proceeded via the coastal road and so need not have concerned the Sinai interior.[67] The account of the passion was composed *ca.* 690 and the author notes that many of those who were at the martyr's deathbed are still alive today. This and the mention that he lived as a solitary "for years" allow us to posit only a very approximate date of death, probably around the year 660.

Peter of Capitolias (d. 715)

There is an entry under 4 October in one of the versions of the synaxary of Constantinople (a collection of abbreviated saints' lives arranged in calendrical order) for one Peter of Capitolias (Bayt Ras), which reads as follows:

> On this day was the passion of the holy pious martyr Peter of Capitolias. He was born and bred in this town, very wise and superior to many men in good sense. After giving himself in marriage and siring three children, he took up the monastic life. Then having received the great honour of [being ordained] a priest by the one directing the seat (i.e. the bishop) of Bostra, he was slandered as a teacher of the Christians before the ethnarch of the Hagarenes. He was brought to the [city] of the Damascenes. When, out of love **{355}** for Christ, first his tongue was cut out, he cried out [even] more clearly and piercingly, whereupon his right hand was removed and he was fixed upon a cross. Then his head was cut off, and his bones were destroyed by fire and [the ashes] cast into the river.[68]

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[65] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrate* C4 (= Nau, LXI).

[66] Mayerson, "The First Muslim Attacks," esp. 161–62. This is refuted by Conrad, "Aspects of the Early Muslim Conquests," and Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 90–93.

[67] Butler, *Conquest of Egypt*, 209–16; though see the entry on the "Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 below for the possibility of Muslim activity in Egypt before 640.

[68] *Synaxary CP*, 106 (4 October, no. 5); a slightly different version is given in *PG* 117, 85C–D (*De menologio Basilii imperatoris*).

Usually assumed to be connected with this is the following account of the chronicler Theophanes, which he places under the year 742:

> Peter *ho kata ton Maiouman*[69] proved… a voluntary martyr on behalf of Christ. Having fallen ill, he invited the prominent Arabs who were his friends – for he served as chartulary of the public taxes[70] – and said to them: "May you receive from God the recompense for visiting me, even if you happen to be infidel friends. I wish you, however, to witness this my will: Anyone who does not believe in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the consubstantial and life-giving Trinity within a unity, is spiritually blind and deserving of **{356}** eternal punishment. Such a one was Muḥammad, your false prophet and precursor of the Antichrist. If you believe me as I testify to you today by heaven and earth – for I am your friend – abandon his fables, that you may not be punished along with him." When they had heard him utter these and many other words about God, they were seized by astonishment and fury, but decided to be patient, thinking he was out of his mind on account of his illness. After he had recovered from his illness, however, he started to cry out even louder: "Anathema on Muḥammad and his fables and on everyone who believes in them!" Thereupon he was chastised with the sword and so became a martyr. He has been honoured in a laudation by our holy father John.[71]

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[69] Maiouma was the port of Gaza, but the *Passion* is wholly centered arround northwest Jordan and southern Syria, never mentioning Maiouma (Peeters, "Passion de S. Pierre," 324–28, argues that the monastery of Mimas near Ḥimṣ is meant, but there is little justification for this). "A *kata ton* B" usually means either "A surnamed B" or, common in later Greek, "A in the service/household of B" (Cameron, "A Note on *katá* in Late Greek," 89–94). There features in the *Passion* a certain Qaiouma whose relationship to Peter is uncertain: he looks after Peter when he is ill (but could not his son have done that?), he summons the Arabs to witness Peter's testament and it is in his favour that the testament is made out (Peter of Capitolias, *Passion*, VI [tr. Peeters, 304]). It is possible that Maiouma is a mistake for Qaiouma; the *Passion* is likely to have come to Georgian from the original Greek via Arabic, in which language the letters Q and M are similar (Peeters, "Passion de S. Pierre," 322, proposes that Syriac played a part in the transmission; Q and M are even more similar in Syriac, but the involvement of this language is less obvious). Otherwise, could Theophanes' account have become confused with the fifth-century martyr Peter, bishop of Maiouma (Lang, *Lives of the Georgian Saints*, 57–80)?

[70] Peeters, "Passion de S. Pierre," 322–23, argues that chartulary is a mistake for Capitolias, which is possible if Syriac were the original language. But there seems more to it than that; why, for example, does Theophanes add "of the public taxes" and why does Peter have Muslim friends?

[71] Theophanes, 416–17 (tr. Mango, AM 6234); cf. Peter of Capitolias, *Passion*, VI (tr. Peeters, 304–305). Theophanes goes on in his text to speak of John of Damascus.

The brief outline of events found in the above two sources is much expanded in a *Passion* of S. Peter attributed to John of Damascus.[72] Preserved in Georgian but originally written in Greek, the text narrates at length the fate of the martyr's eldest daughter, his and his son's ascetic life, the death of his wife, his illness, public attack on Islam and subsequent trial. The latter affair is told in great detail. First, the matter is brought to the attention of ʿUmar ibn al-Walīd, governor of Jordan, who despatches his agent Zora (presumably Syriac *Zʿūrā*) to investigate. Peter is then given a last chance to retract his blasphemy and his refusal leads him to be brought before the caliph Walīd himself, at that moment on his sickbed. Obtaining no satisfactory response to his reasonable question: "You are free to recognise as God Jesus, who is a man and a servant of the Creator, but why insult our religion and call our peaceable Prophet master of error and father of deception?," Walīd orders that Peter be returned to his homeland and there be put to death.

That all three accounts are somehow related to each other is clear from the following table: **{357}**

Georgian Passion		*Theoph.*	*Synax.*
1.	"In the month of October, day 4…"		X
2.	Attribution to John of Damascus	X	
3.	Peter, a priest of Capitolias, puts aside his wife and children to become a monk (II)		X
4.	Digression on the eldest daughter (III)		
5.	Digression on the son (IV)		
6.	Peter desires martyrdom (V)	X	
7.	Peter falls ill and summons Arabs to hear his testament, then professes the Christian faith before them and abuses Muḥammad and Islam.	X	
8.	The Arabs are angry but assume he is delirious.		
9.	When recovered, he continues his blasphemy (VI)	X	
10.	Peter is investigated and eventually brought before Walīd (VII–IX)	X	X
11.	He is sentenced and executed (X–XIV)	X	X

One should note that the date in no. 1 only appears at the beginning of the *Passion*; later it says that he died on 13 January. For no. 3, the synaxarist oddly puts things the other way round to the *Passion*: that Peter was a monk and became a priest.

Theophanes and particularly the synaxarist have massively compressed the story, while the *Passion*, as we have it in the Georgian version, has undergone considerable hagiographical expansion. There is no detail that reveals any genuine familiarity

[72] The full heading of the *Passion* is: "An oration of our holy and blessed father John, monk and priest of Damascus, concerning the life and most illustrious deeds of the pious neomartyr Peter, who was put to death in the city of Capitolias."

with Peter's personal life, not even the names of his wife or children are given. Furthermore, a number of scenes have their parallels in earlier texts. The portrayal of the Christians of Capitolias bidding an emotive farewell to Peter as he departed for Damascus resembles that found in a panegyric of S. Gordian. The miracle of Peter still reciting psalms and praising God after his tongue had been excised is told also of S. Romanus of Antioch. And the action of Peter's son, tracing out a sign of the cross on himself with his father's blood, echoes that of a witness to the crucifixion **{358}** of S. Yiztbuzit at Dwin in 553, both being beaten for this act of piety.[73]

But though the biographical material betrays little reality, other data do indicate a possible historical basis to the *Passion*. 'Umar ibn al-Walīd was indeed the governor of Jordan, but is not at all a well-known figure in Muslim history.[74] Capitolias, together with Gadara and Abila, is portrayed as being in the region of "Trichoro," which presumably derives from a Greek term such as *trichōra* that designates an administrative district of three cities.[75] This is an interesting detail and one that makes sense against the background of a flourishing northwest Jordan, where cities such as Jerash, Pella and Gadara witnessed much Umayyad-sponsored building activity.[76] When summoned before Walīd, Peter is said to have been escorted "to Kasia, which is a mountain overlooking the city of Damascus." The monastery there had been appropriated by "the tyrannical Arabs" and converted into a palace, and "it is there that Walīd, tyrant of the Arabs, was found detained by his illness." This accords with what we know from Arabic sources, which recount how Walīd spent his last weeks at the monastery of Murran on the plateau of Mount Qasiyun, to the north of Damascus.[77] He died on 23 February 715, and so it is not impossible that while ill he saw Peter, whom the *Passion* says was martyred on 13 January 715. It would seem likely, then, that a simple narrative of Peter's martyrdom was composed by someone who knew the area and was contemporary with the events – perhaps John of Damascus in his "laudation" – and that this was subsequently embellished and expanded. An early date is **{359}** confirmed by the inclusion in Theophanes (d. 818) of information very similar to that found in the *Passion*.

Though differing in details, the following notice of Theophanes is usually assumed to refer to the same episode; again it appears under the year 742:

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[73] Pointed out and references given by Peeters, "Passion de S. Pierre," 309, 312–13.

[74] Only Khalīfa, 311, records him as governor of Jordan; see also Ṭabarī, 2.1197 (leads pilgrimage in AH 88, confirmed by Khalīfa, 302), 2.1235 (campaigns against Byzantium in AH 92).

[75] Peeters, "Passion de S. Pierre," 305–306, 313–14; on toponymy in the *Passion* see Milik, "Notes d'epigraphie et de topographie jordaniennes."

[76] Ziyadeh, "Case Studies from Northern Palestine and Jordan;" MacAdam, "Northern and Central Transjordania." On Capitolias itself see Lenzen and Knauf, "Beit Ras/ Capitolias," 35–42.

[77] Peter of Capitolias, *Passion*, VIII (tr. Peeters, 307); Ṭabarī, 2.1270, says Walīd died at Dayr Murran; see Yāqūt, Mu'jam, 2.696–97 ("Murrān"), 4.13–14 ("Qāsiyūn").

> Walīd ordered that Peter, the most holy metropolitan of Damascus, have his tongue cut off because he was publicly reproving the impiety of the Arabs and the Manichaeans, and exiled him to Arabia Felix where he died a martyr on behalf of Christ after reciting the holy liturgy. Those who have told the story affirm to have heard it with their own ears.[78]

This report has been derived by Theophanes from a Syriac source of the mid-eighth century, which says: "In this year (AG 1054/742–43) the bishop of the Chalcedonians of Damascus was delivered up to king Walīd for reviling the prophet of the Arabs. His tongue was cut out and he was exiled to the land of Yemen."[79]

The two Peters are very different: one is a government employee, the other an officer of the church; one is executed, the other exiled. It is not even sure whether the second is called Peter; Michael the Syrian writes "patriarch" in the abbreviated form *Ptr* which could have made Theophanes think of Peter, though a Peter of Damascus is mentioned in the heading of two treatises by John of Damascus.[80] The Syriac source is also too near to the event simply to assume that it has got things **{360}** wrong. The close parallels between the first passage of Theophanes and the *Passion* make it seem certain that Peter *ho kata ton Maiouman* is Peter of Capitolias, but it seems safer to regard the second passage as referring to a separate figure, Peter of Damascus. That they were both punished under a Walīd – Peter of Capitolias under Walīd I (705–15), Peter of Damascus under Walīd II (743–44) – makes understandable Theophanes' mistake in placing them under the same year.

As for the muddle over the details of the biographies of the two saints, I would conjecture that Theophanes is correct[81] in asserting Peter of Capitolias to have been in the government service, probably in the employ of a Christian apostate named Qaiouma. The martyrologist either confused the two Peters or disliked the idea of

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[78] Theophanes, 416 (tr. Mango, AM 6234); cf. Peter of Capitolias, *Passion*, X (tr. Peeters, 310–11). That Peter, metropolitan of Damascus, and Peter *ho kata ton Maiouman* .are one and the same person was first argued by Peeters ("Passion de S. Pierre," 320–28, and "Glanures martyrologiques," 123–25).

[79] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 743. I translate from *Chron. 1234*; Michael the Syrian has: "In the year 1056 Walīd, king of the Arabs, ordered that the tongue be cut out of the patriarch of the Chalcedonians who lived in Syria, and he was exiled to the land of Yemen."

[80] John of Damascus' *Contra Jacobitas* was commissioned by Peter of Damascus (Kotter, *Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 4.109; *PG* 94, 1435) and the latter was the recipient of John's *Libellas de recta sententia* (*PG* 94, 1421, "admonitio"). Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 40, mentions "a lost treatise on Islam by Peter of Damascus," which is said to be "in a Sinai manuscript" by Nasrallah, "Dialogue Islamo-Chrétien," 124. Gardthausen, *Catalogus*, 108 (no. 443), does mention a treatise by Peter of Dasmascus (entitled *Anamnēsis tēs idias psychēs*), but he says it is "a florilegium made from the books of the Old and New Testament."

[81] Note that he is our earliest source, and I see no reason to doubt that he is using, if indirectly, the laudation of John of Damascus, the existence of which is confirmed by the *Passion*.

his subject as a servant of the Muslims, and so derived his information from the *Life* of Peter of Damascus, who was a priest, monk and "teacher of the Christians." The characterlessness of the narrative about Peter's early life in the *Passion* certainly suggests that it is invented; only with the public blasphemy and trial do we get realistic material. The date of 4 October, which only appears in the heading of the *Passion*, should perhaps be assigned to Peter of Damascus, and 13 January, which is in the text itself, reserved for Peter of Capitolias. The synaxarist is hopelessly muddled; the date and career seem to belong to Peter of Damascus and also the statement that he was slandered, for Peter of Capitolias sought out his martyrdom. The place of origin and manner of death, however, apply to Peter of Capitolias.

Sixty Pilgrims in Jerusalem (d. 724)[82]

A Greek text, claiming in its epilogue (§12) to be translated from Syriac at the request of a monk John, narrates the fortunes of 70 distinguished **{361}** men (*archontes*) who undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the seven-year truce concluded between Sulaymān and Leo III in 717 (§§56). This treaty lapses just as they are turning back, and they are apprehended a short distance from Jerusalem; they are first imprisoned, then brought before the Muslim governor in Caesarea. He confines them while seeking advice from the caliph (*prōtosymboulos*). A letter from the latter orders their execution, though giving them the chance of a reprieve if they convert to Islam (§§6–7). "They cry out in one voice, as if from one mouth: 'We are Christians and we shall not renounce the orthodox faith of our fathers,'" and they confess "the true confession," for "besides this faith there is no truth" (§8). Three come forward as spokesmen and ask that they all be martyred outside the gate of David in Jerusalem; they entrust some money to a pious man of Caesarea, named John, that he might see to their burial (§9). On the way there three die and seven take fright and apostatise, though stricken shortly afterwards by dysentery. The remaining 60 are crucified and shot at by archers, meeting their death proudly as Christian martyrs. John fulfils his charge, burying them near the church of S. Stephen just outside the gates of the holy city. There the inhabitants of Jerusalem celebrate the martyrs' anniversary every 21 October (§§10–11).

This account also exists in a much longer Greek recension composed by Simeon, priest and monk of the cave of Lent in Jerusalem. Though the two axe certainly depicting the same event,[83] they differ considerably. John's version is plain and unadorned, whereas Simeon's is highly literary and laced with numerous Biblical quotations and miraculous elements. The only major discrepancy in content is that John's version contains a narrative on the Arab siege of Constantinople in 717 (§§3–5), whereas this is omitted by Simeon who gives instead an exposition of the beginnings of iconoclasm. But there are many variations on finer points: for example, Simeon has 63 martyrs, whose spokesmen are Theodoulus, Eusebius and David, whilst John

[82] See Halkin, *BHG*[3], 2.101 (nos. 1217–18).

[83] Established by Loparev, "Vizantijskie ẓitiya svyatykh," 2–3.

has 60, who are represented by George, John and Julian. Finally, Simeon tends to furnish more details; he can give the names of all 63 martyrs, he knows that they were from Iconium and is aware that it was with illegal entry that they were charged.

{362} In Simeon's version the John who buries the martyrs is archbishop of Caesarea and he writes a memorandum about their plight, which was later made into a martyrology (*martyrion*) by Simeon. This version claims, therefore, to derive from an eyewitness, but either this is false or Simeon considerably reworked the original sketch. The governor of Caesarea writes to the prince (*archēgos*) of Egypt for instructions about the pilgrims, but not until the Fatimids in the tenth century was Palestine subordinate to Egypt. Moreover, it shows a familiarity with iconoclasm and its writings that would put it at least into the ninth century.[84] John's version, by contrast, seems totally innocent of the controversy. It has the John who buries the pilgrims make prostration to their relics, and refers to Leo, who is "impious" and the "new Balthasar" and "a Mōameth" for Simeon, as "crowned by God," "of blessed memory" and "most dear to God and most pious."[85] The author is staunchly pro-Byzantine, most likely a Chalcedonian, and overtly anti-Muslim. He is certainly writing before the proscription of iconoclasm at the Ecumenical Council of 787 and probably before its escalation at the synod convened by Constantine V in 754, so we may date the work to the mid-eighth century.[86]

It has recently been proposed by Huxley that this martyrology is a fictitious adaptation of the *Passion of the Sixty Martyrs of Gaza*.[87] His chief argument is that the latter is "coherent and simple" and possessed of a "secure historical context," whereas the *Passion of the Jerusalem Martyrs* is unfounded, for the seven-year truce and execution of 60 Byzantines at the holy city in 724 is mentioned in no other source. The general narrative framework is very similar, but there is considerable difference in detail. It may be that the author of the *Passion of the Jerusalem Martyrs* used the *Passion of the Sixty Martyrs of Gaza* as a model when writing about what was originally a much smaller incident **{363}** in the 720s, but while we only have the account of the Gaza martyrs in a late crude Latin version, one should be wary about giving any firm conclusions.

Elias of Damascus (d. 779)[88]

The account of this martyr is a well-crafted piece of anti-Muslim polemic. Elias does not seek out his martyrdom, rather he is perfectly willing to coexist with Muslims;

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[84] Illustrated by Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 177 n. 4, 181 n. 13.

[85] *Passion of the Jerusalem Martyrs* (John), §§12 (John prostrates to relics), 3–5 (Leo); *Passion of the Jerusalem Martyrs* (Simeon), 137, 139.

[86] Further discussion is given by Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 176–81. See also *Acta sanctorum* 21 October, 6.358–60 (commentarius praevius), where it is argued, on not very strong grounds, that "the humble monk John" should be identified with John of Damascus.

[87] Huxley, "The Sixty Martyrs of Jerusalem."

[88] See *Palestinian-Georgian Calendar*, 151; Halkin, *BHG*[3], 1.177 (nos. 578–79).

but nevertheless, in the author's portrayal at least, he is a helpless victim of their baseness. This point is brought home by the frequent contrast made between Elias' virtue and innocence and the depravity and wiliness of the Muslim characters in the story. While the Muslim guests of a party at which Elias had been serving are still sleeping off the excesses of the night before, Elias is already up, performing his ablutions then heading off to commune with God. While Elias is able to succeed at business through industry and honesty, his apostate employer is a prey to envy and has to resort to subterfuge. The threats and material inducements used by various Muslim authorities to persuade Elias to profess Islam contrast with the pacific and selfless manner in which Elias stands by his belief in the Christian faith. In addition, the author makes use of the full range of devices at the disposal of a hagiographer – visions, torture, miracles and so on – to enhance his hero's spiritual standing. This *Passion* is also interesting, however, for the unusual detail with which its historical setting is depicted. For this reason, and because it is very little known, I shall present here an outline of the story.

Elias was born and raised at Heliopolis (Baʿalbek) in Second Phoenicia where he worked as a carpenter. Hoping to improve their lot, he, his destitute mother and two brothers headed for Damascus. There he obtained a job with a Syrian Christian apostate, who was himself in the employ of an Arab, and he spent two years practising his craft. The Arab patron of the apostate (*antilēptōr tou apostatou*) died a short while after he had settled his son with a bride. She bore him a child and he, encouraged by his comrades, decided to throw a birthday party **{364}** for his infant son. Elias was called upon to serve and during the feast was questioned by some of the guests as to his origins and invited to become their equals by relinquishing his Christian faith. He avoided the issue by pointing out to them that they were at a party, not a convention, and so just to enjoy themselves. They insisted, however, that he at least eat with them. Later, as the singers began to perform, the guests dragged Elias along to dance with them, undoing his belt (*zōnē*) for him to allow him free movement.[89]

When night had passed and his co-revellers were buried in sleep, Elias got up, tied his belt, doing so out of habit in the Christian way (*perizōnnytai kata to ethos tēs christianikēs politeias tēn idian autou zōnēn*), washed his face and left the house in order

[89] This paragraph is a résumé of Elias of Damascus, *Passion*, 155–60 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 45–46). Auzépy, "Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène," 203 n. 143, implies that it was undoing his belt (though she says he did, whereas it was done for him) that led Elias to be considered a Muslim. This is not made explicit in the text, but it is true that the belt seems to be a sign of Christian identity; cf. the story of the deacon of the region of Edessa recounted at the beginning of this chapter, and note the actions of the apostate Dioscorus of Alexandria upon his decision to seek martyrdom: "He got up at once and tied the *zannār* round his waist, then he prayed and made the sign of the cross over himself, then he walked out into the city" (*Coptic Synaxary*, "6 Barmahāt"). See Cohen, "Origins of the Distinctive Dress Regulation for Non-Muslims." For Zoroastrians removal of the sacred girdle (*kusti*) was a distinctive outward sign of apostasy (cf. Boyce, *Zoroastrians*, 148, 153, 158).

to go and offer his prayers to God. One inebriated guest, however, noticed his departure and called out to ask him where he was going. Elias explained that he intended to pray, to which the guest replied: "Did you not deny your faith last night?" Out of scorn for this suggestion Elias proceeded to pour forth supplications to God, then returned to the workshop. His apostate employer visited him later to warn him, saying that had he not intervened the guests would have done him harm. Though he was told he might remain in his post, albeit with the forfeit of his wages, Elias and his family deemed it more prudent if he left, and so he returned to Heliopolis.[90]

After eight years he made his way back to Damascus. His brothers agreed that the passage of time should have made it safe for him to **{365}** take up residence once more in the city, and he proceeded to set up his own workshop for the manufacture of camel saddles. The apostate, his old employer, found out and, because it was near his business, was envious of the saint and asked him to come and work for him again. Elias scoffed at this offer; since the apostate had done him a wrong last time by withholding his wages, he was hardly likely to let himself be cheated a second time. Taken aback, the apostate retorted that yes indeed, he had done a wrong, namely letting an apostate from Islam get away free. He asked his Arab employer to testify that Elias had converted to Islam the night of the party and then hauled the saint before the local governor (*eparchos*), who was called Layth.[91] From this point on the narrative follows the lines of a traditional Christian passion. Elias is offered freedom if he reverts to Islam, he refuses and is tortured, then put in chains; visions occur which comfort him and encourage him to stand firm in the trials ahead. He is brought before Muḥammad (*Mouchamad*), tetrarch and prince (*hēgemōn*) and a nephew of Mahdī (*Maadi*), who convenes a tribunal and tries by alternately offering him threats and material inducements to persuade him to become a Muslim.[92] When Elias still refuses, he is executed and his corpse hung on a pole outside the gates of the city, an event which took place on 14 February AM 6287 and which was attended by various miracles.[93]

Romanus the Neomartyr (d. 780)

Romanus was a native of Galatia and a monk. He was captured by Arab raiders and sent to Baghdad, where he remained in prison for nine years. At one time, because of the slander of a Greek apostate, he was suspected of being a certain notorious

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[90] Elias of Damascus, *Passion*, 160–64 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 46–47).

[91] *Ibid.*, 165–67 (=Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 47–48).

[92] *Ibid.*, 179–83 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 51–52): the tribunal.

[93] *Ibid.*, 193 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 55): date. According to the Byzantine era AM 6287 corresponds to 779, which falls within the reign of Mahdī, who is presented as the "king (*basileus*) of the Arabs" at the time of the martyrdom. Some scholars have dated it by the Alexandrian era of Panadorus which yields 795 (Loparev, "Vizantijskie žitiya svyatykh," 36–40; Bréhier, "La situation des chrétiens de Palestine à la fin du Ville siècle," 70–71).

spy and was brought before **{366}** Mahdī. Though not convicted, he was taken along on the caliph's campaign against Byzantium in 780 so that he could be kept under close guard. For a time the army encamped at Raqqa, and there Romanus got into trouble for upbraiding some Greek prisoners for their apostasy. He was first taken to the chamberlain Rabīʿ, who had him flogged, then to Mahdī, who, unable to win him over to Islam, had him executed on 1 May 780.[94]

This account only survives in Georgian and bears the title: "The passion of the holy Romanus the Neomartyr, who was martyred by order of the demoniacal king Mahdī, which was written by the blessed Stephen of Damascus, who was one of the fathers of the holy convent of our Father Saba."[95] A Stephen Manṣūr of Damascus is known as the author of the Greek *Passion of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba* in 797 as well as of a number of hymns in Greek. This Stephen appears to have been something of a Greek purist, for in the *Passion of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba* he relates how a Syriac-speaking monk, who had tried unsuccessfully to pronounce Greek properly, was cured of his barbaric tongue by one of the martyrs, who appeared to him in a dream and purged the offending object of its oily "stickiness" with a new cloth.[96] Peeters demonstrates that the Georgian *Passion* of Romanus must have been translated from Arabic.[97] Given Stephen's antipathy **{367}** towards the "Syrian" tongue, it is highly unlikely that he would have written in Arabic, and we must assume that the Arabic version of the *Passion* was itself a translation from Greek.[98] This was not uncommon; the homily on the Persian sack of Jerusalem in 614 by

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[94] The outline of events in the *Passion* fits well with that in Ṭabarī, 3.494–95, where Mahdī sets out with his son Hārūn and chamberlain Rabīʿ in March AH 163/780 and stops off at the castle of Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik near Raqqa. The relevance of this text to the Iconoclast controversy is considered by Ševćenko, "Hagiography of the Iconoclast Period," 114–16 (note that the majority of the Byzantine inmates at the prison in Baghdad were Iconclasts and plotted against the Iconodule minority, whom they called "enemies of our emperor").

[95] Romanus the Neomartyr, *Passion*, "title" (tr. Peeters, 409); see also *Palestinian-Georgian Calendar*, 213–14.

[96] Stephen of Damascus, *Passion of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba*, 12–13/177 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 36). On this author see Nasrallah, *Mouvement littéraire dans léglise melchite* 2.2, 156–57.

[97] Peeters, "S. Romain le néomartyr," 403–405, 407–408. He concludes from this that Stephen of Damascus could not be its author and proposes instead Stephen Thaumaturgus the Sabaite, but he was of peasant origin and anyway died in 794, before the death of the twenty martyrs in 797. See Blake, "Deux lacunes comblées dans la Passio XX monachorum," 40–42; Auzépy, "Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascene," 205–207.

[98] Thus Blake, "Deux lacunes comblées dans la Passio XX monachorum," who regards Stephen of Damascus as the author of the *Passion* of Romanus and of the *Passion of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba*. See also *idem*, "La littérature grecque en Palestine," 375, where it is again asserted that there must have been an Arabic intermediary between the Greek and Georgian versions of Romanus' *Passion*.

Strategius, the *Life* of Stephen the Sabaite by Leontius and very likely the *Passion of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba*, all passed from Greek to Arabic to Georgian.[99]

COPTO-ARABIC TEXTS

A substantial proportion of Coptic literature is taken up with eulogistic homilies composed in honour of early Christian martyrs, who enjoyed particular popularity in Egypt, and numerous other saints. On the anniversary of the death of a martyr or saint such an encomium would be read out to the congregation, commemorating the sufferings and achievements of their life and celebrating the miracles subsequently performed by their relics. From Greek and Coptic these were later translated into Arabic, then in the early fourteenth century they were brought together and placed in calendrical order, the entry for each saint being found under the day of their death.[100] This work, the *Synaxary* of the Coptic church, has been in constant use and frequently updated until this century, now having attained the status of a liturgical book. The focus is very much on the early heroes, and **{368}** "new martyrs," those executed by Muslims, amount to no more than a handful of entries for the whole period from the seventh to the nineteenth centuries,[101] and only the two presented below might plausibly belong to the seventh/eighth century. Of course, not all deserving cases were included in the *Synaxary*,[102] and the great devotion and

[99] Blake, "Deux lacunes comblées dans la Passio XX monachorum," 28, suggests that there was an Arabic intermediary between the extant Greek and Georgian versions of the *Passion of the Twenty Martyrs of Mar Saba.*

[100] It is not certain when this task was first undertaken, but a reasonable case for the early fourteenth century has recently been made by Coquin, "Quelle est la date possible du synaxaire des coptes," who cites relevant earlier discussions. Since that time a number of other recensions have been made, each with their own subtle variations in wording and omissions/additions of certain entries. The work was incorporated whole into the Ethiopie *Synaxary*, which therefore provides an additional witness. See Delehaye, "Les martyrs d'Egypte," 91–113, and *CE*, *s.v.* "Synaxarion, Copto-Arabic." O'Leary, *The Saints of Egypt*, 60–286, provides an alphabetical catalogue of holy men/women with comments on each one.

[101] See *Coptic Synaxary*, "19 Ba'ūna" (Muzāḥim, who apostatised and adopted the name George, d. 960s; his *Passion* is summarised by Yanney, "A New Martyr: St. George the Egyptian), "6 Barmahāt" (Dioscorus of Alexandria; the mention of a "king of Egypt" suggests a date in Fatimid times), "27 Mesore" (Mary the Armenian d. *ca.* 1270). Otherwise, there are a few whose passion is simply noted and not described: *Coptic Synaxary*, "13 Kīhak" (Barsenuphius), "13 Abīb" (Shenute), "14 Kīhak" (Simeon).

[102] There is, for example, the Christian of Egypt who "insulted the Prophet" and at the recommendation of Mālik ibn Anas was executed in Shawwāl AH 169/April 786 (Kindī, *Wulāt*, 69–70). Peeters, *BHO*, 116 (no. 519), mentions John of Phanidjoit (d. 1209), whose *Passion* was written in Coptic (Amélineau, "Un document copte"). And an antiphonary – a collection of hymns for the whole year, commemorating the saints associated with each day

reverence accorded the founding Fathers of the church means that they appropriate much of the limelight, but this poor showing of new martyrs must also to some extent reflect the low degree of persecution by the Muslims.

Menas the Monk

The entry on Menas, a Christian peasant from Akhmim, presents him as resolutely determined ever since his youth to renounce the world and live an ascetic life. On attaining maturity, he was initiated at a monastery near his home and spent some time there in fasting and prayer, then headed for Ashmunayn and remained in a nearby convent for sixteen years, never going outside of its gates, until the Arabs captured the country. When he heard that these new rulers denied that God had a consubstantial and coeternal son, he was "sorely troubled" and he went to see the chief of their army. The latter confirmed to him that they did indeed reject such a belief:

> **{369}** And the saint said to him: "It would be appropriate for you to disassociate from it if he were a son of intercourse or procreation (*ibn mubāḍa'a aw tanāsul*), but this god is from God, light from Light." He (the commander) said to him: "O monk, this in our Religion (*sharī'a*) is unbelief (*kufr*)."[103]

Menas then threatened him, citing John iii.36, which angered the commander, who then ordered that the monk be killed by the sword and thrown into the river.

Whether there was a Menas and whether he died thus is impossible to say, but since his biographer understands precisely the Muslim objection to the idea of a son of God – how could He be associated with sexual intercourse? – it is unlikely that this account was composed before the end of the seventh century.

Thomas, Bishop of Damascus

This entry claims that Thomas was bishop of Damascus when the Arabs captured the city, and that he won a debate against one of their savants (*aḥad 'ulamā'ihim*). The latter, chagrined at his defeat, took the matter up with the emir, accusing the bishop of having impugned their doctrine. Thomas was summoned before the emir and interrogated, but denied the charge: "No execration came out from my mouth, rather I asserted to him that Christ is a true divinity and that his Religion (*sharī'a*) will not be superseded by another religion."[104] "So our Religion then," continued the emir, "is not, in your opinion, from God?" Thomas' endorsement of this earned him execution and "the crown of martyrdom."

(see *CE*, *s.v.* "Difnār") – cites Michael of Damietta (14 Hatūr) and Ṣalīb (3 Kīhak), neither mentioned in the synaxary (Crum, *Coptic Mss. in the John Rylands Library*, 211–12).

[103] *Coptic Synaxary*, "17 Amshīr" (= *Ethiopic Synaxary*, "17 Yakkātit"). I translate from the edition of Michael and Philotheus, since it seems to me to make better sense.

[104] *Coptic Synaxary*, "4 Hatūr" (= *Ethiopic Synaxary*, "4 Khedār").

ARMENIAN TEXTS

David of Dwin (d. ca. 703)

{370} In a chapter entitled "the rule of prince Gregory (662–85) and the misfortunes that occurred in Armenia," the historian and head of the Armenian church, John Catholicos (d. *ca.* 925), narrates the following incident:

> At this time David, who was of Persian origin and of royal blood, came to the great prince Gregory and begged him so that he would be given Christian confirmation. Gregory accepted him with joy and ordered the catholicos Anastas (660–67) to give him the confirmation of holy baptism. And since David was formerly called Surhan, the great prince who had stood as his godfather during the baptism renamed him David, after his own father, and gave him as his residence the village of Jag in the province of Kotayk'. After a number of years he received the crown of martyrdom in the city of Dwin…
>
> After Gregory, Ashot Bagratuni (685–89), the son of Smbat, ruled over the princedom of Armenia. At this time a certain (Muḥammad ibn) Marwān, an Ishmaelite by race, came to Armenia as governor and launched attacks on all the fortresses in Armenia… After Muḥammad another governor was sent to Armenia by the name of 'Abd Allāh, a wicked, insolent and impudent man, extremely malicious by nature… This was the 'Abd Allāh who seized the neophyte David whom we mentioned above. He tormented him with severe blows, fetters and imprisonment because of his belief in Christ, and tried to persuade him to fall into his own abyss of perdition. Since the blessed old man did not consent to this and bravely revealed his indignation, 'Abd Allāh had him nailed to a wooden board and shot an arrow through the heart of the saint, who gave up his ghost **{371}** to Christ. The bishops and the priests took his body and buried it near the martyrium of Saint Yiztbuzit.[105]

This account of David's conversion and passion seems to be a summary of a hagiographical work which served also as the source of the still extant and much fuller *Passion* of S. David of Dwin. The two narratives follow very similar lines, the only discrepancy being that the *Passion* describes David as a *tajīk* by origin who "came to Armenia with the armies of the *tajīks*." This suggests that he was Arab rather than Persian and presumably a Muslim, which would explain why he was singled out for interrogation.[106] Some of the references in John become more understandable in the light of the *Passion*, indicating that the latter preserves better the original composition. Otherwise, the *Passion* simply gives more details and propaganda. There is an exchange between 'Abd Allāh and his chamberlain, a Christian one assumes, who advises his master to have David executed in public as an example to others, while

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[105] John Catholicos, *History of Armenia*, XX (tr. Maksoudian, 106–107).

[106] David of Dwin, *Passion*, 240; for the etymology of *tajīk* – from the Arab tribe Ṭayyi' – see Hübschmann, *Armenische Grammatik*, 86–87.

secretly knowing that this will rather strengthen Christian resolve and bring glory to their cause. David's wife is at the ceremony encouraging him to display resolution. And there is a nice touch at the end when David's crucifix, which had been set to face south, swings round to the east, a shift from the Muslim to the Christian direction of prayer.[107]

The affair supposedly took place "at the sixth hour, Monday 23 Areg," but in what year? For the period 653–83, though obliged to acknowledge Arab suzerainty and pay tribute, Armenia remained largely self-governing. "During the time of war among the Arabs (683–92)," Lewond tells us, "the Armenians, the Georgians and the Albanians ceased to pay them tribute, having been in servitude to them for thirty years."[108] After a brief spell of total independence under prince Ashot (685–89),[109] the Byzantines and Arabs fought for control **{372}** of the country. Justinian II sent an expedition and installed Nerseh Kamsarakan as prince of Armenia (689–92). In 692 Muḥammad ibn Marwn, appointed governor of Mesopotamia by ʿAbd al-Malik, campaigned against and defeated the Byzantines at Sebastopolis; "Smbat (Bagratuni), the prince of Armenia, on being informed of the defeat of the Romans, delivered Armenia to the Arabs."[110] The emperor Tiberius, seeking to arrest Smbat, lauched another assault in 698.[111] A full invasion led by Muḥammad ibn Marwān in 701 resulted in the formal annexation of Armenia, and thenceforth the country was administered by a representative of the caliph rather than a local sovereign.[112]

The first governor would seem to have been Nabīḥ ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAnazī, whom Muḥammad ibn Marwān left in charge while he was away in Syria helping to

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[107] For these and other details see the translation of the *Passion* by Professor Robert Thomson in Excursus D below.

[108] Lewond, IV (tr. Arzoumanian, 54).

[109] Ṭabarī has the rebel leaders Mukhtār and Muṣʿab appoint ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥārith (2.634) and Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufra (2.750) respectively as governors of Armenia, but these were unlikely to have been more than nominal. Hinds, *Awtabī's Account of the Muhallabids*, nowhere has Muhallab in Armenia, and in Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 300, Mukhtār appoints ʿAbd Allāh over Mahayn and Hamadan. Armenia, but these were unlikely to have been more than nominal. Hinds, *Awtabī's Account of the Muhallabids*, nowhere has Muhallab in Armenia, and in Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 300, Mukhtār appoints ʿAbd Allāh over Mahayn and Hamadan.

[110] Theophanes, 366; the encounter with the Byzantines at Sebastopolis (*Sabīsta*) is also reported by Khalīfa, 270 (summer AH 73/692).

[111] Lewond, VI (tr. Arzoumanian, 56).

[112] Khalīfa, 288 (AH 82/701); Lewond, VII (tr. Arzoumanian, 57), who puts it "after the sixteenth year of ʿAbd al-Malik's reign" (February 700–February 701). On the establishment of Muslim hegemony in Armenia see Manandean, "Les invasions arabes en Arménie" (only deals with the earliest stage); Laurent, "L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam," esp. 400–62; Ter-Lewondyan, "Observations sur la situation politique et économique de l'Arménie aux VIIe–IXe siècles," 197–200; *idem*, "L'Arménie et la conquête arabe."

fight the rebel Ibn al-Ash'ath.[113] In the year 703 the Armenian nobles under the leadership of Smbat Bagratuni (692–726) rose up against the Arabs and inflicted a severe defeat upon them at the battle of Vardanakert. 'Abd al-Malik immediately prepared a retaliatory attack to be led by Muḥammad ibn Marwān. Hearing of this, the nobles of Armenia empowered the catholicos Sahak (677–703) to negotiate on their behalf and avert the reprisal. Sahak died at Ḥarran before meeting Muḥammad, but his letter offering Armenia's submission in return for peace was handed to the general, who accepted and **{373}** observed its conditions.[114] From 703 to 704 Muḥammad was governor of all Mesopotamia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, but at the beginning of 705 'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥātim al-Bāhilī was given control over the two northern provinces.[115] This might be the 'Abd Allāh mentioned by John Catholicos as the executioner of David, in which case the latter died in 705. But 23 Areg was not a Monday in that year; it was so in 703, so perhaps Nabīḥ ibn 'Abd Allāh or Abū Shaykh ibn 'Abd Allāh is meant; otherwise the day (Monday) or the date (23 Areg) given in the *Passion* may be wrong.[116]

Vahan (d. 737)

Muḥammad ibn Marwān had abided by the terms of the agreement drawn up by the catholicos Sahak. The caliph Walīd, however, "in the first year of his reign (705–706), plotted to uproot the princely families and their cavalry on account of the grudge that he held against Smbat."[117] The latter obtained reinforcements from the Byzantines and marched against the Arabs, but Muḥammad ibn Marwān quickly rallied an army and defeated the rebels. Retribution this time was severe. A certain Qāsim, acting on the orders of Muḥammad, assembled a number of high-ranking

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[113] Lewond, VIII (tr. Arzoumanian, 59); Khalīfa, 288, who says that the Armenians killed him and that he was subsequently replaced by Abū Shaykh ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ghanawī and 'Amr ibn al-Ṣuddī al-Ghanawī, who also were killed by the Armenians (*ibid.*, 289).

[114] Lewond, VIII (tr. Arzoumanian, 59–61); John Catholicos, XXI (tr. Maksoudian, 107–108).

[115] Thus Khalīfa, 298, who says that 'Abd Allāh died and was replaced by his brother 'Abd al-'Azīz; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 205, has 'Abd Allāh as governor of Armenia and Azerbaijan for Mu'āwiya, but this is certainly too early.

[116] I work the dates out from Grumel, *Chronologie*, 306 (3.IV, Table 7), and Caetani, *Chronographia*, *s.a.* AH 83, 85. Peeters, *BHO*, 57 (no. 246), following Dulaurier, *Chronologie arménienne*, 183, gives a date of 31 March 693, which is too early and does not correspond to any of the Armenian dates that it mentions (18 Arats, 22 and 23 Areg); they cite another version of the *Passion* not available to me.

[117] Lewond, X (tr. Arzoumanian, 64). The following account of the murder of the Armenian nobles is very similar in its details in Lewond, X, and Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 205. Presumably also a victim of this reprisal was the princess Shushan, wife of Nerseh Kamsarakan, martyred at Ḥarran according to a colophon dated 155 of the Armenian era/706 (Yovsep'ian, *Yishatakarank' Dzeragrats'*, 51 n. [Ms. 849]).

Armenians in two churches, locked the doors **{374}** and burned them alive.[118] Other nobles were tortured so that they would reveal the whereabouts of their wealth, then were either killed or led into captivity, first at Dwin, then at Damascus.

Among those taken to the Umayyad capital was Vahan, son of Khusrau, lord of Golt'n, then about four years old, of whom the story of his passion is still extant.[119] By royal command he was converted "from the truth of our great mysteries to error" and was renamed Wahhab. He was educated in the Arab sciences and worked as a scribe in the "royal chancery" until the time of 'Umar (717–20). This ruler determined to release those who had been taken and, though unwilling to lose so talented a youth, he eventually agreed to allow Vahan to go with them, for he always "saw to the strict execution of his orders and was of an excellent nature."[120] He returned to the region of Golt'n which he governed until the death of 'Umar, whereupon he conceived a desire to confess Christ. For six years he lived as a monk in the desert, then resolved to seek martyrdom.

Via Edessa and Callinicum Vahan journeyed to the royal palace at Ruṣafa, the residence of Hishām, king of the Arabs at that time. He went to the chief secretary and the chief executioner, who was called Qarsh and was governor of Ḥama, seeking an introduction to "the tyrant." Finally, he was granted an audience with the caliph, who offered him riches and political power if he would return to Islam. But Vahan would not be won over by "the things of this world" and was consequently imprisoned. A Muslim scholar was sent to debate with him each day, but failed to persuade him. After eight days he was again brought before the caliph, who asked him to recant, saying: "You have given a dangerous example for us, since others, imitating you, will also fall into rebellion." Vahan was unrepentent and Hishām ordered the executioner to take him outside and to try to win him round by appeasing **{375}** or frightening him. But, frustrated by Vahan's implacability, the executioner eventually slew him. This occurred on 17 March, during Easter week, on a Monday, at the ninth hour, which allows us to place the death in the year 737.[121]

One of the earliest references to Vahan's martyrdom is found in the *History* of John Catholicos, but this has compressed events to the point of distortion:

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[118] Theophanes, 372, has reported this together with the earlier battle of Vardanakert. In Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 205, read *ḥarraqahum* ("burned them") instead of *khawwafahum* ("frightened them"); cf. Khalīfa, 290 (AH 84/703).

[119] If the same as the "account which has been composed about him" used by Stephon Asolik of Taron, *Universal History*, 2.IV (tr. Dulaurier, 156), then it was written before 1004, when Stephen finished his chronicle.

[120] Vahan of Golt'n, *Passion*, IV (tr. Gatteyrias, 187–89). 'Umar's release of the prisoners is also reported by Lewond, XIII, XV (tr. Arzoumanian, 70, 106).

[121] Calculated by Dulaurier, *Chronologie arménienne*, 242; confirmed by Thomas Artsruni, 3.XXIX (tr. Thomson, 314–15), and Stephon Asolik of Taron, *Universal History*, 2.IV (tr. Dulaurier, 156), specifying 186 of the Armenian era/737. Peeters, *BHO*, 267–68 (nos. 1235–36) gives 717, presumably misled by the account of John Catholicos cited below.

> After ʿAbd al-Malik, his son Walīd became caliph and after Walīd his brother Sulaymān ruled for a short time, and after him ʿUmar ruled, in whose time Vahan, lord of Golt'n, was put to the torture by the same (ʿUmar?) and, suffering a great deal in the name of Christ, was adorned by Christ with the unfading crown in the city of Ruṣafa in Syria.[122]

The *Passion* itself inspires much greater confidence. It opens with a lament for Armenia, which had endured the invasion of the Arabs and now the decimation of its elite, and the account given of this latter tragedy accords well with that presented by Lewond, our earliest chronicler of the events.[123] It displays familiarity with names of offices in the Muslim government and with the geography of northern Syria, and is correct on such details as the location of Hishām's capital (Ruṣafa) and the identity of his governor in Mesopotamia (Marwān ibn Muḥammad). The work also claims to be based on eyewitness testimonies. Seven years after Vahan's death, an Armenian monk accompanied his abbot Abraham on a visit to the chapel which had been erected to house the martyr's corpse. They met those who were well informed about the events and received from them an account in Greek, which the monk subsequently fashioned into a martyrology.

SYRIAC TEXTS

{376} We possess numerous accounts of martyrdoms undergone by Nestorian Christians under Sasanid rule, but for Muslim times almost none would seem to have been composed.[124] A similar dearth is to be found among the Jacobites, who were, however, able to come up with one example, the late eighth-century Syrian martyr named Cyrus of Ḥarran. Information about his ordeal is preserved in two chronicles, though the notice of the twelfth-century patriarch Michael the Syrian is extremely brief:

> A Christian person, whose name was Cyrus (*Qūrūs*), apostatised (*ahnep*) on account of some whim (*hashā*) and later repented. He was seized by ʿAbbās and judged. For refusing to submit to the latter's will, his head was cut off and his body burnt with fire.[125]

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[122] John Catholicos, XXI (tr. Maksoudian, 109).

[123] Vahan of Golt'n, *Passion*, II–III (tr. Gatteyrias, 182–87), is, however, confused over dates; it puts the massacre in the sixteenth year of ʿAbd al-Malik (700–701) and AH 85/704, and the transfer of prisoners to Damascus in the first year of Walīd's reign (705–706) and 152 of the Armenian era (703–704).

[124] A thorough search through manuscript collections would probably throw up the odd one – e.g. the eulogy for Joseph of Moṣul, martyred by the Muslims in Lent of AH 842/1439 (Mingana, *Catalogue*, 1.961–62) – but certainly very few.

[125] Michael the Syrian 11.XXVI, 476/527.

The version of the monk of Zuqnin monastery (wr. 775) is far longer, but very fragmentary.[126] It begins by drawing attention to the eminent background of this "beautiful shoot." Cyrus (*Qūrīs*) was from Ḥarran from among "the famous people of the city." His father was "a priest, chaste and full of all virtues and all divine graces." His mother was similar to "Elisabeth, mother of the baptist, in [giving] alms every day and in her faith and in all those virtues which befit women." So "from such a good couple as this one a blessed fruit was born." Though a native of "the land of paganism," he was a "light of beautiful blaze" illuminating the "dense shades," for "he walked on the road that Christ paved for us."

{377} Next we move to a military scenario. Besides the occurrence of words such as "victory," "battle" and "commander of the cavalry" (*rīsh parāshê*), there is the following comment:

> This holy Cyrus was a {…} man, swift of movement, strong in body and courageous {in deed}. And at the time when there was the battle {of} Muḥammad and of ʿAbbās and Sulaymān ibn Hishām, {…a}s was mentioned above, {…C}yrus happened to be {in} that bat{tl}e.

Which confrontation is intended is not easy to determine with certainty, but the mention of "their lord Marwān" a little further on makes it clear that we are dealing with the late 740s and the Abbasid struggle for power. Cyrus very likely participated in a military capacity, since the observations on his physical prowess would otherwise be rather out of place in the portrayal of a martyr. Being in Ḥarran, Marwān's capital, Cyrus would have had ample opportunity to enrol in this caliph's army.

After "much time" had elapsed and the Abbasids come to power, Cyrus found himself the victim of "slanderers," perhaps because of his former Umayyad associations:

> They accused him of many things before Humayd {son of Qaḥṭab}a, who was then em{ir} of the Jaz{ira}. {He}, when he heard these things from perfidious persons, took him to a man, who asked him {saying}: "Are you a Christian?" He (Cyrus) said: "Yes." The judge said: "{H}ow {was it possible} for a Christian man {that he not pay} the po{ll-t}ax (*g{z̄ī}tā*)?"[127] Cyrus {told} him the reason without dissembling and how he {was} registered without his consent. The judge said: "It is not possible that you be registered for the poll-tax {after} you have become a Muslim (*mhaggar lāk*)."

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[126] Ensuing quotations are drawn from *Chron. Zuqnin*, 395 (upbringing), 396 (battle), 396–97 (trial), 398 (imprisonment and escape), 399 (passion). Curly brackets indicate a gap, so any letters therein are conjectured. Harrak, "The Fragmentary Account of the Martyrdom of Cyrus of Ḥarran," painstakingly reconstructs the details of the account from this often unintelligible document.

[127] This sentence is conjectured from the general sense, not from the text, which is totally corrupt here; presumably the slanderer had pointed out to Ḥumayd that a Muslim should not be registering himself for poll-tax.

Cyrus' protestation that he had not converted goes against the account of Michael, but since the version of the Zuqnin chronicler is contemporary it should be favoured.

{378} The trial continues with the judge urging Cyrus to "pray and confess that God is one and has no {associate and that Muḥammad is the servant}[128] and messenger (*rasūlā*) and prophet of God," for otherwise he would face severe punishment. The saint responds by affirming: "If you {order}ed every tortur{e} {against} me, you would not {be ab}le to turn me from {my} faith." The judge changes tack and instead promises gifts and high rank, but Cyrus remains adamant: "If you give me a{ll} that {i}s in the worl{d}, a{s} I told you before and am telling you now, … I shall not deny my faith, because if I destroy my soul {gifts} will avail me naug{ht}." The judge at this point begins to taunt him, saying: "Well then, according to your argument, all those peop{le who were} Christian and were made Muslims (*mashlmānē*) have destroyed th{eir} souls {…} for man{y apostatised}, even old people."

And so matters went on until eventually Cyrus was put in prison. However, during the changeover of governors from Humayd ibn Qaḥṭaba to 'Abbās ibn Muḥammad in 759, Cyrus managed to escape and "fled from Ḥarran." He spent "about four years" in hiding and "in solitude," but then resolved to seek martyrdom and "little by little made his way to Ḥarran." He stopped at many places, for example Edessa, where he was seen by many of his friends, who tried to dissuade him from the sacrifice he wished to make "on behalf of my brothers and the members of my faith." But he continued on his way, his countenance cheerful, "prepared for suffering," and he replied, "when by all he was adjured not to enter {Ḥarran}," that "{for} me everything is of no account except that I complete my course {… and be delivered from} this {w}orld so that I may be with Christ." Here the account of the chronicler of Zuqnin breaks off and we must accept the word of Michael the Syrian that Cyrus was tried and sentenced to death by 'Abbās, and that this took place in 769.[129]

DUBIA

Michael the Sabaite

{379} The *Passion* of Michael exists in both Greek, preserved as an episode in the *Life* of S. Theodore of Edessa, and Georgian, which is itself a translation from Arabic. The Greek version is only an adaption from the Arabic, which is clearly the

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[128] Reading: *w-layt leh shawtāpā wa-Mḥamed 'abdeh hwā d-Allāhā*, rather than Chabot's *wa-Mhamed hwā d-Allāhā*.

[129] The Zuqnin chronicler has AG 1080/768–69, Michael 1081/769–70. This discrepancy, plus the disagreement over whether Cyrus had apostatised or not, may mean that the two chroniclers have different sources, or else Michael may have distorted/have in a distorted form the same original source.

original.[130] This opens with a prologue given by the narrator Basil of Emesa, "priest of S. Saba."[131] He tells how on the feast of the Annunciation he and the monks had proceeded to a sanctuary of the Virgin close to the monastery. On the return journey they had made a visit to the nearby cell of Theodore Abū Qurra (d. *ca.* 820s) who, responding to the desire of his guests for edification, related the tale of Michael's martyrdom. Upon its conclusion Basil resumes the narrative with a eulogy to the monastery of Mar Saba and to some of its more illustrious members.[132]

The *Passion* itself describes how "in the days of 'Abd al-Malik son of Marwān, the commander of the faithful (*amir-mumli*), there was great peace and calm." Once the caliph "went up to Jerusalem from Babylon with his wife and child in a great throng with a select army in decorated chariots, on thoroughbred horses, colts, elephants and camels," "searching for a Christian man knowledgeable about the Law" (§2). During this same time Michael, a native of Tiberias and monk at Mar Saba, had set off to the holy city to sell certain artefacts that he had made, thus to provide for himself and his master Moses, a fellow Tiberian and inmate of Mar Saba. In a scene reminiscent of the Old Testament story of Joseph and the Pharaoh's wife, the eunuch of the caliph's wife Sa'īda (*Seida*) spots Michael as a man of intelligence and brings him to his mistress (§3), who, entranced by his youthful good looks, attempts to seduce the young monk, but without success (§4). Furious at his **{380}** rebuff, she has him whipped and dispatched to her husband along with a message accusing him of insolence towards her (§5). 'Abd al-Malik, however, discerns the truth and, after interrogating Michael, soon perceives the monk's wisdom (§§5–6). A Jew, knowledgeable in the Law, is summoned and a debate ensues. Michael wins the first round, whereupon we learn that the debate has an audience, for we are told that "the Saracens were filled with shame, anger and indignation, while the Christian scribes and physicians were filled with joy" (§§7–8).

'Abd al-Malik then dismissed the Jew, vowing to defeat Michael on his own. He opens with the question: "Did not Muḥammad convert the Persians (*sparsni*) and the Arabs (*arabni*) and smash their idols to pieces?" But Michael points out that he had relied on inducements and the sword, whereas Paul came in peace and "was commanding fasting and holiness, not abominable fornication." And he clinches the argument by pointing out that whereas Christianity had spread throughout the world, the Arabs hold only their peninsula, for many in their numerous lands are Christian, particularly the most eminent such as those doctors and scribes at the court (§§8–9). The caliph next subjects Michael to two ordeals: standing in a bath of boiling water without his sandals on and drinking a measure of poison. When he

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[130] Peeters, "Passion de S. Michel," 65–66 (the Georgian is a translation from Arabic), 84 (the Arabic is primary). A thorough discussion of the work is given by Griffith, "Michael the Martyr and Monk of Mar Saba;" accompanying this is a translation by Monica Blanchard, from which the citations below are taken.

[131] This might be the Basil who was hegumenos of Mar Saba in the late eighth century (Stephen the Sabaite, *Greek Life* XV, 610; *Arabic Life* II, 27).

[132] Michael the Sabaite, *Passion*, §§1 (prologue), 14–15 (eulogy).

survives both, the Christians are ecstatic, but the Arabs cry out to the caliph: "You are magnifying the Christians and destroying the Saracens. Either kill the monk or we Saracens will be exposed" (§10). Michael is taken to be executed at the gate of the city before a large crowd of weeping believers. The monks who take him away to be buried at Mar Saba are aided in their task by "a fiery cloud like a pillar of light" which illuminates the evening sky (§§11–12). A brother by the name of Theodore, whom infirmity prevents attending the funeral, calls upon Michael and is cured and goes to the ceremony praising his name (§13).

For a number of reasons this work is unlikely to antedate the late eighth or early ninth century, when lived the characters who introduce and recount it. ʿAbd al-Malik is made to proceed from Babylon to Jerusalem. Muḥammad is said to have converted Arabs and Persians. No personalities of the period of ʿAbd al-Malik are cited besides the caliph himself, Moses and Theodore being unknown, and no detail is given betraying knowledge of that time. The presence of Christian doctors and scribes, which Peeters considered a "touch of local colour **{381}** and even of sincere history," fits as well, if not better, the Abbasid court where Christian doctors were many and highly esteemed. That Michael is said to come from Tiberias, rather than from a renowned Christian city, and his appearance in Melkite synaxaries suggest that he was a historical figure, but it would be rash to reconstruct his life from our text.[133]

The story is skilfully composed, for in a short space it provides both entertainment and edification, the former by a seduction scene and two trials by ordeal, the latter by means of disputations, miracles and a martyrdom, which demonstrate the truth and glory of Christianity. That the dialogue is fictional is evident from the aggressiveness of the polemic. To ʿAbd al-Malik's face Michael asserts that "Paul saved the gentiles, but Muḥammad led the Saracens astray," that "Muḥammad is neither an apostle nor is he a prophet, but rather a deceiver," and that his enemy, the devil, is the caliph's friend (§§7–8). It is, as its translator says, "a hagiographic novel," and it inspired a number of more elaborate successors, such as the *Lives* of Theodore of Edessa and John of Edessa, who are made to dispute with Maʾmūn and Hārūn al-Rashīd respectively.[134]

ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Najrānī al-Ghassānī

Rabīʿ ibn Qays ibn Yazīd al-Ghassānī was an Arab Christian of Najran in Arabia, who joined some Muslims of his locality on a raiding expedition into Byzantine territory. For thirteen years he remained with them, "devoting himself to raiding every year" and even "prayed with them." While wintering in Syria, he chanced to enter a

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[133] References to Michael in synaxaries are given by Nasrallah, "Dialogue islamo-chrétien," 132–33; his defence of the *Passion*'s authenticity is unconvincing.

[134] Peeters, "Passion de S. Michel," 81–91; Abel, "La portée apologétique de la 'Vie' de saint Théodore d'Edesse;" Nasrallah, "Dialogue islamo-chrétien," 133–34 (on John of Edessa).

church in Baʿalbek and saw a priest engaged in reading the Gospel. When, at his request, the cleric recited to him a passage from the holy book, Rabīʿ "wept, being reminded of what he had been and to what he had now come." He at once repented, gave away all he had to the poor and set **{382}** out to Jerusalem. There he visited the patriarch, Abba John, who sent him to be a monk at Mar Saba. After five years there he transferred to Mount Sinai, where he spent "some years in rigorous devotion" and five years as steward (*uqnūm*, i.e. *oikonomos*) of the monastery. Then, taken with an urge to seek martyrdom, he went to Ramla and left a note in its mosque explaining his situation and where to find him. But when some Muslims of the city set out in his pursuit, "they did not see him because God had blinded them to him." Accepting this as God's decree, Rabīʿ returned to Sinai, was subsequently made abbot and adopted the name ʿAbd al-Masīḥ. After about seven years it happened that, as a result of harassment by the one in charge of taxes (*ṣāḥib al-kharāj*), he had to go again to Ramla, for "at that time their tax went to Palestine."[135] On the way he was recognised and denounced by "one of his companions from when he had been in the raiding party years before." He was brought twice before the governor (*wālī*) of Ramla and given the chance to extricate himself by becoming a Muslim, but he replied that "life from my God, Christ, is more imperative than life from you" and made offensive remarks, whereupon the governor gave the order for him to be beheaded.

This account of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ is found in four Arabic manuscripts, all from Mount Sinai, of which the earliest is dated on palaeographic grounds to the ninth century. The only indications in the text for the date of the martyrdom are the existence of Ramla, built for the caliph Sulaymān (d. 717), and the mention of patriarch John of Jerusalem, which could be either John V (705–35) or John VI (839–43). If we opt for John V we must suppose either a Greek original[136] or a gap of some decades between the martyrdom and its narration, for Christian Arabic texts do not begin to be composed until the end of the eighth century.[137] **{383}** The absence of any memory of the martyrdom in Greek synaxaries makes the former solution unlikely; the second is not impossible, but speculative.[138] If we plump for John VI, we

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[135] ʿAbd al-Masīḥ, *Passion*, 367/373; Griffith, "The Arabic Account of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ," 356–57, suggests that the author may be writing shortly after Aḥmad ibn Ṭūlūn's annexation of Egypt in 877, after which Sinai's tax would presumably have gone to Egypt.

[136] This was the opinion of Graf, *GCAL*, 1.517, who cited as evidence the presence of some Greek words in the text (though only ecclesiastical terms) and the fact that the account survives in a compilation of Greek stories translated into Arabic (but then almost all early Christian Arabic writings were works of translation).

[137] The earliest dated Christian Arabic text is the account of the Sinai martyrs "translated into Arabic from Greek in the month of Rabīʿ of the year 155 of the years of the Arabs" (772); see Griffith, "The Arabic Account of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ," 337–39.

[138] Though note that the copyist of the version contained in the eleventh-century Ms. BL Or. 5019 added to the title: "(who sought martyrdom in Ramla) during the rule of the

are in a time when many Christians are writing in Arabic; the martyrdom, allowing for ʿAbd al-Masīḥ's stay at Mar Saba and Sinai, probably fell in the 860s and the account of it penned in the 870s.

A Muslim at Diospolis[139]

This story is found in two slightly different versions in two manuscripts: Paris 1190 dated 1568 and Vatican 1130 of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. It is told how the caliph in Syria[140] sent his nephew[141] to administer certain lands at Diospolis.[142] There the Saracen insolently tethered his camels in the church of S. George, ignoring the pleas of the local priests. But scarcely had the beasts been herded into the building **{384}** than all twelve of them fell down dead. Impressed by this miracle, the Saracen immediately had the carcasses removed by his servants. Since communion was just about to be celebrated, he decided to stay and observe the ceremony. As the time came for the consecration of the eucharist, the Saracen was horrified to see the priest take in his hands a male child, rip its throat out and pour the blood into a chalice. At the end of the liturgy the priest approached the Saracen to present him with a choice piece of the sacrament and was asked by the furious onlooker what was the meaning of this abominable act, his slaughter of a baby boy. Realising that the Saracen had witnessed a vision of the infant Jesus, the priest instructed him in the significance of what he had seen. The Saracen recognised the greatness of the Christian belief and asked to be baptised. The priest was afraid to comply because of

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Umayyads." This is presumably why Hajjar, *Chrétiens uniates*, 100, places this martyr in the time of Hishām, though he gives no explanation.

139 This account is found in the collection of the miracles of S. George, on which see the entry in Chapter 3 above.

140 Called "Mērmnēs" in Ms. Paris 1190, "Ameroumnēs" in Vat. 1130. Both are trying to convey the title "commander of the faithful" (*amīr al-muʾminīn*), though assume it is a personal name (cf. *Miracles of S. George* no. 6 [Paris 1190], 88: *ho Mērmnēs ho basileus tou sarakēnisōn*; and *ibid.* no. 6 [Vat. 1130], 81), so claiming that the incident occurred in Umayyad times, when the caliph resided in Syria.

141 *Ibid.* no. 6 (Paris 1190), 64–66, names him Malmeth and says he was fleeing from his uncle, who wished to appoint him *hekatontarch*. Except for this one use of "uncle" (*theios*), the subject of the tale and the caliph refer to each other as *anepsios*; one could avoid confusion by translating "cousin," but the statement that the caliph of Syria sent *ton idion anepsion* implies greater proprinquity.

142 Diospolis is written *Ampelos*, a corruption of *Rempli*, a Greek rendering of Ramla; that Diospolis is meant is confirmed by the mention that S. George's church was "in the district of Jerusalem." *Ampelos* means "grapevine" and *PG* 100, 1201A n. has connected this with "Alkarem in Thebaid" (*karm* means grapevine in Arabic), which has been followed by Sahas, "Gregory Dekapolites and Islam," 50 and n. 15 thereto.

the Arab's high standing and sent him to the patriarch of Jerusalem, who obliged, and recommended that he become a monk at Mount Sinai.[143]

After three years of the eremitic life the Saracen returned to the priest at Diospolis and inquired of him what he should do to see Christ. The priest suggested that he go before his cousin, proclaim Christ and "anathematise the cult (*thrēskeia*) of the Saracens and their false prophet Muḥammad." This he did and, despite the entreaties and enticements proffered by his cousin and the beating administered by the caliph's entourage, he held firm to Christianity, for which he was stoned to death. During the subsequent 40 nights a star appeared, illuminating the spot where lay the martyr's body.[144] Vatican 1130 attributes this "historical tale" to a certain Gregory, who is called more explicitly in a closely related recension Gregory the Decapolite.[145] The latter was a reasonably prominent figure in the fight against iconoclasm, and he is known to have died in November 842, which would then place the composition of the text in the early ninth century.[146]

{185} In this collection of the miracles of S. George there are two other accounts that involve a Muslim at the church in Diospolis. In one a group of Saracens carouse at the saint's sanctuary and one of them throws a lance at an icon of the martyr, which returns to pierce him in the heart; at the same time all the others are struck dead. In the other it is again recounted how a group of Saracens enter the church and one of them fires an arrow at the saint's image, but it is diverted and comes back, injuring the Saracen's hand. He then calls upon the local priest, who instructs him and heals him by means of oil from a lamp lit above the saint's image.[147] The Saracen is astounded, has himself baptised and the next day gets himself martyred by proclaiming Christ and anathematising Muḥammad's religion before a crowd of Saracens.[148] Not only do these three narratives have similarities with one another, but they also bear resemblance to other tales.

Some Saracens revelling in the church of S. Theodore near Damascus all die shortly after one of them shoots an arrow at an icon of the saint, and Rawḥ al-Qurashī, when he repeats this action in the same church, is impaled in the hand by

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[143] It is only *Miracles of S. George* no. 6 (Paris 1190), 74–76, that has the Saracen go to Jerusalem; *ibid.* no. 6 (Vatican 1130), 75–77, has him proceed directly to Sinai.

[144] At the end the martyred Saracen is referred to as Joachim by *ibid.* no. 6 (Paris 1190), 86–88, and as Pachomius by *ibid.* no. 6 (Vatican 1130), 89.

[145] This recension, which is almost the same as that in Vatican 1130, was published in the *Acta sanctorum* and reproduced in the *Patrologia graeca* (see Bibliography I below for references), which presents it as a sermon of Gregory.

[146] Discussion by Sahas, "Gregory Dekapolites and Islam."

[147] The lesson given to the Saracen by the priest seems inspired by the Second Council of Nicaea of 787, as is pointed out by Festugière, *Collections grecques de miracles*, 271.

[148] *Miracles of S. George*, nos. 2 (lance) and 7 (arrow). No. 2 is related more fully in the entry on miracle collections in Chapter 3 above.

his own deflected arrow.[149] On the feast of S. Theodore the eucharist appeared to this same Rawḥ as a lamb which the priest subsequently dismembered and distributed piecemeal to the congregation, much as the eucharist was manifested to the aforementioned emir's cousin as the infant Jesus.[150] Also like the emir's cousin, Rawḥ and ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Najrānī visit the patriarch of Jerusalem when they wish to commit themselves to Christianity. ʿAbd al-Masīḥ and the emir's cousin both do a stint at Sinai, then go to Diospolis/Ramla. But whereas ʿAbd al-Masīḥ and the aforementioned Saracen whose hand is cured by holy oil seek their martyrdom in Diospolis/Ramla, the emir's cousin and Rawḥ head for Damascus. **{386}** The latter is, however, transferred to Raqqa, there to be interrogated by Hārūn al-Rashīd and there, like Romanns the Neomartyr, is crucified on the bank of the Euphrates. The exact relation of these accounts to one another is impossible to determine, but it is clear that by the time of their composition, in the early ninth century, there existed a reservoir of narrative themes and motifs upon which a martyrographer could draw when putting together such stories.

[149] Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat.*, B2 (= Nau, XLIV); Anthony Rawḥ, *Passion*, §2. In one of the miracles told about S. George's shrine by Arculf a man hurls a lance at a stone image of George in his church, and the lance and the man's hand become stuck in the stone (Adomnan, *De locis sanctis* 3.IV, 229–31).

[150] Anthony Rawḥ, *Passion*, §2.

CHAPTER 10.
CHRONICLES AND HISTORIES

{387} Byzantine historiography of the fourth to sixth centuries is usually assessed under three headings.[1] The first is secular classicising history, which looked back for inspiration to Herodotus and Thucydides, treated warfare and politics, and ideally was based on the author's own experience in the field or in office. It was expected to explain the causes of events and actions, to provide personal commentary and learned digressions, and to encouch all this in appropriately dignified language. Its chronological scope was the recent past and its subject the *res gestae* of the empire. This was in marked contrast to the second genre, the world chronicle, which covered all of human history and considered the deeds of many peoples. It had grown out of a concern to harmonise local records and establish the relative chronology of nations, and in particular to demonstrate the priority of Moses over Plato, so of Biblical lore over Greek philosophy. The first Christian world chronicle proper was provided by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (d. 339), whose great achievement was to correlate a great diversity of material according to a single measure of time, the year of Abraham. He realised this by means of synchronistic tables which listed in parallel columns kingdoms and their rulers, nations and their patriarchs, and recorded select events of sacred and profane history attached to the relevant **{388}** year.[2] Few continued the format of Eusebius, but in composing their accounts of human history subsequent chroniclers made extensive use of his material, chronology and international scope. It was Eusebius, too, who inaugurated the third genre, ecclesiastical history, the subject of which was the struggles of the Christian nation against persecutions and heresies. It tended to avoid the personal opinions and anecdotes so

[1] The only non-Muslim histories and chronicles for this period are by Christians, though for some hints of Jewish historical activity see the entry on "Jewish Texts" in this chapter.

[2] Eusebius had many forerunners, in particular Julianus Africanus, but Eusebius' originality seems evident (argued by Croke, "The Origins of the Christian World Chronicle"). The synchronistic tables, called "chronological canons," are only the second part of Eusebius' work; the first consisted of the raw material for the canons: lists of kings, notables and holders of office for the various peoples and states.

much a feature of classicising history and to rely much on documents, a consequence of its concern for the accuracy of the account.[3]

This categorisation was of course never intended to embrace all the different forms of history writing by the Christians of that time, but for our period it becomes almost redundant. In Greek the genres of ecclesiastical and secular history petered out after Evagrius (wr. 590s) and Theophylact (wr. *ca.* 630) respectively.[4] In other languages secular histories continued to be written, but though they treated the traditional subjects of politics and warfare, their outlook was wholly Christian.[5] Ecclesiastical histories were also still composed, especially in Syriac, but only one author adhered to the Eusebian principle of reliance upon documentary evidence.[6] The world chronicle, because it had to bear much of the responsibility for conveying the past to future generations, **{389}** had also to transcend its original format. There had been considerable variety even in its early stages: from the *Paschal Chronicle*, a cursory outline of world chronology and record of events, to the more narrative exposition of the past produced by John Malalas. But in the ensuing centuries it diversified further. There are the concise annals of the *Chronicle of 819* and that of the narrative annals of the Zuqnin chronicler and Theophanes, the universal chronicle of Dionysius of Tellmaḥre and his imitators, thedidactic chronicle of George the Monk, the ecclesiastical chronicles of the Nestorians,[7] and many more.

Indeed, it is doubtful whether one should constrain all these very different works under the rubric of chronicle.[8] Those usually so termed do exhibit certain

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[3] For the historiography of this period see Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories*, and Hadrill, *Christian Antioch*, 52–66 (on ecclesiastical history); Croke and Emmett, "Historiography in Late Antiquity;" Croke, "Byzantine Chronicle Writing: 1. The Early Development;" Winkelmann, "Kirchensgeschichtwerke;" Whitby, "Greek Historical Writing after Procopius;" and more generally, Momigliano, "Tradition and the Classical Historian;" *idem*, "Pagan and Christian Historiography."

[4] Secular history made a return with the work of Leo the Deacon (covering the period 959–76) and was thereafter fairly continuous until Laonicus Chalcocondyles (1298–1463) and Michael Critobolus (1451–67), but there are significant differences between these later compositions and earlier classicising history (see Scott, "The Classical Tradition in Byzantine Historiography").

[5] Cf. Sebeos and Lewond (for discussion see the entry on "Armenian Texts" in this chapter).

[6] Namely Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (see the entry on him and the introduction to "Syriac Texts" in this chapter).

[7] See the introduction to "Syriac Texts" in this chapter for explanation of the term "ecclesiastical chronicle."

[8] For discussion see Beck, "Zur byzantinischen Monchschronik;" Ljubarskij, "Neue Tendenzen in der Erforschung der byzantinischen Historiographie;" Afinogenov, "Some Observations on Genres of Byzantine Historiography" (contrasting George the Monk and Zonaras); Ljubarskij, "New Trends in the Study of Byzantine Historiography," esp. 133–34 ("histories disappeared, but chronicles remained and began developing in the direction of

common features: all begin from some point in the remote past, most often Creation; they arrange their material in chronological order and attempt to date at least major events; they record both secular and ecclesiastical affairs and treat the history of other nations besides the Christian one. Nevertheless, they are very different in language, form and scope, and one should evaluate each example on its own merits.

Though their style and approach may differ substantially, the authors assembled in this chapter are, however, united in one respect, namely in their acceptance of Muslim rule as a long-term fixture, so requiring some sort of explanation or rationalisation. Earlier histories, such as those of Sebeos and John bar Penkaye, do present a view of the Arabs' emergence, but they have no conception of an enduring Muslim state. The works described here, on the other hand, distinguish themselves by deliberately setting aside an entry for Muḥammad and the rise of Islam, and/or by having as their aim to treat the progress of Islam's hegemony.

SYRIAC TEXTS[9]

{390} Secular classicising history was too tainted by its pagan past and too anthropocentric to win favour in the milieu of Syriac Christianity,[10] but the chronicle (*makthānūt zabnē*) enjoyed great popularity. It was in Syriac that the system of Eusebius was most closely followed: by Simeon of Barqa in the days of Khusrau II,[11] by Jacob of Edessa, who carried it on to 692, by his disciple John of Litarb, who continued

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histories").

[9] Syriac historical texts are surveyed by Duval, *La littérature syriaque*, 187–224; Chabot, "La littérature historique des Syriens;" Czeglédy, "Monographs on Syriac and Muḥammadan Sources of Kmosko," 41–50, 53–63; Segal, "Syriac Chronicles;" Hage, *Die syrisch-jakobitische Kirche in frühislamischer Zeit*, 4–7; Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'église en Iraq*, 12–16; Barsaum, *Al-lu'lu' al-manthūr*, 126–37; Brock, "Syriac Historical Writing;" Spuler, "La 'Sīra' et les conquêtes des arabes d'après les sources syriaques;" Habbi, "Al-tawārīkh al-suryānīya;" Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 76–89; Healey, "Syriac Sources and the Umayyad Period;" Fiey, "The Umayyads in Syriac Sources;" Conrad, "Syriac Perspectives."

[10] The closest to it is the *Chronicle* of ps.-Joshua the Stylite, which narrates events in Syria from 495 to 507, and particularly the Byzantine-Persian war of Anastasius I and Kavad. His descriptions of people, places and conditions reveal first-hand knowledge, and he does consider causes and offer his own opinions on a number of different matters. But his guiding purpose would be unpalatable to a classicising historian, namely "to leave in writing memorials of the chastisements which have been wrought in our times because of our sins so that when they ('all the lovers of learning') see the things that have befallen us, they may take warning from our sins and be spared our punishments" (cited by Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface*, 79).

[11] Both Elias of Nisibis (*Chronicle*, 2.99) and 'Abdisho' of Nisibis (Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 168) say that Simeon expounded the *Chronicle* of Eusebius. Elias calls him Garmqaya (of Beth Garmai), 'Abdisho' gives Barqaya and further on Karkaya (Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 230); one should probably assume that one and the same person is meant (thus Baumstark, *GSL*, 135–36; Wright, *Short History of Syriac Literature*, 132).

until 726,[12] and much later by the Nestorian metropolitan Elias of Nisibis **{391}** (d. 1049).[13] More commonly, however, Eusebius' work was excerpted and adapted for the composition of chronicles, which in their earliest stages adhered to an annalistic format. Notices, typically terse, of church and civil affairs were placed together under each year beginning from some suitably inaugural point such as Creation, Abraham, the Incarnation or Constantine the Great. Commencing with the various chronicles of Edessa, which ultimately had their roots in the archives kept at the court of the Abgarid kings of that city (132–244),[14] this method of presentation remained in vogue at least until the mid-ninth century. Already by the late eighth century, however, there was a gradual move towards a new style, towards a more narrative approach. In the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* the notices for the eighth century are often quite substantial, occasionally running to a few pages; it is still contained within an annalistic frame, but only just. With Dionysius of Tellmaḥre's work the annalistic fetters are broken and a new type of world chronicle is born.[15] The chronological order of events is still taken as the starting point, but it no longer excludes occasional digressions or further divisions of material, such as by books and chapters, and there is also a separation of subject matter into sacred and profane history.

Ecclesiastical history was not so well defined a genre in Syriac as in Greek. Among the Jacobites the work of John of Ephesus (wr. 580s) is limited in its use of documents and heavily embroiled in secular affairs;[16] that of Daniel bar Moses (wr. *ca.* 750) would seem to have relied more on anecdotes than documents.[17] Dionysius

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[12] Michael the Syrian 11.XX, 461/500 (marginal note): "John the Stylite of Litarb ends here the book which he composed on the times" (comes after a notice on the union of the Syrian and Armenian churches in AG 1037). Dionysius of Tellmaḥre classes John with those "who chart the succession of years" (cited in *ibid.* 10.XX, 378/358), but *ibid.* 11.XVII, 450/482–83, says: "After him (Jacob of Edessa) we have found no one who preoccupied himself with these notations and calculations of the years which show so clearly the procession of time." Probably, then, John composed a short chronology with similarities to Eusebius' work, but not in the same format.

[13] See the entry on him in this chapter. For illustration of the use of Eusebius by Syriac chroniclers see Keseling, "Die Chronik des Eusebius in der syrischen Überlieferung."

[14] The reliance of the mid-sixth-century *Chronicle of Edessa* and later works on earlier documentary material from Edessa is demonstrated by Witakowski, "Chronicles of Edessa."

[15] Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 83, distinguishes between the short chronicle and the developed chronicle; Conrad, "Syriac Perspectives," 9–10, prefers to call the latter "universal history."

[16] Thus van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, esp. 77–79, 83–85, though this judgement might be different if we had the first two parts of his *Ecclesiastical History*; these were published as a complete work, and the third part was only added in response to the Monophysite persecutions in the 570s, which affected John directly.

[17] Or so we are told by Dionysius of Tellmaḥre, cited by Michael the Syrian 10.XX, 378/358. Cyrus of Batna is also said to have written an ecclesiastical history in Syriac, but we

of Tellmaḥre tried to advance the genre by separating civil from church history, granting the latter primary place, but the difficulties in this are illustrated by the unequal use made of the two parts by later writers.[18] The Nestorians came up with the solution of what one might call the ecclesiastical chronicle. This might have material arranged according to the succession of catholici or as entries on various holy men, but there was a definite attempt to maintain a chronological order and a considerable amount of attention was devoted to secular affairs.[19] Unfortunately a detailed assessment is hampered by the scarcity of extant texts, the majority of authors being known only from brief citations: Allahazeka, Mika, Daniel bar Maryam and Elias of Merw of the seventh century;[20] Simeon bar Ṭabbaḥa of Kashkar, Mar Athqen, George of Shushtar and Theodore bar Koni of **{393}** the eighth century;[21] a certain Pethion and Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra, both probably writing in the first half of the ninth century.[22]

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know nothing of it except that it was in fourteen books and stopped at 582 (*ibid.* 10.XX, 377/356–57).

[18] See the entry on "Dionysius of Tellmaḥre" in this chapter.

[19] This is stated explicitly in the title of the *Chronicle of Khuzistan* and is obvious from a brief perusal of the *Chronicle of Siirt*. Note also that Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 1.128–41, cites Isho'dnah of Baṣra's *Ecclesiastical History* for the death of Khusrau II and accession of Shiroi (AH 7), 'Umar in Jerusalem (AH 17), the death of Heraclonas and accession of Constantine (AH 20), Mu'āwiya's preparations for a naval battle with the Byzantines (AH 34), the first Arab civil war (AH 36) and Constans' raid against the Slavs and murder of his brother (AH 39).

[20] Allahazeka is cited four times and Mika three times by Elias of Nisibis (*Chronicle*, 1.123–25) for the years AG 906–17/594–605. An Allahazeka appears as a correspondent of Isho'yahb III (*Ep.* 36B, 60–62), and a Mika of Beth Garmai is noted as a contemporary of Isho'yahb III ('Amr and Ṣalība, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 56). If one accepts the identification, then these two historians flourished in the early seventh century. On Daniel, who is cited five times by the *Chronicle of Siirt*, see Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 231; Degen, "Daniel bar Maryam, ein nestorianischer Kirchenhistoriker;" *eadem*, "Die Kirchengeschichte des Daniel bar Maryam." If Elias of Merw is the author of the *Chronicle of Khuzistan*, then his work is extant (see the entry thereon in Chapter 5 above). Bar Sahde of Karka d-Beth Slokh, whose *Ecclesiastical History* treated the sixth-century Jewish persecution of the Himyarite Christians (Scher, "Manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés a Diarbékir," 400 [no. 96]) and is cited by Elias of Nisibis (*Chronicle*, 1.116) for AG 795, was placed by Assemani (*BO* 3.1, 229) without explanation in the time of the catholicos Pethion (731–40). He might rather be identified with the Bar Sahde who is mentioned in a Gospel colophon as teacher at the school of Nisibis in the twenty-fifth year of Khusrau/615 (Wright, *Catalogue*, 1.53 [no. 77]).

[21] Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 215 (Simeon: Mārī, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 68/60, says he was treasurer for the caliph Manṣūr), 216–17 (Athqen: his history is not noted here, but is cited by Thomas of Marga, *Governors* XII–III, 80–85; XVI, 88–89), 228–29 (George), 198 (Theodore: his *Scholia* IX.22, 2.219, mentions a completion date of AG 1103/792, though not in all manuscripts).

[22] Pethion is cited twice by Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 1.178–79 (AH 148/765, 151/768).

Short Chronologies[23]

A number of short chronologies, as I call them, are to be found in Syriac and Greek. Some, like the first two examples below, are a mere list of the rulers of the currently prevailing dynasty; others, like the one *ad annum 775* in Syriac and that *ad annum 818* in Greek, comprise lists of religious as well as of secular authorities, past as well as present, and even include a few events. There has been no study of them, but one assumes them to be the raw material for chronicles proper, much like the first part of Eusebius' and Elias of Nisibis' chronographical *opus*. The longer examples may rather/also have been intended as handy guides for reckoning where one was on the path to salvation or as thumbnail sketches of human history. The following example and **{394}** other short chronologies demonstrate that such lists were periodically updated, though only insofar as they were still of interest or relevance to the compiler and his community.[24]

> AD ANNUM 705: A report giving information about the kingdom of the Arabs, and how many kings there were from them, and how much territory each of them held after his predecessor before he died.
>
> Mḥmṭ came upon the earth in 932 of Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian (620–21); then he reigned 7 years.
>
> Then there reigned after him Abū Bakr for 2 years.
>
> And there reigned after him ʿUmūr for 12 years.

Conrad, "Syriac Perspectives," 19 n. 49, has confused three different persons of this name: director of the school of Bashosh (addressee of Timothy I, *Letters*, no. 43), a younger contemporary of the latter resident in Elam (addressee of *ibid.*, no. 10) and "Pethion the translator" (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 24, 244; cited by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn*, 1.123–41, for as late as the reign of Mutawakkil [847–61]). That the first two are to be distinguished is affirmed by Braun, "Briefe des Katholikos Timotheos I," 2; Baudoux, "A propos de la lettre du patriarche Timothée au prêtre et docteur Péthion," seems unaware of Braun's article. On Isho'dnah of Baṣra, cited seventeen times by Elias of Nisibis, see the entry in Chapter 5 above.

[23] In translating these short chronologies I transliterate the Arab names as they appear in the Syriac. We do not really know how the Prophet's name was vocalised in these early texts, so I simply write the consonants. Perhaps also of relevance here is the short chronicle of disasters that occurred from 712–16 (ed. and tr. by Nau, "Un colloque," 253–56/264–67, and tr. in Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 45–47). Such material is very common in Christian chronicles of all kinds, read and used as signs of God's favour/displeasure, but the text's almost exclusive focus on this material is unusual.

[24] Thus *Short Chron. 818*, cited below, ceases to record the patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch after the early seventh century, and Jacob of Edessa omits the names of the Chalcedonian patriarchs in Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch after the late sixth century (except for Cyrus in Alexandria, 631–42). Of course availability of information could also have been a factor.

> And there reigned after him ʿŪthman for 12 years, and they were without a leader during the war of Ṣiffin (*Sefē*) for 5½ years.
>
> Thereafter Maʿwiyā reigned for 20 years.
>
> And after him Īzīd the son of Maʿwiyā reigned for 3½ years.
>
> {In margin: and after Īzīd for one year they were without a leader}
>
> And after him ʿAbdūlmalik reigned for 21 years.
>
> And after him his son Walīd took power in AG 1017, at the beginning of first Tishrīn (October 705).[25]

This list of Arab rulers is found in a late ninth-century manuscript of very varied contents, sandwiched between "select sentences from the proverbs of Solomon" and "extracts from the discourse of **{395}** of Antioch on prayer."[26] Its provenance is thus unknown and it is presumably incomplete since the promised statistics regarding Muslim-occupied lands do not appear. Rather than the ten years apiece granted them by Muslim sources, Muḥammad is given a seven-year reign and Umar, possibly to make up the shortfall, is accorded twelve years.[27] An accession date is provided for Walīd alone, which suggests that the list did end with him and that this event was recent. Hence October 705 or shortly after is the most probable time of composition.

> AD ANNUM 724: A notice of the life of Mḥmṭ the messenger (r…ā)[28] of God, after he had entered his city and three months before he entered it, from his first year; and how long each king lived who arose after him over the Muslims once they had taken power; and how long there was dissension (*ptnā*)[29] among them.
>
> Three months before Mḥmd came.
>
> And Mḥmd lived ten years [more].
>
> And Abū Bakr bar Abū Qūḥafā: 2 years and 6 months.
>
> And ʿŪmar bar Kattāb: 10 years and 3 months.
>
> And ʿŪthman bar ʿĀfan: 12 years.
>
> And dissension after ʿŪthman: 5 years and 4 months.
>
> And Maʿwiyā bar Abū Syfan: 19 years and 2 months.

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[25] *Short Chron. 705*, 11.

[26] Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.992–93 (no. 861); see also Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 43–44.

[27] Muḥammad is also assigned seven years by Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 326, and *Chron. Zuqnin*, 150; and ʿUmar twelve years by *Chron. Zuqnin*, 150, and *Syriac CS*, *s.v.* 644.

[28] A later hand has tried to erase this word, which is clearly meant to represent the Arabic *rasūl*.

[29] This represents the Arabic word *fitna*, which denotes civil discord.

And Īzīd bar Ma'wiyā: 3 years and 8 months.

And dissension after Īzīd: 9 months.

And Marwan bar Ḥakam: 9 months.

And 'Abdalmalik bar Marwan: 21 years and 1 month.

{396} Walīd bar 'Abdalmalik: 9 years and 8 months.

And Sūlayman bar 'Abdalmalik: 2 years and 9 months.

And 'Ūmar bar 'AbdaUazīz: 2 years and 5 months.

And Īzīd bar 'Abdalmalik: 4 years and 1 month and 2 days.

The total of all these years is 104, and 5 months and 2 days.[30]

This list appears on the last folio of an eighth-century manuscript, following the *Chronicle* of Thomas the Presbyter described in Chapter 4 above. The "three months before Muḥammad" presumably refers to the interval between the beginning of the Islamic calendar on 16 July 622 and the date of Muḥammad's arrival in Medina on 24 September 622.[31] And it would seem that the Islamic lunar calendar is being used, for 104 solar years after Muḥammad's arrival in Medina would take us to February 727, whereas Yazīd II died in January AH 105/724.[32] One assumes that the list was drawn up on or soon after Yazīd's death. The employment of the lunar calendar, the attempt to be accurate regarding names and terms of office and the use of the Arabic words *rasūl* and *fitna* suggest that the above was translated from an Arabic original. There may, then, be some relation between these short chronologies and the lists of caliphs, governors, judges, secretaries, scholars and the like that form the backbone of Muslim chronicles.[33]

AD ANNUM 775: An account of how the generations and races and years were from Adam until today… We therefore begin our discourse from the beginning of Creation:[34]

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[30] *Short Chron. 724*, 40.

[31] See Ṭabarī, 1.1255–56, where it is explained that though Muḥammad's emigration to Medina is the starting point of Muslim chronology, the fact that he made it in the third month of the year means that "year 1" begins 21/2 months earlier.

[32] *Ibid.*, 2.1463, who corroborates that Yazīd reigned 4 years and 1 month.

[33] That is, in chronicles under each year or at the end of each caliph's reign it will be reported who held office, who flourished/died etc. (see Schacht, "The Kitāb al-Tārīkh of Khalīfa b. Khayyāṭ").

[34] This is the start of the preface, which is addressed to "the servants of truth" (*mshammshānē da-shrārâ*) and "my brothers and beloved," whom the author feels "should be instructed about all that is fitting for the truth" and for whom he will "sum up briefly from the holy books that which is suitable and will build up your zeal." He is perhaps an abbot

{397} Biblical figures and events are briefly noted from Adam → Flood →Abraham → death of Joshua bar Nun → reign of king David → Babylonian captivity → birth of Christ.[35] Then comes a list of Roman and Byzantine rulers with the length of their reigns until:

> Maurice, 27 years and 6 months; Phocas, 8 years; Heraclius, 24 years.
>
> In 930 of Alexander, Heraclius and the Romans entered Constantinople, and Mḥmṭ and the Arabs went forth from the south and entered the land and subdued it.
>
> The years of the Muslims and the time when they entered Syria and took power, from the year 933 of Alexander, each of them by name, are as follows: Mḥmṭ, 10 years; Abū Bakr, one year; Ūmar, 12 years; ʿŪthman, 12 years; and without a king, 5 years; Maʿwiyā, 20 years; Yazīd, his son, 3 years; and without a king, 9 months; Marwan, 9 months;
>
> ʿAbdalmalīk, 21 years; Walīd, his son, 9 years; Sūlayman, 2 years and 7 months; ʿŪmar, 2 years and 7 months; Yazīd, 4 years and 10 months and 10 days.
>
> And in the year 1035, which is year 105 of the Arabs, Hishām son of ʿAbd al-Malīk took power in the month of latter Kānūn (January).
>
> And in the year 1054 Hishām died and Walīd son of Yazīd took power and he was killed. And after him there arose Marwan son of Mḥmṭ.
>
> And in the year 128 of the Arabs he (Marwan) destroyed Ḥimṣ.
>
> And in the year 129 he marched against Ḍaḥḥāk the Ḥarūrī.
>
> And in the year 130 of the Arabs he marched against the Wearers of Black (*msawwedē*, i.e. Abbasids) and was defeated **{398}** by them and fled, and in Egypt he was killed by the general Abū ʿĀwn. And in this year Abū l-ʿAbbās son of Mḥmṭ, the Hāshimī took power.
>
> And in the year 1065 ʿAbd Allāh son of Mḥmṭ, his brother, took power.
>
> And in the year 133 the city Circesium was destroyed by Abū Naṣr, and in this year all the cities of Mesopotamia were destroyed.
>
> And in the year 1087 in the month of latter Tishrīn Mḥmṭ al-Mahdī, his son, took power.[36]

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writing for his brethren. The preface is translated and commented upon by Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface*, 100–102.

[35] This earlier portion is based on Eusebius; see Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.611 (no. 714).

[36] *Short Chron. 775*, 348–49 (Maurice → end). Note the alternation between Seleucid and Hijri dates in the last section of this work.

The list of Muslim rulers from Muḥammad to Yazīd II gives a total of 104 years, 6 months and 10 days, only one month and 8 days off the figure given in the previous entry. So again the Islamic calendar is being used, though the regnal years diverge somewhat from the traditional Muslim estimates. After the lists of Byzantine and Arab rulers, which give only the name and length of reign of the monarch and which are presumably independent units, the compiler continues with notices of his own as far as the coming to power of the caliph Mahdī in 775. These subsequent notices are more in the fashion of a chronicle, longer and comprising information beyond regnal lengths.

The paragraph connecting the two lists of rulers, probably inserted by the compiler, contains a number of oddities. Heraclius' reign is cut from the usual 30 years and 5 months to 24 years, which takes us to 633–34, the date of the start of the Arab conquests, perhaps seen by the compiler to mark the end of Byzantine dominion over the Near East. There is no obvious event in AG 930/618–19 to link with the Byzantines' entry into Constantinople and the Arabs' emigration. Heraclius entered the capital upon his accession in 610 and also in 613 after his failed attempt to halt the Persian advance in Syria; but one imagines that the notice would refer to his triumphal entry in 628 after his defeat of the Persians.[37]

{399} One might postulate scribal error and assume AG 940 was meant,[38] and that the mention of Arab mobilisation intended the battle of Mu'ta, which occurred in 629 and did find its way into non-Muslim sources.[39] But this reference to AG 930 is not isolated. An inscription of 780 carved on the wall of a church at Ehnesh in northern Syria notes: "In the year 930 the Arabs came to the land." Jacob of Edessa has Muḥammad travel to Syria three years before "the beginning of the kingdom of the Arabs" (in AG 933), so again in AG 930. And a Chinese source equates AH 34 with 651, which is only correct if one counts from 618–19.[40] A major Arab incursion into Syria is recorded by Theophanes and Michael; the latter places it soon after a solar eclipse which must be that of 4 November AG 929/617.[41] To some Syrians this event could perhaps have been seen in retrospect as the first of a long run of attacks which brought about Arab domination of the Middle East. Otherwise the error may be due to a misunderstanding of the lunar calendar used by the Muslims

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[37] Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 1.237–40, 383–84 (n. 42).

[38] Both Lewond, I, and Eutychius, *Annales*, 2.1, are eleven years out at this point, placing Muḥammad's death in the eleventh year of the reign of Heraclius (620–21).

[39] Theophanes, 335; commented upon by Conrad, "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition," 21–26.

[40] *Ehnesh Inscription*, *s.a.* AG 930 (see the entry thereon in this chapter); Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 326 (though it is difficult to be certain of dates in this work); Ou-yang, *Hsin T'ang shu*, CCXXIb (cited in Chapter 7 above).

[41] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 610–11; Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 115. Both Theophanes and Michael date the incursion to the first year of Heraclius, so Michael may have wrongly connected it with the eclipse.

or due to some quirk in Christian chronology,[42] but it is worth noting that the same three-year discrepancy is sometimes encountered in Muslim sources too.[43]

Theophilus of Edessa and the Syriac Common Source

{400} Theophilus bar Thomas of Edessa is a rather obscure figure of Late Antiquity, but there are hints that he was quite an important one. If we can believe an anecdote that relates how he died within a few days of the Abbasid caliph Mahdī (775–85) at the age of ninety, then he was born in 695 and, as his name suggests, at the city of Edessa in northern Syria.[44] We first hear of him in the late 750s when he was accompanying Mahdī on a campaign in the East, presumably acting as the future caliph's astrological adviser.[45] Thereafter he remained in the service of Mahdī, becoming chief astrologer during his reign and taking up residence in Baghdad.[46] His scientific writings have been fragmentarily preserved and very little studied, so we cannot yet be certain of what he wrote.[47] Very popular was his *Peri katarchōn polemikōn* ("On Military Forecasts"), which was cited by later Muslim astrologers and chapters of which made their way to Byzantium to become incorporated in a mid-ninth century collection of astrological writings.[48] Astrology was evidently his pas-

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[42] E.g. many Jacobites placed the birth of Christ in AG 309 rather than 312 (see Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite*, no. 6); *Short Chron. 705* and Michael the Syrian, together with their source Jacob of Edessa, assign to Muḥammad a rule of seven years, whereas *Short Chron. 724*, evidently dependent upon a Muslim source, has ten years.

[43] Muḥammad is said to have spent 10 or 13 years in Medina, to have lived to the age of 60 or 63 etc. (Lammens, "L'âge de Mahomet et la chronologie de lasîra," 219; Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, 203–209); see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 157 n. 39, for further examples.

[44] Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. syriacum*, 127; *Mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, 219–20.

[45] Cumont, *CCAG* 5.1, 234; Theophilus addresses his son Deukalion: "I was urged, as you know, by those holding power to undertake these things (i.e. write a treatiseon military forecasts) at the time when we made the expedition with them to the East in the province of *Margianēs*" (i.e. Margiana, the Merw oasis). A second edition of this work contains a chapter *De stellis fixis* which gives a planetary conjunction correct for 768 (Cumont, *CCAG* 5.1, 212). The campaign must, therefore, be before 768 and very likely refers to Mahdī's activities in AH 141/758–59 in Khurasan, quelling the revolt of its governor 'Abd al-Jabbār with the help of Khāzim ibn Khuzayma, and in Tabaristan (Ṭabarī, 3.134–37).

[46] Ibn al-Qiftī, *Ḥukamā'*, 109 (*wa-kāna hādha l-munajjim bi-Baghdād wa-huwa ra'īs munajjimī l-Mahdī*); Cumont, *CCAG*, 1.130 (an astronomical calculation made by Theophilus at Baghdad).

[47] Still the best survey is Cumont, *CCAG* 5.1, 229–32. See also Breydy, "Das Chronikon des Maroniten Theophilos ibn Tuma," though his views on Theophilus' historical writing are of no use, since he still holds to the idea that Theophilus is to be identified with the Maronite chronicler (see the entry on him in Chapter 4 above).

[48] This is the so-called *Synatagma Laurentianum*, which can be reconstructed from three manuscripts in Florence, the earliest of the late tenth or eleventh century; see Boll, "Überlieferungsgeschichte der griechischen Astrologie und Astronomie," 88–110, and in particular

sion, for in the preface to the second edition of the **{401}** aforementioned astrological work, addressed to his son Deukalion, he defends this science vociferously against those who would slander its name, "church leaders" being, so he says, the most conspicuous of such detractors.[49]

Besides his scientific output Theophilus is also said to have translated into Syriac Galen's *On the Method of Maintaining Good Health*,[50] Homer's *Iliad*, and penned a "fine work of history."[51] It has been suggested that the latter work is to be identified with the *Syriac Common Source* that was used by Theophanes, Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (partially preserved for us by Michael the Syrian and the chronicler of 1234) and Agapius of Manbij for much of their information on events in the Muslim realm.[52] A careful comparison of the chronicles of these three authors confirms this hypothesis. It is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that Agapius, who relies almost exclusively upon the *Syriac Common Source* for the period 630–750, states at the end of this section that he has drawn upon the "books" of Theophilus of Edessa. That Dionysius, in the preface to his chronicle, also names Theophilus as a **{402}** source gives us the clinching proof. The question is now can we say anything about this work?

The common notices on Eastern affairs in Theophanes and Agapius occur in almost exactly the same sequence. Michael the Syrian, too, largely follows this order in his civil history column, though a number of reports are drafted to one of the other two columns. From a comparison of these three authors it becomes immediately apparent that the notices follow a chronological order. A few are misplaced,

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92–95. Brief comments on Theophilus' astrological writingsand citation from them by Muslim writers are made by Sezgin, *GAS*, 7.49–50, and Ullman, *Die Natur- und Geheimniswissenschaften im Islam*, 302. See also Rosenthal, "From Arabic Books and Manuscripts," 454–55, which describes a ninth-century list of astrological books that includes Theophilus (cf. Cumont, *CCAG*, 1.83).

[49] Cumont, *CCAG*, 5.1, 234–38. Beck, Vorsehung und Vorherbestimmung in der theologischen Literatur der Byzantiner, 70, briefly discusses this preface.

[50] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq über die syrischen und arabischen Galen-Übersetzungen*, §84. Ḥunayn calls it "a dreadfully bad translation," but then he did translate the work himself and so may be indulging in the common practice of disparaging one's forerunners. Otherwise, could this be a different Theophilus of Edessa, perhaps the "Theophilus of Edessa the steward (*al-qahramān*)," whom Mārī, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 75/66, mentions as friend of the court physician George ibn Bokhtisho' and as alive during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809).

[51] Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. syriacum*, 127; idem, *Mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, 220.

[52] Brooks, "Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers," deliberated between Theophilus and John bar Samuel; Becker, "Eine neue christliche Quelle," opted for Theophilus, and this has recently been supported by Conrad, "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition," 43. For information on the chroniclers dependent upon Theophilus see the relevant entries in this chapter. Note that the chronicler of Siirt also depends upon Theophilus, presumably indirectly, though it is not clear by which intermediaries (see *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 610, 622, 625–26, 634, 636–37, 637–42, 641, 651–52).

but the intention was clearly to progress through history from some point in the past up until the author's own day. Yet it is also evident from the frequency with which Dionysius and Agapius either begin a notice with "at this time" or else disagree with each other on dating that Theophilus' work was not annalistic and was indeed rather sparing with dates.[53] This is an important point, for Theophanes is very often relied upon for ascertaining the date of an event. But it is because he is writing an annalistic work that he puts notices under specific years, not necessarily because these notices were originally dated. And in the case of the notices on Eastern affairs, Theophanes has often had simply to place them where he thought best.

What the start and end point were for Theophilus is a difficult question. Constant recourse to him is made by all his dependents from the notice on Abū Bakr's despatch of four generals onwards (s. a. 634). Before this time Theophanes is able to obtain fairly full coverage from Byzantine sources, and therefore only very occasionally turns to Theophilus. The earliest point at which he appears to do so concerns the Persians' crossing of the Euphrates to capture Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia (s. a. 610). Dionysius and Agapius do share some notices for the years 589–610, those on the revolt against Khusrau (*s.a.* 589–91) and the deposition of Maurice (*s. a.* 602) being recounted in a very similar manner. However, their common source need not be Theophilus, for they could both here be drawing upon Sergius Rusafaya, a nobleman **{403}** of Edessa, whom Dionysius is explicitly said to be using as a source for this period and to whom Agapius, as bishop of nearby Manbij, would probably have had access.[54]

Theophilus' dependents give very different accounts of Muḥammad and the rise of Islam, so it is difficult to be sure of Theophilus' own opinions on the matter. Dionysius and Agapius do, however, follow the same basic outline, which is almost certainly that of Theophilus:[55]

1. In the year 933/935 of the Greeks, 11/12 of Heraclius, 30/31/33 of Khusrau, Muḥammad appeared in the land of Yathrib.[56]

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[53] Theophilus may have proceeded by simply narrating events, arranging his entries in chronological order as far as possible and occasionally giving synchronisms after the fashion of Eusbius; e.g. "In the year 34/35/37 of the Arabs, 10/13 of Constans and 9 of ʿUthmān, Muʿāwiya prepared a naval expedition against Constantinople" (Theophanes, 345; Agapius, 483; Michael 11.XI, 430/445; *Chron. 1234*, 1.274).

[54] Michael the Syrian 11.III, 409/411: "From this nobleman Sergius is derived [a part of] the chronicle of Dionysius of Tellmaḥre [which extends] over six generations." See Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 98–99, 134 n. 306, 135 n. 308.

[55] I owe this point to Conrad, *Muḥammadanea Edessensis*, who discusses at length the notices on Muḥammad of Theophilus' dependents.

[56] Dionysius in *Chron. 1234*, 1.227, and Michael the Syrian 11.II, 405/403 (*nfaq b-arʿā d-Yatrib*); Agapius, 456 (*taḥarraka al-ʿarab bi-Yathrib*); cf. *Chron. Siirt* CI, *PO* 13, 600 (*ẓahara bi-arḍ Tihāma*). Theophanes, 334, says: "This heresy prevailed in the region of Ethribos."

2. On journeys to Palestine, he had gained some religious knowledge.[57]
3. He now called the Arabs to the worship of the one God.
4. Muḥammad gradually won over all the Arabs.
5. Muḥammad's followers waged campaigns beyond Arabia, while he remained in Yathrib.[58]
6. **{404}** Muḥammad's teachings.

The last section concludes with a description of paradise, which was retained by all and which makes clear their dependency upon a common source:

> *Theophanes*: He said that this paradise was one of carnal eating and drinking and intercourse with women, and had a river of wine, honey and milk, and that the women were not like the ones down here, but different ones, and that the intercourse was longlasting and the pleasure continuous.
>
> *Dionysius*: They say that there is carnal eating and drinking in it, and copulation with glamorous courtesans, beds of gold to lie upon with mattresses of gold and topaz, and rivers of milk and honey.[59]
>
> *Agapius*: He mentioned that in paradise there is food and drink, marriage, rivers of wine, milk and honey, and blackeyed women untouched by man or spirit.

Except for this extract, Theophanes almost totally ignores Theophilus for his notice on Muḥammad, drawing instead, indirectly, on Jewish and Muslim sources.[60]

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[57] This is in Theophanes, 334 ("whenever he came to Palestine, he consorted with Christians and Jews and sought from them certain scriptural matters") and Dionysius as preserved in *Chron. 1234*, 1.227/Michael the Syrian 11.II, 405/403 ("He began to go up and down from his town of Yathrib to Palestine for the business of buying and selling. While so engaged in the country/with the Jews, he saw/learnt from them the belief in one God").

[58] Michael the Syrian 11.II, 405–406/404 ("when many had submitted to him, he no longer went out in person at the head of those going out to plunder, but sent others at the head of his armies"); *Chron. Siirt* CI, *PO* 13, 601 ("when Islam became strong, he refrained from going out in person to war and began to despatch his companions"). The Muslim tradition, too, has Muḥammad, at the end of his life, sending commanders out on campaigns while he remained in Medina, but these never got beyond southern Palestine and the Balqa' (thus Usāma ibn Zayd's raid noted in Ibn Hishām, 970, 999), and most remained in Arabia, whereas Theophilus and other non-Muslim sources imply that they ranged much further afield (see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 4, 24–25, 152 n. 7).

[59] This is what is common to Michael the Syrian 11.II, 407/405, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.229, but both say more.

[60] His account breaks down into four parts: Muḥammad's dealings with "the misguided Jews" (see the entry on the *Ten Wise Jews* in Chapter 11 below), a summary of the ancestry of the major Arabian tribes (see Conrad, "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition," 11–16), a distorted but well-informed version of the Muslim biography of Muḥammad, the

Agapius abridges Theophilus, as he himself acknowledges, **{405}** and supplements him with material from the Muslim tradition.[61] That leaves Dionysius, who seems to me to preserve best Theophilus' entry, but confirmation of this will require further research.[62]

The last notice of which we can be sure that all have it from Theophilus concerns the manoeuvres of the caliph Marwān against Sulaymān ibn Hishām and Ḍaḥḥāk the Kharijite in 746. Thereafter Theophanes begins to adduce new material, and we can conclude that this point marks the commencement of the activity of Theophilus' continuator via whom Theophanes uses Theophilus.[63] Agapius and the chronicler of 1234 correspond very closely in their narratives – to the extent that one could often pass for a translation of the other – from 744 to 750, then with some divergence until 754. The final notice which our three authors might plausibly all have in common is that which relates how ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī, upon the death of

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teachings of Muḥammad (largely only the passage on paradise cited above). See further Conrad, *Muḥammadanea Edessensis*, who compares Theophanes' account with that in Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, XIV, XVII, and concludes that the latter is dependent not on Theophanes, but on the same continuation of Theophilus used by Theophanes. The whole section on the Arabs of the *De administrando imperio* (XIV–XXV) is discussed by Bury, "The Treatise De administrando imperio," 525–33.

[61] Agapius, 457, gives two lists of Muḥammad's teachings, of a very different nature (the first enumerates practices, the second mostly details beliefs) and both mentioning the requirement of prayer, and so unlikely to be by the same author. The elements of the second list (belief in the prophets and what God revealed to them, Christ, the Gospel, Judgement and paradise; also fasting and prayer) are all found in much the same order in Dionysius (Michael the Syrian 11.II, 406–407/404–405; *Chron. 1234*, 1.228–29). This second list must, therefore, be from Theophilus. For the first list, and for other parts of his account of Muḥammad, Agapius would seem to have drawn on his Muslim source (see the entry on "Agapius" in this chapter), as is suggested by the classical Islamic phraseology of Muḥammad's prescriptions (*an yuqīmū al-ṣalāt wa-yūtū al-ẓakāt… an yu'addū ilayhi al-jizya wa-l-kharāj*). Theophilus himself does not seem to have drawn upon the Muslim tradition (see Excursus C below). Conrad, *Muḥammadanea Edessensis*, states the opposite, citing the material of Muslim origin in Theophanes as proof (see *idem*, "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition"); but none of this material is in Dionysius or Agapius and so is almost certainly not from Theophilus.

[62] I have two small pertinent observations to make. First, the notice of Muḥammad going to Palestine for trade comes from Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 326, which would presumably have been readily available to Theophilus of Edessa, who might then have expanded this notice into an account of Muḥammad's discovery of monotheism. Second, the correspondence between Dionysius and *Chron. Sïirt* in article no. 5 of the outline of Theophilus given above would provide confirmation of Dionysius' use of Theophilus' account of Muḥammad if it could be shown that *Chron. Sïirt* had access to Theophilus independently of Dionysius. For a comparison and discussion of the two versions of Dionysius account, that of Michael the Syrian and the chronicler of 1234, see Conrad, *Muḥammadanea Edessensis*.

[63] This point is explained in the entry on "Theophanes" in this chapter.

Abū l-'Abbās in 754, **{406}** decided to claim the caliphate for himself and had his Khurasani troops give allegiance to him. Manṣūr responded by having himself proclaimed caliph in Kufa and despatching Abū Muslim to fight 'Abd Allāh. The former was victorious, but was suspected of revolt by Manṣūr, who therefore had him killed. This entry is recounted with the same order of events by Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius. The latter gives a very full account; Dionysius evidently has the same version before him, but abbreviates it somewhat. Theophanes also has a long account, but the numerous additional details show that it is not the same as that available to Dionysius and Agapius. Nevertheless, there are a number of revealing points of contact between the three chroniclers. All know that Manṣūr was in Mecca when Abū l-'Abbas died, that Abū Muslim engaged 'Abd Allāh near Nisibis, and that he was persuaded by blandishments and ruses to appear before Manṣūr. On balance, then, we might say that this notice is taken from Theophilus, but that Theophanes has it via the Greek continuation. Hereafter the content of Dionysius' chronicle changes appreciably. The actions of Muslim authorities are noted, but only very briefly or only insofar as they impinged upon the Christian population. And Theophanes' account no longer bears any resemblance to that of either Agapius or Dionysius. So it would seem that Theophilus stopped at this point, with the consolidation of the rule of the caliph Manṣūr.

Since he is quoted for a figure of 5197 years for the interval from Adam to Seleucus, Theophilus is usually thought to have made Creation his starting point.[64] But this is hardly cogent, for as an astrologer he would often have been obliged to make chronological calculations, or it could well be that he prefaced his chronography with some such computation.[65] When one examines the content of the *Syriac Common Source*, one is at once struck by its concentration on secular events, and warfare and diplomacy between the emperors and caliphs in particular.[66] This, plus the lack of interest in dates noted above, leads one to speculate whether Theophilus' intention might have been **{407}** to compose a classicising history. This would certainly be in keeping with the impression that we have of him, namely that he was something of a Hellenophile, writing his astrological works in Greek, translating Homer and Galen, and naming his son Deukalion. Moreover, out of the period he covers Theophilus devotes by far the most attention to the events of the last decade, from the murder of Walīd II in 744 to the triumph of the Abbasids in 754, and he states clearly: "I was myself a constant witness of these conflicts and I used to write things down so that none of it escaped me."[67] Thus we have also the element of autopsy

[64] See the entry on the "Maronite Chronicler" in Chapter 4 above.

[65] Agapius, 455, gives a calculation of the years from Adam before proceeding to relate *amr al-'arab*, but it seems somewhat corrupt.

[66] I give a provisional reconstruction of the *Syriac Common Source* in Excursus C below. Occasionally Theophilus reports such matters as the collapse of a church after an earthquake, but there is no ecclesiastical material proper; note especially the attention given to Arab campaigns in Asia Minor.

[67] Quoted by Agapius, 525.

which was so important a feature of classicising history.[68] The earliest notice shared by Dionysius and Agapius concerns the revolt against Khusrau and his flight to Byzantium in 589–90, so Theophilus may perhaps have been seeking to continue the *History* of Menander Protector (ended in 582) or John of Epiphaneia (572–91). Any solution will, however, remain conjectural until more work has been done on the sources of Dionysius and Agapius for the pre-Islamic period.

If we cannot be sure of Theophilus' personal ambitions for his composition, we do at least have the report of what someone else thought he was doing. In the preface to his own work Dionysius gives some attention to his predecessors "who have written about earlier times."[69] He reviews chronography and ecclesiastical history, then goes on to suggest that there had recently emerged a third type, namely "narratives (*tash'yātē*) resembling ecclesiastical history." What united such accounts was not their content; of the examples Dionysius cites – Daniel bar Moses of Tur 'Abdin, John bar Samuel of the West country, Theophilus of Edessa and Theodosius, metropolitan of Edessa – we know that Daniel wrote on church matters,[70] Theophilus on secular events. **{408}** Rather they were all distinguished, according to Dionysius, by their failure to maintain either the chronological rigour of the chronicle or the pursuit of causes and interrelationships that characterised ecclesiastical history: "Those whom we have mentioned here set forth their accounts in a compartmentalised and discontinuous fashion (*msaykā'it wa-mfasqā'īt*), without paying strict heed to chronological accuracy or the order of succession of events (*l-hattītūtā d-zabnē aw l-naqīpūtā d-sū'rānē*)." So they were narrative histories, but lacking a chronological or thematic thread.

Though perhaps a little harsh, this is a relatively apt characterisation of Theophilus. It is true that he does present his information in a largely chronological order, but he makes little effort to establish firm dates for each entry. For the seventh century in particular he makes heavy use of anecdotal material: the encounter of Heraclius' brother Theodore with a stylite near Ḥimṣ, Mu'āwiya's demolition of the Colossus of Rhodes, Constans' dream that he would lose in a naval engagement with the Arabs in 654, the rebel Shapur and the imperial envoy Sergius at Mu'āwiya's court, the election of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam in 684 and so on. Each of these accounts constitutes a self-sufficient narrative unit bearing little connection with any other, which, as Dionysius says, has the effect of making Theophilus' writing seem

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[68] What is lacking is any evidence of that other notable trait of classicising history, the digression. This is also absent, however, from Nicephorus's work and he was certainly striving to write a classicising history (see the entry on him in this chapter).

[69] Dionysius' preface is preserved in Michael 11.XX, 378/357–58.

[70] He is cited by Elias of Nisibis for the election of the patriarch Athanasius Sandalaya (*Chronicle*, 168 = AH 122), the appearance of an unusual star (*ibid.*, 170 = AH 127), the occurrence of an earthquake which destroyed the Jacobite church at Manbij (*ibid.*, 171 = AH 131); and by Dionysius himself regarding the generosity of the Edessan magnate Athanasius bar Gumaye towards the church, a report which includes a long anecdotal account of how Athanasius came to build a baptistery at Edessa (Michael 11.XVI, 447–49/475–77).

somewhat segmented. Only with the description of the overthrow of the Umayyads are we given a more continuous relation where causal links between events are brought out. But this is not really Theophilus' fault; as was pleaded by a contemporary of his, who was also attempting to write a chronicle: "We have traversed many places and not found any accurate composition, only miscellany."[71] If Theophilus failed to produce a comprehensive narrative of events from 630–740, it was for lack of material, not of industry or talent. Despite his disparaging tone Dionysius did make heavy use of Theophilus in his own work, certainly for information, and it is also likely that it played a part in the adoption by him and others of a narrative format in place of the staccato annalistic bulletins which were so much a feature of earlier Syriac chronography. **{409}** It is to be hoped that the debt which the genre owes to Theophilus will now begin to be more fully recognised.

The Zuqnin Chronicler

This author receives his appellation from the monastery in north Mesopotamia of which he was a resident.[72] His chronicle is frequently referred to as the "ps.-Dionysius," since it was once attributed to the Jacobite patriarch Dionysius of Tellmaḥre.[73] Almost all the opening preface is missing bar the statement of the author's intention to begin from the Creation of the world and to arrange the material "in such a way that neither the reasoning of the reader nor the hearing of the hearer will be disturbed." Events sacred and profane are presented annalistically with little comment from the author until the reign of Justin II (565–78), after which he seems to have had problems with his sources, as he tells us:

> This chronology (*hūshbānā*) – that is to say, this composition (*maktādnūtā*) – begins from the very beginning of Creation and proceeds up to the birth of Abraham and the kingdom of Ninos In the 42nd year of Ninos the patriarch Abraham was born, as Eusebius testifies, for from him is taken the content of this history up to the time of the believing Constantine. From this point up to Theodosius the Younger [it is taken] from Socrates…, then from Theodosius up to the emperor Justin [it is taken] from the holy John, bishop of Asia, that is the year 885 (573–74). From this point until the present year, which is the year 1086 of Alexander and the year 158 (775) of the Muslims, we have not found [anything] concerning [men's] actions (*dūbbārē*) which is composed as carefully as the ones aforementioned.[74]

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[71] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 146–47.

[72] *Ibid.*, 205–206, speaks of "our monastery of Zuqnin."

[73] For discussion of the authorship and of the chronicle in general see Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, and Palmer, "Review."

[74] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 145–46. The division made here by the chronicler (→ Constantine, → Theodosius II, → Justin, → today) is the basis for the characterisation of this work by modern scholars as being in four parts. The sources listed (Eusebius, Socrates, John of Ephesus)

{410} And indeed it was this deficiency that prompted him to take up his pen:

> Since we have traversed many places and not found any accurate writing, only miscellany (*ellā d-meddem meddem*), we determined to collect and set down in order what we have heard from old men of those things which they saw and came upon, and also those affairs to which we have been witness.[75]

Aware of his own failure to produce an "accurate writing," he excuses himself by saying:

> It does no harm to the discerning and the God-fearing if a date is one or two years too early or too late. Let it be enough for the God-fearing to see the chastisements of former generations and to turn away from evil, lest those chastisments be visited upon them too.[76]

This second preface makes it clear that the ensuing portion of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, known by modern scholars as the fourth part, is the work of one person who has endeavoured to weld together diverse material into an ordered narrative. Conrad has proposed that it divides into four layers, each composed by a different author, but this theory collapses under scrutiny.[77] In the midst of the narrative **{411}** on Hishām's reign (724–43) there is a brief notice about an earthquake in Syria in December 717, and during the account of Marwān's rule (743–50) there is a short note

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are, however, only the most major and many others are used; in particular, the *Chronicle* of ps-Joshua the Stylite seems to be incorporated in full. For a discussion of the sources for the first three parts see Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 124–36, and *idem*, "Sources of Pseudo-Dionysius for the Third Part of His *Chronicle*."

[75] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 146–47.

[76] *Ibid.*, 147; note that anticipation and refutation of blame for inexactitude in dates etc. is commonly found in historical prefaces (see Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface*, 103–104, 107), for example in that of the eleventh-century chronicler Ignatius of Melitene (Michael the Syrian 13.1, 546–47/115).

[77] Conrad, "Syriac Perspectives," 24–26. He says that in the period AG 1029–60 the author refers to "the present day;" but he only uses the expression "at this time" (*b-hānd zabnā*), i.e. in the same year as the previous event described. He does speak of "us" occasionally, as Conrad says, and once he states that "all these things happened in our days" (*Chron. Zuqnin*, 181), but this simply suggests that he lived through them. Even if an expression such as "the present day" did occur, it could easily be explained by the fact that the chronicler very often cites his sources slavishly without making even obvious emendments (cf. Palmer, "Review," 145). Conrad also argues that the mistranslation of *msawwedē* ("wearers of black," a reference to the Abbasids) as *awkāmē* ("blacks") by someone who further on seems to claim knowledge of Arabic is best accounted for by assuming that the two references belong to different layers of the text. But the author did know what *msawwedē* meant; he says "all their clothes were black and for this reason they were called *msawwedē*, which in the Syriac language is translated *awkāmē*" (*Chron. Zuqnin*, 193–94). The question is why, when he knew the correct sense of the word, he still chose such a rendering.

about stars falling from the sky in January 743.[78] Conrad infers from both occasions a change of author, but in both cases the narrative immediately reverts to the former subject and the style remains the same. It is simply that the notices are very occasionally out of sequence, as is understandable in this part of the chronicle where material is abundant and dates a long way apart.[79] The disjunction noticed by Conrad *ca.* 713–18 is more significant, but not for indicating a change of author, rather because it marks the point at which the compiler is able to supplement the bare chronological records of rulers, patriarchs, battles and natural phenomena with oral sources and material from his own lifetime. And indeed, it is from this point that we are given ever more profuse and detailed information about events in northern Mesopotamia, the chronicler's homeland.

The most obvious indication that the fourth part of the chronicle is the work of a single writer drawing on different sources, rather than of different writers making separate contributions, is that there are several unifying features to this section. The first is found in the very aim of writing, namely to leave a warning for future generations: **{412}**

1. In order to leave a record of this evil time and the bitter oppression which the earth has suffered in our days and times…
2. We wished that those who will come into the world after us might tremble and fear the Lord and walk uprightly before Him, lest He also deliver them, as [He has] us, into the hands of this rapacious wolf.
3. In order to leave some record for those who come into the world after us…
4. About these things I shall speak, about these things I shall tell, and I shall write them for those who [come] after us.[80]

Secondly, there is the use made of Isaiah x.5, which speaks of the Assyrians as the rod of God's wrath sent by Him to castigate His wayward people and which the chronicler frequently cites or alludes to when speaking of Arab rule.[81] Accompany-

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[78] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 169–71 (AG 1043–1029–1040–1045), 192–96 (AG 1060–1054–1061–1062). The events are also reported by *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 716–18, 743.

[79] E.g. *Ibid.*, 206–207 (AG 1063–1061–1064), 221–22 (AG 1075–1072–1076), 22728 (AG 1077–1074–1078). Note that the Arab capture of Tyana, included in the narrative on Maslama's acitivities of 716–17 (*ibid.*, 159–60), is also misplaced (all other sources date it between 707 and 711; see *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 707–708).

[80] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 146, 146, 301, 333.

[81] *Ibid.*, 146, 192, 232, 262, 302, 314. Use of Isaiah x.5 and of the Assyrians to refer to Christian enemies is also made by ps.-Joshua and John of Ephesus (then meaning the Persians), two of the Zuqnin chronicler's principal sources. Heavy use of John of Ephesus, to the extent of wholesale plagiarism, is also made by the chronicler when it comes to constructing an account of the mid-eighth-century outbreak of bubonic plague (see Harrak, "Literary Borrowings in the Chronicle of Zuqnin").

ing this is the oft-voiced opinion of our chronicler that his fellow Christians have merited such chastisement. This moralising tone permeates this fourth part, and may be detected even in the cursory pre-713 notices. Thus, regarding ʻAbd al-Malik's census in 692, he says: "Thereafter the sons of Hagar began to subject the sons of Aram to Egyptian slavery; but it is our fault: because we sinned, slaves gained authority over us."[82] Finally, there is the concentration on events affecting Mesopotamia, which again, though most noticeable where the chronicle is fuller, is discernable even in the earlier reports. For example, Amida, which was near the author's monastery, features in six entries for the years 622–50.[83]

{413} Up until the year 717, when there is a long description of the Arab siege of Constantinople, the fourth part of the chronicle consists mostly of very short notices, only four being of any length. These concern compulsory baptism of Jews,[84] the Arabs' first civil war,[85] ʻAbd al-Malik's census and tax reforms,[86] and the following rather polemical notice on the appearance of Muḥammad and the Arabs:

> The Arabs subdued the land of Palestine as far as the river Euphrates, while the Romans fled and crossed over to the east of the Euphrates, and the Arabs gained authority over them in it (Palestine). The first king was a man from among them by the name of Muḥammad. This man they also called a prophet, because he had turned them away from cults of all kinds and taught them that there was one God, Maker of Creation. Also he laid down laws for them, because they had been firm adherents of the worship of demons and adoration of idols and particularly of trees. And since he had shown them the one God, and they had conquered the Romans in battle under his direction, and he had appointed laws for them according to their desire, they called him prophet and messenger (*rasūlā*) of God.

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[82] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 154. Another feature common to all the fourth part is extensive quotation from the Bible, not merely of the odd phrase as in earlier sections, but of whole passages.

[83] *Ibid.*, 150–52: Cyriacus, bishop of Amida, dies; Heraclius builds church at Amida; Thomas, bishop of Amida, flourishes; patriarch John Sedra is buried at Amida; John of the Arabs is buried at Amida; Simeon, bishop of Edessa, dies at Amida.

[84] *Ibid.*, 148–49. The author seems to be referring to the same incident narrated by the *Doctrina Jacobi* (see the entry thereon in Chapter 3 above), but places it in Palestine during the reign of Phocas instead of in North Africa in the time of Heraclius.

[85] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 152–53. Writers active in Palestine and Syria generally accord ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib no official status and simply say that Muʻāwiya defeated him at Ṣiffīn (see the entries on "Short Chronologies" and "Latin Texts" in this chapter, those on the "Maronite Chronicler" and "George of Reshʻaina" in Chapter 4 and that on the *Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads* in Chapter 8 above), but the Zuqnin chronicler says that ʻAlī (though oddly calling him ʻAbbās) was considered "king" in Mesopotamia and the East (thus also *Chron. 819*, 12) and that the fighting between him and Muʻāwiya lasted a full five years.

[86] *Ibid.*, 154. Note his observation: "From this time the poll-tax (*gzītā*) began to be levied on the skulls of adult males… Up till this time kings had levied tribute (*madattā*) on the land, not from men."

> They are a very covetous and carnal people, and any law, whether prescribed **{414}** by Muḥammad or another God-fearing person, that is not set in accord with their desire, they neglect and abandon. But what is in accord with their will and complements their desires, though it be instituted by one contemptible among them, they hold to it, saying: "This was appointed by the prophet and messenger of God, and moreover it was charged to him thus by God." He governed them for seven years.[87]

Whereas this period from 587 to 717 takes up only ten pages of printed text, the following six decades occupy an impressive 240 pages and constitute a rich repository of information for the history of eighth-century Mesopotamia, much of it not found in any other chronicle and to a large extent based on first-hand experience. Of course, from a man who closes his preface with the warning: "Take heed and fear the Lord your God, lest He visit upon you these same afflictions," one must expect that he will be particularly concerned to enumerate the evils perpetrated by the Christians and the divine punishments meted out to them. And indeed many of his pages are taken up with the description of plagues, natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, famines etc.), brigandage and invasions, tyranny of governors and fiscal oppression. But amid this are also revealing accounts on the Kharijites, religious pretenders, the social structure of northern Mesopotamia and the intellectual life of its monasteries, Abbasid taxation policies and the decisions of certain caliphs.[88]

The Ehnesh Inscription

{415} This inscription covers three limestone blocks of the south wall of the S. Sergius church at Ehnesh in northern Syria,[89] and chronicles a series of catastrophes for the local Christian inhabitants:

> In the year 309 the Messiah came to the world,
>
> And in the year 930[90] the Arabs came to the land,

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[87] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 149–50 (AG 932). Further on (*ibid.*, 299) the chronicler calls Muḥammad "their guide and legislator" (*mhaddyānhōn w-sā'em nāmosayhōn*). Note that this image of Muḥammad as a lawgiver is very common; cf. Sebeos, XXX (tr. Macler, 95); John bar Penkaye, 146–47/175 (tr. Brock, 61); Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 6a; *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 494; *Chron. Siirt* CI, *PO* 13, 600.

[88] E.g. this chronicle is the earliest Christian source to refer to Yazīd II's edict against images (*ibid.*, 163). For instances of the topics mentioned in this paragraph see Ishaq, "Al-ta'rīkh al-Zūqnīnī;" *idem*, "The Significance of the Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius." Note also that this text contains the first non-Muslim literary reference to the term "Muslim," written *mashlmānā* (*Chron. Zuqnin*, 195); before this the term only features in an inscription of AH 123/741 (Ory, "Les graffiti umayyades de 'Ayn al-Ǧarr," 100) and as the name of a governor (*Meslem*) in the late seventh century (*Nessana Papyri*, no. 58; cf. *ibid.*, no. 94).

[89] On the east wall of the same building is another inscription which comprises quotes from Psalms xliv.5, xxxiv.6, xcii.15.

> And in the year 968 there was a battle at Ṣiffin (*Sefê*)
>
> And in the year 995 there was a great famine,
>
> And in the year 1005 there was a darkness,
>
> And in the year 1088 the vale of Mar'ash entered into captivity in the territory of the Romans by reason of our sins,
>
> And in the year 342, 24 March, day 6, the Messiah suffered,
>
> And in the year 1091 the commander of the faithful (*amīrā da-mhaymnê*[91] came and entered as far as Gihon, and he returned and ordered that the churches be torn down and that the Tanūkh become Muslims (*nhaggrūn*).

The notices on Christ seem, in both cases, intended to serve as a counterpoint to the notice that follows. The coming of Christ and the joy it brought contrasts with the coming of the Arabs and the misery it brought; the passion of Christ entailed salvation, the appearance of Mahdī brought enslavement. One also suspects that there was some irony intended in the juxtaposition of Messiah and Mahdī (which means "saviour" in Arabic); the reason for using the positive term "commander of the faithful" is not obvious. Though it is common in Arabic inscriptions and writings, such a religious epithet was usually eschewed **{416}** by Christian writers in favour of some more secular term, most often "king."[92]

Dionysius of Tellmaḥre

Dionysius came from a wealthy and well-established Edessan family. He studied at the monasteries of Qenneshre and of Mar Jacob at Kayshum before being elevated to the leadership of the Jacobites in 818, which position he held until 845.[93] At the request of John, metropolitan of Dara, he consented to undertake what others, despite his exhortations, had declined to do, namely "to set down in writing for the generations which are to come the events which have occurred [in the past] and which are occurring in our own time."[94] The finished product was described by a later chronicler as follows:

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[90] A later hand has corrected this to 933. For the significance of the date see the entry on "Short Chronology *ad annum* 775" in this chapter.

[91] "Mahdī" is written on an adjacent course of stone, either added in explanation or accidentally omitted in the first place.

[92] Though "commander of the faithful" is used in *Chron. Zuqnin*, 174, 258, 282, in the *Life* of Willibald (see the entry thereon in Chapter 6 above), and in *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §49, which depends upon a Syrian source. The inscriptions are discussed at length by Palmer, "Messiah and Mahdi;" see also *idem*, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 71–74.

[93] Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, discusses the church and its relationship with the state in Dionysius' time and also Dionysius' own contribution as patriarch.

[94] Michael the Syrian 10.XX, 378/358 (Dionysius' preface).

> He composed it in two parts and in sixteen books, each part containing eight books divided into chapters. He wrote it at the request of John, metropolitan of Dara. In this chronicle are included the times, a period of 260 years, from the beginning of the reign of Maurice – that is, from the year 894 of the Greeks (582) – until the year 1154 (842) in which there died Theophilus, emperor of the Romans, and Abū Isḥāq (Muʿtaṣim), king of the Arabs.[95]

His division into parts – one devoted to church history, the other to secular history – and books and chapters indicates a sophisticated approach which differs from that found in earlier Syriac historiography. In his preface Dionysius characterises his work as a *pragmateia*, a term **{417}** used by classical writers to mean a treatise strictly and systematically formulated, and he distances himself from those who "composed their narratives in a summary and fragmented fashion without preserving either chronological accuracy or the order of succession of events." In contrast to such writings, he says: "Our aim is to bring together in this book everything which our feeble self is able, with God's assistance, to collect, and to ascertain the accuracy [of each report] as attested by many persons worthy of credence, to select [the best version] and then to write it down in [correct] order."[96]

Bar a few fragments Dionysius' achievement unfortunately does not survive.[97] Much can, however, be recovered by comparing the writings of those who later drew upon it, notably the Jacobite patriarch Michael the Syrian (1166–99) and an anonymous Edessan chronicler of the early thirteenth century.[98] These two authors were compiling their chronicles within a decade of one another and would seem to have been working independently.[99] Moreover, both explicitly cite Dionysius a

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[95] *Ibid.* 12.XXI, 544/111.

[96] *Ibid.* 11.XVIII, 454/487–88. This is a literal rendering; the translation of Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 94–95, makes it clearer: "Weak as I am, my aim is as follows: To collect with the help of God whatever information I can find and to put it all in this book in good order, selecting the most reliable version of events attested by the majority of trustworthy witnesses and writing them down here in the correct sequence." For more detailed discussion of the format of Dionysius' chronicle see Conrad, "Syriac Perspectives," 28–39; Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 85–104.

[97] These fragments are edited and translated by Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, 130–44.

[98] The terminal colophon states that the author completed the civil history in AG 1514/1203 and the ecclesiastical history on 1 February 1515/1204 (*Chron. 1234*, 2.213–14, 340). As we have it, the work breaks off mid-sentence *ca.* 1234 and hence the work is generally referred to as the *Chronicle of 1234*. Presumably another writer continued it, probably to *ca.* 1240. A few very brief citations from Dionysius are also given by Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 1.174–80 (AH 138, 140, 142, 146, 152–53). See further Abramowski, *Dionysius von Tellmahre*, 14–29.

[99] Otherwise it is difficult to explain why each of them will on different occasions have a more detailed account than the other. For these two authors and their chronicles see, in addition to the survey works cited at the beginning of this section, Chabot, *Chronique de*

number of times,[100] and Michael implies that he was their only substantial **{418}** common source for the period 582–842. We can, therefore, be reasonably sure that every notice common to both writers derives from Dionysius. However, neither of these two pass Dionysius on to us intact, rather both add, omit, abbreviate,[101] rephrase and reshape.[102] Michael breaks up the text of Dionysius and distributes the material over three columns which are devoted to ecclesiastical affairs, natural phenomena and civil history. The chronicler of 1234 has one continuous narrative until the time of Constantine, then divides his notices into secular and church history, relegating the latter to the end. Michael's ecclesiastical column is extensive, but much of this is treated as civil history by the chronicler of 1234, whose church history is relatively small.[103] It seems likely that Dionysius, given his position as patriarch, would have deemed his ecclesiastical history the more important and so given it greater space, but it is difficult to say for sure.

In the preface to his work Dionysius states that he would take from Theophilus of Edessa "only those parts which are reliable and do not deviate from the truth." The reason for this proviso is the rivalry in their faith, Dionysius being a Jacobite and Theophilus a Maronite. In reality, however, Dionysius conveys to us more of Theophilus than either Theophanes or Agapius, albeit only through the filters of Michael and the *Chronicle of 1234*. Most of the notices in Michael's civil history column for the period 630–750 have a counterpart in Theophanes and Agapius, and so most clearly represent Theophilus; but many of the notices on natural phenomena and almost all of the ecclesiastical reports derive from elsewhere.[104] The *Chronicle of 1234* has often been thought **{419}** to best preserve Dionysius, and so Theophilus. This is true to the extent that it often quotes Dionysius in full and does not break up

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Michel le Syrien. Introduction, and Fiey's introduction to the translation of the second volume of the *Chronicle of 1234*.

[100] *Chron. 1234*, 2.17–20, 257, 267; for the numerous references of Michael to Dionysius see Conrad, "Syriac Perspectives," 30 and n. 87 thereto.

[101] At different times each will have a longer account than the other; since historical information about the seventh and eighth centuries was scarce, it is unlikely that either was able to add new details, so they must both at times be abbreviating.

[102] An example is given by Brock, "Syriac Life of Maximus," 337–40, who compares their accounts of Maximus' career.

[103] E.g. Cyrus' part in the conquest of Egypt (see the entry on the "Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 below), demons at Qenneshre (see the entry on "Daniel of Edessa" in Chapter 4 above), the false Tiberius (see *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 737). Though there are occasions when the reverse is true; e.g. the notice on the Arab attack on the convent of Simeon the Stylite is in the ecclesiastical part of *Chron. 1234* 2.260, but in the civil section of Michael 11.VI, 417/422.

[104] Michael also reports a number of censuses, seemingly not drawn from Theophilus; e.g. *ca.* 668 Abū l-Aʿwar made a census of Christian labourers/soldiers for the first time (Michael 11.XII, 435/450); in AG 1009/698 ʿAṭīya made a census of foreigners (*ibid.* 11.XVI, 447/473; *Chron. 819*, 13).

the narrative structure into subject categories like Michael. Yet on closer study it proves to be quite an eclectic work. For example, it dislikes short notices, preferring to have a paragraph's worth before accepting a report, and so omits most entries on natural phenomena. And for the Arab conquests and the first Arab civil war it turns to Muslim sources, not merely supplementing, but borrowing wholesale.[105]

It is evident that Dionysius produced a comprehensive and carefully structured work. The church history takes centre stage, coming first and comprising a formidable array of documents; the secular history follows, smaller in size, but great efforts were made to assemble as much material as possible. The two parts, assigned eight books each, were then cross-referenced and otherwise linked by glimpses forward and flashbacks, and the whole was set forth in a fluid and florid Syriac diction.[106] For Islamicists it is valuable as the best witness to the *Syriac Common Source* attributable to Theophilus of Edessa and for revealing to us something of the life and conditions of the Christians, who still constituted a majority of the population of the Near East in Dionysius' day.

The Chronicles of 819 and 846

The former of these two texts extends from the birth of Christ to the consecration of the patriarch Dionysius of Tellmaḥre in 818–19. The large number of notices concerning Qartmin monastery suggest it was written by a monk of that establishment, presumably in or soon after 819. For the earlier part of the chronicle the principal source used is the **{420}** *Chronicle of Edessa*, which ended in 540. Thereafter notices become fuller, more than half the work being devoted to the seventh and eighth centuries, and the source is most likely the archives of the monastery of Qartmin.[107] The *Chronicle of 846* goes back to Creation and so has a broader scope, but for Islamic times it relies almost exclusively on the *Chronicle of 819*, merely appending a notice that John of Mar Zakkai monastery became patriarch in 846.[108]

The focus of the *Chronicle of 819* is fairly evenly balanced between ecclesiastical and secular affairs. For the seventh and eighth centuries the latter means the actions of the Muslim rulers, and no attempt is made to document the succession of Byzantine emperors – not even Heraclius is mentioned. After AG 1039/728 notices are less evenly distributed than before:

> AG 1045–54a (733–43): Only church affairs (5 notices).

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[105] This is important to note; I had myself, taking over received wisdom that the *Chronicle of 1234* accurately represented Dionysius, assumed the Arabic material was inserted by Dionysius (see Hoyland, "Arabic, Syriac and Greek Historiography"). But since not a single item of it is found in Michael, this cannot be so and it must have become included in the *Chronicle of 1234* at a later date.

[106] See Palmer, *West Syrian Chronicles*, 85–89, for references and further discussion.

[107] Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 9–13.

[108] Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 76–82.

AG 1054b–65 (743–54): Only Muslim affairs (3 notices).

AG 1066–70 (755–59): Only church affairs (3 notices).

AG 1073 (762): The patriarch John dies; the caliph Manṣūr assembles the bishops at Baghdad to resolve the succession.[109]

AG 1074[110] (763): Account of a religious imposter in Mesopotamia, named Maruta.

AG 1080[111] (769): David of Dara dies; Mūsā ibn Muṣʿab is appointed governor of Mesopotamia; harshness of his rule.

{421} Undated entry on Manṣūr's death (775) and the convening of a synod of 36 bishops at Serug by the patriarch George.

List of Abbasid caliphs from Mahdī's death (785) to the fourth Arab civil war "when the whole world was without a leader for fifteen years" (813–27).

AG 1100–30 (788–819): List of Jacobite patriarchs.[112]

It has been proposed, reasonably, that changes of author are detectable at 728–33 and at 775–85.[113] A few of the notices on Muslim affairs are also found, often with similar wording, in the *Syriac Common Source*, to be assigned to Theophilus of Edessa writing in the 750s, and these must therefore derive from the author of 728–33. Though they are few in number, these items are precious for being from the pen of an early eighth-century writer.[114]

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[109] Michael the Syrian puts John's death in 1074 (11.XXV, 476/525) and Manṣūr's meeting with the bishops in 1076 (11.XXVI, 476–77/527–28).

[110] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 282–89, has Maruta appear in 1081.

[111] *Chron. Zuqnin* continues to mention David of Dara until 1084 (*ibid.*, 319–20), and it is in this year that it places Mūsā ibn Muṣʿab's appointment (*ibid.*, 289). According to Forand, "Governors of Mosul," 94–96, Mūsā was governor in AH 156–59/772–75 and 166–67/784–85; clearly the former term is meant here, for *Chron. 819* says Mūsā was in office three years, and its next notice concerns Mahdī's accession in 775. Hence, this date should probably be AG 1083 (thus Michael the Syrian 11.XXVI, 476/526) or 1084.

[112] Headed by a notice, presumably included to connect with the foregoing list of caliphs, erroneously dating Maʾmūn's accession to AG 1100/788–89.

[113] Brooks, "Syriac Chronicle of 846," 570; Conrad, "Syriac Perspectives," 23–24. Brooks, "Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers," 581, notes that *Chron. 846* ceases to have notices in common with Theophanes and Michael the Syrian after 728.

[114] See *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 636 (battle of Yarmuk), 639–40 (subjugation of Mesopotamia), 644 (killing of ʿUmar by an Indian slave), 656 (death of ʿUthmān and civil war), 660–61 (death of ʿAlī and accession of Muʿāwiya), 679 (earthquake and partial collapse of Edessa's church), 683–85 (ʿAbd al-Malik's peace with Justinian), 696–97 (ʿAbd al-Malik's minting of aniconic coins, the drowning of the bandit Shabīb), 693 (ʿAbd al-Malik's slaughter of pigs), 703 (ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Malik's campaign against Byzantium and rebuilding of

Elias of Nisibis (d. 1049)

Elias bar Shinaya was metropolitan of Nisibis for almost half a century (1008–49) and produced what is now the only surviving major Nestorian chronography. It consists of two parts, the first containing chronological lists of Biblical figures, rulers and patriarchs, followed by a record of notable events for each year from 25–1018 (the beginning **{422}** is missing), while the second part is devoted to detailed calendrical tables and problems of chronology. The work is bilingual, in Syriac and Arabic, and is preserved in a manuscript written in 1019. Whereas the Arabic appears in about five different hands, the Syriac is uniform, perhaps by Elias himself, which suggests that it is the primary text and the Arabic entries were compiled by a number of scribes, probably assistants of Elias. For the annalistic entries sources are quoted, and for the notices concerning early Islam these are chiefly a chronological outline of Muslim history (*yūbāl ẓabnē* [*d-malkē*] *d-ṭayyayē*) and a historical work by Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī (d. 847).[115] These, however, add nothing new to the classical picture of Islam.

LATIN TEXTS[116]

Eusebius' *Chronicle* in the translation of Jerome was continued/imitated in the West by Prosper and Hydatius in the fifth century, and by Victor of Tunnuna and John of Biclar in the sixth. The latter writer was one of the first to rehabilitate barbarian kings, to present them as protagonists rather than antagonists, as defenders and preservers rather than as usurpers and despoilers. Thus Christian world history was extended forwards into a new age of "gentile" kingdoms; Western Constantines emerged and replica Byzantiums were created. This is true of Isidore of Seville's *History of the Goths*, Fredegar's account of the Franks and Paul the Deacon's *History of the Langobards*. And it was now the Muslims who were the infidel invaders. Writers not living under Muslim occupation are generally hostile,[117] but they almost never

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Mopsuestia), 716–18 (siege of Constantinople, earthquake), 720 (Yazīd's destruction of images), 724 (Hishām's building), 726 (Maslama's capture of Cappadocian Caesarea), 730 (Maslama attacks the Khazars).

[115] The *yūbāl ẓabnē* ("succession of the times"), if it is the same work, is used AH 1–90 then once for AH 317. On Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī see *EI*², *s.v.*

[116] Latin historical texts are surveyed by Eggert, "Lateinische Historiographie vom 7. bis 9. Jahrhundert," and those of Spanish provenance by Diaz y Diaz, "La historiografía hispana desde la invasion arabe hasta el año 1000" (at 314–19 he makes some general comments about the two chronicles to be discussed here).

[117] This can normally be deduced by the odd offhand comment; e.g. "the madness of the Saracens," "they blasphemed with their foul mouths against God and our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles" (Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, 64, citing the work of this title, *s.a.* 847); "the Arabs who were persecuting the church of God," "the derisive calamity of the Chaldeans," "deceived by the Muḥammadan rite" (Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 168, 175, citing the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, §§10–11, 25).

pass comment upon the Muslims beyond brief notices about raids **{423}** and truces. For those who lived in Andalusia, Muslim-governed Spain, however, it was necessary in some manner to come to terms with the situation and to give some explanation of events.

The Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741 and the Hispanic Chronicle of 754

The former of these two texts is a somewhat odd composition. Its content is as follows:

1. Spanish affairs (9%): six cursory references to Visigothic kings (§§1–3, 5, 9, 14), dated according to the Spanish era, from the death of Reccared in 602 to the accession of Suinthila in 621. Dating by the Spanish era stops after 640. The conquest of Spain is only mentioned amongst other triumphs of Walīd's reign (§36), but there is an entry devoted to the battle of Toulouse in 721 (§42).
2. Byzantine affairs (29%): brief notices on the emperors from the death of Phocas in 610 to the accession of Leo III in 717; only Heraclius receives any substantial treatment (62% of Byzantine notices; 18% of all notices).
3. Arab affairs (62%): this is the major component of the chronicle and comprises entries on each ruler from Muḥammad until Yazīd II (720–24), giving the length and events of their reigns and often some personal description.

The initial references to Visigothic kings are drawn from Isidore of Seville's *History of the Goths*, but it can hardly be regarded as a continuation of Isidore since it concerns itself thereafter only with Eastern and no Western rulers. One might rather see the work as a continuation of John of Biclar's *Chronicle*, which, as a contribution to the universal chronicle tradition, had a more Eastern focus than Isidore's history and **{424}** ended in the reign of Reccared, with whose death the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle* begins. Moreover, both place the Byzantine emperors in a numerical scheme that goes back to Augustus.[118] But the almost total absence of Spanish material, which John of Biclar does include in some measure, makes impossible any strict alignment with the Spanish historiographical tradition.

The second distinctive feature of the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle* is its favourable attitude towards the Arab caliphs, and not only towards the more renowned like Muʿāwiya and ʿAbd al-Malik. Thus, though noting that he had little success in war, it characterises Yazīd I as:

[118] That the text presents itself as a continuation of John of Biclar was noticed by its first editor, Florez, who named it *Incerti auctoris additio ad Joannem Biclarensem*, and was signalled more recently by Diaz y Diaz, "La transmisión textual del Biclarense," 66–67. For an introduction to John of Biclar (wr. 590s) and Isidore (wr. 620s) see Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 1–27.

> A most pleasant man and deemed highly agreeable by all the peoples subject to his rule. He never, as is the wont of men, sought glory for himself because of his royal rank, but lived as a citizen along with all the common people (§28).[119]

The chronicler evidently relies upon an Eastern source, and this must have been composed in Syria, since the Umayyad caliphs are each described in a relatively positive vein, all reference to ʻAlī is omitted, Muʻāwiya II is presented as a legitimate and uncontested ruler (§29),[120] and the rebel Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab is labelled "a font of wickedness" **{425}** (§41). The *Hispanic Chronicle* also makes use of this Eastern source, and a comparison between the two Latin texts makes clear that it must have dealt with both Arab and Byzantine rulers – though the latter much more briefly – and was more extensive than either of its transmitters, both of which abbreviate it, at times substantially.[121] One would expect it to be a Greek work, since that was the usual language of exchange between East and West, and there are a few parallels between this Eastern source and Byzantine chronicles.[122] Yet as regards Arab rulers no Greek source displays such a positive attitude towards them as the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*. Dubler suggested it was written by a Spanish convert to Islam, but no

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[119] One might compare this with the short biographies of caliphs given by Muslim histories at the end of the ruler's reign along with the report of their death. A good example is that drafted for Walīd I, preserved in Ṭabarī, 2.1271, and Ibn ʻAbd Rabbihi, *ʻIqd*, 4.424 (both citing ʻAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī, d. 843): "In the view of the people of Syria, Walīd ibn ʻAbd al-Malik was the most excellent of their caliphs. He built mosques – the mosque of Damascus and the mosque of Medina – set up pulpits, was bountiful to the people and gave to the lepers, telling them not to beg from the people. To every cripple he gave a servant and to every blind person a guide. During his rule extensive conquests were achieved: Mūsā ibn Nuṣayr conquered Andalus, Qutayba conquered Kashgar and Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim conquered Hind."

[120] Muʻāwiya II (683–84) was not recognised in Mesopotamia; of non-Muslim sources only *Jewish Apocalypse on the Umayyads*, 178, likewise composed in the west of the Arab realm, records him. See Nöldeke, "Zur Geschichte der Omai-jaden," 684–85, 689–90. Buk, "Zur ältesten christlichen Chronographie," argues that, since the murder of Marwān in May 685 is not mentioned, the author is pro-Marwanid, but relies on a pro-Sufyanid source for events before the mid-680s, and hence the inclusion of Muʻāwiya II.

[121] Such a comparison is attempted in Excursus B below, where the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle* is translated in full.

[122] Parallels are indicated and sources discussed by Dubler, "La crónica arábigo-bizantina de 741," 298–333, who, however, exaggerates both the similarities with other chronicles and the number of sources that would be circulating in Byzantium and Spain in the seventh century. In the opinion of Nöldeke, "Epimetrum," the Eastern source was composed in Greek by a Jacobite of Syria. An additional argument in favour of a Greek intermediary is the similarity between the two Latin texts and the Greek *Short Chron. 818* in the rendering of Arab names, though the Greek renderings may well be derived from Syriac. Such exchange was, however, minimal at this time (see Mango, "La culture grecque et l'Occident au VIIIe siecle").

Muslim would portray the rise of Islam as a rebellion, and surely no convert would refrain from passing some comment upon his newly adopted faith.[123] The Eastern source of the Latin texts reports many of the same events and halts at the same point (*ca.* 750) as the *Syriac Common Source* of Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius of Tellmaḥre, and it is tempting to postulate that the Spanish chroniclers are dependent on the same Greek translation of this Syriac work as was used by Theophanes. Yet there are very few close parallels between the two, and both have material not found in the other.

A brief comment is required concerning the date of the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*. The concluding notice is as follows:

> **{426}** Then Yazīd, king of the Saracens, his fourth year having unfolded, departed from this life, leaving the rule to his brother, Hishām by name; and he determined that after his brother the one born of his (Yazīd's) own seed, named Walīd, should rule (§43).

This takes us only to 724 and no later event is narrated, nor is the length of Hishām's reign given.[124] It is because the entry on Leo III's accession contains the remark "he took up the sceptre for 24 years" that the text is associated with the year 741. But this suggests that the chronicler had intended to proceed further. The notices on Arab affairs in the *Hispanic Chronicle* carry on in much the same vein until ca. 750, concluding with the accession to power of the Abbasids, and it is simpler to assume that the author is still relying on the same Eastern source rather than to posit some other Eastern source for the period 724–50. One wonders, then, whether we do not have the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle* in an apocopated form and that it too originally continued until 750.[125]

The *Hispanic Chronicle* is a relatively straightforward affair. It follows in the footsteps of John of Biclar, for the scope of both is Mediterranean-wide but with an Iberian focus, and both treat matters ecclesiastical and secular. The author, an Andalusian cleric, generally disparages the emirs of Spain and makes clear his antipathy towards the invaders: "Even if every limb were transformed into a tongue it would be beyond human nature to express the ruin of Spain and its many and great evils" (§45). Since it uses the same Eastern source as the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle*, its entries

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[123] Dubler, "La crónica arábigo-bizantina de 741," 331; further objections are given by Barkai, *Cristianos y musulmanes en la España medieval*, 55 n. 2.

[124] Collins, *Arab Conquest of Spain*, 55, infers that the text must date to 744 or that the final notice was added later, not realising that the accession of Walīd II after Hisham (d. 743) was pre-arranged by Yazīd II. Collins' discussion of the text (*ibid.*, 53–57) is nevertheless very helpful.

[125] Though the observation that "it is a descendant of the son of the latter (Marwān ibn al-Ḥakām) who holds their leadership up till now in our times" (§31) suggests that the chronicler is writing while the Marwanids are still in power, unless the reference is to the fact that Spain was governed by a descendant of Marwān (the first Umayyad king in Spain was ʿAbd al-Raḥman ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, ruled 755–88).

on the Arab caliphs are generally favourable. But whereas the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle* simply **{427}** relays the Eastern source, abbreviating but not polemicising, the *Hispanic Chronicle* often adds a pejorative remark or omits the notice altogether if it is too positive, as with that on Muḥammad.[126]

GREEK TEXTS[127]

We have no extant Greek historical text composed between 630 and 780. Some recording of events must have gone on – for example, there is the common source (s) of Nicephorus and Theophanes for the years 668–769 – but it is certainly true to say that historiography was at a low ebb during this period. The first signs of a revival of activity in this field that we may discern come from a certain George, whose work is described by his continuator, Theophanes:

> The most blessed Father George, who had also been personal assistant (*synkellos*) of Tarasius (784–806), the most holy patriarch of Constantinople, a man of distinction and great learning, after he had perused and thoroughly investigated many chronographers and historians, composed with all accuracy a succinct chronicle from Adam down to Diocletian, the Roman emperor who persecuted the Christians. He made a very exact study of the dates, reconciled their divergences, corrected them and set them together in a manner surpassing all his predecessors. He recorded the lives and dates of the ancient kings of every nation and, as far as he was able, accurately inserted, with their dates, the bishops of the great ecumenical sees, I mean those of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, both **{428}** Chronicles and Histories those who had tended the church in the right faith and those who, like robbers, had ruled in heresy.[128]

George states himself that he was working on his *Chronographia* in the year 810,[129] and from certain topographical references we can deduce that he was at that time

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[126] Since it represents the earliest Spanish view of the Arab conquest and rule of the peninsula, this text has received considerable attention to date. See especially Pereira, *Crónica mozárabe de 754*; Barkai, *Cristianos y musulmanes en la España medieval*, 19–27; Collins, *Arab Conquest of Spain*, 57–65; Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 28–45.

[127] Greek historical texts are surveyed by Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, 219–408; Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 1.243–504; Scott, "Byzantine Chronicle Writing: 2. After Malalas;" Rochow, "Chronographie."

[128] Theophanes, 3 (tr. Mango, "preface"). George Syncellus was disdained by early scholars, then for a long time neglected, but he has recently been the object of a number of more appreciative studies: Huxley, "On the Erudition of George the Synkellos;" Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?;" Adler, *Time Immemorial*, esp. 132–231; Sevcenko, "The Search for the Past in Byzantium," 280–83.

[129] George Syncellus, *Chronographia*, 389 (= Mosshammer, 244): "the present year 6302."

based in Palestine, at one of the monasteries in the Judaean desert.[130] Illness prevented him from continuing up until his own time, as he had originally intended to do,[131] but a number of his slightly younger contemporaries took up this challenge, so ensuring that we do have some view of seventh and eighth-century Byzantine history, albeit a rather patchy one.

Theophanes the Confessor (d. 818)

Theophanes was born in 760 to noble and rich parents. His father, governor of the region by the Aegean Sea, died while his son was still young. As heir to extensive estates in Bithynia and a considerable fortune, Theophanes spent his youth in "hunting and riding" and married a woman of comparable wealth. He entered imperial service with the rank of groom (*strator*) and was assigned the task of superintending the rebuilding of the fortifications at Cyzicus. He would undoubtedly have risen to high office, but decided to renounce his property and become a monk. He established his wife at a convent, while he founded a **{429}** monastery on the island of Kalonymos and spent six years there practising calligraphy. He later oversaw the construction of another monastery at Agros in Bithynia, where he remained for much of his life. When he refused to approve the iconoclastic policies of Leo V (813–20), he was placed under guard and then exiled, but died 23 days later on 12 March 818.[132]

In his fiftieth year Theophanes fell ill with a disease of the kidney and was confined to his bed for the rest of his life.[133] Shortly thereafter he was entrusted by his friend George Syncellus with the materials (*iaphormai*) necessary to continue the *Chronographia* that George had begun. He makes this clear in the preface to his own work, having first given a description of the achievement of George (cited above):

> Since, however, he (George) was overtaken by the end of his life and was unable to bring his plan to completion, but, as I have said, had carried his composition down to Diocletian when he left this earthly life and migrated unto the Lord, he bequeathed to me, who was his close friend, the book he had written and provid-

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[130] Thus regarding Rachel's tomb situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem he says (*ibid.*, 200–201 [= Mosshammer, 122]): "I often saw her sarcophagus, which lies above ground, as I was on my way in the direction of Bethlehem and the so-called Old Laura of S. Chariton." Other examples are given by Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?," 13 n. 16.

[131] George Syncellus, *Chronographia*, 10 (= Mosshammer, 6); this is quoted in full in the following entry on Theophanes.

[132] This paragraph is drawn from the two main sources for Theophanes' life: a panegyric by S. Theodore the Studite, probably delivered in 821 upon the deposition of Theophanes' body in his monastery, and a biography by Methodius, future patriarch of Constantinople (843–47), written before 832 (see Efthymiadis, "Le panégyrique de S. Théophane," 259–60).

[133] When called to Constantinople he had to be taken in a litter (*epi skimpodos*).

> ed materials with a view to completing what was missing. As for me, not being unaware of my lack of learning and my limited culture, I declined to do this inasmuch as the undertaking was above my powers. He, however, begged me very much not to shrink from it and leave the work unfinished, and so forced me to take it in hand. Being thus constrained by my obedience to him to undertake a task above my powers, I expended an uncommon amount of labour. For I, too, after seeking out to the best of my ability and examining many books, have written down accurately – as best I could – this chronicle from Diocletian down to the reign of Michael (811–13) and his son Theophylact, namely the reigns of the emperors and **{430}** the patriarchs and their deeds, together with their dates. I did not set down anything of my own composition, but have made a selection from the ancient historians and prose writers and have consigned to their proper places the events of every year, arranged without confusion. In this manner the readers may be able to know in which year of each emperor what event took place, be it military or ecclesiastical or civic or popular or of any other kind; for I believe that one who reads the actions of the ancients derives no small benefit from so doing.[134]

It is not obvious what were the *aphormai* that George had pressed upon Theophanes, but it has been argued convincingly by Mango that they constituted almost the whole of what goes under the name of Theophanes' *Chronographia*, and that Theophanes himself did little beyond a certain amount of redaction and the verification of some facts and calculations.[135] The most cogent arguments for this are that Theophanes is presented in his biography as "lacking a formal education" and, for the period of the *Chronographia's* composition (810–14), as "bed-ridden and motionless," and so incapable on both counts of undertaking the extensive research necessary for such a major project. Moreover, George, who had spent much time in Palestine, was better placed to gather information on Eastern affairs, the prominence of which are so much a feature of the *Chronographia*, and that he intended to write on this is stated in the preface to his own work:

> Taking the greater part of my material from them (the Bible, the apocrypha and the "more famous historians"), except for a few events which happened in our own times, I shall attempt to produce a kind of synopsis…, I mean about the various kings and the number of priests, prophets, apostles, martyrs and teachers…, collecting all of this as **{431}** best as I can from the aforementioned historians. And above all I shall describe to the best of my ability the God-hated testament that was set forth against Christ and our nation by the Idumeans in their tabernacles and the Ishmaelites, who are persecuting the people of the Spirit and are

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[134] Theophanes, 3–4 (tr. Mango, "preface").

[135] Mango, "Who Wrote the Chronicle of Theophanes?;" *idem* and Scott, *Theophanes*, lv. For Theophanes' sources see Pigulevskaja, "Theophanes' Chronographia and the Syriac Chronicles;" Proudfoot, "The Sources of Theophanes for the Heraclian Dynasty;" Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, lxxiv–xcv.

> devising that apostasy which the blessed Paul had prophesied for the last days (2 Thessalonians ii.3), down to the present year 6300 from the creation of the world, indiction 1 (808).[136]

Certainly Mango's theory would explain two rather odd facts about Theophanes' *Chronographia*: its annalistic format, which could then be seen as a borrowing from the Syriac tradition adopted by George while in Palestine, and the rather poorly edited condition of the text, in which differences in style and the spelling of names from one page to the next are allowed to stand.[137]

Since he is attempting to write a universal chronicle, Theophanes gives information on both Byzantine and Arab affairs. For the latter he is almost entirely dependent upon Theophilus of Edessa for the period 630–750. Even after this date, however, Theophanes continues to narrate events occurring in Muslim-ruled lands, until *ca.* 780. Either he made use of another chronicle for these three decades or, far more likely, he had at his disposal a continuation of Theophilus. The preponderance of material concerning northern Syria suggests that the continuator was from that region, and probably from Ḥimṣ, which features in four of the additional notices.[138] Most of the very few entries in Theophanes for the period 630–750 that are not from Theophilus are also concerned **{432}** with Syria, so it is likely that this continuator was a redactor as well, inserting the occasional notice within the text of Theophilus.[139] Theophanes was no scholar and had spent all his life under Byzantine rule, so he must have received this revised Theophilus in Greek. The addition of notices on the succession of the Melkite patriarchs of Antioch in the years 742–56 imply that the continuator/redactor was himself a Melkite clergyman, and so plausibly familiar with Greek as well as Syriac. This makes it likely that he was responsible for both the translation of Theophilus' chronicle into Greek and for its updating.[140] When compared to Agapius and Dionysius, it becomes immediately apparent that Theophilus, as he appears in Theophanes, has been substantially abbreviated and his

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[136] George Syncellus, *Chronographia*, 10 (= Mosshammer, 6).

[137] Examples are given by Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, lxii–lxiii, which consist of disagreement between text and rubric, repetitions of the same events, the appearance of same persons and places under variant names, sundry confusions and inconsistencies.

[138] Theophanes, 427 (anti-Abbasid rebellion near Ḥimṣ), 429 (Ḥimṣ captured by ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī), 431 (head of John the Baptist moved to Ḥimṣ), 452–53 (antiChristian actions in Ḥimṣ). Brooks, "Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers," 587, suggested a Palestinian author on the basis of the frequency of reports from that province, but any monk could be expected to comment upon events in the Holy Land and many would have spent time there. For this point and the north Syrian provenance of Theophilus' continuator see Conrad, "Capture of Arwad," 336–38.

[139] E.g. Theophanes, 348 (the death of Thomas, bishop of Apamea, and the burning of the bishop of Ḥimṣ), 412 (Iraqis burn the markets of Damascus).

[140] I.e. rather than that Theophilus was continued in Syriac and translated by another person into Greek.

notices have sometimes been amalgamated, thus creating a causal link between events which seem originally to have been unconnected.[141] This compression is probably a consequence of Theophanes' bias for Byzantine affairs and should not be attributed to the continuator.[142]

Patriarch Nicephorus (d. 828)

Nicephorus, a native of Constantinople and its patriarch during the years 806–15, chiefly authored theological works, but he is also credited with two historical compositions.[143] The first, entitled *Chronographikon syntomon* ("Short Chronography"), is no more than a set of **{433}** chronological tables, listing Biblical figures, kings and patriarchs. It exists in a number of manuscripts, but they differ in the number of tables they contain and not all attribute the composition to Nicephorus, but rather are anonymous. The second work, his *Historia syntomos* ("Short History") – commonly known by its Latin title, the *Breviarium* – narrates in brief the course of the Byzantine empire from the accession of Phocas in 602 to the marriage of Leo IV to Eirene in 769. It exists in two recensions, both by Nicephorus himself. One halts in 713 and most likely descends from a first draft, for the second is a reworking and completion of this first version. The differences are in style not substance, for Nicephorus' aim was apparently to render into ancient Greek a few chronicles written in the vernacular language. He did this with particular vigour in the first part of the *Breviarium*, which resulted in the suppression of almost all chronological indications.

Nicephorus wrote at a time when interest in ancient literary forms was reviving and when Byzantine culture in general was enjoying a certain degree of renaissance.[144] He evidently wished to do the same for history writing and to provide a continuation of Theophylact's *History*, which stopped at 602 and was the last representative of classicising history proper in Byzantium. Nicephorus did not fully live up to this aim, partly because of the paucity of sources for the seventh century and partly because he barely carried the work into his own lifetime, thus omitting the element of personal testimony so crucial in classical historiography. He presumably intended to continue it, but as it stands it halts at a time when he could only have

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[141] E.g. Theophanes, 365 ('Abd al-Malik's minting of coins and Justinian's breaking of the peace), 399 (earthquake in Syria and 'Umar II's banning of wine).

[142] It was probably Theophanes too who chose to compress the account of the Arab-Persian confrontation into one short notice. Theophanes' use of the *Syriac Common Source* is further discussed in the entry on "Theophilus of Edessa" in this chapter; for the worth of Theophanes for Umayyad history see also 'Abd al-Wahhab, "Ḥawlīyat Thiyufanīs."

[143] Nicephorus' literary output is surveyed by Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, 156–88. For the two historical works in particular see Mango, "The *Brevianum* of the Patriarch Nicephorus," and *idem*, *Nikephoros*, 2–19, from which most of the information in this paragraph is drawn.

[144] Cf. Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, 1–59; Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium*, 61–88.

been about eleven years old. Exactly when he wrote it is difficult to say, and opinions range from the 780s to the 820s.[145]

The part of the *Breviarium* dealing with the rise to power and reign of Heraclius (610–41) relies upon a Constantinopolitan chronicle, as may be inferred from the prominence given to events in the capital and from the lack of information about affairs further afield. The detailed nature of the narrative makes it likely that it was written soon after **{434}** 641 and by a Monothelete, since it is sympathetic to the patriarch Pyrrhus (638–41). The reign of Constans II (641–68) is passed over entirely, possibly for lack of sources. After this gap there is very little in the *Breviarium* that is not recorded by Theophanes, who is able to provide additional information, particularly on events in the East, largely based upon the *Syriac Common Source*. The sources that the two texts have in common need have been no more than two, most likely a Constantinopolitan chronicle favourable to Leo III and of the early eighth century,[146] and an iconophile chronicle hostile to Constantine V (741–75), composed towards/at the end of the latter's reign.[147]

Since the material for the period 610–41 was very likely compiled by a contemporary, it merits particular attention. Unfortunately the notice on the rise of Islam is very summary: "At about this time the Saracens began to appear from Yathrib (*Aithribos*), as it is called – this being a country of Arabia the Blessed – and attempted to lay waste neighbouring villages."[148] And the notices on the Arab conquests, though valuable because of their early date, are also very brief. The main interest of the *Breviarium* for Islamicists lies in the insights it furnishes into the first thoughts of the Byzantines about the Arabs,[149] and the very meagreness of its knowledge of events in the Muslim realm illustrates well the parochiality of the Constantinopolitan world-view of this time.

A Short Chronology ad annum 818

From the early ninth century onwards there is a proliferation of succinct chronologies, that is, lists of secular and religious authorities sometimes including brief historical notices. The most well known is that **{435}** attributed to the patriarch Nicephorus, belonging to the 820s in its earliest dateable form. Ševčenko has charac-

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[145] The evidence is examined by Mango, *Nikephoros*, 8–12, who tentatively concludes that the *Breviarium*is an *oeuvre de jeunesse*datable to the 780s; Ševčenko, "The Search for the Past in Byzantium," 280, feels that Nicephorus "was rewriting and stylistically improving… the *Breviarium* late in life."

[146] The description of the Arab siege of Constantinople of 716–18 in Nicephorus, §54, has indications of contemporaneity with the event (e.g. knowledge of weather conditions), and there is a dearth of Constantinopolitan information in both Nicephorus and Theophanes for the period 720–40. See Mango, *Nikephoros*, 15–16.

[147] Discussed by Alexander, *The Patriarch Nicephorus*, 158–62.

[148] Nicephorus, §18 (tr. Mango, 65–67).

[149] See the entry on "Martin I" in Chapter 6 above and on the "Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 below.

terised these as a "popularising vehicle" for the more heavyweight chronicles, such as that by George Syncellus.[150] As I have said above, one might also consider them as updated official lists which went on to provide the foundation for more extensive chronographical works, or as handbooks of chronology. But until more have been edited and begun to be studied, it is rash to attempt any analysis of them. The following example begins with a calculation of the years elapsed between Adam and Michael III's thirteenth year, pointing out major junctures along the way, then presents a large number of lists, first of historical miscellany, then of church leaders and secular rulers:

> Computation of years from Adam → Flood → Abraham → Exodus → Solomom and building of Temple → destruction of Temple by Babylonians → Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus Christ → Diocletian → "the 7th year of the rule of Constantine, great-grandson of Heraclius" (676)[151] → "the thirteenth year of the rule of Michael the Young, his mother Theodora and his sister Thecla" (854).
>
> How often and when were the Jews subjugated? …
>
> In another way: on the conquests of Jerusalem …[152]
>
> On seven centres that dominated the world …
>
> On the date of composition of the four Gospels …
>
> **{436}** The patriarchs of Rome from S. Peter to Paschal I (d. 824).
>
> The patriarchs of Alexandria from S. Mark to the Melkite Peter (d. 651).
>
> The patriarchs of Antioch from S. Peter to the Melkite Anastasius II (d. 609).
>
> The patriarchs of Jerusalem from James to Modestus (d. 631).
>
> The patriarchs of Constantinople from Metrophanes to Methodius (d. 847).
>
> The jurisdictions of the various patriarchates.
>
> Lists (27) of the kings of various peoples …

List no. 26 = the Sasanian rulers to "Boran, daughter of Khusrau. The rule of the Persians was transferred to the Saracens. In the year 6131 of the world and the thir-

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[150] Ševčenko, "The Search for the Past in Byzantium," 284; he discusses *Short Chron. 818* at 284–87. See also Mango, "The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography," 365–67.

[151] I.e. Constantine IV, and the text continues: "under whom Stephen the philosopher of Alexandria interpreted the canon" (*Short Chron. 818*, 63). Stephen of Alexandria would have been dead by this time (see the entry on him in Chapter 8 above), so presumably the computation was attributed to him.

[152] Twelve conquests are recorded, the last by Khusrau; once liberated by Heraclius the city then fell to the "Hagarenes," who have held it "up until now" (*ibid.*, 67).

teenth year of Heraclius there began the rule of the Saracens: Mouameth, 9 years; Aboubacharos, 3 years; Oumar, 12 years; Outhman, 10 years; anarchy and war, 4 years; Mabias, 19 years; Ēzit, 3 years; Maroua, 1 year; Abdemelech, 21 years; Ioulit, 10 years; Souleiman, 3 years; Oumar, 2 years; Izith, 3 years; Isan, 19 years; Oulit, 1 years; Izit "the deficient," 1 year; Maroua, 6 years; Aboulabas, 4 years; Abougiafar, 21 years; Maadi, the son of the latter, 10 years; Mouse, son of the latter, 1 year; Aaron, the brother of the latter, 20 years; anarchy and war among the latter's sons for 7 years up until the present 11th indiction.

Presently (*nyn*) God will curtail the years of their rule and will raise the horn of the Christian empire against them.[153] **{437}** This text is obviously composite. One layer must go back to 818, as is clear from the prophecy about the imminent curtailment of Arab rule, but the compiler then continues, now copying out the *Short Chronology* of Epiphanius, bishop of Constantia on Cyprus. This counts from Adam and concludes with two lists of rulers: "pagan emperors who ruled in Rome" starting from Augustus, and "Christian emperors who ruled in Byzantium" ending with Basil I. Since the latter's regnal years are not given, we can deduce that the final compilation was put together sometime in the reign of Basil (867–86).

ARMENIAN TEXTS[154]

Armenian historiography begins in the fifth century with a burst of national history which endeavoured to give the Armenian people and their mythology a place in the scheme of Biblical history. The traumatic events of the seventh century demanded a more universal approach and thereafter, though the focus remained Armenia, the other nations that impinged upon it were also accorded some consideration. This is true already of Sebeos and is well illustrated by the title of Lewond's *History*: "On the subject of the appearance of Muḥammad and of his successors, how they ruled the world and particularly our Armenian nation." From the ninth century, though ostensibly written in the fifth, the *History of the Armenians* of Moses Khorenats'i started to make its influence felt. In particular, the tripartite division of his work into ancient, intermediate and recent history was followed by many later historians such

[153] *Ibid.*, 96–97. Hārūn al-Rashīd died in 809 and so seven years of civil war would take us to 816; the nearest eleventh indiction to this is 818.

[154] Armenian historical texts are surveyed by Inglisian, "Die armenische Literatur," esp. 177–201; Etmekjian, *History of Armenian Literature*, 225–63; Ter-Mkrtichyan, *Armyanskie istochniki*, 17–65 (focusing on those who wrote about Palestine); Hairapetian, *History of Armenian Literature*, 160–71, 223–35. Those that have something to say about Muḥammad are listed with bibliography by Caspar *et al*, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1980), 279–86, and discussed by Thomson, "Muḥammad and the Origin of Islam in Armenian Literary Tradition." An overview and some analysis is offered by Muyldermans, "L'historiographie arménienne;" Dowsett, "Armenian Historiography;" Mahé, "Entre Moïse et Mahomet: réflexions sur l'historiographie arménienne." For literature on the authors cited in the following paragraph consult Thomson, *Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature.*

as Thomas Artsruni (→ 904), Ukhtanes (→ 980s), Stephen Asolik of Taron (→ 1004), and Mkhitar of Ani (→ early thirteenth century).

{438} Even if this schema was not explicitly adopted, most Armenian historians at least felt obliged to commence their narratives from the earliest times, as did John Catholicos (→ 923), Samuel of Ani (→ 1180), Vardan Arewelts'i (→ 1267)[155] and Kirakos Ganjakets'i (→ thirteenth century). But the principal feature of Armenian historiography is its variety. Thus we have histories of particular regions (Zenob Glak and John Mamikonian on Taron,[156] Stephen Orbelian on Siounia), of particular periods (Aristakes Lastiverts'i on the years 1002–72, Matthew of Edessa on 951–1136), and of particular peoples and families (Moses Daskhurants'i on the Albanians; many historians show partisanship for one of the noble families of Armenia, like the Mamikonians, Bagratunis or Artsrunis).

The only Armenian historians active in the seventh and eighth centuries whose works have come down to us are Sebeos and Lewond, and it is largely from these two that later writers derive their information about this period.[157] We know almost nothing about either author except that they were churchmen.[158] Their works exhibit a number of common features. Both are more in the style of a history than a chronicle, since they treat a fairly short passage of time, devoting most of their attention to their own lifetimes,[159] concentrate on politics and **{439}** Warfare[160] only

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[155] Muyldermans, *La domination arabe en Arménie*, 73–141, gives an annotated translation of the period from the rise of Islam to 888; a study and translation of the whole work is given by Thomson, "The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc'i," 125–40 (study), 141–224 (translation).

[156] Ostensibly of the fourth and seventh century respectively, but see Avdoyan, *Pseudo-Yovhannës Mamikonean: the History of Taron*, who argues that this text is a tenth-century compilation.

[157] Though both Thomas Artsruni and John Catholicos do adduce additional material, which suggests that more history writing was going on in this period than we know about. For example, John Catholicos was able to produce a list of Armenian patriarchs replete with names, geographic origins, length of office and pertinent historical notices (see Boisson-Chenorhokian, "La liste des patriarches arméniens par Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i").

[158] Stephen Asolik of Taron, *Universal History*, 1.I (tr. Dulaurier, 4), includes in his inventory of Armenian historians: "Lewond the priest, who informs us about the invasions of the Arabs and the woes which their tyranny visited upon Armenia."

[159] Bar the first one and a half chapters Sebeos focuses on the years 590–660. Lewond begins with Muḥammad and the early caliphate, which he summarises from Sebeos, gives a very few lines on the period 660–700, and then covers in detail the years 701–88. If we believe him that he "heard from veracious people" about an incident in 703 (Lewond, IX), then we would have to assume that he was writing not long after the date of the final notice in his work (Stephen of Dwin's accession to the patriarchate of Armenia in 788).

[160] Sebeos treats ecclesiastical matters more often than Lewond, but the latter furnishes an exchange of letters on theological issues between 'Umar II and Leo III that occupies a third of his *History*.

rarely give dates (and then in terms of regnal years rather than an era), provide speeches for their characters and offer personal comments and the occasional anecdote.[161] Neither can be said, however, to be classicising history, for they are replete with scriptural quotations and their personal comments tend to be of a moralising kind or lamenting the sad plight of the Armenian people and their church. Both are hostile to Arab rule, but are nevertheless able to present us with a number of calm and balanced observations. Thus Lewond notes that Muḥammad ibn Marwān "stayed firm to the written oath that he had given" to the catholicos Sahak; that the governor ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz ibn Ḥatīm ibn Nuʻman al-Bāhilī "was a man of prudence, full of earthly wisdom, a fabulist and teller of proverbs… and by stern reproofs he subdued the haughty arrogance of the sons of Ishmael;" and that when the patrician Ashot Bagratuni complained that for three years "the official maintenance given to the Armenian nobles and their cavalry had been withheld," the caliph Hisham "honoured him worthily and fulfilled his request, giving orders that three years of arrears be paid to him on the basis of 100,000 [*dirhams*] for each year."[162] Finally, both make claims about the provenance of some of their information on the Muslims that should make us take their reports seriously. Sebeos specifies prisoners-of-war who imparted to him eyewitness accounts, and Lewond states that "we heard from veracious people" and "we have learned from the enemy itself."[163] And both tender material that supports their assertions.[164]

CHRISTIAN ARABIC TEXTS[165]

{440} Except for a brief revival in the late twelfth and thirteenth century, history writing in Syriac declined from the middle of the ninth century. This is principally because Arabic gradually replaced other languages of the Middle East as the chief

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[161] E.g. Sebeos, IV (tr. Macler, 28): piety of Khusrau's wife Shirin; *ibid.*, XVI (tr. Macler, 44–45): discovery of a fragment of the Cross; Lewond, X (tr. Arzoumanian, 67): ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz ibn Ḥātim's role in the destruction of Dwin when a boy.

[162] Lewond, IX, X, XXI (tr. Arzoumanian, 63, 66–67, 114).

[163] *Ibid.*, IX, XXXIV (tr. Arzoumanian, 63, 137).

[164] Examples from Sebeos are given in the entry on him in Chapter 4 above. See Lewond, VIII (no matter if we die "for our lawgiver Muḥammad has promised us paradise"), XXII (Marwān ibn Muḥammad "set aside one fifth of both the captives and the booty, and sent them to their caliph Hishām"), XXIII ("they asked the trustworthy men of their religion, whom they called the *kurd*"), XXVII (on the Abbasid revolution: "Some of them, who were from the lineage of their lawgiver, separated themselves from the rest and went as fugitives to the land of Khurasan where they lived in secrecy for some time. Later they united the troops of Khurasan together and appointed Qaḥṭaba and a certain Abū Muslim as their commander, the latter being a wily man regarding astrological magic") [tr. Arzoumanian, 61, 114, 115, 121].

[165] Christian Arabic historical texts are surveyed by Cheikho, "Al-tawārīkh al-naṣrānīya fi l-ʻarabīya," 482–87 (lost works), 487–99 (extant works); Samir, "Christian Arabic Literature," 455–59.

medium of scholarship. Already in the late ninth and early tenth century we hear of a number of Christian historians writing in Arabic, the earliest being Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq (d. 877), who documented the period from Creation to the reign of Mutawakkil (847–61),[166] and Qays al-Mārūnī, who dealt with "chronology, the beginning of Creation, the prophets, scriptures, cities, nations, the annals of the kings of the Romans and of other peoples" and concluded his survey with the caliphate of Muktafī (902–908).[167] These pioneering Christian Arabic historical texts have not come down to us, and the first to survive are the following:

Agapius, Bishop of Manbij (wr. 940s)

The earliest manuscript of this author's chronicle, Sinai arab 580 of the late tenth century,[168] assigns it the following title: "The book of history, the composition of Maḥbūb son of Constantine the Byzantine of Manbij, the title of which is [dedicated] to the man crowned with the virtues of wisdom, versed in the ways of philosophy, commended **{441}** by the truths of knowledge, righteous and benevolent, Abū Mūsā ʿĪsā son of Ḥusayn."[169] Unfortunately we know nothing about the latter character and very little about Maḥbūb himself beyond what is in the heading.[170] His work begins with Creation and halts abruptly at the end of the reign of Leo IV (775–80), but he would seem to have continued until *ca.* 942, since at one point he states that "the kingdom of the Arabs" has endured for 330 years.[171] The work was already known to Masʿūdī (d. 956) who deemed it one of the best books he had seen by the Melkites on history.[172]

Agapius has almost no information for the years 630–754 that is not drawn from Theophilus of Edessa. The only other source that we can detect is a Muslim chronology, which is revealed from the occasional provision of a Hijri date or the full name of a Muslim authority, and also from such notices as who led the pilgrimage in certain years and who the governors were for a particular caliph.[173] It would

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[166] The result is described by Ibn Abī Uṣaybīʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ*, 1.200.

[167] Commended by Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 154, as a "fine composition."

[168] See Gibson, "Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts," 123–24; Atiya, *The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai*, 23.

[169] Instead of *Kitāb al-taʾrīkh taʾlīf Maḥbūb… ʿunwānuhu li-l-mukallal…*, as in Sinai arab 580, the Bodleian manuscript (Hunt 478 dated 1320) begins *Kitāb ai-ʿunwān al-mukallal…*, and this is how the work has come to be known (i.e. as the "Book of the Title").

[170] He is commonly referred to by the Greek equivalent of his name, Agapius. Such information as we do have about him is collected by Vasiliev, "Agapij Manbidžskij;" see also Graf, *GCAL*, 2.39–41, and Nasrallah, *Mouvement littéraire dans l'église melchite* 2.2, 50–52.

[171] Agapius, 456. The year AH 330 corresponds to 941–42; this is equated by Agapius to AG 1273, but a marginal note says "it is wrong," and indeed it should read AG 1253.

[172] Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 154.

[173] E.g. Agapius, 474 (ʿUmar replaced Khālid with Abū ʿUbayda as commander of Syria), 476 (ʿUmar appointed Abū ʿUbayda over Egypt in addition to Syria), 477 (ʿUmar named Muʿāwiya governor of Syria in place of Abū ʿUbayda), 483 (ʿUthmān led the pilgrimage in

also seem to have covered the first Arab civil war,[174] but either stopped soon thereafter or was no longer used by Agapius, for he adduces no more material **{442}** of Muslim provenance. He may, however, have continued to use it for chronological purposes, for most of his notices are dated according to the years of the reigning caliph. Agapius is rather erratic in his use of Theophilus, sometimes reproducing him in full, at other times abbreviating him considerably.

Eutychius of Alexandria

The apprentice physician Saīd ibn Baṭrīq, who adopted the name Eutychius when elected patriarch of Alexandria (935–40), is credited with a number of works. The only one securely attributed to him is a universal history, of which we have a single copy of the original (Alexandrian) recension and numerous exemplars of the very popular (Antiochene) continuation by Yaḥyā ibn Saīd al-Anṭakī (wr. 1030s).[175] Eutychius sought to compose a basic reference work made up of "brief, concise accounts," beginning with Creation and concluding in his own time.[176] The narrative certainly moves at a rapid pace, and the 300 years or so of Muslim rule are dealt with in less than 90 pages of printed text. Its value to us here is minimal, since it relies heavily on Muslim sources for the history of Islamic times and passes over Muḥammad's life and teaching except to note the date of his emigration to Medina and his death.[177] Eutychius does, however, preserve some material not found elsewhere, especially as regards events of the early seventh century. For example, he gives novel information about Jewish activities at this **{443}** time;[178] he recounts

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the eighth year of his reign), 485 ('Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās led the pilgrimage in the year of 'Uthmān's murder), 487 (Mu'āwiya's governors), 488 (Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam led the pilgrimage, 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ died). Also the notice on Mu'āwiya's capture of Rhodes, which adds details to Theophilus' account, may derive from this Muslim chronology (see Conrad, "Arabs and the Colossus," 173).

[174] It is, however, very difficult to determine the content of Theophilus' account of the first civil war, since Theophanes, Dionysius and Agapius each have different accounts.

[175] The Alexandrian recension is preserved, though with some gaps, by Ms. Sinai arab 580 of the early tenth century. Because of the disjointed nature of its entries, Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios*, argues that Eutychius was not much of a historian, simply collating "selected stories and legends" with very little analysis or comment. Griffith, "Historiography in the *Annals* of Eutychius," shows that there is greater coherence and authorial presence than admitted by Breydy. For discussion and references regarding Eutychius' life and works see Breydy, *Etudes sur Sa'īd b. Baṭrīq*.

[176] Eutychius, *Annales*, 1.5.

[177] See Breydy, "Un fragment du traditionniste 'Uthmān ibn Ṣālih identifié dans les Annales d'Eutychios," and "Les Annales originales d'Eutychès." For some comments on the sources of the whole history see *idem*., "Aspects méconnus des Annales d'Eutychés."

[178] Eutychius, *Annales*, 1.216 (Jews join Persians in destroying churches in Jerusalem), 1.218–19 (Jewish revolt at Tyre), 2.5–7 (inhabitants of Jerusalem persuade Heraclius to punish Jews).

how Manṣūr, fiscal governor of Damascus, tried by a ruse to divert the Byzantine army from his city;[179] he offers a divergent account of the patriarch Sophronius' encounter with 'Umar I in Jerusalem;[180] and he records an incident about Muslims defacing an image of Heraclius that had been used as a boundary marker.[181] These and other reports would, however, require careful evaluation before being accepted.

The Chronicle of Siirt

This text, so called because the manuscript was found in the town of southern Turkey bearing that name, narrates the history of the saints and patriarchs of the Nestorian church, and of the principal events of the Roman, Persian and Arab empires that impinged upon it. Its interest for us is somewhat limited since the the two volumes that contain the work are both defective at the beginning and end: it starts abruptly in 251, has a lacuna in the middle corresponding to the years 423–83, and halts mid-sentence in 650.[182] It presumably began with Jesus, demonstrating the continuity of the Eastern church with Christianity's fount. How far it extended is less easy to say. The mention of place names such as Baghdad (founded in 762), Samarra (830s), Jazirat ibn 'Umar (founded by and named after Ḥasan ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab al-Taghlibī, d. *ca.* 865), and the reference to Moṣul as the seat of a metropolitan (from 820s), take us to the late ninth century.[183]

{444} Further indications can be gleaned from the sources which the chronicler names at intervals. The *Ecclesiastical History* of Daniel bar Maryam, a contemporary of Isho'yahb III (d. 659), is cited five times, and that of two other approximate contemporaries, Elias of Merw and Bar Sahde, are cited two and three times respectively. The works of the eighth-century theologian Shahdust, bishop of Ṭirhan, and the biographies (*tarājim*) compiled by the catholicos Isho' bar Nun (824–28) are each excerpted twice. And the Melkite philosopher and physician Qusṭā ibn Lūqā, who died sometime in the reign of the caliph Muqtadir (907–32), is cited four times, bringing us into the tenth century.[184] A *terminus ante quem* is given by the observation

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[179] Eutychius, *Annales*, 2.14; see Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 124–25.

[180] Eutychius, *Annales*, 2.17–18; see Busse, "'Omar in Jerusalem," 107–109; Wilken, *The Land Made Holy* 235–37. In general, Eutychius gives much information about Jerusalem in the early seventh century.

[181] Eutychius, *Annales*, 19; see Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 166.

[182] On the manuscripts of this work see Degen, "Zwei Miszellen zur Chronik von Se'ert," 84–91.

[183] Fiey, "Īšō'dnāḥ et la Chronique de Seert," 455; note that the text of Muḥammad's pact with the Christians of Najran was said to have been discovered in AH 265/879 (*Chron. Siirt* CII, *PO* 13, 601).

[184] References and further literature on each are given by Sako, "Les sources de la Chronique de Séert," where more minor sources are also noted. He does not mention, however, Theophilus of Edessa, who seems also to have been used, most likely indirectly, by the chronicler of Siirt (see n. 52 above).

that Isho'yahb III was the last catholicos to bear this name,[185] which means that the work antedates the appointment of Isho'yahb IV in 1020. The *Chronicle of Siirt* was, therefore, composed between 912 and 1020.

The only objection to this dating comes from an incidental remark concerning the Persian emperor Shiroi:

> Then Shiroi went out to Ḥulwan for the summer in accordance with the custom of the kings of the Persians. He fell ill there and died, and the length of his reign was six months, or it is said eight. The people grieved for him because of his goodness towards them {12mm blank} as happened in our days with Ẓāhir, may God sanctify his soul.[186]

The editor Scher took this to be a reference to the Abbasid caliph Ẓāhir (1225–26), made either by the author or a later copyist. Seybold rejected this and asserted that the Fatimid Ẓāhir (1021–36) must be meant, for he, like Shiroi, died of the plague.[187] His view was accepted and the *Chronicle of Siirt* has since been assigned to the eleventh century.[188] But the text makes no mention of the plague; the point is **{445}** that the people "in our days" grieved for Ẓāhir as they did for Shiroi. The Abbasid Ẓāhir is the obvious candidate; he too died after a very short reign and Muslim writers extol his virtuousness, benevolence and piety.[189] The slight gap between the main text and the remark, the absence of any reference to a source later than Qusṭā ibn Lūqā and the ignorance about Isho'yahb IV – all this indicates that the remark does not belong to the author, but to a thirteenth-century copyist, and so does not affect our dating of the original to the tenth century.

The only other personal intrusion into the text of the chronicle comes at the end of the entry on Babai of Nisibis (d. 626): *wa-qad sharaḥnā akhbārahu fī tash'īt 'mlt lahu*. One should probably translate: "We have set forth (i.e. in greater detail) his story in a biography I made (*'amaltu*) of him."[190] The change of pronouns is somewhat odd, and Scher suggested that one might read: "We have set forth his story according to a biography which has been made (*'umilat*) of him," by which he understood "what we have just said about Babai has been taken from his biography."[191] But this is a rather pleonastic statement, and the former rendering seems to make

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[185] *Chron. Siirt* LIV, *PO* 13, 460.

[186] *Ibid.* XCII, *PO* 13, 553–54.

[187] Scher in *ibid*, "intro.," *PO* 4, 227–28; Seybold, "Review," 743.

[188] E.g. Baumstark, *GSL*, 5; Graf, *GCAL*, 2.195–96.

[189] See *EI*[1], *s.v.* "al-ẓāhir," which gives references.

[190] The omission of a referential pronoun (correctly read here: *'amaltuhā*) is not unusual in Christian Arabic.

[191] Scher in *Chron. Siirt* L, *PO*13, 456 n. 1; *tash'īt* is a loan-word from Syriac, where it is feminine, so *'umilat* is not unexpected here. The comment of Fiey ("Išō'dnaḥ et la Chronique de Seert," 458 n.) that the passive is beyond the capability of a Christian Arabic writer is exaggerated.

better sense. In this case one must decide if it is a remark of an earlier writer that has passed unedited, or was made by the compiler of the *Chronicle of Siirt* himself.

If one accepts the latter conclusion, does this help us to identify the author? Babai does feature in the *Book of Chastity*, a collection of the lives of founders of monasteries and writers on the monastic life by Isho'dnaḥ, metropolitan of Baṣra. Though not exploiting this point, Nautin did propose that Isho'dnah was the author of the *Chronicle of Siirt*. This he argues on the grounds that the six quotes from Isho'dnah by Elias of Nisibis are also found in the *Chronicle of Siirt* and with similar wording.[192] There are as well, however, significant differences, and the resemblances are not so striking as to decide the **{446}** issue. Fiey compared the *Book of Chastity* and the *Chronicle of Siirt*, which again revealed parallels and discrepancies, but admitted no conclusion.[193] Moreover, though it is unsure when he flourished, one hesitates to extend Isho'dnah's lifetime into the tenth century. Most of the characters of the *Book of Chastity* lived in the sixth and seventh centuries, none later than the eighth. There is mention of the catholicos Timothy I (780–823) and of the translation of the body of the monk Isho'zeka in 850, but these could be later glosses, for the composition shows signs of reworking.[194] And even this leaves us more than six decades away from the *terminus post quem* for the *Chronicle of Siirt*. It seems better, then, to leave the matter of authorship open pending further research.

The History of the Patriarchs

This text comprises the biographies of the leaders of the Coptic church of Egypt, beginning with S. Mark, the disciple and evangelist who preached and was martyred in Alexandria. It existed as individual *Lives* and short histories,[195] mostly in Coptic, until at least the tenth century, when these were assembled and translated into Arabic where necessary by one Mawhub ibn Manṣūr ibn Mufarrij (d. *ca.* 1100). This first redaction does not survive, but was incorporated into the numerous continuations that carried on as late as 1942. The two earliest recensions are found in Ms. Hamburg arab 304, dated 1260, and the "Vulgate" recension in Ms. Paris arab 301–302 of the fifteenth century. The former is a continuation of Mawhūb's work up to 1166 and after that copied until 1260. It is the closest we have to Mawhūb's original, and the Vulgate is simply a reworking of it. The latter has a preface which assigns the compilation to the renowned Coptic theologian Severus ibn al-Muqaffa', but this is not in the Hamburg text. **{447}** The attribution was made in the period between the two recensions, presumably to gain greater authority for the work, and the real con-

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[192] Nautin, "L'auteur de la 'Chronique de Seert': Īšō'denaḥ de Baṣra."

[193] Fiey, "Īšō'dnaḥ et la Chronique de Seert," 447–53, where he urges caution.

[194] See the entry on "Isho'dnaḥ of Baṣra" in Chapter 5 above.

[195] These short histories would have been largely based on the individual *Lives*, but adduce some additional material. Compare the *Life* of Isaac of Rakoti with the entry on him in the *History of the Patriarchs*, which comes from the history by the archdeacon George (see further on in this entry).

tribution of Severus was simply the composition of a few biographies of tenth-century patriarchs.[196]

There are two portions of particular interest to us. The first comprises *Lives* 27–42, covering the period from Chalcedon to the early eighth century, and was written by a certain George, as is described in this passage:

> There began to write of events after that, from the father Cyril (d. 444)… to the father and confessor Alexander (704–29), … the doctor and scribe of his (Alexander's) time, who was the archdeacon and companion of the father and patriarch Abba Simon, patriarch of Alexandria (692–700), and his scribe, namely the monk Abba George. And he wrote that in the holy mountain of Abba Macarius in the Wadi Ḥabīb, and he informed us what occurred in the time of the arch-unbeliever Marcian and what troubles came upon our fathers and what came after them up to the time of Sulayman ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (715–17), king of the Muslims.[197]

The second section was composed by the author of this comment upon archdeacon George, namely John, bishop of Wasim, who continued George's account down to the time of the patriarch Michael I (743–67).[198] The narratives of both these men are a very rich source of information for relations between the Muslim and Christian authorities in Egypt, for the fiscal and administrative decisions of the country's governors and for a number of major events of Islamic history.[199] For example, Bishop John devotes 40 pages to the Abbasid revolution, and **{448}** the detail he gives lends credibility to his statement that "I beheld what I wrote with my own eyes."[200] The only *caveats* one must bear in mind are that some editing was probably effected by Mawhūb, and that the corruption evident in parts of the notice on Muḥammad show that translation from Coptic and subsequent copying took its toll.[201]

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[196] For a full discussion and further literature see den Heijer, *Mawhūb ibn Manṣūr*; on Mawhūb himself see *idem*, "Mawhūb ibn Manṣūr."

[197] *Hist. Patriarchs* XVIII, *PO* 5, 90–91; *Hist. Patriarchs* (*Hamburg*), 152, calls him Mark. See Johnson, "Further Remarks on the Arabic History of the Patriarchs," 113–14; den Heijer, *Mawhūb ibn Manṣūr*, 7–8, 121–24, 142–43.

[198] *Ibid.*, 8, 118–19, 145–46.

[199] For some examples see the entries on "Benjamin I" and "Isaac of Rakoti" in Chapter 4 above, on "ps.-Athanasius" in Chapter 8 above, and on "Sacred Direction in Islam" and the "Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 below.

[200] *Hist. Patriarchs* XVIII, *PO* 5, 91; and when he describes Marwān's death he notes: "We were witnessing it" (*ibid.*, 187). See Amélineau, "Les derniers jours et la mort du khalife Merouân II."

[201] E.g. *ibid.* XIV, *PO* 1, 492: "He (Muḥammad) took possession of Damascus and Syria, crossed the Jordan and dammed its waters (*sādamahu?*)." Cf. *Hist. Patriarchs* (*Hamburg*), 99: "This Muḥammad and his companions took possession of Damascus and Syria, crossed the Jordan and… (*wa-bayn al-nahrayn sbādāmyh?*)."

JEWISH TEXTS[202]

For the rabbis the Bible was much more than a repository of past history; it was also a revealed pattern for the whole of history. New events, therefore, required no explanation, since they could easily be subsumed to familiar archetypes. The conflicts between the Jews and Romans/Byzantines were simply the playing out of the feud between Israel and Edom or Jacob and Esau, the Persian capture of Jerusalem in 614 echoed that by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, and the Muslims were to be identified with the sons of Ishmael. Thus the nature and course of the Jews' relations with the various gentiles had already been delineated and needed no further comment. For this and other reasons the rabbis channelled all their efforts into the elaboration of law and scripture and worried little about history writing. All that we do have are various lists of generations and chains of authorities which serve different purposes, but all essentially emphasise the continuity of the Jewish people and their tradition. The *Lesser Order of the World* presents the chronology of the generations from Adam to Mar Zutra III, the thirty-first exilarch, who in the year 4280 of Creation (520) went to become chief of the Sanhedrin in Palestine. Later hands have added another eight exilarchs taking the work up to 4564 of Creation **{449}** (804), as is stated by the colophon of one manuscript.[203] The object of this work was apparently to demonstrate that the Babylonian exilarchs were direct descendants of David, but their successors not so and therefore not legitimate. The *Order of the Tannaites and Amoraites*, probably composed in 885, the *Letter* of Sherira, gaon of Pumbedita (968–98), and the *Book of Tradition* of Abraham ibn Daud (d. 1180) each provide a detailed enumeration of Jewish teachers from earliest times with historical background, demonstrating that there existed a complete and accurate record of the history of the non-scriptural tradition of the rabbis, so refuting the Karaite contention that this tradition was a late fabrication.[204]

Although no histories proper by Byzantine Jews have come down to us, there are hints that some historical records were kept. Numerous snippets of historical information are scattered throughout the two aforementioned works of Sherira and Ibn Daud. Both relate, for example, how 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb, "king of the Arabs," came to Babylonia after the Arabs had been in control of the country for a number of years; "Rabbi Isaac, head of the academy, went out to him and this king honoured him in the year 4420 (659–60)."[205] Another example is the following Judaeo-Arabic fragment found in the Geniza collection:

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[202] Comments on what few Jewish historical texts we have are given in the prefaces to Neubauer's *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*; *JE*, *s.v.* "Historiography;" Yerushalmi, *Zakhor. Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, 31–52. I say Jewish texts for simplicity, since they are in Aramaic, Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic.

[203] See *JE*, *s.v.* "Seder 'Olam Zuṭa." It is designated "lesser" to distinguish it from an earlier work originally simply called *Seder 'Olam* ("Order of the World").

[204] Discussion and further references given by Cohen, *Book of Tradition*, xliii–lxii.

[205] Abraham ibn Daud, *Sefer ha-qabbālā*, 34–35/44–45; cf. Sherira Gaon, *Letter*, 50.

> There were present all the Muslims, in the city and in the district, and present with them were a group of the Jews. Then he (ʿUmar) ordered them to sweep the holy place and to clean it, and ʿUmar was watching over them all the time. Whenever a remnant[206] was uncovered, he would ask the elders of the Jews about the rock, which is the foundation stone (*even shetīyā*), and one of the sages would mark out for him the spot until it was uncovered. And then he ordered **{450}** that the wall of the holy place be built, that a dome be built upon the rock and that it be plated with gold.
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> After this the Jews sent [word] to the rest of [the Jews of] Syria, informing them what ʿUmar had agreed with them. They (the other Jews) then sent [word] to them (the Jews in Jerusalem), saying: "What is the number of people who may transfer to Jerusalem?" So they entered before ʿUmar and said to him: "How many do you instruct, commander of the faithful, that may transfer to this city of the peoples (*ṭā'ifāt*) of the Jews?" ʿUmar replied: "[I will hear] what your opponents say, then you speak, and after that I shall speak to remove the disagreement that is between you." Then he summoned the patriarch and his companions, and said to them: "I have agreed with these Jews [that they live] in the ruined part of the city. There shall transfer to here however many of them you accept." The patriarch said: "Those who shall transfer with their families and children shall be fifty households," to which the Jews replied: "We shall not be less than two hundred households." And so the negotiations went on between them until ʿUmar proposed seventy households and they agreed to that. Then he said: "Where in the city do you want to live?" And they said: "In the south of the city," that is, the market of the Jews, for their aim was to be near the holy place and its gates, and thus the fountain of Silwan for immersion. The commander of the faithful granted them that, then from Tiberias and its environs seventy households transferred with their women and children, and they rebuilt their area with buildings that had lain destroyed for generations until grown old.[207]

Because this text is late, probably eleventh century, one at first assumes that it is dependent upon Muslim sources, which also mention the participation of Jews, notably Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, in the clearing of the **{451}** Temple Mount and their role in locating the Rock.[208] Yet it is equally possible that the Muslim tradition was influenced by reports circulating amongst Jews. Certainly the above text gives details, such as the number of families that relocated to Jerusalem, that could well derive from records maintained by the Jewish community of the city.

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[206] The text has *shadwa*, adding a *tā' marbūṭa*; Arabic lexicographers usually give *shadw* (e.g. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, *s.v.* "*shdā*:" *al-shadw kull shay' qalīl min kathīr*).

[207] Judaeo-Arabic Chronicle, fol. 1a–b.

[208] These reports are collected by Busse, "'Omar in Jerusalem," 84–85, 91–92; cf. Wāsiṭī, *Faḍā'il*, 43–44 (*bāb kānat al-yahūd tusriju maṣābiḥ bayt al-maqdis*).

SAMARITAN TEXTS[209]

The seven Samaritan texts that are often grouped together under the term "chronicles" are a rather diverse bunch and include genealogies and a midrash as well as more straightforward historical works. The earliest complete example is the *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh* of Abū l-Fatḥ ibn Abī l-Ḥasan, who, having complained to the high priest Pinhas in AH 753/1352 about the people's "lack of familiarity with the knowledge of the affairs of past generations" and the "disarray" of their chronicles, was subsequently charged by the same Pinhas with "putting together a history comprising all the actions of the Fathers, from the beginning of the world… up to recent times."[210] He embarked upon this task three years later and managed to document the period from Adam as far as Muḥammad; this was then continually updated until as late as 1853. The additional material is useful for illustrating Samaritan dealings with Jews, Christians and Muslims in Islamic times, but it has yet to be studied.[211]

DERIVATIVE ACCOUNTS

There are numerous other chroniclers who narrate events of early Islamic history, but though they do occasionally adduce new material **{452}** and so should be consulted, they are, nevertheless, mostly dependent upon the accounts of those authors discussed above or on Muslim historians for their notices on Islam, and so they have not been included in this chapter.[2122] Of the more well-known Greek chronographers George the Monk (→ 842), Symeon the Logothete (→ 948), ps.-Symeon (→ 963), Leo the Grammarian (→ 1013), George Cedrenus (→ 1057), John Zonaras (→ 1118) and Theodore Skoutariotes (→ 1261) all draw, whether directly or indirectly, upon Nicephorus and Theophanes.[213] Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), ps.-Jacob

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[209] Samaritan chronicles are surveyed by MacDonald, *Theology of the Samaritans*, 40–49; Stenhouse, "Samaritan Chronicles;" Crown *et al.*, *Companion to Samaritan Studies*, 50–53 (*s.v.* "Chronicles"). I say Samaritan texts for simplicity, since they are in Aramaic, Hebrew and Arabic.

[210] Abū l-Fatḥ, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*, 4. On all matters to do with this text and its author see now the commentary in the new edition of Stenhouse cited in Bibliography I below.

[211] Some comments on Samaritans in this period are given by Crown, "Samaritan History: the Byzantine and Moslem Period," 77–81. Dr. Milka Levi-Rubin of the Hebrew University is currently working on one of these continuations of Abū l-Fatḥ.

[212] And what new information they do adduce is very likely to be an expansion/distortion of earlier reports; e.g. Michael Psellus, *Historia syntomos*, §76 (tr. Aerts, 65): "On his victorious way home the emperor (Heraclius) met with Muḥammad, the tribal chief of the Saracens, who had come from Yathrib. This man asked for the concession to found a colony and he was granted it. It was he also who, having become a well-to-do man through his wife, then started to beguile his people. He provided himself with troops, plundered first Syria and began after that to devastate Roman lands."

[213] Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 2.5; Scott, "Byzantine Chronicle Writing: 2. After Malalas," 45–50. Lists of later authors who write about the seventh and eighth centu-

of Edessa and Maribas the Chaldean all rely upon Michael the Syrian.[214] The historical section of the religious encyclopaedia entitled *kitāb al-majdal li-l-istibṣār wa-l-jadal* ("Book of the Tower for Insight and Dispute") is largely based upon the *Chronicle of Siirt*.[215] And the chief sources for Ibn 'Adīm's world **{453}** history (→ 1260), *Al-majmū 'al-mubārak* ("the Blessed Compilation"), are Ṭabarī and Eutychius.[216]

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ries are given by Karagiannopoulos, *Pēgai tēs byzantinēs historias*, 198–99, 214. The section on the Arabs in the *De administrando imperio* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913–59) is discussed by Bury, "The Treatise De administrando imperio," 525–33 (see n. 60 above).

[214] For Bar Hebraeus see Todt, "Die syrische und die arabische Weltgeschichte des Bar Hebraeus;" Isḥaq, "Maṣādir Abī l–Faraj;" Conrad, "On the Arabic Chronicle of Bar Hebraeus." Ms. Leeds University syr. 7, fols. 8a–12b (in Arabic) and Ms. Bibliothèque Nationale syr. 306, fols. 77r–82r (in Garshuni) contain a chronicle ascribed to Jacob of Edessa and composed of abridged excerpts from Michael (Ebied and Young, "A Chronicle Erroneously Attributed to Jacob of Edessa"). Both manuscripts also contain a chronicle assigned to one Maribas the Chaldean and made up of extracts from Michael (Chabot, "La prétendue chronique de Maribas le Chaldéen").

[215] See Degen, "Daniel bar Maryam, ein nestorianischer Kirchenhistoriker," 67–73. When giving references in this book, I have followed the traditional attribution of the seven-chapter version of this work to Mārī ibn Sulaymān (twelfth-century) and of its later five-chapter recension to 'Amr ibn Mattā (fourteenth century), the latter supposedly plagiarised by his contemporary Ṣalība ibn Yūḥannā (cf. Graf, *GCAL*, 2.200–202, 216–17, 217–18). This picture has, however, been challenged by Holmberg, "A Reconsideration of the *Kitāb al-Maǧdal*," who argues convincingly that it was 'Amr who, in the early eleventh century, composed the seven-chapter version, which was revised (*not* plagiarised) in five chapters by Ṣalība in 1332. Mārī seems only to have been a continuator of the historical section.

[216] Graf, *GCAL*, 2.348–51 (Ibn 'Adīm's proper name was al-Makīn Girgis; only the second part of his work, the *History of the Muslims*, has been published). Dependent upon Ibn 'Adīm is the *Chronicon orientale* ascribed to Peter the Monk (see Chaîne, "Le Chronicon orientale de Butros Ibn ar-Rahib et l'histoire de Girgis el-Makim"), whose full name was al-Nushū' Abū Shākir ibn Buṭrus al-Rāhib and who would seem to have written a history, but not the *Chronicon* (see Graf, *GCAL*, 2.432–35).

CHAPTER 11.
APOLOGIES AND DISPUTATIONS

{454} In a treatise aiming to demonstrate that Christianity is the true religion, the Melkite theologian Theodore Abū Qurra (d. *ca.* 820s) introduces a small thought-experiment:

> Let's say that I grew up on a mountain ignorant of the nature of people and one day, on account of some need that presented itself to me, I went down to the cities and to the society of people, and I perceived them to be of different religions… (Theodore reviews the nine principal creeds of his day)… Reflecting on the doctrine of each one of them, I perceived all of them to be in agreement on three points and in disagreement about them too. As for their agreement, all bar one or two claimed to have a god, to have permitted and forbidden things, and also reward and punishment. As for their disagreement, they differ on the characteristics of their gods, the things permitted and forbidden, and [the nature of] the reward and punishment.
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> I reflected again and said [to myself]: It befits God, in his goodness and grace, when he perceived that his creation had deviated from the worship of truth, that he send to them a messenger and a book to make them realise that and to return them to it from their errors. But there came a plurality of messengers and books… It is appropriate that thereshould be among them [only] one [true one] in accordance **{455}** with what is known of God's grace and providence for his creation, but what is the trick for recognising this one?[1]

Two younger contemporaries of Theodore, the Muslim writer Jāḥiẓ and the Jewish theologian Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ, also posed themselves this question.[2]

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[1] Theodore Abū Qurra, *Fī wujūd al-khāliq wa-l-dīn al-qawīm*, 200… 211–12. This Arabic tract is discussed by Klinge, "Die Bedeutung der syrischen Theologen," 37782, and Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian Kalām."

[2] And it prompted the mid-ninth-century Zoroastrian author Mardanfarrokh i Ohrmazddadan, who had "traversed many lands and seas" in search of the truth, to compose his "Doubt-Dispelling Exposition" (*Shkand-gumānīg wizār*), which is discussed further on in this chapter.

The former, in his essay *Fī ḥujaj al-nubūwa* ("On the Proofs of Prophecy"), postulates two categories of proofs: those pertaining to sensory perception (*ʿiyān ẓāhir*) and those based upon a cogent tradition (*khabar qāhir*), both cases requiring the involvement of the intellect for purposes of verification. The most important sensory experience in the determination of prophethood was a miracle performed by the contender:

> The signs of messengers, peace be upon them, and their miracles are more worthy of attention and renown and [of being considered] a compelling [argument] for hearts and minds than their preaching and their laws. Indeed, we know that Moses, peace be upon him, was unknown and of no repute except on account of his wonders and miracles, and the same is true of Jesus, peace be upon him. Were it not for that, they would have been just like the rest whose death and birth pass unnoticed.[3]

For Muqammiṣ, too, the execution of miracles was a prerequisite for belief in a prophet, and he further stipulated that the content of the prophecy must be in accord with logic and common sense, and that "the tradition about him should not come from one direction, but rather from several quarters… nor from one nation and in [only] one language."[4]

{456} These three works illustrate very well two salient characteristics of the polemic conducted by Christians, Jews and Muslims in the eighth to tenth centuries. Firstly, the combatants of each party entered the interconfessional arena with the same intellectual armoury: scriptures, authenticated traditions and dialectical reasoning based upon categorical definitions. The latter was the most important, as it enabled the debate to cross sectarian lines, and it is noticeable that the three tracts mentioned above each open with an excursus on the nature of knowledge and truth and on the procedure for deriving them.[5] In the second place, the debate was clearly a real one. The question of how to recognise a true prophet, given such careful reflection in the above texts, was scarcely considered by pre-Islamic Christian and Jewish authorities and was clearly provoked by Muslim claims about Muḥammad's prophetic credentials.[6] Moreover, we very often find in dispute texts that arguments put forward by one party are taken up and refuted by another.[7]And this is confirmed by the complaint of Jāḥiẓ regarding Christians:

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[3] Jāḥiẓ, *Fī ḥujaj al-nubūwa*, 259.

[4] Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ, *ʿIshrūn maqāla*, XIV.

[5] This had begun earlier with Christian infighting; compare the *Dialéctica* of John of Damascus and the two introductory chapters to Anastasius of Sinai's *Hodēgos*. See Roueché, "Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century;" *idem*, "A Middle Byzantine Handbook of Logic Terminology," esp. 71–72; Cook, "The Origins of *Kalām*."

[6] For discussion see Stroumsa, "The Signs of Prophecy."

[7] On the Muslim side see Becker, "Christliche Polemik und islamische Dogmenbildung;" Sahas, "The Formulation of Later Islamic Doctrines as a Response to Byzantine Polemics;" Sadan, "Les bébés qui parlent dans leur berceaux." On the Christian

> They hunt down what is contradictory in our traditions, our reports with a suspect line of transmission (*isnād*) and the ambiguous verses of our scripture. Then they single out the weak-minded among us and question our common people concerning these things, plus whatever they might know of the matter of the heretics (*mulḥidūn*) and the accursed Manichaeans (*zanādiqa*). In addition, they will often address themselves to the learned and the powerful among us, causing dissension among the mighty and confusing the **{457}** weak…. What makes things worse is that every Muslim thinks he is a theologian and that no one else is more adept at arguing with these deviants.[8]

This does not mean, however, that we have records of actual discussions, only that the authors of the texts, though purveyors of literary fictions, had tested their metal in the field.

The roots of these controversies between the Muslims and their subject peoples went back to the late seventh and early eighth century, when Islam first began to present itself as "the religion of truth," so challenging other faiths.[9] But the debate only gathered momentum once Arabic, established as the administrative language of the empire by late Umayyad times, had become accepted as the international medium of scholarship.[10] Whereas only eight authors are known to have polemicised in Syriac against Islam from the seventh to the thirteenth century in Muslim-ruled lands, and even fewer in Greek, as many did so in Arabic in the first Abbasid century (750–850) alone. The emergence of Arabic as a *lingua franca* and the patronage of scholarship by the early Abbasid rulers sponsored a kind of Islamic "enlightenment," fuelled by the transmission of Greek learning into Arabic, and made Iraq of the ninth and tenth centuries a centre of lively altercations amongst Jews, Christians, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Manichaeans and pagan philosophers over the nature of truth and knowledge.

The contest itself was conducted in an almost gentlemanly fashion:

> **{458}** It is hoped that you will treat us fairly in the discussion and that you will negotiate with us as brothers who share in the goods they inherit from their fa-

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side compare how the positive signs of Muḥammad's prophecy advanced by the Muslims were taken up and twisted by the Christians into the negative signs of religion (see the entry on "A Worldly Religion" in Chapter 12 below).

[8] Jāḥiẓ, *Al-radd 'alā l-naṣārā*, 320.

[9] This expression (*dīn al-ḥaqq*) first appears on the gold coins of 'Abd al-Malik dated AH 77/696 (see Excursus F, no. ii, below). That such pretensions spurred nonMuslims to write is shown by Abū Rā'ita, *Rasā'il* no. 1 (*Fī l-thālūth al-muqaddas*), 1: "You have asked me to write for you a treatise in which I should make clear to you what is obscure to you of the doctrines of peoples and their claims about the correctness of what they hold to, especially the doctrine of the Muslims and their description of the excellence of their religion, its nobleness and its superiority over other religions."

[10] Griffith, "Greek into Arabic;" *idem*, "The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic."

> ther. All of them share in them. Nothing belongs to one to the exclusion of the other. So we and you should be on a par in the discussion.[11]

But though the dialectical style of the disputants became ever more honed and their arguments ever more refined, the key objections were never overcome. Jews and Muslims could not forgive Christianity its dilution of God's unity and ascription to Him of a son;[12] Muslims and Christians remained opposed to Judaism on the subject of abrogation of the law and falsification of the scriptures; and Jews and Christians persisted in their rejection of Muḥammad's prophethood and claim to have brought a revelation from God.[13] Yet in the process each was subtly transformed and drawn a few steps towards its opponents' position.[14]

SYRIAC TEXTS[15]

Patriarch John I and an Arab Commander

{459} Reputedly the earliest dialogue between a Christian and a Muslim is that alleged to have taken place between the Jacobite patriarch of Antioch, John Sedra (631–48), and an unnamed Arab general.[16] The text, contained in a manuscript cop-

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[11] Abū Rā'ita, *Rasā'il* no. 1 (*Fī l-thālūth al-muqaddas*), 3–4. This at least is the approach of polemicists writing in Syriac and Arabic; writings in Greek, whether from within or outside the Muslim empire, tend to adopt a more hostile tone.

[12] Muslim anti-Christian texts of the seventh to tenth centuries are surveyed by Caspar *et al.*, "Bibliographic du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1975), 142–52; (1976), 190–94. For Jewish polemic against Christianity in this period see Stroumsa, "Jewish Polemics against Islam and Christianity," Section III.

[13] Muḥammad's prophethood was denied on the grounds that he was not announced in the scriptures and had worked no miracles. The earliest witness is John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* C/CI, 61–62 (= *PG* 94, 765C): "Who is it who bears witness that God has given him a scripture and who of the prophets foretold that such a prophet would arise?" (cf. Timothy I, *Syriac Apology*, 106–13/32–39 = *Arabic Apology*, §§92–157; Theodore Abū Qurra, *Greek Opuscula*, no. 19). The divine origin of Muḥammad's revelation was also refuted by imputing to him Christian/Jewish teachers (see the entries on "Baḥira" and the *Ten Wise Jews* in this chapter).

[14] For example, Christianity came to place greater stress on monotheism; thus the religious encyclopaedia *Kitāb al-majdal* (see under 'Amr ibn Mattā in Bibliography I below) begins its exposition of Christianity (*Bāb* 2, *Fasl* 1) with the words: "The culmination of faith is the oneness of God" (*dhurwat al-īmān tawḥīd Allāh*). And later Muslims came to put forward a "Jesus-like portrait of Muḥammad's prophecy," stressing his humility and universal message (Stroumsa, "The Signs of Prophecy," 114).

[15] Dispute texts in Syriac against Islam are surveyed by Caspar *et al.*, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1984), 277–90; Griffith, "Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts."

[16] The life and works of John are surveyed by Martikainen, *Johannes I. Sedra*, 132. A description and brief discussion of the dialogue is given by the latter at 4–10; Mingana,

ied in 874, exists in the form of a letter and bears the heading: "A letter of the patriarch Mar John on the conversation he had with an emir of the Muslims (*mhaggrāyē*)."[17] The sender of the letter is unknown, but he presents himself as part of a delegation summoned to appear with the patriarch before "the illustrious emir."[18] What he gives in the letter is "a few things from the many that were discussed at this time." His addressee is equally anonymous, simply someone "in anxiety and fear" about the sender's fate and the outcome of this interview. Seven questions are posed by the emir:

1. "Is there just one Gospel which does not vary in any way and which is held to by all those who are and call themselves Christians?"
2. "Why, if the Gospel is one, does the faith differ?"
3. "What do you say Christ was: God or not?"
4. **{460}** "When Christ was in the womb of Mary, he being God as you say, who was bearing and managing heaven and earth?"[19]
5. "What doctrine and faith did Abraham and Moses have?,"[20] and, if Christian, "why did not they (Old Testament figures) from then on write and inform clearly about Christ?"
6. The emir demands that "if Christ is God and born of Mary and if God has a son, this be shown to him in one exposition (*beḥ b-meltā*) and from the Law."
7. The emir asks "about the laws of the Christians: what and after what fashion are they, and if they are written in the Gospel or not," and he enquires about a particular case of inheritance law.

Certain features lend this work the appearance of a typical piece of disputation literature. There are the usual narrative flourishes designed to impart reality to the work. Thus we are told part way through the debate that "there were gathered there a crowd, not only the nobles of the Muslims, but the heads and governors of the cities

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"Transmission of the Kur'ān," 35–37; Suermann, "Orientalische Christen und der Islam," 125–28; Griffith, "Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts," 257–59.

[17] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 248/257; the manuscript and its contents are described by Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.989–1002 (no. 861).

[18] The statement of Barsaum, *Al-lu'lu' al-manthūr*, 279 (followed by Samir, "Qui est l'interlocuteur musulman," 388), that the Severus mentioned among the members of the delegation was the patriarch's secretary and recorder of the interview, is conjecture.

[19] The same question is posed in 'Umar-Leo, Letter (Arabic), 27/13 (*wa-man kāna yudabbiru amr al-samāwāt wa-l-arḍ wa-yumsikuhā… idha kāna 'Īsā fī baṭn ummih?*) = Letter (Aljamiado), fol. 99a.

[20] Note Qur'an iii.67: "Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a *ḥanīf*."

and of the believing and Christ-beloved peoples: Tanūkh, Tū'aye and 'Aqūlaye."[21] And when the emir demands proof of a scriptural citation made by John, the Greek and Syriac versions of the Bible are brought so that the Muslims (*nāshīn mhaggrê*) might read "with their own eyes" that Christ is God. Further, there are the customary polemical touches. For example, the emir has a Jew brought in to verify the text; not wishing to admit that Christ's divinity is there proven, the Jew lamely answers: "I do not know for sure."[22] And the Jacobite patriarch is depicted as **{461}** one to whom the Chalcedonians must defer, as the spokesman of all the Christians.[23] Finally, much of the content is recognisable from earlier Christian anti-Jewish disputations. The matter of why Christ is not mentioned clearly in the Old Testament was broached in the *Trophies of Damascus*, and the response – that the people then were too rude to appreciate the Trinity – is found also in a homily of Severus of Antioch (d. 538) against the Jews.[24] The issue of Christology, which is prevalent in this Christian-Muslim exchange, is of course a dominant theme in Christian-Jewish debate too, and the Old Testament passage used by the patriarch John to demonstrate Christ's divinity (Genesis xix.24) is adduced to the same end by Severus of Antioch.[25]

Nevertheless, the dialogue is in many ways rather untraditional. Firstly, there is no triumph for the Christians at the end. Having persuaded the emir that the Christians do observe what is prescribed in the Gospel, "the assembly of the first day was dissolved and until now we have not come before him again." To compensate for the lack of any victory, it is stressed how the Chalcedonians "prayed for the life and preservation of the blessed lord patriarch, and they praised and magnified God who gave the word of truth in abundance to his eloquent speech."[26] Secondly, the question on a particular point of law is not a standard feature. Inheritance law is of course found in the Pentateuch and Syriac Christian legal manuals, but the particular point of inheritance law chosen receives more precise elaboration in the Qur'an.[27] Finally, acquaintance with some aspects of Muslim belief is demonstrated. In the course of one answer the patriarch reveals his knowledge that the Muslims – like the Christians, Jews and Samaritans – accept the Pentateuch (*Ūroytā*). And when John

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[21] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 251/261. A letter written in the early 680s mentions these three tribes as belonging to the regions west of the Euphrates (Michael the Syrian 11.XIV, 443/466–67).

[22] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 251/260–61. On the *topos* of confirmation of Biblical texts by a Jew see Griffith, "Jews and Muslims," 67–68.

[23] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 252–53/262–63.

[24] *Ibid*., 249–50/259; *Trophies of Damascus* 1.3.2, 197–98; III.8.2, 254–56; Brière, "Homilae cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche," 21 (noted by Nau, "Un colloque," 259 n. 1).

[25] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 251/260; Brière, "Homilae cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche," 26 (noted by Nau, "Un colloque," 260 n. 2).

[26] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 252/262.

[27] *Ibid*., 251/261; cf. Qur'an iv.11–12; see Nau, "Un colloque," 271, and Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 168 n. 20.

begins citing the prophets to illustrate that Christ is God, it is said that the **{462}** emir did not accept the prophets, demanding instead confirmation from Moses.[28]

But what is most noticeable about the dialogue is that the emir appears to have an implicit agenda. He wants to know whether the Christians have a defined law by which they can govern themselves, as is shown by his ultimatum: "Show me that your laws are written in the Gospel and that you conduct yourselves by them, or submit to the law of the Muslims (*nāmōsā da-mhaggrē*)."[29] To this the patriarch replies that "we Christians have laws which are right and just and accord with the teaching and prescriptions of the Gospel, the canons of the apostles and the laws of the church," whereupon the assembly is dismissed. The Qur'an instructs: "Let the adherents of the Gospel judge by that which God has revealed therein" (v.47), and the emir seems to have been trying to ensure the implementation of this principle. On the Christian side, too, one senses an underlying purpose, namely to present a united front to the invaders: the Gospel is one, the Christian laws are coherent and the patriarch "spoke for all the assembly of Christians." It is quite possible, then, that the author has taken a genuine record of a meeting between an Arab commander and the patriarch of Antioch, who would have been a natural figure to represent the Christians of Syria, and fashioned it into an apology for Christianity.[30]

The identity of the Arab emir has been surmised on the basis of a report by Dionysius of Tellmaḥre, who first tells how "'Amr bar **{463}** Sa'd" forbade the public display of crosses at Damascus and Ḥimṣ, then continues:

> This emir Bar Sa'd, {either because of his hatred for the Christians or in order to stop them calling Christ God}, summoned by letter our patriarch John. When he (John) entered his ('Amr's) presence, he ('Amr) began to say insolent things contrary to the scriptures and to ask difficult questions. But the patriarch answered all the questions with examples from the Old and New Testament and with natural arguments. When he ('Amr) saw his courage and the breadth of his learning, he was astonished and thereupon ordered him, saying: "Translate for me your

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[28] Patrarich John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 248/257 (acceptance of Pentateuch), 250–51/260 (rejection of prophets). Cf. Sergius the Stylite, *Disputation against a Jew* XVII.II, 56… XXII. 18, 80: "You asked me about the Messiah, and I invoked the prophets and they came and bore witness, but you did not accept it… Because you boast in Moses, let us return to Moses" (a mid-eighth century Syriac text); Theodore Abū Qurra, *Greek Opuscula*, no. 24: "Convince me, not from your Isaiah and Matthew, which I care little for, but on the basis of compelling and generally accepted notions" (Muslim to a Christian).

[29] *Ibid.*, 252/262; the text has *mhaggrā*, which makes Crone and Cook (*Hagarism*, 168 n. 20) suspect corruption, but it seems easier to assume a dot has been left off. Though downplaying the theological element, Fritsch (*Islam und Christentum*, 1) also detects an ulterior motive: "For the Arab emir it was less a matter of conversion or of religious information than of acquiring political contacts."

[30] In favour of there having been a genuine meeting is the provision of a precise date (Sunday, 9 May); against is the failure to name the emir.

> Gospel into the Saracen tongue, that is, Arabic, except do not put in the divinity of Christ, baptism or the cross" … (the Patriarch refuses this proviso and 'Amr backs down)… Then he (John) assembled the bishops and sent for those of Tanukh, 'Aqūʿaye and Tuʿaye who were conversant with the Arabic and Syriac languages, and ordered that they translate the Gospel into Arabic.[31]

This certainly pertains to our dispute text, but did Dionysius have the latter before him or is he giving independent testimony? The statement that 'Amr perhaps wanted to stop the Christians calling Christ God does not follow from the preceding narrative about his hostility towards crosses and could easily be an inference from our text. The translation of the Gospel is not mentioned in the dispute, but the same three Arab tribes are listed and it is possible that the tale grew out of this. Given 'Amr bar Sa'd's anti-Christian actions it would be natural for Dionysius to connect him with the unnamed emir.

Though Dionysius' account is our only clue to the emir's identity, there are other indications of the date of the interview. At the end **{464}** of the dispute a list of bishops who participated is given: Thomas, Severus, Sergius, Aitallaha and John. Unfortunately their dioceses are not named, but an Aitallaha was made bishop of Marga in 629 and the other names coincide with three of the twelve bishops who accompanied Athanasius Gammala, John's predecessor, to meet Heraclius in 630.[32] If still in office, they would be an obvious choice to meet a new Arab ruler. The text itself has the interview take place "on the ninth of this month of May, on the day of holy Sunday,"[33] which corresponds to 9 May 633, 639 or 644 within John's term of office. Regarding 633 as too early, scholars have all opted for 639 or 644, their choice depending on whom they think Dionysius meant by 'Amr bar Sa'd.[34]

But if the time of the original encounter can be determined within fairly close limits, this is not true for the reworking of its minutes that has come down to us. A reasonably sure *terminus ante quem* of the early ninth century is provided by Dionysi-

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[31] Preserved in Michael the Syrian 11.VIII, 421–22/431–32, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.263; the sentence in curly brackets is only in *Chron. 1234*. The notice is not in Theophanes or Agapius and so is unlikely to go back to their common source. Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic," argues that the first translation of the Gospel for general use in the church was not made until the first Abbasid century.

[32] Patrarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 253/263; Michael the Syrian 11.IV, 413/416 (Aitallaha); *ibid.*, 11.III, 409–10/412 (mission to Heraclius).

[33] Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 248/257.

[34] Nau ("Un colloque," 227 and n. 3 thereto) favoured 639 and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ. All others back 644, but vary in their choice of emir: Lammens, "A propos d'un colloque:" Saʿīd ibn 'Amr; Graf, *GCAL*, 1.35–36: 'Amr ibn Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 162 n. 11, and Samir, "Qui est l'interlocuteur musulman," 396–400: 'Umayr ibn Sa'd al-Anṣārī. The latter opinion seems the most likely, for 'Umayr wielded considerable power in the early 640s, at one time being governor over Damascus and Ḥimṣ (Ṭabarī, 1.2646, 2798), and is connected with attempts to convert Christian Arabs (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 136, 182).

us' apparent acquaintance with the document. Griffith placed its composition in the early eighth century, relating it to the next item in the manuscript: a chronicle of disasters pertaining to the years 712–16.[35] This is possible, but no connection is evident and the manuscript's contents are of very varied date. In a thorough analysis of the colloquy Reinink points out that the text demonstrates awareness of Islam as a new faith and of the need for Christians to rally together to meet this challenge. Such awareness, he feels, presupposes the Islamisation and Arabisation policies pursued by 'Abd al-Malik and Walīd in the years 691–705, and so puts our text **{465}** in the first decades of the eighth century.[36] This would then bring this dispute into line with the time of composition of other early apologetic texts.

A Monk of Beth Ḥale and an Arab Notable

Nothing is known about the transmission of the text of this disputation before its appearance in two manuscripts, one from Diyarbakir of the early eighteenth century, the other at Mardin copied in 1890.[37] 'Abdisho''s thirteenth-century catalogue knows of an Abraham of Beth Ḥale who composed "a disputation against the Arabs," and he has come to be regarded as the author of our text.[38] This does not help us much, however, for there are two monasteries of this name, one near Moṣul and one near Ḥira, and it is not certain when Abraham lived. It is asserted that he was a student of the early seventh-century ascetic Khudahwi and so died *ca.* 670, but this seems to be conjecture.[39] In the absence of any firm external data we must turn to the text itself for information. Since this has not yet been published,[40] I shall first give a description of its contents. The composition opens with a somewhat tortuous primordium:

> With God's help we shall write down the debate that took place between a man of the Arabs and a certain monk of the monastery of Beth Ḥale. Because you determined – O our brother and beloved above myself, Father Jacob – to **{466}** make earnest petitions upon our frail self for an account of our investigation into the apostolic faith at the instance of the Son of Ishmael (*Bar Īshma'il*), and because

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[35] Griffith, "Muḥammad's Scripture and Message," 99; the chronicle is edited and translated in Nau, "Un colloque," 253–56/264–67, and translated in Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 45–47.

[36] Reinink, "Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature."

[37] For references to descriptions of these manuscripts see Jager, "Intended Edition." I use Diyarbakir syr. 95 (Seller, "Manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés à Diarbékir," 398), a copy of which was kindly given to me by Professor Michael Cook.

[38] Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 205; the identification was first made by Baumstark, *GSL*, 211.

[39] Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 205 n. 2, simply states it without reference; cf. Nau, "Abraham de Bet Ḥale."

[40] The "Intended Edition" of Jager (see under his name in Bibliography II below) did not materialise; Professor Han Drijvers has since completed an edition, and I am very grateful to him for showing this to me before its publication.

> it seemed to me that it would be of advantage that you impart it to your brethren, and because I know that it is useful to you, so I am setting it down, in question-and-answer form, as is fitting.[41]

After making praise to God and convocation of Jesus and the saints, the setting of the dispute is then elaborated:

> This Arab man then, O my lord, was one of the chief men before the emir Maslama and by reason of a malady which he had, he came to us and remained with us for ten days. He spoke freely with us and debated much about our scriptures and their Qur'an (*qūrān*). When he saw our rites performed at the appropriate seven times, in accordance with what the blessed David said: "Seven times a day I praise you for your judgements, O righteous one," he called me to him. And because he had acted as steward in the government for a long time and because of his exaltedness and our lowliness, he would speak with us via an interpreter. He began by reproving us for our faith, saying: "You make prayers much, night and day you are not silent, and you outdo us in prayer and fasting and in your petitions to God. However, in my own opinion, your faith rules out that your prayers will be accepted."[42]

This attack prompts the monk to set out the terms by which a debate should be conducted:

> The monk said: "Speak with me respectfully so that I shall speak with you as is fitting. Since you pose questions through an intermediary (*'ābōrā'īt*), our mind is made up that we shall take refuge in silence. For when a man is silent, **{467}** even if he be stupid, he is considered wise. If, then, you sincerely wish to learn the truth, speak with me without an interpreter, for when you seek a request such as this from me, truly it is proper that we speak one to one, even though you are very important. I know that in every matter, whatever it is, I should respect you because of your authority and importance; but when you desire from me the truth of my faith, I know that I shall not show you favour. Everything that you have [in mind], say, as long as you do not depart from the scriptures; and even though we are lowly, accept from us every word which you know to be true, because I know that truth is beloved to all God-fearing people."[43]

The Arab's objection that "we do not accept all your Books" is smoothed over by the monk, who promises to be responsive to any doubts the Arab may have, and the debate proper begins. The Arab's questions are as follows:

1. "Is not our faith better than any faith that is on the earth…, for we observe the commandments of Muḥammad (*Mūḥmd*) and the sacrifices of Abraham… And this is a sign that God loves us and is pleased with our faith,

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[41] Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 1a.

[42] *Ibid.,* fol. 1a–b.

[43] *Ibid.*, fol. 1b.

namely, that he gives us dominion over all religions and all peoples?"

ANSWER: There are and have been many other rulers in the world besides the Arabs.

2. "Why do you not profess Abraham and his laws, when he is the father of the prophets and of kings, and scripture bears witness to his righteousness?"

ANSWER: Christ has brought a new covenant, the old being merely a model (*typos*) of the new.

3 "Since God is lofty and exalted… why do you degrade him and announce 'to him is a son,' and why, when he is one, do you say 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit?'"
(The monk gives proofs from scripture and by reasoning).

4 **{468}** "How is Muḥammad our prophet considered in your eyes?"

ANSWER: "A wise and God-fearing man who freed you from idolatry and brought you to know the one true God."

5 "Why do you act perversely and worship images and crosses and the bones of saints?"

ANSWER: The image is a reminder of the original; the cross is symbolic and has miraculous power; relics are important for intercession.

6 "Why do you reject all [other] directions and prostrate in the direction of the east?"

ANSWER*:* The paradise of Eden is there, thence we came and thither we hope to return.[44]

The sagacious replies of the monk have gradually won round the Arab, who now feels compelled to admit the truth of Christianity. "Moreover," he continues, "Muḥammad our prophet said concerning the residents of convents and the inhabitants of mountains that they would enjoy the Kingdom, as indeed will all those who are of this doctrine."[45] But one question still bothers him:

> Though I know that your faith is true and that your way of thinking is superior to ours, what is the reason that God has delivered you into our hands, and that you are led by us like sheep to the slaughter, and that your bishops and priests are

[44] *Ibid.*, fols. 1b–2a (Question no. 1), 2b (no. 2), 4a (no. 3), 5a (nos. 4–5), 7b (no.6).

[45] *Ibid.*, fol. 8a; cf. Qur'an v.82: "You will find the closest in friendship to those who believe are those who say 'we are Christians;' that is because among them are priests and monks, and because they are not proud." For discussion see Sviri, "Traditions concerning Christian Monasticism."

> killed and the rest crushed and enslaved night and day by the king's taxes, which are harsher than death.[46]

{469} The monk's answer is to cite the words of Moses to the Israelites: "Not because of your righteousness has God brought you into the Land of promise, but because of the wickedness of its inhabitants" (Deuteronomy ix.5), and to point out that chastisement by God is a sign of His love. In fact, "if you are without chastisement, you are strangers not children [of God]." The Arab, now fully accepting the truth of Christianity, inquires: "Will the sons of Hagar enter the Kingdom or not?," to which the monk replies by quoting John iii.5: "Truly, I say to you, all who are not born of water and spirit will not enter the kingdom of God."[47] And the dispute concludes with the Arab testifying that "were it not for fear of the authorities and of disgrace before men, many would become Christians."

It is immediately obvious that this disputation is a literary fabrication. The Arab only asks questions, advances almost no arguments of his own, and comes to agree more and more with his antagonist until he eventually bears witness to the superiority of Christianity. The religion of the Arab receives only incidental consideration. Furthermore, the agenda is very familiar from earlier disputations against the Jews. In the *Trophies of Damascus*, for example, there are the same questions about the Godhead, adoration of images and the cross, and prayer to the east. There, too, the Christian interlocutor was taunted about the diminishment of Byzantine sovereignty, though the answer at that earlier stage was to emphasise the resilience of the Christian realm. And even when there are new questions, such as that regarding Muḥammad, the answers are still traditional. Thus the Arab asks: "Why, if he (Muḥammad) was wise, did he not teach us from the beginning about the mystery of the Trinity?" Because the minds of the people at that time were too simple, responds the monk, echoing again the *Trophies* **{470}** *of Damascus* and, indeed, a far older argument used originally against the Jews.[48]

At the beginning of the text the author informs his patron, Father Jacob, that he will put the disputation into the requisite question-and-answer form. So might we have here a literary redressing of a real debate? Can we, in other words, detect any material that might derive from interaction with a Muslim? A number of features are

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[46] Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 8a.

[47] A sermon given in honour of SS. Peter and Paul has the patriarch Athanasius ask S. Peter: "My lord Father, apostle of Jesus Christ, I ask you to tell me whether the nations who worship God, but do not accept the Son or the Holy Spirit and are not baptised in his name nor do they receive the holy mysteries – may they enter into the kingdom of heaven when they depart from their bodies??' to which Peter gives the same answer as the monk of Beth Ḥale, quoting John iii.5 (Theophilus of Alexandria, *Homily*, 393–95; see the entry on this text in Chapter 3 above). And this verse is also cited at the end of *Trophies of Damascus* IV.6.1, 274.

[48] *Ibid.* 1.2–5, 194–207 (Godhead); III.6, 245–50 (images and cross); III.7, 250–54 (praying east); II.3.1, 220 (loss of sovereignty); 1.3.2, 197–98 and III.8.2, 254–56 (Jews at that time too simple to understand the Trinity).

worth considering. When asked why the Christians do not "profess Abraham and his commandments," the monk has to request clarification: "What faith of Abraham do you desire for us, and what are his commandments that you wish us to perform? The Arab said: circumcision and sacrifice, because he received them from God."[49] The two practices are attested for the Arabs in pre-Islamic times, and it has been proposed that they became the pillars of the nascent Islamic faith, which was a religion of Abraham.[50] All one might note in addition here is that a Syriac chronicle has Muḥammad's initiation of sacrifice mark the beginning of the new Muslim polity,[51] and that the "faith of Abraham" (*tawdītā d-Abrāhām*) which the monk queries echoes the equivalent Qur'anic expression *dīn Ibrāhīm*.[52]

In the debate on the Godhead, whether God is three and if He has a son, the Arab is asked about "the one who is called by you Īsābar **{471}** Maryam and by us Jesus Christ," and he replies: "In accordance with what is from our Muḥammad (*Mḥmd*), we also bear witness to what he said, [namely that he is] the Word of God and His Spirit."[53] This is drawn from Qur'an iv.171, and also the term 'Īsā ibn Maryam is the standard formula used by the Qur'an to refer to Jesus.

The Arab asks: "What is the reason that you adore the cross when he did not give you such a commandment in his Gospel?" This the monk counters with the observation:

> I think that for you, too, not all your laws and commandments are in the Qur'an which Muḥammad taught you; rather there are some which he taught you[54] from the Qur'an, and some are in *sūrat albaqrah* and in *gygy* and in *twrh*. So also we, some commandments our Lord taught us, some the Holy Spirit uttered through the mouths of its servants the Apostles, and some [were made known to us] by

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[49] Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 2b.

[50] Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, 174–76 (circumcision), 112–29 (sacrifice); Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 12–13.

[51] *Chron. 819*, 11 (AG 932): "Muḥammad (*Mūhmṭ*) began to reign, the first king of the Arabs. He made the first sacrifice and had the Arabs eat them against their custom. From this point the enumeration of their years begins." Cf. Theophanes, 333: "The misguided Jews thought he was the Messiah… and they remained with him until his [first] sacrifice" (see the entry on the "Ten Wise Jews" in this chapter). Sacrifice is also alluded to in the Qur'an (e.g. xxii.32–33: "Whoever magnifies the offerings consecratëd to God [has done well], for they proceed from devotion of the hearts. They contain benefits for you for an appointed term, then they are brought for sacrifice (*maḥilluhā*) to the ancient House"). And there are Arabic reports which maintain that to be a Muslim entails eating our sacrifices (Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 69; Ṭabarī, 1.2020; though see the entry on "Athanasius of Balad" in Chapter 4 above).

[52] On *dīn Ibrāhīm* see the entry on "Sebeos" in Chapter 4 above.

[53] Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol 4b.

[54] Reading *aleptōn* ("you taught") as a mistake for *alepkōn* ("he taught you").

> means of teachers who directed and showed us the Way of Life and the Path of Light.[55]

The Chapter (*sūra*) of the Cow (*al-baqara*), now the second in the Qur'an, is evidently considered by the monk to be a separate source of law. In the legend of Baḥira it appears as the name of the whole Book, and in the Muslim tradition too there are indications that it had a certain distinctiveness. For example, at the battle of Ḥunayn, 'Abbās calls his men to arms with the cry: "O followers of the Chapter of the Cow."[56] The identity of the next two alleged sources of Muslim law adduced by the monk is less clear. One might assume them to be also chapters of the Qur'an, but it is not obvious which would be intended.[57] Almost certainly the Gospel and the Torah are meant, and the Syriac is **{472}** attempting to convey the Arabic names for these scriptures: *Injīl* and *Tawrāh*; the corruption of the letter forms is fairly minor and is easily explained as the result of a thousand years of transmission.

The text is somewhat difficult to date. If the "emir Maslama" whom the Arab serves is to be identified with Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik (d. 738), then this would yield a *terminus post quem* of 710, when he was appointed governor of Mesopotamia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and probably after 717, when he gained notoriety among Christians for his role as commander of the siege of Constantinople.[58] In his account of Muḥammad's initiation of the Arabs into monotheism the monk says that "he first brought you to know the one true God, a doctrine which he had received from Sargis Baḥira."[59] The association of Sergius and Baḥira is not otherwise attested before Thomas Artsruni and Mas'ūdī, both writing in the early tenth century; 'Abd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī (wr. 820s?) speaks rather of "Sergius surnamed Nestorius and John known as Baḥira."[60] It is of course possible that Kindī is confused,[61] but

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[55] *Ibid*., fol. 6a.

[56] Baḥira (Syriac), 228/222 and 243 ("the book was called *sūrah al-baqrah*"); Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* 4.1, 12 (*yā aṣḥāb sūrat al-baqara*). See also Bashear, *Al-ta'rīkh al-ākhar*, 44–45; Modarressi, "Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qur'ān."

[57] One might emend *gygy* to *gwāgay*, Syriac for "spider," which is the name of the twenty-ninth chapter of the Qur'an, but unlike *sūrat al-baqara* this chapter has no real legal content.

[58] *EI*², s.v. "Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik;" Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 163 n. 23.

[59] Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 5a.

[60] Thomas Artsruni, 2.IV (tr. Thomson, 165); Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 1.146; Kindī, *Letter to al-Hāshimī*, 196. Cf. 'Umar-Leo, *Letter*, 32/24: "You alleged that John and Nestorius (*Yānis wa-Nasthūr*) taught our prophet the religion which he brought" (Sourdel, "Un pamphlet anonyme," 24 n. 4, reads *yās*, and suggests that Baḥira's companion Isho'yahb is meant, but given the comment of Kindī, John makes better sense).

[61] Or else late. Tartar, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien*, has recently argued that Kindī wrote in Ma'mūn's time, but there has been much controversy over this text (a useful summary is given in Griffith, "Muḥammad's Scripture and Message," 105–108) and Tartar's study cannot resolve the matter, for he does not consider the borrowing from Muslim works evident in Kindī's *Letter*.

in any case the casual reference here suggests that the story was already well enough known not to require any introduction, and one would not wish to put this before late Umayyad times.

Timothy I (180–823)

The discussion between the caliph Mahdī and the catholicos Timothy on the relative merits of Christianity and Islam is the most famous of **{473}** the early exchanges between the two great religions. For this reason I give a brief mention of it here, even though it is just outside our period. The actual encounter must have occurred after Timothy's accession to the catholicate in 780 and before Mahdī's death in 785. The account of it, which Timothy gives in a letter to his life-long friend Sergius, was probably composed not much afterwards, as is implied by the statement that the meeting took place "before these days."[62] The debate would have been conducted in Arabic, the language of the court, but since all of Timothy's extant correspondence is in Syriac, we may assume that the letter to Sergius was also composed in that language and that the shorter Arabic version we have is an abridged translation made at a later date.[63]

After a few humble words of introduction to Sergius, then director of the school of Bashosh in northern Iraq where he and Timothy had once been pupils together, the catholicos proceeds directly to his subject:

> We inform your Wiseness, O God-loving lord, that before these days we entered before our victorious king and we blessed God and His majesty according to our custom. And when we had completed as many words of praise as were allowed, in which we spoke of the nature of God and His eternity, he thereupon acted towards us as never before, saying to us: "It is not right for a man like you, O Ca-

[62] Timothy I, *Syriac Apology*, 92/16 (*men qdām yawmīn hāleyn*), 156/83–84. Nau, "Compte-rendu," 242–44, argues that the meeting must have taken place during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (786–809), since he is referred to in a manner inappropriate while Hādī was heir apparent; however, Hārūn had by 781 been designated the second heir and so might also come in for praise (see Caspar, "Les versions arabes du dialogue," 116–17). On Timothy see Putman, *L'église et l'Islam*, 13–23; his letters are reviewed by Young, *Patriarch, Shah and Caliph*, 128–55.

[63] Demonstrated by Putman, *L'église et l'Islam*, 173–83. This does not mean, however, that the thirteenth-century Syriac manuscript from which derives our knowledge of the *Apology* has conveyed to us the original (Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits de Notre Dame des Semences," 57 [Codex 90]). In particular, the division of the debate into two sessions may have been a later elaboration, for the second session deals chiefly with the Trinity and Christ, both of which had been treated on the first occasion, and none of the Arabic versions have this division. Note also that there does exist a shorter Syriac rendition (see van Roey, "Une apologie syriaque attribuée à Elie de Nisibe").

> tholicos, who **{474}** possesses such knowledge as this and such reasoning about God, ever to say about God that He took a wife and begat from her a son."[64]

This sparks off a lengthy debate which ranges across the following topics:

1. The Incarnation and Christ's nature.
2. The Trinity.
3. Circumcision and direction of prayer.
4. Biblical references to Muḥammad and the falsification of scripture.
5. The cross and the death of Christ.
6. The Gospels ("Why are they different from one another?").
7. Muḥammad's prophethood and the falsification of scripture.
8. "Muḥammad walked in the path of the prophets."[65]

All these subjects are, of course, standard fare of Christian-Muslim debate and were probably already familiar to intellectuals of Mahdī's day, but this is the earliest elaborate account of them that we have. Moreover, Timothy does adduce new arguments, some of which rely on topical details. Thus, in answer to the caliph's question whether Christ wished to be crucified, and so whether the Jews were simply doing his will and are not to be blamed,[66] Timothy counters by drawing a **{475}** parallel between Christ's situation and that of the "voluntary fighters for God's sake (*mūṭṭaw ʿīn b-sabīl Allāh*)" whose killers are, like the Jews, blameworthy, since in both cases the killing was effected without regard for the will of the slain.[67] And in reply to the caliph's observation that the prophets several times called Christ a servant, Timothy invokes the example of the heir-apparent Hārūn, who, while serving in the imperial army, does not forego any of his "royal sonship and freedom."[68]

To what degree the text that has come down to us represents a genuine conversation between Mahdī and Timothy is difficult to say. It is true that the catholicos commands the lion's share of the lines and uses a somewhat didactic tone, and that

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[64] Timothy I, *Syriac Apology*, 92/16–17 = *Arabic Apology*, §§2–3.

[65] The Arabic versions mostly follow the same order as the Syriac, except that they either omit the last topic or put it as no. 5. See further Caspar, "Les versions arabes du dialogue," 108–12, 118–21.

[66] Whereas if Christ did not want to be crucified and was so, then he was weak and so could not be God. The same question is found in John of Damascus, *Disputation* 431–32 (= *PG* 96, 1340C–1341C), and Theodore Abū Qurra, *Greek Opuscula*, no. 9 (see Griffith, "Unpublished Arabic Sayings Attributed to Theodore Abū Qurrah").

[67] Timothy I, *Syriac Apology*, 117/44 (omitted in the Arabic version); on these "voluntary fighters" see *EI²*, *s.v.* "Mutaṭawwiʿa, muṭṭawwiʿa."

[68] Timothy I, *Syriac Apology*, 156/83–84. Mingana, "Apology of Timothy," 84 nn. 2–3, feels that this is a reference to Hārūn's expedition of AH 165/781, from which he had not yet returned, and that the debate must therefore have taken place in 781.

the caliph, though he is not so meek as the Arab of the Beth Ḥale dispute and undergoes no change of heart, does little more than pose questions and objections. This could be explained as the result of the transformation of the dialogue into a letter, but in either case we have to do with a literary construction rather than a faithful transcription.[69] On the positive side, the fact that a number of the arguments also feature in Muslim refutations of Christianity does at least indicate that the text reflects discussions taking place between the adherents of the two faiths.[70]

Baḥira

{476} Two works stand out in the history of Christian polemic against Islam for their enormous popularity and influence in both eastern and western Christendom. One is the apocalypse of ps.-Methodius, the other is the story of the monk Baḥira, which is to be found in Syriac, Christian Arabic, Latin, Armenian and Hebrew versions, all ultimately dependent upon the tale of the young Muḥammad's encounter with the monk recounted in the Prophet's biography.[71] The earliest reconstructable account of it in the Islamic tradition is that given by Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq (d. 767):

> Once Abū Ṭālib was going out with a party of Quraysh to Syria for trade, but when he was all prepared for the journey and was resolved to set out, the Messenger of God, as they allege, displayed great attachment to him. Abū Ṭālib took pity on him and said: "By God, I shall take him with me and we shall never be separated from one another," or the like, and took him with him. The caravan stopped at Bostra in Syria where there was a monk named Baḥira in his cell,[72] and

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[69] This is the opinion of Nau, "Compte-rendu," 242, 244, who labels it "un travail de bureau."

[70] E.g. the question of whether Isaiah xxi.7 ("And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen…") or John xv.26 ("But when the Comforter is come…") are referring to Muḥammad, discussed at some length by Timothy (*Syriac Apology*, 110–13/37–39, 107–109/33–35 = *Arabic Apology*, §§134–57, 104–21), features very early in Muslim tradition (see Bashear, "Riding Beasts on Divine Missions," 4043, on Isaiah; Guillaume, "The Version of the Gospel used in Medina," 28993, on John). Timothy's knowledge of Islam is illustrated by another apologetic work written by him, in which he discusses with a Muslim scholar how to speak of God (edition and discussion given by Cheikho, *Dialectique du langage sur Dieu*).

[71] In general, see *EI*[1] (Wensinck) and *EI*[2] (Abel), s.u. "Baḥīrā;" Graf, *GCAL*, 2.145–49; Gero, "The Legend of the Monk Baḥīrā;" Griffith, "Muḥammad and the Monk Baḥîrâ;" Rubin, *Eye of the Beholder*, 44–55 (discussing the theme of attestation of the Prophet). The Syriac, Arabic and Latin versions are considered here; for the Armenian see Thomson, "Armenian Variations on the Baḥira Legend;" for the Hebrew see Shtober, "Ha-nazīr Baḥīrā, īsh sōdō shel Mūḥammad, ve-ha-yehūdīm," and Gil, "Ma'ase Bahīrā."

[72] *Ten Wise Jews* (*Judaeo-Arabic*), 402, makes Baḥira a stylite. Interestingly, a Chalcedonian anti-Monophysite tract written ca. 670 tells us that "in the confines of Arabia, lying near Damascus and Bostra, there is a village named Gasymeos (Jasim), entirely of the Jacobite

> he was well acquainted with the knowledge of the Christians. There had always been in that cell a monk to whom would pass their knowledge, so they claim, from a book that was handed down from generation to generation. When they stopped by Baḥira that year, he prepared **{477}** much food for them. That was because, while in his cell, he had seen a cloud over the Messenger of God which was shading him [alone] out of the people. Then they drew near and halted in the shade of a tree close to him, and he noticed the cloud shadowing the tree and inclining its branches over the Messenger of God until he was in the shade beneath it. When Baḥira saw this, he went down from his cell, then sent for them. When Baḥira saw the Messenger of God, he observed him closely, looking at features of his body which he might find familiar to him [from his book] of his description. When the men had finished the meal and dispersed, he asked the Messenger of God about things which had happened in his waking and sleeping. The Messenger of God began telling him and Baḥira found them in agreement with what he knew [from his book] of his description. Then he looked at his back and saw the seal of prophethood between his shoulders, whereupon he said to his (Muḥammad's) uncle Abū Tālib: "What relation is this boy to you?" "My son," he replied. "He is not your son," said Baḥira to him, "it cannot be that this boy's father is alive." "He is my nephew," he said. "What became of his father?" "He died while the boy's mother was pregnant with him." "You have spoken the truth," said Baḥira, "take him back to your country and guard him from the Jews, for by God if they see him and recognise in him what I have recognised in him they will wish him harm. Great things lie ahead of him, so take him back quickly to his country."[73]

This tale of how a monk bore witness to the prophethood of Muḥammad was taken up by Christian authors and fashioned into an account of how a monk instructed Muḥammad in monotheism and wrote for him a scripture. The most elaborate form of this narrative is found in one **{478}** Arabic (A) and two Syriac recensions (one Jacobite: S1, one Nestorian: S2), which also include the apocalyptic prophecies of Baḥira discussed in Chapter 8 above. Their dependence upon the Arabic tradition is clear, since they repeat the essential storyline of a number of Arabs coming with the boy Muḥammad to the dwelling of Baḥira, who recognises the future greatness of the youth by a vision above his head.[74]

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heresy, and two stades to the south there is a stylite belonging to the same heresy" (Bonwetsch, "Ein antimonophysitischer Dialog," 124).

[73] This passage translates the material common to Ṭabarī, 1.1123–25, and Ibn Hishām, 115–17, both citing Ibn Isḥāq as their source. It is almost the whole of the account of Ṭabarī, who seems to be abbreviating. For other Muslim accounts see Sprenger, "Muḥammad's Zusammenkunft mit dem Einsiedler Baḥyrâ," and Nöldeke, "Hatte Muḥammad christliche Lehrer?"

[74] Baḥira (Syriac), 216/216–17 (S1; adds "like a cloud"), 216/238 (S2); A has the same outline but does not mention the vision.

Baḥira proceeds to teach Muḥammad about God and Christ, and asks in return that he and his successors show indulgence to the Christians, their monks and their clerics. Muḥammad protests: "How will my people believe in me when I cannot read a book and am unlearned?"[75] Baḥira promises to take care of everything for him. This he does firstly by prescribing beliefs and practices which will be acceptable to the Arabs and match their capabilities. These are recognisably Islamic, though there is excessive attention, common in anti-Muslim polemic, given to the description of paradise, and prayer is set at seven rather than five times a day. Secondly, Baḥira composes for Muḥammad a scripture which is variously called *Sūrah al-baqrah* (S1, S2), *Qūran* (S1, S2) and *Furqān* (A).[76] The reason for the subsequently tainted state of Islam is explained differently in the Syriac and Arabic recensions. The former postulates the appearance of a Jewish scribe named Kaʿb who distorts Baḥira's teaching, notably changing the identity of the Paraclete from Christ to Muḥammad. The Arabic stresses the debauched nature of the Arabs, which required Baḥira to make many concessions. He also admits that it was self-glory that led him to undertake the task, and the text ends with Baḥira weeping and reproaching himself for what he has done.[77]

{479} To Baḥira's catechisation of Muḥammad was added a prophecy about the subsequent course of Arab rule. This was taken, with only minor modifications, from the Baḥira apocalypse which seems to have existed independently of, though not necessarily prior to, the Baḥira-Muḥammad sketch. The apocalypse survives in Latin and derives ultimately from a mid-ninth-century original.[78] At an even later date the apocalypse was prefixed to the new compilation to make a Baḥira corpus, and that is what we now have in the Arabic and Syriac recensions. As it stands, then, it cannot predate the late ninth century, but it seems certain that the legend circulated in some form, whether orally or in a more primitive version, long before this time. The tale of Sergius in the *Letter* of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī (wr. 820s?) has all the essential ingredients of the later Baḥira story: the persecution of the monk, his flight to Arabia "as far as Mecca," the instruction of Muḥammad in the Christian faith and the subsequent corrupting influence of the Jewish scribe Kaʿb. The only difference is that Sergius is surnamed Nestorius and teaches Muḥammad the Nesto-

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[75] *Ibid.*, 223/220 (S1). *Ibid.*, 223/241 (S2), and Baḥira (Arabic), 57/137, have abbreviated this to *seprā lā yāda ʿnā / lā aʿrifu kitāban*. On Muḥammad's supposed illiteracy see Goldfeld, "The Illiterate Prophet," and for its role in Christian polemics see Daniel, *Islam and the West*, 86–87.

[76] Baḥira's interview with Muḥammad is some five times longer in the Arabic recension than in the Syriac, in part because Baḥira's Book is not just named, but extensively quoted (most citations are from the Qur'an).

[77] Baḥira (Syriac), 212–14/214–15 (S1), 212–14/236 and 240–42/250–52 (S2); Baḥira (Arabic), 89–92/159–60, 97/163.

[78] See the entry on "Baḥira" in Chapter 8 above.

rian brand of Christianity.[79] Theophanes (d. 818) mentions a "monk exiled for false belief" in whom Muḥammad's wife confided her anxieties about her husband's visions. This role is played in Muslim accounts by Waraqa ibn Nawfal, an Arab convert to Christianity, but the description also includes traits of Baḥira who was expelled from Byzantine lands for his heretical belief in the worship of one cross.[80] Muḥammad received the doctrine of monotheism "from Sargis Baḥira," writes a monk of Beth Ḥale in his disputation text, plausibly of late Umayyad date. And John of Damascus (wr. 730s) alludes to Muḥammad's alleged encounter with an Arian monk, which enabled him to "form a heresy of his own."[81]

GREEK TEXTS[82]

John of Damascus (wr. 730s)

{480} Despite the enormously important role he played in the struggle against iconoclasm, we know very little about the life of John of Damascus, and the information that would help us to form a proper assessment of his writings is either lacking or of doubtful veracity. Was he, for example, raised in an Arab milieu?[83] The Council of Hiereia of 754 refers to John as "Mansour," an Arab name meaning "victorious" (*manṣūr*), which, explains the chronicler Theophanes, was his patronym.[84] By reason of this name he is linked to the Manṣūr family,[85] whose most notable members

[79] Kindī, *Letter to al-Hāshimī*, 128–29; see the entry on the "Monk of Beth Ḥale" in this chapter.

[80] Theophanes, 334; Ibn Hishām, 121, 143; Baḥira (Syriac), 211/212–13 (S1), 211/236 (S2). His "heresy" is discussed by Gero, "The Legend of the Monk Baḥīrā," 55–57.

[81] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* C/CI, 60 (= *PG* 94, 765A); Thomas Artsruni, 2.IV (tr. Thomson, 165), explicitly draws a connection between this Arian monk and Baḥira.

[82] Dispute texts in Greek against Islam are surveyed briefly by Caspar *et al* "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1975), 169–73; (1976), 194–95; and with full discussion by Eichner, "Die Nachrichten über den Islam bei den Byzantinern;" Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*; Ducellier, *Le miroir de l'Islam*, 109–216.

[83] If so, were his writings in defense of images more a response to Muslim than Byzantine iconclasm (see Griffith, "Images, Islam and Christian Icons," for the extent of Muslim iconoclasm within the caliphate)? Sahas, "The Arab Character of the Christian Disputation with Islam," goes so far as to claim him as a "Syrian Arab," though this seems odd for one who lauds the Virgin Mary "through whom the barbarian-born and slaughter-loving dog Ishmael is slain by the sword" ("Homily on the Annunciation," *PG* 96, 657B). The traditional view of John is rather of a wholly Byzantine figure (e.g. Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," 118: "in mind and in heart John still lives in Byzantium;" Louth, "A Christian Theologian at the Court of the Caliph," 10: "a Byzantine subject in exile").

[84] *Concilia sacra*, 13.356C–D; Theophanes, 417.

[85] Others bearing this name are "Theodore son of Manṣūr," whom Theophanes, 410, says "was exiled to the desert regions" in 734, and Stephen Manṣūr of Damascus, monk of Mar Saba and author of the *Passion* of Romanus the Neomartyr and of the *Passion of the Twen-*

were: Manṣūr ibn Sarjūn, John's grandfather and financial governor of Damascus for Maurice (582–602), a position he allegedly still held when Heraclius visited the city in 630 and when the Arabs took **{481}** it in 635;[86] and Sarjūn ibn Manṣūr, his father, secretary for Muʿāwiya, Yazīd, Muʿāwiya ibn Yazīd, Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam and ʿAbd al-Malik.[87] The Arabic biography of John says that "Manṣūr died and his son John became secretary to the emir of the city."[88] The derivative Greek *Lives* make ever more grandiose claims, and that John was a senior official in the Muslim government has been accepted by all modern scholars. Yet there is no mention at all of John in Arabic sources, where it is asserted that Sarjūn left *ca.* 700 when the language of administration was changed to Arabic.[89] That he held some financial post is, however, intimated by the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, which report:

> John, who is insultingly called Mansour by all, abandoned all, emulating the evangelist Matthew, and followed Christ, considering the shame of Christ as a richness

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ty Martyrs of Mar Saba. The former is taken to be John's brother by Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 48, and, more plausibly, his uncle by Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, AM 6226 n. 2; the latter is identified as John's nephew by Blake ("Deux lacunes comblées dans la Passio XX monachorum," 40–42) and Nasrallah (*Mouvement littéraire dans l'église grecque* 2.2, 157). On John, his father and grandfather see Cheikho, *Les vizirs et secrétaires arabes chrétiens*, 72–75.

[86] Eutychius, *Annales*, 2.5, 2.13–15, who describes how Manṣūr bore a grudge because Heraclius had treated him harshly and so betrayed Damascus to the Arabs; Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire 3B*, 1137, says that Eutychius must have conflated father and son. *Chron. 1234*, 1.248, says that the surrender of Damascus was negotiated by "the deacon John bar Sarjūn, himself a Damascene, who was loved and well-known among the Arabs." Arabic sources, however, speak variously of a monk, bishop, patrician, lord of Damascus, general Bāhān or *Nsṭās ibn Nsṭūs* (for references see Noth, "*Futūḥ*-History," 454).

[87] Ṭabarī, 2.837; Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 23, 31–33, 40; Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 302, 306–307, 312 (has Ibn Sarjūn), 316; Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 7.174 (has Ibn Sarjūn), 16.70; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd*, 4.171, 247, 252, 5.124, 147–48. His name often has the epithet "the Byzantine" (*al-rūmī*) or "the Christian" (*al-naṣrānī*). Christian sources say he used his influence with ʿAbd al-Malik to oppress non-Chalcedonians (Michael the Syrian 11.XVI, 449/477 [discredited Athanasius bar Gumaye, secretary to the governor of Egypt; cf. Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 34–35]; 11.XX, 458/492), and to save the pillars at Gethsemane from being used to refurbish Mecca's mosque (Theophanes, 365, where he is described as a "most Christian man," "treasurer [*genikos logothetēs*]" and "on close terms with Abd al-Malik").

[88] John of Damascus, *Arabic Life*, 15.

[89] Sarjūn is said to have been tardy in executing an order of ʿAbd al-Malik, thinking himself indispensable; on account of his conceit (*idlāl*) the caliph sought a way to oust him and was advised to replace Greek with Arabic as the language of the bureaucracy (Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *Iqd*, 4.252; Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 40; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 242). But this is only one of a number of anecdotal explanations for this policy change (cf. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 193).

> superior to the treasures which are in Arabia. He chose rather to suffer with **{482}** the people of God than to enjoy the temporary pleasure of sin.[90]

Otherwise, the earliest writers simply call him priest and monk.[91] The Arab colouring of John's upbringing is also often stressed, but weakly documented. It is said that at the parties of the caliph Yazīd I (680–83) "his freedman (*mawlā*) Sarjūn the Christian and Akhṭal would join in the merriment."[92] Nasrallah decided that Sarjūn must by then have been too old to carouse and that his son John must be meant.[93] The same source tells us that Akhṭal *once* stayed at the house of Sarjūn, which has been elaborated by Lammens into friendship between the poet and John. Subsequent scholars have taken this friendship as axiomatic.[94]

Another matter one would like to be able to clarify is the chronological parameters of John's life. Of the date of his birth there is no indication in any source. The Acts of the Council of Hiereia state that "the Trinity has deposed (*katheilen*) these three," namely Germanus of Constantinople, George of Cyprus, and John. If one takes this to mean they have died – which is not, however, certain – then we have a *terminus ante quem* of 754 for John's death.[95] In one part of his *Fount of Knowledge* there is a dedication to "Cosmas, bishop of Maiouma;" **{483}** Theophanes reports that a Peter of Maiouma was executed in 742, and it has been deduced from these two facts that the work was composed in or soon after 743.[96] But the dedication seems secondary, and in any case Theophanes portrays Peter as a financial secretary, not a bishop, and Peeters has identified him with Peter of Capitolias, who died in 715.[97]

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[90] *Concilia sacra*, 13.357; Matthew was originally a tax-collector.

[91] Theophanes, 408 (*presbyteros kai monachos*); Stephen the Younger, *Life*, *PG* 100, 1120A (*ho timiōtatos kai sophōtatos Iōannēs ho Damaskēnos presbyteros*). Thus also he is called in Peter of Capitolias, *Passion*, "title" (tr. Peeters, 301).

[92] Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 16.70; cf. Balādhurī, *Ansāb* 4.1, 288: "Yazīd would indulge in drinking with Sarjūn, freedman of Mu'āwiya." Akhṭal was a famous Christian Arab poet.

[93] Nasrallah, *Saint Jean de Damas*, 66–67. It is worth bearing in mind that Sergius is a common name; for example, 'Abd al-Malik had a Nestorian physician named Sarjūn (Assemani, *BO* 3.2, 100), who slandered the catholicos Ḥnanisho' before the caliph (Mārī, *Kitāb al-majdal*, 64/56).

[94] Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 7.174; Lammens, "Chantre des Omiades," 124; Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 38–39; Le Coz, *Jean Damascène: écrits sur l'Islam*, 51.

[95] *Concilia sacra*, 13.356C–D; see Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Constantine*, 108–109 and esp. n. 183. Vailhé, "Date de la mort de Jean Damascène," 28–30, had proposed 749, basing himself on indications in the life of Stephen the Sabaite (d. 794), whom he wrongly assumed to be John's nephew. Stephen the Sabaite, *Arabic Life* LXXVII, 381, refers to Stephen ibn Manṣūr al-Dimashqī (*Greek Life* XV, 607, just says "Stephen of our laura") separately from Stephen the Sabaite.

[96] Most scholars following Jugie, "Jean Damascène (saint)," 706.

[97] Theophanes, 416–17; see the entry on "Peter of Capitolias" in Chapter 9 above. Kazhdan and Gero, "Kosmas of Jerusalem: His Biography," 123, state that the dedication to

John is also "known" to have written while at Mar Saba monastery, but no early source attests this, and he is absent from an early ninth-century list of past Mar Saba luminaries.[98] Our earliest biographical reference to John comes from Theophanes, who, under the year 729, simply says: "In Damascus of Syria there shone forth in his life and discourse John of the Golden Stream (*Chrysorrhoas*), son of Manṣūr, a presbyter and a monk, a most excellent teacher."[99] All that one may assume with some certainty is that since a number of his writings are in defence of the worship of images, John was chiefly active after 730, when Leo III convened a formal meeting to proclaim his condemnation of icons.

The problem of John's biography is that, for want of other material, scholars have relied heavily upon the Arabic *Life* and its derivatory Greek models, which are lacking in concrete details but rich in legendary and fanciful stories.[100] Almost the whole of the Arabic *Life* is taken up with the tale of Cosmas, with the emperor Leo's calumny of John **{484}** before the caliph (who amputated John's right hand, which was then restored by the agency of the Virgin Mary), with miraculous incidents at Mar Saba and with the testimony of Stephen the Younger.[101] Figures such as the emir of the city and the abbot of Mar Saba are alluded to but never named, and matters like John's childhood and part in the Arab administration are dealt with in one line. But why are there so few facts about John? Perhaps, as Theophanes says, he was simply a "priest and monk," a reclusive man who, however, reached out far with his pen.[102]

Cosmas is most likely a secondary addition since it does not feature in the text itself, only in the lemma, and an eleventh-century Georgian translation omits it.

[98] Given in Michael the Sabaite, *Passion*, §15 (epilogue).

[99] Theophanes, 408 (tr. Mango, AM 6221); Nicephorus, §72, only mentions his anathematisation at the Council of Hiereia.

[100] There are three manuscripts containing the Arabic *Life;* one has a prologue which relates how a certain monk Michael came to write the account in 1084. But the first Greek version, which claims to be made from the Arabic by "John, patriarch of Jerusalem," appears in a tenth-century manuscript. Hemmerdinger, "La *Vita* arabe de saint Jean Damascène," argues that the prologue is not part of the original Arabic version, that the Greek *Life* was written by the John who was patriarch of Jerusalem 964–69, and that the Arabic *Life* must antedate this. However, the Arabic *Life* that we have need not have been the one used by patriarch John and there seems no cogent reason to reject Michael's claims. See Peeters, "Review;" Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 32–35; Kazhdan and Gero, "Kosmas of Jerusalem: His Biography," 126.

[101] This yields a *terminus post quem* for the Arabic *Life* of John of 808 when the Life of Stephen the Younger was written (Gill, "The Life of Stephen the Younger," 128).

[102] Cf. Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," 117–18, who says John's hymns suggest he was living in a "Christian ghetto." For a full discussion of John's biography see now Auzépy, "Etienne le Sabaïte et Jean Damascène," 193–203; Kotter, "Johannes von Damaskos," 130–32, gives further bibliography.

What is sure is that John of Damascus was a prolific writer on theological matters and a hymnographer of no mean talent. His principal achievement is the *Fount of Knowledge*, which represents the earliest systematic exposition of the orthodox faith. It comprises three parts: the *Dialéctica* (or "Philosophical Chapters"), which provides the basic intellectual tools wherewith to proceed to an understanding of the faith; the *De haeresibus*, which outlines the errors to avoid along the way; and the *De fide orthodoxa*, which details the goal, namely right belief. The book of heresies largely incorporates a similar compilation made in the fourth century by Epiphanius of Salamis, then adds a few later examples to bring the number up to 100.[103] Islam occupies the last place, after Monotheletism. Surprise has sometimes been registered at Islam being described as a Christian heresy, but that is clearly not what is meant here. The first twenty heresies discussed are pre-Christian and are presented as stemming from four major groups: Barbarism, Scythism, Hellenism and Judaism, which are labelled "the **{485}** mothers and prototypes of all the heresies." Evidently, then, the term simply signifies an erroneous belief or a false doctrine.[104]

There has been much debate over the authorship of the chapter on Islam. The matter is important, for, if genuinely by John of Damascus, it represents the earliest Greek polemical writing against Islam.[105] Arguments for a late date of composition are, however, no longer tenable since the researches of Kotter, who has brought to light a ninth-century manuscript containing the text. Moreover, the first two paragraphs are cited by an anonymous florilegium of even earlier date, which includes a résumé of the *De haeresibus*.[106] Authenticity is still a problem, for the chapter stands apart from the rest of the work by reason of its length and style. But since it must have been written, if not by John of Damascus himself, then by a near contemporary, the question does not affect appreciation of the text as an example of early Byzantine polemic.

Chapter 100/101 of the *De haeresibus* aims to give the reader a succinct introduction to Islam, beginning with an explanation of its origin and emergence:

> There is also the people-deceiving cult (*thrēskeia*) of the Ishmaelites, the forerunner of the Antichrist, which prevails until now. It derives from Ishmael, who was born to Abraham from Hagar, wherefore they are called Hagarenes and Ishmael-

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[103] Thus most of the oldest manuscripts; *PG* 94 has 103, the autoproscoptae (put in position 100, so making Islam no. 101), iconoclasts (102) and aposchites (103) having been added later. The manuscript tradition of the text is discussed by Kotter, *Überlieferung der Pege Gnoseos*, 197–214.

[104] See Sahas, "John of Damascus on Islam Revisited," 112–14.

[105] As was noted by Abel ("Le chapitre CI de Jean Damascène," 5), the chief opponent of its authenticity.

[106] Kotter, *Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 4.4 (i.e. Ms. Moscow Synod, gr. 315); Diekamp, *Doctrina Patrum*, 270 (at xiii he dates the manuscript to the period 750–850). For the most recent comment on this question see Glei and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, 38–43.

> ites. And they call them Saracens, inasmuch as they were [sent away] empty-handed by Sarah (*ek tēs Sarras kenous*); for it was said to the angel by Hagar: "Sarah has sent me away empty-handed" (cf. Genesis xxi.10, 14).
>
> These, then, were idolaters and worshippers of the morning star and Aphrodite whom in fact they called *Chabar* **{486}** in their own language, which means "great."[107] So until the times of Heraclius they were plain idolaters. From that time till now a false prophet appeared among them, surnamed Muḥammad (*Mamed*), who, having happened upon the Old and the New Testament and apparently having conversed, in like manner, with an Arian monk, put together his own heresy. And after ingratiating himself with the people by a pretence of piety, he spread rumours of a scripture (*graphē*) brought down to him from heaven. So, having drafted some ludicrous doctrines in his book, he handed over to them this form of worship (*to sebas*).[108]

The introduction continues with a concise exposition of the Muslim view of God and Christ and a demand for the credentials establishing Muḥammad's prophethood; there then follows an apologetic section in which response is made to two charges brought by Muslims against Christians:

> They call us associators (*hetairiastas*)[109] because, they say, we introduce to God an associateby saying Christ is the Son of God and God. To them we say that the prophets and the scripture have transmitted this, and you, as you affirm, accept the prophets. Again we say to them: "How, when you say that Christ is the Word and Spirit of God, do you revile us as associators? For the Word and the Spirit are inseparable… So we call you mutilators (*koptas*) of God."
>
> They Miṣrepresent us as idolaters because we prostrate ourselves before the cross, which they loathe. And we say to them: "How then do you rub yourselves on a stone at your **{487}** Kaʿba (*Chabatha*)[110] and hail the stone with fond kisses?"… This, then, which they call "stone," is the head of Aphrodite, whom they used to worship and whom they call *Chabar*.[111]

Next comes an attack upon and lampoon of the Qur'an:

> This Muḥammad, as it has been mentioned, composed many frivolous tales, to each of which he assigned a name, like the text (*graphē*) of the Woman, in which he clearly prescribes the taking of four wives and one thousand concubines, if it is

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[107] For an explanation of this point see the entry on "Germanus" in Chapter 3 above.

[108] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* C/CI, 60–61 (= *PG* 94, 764A–765A).

[109] This is a translation of the term *mushrikūn*, which the Qur'an applies to all those who ascribe a partner to God; cf. *Christian Arabic Disputation* (*PSR 438*), 10: *fa-ammā qawlukum tad ʿūnā mushrikīn li-annā najʿalu lillāh* [*sharīkan*]…

[110] The *theta* is presumably meant to convey the feminine ending of the Arabic word (*tāʾmarbūṭa*); cf. Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 14, fol. 124a (*kaʿbtā*).

[111] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* C/CI, 63–64 (= *PG* 94, 765C–769B).

> possible (story of Zayd is told; cf. Qur'an xxxiii.37). Another is the text of the Camel of God, aboutwhich he says that there was a camel from God (story of Ṣāliḥ's camel; cf. Qur'an xci. 11–14, vii.77)You say that in paradise you will have three rivers flowing with water, wine and milk (cf. Qur'an ii.25, xviii.31, xxii.23). Again, Muḥammad mentions the text of the Table. He says that Christ requested from God a table and it was given to him, for God, he says, told him: "I have given to you and those with you an incorruptible table." Again, he mentions the text of the Cow and several other foolish and ludicrous things which, because of their number, I think I should pass over.[112]

The tract concludes with a note on some Muslim laws:

> He prescribed that they be circumcised, women as well, and he commanded neither to observe the sabbath nor to be baptised, to eat those things forbidden in the Law and to abstain from the others. Drinking of wine he forbade absolutely.[113]

{488} This composition exerted great influence upon the language,[114] tone and content of subsequent Byzantine polemic against Islam. The subjects of Christology, Muḥammad's prophethood and scripture, worship of the cross and Muslim licentiousness, as evidenced by the story of Zayd[115] and the description of paradise, were all to feature time and time again and to be presented in the same hostile fashion. But though unsympathetic, the author is well informed,[116] as is well illustrated by the presentation of the Muslim view of Christ:

> He says Christ is the Word of God and His Spirit (cf. Qur'an iv.171), created (iii.59) and a servant (iv.172, xix.30, xliii.59), and that he was born from Mary (iii.45, and cf. *Īsā ibn Maryam*), the sister of Moses and Aaron (xix.28), without seed (iii.47, xix.20, xxi.91, lxvi.12). For, he says, the Word of God and the Spirit entered Mary (xix.17, xxi.91, lxvi.12), and she gave birth to Jesus, a prophet (ix.30, xxxiii.7) and a servant of God. And [he says] that the Jews, acting unlawfully,

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[112] *Ibid.* C/CI, 64–67 (= *PG* 94, 769B–772D).

[113] *Ibid.* C/CI, 67 (= *PG* 94, 773A).

[114] For example, John's use of the term "cult" (*thrēskeia*) to refer to Islam – in contrast to Christianity which is described as a "faith" (*pistis*) – is followed by almost all later Greek writers, as also is the characterisation of Muḥammad as a "false prophet" (*pseudoprophētēs*).

[115] Against those who say Muḥammad concealed much of the Qur'an, a mid to late Umayyad Muslim polemicist asserts: "If the Prophet of God were to have concealed anything of what God sent down to him, he would have concealed the matter of the wife of Zayd." Is that because it was already being picked on by Christians? (text in van Ess, "Das *Kitāb al-irǧā*, 24; discussion of date by Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 68–88).

[116] The contrary opinion held by Merrill, "Tractate of John of Damascus on Islam," and Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," has been disproven by the detailed studies on chapter 100/101 by Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 55–65; Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 67–95; Le Coz, *Jean Damascène: écrits sur l'Islam*, 70–80, 89–133.

> wanted to crucify him, but, on seizing [him], they crucified [only] his shadow; Christ himself was not crucified, he says, nor did he die (iv.157). For God took him up to heaven to himself… and God questioned him saying: "Jesus, did you say that 'I am son of God and **{489}** God?'" And, he says, Jesus answered: "Mercy me, Lord, you know that I did not say so (v.116)…"[117]

These and the many other allusions to, and even direct quotations from, the Qur'an interspersed throughout the chapter demonstrate that the author had access to that work.[118] Other information on Islam probably derives from oral sources; for example, the expanded stories of Zayd and of Ṣāliḥ's camel, and the tales about the "stone:" that Abraham had intercourse with Hagar on it or tethered his camel to it, and that there are traces of inscriptions upon it "even until now."[119] Finally, some material is drawn from Byzantine sources, such as the observations on the Arabs' former worship of Aphrodite.[120]

To John of Damascus there has also been attributed a "disputation between a Saracen and a Christian." This contains a long discussion on the subject of God's omnipotence and man's free will, followed by brief debates on Christ (he is uncreated Word of God, how could he as God enter a woman's womb,[121] did he eat and drink), the death of the Virgin Mary and the relation of John the Baptist to Christ. The text is found in inverted order, with numerous variations, and is cited anonymously in all manuscripts bar one;[122] internally it has no logical plan or overall unity and has a number of incomprehensible passages. Evidently, as we have it now, it is composite and so, though plausibly constructed from his teachings, it cannot have been written by John of Damascus himself.[123]

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[117] John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* C/CI, 61 (= *PG* 94, 765A–B).

[118] Carefully documented by Khoury, "Jean Damascène et l'Islam," 52–62.

[119] For the latter point see Kister, "Maqām Ibrāhīm: a Stone with an Inscription." The "black stone with an inscription" is mentioned in the official T'ang histories (see the entry thereon in Chapter 7 above).

[120] See the entry on "Germanus" in Chapter 3 above.

[121] Note that this particular objection, which features in numerous Muslim tracts against Christianity (e.g. Wāṣil-Bashīr, *Disputation*, 322), also appears in earlier anti-Jewish works (e.g. *Trophies of Damascus* II.5.1, 225).

[122] See Kotter, *Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 4.420–26; the one version that is not anonymous is attributed to a Sisinnios Grammatikos.

[123] See Griffith, "Free Will in Christian *Kalām*: Abū Qurrah," 82–91 (who assigns the *Disputation* in its present form to Theodore Abū Qurra), and Glei and Khoury, *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abū Qurra*, 59–62 (who ascribe it to John the Deacon, student of Abū Qurra). It has been analysed by Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 68–82; Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 99–122; Le Coz, *Jean Damascène: écrits sur Islam*, 80–87, 135–82, 198–203. Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collection* 4.2, 323, states that Ms. Vatican arab 175, contains an Arabic refutation of Islam by John (noted also by Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 48, and Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," 117). This seems not to be so (see Le Coz, *Jean Damascène: écrits sur*

The Correspondence of Leo III (717–41) and ʿUmar II (717–20)[124]

{490} These two rulers were both known as zealous reformers of their respective faiths, Leo for his iconoclasm and forcible baptism of Jews, ʿUmar for his fiscal innovations favouring converts to Islam and rigorous enforcement of Muslim law. And it is on matters of faith that the two are most well known to have corresponded. Theophanes tells us: "He (ʿUmar) composed a theological letter for Leo the emperor, thinking to persuade him to become a Muslim (*magarisai*)."[125] A fuller statement is given by Agapius:

> He (ʿUmar) wrote for Leo the king a letter summoning him therein to Islam and, moreover, disputed with him about his religion. Leo made him a reply in which he tore apart his argument and made clear to him the unsoundness of his statement, and elucidated to him the light of Christianity by proofs from the revealed Books and by comparisons from the insights and inclinations of the Qur'an.[126]

This notice is preceded in both Theophanes and Agapius by brief entries on "a violent earthquake" and ʿUmar's banning of wine, and so it may well be that they draw on a common source and Agapius preserves more fully a report which Theophanes has abbreviated.[127]

The earliest and most detailed extant account is provided by Lewond, a late eighth-century Armenian chronicler, who also gives what **{491}** he claims are the texts of this epistolary exchange. In the opinion of Gero, however, these were fashioned and interpolated by an eleventh or twelfth-century reviser of Lewond. He argues that the narrative framework of the correspondence is taken from the tenth-century history of Thomas Artsruni,[128] and that Lewond's entries on Yazīd II and Hishām have been lifted from the eleventh-century *Universal History* of Stephen of Taron.[129]

He attempts to prove this first by demonstrating the awkwardness of the adaptation. The narrative on ʿUmar begins: "(Sulaymān) was succeeded by ʿUmar who reigned for two years and five months and then died," and his reign is then described as though, says Gero, "'Umar reappears from the dead." But, as Gero was

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l'Islam, 59 n. 4); if it exists at all, this work is probably just an Arabic translation of the chapter on Islam in John's *De haeresibus*.

[124] This entry has already been published as a separate article (see Hoyland, "The Correspondence of Leo III and ʿUmar II").

[125] Theophanes, 399; see Kahane, "Die Magariten," 194–95, for this verb.

[126] Agapius, 503.

[127] The obvious common source would be Theophilus of Edessa (see the entry on him in Chapter 10 above), but Michael the Syrian and *Chron. 1234*, who use Theophilus via Dionysius, make no mention of ʿUmar's letter or his banning of wine.

[128] Thomson, "Muḥammad and the Origin of Islam in Armenian Tradition," 839, points out that Thomas does not say he has the letter from Lewond, but, as Thomson notes elsewhere in the same article, Thomas does not name his sources.

[129] Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 138–40.

surely aware, this is how Lewond introduces most of the caliphs. The account of "'Umar's supposed kindness to the Armenians" and "partiality towards the Armenian nobility" is fabricated, says Gero, but this is a very tendentious reading of the text, which simply has:

> We are told that he was the noblest among the men of his race. He had the captives return home, those who had been taken into captivity from Armenia by Muḥammad (ibn Marwān)… And when 'Umar was entrusted with the rule he released all the captives and let them return to their respective places.[130]

Moreover, it is known from elsewhere that 'Umar was indeed responsible for freeing the Armenian prisoners-of-war held in Damascus.[131] 'Umar's alleged change of heart after reading Leo's letter is "a clumsy sequence," says Gero, for the caliph's benevolence towards the Christians had already been noted. Yes indeed, but Lewond's aim is clearly to explain this benevolence, namely that Leo's reply had shamed him into it:

> **{492}** As he ('Umar) read the letter, he felt very confused.[132] As a result of this letter he now exercised more temperance and indulgence towards the Christian people, presenting himself everywhere as an obliging person and, as we said earlier, he was the one who allowed the captives to return after pardoning them for their faults.[133]

Gero's claim that the material in Lewond on Yazīd II and Hishām is mostly from Stephen of Taron, supplemented by "fanciful elaborations," is likewise unconvincing. Lewond's *History*, which spans only 160 years, is generally anecdotal and full of speeches and rhetoric, whereas Stephen, who is writing a universal history, is far more concise. It is, therefore, at least as likely that Stephen gives an excised version of Lewond, whom he does indeed acknowledge as a source.[134]

The second argument put forward by Gero is that Leo's letter in Lewond is not a translation or reworking from Greek, as has been generally thought, but was written originally in Armenian.[135] The points in favour of a Greek ur-text are slight –

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[130] Lewond, XIII (tr. Arzoumanian, 70); Thomas Artsruni, 2.IV (tr. Thomson, 171) has: "He was the most noble of them all."

[131] Vahan of Golt'n, *Passion*, IV (tr. Gatteyrias, 188).

[132] The text literally reads: "He was greatly ashamed by confusion."

[133] Lewond, XV (tr. Arzoumanian, 105–106); Thomas Artsruni, 2.IV (tr. Thomson, 171), is here copying from Lewond, as Thomson, *Thomas Artsruni*, 37, notes.

[134] Stephen Asolik of Taron, *Universal History*, 1.I (tr. Dulaurier, 4), says he uses "the history of Lewond the priest who informs us about the invasions of the Arabs and the woes which their tyranny visited upon Armenian;" one cannot infer from this, as does Gero; (*Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 137), "that Stephen could use Lewond's work for local events in Armenia only."

[135] *Ibid.*, 164–70. Note that Meimaris, *Katalogos/katālūg*, 41/43, signals an Arabic Sinai manuscript containing a letter of 'Umar to Leo, which may affect the question of the original

Leo refers to "our Greek tongue," calls the Pentateuch *nomos* and uses the Septuagint names for Chronicles and Canticles[136] – and so Gero has no problem in explaining them away. But his only positive argument is that the Armenian Vulgate rather than the Septuagint has been used for scriptural citations, which **{493}** is a common practice among translators.[137] And the principal argument for a Greek original – namely in what other language could one hope to pass off a letter of Leo? – is not considered by Gero.

There is, therefore, reason to be sceptical about Gero's conclusions regarding the Leo-'Umar correspondence. The issue can now be resolved to some extent in the light of the studies of Gaudeul, who claims to have unearthed the original letter of 'Umar to Leo.[138] He recovers this from two documents: the first half from an Aljamiado (Romance written in Arabic characters) text of the early sixteenth century, the second half from a ninth-century Arabic text. Though both are defective, they overlap for ten paragraphs and can be seen to resemble each other so exactly that they must be versions of the same document. The nature of this document is explained in the title of the Aljamiado text: "This is the epistle that 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, king of the believers, wrote to Lyon, king of the Christian infidels." This letter, as reconstructed from the two texts, voices most of the objections to which Leo's letter in Lewond is responding, and does so in a very similar order and using similar expressions. Certain themes are distinctive and not found in other Muslim-Christian dispute texts, such as the alleged saying of Jesus that "naked you came into the world, and naked you shall go" and that "God made Satan a treasurer," and so their presence in both the Arabic/Aljamiado and Armenian documents makes it certain that they are somehow related.

The Aljamiado text is equipped with a chain of transmitters (*isnād*), which begins: "Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Awf al-Ṭā'ī passed it on to us in the town of Ḥimṣ." Gaudeul takes this man, or a contemporary of his, to be the author, because his death date of 885 coincides with the estimated time of composition of the Arabic text. By the late ninth **{494}** century, however, *isnād* criticism was highly devel-

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language of the dispute (though I can see no obvious resemblances to our text in the two photographs published by Meimaris).

[136] These and other arguments are given by Beck, *Vorsehung und Vorherbestimmung in der theologischen Literatur der Byzantiner*, 44–45 n. 50, and followed by Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 201–202.

[137] Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 165 n. 36, observes that Chahnazarian and Jeffery used French and English Bibles when translating Lewond, rather than rendering from the Armenian.

[138] Gaudeul, "The Correspondence between Leo and 'Umar," gives full discussion. Gero (*Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 162–63), and Thomson ("Muḥammad and the Origin of Islam in Armenian Tradition," 839), point out the very "cursory" nature of 'Umar's letter in Lewond, but the latter does state explicitly that he is only giving a summary, and one should note that there are remarkable similarities between his epitome and the material about to be discussed, which may mean that Lewond was telling the truth.

oped and scholarship professional, so one should not simply dismiss *isnāds* as fictitious without some consideration. Sourdel, the editor of the Arabic text, gives the late ninth/early tenth century as a *terminus ante quem*, and notes that the text compares well with a manuscript of 857.[139] Moreover, the text as we have it could be a copy. The rest of the *isnād* runs: "It has been transmitted to us by ʿAbd al-Quddūs ibn al-Ḥajjāj who said: it has been transmitted to us by Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAyyāsh." These were both scholars of Ḥimṣ who died in 827 and 798 respectively, so it is plausible that they transmitted from each other. That there is no attempt to get back to Umar himself is another point in the *isnād's* favour.

Ostensibly, then, the text of ʿUmar's letter to Leo originates from the end of the eighth century. This is not impossible, and certainly it fits well with the comment in Leo's reply that "it is now 800 years since Jesus Christ appeared."[140] It also accords with what we know of this period, which witnessed the efflorescence of Muslim – Christian debate. Finally, it coincides with the time of writing of Lewond, who would then have picked it up very soon after its composition and incorporated it into his *History*.[141] The only concrete reason advanced by scholars for a later date is the mention in Leo's reply of the "Jahdi who deny both the existence of God and the resurrection," who have been identified as the "Jāḥiẓīya," followers of the writer Jāḥiẓ (d. 869).[142] Aside from the fact that Jāḥiẓ certainly did not reject God's existence or the resurrection, this sect is totally fictitious. It is difficult after translation from Arabic to Armenian, very likely via Greek, to determine who are meant, but certainly not devotees of Jāḥiẓ.[143]

Gaudeul concludes that a Muslim writer of Ḥimṣ drew up this letter, presenting it as from ʿUmar to Leo, and soon afterwards a Christian answered, assuming the identity of Leo. Muslims kept "'Umar's letter," **{495}** of which one copy reached Spain and was translated into Romance and continued being copied as late as the sixteenth century. Christians kept "Leo's letter" and translated it into Armenian, whence it became integrated into Lewond's *History*.[144] The story is not, however, so simple, for ʿUmar's letter not only contains objections which Leo then answers, but also responds to Leo's replies:

> Leo-ʿUmar: "We do not hope to find there (in paradise) springs of wine, honey or milk. We do not expect to enjoy there commerce with women who remain forever virgin and to have children by them."

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[139] Sourdel, "Un pamphlet musulman anonyme," 2–3.

[140] Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 296.

[141] This halts in the year 788 and the last few entries give evidence of eyewitness material.

[142] Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 276; Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 202–203; Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 163 n. 31.

[143] See Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 163 n. 26, 165 n. 49; Newman, *Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, 49, suggests that the Yazīdīs are meant.

[144] Gaudeul, "The Correspondence between Leo and ʿUmar," 127–28.

> ʿUmar-Leo: "You wrote rebuking us for saying that the inhabitants of paradise eat, drink, wear clothes and get married."
>
> Leo-ʿUmar: "Do you feel no shame to have venerated that house which is called the Kaʿba, the dwelling of Abraham…?"
>
> ʿUmar-Leo: "You wrote rebuking us for turning to face the direction of Abraham's place of worship when we pray…"
>
> Leo-ʿUmar: "As a consequence of this licence (given by Muḥammad) a goodly number of you have contracted the habit of multiplying their commerce with women as if it were a question of tilling the fields."
>
> ʿUmar-Leo: "You rebuke us as well for having many women."
>
> Leo-ʿUmar: Nor can I forget the unchasteness of your Prophet and the manner full of artifice whereby he succeeded in seducing the woman Zeda… As for the example of David who took Uriya's wife, as you remind me, it is well known that therein he committed a sin before the Eternal."
>
> ʿUmar-Leo: "You rebuke us because our Prophet married a woman (Zaynab) whom her husband had repudiated. It is indeed what David did in the case of Uriya and his wife."[145]

{496} The last example is particularly noteworthy, for not only is ʿUmar defending himself against Leo's accusation: David did the same, but Leo's accusation includes a reply to that defence: David was wrong. Moreover, though the subjects are the same, ʿUmar's replies, especially the first two, do not exactly fit the criticisms of Leo. It is, therefore, evident that we do not have here a simple exchange of letters.

Both ʿUmar and Leo open their address by mentioning previous correspondence. ʿUmar says:

> You have written to me many letters where you have treated questions concerning Jesus and your religion, questions that you treat personally and upon which your messenger enlarged. I do not know what made you write to me again. Is it because you want to verify what it was I wrote to you about?[146]

Leo asserts that "it is true that we have several times written to you… but it has always been about mundane affairs, never about affairs divine." There is, however, reason to doubt this, for though he avers that "nothing would induce us to discuss with you our doctrines, since our Lord and Master himself has bidden us refrain from exposing our unique and divine doctrine before heretics," he nevertheless continues by saying that "Holy Writ bids us reply to those who question us."[147] A pos-

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[145] Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 322–24, 328; ʿUmar-Leo, *Letter* (Arabic), 31–32/22–24.

[146] ʿUmar-Leo, *Letter* (Aljamiado), fol. 85a–b (tr. Gaudeul, 133).

[147] All these quotes are from Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 282.

sible solution, then, is that a number of Leo-ʿUmar/ʿUmar-Leo letters were composed in the course of the eighth century, and that what has come down to us is a compilation from or rehashing of such works.

One could adduce a number of arguments to demonstrate that at least some of the material in the text as we have it is from the early eighth century. On the Muslim side we have a report that describes the circumstances under which an exchange of religious writings took place. Allegedly ʿUmar despatched to Leo ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Aʿlā and a certain "man from (the tribe of) ʿAns," who narrates the following:

> When we came to him (Leo), we found ourselves before a man of Arabic speech and hailing from Marʿash. ʿAbd Allāh **{497}** began to debate, so I said "hold on" and praised God and prayed for His Prophet. Then I said: "I was sent by the same man (ʿUmar) as him (ʿAbd Allāh). Now, the commander of the faithful calls you to Islam. If you accept you will attain the right way, although I myself think that misery is already decreed for you unless God wishes otherwise. If you accept [well and good]; if not, write a reply to *our letter*"[148]

A short debate ensues between ʿAbd Allāh and Leo, then the emperor "*wrote a reply* to our writings and we returned to ʿUmar with it." The account is of course anecdotal and polemical, but its knowledge of Leo's eastern origins is a point in its favour.

More substantial corroboration comes in the form of a Latin version of Leo's letter to ʿUmar. This was first published in 1508 by the French physician and humanist Symphorianus Champerius, who included it in his *De triplici disciplina*. In a short note which precedes the text Champerius introduces the work as follows:

> The letter of the emperor Leo (*Lenis*) addressed to ʿUmar (*Amarum*), king of the Saracens. This letter was translated from Greek into the Chaldaean language. Now indeed, God willing, we shall turn [it] from the Chaldean expression (*eloquio*) into Latin in accordance with the particular nature of [that] speech (*iuxta proprietatem sermonis*).[149]

Unfortunately it is not known on what grounds Champerius claimed a Greek genealogy for this letter; it may simply have been an assumption based on Leo's authorship. Since it is a reply to a Muslim adversary, Chaldean presumably means Arabic here, a usage found elsewhere in Latin Christian writings.[150]

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[148] Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, 1.295.

[149] Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Latin) – the *editio princeps* I use (Bodleian) has no pagination. The version in *Maxima bibl.* (see under Leo-ʿUmar in Bibliography I below) and *PG* 107 omit this note and wrongly attribute the letter to Leo VI; see Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 154–55, esp. n. 11 thereto.

[150] Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 156–62, worries too much about a Syriac version; Eulogius, Paul Albar, Sancho and other Latin Christians used Chaldean to signify Arabic (see Daniel, *Arabs and Medieval Europe*, 32, 34, 86; Wasserstein, "A Latin Lament on the Prevalence of Arabic," 6 n. 9).

{498} Gero, wishing to show that Leo's letter in Lewond is an original Armenian composition, argues "that the two letters are quite independent documents and cannot even be regarded as two separate replies to the same Muslim attack." Khoury, on the other hand, says "there is no doubt that, in the two cases, it is a matter of the same exchange of correspondence between the emperor and the caliph;" and Jeffery concurs: "the Latin, though much briefer and somewhat differently arranged, is really the same material, meeting the same Muslim objections with essentially the same arguments."[151] There are major differences between the two writings. The Latin version is only about one sixth the length of the Armenian and, unlike the Armenian, it does not make constant allusion to a letter already written. Nor does it have the distinctive features, such as the references to coming naked into the world or to Satan as God's treasurer, and it has very few Biblical quotes in common with the Armenian. It does, however, follow the same general layout: scriptures, divinity of Jesus, defence of Christian practices, attack on Muslim practices; and, like the Armenian, it simply lists Old and New Testament witnesses to Christ's divinity. Though each of the arguments is familiar from Muslim-Christian polemics, enough of them occur in both texts to guarantee that there is some relation between them. But the divergence is too great for the Latin to be an abbreviation of the Armenian or for the latter to be an expansion of the Latin. The most likely explanation is that they are two distinct redactions made from common material, probably Greek in origin and earlier than Lewond.[152]

Turning to the contents of Leo's reply, one notes the remark of the emperor to 'Umar that "it is a hundred years more or less since your religion appeared," which is correct for the reign of 'Umar (AH 99–101).[153] This could be evidence of an earlier remnant, though it could of course have been written to add verisimilitude to the purported setting. More cogent is Meyendorff's argument that "the text clearly reflects a state of mind which was predominant at the court of Constantinople in the **{499}** years which preceded the iconoclastic decree of 726… for neither the iconoclasts nor the orthodox were capable, at a later date, of adopting towards the images so detached an attitude."[154] Certainly the text betrays no sign of images as a burning issue:

> As for images, we do not give them a like respect [as for the cross], not having received in holy scripture any commandment whatsoever in regard to this. Nevertheless, finding in the Old Testament that divine command which authorised Moses to have executed in the tabernacle the figures of the cherubim, and animated by a sincere attachment for the disciples of the Lord… we have always felt a desire to conserve their images, which have come down to us from their times

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[151] Gero, *Byzantine Iconoclasm… Leo*, 154, cf. 162; Khoury, *Théologiens byzantins*, 201; Jeffery, "Ghevond's Text," 273–74.

[152] *Ibid.*, 274–75; Khoury, *Théologiens Byzantins*, 201–202.

[153] Leo-'Umar, *Letter* (Armenian), 295.

[154] Meyendorff, "Byzantine Views of Islam," 127.

> as their living representation… But as for the wood and the colours we do not give them any reverence.[155]

And one might again see this as a vestige of an earlier version. Finally, a number of the opinions expressed about Islamic practices and beliefs are voiced in other apologetic writings of the first half of the eighth century. The attack on the Kaʿba and its stone, the licentious nature of Muslim marriage, divorce and concubinage, and the carnal vision of paradise, are all found in John of Damascus (wr. 730s).[156] Muslim acceptance of the Pentateuch and rejection of the prophets, and adherence to circumcision and sacrifice feature in the Syriac disputations involving Patriarch John of Sedra and a monk of Beth Ḥale respectively.[157]

However, some of the material is certainly of the late eighth/early ninth century. This is intimated by Leo's statement that "it is now 800 years since Christ appeared," and is reinforced by the appearance of arguments known from dispute texts of this period. That **{500}** Adam, like Jesus, was not born of man and so should, according to the Christians' reasoning, also be regarded as a god, is an argument used to the same end by a number of Muslim authors of the first half of the ninth century.[158] In defence of the Muslim paradise where there is food and drink ʿAlī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. *ca.* 855), a convert to Islam from Christianity, also cites Matthew xxvi.29: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until I drink it again with you in the kingdom of heaven."[159] The application of Isaiah xxi.7 to Muḥammad occurs early in Muslim writings and was already refuted by the patriarch Timothy (780–823).[160] And the subject of the early history of the Qur'an crops up in other polemical texts of this time. Leo says:

> It was ʿUmar, Abū Turāb and Salmān the Persian who composed that ("your *P'ourkan*"), even though the rumour has got around among you that God sent it

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[155] Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 322.

[156] *Ibid.*, 323–26, 328–29; John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* C/CI, 64–66 (= *PG* 94, 769A–772D). Both refer to Muḥammad marrying the wife of Zayd (cf. Qur'an xxxiii.37) and to wives as a tilth (ii.223).

[157] Scriptural position: Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 299–300; Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy*, 248/257, 250–51/260. Circumcision and sacrifice: Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 314–15; Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 2b.

[158] Umar-Leo, *Letter* (Arabic), 27/14 = *Letter* (Aljamiado), fols. 99a–100a; Ibn Hishām, 403; Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī, *Al-radd ʿalā al-naṣārā*, 144; Jāḥiẓ, *Al-radd ʿalāl-naṣārā*, 342; Wāṣil-Bashīr, *Disputation*, 322. ʿUmar, Ibn Rabban and Wāṣil drive the point home by pointing out that others too had raised the dead (e.g. Ezekiel and Elisha) and worked miracles (e.g. Moses and Joshua). On the latter point see Thomas, "The Miracles of Jesus in Early Islamic Polemic." For a discussion of the Wāṣil-Bashīr text see Griffith, "Bashīr/Bēsēr," 293–313.

[159] ʿUmar-Leo, *Letter* (Arabic), 31/22; Ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī, *Al-dīn wa-l-dawla*, 201.

[160] Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 327–28; Muslim sources are cited by Bashear, "Riding Beasts on Divine Missions," 40–43; Timothy I, *Syriac Apology*, 110–13/37–39 = *Arabic Apology*, §§134–57.

> down fromthe heavens. As for your [Book], you have already givenus examples of such falsifications and one knows among others of a certain Ḥajjāj, named by you as governor of Persia, who had men gather your ancient books, which he replaced by others composed by himself according to his taste and which he disseminated everywhere in your nation, because it was easier by far to undertake such a task among a people speaking a single language. From this destruction, nevertheless, there escaped a few of the works **{501}** of Abū Turāb, for Ḥajjāj could not make them disappear completely.[161]

A very similar version of events is narrated by ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī and Abraham of Tiberias, both allegedly writing in the reign of Maʾmūn (813–33). They speak of the part played by various Companions of Muḥammad in putting together the Qurʾan and of the first redaction made by ʿUthmān:

> Then there was the matter of Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf, namely that he gathered together every last copy and caused to be omitted from the text many things…, and a version (*naskh*) was written according to the composition (*taʾlīf*) favoured by Ḥajjāj in six copies (*maṣāḥif*), and one was sent to Egypt, another to Syria, another to Medina, another to Mecca, another to Kufa and another to Baṣra.[162]

Kindī avers to his Muslim addressee that "all that I have said is drawn from your own authorities." And this would appear to be so, for we find notices in Arabic sources that "Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf wrote exemplars of the Qurʾan (*maṣāḥif*) and sent them to the chief cities (*al-amṣār*),"[163] that he changed the wording or eliminated variant readings,[164] or introduced diacritical marks into the text.[165] The convergence of reports upon the figure of Ḥajjāj makes it almost certain that he undertook some sort of revision of the Muslim scripture, but this may have been no more than the sponsoring of an improved edition.[166]

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[161] Leo-ʿUmar, *Letter* (Armenian), 292, 297–98.

[162] Kindi, *Letter to al-Hāshimī*, 137; Abraham of Tiberias, *Dialogue* CXXVI, 331, says Ḥajjāj "compiled it and arranged it" (*allafahu wa-rattabahu*). Both also mention the survival of ʿAlī's copy (for his role in writing/editing the Qurʾan see Nöldeke and Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, 2.8–11).

[163] Ibn Shabba, *Taʾrīkh al-Madīna*, 1.7; Ibn Duqmāq, *Intiṣār*, 4.72; cf. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tahdhīb al-taʾrīkh*, 4.82.

[164] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 49–50, 117–18 (*Bāb mā ghayyara al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf fī muṣḥaf ʿUthmān*); Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 4.463, and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tahdhīb al-taʾrīkh*, 4.69 (opposition to Masʿūd's reading).

[165] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 2.32; Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Maṣāḥif*, 119.

[166] He was acting for the caliph, if one accepts the reference in Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 11.264, to ʿAbd al-Malik's collection of the Qurʾan. See further Mingana, "Transmission of the Kur'ān;" Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 17–18.

CHRISTIAN ARABIC TEXTS[167]

{502} The most famous early Christian apologetes who wrote in Arabic were the Nestorian ʻAmmār al-Baṣrī (d. *ca.* 850), the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra (d. *ca.* 820s) and the Jacobite Abū Rāʾita al-Takrītī (d. *ca.* 830s).[168] Of early Muslim polemicists whose works survive there is ʻAlī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabari (d. 855), Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. *ca.* 860), Abū ʻĪsā al-Warrāq (d. 861) and Jāḥiẓ (d. 869).[169] Though these are all too late to concern us here, we shall have a brief look at their forerunners.

Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid

The earliest example of Christian apologetic in Arabic that we have is the treatise entitled *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid* ("On the Triune Nature of God"). Its credal position is stated clearly from the start:

> We do not say three Gods… but we say that God and His Word and His Spirit are one God and one Creator… We do not say that God begat His Word as any man begets – God forbid! Rather we say that the Father begat his Word as the sun begets rays, as the mind begets speech (*al-kilma*) and as the fire begets heat.[170]

{503} By these words the author reveals his intention to respond to the most fundamental Muslim objections to Christianity, prevalent in the Qur'an and the earliest official inscriptions, that God is not three and "God does not beget and was not begotten." After some elaboration of this point the author sets out how he will continue:

> This, then, is our faith and our testimony in God and His Word and His Spirit: He is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God and one Lord. As for Christ, in him He saved and delivered mankind, and we shall expound that, God

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[167] Dispute texts in Christian Arabic against Muslims are surveyed by Caspar *et al*, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1975), 152–69; Griffith, "Muḥammad's Scripture and Message," 102–104; Haddad, *La trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, 25–81. Thematic studies are given by Khoury, *La controverse théologique islamo-chrétienne de langue arabe*; Rissanen, *Theological Encounter of Oriental Christians with Islam.*

[168] Griffith, "'Ammār al-Baṣrī's *Kitāb al-Burhān*;" *idem*, "Theodore Abū Qurrah: Intellectual Profile;" *idem*, "Ḥabīb b. Ḥidmah Abū Rāʾiṭah."

[169] For references and discussion see Bouamama, *La littérature polémique musulmane contre le christianisme*; Thomas, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam*, 31–50.

[170] *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid*, 75–77/4–5. The text is discussed by Harris, "A Tract on the Triune Nature of God" (who demonstrates the affinity of the tract with earlier anti-Jewish literature), very briefly by Nasrallah, *Mouvement littéraire dans l'église grecque* 2.2, 145–46, and at length by Samir, "The Earliest Arab Apology for Christianity."

> willing, how God sent His Word and His Light as a mercy and guidance to men, and favoured them by him.[171]

The argumentation is simple and there is heavy reliance on the Bible for both quotations and the development of ideas. What makes this text interesting is its extensive recourse to Qur'anic vocabulary and phraseology, and on eight occasions there is direct, if somewhat free, quotation of Qur'anic verses.[172] The date of the text is given by the assertion: "If this religion were not truly from God, it would not have endured and stood for 746 years."[173] The obvious starting point for the establishment of Christianity is the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, and by the Alexandrian world era which prevailed in the Near East at that time, this would yield the year 788.[174]

Papyrus Schott Reinhard no. 438

{504} Our second text exists only as papyri fragments. It is patently a polemical writing against Islam of Christian authorship. If it is meant to be a dialogue then the Muslim plays a very minor part, for the surviving extracts are wholly taken up with declarations and assertions, objections and counter-questions posed by the Christian disputant. Again the principal aim is to demonstrate that the Trinity and Incarnation in no way compromise God's unicity, and this is corroborated by quotations from the Qur'an and the Bible. Graf states that the script resembles that found in papyri of the Heidelberg collection of the period 709–31, but that "further comparative material from the Erzhog Rainer papyrus collection puts the dating nearer to the middle or second half of the eighth century after Christ."[175] The naming of chapters

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[171] *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid*, *78/6–7*.

[172] Examples are given by Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu*, 105. See also Graf, *GCAL*, 2.27–28; Harris, "A Tract on the Triune Nature of God," 76; Samir, "The Earliest Arab Apology for Christianity," 69–70, 108–109.

[173] MS. Sinai arab 154, fol. 110b (which is fol. 113b in Gibson's edition; the page containing this note was, however, missed out by her): *wa-law lam yakun hādhā l-dīn ḥaqq min Allāh*, *lam yathbut wa-lam yaqum mundhu sab' mi'at sana wa-sitt arba'īn sana.*

[174] Griffith, "Theodore Abū Qurra: Intellectual Profile," 43 n. 3, counts from the Incarnation, which then gives us 755, but the arguments adduced by Swanson, /Considerations for Dating," 122–28, for the crucifixion are convincing (cf. also *Doctrina Jacobi* 1.22, 101–103). Samir, "The Earliest Arab Apology for Christianity," 61–64, suggests that the Melkite era of the Incarnation was used; this places Christ's birth in 9 BC and resurrection in AD 25–26, and would date our text to 737 or 771. But Swanson gives evidence that "up to the year A.D. 900 it is exclusively the Alexandrian world eras that we find used in the Melkite circles of Palestine and Mount Sinai" ("Considerations for Dating," 139), and Samir himself maintains elsewhere that the Melkite Incarnation era seems only to have been in use between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries ("L'ere de l'lncarnation dans les manuscrits arabes melkites," 194, 200).

[175] Graf, "Christlich-arabische Texte," 3–4.

from the Qur'an[176] and the many similarities to the *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid* and to writings of Theodore Abū Qurra make it unlikely that this treatise predates the late eighth century.[177]

Masā'il wa-ajwiba 'aqlīya wa-ilāhīya

Plausibly dateable to this period as well is the work entitled: "Questions and [the] rational and religious answers [thereto]," in which a Muslim notable of Jerusalem poses three questions in writing to a monk. Their subject is the Trinity and Christ's nature, and the monk's reply to each **{505}** consists of two parts: an answer based on rational argument, and an answer drawing upon the Bible and occasionally the Qur'an. The tract is anonymous and undated, so it is only similarities with the above two Christian Arabic documents that suggest a date in the late eighth century.[178]

JEWISH TEXTS[179]

The Ten Wise Jews

Muslim tradition is able to cite a number of Jewish rabbis who accepted Islam. Most famous were 'Abd Allāh ibn Salām and Ka'b al-Aḥbār, who were wholehearted and enthusiastic converts. Ibn Isḥāq lists eight more who "took refuge in Islam," but only "hypocritically professed it."[180] On the basis of these and other narratives,[181]

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[176] *Āl 'Imrān* (iii), *al-Zukhruf* (xliii), *al-Nisā'* (iv) and *al-Baqara* (ii) are specified; otherwise Qur'anic borrowings are indicated by such expressions as "the saying of your messenger," "you say in your Qur'an," "in your book."

[177] The similarities are collated by Graf in the footnotes to his edition. Particularly noteworthy is the use by both our author (*Christian Arabic Disputation* (*PSR 438*), 16–18) and Theodore Abū Qurra of Qur'an v.116 ("God said to Jesus son of Mary: Did you say to mankind 'take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?'") followed up by the question "when did this inquiry occur?"

[178] The work is found in Ms. Sinai arab 434, fols. 171–181, dated 1138. An edition is being prepared by Dr. Mark Swanson; until then see the brief description in Haddad, *La trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes*, 38.

[179] Jewish dispute texts against Islam are surveyed by Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache*, 244–388; Schreiner, "Zur Geschichte der Polemik zwischen Juden und Muhammedanern;" Perlmann, "The Medieval Polemics between Islam and Judaism;" Stroumsa, "Jewish Polemics against Islam and Christianity," Section II. See also Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu*, 109–114. I say Jewish texts because they are in Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic.

[180] Ibn Hishām, 353–54 ('Abd Allāh ibn Salām), 361–62 (hypocrites); there exist many accounts of Ka'b's conversion (see *EI*², *s.n.*). Maybe also significant for this entry is the Prophetic saying: "If ten Jews were to believe in me, then [all] the Jews would believe in me" (Bukhari, 2.207 [*Manāqib al-anṣār* LII]).

[181] See Hirschfeld, "Historical and Legendary Controversies between Muḥammad and the Rabbis."

Jewish polemicists elaborated accounts of how Muḥammad had been instructed by Jewish scholars. As with the legend of Baḥira the purpose was to rob Islam of any originality and to negate its claim to have direct revelation from God.[182] The most popular and influential version was of the ten wise Jews who converted to Islam in order to safeguard Israel and who participated in the composition of the Qur'an.

{506} The earliest witness to this tale is Theophanes (d. 818), who makes use of it in his entry on Muḥammad:

> At the beginning of his advent the misguided Jews thought he was the Messiah who is awaited by them, so that some of their leaders joined him and accepted his religion while forsaking that of Moses who saw God. Those who did so were ten in number and they remained with him until his [first] sacrifice (*sphcigê*).[183] But when they saw him eating camel meat,[184] they realised that he was not the one they thought him to be and were at a loss what to do. Being afraid to abjure his religion, these wretched men taught him illicit things directed against us Christians and remained with him.[185]

The first Jewish attestation is found embodied within a Hebrew anti-Karaite treatise of the late ninth or early tenth century.[186] It also exists as an independent entity in Judaeo-Arabic. The two are very similar, though the Hebrew gives a somewhat con-

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[182] Though it is never quoted, Jewish and Christian polemicists may have been inspired by the Qur'anic verse: "We know well that they say 'only a man teaches him,' [but] the language of him to whom they allude is foreign, whereas this is clear Arabic speech" (xvi.103).

[183] Cf. *Chron. 819*, 11: "Muḥammad began to reign… He made the first sacrifice and had the Arabs eat them against their custom" (see also the entry on the "Monk of Beth Ḥale" in this chapter). Translations give "until his death/murder," but there is an obvious connection between his *sphagés* and his eating camel; there is a variant *phagés*, though this means "food" rather than "meal." Professor Cyril Mango has suggested to me that one might understand *achri* in the sense "as long as" and suppose that a verb is missing: "They remained with him as long as [they approved of] his diet."

[184] This is an infringement of Deuteronomy xiv.7; the eating of camel meat by Arabs is commented upon by a number of pre-Islamic Greek and Syriac writers (some examples given in Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature," 103–105), and it was a point on which rabbis questioned Muḥammad (Ibn Hishām, 375).

[185] Theophanes, 333 (tr. Mango, AM 6122 – except translating "murder" not "sacrifice"); this passage is discussed by Schwabe," 'Aseretḥavērāv ha-yehūdīm," 74–76.

[186] Described by Mann, "A Polemical Work against Karaite and other Sectaries," 126–31, and more fully in his "An Early Theologico-Polemical Work" on the basis of newly discovered leaves of the manuscript. Marmorstein, "Einleitung zu David ben Merwans Religionsphilosophie," 52–53, wrongly identified the text as a writing of David ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ.

densed rendering.[187] **{507}** The author of the treatise is polemicising against "our brethren, our rebels, defiers and despisers, who strike at the inheritance which our God gave us," and amid his denunciations he mourns that these had not acted like the ten elders in the following account:[188]

> This is the book of the story of Muḥammad who dwelt in the sheep-pasturing place,[189] which is called the New Mountain, and how he fared until he went up to Ṣanʿa and to the Ḥijaz by reason of the monk who was in *Balqīn* on a pillar that is called "the sign of the sun." And [it also tells of how] those rabbis, who had joined him, came and reminded him of his affair and fabricated (*handaẓa*) for him a book. They inserted at the beginning of a chapter from his Qur'an their names and they inserted the words: "Thus did the wise men of Israel advise the wicked *Aim*,"[190] [making it] hidden and distorted so that it would not be understood. And cursed would be he, as these rabbis said, who explained that to one of the nations of the world, and the monk called Baḥira should not be mentioned.[191] Now these are the rabbis who came to him: Abraham named Kaʿb al-Aḥbār; Absalom named ʿAbd al-Salām… These are the ten who came to him and converted to Islam (*aslamū*) at his hands so that he **{508}** might not harm Israel at all. They made for him a Qur'an and each one of them inserted their names in a chapter, without incurring suspicion. And they wrote in the middle chapter: "Thus did the wise men of Israel advise the wicked *Alm*."

The verses of the Qur'an which make up this last sentence by their initial letters are then cited, though they would seem to be invented.

It is quite possible that the Greek and Judaeo-Arabic/Hebrew texts draw upon a common source,[192] but each has considerably abbreviated it, for many of the allu-

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[187] Schwabe, "'Aseret ḥavērāv ha-yehūdīm," 77–83, compares the two versions and concludes that the divergences, though minor, are sufficient to indicate that the Hebrew derives from a common source rather than from the Judaeo-Arabic text directly.

[188] *Ten Wise Jews* (Judaeo-Arabic), 402; discussion by Baneth, "Teshūvōt ve-heʿarōt." I translate from the Judaeo-Arabic, as it is clearer.

[189] The text has *mawḍaʿ swrʿā al-ġūsī*. The Hebrew version simply speaks of "a shepherd [who dwelt] in a place known as the New Mountain;" for this and other reasons Baneth, "Teshūvōt ve-heʿarōt," 113, proposes reading *mawḍʿ marʿā al-ġhanam*, and I have followed this in the above translation. Leveen, "Mohammed and his Jewish Companions," 401, connects *ġust* with the place *Gūsīt*, near Ḥimṣ, where a certain Sergius the Stylite is said to have lived (Hayman, *Disputation of Sergius against a Jew*, 4*–6*); Leveen then conjectures that this Sergius is to be identified with the Baḥira in our text.

[190] This sentence is in Hebrew; *Alm* is used to mean a false prophet and is a reference to the "dumb (*illemim*) dogs" of Isaiah lvi.10 (see Leveen, "Mohammed and his Jewish Companions," 401).

[191] This phrase is in Hebrew and is probably a form of curse (Baneth, "Teshūvōt ve-heʿarōt," 112–13).

[192] Argued by Schwabe, "'Aseret ḥavērāv ha-yehūdīm," 83–86.

sions in each require explanation in order to be understood. It is not, for example, made explicit that the sentence: "Thus did the wise men of Israel advise the wicked Aim," is meant as a play upon the so-called mystical letters of the Qur'an. "Thus did advise" (*kakhah ya'aṣū*) intends the letters *khy's*, which stand at the beginning of Chapter xix;[193] "the wise men" (*ḥakhemē*) gives *ḥm* of xli–xlvi; "of Israel" (*yisrā'ēl*) yields *ys* of xxxvi; and Aim, a reference to Isaiah lvi.10, opens ii–iii, vii, xiii, xxx–xxxii.[194] Each text has also adapted the common source for its own purposes. The reason why the ten Jews follow Muḥammad, for instance, is given an anti-Jewish twist by Theophanes, who has them mistake Muḥammad for the Messiah, and an anti-Christian slant by the Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew accounts, which have them join him in order to protect Israel from the malicious counsel of the monk Baḥira. Since the legend is in Theophanes, it must have arisen earlier than the ninth century, and most probably in the second half of the eighth century when the biography of Muḥammad had already become largely standardised.[195]

Targum Ps.-Jonathan

{509} Ps.-Jonathan's Aramaic translation (*targum*) of the Pentateuch has long attracted the attention of scholars, most notably for its abundance of haggadic material and distinctive language.[196] But it has recently been the subject of much debate as to whether it may be considered a document of anti-Muslim polemic. Ohana maintains that it can by recourse to ps.-Jonathan on Genesis xxi.9–21, which often portrays Ishmael, the progenitor of the Arabs, in an unfavourable light:[197]

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[193] Chapter xix does indeed fall halfway through the Qur'an, as stated in the treatise ("the middle chapter"), for the initial few chapters of the Qur'an are much longer than the final ones. It is also, significantly, the chapter which narrates the birth of Jesus and affirms that he was not the son of God, but only a prophet.

[194] Schwabe, "'Aseret ḥavērāv ha-yehūdīm," 81; Baneth, "Teshūvōt ve-he'arōt," 114. The letter groups *khy's* and *alm* also have significance in Baḥira (Arabic), 100/165, which made Schwabe," 'Asereṭḥavērāv ha-yehūdīm," 86–87, and Baneth, "Teshūvōt ve-he'arōt," 114, think that this text was related to the texts of the ten wise Jews legend.

[195] For the legend's later development see Shtober, "Muḥammad and the Beginning of Islam," esp. 347–52. Another, or a related, polemical tale is hinted at by Simon ben Yoḥai, *Midrash of the Ten Kings*, 465: "At the beginning of his dominion, when he goes forth, he will seek to do harm to Israel, but great men of Israel will join with him and give him a wife from among them, and there will be peace between him and Israel." Cf. Thomas Artsruni, 2.IV (tr. Thomson, 167): "They (the Jews of Medina) joined him and made a pact, gave him a wife from their nation, and made ready to support him in whatever way his wishes might dictate;" Michael the Syrian (Armenian tr.), 223, also mentions that the Jews gave Muḥammad a wife.

[196] An excellent introduction to this work with extensive bibliography is provided by Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, 1–14.

[197] Ohana, "La polémique judéo-islamique et l'image d'Ismaël."

> Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she bore to Abraham, sporting *with an idol and bowing down to it.* And she said to Abraham: "Cast out this maidservant and her son, for *it is not possible that* the son of this maidservant should inherit with my son *and* [*then*] *make war* with Isaac." But the matter was very distressing in Abraham's eyes on account of his son *Ishmael*, *who had practised idolatry.* But the *Lord* said to Abraham: "Do not be distressed about the boy *who has abandoned the training you have given him*, or about your maidservant whom you are *banishing. Pay heed to* all that Sarah will say to you – *for she is a prophetess* – because through Isaac shall your children be named; *but this son of the maidservant shall not be recorded* [*in the genealogies*] *after you.* And I will make a nation *of robbers* of the son of the maidservant also, because he is your *son."* Abraham rose early in the morning, took some bread and a skin of water and gave [them] to Hagar. He placed [them] on her shoulder – *tying* [*them*] *to her loins to show that she was* **{510}** *a maidservant* – along with the child. He sent her away *with a bill of divorce.* She went off and strayed *from the way*, to the desert *which is near* Beersheba. *When they arrived at the entrance to the desert, they reverted to going astray after idolatry. Ishmael was stricken with a burning fever…* And the angel of *the Lord* called to Hagar from heaven and said to her: "What is the matter, Hagar? Fear not, for the voice of the child *has been* heard *before the Lord and He has not judged him according to the evil deeds he is destined to do. Because of the merit of Abraham he has shown mercy to him in the place* where he is. Arise, take the boy and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him." *The Lord* uncovered her eyes, and a well of water *was revealed to her*, and she went and filled the waterskin with water and gave the boy a drink. *The Memra of the Lord was at the assistance of* the boy and he grew up. He dwelt in the wilderness and became a *skilled* bowman. He dwelt in the desert of Pharan *and took as wife Adisha. But he divorced her* and his mother took *Fāṭima* as wife for him from the land of Egypt.[198]

In the last verse there is an obvious reference to two of Muḥammad's wives, ʿĀ'isha and Fāṭima. But should we regard this as the gloss of a later copyist to what is essentially an intertestamental text, or should we take it to indicate that this *targum* is a post-Islamic compilation, drawing on earlier materials and engaged in a rebuttal of Islam's pretensions? Proponents of the latter view draw attention to its distinctive literary character and its seeming dependence upon late midrashic collections such as the *Chapters* of Rabbi Eliezer.[199] Neither of these points, however, is so conclusive

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[198] Ps.-Jonathan, *Targum*, Genesis xxi.9–21 (tr. Maher, 75–76); italics indicate deviations from the Hebrew text, whether by interpretation or paraphrase. Hayward, "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic," argues that the portrait of Ishmael as idolater and brigand is entirely consonant with descriptions of pre-Islamic Arabs known in Israel.

[199] Shinan, "The 'Palestinian' Targums: Repetitions, Internal Unity, Contradictions;" idem, "Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan;" Ohana, "La polémique judéo-islamique et l'image d'Ismaël" (Ohana makes the point that whereas the Chapters has good and bad comments about Ishmael, ps.-Jonathan has only used the pejorative remarks).

that those who hold the former position **{511}** cannot explain them away.[200] More could probably be said if all the hostile statements about Ishmael were collected and analysed,[201] but it is unlikely that a definitive answer could be given.

PERSIAN TEXTS

Though not so much in evidence as their monotheist adversaries, Zoroastrians did also join in the interconfessional debates of early Abbasid times. Theodore Abū Qurra (d. *ca.* 820s) includes them in his review of the nine principal creeds of his time, attacking them for their approval of incestuous marriages and for the belief that their god had created them for the enjoyment of earthly pleasures.[202] In the presence of the caliph Ma'mūn (813–33) a religious disputation was held between a Zoroastrian convert to Islam, now known only as Abālish,[203] and the Zoroastrian leader Adurfarnbag i Farrokhzadan. The latter was victorious, and indeed is known to us as something of a polemicist from the third book of his religious encyclopaedia, the *Dēnkard*. About 50 chapters of this book have an overtly apologetic format, first setting out the position of the Good Religion on a particular issue (*az nigēz ī wehdēn*), then refuting the practitioners of the bad religions (*akdēn*), "the doctors (*kēshdārān*) whose doctrine is that…" The confession of these "doctors" is not usually specified, but we can recognise Muslims among them from the explicitly Islamic character of certain of the false notions singled out for reproof.[204]

{512} Dependent upon this work, but probably not much later since it reveals no influence of New Persian, is the "Doubt-Dispelling Exposition" (*Shkand-gumānīg wizār*) of Mardanfarrokh i Ohrmazddadan. This follows the layout favoured by theologians of the day: a theoretical section, which proceeds in question-and-answer form to establish the truth of dualism, followed by a polemical section, which criticises the religions of Islam, Judaism, Christianity and Manichaeism. The approach is abstract and intellectual, leaving aside the mythical and traditional elements of Zoroastrianism. In the confrontation with Islam debate centres around the problem of

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[200] As is done by Hayward, "The Date of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan;" *idem*, "Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan;" *idem*, "Inconsistencies and Contradictions in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan."

[201] Other examples are the dispute between Isaac and Ishmael in ps.-Jonathan, *Targum*, Genesis xxii.1, and Abraham's refusal to bless Ishmael in *ibid.*, Genesis xxv.11.

[202] Theodore Abū Qurra, *Fī wujūd al-khāliq wa-l-dīn al-qawīm*, 201–202. Note that he dwells mostly on the Zurvanite creation myth.

[203] For information about this character and the text of the dispute see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Abāliš."

[204] *Dēnkard*, 3.XXXV (against the idea that the "seal of the prophets" had come, "the one whom they hold as a prophet"), XLIX (against the idea of eternal hell), CCXLI (against the idea that God made the angels pay homage to man), CCXCIII–IV (against the idea that God created evil). Adurfarnbag is cited as the original author of the *Dēnhard* at the end of Book 3, but the work became dispersed and had to be reconstituted by Adurbad i Emedan at the end of the ninth century (see the entry on this text in Chapter 8 above).

man's free will and the attribution of evil to God, an area in which a dualist has a far more easily defensible position than a monist. Citation from authoritative texts is frequent in each of the discussions, from the Qur'an and the Bible as well as from Zoroastrian books. This work has been called the "last great treatise of the later period of Mazdaism,"[205] and certainly it is true that thereafter, Zoroastrians, now a dwindling minority, concentrated chiefly on the preservation of old writings rather than the composition of new ones.

LATIN TEXTS[206]

Istoria de Mahomet

In a letter to Paul Albar,[207] John of Seville, a professor of rhetoric, appended a "note about the heretic Muḥammad (*Mammet*)," which reads as follows:

> **{513}** A note on Muḥammad, chief of the Arabs: In the time of Heraclius, in his seventh year and in the current era 656 (618), there arose the heretic Muḥammad, seal (*sigillus*) of the false prophets of the Arabs, forerunner of the Antichrist. At that time Isidore of Seville excelled in our doctrine and Sisebut held the throne in Toledo.
>
> His followers say that this aforementioned wicked prophet shone out by his many miracles, such as that he took the wife of another by reason of the ardour of his lust and joined her to himself in marriage; and that, as we have read no [other] prophet to have done, he held mastery over a camel, controlling its will.[208] When death was approaching, he promised to rise up on the third day, but by the negligence of the guards he was discovered [to have been] devoured by dogs. He held the leadership for ten years, at the end of which he was buried in hell.[209]

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[205] De Menasce, "Zoroastrian Literature after the Muslim Conquest, 560 (*ibid.*, 553–65, discusses this text and Book 3 of the *Dēnhard*). *Idem*, *Škand-gumānīk vicar*, introduces, edits and translates this text; there is also an English translation by West, *Pahlavi Texts*, 3.117–251. Note that it survives only in Pazand (Middle Persian transcribed out of Pahlavi into Avestan script) and in a late Sanskrit version.

[206] Dispute texts in Latin against Islam are surveyed by Caspar *et al.*, "Bibliographic du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1975), 173–76; Burman, *Religious Polemic and the Intellectual History of the Mozarabs*, 33–94.

[207] For Paul's life and works see Cabaniss, "Paulus Albarus of Muslim Cordova," and Colbert, *Martyrs of Córdoba*, 148–66, 305–32.

[208] It is narrated in the Islamic tradition how Muḥammad was able to subdue a wild camel; e.g. Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt* 1.1, 124, and Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 3.158–59, 310.

[209] *Adnotatio de Mammet*, 146. John simply says "we direct to you this note of Mammet" with no indication as to how he had come by it; he may have sent it for Paul to compare with the version in the possession of his friend Eulogius (see Colbert, *Martyrs of Córdoba*, 156–57).

A much longer version is given by Eulogius of Córdoba and was used by him in his defence of the martyrs of that city who had been blaspheming Islam. He had discovered it in the library of the monastery at Leyre in Pamplona while traversing northern Spain in 849–50. It begins with a sketch of the Prophet's career: that he was an orphan, travelled on business whence he became familiar with Christian teachings, married a widow and received a visitation from the angel Gabriel announcing to him his prophethood:

> He began to preach to the irrational animals and he made headway as if on the basis of reason so that they retreated from the cult of idols and adored the corporeal God in heaven. He ordered his believers to take up arms on his **{514}** behalf and, as if with a new zeal of faith, he ordered them to cut down their adversaries with the sword. God, with his inscrutable judgement…, permitted them to inflict injury. First they killed the brother of the emperor who held dominion over the land, and in recognition of the triumph of victory they established the Syrian city of Damascus as the capital of the kingdom.[210]

Then follows a lampoon of the Qur'an, mocking the chapter titles involving animals and twisting the words of the verse on the divorce of Zayd and Zaynab (Qur'an xxxiii.37). The final section recounts Muḥammad's failed attempt at resurrection, as told in John of Seville's note, adding that an annual slaughter of dogs was instituted to avenge him. This is pure invention, presumably meant to compare Muḥammad unfavourably with Christ, and a similar fiction is found in the Baḥira legend.[211] "It was appropriate that a prophet of this kind fill the stomachs of dogs," concludes the author, "a prophet who committed not only his own soul, but those of many, to hell." The contents of the biographical sketch and Qur'anic allusions are mostly found in the Greek writings of Theophanes and John of Damascus, and it was very likely from Byzantine sources that the *Istoria* was composed.[212]

A reading of the two recensions makes clear that they both derive from the same original text. John of Seville has drastically abbreviated this, but he still offers ingredients – such as the miracles and camel of Muḥammad – which are not brought by Eulogius, who may also, therefore, be making selective use of the original. In the form we have it, the text is clearly of Spanish provenance, as is shown by the notices on Spanish affairs at the beginning and the dating of Muḥammad's appearance to the seventh year of Heraclius's reign, which is only found in the Hispan-

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[210] *Istoria de Mahomet*, 157–58 (tr. Wolf, 98); this text is discussed by Franke, *Die freiwilligen Märtyrer von Córdoba*, 38–47, and more briefly by Daniel, *Arabs and Medieval Europe*, 39–45, and Colbert, *Martyrs of Córdoba*, 334–38 (includes translation).

[211] Baḥira (Syriac), 213/215: the Jewish scribe Kaʿb predicts that Muḥammad will arise after three days, but instead the corpse putrifies.

[212] See the entry on "Theophanes" in Chapter 10 above and that on "John of Damascus" in this chapter.

ic chronicles of 741 and 754, where it is equated to 656 **{515}** of the Spanish era.[213] It is possible that we have here an adaptation of a late Umayyad Greek tract, and hence the mention of Damascus as the Arab capital. But the Spanish author himself is unlikely to have written before the beginning of the ninth century, since we hear of no antipathy towards Islam earlier than that time.[214]

Tultusceptru de libro domni Metobii

This rather curious text relates that a certain bishop Osius saw an angel of the Lord who instructed him to "go and speak to my satraps who dwell in Erribon," since "they have strayed from my pact." Osius, instead, sent one of his monks, a youth named Ozim, who set off as commanded, but on the way encountered an evil angel. The latter, posing as the same angel as spoke to the bishop, tells Ozim to take the name "Mohomad" and to teach the satraps dwelling in Erribon the words *alia occuber alia occuber situ leilacita est Mohamet razulille* which, unbeknown to the monk, "serves to conjure up demons." "And so what was to be a vessel of Christ became a vessel of Mammon to the perdition of his soul; and all those who converted to the error and all those who, through his persuasion, shall be, are numbered among the company of hell."

This tract attacks Islam's claim to have a new and direct revelation from God by postulating that this same revelation was perverted by an *ángelus malignus* and had been intended as a Christian message anyway. A certain degree of familiarity with Islam is evident. The Muslim profession of faith is recognisably reported in the Latin,[215] the monk's name of Ozim is presumably meant to represent the epithet of **{516}** *'azīm* ("great") and Erribon to signal Yathrib. The lettering of the extant text indicates that it was written in the mid-eleventh century, but its career before that date is unknown.[216]

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[213] *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, §12; *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §7 (= Pereira/Wolf, §8). Colbert, *Martyrs of Córdoba*, 335–36, suggests that the chronicler of 754, writing in AH 136/792 of the Spanish era, had simply subtracted 136 to get to the beginning of Islam, giving 656 of the Spanish era/618 (actually the eighth year of Heraclius).

[214] For discussion of the date and origin of the work see Ceinos' appendix in Diaz y Diaz, "Textos antimahometanos," 165–68.

[215] In the Latin words of the evil angel "God is most great" (*Allāhu akbar*), "I witness that there is no god" (*ashhadu anna lā ilāha*) and "Muḥammad is the messenger of God" (*Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*) are all discernable, but it is unclear what is meant by *cita est*.

[216] Diaz y Diaz, "Textos antimahometanos," 160–61; Wolf, "Earliest Latin Lives of Muḥammad," 94–96.

DUBIA

John the Stylite

The manuscript Paris syr. 203, written in a Maronite monastery at Qannubin in Lebanon in 1470, mostly contains Maronite writings, particularly those of John Marón.[217] Amongst them is found "a short extract of the discussion of Mar John the Stylite of the convent of the holy Mar Z'uro at Serug," which he had with an anonymous antagonist on the subjects of Christology and God's foreknowledge. Suermann has identified this author with John the Stylite of Litarb (d. 738) – though without giving any justification for this identification – and the antagonist as a Muslim, since he refers to John as a Christian and mentions the Jews in the third person.[218] Baumstark pointed out that the transmission of this piece via a Maronite manuscript means that we should expect a Maronite author.[219] This may not be absolutely so, but Suermann should at least have considered why the Jacobite John might have featured in a Maronite manuscript and why he does not bear his usual designation of "Stylite of Litarb." Moreover, if by John of Litarb, this dialogue would be the earliest witness to a number of doctrinal points of contention between Christians and Muslims. Again, this is not impossible, but it should not be proposed without due consideration. More damning is the fact that this same "John the Stylite of the convent of the holy Mar Z'uro at Serug" appears as the author of a short grammatical treatise, which seems dependent upon the work **{517}** of Joseph Ḥazzaya, who died in the late eighth century.[220] We might, then, place this John of Mar Z'uro in the first half of the ninth century, when both his grammatical and apologetic writing would seem best at home.[221]

Abjuration

Attributed to the Byzantine historian and civil servant Nicetas Choniates (d. *ca.* 1215) is a short Greek writing entitled: "Procedure (*taxis*) to be followed for those of the Saracens who return to the pure and true faith of us Christians." It comprises two parts: the separation (*apotaxis*) from Islam, consisting of some twenty anathemas of key tenets of Muslim belief, and the alignment (*syntaxis*) with Christianity, which

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[217] The manuscript is described by Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, 154–55, and Breydy, *Literatur des Maroniten*, 114–16.

[218] Suermann, "Une controverse de Jôhannàn de Lītārb." He also fails to signal Nau's earlier translation of this same dialogue ("Opuscules maronites," 332–35). For information about John of Litarb see Peña, Castellana and Fernandez, *Les stylites syriens*, 126–32.

[219] Baumstark, *GSL*, 342.

[220] Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits de Notre Dame des Semences," 74 (Codex 139); Moberg, "Die syrische Grammatik des Johannes Esṭōnāyā," esp. 30–31 (he discusses the *floruit* of this John and decides against identification with John of Litarb). On Joseph Ḥazzaya see the entry on "Isho'dnah of Baṣra" in Chapter 5 above.

[221] Assemani, *BO* 3.1, 256, assigns him to *ca.* 830.

includes penance and a profession of the orthodox faith. All scholars agree that the text is earlier than Nicetas' time,[222] but how early is disputed. The appearance of icon worship in the profession of faith suggests a time at least after the temporary reinstatement of that practice in 787, and more likely after its final reinstatement in 843.[223] Cumont has argued for an ascription to the late seventh century, though not on very good grounds. The first anathema is of a number of early Islamic figures and the lack of a caliphal name later than Yazīd prompts Cumont, who thinks that Yazīd I (680–83) is meant, to believe that this is "because the final redaction was fixed in his time."[224] But there were three Yazīds who became caliph, and in any case the list would seem to **{518}** be of Muḥammad's companions, not of caliphs, and Yazīd I was not a companion of the Prophet.[225] Cumont then highlights the similarities between the anathema of the Muslim view of Jesus and a passage of John of Damascus' *De haeresibus* on the same subject, concluding from this that they draw upon a common source.[226] The resemblances are also to be found in other of the anathemas and can equally well be explained by assuming that the author of the abjuration is paraphrasing John's writing on Islam, at times abbreviating, as here, and at times elaborating with material from other sources. The chief obstacle, however, to Cumont's proposal is that the abjuration presupposes not only a fully-fledged Islam[227] but also a comprehensive polemical response to it, and any time before the late eighth century is, therefore, excluded.

Before giving an answer on the date of the abjuration, however, one should first consider whether this text is an abstract document composed for polemical purposes alone, or whether it was intended for use and so has a real historical background. The former option is possible, especially since abjurations of Judaism and Manichaeism are found alongside that of Islam in the manuscripts.[228] If we prefer to think that these texts were for use, then the obvious context would be a Byzantine

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[222] Note that the emperor Manuel I (1143–80) blamed "former emperors and members of the hierarchy" for not censuring the last anathema, against "the God of Muḥammad" (cited by Sahas, "Ritual of Conversion from Islam," 58).

[223] Thus Montet, "Un rituel d'abjuration des musulmans," 147, favouring the patriarchate of Photius (858–67, 877–86); followed by Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 152 n. 6.

[224] Cumont, "L'origine de la formule grecque d'abjuration," 144.

[225] Named are ʿAlī, his sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, Abū Bakr (seemingly twice), ʿUmar, Ṭalḥa, Muʿāwiya, Zubayr, ʿAbd Allāh, Zayd, Yazīd and ʿUthmān.

[226] *Ibid.*, 144–46, referring to *Formula of Abjuration*, anathema no. 11 (= *PG* 140, 129C; = Montet, 152–53), and John of Damascus, *De haeresibus* C/CI, 61 (= *PG* 94, 765A–B).

[227] All the doctrines anathematised are classical, and very often Qur'anic, except for no. 8: "I anathematise the secret teaching of the Saracens and promise of *Mōamed* which says that he will become the keyholder (*kleidouchos*) of paradise" (see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 4 and 152 n. 6). Montet had thought that the characterisation of the sun and moon as *kaballarious* in anathema no. 7 was unorthodox, but Clermont-Ganneau, "Ancien rituel grec," 255, points out that it is a reference to *al-dāʾibīn* of Qur'an xiv.37.

[228] See Cumont, "Une formule grecque de renonciation au Judaisme."

recapture of territories once Christian whose inhabitants had mostly converted to Islam in the meantime.[229] Such a comeback did occur in the mid-ninth century and particularly in the late tenth century under John Tzimisces.

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{519} In a bibliography of Christian-Muslim dialogue this manuscript is stated to contain a disputation in Syriac involving a Muslim named Bāhilī and a certain Christian monk.[230] This text is actually written in Garshuni, Arabic in Syriac characters, and so is unlikely to antedate the tenth century.

[229] The procedure for the "return to the pure and true faith" involves catechisation of the apostate, suggesting that some were children of apostates, or even grandchildren, and so knowing little of Christianity.

[230] Caspar *et al*, "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien" (1984), 290; see Mingana, *Catalogue*, 1.408 (no. 184).

Part III.
Writing the History of Early Islam

CHAPTER 12.
NON-MUSLIM CONCEPTIONS OF ISLAM[1]

{523} Before attempting to use the testimony of non-Muslims for the writing of Islamic history, it is worth first considering the theoretical structures that underpin their observations on the rise of Islam, the "fictional matrices"[2] that give their writings coherence and meaning. In other words, we should try to comprehend the conceptual framework which allowed these authors to make sense of and then recast the situation they faced, namely that a new religio-political entity had unexpectedly arisen, achieved dazzling military successes and promoted itself as favoured by God and in possession of His latest dispensation. In particular, it must be borne in mind that, in their provision of a response to this situation, only very rarely did the conquered peoples evince an interest in the motives and actions of the Muslims themselves.

{524} Their chief concern was rather to minimise the damage done to their own former status and self-image, to play down the gains won by their new masters and to extend some hope that they would themselves rise to the fore once more.[3]

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[1] Discussion of the earliest responses of Christians to Islam has been given by Cahen, "L'acceuil des chrétiens d'Orient à l'Islam;" Kaegi, "Initial Byzantine Reactions;" Ducellier, *Le miroir de l'Islam*, esp. 23–36, 59–185; Constantelos, "The Moslem Conquests of the Near East as Revealed in the Greek Sources;" Moorhead, "The Earliest Christian Theological Response to Islam;" Brock, "Syriac Views;" Suermann, "Orientalische Christen und der Islam;" Gero, "Early Contacts between Byzantium and the Arab Empire;" *idem*, "Only a Change of Masters;" Fiey, "The Attitude of the Local Populations towards the Muslim Conquerors." For some comments on the Jewish response see Leder, "The Attitude of the Jews and their Role;" there seems to be no study of the Zoroastrian reaction. See also Yahya, "Istiqbāl bilād al-shām li-l-fatḥ al-ʿarabī," who emphasises the cultural ties existing between the Ḥijaz and adjacent Byzantine lands before Islam.

[2] The expression is that of White, "Fictions of Factual Representation," 30.

[3] In what follows, references that have been given before will not be repeated; see then the relevant entry for the author in Part II above.

THE TOOL OF GOD'S WRATH

"We should not think of their advent (of the sons of Hagar) as something ordinary," advised John bar Penkaye, writing in Mesopotamia in the 680s, "but as due to divine working:"

> When these people came, at God's command, and took over as it were both kingdoms…, God put victory into their hands in such a way that the words written concerning them might be fulfilled, namely: "One man chased a thousand and two men routed ten thousand" (Deuteronomy xxxii.30). How otherwise could naked men riding without armour or shield have been able to win, apart from divine aid, God having called them from the ends of the earth so as to destroy by them "a sinful kingdom" (Amos ix.8) and to bring low through them the proud spirit of the Persians.[4]

John's view was shared by numerous other Christian authors of the seventh century, who agreed that "the victory of the sons of Ishmael who subdued and enslaved these two strong empires was from God" (Chronicler of Khuzistan), that the Arabs were "the sword of God" (Fredegar), and that they had been summoned by Him "to be a chastisement in which there will be no mercy" (ps.-Methodius).

But if there was some consensus on the fact of divine intervention in the Muslim conquest, there was much variety of opinion about what exactly had provoked it, religious and political allegiances tending to colour each party's perceptions. Since the whole empire had been affected rather than a certain individual, group or place, one of two cases had to apply. Either the collective punishment was the result of collective sin, or else the emperor himself had sinned and brought down retribution on the realm he personified. Adherents of the latter explanation **{525}** pointed to the imperial espousal of Dyophysitism (ps.-Athanasius) and persecution of Monophysites (John of Nikiu, ps.-Ephraem, Dionysius of Tellmaḥre),[5] to Heraclius' marriage to his niece Martina (Fredegar, Nicephorus)[6] and promotion of Monotheletism,[7] and to Constans' exile of Pope Martin (Anastasius of Sinai).[8] Those who

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[4] John bar Penkaye, 141–42 (tr. Brock, 57–58).

[5] Dionysius' views are preserved by Michael the Syrian 11.III, 410/412–13, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.237.

[6] Fredegar, 154 (tr. Hadrill, 55); Nicephorus, §20 (tr. Mango, 69): "He (Heraclius) became incensed at his brother Theodore, for it was rumoured in some quarters that the latter was railing at the emperor on account of Martina and saying that 'his sin is continually before him.'"

[7] This is hinted at in one of the accusations levelled at Maximus the Confessor during his trial, namely that he advised Peter of Numidia not to send troops to Egypt to fight the Arabs "since God does not favour assisting the Roman state during the reign of Heraclius and his family" (*Relatio motionis* §1, *PG* 90, 112A–B).

[8] Disillusionment with certain emperors manifested itself in physical as well as literary opposition; the emperors of early Islamic times responded with a variety of measures (perse-

favoured the idea of collective responsibility either pointed to the gains made among the population by heresies such as Dyotheletism (George of Resh'aina) and Theopaschism (Bar Penkaye), or else simply championed the traditional failings of un-Christian behaviour and pervasive moral laxity.[9] As time went on, however, and the Arabs still remained, more specific causes were sought, and there were some who argued that the only sin meriting such a punishment as the loss of the provinces was the violation of the first commandment itself, the prohibition of idolatry, in which Christians were indulging when they prostrated to icons.[10]

This first attempt to make sense of the Arabs' emergence harks back to the Book of Judges, where "the chosen people," whenever they "did evil in the sight of the Lord," would be "delivered into the hand" of some gentile people until such time as they repented. The parallel was **{526}** close, and for a Biblically rooted people it was an eminently plausible explanation of their plight. As such it had been called upon often before, most recently to explain the Persian occupation.[11] But it was also a useful theory for church leaders to promote. In the first place, it forestalled any idea that the success of the Arabs' campaigns might be due to their merit or to divine approval, and it voided the need for an inquiry into whether they had any reasons for their venture. Just as it was said to the Israelites: "Not for your righteousness… do you go to possess the land, but for the wickedness of these nations" (Deuteronomy ix.5), "similarly with these sons of Ishmael, it was not because God loved them that he allowed them to enter the kingdom of the Christians, but because of the wickedness and sin which is perpetrated by the Christians."[12] Secondly, this construction of events was a spur to the faithful to mend their ways, for, as the patriarch Sophronius observed, "if we were to live as is dear and pleasing to God, we would rejoice over the fall of the Saracen enemy and observe their near ruin and witness their final demise."

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cution of non-orthodox groups, convening of church councils, legislation, military campaigns) to reaffirm their authority (see Haldon, "Constantine or Justinian?").

[9] For examples see the entries "Prelude," "John Moschus," "Sophronius" and "Maximus the Confessor" in Chapter 3 and on "Jacob of Edessa" in Chapter 4 above; a particularly lurid catalogue of malpractices is drawn up by ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XI.6–8. Isho'yahb III, *Ep.* 39B, 66, speaks of the "barbarian rulers whom our sins have raised up."

[10] Brown, "A Dark-Age Crisis," esp. 23–25; Whittow, *Making of Orthodox Byzantium*, 139–64.

[11] Compare Heraclius' alleged address to the Persian soldiers: "It is not because of your piety that He (God) has given you victory, but because of our iniquity. It is our sins, not your valour, that have made you successful" (Sebeos, XXVI [tr. Macler, 78]).

[12] Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse*, XI.5. Cited also by the monk of Beth Ḥale (*Disputation*, fol. 8a) in reply to the Arab's question: "What is the reason that God has delivered you into our hands?"

DELIVERANCE FROM THE WICKED KINGDOM[13]

If among the Christians the Persian and Arab victories provoked doubts about the durability of their empire and its favoured status with God, for the Jews it inspired hopes that their unhappy period of clientage might soon be at an end. And their excitement is understandable, for historical reality indeed seemed to conform very closely to eschatological expectations in the early seventh century. The Persian-Byzantine clash was on the scale of the predicted war of Gog and Magog, and it concluded with Roman dominance "over the whole world" for a short time, which, it was said in the Talmud, was required before the Messiah son of David would come.[14] When the emperor Heraclius decreed **{527}** compulsory baptism of Jews, it was patent that the final showdown between the enemies of God's kingdom and the nation of Israel was at hand.[15] So whereas Christians regarded the invading Arabs as God's rod for their chastisement, many Jews saw them rather as God's instrument for their deliverance. The possibly contemporary poet Yoḥannan ha-Kohen called upon God to unleash the rod of his anger (Isaiah x.5), namely "the kingdom of the wild man" (*malkhūt perè*), who is Ishmael (Genesis xvi.12), and to let him destroy the "sinful kingdom," which is Edom (the Romans/Byzantines).[16] And these sentiments are captured in a contemporary apocalypse which was attributed to the second-century rabbi Simon ben Yoḥai:

> Since he (Simon) saw the kingdom of Ishmael that was coming, he began to say: "Was it not enough what the wicked kingdom of Edom has done to us, but [we deserve] the kingdom of Ishmael too?" At once Metatron, the foremost angel, answered him and said: "Do not fear, son of man, for the Almighty only brings the kingdom of Ishmael in order to deliver you from this wicked one (Edom). He raises up over them (Ishmaelites) a prophet according to His will and He will conquer the land for them, and they will come and restore it to greatness, and a great dread will come between them and the sons of Esau."

Such a positive attitude towards the Arabs also receives some confirmation from the comment in the *Doctrina Jacobi*, a Greek anti-Jewish **{528}** tract composed *ca.* 634,

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[13] This entry draws upon my "Sebeos, the Jews and the Rise of Islam," 90–92.

[14] *Talmud*, Yoma 10a.

[15] The poet Eliezer ben Qilir is possibly alluding to this when he says: "And destruction/conversion (*shemad*) will be decreed upon them (the people of Israel), for He will ordain the one named Armilus (the last anti-Jewish king; see *JE*, *s.v.* "Armilus," and Berger, "Three Typological Themes in Early Jewish Messianism," 155–62), and He will appoint him to exterminate and annihilate. And he will set up an idol in his name and whoever does not prostrate [before it] will be destroyed" (*Apocalyptic Poem*, 415). Cf. Simon ben Yoḥai, *Midrash of the Ten Kings*, 465: "He (Rabbi Simon) was hidden for thirteen years in a cave from the emperor, the king of Edom, who had decreed destruction/conversion (*shemad*) on Israel."

[16] Yoḥannan ha-Kohen, *Pīyūṭīm* no. 7, 11. 233–36; interpreted by Yahalom, "Ḥillūfē malkhūyōt," 6. Weissenstern, *Pīyūtē Yōḥannan ha-Kohen*, 313–20, argues that this poet lived through the Arab conquests; such writings are, however, notoriously difficult to date.

that the Jews rejoiced when they heard of the killing of a Byzantine officer by the Arabs.[17]

A number of Jews would even seem to have participated in the Arab armies. The *Doctrina Jacobi* has the newly baptised Jacob interrogate Justus, whom Jacob has just won over to Christianity, saying: "If your brother or the Jews who mix with the Saracens turn you from the faith, what will you do?" In response Justus avers that "even if the Jews and Saracens take hold of me and cut me into little pieces, I will not deny the Christ the son of God."[18] No more than one or two years later Maximus the Confessor was writing a letter to Peter, governor of Numidia, in which he briefly complained of the Arab predations and then ranted at length against "the Jewish people" for their part in "the evils which today afflict the world." In particular, he says, there can be nothing more terrible than "to see a cruel and alien nation authorised to raise its hand against the divine inheritance." His vituperative rhetoric is no doubt due to his prejudice against Jews, but his anger must have had some goad, and this was evidently that some Jews had shown their support for the new conquerors. This would seem to be confirmed by Sebeos, who speaks of "the rebellious Jews who had for a time received the assistance of the Hagarenes."[19] Such cooperation had happened before during the Persian occupation of Palestine (614–28), when "Hebrews and Saracens" had roamed the Judaean desert, terrifying the monks resident in the monasteries there.[20] Possibly these were the Jews of Noara and Livias, two "bases of aggression" (*ormētēria*) of theirs near Jericho.[21] It is also worth noting that later Jewish sources attest the presence of Jews among the invading Arabs:

> It was God's will to have us find favour before the Ishmaelite kingdom at the time of its conquest of the Holy Land from the hands of Edom. When they (the Arabs) **{529}** came to Jerusalem, there were with them men from among the children of Israel who showed them the place of the Temple…[22]

Such accounts may be dependent upon the Muslim tradition, which relates the part played by the Jewish scribe Kaʿb al-Aḥbār in the caliph ʿUmar's establishment of a

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[17] *Doctrina Jacobi* V.16, 209. For some general comments see Gil, *History of Palestine*, 60–64; Leder, "The Attitude of the Population, especially the Jews, towards the Arab-Islamic Conquest."

[18] *Doctrina Jacobi* V.17, 212–13.

[19] Sebeos, XXXI (tr. Macler, 102).

[20] George of Khoziba, *Life* VIII (§34), 134.

[21] Antiochus, *Ep. ad Eustathium*, *PG* 89, 1692A; see the comments of Mayerson, "Antiochus Monachus' Homily on Dreams."

[22] Mid-eleventh-century letter from the academy of Jerusalem to the diaspora communities in Egypt cited by Mann, *Jews under the Fatimids*, 1.44, 1.164–65 (date), 2.189–91 (full text). Cf. the entry on "Jewish Texts" in Chapter 10 above, and Gil, *History of Palestine*, 71, who is sceptical.

mosque on the Temple Mount,[23] but it is also possible that reports current among the Jews contributed to the Muslim tradition.

Of course, most Jews would not have risen up in support of the oncoming Arabs. In the city of Manuf in Egypt, for example, all the Jews gathered together and fled to Alexandria, "owing to their fear of the Muslims, the cruelties of (the general) 'Amr and the seizure of their possessions."[24] And we hear of Jews being killed and taken prisoner along with everyone else.[25] But as Byzantine intolerance towards the Jews increased in the early seventh century and the Persian-Byzantine conflict escalated into all-out war, ever more Jews took advantage of the disorder: "When at Ptolemais the Christians fled on account of the arrival of the Persians, the Jews took the chance to burn the churches of the Christians and to plunder their houses, and they molested and killed many Christians."[26] When the Persians marched on Jerusalem itself, thousands of Jews flocked to them in the hope of being allowed to restore the Temple. A poem written by Eliezer ben Qilir *ca.* 630 bears witness to these expectations and their subsequent frustration:

> The holy people will have a short respite, for Assur (the Persians) will permit them to found the holy shrine, and **{530}** they will build the altar and offer up the sacrifices. But they will not have time to establish the sanctuary… After three months the commander-in-chief will come against him (the Messiah son of Joseph) and will kill him in the little temple, and his blood will flow upon the rock. And the country will be in mourning.[27]

And this is echoed by a second more well-known apocalyptic work, the *Book of Zerubbabel*, which mentions all the above ingredients and portrays the Persian ruler Shiroi as an anti-Christ for his complicity in the slaying of the Messiah son of Joseph.[28]

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[23] On which see Busse, "'Omar in Jerusalem."

[24] John of Nikiu, "enumeration of chapters" (tr. Charles, 13).

[25] Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 148: Christian, Jewish and Samaritan villagers killed in Palestine; Anastasius of Sinai, *Narrat.*, B9 (= Nau, LI): a young Jew, slave of a Saracen, flees to Cyprus and becomes a Christian.

[26] *Doctrina Jacobi* IV.5, 180–81. Other examples of Jewish activism in this period are given by Starr, "Byzantine Jewry on the Eve of the Arab Conquest," 282–87; for the general situation see Sharf, *Byzantine Jewry*, 42–60.

[27] Eliezer ben Qilir, *Apocalyptic Poem*, 414; Fleischer, "Le-fitaron," 403–404, argues that "the commander-in-chief" (*sar ha-rosh*) means the leader of the Persians.

[28] *Book of Zerubbabel*, 135/151. See further Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine*, 259–70; Baras, "Ha-kibush ha-Parsī," 323–33; Wilken, *The Land Called Holy*, 202–207 (the Jews' involvement in the Persian conquest), 207–14 (*Book of Zerubbabel*). And there is possibly physical evidence: Dexinger and Seibt, "A Hebrew Lead Seal (614–29 AD)" (a seal engraved with the words "Josina, *archon*, son of Ep… Shalom").

One might argue that, as after the unsuccessful Bar Kochba uprising,[29] there would have been a period of passivity following the failure of the collusion with the Persians. But throughout the seventh and eighth centuries cataclysmic events plausibly heralding the end of days spawned messianic pretenders, and in each case they were able to attract a considerable following.[30] The Jews were, however, to be disappointed once their messianic fantasies went unfulfilled or even came into conflict with the Muslims' own program. The first confrontation appears to have occurred when a number of "the rebellious Jews" conceived the plan of "rebuilding the Temple of Solomon," but were frustrated in this by the Muslims, who wanted this site for their own place of prayer.[31] Somewhat later an anonymous poet tells of his joy when he perceived that the four kingdoms were at an end, for redemption was now at hand; but he also relates his subsequent disappointment, when it became evident that the new conqueror – "the wild man" (*pere ādām*), **{531}** who "appeared with a spear and a helmet" (*ba-ḥanīt ū-ve-kōva'*) – was a new enemy of Israel, who enslaved and imposed taxes.[32] Similarly, in a mid-eighth-century redaction of the aforementioned apocalypse attributed to Simon ben Yoḥai, those who were portrayed as "a salvation for Israel" are now described as those "who were to arise and subject Israel." And henceforth the Muslims were assigned the former Byzantine role of oppressors of Israel.[33]

AN AGE OF ADVERSITY[34]

Zoroastrians gave an apocalyptic interpretation to the tumultuous events of the end of the Sasanian empire, which they took to mean that the millennium of Zoroaster was drawing to a close and that of Ushedar, in which the Good Religion would flourish, about to commence. This period, which marked the conclusion of Zoroaster's millennium, was to be an age of adversity, in which "a myriad kinds of demons with dishevelled hair, of the race of Wrath, would rush into the country of Iran from the direction of the East," when religion and people would suffer and when "sovereignty would come from those leather-belted ones (Turks) and Arabs and Romans" (*Bahman yasht*). The revolt of Bahram Chobin had prompted this speculation and the conquests of Khusrau II occasioned further elaboration, but it was the Arabs' victories that called forth greatest lament, for at their hands:

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[29] See Zeitlin, "The Essenes and Messianic Expectations," 108–12.

[30] For examples and references see the entry on "Apocalypticism" in Chapter 1 above.

[31] Sebeos, XXXI (tr. Macler, 102).

[32] Cited by Fleischer, "Massōret yehūdīt qedūmā," 114; commented upon by Ya-halom, "Ḥillūfē malkhūyōt," 8. It is found amid a collection of poems for the feast of Tish'at be-Av, most by Eliezer ben Qilir.

[33] See, for example, the poem edited by Yahalom, "Ḥillūfē malkhūyōt," 18–22.

[34] Apocalyptic statements seem to be almost the only literary witness we have from the Zoroastrians concerning their reaction to Arab rule. For a survey of such statements see the entry thereon in Chapter 8 above.

> The Religion was ruined and the King of Kings slain like a dog. They eat the bread. They have taken away the sovereignty from the emperors. Not by skill and valour, but in mockery and scorn have they taken it. By force they take from men wives and sweet possessions, parks and gardens. Taxes they have imposed, they have distributed them upon the heads. They have demanded again the principal, **{532}** a heavy impost. Consider how much evil those wicked ones have cast upon this world, than which ill there is none worse. The world passes from us.[35]

But sometime soon the warrior-king Wahram Warjawand would march from India with 1000 elephants to wreak vengeance on the Arabs: "Their mosques we will cast down, we will set up fires, their idol-temples we will eradicate and purify away from the world so that shall vanish the spawn of the wicked one from this world."[36]

THE FOURTH BEAST

In contrast to the cyclical view of history found in the Book of Judges, a more linear conception is proposed by the prophet Daniel. He had had a vision of "four great beasts," the last possessing ten horns followed by a little horn, all cast down as the "Ancient of Days" arrived to inaugurate the Day of Judgement. This, Daniel was told, signified the succession of four world empires, the last concluding with ten kings, "and another shall rise after them… who shall think to change times and laws," after which "the Judgement shall sit" and "the kingdom and dominion… shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom" (Daniel vii). This prophecy became connected by many with S. Paul's reference (2 Thessalonians ii.7–8) to the "withholding power" (*ho katekhōn*), whose removal would lead to the advent of the Antichrist. The conclusion was then drawn that the Roman Christian empire was to be identified with the fourth beast/the "withholding power," whose rule would last as long as the world itself, only to be swept away by the little horn/Antichrist, who would himself soon be deposed by the "Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew xxiv.30).[37]

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[35] Pahlavi Ballad on the End of Times, 11. 6–11 (tr. Bailey, 195–96).

[36] *Ibid.*, ll. 14–15 (tr. Bailey, 196).

[37] Though there were other interpretations. Cosmas Indicopleustes felt that with Christ's advent not only the old law but also the old kingdoms of Daniel vii had come to an end, and that the Roman empire should rather be seen in Daniel ii.44: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (*Christian Topography*, 2. lxix-lxxv; see Casey, "The Fourth Kingdom in Cosmas Indicopleustes and the Syrian Tradition"). John bar Penkaye, 166/193 (tr. Brock, 72), opined: "What is 'the withholding [power]' if not the care of our Lord?" Seeing that pagan and Christian Rome were so different, the Jews had begun to reorder the Danielic schema into four pairs of kingdoms: Babel and Kasdin, Media and Persia, Greece and Macedonia, Edom and Seir (see Yahalom, "Ḥillūfē malkhūyōt," 5–6).

{533} The Byzantine empire's steady losses in the West, and particularly their dramatic defeats in the East in the early seventh century, fuelled speculation that its demise was imminent. As one contemporary observed: "We see that the fourth beast, namely Rome, is brought low and ravaged by nations, and henceforth one must expect the ten horns," for "after the humbling of the fourth beast, that is, Rome, nothing else is expected, except the confusion of the nations, the ten horns and the coming of the blasphemous and deceiving devil."[38] It was thus easy, even obvious, initially to portray the Arabs as the Antichrist, "the little horn," "the abomination of desolation,"[39] that is, as eschatological characters in the drama of the world's end. But as time went on and Arab sovereignty over the Middle East persisted, another solution needed to be found that would account for this longevity.

The Mesopotamian John bar Penkaye considered the Arabs as just one of many gentile nations who were "striving to undo the Byzantine kingdom;" an army of prisoners-of-war, whose "victory is from God," would very likely "be the cause of the destruction of the Ishmaelites," and "that these people too will not last is clear."[40] A compatriot and contemporary of John, masquerading under the guise of Methodius of Patra, proposed an ingenious answer to the problem of how to preserve the traditional interpretation of Byzantium as the fourth and last kingdom that would endure until the Second Coming. It involved the elaboration of a new messianic character, the Last Emperor, who was to oust the Arabs and to rejuvenate the empire and its religion.[41] These two authors wrote at a time when Arab rule was faltering, namely during **{534}** the second civil war (683–92), so it was plausible to postulate its impending dissolution. But the vigorous and long-lasting recovery of the Muslim regime in the reigns of ʿAbd al-Malik and Walīd obliged even the most pro-imperial of Christians to countenance the unthinkable and write the Arabs into the Danielic schema as the fourth beast. This was undertaken in the apocalyptic texts known as the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* and the *Vision* of Enoch, both composed in the early eighth century, but in these and later works the Last Emperor or a figure in his image was retained as the one who would terminate Arab dominion and reinstate Christianity.

For those whose interest in the continuity of Byzantine rule was faint, it was easier to envisage a new scenario for world history that assigned to the Byzantines a more minor role. Armenians were fiercely protective of their independence and resented any imperial interference, so it comes as no surprise that already in the 660s one of their number, the chronicler Sebeos, was attempting just such a revision:

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[38] *Doctrina Jacobi* IV.5 (= Bonwetsch, IV.7), 183; V.5, 193.

[39] E.g. *ibid.* V.16, 209 ("we are preparing to receive the Antichrist"); Sophronius, *Holy Baptism*, 166, ps.-Shenute, *Vision*, 341, and Theophanes, 339 ("the abomination of desolation," mentioned by Daniel xi.31, and cited as one of the signs of the end, when seen "standing in the holy place," by Matthew xxiv.15). See Gil, *History of Palestine*, 63–64, for references to the "the little horn."

[40] John bar Penkaye, 167/194 (tr. Brock, 73).

[41] See the entry on "Ps.-Methodius" in Chapter 8 above.

> Who can recount the horror of the Ishmaelite invasion which enflamed both sea and land? The blessed Daniel foresaw and prophesied such disasters which would come upon the earth when he represented by four wild beasts the four kingdoms which were to arise in the world. First of all is the beast with human form, the kingdom of the West, which is that of the Greeks… Then there is the second beast, similar to a bear, and it raised itself up on one side, the eastern side. It signifies the kingdom of the Sasanians. "And having in its mouth three ribs" means the kingdom of the Persians, the Medes and the Parthians… "And the third beast, like a leopard, four wings of a bird upon it and four heads of beasts." He means the kingdom of the North, Gog and Magog and their two companions, to whom was given the power to fly with force in their time from the direction of the North. "And the fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, its teeth of iron, its claws of bronze; it devoured and pounded and crushed underfoot all the rest." He is saying that this fourth beast, which rises to go out from the direction of the South, is the kingdom of Ishmael, as the archangel explained **{535}** (to Daniel): "The beast of the fourth kingdom will arise; it will be more powerful than all the [other] kingdoms and will devour all the earth. Its ten horns are the kings that will arise, and then there will arise another who will exceed in wickedness all the previous ones."[42]

What is interesting about this interpretation is that the kingdoms are not successive, but rather are connected with the four quarters of the earth and are contemporaneous with one another, the Arab kingdom eventually usurping the other three.

As a result of the imperial persecutions of the early seventh century, the Copts and Jews too had no fond memories of the Byzantine empire and were happy to portray the Arabs as its successors. On the Coptic side a *terminus ante quem* for such a recasting is given by the apocalypse of ps.-Athanasius, composed *ca.* AH 96/715, which simply states of the Muslims that "this is the fourth beast which the prophet Daniel saw," though regarding them with no affection: "It is a brutal nation with no mercy in its heart." As for the Jews, the transition in their thinking about the Arabs is difficult to chart. At least some of those contemporary with the Muslim conquests looked upon the invaders as the "rod of God's anger" (Isaiah x.5) that would eliminate the "wicked kingdom" of the Byzantines, but certainly by early Abbasid times the Muslims had taken their place in the Danielic schema as the last kingdom that would endure until the world's conclusion.[43]

ABRAHAMIC/PRIMITIVE MONOTHEISM

The previous theories about Islam consider only its military and political aspects, but it was also noted by contemporaries that the Arabs had brought with them a faith. The Armenian chronicler Sebeos seems to envisage them as turning away

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[42] Sebeos, XXXII (tr. Macler, 104–105).

[43] See the entry on "Deliverance from the Wicked Kingdom" in this chapter.

from idolatry and taking up once more their ancestral religion, the core of which was Abrahamic monotheism:

> At this time there was an Ishmaelite called Mahmet, a merchant; he presented himself to them as though at God's command, as a preacher, as the way of truth, and taught **{536}** them to know the God of Abraham, for he was very well informed and very well acquainted with the story of Moses. Since the command came from on high, they all came together, at a single order, in unity of religion, and, abandoning vain cults, returned to the living God who had revealed himself to their father Abraham.

Another writer of the 660s, a resident of Khuzistan, also remarks upon this ancestral Abrahamic connection:

> Regarding the dome of Abraham… the memory of the place was preserved with the generations of their race. Indeed, it was no new thing for the Arabs to worship there, but goes back to antiquity, to their early days, in that they show honour to the father of the head of their people.

These two reports are imparted in a remarkably calm and matter-of-fact tone, though patently coloured by Biblical perceptions.[44] And they receive some confirmation not only from the Qur'an, where Abraham features prominently, but also from the conflict that occurred during the second Arab civil war over the layout of the Meccan sanctuary. The point of contention was the status of the *ḥijr*, a place generally associated in some way with Ishmael. Ibn al-Zubayr sought to include it within the sanctuary, wishing to reinstate "the foundation of Abraham," though for this he was accused by his Marwanid rivals of "deviance in God's sanctuary" (*ilḥād fī ḥaram Allāh*).[45]

In general, however, much of the reason for the presentation of Islam as a religion of Abraham by Christian writers was to emphasise that **{537}** it was nothing new, indeed that it was primitive, not having benefited from any of Jesus' modernisations. This same intent is evident in the following frequently encountered characterisation:

> Chroniclers say that Heraclius, when the Arab armies overtook him and seized his lands, assembled all the bishops and the head priests and the rest of the sa-

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[44] They are from Sebeos, XXX (tr. Macler, 95 – with a slight amendment on the advice of Robert Thomson), and *Chron. Khuzistan*, 38, and are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 above respectively.

[45] Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, 140–46; Ṭabarī, 2.854 (AH 74). On the *ḥijr* see Hawting, "Origins of the Muslim Sanctuary," 33–34, 42–43; Rubin, "The Kaʿba." On Ibn al-Zubayr as a deviant see Madelung, "'Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr the *Mulḥid*." The usual accusation against him is that he permitted fighting in the sanctuary (*iḥlāl al-qitāl fī l-ḥaram*), but this explanation does not always fit (cf. the exchange between Ibn al-Zubayr and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAdāt in Balādhurī, *Ansāb* 4.1, 309), and his building activities might have been significant.

> traps, and interrogated them about the matter of who and what these people were. Once each one of them had replied as best as his knowledge permitted, the subject then lay open for him and he gave his answer thus: "As far as their way of life, manners and belief are concerned," he said, "I see this people as the faint glimmer of first dawn, when it is no longer completely dark, but at the same time it is not yet completely light." They asked him for an explanation of his words, and he continued: "Yes, they have indeed left darkness far behind in that they have rejected the worship of idols and worship the one God, but at the same time they are deprived of the perfect light in that they still fall short of complete illumination in the light of our Christian faith and orthodox confession."[46]

Thus the Arabs are seen as having ascended to the first rung of the monotheist ladder, but as being still a long way off from the more lofty heights of Christianity. Accordingly, Muḥammad is portrayed as a revivalist who reacquainted the Arabs with the one God, from whose service they had lapsed. "As a result of this man's guidance they held to the worship of the one God in accordance with the customs of ancient law" (John bar Penkaye), "he had turned them away from cults of all kinds and taught them that there was one God, Maker of Creation" (*Chron. Zuqnin*), "he enjoined them to belief in the one God, who has no companion, and to reject idolatry" (Agapius), "he returned the worshippers of idols to the knowledge of the one God" (*Hist. Patriarchs*).

Muḥammad himself had, of course, knowledge of Christian doctrines, but it was not possible for him to teach them to the Arabs since **{538}** their minds were as yet too immature. This is carefully explained by a monk to his Muslim interlocutor in a passage that is worth quoting in full:

> Arab: "Tell me the truth, how is Muḥammad our prophet considered in your eyes?"
>
> Monk: "As a wise and God-fearing man who freed you from idolatry and brought you to know the one true God."
>
> Arab: "Why, if he was wise, did he not teach us from the beginning about the mystery of the Trinity as you profess [it]?"
>
> Monk: "You know, of course, that a child, when it is born, because it does not possess the full faculties for receiving solid food, is nourished with milk for two years, and [only] then they feed it with meat. Thus also Muḥammad, because he saw your simpleness and the deficiency of your understanding, he first taught you of the one true God…, for you were children in terms of your understanding."[47]

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[46] Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. syr.*, 96–97; given in slightly abbreviated form by *Chron. Siirt* CVI, *PO* 13, 626.

[47] Monk of Beth Ḥale, *Disputation*, fol. 5a; cf. 1 Corinthians iii.2: "I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto you were not able to bear it, nor yet now are you able."

This same tack is pursued in the Baḥira story, where Muḥammad is given a simplified version of Christianity to take to the Arabs. Even then he has often to remind his instructor, the monk Baḥira, that "my comrades are uncouth desert Arabs who are not accustomed to fasting and prayer, nor to anything which causes them trouble or bother." And in the end he has to request something more in accord with their capacities: "I taught what you described to me and they did not understand it, so give them something succinct enough that their minds can accept it."[48]

THE NEW JEWS

It has often been noted, with some puzzlement, that the rise of Islam coincided with a heightened awareness among Christians of Jews **{539}** and Judaism. It is not only that the Jews themselves came in for renewed criticism,[49] but that the actions of other parties were presented as having being provoked by Jewish influence or inspired by Jewish thinking. Thus the Muslims trying to build 'Umar I's mosque were said to have removed the cross from the Mount of Olives on the advice of Jews;[50] Yazīd II and Leo III were alleged to have enacted legislation against images in response to the inducement of a long reign promised to them by a Jewish magician;[51] and Iconoclasts were portrayed as having "perpetrated the work of the Jews."[52] Some scholars argue that the anti-Jewish polemic of this period should be understood as a covert attack on Muslims.[53] But Christians do not seem to have had any qualms or fears about abusing the new rulers,[54] and the pervasiveness of such polemic, which is visual as well as literary,[55] suggests there is something more to it.

It is true that in the wake of the disastrous Byzantine defeats of the first half of the seventh century church leaders were under pressure to come up with some triumphalist rhetoric to bolster the morale of their disillusioned flock, and the Jews were of course an easy and familiar target. From the beginning Christianity had defined and asserted itself by differentiating itself from Judaism, and there was every reason why it should continue to do so. The Christians understood well the Jews'

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[48] Baḥira (Arabic), 64/141, 73/147.

[49] Note the proliferation of anti-Jewish treatises from 634 onwards (see the entries on the "Christian Apologist of 634" and "Anti-Jewish Polemicists" in Chapter 3 above).

[50] *Syriac CS*, s.a. 641.

[51] Yazīd: *Concilia sacra*, 13.197B–200B (John of Jerusalem, vicar of the Oriental patriarchs, speaking at the Council of Nicaea in 787), and Theophanes, 401–402. Leo: *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, *PG* 95, 336C–D (possibly also by John of Jerusalem, written *ca.* 780).

[52] *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum*, *PG* 95, 336B.

[53] Most recently see Olster, *Roman Defeat*, *Christian Response*, 44, 116, 123–25. For useful discussion of this issue see Cameron, "Byzantines and Jews."

[54] For examples see the entries on "Sophronius," "Maximus the Confessor," "Anastasius of Sinai" and "Germanus" in Chapter 3; those on the *Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon*, "Sebeos" and "John of Nikiu" in Chapter 4; and all the entries in Chapters 8–9 above.

[55] See Corrigan, Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters, esp. 43–61.

scriptural position and had at their disposal a large body of disputational **{540}** literature upon which they could draw. But the Jews were not merely a rhetorical foil, and the polemic against them was not solely about confidence-boosting. In the first place, the involvement of at least some of the Jews in the Persian and Arab conquests had soured relations between the two parties, the Christians feeling genuinely aggrieved.[56] Secondly, those Christians who lived in Muslim-ruled lands now had to rub shoulders with the Jews, both being accorded equal status by the Muslims. As one late seventh-century Mesopotamian writer complained, "there was no distinction between pagan and Christian, the faithful was not known from a Jew."[57] This meant that the Jews could themselves go on the offensive, and it is notable that whereas we have no Jewish anti-Christian treatises from pre-Islamic times, there were quite a number written under Islam.[58] Possibly this had some effect, for in a mid-eighth century Syriac disputation a Jew taunts his Christian interlocutor, saying: "There are among you some Christians who associate with us in the synagogue and who bring offerings and alms and oil, and at the time of the Passover send unleavened bread."[59] At the very least, we can say that Judaism still held a certain attraction and fascination for Christians.

In addition, the fact that some of the beliefs and practices of the Jews were also shared by the newly victorious Arabs-rejection of Jesus as the son of God, circumcision, hostility to veneration of the cross and images, and, in Syria and Palestine at least, prayer towards the south-lent a certain credibility to these beliefs and practices, as is evident from their appearance, especially veneration of the cross and images, in numerous Christian anti-Jewish tracts from the 630s onwards.[60] Because of this common ground between Judaism and Islam, the Christians considered the latter to be Jewish-inspired. So when, in the late seventh/early **{541}** eighth century, the Christians came to polemicise against the Muslims, they turned to these same anti-Jewish writings for ideas, borrowing from them not only their form and arguments, but also often using the same scriptural citations.[61] And the Christian disputant in such anti-Muslim texts could refer to his opponents as "the new Jews" and tell his

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[56] See Dagron, "Juifs et chrétiens," and the entry on "Deliverance from the Wicked Kingdom" in this chapter. Note the report of Eutychius, *Annales*, 2.5–6, that Heraclius was persuaded by the Christians of Jerusalem to punish the Jews for their crimes against the Christians during the Persian conquest.

[57] John bar Penkaye, 151/179.

[58] See Stroumsa, "Jewish Polemics against Islam and Christianity," Section III.

[59] Sergius the Stylite, *Disputation against a Jew* XXII.1, 73–74.

[60] See the entry on "Anti-Jewish Polemicists" in Chapter 3 above. Christ's divinity and circumcision were of course old topics, but images and prayer to the south were new.

[61] Demonstrated by Harris, "A Tract on the Triune Nature of God," with regard to the Christian Arabic text *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid* (see the entry thereon in Chapter 11 above). Note his comment at 76 that "the value then of the tract consists in the fact that it is a survival of anti-Judaic literature." See also the entries on "Patriarch John I" and a "Monk of Beth Ḥale" in Chapter 11 above.

adversary that "you are believing as a Jew."[62] Thus Christians drew upon their anti-Jewish literary tradition in order to assess and rebut the religious claims of Islam. In that Judaism and Islam do share certain precepts, this approach is to some degree understandable, but since Christian refutations of Judaism were hardly objective documents, often not even well-informed, they obviously led to a rather distorted presentation of Islam.[63]

A WORLDLY RELIGION

Vahan, son of Khusrau, lord of Golt'n, was taken from his native Armenia at the age of four and was brought up a Muslim in the city of Damascus during the reigns of Walīd and Sulaymān. When made a free man by 'Umar, he returned to his homeland and soon thereafter adopted Christianity once more, living as an ascetic for six years. After this time he conceived the notion of becoming a martyr for Christ and travelled to the royal palace at Ruṣafa in the hope of obtaining an audience with "the tyrant" Hishām. The latter, on learning Vahan's story, endeavoured to entice him back into the Islamic fold:

> He ordered his treasurers to display before Vahan precious objects of gold and silver and patterned garments of silk, then he added: "You malicious and wicked man, take all these goods, attendants, slaves, horses, mules, camels, and **{542}** I will give you also a governorship, either here or at Golt'n, your principality. Consider that our Prophet has given us in this world a great empire and has reserved for us on high the delights of a paradise prepared [just] for us." The saint made this reply: "For a long time I have been acquainted with your perfidious, deceitful and wily counsel; I know that by your guile many people have been drawn into the abyss of perdition and have become your companions [destined] for hell. You have frightened some with threats and seduced others with gentle and flattering words, others again have been overwhelmed with vain and idle goods and perishable riches. You have deceived a good number of them by promising to them eternal life and the joys of paradise, and always your skill and perfidy have been employed to divert vacillating souls from the broad path and to precipitate them into the pit of perdition. To those I make this promise that they will be eternally tormented by the flames of hell. But I, a servant of God, I will not succumb to any of your malicious ruses, for I am protected by fear of God, fortified by

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[62] Cheikho, *Dialectique du langage sur Dieu*, 275/186 (citing from letter no. 40 of Timothy I); Theodore bar Koni, *Scholia* X.8, 2.276 (*yihūdā'īt*).

[63] See Griffith, "Jews and Muslims in Christian Syriac and Arabic Texts;" Corrigan, *Visual Polemics in the Ninth-Century Byzantine Psalters*, 78–103 (though there are no representations of Muslims in these psalters).

> knowledge of the holy scriptures and the precepts of Christ, which assures that I know better than you the fallaciousness of your fanciful doctrines."[64]

A scene such as this features time and time again in martyrdom accounts: some Muslim governor or ruler will indicate the advantages of wealth, status and physical pleasures offered by Islam, and the would-be martyr spurns them in favour of the lasting and spiritual riches bestowed by Christianity, which had no need of incentives for its propagation:

> Paul possessed neither swords nor treasures. He was toiling with his hands and he was being provided for by means of **{543}** that, and he was conducting himself in accordance with all [the laws]; he was commanding fasting and holiness, not abominable fornication. Nor was he making promises of eternal eating or marriage, but rather of [an eternal] kingdom.[65]

The message is simple: Islam is a worldly religion, spread by worldly means and maintained by worldly inducements. Here it is bluntly put, for martyrologies were about flag-waving, not truth-seeking, but in the genre of disputations, though more subtly argued, the point remained the same:

> There is another reason why we have come to the conclusion that the Christian religion is from God, namely that the [Christian] nations have been led to [become] disciples of Christ and to accept that religion by the power of God and not by the power of men, nor by their coercion, nor their ruses nor their enticements, as is the case with other religions.[66]

This idea became further developed by later apologetes, both Christian and Jewish, as a way of testing the veracity of a religion. If it could be shown that its success derived from mundane circumstances (*asbāb al-dunyā*, *asbāb al-arḍ*), then that religion was evidently not from God, but a religion of men. The Jacobite theologian Abū Rā'iṭa proposed six categories of unworthy motives for adoption of a religion: worldly desire, ambition, fear, license, personal whim and partisanship, and these are found with only minor variations in a host of other polemical works.[67] Inevitably Islam was found guilty on all counts, and so **{544}** discounted as a divinely inspired

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[64] Vahan, *Passion*, VI (tr. Gatteyrias, 202–203). Cf. *Concilia sacra* 13.357: "John (of Damascus)… abandoned all, emulating the evangelist Matthew, and followed Christ, considering the shame of Christ as a richness superior to the treasures which are in Arabia. He chose rather to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the temporary pleasure of sin."

[65] Michael the Sabaite, *Passion*, §8.

[66] Theodore Abū Qurra, *Fī wujūd al-khāliq wa-l-dīn al-qawīm*, 259.

[67] Abū Rā'iṭa, *Rasā'il* no. 8 (*Fī ithbāt al-dīn al-naṣrānīya*), 131–32. Cf. 'Ammār al-Baṣrī, *Burhān*, 32–33, and *Masā'il wa-ajwiba*, 136–37; Dāwūd al-Muqammiṣ, *'Ishrūn maqāla*, XIV; Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq in his letter to Yaḥyā ibn al-Munajjim cited by Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides*, 103. Other examples and further discussion are given in Griffith, "Comparative Religion in the Apologetics of the First Christian Arabic Theologians."

religion and labelled "a religion established by the sword and not a faith confirmed by miracles."[68]

[68] As the catholicos Ḥnanisho' declared to 'Abd al-Malik (Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. eccles.*, 2.136). The point of this polemic by Christians and Jews was of course to discourage conversion to Islam amongst their own people.

CHAPTER 13.
USING NON-MUSLIM SOURCES: AN EMPIRICAL APPROACH

{545} In this chapter three issues have been selected upon which there is disagreement or indifference in the secondary literature, then nonMuslim sources adduced to see whether, when used in conjunction with Muslim and archaeological evidence, they can offer solutions to or new perspectives on the problem.[1] It must be stressed before proceeding that evaluation of the usefulness of non-Muslim testimony for questions of Islamic history is the primary aim here, and the following essays are not meant as a comprehensive argument for or against the issue.

ISLAM IN THE FIRST CENTURY AH

Though concrete evidence remains scant, enough exists to confirm that Muslim scholarship was already under way in the first half of the eighth century. A papyrus of the late Umayyad period contains a recognisable piece of the Prophet's biography;[2] a number of theological texts fit best into a late Umayyad context,[3] and the first Muslim creed makes its appearance **{546}** in the mid-eighth century.[4] A discussion of prayer during a solar eclipse yields a time and date for such an incident (between afternoon and evening prayer 27 Dhū l-Ḥijja AH 113) which corresponds to modern astronomical calculations (4.45–5.00 pm, 1 March 732), and so must be a genuine report.[5] The legal compendium of ʿAbd al-Razzāq (d. 826) has been ana-

[1] This has been done in an exemplary fashion by Chase Robinson in his "The Conquest of Khūzistān." See also my "Sebeos, the Jews and the Rise of Islam."

[2] *Khirbat al-Mird Papyri*, no. 71, on which see Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 226–30.

[3] Though unwilling to commit himself, this is the preferred opinion of Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (e.g. 66, 88, 102–103), for the texts first presented by van Ess, *Anfänge muslimischer Theologie* (who dated them to AH 70–90).

[4] See Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*, 102–24, on Abū Ḥanīfa's *Al-fiqh al-akbar*. If the authenticity of this text is somewhat suspect (van Ess, "Kritisches zum *Fiqh Akbar*"), his letter to a certain ʿUthmān al-Battī is on the other hand usually considered authentic and contains credal material (idem, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 1.192–205).

[5] Muranyi, "Zwischen *ʿAṣr* und *Maġrib* in Mekka."

lysed by Motzki and shown to derive largely from the compilations of Ma'mar ibn Rāshid (d. 770), Ibn Jurayj (d. 767) and Sufyan al-Thawrī (d. 776). Furthermore, 40 percent of the writings of Ibn Jurayj are said to come from 'Aṭa' ibn Abī Rabāḥ (d. 733), mostly in the form of statements (*dicta*) or answers to questions (*responsa*). Ninety-two percent of these *responsa* and eighty percent of the *dicta* are given as 'Atā's personal opinion (*ra'y*), suggesting that 'Atā's own legal thinking is to some degree recoverable.[6] The subsequent development of Muslim learning is in some measure documentable.[7] This is not so for the period before AH 100/718. That is not to say there was no such activity, but that it is not possible to track and chart it.

This problem of the late formation of the Muslim literary tradition, compounded with a dearth of physical evidence and a dose of empirical fundamentalism, has resulted in much speculation among scholars as to what form of Islam might have existed in the first few decades after the Arab conquests.[8] It is of course true that "new religions do not spring fully-fledged from the heads of prophets" and that Islam must have had "a period of development prior to the formulation of orthodoxy **{547}** and scriptural canonisation,"[9] but endeavours to strip off the classical veneer and reveal the formative undercoat have often been somewhat cavalier and conjectural.[10] Though they may be few,[11] non-Muslim and archaeological testimonies, when carefully supplemented by Muslim evidence, can give us some interesting insights into the first century of Islam, precisely because we can restrict ourselves to those pertaining to that period, as will be done in the following sketch.[12]

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[6] Motzki, "The *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq," 6–13.

[7] In the field of law see Schacht, *Origins of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence*, and in the realm of theology see van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie*, and now his *Theologie und Gesellschaft*.

[8] Though in very different ways and with very different conclusions this is true of Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, Wansbrough, *Qur'anic Studies* and *Sectarian Milieu*; Bashear, *Al-ta'rīkh al-ākhar*; Sharon, "The Umayyads as *Ahl al-Bayt*," 122–25; Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*; Donner, "From Believers to Muslims."

[9] Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 10, and Nevo, "Towards a Prehistory of Islam," 108, respectively.

[10] Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, are too willing to accept the non-Muslim sources at face-value; Sharon, "Birth of Islam in the Holy Land," and Nevo and Koren, *Crossroads to Islam*, place heavy weight on anomalies and silences in the archaeological record (cf. *eidem*, "Methodological Approaches to Islam," 91–92, 100–105). Bashear, *Al-ta'rīkh al-ākhar*, is more careful, but some of his interpretations are arbitrary (e.g. the similarities in the biographies of the Prophet and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīya are explained in *ibid.*, 158, 163–65, 192–93, as the result of a desire to pad out the Prophet's biography, but it is equally – if not more – plausible to assume that they derive from a wish to establish Ibn al-Ḥanafīya's credentials).

[11] Wansbrough, "Res Ipsa Loquitur," 10, exaggerates when he says we have "neither artifact nor archive."

[12] In what follows, references to non-Muslim sources that have been given before will not be repeated; see then the relevant entry in Part II above.

In the early 640s the historical record alerts us to a new phenomenon disrupting the familiar course of the Late Antique world. Arabs, equipped with a new name for themselves (*muhājirūn*) and a new era, were overrunning regions as far afield as Egypt and Iraq and demanding provisions from the local populations to facilitate their progress.[13] Patently a new movement had been born, but its nature is unclear. Papyri and inscriptions are dated according to "the year…" or "the year… according to the Arabs (*kat' arabas*)," and many East Syrian texts according to "the year… of the rule of the Arabs," but without **{548}** it ever being explained what was the event that inaugurated this calendar. The same obscurity envelops the Arabs' new name, though papyri illustrate that it signalled a certain exclusivity, not all being allowed to claim it,[14] and that its bearer was a soldier and endowed with fiscal rights.[15] The non-Muslim sources make use of, but pass no comment on, the new appellation,[16] and it is only from the Islamic tradition that we learn of its primary significance, namely emigration (*hijra*) from the homeland to man the new garrison cities being established in the conquered lands.[17]

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[13] The Arabic name and/or its Greek rendering *magaritai*, plus the new dating, appear in numerous papyri of Egypt from 642 onwards; the earliest firmly dated example is *Papyri ERF*, no. 558 (Pharmouthi indiction 1 and Jumādā I "of the year 22" = April 643). Otherwise, the dating is found on inscriptions from AH 31/651–52 onwards (see Excursus F below). The earliest literary attestation of the name is in Syriac (rendered *mhaggrē*) from a letter of the catholicos Isho'yahb III (*Ep.* 48B, 97), written in Iraq *ca.* 640s; and the dating first appears in the preamble to the Nestorian synod which took place "in the year 57 of the rule of the Arabs" (*Synodicon orientale*, 216).

[14] *Aphrodito Papyri*, nos. 1433, 1441, 1447, distinguish between *mōagaritai* and *mauloi*. See Crone, "First-Century Concept of *Higra*" 365; Athamina, '*A'rāb* and *Muhājirūn* in the Environment of *Amṣār*."

[15] That the *muhājirūn* were fighters is clear from the Qur'an, and their entitlement to receive stipends from the proceeds of the immovable spoils of war (*fay'*) is indicated by papyri and Muslim sources (for both points and illustrative references see Crone, "First-Century Concept of *Higra*," 354–65).

[16] A Nestorian scribe records the completion of a copy of the New Testament "in the year 993 of the Greeks, which is year 63 of the *mhaggrāyē*, the sons of Ishmael son of Hagar [and] son of Abraham" (Wright, *Catalogue*, 1.92 [no. 142]), from which conjunction one might conclude that Eastern Christians made a connection between the invading Arabs' epithet for themselves (*muhājirūn*) and their status as sons of Hagar, but this is not certain. For other examples of the use of the term *mhaggraye* see the entries on "Daniel of Edessa," "Athanasius of Balad," "Theodotus of Amida," "Jacob of Edessa" and "Isho'yahb III" in Chapters 3–4 above.

[17] As is argued convincingly by Crone, "First-Century Concept of *Hiğra*;" see also Madelung, "Has the *Hijra* Come to an End?," and Rubin, "*Hijra* and *Muhājirūn* in Early Islam," Section B2.

The foundation document of the new movement, the so-called *Constitution of Medina*, refers to its signatories as "believers" (*mu'minūn*),[18] a term found in a number of early Arabic inscriptions where the leader of the community is styled as "commander of the believers" (*amīr al-mu'minīn*).[19] The *Constitution of Medina* also informs **{549}** us that these "believers" had come together "under the protection of God" (*dhimmat Allāh*) so that they might fight in His cause (*fī sabīl allāh*). This concept of a holy war is also hinted at by papyri, where demands for the army's sustenance are always made "in the name of God."[20] Thus our soldiers possessed, and fought in the name of, a faith, but what was its nature? Non-Muslim writers of the first century AH attest that it was strictly monotheistic (Sebeos, John bar Penkaye, Anastasius of Sinai) and iconoclastic (anti-Jewish polemicists, Germanus); that its adherents had a sanctuary, their "House of God" (Bar Penkaye), of Abrahamic association (Chronicler of Khuzistan, Jacob of Edessa), called the Ka'ba (Jacob of Edessa), towards which they prayed (Jacob of Edessa) and at which they sacrificed (Anastasius of Sinai) and reverenced a stone (Anastasius of Sinai, Germanus); and also that they followed Muḥammad (Thomas the Presbyter, Sebeos, Chronicler of Khuzistan), who was their "guide" and "instructor" (Bar Penkaye), whose "tradition" and "laws" they fiercely upheld (Bar Penkaye) and who prescribed for them abstinence from carrion, wine, falsehood and fornication (Sebeos). It is also noted that the Muslims held Jerusalem in honour (John Moschus, Arculf, Maronite chronicler, Anastasius of Sinai), were hostile to the cross (Sophronius, Isaac of Rakoti, Anastasius of Sinai), denied that Christ was the son of God (Isaac of Rakoti, Ḥnanisho', Anastasius of Sinai, Jacob of Edessa) and conducted their worship in specific places bearing the name *masjid* (John Moschus, Anastasius of Sinai).[21]

It is thus evident that the early Muslims did adhere to a cult that had definite practices and beliefs and was clearly distinct from other **{550}** currrently existing

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[18] The term appears a total of 32 times. This document is found in Ibn Hishām, 341–44, and Abū 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 290–94; it is translated and commented upon by Serjeant, "The *Sunnah Jāmi'ah*." Its authenticity is championed by Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, 4.80–81; Wensinck, *Muḥammad and the Jews of Medina*, 64–68; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 7.

[19] See Excursus F, nos. 6 (AH 41), 7 (AH 42), 16 (AH 58), below, where the title appears in Persian, Greek and Arabic respectively.

[20] See Excursus F, no. 1, below.

[21] Rendered by (ps.-)John Moschus as *midzgitha*, by Anastasius as *masgida* (see the entry on "George the Black" in Chapter 9 above; the same word is found in *Aphrodito Papyri*, no. 1403), and it is translated in Simon ben Yohai, *Secrets*, 79, as *hishtahawāyā*. The similarity in the layout of many of the mosques built in Marwanid times (enclosure containing courtyard and hypostyle prayer hall at one end) suggest that a particular conception of the mosque already existed in pre-Marwanid times (deriving from the Prophet's or 'Umar's mosque?). Unfortunately we have no archaeological evidence for pre-'Abd al-Malik mosques, except perhaps some remnants of Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān's reconstruction of the one at Kufa in AH 50/670 (see the entry on "Sacred Direction in Islam" in this chapter) and of 'Umar I's building at Jerusalem (see Raby, "Aqṣa and the Anastasis").

faiths.[22] This is also confirmed by archaeology for the period beginning AH 72/691, when inscriptions proclaiming allegiance to Muḥammad and his religion are found in abundance on buildings, milestones, rocks, coins, papyri, textiles and so on. "Our lord is the one God, our religion is Islam and our prophet is Muḥammad," as it is succinctly put by Walīd in his inscription of AH 87/706 on the mosque of Damascus.[23] Yet before AH 72 the archaeological record is strangely silent about Islam, and this despite the fact that we do have a fair amount of material from this time.[24] A similar problem occurs with regard to the Qur'an, which seems to have been ignored by Muslims as a source of law until the early eighth century.[25] What are we to make of these omissions? It is of course true that only with the passage of time does a man become a hero and a book authoritative, but this does not explain the abruptness of the appearance of Muḥammad and Islam in inscriptions, nor can it account for the near immutability of the text of the Muslim scripture.[26]

Though accorded little attention, there are actually a very few artefacts of Islamic colouring before AH 72, namely three Arab-Sasanian *dirhams* on the margin of which is inscribed a truncated Muslim profession **{551}** of faith: "In the name of God, Muḥammad is the messenger of God" (*bismillāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*). All were minted at Bishapur in Fars and bear the usual imperial bust on the obverse and a Sasanian fire-altar on the reverse. Two of them are dated to the years 66 and 67, which in the Hijri era correspond to 685–86 and 686–87, and the issuing authority is named as 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Abd Allāh.[27] This could either be 'Abd al-Malik ibn

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[22] Against Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu*, 118, who maintains that the nonMuslim testimony is "confessionally indifferent or, at least, not sufficiently distinctive to permit identification of that community." And against Donner, "From Believers to Muslims," who argues that Muḥammad's community itself was confessionally indeterminate for the first decades of its existence.

[23] Full text given in Excursus F, no. v, below.

[24] The language of this material (collected in Excursus F below) is monotheist (refers to God, believers etc.), but not specifically Islamic. There are a few coins with the name "Muḥammad" written in the margin in Pahlavi or Arabic script, but this is almost certainly a reference to a governor, not the Prophet; the unusual weight standard of this series suggests it may derive from Azerbaijan, in which case the governor might be Muḥammad ibn Marwān (see Sears, "The Sasanian Style Coins of 'Muḥammad'").

[25] Pointed out by Schacht, *Origins of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence*, 188, 226–27, and thoroughly discussed by Crone, "Two Legal Problems Bearing on the Early History of the Qur'ān."

[26] Difficult words and concepts were not replaced with more familiar ones, as one might have expected to happen if the Qur'an had not already achieved canonical status; instead there exist a plethora of explanations for a single invariable word (cf. Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 204–13, on *īlāf*).

[27] Excursus F, no. 21, below (the truncated *shahāda* is in Arabic, the rest is in Pahlavi). Album, "Sasanian Motifs Used in Islamic Coinage," xix–xx, divides the pre-reform Arab-Sasanian coins into three phases: (a) 652–61: coins bearing only the names of Khusrau or

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khālid ibn Asīd or ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir ibn Kurayz.[28] Both had distinguished fathers with a connection to Fars: ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir had been instrumental in its conquest while governor of Baṣra in AH 29–35/650–56 and 41–44/661–65, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khālid had governed it briefly for Ziyād ibn Abī Sūfyān (45–53/665–73).[29]

But for a number of reasons it must be the son of the former who is mentioned on the two *dirhams*. At the time these coins were struck, Fars was under the control of the rebel caliph Ibn al-Zubayr, and so it is highly improbable that any relative of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khalīd ibn Asīd, an eminent Umayyad, would have been set over it. Only when the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik gained the upper hand do we hear of his family holding office once more.[30] This was not, however, the case for the sons of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir: ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was **{552}** married to Ibn al-Zubayr's sister, named Hind,[31] and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir was entrusted with the governorship of Sistan by Ibn al-Zubayr's brother Muṣʿab in AH 66.[32] It seems most likely, then, that the two sons of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir, ʿAbd al-Malik and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, governed Fars and Sistan respectively on behalf of Ibn al-Zubayr in the years AH 66–67.[33]

Yazdgird, dated in either the Yazdgird or Hijri era; (b) 661–71: "coins of the anonymous 'Khusrau' type alongside coins bearing the name of an Umayyad official," dated in either the Yazdgird or Hijri era; (c) 671–92: "all coins bear the name of an Umayyad or Zubayrite official," "Hijri dates dominate at most mints save Darabgird." So we may be reasonably sure that these two coins bear Hijri dates.

[28] Balādhurī, *Ansāb* 4.1, 405 (ʿAbd al-Malik… ibn Kurayz), 458, 478 (ʿAbd al-Malik… ibn Asīd).

[29] On ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAmir see *EI*² and *EIr*, *s.v.*; on ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khālid's appointment see Balādhurī, *Ansāb* 4.1, 458.

[30] Khālid ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khālid ibn Asīd became governor of Baṣra in AH 71 (see below for discussion of the date); his brother Umayya ibn ʿAbd Allāh became governor of Sistan and Khurasan in AH 73 (Khalīfa, 295; Walker, *Catalogue*, 1.107); ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbd Allāh, their half-brother, was governor of Mecca for the caliphs Sulayman and ʿUmar II (Khalīfa, 317, 323).

[31] Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 67. We first hear of him at the beginning of the second civil war when he was called upon by the Baṣrans to be their governor after the flight of ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ziyād and the killing of his deputy Masʿūd ibn ʿAmr al-Azdī; Ṭabarī, 2:463 (AH 64), says he held this position for one month.

[32] Zubayrī, *Nasab Quraysh*, 149; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 398; Iṣfahānī, *Aghani*, 17.167; confirmed by three coins minted in Sistan and dated 66 (Excursus F, no. 20, below).

[33] Coins dated 67–70 were struck at Bishapur in the name of ʿUmar ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Maʿmar (Excursus F, no. 23, below). This man was deputy governor of Baṣra for Muṣʿab in AH 67, then was appointed to Fars (Ṭabarī, 2.751, 753–54). ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir may have been in power somewhat longer, for we do not hear of any other governor of Sistan until ʿAbd al-Malik appointed ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAdī, whom he dismissed

If this reconstruction is correct, it would mean that the earliest attested Islamic profession comes from an opposition party. This is not implausible. That the revolt of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr had religious implications is confirmed by a contemporary Christian source, which says of him that "he had come out of zeal for the house of God and he was full of threats against the Westerners, claiming that they were transgressors of the law."[34] And an Arab apocalypse, which must have been composed before the assumption of full control by ʿAbd al-Malik, maintains that through Ibn al-Zubayr Islam "will settle down firmly on the ground."[35] Moreover, other insurrectionary figures of a religious hue flourished during this civil war, such as the enigmatic Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīya,[36] the "cudgel-bearers" (*khashshabiya*) of Mukhtār ibn **{553}** Abī ʿUbayd known for "their zeal for righteousness,"[37] and another pretender to the caliphate, the Kharijite leader Qaṭarī ibn al-Fujāʾa, who struck coins declaring that "judgement belongs to God alone" (*lā hukma illā lillāh*).[38]

The total lack of specifically Islamic declarations made by the Sufyanid line of Umayyads, the proliferation of them issued by the Marwanid branch and the religious causes espoused by the various opposition movements of the intervening civil war lead us to the conclusion that it was pressure from rebel factions that induced the Marwanids to proclaim Islam publicly as the ideological basis of the Arab state. But the soundness of this move must have been evident to ʿAbd al-Malik, for it offered him a way to rally the competing parties of this divisive civil war and to steal the thunder from his opponents. The enthusiasm with which he and his successors pursued the policy illustrates that they saw in it a means to strengthen their own legitimacy, styling themselves as God's deputies on earth with the right and responsibility to determine matters of religion.[39]

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shortly after and entrusted its governorship together with that of Khurasan to Umayya ibn ʿAbd Allāh in AH 73 (see n. 30 above).

[34] John bar Penkaye, 155/183 (tr. Brock, 64). Note that even the Marwanid polemic against Ibn Zubayr is religious in tone (see Madelung, "ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr the *Mulḥid*").

[35] Quoted in full in the entry on "ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr and the Mahdī" in Chapter 8 above.

[36] A very interesting account of him is given by Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5.91–116, where he is greeted as *mahdī* (5.94, 95) and recognised as *min bayt nubūwa* by the exilarch (*raʾs al-jālūt*), the head of the Jewish community (5.113).

[37] John bar Penkaye, 158/185 (tr. Brock, 66); on the appellation *al-khashshābiya* see *EI*², *s.v.*

[38] Excursus F, no. 25, below (a coin of AH 69 minted at Bishapur and proclaiming the rebel as "servant of God" and "commander of the faithful").

[39] In the archaeological record ʿAbd al-Malik is the first to claim the title "deputy of God" (*khalīfat Allāh*), the earliest dated testimony being a coin of AH 75/694 (Miles, "Miḥrāb and ʿAnazah," 171); before this only the modest "servant of God" (*ʿAbd Allāh*) and "commander of the faithful" (*amīr al-muʾminīn*) are used. When considering the text of the Dome

A less circumstantial link between the rebel slogans and ʿAbd al-Malik's official proclamations is possibly provided by the third *dirham* bearing the truncated profession of faith. This was also minted at Bishapur, but in the year 71 and on behalf of an Umayyad, namely Khālid ibn ʿAbd Allāh.[40] This man was on intimate terms with ʿAbd al-Malik and stayed by his side in Syria during the early years of the civil war. He then left to attempt a sortie upon Baṣra, and, though unsuccessful, was rewarded by the caliph with the governorship of Baṣra "once his rule was on a sound footing," that is, "when ʿAbd al-Malik had **{554}** killed Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr."[41] Arabic sources are divided over whether the latter died in autumn AH 71/690 or 72/691.[42] The numismatic evidence would seem to favour the earlier date, for not only is the coin of Khālid ibn ʿAbd Allāh dated 71, but so too is one struck by the local Umayyad governor in Fars, Muqātil ibn Mismaʿ.[43] And this fits with the statement of a Mesopotamian chronicler that in the year AG 1002/690–91 "there was peace and the entire land submitted to the authority of ʿAbd al-Malik."[44] If the date of Khālid's coin is accepted, then we have here a clear indication that Zubayrid slogans were taken up and used by the Umayyads for their own purposes.

The exact mechanics of this policy change on the part of the Marwanids will remain opaque until more study has been done of the coinage and events of the second civil war, but that they effected such a shift seems irrefutable. This then begs the question of what they were changing from: that is, what had been the rationale of the Arab polity before ʿAbd al-Malik? As is clear from non-Muslim testimony, there was a recognisably Islamic cult at this time, but, as is evident from the extant archaeological evidence, it was not publicly proclaimed. So what exactly was happening?

One way to approach this question would be to consider to what extent Muḥammad's organisation of and directives for his community would have been continued by his immediate successors. His measures in this sphere have to some degree been preserved for us in the *Constitution of Medina*. This offers a blueprint for a single politico-religious community uniting different religious denominations under the "protection of God" to fight on His behalf. The only requirement was that every signatory "affirm what is in this document and believe in God and the Last

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of the Rock (Excursus F, no. i, below), one should note not just the content, but the very fact that ʿAbd al-Malik presumed to dictate doctrine, to Christians as well as Muslims.

[40] See Excursus F, no. 26, below.

[41] Baladhurī, *Ansāb* 4.1, 462 (*kāna bi-l-Shām maʿa ʿAbd al-Malik yuḥibbuhu wa-yastaṣḥibuhu*), 464 (*baʿda istiqāmat al-umūr lahu*), 465 (*lammā qatala ʿAbd al-Malik Muṣʿab*) cf. Ṭabarī, 2.798–800.

[42] Caetani, *Chron.*, 839–40, 845–46.

[43] Walker, *Catalogue*, 1.105; the appointment is confirmed by Ṭabarī, 2.822 (specifying Ardashir Khurrah). One might choose to read 73 (SIHFTAT) instead of 71 (AYHFTAT) were it an isolated coin, but the existence of two coins seemingly dated 71 makes this option less plausible. Note that Ṭabarī, 2.818, places Khālid ibn ʿAbd Allāh's appointment in AH 71.

[44] *Chron. Zuqnin*, 154; partially confirmed by *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 692.

Day," accept God and Muḥammad as the ultimate arbiter **{555}** for all parties, "help one another against whomsoever fights the people of this document" and contribute to the war effort.[45] That Muḥammad himself initiated this war effort, campaigning north in the direction of Syria, is clearly stated by Muslim and non-Muslim writers.[46] Thus we might envisage the first caliphs as extending this policy, effectively running a "*jihād* state," a politico-religious entity comprising fighting men of different religious affiliations whose overriding aim was the expansion of the state in the name of God.[47] Muslim sources tend to assume that non-Muslims who participated in the conquests must have converted at an early stage, but the prosopographical evidence suggests rather that many remained in their own religion until much later.[48] The religiously pluralist character of the community would explain why no Islamic pretensions were advanced and why the leader was designated by such neutral terms as "servant of God" and "commander of the faithful." The latter would have replaced Muḥammad as the arbiter for all parties,[49] and the Qur'an would at this time have been of significance only for the Muslim members rather than authoritative for **{556}** the whole community. 'Umar's grant to Jews of right of residence in Jerusalem and Mu'āwiya's tour of the Christian holy sites in that city might then be interpreted as moves to reassure the Jewish and Christian elements in the community of the leadership's impartiality.[50] And 'Abd al-Malik's innovation would have been to elevate Islam to the position of the state religion as opposed to one of a number of creeds of equal standing.

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[45] See Hoyland, "Sebeos, the Jews and the Rise of Islam," 93–96. The religious independence of the signatories to the document is clear from the clause: "The Jews have their religion and the Muslims have their religion." The compromise religious formula, that all believe in God and the Last Day, is also found in *ḥadīth* (e.g. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, 2.175: *man kāna yu'minu billāh wa-l-yawm al-ākhir*…); see Kister, "…*illā bi ḥaqqihi*," 41–49.

[46] E.g. *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, §13: "They invaded the provinces of Syria, Arabia and Mesopotamia; above them holding the leadership was one Muḥammad by name;" Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (preserved in Michael the Syrian 11.II, 405/403, and *Chron. 1234*, 1–228): "He led a band of them who were obedient to him and began to go up to the land of Palestine plundering, enslaving and pillaging;" Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 59: "The messenger of God set out for Tabuk in the land of Syria for the purpose of raiding…"

[47] Cf. Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State*, esp. 11–35, though he does not make clear what he means by the term and assumes that it was only open to Muslims.

[48] In the early eighth century many of the Mardaites and Asāwira still enjoyed exemption from poll-tax and participated in Muslim campaigns, yet were not Muslim (see Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 161; Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 237–38 n. 362). And many clients of Muslims were not themselves Muslim (some examples given in *ibid.*, 237 n. 358).

[49] Cf. Mu'āwiya's arbitration between Jews and Christians in the matter of the cloth of Jesus (see the entry on "Arculf" in Chapter 6 above).

[50] Regarding Jews in Jerusalem see the entries on "Sebeos" and "Jewish Texts" in Chapters 4 and 10 above respectively; on Mu'āwiya's pilgrimage see *Chron. Maronite*, 71.

Another possible approach to the problem would be to take our cue from the material culture of the first seven decades after the Hijra, which displays little change from that of the immediately preceding decades.[51] So if the pre-'Abd al-Malik Arab polity was distinct from its Marwanid successor, was it rather more akin to its pre-Islamic predecesors? The sixth century witnessed renewed hostilities between Byzantium and Persia, and with the increased centralisation of the latter empire achieved by Kavad and Khusrau I these hostilities were more intensive than in earlier centuries. In particular, they affected many neighbouring peoples as both empires actively sought to bring them into their orbit.[52] The Arabs of the peninsular and Syrian desert were both the beneficiaries and victims of this imperial scramble for **{557}** influence. They could extract subsidies and power,[53] but at the price of compromising their freedom of action. Various Arab confederations emerged, the most well known being the Ghassanids and Lakhmids, allied to the Byzantines and Persians respectively. We know very little about the Lakhmids, but we can see that the Ghassanids had over the course of the sixth century built up a considerable power base for themselves in Jordan and southern Syria. This is illustrated by the buildings and inscriptions which commemorate the names of their rulers, and by contemporary Syriac documents that speak of their patronage of and arbitration in matters of religion.[54] Greek and Syriac texts mention them alongside Byzantine emperors as "our most pious and Christ-loving kings," even speaking of their "kingdom."[55] And in the verses of their poets there would seem to be none more powerful:

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[51] E.g. Walmsley, "The Social and Economic Regime at Fihl," 256: "Neither the Islamic conquest nor the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty was accompanied by any appreciable modification to the ceramic inventory at Fihl… Two periods of accelerated change, which involved the loss of some wares and the appearance of new types, occurred between AD 600 and 900. The first can be dated to the end of the 7th and early 8th century, the second to the first half of the 9th century." Dated Christian tombstones in southern Palestine and Jordan are found in considerable numbers from the mid-sixth to the late seventh century, petering out *ca.* 680 (Negev, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Negev*, 83–84, 94–97; Schick, "The Settlement Pattern of Southern Jordan," 138–41). And it is well known that until AH 72 only Byzantine coins or imitations thereof circulated in the West (most recently see Bates, "Byzantine Coinage and its Imitations").

[52] Cf. Beeston, "The Martyrdom of Azqir," 7: "I am increasingly inclined to see the conflicts of the early sixth century in Yemen not as religious wars between Christians and anti-Christians, but as in the main occasioned by the antagonisms between pro- and anti-Byzantine parties" (though in the sixth century being proByzantine was intimately bound up with being Christian).

[53] Cf. ps.-Joshua the Stylite: "To the Arabs on both sides this war was a source of much profit and they wrought their will upon both kingdoms" (cited by Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature," 108–109).

[54] Gaube, "Arabs in Sixth-Century Arabia;" Shahid, *BASIC1*, esp. 117–24, 325–31, 489–512, 805–38.

[55] *Ibid.*, 95–117, 542–48, 812–13.

> Do you not see that God has granted you such a degree of power that you will observe every king trembling at your feet.
>
> For you are the sun, the kings are stars; when the sun rises, no star will be seen.[56]

The elevation to power of these confederations meant that what had formerly been squabbles between them now became significant confrontations:

> Whoever examines the battle days of the Arabs in preIslamic times and becomes acquainted with their campaigns will find all of them or most of them to be no more than raids (*ighārāt*)… One or a few of them (the participants) might be killed, or one or a few of them be captured, or none of them would be killed. And this was the extent of **{558}** their fighting in all their battle days or most of them until the three aforementioned battle days, namely the Day of Jabala, the Day of Kullab al-Thani and the Day of Dhu Qar.[57]

One wonders, then, whether the Arab conquests had begun as a similar clash between the Ḥijazi and Ghassanid confederations, the former intending to usurp the latter's position. There were a number of very early engagements between the two.[58] Jabiya, the Ghassanid headquarters, was the primary destination of 'Umar on his journey to Syria and remained an important political seat in early Islam until the time of 'Abd al-Malik.[59] In addition, there do survive some anti-Ghassanid sentiments in Muslim sources.[60] And like the Ghassanids, the Ḥijazi Arabs effected little change in the Byzantine administration, and depended upon coinage minted in Constantinople until 'Abd al-Malik's time. One might postulate the same scenario for the Lakhmid kingdom at Ḥira. Certainly it seemed obvious to a resident of Khuzistan in the 660s that the present-day Arab rulers were simply a continuation of the earlier Arab kings

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[56] Nābigha al-Dhubyānī (wr. *ca.* 600), *Dīwān*, 28 (*ayyu l-rijāli l-muhadhdhabu*, ll. 9–10).

[57] Abū l-Baqā', *Manāqib*, 1.201. *Ibid.*, 1.191–92 (cf. Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, 10.34), explains these battles as being between the tribes of Tamīm and 'Āmir, Yaman and Tamīm, Bakr ibn Wā'il and the Persians respectively, and dates them to 30 or 40 years before Islam, to Muḥammad's Meccan period (610–22), and to AH 2/623–24 respectively. Military activity by Arabs in the first three decades of the seventh century is noted by *Chron. Siirt* LXXXVII, *PO* 13, 539–40; *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 610–11; Antiochus, *Ep. ad Eustathium*, *PG* 89, 1424–25; Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 326.

[58] De Goeje, *Mémoire*, 4–9, 10–17 (campaign against Dumat al-Jandal, where resided the phylarch Ukaydir, of Kinda, another Arab confederation, which was allied to Ghassan); Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 107–10; Schick, "Jordan on the Eve of the Muslim Conquest," 112–13.

[59] Busse, "'Omar In Jerusalem," 73–75; *EI*², *s.v.* "Djàbiya;" Shahid, *BASIC1*, 649. See also *idem*, "Ghassānid and Umayyad Structures."

[60] Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8.132 (when someone told 'Umar he had some bad news, 'Umar said: "Has Ghassan come?"); Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, 2.28, 3.289 (the Prophet asked God to let the kingdom of Ghassan disappear).

of Ḥira.[61] And Mesopotamian chroniclers regarded ʿAlī as a king of the East, based at Ḥira/Kufa, rivalling Muʿāwiya in the West. One might combine this with the first **{559}** proposal and envisage that the Muslims and those collaborating with them had overthrown the former Arab client states and were making use of the power base the latter had built up to carry out their holy war.[62]

These suggestions are meant only as stimuli to debate rather than solutions to the question, for it seems that the problem of early Islam is not so much lack of the right materials, but of the right perspectives. Events of the first decades AH that a Muslim of the third century would consider central to his faith, may well have been tangential at the time. This is not to belittle those events. They can have been of the utmost significance, but this is often only likely to be appreciated in hindsight once their repercussions had made themselves felt. Thus writers of the eighth century and later would regard the defeat of the Byzantines and Iranians to have been achieved with the battles of Yarmuk and Qadisiya or very shortly thereafter. This was not, however, the case for contemporaries. During the first Arab civil war a large Muslim contingent in Egypt evidently thought that their period of suzerainty was over, for "they negotiated with the king of the Greeks, concluded a peace with him and went over to his side."[63] A Christian inhabitant of Damascus in the time of Muʿāwiya conceded that the Byzantine empire was embattled, but certainly not defeated. John bar Penkaye, writing during the second Arab civil war, and Anastasius of Sinai, writing in its aftermath, seem confident that Arab rule was on the wane.[64] And up until the reign of Walīd revolts continued to be launched in the east of Iran, and the coastal cities of Syria and Palestine passed in and out of Muslim hands.[65]

SACRED DIRECTION IN ISLAM

{560} For the religious communities of the Middle East direction of prayer was of fundamental importance on the level of both identity and of belief. For the early Muslims it constituted the most manifest sign of allegiance to Islam. "He who prays as we do, taking our direction of prayer (*qibla*), and eats our sacrifices," so it was

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[61] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 38.

[62] This would help to explain how the Muslims held on to their conquests (they appropriated existing power structures) and how Byzantine and Sasanian ideas reached them (mediated via Arab client states who had absorbed many such ideas in the preceding centuries). Note also that the Muslims took over the Arabic alphabet developed earlier by the Christian Arabs (see the discussion in Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens*, 95–99).

[63] Sebeos, XXXVIII (tr. Macler, 149), who says that they were about 15,000 soldiers and that "they believed in Christ and were baptised."

[64] See the entries on the *Trophies of Damascus* and "Anastasius of Sinai" in Chapter 3 and on "John bar Penkaye" in Chapter 5 above.

[65] See *EI²*, *s.v.* "Nīzak, Tarkhān;" Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars," esp. 203–204.

said, "he is a Muslim and under the protection of God and His Prophet."[66] And in our earliest texts the Muslim community as a whole is often designated by the term "people of the *qibla*."[67] Yet the Qur'an and early Muslim tradition are extremely vague about many of its aspects. For example, the Qur'an tells us that there was a change of *qibla*, but it does not specify when this occurred nor what the original direction of prayer was, and it simply describes the new direction as "towards the sacred place of worship" (ii. 142–44).[68] Later commentators on these verses, though certain that the new *qibla* was to the Kaʿba in Mecca, were unsure whether its predecessor, Jerusalem, had been a permanent fixture or only a temporary deviation from the Kaʿba.[69] There is, of course, justification for saying that many questions that we might have were too obvious or irrelevant to early Muslims to require explanation, but that does not help us, and the situation has led to much loose speculation on the matter.

Frequent enlargements, embellishments and rebuilding have meant that, unfortunately, the structures of the earliest mosques do not survive **{561}** intact, and it is therefore to Muslim historical accounts that we must turn for information on their orientation.[70] The old Persian capital of Mada'in was where the general Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqās first chose to settle his troops, and use was made of the Great Hall of the Royal palace for prayer.[71] About two years later, in 638, Saʿd relocated to what was considered a more salubrious site, namely Kufa, and a whole new city was constructed. "The first thing to be marked out in Kufa and that was subsequently erected, when they had finally decided to make a start with the building, was the mosque:"

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[66] Bukhārī, 1.53 (*Ṣalāt* XXVIII); cf. Abū ʿUbayd, *Amwāl*, 67: "'Umar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz decreed that he who says our profession of faith, prays according to our *qibla* and becomes circumcised, then do not take from him the poll-tax."

[67] See, for example, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Risāla fī l-ṣaḥāba*, §31; van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, 5.28, citing the letter of Abū Ḥanīfa to ʿUthmān al-Battī (*ahl al-qibla* used three times); Crone and Zimmermann, *The Epistle of Sālim b. Dhakwān*, where the term is used twelve times (listed in index under *qibla*). These texts date to the mid-eighth century.

[68] Barthold, "Die Orientierung der ersten muhammedanischen Moscheen," argues that the first *qibla* of Islam was to the east, postulating that the object of Muḥammad's night journey (Qur'an xvii.1) was not Jerusalem, but a heavenly sanctuary in the east alluded to in Qur'an liii.13–15 (cf. Busse, "Jerusalem in the Story of Muḥammad's Night Journey and Ascension," 23, 35, 37), and arguing that since the earliest mosques were entered by a door on the west side they must have faced east. See also Andrae, *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum*, 4.

[69] See Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammeds*, 216–17.

[70] Helpful when using such accounts are Akbar, "Khatta and the Territorial Structure of Early Muslim Towns," and Conrad, "The Early Arab Urban Foundations in Iraq and Egypt."

[71] Ṭabarī, 1.2443–44, 2451.

> When he (Sa'd) came to the place of the mosque, he ordered a man to shoot as far as he could an arrow in the direction of the *qibla* and he marked where it fell. Then he let loose another arrow in the direction of the north and marked where it fell; and he shot an arrow to the south and marked where it fell; and he shot an arrow to the east and marked where it fell.[72]

The object of the exercise was to define the limits of the public area, beyond which private dwellings might be built and within which the mosque, governor's quarters (*dār al-imāra*) and market place were to be located. "The whole square was meant for the people to congregate in, and in a way that they need not stand packed."[373] The description of the method of demarcation does imply that the *qibla* lay to the west. Sayf ibn 'Umar's account has the archer shoot to his right, left, straight ahead and behind, but his account of a robbery attempt upon the public treasury (*bayt al-māl*), which was kept inside the governor's residence, still points to a westerly *qibla*. To prevent further thefts, Sa'd had been advised: "Move the mosque and position it next to the (governor's) residence, and make the residence its *qibla*," so that those praying "will act as guards." Accordingly, Sa'd "placed the mosque facing the **{562}** treasure chambers, with the entire length of the governor's residence being situated to the right of that side of the mosque facing south."[74] It would seem, then, that the Muslims in Kufa were initially praying to the west.[75] If this is true, it nevertheless changed at some point during the Umayyad period, for of the three stages of the governor's residence distinguished during excavations, the second has its northern side contiguous with the mosque.[76] Assuming that the policy continued of maintaining the *qibla* wall of the mosque facing the governor's abode, the *qibla* must therefore have been towards the south. Perhaps there is a connection here with the situa-

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[72] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 276. On Kufa's founding see Djaït, *Al-Kufa: naissance de la ville islamique*, esp. 65–69.

[73] This is clearer in Ṭabarī, 1.2488–89 (from Sayf ibn Umar).

[74] *Ibid.*, 1.2491–92. I translate *al-qibla* as "south," because the governor's house is stated as being in front of the *qibla* wall, not to the right side of it. Since the direction of prayer in Iraq came to be roughly southwards (see further on in this entry) and in Syria always was so, the word *al-qibla* came to be associated with the south, and indeed, *qiblī* means "southern." Note that the Muslims were sometimes called by Christians "people of the south" (*ahl al-tayman*), which Griffith, "Muḥammad's Scripture and Message," 126–27, thinks was a reference to their *qibla*; though see Holmberg, "*Ahl/farīq at-tayman*," who suggests the epithet may rather be connected with apocalyptic prophecies about the south (cf. Bashear, "Yemen in Early Islam").

[75] According to Bazdawī, *Risāla fī samt al-qibla*, §6, the same held for Khurasan and Transoxania: "When the righteous first generation conquered these lands, they made the *qibla*… at the setting point of [the sun in] the autumn," that is, due west.

[76] Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 11. *Ibid.*, 14, says that two copper coins of the caliph Saffāḥ, dated AH 136/753–54, were found in the third layer, which gives us a *terminus ante quem* for the second layer.

tion that prevailed later in Samarkand, where the Ḥanafīs prayed due west and the Shāfiʿīs faced south.[77]

The first mosque at Baṣra was initially no more than an open area marked out by reeds. Then, as Baṣra grew from an encampment to a city, a mosque and governor's residence were constructed using bricks and mortar. Nothing is mentioned about prayer direction beyond a note that "the governor, when he came to prayer, would make his way through them (those praying) to the front [walking] on a dividing wall (*ilā l-qibla ʿalā ḥājir*). Deeming this inappropriate, the governor Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān (665–73) moved the official residence to the *qibla* side of the mosque so that he could pass between the two via a door in **{563}** the *qibla* wall.[78] Again, we are given an anecdotal explanation of the interesting fact that from a very early time the mosque and governor's quarters were considered a single unit.

A new camp was also laid out in Egypt, named Fusṭaṭ, and again a mosque was erected as part of a congregational area shared by markets and the residence of the general, in this case ʿĀmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ. Our earliest account says:

> ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ built a mosque and around it there were gardens and vines. They hauled up the ropes until they had it (the structure) upright (*hattā istaqāma lahum*) and they applied themselves, and ʿAmr remained present until they had fixed (*waḍaʿū*) the *qibla*. ʿAmr and the Companions of the messenger of God were the ones who set it.[79]

Later versions confirm the participation of Companions in the orientation process, the number of them being anywhere between two and eighty. After hearing their views, ʿAmr instructed the builders to turn the *qibla* to the east (*sharriqu al-qibla*), and indeed the *qibla* "was very much turned towards the east (*musharraqa jiddan*)."[80] So when ʿAmr prayed, whether in his mosque or in a church, he did so to the east, to the Christian *qibla*, bar a little (*illā l-shay' al-yasīr/qalīlan*).[81]

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[77] Bazdawī, *Risāla fī samt al-qibla*, §9.

[78] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 346–47. In keeping with a common human tendency to romanticise about the primitive, it is said that "the men of reeds were better than those of mud-bricks… and these were better than those of fired bricks" (Conrad, "Historical Evidence and the Archaeology of Early Islam," 266, citing Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar*, and giving discussion of this point), so one should be wary about this oft-stated progression from reed to mud to brick.

[79] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, 91–92 (from ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Maslama from Layth ibn Saʿd).

[80] Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, 3.898–99, has "a little turned to the east," but Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2.247, and Ibn Duqmāq, *Intiṣār*, 4.62, attest to the given reading.

[81] Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2.247. *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO*1, 492, says that the Muslims pray in the direction of the south, turning east (*musharriqīn*) towards a place they call the Kaʿba. Crone and Cook, *Hagarism* 173 n. 28, suggest that this may be a confused recollection that Muslims prayed to the east, and this receives some confirmation from the earlier recension *Hist. Patriarchs* (*Hamburg*), 99, which states that they pray to the southeast (*yuṣallū qiblī sharqī*), but probably to be read as "towards the east" (*qibal al-sharq*).

{564} In Syria and Palestine there were no new settlements founded in the first century of Islam,[82] and few, if any, new mosques. Very commonly Muslims made use of churches, which were then either converted or simply divided.[83] In Jerusalem a Muslim sanctuary was raised from the ruins of Herod's portico hall, the caliph ʿUmar himself arriving to oversee the task. Allegedly, he consulted the Jew Kaʿb al-Ahbar concerning the *qibla*. The latter advocated placing it behind the rock of the Jewish Temple so as to align the *qiblas* of Moses and Muḥammad. ʿUmar regarded this as too much of a concession to Judaism and chose to position the *qibla* in front of the rock.[84] But in either case the implication of the account is that a southern direction of prayer was adopted.[85] If the same principle obtained as at Kufa and Baṣra, that the *qibla* of the mosque faced the governor's residence, then this would give further confirmation, for there are a number of administrative buildings on the south side of the Temple Mount, including the "palace of the commander of the faithful."[86] Of mosques aligned to the north we have only the example of the mosque in Ṣanʿa for this period. It is said to have been constructed on the order of the Prophet, but Walīd I considerably enlarged it, extending the northern side and installing there a decorative niche (*miḥrāb*), which makes clear that this was the *qibla* wall.[87]

Some scholars have concluded from these and other reports either that the *qibla* at this time was not towards Mecca,[88] or that it was only **{565}** one of a number

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[82] Whitcomb, "*Amṣār* in Syria?," suggests that the Muslims did, however, designate areas for their habitation both inside and outside existing cities.

[83] See Creswell, *Early Muslim. Architecture*, 6; King, "Two Byzantine Churches in Northern Jordan and Their Re-Use in the Islamic Period." Similarly, in the eastern half of the empire, we find that Zoroastrian fire-temples and Sasanian palaces were requisitioned for ritual purposes (*EI*^{2}, *s.v.* "Masdjid," B3).

[84] Ṭabarī, 1.2408.

[85] Note how the most beautiful tie-beams of the octagonal arcade arches in the Dome of the Rock are in the centre of the south side, facing Mecca (Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 29; Blair, "What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?," 77). Raby, "Aqsa and the Anastasis," maintains that the evidence from the earliest Aqṣa mosque (pre-Walīd I) is that its *qibla* was on the south side.

[86] See the entry on "Arculf" in Chapter 6 above.

[87] Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 83.

[88] Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 23–24, favour northwestern Arabia (also relying on the deviant *qiblas* of the mosques of Wasiṭ and Uskaf bani Junayd discussed below); Nevo and Koren, "The Origins of the Muslim Descriptions of the Jahili Meccan Sanctuary," suggest the Negev, pointing to certain "pagan" habitations there. One should note, however, that our earliest Muslim inscriptions are from the Mecca-Ṭa'if area (see Excursus F, nos. 5, 11, 14, 16, below), and there appears to have been much construction work there from an early date (see Kister, "Some Reports concerning Mecca;" ʿAli, "Muslim Estates in Hidjaz in the First Century A.H."), all of which would be inexplicable if Mecca was of little significance to the early Muslims.

of *qiblas*.[89] Fortunately, we can call upon a seventh-century witness to help us, namely Jacob, bishop of Edessa (684–88), who was asked the question why the Jews pray facing south,[90] to which he gave the following reply:

> Your question is vain… for it is not to the south that the Jews pray, nor either do the Muslims (*mhaggrāyē*). The Jews who live in Egypt, and also the Muslims there, as I saw with my own eyes and will now set out for you, prayed to the east, and still do, both peoples – the Jews towards Jerusalem and the Muslims towards the Kaʿba. And those **{566}** Jews who are to the south of Jerusalem pray to the north; and those in the land of Babel, in Ḥira and in Baṣra, pray to the west. And also the Muslims who are there pray to the west, towards the Kaʿba; and those who are to the south of the Kaʿba pray to the north, towards that place. So from all this that has been said, it is clear that it is not to the south that the Jews and Muslims here in the regions of Syria pray, but towards Jerusalem or the Kaʿba, the patriarchal places of their races.[91]

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[89] Sharon, "The Umayyads as *Ahl al-Bayt*," 129 ("The faces of the *mu'minūn* did not necessarily turn towards Mecca in prayer… Under the influence of Christianity, at least in Egypt and Syria, the early *mu'minūn* turned their faces to the east"); Bashear, "Qibla Musharriqa," 282 ("one cannot speak of one original *qibla* of Islam, but rather of several currents in the search for one"). Sharon, "The Birth of Islam in the Holy Land," 230–32, supports his claim with archaeological evidence in the form of an open rectangular structure located in the southern Negev, marked out by large slag pieces with a south-facing and an east-facing apse. The latter is better explained, however, as being part of "a symbolic early Christian church" (Rothenberg, *Timna*, 221–22, 196, photograph no. 121). Note that this is chiefly a Roman site, though Sharon reports finds of Umayyad pottery which, along with the southern apse, might indicate later use as a mosque. Bashear, "Qibla Musharriqa," points to the use of the term *musharraq* ("place facing sunrise") as a synonym of muṣallā ("prayer place") – but this is likely just a relic from pagan days (Juynboll, "Über die Bedeutung des Wortes Taschrīk") – and to reports of Muslims praying in churches – but since the Muslims could not instantly erect mosques in every place they occupied, the use of existing sacred sites made sense and also demonstrated their religious pretensions.

[90] Note that this question also appears in two seventh-century Greek texts, the *Trophies of Damascus* and the *Questions to Antiochus Dux*; it was very likely provoked by reports of the Muslims in Syria also praying south, which caused Christians to wonder what was the significance of this prayer direction. This is discussed in the entry on "Anti-Jewish Polemicists" in Chapter 3 above.

[91] Jacob of Edessa, *Letter to John the Stylite* no. 14, fol. 124a; summarised by Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.604, and translated by Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 173 n. 30. The latter leave the places in Babylonia untranslated, transliterating them as *nhrt* and *bwsrt*; I read this as Ḥira (*het-yod* not *nun-het*), and Baṣra (often spelt with a *waw* in Syriac, e.g. Michael the Syrian 11.XVII, 449/478); the *taw* conveys Arabic *tā' marbūṭa*). By Ḥira, Kufa is probably meant (see the entry on "George of Resh'aina" in Chapter 4 above). Possibly also of relevance here is Jacob's remark, made amid an attack on malpractices of Armenians, that the Arabs "make three

Jacob had studied in Alexandria as a youth and so would have been in a position to observe the Muslims there at first hand, which makes his testimony particularly valuable. His information about Syria is also likely to be accurate, for there were Muslims resident in Edessa while he was bishop of that town.[92] What he makes abundantly clear is that the intention of the Muslims was to direct themselves towards a specific site, which they called the Ka'ba.[9393] This is presumably to be identified with the "House of God," "the locality in the south where their sanctuary **{567}** was," which is mentioned by Jacob's contemporary, John bar Penkaye, a resident of north Mesopotamia.[94]

In addition, Jacob implies that the Muslims initially prayed in the general direction of the Ka'ba rather than trying to be accurate. This is also the impression conveyed by the traditions on the foundation of the earliest non-Arabian mosques adduced above, and it would appear to have been the view of many Muslim authorities:

> Scholars disagree as to whether one who is distant from the Ka'ba is obliged to turn to face the Ka'ba itself or in its general direction (*istiqbāl al-'ayn aw istiqbāl al-jiha*). Some say: "His duty is to face the Ka'ba itself," but this is weak, for it is a commandment (*taklīf*) to which one cannot attain. Some say: "In the general direction," and this is correct.[95]

If we accept the hint given above in connection with 'Umar's mosque that the Muslims sought the advice of Jews, which would make sense since they both prayed to a specific place rather than in a cardinal direction like the Christians, then we would reach the same conclusion. The synagogue of Dura Europos on the Euphrates, for example, is aligned to the west, not to Jerusalem itself.[96]

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genuflections to the south when they make a sacrifice" (*Tract against the Armenians*, fol. 193b [= Kayser, 4/35]).

[92] For example, Michael the Syrian 11.XVI, 448/476, mentions a tax-collector there, named Muḥammad, in the 690s.

[93] Cf. Qur'an ii. 144, 149, 150: "Turn your face towards the sacred place of worship (*fawalli wajhaka shaṭra l-masjidi l-ḥarām*), and wherever you are turn your faces towards it." The exact nature and location of this Ka'ba/Sacred Place of Worship (assuming they are to be identified with each other) are not, however, made clear either by Jacob or the Qur'an. The term "Ka'ba" may refer to the form of the structure (see Finster, "Zu der Neuauflage," 94–97); note that the Arab god Dusares, whose cult also centred around a black stone, was worshipped, says Epiphanius of Salimis (d. 403), together with his mother, the virginal *Kaabou* (see Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 192, and the literature cited there).

[94] John bar Penkaye, 155/183 (tr. Brock, 64).

[95] Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, 1.42–43.

[96] See Lambert, "La synagogue de Doura Europos et les origines de la mosquée," 68, and Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, 50–52, who also describes synagogues in northern Transjordania turned to the west and two by the Mediterranean turned to the east (but see Landsberger, "Sacred Direction in Synagogue and Church," 188–93, who argues

Baṣra, Kufa and Fusṭaṭ were reconstructed in 665, 670 and 673 respectively along somewhat grander lines. But the most ambitious and visionary stage of the Muslim building program was undertaken by the caliphs ʻAbd al-Malik and Walīd. In every major city of the Muslim realm new mosques and palaces were erected and old ones refitted and restyled. In a number of mosques a niche (*miḥrāb*) was introduced, first at Medina in 707, then at Damascus, Ṣanʻa and Fusṭaṭ.[97] Furthermore, **{568}** changes were made in their alignments. Ḥajjāj's mosque at Wasiṭ, built in 703, is the first for which we have clear archaeological evidence, and this reveals that its *qibla* was not aligned to the west, like Saʻd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ's mosque at Kufa, but 39 degrees southwards from west.[98] On the orders of Walīd, Qurra ibn Sharīk pulled down ʻAmr's mosque and rebuilt it more grandly, installing a *miḥrāb*, and "turned its *qibla* somewhat to the south."[99] The ninth-century writer Jāḥiẓ imputes nefarious intentions to the innovation:

> There arose ʻAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān and his son Walīd and their agent Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf and his client Yazīd ibn Abī Muslim. They again demolished the House and attacked the sacred precinct of Medina. They pulled down the Kaʻba, violating what is inviolable, and instituted a deviant direction of prayer at Wasiṭ.[100]

But is it that advances in astronomical science meant that such errors in alignment were regarded as unacceptable by Jāḥiẓ's day, or is the latter suggesting that Ḥajjāj deliberately chose an orientation for his mosque other than Mecca?[101]

An indication of what may be happening here is given by the example of Samarkand, where the Ḥanafīs, who prayed due west, and the Shāfiʻīs, who faced

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that this is a consequence of the Tosefta ruling that synagogue gates should open towards the east).

[97] See *EI²*, *s.v.* "Miḥrāb;" Whelan, "Origins of the *Miḥrāb Mujawwaf*." Baer, "The Mihrab in the Cave of the Dome of the Rock," shows that the so-called *miḥrāb Sulaymān*, found in a cavern beneath the Dome of the Rock, is of the late tenth century, not by ʻAbd al-Malik as Creswell had thought.

[98] Safar, *Wāsiṭ*, 20, 29 n. 8 ("The qibla of mosque I is 231 degrees from magnetic north"). It deviates from the true *qibla* by 33 degrees; almost the same degree of error is found in the late Umayyad mosque of Uskaf bani Junayd, near Baghdad (noted by Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 23; on its date see Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 268).

[99] Ibn Duqmāq, *Intiṣār*, 4.62 (*tayāmana bihā qalīlan*).

[100] Jāḥiẓ, *Risāla fī banī Umayya*, 296 (*ḥawwala qiblat Wāsiṭ*).

[101] Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 23–24, understand him to mean the latter, favouring northwest Arabia. But note that by Jāḥiẓ's day the error in Ḥajjāj's *qibla* would have stood out (Safar, *Wāsiṭ*, 29–30, 33–35, says it was only changed *ca.* AH 400); other early congregational mosques had mostly had their *qiblas* tuned, and later ones had been calculated more accurately in the first place. And of course, given the Abbasid demonisation of Ḥajjāj, Jāḥiẓ would not have given him the benefit of the doubt.

south, agreed on a *qibla* between the two for the **{569}** grand mosque of the city.[102] Otherwise, and more probable, Walīd may genuinely have been striving to impose greater accuracy of alignment towards Mecca, at least for congregational mosques. Certainly in Syria increased precision was achieved: the mosques at ʿAmman,[103] Qaṣr al-Kharana, Jabal Says, Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqi, Qaṣr al-Hayr al-Gharbi and Ruṣafat Hisham are all oriented towards Mecca with an error of 9 degrees or less, the deviation becoming smaller as time went on.[104] And the tribal mosques in the Negev and southern Jordan, some probably from the first half of the second century of Islam (*ca.* 720–70), all have an apse or a single large stone in their southern wall, indicating a southerly direction of prayer.[105] There is no doubt that other sites soon became important centres of worship, particularly Jerusalem, in which ʿAbd al-Malik built sumptuously and possibly towards which he aligned his palaces.[106] But it seems that Mecca remained primary; it was "the House of God," declared Farazdaq in a poem addressed to ʿAbd al-Malik in 694, whereas Jerusalem was simply the "honoured" (*musharraf*) house.[107]

The issue then may not be so much what the Muslims were directing themselves towards, as how they established what that direction was. Here one must differentiate between the calculation of the direction for congregational mosques and its estimation for individuals, private prayer places and so on. The latter was always likely to be inaccurate, whereas the former was likely to depend on the current state of astronomical science and its correct application. From the late eighth century onwards we find Muslim astronomers busily devising trigonometric and geometric solutions to the problem of determining the *qibla* **{570}** for any given locality.[108] Before this, however, we are rather in the dark, for legal manuals on prayer tend to pass over this question:

> Most of the religious leaders of the first generations avoided thinking about the matter of the *qibla* and they were content to follow the opinion [of others] They did this only because they did not have the means to know the *qibla*, since it can only be known by the science of arithmetic and they had no insight into calcula-

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[102] Bazdawī, *Risāla fī samt al-qibla*, §9. Note that the *qibla* at Wāsiṭ, as also that at Uskaf bani Junayd, is aligned almost exactly to the southwest.

[103] Northedge, "The Umayyad Mosque of ʿAmman," 148, observes that the Palestine Exploration Fund's survey, which had found the *qibla* of the mosque to be 20 degrees out, was using a north point incorrect by 11–12 degrees, so the error is only 8–9 degrees.

[104] Carlier, "Qastal al-Balqa'," 119, 134.

[105] Avni, "Early Mosques in the Negev Highlands;" Jobling, "Wadi Shireh," mentions a mosque with an inscription dated AH 107 nearby.

[106] Kister, "You Shall Only Set Out for Three Mosques;" Carlier, "Qastal al-Balqa'."

[107] Farazdaq, *Dīwān*, 2.31–33.

[108] See *EI*², *s.v.* "Ḳibla ii: Astronomical Aspects," for an overview and secondary literature.

> tion. So they followed the opinion of others because of their inability to find it by [means of legal] proofs.[109]

It is possible that Christian and Jewish scientists were employed. Mu'āwiya is said to have had astrologers at his court, and a table of historically significant eclipses relating to events in Islamic history ends with a lunar eclipse of 22 December 679, foreboding the death of Mu'āwiya.[110] One wonders, however, whether non-Muslims would have been used for this purpose; as the Qur'an says: "It is not for polytheists to build God's sanctuaries, … only him who believes in God and the Last Day, and who has observed prayer, given alms and feared none but God" (ix.17–18).

Though legal texts nowhere discuss how the *qibla* of a mosque should be ascertained, they do give some consideration to the problem of how an individual with no astronomical equipment or scientific knowledge might determine in which direction to pray. There were two authoritative statements that were employed, particularly in the case of the traveller with no mosque nearby. The first was the Qur'anic phrase: "To God belongs the east and the west" (ii.115, ii.177), which was usually interpreted to mean that a directionless prayer was allowed when journeying by night or on a cloudy day. Suspension of the *qibla* was also admitted when riding, for "the messenger of God used to pray on **{571}** his camel in whatever direction it placed him," though this concession later became confined to superogatory prayers.[111]

The second source was the influential early tradition, commonly attributed to the Prophet or to 'Umar, though also to other Companions: "What is between the east and the west is a *qibla*."[112] Its authority prompted many to seek the *qibla* on its basis, such as the following rather literal application:

> A man should look to the rising of the sun and to its setting at the equinox so that night and day are equal, and then draw a line from the east to the west. Then the people should pray towards that line, taking from the two directions but not turning to the east nor to the west.[113]

The same line of thought was followed by the Shāfi'ī scholars of Samarkand who supplemented it with the Prophetic tradition: "Do not face toward or away from the *qibla* when relieving yourself, rather face east or west," in order to support their stance against the Ḥanafīs that one should face not west but south.[114] Perhaps origi-

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[109] Bazdawī, *Risāla fī samt al-qibla*, §3.

[110] Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, 67 (citing Baghdādī); Pingree, *Thousands of Abū Ma'shar*, 114–15.

[111] Ibn Qutayba, *Tafsīr gharīb al-Qur'ān*, 62; Muslim, 1.195 (*ṣalāt al-musāfirīn wa-qasruhā* IV); Bukhārī, 1.54 (*Salāt* XXXI).

[112] Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 1.196 (*Qibla* IV); other references given by Wensinck, *Concordance*, 5.259 (*s.v.* "*Qibla*").

[113] Ibn Rushd (*al-jadd*), *Bayān*, 17.320, who says this method is totally wrong.

[114] Bazdawī, *Risāla fī samt al-qibla*, §5.

nally developed in response to the Qur'anic admonition: "It is not right that you turn your faces to the east and to the west" (ii.177), this tradition became further clarified by the words "when one's face is turned towards the House (*idha tuwujjiha qibal al-bayt*)," [115] or qualified by the warning that this saying only sets the parameters within which one should strive to narrow down the direction further. [116]

The problem was that "the greater the distance involved, the greater the error in the *qibla*," [117] and this led many scholars to grant considerable leeway regarding orientation as long as there had been intention (*nīya*) to pray correctly. Shāfiī, however, reacted against this **{572}** approach, saying: "God did not permit them to pray in any direction they wished if the Sacred Mosque were out of sight." On the basis of the Qur'anic verses: "For it is He who has made for you the stars that you might be guided by them in the darkness of land and sea" (vi.97), and: "By landmarks and by the stars they are guided" (xvi.16), he argued that man was expected to find the direction of prayer by applying his reasoning powers (*ijtihād*) to such "landmarks." These might be: "The mountains, the nights and the days, which have winds of known names, though they blow fron different directions, and the sun and the moon and the stars, whose risings and settings and whose places in the firmament are known." [118] There are a number of indications that this was indeed practised. In the account of the founding of the mosque of Kufa cited above, the directions were given in terms of the winds (*fī mahabb*). The tenth-century scholar Khatīb al-Baghdādī lists "the finding of the *qibla* through the stars" as one of the acceptable parts of astronomy. [119] And stellar occurrences were often used to site events – the death of Muḥammad's son was fixed by a solar eclipse, the siege of Damascus by the setting of the Pleiades, and the allocation of *fay'* in Iraq was carried out upon the rising of Sirius [120] – so it is not improbable that they were used for other calculations too.

King argues that the Ka'ba itself was aligned in accordance with natural and astronomical phenomena. The early Muslims, he says, "knew that, when facing a particular wall or corner of the Ka'ba in Mecca, one was facing a particular solar or stellar rising or setting point; they assumed that, away from Mecca, if one faced in that same astronomical direction one would still be facing the same wall or corner of the Ka'ba." [121] The theory is ingenious, but it presumes knowledge among the early Muslims of the medieval theory that each side of the Ka'ba was associated with a specific region of the world. Likewise, the large amount of material in later sources

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[115] Wensinck, *Concordance*, 5.259 (*mā bayn al mashriq wa-l-maghrib qibla*).

[116] Bajī, *Muntaqā*, 1.340; Ibn Rushd (*al-jadd*), *Bayān*, 17.319–20, stresses that the *qibla* is to be sought in one of the four quadrants.

[117] Ibn Rushd (*al-jadd*), *Bayān*, 17.320.

[118] Shāfi'ī, *Risāla*, 24.

[119] Cited by Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, 25.

[120] Bukharī, 1.124 (*Kusūf* XV); Ṭabarī, 1.2152 (Damascus), 2486 *(fay')*.

[121] King, "Astronomical Alignments in Medieval Islamic Religious Architecture," 309–10; see also *idem*, "On the Orientation of the Ka'ba."

describing how such natural phenomena as the winds are determined in relation to the Kaʿba derives only from a time when the Kaʿba was conceived as the centre of the **{573}** world and universe.[122] King also takes no account of the frequency with which the Kaʿba was demolished and rebuilt in earlier times and the stone itself moved, and he makes many conjectures, such as that "the mosque of ʿAmr in Fusṭaṭ, the first mosque built in Egypt, is also aligned to face the winter sunrise."[123] In general, his theories are insightful and revealing of medieval times, but do not stand up when retrojected to the first two centuries of Islam.

> In ascertaining the *qibla*, as with analogous issues such as times of prayer, it was recognised that one simply did the best one could with the tools at hand: The one who judges by approximation often errs, but despite this he may validly pray if he has no other evidence. The prayer of those who have no adequate evidence is permissable and likewise the prayer of those who follow them, but when someone has revealed their error with the correct evidence, they may no longer pray towards the [former] *qibla*.[124]

Early governors probably applied different principles according to their own views, many deeming prayer in the general direction of the Kaʿba as sufficient. From the time of ʿAbd al-Malik and Walīd onwards there was a move to fix the *qibla* in the exact direction of the Kaʿba itself, at least in the case of imperial and congregational mosques, where astronomers could be employed. Local prayer places, however, mostly remained aligned in the general direction of the Kaʿba or according to some natural phenomenon. As Bīrūnī asserts: "Even the professional astronomers find the *qibla* problem difficult to solve, so you can imagine how difficult it is for non-astronomers," a comment echoed more tersely by his contemporary Naṣr ibn ʿAbd Allāh: "Seeking this object (the *qibla*) by way of calculation is difficult."[125]

THE CONQUEST OF EGYPT

{574} A number of sources suggest that the Byzantines paid, or at least proposed to pay, tribute to the Arabs for a number of years in order to stave off the conquest of Egypt. This was accepted by early historians of the late Roman empire, but was categorically rejected by Butler, who regarded it as a "perversion of truth," a "distorted

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[122] Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, 157–58.

[123] King, "The Astronomy of the Mamluks," 79. He backs up the statement elsewhere by quoting a sixteenth-century source ("Architecture and Astronomy," 112), but as recently as 1401 "the whole *qibla* side of the mosque (of ʿAmr) was demolished and rebuilt" (Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 304).

[124] Bazdawī, *Risāla fī samt al-qibla*, §8.

[125] Bīrūnī is cited by King, "Al-Bazdawī on the Qibla," 24; Lorch, "Naṣr b. ʿAbdāllah's Instrument for Finding the *Qibla*," 128.

image" and a "legend."[126] Butler's authority has meant that subsequent writers have either followed him or left the question open, and most have avoided the issue entirely.[127] However, the traditional view that this important province was ignored by all until the Muslims invaded it in 639–40 seems implausible. In particular, it is hard to believe that after the loss of Syria in 636 Heraclius would not have taken some steps to safeguard Egypt. The matter does, then, deserve consideration anew.

The Greek tradition's view of events is preserved for us only by Nicephorus:

> While Heraclius was dwelling in the eastern parts, he appointed John of Barkaina general of the army and sent him against the Saracens in Egypt. He joined battle with them and was himself killed. Likewise Marinus, commander of the Thracian contingents, engaged them in battle and was defeated; he lost many soldiers and himself barely escaped. In succession to him he (Heraclius) conferred command of the army on Marianus, who held the Roman rank of *cubicularius*, and dispatched him with instructions to consult with Cyrus, archpriest of Alexandria, that they might take joint action with regard to the Saracens. Now Cyrus had informed the emperor that he was going to conclude an agreement with Ambrus, phylarch of the Saracens, and [pay him] tribute which, he stated, he would raise by a commercial levy (*dia empolaiou syneisforas*) while the imperial **{575}** taxes would not be affected. [He also recommended] that the Augusta Eudokia or another of the emperor's daughters should be offered in marriage (to Ambrus) with a view to his being consequently baptised in the holy bath and becoming a Christian; for Ambrus and his army had confidence in Cyrus and regarded him with great affection. But Heraclius would not brook any of this. Since Marianus, too, was aware of these matters, he rejected the policy of Cyrus and, having attacked the Saracens, fell in battle as did many of his soldiers… (Heraclius) recalled to Byzantium Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria, and held him under severe accusation of having surrendered to the Saracens the affairs of all Egypt…[128]

The picture outlined by this narrative is eminently plausible. Gifts, marriage alliances and conversion had for centuries formed part of the diplomatic armoury for dealing with "barbarians," and it makes sense to assume that, since military methods had failed, the Muslims would have been approached in similar fashion. The detail about the raising of a commercial levy suggests genuine recollection of a debate on how to maintain payment of tribute. Moreover, Byzantine leaders are shown taking positive, if unsuccessful, action to secure Egypt as soon as it was realised that the Arabs posed a serious threat. Finally, it very likely derives from a Constantinopolitan

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[126] Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 207–209 (citing Lebeau, Drapeyron, Milne and "the English historians from Gibbon to Bury"), 481–83.

[127] Fraser's revised edition of Butler adds nothing on this issue. New studies on the Arab conquests tend to omit discussion of Egypt; thus Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, and Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (though he alludes to the issue at 167), deal only with Syria and Iraq.

[128] Nicephorus, §§23, 26 (tr. Mango, 71–73, 75).

chronicle written shortly after 641, and so constitutes our earliest witness to the last days of Byzantine Egypt.[129] Nevertheless, "no scholar today accepts the Nicephorus version."[130]

For the Coptic tradition of the conquest of Egypt we have to rely on the account in the *History of the Patriarchs*[131] which is as follows:

> When Heraclius saw that (the loss of Syria), he assembled all his troops from Babylon to the borders of Aswan and for **{576}** three years he continued paying to the Muslims the tribute which he had asked to be settled upon himself and on all his troops – they used to call the sum stipulated *al-baqt*, that is, a poll-tax[132] – until he had paid to them most of his money. And many people died from the hardship which they endured.[133]

No reason is given for the subsequent decision of the Muslims to invade Egypt, though its juxtaposition to the note on Cyrus' hunting down of Benjamin suggests a connection in the author's mind. The Muslims' progress and success is briefly described, and it is observed that they "left alone the province and its inhabitants, but destroyed the people of the Romans and their general named Marianus."[134] Again we learn of an agreement to pay tribute made *ca.* 636–37, though involving Heraclius rather than Cyrus,[135] and of the defeat of the general Marianus. And there is even remembrance of the trials that its imposition occasioned. Moreover, the sources of this work consist of biographies of patriarchs which were often composed shortly after their subject's death, though they underwent at least some editing in the process of their later compilation.[136]

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[129] Thus Mango, *Nikephoros*, 14; see also the entry on "Nicephorus" in Chapter 10 above.

[130] Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 2.89.

[131] For the period before the full-scale Arab invasion of Egypt in 640 the chronicle of John of Nikiu is defective and so cannot help us here.

[132] *Ayy annahu baqṭ ru'ūsihim.* One assumes the word to derive from Latin *pactum;* it is not part of Muslim fiscal terminology, though it does occur in a papyrus dealing with Nubian-Muslim relations, where it means "annual quota of humans" (Hinds and Sakkout, "A Letter from the Governor of Egypt in 758," 210).

[133] *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 493; the editor says the manuscripts have "eight years," but he amends to "three years" with no explanation. However, note that *Coptic Synaxary*, "8 Tuba," has "three years," and this is relying on the same *Life* of the patriarch Benjamin used by the *History of the Patriarchs*.

[134] *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 494.

[135] These two may be cited as the ones ultimately but not immediately responsible. When summoned before Heraclius, Cyrus "accused others of having committed the misdeeds in question and alleged that he himself had made charges against them to no avail" (Nicephorus, §26 [tr. Mango, 75]).

[136] See the entry on the *History of the Patriarchs* in Chapter 10 above.

The Syriac tradition is likewise sparse, but we do at least have the account of the mid-eighth-century *Syriac Common Source* used by Theophanes, Agapius and and Dionysius of Tellmaḥre. The versions of **{577}** these three authors are so similar that it is possible to reconstruct a common core.[137]

> At that time ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ[138] marched to Egypt and entered it. Cyrus, bishop of Alexandria, went out to meet him and agreed to give him every year 200,000 *dinars*[139] on the condition that the Arabs would not enter Egypt.
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> ʿAmr withdrew and did not enter Egypt. Egypt was saved for three years.[140] Then some people accused Cyrus before Heraclius of taking the gold of Egypt and giving it to the Arabs. Heraclius wrote deposing Cyrus and sent an Armenian named Manuel to govern the country. When, after a year had passed, the Arab envoys came as usual to Egypt to take the tribute, they found Manuel at Babylon with the Byzantine army. They entered his presence and asked for the gold, but he sent them back empty-handed saying: "I am not that Cyrus who used to give you gold. He did not wear armour, but a monk's tunic. I, however, am dressed in armour as you see. Go away and do not come here again." After the envoys had left and informed ʿAmr of this, he invaded Egypt. Manuel was defeated and fled with a few men to Alexandria. The Arabs then took possession of Egypt. On hearing of this, Heraclius wrote to Cyrus to persuade the Arabs to withdraw from Egypt, if he could. Cyrus went to the camp of the Arabs and explained that he was not to blame for the breaking of the agreement. He beseeched **{578}** them eloquently to accept the gold, but ʿAmr replied to him: "Now that we have taken the country, we will not abandon it."[141]

The style of this passage is rather anecdotal, but once more we have the story of Cyrus paying tribute to preserve Egypt and again it is placed immediately after the battle of Yarmuk. Butler takes the participation of Manuel to indicate that this inci-

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[137] The following represents the material common to Agapius, 471–74, Michael the Syrian 11.VII, 419/425, and Theophanes, 338–39 (with allowances for his compression of events). This does not exclude that one or more of the variations given by each chronicler belonged to the account of their common source. *Chron. 1234*, 1.251–53, also has this narrative, but blends it with an extract about the Coptic patriarch Benjamin drawn from Dionysius of Tellmaḥre's ecclesiastical history (found in Michael the Syrian 11.VIII, 422–23/432–33).

[138] Michael has ʿUmar, confusing him with ʿAmr; this is corrected in *Chron. 1234*, 1.252.

[139] De Boor's edition of Theophanes has the misprint 120,000 (see Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, AM 6126 n. 5).

[140] This comment is made by Agapius, 472, and Theophanes, 338, but not Michael.

[141] This last paragraph is perhaps an anecdotal version of the more sober account of Cyrus' meeting with ʿAmr in Babylon related by John of Nikiu, CXX.17–21 (tr. Charles, 193–94).

dent is really that of 646, when the Byzantines under Manuel retook Alexandria.[142] Yet no element of the story, except for the presence of Manuel, would bear this out, and it seems simpler to assume that the mention of Manuel is a mistake or even – since in the above he lives to fight another day – that he features in both episodes. Possibly the Marianus of Nicephorus and the *History of the Patriarchs* is meant; in this case one would have to assume that he was killed, as these two assert, and that Nicephorus' account has been compressed, there being an interval of some years between the dispatch of John and Marinus and that of Marianus, with Cyrus' agreement in place in the meantime. Difficulties notwithstanding, it seems undeserved that "this version understandably is no longer accepted by anyone."[143]

In short, we have three early, independent sources which concur on the payment of tribute *ca.* 636–37 by the Byzantines to the Arabs with the aim of safeguarding Egypt. The policy makes sense and was indeed implemented elsewhere, as when John Kataias, governor of Osrhoene, "sought out Iyāḍ bar Ghanm at Qinnasrin and made a pact to give him 100,000 denarii a year for the whole of Mesopotamia, if the Arabs would stay on the west bank of the Euphrates."[144] Nevertheless, one finds no supporters for such a thesis. The above reports are all rejected since they contradict the seeming axiom that no Muslim presence could have existed in Egypt before its invasion, and because it is believed that no confirmation of such a reconstruction is found in **{579}** Muslim sources.[145] Even if the latter were true, argument from silence is insufficient, particularly as acceptance of a date of December 639 for the full-scale invasion in no way precludes diplomatic manoeuvres or military skirmishes having taken place beforehand.

In fact, one can discern in the Arabic sources traces of this version of events described by the Christian sources. In the first place, relations are portrayed as having been established almost as soon as the Arabs emerged from the peninsula:

> After the death of the messenger of God, Abū Bakr sent Ḥātib to the *Muqawqis* in Egypt and he passed by the region of the eastern villages. He made a truce with them and they gave to him [their word], and they remained in this until ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ entered it. Then they fought him and that treaty was broken. And this, said ʿAbd al-Malik, was the first truce in Egypt.[146]

The messenger is presumably the same Ḥātib ibn Abī Baltaʿa said to have been sent by Muḥammad to "the *Muqawqis*, master of Alexandria," in 627.[147] This latter report

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[142] Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 475–83.

[143] Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 2.214.

[144] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 637–38.

[145] Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 208–209 (who sees it as "a mere blunder of the Greek historians"); Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 2.88–89.

[146] Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, 53 (from ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Maslama from Ibn Lahīʿa from Ḥārith ibn Yazīd from ʿUlayy ibn Rabāḥ al-Lakhmī).

[147] Ṭabarī, 1.1560; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, 45–49.

seems misplaced,[148] probably as a result of a wish to explain the origin of the Prophet's Coptic wife (a gift from the *Muqawqis*), but it does help identify the *Muqawqis*, namely Cyrus, patriarch of Alexandria. Abū Bakr's plan was possibly to make sure there would be no harassment from Egypt while he conducted attacks upon Syria. If there really was some contact with Cyrus, it may have been to obtain some sort of non-aggression pledge; if so, the figure of eight years given by the *History of the Patriarchs* would reflect the period 632–39.

That a Muslim presence existed in Egypt before its conquest had begun is intimated by the affair of "the Drought:" "Severe want afflicted the people of Medina during the reign of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb in the **{580}** Year of the Drought (*sanat al-ramāda*), and he wrote to 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ who was in Egypt."[149] This misfortune is unanimously placed in "the latter part of year 17 and the beginning of 18" (638–39),[150] one year before the traditional date for the Arabs' entry into Egypt. And one scholar observes:

> Miṣr was conquered on Friday at the beginning of Muḥarram in the year 20, and it is said it was conquered in the year 26 and this is the saying of Wāqidī, and it is said that it was conquered along with Alexandria in the year 25. Most [scholars] agree that it was conquered before the Year of the Drought and the Drought was at the end of year 17 and the beginning of 18.[151]

At the root of this may lie a desire to give a reason or setting for 'Amr's decision to dredge the canal of Trajan, namely to enable supply ships to reach Medina quickly;[152] or it may have been assumed that 'Amr was included in the statement that "'Umar wrote to the commanders of the garrison cities requesting them to help the Medinans."[153] But it may rather reflect a misconception which has been perpetuated by Western historians, namely that the Arabs were either overrunning a province or they were not there at all, whereas quite clearly raids and skirmishes and even diplomatic manoeuvres preceded full-scale invasion. Theophanes reports that in the year 634 "an enormous multitude" of Saracens set out from Arabia and "made an expedition to the region of Damascus," but he describes a number of Arab-Byzantine confrontations that occurred in Syria before this. The same pattern is

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[148] Other biographers of Muḥammad such as Ibn Hishām and Wāqidī do not mention it.

[149] Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 162.

[150] Ṭabarī, 1.2574–77 (from Sayf ibn 'Umar); other references given by Caetani, *Chron.*, 207–208.

[151] Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1.294 (from al-Quḍa'ī).

[152] That is, the two incidents of the drought at Medina in 638 and the dredging of the Trajan canal, begun probably in 642 (John of Nikiu, CXX.31; see also Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 162–68; Ṭabarī, 1.2577), became linked and telescoped.

[153] Ṭabarī, 1.2576.

found in the Arabic sources, where Abū Bakr's dispatch of the main **{581}** body of the Muslims in April 634 is preceded by numerous smaller expeditions.[154]

Elements of the actual theme of Cyrus' pact are also found in the Arabic sources. There is, for example, the report that Cyrus (*al-Muqawqis*) concluded an agreement with 'Amr, a move which angered Heraclius and prompted him to dispatch troops to Egypt.[155] When such an understanding might have been reached is difficult to ascertain, since accounts of contact between the *Muqawqis* and 'Amr are rife: before, during or after the siege of Babylon (*ca.* September 640–April 641),[156] or before or during the siege of Alexandria (*ca.* June-November 641).[157] Much of this proliferation is probably a result of the application of the title *Muqawqis*, originally designating only Cyrus, to a variety of leaders.[158]

Butler has Cyrus approach 'Amr twice for the purposes of arranging a truce: one month after the start of the siege of Babylon and during the siege of Alexandria.[159] However, the description of both encounters follows such similar lines that one suspects we have two variants rather than two incidents, as indeed the Muslim sources tell us.[160] Both take place at the time of the Nile's flooding in late October. Both share the same narrative framework: Cyrus goes out to 'Amr suing for peace, a pact is made subject to the approval of the emperor; this is not forthcoming and Cyrus returns to 'Amr with three requests: that he not deal as generously with the Byzantines as with him since they had **{582}** distrusted him, that he respect the treaty vis-à-vis the Copts since they were not to blame for its violation, and that on his death he be buried in a church at Alexandria.[161] The difference lies in the padding, the Babylon siege version being heavily endowed with edifying and anecdotal material: how the Muslims were "a people who prefer death to life and humility to pride," how the Byzantines faced the conversion-*jizya*-fight ultimatum presented to them, and so on.

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[154] Theophanes, 337; cf. *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, §§12–13. De Goeje, *Mémoire*, 2135, and Dormer, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 113, have problems with chronology since both assume no activity could have preceded the full invasion.

[155] See the next two footnotes for references to this report.

[156] Before: Ṭabarī, 1.2584–87. During: Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 65–72 = Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1.288–93. After: Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 214–15; Yaqūt, *Mu'jam*, 3.894–95.

[157] Before: Ṭabarī, 1.2581–83. During: Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 72–73 = Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1.163; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 215–16; Ibn Duqmāq, *Intiṣār*, 5.118.

[158] Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 508–26 (Appendix C).

[159] *Ibid.*, 253–64, 319–21.

[160] The source used by Butler (*ibid.*, 255 n. 2) continues, with no change of transmitter: "And it is said that rather the *Muqawqis* made peace with 'Amr as thelatter was besieging Alexandria" (Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, 72 = Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1.293). *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 494, has "the chiefs of the city" negotiate a peace treaty with 'Amr for Babylon.

[161] Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 475–80, says this incident of Cyrus asking 'Amr three favours belongs to Manuel's revolt in 646, yet it is an integral part of the narrative relating events during the Babylon siege.

John of Nikiu has Cyrus go to Babylon only when it was already in Muslim hands, "seeking by the offer of tribute to procure peace from them and put a stop to war in the land of Egypt," "to save you and your children," as he tells the Alexandrians.[162] It would seem justifiable, then, to regard the meeting between 'Amr and Cyrus during the siege of Babylon as a fiction, a result of the misplacement of the genuine meeting that occurred towards the end of the siege of Alexandria.[163] In general, one must be very cautious when dealing with the subject of treaties, for it is intimately bound up with the jurists' dispute concerning rights to the conquest territories and their contents. In the account where Babylon is taken by force, "the Muslims considered it legal to take all that was in it;" where 'Amr signs a covenant, "women and children were neither to be sold nor taken captive, their possessions and treasures were to be kept in their hands."[164] Considering Egypt bereft of a treaty, the Umayyads say: "The inhabitants are no more than our slaves, whose taxes we can increase if we so desire and with whom we can deal as we want." Believing the converse, 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ' client Wardāan tells **{583}** Mu'āwiya: "How can I increase it (the Copts' poll-tax), when it is stated in their covenant that their tax should not be increased."[165] When Cyrus met 'Amr in the time of Heraclonas, he had been sent expressly by that emperor "to make peace with the Muslims and check any further resistance against them,"[166] so the tale of Heraclius becoming angry and sending an army could not apply to this occasion. Though very much compressed, it patently resembles the account of the Syriac chronicler cited above. With the obstacle of total incompatibility with the Muslim tradition now removed, it seems worth testing the relevant sources to see whether they provide a plausible reconstruction of the Arab conquest of Egypt. To do this, we have to go back to *ca.* 630 when Heraclius was traversing the eastern provinces, reassuring all that the God-favoured empire of Rome still held sway. He sought to bolster morale, to foster religious unity, to reassert his authority, and presumably to assess the damage done to man and materials after a decade or so of Persian occupation. One decision of his is briefly alluded to: "When he took control of the land, he established governors in every place and he

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[162] John of Nikiu, CXX.17, CXX.26 (tr. Charles, 193, 194). This visit must have taken place after 14 September 641, when Cyrus returned from Constantinople (*ibid.*, CXX.8 [192]), and before the end of November 641, since its results were reported to the emperor Heraclonas who died in that month (*ibid.*, CXX.22 [194]); see Butler, *Arab Conquest of Egypt*, 536–41 (Appendix D).

[163] There nevertheless was an agreement made with 'Amr concerning the fortress of Babylon, but this was concluded by the troops that garrisoned it (John of Nikiu, CXVII.1–3), and this should be distinguished from the treaty arranged with 'Amr for the city of Miṣr by "the leaders of the city" (*Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 494; cf. John of Nikiu, CXIX.5).

[164] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 213, 215.

[165] Ṭabarī, 1.2584; Baladhurī, *Futuh*, 217; further examples given by Hill, *Termination of Hostilities*, 34–42. The issue is discussed by Morimoto, "Muslim Controversies Regarding the Arab Conquest of Egypt," and Noth, "'*ṣulḥ*' – '*anwa*' – Traditionen."

[166] John of Nikiu, CXX.17–22 (tr. Charles, 193–94).

dispatched a governor called Cyrus to Egypt."[167] What might have been expected of these appointees is suggested by certain actions of Cyrus:

> He enters Egypt and undertakes many tasks… He constructs ditches and forts, and orders that the walls of the towns in the deserts and wastelands be rebuilt.[168]

> He blocked the entrances and exits to the region, building walls everywhere along the banks of the Nile. Owing to their height, only with difficulty were the Arabs able to enter and take the land of Egypt, the Thebaid and Africa.[169]

{584} Such measures may have been implemented with Arab raids in mind, for the Byzantine authorities were aware at a very early date that the Arabs were taking advantage of the unprotected state of the empire's borders. In 626, writes Jacob of Edessa, "the Arabs began to carry out raids in the land of Palestine;"[170] and Nicephorus relates that "at about this time (*ca.* 629) the Saracens began to appear from Aithribos, as it is called, and attempted to lay waste neighbouring villages."[171] Theophanes notes under the year 630–31 that the Arabs employed to "guard the approaches to the desert," when denied their pay, "went over to their fellow tribesmen, and it was they that led them to the rich country of Gaza."[172] And Muslim sources describe raids in the same year around "the frontiers of the Balqa' and Darum," the latter signifying southern Palestine from the coast to the Dead Sea and south of Eleutheropolis/Bayt Jibrin, and so lying on Egypt's borders.[173]

At the trial of Maximus the Confessor in May 655 it was revealed by "John, who had been treasurer to Peter, the former general of Numidia," that: "Twenty-two years ago, the grandfather of the emperor asked the blessed Peter to take an

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[167] *Hist. Patriarchs* XIV, *PO* 1, 489; cf. Azdī, *Futūḥ*, 31: "He appointed commanders from his army over the cities of Syria.

[168] Ps.-Shenute, *Vision*, 340–41.

[169] *Chron. Khuzistan*, 37.

[170] Jacob of Edessa, *Chronicle*, 326. The entry is synchronised with year 301 of James reckoning (= AG 937), year 16 of Heraclius and 36 of Khusrau, which yields 626; it comes after a notice on the inauguration of the Arab kingdom (622) and before another on Khusrau's death (628). Note that AH 5/626 is the date of the Muslim attack on Dumat al-Jandal's ruler Ukaydir ibn 'Abd al-Malik al-Kindī, who was "obedient to Heraclius, king of the Romans," and this was "the first of his (Muḥammad's) raids upon the Romans" (Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 248; cf. Ibn Hishām, 668).

[171] Nicephorus, §18 (tr. Mango, 65–67); the notice comes after the death of Shiroi (628) and before the return of the Cross to Jerusalem (630). Note that Mu'ta was attacked by the Muslims in AH 8/629, and Ayla and Udhruh submitted to them in 9/630 (Ṭabarī, 1.1702). *Chron. Siirt* CI, *PO* 13, 601, states that "the Arabs began their conquests" in the eighteenth year of Heraclius (627–28) and the year in which the Persian emperor Ardashir reigned (628–29).

[172] Theophanes, 335–36 (tr. Mango, AM 6123); see Mayerson, "The First Muslim Attacks," for discussion of this report.

[173] Ibn Hishām, 970, 999; see Burrows, "Daroma," and *EI*[2], *s.v.* "Dārūm."

army and to lead it into Egypt against the Saracens."[174] The minutes of the trial mention that the patriarch Pyrrhus (d. May–June 654) was already dead; a letter from **{585}** Maximus to his disciple Anastasius tells how "yesterday, on the eighteenth of the month, it being holy Pentecost," the patriarch visited him and informed him of his probable sentence of anathematisation and death "unless you comply;" and the record of the dispute at Bizya shows that Maximus was in exile by 24 August 656.[175] Together these facts give us a date of early May 655 for the trial and *ca.* May 633 for Heraclius' request to Peter to go to Egypt's defence. One might be wary of such a notice since it comes as part of an accusation, namely that Maximus "handed over to the Saracens Egypt, Alexandria, the Pentapolis, Tripolis and Africa" by advising Peter not to go, "for God, in his design, did not wish to favour the empire of the Romans under the reign of Heraclius and his family." There is, however, evidence that Peter did journey from Numidia to Alexandria in the early summer of 633. A reply of Maximus to Peter, now in Alexandria, makes it clear that the latter had written telling Maximus of the safe conclusion of a sea voyage and requesting material for disputing with Monophysites. Maximus responds with a short treatise and a recommendation that Peter consult Sophronius, whom "you have there" and who is better able to answer such queries.[176] Sophronius was himself in Alexandria at the time of Cyrus' declaration of the Pact of Union in June 633, but went to petition Sergius in Constantinole soon afterwards. This dates Maximus' letter to late summer 633, which fits well with the chronology of Peter's itinerary. It is likely that Peter was instructed to proceed to Egypt in response to news about the Arab movements in eastern Egypt described above, but we have no information on his actions.[177]

As the Arabs entered in ever greater numbers into the Byzantine provinces, the government was forced to act. In order to buy time while making preparations, Heraclius first advised a policy of containment. **{586}** This recommendation is recorded by Nicephorus, excerpting from a Constantinopolitan chronicle of the 640s ("He ordered Theodore not to join battle with the Saracens"); by Sebeos, writing in Armenia in the 660s ("Heraclius told his troops not to deliver battle with the Arabs but to be on the defensive until he had sent reinforcements"); by a mid-eighth-century Latin chronicler ("The Saracens… incite the neighbouring tribes… On hearing the

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[174] Maximus, *Relatio motionis* §1, *PG* 90, 112A–B; the figure of "twenty-two years" suggests an attempt to be accurate.

[175] *Ibid.* §13, *PG* 90, 128C (for the death date of Pyrrhus see Devreésse, "La vie de S. Maxime," 47–49); *Ep. ad Anastasium Monachum*, *PG* 90, 132A–C; *PG* 90, 137A. The Latin version of *Relatio motionis*, §7, mentions the apocrisaries of Pope Eugene, who acceded in August 654; see Sherwood, *Annotated Date List*, 21 and n. 94.

[176] Maximus, *Ep.* 13, *PG* 91, 509C (sea voyage), 533A (Sophronius).

[177] Maximus' letter no. 14, which mentions the Saracen marauders (see the entry on "Maximus the Confessor" in Chapter 3 above), is addressed to Peter, who was therefore still in Alexandria *ca.* 635; we do not hear of him again until 643, when he is back in Africa. See Sherwood, *Annotated Date List*, 7–8.

report, Heraclius warned his brother that he should in no way fight with such people"); and by the *Syriac Common Source*:

> Heraclius wrote to Mesopotamia, Egypt and Armenia, to all the Romans who were found there: "Let no one engage the Arabs, but let he who is able to hold his post remain in it."[178]

The latter, however, places the emperor's decree after the Byzantine defeats at the battles of Ajnadayn and Yarmuk, and is followed in this by Arabic accounts:

> I recommend that you do not fight these people in open battle, but rather make treaties with them. For it is better for you to give them half the income of Syria while you yourselves keep the other half as well as the mountains of Anatolia.[179]

It is possible that Heraclius' defensive strategy was only adopted out of necessity, after heavy losses, but it must be borne in mind that Nicephorus' source is contemporary.

It seems agreed upon by most sources that the emperor assembled a considerable army to oppose the Arabs at Yarmuk, and that its defeat left them in considerable disarray. In the aftermath generals and local leaders made deals with the Arabs to preserve what they could. An example is the aforementioned John Kataias, who, after the Byzantine **{587}** defeat at Yarmuk in AH 15/636, agreed to pay tribute to the Muslims on the condition that they stayed on the west bank of the Euphrates. This pact may well have stood for longer than the one year allowed by the Syriac chronicler who reports it, for the Muslims did not enter Mesopotamia until the summer of AH 18/639 and only subdued its cities in 19/640.[180] The pattern of events seems very similar to that which obtained in Egypt: unsuccessful military action led to the making of deals to minimise losses. And the invasion of the two provinces, too, happened under similar circumstances: two to three years after agreements had been made by Cyrus and John, these two civilian governors were replaced by the military commanders Marianus and Ptolemy.[181] They refused the

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[178] Nicephorus, §20 (tr. Mango, 69); Sebeos, XXX (tr. Macler, 96–97); *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, §12; *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 637–42.

[179] Ṭabarī, 1.2102 (from Sayf ibn 'Umar); though placed in year 13, it comes after Yarmuk. A variant is given at 1.1567–68, where it is dated to "when Heraclius wanted to go from Syria to Constantinople."

[180] Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 172 (= Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 1.325), 176; Ṭabarī, 1.2505–11, 2578–79 (Sayf, as often, places events two years earlier in 638); Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, 2.172. Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (in Michael the Syrian 11.VII, 420/426, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.256) gives confirmation: "In the year AG 951 (639–40)… the Arabs crossed the Euphrates."

[181] In Theophanes, 338, Cyrus is *aoplos*, but Manuel (Marianus?) *enoplos*. The *Life* of Samuel of Qalamun describes Cyrus as "archbishop and… controller of the revenues of the land of Egypt" (Amelineau, *Monuments*, 776). Another general despatched by Heraclius at this time was Gregory, whose job was to prevent the Arabs advancing beyond Callisura in Cilicia (Michael 11.VI, 415–16/422).

Arabs their tribute and simultaneously a renewed Byzantine assault was launched: "Heraclius was making attacks on Egypt and Syria from the sea while he assailed the people of Ḥimṣ in person."[182]

This come-back "created a truly desperate situation for the Muslims" of which echoes are found in their apocalyptic literature.[183] Byzantine forces marched on Ḥimṣ from the west,[184] while the people of Mesopotamia and Qinnasrin reneged on their agreements and approached **{588}** from the east. Dionysius of Tellmaḥre describes the strategy as follows:

> The Armenian David, a Byzantine general, marched from his country and another man named Valentian [went out] from the west, and they kept in touch with each other by envoys so that by a simultaneous attack from the west and from the east they might destroy in battle all the Arabs who were in Syria.[185]

The Muslims, however, noticed that "the Byzantines are busy regrouping themselves."[186] They initiated an invasion of Mesopotamia which sent its inhabitants scurrying back to defend their own cities, relieving pressure on Ḥimṣ. Some scholars think that this episode should be identified with the earlier capture of Ḥimṣ.[187] The description of the two sieges of Ḥimṣ – the first by the Muslims against the Byzantines, the second by the Byzantines against the Muslims – is, however, very different. Sayf ibn 'Umar's portrayal of the capitulation of Qinnasrin is certainly tainted by material from its later rebellion and the invasion of Mesopotamia, but this can be unravelled by comparison with other authors.[188]

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[182] Ṭabarī, 1.2594 (from Sayf ibn Tīmar); if one adds the customary two years, this notice dates to November 639. The Arabic sources often use *Hiraql* as a general title (Bashear, "The Mission of Diḥya al-Kalbī," 103–106), and it is likely that the general Valentinus is meant here rather than Heraclius himself.

[183] Ṭabarī, 1.2501 (the account of the attack on Ḥimṣ is at *ibid.*, 2498–2504); cf. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, 30–31. For the apocalyptic references see Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Earlv Muslim-Byzantine Wars," 180–91.

[184] In Ibn Hubaysh's version of Ṭabarī (1.2501) this force arrives by sea, which is plausible since many coastal towns were not yet taken by the Muslims.

[185] *Chron. 1234*, 1.257; cf. Michael the Syrian 11.X, 428/443. The general in the west was Valentinus (he later revolted against Constans); David the Armenian came from the east, but seems to have done more harm than good.

[186] Ṭabarī, 1.2572–73; cf. *Chron. 1234*, 1–257: "but, the Arabs were forewarned."

[187] Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, 6.86 (83–89 treat "Iad b. Ghanm in Mesopotamia"); Hill, *Termination of Hostilities*, 93–94. Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 149–50, notes the reports without discussion; Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, 3.84–86, and Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 178–79, are sceptical but unhelpful. Oddly, Donner and Kaegi cite only pages 25–29 of Ibn al-'Adīm's *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, whereas the come-back appears at 30–31.

[188] Ṭabarī, 1.2390–94 (first capture of Ḥimṣ and Qinnasrin); cf. Ibn al-'Adīm, *Zubdat al-ḥalab*, 30–31 (first capture at 25–29) and Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, 2.75. For the other objection to

Nicephorus explicitly says that "Cyrus had informed the emperor that he was going to conclude an agreement with Ambrus, phylarch of the Saracens." If true, it would appear that Heraclius knew of the treaties made to pay tribute in order to keep the Arabs out of Egypt and **{589}** Mesopotamia, and made use of the time to recruit more troops. When he was ready, he denounced the pacts as made without his consent, took the opportunity to depose civilian governors in favour of military commanders, and embarked upon a fresh assault. This certainly seems to be more in accord with what one would expect of a man who had overthrown the tyrannical emperor Phocas and waged an eighteen-year war, ultimately with success, against the Persians, rather than the traditional view of him waving goodbye to Syria in 636 and abandoning Egypt until 639.[189]

A final complication occurs regarding the fate of Cyrus. Nicephorus states that Martina's son Heraclonas reinstated Cyrus in his own see, and this is corroborated by John of Nikiu:

> Cyrus, the Chalcedonian patriarch in Alexandria, was excessively grieved when he heard of the exile of Martina and her sons, *who had brought him back from exile*… And for these reasons he wept unceasingly, for he feared lest he should suffer the same fate that had befallen him previously.[190]

But when was he banished? Sergius, patriarch of Constantinople, sent to Cyrus at Alexandria a copy of the *Ekthesis*, "an exposition of the orthodox faith," in November 638.[191] And a papyrus contains a receipt written by the elders of a village for payment of supplies furnished by the inhabitants "according to the order of our lord Cyrus, most holy and God-honoured father, in the thirteenth indiction," that is, 639–40 **{590}**.[192] Cyrus remained, therefore, in his post at least until the end of 639.

Nicephorus appears to contradict this when, after noting the appointment of Pyrrhus as patriarch of Constantinople in December 638, he states:

> Some years previously he (Heraclius) had recalled to Byzantium Cyrus, the bishop of Alexandria, and held him under severe accusation of having surrendered to the

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Sayf's account, namely Iraqi bias, see Posner, "Whence the Muslim Conquest of Mesopotamia?"

[189] Note that a treatise on Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* was "completed by Severus Sebokht in the year 949 of the Greeks in the month of Hezīrān (June 638), in the year in which the king of Byzantium, that is, of Constantinople, came to Amida and from Amida went down to Babel" (Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in Cambridge*, 2.886, from Add. 3284, fol. 41a). It is possible that this is a mistake for AG 939/628 (instead of *ṣmṭ* read *ṣwa-lṭ*), but note that Heraclius is also said to have undertaken a census of the provinces in 638 (Kaegi, "A Neglected Census of Heraclius," citing Theodore Skutariotes' *Synopsis chromkē*).

[190] Nicephorus, §30 (tr. Mango, 81); John of Nikiu, CXX.66–67 (tr. Charles, 199).

[191] Grumel, *Les Regestes* 1.1, 117 (no. 291), and this is noted in Cyrus' reply to Sergius (*Concilia Sacra*, 10.1005).

[192] Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 1.222–23 (PLond. 113).

> Saracens the affairs of all Egypt. He pursued these charges at the time in front of a large gathering of citizens. But he (Cyrus) defended himself by saying that he was in no way guilty of these matters… But he (Heraclius) called Cyrus a pagan for having advised that the emperor's daughter should be betrothed to Ambrus, phylarch of the Saracens, a pagan, an enemy of God and an opponent of the Christians. Waxing incensed with him and threatening him with death, he handed him over to the prefect of the City for punishment.[193]

Yet one must bear in mind that Nicephorus, in the interests of style, omits almost all dates and substitutes vague, colourless temporal expressions such as "at about this time" and "after a short/considerable lapse of time." Events in the source from which he draws are often somewhat confused, but are generally narrated consecutively without flashbacks or anticipations. One should assume the same is the case here, ignoring the "some years previously" as an arbitrary intrusion on the part of Nicephorus. The above passage is placed between the appointment of Pyrrhus in December 638 and Heraclius' succession arrangements shortly before his death in February 641. Adding the papyrus evidence, we can see that Cyrus' exile must have occurred in 639. Since John of Nikiu nowhere mentions Cyrus in his description of the Arab conquest of Egypt until his return in September 641, it seems likely that Cyrus was exiled very early in 640, at the time when Heraclius dispatched a more military-minded man to handle the Muslim offensive.

[193] Nicephorus, §26 (tr. Mango, 75–77).

CHAPTER 14.
USING NON-MUSLIM SOURCES:
AN ARGUMENTATIVE APPROACH

{591} Throughout this book I have striven to bring out the parallels and similarities between the reports of Muslim and non-Muslim witnesses. The reason for this approach is that it seems to me a strong argument in favour of the latter that they do frequently coincide with what is said by the former. If both the Muslim and non-Muslim sources give a false picture of events, how are we to explain that they both give the same false picture? Many of the non-Muslim sources are demonstrably early, so borrowing or later reworking could certainly not account for all cases of agreement. And as van Ess states, "we should expect that he ('an observer from outside') tried to describe the phenomenon (of Islam) with his own categories,"[1] so it cannot be that the concord is attributable to shared presuppositions. The answer must be either that they are giving independent testimony or, as is more common, that they are interdependent, but in which case the picture, whether false or not, is as old as the non-Muslim source presenting it. Hence if we concentrate on non-Muslim authors of the first 150 years AH, then we will obtain some impression of the Islamic community in that period, even if one chiefly conveyed by that community's own members.

To take a very simple example: both John bar Penkaye, writing *ca.* 687, and ninth-century Muslim historians say that the rebel Mukhtār **{592}** liberated and then employed in his armies the slaves of the Kufan Arabs. This conforms to no polemical or stereotypical formula, and on internal grounds one cannot argue that John's history was revised at a later date.[2] The only possible explanation is that John is recording what had reached him from Muslim informants, probably via their Christian slaves, and that Muslims preserved this account until the ninth century. And this is perhaps the most valuable aspect of the non-Muslim sources: not so much that they give independent testimony – though they often do that too – but that they can sometimes tell us what the Muslims were saying long before this was written down

[1] Van Ess, "The Making of Islam," 998.

[2] For this point and the references see the entry on "John bar Penkaye" in Chapter 5 above.

by the Muslims themselves.[3] If what the non-Muslims say the Muslims were saying in the seventh century agrees with what the Muslims wrote down in the ninth century then it is likely that this is what the Muslims were saying from the beginning, or at least from the time of the relevant non-Muslim witness. And if they do not agree, then this should be investigated, for the very fact that there are so many instances of agreement means that discrepancies deserve our attention.

The implementation of such an approach has been greatly hampered by the fact that, despite their enormous diversity, the non-Muslim sources tend to be assessed *en masse* when it is a matter of their relevance for Islamic history. This is unhelpful; they are of value, but one must be discerning and first ask certain questions:[4]

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THE OBSERVATION?

In his review of Crone and Cook's *Hagarism* van Ess urged that "we should not forget that these texts, though contemporary, only show **{593}** bow the new phenomenon was seen, not how it actually was."[5] This blanket statement needs qualification. In particular, one must distinguish between different types of observation, for one would generally place more confidence in what someone said they saw or heard directly rather than in second or third-hand evidence. Jacob of Edessa's information on Muslims praying east in Egypt of the 660s comes from his "own eyes," and it seems impossible to deny that the Muslims were doing something recognisable as praying and this in an easterly direction (allowing some margin of error since Jacob had no compass).

Of the same unimpeachable character is the report of Arculf about the Arabs' "house of prayer" in Jerusalem of the 670s.[6] Sebeos' information on Muslim prac-

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[3] Or rather, long before the earliest texts that have come down to us were penned (mostly in the ninth and tenth centuries); these may well, as indeed they often claim, be transmitting earlier written versions, though they are unlikely to have done so without at least some reworking. See the entry on "Redactional Identity" in Chapter 2 above for discussion of this point.

[4] In what follows references that have been given before will not be repeated; see then the relevant entry for the author in Part II above.

[5] Van Ess, "The Making of Islam," 998. Whether we can ever know things as they actually are is, of course, the first question of philosophy (Russell, *Problems of Philosophy*, 1–6), but I assume van Ess not to be adopting a Berkeleian stance.

[6] This does not mean that we should accept Arculf's report at face value, as have done a number of scholars who have consequently dismissed 'Umar's mosque as, in Creswell's words, "a mean structure." That it was constructed "in a crude manner" is a value judgement, but that it was rectangular and built with planks and large beams over ruins are descriptive facts (for further discussion see Raby, "Aqṣa and the Anastasis"). It is of course a common ploy to claim to be an eyewitness, thus adding weight to one's testimony, but in the case of Jacob and Arculf their claim is supported by the intimate detail and unstereotypical nature of their reports.

tices is second-hand; it comes from Muslims via escaped prisoners-of-war "who were eyewitnesses thereof and recounted it to us." Each item in his enumeration of Muḥammad's teachings – not eating carrion, not drinking wine, not lying, not fornicating – has parallels in various religious traditions, but as a whole it is not a formulaic list. And though abstention from fornication might be a favourite of monotheist preachers, it is not an obvious commandment for a Christian to impute to a prophet of the Arabs who were invariably regarded, both before and after Islam, as carnal and libidinous.[7]

Most commonly the material on Islam in the earliest non-Muslim sources derives from general hearsay: snippets of knowledge that percolated down from the Muslims to the non-Muslims who worked for **{594}** them to their associates, which then went to make up the basic picture of the Muslims held by an average person who had no dealings with them, and which could be augmented by conjecture and combination with previous conceptions about Arabs. Thus the Nestorian chronicler of Khuzistan (wr. *ca.* 660s) has evidently heard that the Arabs have a sanctuary which has some connection with Abraham. Wanting to know more, he turns to Genesis and pieces extracts together until he has constructed an explanation that satisfies him. One finds further examples in the work of John bar Penkaye, who knows of the characterisation of the caliph Yazīd I, circulated by his opponents, as profligate and corrupt, and of the claim of the rival caliph ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr to be a champion of the "House of God," and who can inform us about the Muslims' conception of Muḥammad. Other instances are found in the writings of his contemporary Anastasius of Sinai, who is aware of the Muslims' literal interpretation of Christ's humanity and of their sacrifices at the place where they "have their stone and their cult." These and many other examples give an indication of what the Muslims said and not just of how such sayings were regarded.

But what about later texts, such as disputations, that are likely to have their material from debate with Muslims and yet give only the Christian view of the matter? Another question needs to be posed:

WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF THE OBSERVATION?

Van Ess continues his review by saying: "We cannot demand that an observer from outside, who could even less evaluate the radical novelty of the event, should have had a clearer concept of what was really happening. We should rather expect that he tried to describe the phenomenon with his own categories."[8] This is undeniable, but again one must make a distinction, here between simple observations and totalising

[7] The comment of Ammianus Marcellinus (14.IV.4, cited by Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature," 105) that "it is unbelievable with what ardour they (the Saracens) give themselves up to intercourse" is echoed by numerous writers, usually in a more abusive vein.

[8] Again there is a philosophical problem here, but as humans we tend to proceed on the basis that we are able to communicate information about reality to others using our own categories.

explanations/apologetic formulations. There is a world of difference between the report of Thomas the Presbyter that a battle **{595}** occurred between Arabs and Byzantines "on Friday 4 February at the ninth hour… twelve miles east of Gaza" and the common Christian statement that the Arabs are the tool of God's wrath or the vituperative rhetoric used by Sophronius and Maximus the Confessor against the invaders. When Arculf says that the Arabs have "a kind of church" in Damascus, he is of course using Christian vocabulary, but surely we can still infer from this that there was some sort of Muslim place of worship in the city. And when Anastasius of Sinai says that during his stay in Jerusalem *ca.* 660 he was woken up in the morning by Egyptian labourers clearing the Temple Mount, one might doubt his accompanying comment that demons collaborated in this task, but surely not the undertaking of the work itself.

It is, however, the totalising explanations and apologetic formulations that critics most have in mind when they attack the worth of non-Muslim sources, and they particularly mean apocalypses and disputations, which seek to schematise and refute Islam. But even with these, there is not grounds for outright dismissal. Wansbrough is right to say that the text of the conversation between the patriarch John and an Arab emir represents a Jacobite attempt to forestall Melkite advances to the new rulers of Syria, but did the author really need to discuss the Arabs' scriptural position in order to achieve this task? Apocalypses usually try to win credence for their prophetic visions by showing how they follow on from present events, and disputations seek to gain support for their position by caricaturing the beliefs of their antagonist or carefully presenting their weaknesses. In each case there is some anchor in reality, but it is true that one can only use such material for historical reconstruction with circumspection.

WHAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THE OBSERVATION?

Finally, one must make some distinction as to the content of the observation. As one would expect, the non-Muslim sources are at their most reliable when describing externally observable phenomena, particularly such actions of the Muslims as directly affected them (allowing, of course, for exaggeration). For example, they illustrate how numerous **{596}** were the prisoners-of-war taken by the Muslims and how extensively this affected non-Muslim society, both physically and mentally.[9] They reveal how preoccupied were the Muslims about matters of security and how

[9] That the Muslims took large numbers of captives in the first decades of their rule is suggested by Anastasius of Sinai, John bar Penkaye, ps.-Ephraem, ps.-Methodius and George the Black; the *Questions* of Anastasius reveal some of the problems this caused the Christians. On the Muslim side see Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 50. There is also archaeological evidence in the form of two inscriptions from Cyprus which speak of the Arab attacks upon the island in 649 (year 7 of the indiction, year 365 of the era of Diocletian) and the following year. It is stated that "about 120,000 were led away as prisoners" in the first raid, and "an even greater number" in the second (Soloi, *Dix campagnes de fouilles*, 115–25).

suspicious they were that Christians might be conspiring with the Byzantines against them.[10] They record a number of caliphal decrees that are not found in Muslim sources, such as that ʻAbd al-Malik ordered a slaughter of pigs in Syria and Mesopotamia,[11] that Walīd required magicians to be tried by ordeal,[12] that ʻUmar II forbade consumption of wine and the testimony of a Christian against a Muslim and exempted converts to Islam from poll-tax,[13] that Yazīd II banned the display of images,[14] and that Mahdī prescribed the death penalty for converts to Islam who subsequently apostatised.[15] They also bear witness to Muslim hostility to the cross at a very early stage and to a **{597}** number of cultic practices performed by Muslims.[16] Also as one would expect, non-Muslim sources are at their least helpful – or at least one has to be at one's most wary – when they are commenting upon Muslim beliefs and intra-communal life. Between these two poles one must apply varying degrees of scepticism.

In addition, because their time of writing is often ascertainable and because they are often more informative than their Muslim counterparts about what was happening outside their own community, non-Muslim authors can frequently help us to understand the setting and gain the right perspective for various events and developments that took place in Muslim-ruled lands. One example is the background to Islam's genesis and maturation. Muslim literature presents this as a self-regulating process that needed no outside stimuli and consequently affords us no

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[10] Note how Isaac of Rakoti, Theodotus of Amida, the sixty pilgrims in Jerusalem and Willibald among others were all arrested on the charge of abetting Islam's enemies. Evidence of the Muslims' nervousness about losing their newly won lands is also found in Arabic apocalyptic writings (see Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars").

[11] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 693; *Chron. 819*, 14. Notices common to these two sources are likely to derive from a chronicle written *ca.* 728 (see Brooks, "Theophanes and the Syriac Chroniclers," 581).

[12] Michael the Syrian 11.XVII, 451/481.

[13] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 716–18. The latter ruling is found in Muslim sources, but it is interesting to find it confirmed in a mid-eighth-century source.

[14] *Ibid.*, *s.a.* 720; *Chron. 819*, 16; *Chron. Zuqnin*, 163. The one or two Muslim sources that do mention Yazīd's decree are likely to have it from Christians (to the meagre list compiled by Vasiliev, "The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II," 39, add Nuʻaym ibn Hammad, *Fitan*, fol. 199a, who calls Yazīd a "corrupter of images" / *mughayyir al-ṣuwar*). Note the other decrees of Yazīd II listed by *Chron. Zuqnin*, 163–64.

[15] Elias of Damascus, *Passion*, 181 (= Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 52).

[16] For hostility to the cross see the entries on "Anastasius of Sinai," "Isaac of Rakoti" and the "Monk of Beth Ḥale" in Chapters 3, 4 and 11 above respectively; *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 641; Griffith, "Images, Islam and Christian Icons," 126–28. There was certainly not, however, a consistent policy of removing or defacing crosses (see Schick, *Christian Communities of Palestine*, 163–66). For cultic practices see the entry on "Islam in the First Century AH" in Chapter 13 above.

impression of the Late Antique civilisation which Islam slowly replaced. Another is the issue of inter-confessional relationships, for here again the Muslims – at least in their writings – exhibited little interest in the masses they conquered and employed to run their empire, seeing them all as inferior clients.[17]

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Amid his literary assessment of the early Muslim tradition Wansbrough digresses briefly to consider the use of non-Muslim writings for **{598}** the reconstruction of Islamic history. He puts the problem succinctly and clearly:

> Can a vocabulary of motives be freely extrapolated from a discrete collection of literary stereotypes composed by alien and mostly hostile observers, and thereupon employed to describe, even interpret, not merely the overt behaviour but also the intellectual and spiritual development of helpless and mostly innocent actors?

His answer is negative:

> What they do not, and cannot, provide is an account of the "Islamic" community during the 150 years or so between the first Arab conquests and the appearance, with the *sira-maghāzī* narratives, of the earliest Islamic literature.[18]

I would certainly agree that non-Muslim sources cannot provide a complete and coherent account of the history of Early Islam, even less can they support an alternative version of its development. But what I hope to have achieved in this book is to demonstrate that the testimony of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian writers can be used alongside that of Muslim authors to furnish us with an enriched and expanded vision of the history of the Middle East in Early Islamic times, to offer us new perspectives on its character and to suggest to us new directions for its study.

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[17] More specific examples have been given throughout Part II above; another that is worth noting here concerns the battle of Ṣiffin during the first Arab civil war. The account of how the Syrians called for arbitration according to the Qur'an by placing exemplars on their spears is frequently rejected as apocryphal, but it should be borne in mind that the affixing upon a lance or spear of an authoritative document which one wished one's opponents to abide by seems to have been a common practice in the Middle East: e.g. Ṭabarī, 1.876, and Procopius, *Wars* 1.IV.9 (Peroz and the Hepthalites in 484), *ibid.*, 1.XIV. 10 (Persian-Byzantine battle of Dara in 530); Michael the Syrian 10.XVI, 366/338 (Khusrau I and Tiberius II in the 570s); Theophanes, 366 (Justinian II and the Arabs in 692).

[18] Wansbrough, *Sectarian Milieu*, 116–17, 119.

PART IV.
EXCURSES

EXCURSUS A: THE CANONS AND RESOLUTIONS OF JACOB OF EDESSA

{601} Jacob, Bishop of Edessa (684–88), has left us a substantial corpus of his rulings on diverse matters, some unilateral (canons), most in answer to specific questions (resolutions). Though these writings are of great importance for religious and social history, they have been little studied and the manuscripts containing them remain mostly unedited.[1] The following is intended to illustrate what material there is and where it is to be found, drawing particular attention to three of the most extensive, yet most neglected witnesses: Ms. Harvard syr. 93 and Ms. Mardin Orth. 310 of the eighth century,[2] and Ms. Cambridge Add. 2023 of the thirteenth century.[3]

Questions of Addai

{602} A collection of 71 rulings of Jacob given in reply to questions put by the priest Addai are found in Ms. Paris syr. 62 of the ninth century; they have been edited by de Lagarde (*Reliquiae iuris*, 117–44) and by Lamy with a Latin translation (*Dissertatio de syrorum fide*, 98–171), and translated into German (Kayser, *Canones*, 11–33) and French (Nau, *Canons et résolutions*, 38–66). This collection is preserved in varying degrees by our three manuscripts. Harvard 93, fols. 1–16b, has all bar nos. 1–12; Mardin 310, fols. 178a–189b (= Mingana 8, fols. 215a–230a), has all bar nos. 1–5

[1] Most were signalled by Vööbus, "New Cycles of Canons and Resolutions by Ja'qōb of Edessa."

[2] The contents of Harvard 93 – formerly no. 85 in Harris' private collection – are listed in Harris, *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, 8–11; for the new reference see Goshen-Gottstein, *Syriac Manuscripts*, 75–76. On Mardin 310 see Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1B.447–52. Ms. Mingana syr. 8 is a late copy of Mardin 310 made in 1906 (compare *ibid.*, 1B.449–52, with Mingana, *Catalogue*, 1.25–37).

[3] The Cambridge manuscript is described by Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in Cambridge*, 2.600–628; the part relevant to Jacob is dealt with at *ibid.*, 2.623–26, and see also *idem*, *Notulae Syriacae*, 11–14. Note that the Harvard and Cambridge manuscripts present Jacob's writings in the same order (replies to questions of Addai, canons of Jacob, replies to further questions of Addai, replies to questions of Thomas, replies to questions of John the Stylite); thus also Mardin 310, except that it breaks off after the reply to the first question of Thomas.

and 37–49; Cambridge 2023, fols. 259a–275b, has nos. 1–7, 10, 12–19, 22, 24–26, 28, 30, 48, 31–36, 38, 40–45, 47, 49–58, 60, a new ruling,[4] 61–63, 65–71. Other partial versions, found in a number of manuscripts, are listed by Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1B.274–78.

Harvard 93 and Mardin 310 give two additional rulings in answer to the following questions:[5]

> Q. 72: "[What do you say] concerning people of whom none know an incantation nor how to write or to read, and when they converse with one another and quarrel and become great enemies, then one of them will go and determine curses over the funereal urns of the martyrs and over the graves of lepers in the name of his enemy, and even under the altar of a sanctuary. He delivers him up there so that he (the enemy) will fall ill or will be injured or he will be afflicted by the Evil One. And [so what do you say] if he (the enemy) should become ill as a result of that or it happens that he falls ill or some evil befalls him?"
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> Q. 73: "Is it right for those who at one time took refuge in God and His saints and brought the blessings of the saints for [the **{603}** protection of] the fields or the vineyards because of the locust, the canker-worm, field-mice or any other scourge – [is it right] that they should [also] strive [by their own efforts] to drive away the locust or to kill the canker-worm or field-mice?"

Canons of Jacob

Harvard 93, fols. 18a–25a, presents 31 rulings of Jacob, apparently not given in reply to questions;[6] Mardin 310, fols. 191a–195b (= Mingana 8, fols. 231a–236a), has the same collection less one canon.[7] Cambridge 2023, fols. 275b–277b, has 14 of these

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[4] This occupies fols. 272a–273a and concerns the singing of psalms for the deceased.

[5] Harvard 93, fols. 16b–18a; Mardin 310, fols. 190a–191a (= Mingana 8, fols. 230a–231a). As stated above, my aim in this excursus is simply to illustrate what material is available, not to provide a translation. I shall not, therefore, translate the answers to these two and subsequent questions, which are often lengthy, unless they contain information of direct relevance to Islamic history.

[6] The collection comes after 73 questions of Addai to Jacob. The canons are numbered 74–103 in the manuscript instead of 74–104, because the scribe did not count the thirteenth canon (at the bottom of fol. 19b), probably because it lacks the usual *Ya'qōb* at the beginning. Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1A.203, does not notice this and so states that the collection consists of 30 canons.

[7] Again the collection comes after 73 questions of Addai to Jacob. The canons are numbered 74–102 in the manuscript instead of 74–103, because the scribe numbered both the fifth and sixth canons "78" (*ḥ*). The nineteenth canon in Harvard 93 (fol. 21a) – against keeping the Jewish observance – is not to be found in Mardin 310.

canons: nos. 5–7, 11–13, 15, 18–21, 24, 26–27 of Harvard 93.[8] Damascus Patr. 8/11 (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 269–72/245–47) gives 22 of these canons in abbreviated form and two new ones.[9] These canons are summarised and other manuscripts containing them listed by Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1A.203–207.

Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1A.212–14, signals and briefly describes another collection of 28 canons in the eighth-century Ms. Mardin Orth. 309, fols. 152a–157a. Others are to be found in Bar Hebraeus' *Nomocanon* (most are edited and translated in Kayser, *Canones*, 5–30/35–47; translated by Nau, *Canons et résolutions*, 69–117; summarised in Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1A.214–16), **{604}** but most of these are simply abbreviated versions of the answers of Jacob to correspondents with the question omitted.[10]

Further Questions of Addai

Harvard 93, fols. 25a–33b, Mardin 310, fols. 195b–199a (= Mingana 8, fols. 236a–239b), and Cambridge 2023, fols. 277b–281a, present a second collection of rulings introduced by the title: "Other questions which the aforementioned priest Addai asked together with the replies to them." It consists of only seven rulings (nos. 74–80) in Mardin 310 and only five in Cambridge 2023 (nos. 74–76, 79–80), whereas Harvard 93 has 25 rulings (nos. 74–98) given in response to the following questions of Addai:[11]

> Q. 74: "Is it right that orthodox people make remembrances and offerings for their heretical forefathers? And is it appropriate for a son of them (of the heretics), if he is a priest or monk and they have allowed him to be a monk for the orthodox, that he commemorate them (the heretical forefathers) over offerings and pray for them over the incense? In addition to these [questions] I want to learn whether there is any benefit to him from these (commemorations and offerings) for the person on whose behalf they take place, since he has departed from his heresy."

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[8] Or nos. 5–7, 11–13, 15, 18–20, 23, 25–26 of Mardin 310 plus one against keeping the Jewish observance. Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1A.204 n. 17, wrongly states that Cambridge 2023 has thirteen canons.

[9] These correspond to nos. 1, 3–6, 8–20, 22–24, 30 of Harvard 93; and to nos. 1, 3–6, 8–19 (missing the canon against keeping the Jewish observance), 21–23, 29 of Mardin 310.

[10] E.g. Jacob of Edessa, *Replies to Addai*, nos. 5, 17, 22, 75, 80, are found abridged in *Canons* (*BH*), 38–39, 43, 36, 41, 42 and 112; *Replies to John*, A4, 7, 11, 13, 14, are found abridged in *Canons* (*BH*), 112, 39, 39, 22 and 42, 14.

[11] See Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, IB.281–86. Nos. 77 and 79–80 are also found in Ms. Sharf. Patr. 234 of the eighteenth century (Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1B.279 n. 61). Nos. 75, 77–78 and 80 also appear in abbreviated form without their question in Bar Hebraeus, *Nomocanon*, 41 (= Kayser, 13/39), 112 (= Kayser, 22/45; cf. Vööbus, *Syriac and Arabic Documents*, 95, no. 6), 42 (= Kayser, 13/39).

Q. 75: "Concerning a Christian woman who of her own free will marries a Muslim (*mhaggrāyā*), is it appropriate for priests to give her communion and is there known a canon regarding this? And if her husband threatens to kill the priest if he does not give communion to her, is it right for him to consent temporarily while he (the husband) is seeking that he (the priest) be killed, **{605}** or is it a sin for him to consent? Or is it better that he give her communion lest she become a Muslim, since her husband is compassionate towards the Christians?"[12]

Q. 76: "Is it right for a deacon of the church or for a monastic brother that he kill any kind of animal at all, whether a stag or a deer or anything else which has been wounded by hunters, or any domesticated animal, a sheep or a bull, which is sick and near to death, when there is no layman at hand to prevent [the animal] from dying [of its own accord]?"

Q. 77: "Is it blameworthy for a deacon of the church that he throw a spear at a stag or a wild boar and mortally wound it, and afterwards that his fellow hunters catch up with it and kill it?"

Q. 78: "And also if a deacon takes a knife and puts one hand on the horn of a bull and wounds it with the other by a knife between its horns and it falls and he does not need a tether any more, but for his ease a butcher approaches and kills it. And that deacon does this trusting in the soundness of his strength. Is he also blameworthy because of this?"[13]

Q. 79: "A deacon of that time of hunger and want,[14] because he had nothing by which he might be nourished and there was no one to **{606}** offer him work

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[12] Jacob's reply is: "All these doubts of yours, you have resolved them [yourself] in that you have said it is appropriate that communion be given to her lest she become a Muslim; [just] so that she does not then become a Muslim – even if it be that the priest is sinning when he gives [it] to her and even if her husband is not making threats – it would be right to give her communion and it would not be a sin for him because he gives [it] to her. As for the other thing that you say, is a canon known regarding this, you should conduct yourself [according to what I have said] even if there is no fear of her apostatising and her husband is not making threats. So that other women fear lest they too stumble and for the rebuke of that particular woman, it is right, however much she supplicates those in authority, that she suffer under the canons whatever she is able to bear."

[13] The exact point of this question is elusive, but in general these last three questions are attempting to get round the problem that a deacon is not supposed to kill (in no. 76 understand that an animal cannot lawfully be eaten if it died of its own accord, so in this case it would go to waste).

[14] Note that a specific occasion seems to be intended (*ʒabnā haw d-kapnāwa-d-hasīrūtā*), perhaps the "unparalleled plague and famine" of AH 67/687 described by the contemporary Bar Penkaye, 159–64/186–92 (tr. Brock, 67–71). Jacob's reply is sympathetic: "The fact that as soon as his situation eased he immediately fled from evil and hastened to his former position of indigence, shows that it was out of necessity that he did what he did…"

with them, even for his bread, he went and joined some soldiers, and he (the-deacon) bore arms too and he lived with them for all that year. And as soon as that difficult time had passed and it was a time for work, he went to crop his head and take up his former attire and to sit in the stillness of his soul. How is it appropriate to deal with him? Is it right that he serve in his former position or does a canon restrict his situation?"

Q. 80: "When our bishop of Mardin was attacked by those from the outside (*hānon d-meni-bar*), the Arabs, who are ruling on the inside (*tayyāyē hānōn d-shallītīn men l-gaw*),[15] ordered that everyone go out to the wall to fight and did not exempt anyone from going out, not even the priests. Then a priest or a deacon, when the battle was in full swing (*'shen*), threw a stone from the wall and struck and killed one of the fighters attempting to scale the wall. How is it right to deal with him as regards the canons? And I want to learn whether it is a sin for him [alone] or [also] for other priests and monks inasmuch as it was not their wish to be pulling the rope of machines (*māngānqōn*) of war and to be throwing stones and killing fighters outside. And is it right that they serve in the priesthood, and is it right for a short time that they be subject to the law?"[16]

Q. 81: "Is it known for a woman to be a wife in the resurrection?"

Q. 82: **{607}** "What is it appropriate to do with one who offers the oblation like a priest when he has not been made a priest?"

Q. 83: "What is one to do with a priest who took the altar and its vessels from the Chalcedonians and then gave them back to them?"

Q. 84: "[What do you say] concerning the urn and basin and skin[17] which they use for baptism?"

Q. 85: "Is it appropriate to observe the law of the heretics?"

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[15] These terms presumably intend Byzantines and Muslims respectively.

[16] Jacob's answer is: "The fact that they have been forced to go out against their will shows that they are free [of recrimination] from these things which have been committed. Thereafter it is in the hands of their bishop, that is, that he shall deal with them compassionately and allow them to serve when it seems proper to him. [Regarding] the matter of a priest who has thrown a stone from a wall and has killed while his own eyes looked upon the one killed, after a specific time when he is suspended from service for the sake of penitence, it is right that it is left to the conscience of the priest himself whether he shall serve or not. As for whether there is a sin or not, it is not right that this should fall under [the heading of] questions [to me], rather this should be handed over to the righteous Judge, who is not partial, for God is the discerner and examiner of all."

[17] The manuscript clearly has *meshkā* either some leather/hide accessory is meant or, as Sebastian Brock suggested to me, one might read *meshḥā* ("oil").

Q. 86: "[Concerning] a priest, *sā'ōrā* or abbot who is celebrating [mass], should another give them communion or may they take [it]?"

Q. 87: "Is it right for a deacon to proclaim (the litanies) when he has eaten (i.e. is not fasting)?"

Q. 88: "If a plague takes hold of a people, is it to do with the air of a place or the physical temperaments [of its people]?"

Q. 89: "Are those who are dead inscribed?"

Q. 90: "Concerning those who forbid their children from meeting up with other [children] and [from going] to church or to school, and those who confine them where there is no light so that no messenger may find them and as a result they die."

Q. 91: "Concerning those who proclaim in a time of plague that so and so is dying, and sometimes it is true and sometimes they are lying."

Q. 92: "Is the plague contagious?"[18]

Q. 93: **{608}** "What is [the meaning] of what was said to Moses and to Jesus: 'Undo the sandals from your feet'?"

Q. 94: "Is it right for monks to go out to a vigil or to a commemoration of saints or to a feast so that they keep a vigil there and sing? Is it right for them to receive baptisms (i.e. act as godparents) as is the custom for many?"

Q. 95: Regulations concerning godparents.

Q. 96: "Why do we prostrate before images?"[19]

Q. 97: "That upper room in which Christ ate passover and that foal on which he rode when he entered Jerusalem – whose were they?"

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[18] Jacob's answer begins: "The plague is not contagious, and [you can] take for yourself a proof [of this] from those physicians who bandage the ulcers of [those afflicted with] the plague and [like] *diseases* and whose hands are besmattered with the blood and pus which issues from them, and [also take a proof] from those who take care of them in all this until their death [and yet do not themselves contract the plague]. Because it [happens] not by chance, [but] it is the action of God, according to the dispensation of Him who summons all men." This is very much in line with the Muslim position, which emphasises that God and not contagion is responsible for each person killed by a disease (see Conrad, "Epidemic Disease in Early Islamic Society," esp. 88–90).

[19] Jacob's answer is: "We prostrate before God with supreme devotion as our Lord and Maker. We prostrate before the cross as if we were seeing the Messiah upon it, and before the icons of the saints and their bones as ones who are servants of God and [who] then supplicate him and present to him petitions on our behalf. And before the leaders (*rīshānē*) of the world we prostrate, whether they are heretics or pagans, as if in honour according to the word of the apostles, but these prostrations are distinct from each other."

Q. 98: "Is it written that Christ was born in a cave?"

Ms. Damascus Patr. 8/11, written "in the year AG 1515 which is according to the Arabs 500" (1204), contains 51 questions of Addai (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 258–69/235–44). Nos. 4, 5, 7 and 22–51 are the same as nos. 83, 85, 87, 1, 3, 5–7, 10–28, 31–34, 36 and 80 of the above questions of Addai,[20] but the other eighteen (nos. 1–3, 6, 8–21) are new and I number them as 99–116 in this book.

Questions of Thomas

{609} Harvard 93, fols. 33b–37a, and Cambridge 2023, fols. 281a–285a, contain "questions which the priest[21] Thomas asked and the replies to them," namely three lengthy rulings (summarised by Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1B.296–97) which are also found, though differently phrased and abbreviated, in Damascus Patr. 8/11 (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 256–58/234–35). Mardin 310, fol. 199a–b (= Mingana 8, fols. 239b–240a), gives the first, but then breaks off. Damascus Patr. 8/11 contains two further rulings of Jacob to Thomas which are given without the initial question (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 226–28/210–11).

Questions of John

Harvard 93, fols. 37a–44b, contains sixteen questions put to Jacob by John the Stylite of Litarb and the replies to them, which are given in the form of a letter from Jacob to John.[22] The letter is also preserved by Damascus Patr. 8/11 (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 245–54/225–33), which, however, has seventeen questions; nos. 8 and 14 are new, but it omits no. 16 of Harvard 93. Cambridge 2023, fols. 285a–291a, has nos. 2–3, 5–8, 11–15 of Harvard 93 and no. 14 of Damascus Patr. 8/11 (so it has nos. 2–3, 5–7, 9, 12–17 of Damascus Patr. 8/11).

A second letter containing 27 replies of Jacob to questions of John is found in Damascus Patr. 8/11 (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 233–45/215–25).[23]

The letter of Jacob to John in Ms. BL Add. 14,493 (ed./tr. Rignell, *Letter from Jacob of Edessa*, 46–69) is a tenth-century compilation: nos. 1–5, 10, 13 = nos. 4–7, 11–12, 14 of John's questions in Harvard 93 (nos. 4–7, 12–13, 16 of Damascus Patr. 8/11); nos. 7, 9, 11, 12, 15–17 **{610}** = nos: 86, 12 (and the end of 14), 25, 61, 5, 96 and 22 of the above questions of Addai; no. 6 resembles a reply to Thomas in Damascus Patr. 8/11 (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 227–28/210–11), and no. 14 = no. 1

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[20] There are numerous subtle changes in wording and in general Damascus Patr. 8/11 abbreviates the text of the original collection.

[21] Some manuscripts containing the questions of Thomas describe him as a recluse (*habishd*) instead of a priest (*qashīshā*); see Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1B.296–97.

[22] Fols. 37b–38a contain the preface of Jacob's letter; this same preface heads two other letters of Jacob to John found in Damascus Patr. 8/11 (Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 233–34/215–16) and Ms. BL Add. 14, 493 (ed./tr. Rignell, *Letter from Jacob of Edessa*, 46–48/47–49). This collection of rulings is referred to as *Replies to John*, A1–16, in this book.

[23] This collection of rulings is referred to as *Replies to John*, B1–27, in this book.

of the questions of Addai found in Damascus Patr. 8/11 (ed./tr. *ibid.*, 258/235–36).[24] Only no. 8 seems to be new ("If many gifts are brought to the church, how is it right to divide them and should they be offered up in batches or not?").

Questions of Abraham

Damascus Patr. 8/11 (ed./tr. Vööbus, *Synodicon*, 255–56/233–34) presents three questions from Abraham the recluse[25] and Jacob's replies to them.

[24] The question is only loosely similar, but the answer is exactly the same in both.

[25] Probably rather Abraham the priest to whom Jacob wrote a letter (Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.594 [no. 707h]).

EXCURSUS B: THE BYZANTINE-ARAB CHRONICLE OF 741 AND ITS EASTERN SOURCE

{611} Even a very brief perusal of the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741* and the *Hispanic Chronicle of 754* will reveal that, though considerable agreement exists between them, there are to be found numerous subtle differences in wording, and they both select and rework passages in accordance with their own wishes. This suggests that they are both drawing upon a common source rather than that either is borrowing from the other. This common source was clearly more extensive than either chronicle, since both at times abbreviate it substantially; it must also have been of eastern origin, since the material common to the two chronicles is almost wholly concerned with Byzantine and Arab affairs. The aim of this excursus is to facilitate investigation into the nature of this Eastern source. I have done this by giving a full translation of the *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741*[1] – a worthwhile exercise in itself, since it has never yet been translated – and by indicating correspondences between it and the *Hispanic Chronicle of 754*.[2] The Latin **{612}** of the two texts is often obscure, but this seems to be due less to the linguistic (in)competence of the authors than to their desire to condense the common source, a process they often carry out to such extremes that the original sense is difficult to grasp.

§1. Reccared died having completed the 15th year of his reign.[3]

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[1] The translation is based on the edition of Gil in *Corpus scriptorum muzarabicorum*, I; the paragraphing of Mommsen's edition (in *MGH*) is indicated where it differs from Gil's. I am extremely grateful to Professor J.N. Adams for making many valuable suggestions; any errors are, however, mine.

[2] Exact correspondence in wording (including different forms of the same word) is signalled by "=" before the reference and the relevant words in the text are in sans serif type; narration of the same event without verbal dependence is indicated by "cf." before the reference. Dubler, "La crónica arábigo-bizantina de 741," 298–321, gives correspondences with other chronicles when the same event is narrated, even when there is not the slightest resemblance in the details of the two accounts. Although this approach has its merits, it can give a misleading impression, and I shall only give correspondences with other works (chiefly *Syriac CS*) when there is some similarity between their respective notices.

[3] Cf. Isidore of Seville, *History*, §56; Reccared I reigned 586–601.

§2. Era 639[4] (601): After Reccared his son Liuva, born of a humble mother, was set over the Goths and remained in the rule for two[5] years.[6]

§3. Era 641 (603): Witteric claimed for himself for 7 years the rule that he had tyranically seized from Liuva, and because he lived by the sword he perished by the sword. For the death of the innocent Liuva, Reccared's son, did not go unavenged in him; indeed he (Witteric) was slain between the courses of a meal by his own men.[7]

§4. Era 642 (604): Phocas, 56th [emperor] of the Romans, was set in power in a tyrannical manner and he remained in it for 8 years. The Persians left their own homes and achieved successes against the Romans. Having driven back the Romans, they subjected Syria, Arabia and Egypt.[88]

§5. Era 648 (610): Gundemar was set in power over the Goths after Witteric for two years.[9]

§6. Era 649 (611): Heraclius was crowned emperor, 57th[10] of the Romans.[11] He had plotted a rebellion against Phocas from Africa out of **{613}** love for Flavia, the most noble virgin, who had been betrothed to him in Africa and deported from the land of Libya to Constantinople by order of the emperor Phocas. The aforesaid ruler (Heraclius), confronted by such an event, armed and gathered together troops from all the West, and waged a naval battle against the state with a thousand and more ships. He made Nicetas, the magister militum of the Romans, the leader of the assembled land army, and a pact was agreed between them that whoever of them arrived first at Constantinople, on him would be conferred administration of the whole empire.[12] And so Heraclius, setting out from Africa,

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[4] This is the Spanish era, which counts from 1 January 38 BC for reasons not altogether clear.

[5] Where I write a number in full, it is because it appears that way in the text.

[6] = Isidore of Seville, *History*, §57; Liuva II reigned 601–603.

[7] = Isidore of Seville, *History*, §58; Witteric reigned 603–10.

[8] Cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 610 (Persians).

[9] = Isidore of Seville, *History*, §59; Gundemar reigned 610–12.

[10] The text has LVI instead of LVII, but LVII is given in the next paragraph.

[11] *Chron. Hisp. 754* here gives the *annus mundi* (the number of years elapsed since the beginning of the world) and continues to do so for the first year of each emperor's reign. This chronicle also attempts to give synchronisms for a large number of entries, using the Spanish era, regnal years and the years of the Arabs. The regnal years of the Byzantine emperors are erratic, but the years of the Arabs are mostly accurate and so perhaps derive from the Eastern source used by the two chronicles. *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, however, omits almost all dates.

[12] *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §1, has instead: "(whoever of them arrived first at Constantinople) he would, having been crowned there, deservedly enjoy the rule" (*in loco coronatus digne frueretur imperio*).

reached the royal city more swiftly by sailing. He waged war on [Phocas], who put up considerable resistance, and so the Byzantines brought before Heraclius the captive Phocas for his throat to be cut.[13]

§7. {MGH§6} Heraclius was made emperor, the 57th of the Romans, by the senate after the killing of Phocas; he reigned for 30 years.

§8. {MGH§7} Nicetas, the magister militum, reached Egypt via the desert wilderness after much toil; he attacked with great courage and vigour and, with the Persians cut down in battle line,[14] he restored the provinces of Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Judaea and Mesopotamia to imperial control in a magnificent fight.[15]

§9. {MGH §8} Era 650 (612). Sisebut was called to the royal dignity among the Goths; he reigned for 8 years.[16]

§10. **{614}** {MGH §9} The people of the Persians, hastening forth from their abode, stir up again the provinces neighbouring upon them by sudden attacks.[17] The son of Khusrau, the king of the Persians, fled his father and offered himself to the Roman ruler, hoping that he would defend himself by the arms of Byzantium[18] and promising that he would hand over his father's kingdom to the emperor.[19]

§11. {MGH §10} Having assembled the forces of the state, Heraclius set off for Persia. Receiving news of this, Khusrau came out to meet [him] with all the army of the Persians and with immense hordes of auxiliaries of neighbouring peoples.[20] {MGH §11} Having routed and killed the forces of the Persians, Heraclius [went] as far as the city of Susa, which is the capital and centre of power of the Persians, then assailed and captured [it]. He destroyed the cities of all the regions, the villages and the towns, and reformulated the provinces under Roman rule. Having

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[13] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, cf. Nicephorus, §1, and *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 610, which both mention that Nicetas went by land and Heraclius by sea, that they agreed upon the swifter of them becoming emperor and that Heraclius had a favourable journey.

[14] *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §2, has instead: "by keenly pursuing the Persians;" there seems to have been a confusion between the two meanings of *acies* ("keenness" and "battle line").

[15] = Chron. Hisp. *754*, §2.

[16] = Isidore of Seville, *History*, §60; Sisebut reigned 612–21.

[17] The latter part of this sentence (*iterum sibi vicinas provincias repentinis obreptionibus stimulant*) appears in *Chron. Hisp. 754* in slightly modified form (*iterum*, *sibi vicinas provincias stimulant reformando*). One might translate: "They stir up again the provinces neighbouring upon them and restructure them (the provinces)," but the exact meaning is obscure.

[18] I.e. *Romania*, which I will render by "Byzantium" throughout this translation.

[19] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*. §2. This seems to be a misplaced reference to the seeking of peace from Heraclius by Shiroi, son of Khusrau II, in 628 (cf. Theophanes, 325–27).

[20] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §3, which goes on to give a lengthy account, omitted by our text, of a hand-to-hand combat between Heraclius and one of Khusrau's men.

abolished Persian sovereignty and dismantled their rule, he returned in success and with great glory to New Rome.[21]

§12. **{615}** In the seventh year of the aforesaid ruler (Heraclius) the Saracens, in rebellion and hostile to [the inhabitants] of the provinces of the Romans, by stealth rather than by open attacks, incite {the neighbouring tribes}.[22] Theodore, brother of the emperor Heraclius, fought[23] many battles against them. On hearing the report, Heraclius warned his brother that he should in no way fight with

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[21] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §4 (= Pereira/Wolf, §5); cf. Nicephorus, §§12, 19, and Theophanes, 306–308, 327–28. *Chron. Hisp. 754* adds the following comment: "They say that many things concerning this event came to him in his dreams as a warning that he would be ravaged mercilessly by rats from the desert. He was also forewarned by an astrological omen through the course of the stars;" and continues (*ibid.*, §5 [§6]): "Heraclius, as we have said, subdued the rebellious Persians and restored the imperial lands through his fighting. Seduced, as they say, by the praises of his people, he heaped the honour of victory not on God but on himself, [but] grimly foreseeing no small rebuke [for himself] by means of a vision, he was frequently in terror." The ablative gerunds in this last sentence (*exaggerando*, *presagando*) should be treated as present participles, of which Heraclius must be the subject given the presence of the reflexive "on himself" (*sibi*). This seems to have confused Wolf, who made "his people" the subject of *exaggerando*, and made *presagando* a passive participle dependent upon *increpationem*; given its position right before the verb (*expavit*), *crebrem* should probably be understood as a mistake for *crebre* rather than, as Wolf, in agreement with *visum*.

[22] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §7 (= Pereira/Wolf, §8). The words in curly brackets, *adiacentes civitates*, are given in the corresponding passage in *Chron. Hisp. 754* as the object of *stimulant* and seem neccesary to complete the sense (I translate *civitates* as "tribes," as it seems to me to fit best the sense). This sentence reads: *Sarraceni rebellantes Romanorum provinciarum infesti furtim magis quam. publicis obreptionibus stimulant.* The original report has probably been more fully conveyed by *Chron. Hisp. 754* which has: *Sarraceni… Siriam*, *Arabiam et Mesopotamiam furtim magis quam virtute Mammet eorum ducatore rebellia adortante sibi vinciant atque non tantum publicis irruptionibus quantum clanculis incursationibus perseverando vicinas provincias vastant. Sicque quoquo modo*, *arte*, *fraude*, *virtute cunetas adiacentes imperii civitates stimulant et post-modum iugum a cervice excutientes aperte rebellant.* Wolf translates the first part as: "The Saracens rebelled… and appropriated for themselves Syria, Arabia and Mesopotamia, more through the trickery than the power of their leader Muḥammad;" but it seems better to take *Mammet* as ablative in agreement with *adortante* (understand *adhortante*) rather than as a genitive dependent on *virtute*. So the passage should be rendered: "The Saracens…, with Muḥammad their leader encouraging rebellion, appropriated for themselves Syria, Arabia and Mesopotamia stealthily rather than by valour, and devastated the neighbouring provinces not so much by open attacks as by persisting in secret incursions. Thus also, by artifice and deceit rather than by valour, they incite all the neighbouring tribes of the empire and soon, throwing off the yoke from their necks, rebel openly."

[23] The text has *fudit*, meaning rout or scatter, but since the object here is *proelia* I have translated it as "fought." *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §8 (= Pereira/Wolf, §9), more sensibly, has *multis proeliis dimicante*.

such people, for indeed he was experienced in the knowledge of the discipline of astrology and should anything happen by chance, he would know somehow.[24]

§13. **{616}** When a most numerous multitude of Saracens had gathered together, they invaded the provinces of Syria, Arabia and Mesopotamia.[25] Above them, holding the leadership, was one Muḥammad (Mahmet) by name. Born of a most noble tribe of that people, he was a very prudent man and a foreseer of a good many future events.

§14. Era 659 (621). Suinthila deservedly received the sceptre of government over the kingdom of the Goths.[26]

§15. Heraclius sent forth [messengers] throughout all the provinces and islands of his realm [instructing] that however many Roman legions were stationed in various places in defence of the countries, they should make their way to Damascus, the capital of Syria, to fight off the enemy.[27]

§16. Theodore fought a battle with many thousands of Romans at the town of Gabatha, but panic and the force of the foe was in the Roman legions in such a way that scarcely a few were left from them who could bear the message [of their defeat]. Even Theodore, brother of the emperor, was killed in this struggle. The Saracens, informed of such a great and ruinous slaughter of noble Romans[28] and with fear of the Roman name removed,[29] took firm possession of the provinces which they had not long since[30] invaded, and located their rule at Damascus, the most splendid city of Syria.[31]

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[24] *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §8 (= Pereira/Wolf, §9), begins the same, but continues: "(Theodore) withdrew from combat to increase and consolidate his forces for war at the admonition of his brother, who was mindful of the prophecy of the rats." Heraclius' astrological prediction about the Arabs is recorded by a variety of sources (see the entry on "Fredegar" in Chapter 6 above).

[25] The same three provinces in the same order are named in *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §7 (= Pereira/Wolf, §8). Cf. Theophanes, 337: "In this year the Saracens – an enormous multitude of them – [setting out from] Arabia, made an expedition to the region of Damascus" (immediately before this Theophanes, like *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, had recounted the dealings with the Arabs of Heraclius' brother Theodore).

[26] = Isidore of Seville, *History*, §62; Suinthila reigned 621–31.

[27] Cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 635.

[28] The text is *certi de tanta nobilium Romanorum strage prostrata*, which seems to be a confusion of two expressions, namely *strages Romanorum* and *prosternere Romanos*.

[29] The expression (*excusso Romani nominis metu*) recurs in *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §9 (= Pereira/Wolf, §11), this time in full.

[30] The text has *dudum*, but the sense implies *non dudum*.

[31] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §8 (= Pereira/Wolf, §9); cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 636, which makes it clear that Theodore Trithyrius, the imperial treasurer, is meant, not Heraclius' brother.

§17. Muḥammad, the aforesaid chief of the Saracens, having fulfilled ten years of his rule, reached the end of his life; [it is] he whom they to **{617}** this day hold in such great honour and reverence that they affirm him to be the apostle and prophet of God in all their oaths and writings. In his place Abū Bakr (Habubeccar), who hailed from {the same tribe}[32] of the Saracens as his predecessor, was elected by them. He mobilised a very great expedition against the Persians which devastated cities and towns, and he seized quite a few of their fortifications.[33]

§18. Heraclius left the mortal world [struck down] by the disease dropsy.

§19. Abū Bakr, after holding the leadership over his men for almost three years, reached the end of his life. After his death 'Umar (Hamer) assumed the government of the kingdom of the Saracens for ten years.[34]

§20. Era 678 (640). Constantine, son of the Roman emperor Heraclius, assumed the rule as 58th [emperor] of the Romans in[side of] a year,[35] against the say of the senate.[36]

§21. 'Umar directed in a most skilful manner the troops of his nation of the Saracens to fight against almost all the nations of the East and West. Also he subjected Alexandria, the most ancient and prosperous city of Egypt, to the yoke of tribute, having cast out the garrisons of Romans abiding there. And the aforesaid 'Umar, leader of the Ishmaelites, ordered the establishment of the town of Babylon and of garrisons to watch over the Roman district which is still extant. While the chiefs of his army were carrying off the triumph of victory over all parts, namely of the East and the West, he was killed[37] while at prayer by a certain slave after completing ten years of his reign.[38]

§22. **{618}** In his administration Constans, son of Constantine, assumed the reins of the state, 59th [emperor] of the Romans, upon the death of his father. He reigned for 27 years.[39]

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[32] These words (*de eius tribu*) are given in the corresponding passage in *Chron. Hisp. 754* and seem necessary here to complete the sense.

[33] *Chron. Hisp. 754,* §9 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§10–11), seems here to recap on the last two paragraphs; cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 636–37 and 639–42 (war on Persians).

[34] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §10 (= Pereira/Wolf, §12).

[35] The text simply has *an*; this Constantine reigned for just four months (Theophanes, 341; Nicephorus, §29, says "one hundred and three days"), so read *anno.*

[36] Cf. *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §17 (= Pereira/Wolf, §20).

[37] *Occisus est*, *Chron. Hisp. 754* has instead "he was struck by the sword" (*verberatus est gladio*).

[38] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §10 (= Pereira/Wolf, §12); cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 644 (death of 'Umar). *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §§11–16 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§13–19), deal with Spanish affairs.

[39] Cf. *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §20 (= Pereira/Wolf, §24).

§23. ʻUthmān (Etheman) assumed the leadership[40] of his people the Saracens and held the government for 12 years. This man united under the rule of the Saracens and subjected to their authority Libya, Marmorica and Pentapolis as well as Gazania and Ethiopia, which lie in the desert regions upriver from Egypt, and he made tributaries out of many cities of the Persians. After accomplishing these things, ʻUthmān was killed in an uprising of his own men.[41]

§24. But soon Mu'āwiya (Moabia)[42] obtained[43] his (ʻUthmān's) seat and ruled for 25 years. However, for five of these years he waged civil war with his own [people], but indeed twenty he carried through with complete success, with the obedience of all the people of the Ishmaelites.[44] The emperor Constans, gathering together a thousand and more ships, contended unsuccessfully against him and with scarcely any [of them] escaped in flight. Many victories were achieved in the West by a general named ʻAbd Allāh (Habedella) who had long since held leadership of a campaign [which he had been] ordered [to wage].[45] He came to Tripoli and advanced in war upon Cidamo and Lebida. After carrying out many desolations, he received in loyalty the conquered and devastated provinces, and he soon reached Africa still thirsty for blood. Therefore the confrontation was prepared, whereupon the battle line of the Moors turned in flight and all the nobility of Africa, along with count Gregory, was destroyed to the point of extinction. ʻAbd Allāh, laden with vast booty, returned to Egypt with all his troops, Mu'āwiya then having completed the 10th year of his reign.[46]

§25. **{619}** The emperor Constans, who stirred up trouble throughout the state,[47] was done away with by a plot of his ministers at Syracuse, the famous city of Sici-

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[40] *Principatum*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has instead *administrationem*.

[41] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §18 (= Pereira/Wolf, §21).

[42] *Chron. Hisp. 754* writes both Moabia and Mauia.

[43] Literally "obtained by lot" (*sortitus est*).

[44] The construction here is an accusative absolute.

[45] *Imperati certaminis*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has "of an uncompleted campaign (*inperacti certaminis*)."

[46] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §22 (= Pereira/Wolf, §28). Although most of the words are identical in both chronicles for this paragraph, the order is often not so and there are also small differences in spelling (*Chron. Byz.-Arab 741* has Hismaelitae, Habdella, Aegyptus; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has Smahilitae, Abdella, Egiptus) and in choice of words (*741* has *rates*, *754* has *lembes*; *741* has *per fugam evasit*, *754* has *aufugens lapsus evasit*). The references here are to the naval battle between the Arabs and Byzantines (cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 654), and to the campaigns in Africa of ʻAbd Allāh ibn Saʻd ibn Abī Sarḥ, governor of Egypt (648–56).

[47] This is a very free translation of *rem publicam fomitibus praecurrebat* (read *percurrebat*), literally "he ran through the state with fires." Theophanes, 351, says Constans was hated by the Byzantines for killing his brother, exiling pope Martin, cutting off the tongue and hand of Maximus the Confessor and persecuting many of the orthodox.

ly, having completed 27 years of his reign.[48] Constantine, his elder son, then assumed the care of administering the command of the Romans.[49]

§26. {MGH §25} Hearing at Syracuse that his father had been killed in a revolt of his own men, Constantine was crowned as 60th emperor of the Romans, reigning for [15] years.[50]

§27. {MGH §26} Mu'āwiya, king of the Saracens, despatched[51] a hundred thousand men to war against[52] Constantinople; they were to serve under his son Yazīd (Yzit) to whom he had also decreed his kingdom. This [city] they surrounded with a siege through all the spring time until they could no longer bear the pain of hunger and pestilence, and abandoning the city they captured many towns and, after two years, returned bringing greetings and laden with plunder to Damascus and the king, by whom they had been despatched. When Mu'āwiya had completed 20 years **{620}** of his leadership and lived as a citizen [a further] 5, he paid his debt to human nature (i.e. he died).[53]

§28. {MGH §27} When he died, the son Yazīd took his place for 3 years; [He was] a most pleasant man and deemed highly agreeable by all the peoples subject to his rule. He never, as is the wont of men, sought glory for himself because of his royal rank, but lived as a citizen along with all the common people. Few or no victories were achieved in his times in the armies sent forth by him.[54]

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[48] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §20 (= Pereira/Wolf, §24), which adds two notices about Constans, namely that "he fought fiercely in a naval battle with the Arabs" and "during his reign, after the sun had darkened at midday, the sky brought forth stars." The former must refer to the skirmish of 654 (see previous passage), the latter probably refers to the eclipse of 644 (cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 644).

[49] Cf. *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §24 (= Pereira/Wolf, §30); cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 668.

[50] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §24 (= Pereira/Wolf, §30); *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741* has abbreviated this notice to the point of incomprehensibility. *Chron. Hisp. 754* has: "Hearing at Syracuse that his father had been killed in a revolt of his own men, he headed for the palace with [as large] a fleet as he could [muster] and ascended the throne in glorious triumph."

[51] *Direrit*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has instead *tradidit*.

[52] *Debellandum*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has instead *pergendum*.

[53] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §23 (= Pereira/Wolf, §29). This was chiefly a naval campaign (cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 674–78); *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741* or its source may have expanded/confused this account with details from the assault on Constantinople under Sulaymān. Wolf translates the adverb *civiliter* in the final sentence as "in civil war;" this certainly fits the context, but it is odd that in the very next paragraph the adverb recurs, here with the expected sense of "as a citizen." Probably the author simply means that Mu'āwiya, though usually assigned a reign of 25 years, was not officially king for five of them.

[54] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §25 (= Pereira/Wolf, §31); the latter omits the final sentence, which is rather odd given that it is usually more hostile to Islam than *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*.

§29. {MGH §27} After three years he ended his life and reign and left behind as successor to him his son[55] Mu'āwiya, who was similar to his father in habits. When he had attained to the pinnacle of power he remitted a third of the tribute in money to all the provinces of his rule. He, before remaining in power half a year, departed from this light.[56]

§30. {MGH §28} Justinian was appointed to rule by the senate, the 61st [emperor] of the Romans. He reigned 10 years before his first deposal and [a further] 10 years after regaining the rule.[57]

§31. {MGH §29} With the death of Mu'āwiya the younger the armies of all the provinces chose two rulers for themselves, one by name ʿAbd Allāh (*Abdella*) and the other called Marwān (*Maroan*); it is a descendant of this latter's son who holds their leadership up till now in our times.[58] But before an interval of almost two years [had passed] **{621}** ʿAbd Allāh was elected ruler with the consent of all and Marwān was expelled in odium from the territory of Medina (*Almidina*) by ʿAbd Allāh himself together with all his children and relatives and was ordered into exile at Damascus. But after a limited passage of time, with the consent of a good many from the army, he (Marwān) was carried forward to power with God turning a blind eye (*coniuente*). Waging countless great battles against each other through a second year without a break, an innumerable multitude of men fell from each army in their mutual battles conducted amongst themselves. Since he perceived his troops to be weakened more and more by fighting so much successively, Marwān, king of one side, sent envoys and requested beseechingly from Constantine Augustus that a peace be granted to him. A peace of 9 years was granted to him on these conditions: that the king of the Saracens release to their own lands unharmed the captives and deserters found in all the provinces of the Saracens and pay to the Roman emperor the quantity[59] of one thousand gold solidi of proven weight, one girl, one hairy Arab mule [and] a silk [garment][60] daily without interruption for 9 years in succession.[61] Before he died, Marwān distributed the provinces of the Ishmaelites amongst his sons: that is, he left the regions of Persia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Osrhoene, Arabia and Syria to ʿAbd al-Malik

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[55] *Filius*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has instead *proles*.

[56] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §26 (= Pereira/Wolf, §32).

[57] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §32 (= Pereira/Wolf, §39).

[58] This would seem to imply that the author is writing while the Marwanids are still in power (685–750), unless the reference is to the fact that Spain was governed by their descendants (the first was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, ruled 755–88), though the text does say *illorum principatum*.

[59] The text has *quantite*; read *quantitatem* (object of *proferret*).

[60] The text has *mulam Arabicam villosam siriciam unam*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has *mula Arabica cum lecti sericia vestiaria*.

[61] *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 685, gives the terms as 1000 gold pieces, one horse and one slave to be paid every day for ten years.

(Habdelmele), the firstborn, for his rule; Egypt including the parts of remote Ethiopia, of Tripoli and of Africa as far as the Gaditan straits adjoining those provinces he left to his son ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (Habdellaziz); the armies of the land and marine divisions he granted to his son Muḥammad so that, once the nine-year period of peace[62] had expired, he might devote himself to expeditions against Byzantium and all neighbouring peoples. So having accomplished all with diligence and prudence and ended one year of fighting, he repaid his debt to human nature **{622}** and, as he himself had ordered, left his elder son ʿAbd al-Malik as successor.[63]

§32. {MGH §30} With Justinian deposed for tyranny Leontius was crowned in power, the 62nd [emperor] of the Romans. He reigned for 3 years.[64]

§33. {MGH §31} After him Apsimarus was appointed 63rd [emperor] of the Romans in that way.[65] He reigned for 8 years.

§34. {MGH §32} ʿAbd al-Malik achieved the apex of royal power and ruled for 20 years. In the first year of his reign, applying all his experience and the courage of his mind against ʿAbd Allāh, whom his father had attacked many times in various battles, [he came] finally to Mecca, the home of Abraham as they think, which lies between Ur of the Chaldees and the city of Ḥarran (*Carras*) in the desert. When a clash was initiated, king ʿAbd Allāh was killed by the general of the army, Tahihis by name, appointed by the king ʿAbd al-Malik, and the head of the aforementioned king ʿAbd Allāh was cut off and presented to ʿAbd al-Malik, the son of king Marwān, by the army general *Aiais* in Damascus.[66] So in the sixth year of the aforesaid ruler, after the internal struggles had been settled everywhere round about, he very wisely turned upon the territory of external enemies, for he had made tributary to his authority the provinces, cities, estates, towns and forts of many peoples. And his brother (ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz), already mentioned above[67] – to whom his father had handed over power from the borders of Egypt to the Gaditan straits and given orders that he be successor to the rule after him (ʿAbd al-Malik) – was cut off by a fatal accident. He (ʿAbd al-Malik), nevertheless, set-

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[62] The text has *pace*; read *pacis*.

[63] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §27 (= Pereira/Wolf, §33). Enough is the same to make it likely that the two chronicles are still relying on their common source, but *Chron. Hisp. 754* massively abbreviates it here.

[64] =*Chron. Hisp. 754*, §35 (= Pereira/Wolf, §42).

[65] Meaning that Apsimarus, like Leontius, came to power by a coup. Cf. *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §38 (= Pereira/Wolf, §46); the notice is too short to establish borrowing.

[66] Both *Tahihis* and *Aiais* must be attempts to convey Ḥajjāj, perhaps distorted by the local pronunciation of "j." Cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 692; Ṭabarī, 2.829–30; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, 5.357. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, *ʿIqd*, 5.166, confirms that it was Ḥajjāj who despatched the rebel's head to the caliph in Damascus.

[67] This seems to be the sense, but the text has "sent on ahead above (*supra praemissum*)."

tled the rule on his own **{623}** sons, [which meant] it had to be conferred three times (*ter contradendum*).[68] He handed over to Walīd (*Hulit*), his firstborn son, the rule of his people after himself; also he ordered his (Walīd's) brother, Sulayman (*Zoleiman*) by name, to follow him (Walīd). Thus he arranged for his sons a suitable settlement, as he had learned from his father, and, having completed the [last] year of his reign, free from care he departed from this light.[69]

§35. {MGH §33} Justinian returned to Constantinople aided by a powerful force of Khazars, settling back in his own rule, and he overcame those who not long since[70] had been tyrannising him.[71]

§36. {MGH §34} Walīd succeeded to power, [taking up] the sceptre of rule of the Saracens in accordance with what his father had arranged. He reigned for 9 years. [He was] a man of great prudence in arranging his armies, to the extent that though destitute of divine favour, he crushed the strength of almost all the neighbouring peoples adjoining him. He debilitated Byzantium in particular with constant raiding, brought the islands to the point of destruction and tamed the land of India by raids.[72] In the western regions, through a general of his army by the name of Musa, he attacked and conquered the kingdom of the Goths established at Spain with ancient solidity, and having cast out[73] their rule he imposed tribute.[74] So, waging all things successfully, he (Walīd) gave an end to his life in

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[68] First 'Abd al-'Azīz had been expected to be 'Abd al-Malik's successor, but upon his death 'Abd al-Malik named his sons Walīd and Sulaymān (see Ṭabarī, 2.1164–71), so all in all the rule was "conferred three times."

[69] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §28 (= Pereira/Wolf, §34). *Ibid.*, §§29–31, 34, 37, 39 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§35–38, 41, 44–45, 47–48) concern the Goths; *ibid.*, §§33, 36 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§40, 43) give very brief notices about 'Abd al-Malik: "'Abd al-Malik retained the peak of dignity, having already been ruling for four years," "'Abd al-Malik completed the thirteenth, 14th and 15th year of his rule."

[70] The text has *dudum*, but the sense implies *non dudum* (cf. §16).

[71] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §40 (= Pereira/Wolf, §49); cf. Nicephorus, §42, and Theophanes, 372–73 (Justinian returns to power with help of Khazars). The construction here is an accusative absolute.

[72] *Chron. Hisp. 754* adds: "He brought cities to utter destitution, knockedout fortresses by siege and, from the winding paths in Libya, subjugated all of Mauritania."

[73] *Regno abiecto*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has instead *regno ablato.*

[74] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §42 (= Pereira/Wolf, §51). *Ibid.*, §§43–49 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§52–57) deals with the Arab conquest of Spain, which the author deplores (e.g. §45 [§55]: "Even if every limb were transformed into a tongue, human nature would be utterly unable to express the ruin of Spain and its many and great evils").

the **{624}** ninth year of his rule, having already seen[75] the riches of all the peoples displayed to him.[76]

§37. {MGH §35} Justinian having been killed by a sedition roused [against him], the tyrant Philip seized the rule [and became] 64th [emperor] of the Romans. After him Anastasius was crowned 65th. Then Artemius, also [known as] Theodosius, was appointed to rule, the 66th. These completed five years, ruling amidst civil war.[77]

§38. Among the Arabs, after the death of Walīd, Sulaymān, his brother by blood, was in power according to the arrangement of their father; he reigned for 3 years. This man, the scourge of Byzantium, sent his brother, Maslama (Mazalema) by name, born of a different mother,[78] to destroy Byzantium, one hundred thousand armed men having been gathered together with him.[79] On soon reaching the land of Asia, he arrived at Pergamum, the most ancient and prosperous city of Asia, attacked[80] it in battle, deceived it by a ploy and put an end to it by fire and sword, and advised that the survivors be distributed to his army. From there **{625}** he hurried on to the royal city[81] and surrounded it with a siege for two years, but after making no progress and perceiving himself to be more endangered than endangering and constrained by hunger, the sword and a comprehensive want, he returned to his own provinces at the order of the new ruler, having had little suc-

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[75] Literally "having foreseen" (*praevisis*), but that doesn't seem to be quite what is meant here.

[76] The two phrases in this sentence appear in *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §49 (= Pereira/Wolf, §57), but in a very different context: "Walīd, the *amir almuminin*, a regnal term which means in their language 'waging all things successfully,' having already seen the riches of all the peoples and after the rewards of Spain had been displayed to him together with the beauty of its girls and [yet] the considerable repute [of Mūsā] being deemed little in his eyes, judged that he (Mūsā) should be punished by torture unto death. By the entreaties on his behalf of leaders and powerful men, whom Mūsā had offered many gifts from those abundant riches, Walīd [agreed to] fine him two million *solidi* in number, then he reached the end of his life and left this world."

[77] Cf. *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §§52–54 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§60, 63, 66); the expressions *Artemius qui et Theodosius* and *civiliter* common to both suggest that the two chronicles are still sharing a source, but the notice is too short to be certain.

[78] The text has *non dissimili matre*; read *non de simile matre*, unless this is a reference to her status (Maslama was born of a slave-girl; see *EI²*, *s.v.*).

[79] This must be the meaning of *lectis cum eo centum milia armatorum*, but the agreement is wrong (one expects *milibus*).

[80] *Impetitam*; *Chron. Hisp. 754* has instead *impeditam* which, together with its substantial abbreviation of this paragraph and transfer of the destruction of Pergamum to a later paragraph, makes its entry somewhat garbled.

[81] *Chron. Hisp. 754* has "Constantinople."

cess. After completing almost three years, the aforenamed ruler Sulaymān died while staying in the province of Antioch.[82]

§39. {MGH §37} While the Saracens were advancing on the royal city to attack it, Leo, 67th [emperor] of the Romans, who was skilled in the art of war, assumed the sceptre for 24 years with the senate of the state approving.[83]

§40. {MGH §38} On the point of dying, Sulaymān left as successor to the rule of the Saracens the son, ʿUmar (*Amer*/*Hamer*) by name, of the paternal uncle to whom their grandfather had given authority from Egypt in its entirety to the west. He reigned for 3 years. And after him he (Sulaymān) placed in [line to] the rule his brother Yazīd (*Yẓit*). In military matters ʿUmar achieved no great success nor anything adverse, but he was of such great kindness and compassion that to this day as much honour and praise is bestowed on him by all, even foreigners, as ever has been offered to anyone in his lifetime holding the reins of power.[84] He withdrew very near to the place in which Sulaymān had died.[85]

§41. {MGH §39} Yazīd, succeeding in the rule of the Saracens, reigned for 3 years. The armies of his people, who were to maintain **{626}** the defence among the Persians, plotted[86] a revolt and prepared a civil war against him. A Saracen named Yazīd, who did not originate from that royal tribe, [was] the font of this wickedness and provided counsels among them and remained over them. Informed about the rebellion, Yazīd the king dispatched an expedition against them with his brother [whom we] mentioned some time before, Maslama by name, born of a different mother. When both armies clashed in the Babylonian plain above the Tigris river, the aforementioned Yazīd, leader of the rebellion, was killed by the army of Yazīd the king. Thus his army was crushed as they slipped into flight so that, with hardly any escaping, they congratulated themselves that they had retained the breath in their bodies, their life spared by Maslama, the

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[82] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §50 (= Pereira/Wolf, §58); cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 716–18. Pergamum features in *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §52 (§61), which reads: "The Arabs fiercely ravaged Byzantium and burned down Pergamum, that most ancient and flourishing city of Asia, with avenging fire."

[83] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §58 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§71–72), which locates this notice in Hishām's reign.

[84] ʿUmar II's "kindness and compassion" is remarked upon by Syriac chronicles. *Chron. 819*, 15, and *Chron. 846*, 234, have: "He was a kind man and a more compassionate king than all the kings before him" (thus also Lewond, XV [Arzoumanian, 106]); though in *Chron. 1234*, 1–307, this is given as: "He was a kind man and compassionate, loving truth and justice and avoiding evil, but he persecuted the Christians more than the kings before him."

[85] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §§53, 58, 55 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§72, 67), which seems to have cut up a notice on ʿUmar, while *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741* has abbreviated it.

[86] The text has *moliti*, apparently qualifying *exercita*; either the author has mistaken the gender or intended *exercitus*.

> commander of the army. He (Yazīd) also achieved many successes against Byzantium. Further, in the western regions he in part achieved successes through the generals of the army.[87]
>
> §42. {MGH §40} Also he made Narbonnian Gaul his own through the leader of the army, Maslama by name, and harassed the people of the Franks with frequent battles. With inconsistent valour the general of the army, already mentioned, reached as far as Toulouse, surrounded it with a siege and strove to overwhelm it with slings and other types of machines. Informed of this news, the peoples of the Franks gathered together under the leader of this same people, Eudes by name. So having assembled they reached Toulouse. At Toulouse each battle line of the armies clashed in a great struggle. They killed Samh (*Zema*), the leader of the army of the Saracens, together with a part of his army, and they pursued the rest of the army as it slipped away in flight.[88]
>
> §43. So Yazīd, king of the Saracens, his fourth year played out, departed from this light, leaving the rule to his brother, Hishām (*Hesciam*) **{627}** by name; and after his brother he approved that the one born of his own seed, Walīd (*Hulit*) by name, should rule.[89]

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The *Byzantine-Arab Chronicle of 741* stops here with the death of Yazīd in 724, but the *Hispanic Chronicle of 754* continues to report on events in the East until 750. Either the latter text made use of a second eastern source for the period 724–50 or, far more likely, the common source of the two chronicles went up to 750. This receives some confirmation from the fact that in §39 above it is noted that Leo III reigned for 24 years (717–41), suggesting that the author was writing after 741 and had information at least up to that date.[90] Therefore, I give the remaining notices on eastern affairs to be found in the *Hispanic Chronicle of 754*:

> This Hishām (*Iscam*), at the beginning of his power – in the era 761 (723), almost already in the fifth [year] of the rule of the aforementioned Leo, the one hundred

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[87] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §§56–57 (= Pereira/Wolf, §§68–69); cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 720. The rebel is Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab (see *EI*², *s.v.*), whose defeat by Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik at al-ʿAqr of Babel is narrated at length by Ṭabarī, 2.1395–1405.

[88] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §57 (= Pereira/Wolf, §69). It is not clear whether this notice belongs to the common Eastern source or whether it derives from a source on Spanish affairs which the two chronicles share, but which the author of the *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741* – since his aim is to write an eastern history – only uses in so far as it conforms to that aim (so here it fits in with an account of the successes of Yazīd).

[89] = *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §62 (= Pereira/Wolf, §76).

[90] But perhaps little further; see n. 58 above.

and sixth of the Arabs (724)[91] – exhibiting sufficient moderation,[92] achieved several successes through the commanders of the army sent by him against Asia Minor by land and sea. In the western regions he accomplished almost nothing of note. Then, seized with greed, a greater collection of money was made in East and West through the generals sent by him than had ever been gathered at any time among the kings who were before him. Discerning that there remained in him a perverse cupidity, substantial groups of peoples turned against[93] his authority. For three, almost four years civil war was waged with considerable slaughter so that he was scarcely able to restore the **{628}** lost provinces to his power.[94] … Therefore Hishām, overcome by unjust rage, gave unrestricted rein to his cupidity and all the peoples under his power immediately launched into civil war. And all that vast desert, in which the Arabic multitude themselves have their origin, was thrown into great disorder, [its people] not tolerating the impiety of the judges.[95]

In the era 781 (743), in the 23rd year of the rule of Leo, 125 of the Arabs (743), Walīd the Fair (*Alulit pulcher*), commander of the faithful (*amir almuminim*),[96] was raised by all upon the throne in the required place. It remained his for a year and three quarters, whereupon the kingdom was snatched away by Yazīd (*Iẓit*) without delay.[97]

When the era 782 (744) had ended and the third[98] was already beginning, Constantine, son of Leo, was crowned in the rule after his father as 68th [emperor] of the Romans, reigning for very many years, there having passed 5,954 years from the beginning of the world until the expiry of the tenth year of Constantine. When he was crowned in his father's rule, his father having just concluded his last day, he learned that his rule was about to be seized by Artabasdus, to whom a blood relationship had been accorded.[99] But Artabasdus, as a general of Constantine, secretly and gradually assembled all the soldiers of the palace on the pretext

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[91] These synchronisms and datings appear throughout *Chron. Hisp. 754*, but do hot feature in *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*. Interestingly, the Arab dates are generally correct throughout – perhaps they were in the original Eastern source – whereas the regnal years of the emperors are somewhat erratic.

[92] The text has *modestam*; read *modestiam*.

[93] Literally "separated their minds from."

[94] *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §62 (= Pereira/Wolf, §76).

[95] *Ibid.*, §68 (= Pereira/Wolf, §84).

[96] This is the earliest occurrence of this term (= Arabic *amīr al-mu'minīn*) in a non-Muslim text.

[97] *Ibid.*, §71 (= Pereira/Wolf, §87).

[98] I.e. the seven hundred and eighty third. This is incorrect; Constantine's rule began in June 741.

[99] Artabasdus had married Constantine's sister Anna (Theophanes, 413). The account of Artabasdus' usurpation is told at length by Nicephorus, §§64–66, and Theophanes, 413–15, 417–21; it lasted from June 742 until November 743.

of fighting other peoples. As soon as he saw him (Constantine) alone and about to be deserted by all the senate, he, with the allies whom he had united to himself, made haste to frighten Constantine off from the palace (*palatium*)[100] in order to be murdered. When Constantine understood that Artabasdus was coming **{629}** with a rowdy squadron of armed men, he left his abode with his men and sought out the help of neighbouring peoples. At length, when he saw that he was supported by the multitude, he gave a warning to Artabasdus that he relinquish the palace, hastening to regain his former seat. But soon Artabasdus gave instruction to the people that they not open the gates of the city to the oncoming [soldiers]. At last, when Constantine discovered the city to be secure, he besieged it with a band of his people and prepared for a most arduous war. After he had worn down the inhabitants of the city with hunger for almost three years, peace was negotiated with the citizens through intermediaries and they presented to Constantine Artabasdus bound in chains and much weighed down by the burden of the iron. Then, in view of the gravity of his crime, without interrogating him he put out his eyes and sent him into exile after torturing him for a long time.[101]

At this time everyone in the country quickly learned that Yazīd [son of] Walīd had committed suicide[102] and that his brother Ibrāhīm (*Abrahim*) – at the beginning of era 783 (745), in the first year of Constantine, with the 127th of the Arabs expiring (745) – had been left as his successor. But Marwān, one of the Arabs, hearing that the rule was about to be lost and was torn in conflicting directions by civil war,[103] ferociously pursued the vacant position by tyrannical means. In the era 784 (746), in the second year of the rule of Constantine, 128 of the Arabs (746), Marwān, while fighting a war with the allies of Ibrāhīm,[104] as said above, finding him (Ibrāhīm) with [only] a few men, he (Marwān) immediately struck him with his sword, desiring the rule (*palatium*). And so, because of this affair, he was hindered by internal strife, living amid insurrection for five years and engaging in various battles. He **{630}** was pursued from Damascus as far as the Babylonian

[100] Literally, the Palatine hill in Rome or a temple/imperial residence on that hill. Here the author seems to mean imperial residence, but in the next paragraph he uses the word to intend the sovereigntyitself.

[101] *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §73 (= Pereira/Wolf, 89). This is mistranslated by Wolf as "he was sent into exile… without ever having been asked why he had committed so great a crime." The point is that his crime was so serious that he merited no trial.

[102] Yazīd died of a brain tumour (see *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 744), so instead of *propria morte functum* one should perhaps read *propera morte functum* ("he suffered a sudden death").

[103] The text is *palatium adiens periturum etproprio velle in diversa distractum.* For *adiens* read *audiens*; for *proprio velle* one should perhaps understand *proprio hello*, meaning "by a war of its own" (i.e. by civil war); *palatium*, as pointed out in n. 100 above, seems to intend here the empire or the rule.

[104] Or "while fighting a war against Ibrāhīm with his (Marwān's) allies."

plains[105] by Ṣāliḥ (*Zali*),[106] paternal uncle of ʿAbd Allāh,[107] whom the great majority of the Ishmaelites had chosen as ruler for themselves, and, having crossed the Nile, he fell down decapitated.[108]

At this time – in the era 788 (750), in the 6th year of his (Constantine's) rule, 133 of the Arabs (750–51), in the first of ʿAbd Allāh al-Hāshimī (*Abdella Alescemi*) – Marwān, as we have said, hounded by a band of the people and frightened by the insurrection of the nations, fled with the public treasure from the palace and sought to enter Libya in order to prepare anew for battle. ʿAbd Allāh, no longer fearing anything, headed for the royal seat at the instigation of his elders. He immediately despatched his uncle Sālih after him with an immense army of fighters, namely Persians, who were still worshippers of the sun and dark demons. They vehemently chased Marwān, who was fleeing from city to city and finding no refuge on account of the evils which he had done and the various slaughters which he had inflicted on the Saracens. He crossed the Nile, a river of Egypt, but when the two sides came together in a place which is called in their language Ashmunayn (*Azunummin*), they threw themselves so mercilessly upon each other that for two days they laid each other low with a killing of many on both sides. Marwān was with difficulty overcome and slain on the third [day], [whereupon] they put their swords back into their sheaths and rested themselves. Then, despatching the heads of the nobles to ʿAbd Allāh, the generals were rewarding their men handsomely from the profits of plunder and pacifying all the former borders as was proper.[109]

[105] This is the wrong way round; Marwān was defeated at the battle of the Zab in northern Iraq and from there fled to Palestine (see *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 750).

[106] I.e. Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī (not ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī as stated by Wolf); cf. *Syriac CS*, *s.a.* 750.

[107] I.e. Abū l-ʿAbbās, the first Abbasid caliph (750–54).

[108] *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §74 (= Pereira/Wolf, §90).

[109] *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §76 (= Pereira/Wolf, §94).

EXCURSUS C: AN OUTLINE OF THE SYRIAC COMMON SOURCE

{631} The intention of this excursus is to give an impression of the nature and scope of the *Syriac Common Source* – that is, Theophilus of Edessa's chronicle – which was relied upon by Theophanes, Dionysius of Tellmaḥre and Agapius for events in the East from *ca.* 590–750.[1] The method of this reconstruction has been to assemble all and only those notices which feature in, and are narrated in a similar manner by, two or all of Theophilus' three dependents (Dionysius being represented by Michael the Syrian and/or the *Chronicle of 1234*). Notices in Michael and the *Chronicle of 1234*, but not in Theophanes or Agapius, are excluded since they very likely only go back to Dionysius. Theophanes and Agapius give notices from Theophilus mostly in the same order, and I follow this order here. I have assigned dates to a number of the entries, largely obtained from independent sources, the purpose of this being to allow me to refer to this reconstruction in the rest of the book and to demonstrate Theophilus' chronological ordering of events; it is not intended to solve problems of chronology. An undated event is generally to be placed somewhere between the dates immediately preceding and following it, but should *not* be assumed to fall in the same year as the dated entry preceding it. Each entry is a summary of what is common to each of the dependents, but one or more of them **{632}** will generally give further information. Theophilus will be designated as "CS" ("Common Source") in this outline, and Michael the Syrian simply as "Michael."

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[589–91] There was a revolt amongst the Persians led by Bahram; Khusrau sought refuge and aid from Maurice, who helped him to regain his throne.[2]

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[1] For more information see the entry on "Theophilus of Edessa" and each of his three dependents in Chapter 10 above.

[2] Agapius, 441–47; Michael 10.XXIII, 386–87/371–72; *Chron. 1234*, 1.215–17. This is a long account, especially in Agapius, who includes examples of the correspondence between Maurice and Khusrau (not found in Theophanes). Cf. Theophylact Simocatta, *History*,

[590–98] A report on various natural disasters and phenomena.[3]

[602] The army mutinied against Maurice and they asked his brother Peter to be emperor; he refused and went to inform Maurice in Constantinople. Thereupon Maurice fled to Chalcedon; the army pursued and killed him, and proclaimed Phocas emperor.[4]

[603–604] When he heard of the murder of Maurice, Khusrau annulled the treaty between him and the Byzantines and marched on Dara, taking it after a siege.[5]

[610] The Persians crossed the Euphrates and subjugated all of Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia.[6] They passed through Armenia and Cappadocia, took Galatia and Paphlagonia, and advanced as far as **{633}** Chalcedon.[7] And while the Persians were thus oppressing the Byzantines outside the capital, Phocas was outdoing them from within by murdering and imprisoning people.[8]

There was a disturbance among the Jews of Antioch, and they murdered Anastasius, patriarch of Antioch.[9]

Two patricians in Africa, Gregory and Heraclius, planned a rebellion against Phocas, sending their sons, Nicetas and Heraclius, to Constaninople, the former by land, the latter by sea. It was agreed that whichever arrived at the capital first

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3.VIII.1–2, 10–12 (revolt begins year 8 of Maurice); *Chron. paschale*, 691 (concludes in the ninth indiction/591).

[3] Agapius, 447; Michael 10.XXIII, 387/373–74; *Chron 1234*, 1–218. There is only a slight overlap between the respective notices here.

[4] Agapius, 447–48; Michael 10.XXIV, 388–89/374–75; *Chron. 1234*, 1.218–19. The entry is dated by all to year 20 of Maurice.

[5] Agapius, 448 (very brief); Michael 10.XXV, 389–90/377–78, and *Chron 1234*, 1.220–21 (includes Khusrau's mourning for Maurice and address to the army). Cf. Theophanes, 292, 293; Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 145 (AG 915: capture of Dara).

[6] Theophanes, 295; Michael 10.XXV, 391/378, 391–92/379; *Chron. 1234*, 1–224. Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 146, has: "On 7 August of the same year (AG 921/610) Shahrbaraz crossed to Zenobia and took it; this was the first city west of the Euphrates to be taken."

[7] Theophanes, 296; Michael 10.XXV, 391–92/379; *Chron. 1234*, 1.224.

[8] Theophanes, 296; Michael 10.XXV, 391/378; *Chron. 1234*, 1.224 (all have very similar wording).

[9] Theophanes, 296; Agapius, 449; Michael 10.XXV, 392/379. On this pogrom see Olster, *Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century*, 101–15, who feels that it has been confused with an earlier riot at Antioch between the circus factions.

would become emperor. The sea was calm and Heraclius arrived first, entered the city and killed Phocas.[10]

[608–609] There was a very severe cold such that the water froze on the sea shore.[11]

[610–11] The Persians took Apamea, Ḥimṣ and Antioch. Then they besieged and captured Cappadocian Caesarea.[12]

The Saracens invaded Syria and after much plunder and devastation returned home.[13]

[613] The Persians subjugated Damascus.[14] **{634}**

[614] The Persians took Jerusalem, slaying 90,000 people in it. The Jews ransomed the Christians so as to kill them. The patriarch Zachariah was led off with the Cross and many captives into Persia.[15]

[619] The Persians occupied all of Egypt, Alexandria and Libya as far as Ethiopia, and the Persian general Shahin besieged and took Chalcedon.[16]

[622] {Muḥammad appeared in Yathrib…}[17]

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[10] Theophanes, 297; Agapius, 449; Michael 10.XXV, 391/378; *Chron. 1234*, 1.225–26. The pact between Nicetas and Heraclius is also mentioned in *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, §6; *Chron. Hisp. 754*, *§1* Nicephorus, §1; *Chron. Siirt* LXXXII, *PO* 13, 527.

[11] Theophanes, 297; Michael 10.XXV, 392/379. Cf. Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 146 (AG 920).

[12] Theophanes, 299; Agapius, 450; Michael 11.I, 403/400; *Chron. 1234*, 1–226. Cf. Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 146 (AG 922: capture of Ḥims).

[13] Theophanes, 300; Michael 11.I, 403/401. Both date the incident to the first year of Heraclius, but Michael places it after an eclipse, which must be that of 4 November 617 (Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 115–16), and so one wonders whether to connect this with the notice in *Short Chron. 775*and *Ehnesh Inscription* under AG 930/618–19 that the Arabs "entered the land."

[14] Theophanes, 300; Michael 11.I, 403/400; *Chron. 1234*, 1.226. Cf. Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 146 (AG 924).

[15] Theophanes, 300–301; Agapius, 451 (very brief); Michael 11.I, 403–404/400; *Chron. 1234*, 1.226–27. For the date of this event (May 614) see the entry on "Sebeos" in Chapter 4 above.

[16] Theophanes, 301; Agapius, 451; Michael 11.I, 404/401; *Chron. 1234*, 1–227. Cf. Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 146 (June AG 930/619: capture of Alexandria). Theophanes places the capture of Chalcedon in the next year.

[17] Theophanes, 333–34; Agapius, 456–57; Michael 11.II, 404–407/403–405; *Chron. 1234*, 1.227–30. Cf. *Chron. Siirt* CI, *PO* 13, 600–601. For CS's account of the appearance of Muḥammad see the entry on "Theophilus of Edessa" in Chapter 10 above.

The Persians captured Ancyra in Galatia and the island of Rhodes.[18] Khusrau became arrogant because of his numerous victories and hardened his yoke on all men.[19]

[625–26] The Persian general Shahrbaraz besieged Constantinople.[20] The sun was darkened from October to June.[21] Khusrau ordered the deportation of the inhabitants of Edessa to Persia, but the governor, a clement man, delayed this action.[22]

{635} Shahrbaraz was slandered to Khusrau, who ordered him to be killed. Learning of this, Shahrbaraz defected to the Byzantine side.[23]

Heraclius asked the king of the Khazars to send 40,000 men to help him fight Khusrau and in return promised his daughter Eudocia as a wife. Heraclius set off and retook many cities from the Persians.[24]

When Khusrau heard of the mutiny of Shahrbaraz and the expedition of Heraclius, he became anxious and agitated. His forces were scattered throughout Syria and Mesopotamia. He sent against Heraclius a certain Rozbahan, who was defeated, and so Khusrau fled.[25]

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[18] Theophanes, 302; Agapius, 451, 458; Michael 11.III, 408/408; *Chron. 1234*, 1.230. All agree that this occurred in the first year of Muḥammad. Cf. Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 147 (AG 934: capture of Rhodes).

[19] Theophanes, 302; Agapius, 451, 458; Michael 11.III, 408/408; *Chron. 1234*, 1.230.

[20] Agapius, 458; Michael 11.III, 408/408; *Chron. 1234*, 1–231. Cf. *Chron. paschale*, 716–17 (indiction 14/625–26). Theophanes, 315–16, probably recounts this event from a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §§12–13).

[21] Agapius, 452, 461; Michael 11.III, 409/411; *Chron. 1234*, 1–231. Cf. Thomas the Presbyter, *Chronicle*, 147 (15 September AG 938/627); Agapius, 461 (there was an eclipse in year 7 of Muḥammad). All this may have to do with volcanic dust (Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 120).

[22] Agapius, 460–61; Michael 11.III, 408/411; *Chron. 1234*, 1.230–31. Agapius, 458–60, describes how the Jacobite Cyrus, tax-collector of Edessa, was envied by the city's Chalcedonian community and denounced to Khusrau, but Cyrus' relative Jonah, physician to the emperor, persuaded the latter to compel the Chalcedonian Edessans to become Jacobite or Nestorian. Dionysius (in Michael 11.I, 403–404/402–403; *ibid.* 11.III, 408/411; *Chron. 1234*, 1.230) agrees on the first part, but makes the repercussion of the Edessene's envy of Cyrus that Khusrau stripped the silver from the city's churches.

[23] Theophanes, 323–24; Agapius, 461–62; Michael 11.III, 408–409/408–409; *Chron. 1234*, 1.231–32. Cf. *Chron. Siirt* LXXXVII, *PO* 13, 540–41. On this incident see Mango, "Deux ètudes," 105–109, who may, however, be wrong to say that Theophanes and *Chron. Siirt* give independent testimony, for *Chron. Siirt* seems also to use CS, though most likely indirectly. The incident is also known to Muslim sources (on this point see Kaegi, "Heraclius, Shahrbarāz and Ṭabarī").

[24] Agapius, 462–63; Michael 11.III, 409/409; *Chron. 1234*, 1.233.

[25] Agapius, 463–64; Michael 11.III, 409/409; *Chron. 1234*, 1.233–34.

[628] Shiroi, who had been emprisoned by his father, pursued the latter and killed him, and became emperor himself. He made peace with Heraclius on the condition that the Persians would leave the territories of the Byzantines.[26]

At Edessa the Persians refused to heed the letters of Shahrbaraz and Shiroi that they should withdraw, and Heraclius' brother Theodore was forced to use catapults to evict them.[27]

Theodore sought to kill the Jews at Edessa because they had aided the Persians, but a certain Jew, anticipating this, obtained a pardon from Heraclius and saved his fellow Jews.[28] **{636}**

[630] Shiroi died and was succeeded by Ardashir, but Shahrbaraz killed him and there was a struggle for power between him and Kardigan.[29]

Shahrbaraz agreed to return the Holy Cross, and Heraclius then restored it to Jerusalem.[30]

[634] Abū Bakr sent out four generals: one to Palestine, one to Egypt, one to Persia and one to the Arab Christians.[31]

The patrician Sergius came from Palestinian Caesarea to engage a troop of Arabs, but was killed.[32]

There was an earthquake and a sign appeared in the sky, which was sword-shaped, extending from north to south, and remained for 30 days, signalling the coming of the Arabs. In many places there was a severe plague.[33]

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[26] Agapius, 464–65; Michael 11.III, 409/409; *Chron. 1234*, 1.234–35. Cf. *Chron. paschale*, 727–29 (Shiroi was crowned on 25 February indiction 1/628).

[27] Agapius, 452–53, 465–66; Michael 11.III, 409–10/409–10; *Chron. 1234*, 1.235.

[28] Agapius, 466; Michael 11.III, 410/410; *Chron. 1234*, 1.235–236. Sebeos, XXX (tr. Macler, 94–95), gives a garbled account of these two notices.

[29] Agapius, 452, 467; Michael 11.III, 410/410; *Chron. 1234*, 1.237–38. Ṭabarī, 1.1061–62, says that Shiroi ruled 8 months and Ardashir 18 months; counting from Shiroi's accession in February 628 this puts Ardashir's death in April 630.

[30] Agapius, 467–68; *Chron. 1234*, 1.238.

[31] Theophanes, 336; Agapius, 453–54, 468; Michael 11.IV, 411/413; *Chron. 1234*, 1.239–40 (which names the generals). Muslim sources date Abū Bakr's despatch of the generals to early AH 13/March–April 634, though this may be slightly late (Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 124–26).

[32] Theophanes, 336; Agapius, 454, 468–69; Michael 11.IV, 411–12/413; *Chron. 1234*, 1.241–42. This is a lengthy account in the latter two sources, which tell of the participation of Samaritan foot-soldiers and of how Sergius kept falling off his horse.

[33] Theophanes, 336; Agapius, 454, 469; Michael 11.IV, 413/414. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 150 (sign in sky, dated to AG 937); *Chron. Siirt* XCIV, *PO* 13, 580. Agapius applies the 30 days to the earthquake instead of the comet. Michael dates the earth quake to September 634 and

Abū Bakr died. After him there reigned ʿUmar, who sent an army into that part of Arabia called Balqa'; it took Bostra and other cities.[34] **{637}**

ʿUmar sent an army to Persia; it defeated the Persians, whose kingdom was weakened. Afterwards Hormizd was killed and Yazdgird became emperor.[35]

Heraclins sent his brother Theodore against the Arabs, but he was defeated.[36]

[635] Heraclius sent the general Baanes and the son of Shahrbaraz to protect Damascus, and they encamped in the vicinity of that city by the river Barada.[37] The emperor also despatched the *sakellarios* Theodore against the Arabs; he encountered an Arab force near Ḥimṣ, killed some and chased the rest to Damascus.[38]

[636] The next year the Arabs returned to campaign in the vicinity of Damascus. Theodore and a patrician came with 70,000 men to provide reinforcements for Baanes and the son of Shahrbaraz, still encamped by the city. When the Arabs and Byzantines first engaged, Theodore's contingent was defeated. Baanes' men rebelled and acclaimed him emperor; Theodore's men withdrew, and at the next

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the comet immediately after it. Only Agapius, 469, and Michael 11.V, 414/419, mention the plague.

[34] Theophanes, 336–37; Agapius, 469; Michael 11.V, 414/417; *Chron. 1234*, 1.245. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 149 (Jumāda II 13 AH/August 634: Abū Bakr's death). In the reconstruction of Ibn Isḥāq and Wāqidī Bostra was the first city to be taken (Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 129); other Muslim historians say Maʿab (Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, 83–87), though Ṭabarī, 1.2108, says this was only a tribal encampment.

[35] Theophanes, 341; Agapius, 469 (fragmentary); Michael 11.V, 414/417–18; *Chron. 1234*, 1.245. Soon after his accession ʿUmar sent Abū ʿUbayd al-Thaqafī to Iraq (Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 174, 191–95).

[36] Theophones, 337; Agapius, 454, 469–70; Michael 11.V, 414–15/418; *Chron*, *1234*, 1.242–44. This is a lenghty account in the latter two, who recount his meeting with a stylite near Ḥimṣ. *Chron. 1234* says the two sides were encamped opposite each other from May to October, towards the end of which there was an encounter. Cf. Nicephorus, § 20 (conflating this battle with that of Yarmuk); Chron. *Byz.-Arab 741*, §12).

[37] Cf. *Chron. Byz.-Arab 741*, §15. *Fragment on the Arab Conquests*, ll. 17–19, and Michael 11.VI, 415–16/420, agree that there was a skirmish between Baanes and the Arabs near Damascus; the former seems to say that it occurred in August and that 10,000 Byzantines were killed. Khalīfa, 130 (AH 15), says that Baanes was a Persian noble who converted to Christianity and went over to the Byzantines; see further Gil, *History of Palestine*, 34 and n. 33 thereto.

[38] Theophanes, 337; Michael 11.VI, 415–16/420; *Chron. 1234*, 1–244. *Fragment on the Arab Conquests*, ll. 14–16, places Theodore's success in May 635.

encounter the Arabs were victorious. Many of the Byzantines were drowned in the river Yarmuk; a total of 40,000 of them were killed.[39] **{638}**

Having vanquished the Byzantines, the Arabs came to Damascus and took it and many other cities of Syria by treaty.[40]

[636–37] Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ left Yathrib, marched across the desert of Qadash and encamped five parasangs from Kufa. The forces assembled by Yazdgird to oppose them established themselves on the Euphrates by Kufa. The Arabs routed the Persians and pursued them as far as Ctesiphon.[41]

[637–42] The Persians regrouped on the east bank of the Tigris and cut the bridges so that the Arabs could not cross. But the latter plunged into the river with their horses and charged at the Persians, whom they put to flight. Then they seized Ctesiphon. Yazdgird rallied the Persians again at Jalula', Ḥulwan and Nihawand, but each time he was defeated and so fled.[42]

Seeing the rout of the Byzantines, Heraclius left Antioch for Constantinople, bidding farewell to Syria. He wrote to Egypt, **{639}** Syria, Mesopotamia and Arme-

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[39] Theophanes, 337–38; Agapius, 453, 470; Michael 11.VI, 415/420, 416/420–21; *Chron. 1234*, 1.244. This entry is confused in all the texts. Agapius and Michael agree that Theodore and a patrician (of Ḥimṣ or Antioch) had 70,000 men; Theophanes, Michael and *Chron. 1234* agree that 40,000 Byzantines were killed. *Fragment on the Arab Conquests*, l. 20, gives 20 August AG 947/636 as the date of a battle at Gabitha. Since this is close to dates given by many Muslim sources for the battle of Yarmuk (Caetani, *Chron.*, 180, and Khalīfa, 130: Rajab AH 15/August 636) and since Michael states that Gabitha was on the river Yarmuk (in the region of Bostra), we may assume that Christian and Muslim sources are recording the same battle. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 150 (AG 944); *Chron. 819*, 11 (AG 947).

[40] Theophanes, 338; Agapius, 470; Michael 11.VI, 416/421. These three give this notice in a single sentence, whereas *Chron. 1234* massively expands it by drawing on Muslim sources. The latter mostly place the capture of Damascus some time in autumn 14 AH/635, but say that the Arabs evacuated it upon the approach of the Byzantines in 636, then reclaimed it after the latter's defeat at Yarmuk (Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests*, 131–32, 137).

[41] Agapius, 470; Michael 11.VI, 416–17/421; *Chron. 1234*, 1.246–47. Cf. *Chron. Siirt* CVI, *PO* 13, 627–28. Dionysius includes an anecdote about a man of Ḥira, sent to spy on the Arabs, who encounters a tribesman of Ma'add eating bread and delousing his shirt while urinating (see Brock, "Syriac Views," 13, who notes that a similar tale is also told about Homer); Michael adds a further anecdote about a Persian soldier fleeing from a naked lance-bearing Arab of Ma'add. Muslim sources commonly have Sa'd depart from Medina in AH 15/636 and wage the battle of Qadisiya in 16/637 (Caetani, *Annali*, 3.629–33), but they are not unanimous.

[42] Agapius, 470–71; Michael 11.VII, 417–18/423–24; *Chron. 1234*, 1.247–48. Cf. *Chron. Siirt* XCIV, *PO* 13, 580–81. Muslim sources commonly date the capture of Ctesiphon to winter 16/637, of Ḥulwan to 19/640 and of Nihaw and to 21/642 (Caetani, *Chron.*, 189–90, 217).

nia that no one should engage the Arabs further, but whoever could hold on to his post should do so.[43]

'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ, Cyrus and the Arab capture of Egypt.[44]

[637–38] 'Umar came to Palestine from Yathrib. Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, went out to meet him and obtained from him a guarantee for the country's security and a diploma stating that the Jews were forbidden to live in Jerusalem. Then 'Umar entered the holy city and ordered that a mosque be built on the site of the Temple of Solomon. Noticing that 'Umar's clothes were very dirty, Sophronius asked him to accept a robe. But the king refused, only conceding to wear the robe while his own clothes were being washed.[45]

'Iyād ibn Ghanm passed through the cities of Syria and made agreements with them all.[46]

John Kataias, governor of Osrhoene, came to 'Iyād ibn Ghanm at Qinnasrin and agreed to pay the Arabs 100,000 gold pieces each year so long as they did not cross the Euphrates and enter Mesopotamia. Then he gave one year's tribute to 'Iyād. When Heraclius learnt that, he became angry and deposed and exiled John, replacing him with the general Ptolemy.[47]

{640} The Arabs took Antioch and enslaved the people of the villages roundabout; 'Umar appointed Mu'āwiya over Syria.[48]

[639–40] 'Iyād crossed the Euphrates because the Arabs had not been paid the tribute for this year. The Edessenes came out and made a treaty for their city, but Telia and Dara refused to submit, so the Arabs took them by force and killed all

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[43] Theophanes, 337; Agapius, 470, 471; Michael 11.VIII, 418–19/424–25; *Chron. 1234*, 1.251. Cf. *Chron. Siirt* CVI, *PO* 471; Michael says that Heraclius also ordered his troops to despoil the countryside as they retreated.

[44] Theophanes, 338–39; Agapius, 471–74; Michael 11.VII, 419/425, and 11.VIII, 422–23/432–33; *Chron. 1234*, 1.251–53. This is a fairly lengthy account in all texts; it is given in full and discussed in the entry on "The Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 above.

[45] Theophanes, 339; Agapius, 454, 475; Michael 11.VII, 419–20/425–26; *Chron. 1234*, 1.254–55. Muslim sources commonly date Umar's visit to Jerusalem to AH 17/638 (Caetani, *Chron.*, 200–201); Khalīfa, 130, has 16/637. See also the entry on "Sophronius" in Chapter 3 above.

[46] Theophanes, 339; Agapius, 476; Michael 11.VII, 420/426 (not specifying 'Iyād); *Chron. 1234*, 1.256.

[47] Theophanes, 340; Agapius, 476; Michael 11.VII, 420/426; *Chron. 1234*, 1.256. Agapius has 'Abbād ibn 'Āthim instead of 'Iyāḍ ibn Ghanm and Būlus instead of Īwannis; in both cases the difference in orthography is small.

[48] Theophanes, 340; Agapius, 476–77; *Chron. 1234*, 1.256. Michael 11.VI, 416/421, and 11.VII, 418/424, mentions raiding around Aleppo and Antioch. Khalīfa, 134, records that Aleppo, Antioch and Manbij were taken in AH 16/637.

the Byzantines (*Rūm*/*Rhumāyē*) in them. Having subjected all Mesopotamia, ʿIyād returned to Syria.[49]

ʿUmar ordered that all the countries of his kingdom be registered for tribute.[50]

[641] In the year 952 of the Greeks, 19 of the Arabs and 7 of ʿUmar, Heraclius died. After him reigned his son Constantine, but he was murdered by Heraclius' wife Martina, and Heraclonas ruled. The Byzantines, however, deposed him, and Constans, son of Constantine and grandson of Heraclius, ruled.[51]

Muʿāwiya captured Palestinian Caesarea after a long siege and killed most of the 7000 Byzantines guarding it.[52]

The Arabs ravaged the town of Euchaita in Cilicia.[53]

The Arabs began to build a temple in Jerusalem, but the construction fell down. The Jews told them that if they did not remove **{641}** the cross from the church opposite on the Mount of Olives, then their building would never stay up. So they brought down that cross and their building stood firm. For this reason they took down many crosses.[54]

[644] There was an eclipse of the sun on Friday, 5 November.[55]

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[49] Theophanes, 340; Agapius, 477; Michael 11.VII, 420–21/426; *Chron. 1234*, 1.256–57. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 150–51 (AG 948, 952); *Chron. 819*, 11; Caetani, *Chron.*, 209–10, 219 (AH 18–19/639–40); see also the entry on "The Conquest of Egypt" in Chapter 13 above.

[50] Theophanes, 341; Agapius, 478; Michael 11.VII, 421/426. Muslim sources mention only ʿUmar's registering of Arab tribesmen (e.g. Ṭabarī, 2.749–52).

[51] Theophanes, 341–42; Agapius, 454, 478; Michael 11.VII, 421/426; *Chron. 1234*, 1.260. Nicephorus, §27, implies, and John of Nikiu, CXVI.2 (tr. Charles, 184–85), states that Heraclius died in February 641, which fell in the beginning of year AH 20. Agapius, 454, and Dionysius assign Heraclius a reign of 30 years and 5 months, which was perhaps the figure of CS; Theophanes gives 30 years 10 months.

[52] Theophanes, 341; Agapius, 454, 478; Michael 11.VIII, 422–23/430–31; *Chron. 1234*, 1.259. Michael says the siege lasted "from the beginning of December to the month of May," so Theophanes' 7 years should probably be amended to 7 months. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 151 (AG 953); Muslim sources give either AH 19/640 or 20/641 for Caesarea's capture (Caetani, *Annali*, 4.156–61), perhaps reflecting that its siege spanned both years.

[53] Agapius, 478; Michael 11.VIII, 423/431; *Chron. 1234*, 1.259.

[54] Theophanes, 342; Michael 11.VIII, 421/431; *Chron. 1234*, 1.260–61 (who connects the collapse of the Arabs' construction with the gale mentioned below). Cf. *Chron. Siirt* CIV, *PO* 13, 624; Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 132–33 (citing Isho'dnah of Baṣra). Dionysius also notes that the emir ʿAmr bar Saʿd forbade crosses to be displayed outside churches.

[55] Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 479; Michael 11.VIII, 421–22/432 (who has Tishrīn I instead of Tishrīn II). The date is confirmed by Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 123–24.

The patrician Valentinus rebelled against Constans, who had him killed and his rebellion crushed.[56]

After twelve years of rule ʿUmar was assassinated while at prayer, stabbed in the stomach by a slave. He was succeeded by ʿUthmān.[57]

[648] The patrician Gregory rebelled in Africa. The Arabs raided Africa and fought and defeated Gregory, who went to Constantinople and submitted to the emperor.[58]

There was a violent gale; trees were uprooted, crops destroyed and the columns of stylites collapsed.[59]

[649] Mu'āwiya launched a naval expedition against Cyprus and Arwad.[60]

{642} Muʿāwiya again attacked and this time captured Cyprus and Arwad.[61]

[651–52] ʿUthmān sent his son Saīd in pursuit of Yazdgird, the king of the Persians, who had been in refuge in Sistan. Saʿīd caught up with the king in Merw, where he was hiding in a windmill. The owner killed him and Saʿīd took the head to his father, who put it in the Kaʿba, where it still is.[62]

The Arabs campaigned in Isauria.[63]

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[56] Theophanes, 343; *Chron. 1234*, 1.260.

[57] Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 479; Michael 11.VIII, 421–22/430; *Chron. 1234*, 1.261. Cf. *Chron. 819*, 12 (AG 955); Caetani, *Chron.*, 261 (Dhū l-Ḥijja AH 23/November 644). That it was in the stomach that ʿUmar was stabbed is stated also by Muslim sources (e.g. Ṭabarī, 1.2723).

[58] Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 479; Michael 11.X, 428/440–41; *Chron. 1234*, 1.260. Agapius adds that the Arabs took Alexandria, ousting the patrician Manuel. Khalīfa, 159, places the encounter between Gregory (*Jarjīr*) and the Arabs, led by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Sarḥ, 70 miles from Qayrawan in the year AH 27 (probably spring or summer, and so 648).

[59] Theophanes, 343; Agapius, 480; Michael 11.X, 429/445; *Chron. 1234*, 1.260 (adduced to explain why the Arabs' temple fell down).

[60] Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 308, AH 28 (probably in spring or summer, so 649). This and the following notice seem to belong together as an account of the conquest of Cyprus and Arwad, so references to CS are given in the next note.

[61] Theophanes, 343–44; Agapius, 455, 480–81; Michael 11.X, 429–30/441–42; *Chron. 1234*, 1.268–73. This account is fairly long in all the texts, particularly in *Chron. 1234*, which is probably quoting Dionysius verbatim. See Conrad, "The Conquest of Arwad."

[62] Agapius, 481; Michael 11.VIII, 422/430; *Chron. 1234*, 1.273–74. Cf. Sebeos, XXXV (tr. Macler, 131–32), speaking of year 11 of Constans/651–52; *Chron. Siirt* XCIV, *PO* 13, 581; Caetani, *Chron.*, 329 (AH 31/651–52). Presumably Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ is meant to be the subject of this report, but he was not the son of ʿUthmān.

[63] Theophanes, 344; Michael 11.XI, 432/446. Theophanes says the commander was *Bousour*, presumably Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt.

The emperor Constans sent an ambassador to Mu'āwiya to sue for peace; the latter agreed, and Gregory, son of Heraclius' brother Theodore, was given as a hostage. The next year Gregory died at Heliopolis and his embalmed body was sent to Constantinople.[64]

[653] The Armenians revolted against Constans and submitted to the Muslims. The patrician Pasagnathes, their governor, made an agreement with Mu'āwiya and sent him his son as hostage. Constans marched as far as Cappadocian Caesarea, then returned having despaired of regaining the province.[65]

Mu'āwiya despatched troops to Rhodes, who captured it. They threw down the Colossus of Rhodes and sold it to a Jew of Ḥimṣ.[66]

{643} The Arab general Habīb ibn Maslama attacked and ravaged Armenia.[67]

[654] Mu'āwiya prepared a naval expedition against Constantinople. It was sabotaged while in port by two Christians, but was still launched under the command of Abū l-A'war. Constans had dreamt that he was at Thessaloniki, which an interpreter said presaged his defeat (*thes aliō tēn nikē*), and indeed he lost an encounter against Abū l-A'war by Phoenix on the Lycian coast.[68]

[656] 'Uthmān was assassinated in Medina, which resulted in civil war amongst the Arabs.[69]

[657] Mu'āwiya and 'Alī engaged in battle by the Euphrates.[70]

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[64] Theophanes, 344; Agapius, 481; Michael 11.XI, 432/446; *Chron. 1234*, 1.274. Gregory's death is only mentioned by Theophanes and *Chron. 1234*. Sebeos, XXXIII (tr. Macler, 110–111), and *Chron. Zuqnin*, 152, agree with Theophanes that the ambassador was Procopius; Michael has Ptolemy and Agapius mentions Manuel.

[65] Theophanes, 344; Agapius, 482. The submission of the Armenians presumably refers to Theodore Rshtuni's conclusion of peace with Mu'āwiya in year 12 of Constans/653 (Sebeos, XXV [tr. Macler, 132–33]).

[66] Theophanes, 345; Agapius, 482; Michael 11.X, 430/442–43. See Conrad, "The Arabs and the Colossus."

[67] Theophanes, 345; Michael 11.X, 428/441 (who explains this as a joint campaign, the other half of the army marching with Mu'āwiya against Cappadocian Caesarea and Armorium). Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 330 (AH 31/652); the next year he campaigned in northern Mesopotamia (*ibid.*, 338; *Chron. Zuqnin*, 152 [AG 964]).

[68] Theophanes, 345–46; Agapius, 483–84; Michael 11.XI, 430–32/445–46; *Chron. 1234*, 1.274–75. Agapius blends this with an account of a campaign in the region of Melitene. Cf. Sebeos, XXXVI (tr. Macler, 140), who dates it to year 13 of Constans/653–54; Caetani, *Chron.*, 360 (AH 34/July 654–July 55); so probably summer 654.

[69] Theophanes, 346; Agapius, 484; Michael 11.XII, 433–34/450; *Chron. 1234*, 1.275–77. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 152 (AG 967); *Chron. 819*, 12 (AG 967); Caetani, *Chron.*, 368 (Dhū l-Ḥijja AH 35/June 656: 'Uthmān's death). The civil war itself is described in different ways by CS' dependents.

[659] There was a violent earthquake in Palestine and Syria.[71]

{A peace was made between the Byzantines and Arabs at Mu'āwiya's request.}[72]

{644} Constans killed his own brother Theodosius.[73]

[661] 'Alī was assassinated; Mu'āwiya became sole ruler, living in Damascus.[74]

The sect of the Harurites appeared.[75]

Mu'āwiya favoured the people of the West over those of the East, since the former had submitted to him.[76]

Constans decided to transfer the imperial capital to Syracuse in Sicily. He ordered that his sons be brought over as well, but the Constantinopolitans would not let them go.[77]

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[70] Theophanes, 347; Michael 11.XII, 434/450; *Chron. 1234*, 1.278. This is the battle of Ṣiffīn; Theophanes has conflated it with the battle of Karbala fought by 'Alī's son Ḥusayn in 680, as is clear from the mention of thirst causing the defection of 'Alī's men (Ṭabarī, 2.312–13). *Chron. 1234*, 1.280, also makes the battle of Karbala part of this civil war, though correctly connects it with Ḥusayn. Agapius seems only to mention the Battle of the Camel. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 152 (AG 968); *Ehnesh Inscription*, *s.a.* AG 968; Caetani, *Chron.*, 411 (summer AH 37/657).

[71] Theophanes, 347; Michael 11.XIII, 436/456, which is vague. Cf. *Chron. Maronite*, 70 (7 June AG 970/659, which was, as Theophanes says, indiction two).

[72] This is only reported by Theophanes, 347, who says that Mu'āwiya "had sent an embassy because of the rebellion," so implying that it fell during the civil war (656–61), which is corroborated by Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, *Waq'at Ṣiffīn*, 37. However, Michael 11.XII, 435/450, mentions the expiry of a seven-year truce in AG 980, which would mean that it began in AG 973, which is approximately supported by Khalīfa, 205 (AH 41/661) and Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 1.141 (AH 42/662).

[73] Theophanes, 347; Michael 11.XI, 432/446. Cf. *Chron. Maronite*, 70 (AG 970).

[74] Theophanes, 347; Michael 11.XII, 434/450; *Chron. 1234*, 1.279–80. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 153 (AG 973); Caetani, *Chron.*, 451 (Ramaḍān AH 40/January 661: 'Alī's death; though some sources give an earlier date), 462 (summer 41/661: universal acknowledgement of Mu'āwiya). Dionysius tells how three men pledged each to kill one of the emirs responsible for the civil war, namely 'Alī, Mu'āwiya and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ; two failed, but 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muljam, in charge of killing 'Alī, succeeded (for the Muslim versions of this story see *EI²*, *s.v.* "Ibn Muldjam").

[75] Theophanes, 347; Agapius, 487; Michael 11.XII, 434–35/450. Each author gives different comments about these sectarians, otherwise known as Kharijites.

[76] Theophanes, 347–48; Agapius, 487. Theophanes blends this with the previous notice and asserts that Mu'āwiya gave the Westerners/people of al-Shām (*Isamites*) a stipend of 200 gold pieces, but the Easterners/people of Iraq (*Herakites*) only 30. Cf. Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, *Futūḥ*, 2.110–11 (*dhikr mā jarā bayna ahl al-shām wa-ahl al-'Irāq min al-'adāwa*).

[77] Theophanes, 348; Michael 11.XI, 432/446; *Chron. 1234*, 1.282.

Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt campaigned in Asia Minor.[78]

[664–65] In this year there was a confusion over the date of Easter.[79]

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid raided in Asia Minor.[80]

{645} [665] Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt campaigned in Asia Minor.[81]

Shapur, the general of Byzantine Armenia, rebelled against Constans and sent an envoy named Sergius to Muʿāwiya seeking his support. The emperor sent a eunuch and chamberlain named Andrew to dissuade the caliph from the alliance, but Muʿāwiya aided the rebel.[82]

There was a flood at Edessa.[83]

[668] Constans was murdered by one of his servants, Andrew of Troilus, while in a bath-house in Sicily. The Armenian patrician Mizizius was named emperor, but Constans' son Constantine executed him and himself took power and ruled with his brothers Tiberius and Heraclius.[84]

[670] The Arabs attacked Africa and took 80,000 prisoners.[85]

It was a harsh winter with much snow and ice, and many animals perished.[86]

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[78] Theophanes, 348; Agapius, 487; Michael 11.XII, 435/450. This notice is very brief in each of the sources, and only Agapius names Busr. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 484–85 (AH 43/663).

[79] Theophanes, 348; Michael 11.XII, 433/451; *Chron. 1234*, 1.282. Dionysius gives the synchronisation AG 976 = AH 44, both corresponding to 664–65.

[80] Theophanes, 348; Agapius, 488; Michael 11.XII, 435/450 (vague). Cf. *Chron. Maronite*, 73 (AG 975); Caetani, *Chron.*, 493 (AH 44/664), 502 (AH 45/665). Theophanes adds that 5000 Slavs returned with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and settled in the region of Apamea.

[81] Theophanes, 348, mentions campaigns of Busr in two separate years; Agapius, 487–88, also seems to, but the first reference is fragmentary. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 493, 502 (AH 44/664, 45/665).

[82] Theophanes, 348–51; Agapius, 488–89; Michael 11.XII, 433–36/451–54; *Chron. 1234*, 1.282–86. This is a lengthy and anecdotal account of Andrew and Sergius at the caliphal court and the revolt of Shapur.

[83] Theophanes, 351; Agapius, 489; Michael 11.XII, 433/451; *Chron. 1234*, 1.286–87.

[84] Theophanes, 351–52; Agapius, 455, 490–91; Michael 11.XII, 435/450–51; *Chron. 1234*, 1.287. Cf. Nicephorus, §33 ("after a reign of 27 years"). Having noted this incident, Agapius, 455, gives a computation of the years from Adam to his day, then jumps back to AG 933/622 and continues from there, often reporting events a second time (this is why two-page references have been given for him in this and previous footnotes); the reason for this is unclear.

[85] Theophanes, 352; Agapius, 491 (has 100,000 prisoners); Michael 11.XIII, 436/454; *Chron. 1234*, 1.287. This is probably the raid of Muʿāwiya ibn Ḥudayj in AH 50/670, which according to Khalīfa, 210, led to the capture of many prisoners.

Busr ibn Abī Arṭāt raided Asia Minor and took many prisoners.[87]

A perfect rainbow appeared in the sky; all the people were afraid and many thought that the end of the world had arrived.[88] **{646}**

[673] Mu'āwiya sent a naval expedition against the Byzantines.[89] There was a plague in Egypt.[90]

[674–78] The Arabs led a number of naval campaigns against the Byzantines. In the first they lost 30,000 men at the hands of three patricians. Callinicus, an architect from Heliopolis, fled to the Byzantines with his invention of Greek fire, which gave the Byzantines victory over the Arabs.[91]

A sign/comet appeared in the sky.[92]

Rats were numerous in Syria; they destroyed the crops and so there was a great famine.[93]

There was a locust plague in Syria and Mesopotamia.[94]

The Mardaites, whom the Syrians call *Gargūmāyē*, invaded Lebanon and they gained control from the heights of Galilee to the Black Mountain.[95]

[679] There was a violent earthquake; Batnan of Serug was ruined and part of the old church at Edessa collapsed, but Mu'āwiya had it restored.[96]

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[86] Theophanes, 353; Agapius, 491; Michael 11.XIII, 436/456. Theophanes adds that Phadalas (Faḍāla ibn 'Ubayd) wintered at Cyzicus.

[87] Theophanes, 353; Agapius, 491. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 545, 566–67, 576 (AH 50/670, 51/671, 52/672).

[88] Theophanes, 353; Agapius, 491; Michael 11.XIII, 436/456; *Chron. 1234*, 1.288. The latter two say that the bow appeared at night, Agapius says "in the clouds."

[89] Theophanes, 353; Agapius, 492. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 587–88 (AH 53/673). Theophanes chiefly reports from a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §34).

[90] Theophanes, 353; Agapius, 492 (adds "and Palestine").

[91] Theophanes, 354; Agapius, 492–93; Michael 11.XIII, 436–37/455. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 599, 608, 617, 626, 637 (AH 54–58/674–78).

[92] Theophanes, 354; Michael 11.XIII, 436/456 (AG 988). Cf. Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 145 (AH 56/676), citing Jacob of Edessa (who has the same wording as Michael).

[93] Agapius, 492; Michael 11.XIII, 436/457 (AG 989).

[94] Theophanes, 354; Michael 11.XIII, 436/457 (AG 990).

[95] Theophanes, 355; Agapius, 492–93; Michael 11.XIII, 437/455; *Chron. 1234*. These are the *Jarājima* that feature in Muslim sources (see Lammens, *Mo'âwia I*, 14–22); Michael says they are also called *Īpūrē*. Theophanes adds from a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §34) that Mu'āwiya consequently sued for peace.

[96] Theophanes, 356; Agapius, 493; Michael 11.XIII, 436–37/457; *Chron. 1234*. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 153 (Sunday, 3 April AG 990/679); *Chron. 819*, 12 (AG 990).

[680] Muʿāwiya died on the sixth of May, having been emir for 20/21 years and king for 20/21/24 years. He was buried at Damascus and his son Yazīd succeeded him.[97]

{647} {Constantine convened an ecumenical synod of 289 bishops at Constantinople, known as the sixth council.}[98]

Constantine deposed his brothers in favour of his son Justinian. A patrician named Leo refused to accept this, so Constantine had his tongue, hands and feet cut off.[99]

[683–85] Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiya died. Mukhtār the deceiver had already appeared at Kufa, claiming he was a prophet. Since Yazīd had no adult son to succeed him, the Arabs were in turmoil. Those in Medina and the East proclaimed ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr; those in Damascus and Palestine remained loyal to the family of Muʿāwiya; in Syria and Phoenicia they followed Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays, who came to Damascus and pretended to be fighting for ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr. Each country chose someone. In the midst of all this arose Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam, who proposed drawing lots for the caliphate. His name came up; Ḍaḥḥāk was not content with this, but was defeated by Marwān at Marj Rahit. Marwān ruled for nine months, then was succeeded by his son ʿAbd al-Malik.[100]

There was a famine and great plague in Syria and Mesopotamia.[101]

[685] Embattled on all fronts, ʿAbd al-Malik sought peace with Byzantium. Constantine agreed to a ten-year truce on the condition that the caliph would pay 1000 gold pieces, a horse and a slave daily to the emperor. The tribute of Cyprus, Armenia and Iberia was to be shared by both sides, and the emperor was to recall the Mardaites from Lebanon.[102]

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[97] Theophanes, 356; Agapius, 493; Michael 11.XV, 444/468; *Chron. 1234*, 1.288. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 672 (Rajab AH 60/April-May 680).

[98] Theophanes, 360; Agapius, 493–94. The notice is too different in these two sources to be sure whether it belongs to CS.

[99] Theophanes, 360; Agapius, 494; Michael 11.XIII, 437/455–56; *Chron. 1234*, 1.288–89.

[100] Theophanes, 360–61; Agapius, 494–97; Michael 11.XV, 444–45/468–69; *Chron. 1234*, 1.289–92. Agapius and *Chron. 1234* give the fullest account. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 734 (Rabīʿī AH 64/November 683: Yazīd's death), 736 (Dhū l-Qaʿda 64/June 684: Marwān proclaimed caliph), 756 (Ramaḍān 65/April 685: Marwān's death).

[101] Theophanes, 361; Agapius, 497. Cf. *Ehnesh Inscription*, *s.a.* AG 995 (famine).

[102] Theophanes, 361, 363; Agapius, 497; Michael 11.XV, 445–46/469 and 11.XVI, 447/473; *Chron. 1234*, 1.292. Cf. *Chron. 819*, 13 (AG 996); Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 148 (7 July AH 65/685); for the Muslim sources see Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 122–23. Theophanes, Agapius and Michael have two notices on the peace, sandwiching the notice on Constantine's death. Michael also lists ʿAbd al-Malik's rival contenders: ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr in

{648} Constantine died and was succeeded as emperor by his son Justinian.[103]

[686–89] ʿAbd al-Malik sent Muʿāwiya's brother Ziyād against Mukhtār, but Ziyād was killed. Hearing of this, ʿAbd al-Malik went to Mesopotamia, but when he reached Reshʿaina he learned that ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd had rebelled against him and taken Damascus. The caliph returned, retook the city and killed ʿAmr.[104]

[687] There was a famine in Syria and many sought relief in Byzantine territory.[105]

{687–91: ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr sent his brother Muṣʿab against Mukhtār, who was defeated and fled to Syria. Muṣʿab overtook him and slew him. ʿAbd al-Malik attacked and overcame Muṣʿab, and so all of Persia was subject to him.}[106]

[692] ʿAbd al-Malik sent Ḥajjāj to Mecca in pursuit of Ibn al-Zubayr. The latter was defeated and sought refuge in their house of worship. Ḥajjāj used catapults to demolish the enclosing wall and killed Ibn **{649}** al-Zubayr in the sanctuary, which he subsequently rebuilt.[107] Ḥajjāj was appointed over Persia, Iraq and the Ḥijaz, and Muḥammad ibn Marwān over Mesopotamia and Armenia.[108]

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the region of Babylon, ʿUmayr ibn al-Hubāb al-Sulamī (*Bar Hwbb*) in Reshʿaina, Yazīd ibn Abī Ṣakhr (*Bwryd*) in Nisibis, ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd al-Ashdaq in Damascus, Zufar ibn al-Ḥārith al-Kilābī (*Zwfr*) in Circesium.

[103] Theophanes, 361; Agapius, 497; Michael 11.XVI, 446–47/473; *Chron. 1234*, 1.292. Cf. Nicephorus, §37 ("He died in the seventeenth year of his reign"). There is unfortunately a gap in the manuscript of Agapius from here to the end of ʿAbd al-Malik's reign.

[104] Theophanes, 363; *Chron. 1234*, 1.292–93. It was Muʿāwiya's brother's son, ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ziyād, who fought Mukhtār's general Ibrahim ibn al-Ashtar at a battle by the river Khazir near Moṣul. Michael 11.XV, 445/471, who seems to have his account from a different source, says the fighting began on 22 September AG 996/685 and lasted a few days; Muslim sources variously date the conflict to 24 Dhū l-Ḥijja AH 66/22 July 686 and 10 Muḥarram 67/6 August 686 (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 65). ʿAmr ibn Saʿīd's revolt occurred in 688–89 (*ibid.*, 124–28).

[105] Theophanes, 364; Michael 11.XI, 430/446. This famine is dated by the contemporary John bar Penkaye ("in the year 67 of the rule of the Arabs") and by Michael's comment (11.XVI, 447/474) regarding a famine in AG 1005 that "seven years before (so 998) there occurred that great and cruel famine."

[106] This notice is only in Theophanes, 364, but it almost certainly belongs to CS. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 783–84 (Ramaḍān AH 67/April 687: death of Mukhtār), 839–40 (autumn 71 or 72/690 or 691: death of Muṣʿab); see also Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 134.

[107] Theophanes, 364–65; Michael 11.XV, 446/470; *Chron. 1234*, 1.293. Muslim sources date Ibn al-Zubayr's death to Jumādā I or II AH 73/October or November 692 (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 139).

[108] Theophanes, 365; Michael 11.XVI, 448/474; *Chron. 1234*, 1.293.

'Abd al-Malik was now free from all opposition.[109]

[696–97] 'Abd al-Malik struck coins without images and with writing on both sides.[110]

[692–93] Justinian sought to resettle the inhabitants of Cyprus in Byzantium, but many were drowned on the way. 'Abd al-Malik considered this a violation of the peace between them and sent his brother Muḥammad to raid Asia Minor. The Arabs won when the Slavic contingent of the Byzantine army defected to them.[111]

{'Abd al-Malik ordered the rebuilding of the temple of Mecca and wanted to use the columns of Gethsemane, but his treasurer Sergius son of Manṣūr and the patrician Klausys persuaded him instead to ask Justinian to send other columns.}[112]

Prince Smbat surrendered Armenia to the Arabs.[113]

[696–97] The bandit Shabīb ibn Yazīd al-Shaybānī achieved many successes and almost killed Ḥajjāj himself, but was finally drowned in a river.[114]

[693] There was an eclipse of the sun on Sunday, 5 October, at the third hour.[115]

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[109] Theophanes, 365; *Chron. 1234*, 1.296. Theophanes dates this notice to the fifth year of Justinian (689–90) and seventh of 'Abd al-Malik (691–92); *Chron. 1234*, supported by *Chron. Zuqnin*, 154, gives AG 1002/690–91. Of some significance here must be 'Abd al-Malik's minting of coins in AH 72/691–92, and certainly by this time he was in control of every region bar Arabia. But the "year of unity" (*'ām al-jamā'a*) could only be proclaimed with the death in 73/692–93 of the rival caliph Ibn al-Zubayr (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 140).

[110] Theophanes, 365; Michael 11.XVI, 447/473; *Chron. 1234*, 1.296. This is how the notice appears in Michael and *Chron. 1234*, the former agreeing with *Chron. 819*, 13, that the event occurred in AG 1008. Theophanes only says that the coins were "of a new kind," not specifying that they were aniconic, and connects this with Justinian's breach of the peace and minting of his own new coins. This has been accepted by some numismatists (e.g. Bates, "First Century of Islamic Coinage," 247–48), but if Theophanes is using CS here then the connection he makes is probably his own invention.

[111] Theophanes, 365–66; Michael 11.XV, 446/470; *Chron. 1234*, 1.296. The Arab victory referred to here is the capture of Sebastopolis in AH 73/692 (cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 861; Khalīfa, 270).

[112] Theophanes, 365. This may well have been in CS, but omitted by Dionysius since it shows the Chalcedonian Sergius in a good light; otherwise it was inserted by the continuator of CS used by Theophanes.

[113] Theophanes, 366; *Chron. 1234*, 1.296.

[114] Theophanes, 366–67; *Chron. 1234*, 1.296. *Chron. 819*, 14, erroneously places this notice under AG 1016/704–705; Muslim sources agree on AH 77/696 (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 188–90). See also Conrad, "Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition," 27–28.

ʿAbd al-Malik ordered a slaughter of pigs in Syria.[116]

{695: Justinian was exiled and the patrician Leontius made emperor.

698: Tiberius Apsimarus ousted Leontius and became emperor.}[117]

[699–700] There was a great plague.[118]

[700–701] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath rebelled against Ḥajjāj, but the latter eventually defeated him with the aid of Muḥammad ibn Marwān.[119]

The Byzantines invaded the region of Samosata and killed many Arabs. They took many captives and much booty.[120]

{651} [703] ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Malik campaigned in Asia Minor. He rebuilt and garrisoned Mopsuestia.[121]

The leaders of Armenia rebelled against the Arabs and sent messages to the emperor, who despatched a Byzantine force. Muḥammad ibn Marwān crushed this force and, having resubjected Armenia, gathered the Armenian nobles together and burned them alive.[122]

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115 Theophanes, 367; Michael 11.XVI, 446–47/474. This is also recorded by *Ehnesh Inscription*, *s.a.* AG 1005; the time is confirmed by Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 137–42.

116 Theophanes, 367; Michael 11.XVI, 447/475; *Chron. 1234*, 1.296. Cf. *Chron. 819*, 14 (AG 1015). Michael says ʿAbd al-Malik's order also included the taking down of crosses.

117 One assumes that Theophilus would have mentioned these events (cf. Michael 11.XVI, 447–48/473; *Chron. 1234*, 1.297), but Theophanes uses a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §§40–41), so one cannot be sure.

118 Theophanes, 371; Michael 11.XVII, 449/480. Cf. *Chron. 819* (AG 1011); Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 154 (AH 79/698, 80/699); Khalīfa, 279 (AH 80). Michael gives AG 1016 (thus also *Chron. Zuqnin*, 155), but situates the notice among those pertaining to *ca.* 700.

119 Theophanes, 371; Michael 11.XVII, 449–50/478, 450/480, who is rather vague. The revolt of Ibn al-Ashʿath chiefly occupied the years AH 81–82/700–701 (Dixon, *Umayyad Caliphate*, 151–68).

120 Theophanes, 371; Michael 11.XVI, 448/473–74.

121 Theophanes, 372; Michael 11.XVII, 450/477 (AG 1015: capture of Mopsuestia by Maslama), 451/478 (AG 1017: rebuilding and garrisoning); *Chron. 1234*, 1.297 (AG 1013). Cf. *Chron. 819*, 13–14 (AG 1015); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1011 (AH 84/703). Theophanes notes that ʿAbd Allāh besieged Taranton, which is confirmed by Khalīfa, 291 (AH 84: *ghazā… ḥattā balagha arḍ Ṭuranda*).

122 Theophanes, 372; Michael 11.XVI, 449/474; *Chron. 1234*, 1.297. For the date and other references see the entry on "Vahan of Golt'n" in Chapter 9 above.

{Yazīd ibn Ḥunayn campaigned in Cilicia and besieged Sision, but his army was defeated.}[123]

Justinian gained the support of the king of the Khazars, whose daughter he married, and of the Bulgars, and then recovered his throne. He sent a large force to fetch his wife, but they were all drowned, for which the king of the Khazars reproved him.[124]

[705] ʿAbd al-Malik died and his son Walīd succeeded him.[125]

[706] Walīd demolished the great church of Damascus and built a mosque in its place. He also ordered the public records to be written no longer in Greek, but in Arabic.[126]

[707–708] Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik attacked the city of Tyana and wintered there. Justinian sent an army to try and relieve the siege, but it was defeated and about 40,000 were killed. After nine months the Arabs took the city.[127]

{652} [709] ʿAbbās ibn al-Walīd raided in Asia Minor. ʿUthmān ibn Ḥayyān raided in Cilicia.[128]

{711: The patrician Philippicus deposed Justinian.}[129]

Philippicus ordered that all Armenians were to be expelled from his realm. Many went to the Arabs, who settled them in Melitene and Samosata.[130]

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[123] Only reported by Theophanes, 372, but very likely from CS. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1022 (AH 85/704); Khalīfa, 291 (AH 85: *uṣība al-nās bi-Sūsana*).

[124] Agapius, 498; Michael 11.XVII, 450–51/478; *Chron. 1234*, 1.297–98. Theophanes, 372–75, uses a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §42).

[125] Theophanes, 374; Agapius, 498; Michael 11.XVII, 451/478; *Chron. 1234*, 1.298. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1035 (Shawwāl AH 86/October 705).

[126] Theophanes, 376; Agapius, 498; Michael 11.XVII, 451/481; *Chron. 1234*, 1.298, 298–99. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1053–54, and Khalīfa, 300 (AH 87/706: mosque of Damascus); see also Excursus F, nos. iv–v, below.

[127] Theophanes, 376–77; Agapius, 498–99; Michael 11.XVII, 451/478; *Chron. 1234*, 1.298. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1064–65, and Khalīfa, 302 (AH 88/707). Theophanes is chiefly using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §44). Michael dates the final fall of Tyana to March 708.

[128] Theophanes, 377; Agapius, 499. Theophanes places ʿUthmān's raid in the following year and adds that ʿAbbās began to build ʿAyn al-Jarr in Lebanon (thus *Chron. 819*, 14, AG 1016, though naming Walīd I as the builder). The campaign of ʿAbbās intended here is probably that of AH 90/709, when he reached as far as Arzun (Caetani, *Chron.*, 1089; Khalīfa, 303).

[129] Though reported by all four authors (Theophanes, 377–81; Agapius, 499; Michael 11.XVII, 452/479; *Chron. 1234*, 1.299), the accounts are too different to be sure of the nature of the notice in CS.

[711] Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik campaigned in Asia Minor and captured many strongholds.[131]

[712] Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik campaigned in Asia Minor and captured the city of Amasia and other strongholds.[132]

[713] ʿAbbās campaigned in Asia Minor; he captured Pisidian Antioch and withdrew with many prisoners.[133]

There was a violent earthquake on 28 February and many places were ruined in the region of Antioch, Aleppo and Qinnasrin.[134]

The Byzantines deposed Philippicus and gouged out his eyes, then proclaimed Artemius emperor.[135]

{653} Maslama campaigned in Asia Minor; he entered Galatia, captured many strongholds and withdrew with many prisoners.[136]

[715] Walīd died and Sulaymān succeeded him.[137]

Artemius despatched troops to the West to fight his enemies, but they mutinied and proclaimed a certain Theodosius emperor, so Artemius fled to Nicaea. Theodosius proceeded to Constantinople and its inhabitants received him as emperor. Artemius was banished.[138]

[716–18] Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik led an expedition against Constantinople. He sent Sulaymān ibn Muʿādh and Bakhtarī ibn al-Ḥasan with numerous troops by land and ʿUmar ibn Ḥubayra with many ships by sea. A patrician named Leo went

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[130] Theophanes, 382; Agapius, 500; Michael 11.XVII, 452/482; *Chron. 1234*, 1.299.

[131] Agapius, 500; Michael 11.XVII, 451–52/479 (AG 1022). Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1120 (AH 92/711). *Chron. 819*, 14 (AG 1021), amalgamates this with the following notice, but Muslim sources and CS make clear that they are distinct campaigns. Michael names three of the strongholds taken as *Ṭybrnda*, Gargarum and *Ṭwndā*.

[132] Theophanes, 382; Agapius, 499; Michael 11.XVII, 452/479; *Chron. 1234*, 1.299. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1133 (AH 93/712).

[133] Theophanes, 383; Agapius, 500; Michael 11.XVII, 452/479. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1147 (AH 94/713).

[134] Theophanes, 383; Agapius, 500; Michael 11.XVII, 451/481; *Chron. 1234*, 1.299–300. Cf. *Chron. 819*, 15 (28 February AG 1024).

[135] Agapius, 500; Michael 11.XVII, 452/479; *Chron. 1234*, 1.299. Theophanes, 383, uses a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §48).

[136] Theophanes, 383; Agapius, 500; Michael 11.XVII, 452/479. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1147–48 (AH 94/713).

[137] Theophanes, 384; Agapius, 500; Michael 11.XVII, 452/479; *Chron. 1234*, 1.300. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1176 (Jumada II AH 96/Febrary 715).

[138] Agapius, 501; Michael 11.XVII, 452/479; *Chron. 1234*, 1.300. Theophanes, 385–86, uses a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §§50–51).

to Sulaymān ibn Mu'ādh and promised to help him enter Constantinople. Sulaymān introduced him to Maslama, who promised to make him emperor. On hearing of this, Theodosius despatched a force against Leo, but the latter won the soldiers over to him, marched on Constantinople and deposed Theodosius, becoming emperor himself. Maslama awaited the fulfilment of Leo's part of the deal; when he saw this was not forthcoming, he went and besieged the Byzantine capital for a whole year. The Arabs became desperately short of food and, after the death of the caliph Sulaymān, were recalled by his successor 'Umar.[139]

{Maslama returned by sea with the survivors, but then they were caught at sea by a storm and most of their ships sunk.}[140]

{654} There was a violent earthquake.[141]

'Umar was a good and pious man. He decreed that every Christian who became a Muslim would not have to pay poll-tax, and many apostatised. He ruled that a Christian's testimony against a Muslim was inadmissable and forbade wine and fermented drinks to Muslims. He also sent a doctrinal letter to Leo summoning him to Islam.[142]

The patrician Nicetas Xylinites wrote to the exiled Artemius, inciting him to move against Leo. Artemius accepted this and, having acquired troops from the king of the Bulgars, marched on Constantinople. But the Byzantines did not receive him, and so the Bulgars handed him over to Leo, who executed him along with some other patricians favourable to Artemius.[143]

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[139] Theophanes, 386–90, 395–99; Agapius, 501–502; Michael 11.XVIII, 453–55/483–86; *Chron. 1234*, 1.300–307. Michael abbreviates CS somewhat, Agapius very much; Theophanes, 386–91, 395–99, excerpts from CS, but chiefly uses a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §§53–54). Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 156–59 (AG 1028); *Chron. 819*, 15 (AG 1027–28); Ṭabarī, 2.1316 (AH 98), who also records the deal made between Maslama and Leo and the latter's subsequent deception. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1193–94, 1208–10, 1223–24 (97–99 AH/716–18: siege of Constantinople), 1222 (Safar AH 99/September–October 717: death of Sulaymān).

[140] Theophanes, 399; Michael 11.XVIII, 455/486; *Chron. 1234*, 1.307. This very likely belongs to CS, but because Theophanes seems to be using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §56), one cannot be sure.

[141] Theophanes, 399; Agapius, 502; Michael 11.XIX, 455/490. Cf. *Chron. 819*, 15 (24 December AG 1029/717); Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 1.161–62 (Jumādā I AH 99/December 717). Theophanes links this with 'Umar's actions in the next notice.

[142] Theophanes, 399; Agapius, 502–503; Michael 11.XIX, 456/488–89; *Chron. 1234*, 1.307–308. Only Theophanes and Agapius mention 'Umar's letter; *Chron. 1234* has added material drawn from the so-called Covenant of 'Umar.

[143] Theophanes, 400–401; Agapius, 503. Theophanes is chiefly using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §57).

[720] ʻUmar died and Yazīd ibn ʻAbd al-Malik became caliph.[144]

Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab rebelled in Iraq and the Arabs of the East rallied to him. Maslama ibn ʻAbd al-Malik engaged him in battle by Babylon and killed him.[145]

A Syrian named Severus from the district of Mardin proclaimed to the Jews that he was the Messiah. By his trickery he gained much gold from them, but the caliph Yazīd had him executed.[146]

Leo sought to convert to Christianity all those in his empire who adhered to another confession. Many Jews were baptised and they were called "new citizens."[147]

{655} {Yazīd ordered the destruction of images.}[148]

[721–22] ʻAbbās ibn al-Walīd engaged in raiding in Paphlagonia and took many captives. Upon his return he ravaged Cilicia and captured a stronghold.[149]

[724] Yazīd ibn ʻAbd al-Malik died; after him Hishām ruled over the Arabs. He built palaces in every place, diverted the waters of the Euphrates above Callinicum for irrigation, created many plantations and estates, and his revenues exceeded the taxes which he received from the whole empire.[150]

Kathīr ibn Rabīʻa campaigned in Asia Minor, but was defeated and escaped with only a few men.[151]

[726] Leo ordered the removal of images from churches and houses. When Pope Gregory heard of this, he stopped the tribute from Italy and Rome.[152]

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[144] Theophanes, 401; Agapius, 504; Michael 11.XIX, 456/489; *Chron. 1234*, 1.308. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1261 (Rajab AH 101/February 720).

[145] Theophanes, 401; Agapius, 504; Michael 11.XIX, 457/489; *Chron. 1234*, 1.308. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1281 (Safar AH 102/August 720).

[146] Theophanes, 401; Agapius, 504; Michael 11.XIX, 456/490; *Chron. 1234*, 1.308. Cf. *Chron. Hisp. 754*, §00 (= Pereira/Wolf, §74); *Chron. Zuqnin*, 172–74 (places the incident in the time of Hishām).

[147] Theophanes, 401; Agapius, 504; Michael 11.XIX, 457/489–90; *Chron. 1234*, 1.308.

[148] This is mentioned by Theophanes, 401–402, and Dionysius (in Michael 11.XIX, 457/489, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.308), but in a very different vein, so one cannot be sure if it featured in CS. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 163 (AG 1035); *Chron. 819*, 16; see also Vasiliev, "The Iconoclastic Edict of the Caliph Yazid II."

[149] Agapius, 505; Michael 11.XIX, 457/489; *Chron. 1234*, 1.308–309. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1296–97 (AH 103/721–22). Dionysius names the stronghold *shyẓā*, perhaps the Sision mentioned earlier by Theophanes, 372.

[150] Theophanes, 403; Agapius, 505; Michael 11.XIX, 457/490; *Chron. 1234*, 1.309. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1321–22 (Shaʻbān AH 105/January 724: death of Yazīd II); *Chron. Zuqnin*, 171, and *Chron. 819*, 16 (Hishām's building).

[151] Theophanes, 403; Agapius, 505, who alone gives the general's name.

Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik campaigned in Asia Minor and captured Cappadocian Caesarea.[153]

There was a severe plague in Syria.[154]

{656} Muʿāwiya ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor, but achieved nothing.[155]

[727] Muʿāwiya ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor; he captured Gangra in Paphlagonia and besieged Nicaea in Bithynia.[156]

[728] Muʿāwiya ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor and took the stronghold of Ateous.[157]

[730] The son of the Khagan, king of the Khazars, attacked Azerbaijan and other provinces. Jarrāḥ ibn ʿAbd Allāh, governor of Armenia, engaged him, but was defeated.[158]

Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik invaded the land of the Khazars. When they joined battle, many were killed on both sides; Maslama became fearful and withdrew.[159]

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[152] Theophanes, 404; Agapius, 506; Michael 11.XIX, 456–57/491. Theophanes is also using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §60, who makes Leo's decision a consequence of a volcanic eruption in the Aegean in the summer of indiction 9/726).

[153] Theophanes, 404; Agapius, 506; Michael 11.XIX, 457/490; *Chron. 1234*, 1.309. The latter three (and *Chron. 819*, 17, AG 1037) speak of Neocaesarea in Pontus, but Cappadocian Caesarea must be meant. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 171 (AG 1040); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1361 (summer AH 108/726). Khalīfa, 337, and Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 164, agree on AH 107/725.

[154] Theophanes, 404; Agapius, 506; Michael 11.XIX, 456/491. Cf. *Chron. 819*, 16 (AG 1036).

[155] Theophanes, 404; Agapius, 506. CS records six occasions on which Muʿāwiya led a campaign into Asia Minor; Muslim sources have him do so every year AH 107–18/725–36. When some specific place was attacked (Gangra and Nicaea, Kharsianon), it is possible to match up CS and the Muslim sources, but otherwise it is uncertain.

[156] Theophanes, 405–406; Agapius, 506; Michael 11.XXI, 462–63/501; *Chron. 1234*, 1.310. Theophanes, drawing on a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §61), mentions a certain *Amer* with Muʿāwiya; Muslim sources speak of ʿAbd Allāh al-Baṭṭāl, who may perhaps have had the forename ʿAmr/Āmir/ʿUmayr (or the Greek source may have understood the title *amir* as a name). Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1374 (AH 109/727). Khalīfa, 338, and Elias of Nisibis, *Chronicle*, 164, agree on AH 108, but since Nicephorus places it in the summer after the eruption of 726, then 109/727 seems more likely.

[157] Theophanes, 407; *Chron. 1234*, 1.309. Only Theophanes names the place, which Arab sources variously render as *Ghaṭāsīn* (Khalīfa, 339, AH 109), *Atāsīn* (Ibn Khurdadhbih, *Masālik*, 103) and *Ṭīna*/*Ṭība* (Ṭabarī, 2.1495).

[158] Theophanes, 407; Agapius, 506; Michael 11.XXI, 462/501; *Chron. 1234*, 1.309–10. Cf. also *Chron. Zuqnin*, 169–70 (AG 1043); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1416 (AH 112/730).

Mu'āwiya ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor and took the stronghold of Kharsianon.[160]

{657} [731–32] Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik marched against the Turks and withdrew after reaching the Caspian gates.[161]

Leo betrothed the daughter of the Khagan to his son Constantine and had her baptised.[162]

Mu'āwiya ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor reaching as far as paphlagonia, and he took many prisoners.[163]

Hishām appointed Marwān ibn Muḥammad as governor of Armenia.[164]

[733] There was a plague in Syria.[165]

Mu'āwiya ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor.[166]

There was a sign in the sky which shone like a flame/sword of fire.[167]

[735] Sulaymān ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor, but returned without having achieved anything.[168]

[737] Mu'āwiya ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor; on the return he fell off his horse and died.[169]

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[159] Theophanes, 407; Agapius, 507; Michael 11.XXI, 462/501; *Chron. 1234*, 1.310. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 168–69 (AG 1042); *Chron. 819*, 17 (AG 1039); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1416 (winter AH 112/730); Khalīfa, 343 (Shawwāl 112/December 730).

[160] Theophanes, 409; Agapius, 507; Michael 11.XXI, 463/501. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1417, and Khalīfa, 343 (summer AH 112/730). Theophanes wrongly names the general as Maslama.

[161] Theophanes, 409; Agapius, 507; Michael 11.XXI, 462/501. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 169, 170 (AG 1043); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1428, 1438 (AH 113/731, 114/732).

[162] Theophanes, 409–10; Agapius, 507; Michael 11.XXI, 463/501; *Chron. 1234*, 1.310. Cf. Nicephorus, §63.

[163] Theophanes, 410; Agapius, 507; *Chron. 1234*, 1.310. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1439 (AH 114/732); Khalīfa, 345 (AH 114), 346 (AH 115: *intahā ilā Aflājūniya*, presumably Paphlagonia).

[164] Agapius, 507; *Chron. 1234*, 1.310. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1438, and Khalīfa, 345 (AH 114/732).

[165] Theophanes, 410; Michael 11.XXI, 463/504 (AG 1040). Cf. also Caetani, *Chron.*, 1450 (AH 115/733). Agapius, 508, mentions a plague in Palestine and Egypt.

[166] Theophanes, 410; Agapius, 507; *Chron 1234*, 1.310. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1450 (AH 115/733).

[167] Theophanes, 410; Agapius, 508; Michael 11.XXII, 465/507.

[168] Theophanes, 410; *Chron. 1234*, 1.310. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1471 (AH 117/735).

[169] Theophanes, 410; Agapius, 508; *Chron. 1234*, 1.310. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1502 (AH 119/737); but Khalīfa, 353, has Mu'āwiya campaign for a last time in AH 122/740.

A prisoner from Paphlagonia claimed he was Tiberius, son of Justinian, and this was reported to Sulaymān ibn Hishām, who passed it on to his father. In order to raise his son's standing with the Arabs and to terrify the Byzantine emperor, Hishām had the pretender clothed in **{658}** royal garb and ordered him to tour Syria and Mesopotamia for all to see him.[170]

[738] Sulaymān ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor and captured the stronghold of Sideron.[171]

[739] Maslama ibn ʿAbd al-Malik campaigned in Asia Minor and took many prisoners; Hishām went to Melitene.[172]

[740] Zayd ibn ʿAlī revolted at Kufa.[173]

The inhabitants of Africa rose in revolt and killed their governor.[174]

Sulaymān ibn Hishām campaigned in Asia Minor with Ghamr ibn Yazīd, Malik ibn Shuʿayb and ʿAbd Allāh al-Battāl. The latter two were killed and their forces routed.[175]

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[170] Theophanes, 411; Michael 11.XXI, 462–63/503–504; *Chron. 1234*, 1.311–12. Dionysius of Tellmaḥre calls the pretender Bishr; Theophanes, 402, 405, mentions a certain Beser, a Christian prisoner in Syria who had become a Muslim, then approached the emperor and become his ally in the promotion of iconoclasm. Scholars usually identify the two, but they have different origins (Pergamum and Paphlagonia) and different deaths (*Chron. 1234*, 1.312: crucifixion at Edessa by Sulaymān; Theophanes, 414: slain by the sword of the general Artabasdus), so Dionysius may have confused two accounts, wrongly associating the Paphlagonian with Beser.

[171] Theophanes, 411; Agapius, 508; *Chron. 1234*, 1.312. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 171–72 (AG 1045); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1511 (AH 120/738).

[172] Agapius, 508; *Chron. 1234*, 1.312. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1524, and Khalīfa, 352 (AH 121/739).

[173] Agapius, 509; *Chron. 1234*, 1.312. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1531–32 (AH 122/740). The report of Theophanes, 412, that "the markets in Damascus were burned by the Iraqis," may have some connection with this.

[174] Theophanes, 411; Agapius, 509. This refers to the great Berber revolt which began in AH 122/740 (Caetani, *Chron.*, 1536–37) and in the course of which the governor Kulthūm ibn ʿIyāḍ al-Qushayrī was killed in AH 123 or 124 (*ibid.*, 1553, 1561; Khalīfa, 354–56). As is implied by Theophanes, who refers to him as *Damaskenos*, Kulthum was a Syrian and had been governor of Damascus for Hishām (Crone, *Slaves on Horses*, 128).

[175] Theophanes, 411; Agapius, 509. Agapius says that plague and famine depleted the Arabs' numbers and prompted some to flee to the Byzantines and become Christians. Theophanes gives a detailed account, probably from a Byzantine source (one cannot be sure since it is not transmitted by Nicephorus); he dates the campaign to May of the eighth indiction, namely 740. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 172 (AG 1046); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1534, and Khalīfa, 353 (AH 122/740).

{659} Heavy rains caused flooding and the walls of Edessa were breached.[176]

There was a severe earthquake at Constantinople.[177]

Hishām received a false report that Leo had killed all the Arab prisoners held in Byzantine lands and so, without checking, ordered that all the Byzantine captives in his realm be killed. Among them was Eustathius son of Marianus, who was held at Ḥarran.[178]

[741] Leo died; his son Constantine reigned after him.[179]

There was civil war between Constantine and the pretender Artabasdus.[180]

[742] Sulaymān ibn Hishām took advantage of the Byzantines' involvement to raid Paphlagonia and he took many prisoners.[181]

[743] Hishām died and his nephew Walīd ibn Yazīd succeeded him. Both Constantine and the rebel Artabasdus sent envoys to him seeking favour.[182]

There was a drought and famine, and also an earthquake in the desert of Saba during which villages were swallowed up.[183]

{660} In Yemen monkeys attacked people, drove them from their dwellings and killed many.[184]

Ghamr ibn Yazīd campaigned in Asia Minor.[185]

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[176] Theophanes, 412; Agapius, 509; Michael 11.XXI, 463/504–505; *Chron. 1234*, 1.312. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 176–77 (AG 1054).

[177] Agapius, 509; Michael 11.XXI, 463/504. Theophanes, 412, is using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §63).

[178] Theophanes, 414; Michael 11.XXI, 463/501; *Chron. 1234*, 1.313. Dionysius says that many were unsure whether those killed could be considered true martyrs or not.

[179] Agapius, 509; Michael 11.XXI, 463/502; *Chron. 1234*, 1.313. Theophanes, 412–13, uses a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §64), which gives the date of Leo's death as 18 June, ninth indiction/741.

[180] Agapius, 510; Michael 11.XXI, 463/502; *Chron. 1234*, 1.313–14. Theophanes, 414–15, is using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §64); Dionysius gives a fairly full account, but Agapius is extremely brief.

[181] Theophanes, 415; Agapius, 510. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1558–59 (AH 124/742). Agapius, 509, mentions two earlier raids of Sulaymān, which were both disastrous, one ending in the defection to Byzantium and conversion to Christianity of a large number of his men.

[182] Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 510; Michael 11.XXI, 463/502; *Chron. 1234*, 1.314. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1573–74, 1583 (Rabīʿ II AH 125/February 743). Dionysius gives here a notice on ʿAbbās ibn al-Walīd, claiming that he coveted the caliphate for himself.

[183] Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 510; Michael 11.XXII, 464–65/506–507; *Chron. 1234*, 1.314. By Saba is meant Sheba, south Arabia.

[184] Agapius, 511; Michael 11.XXII, 465/507.

In June there appeared a sign in the sky in the form of three columns and like a flame of fire; then it was seen again in September.[186]

The metropolitan of Damascus was accused before Walīd of blaspheming the Arab faith, and Walīd ordered his tongue cut out and that he be exiled to Yemen.[187]

Walīd resettled the inhabitants of Cyprus in Syria.[188]

In January a sign appeared in the sky in the shape of a moon, and from March to April dust filled the atmosphere with darkness.[189]

[744] Yazīd "the deficient" went in secret to Damascus and took it, and from the royal treasury distributed money to his followers. He then sent troops under the command of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Ḥajjāj to fight with the caliph Walīd, whom they killed at Tadmur (Palmyra). His head was put on a lance and paraded around Damascus. Yazīd also imprisoned the latter's sons, ʿUthmān and Ḥakam.[190]

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[185] Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 511, who wrongly gives the name of the general as ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1575 (AH 125/743).

[186] Theophanes, 416; Agapius, 511; Michael 11.XXII, 465/507; *Chron. 1234*, 1.314.

[187] Theophanes, 416; Michael 11.XXII, 464/506; *Chron. 1234*, 1.314. See the entry on "Peter of Capitolias" in Chapter 9 above.

[188] Theophanes, 417; Agapius, 511, who specifies "*al-Māḥūr*, which is on the sea coast between Tyre and Sidon" (Sauvaget, "Notes de topographie omeyyade," 97–98, says this is *al-Māḥūz*, just north of Beirut, where an inscription was found, probably commemorating the building by Walīd II of a town for these emigrants). Cf. Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 154 ("because of some matter he suspected them of"); Ṭabarī, 2.1769 (AH 125), who says the Cypriots were given a choice of going to Syria or Byzantium.

[189] Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 511; Michael 11.XXII, 465/507; *Chron. 1234*, 1.314. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 195 (AG 1054).

[190] Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 511–12; Michael 11.XXI, 463–64/502; *Chron. 1234*, 1.315–16. The latter says that when the revolt broke out, Walīd was revelling at the fortress of Bakhra' near Tadmur, but Muslim sources say he only went there after he had heard of Yazīd's capture of Damascus (Ṭabarī, 2.1796–97). CS makes ʿAbbas ibn al-Walīd instrumental in the revolt of his brother Yazīd (Theophanes, 421; Michael 11.XXI, 463–64/502; *Chron. 1234*, 1.315), whereas Muslim sources have him dissuading Yazīd from rebellion and only joining him once Walīd's defeat was imminent (Ṭabarī, 2.1784–85, 1787, 1797–99). *Chron. 1234* also makes Abrash, brother of Yazīd and ʿAbbās, a participant in the plot against Walīd, which again is unknown to Muslim sources, except that he appears to go over to Yazīd when Walīd's defeat is imminent (Ṭabarī, 2.1805; though cf. 2.1896). The parading of Walīd's head around Damascus is confirmed by Muslim sources, which date his death to Thursday, 27 Jumādā II AH 126/16 April 744 (Caetani, *Chron.*, 1595–96, 1608). Theophanes alone of Christian sources gives this same day and date, probably inserted by the continuator of CS.

{661} When they heard of the killing of Walīd, confusion arose among the Arabs.[191]

Marwān ibn Muḥammad left Armenia for Mesopotamia, seeking to avenge the blood of Walīd.[192]

After reigning five months Yazīd III died, leaving his brother Ibrāhīm as his successor in Damascus.[193]

Marwān came to Ḥarran claiming that he was fighting on behalf of the sons of Walīd. Hearing of his coming, Ibrāhīm sent ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Ḥajjāj to subdue Ḥimṣ and Masrūr to reinforce his brother Bishr in Aleppo. Marwān captured Aleppo and took prisoner Masrūr and Bishr. On learning of this, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz withdrew from Ḥimṣ.[194]

{662} The Ḥimṣis welcomed and gave allegiance to Marwān when he arrived at their city. The latter then marched on Damascus, but was met by Sulaymān ibn Hishām, who had been sent by Ibrahim. The two sides met by the river Litani near ʿAyn al-Jarr. By a ploy Marwān defeated Sulaymān and killed 12,000 of his men.[195]

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[191] Agapius, 512; Michael 11.XXI, 464/503; *Chron. 1234*, 1.316. The latter is more explicit, narrating how the people of Ḥimṣ refused allegiance to Yazīd (thus Ṭabarī, 2.1826–31) and listing the various rebels and power-brokers in the Muslim realm (also in Michael 11.XXI, 464/502–503): in the West, Yazīd ibn al-Walīd, *Sksy* (perhaps Muʿāwiyaal-Saksakī) and Sulaymān ibn Hishām; in Mesopotamia, Bistām al-Bayhasī; in Moṣul, Saʿīd ibn Bahdal, head of the *Mūrgāyē* (this better describes Ibn Surayj, whereas Ibn Bahdal was a Kharijite); in Persia, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar (governor of Iraq for Yazīd III); in Armenia, Marwān ibn Muḥammad; in Khurasan, Ḥārith ibn Surayj; in Africa, Abū Hudhayl.

[192] Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 512; *Chron. 1234*, 1.317.

[193] Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 513; Michael 11.XXI, 464/503; *Chron. 1234*, 1.316–17. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1609 (Dhū l-Ḥijja AH 126/September–October 744). Dionysius says that Yazīd died of a brain tumour and that Ibrāhīm was of good repute, but was unable to establish his rule because of Marwān, "the most wicked of all men, perverse and devoid of all compassion." From here until the end of CS, Michael only gives a very abbreviated account of Muslim affairs.

[194] Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 513; *Chron. 1234*, 1.317. This is the account of Agapius, which is the same as that related by Khalīfa, 372–73, and Ṭabarī, 2.1876–77 (though Agapius has made Bishr and Masrūr sons of Ḥajjāj ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, whereas they were sons of Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik and so brothers of Yazīd III and Ibrāhīm). *Chron. 1234*, 1.317, has Masrūr besieging Ḥimṣ instead of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and says that Masrūr was routed by Marwān's son ʿUbayd Allāh.

[195] Theophanes, 418; Agapius, 513–14; Michael 11.XXII, 464/505; *Chron. 1234*, 1.317, Theophanes mentions 20,000 dead rather than 12,000; Michael locates the battle "on the banks of the Euphrates." Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 189; Caetani, *Chron.*, 1617–18 (7 Safar AH 127/18 November 744).

Sulaymān escaped with his retinue to Damascus and then fled to Ruṣafa with much money from the treasury. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Ḥajjāj entered the prison and killed the two sons of Walīd ibn Yazīd, but was himself killed when the inhabitants of the city set fire to his house.[196]

Marwān marched on Damascus, and its inhabitants opened the gates and gave allegiance to him. He ordered Yazīd's body to be exhumed and hung up, and he mutilated, killed or exiled those who had been involved in the murder of Walīd. He had the monies of the imperial treasury collected and transferred to Ḥarran.[197]

Constantine entered Constantinople and had the rebel Artabasdus killed.[198]

[745] In January a great comet appeared in Syria.[199]

Thābit ibn Nuʿaym rebelled in the West, and in Kufa there was the revolt of Ḍaḥḥāk the Kharijite.[200]

{663} {Marwān allowed the Christians of the East to take Theophylact bar Qanbara as the patriarch of Antioch.}[201]

When the winter had passed, Marwān set out from Ḥarran. He received messages from Ibrāhīm and Sulaymān ibn Hishām seeking peace and security, and he granted them that.[202]

Marwān crossed the Euphrates and marched against Thābit. On learning of this, the latter went and encamped at Tiberias. As Marwān approached Ḥimṣ, one of its inhabitants rallied together his fellow tribesmen of Kalb and revolted, but

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196 Theophanes, 418–19; Agapius, 514, 515; *Chron. 1234*, 1.317–18. Theophanes says that Sulaymān killed the sons of Walīd; Khalīfa, 373, and Ṭabarī, 2.1878–79, say the decision was taken by a number of leading men, including Sulaymān and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, and the murder carried out by Yazīd ibn Khālid ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Qasrī or his client.

197 Theophanes, 419; Agapius, 514–15; Michael 11.XXII, 464/505; *Chron. 1234*, 1.318, Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 190 (transfer of treasury); Caetani, *Chron.*, 1617–18 (26 Ṣafar AH 127/7 December 744: Marwān proclaimed caliph).

198 Agapius, 515; Michael 11.XXII, 465/506. Theophanes, 419–21, is using a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §66), which dates Constantine's recapture of Constantinople to 2 November of the twelfth indiction/743.

199 Theophanes, 421; Agapius, 515; Michael 11.XXII, 465/507–508. Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets*, 294, confirms that there was a comet in January 745.

200 Theophanes, 421; Agapius, 515–16; *Chron. 1234*, 1.318–19, 319. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1615, 1618–19 (AH 127/745).

201 Theophanes, 421; Michael 11.XXII, 467/511. The two accounts are different (e.g. Michael relates at length Theophylact's dealings with the Maronites) and so may be from different sources.

202 Agapius, 515, 517 (misplaced); *Chron. 1234*, 1.320. Cf. Khalīfa, 374, and Ṭabarī, 2.1893 (AH 127).

Marwān defeated them, ordered that their slain be crucified and breached a part of the city walls.[203]

The Tiberians fought with Thābit and killed many of his men. He fled with a few followers and his sons to Sinai, but they were captured by the troops of Marwān; they had their right hand and left foot amputated and were then crucified on the Jabiya gate of Damascus.[204]

Marwān left Damascus for Circesium. Sulaymān ibn Hishām asked if he could rest with his troops at Ruṣafa, but while Marwān was at Circesium Sulaymān revolted against him with the Arabs of Syria. Hearing of this, Marwān set out to meet him and when they came together, Sulaymān was defeated and 7000 of his men killed, and he himself fled to Tadmur in the desert.[205]

A number of Sulaymān's followers took refuge in a fortress of his on the Euphrates. Marwān sent troops to subdue them and had them mutilated; they numbered about 400.[206]

[746] The inhabitants of Ḥimṣ revolted once more against Marwān and repaired the breach in the wall made by the caliph. He besieged **{664}** them for four months, at the end of which hunger forced them to submit to him.[207]

Marwān sent part of his army with his son ʿAbd Allāh to Nisibis, since he had heard that Ḍaḥḥāk was proceeding there from Kufa; another part he sent with Yazīd ibn ʿUmar ibn Hubayra to Circesium; and he gave instructions that whichever of them did not meet Ḍaḥḥāk should go and take Iraq.[208]

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[203] Theophanes, 421; Agapius, 516; Michael 11.XXII, 465/505; *Chron. 1234*, 1.320. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1618–19 (summer AH 127/745).

[204] Agapius, 516–17; *Chron. 1234*, 1.320. Cf. Ṭabarī, 2.1894–96 (AH 127).

[205] Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 517; *Chron. 1234*, 1.320–21. All three give the figure of 7000. The detail of Sulaymān asking to rest at Ruṣafa is given only by Agapius, but corroborated by Ṭabarī, 2.1897, 1908.

[206] Agapius, 517–18; *Chron. 1234*, 1.321. Cf. Ṭabarī, 2.1909–11.

[207] Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 518, 519; Michael 11.XXII, 465/505; *Chron. 1234*, 1.320. Dionysius has conflated this revolt of the Ḥimṣis with the previous one. Theophanes and Dionysius give the length of the siege as four months; this fits well with Agapius' statement that the siege was begun in spring and with Wāqidī's assertion (in Ṭabarī, 2.1942) that Ḥimṣ was taken in Shawwāl 128 AH/July 746 (though *ibid.*, 2.1912, says the siege lasted ten months).

[208] Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 518; *Chron. 1234*, 1.321. The latter two have much the same account for the events of the Abbasid revolution (from the killing of Walīd II to the accession of Abū l-ʿAbbās), and from this point on they also frequently have much the same phrasing.

Ḍaḥḥāk marched on Moṣul and killed its governor, then went and besieged Nisibis. So Ibn Ḥubayra went to Iraq, killed the followers and family of Ḍaḥḥāk and subjugated all the East.[209]

Taking advantage of this infighting among the Arabs, the emperor made an incursion into Syria, reaching as far as Duluk, and returned with many prisoners.[210]

From the tenth to the fifteenth of August it was dark and gloomy, but it was not an eclipse.[211]

Marwān proceeded to Nisibis to meet Ḍaḥḥāk, with whom was Sulaymān ibn Hishām and his followers. A battle took place between Resh'aina and Kafartuta; many were killed on both sides, including Ḍaḥḥāk. The Kharijites then chose as their leader Khaybarī, who made a sudden attack on Marwān's camp, slaying many of his men. Marwān **{665}** himself would have been killed had not his son 'Abd Allāh returned with his troops and killed Khaybarī and his men.[212]

[746–47] The Kharijites elected as their leader a man named Shaybān and they then marched to Moṣul. Marwān followed them and skirmished with them for a few months by the Tigris, after which time the Kharijites withdrew. Marwān sent 'Āmir ibn Dubāra to pursue them and returned himself to Ḥarran.[213]

In January there was a violent earthquake along the Palestinian littoral.[214]

A man named Abū Muslim began to preach revolt and won many over to his ideas. He had fourteen close followers; they wore black, practised asceticism, let their hair grow long and showed partisanship for the descendants of Muḥammad.

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[209] Agapius, 519; *Chron. 1234*, 1.321. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1634–35, and Khalīfa, 378–79, 382–83 (AH 128/746).

[210] Theophanes, 422 (*Doulichia*); Agapius, 519 (*Dlwk*). Theophanes adds that he took Germanicea (thus also Nicephorus, §67; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 189).

[211] Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 520. Both writers then say that Marwān demolished the walls of certain cities (the former names these as Heliopolis, Damascus and Jerusalem; the latter refers to Ḥimṣ and Heliopolis, agreeing with Michael 11.XXII, 465/505).

[212] Theophanes, 422 (very brief); Agapius, 520; *Chron. 1234*, 1.321–22. The latter says that the battle between Khaybarī and Marwān occurred on 6 October, presumably in 746 (at the beginning of AH 129); Ḍaḥḥāk's siege of Nisibis must have taken place at the end of AH 128 (Khalīfa, 378, says it lasted about two months). This would explain why Muslim chroniclers place Marwān's dealings with the Kharijites in either AH 128 or 129. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 190–91 (AG 1058).

[213] Agapius, 521; Michael 11.XXII, 465/505 (only an allusion); *Chron. 1234*, 1.322–23. Agapius says the skirmishing lasted two months, *Chron. 1234* says eight, Ṭabarī, 2.1944, says six.

[214] Theophanes, 422; Agapius, 521. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 191 (AG 1059). It is not clear whether this is a confusion with the great earthquake of 749 or an earlier tremor.

Many of the people of Khurasan joined them and they became a big party. They gave allegiance to Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad.[215]

[749] When Marwān heard of this, he sent ʿĀmir ibn Ḍubāra against them. He met the Khurasanis near Iṣfahan, but was defeated and killed.[216]

Ibn Hubayra gathered a large army and camped near Ctesiphon. When the Khurasanis came and engaged with him, he fled to a place between the Tigris and Euphrates. The Khurasanis marched after him, **{666}** but he went and shut himself in Wasiṭ, where he had already collected much wealth and goods. The Khurasanis then plundered his camp.[217]

The family of Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad were all at Kufa when Marwān sent troops to capture Ibrāhīm, who was then emprisoned at Ḥarran. He died in prison, having designated his brother ʿAbd Allāh, called Abū l-ʿAbbās, as his successor. Abū Salama came to the latter in his refuge at Kufa and, together with the Khurasanis present, proclaimed him caliph.[218]

When Abū l-ʿAbbas became king, he sent a part of the army of the Khurasanis with Abū ʿAwn to Assyria, and a part with Ḥasan ibn Qaḥṭaba against Ibn Hubayra in Wasiṭ. Hearing of this, Marwān despatched his son ʿAbd Allāh to Assyria to engage the Khurasanis and ʿUbayd Allāh, his other son, to Circesium.[219]

{There was a severe earthquake in Syria, Jordan and Palestine.}[220]

[750] A son was born to the emperor Constantine from the daughter of the Khagan, king of the Khazars, and he named him Leo.[221]

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[215] Agapius, 521–22; *Chron. 1234*, 1.323–24, which also gives information on Abū Muslim's early career. From this point on the continuator of CS, used by Theophanes for eastern affairs, seems to add new material.

[216] Agapius, 522; Michael 11.XXII, 465/505 (only an allusion and misapplied to Marwān); *Chron. 1234*, 1.324. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1680–81 (Rajab AH 131/March 749: battle of Jabalq).

[217] Agapius, 522–23; *Chron. 1234*, 1.324. Cf. Ṭabarī, 3.11–18 (end AH 131 and beginning of 132/summer 749).

[218] Agapius, 523; *Chron. 1234*, 1.324–25. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1695–96 (autumn AH 132/749: Abū l-ʿAbbās proclaimed caliph).

[219] Agapius, 523; *Chron. 1234*, 1.325.

[220] This is related by Dionysius (in Michael 11.XXII, 466–67/508–10, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.326–28) at great length, and by Theophanes, 426, from a different source. Agapius and Theophanes have an earlier mention of an earthquake, which may be distinct from this one (see above under the year 747).

[221] Theophanes, 426; Michael 11.XXII, 465/506; *Chron. 1234*, 1.325. The wording is almost the same in each case, but the notice is too short to be sure of a common source. Theophanes dates this to 25 January of the third indiction/750.

Abū l-ʿAbbās sent his elder brother ʿAbd Allāh, called Abū Jaʿfar, to join the Khurasanis with Ibn Qaḥṭaba and to take command, and he sent his uncle ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī to join the Khurasanis with Abū ʿAwn and to take command. Abū Jaʿfar proceeded to Wasiṭ and found Ibn Qaḥṭaba besieging it, but avoiding combat. So Abū Jaʿfar urged an assault upon the city, and there was a protracted battle.[222]

Marwān assembled the troops of Syria and headed for Assyria. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī came with the Khurasanis and encamped on the river **{667}** Zab; ʿAbd Allāh ibn Marwān also arrived there and camped on the west bank facing ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī. Neither side sought an engagement, waiting for the arrival of Marwān. When he came, he ordered his son to cross the river and camp on the east bank, and to encircle his camp with a ditch. Marwān himself camped on the west bank, constructed a bridge over the Zab and prepared his troops, both cavalry and infantry, for battle. When the two sides came together, Marwān found the Khurasanis like a solid wall. The battle was protracted and eventually the Syrians lost heart and fled, pursued by their opponents. Many were drowned in the river, others were cut down or taken prisoner by the Khurasanis. The latter plundered the camp of Marwān, who himself fled with his son to Ḥarran.[223]

The rule now passed from the family of Umayya to the family of Hāshim, and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad, who is Abū l-ʿAbbās, began to reign.[224]

Marwān assembled his family and clients and loaded his possessions on 3000 camels, then crossed the Euphrates and went to Ascalon. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī marched on Ḥarran and ordered the destruction of Marwān's palaces there, then he handed over the government of Mesopotamia to Musa ibn Kaʿb and set off in pursuit of Marwān.[225]

Wher Walīd ibn Muʿāwiya ibn Marwān, who was at Damascus, heard of the approach of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī, he fortified himself in the city as he had been commissioned to do by Marwān, who hoped thereby to win tine to rally troops. ʿAbd Allāh set about besieging Damascus and placed ladders against the walls. The supporters of Walīd strove against those trying to scale the walls, but the soldiers of ʿAbd Allāh eventually entered and initiated a great slaughter for three

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[222] Agapius, 523–24; *Chron. 1234*, 1.328.

[223] Agapius, 524–26; Michael 11.XXII, 465/505–506; *Chron. 1234*, 1.328–30; Theophanes, 425. Agapius and *Chron. 1234* specify Saturday, 24 January AH 132 (read *sabʿ* not *tsʿ* in Agapius for days of month remaining). Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 194; Caetani, *Chron.*, 1698–99 (Jumada II 132/January 750). Agapius adds that his principal source is Theophilus of Edessa.

[224] Agapius, 526; *Chron. 1234*, 1.330.

[225] Agapius, 526; Michael 11.XXIV, 471/517; *Chron. 1234*, 1.330. Cf. Theophanes, 425: "Taking all the money, his household as well as 3000 servants, he fled to Egypt."

hours until **{668}** ordered to stop by ʿAbd Allāh. Walīd was among those killed, along with a great number of Jews and Christians.[226]

Abū l-ʿAbbās sent his uncle Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī with a large army and ordered him to proceed through the desert of Qadash until he reached his (Ṣāliḥ's) brother ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī, then to proceed together against Marwān. When the latter learnt of what had been done to Walīd and Damascus, he lost hope and fled with a few of his family and clients to Egypt, making his way down the Nile to Nubia. Ṣāliḥ sent a part of his army with ʿĀmir ibn Ismāʿīl to pursue Marwān more swiftly. ʿAmir found him encamped on the bank of the Nile, and he attacked him by night. Marwān's men fled and he himself climbed a hill and kept fighting until his death. His two sons, ʿAbd Allāh and ʿUbayd Allāh, fled; the latter went to Abyssinia and perished there; the former crossed the Red Sea and took refuge in Mecca. ʿAmir took Marwān's body and wealth to Ṣāliḥ in Fusṭaṭ. He had the corpse crucified and sent the head to Abū l-ʿAbbās.[227]

ʿAbd Allāh, who is called Abū Jaʿfar, remained besieging Wasiṭ. The situation became desperate for the inhabitants, and they asked Ibn Hubayra to leave. The latter negotiated with Abū Jaʿfar, who promised him and his troops security. However, when he entered the city, Abū Jaʿfar killed Ibn Hubayra and demolished the city walls, then returned with the news to his brother Abū l-ʿAbbas.[228]

Abū l-ʿAbbās had built for himself a city on the Euphrates; he called it Anbar and installed himself and his household there.[229]

ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī fixed his camp in Palestine. He invited 70 men of the Umayyads to appear before him. He had previously given them **{669}** guarantees of safety, but now he ordered them to be beaten to death with iron bars. He sent their heads to Abū l-ʿAbbās, seized their wealth and sought out the others of their family.[230]

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[226] Agapius, 527; *Chron. 1234*. Ṭabarī, 3.48, dates this to Ramaḍān AH 132/April–May 750, and confirms that the fighting inside the city lasted for three hours.

[227] Agapius, 527, 528–29; Michael 11.XXIV, 471/517; *Chron. 1234*, 1.331–32. Agapius breaks up the report by returning to the siege of Ibn Hubayra in Wasiṭ. Cf. Caetani, *Chron.*, 1700–1702 (Dhū l–Ḥijja AH 132/August 750: death of Marwān).

[228] Agapius, 527–28; *Chron. 1234*, 1.332. Ṭabarī, 3.66, says: "They did not ask for peace until the news of the killing of Marwān reached them."

[229] Agapius, 528; *Chron. 1234*, 1.332. The latter adds that it was to the west of Baghdad; since in 750 Baghdad had not yet been built, one assumes that this is a comment of Dionysius. On the Abbasid capital before Baghdad see *EI²*, *s.v.* "al-Hāshimiyya."

[230] Agapius, 529; *Chron. 1234*, 1.333. This conforms very closely to Muslim accounts, especially in Agapius (though he has Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī instead of ʿAbd Allāh). E.g. Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, 2.425–26: *aqāma* (*ʿAbd Allāh*) *ʿalā raʾs kull rajul minhum* (the Umayyads) *rajulayn bi-l-*

[750–51] When the Arabs of Syria saw that Abū l-ʿAbbās had subjected them to shame and to the domination and depradation of foreigners, they were angered and many rebelled: a Qaysī named Ḥabīb ibn Murra around Ramla, another Qaysī named Abūl-Ward in Syria, in Mesopotamia Manṣūr ibn Jaʿwana and Isḥāq ibn Muslim al-ʿUqaylī.[231]

Constantine attacked Melitene and took many prisoners. The Romans also ravaged Armenia and led off many of its inhabitants as captives.[232]

Abū l-ʿAbbās had brought whatever was in the royal treasury at Ḥarran to the city which he had built. He appointed Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī over Egypt and neighbouring countries; ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī over Syria, Palestine and Phoenicia; Abū Jaʿfar over Mesopotamia and Armenia; Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad over Moṣul and its province. This latter, when he arrived at Moṣul, gathered together the Arab chiefs of the region and had them massacred.[233]

{670} [754] Constantine convened a council of bishops in Constantinople to examine the question of images. The council decreed that images should not be worshipped and anathematised those who championed them.[234]

Abū Jaʿfar and Abū Muslim went on pilgrimage to Mecca.[235]

Abū l-ʿAbbās instructed ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī to campaign in Asia Minor.[236]

ʿumud; Agapius: *aqāma ʿinda raʾs kull wāḥid minhum rajulayn min abnāʾ Khurāsān bi-aydayhim al-ʿumud al-ḥadīd.*

[231] Agapius, 529–31; *Chron. 1234*, 1.333–35; Theophanes, 427. These rebellions occupied late AH 132 and much of 133/autumn 750–summer 751. Cf. *Chron. Zuqnin*, 195–97 (AG 1061–62); Ṭabarī, 3.52–58; Balādhurī, *Futuh*, 192 (on Manṣūr ibn Jaʿwana). Dionysius (in Michael 11.XXIV, 471–72/518–20, and *Chron. 1234*, 1.335–36) then gives an account of an incident which caused consternation in the camp of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAIī, namely the apparition of eight men above their graves, some of whom had their beards died with henna, "as it is the custom of the Arabs to do."

[232] Theophanes, 427; Agapius, 531; Michael 11.XXIV, 472/518; *Chron. 1234*, 1.336–37. Theophanes seems to have this notice from CS (Nicephorus, §70, mentions the capture of Melitene, but not Armenia), though it is too brief to be sure; he later says that Constantine resettled these captives in Thrace. Cf. Khalīfa, 410 (AH 133/751).

[233] Agapius, 532; *Chron. 1234*, 1.338–39. *Chron. 1234* gives much detail, which agrees with the eyewitness reports provided by Azdī, *Taʾrīkh Mawṣil*, 145–53 (AH 133).

[234] Agapius, 533; Michael 11.XXIV, 472–73/520–21. All have a problem with the names of those anathematised. Theophanes, 427–28, gives us an accurate account drawn from a Byzantine source (cf. Nicephorus, §72), which states that the council met from 10 February to 8 August of the seventh indiction/754 and anathematised Germanus, John of Damascus and George of Cyprus.

[235] This is all *Chron. 1234*, 1.339, says; Agapius, 532–33, also recounts how Abū l-ʿAbbās took his brother aside and asked him to kill Abū Muslim if he got the chance (cf. Ṭabarī, 3.84–86).

While Abū Ja'far was in Mecca and 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī in Dabiq, Abū l-'Abbās died. Hearing of this, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī decided to take the caliphate for himself and had his Khurasani troops give allegiance to him. Abū Ja'far went to Kufa and was proclaimed caliph there, then he despatched Abū Muslim to fight 'Abd Allāh. The two sides met near Nisibis and 'Abd Allāh was defeated. Suspecting Abū Muslim of revolt, Abū Ja'far sent 'Īsa ibn Mūsā to him and he persuaded him with many promises and blandishments to come to Abū Ja'far. When Abū Muslim did so, the caliph had him killed in his presence.[237]

{671} There appeared a sign in the sky like a sword/lance stretching from east to west.[238]

[757] Abū Ja'far had Melitene rebuilt and garrisoned.[239]

Abū Ja'far had Theodosiopolis rebuilt and garrisoned.[240]

[760] The Arabs subdued Africa.[241]

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[236] Agapius, 533; *Chron. 1234*, 1.339.

[237] Theophanes, 428–29; Agapius, 533, 534–37; Michael 11.XXIV, 472–73/518; *Chron. 1234*, 1.339. Theophanes' account has many similarités with CS (e.g. he also places the battle between Abū Muslim and 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Alī near Nisibis), but the additional material he adduces suggests that again he has it via the continuator of CS. Agapius narrates events at length, whereas Dionysius substantially abbreviates them. Agapius says that Abū l-'Abbās died in June AH 136/754 (thus Ṭabarī, 3.88). Hereafter the content of *Chron. 1234* changes noticeably. The actions of Muslim authorities are still noted, but only very briefly (e.g. "Abū Ja'far built a city on the Tigris above Ctesiphon and called it Baghdad") or only insofar as they impinged upon the Christian population (e.g. the harsh policies of Mūsā ibn Muṣ'ab, governor of Mesopotamia); there is no longer any concern with internal Muslim politics. It is likely, then, that CS stops at this point, with the consolidation of the rule of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr. For completeness I shall, however, note the coincidences that seem still to occur in a few notices of Michael and Agapius.

[238] Agapius, 536; Michael 11.XXIV, 472/520.

[239] Agapius, 538; Michael 11.XXIV, 473–74/522. Cf. Khalīfa, 418 (AH 140/757).

[240] Agapius, 539; Michael 11.XXIV, 474/522.

[241] Agapius, 539; Michael 11.XXIV, 474/522. Agapius says that in charge of this expedition against Africa was Ash'ath, that is, Muḥammad ibn al-Ash'ath al-Khuzā'ī, governor of Egypt AH 141–43/758–60. The reference is presumably to the defeat of Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Ibāḍī by Ibn al-Ash'ath in AH 143/760 (Khalīfa, 420).

EXCURSUS D: THE PASSION OF DAVID OF DWIN

Translated and annotated by Professor Robert W. Thomson[1]

{672} This man, called Surhan, was by race from the Tajik[2] nation, famous and [descended] from great ancestors on his father's side. Now during the time of the principate of the great Hamazasp *curopalates*, son of Davit'[3] the blessed martyr of Christ had arrived in this land of Armenia with a Tajik army, in the province of Ayrarat, in the canon of Kotayk'.[4] He travelled about through villages and towns, and saw the rites of Christians and their decent and pious way of life. He decided on a beautiful plan, through the supernal gift [and] influence of the Holy Spirit that was always in his heart, and he remained by day and night in the true faith in Christ. From then on he separated himself from all his own [people] in order to gain Christ, that he might be saved through Him and be freed from servitude to corruption by renewal and the second birth in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. He desired the illumination of the font in order to drown the invisible **{673}** Pharaoh in the water of the baptism of the font. And he looked with supplication to catechism in order to linger no more in servitude. This took place in the time of Anastas, the Armenian catholicos (662–68), and in the principate of Armenia of the renowned Grigor Mamikonian, *patrik* (661–85).

Since Surhan was much befriended and respected by many [people], Grigor, prince of Armenia, presented Surhan to the catholicos Anastas so that he might baptise him. With great joy and very happy delight he baptised him by the purification of the font in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. On him Grigor *patrik* bestowed his own father's name, calling him Davit', through the patriarch and the purification of the font. And he immediately be-

[1] This translation is made from L. Alishan, *Hayapatum* (Venice, 1901), 240–42 (no. 196). Another version of David's passion is edited by J.B. Aucher, *Liakatar vark' ew vkayabanut'iwn srbots'* (Venice, 1810–15), 6.224–29.

[2] I.e. Arab. *Tajik* is derived from the tribal name Tayyi'.

[3] This is Hamazasp Mamikonian, prince of Armenia (656–60). Prince renders *ishkhan*; the title was that of the leading Armenian noble appointed by the caliph to act under the Muslim governor, *ostikan*.

[4] Kotayk' is north of Dwin.

came a dwelling place of the all-holy Trinity, just as Christ promised, saying: "I and my Father will come and make our dwelling with him" (John xiv.23). And the Apostle says: "There is no distinction, not of Jew nor of Gentile, not of servant nor of free" (Galatians iii.28). And: "Those of you who have been baptised in Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians iii.27). And Isaiah (lxii.2) says: "His name will be called new whom the Lord will call."

He was filled with the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit, and removed the name of servitude, and was removed and separated from Mount Sinai, which is Hagar, who is a servant with her sons; and he enrolled himself among the sons of the free one, in the supernal Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all and of the free son – not Ishmael but Isaac. He proclaimed in accordance with Paul: "I am not a son of the handmaiden but of the free one, whereby Christ freed me from servitude to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the Son of God" (Galatians iv.31; Romans viii.2, 21). Confirmed in the same, he dwelt in the land of Armenia, on the plain in a village called Jag.[5] After a little time he acquired a wife and children, living a pure life in a modest and honourable marriage according to [divine] advice. He spent all his time in benevolence, reached old age and sheltered under the strong protective right hand of Christ. He meditated on the law of the Lord by day and night.

[We] now arrive at the time of Sahak, catholicos of Armenia (677–703), and of Smbat Bagratuni, prince of Armenia (693–726), when the **{674}** Tajiks, held the land of Armenia in subjection; and the leader of their army in Armenia was called Abdlay,[6] a cruel and evil [man], who always delighted in the shedding of the blood of the innocent under the impulsion of the Evil One. At that time the blessed Davit' was arrested by the impious Abdlay, for it was not right that the truth be hidden. Jealous at his faith in Christ, through the counsel of the Slanderer, he lay in wait, grew proud and angry, gnashing his teeth. He sought a means to humble the just one in his snare. He tried many and various stratagems, by entreaties and promises of gifts, then by threats of tortures and death. He strove to [make him] abandon Christ and return to his former [people], who profess that they know God but have not recognised the true God. However, the blessed one stood firm in faith in the holy Trinity, with unmoved intent and fearless responses, he did not consent to their semi-religious rituals…[7]

Now the tyrant was astonished at the outspokenness of the servant of Christ. He ordered him to be bound and put in prison for three days. He was tormented by various tortures and beatings; he was dragged around, his hair and beard were pulled out in order to entice him to their religion. However, he did not agree, but

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[5] There is more than one Jag; this is presumably the one in Kotayk'.

[6] See the entry on "David of Dwin" in Chapter 9 above for the identity of this 'Abd Allāh.

[7] Alishan omits a passage here, but gives no indication of its length.

valiantly endured with the hope of the incorruptible life and boundless joys and unfading crowns in Christ Jesus.

Then on the third day at dawn in the morning he ordered the blessed one to be brought before him, and opening his mouth that reeked of death he said: "Accept our commands and deny Christ." But he kept his noble intentions firm in accordance with his worthy stature, his great old age, his notable dignity, his hoary white hairs, his fine upbringing from youth to age, filled with all dignity like the blessed Eleazar.[8] He mocked and despised the threats; he censured and reproached the impious one in their own language. Then the wicked counsellor[9] ordered the holy sign to be thrown on the ground, and with blows he tried to force [Davit'] to trample on the boast of victory and the pledge of life, **{675}** the holy cross. But the latter did not agree. He said to the tyrant: "I shall not heed your destructive command. Whatever you wish to do, do quickly." Angered, he took his sword so that there within his chamber he might kill the blessed one. But his concubine, raising a shriek, snatched the sword from his hand and said: "Why do you kill him inside this room? If he is at all worthy of death, let him die outside." This did not happen at the will of the Evil One, but at God's [will] so that the martyrdom of the blessed one for Christ's sake might be manifest to all.

Then after this the tyrant offered him life if he would agree; otherwise the death of the cross.[10] But he preferred death for Christ's sake over life with remorse. He stood with fearless boldness, according to the saying: "Avoid the unjust and trembling will not approach you" (Isaiah liv.14). And: "The just one does not fear death," especially in accordance with the gospel of Christ: "Do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul" (Matthew x.28). Therefore he chose to die for Christ's sake.

Then the blessed one was led to the place of valour, to the arena of his martyrdom. Praying, he gave thanks for the ineffable grace which had been given him by Christ, to become worthy of dying for his name. Willingly going to the cross, he spread himself on it. The cross was raised facing south. The executioner took the lance and put it to his ribs, to frighten him so that perhaps he might be persuaded. But the holy Davit', resembling the brigand, cried out to Christ with a sincere groan: "Remember me, Lord, when you come with your kingdom" (Luke xxiii.42).

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[8] I.e. Maccabaeus.

[9] Why Abdlay is so called is unclear [though compare the frequent translation of *amīr* into Greek as *symboulos* – R.G.H.].

[10] The instrument of David's death is called *p'ayt*, literally "wood." It can refer to a cross (as of Christ) or to a gibbet from which someone is hung. Here "cross" is intended; this is clear not only from what follows, but from the description of David's death in John Catholicos, where he says David "was nailed" to the wood. Maksoudian's translation (XX.31) as "wooden board" is wrong.

Now of the many people standing around, some addressed to him words of valour, and others of defeat. His wife was standing near the cross; she encouraged him and exhorted him with many words to remain inflexible in belief in Christ. The blessed Davit' with solid faith desired to leave the body and to enter to Christ. Then he struck the lance into his heart, and as the blood flowed he gave up his soul to the glory of **{676}** God, according to the saying: "The souls of the just are in the hand of God" (Wisdom iii.l). And the cross, which was facing south, turned to the east. This miraculous sign was shown to the believers and unbelievers, so that the power of Christ and the defeat of the Enemy might be manifest. There was rejoicing for the angels, since those on the right hand side had been strengthened, and those of the left put to shame. Thus the holy Davit' bore witness to Christ, despising death. He set up on earth the sign of his name, and in heaven he received from Christ incorruptible glory and the crown of the kingdom with all the saints.

After this there quickly arrived at the spot Sargsak, bishop of the Amatunik',[11] with priests and clergy of the church; and Mushel Mamikonian, *sparapet* of Armenia;[12] and Artawazd his brother, with many nobles. Taking down from the cross the relics of the blessed Davit', martyr of Christ, they took them to [the cathedral of] S. Gregory.[13] And bringing honourable clothes, they wrapped the saint in his own clothing and laid it out with incense and oils. They bore it to the tomb with psalms and blessings and spiritual songs and glorious lights, and placed it in the sepulchre of S. Yiztbuzit.[14] The cross of the holy martyr they arranged as a cross and set it up over the tomb. The lance with which he had been wounded Mushel *sparapet*, son of the Mamikonian and *marzpet*,[15] asked for himself in return for twenty *dahekan*, so that having been shaped into a cross it might be honoured as a memorial from generation to generation of his family, to the glory of God.

The holy martyr of Christ Davit' was martyred on the 23rd of the month Areg, on the second day of the week (Monday), at the sixth hour, with a true confession in Christ Jesus our Lord.[16] Through his intercession no few healings of believers were effected, to the glory and praise of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

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[11] Sargsak is not otherwise attested, nor is his name, though Sargsuk exists.

[12] Mushel was the son of the Hamazasp mentioned above. The title *sparapet*, "commander-in-chief," was hereditary in the Mamikonian noble house. That family had lands in Aragatsotn, west of Kotayk'.

[13] In Dwin, the seat of government and residence of the *ostikan*.

[14] This is first mentioned in John Catholicos; he was martyred in 553.

[15] *Marzpet*, "governor," is quite rare; here it seems to be a variant for Hamazasp's title of prince.

[16] For the date see the entry on "David of Dwin" in Chapter 9 above.

EXCURSUS E: GEORGIAN HISTORICAL WRITING[1]

BY DR. STEPHEN H. RAPP, JR.

{677} For a variety of reasons, some of them valid, medieval Georgian historical literature has been largely ignored by specialists of the Near East. The linguistic nightmare posed by the Georgian language has been a death sentence of sorts, and the difficulty in obtaining books printed in Georgia remains a formidable obstacle. It is true that for over a century scholars possessing a knowledge of French have had access to Brosset's translations of several Georgian historical works (albeit via a rather late manuscript tradition), and in Russian several excellent translations from the Old Georgian critical editions have been published during the past 40 years, but even today very few pre-modern Georgian historical works have been translated into English. Yet Georgian historical writing does provide a valuable insight into a region not treated in detail by Byzantine, Syriac, Armenian, or Muslim historians; and from the Georgian sources we may extract evidence not preserved elsewhere. From the late eighth century Georgian historical works are relatively plentiful in contrast to the contemporary historical output of the neighboring Armenians. Here we shall examine Georgian historical literature up through to the late eighth/early ninth century, provide a brief summary of each text, and enumerate the most significant editions and translations.

{678} In the early Hellenistic period indigenous royal authority was established in the central Caucasian region of K'art'li.[2] But the K'art'velians did not possess their own script at the time; although familiar with other alphabets (notably Greek and Aramaic) the K'art'velians did not engage in historical writing until well after the

[1] My ignorance of Georgian has led me to neglect its literature in this book; I am therefore very grateful to Stephen Rapp of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for agreeing to remedy this deficiency with the following excursus.

[2] K'art'li is the historical core of the "land of the K'art'velians" (*sak'art'velo*). This latter term refers to the unified Georgian kingdom, which did not exist prior to the reign of Bagrat III, who united K'art'li and the western region of Ap'khazet'i (Russian *Abkhaziia*, Greek *Abasgia*) *ca.* 1008. Here "Georgian" is employed for the language while "K'art'velian" refers to the majority community.

invention of the Georgian script in the fifth century AD, which itself was a product of the Christianisation of the K'art'velian monarchy. Also in the fifth century the Armenian alphabet was developed under the direction of the cleric Mashtots' (later called Mesrop). Unlike their Armenian neighbours, the K'art'velians did not immediately indulge in the composition of original historical works.[3] While Armenian authors such as Agat'angelos, P'awstos Buzandats'i, Elishe, and Lazar P'arpets'i wrote histories of Armenia, the K'art'velians engaged principally in translating Biblical and patristic texts from Armenian, Greek, and Syriac.

This is not to suggest that the K'art'velians did not develop any forms of original writing, for the oldest monument of Georgian literature, *The Martyrdom of Shushaniki* attributed to the cleric Jacob of Ts'urtavi, was composed in the fifth century;[4] a century later *The Martyrdom of Evstat'i of Mts'khet'a* was written by an anonymous **{679}** hagiographer.[5] Like a great many Georgian medieval texts, these two have survived only in later manuscripts (of the eleventh century in these cases). Neither of these works offers information about local royal authority in K'art'li; however, both are extremely important for their testimony about the Persian domination of Caucasia. Moreover, these hagiographical monuments describe a heterogeneous, cosmopolitan K'art'li. Indeed, the principal characters of each of these martyrdom accounts are non-K'art'velians (Shushaniki was an Armenian martyred by her Zoroastrianised K'art'velian husband and Evstat'i was a Christianised Persian residing in the K'art'velian royal city, Mts'khet'a).

Judging from extant manuscripts, Georgian historical writing emerged only two or three centuries after the invention of the Georgian script. The efflorescence of historical writing among the K'art'velians at this time was stimulated by the schism with the Armenian church following the Third Council of Dwin in 607. Although the K'art'velians did not issue virulent, Christological polemic against their neigh-

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[3] The most comprehensive studies of medieval Georgian literature are Ivane Javakhishvili, *Dzveli k'art'uli saistorio mtserloba* (*V–XVIII ss.*) in vol. 7 of his *T'khzulebani* (Tbilisi, 1977 [1920]); Korneli Kekelidze, *K'art'uli literaturis istoria*, 2 vols. (Tbilisi, 1941 and 1958). Kekelidze's work was adapted by Michael Tarchnishvili, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur* (Studi e Testi 185; Città del Vaticano, 1955). See also Cyril Toumanoff, "Medieval Georgian Historical Literature (VIIth–XVth Centuries)," *Traditio* 1 (1943), 139–82; *idem*, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington DC, 1963); Robert W. Thomson, "K'art'lis c'xovreba" in *The Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 7 (New York, 1986), 222–23; Donald Rayfield, *The Literature of Georgia: a History* (Oxford, 1994), which is highly dependent upon Kekelidze for the medieval period.

[4] Georgian critical edition by Ilia Abuladze, *Dzveli k'art'uli agiograp'iuli literaturis dzeglebi* (= *DzK'ALDz*), 1 (Tbilisi, 1963), 11–29; partial English translation by D.M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints* (London, 1956), 44–80. See also P. Peeters, "Sainte Sousanik, martyre en Arméno-Géorgie," *AB* 53 (1935), 5–48, 245–307; Ot'ar Egadze, *Shushanikis tsameba* (Tbilisi, 1983), which includes a full English translation by Elizabeth Fuller.

[5] Abuladze, *DzK'ALDz*, 1.30–45; tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 94–114.

bors until the eleventh century,[6] they did seize the opportunity to emphasise, popularise and even invent their own traditions, ecclesiastically and politically. The earliest Georgian historical (-hagiographical) work is the seventh/eighth-century *Conversion of K'art'li*. Traditionally attributed to a certain Gregory the Deacon, its author has yet to be identified positively. It is the earliest extant native tale of the Christianisation of the K'art'velian monarchy that occurred in the fourth century at the hand of the holy woman Nino, and is based upon sources of great antiquity.[7] It was superseded a century or two later by the dependent – but greatly expanded and reworked – *Life of Nino*, **{680}** the (now) traditional story of the conversion of King Mirian III (284–361).[8]

Georgian historical writing proper did not emerge until the end of the eighth century, at which time three works – the *Life of the Kings*, the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali*, and the history of ps.-Juansher Juansheriani – were composed.[9] These constitute the original core of the historical corpus known as *K'art'lis ts'khovreba* ("The Life of K'art'li").[10] It is the major source for pre-modern "Georgian" history and it largely reflects the position and ideology of the monarchy; this contrasts sharply with medieval Armenian histories, which were usually composed for a particular noble house. We do not know when *K'art'lis ts'khovreba* was originally assembled, but the aforementioned three works (composed *ca.* 800) must have been incorporated from an early time. Nearly all of the extant works of medieval Georgian historical litera-

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[6] I.e. the tract of Arseni Sap'areli, *Ganqop'isat'ws k'art'velt'a da somekht'a*, ed. Zaza Alek'sidze (Tbilisi, 1980), with English summary, 206–208.

[7] Though in its received form it dates from the seventh/eighth century, it may be based upon the fifth-century *Ecclesiastical History* of Rufinus, who wrote an account of the conversion of K'art'li as it was related to him by the K'art'velian prince and Roman military commander of Palestine, Bakur (*PL* 21, 480–82; tr. Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 15–19).

[8] Both works are part of a corpus of six texts (Abuladze, *DzK'ALDz*, 1.81–163), of which the *Conversion of K'art'li* is the third (*ibid.*, 1.83–91) and a version of the *Life of Nino* the last (*ibid.*, 1.98–163). The corpus is known collectively, and confusingly, as the *Conversion of K'art'li* (Toumanoff, "Medieval Georgian Historical Literature," 149–53; *idem*, *Studies*, 23–24; Michael Tarchnisvili, "Sources arméno-géorgiennes de l'histoire ancienne de l'église de Géorgie," *Le Muséon* 60, 1947, 30–37). The other four texts of the corpus concern the establishment of K'art'velian kingship (*Primary History of K'art'li*) and the succession of monarchs and ecclesiastical hierarchs from Mirian to the ninth century (*Royal Lists I*, *II*, *III*). The earliest manuscripts of the corpus were copied in the tenth century (the Shatberdi and unpublished Sinai recensions).

[9] Toumanoff, *Studies*, 20–25. The precise identification of the authors and the original date of composition of each of these texts is much contested. It is commonly thought that all three sources were composed in the eleventh century (most recently see Rayfield, *Literature of Georgia*, 53–56). However, Toumanoff, Tarchnishvili, Ingoroqva and others have argued convincingly that they must have been written on the eve of Bagratid rule in K'art'li, in the eighth/ninth century.

[10] Toumanoff's *The Georgian Royal Annals*.

ture found their way into *K'art'lis ts'khovreba*; moreover, its constituent histories are extant only within manuscripts of *K'art'lis ts'khovreba*. Unfortunately the manuscript tradition is extremely late: the earliest surviving Georgian manuscripts were copied only from the late fifteenth century,[11] and the oldest manuscript is actually a medieval Armenian adaptation copied **{681}** in the period 1279–1311.[12] Thus, although the corpus contains works of considerable age, the earliest extant manuscript was copied some 500 years after the composition of the earliest works that it contains.[13]

The *Life of the Kings* treats K'art'li from its origin down to the reign of Mirian III.[14] The anonymous historian set the provenance of the K'art'velian community within an Old Testament framework, interpolating its origins into the combined accounts of Genesis x, Hippolytus' *Chronicle* (via its Armenian adaptation), and perhaps Josephus. Thereafter the focus of the work is the K'art'velian monarchy established in the wake of Alexander the Great's alleged Caucasian offensive. The author, writing on the eve of Bagratid rule in K'art'li (in the early ninth century), firmly placed the K'art'velians and their monarchy within the Persian cultural world. Royal nomenclature is exclusively Persian/Parthian/Avestan, the ascendancy of the monarchy – although linked to Alexander – is set within a Persian context and the very description of K'art'velian kings (as with the term *humberazi/mumbarezi*, though derived from the Arabic word *mubāriz*, "champion-duelist") is undeniably, but anachronistically, Sasanian. Moreover, like other pre-Bagratid works, the *Life of the Kings* describes a cosmopolitan K'art'li **{682}** (cf. the martyrdom accounts of Shushaniki and Evstat'i). In short, the *Life of the Kings* depicts K'art'li as a part of the Sasanian

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[11] Cyril Toumanoff, "The Oldest Manuscript of the Georgian Annals: the Queen Anne Codex (QA), 1479–1495," *Traditio* 5 (1947), 340–44. On the manuscripts in general see Konstantine Grigolia, *Akhali k'art'lis ts'khovreba* (Tbilisi, 1954).

[12] Critical edition with Georgian translation by Ilia Abuladze, *K'art'lis ts'khov- rebis dzveli somkhuri t'argmani* (Tbilisi, 1953). An English translation, together with a translation of the Georgian text of Qaukhch'ishvili (see n. 14 below) for comparison, is given by Robert W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History: the Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles* (Oxford, 1996) = Thomson. See also *idem*, "The Armenian Version of the Georgian Chronicles," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 5 (1990–91), 81–90.

[13] To complicate matters, the edition and translation of M.F. Brosset, so widely cited by Western scholars, was based upon the eighteenth-century recension commissioned by the scholar-king Vakhtang VI (d. 1737). And this recension, seeking to present a uniform, chronologically organised narrative, obscured the fact that *K'art'lis ts'khovreba* consists of several disparate histories, composed during a span of over half a millennium.

[14] A critical edition of the earliest histories of *K'art'lis ts'khovreba* was produced by Simon Qaukhch'ishvili, *K'art'lis ts'khovreba*, 1 (Tbilisi, 1955) = *K'Ts'*. An edition and French translation of the Vakhtangiseuli recension was made by M.F. Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, Part 1 (St. Petersburg, 1849) = Brosset. The *Life of the Kings* is edited in *K'Ts'* 1–71, and translated in Brosset, 15–89, and in Thomson, 2–84. There is a partial Russian translation by G.V. Tsulaia, *Žizn' kartliiskikh tsarei: izvlechenie svedenii ob abkhazakh, narodakh Severnogo Kavkaza i Dagestana* (Moscow, 1979).

world and this is a reflection of the Persian heritage of K'art'li, a heritage which persisted in K'art'li well after the dissolution of the Sasanian empire itself.

Following the *Life of the Kings* in the received form of *K'art'lis ts'khovreba* is the *Life of Nino* and the *Life of the Successors of Mirian*, the three traditionally having been envisaged as a single work composed by the eleventh-century archbishop Leonti Mroveli ("of Ruisi").[15] However, the connection of the name Leonti Mroveli with these texts seems to be a recollection that he was responsible for editing the *Life of the Kings* in the eleventh century. Aspiring to Christianise this rather unchristian tale, Leonti not only appended the lengthy *Life of Nino* but also introduced several Biblical notices within the *Life of the Kings* itself. He may also be responsible for composing the *Life of the Successors of Mirian*, a brief work continuing the *Life of the Kings*, treating the Christian kings of K'art'li from Mirian's son and successor Bak'ar (363–65) down to Mihrdat IV (409–11). Regardless, the *Life of the Successors of Mirian* was written between *ca.* 800 and the eleventh century, and its anonymous author attempted to imitate the style of the earlier *Life of the Kings*, although some overtly Persian elements, such as the champion-duelist, are noticeably absent.

The *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* is also considered by many specialists as an eleventh-century work and is traditionally credited to a certain Juansher Juansheriani. However, Toumanoff has demonstrated that this work is a composite of two separate texts, both composed ca. 800. The *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* proper commences with the death of Mihrdat IV and is concerned principally with the life and deeds of Vakhtang I Gorgasali (*ca.* 447–522).[16] This anonymous work is imbued with brilliant detail and in this regard is reminiscent **{683}** of the *Song of Roland*. Like the *Life of the Kings*, it emphatically situates K'art'li within the Persian commonwealth, and champion-duelist combat is featured throughout its pages. However, the author of the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* exhibits an acute awareness of the numerous, and sometimes contradicting strands of medieval "Georgian" self-identity. Thus, while Vakhtang was related by blood to the Persians and himself bore a Persian name, he was not a Zoroastrian. Moreover, Vakhtang is portrayed in a hagiographical mould, for his "progression" from a Persian to a specifically Christian (and Byzantine) orientation is emphasised. As a Persian story coloured by Christianity with a K'art'velian king as its principal character, the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* is noteworthy for its testimony on the expansion of the K'art'velian church. In particular, ecclesiastical relations with Antioch, Pontus, and Constantinople as well as the establishment of the K'art'velian catholicate – and its potential implication of autocephaly – are prominently featured. But far from denying K'art'li's Persian heritage, the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali* merely enhanced the Christian dimension of K'art'velian identity (vis-à-vis

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[15] *Life of Nino: K'Ts'*, 72–130; tr. Brosset, 90–132; tr. Marjory Wardrop, "The Life of St. Nino," *Studia et Biblica Ecclesiastica* 5 (1903), 1–66; tr. Thomson, 841–45. *Life of the Successors of Mirian: K'Ts'* 130–38; tr. Brosset, 133–44; tr. Thomson, 146–53.

[16] *K'Ts'*, 139–204; tr. Brosset, 108–49; tr. Thomson, 153–223; Russian translation by G.V. Tsulaia, *Żizn' Vakhtanga Gorgasala* (Tbilisi, 1986), 57–94.

the Persian), and K'art'li's indebtedness to Persian civilisation was not obscured insofar as it did not interfere with the Christian orientation of K'art'li.

Shortly after the *Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali*, a brief continuation was composed by ps.-Juansher.[17] This traces the rulers of K'art'li from Vakhtang's son and successor Dach'i (522–34), through the period of the dissolution of the K'art'velian monarchy by the Persians,[18] and ends his narrative in the eighth century. The tension arising from the opposition of Persian and Byzantine influences in K'art'li are conspicuous throughout this work. Ps.-Juansher provides much information about the dissemination of Christianity throughout K'art'li; particularly noteworthy are the accounts of the establishment of monasticism in K'art'li resulting from the arrival of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers **{684}** (with substantial later insertions), the martyrdom of Shushaniki (anachronistically reported in the reign of Bakur III [d. 580]), and the building of the Juari church in Mts'khet'a and that of Sioni in Tbilisi. Heraclius' invasion of K'art'li, and the sacking of Tbilisi, are also treated; this was evidently a momentous occasion in the minds of K'art'velian historians, for this account is found in three separate historical works (but ps.-Juansher's account appears to be the earliest).

Ps.-Juansher is also familiar with the rise of Islam, conveying that "Muḥammad (*Mohamadi*), a descendant of Ishmael, teacher of the religion of the Saracens (*sarkinozt'a sjulisa*)… conquered all Arabia and Yemen," and that he was succeeded by Abū Bakr (*Abobik'ari*), who "conquered Persia, entered Baghdad, and by force compelled innumerable people to abandon fire-worship, converting them to the Saracen [religion]."[19] The author is also familiar with the fact that the Muslims possessed their own holy book, the Qur'an (*Kurani*).[20] Much about the Islamic conquest of Caucasia and K'art'li is omitted, but the invasion by Murvan Qru ("the Deaf"),

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[17] *K'Ts'* 204–44; tr. Brosset, 200–52; tr. Thomson, 223–51; Russian translation by Tsulaia, *Žizn' Vakhtanga Gorgasala*, 95–107. Juansher Juansheriani was unquestionably a historical figure, but the attribution to him of this text by later historical tradition is anachronistic and incorrect.

[18] Although the K'art'velian monarchy was abolished in 580 (shown by Toumanoff, *Studies*, 360–82), ps.-Juansher continues to style the presiding princes as kings.

[19] *K'Ts'*, 229; tr. Thomson, 237. Note Heraclius' reaction: "They informed King Heraclius that the Hagarenes had invaded Sham and Jaziret'i, which is Mesopotamia. Heraclius set out for Palestine in order to do battle there. But there was a certain monk, a man of God, and he said to the king: 'Flee, because the Lord has given the East and the South to the Saracens, which means "the dogs of Sarah."' The astrologers and expert soothsayers reported (interpreted?) these words of the monk to King Heraclius. He erected a pillar and inscribed on it: 'Farewell, Mesopotamia and Palestine, until seven weeks have passed"' (K'Ts', 230; tr. Thomson, 238).

[20] "A certain Hagarene saw a vision in which their supposed apostle said: 'God has given us power down to the death of ten kings, as God said to Abraham and to Hagar. But spare the holy churches and the men who serve God, as I commanded you in my Koran"' (*K'Ts'* 238; tr. Thomson, 244).

namely the future Umayyad caliph Marwān II, in the 730s is included.[21] Finally, ps.-Juansher is our earliest Georgian source for the rise of the K'art'velian Bagratids, for he mentions Adarnase, "of the family of David the Prophet."[22]

{685} The *Martyrdom of Arch'il* is a brief work describing the martyrdom of Arch'il II in 786.[23] Traditionally ascribed to Leonti Mroveli, it was not written by the author of the *Life of the Kings* and was composed in the tenth or eleventh century. The murderer of Arch'il, a certain Chichum, has been identified by Joseph Marquart as Khuzayma ibn Khāzim, the governor of the province of Armenia under the caliph Hādī; Toumanoff concurred, citing the Armenian historian Lewond, who reported the assassination of the prince of K'art'li during the reign of Hādī.[24]

Finally, we should note two later hagiographical works which contribute to our understanding of early medieval K'art'li. The *Martyrdom of Habo*[25] composed in the eighth century by John Sabanis-dze, relates the story of a Muslim named Habo (Abo) who came to K'art'li and converted to Christianity. It exists in a near contemporary manuscript copied in the ninth century. The tale is set within the context of the decimation of K'art'li at the hands of the armies of Islam and provides significant information not only about Arab rule in K'art'li but also about the Khazars and Ap'khazet'i. Giorgi Merch'ule's biography of Gregory of Khandzt'a,[26] written nearly a century after Gregory's death in 861, also describes a K'art'li devastated by the Arab conquest of Caucasia. The narrative is anchored in southwestern "Georgia," in the regions of Tao, Klarjet'i, and Shavshet'i. It was in this area that **{686}** the great K'art'velian monastic centers arose in this period, escaping the tyranny of the Arabs in K'art'li proper. Moreover, it was also here that the K'art'velian Bagratids rose to power under Byzantine tutelage. The *Life* of Gregory of Khandzt'a offers evidence

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[21] Toumanoff, *Studies*, 394–95.

[22] *Ibid.*, 202, 254, 316–17, 328–29, 334–36, 345–46. With regard to the Bagratids, it should be said that the later Vakhtangiseuli recension has interpolated several passages from eleventh-century Bagratid histories (especially that of Smbat Davit'is-dze) into ps.-Juansher.

[23] The preferred Georgian critical edition is by Abuladze, *DzK'ALDz*, 2 (Tbilisi, 1967), 208–12, which incorporates the Mtskhet'ian manuscript ("Q") of 1697 (not used by Quakch'ishvili). See also *K'Ts'*, 245–48; tr. Brosset, 253–56; tr. Thomson, 251–55.

[24] Joseph Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903), 402–16; Toumanoff, "Medieval Georgian Historical Literature," 172.

[25] For the critical Georgian text see Abuladze, *DzK'ALDz*, 1.46–81; partial translation by Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 115–33.

[26] This work has reached us in a single twelfth-century Ms. from Jerusalem. For the critical Georgian text, with a Russian translation, see N.Ia. Marr, "Žitie sv. Grigoriia Khandzt'iiskago," *Teksty i razyskaniia po armiano-gruzinskoi filologii* 7 (1911), 1–82. Another critical Georgian version was published by Abuladze, *DzK'ALDz*, 1.248–319. A partial English translation was made by Lang, *Lives and Legends*, 134–53. See also the detailed study of Pavle Ingoroqva, *Giorgi merch'ule: k'art'veli mtserali meat'e saukunisa* (Tbilisi, 1954), and the recent study by Wachtang Djobadze, "A Brief Survey of the Monastery of St. George in Hanzt'a," *OC* 78 (1994), 145–76.

not only about the monastic communities of southwestern "Georgia," but also the rise of the Bagratids, as well as the relationship of these early Bagratid rulers to the K'art'velian church.

With the coming to power of the K'art'velian Bagratids in the early ninth century, Georgian historical writing entered a new phase. Whereas pre-Bagratid historical works admitted and emphasised the Persian heritage of K'art'li, even in the Christian period, the Bagratids had ascended with the support of the Byzantine Empire. Bagratid-era histories, beginning with those of Smbat Davit'is-dze and the anonymous *Chronicle of K'art'li* (both eleventh-century), de-emphasised the K'art'velians' intimate, long-standing bonds with Persia. Instead, the Christian dimension of K'art'velian identity was elevated and enshrined, and the connection with the Persian cultural world, which persists in many respects even today, was, for the most part, consciously denied and conveniently ignored.

EXCURSUS F: DATED MUSLIM WRITINGS, AH 1–135/622–752

{687} This excursus assembles writings by Muslims dated securely to the first seven decades after the Hijra, and also writings specifically by caliphs from the six following decades. The purpose of this is firstly to illustrate the point made in Chapter 13 above, that writings before AH 72 differ considerably in terms of religious content from those coming after this date. The second aim is more general, namely to encourage greater use of this material which offers Islamicists something that they otherwise lack, namely texts definitely composed in the Umayyad period.[1] It should be emphasised that dated writings, particularly as regards rock inscriptions, account for no more than a small proportion of the totality of writings of this period.[2] These can often be assigned an approximate date, for the so-called Kufic script in which they are **{688}** written changed over time, but the study of such developments is as yet in its infancy.[3]

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[1] Studies making use of this material are Donner, "The Formation of the Islamic State;" Ory, "Aspects religieuxdes textes épigraphiques du début de l'Islam;" Nevo, "Towards a Prehistory of Islam;" Hoyland, "The Content and Context of Early Arabic Inscriptions."

[2] Some major collections of mostly first-third century rock inscriptions are Grohmann, *Arabic Inscriptions* (*ca.* 350, earliest dated = AH 46); Imbert, *Corpus des inscriptions arabes de la Jordanie du nord* (*ca.* 250, earliest dated = AH 81); Nevo *et al.*, *AAIN1* (*ca.* 400, earliest dated = AH 85); Ory, "Les graffiti umayyades de 'Ayn al-Garr" (60, earliest dated = AH 123); Rāshid, *Kitābāt islāmīya ghayr manshūra min 'Ruwāwa' al-Madīna* (55, earliest dated = AH 76); 'Ushsh, "Kitābāt 'arabīya ghayr manshūra fī Jabal Usays" (85, earliest dated = AH 93). Sharon is publishing a corpus of the inscriptions of the Holy Land (until then see the articles listed under his name in Bibliography II below). See also Sourdel-Thomine, "Inscriptions et graffiti arabes d'époque umayyade." Inscriptions are also found on glass stamps, lead seals, textiles, ceramics, coins etc.; for a survey see Fischer, *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*, *Band I*, Teil II. For papyri, see Frantz-Murphy, "Arabic Papyrology and Middle Eastern Studies;" Ragib, "L'écriture des papyrus arabes aux premiers siècles de l'Islam."

[3] See especially Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*; *idem*, *Arabic Inscriptions*, xix–xxv; Gruendler, *Development of the Arabic Scripts*; Tabbaa, "The Transformation of Arabic Writing."

The intention here is only to give an indication of what material is available, not a scientific presentation of this material. If one wishes to know how the original text appears, one must consult the works cited (I have not, for example, preserved the line numbering of the original nor orthographical abnormalities). I shall only include extant material, except for nos. 24 and v–vi, which, though only known from literary works, still seem worth consideration.

Dated Writings before AH 72/691

Various demand notices and receipts on papyri (in Greek and Arabic or Greek only), Egypt, AH 22/December 642 onwards:[4]

> Opening formulae: *bism Allāh/en onomati ton theou* ("In the name of God"); *bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm* ("In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful"); *syn theō* ("With God").
>
> *Papyri ERF*, no. 552, containing an acknowledgement for the receipt of six *nomismata* by ʿUbayd ibn ʿUmar, concludes *kai eirēnē soi apo ton theou* ("And peace from God be upon you"). **{689}**

The tombstone of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khayr, Egypt, AH 31/651–52:[5]

> *Bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm. hādha l-qabr li-ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khayr al-Ḥajrī. Allahumma iġfir lahu wa-dkhulhu fī raḥma minka wa-ātina maʿahu. istaghfir lahu idha qaraʾa hādha l-kitāb wa-qul amīn. wa-kutiba hādha l-kitāb fī jumādā al-ākhar min sanat iḥdā wathalāthīn.*
>
> In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate. This tomb belongs to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān son of Khayr al-Ḥajrī. O God, forgive him and enter him into Your mercy and make us go with him. (To the passer-by) When reading this writing, ask pardon for him (the deceased) and say amen. And this writing was written in Jumādā II of the year thirty-one.

Arab-Sasanian coins, various mints in Iran, known in large quantities from year 20 (assume Yazdgird era, so AH 31) onwards.[6] All bear the legend *bism Allāh* ("In the name of God"), sometimes with additional words in Arabic or Persian.

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[4] Esp. see *Papyri ERF*, nos. 552–73, which are dated between AH 22 and 57 (except no. 572, which may be later). In a papyrus of "the year 65" the phrase *al-salām ʿalā man ittabaʿa al-hudā* is partially preserved (Diem, "Der Gouverneur an den Pagarchen"). For what may be deduced from these documents see Bell, "The Administration of Egypt under the Umayyad Khalifs;" Morimoto, "Taxation in Egypt under the Arab Conquest;" *idem*, *Fiscal Administration of Egypt*; Simonsen, *The Caliphal Taxation System.*

[5] Hawary, "The Most Ancient Islamic Monument Known," 322; Combe *et al.*, *RCEA*, no. 6. It might be thought that the year should be understood as AH 131 (the *miʾa* having been omitted), but omission of Muḥammad in a funerary inscription from Egypt is unheard of after AH 72 and the script is very crude (see Hawary, "The Most Ancient Islamic Monument Known," 323–37).

Arab-Sasanian coins, various mints in Iran, known with years 23–39 (assume Yazdgird era, so AH 34–50/654–70). All bear the legend *lillāh* ("Unto God").[7] **{690}**

Arabic graffito, Ḥijaz (on pilgrimage route from Iraq), AH 40/660–61:[8]

> *Raḥmat Allāh wa-barakātuhu ʿalā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khālid ibn al-ʿĀṣ wa-kutiba li-sanat arbaʿīn.*
>
> The mercy of God and His blessing upon ʿAbd al-Raḥmān son of Khālid son of al-ʿĀṣ, written in the year forty.

Five Arab-Sasanian coins of Muʿāwiya, Darabgird, year AH 41/661–62.[9] On the obverse is written in Persian *Maawia amir i-wruishnikan* ("Muʿāwiya, commander of the faithful"), and in Arabic *bism Allāh* ("In the name of God").

Greek inscription in the baths at Hammat Gader, AH 42/662–63:[10]

> In the days of the servant of God Muʿāwiya, the commander of the faithful (*abdalla Maavia amēra almoumenēn*), the hot baths of the people there were saved and rebuilt by ʿAbd Allāh son of Abū Hāshim, the governor (*Abouasemou symboulou*), on the fifth of the month of December, on the second day (of the week), in the 6th year of the indiction, in the year 726 of the colony, according to the Arabs (*kata Arabas*) the 42nd year, for the healing of the sick, under the care of Ioannes, the official of Gadara.

A papyrus, now in the Louvre, bearing an acknowledgement of a debt, dated AH 42. The dating formula is *sanat qaḍā' al-mu'minīn* ("the year of the dispensation of the believers").[11] **{691}**

A protocol (a protective cover at the beginning of a papyrus roll, bearing caliph/governor's name and formulae), in Greek and Arabic, from the time of Muʿāwiya (661–80):[12]

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[6] This may be a frozen year, but certainly coins with this legend were struck from very soon after the death of Yazdgird. On the "*Bismi'llāh-Gruppe*" see Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik*, 19–22, 26–34 (with additional words in Arabic and Persian); Album, "Baṣran and Kufan Affiliations." Dating from the year of Yazdgird 's accession in 632 remained common until Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān took control of all the East in AH 50/670, so I shall assume that years 1–39 are according to the Yazdgird era (= AH 11–50).

[7] Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik*, 34; this is rarer than the *bism Allāh* type, but still over 100 specimens are known.

[8] Sharafaddin, "Islamic Inscriptions Discovered on the Darb Zubayda," 69, Plate 49.

[9] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.25–26.

[10] Hirschfeld and Solar, "The Roman Thermae at Hammat Gader," 203–204; Green and Tsafrir, "Greek Inscriptions from Hammat Gader," 94–96.

[11] The same formula is found in a papyrus of the Austrian national library, also of the first century AH. This information was kindly given to me by Professor Yusuf Ragheb, who will be publishing these papyri along with others of the same period.

Greek: *abdella Mouaouia amiralmoumnin*

Arabic: *ʿAbd Allāh Muʿāwiya amīr al-muʾminīn*

Three Arab-Sasanian coins, Bishapur, years AH 45/665 and 47/667.[13] All bear the legend *bism Allāh al-malik* ("In the name of God the King").

Arabic graffito, Ḥijaz (Wadi Sabil, near Ta'if), AH 46/666:[14]

Allāhumma igḥfir li-ʿAbd Allāh ibn Dayrām kutiba li-ʿarbaʿa layāl kḥalūn min muḥarram min sanat sitt wa-arbaʿīn.

O God, forgive ʿAbd Allāh son of Dayrām, written when four nights had passed of Muḥarram of the year forty-six.

Arab-Sasanian coins, various mints in Iran, from year 35 (assume Yazdgird era, so AH 46) onwards. All bear the legend *bism Allāh rabbī* ("In the name of God my Lord"), sometimes with additional words in Arabic or Persian.[15] **{692}**

Seven bilingual *entagia*, Nessana, AH 54–57/674–77.[16] All begin *bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm* ("In the name of God the Compassionate the Merciful").

Arabic graffito, Ḥijaz (on pilgrimage route from Iraq), AH 56/676:[17]

Allahumma igḥfir li-Jadhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn Hubayra wa-kutiba li-sanat sitt wa-kḥamsīn.

O God, forgive Jadhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn Hubayra, written in the year fifty-six.

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[12] Grohmann, "Zum Papyrusprotokoll in früharabischer Zeit," 6–13. This protocol is followed by the bilingual *entagion* of AH 54 from Nessana (see no. 13 below). The dots indicate three lines preserving "Spuren der Schraffenschrift," now undecipherable except possibly for the *basmala*. *Ibid.*, 2–5, publishes a Byzantine protocol in four lines which is followed by an Arabic embola (= P. Mich. 6714); Grohmann considers this to antedate the Muʿāwiya protocol and to illustrate that the Arabs initially continued to produce Byzantine-style protocols.

[13] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.18–19; Mordtmann mentions two other coins identical to these three, but with dates 31 and 41, though Walker (*ibid.*, 1.12, 1.17) is sceptical.

[14] Grohmann, *Arabic Inscriptions*, 124.

[15] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.13–23, 36–37, 40–46, 55, 65. On the "*Bismi'llāh-rabbī-Gruppe*" see Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik*, 22–24, 24–25 (with additional words in Persian or Arabic), who noticed that this legend is particularly connected with the time of Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyan's governorship (AH 45–53).

[16] *Nessana Papyri*, nos. 60–66.

[17] Sharafaddin, "Islamic Inscriptions Discovered on the Zarb Zubayda," 69, Plate 50; corrected by Fahmi, "Naqshān jadīdān min Makka al-mukarrama," 346–47, who considers the part containing the date to be damaged and the text rather to be of the second century AH.

Seven Arab-Sasanian coins of the governor Ḥakam ibn Abī l-ʿĀs, Fars and Khuzistan, AH 56–58/676–78. All bear the legend: *Allāh rabb al-ḥukm* ("God is the Lord of judgement").[18]

Arabic inscription on a dam near Ṭa'if, AH 58/678:[19]

> *Hādha l-sadd li-ʿabd Allāh Muʿāwiya amīr al-muʾminīn banāhu ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣakhr bidhn Allāh li-sanat thamān wakhamsīn. Allahumma igḥfir li-ʿabd Allāh Muʿāwiya amīr al-muʾminīn wa-thabbithu w-unṣurhu wa-mattiʿ l-muʾminīn bihi. kataba ʿAmr ibn Ḥabbāb.*
>
> This dam is on behalf of the servant of God Muʿāwiya, the commander of the faithful; ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣakhr has built it with God's leave in the year fifty-eight. O God, forgive the servant of God Muʿāwiya, the commander of the faithful, strengthen him and help him, and let the faithful profit by him. ʿAmr ibn Ḥabbāb has written [it]. **{693}**

Coin of Yazīd I, no place, year 1 (AH 61/681).[20] Obverse has standard profile of Khusrau II and bears his name; reverse has usual Sasanian iconography (fire altar, star and crescents etc.), but in the margin is written in Persian: "Year one of Yazīd."

Arabic graffito, near Karbala in Iraq, AH 64/683–84:[21]

> *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm. Allāh wa-kabbir kabīran wa-l-ḥamd lillāh kathīran. wa-subḥān Allāh bukratan wa-aṣīlan wa-laylan ṭawīlan Allahumma rabb Jibrīl wa-Mīkāʾīl wa-Isrāfīl igḥfir li-? ibn Yazīd al-Asʿadī mā taqaddama min dhanbihi wa-mā taʾakhkhara wa-liman qāla amīn amīn rabb al-ʿālamīn. wa-ktbt hādha l-kitāb fī shawwāl min sanat arbaʿ wa-sittīn.*
>
> In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate. God, magnify [Him] greatly and praise to God much. Praise be to God morning, evening and all night long. O God, Lord of Gabriel and Michael and Israfil, forgive ? ibn Yazīd al-Asʿadī for his sins, the earlier and the later ones, and whoever says amen amen, Lord of the worlds. I wrote (?) this writing in Shawwāl of the year sixty-four.

Two pieces of silk of Marwān, AH 65/684–85:[22]

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[18] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.86–87; Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik*, 67. Note the legend's pun on the governor's name.

[19] Miles, "Early Islamic Inscriptions near Tāʾif," 237, 241; Grohmann, *Arabic Inscriptions*, 56–58; *idem*, *Arabische Paläographie*, 2.79.

[20] Mochiri, "A Sasanian-Style Coin of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya," 137–41; the coin is unusual in that it has no Arabic legend, Yazīd does not replace Khusrau on the obverse and the dating system is Sasanian. See the comments of Cook, "The Emergence of Islamic Civilization."

[21] Sanduq, "Ḥajar Ḥafnat al-Abyad," 214; Grohamnn, *Arabische Paläographie*, 2.80. The phrase *mā taqaddama min dhanbihi wa-ma taʾakhkhara* is found in Qur'an xlviii.2 and is a common expression in early Arabic graffiti.

{*'abd*} *Allāh Marwān amīr al-mu'*{*min*}*īn*

{Servant} of God Marwān, commander of the fai{thf}ul **{694}**

Three Arab-Sasanian coins of the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿĀmir, Sistan, AH 66/685–86. The legend is *bism Allāh al-ʿaẓīẓ* ("In the name of God the Great").[23]

Two Arab-Sasanian coins of the governor ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd Allāh, Bishapur, AH 66 and 67.[24] The legend is *bism Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* ("In the name of God, Muḥammad is the messenger of God").

An Arab-Sasanian coin of Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr, Baṣra, 66? AH.[25] The legend is *Muṣʿab ḥasbuhu Allāh* ("God is his sufficiency").

Eighteen Arab-Sasanian coins of the Zubayrid governor of Baṣra ʿUmar ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Maʿmar, Fars, AH 67–70/686–89.[26] All have the legend *Lillāh al-ḥamd* ("Unto God be praise").

Inscription on a bridge in Fusṭaṭ by the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān, AH 69/688–89:[27]

> *Hādhihi l-qanṭara amara bihā ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān al-amīr. Allahumma bārik lahu fī amrihi kullihi wa-thabbit sulṭānahu ʿalā mā tarḍā wa-aqarra ʿaynahu fī nafsihi wa-ḥashamihi amīn. wa-qāma bi-binā'ihā Saʿd Abū ʿUthmān wa-kataba ʿAbd al-Raḥmān fī ṣafar sanat tisʿ wa-sittīn.*
>
> This bridge was commissioned by the governor ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Marwān. O God, bless him in all his affairs, strengthen **{695}** his rule as You see fit and

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[22] Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*, 2.81. Combe *et al.*, *RCEA*, no. 36, assigns it to Marwān II, but Day, "The Tirāz Silk of Marwān," gives arguments for its attribution to Marwān I.

[23] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.96–97. Note the legend's pun on the governor's name, though it is also found on coins of the governor Salm ibn Ziyād dated AH 68–70 (*ibid.*, 1.81).

[24] Gaube, *Arabosasanidische Numismatik*, 62; Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.97, only has the one of AH 66. For the significance of these coins see the entry on "Islam in the First Century AH" in Chapter 13 above.

[25] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.102. The date is unclear, but the coin must precede Muṣʿab's death in AH 71 or 72.

[26] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.98–102; there is a coin of this governor dated 67, but the Kufic legend is mostly obliterated. *Ibid.*, 1.85, says that the same legend is probably found on a coin of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ziyād dated 54, but it is unclear.

[27] Attested by Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 2.146; Combe *et al.*, *RCEA*, no. 8. The absence of any religious element, not even a *Hijri* date, make it likely that this inscription has been accurately transmitted.

> cheer him himself and his entourage, amen. Sa'd Abū 'Uthmān undertook the building of it, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān wrote [this] in Safar of the year 69.

An Arab-Sasanian coin of the Kharijite rebel Qaṭarī ibn al-Fujā'a, Bishapur, AH 69.[28] It bears the typically Kharijite slogan *lā ḥukm illā lillāh* ("Judgement belongs to God alone"), prefixed with *bism Allāh*. And written in Persian: "Servant of God, Ktri, commander of the faithful."

An Arab-Sasanian coin of the Umayyad governor of Baṣra Khālid ibn 'Abd Allāh, Bishapur, AH 71/690–91.[29] The legend is *bism Allāh Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* ("In the name of God, Muḥammad is the messenger of God").

Religious Declarations by Caliphs in Dated Writings of AH 72–135/691–752

Once we come to the Marwanid period, dated Muslim texts become much more numerous and the content is more varied.[30] In particular, citations from the Qur'an begin to appear (I indicate this by "= *Q*.," even if only a partial citation). Here I consider only those dated texts that contain religious declarations by caliphs beyond the *basmala* or a formulaic request (such as *aṣlahahu Allāh*/"may God make him **{696}** prosper"). Not included are an undated inscription of Hishām commemorating the construction of a reservoir near Suweida in southeast Syria,[31] and two fragmentary inscriptions: one of Yazīd II[32] and another possibly to be attributed to Walīd II.[33]

(i) The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, built by 'Abd al-Malik, AH 72/691:[34]

OUTER FACE (SOUTH)

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[28] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.112–13 (records four other coins of this rebel dated ah 75 from Ardashir Khurra). Also dated to this year is a bronze èwer bearing the inscription *min Ṣan'at Yazīd mimmā 'amala bi-l-Baṣra sanat tis' wa-sittīn baraka* (Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*, 2.72a, 82a fig. 47), but Julian Raby informs me that the style of manufacture dates it to the second century AH, so presumably a *mi'a* has been left off.

[29] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 1.108; discussed in the entry on Islam in the First Century AH" in Chapter 13 above. Also dated to this year is the tombstone of 'Abbasa bint Jurayj (Hawary, "The Second Oldest Islamic Monument Known"), but the developed phraseology (e.g. *inna a'ẓam maṣā'ib ahl al-islām muṣībatuhum. bi-l-nabī Muḥammad*) and the ornate script suggest that a *mi'a* has been omitted and that it should be read AH 171/787, which is when tombstones from Egypt start to become common.

[30] See Combe *et al.*, *RCEA*, nos. 9–37, and the bibliography given in n. 2 above.

[31] Rihaoui, "Découverte de deux inscriptions arabes," 208.

[32] Sauvaget, "Les inscriptions arabes de la mosquée de Bosra," 55.

[33] *Idem*, "Notes de topographie omeyyade," 96–100.

[34] Kessler, "'Abd al-Malik's Inscription," 4–9; Combe *et al*, *RCEA*, no. 9. The division into lines is mine and does not correspond to that on the Dome; it allows me to avoid the repetitions and to make the division of content clearer. To facilitate comparison with the original text, I note the face on which the original appears (South, etc.).

1. In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate,
2. There is no god but God alone,
3. He has no associate.
4. Say He is God the one, God the eternal. He did not beget and was not begotten, there is none equal to Him (= *Q*. cxii).
5. Muḥammad is the messenger of God,
6. May God incline (*ṣallâ*) unto him ⊗

OUTER FACE (SOUTHWEST)

7. 11. 1 + 2 + 3 + 5
8. God and His angels incline unto the Prophet;

{697} OUTER FACE (WEST)

O you who believe, pray for him and give him salutations (= *Q*. xxxiii.56) ⊗ ll. 1 + 2

OUTER FACE (NORTHWEST)

9. Praise be to God who has not taken a son, and who has no companion in sovereignty nor a protector through dependence. Magnify him greatly (= *Q*. xvii.111) l. 5.

OUTER FACE (NORTH)

10. May God and His angels and His messengers incline unto him, and the peace and compassion of God be upon him ⊗ ll. 1 +2 + 3.

OUTER FACE (NORTHEAST)

11. To Him belongs sovereignty and to Him belongs praise, He allots life and death, and He is omnipotent (= *Q*. lxiv.1 + lvii.2).
12. ll. 5 + 6 and accept his intercession on the day of the resurrection on behalf of his community ⊗

OUTER FACE (EAST)

13. ll. 1 + 2 + 3 + 5 + 6 ⊗ There built this dome the servant of God

OUTER FACE (SOUTHEAST)

14. ʿAb{d al-Malik… commander}[35] of the faithful in the year seventy-two, may God accept it from him and be pleased with him, amen, Lord of the worlds, to God belongs praise ⊗

[35] The caliph Ma'mūn substituted his own name here.

{698} INNER FACE (SOUTH)

15. ll. 1 + 2 + 3 + 11 Muḥammad is the servant of God and His messenger.

INNER FACE (SOUTHEAST)

16. ll. 8 + 6 and the peace and compassion of God be upon him.

17. O people of the Book, do not exaggerate in your religion

INNER FACE (EAST)

and only say the truth about God. The Messiah Jesus son of Mary was only a messenger of God, and His word which He committed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not say "three;" refrain,

INNER FACE (NORTHEAST)

it is better for you. God is only one god; he is too exalted to have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and on the earth. God suffices as a defender (= *Q*. iv.171).

INNER FACE (NORTH)

18. The Messiah will never disdain to be God's servant, nor will the favoured angels. Whoever disdains to serve Him and is proud, He will gather them all to Him (= *Q*. iv.172).

19. O God, incline unto your messenger and your servant Jesus son of Mary.

{699} INNER FACE (NORTHWEST)

20. Peace on him the day he was born and the day he dies and the day he shall be raised alive (= *Q*. xix.15).

21. Such was Jesus son of Mary; [we have said it as] a statement of the truth concerning which they are in doubt. It is not for God to take a son, glory be to Him.

INNER FACE (WEST)

When He decrees a thing, He only says "be" and it is. God is my lord and your lord, so serve Him, that is an upright way (= *Q*. xix.34–36).

22. God is witness that there is no god but Him, as also are the angels and men of knowledge. He acts with justice; there is no god but Him the mighty the wise (= *Q*. iii.18).

INNER FACE (SOUTHWEST)

23. Religion with God is Islam. Those who received the scripture differed only after knowledge came to them, out of envy for one another. Whoever denies the signs of God [beware], for God is swift to call to account (= *Q*. iii.19).

(ii) Aniconic gold and silver coins, minted by ʿAbd al-Malik, from AH 77/696:[36]

{700} *Obverse centre:* There is no god but God alone, He has no associate.

Obverse margin gold = *reverse margin silver:* Muḥammad is the messenger of God whom He sent with guidance and the religion of truth that He might make it prevail over all religion (*silver adds:* even if the associators are averse) = *Q.* ix.33.

Reverse centre: God the one, God the eternal, He did not beget and was not begotten (*silver adds:* there is none equal to Him) = *Q.* cxii.

Reverse margin gold = *obverse margin silver:* In the name of God this *dīnār*/ *dirham* was struck in the year…

(iii) Seven milestones on the Damascus-Jerusalem road from the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705):[37]

Bism All{āh al-Raḥmān} al-raḥīm la ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīk lahu Muḥammad rasūl Allāh. amara bi-tashīl hādhihi l-ʿaqaba ʿabd Allāh ʿAbd al-Malik amīr al-muʿminīn wa-ʿumilat ʿalā yaday Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥakam fī l-muḥarram min sanat thalāth {*wa-sabʿīn*}.

In the name of Go{d the Merciful} the Compassionate. There is no god but God alone, He has no companion, Muḥammad is the messenger of God. There has ordered the levelling of this pass the servant of God ʿAbd al-Malik, the commander of the faithful, and it has been accomplished at the hands of Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥakam in Muḥarram of the year three {and seventy}.[38] **{701}**

(iv) Arabic-Greek/Greek-Arabic and Arabic protocols, mostly from the time of Walīd I (705–15) to Yazīd II (720–24).[39] These have various formulas; all begin *bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm*, and commonly continue with all or part of the following:

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[36] Walker, *Catalogue of Muḥammadan Coins*, 2.liii–lxx, 84, 104. In the period between their imitation of Byzantine/Sasanian models and their minting of aniconic coins (*ca.* AH 72–77), the Muslims produced a number of transitional types (see Bates, "First Century of Islamic Coinage"). *Ibid.*, 254, mentions two *dirhams* of AH 75/694 that bear the inscription: "Commander of the faithful, deputy of God" (*amīr al-mu'minīn Khalīfat Allāh*).

[37] The following is the most complete and was published by Sharon, "An Arabic Inscription from the Time of ʿAbd al-Malik." Four others are given in Combe *et al.*, *RCEA*, nos. 14–17, and Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie*, 2.83; two more lie in Qatzrin in the Golan and will be published by Dr. Amikam Elad.

[38] Words within curly brackets are missing, since the top left and bottom right part of the stone are broken off. The latter half of the *basmala* is an obvious reconstruction; Sharon favours the year AH 73 rather than 83, since Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥakam, if he is to be identified with Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥakam ibn Abī l-ʿĀs, was dead by AH 80 (Caetani, *Chron.*, 965).

[39] *Arabic Papyri EL*, nos. 1–18, 31–33. See Grohmann, *Protokolle*, xxvii–xlvii.

> There is no god but God alone, He has no associate. He did not beget and was not begotten; there is none equal to Him (= *Q.* cxii.2–3). Muḥammad is the messenger of God whom he sent with guidance and the truth (= *Q.* ix.33).

and conclude with the name of the caliph/governor and the date.

(v) Mosque of Damascus, built by Walīd, AH 86–87/705–706:[40]

> *Rabbunā Allāh lā na'budu illā Allāh, amara bi-binā' hādha l-masjid wa-hadm al-kanīsa allatī kānat fihi 'abd Allāh al-Walīd amīr al-mu'minīn fī dhī l-ḥijja sanat sab' wa-thamānīn.*
>
> *Bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm lā ikrāh fī l-dīn qad tabayyana al-rushd min al-ghayy faman yakfuru bi-l-ṭāghūt wa-yu'minu billāh fa-qad istamsaka bi-l-'urwa al-wuthqā lā infiṣāma lahā w-Allāh samī' 'alīm. Lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīk lahu wa-lā na'budu illā iyyāhu. rabbunā Allāh waḥdahu wa-dīnunā al-islām wa-nabīyunā Muḥammad ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-sallam. amara bi-bunyān hādha l-masjid wa-hadm al-kanīsa allatī kānat fihi 'abd Allāh amīr al-mu'minīn al-Walīd fī dhī l-qa'da sanat sitt wa-thamānīn.*
>
> Our Lord is God, we worship only God. There has ordered the building of this mosque and the demolition of the church that was there the servant of God Walīd, the commander of the faithful, in Dhū l-Ḥijja of the year eighty-seven.
>
> In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate. There is no compulsion in religion, the right way has become distinguished from error, and he who rejects false deities and **{702}** believes in God has grasped a firm handhold that will never break, God is [all-] hearing and knowing (= *Q.* ii.256). There is no god but God alone, he has no associate, we worship none but Him. Our lord is God alone and our religion is Islam and our prophet is Muḥammad, may God incline unto him and give him greeting. There has ordered the building of this mosque and the demolition of the church that was there the servant of God and commander of the faithful Walīd in Dhū l–Qa'da of the year eighty-six.

(vi) Mosque of Medina, rebuilt by Saffāḥ, AH 135/752:[41]

> *Bism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-raḥīm lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīk lahu Muḥammad 'abduhu wa-rasūluhu arsalahu bi-l-hudā wa-dīn al-haqq li-yuẓhirahu 'alā al-dīn kullihi wa-law kariha al-mushrikūn. amara 'abd Allāh amīr al-mu'minīn bi-taqwā Allāh wa-tā'atihi wa-l-'amal bi-kitāb Allāh wa-sunnat nabīyihi wa-bi-silat al-raḥim wa-ta'ẓīm mā ṣaghghārā al-jabābira min ḥaqq Allāh wa-tasghīr mā 'aẓẓamū min al-bāṭil wa-iḥyā' ma amātū min al-ḥuqūq wa-imātat mā aḥyū min al-'udwān wa-an yutā 'Allāh wa-yu'ṣā al-'abbād fī ṭa'at Allāh*

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[40] This inscription, no longer extant, is reported to us in two versions: a shorter one by Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, 5.362–63, and a longer one by Muḥammad ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 1363); both are cited by Combe *et al.*, *RCEA*, no. 18.

[41] Ibn Rusteh, *Al-a'lāq al-nafīsa*, 70–71, who says that he read it himself in AH 260/874; at this time there had been added some words from the caliph Mahdī, who commissioned further work in 162/779 (*ibid.*, 73–74). See Combe *et* a*l.*, *RCEA*, nos. 38, 46–47.

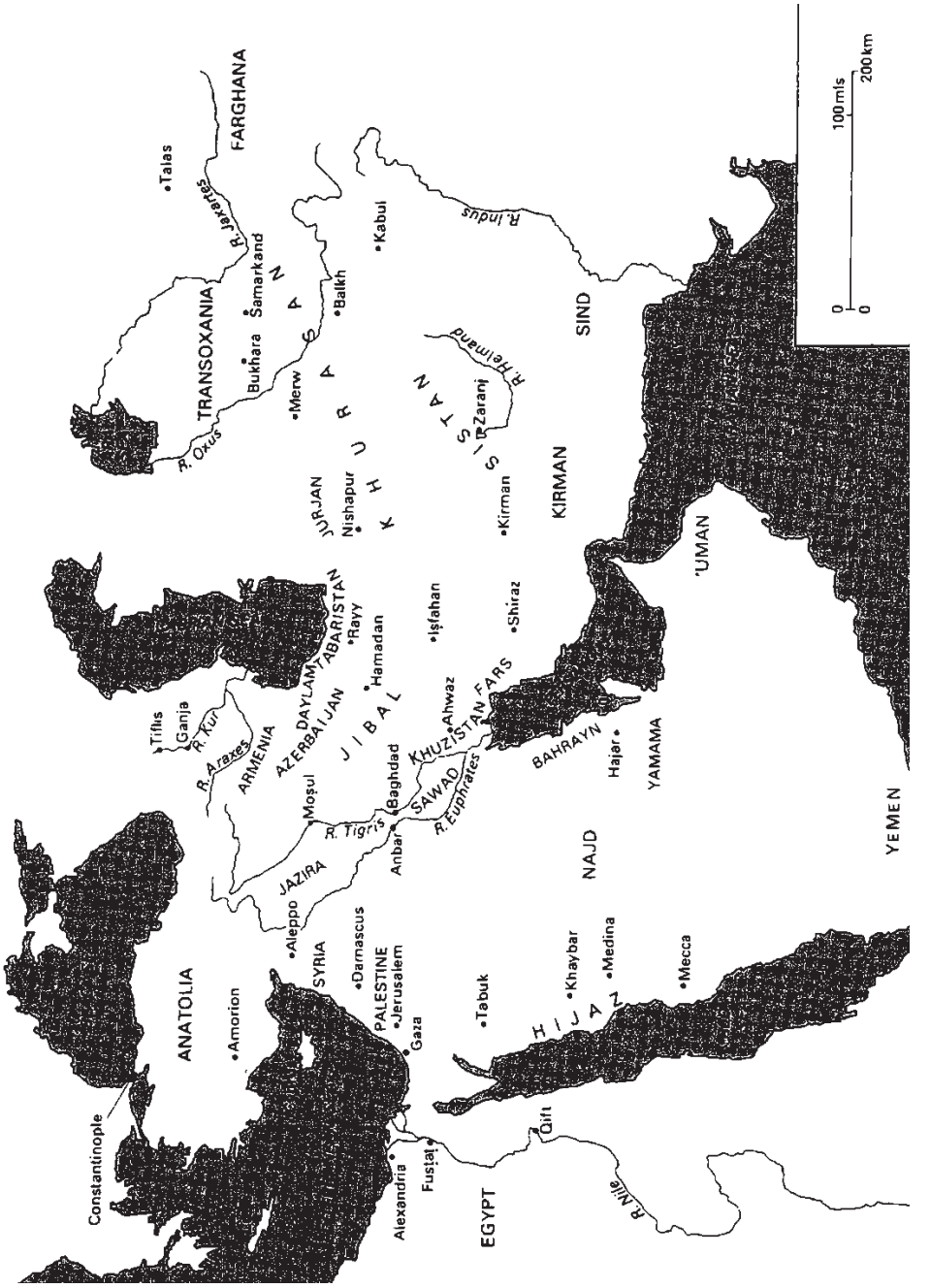
fa-l-ṭā'a lillāh wa-li-ahl ṭā'at Allāh wa-lā ṭ'ca li-aḥad fī ma'ṣiyat Allāh yad'u ilā kitab Allāh wa-sunnat nabiyihi wa-ilā al-'adl fī aḥkām al-muslimīn wa-l-qasm bi-l-sawīya fī fay'ihim wa-waḍ' al-akhmās fī mawādi'iha allatī amara Allāh bihā li-dhawī al-qurbā wa-l-yatāmā wa-l-masākīn wa-bn al-sabīl.

In the name of God the Merciful the Compassionate, there is no god but God alone, he has no associate. Muḥammad is His servant and His messenger, whom He sent with guidance and the religion of truth that He might make it prevail over all religion even if the associators are averse (= *Q.* ix.33). The servant of God, the commander of the faithful, **{703}** has ordered [that all] fear God and obey Him, act according to the Book of God and the Sunna of His Prophet, [respect] the ties of kinship, magnify God's truth which the tyrants have belittled and belittle the falsehood which they have magnified, revive the rightful things they suppressed and suppress the wrongful things they revived. [And he has ordered that] God be obeyed and that the worshippers be united in obedience to God, for obedience [is due] to God and to those obedient to God, but none should obey [when asked] to act against God. He (the caliph) calls [the people] to the Book of God and the Sunna of His Prophet, to justice in the ordinances of the Muslims, to equity in the allocation of their income and to the assignment of subsidies to the relatives [of the Prophet], orphans, the poor and the wayfarer in accordance with God's decree.[42]

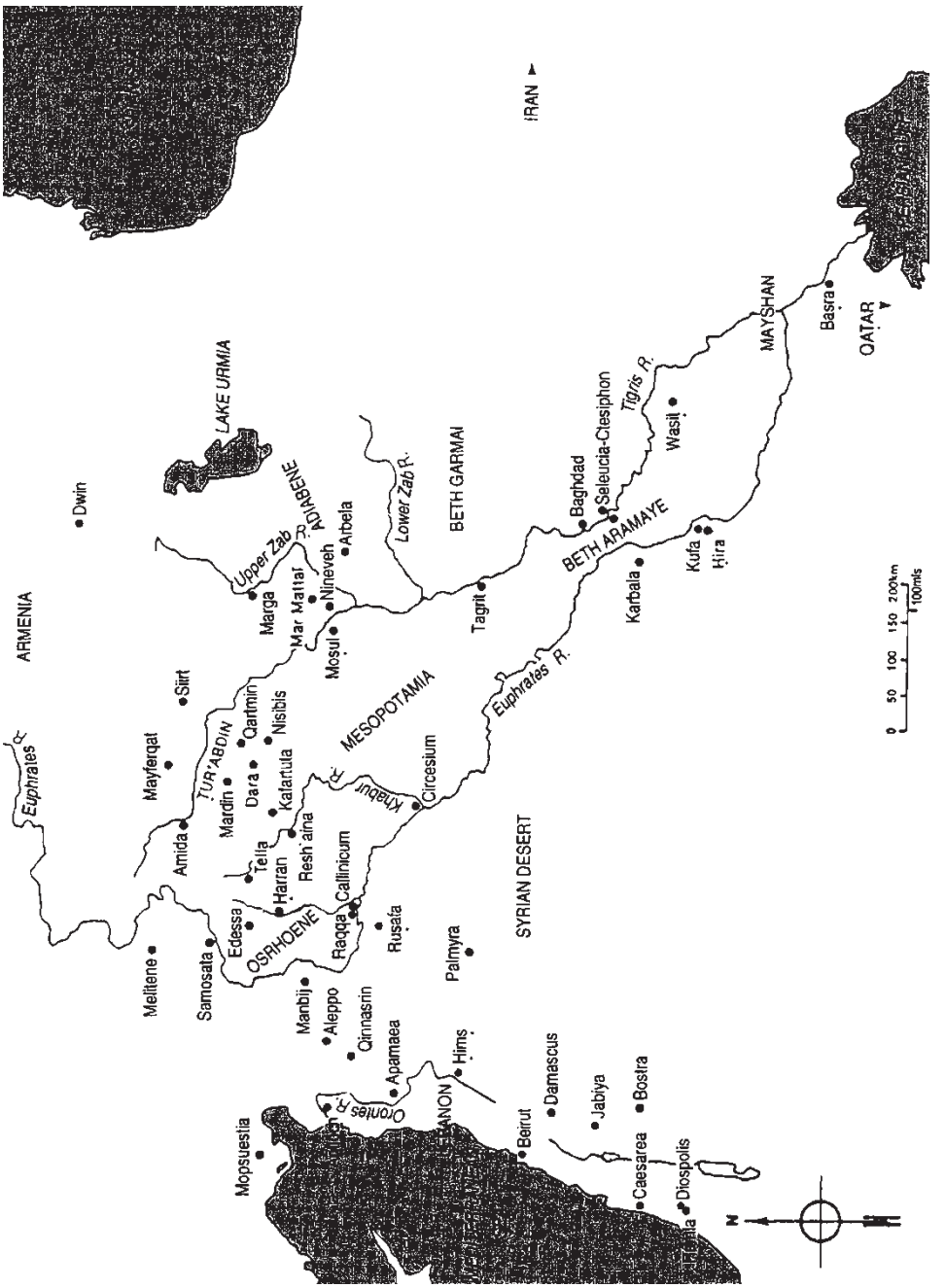
[42] Cf. Qur'an viii.41; the last sentence has been more freely translated.

Maps

MAP 1
PROVINCES OF THE EARLY ISLAMIC MIDDLE EAST



MAP 2
SYRO-MESOPOTAMIA IN THE SIXTH-EIGHTH CENTURIES



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{709} Where more than one edition is given, the first cited is the one used in this book. The language in which a modern translation is published will not be noted unless it differs from that of the title. Any abbreviated references appear in full in Bibliography II below. Note that the following is meant to be helpful, not exhaustive; for further information consult the literature cited in the first footnote of each chapter/section in Part IIA above, or in the first footnote in each section of Part IIB.

As regards Muslim works, which are not the main concern of this book, there is no attempt made to list translations or alternative editions.

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ʻUmar-Leo. *Letter* (Aljamiado) = Ms. Madrid Biblioteca Nacional 4944, fols. 84b–101a; D. Cardaillac, ed. *La polémique anti-chrétienne du manuscrit aljamiado no. 4944 de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Madrid* (Ph.D. thesis in 2 vols., Université de Paul Valéry; Montpelier, 1972), 2.194–267; Gaudeul, tr. "The Correspondence between Leo and ʻUmar," 132–48. This text is a translation from Arabic, a partial version of which does survive (see the entry on "ʻUmar-Leo" in the next section).

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Anthony Rawli. *Passion* = Dick, ed./tr. "La Passion arabe de S. Antoine," 119–27/127–33. For the Ethiopic and Georgian versions (derived from the Arabic), as well as a late Arabic abridgement, see Peeters, "S. Antoine le néo-marty." and *idem*, "L'autobiographie de S. Antoine."

Baḥira (Arabic) = Gottheil, ed./tr. "A Christian Bahira Legend," 252–68 and 56–102/125–66. There is a summary of the version found in Ms. Paris arab 215 by Baron Carra de Vaux, "La légende de Bahira ou un moine chrétien auteur du Coran," *ROC* 2 (1897), 439–54.

Bar Hebraeus. *Ta'rīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal.* ed. A. Salihani (Beirut, 1890); ed./tr. Edward Pocock as *Historia compendiosa dynastiarum* (Oxford, 1663). This is an Arabie recension of Bar Hebraeus' Syriac chronography (see the section on Syriac sources below), which he undertook at the request of a Muslim acquaintance.

Christian Arabic Disputation (*PSR 438*) = Papyrus Schott Reinhard no. 438. ed./tr. Graf, "Christlich-arabische Texte," 8–24.

Chron. Siirt = Addai Seller, ed./tr. "Histoire nestorienne. Chronique de Séert," *PO 4* (1908), 215–312; 5 (1910), 221–334; 7 (1911), 99–201; 13 (1919), 437–636. An index to the second part is provided by Jean Maurice Fiey in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 42 (1966), 205–18.

Coptic Synaxary = René Basset, ed./tr. "Le synaxaire arabe jacobite (rédaction copte)," *PO* 1 (1907), 223–379; 3 (1909) 245–545; 11 (1915), 507–859; 16 (1922), 187–424; 17 (1923), 527–782; 20 (1979), 742–80; I. Forget, ed/tr. *Synaxarium Alexandrimnn* (*CSCO* 47–49, 67, 78 *scr. arabici* 3–5, 11–12; Paris and

Louvain, 1905–32); Hegumenos Philotheus and al-Qiss Michael, eds. *Kitāb al-ṣādiq al-amīn fī akhbār al-qiddīsīn*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1912); S.C. Malan, tr. *Original Documents of the Coptic Church, II. The Calendar of the Coptic Church Translated from an Arabic Manuscript* (London, 1873), 3–39; F. Wiistenfeld, tr. (of first half of the year only) *Synaxarium., das ist Heiligen-Kalender der coptischen Christen* (Gotha, 1879); R. and L. Suter, tr. *Das Synaxarium. Das koptische Heiligenbuch mit dem Heiligen* zu *jedem Tag des Jahres* (Waldsolms-Kroffelbach, 1994).

Eutychius. *Annal es* = Louis Cheikho, ed. *Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, 2 parts in 1 vol. (*CSCO* 50–51 *scr. arabici* 6–7; Beirut, 1906–1909); Edward Pocock, tr. *Contextio gemmarum. sive Eutychii patriarchae Alexandrini Annales* (Oxford, 1658), which is reprinted in *PG*111, 889–1156, and is still worth consulting for its detailed indices; Bartolomeo Pirone, tr. *Eutichio patriarca di Alessandria* (*877–940*), *Gli Annali* (Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies; Cairo, 1987). This is the so-called Antiochene recension, found in numerous manuscripts; the original Alexandrian recension is preserved only in Ms. Sinai arab 582, partially edited and translated by Breydy, *Das Annalenwerk des Eutychios.* For the quotations in this book Breydy's edition hardly differs at all, so I cite only Cheikho's edition.

Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid = Ms. Sinai arab 154, fols. 99–139; Margaret Dunlop Gibson, ed./tr. *An Arabic Version of the Acts of the Apostles and the Seven Catholic Epistles, from a Eighth or Ninth Century MS in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, with a Treatise 'On the Triune Nature of God'* (Studia Sinaitica. 7; Cambridge, 1899), 74–107/2–36. A new edition is being prepared by Samir Khalil Samir.

Hist. Patriarchs = B. Evetts, ed./tr. "History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria," *PO* 1 (1907), 105–214, 383–518; 5 (1910), 3–215; 10 (1915), 359–547. There is also an edition by C.F. Seybold, *Severus ben el-Moqaffa'*, *Historia patriarcharum Alexandrinorum* (*CSCO* 52 and 59 *scr. arabici* 8–9; Paris, 1904–10). These two editions are based on the "Vulgate" recension in the fifteenth-century Ms. Paris arab 301–302; for the earlier Hamburg recension see the next entry. For other publications and manuscripts see den Heijer, *Mawhūb ibn Manṣūr*, 14–27.

Hist. Patriarchs (Hamburg) = C.F. Seybold, ed. *Severus ibn al-Muqaffa' Alexandrinische Patriarchengeschichte von S. Marcus bis Michael I (61–767), nach der altesten 1266 geschriebenen Hamburger Handschrift im arabischen Ur-text herausgegeben* (Hamburg, 1912). I cite this early recension only where it differs appreciably from the above.

John of Damascus. *Arabic Life* = Constantine Bacha, ed. *Sīrat al-qiddīs Yuḥanna al-Dimashqī al-aṣlīya/Biographie de Jean Damascene* (Harissa, 1912); Georg Graf, tr. "Das arabische Original der *Vita* des hi. Johannes von Damascus," *Der Hatholik* 93 (1913), 164–90; A.A. Vasiliev, tr. *Arabskaya versiya Zitiya sv. Ioanna Damaskina* (St. Petersburg, 1913). The principal derivative Greek biographies are described by Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam*, 35–38.

Kindī, ʻAbd al-Masīḥ al-. *Letter to al-Hāshimī* = A. Tien, ed. *The Apology of El-Kindī* (London, 1885), 38–270; W. Muir, partial tr. *The Apology of al-Kindy in Defence of Christianity* (London, 1887); Tartar, tr. *Dialogue islamo-chretien*, 85–282.

Mārī ibn Sulaymān. *Kitāb al-majdal* = Henry Gismondi, ed./tr. *Maris Amri et Shbae De patriarchis nestorianorum com.m.entaria) pars prior: Maris textus arabicus et versio latina* (Rome, 1899).

Miracles of S. Ptolemy, ed./tr. L. Leroy, *PO* 5 (1910), 779–803.

Ps.-Peter. *Apocalypse* = Mingana, ed./tr. "Apocalypse of Peter," 153–208/100–152, 283–348/215–82 (in Garshuni, Arabic written in Syriac script). The numerous, unpublished Arabic manuscripts of this text are listed by Graf *GCAL*, 1.289–91.

Ps.-Pisentius of Qift. *Letter* = Augustin Périer, ed./tr. "Lettre de Pisuntios, évêque de Qeft, à ses fidèles," *ROC* 19 (1914), 80–87/88–92, 302–16/316–36 and 445–46. This text is most likely a translation from a Coptic original.

Ps.-Samuel of Qalamun. *Apocalypse* = Jean Ziadeh, ed./tr. "L'apocalypse de Samuel, supérieur de Deir el-Qalamoun," *ROC* 20 (1915–17), 376=92/392= 404. This text is most likely a translation from a Coptic original.

Ps.-Shenute. *Vision* = Amélineau, ed./tr. *Monuments*, 338–49. The *Vision* is contained within an Arabic *Life* of Shenute [*ibid.*, 289–478); the Coptic *Life* (*ibid.*, 1–91, and fragments 237–48) does not include the *Vision.*

Stephen of Ramla. *Jāmiʻ wujūh al-īmān* = Ms. BL Or. 4950, fols. 1–197 (written in AH 264/877). Most of Chapters V–VIII are edited by Louis Maʼluf, "Aqdam al-makhṭūṭāt al-naṣrānīva al-ʻarabīya," *al-Machriq* 6 (1903); description and discussion are given by Graf, *GCAL*, 2.17–19, and at greater length by Griffith, "Islam and the *Summa Theologiae Arabica*." An edition and translation have been prepared by Sidney Griffith.

Stephen the Sabaite. *Arabic Life* = Bartolomeo Pirone, ed./tr. *Leonzio di Damasco*, *Vita di Santo Stefano Sabaita* (Studia Orientalia Christiana Monographiae 4; Cairo and Jerusalem, 1991); C. Carta., tr. *Vita di S. Stefano Sabaita* (Quaderni de "La Terra Santa;" Jerusalem, 1983); a new edition with English translation has been prepared by John C. Lamoreaux. This is a translation from a Greek original (see the section on Greek sources below).

Strategius. *Capture of Jerusalem.* = Gérard Garitte, ed./tr. *Expugnatioms Hierosolymae A.D. 61 f, recensiones arabicae* (*CSCO* 340–41, 347–48 *scr. arabici* 26–29; Louvain, 1973–74), gives four Arabic recensions (A = Ms. Sinai arab 428; B = Sinai arab 520; C = Sinai arab 531; V = Vatican arab 697). The Vatican text was first edited with notes by Paulus Peeters, "La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 9 (1923= 24), 12–41; an epitome found in Ms. Paris arab 262 was published by Comte Couret, ed./tr. "La prise de Jérusalem par les Perses," *ROC* 2 (1897), 147= 54/154–64. There is also a Georgian version, a translation from Arabic (it is very close to recension A), which was first edited by N. Marr, *Antioḫ Stratig. Plênenie Ierousahma persami v 614* (St. Petersburg, 1909), and subsequently by Garitte with Latin translation: *La prise de*

Jérusalem, *par les Perses en 614* (*CSCO* 202–203 *scr. Iberici* 11–12; Louvain, 1960); an abridged translation is given by F.C. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategius' Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910), 502–17. The related anonymous and incomplete Greek text on the Persian conquest in *PG* 86, 3236–68, suggest that at the base of all this lies a Greek original.

Theodore Abū Qurra. *Mīmar fī wujūd al-khāliq wa-l-dīn al-qawīm*, ed. Ignace Dick (Patrimoine arabe chrétien 3; Jounieh and Rome, 1982); ed. Louis Cheikho in *al-Machriq* 15 (1912), 757–74, 825–42. There is a translation by Georg Graf, *Des Theodor Abū Kurra Traktat über den Schöpfer und die wahre Religion* (Texte und Untersuchungen 14.1; Münster, 1913) and by George H. Khoury, *Theodore Abū Qurrah* (*c. 750–820*)*: Translation and Critical Analysis of his 'Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and on the True Religion'* (Ph.D. thesis, Graduate Theological Union; Berkeley, 1991).

Mīmar fī ikrām li-īqūnāt, ed. Ignace Dick (Patrimoine arabe chrétien 10; Jounieh and Rome, 1986); ed./tr. Joannes Arendzen as *Theodori Abu Kurra de cultu imaginum. libellus e codice arabico nunc prim um editus latine versus illustratus* (Bonn, 1897). There is a translation by Georg Graf, *Die arabischen Schriften des Theodor Abu Qurra*, *Bischofs von Harrān* (Paderborn, 1910), 278–333, and one forthcoming by Sidney H. Griffith (being published by the Franciscan Centre of Christian Oriental Studies).

Theophilus of Alexandria. *Arabic Homily* =Fleisch, ed./tr. "Une homélie de Théophile d'Alexandrie," 377–419/376–418.

Timothy I. *Arabie Apology* = Putman, ed./tr. *L'église et l'Islam*., 1–51 (back)/213–77; Louis Cheikho, ed. "Al-muḥāwara al-dīnīya bayna l-khalīfat al-Mahdī wa-Tīmāthāūs al-jāthlīq," *al-Machriq* 19 (1921), 359–74, 408–418; repr. in *idem*, *Trois traités anciens de polémique et de théologie chrétiennes* (Beirut, 1923), 12–23. Caspar, ed./tr. "Les versions arabes du dialogue," 125–52/153–75, publishes this dialogue from the fourteenth-century Ms. Paris arab 82, which represents a different line of transmission from the nineteenth-century Beirut manuscript used by Putman and Cheikho. This is a reworking of a Syriac original (see the section on Syriac sources below).

Timothy the Stylite. *Arabic Life* = Ms. Paris arab 259, fols. 104–50; the manuscript is of different hands, the earliest of the fourteenth century. There is a Georgian version of this work, which has been edited by K. Kekelidze; I have seen only the reprint of it in his *Etiudebi jveli k'art'uli literaturis istoriidan*, vol. 6 (Tbilisi, 1960), 311–406 (Russian summary, 296–311). For the reference to the original publication see Garitte, "Bibliographic de K. Kekelidze," 457 (no. 81). An edition and translation of the *Arabic Life* is being prepared by John C. Lamoreaux.

ARABIC (*Judaeo-*)

Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ. *'Ishrūn maqāla* = Sarah Stroumsa, ed./tr. Dāwūd ibn Marwān al-Muqammiṣ's Twenty Chapters (*Ishrūn Maqāla*) (Leiden, 1989).

Judaeo-Arabic Chronicle = Taylor Schlechter Collection, Cambridge University Library, Arabic Box 6 (1), fol. 1; Moshe Gil, ed. *Eres-isrā'ēl ba-teqūfā hā-muslimīt ha-ri'shōna* (*634–1099*) (Tel Aviv, 1983), 2.1–3 (no. 1).

Ten Wise Jews (Judaeo-Arabic) = Leveen, ed./tr. "Mohammed and his Jewish Companions," 402–403/403–405; text emended by S. Gandz, "Notes on Mr. Leveen's Article," *JQR* 17 (1927), 235–36, and by Leveen, "Mohammed and his Jewish Companions: Additions and Corrections," *JQR* 17 (1927), 237.

ARABIC (*Samaritan*)

Abū l-Fatḥ. *Annales* = Edward Vilmar, ed. *Abulfathi annales samaritani quos ad fidem. codicum. manu scriptorum. Berolinensium. Bodlejani Parisini edidit* (Gotha, 1865); Paul Stenhouse, ed. *The Kitāb al-Tarīkh of Abū 'l-Fatḥ* (Ph.D. thesis; Sydney, 1980); idem, tr. *The Kitāb al-Tarīkh of Abū 'l-Fatḥ* (Mandelbaum Trust; Sydney, 1985).

ARCHAEOLOGY

Aphrodito Papyri = H.I. Bell, ed. *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, *Volume IV: the Aphrodito Papyri* (London, 1910); *idem.*, tr. "Translations of the Greek Aphrodito Papyri in the British Museum," *Der Islam* 2 (1911), 269–83, 372–84; 3 (1912), 132–40, 369–73; 4 (1913), 89–96.

Arabic Papyri EL = Adolf Grohmann, ed./tr. *Arabic Papyri in the Egyptian Library*, 6 vols. (Cairo, 1934–62).

Coptic Papyrus = BL Coptic papyrus no. 89; Revillout, ed. "Mémoire sur les Blemmyes," 402; corrected by Crum, *Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 123 (no. 280).

Khirbat al-Mird Papyri = Adolf Grohmann, ed./tr. *Arabic Papyri from Hirbet el-Mird* (Louvain, 1963).

Nessana Papyri = C.J. Kraemer, ed./tr. *Excavations at Nessana, Volume 3: Non-Literary Papyri* (Princeton, 1958).

Papyri ERF: the most important for our purposes are published by Adolf Grohmann, "Aperçu de papyrologie arabe," *Etudes de papyrology* 1 (1932), 2395 (PERF 555, 556–58, 561, 573); *idem*, *From the World of Arabie Papyri* (Cairo, 1952), 115–16 (PERF 556, 558); *idem*, "Greek Papyri of the Early Islamic Period in the Collection of Archduke Rainer," *Etudes de papyrologie* 8 (1957), 5–40 (PERF 552–54, 559–61, 563–66, 570–72). These are also to be found in Emil Kiessling (continuing on from Preisigke and Bilabel), ed. *Sammelbuch gnechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*, vol. 6 (Wiesbaden, 1963), 383–84 (nos. 9576–78); vol. 8 (Wiesbaden, 1965), 86–92 (nos. 9748–60).

ARMENIAN

Ananias of Shirak. *On Easter*: of particular interest in this work is the autobiographical preface, which has been edited by K. Patkanian (*Ananiyi Shirakats'woy Mnats'ordk' Banits'* St. Petersburg, 1877, 1–4; tr. F.C. Conybeare, "Ananias

of Shirak," *BZ*6, 1897, 572–74), L. Alishan (*Hayapatum*, Venice, 1901, 232–33) and Jacob Dashian (*Katalog der armenischen Handschriften in der Mechitharisten Bibliothek zu Wien*, Vienna, 1895, 174–76; tr. H. Berbérian, "Autobiographie d'Anania Širakac'i," *REA* 1, 1964, 189= 94). The piece is found in numerous manuscripts but there is still no critical edition.

David of Dvin. *Passion*: for details of editions and a translation see Excursus D above and Peeters, *BHO*, 58 (no. 246).

Enoch the Just. Vision = J. Issaverdens, tr. *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament Found in the Armenian Mss. of the Library of St. Lazarus* (Venice, 1901), 309–23. The edition (in H.S. Josepheanz, *Trésor des pères anciens et récents: écrits non canoniques de l'Ancien Testament*, Venice, 1896) was not available to me.

John Çatholicos (Yovhannes Draskhanakertets'i) = M. Emin, ed. *Patmut'iwn Hayots'* (Moscow, 1853; repr. Tbilisi, 1912; repr. Delmar, New York, 1980); M.J. Saint-Martin, tr. *Histoire d'Arménie par le patriarche Jean VI dit Jean Çatholicos* (Paris, 1841); Krikor Maksoudian, tr. *History of Armenia* (Atlanta, Georgia, 1987).

Leo-'Umar. *Letter* (Armenian) = Chapters XIII–XIV of Lewond's *History* (see next entry); in this book I cite only from Jeffery, tr. "Ghevond's Text," 281–330.

Lewond = K. Ezian, ed. *Lewond erets' patmut'iwn* (St. Petersburg, 1887); G. Chalmazarian, tr. *Histoire des guerres et des conquêtes des arabes en Arménie par l'éminent Ghevond, Vartabed arménien* (Paris, 1856); K. Patkanian, tr. *Istoriya khalifov vardapeta Gevonda* (St. Petersburg, 1862); Zaven Arzoumanian, tr. *History of Lewond the Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians* (Philadephia, 1982).

Michael the Syrian (Armenian tr.) = Victor Langlois, tr. *Chronique de Michel le Grand patriarche des syriens jacobites, traduite pour la première fois sur la version arménienne du prêtre Ischôk* (Venice, 1866); E. Dulaurier, tr. (of the years 573–717) "Extrait de la chronique de Michel le Syrien traduit de Parmenien," *JA* ser. iv, 12 (1848), 289–334; 13 (1849), 315–76; for editions see Thomson, *Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature*, 69. This is an abridged version of the Syriac (see the section on Syriac sources below) made in 1248; for discussion see F. Haase, "Die armenische Rezension der syrischen Chronik Michaels des Grossen," *OC* 5 (1915), 60–82, 271–84.

Sebeos = K. Patkanian, ed. *Patmut'iwn Sebeosi* (St. Petersburg, 1879); Gevorg Abgarian, ed. *Patmut'iwn Sebeosi* (Erevan, 1979); K. Patkanian, tr. *Istoriya imperatora Irakla* (St. Petersburg, 1862); Heinrich Hübschmann, partial tr. *Zur Geschichte Armeniens und der ersten Krieger der Araber aus dem Armenischen des Sebeos* (Leipzig, 1875), 10–44 (repr. in *REA* 13, 1978–79, 313–53); F. Macler, tr. *Histoire d'Héraclius par l'évêque Sebêos* (Paris, 1904); Robert Bedrosian, tr. *Sebeos' History* (Sources of the Armenian Tradition; New York, 1985); C. Gugerotti, tr. *Sebeos*, *Storia* (Eurasiatica 4; Verona, 1990); Robert Thomson, tr. (with commentary by James Howard-Johnston) *Sebeos' History* (Translated Texts for Historians; Liverpool, forthcoming).

Stephen Asolik of Taron. *Universal History* = S. Malkhasian, ed. *Step'annos Taronets'woy patmut'iwn tiezerakan* (St. Petersburg, 1885); E. Dulaurier, tr. *Histoire universelle par Etienne Açogh'ig de Daron*, Part 1 (Paris, 1883); F. Macler, tr. *Histoire universelle par Etienne Asolik de Tarôn*, Parts 2–3 (Paris, 1917–20); H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt, tr. *Stephanos von Taron, armenische Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1907).

Thomas Artsruni = K. Patkanian, ed. *T'ovmayi vardapeti Artsrunwoy patmut'iwn Tann Artsruneats'* (St. Petersburg, 1887; repr. Tbilisi, 1917; repr. Delmar, New York, 1991); M.F. Brosset, tr. *Collection d'historiens arméniens* (St. Petersburg, 1874–76), 1.1–266; Robert W. Thomson, tr. *Thom.as Artsruni: History of the House of the Artsrunik'* (Detroit, 1985).

Vahan of Golt'n. *Passion* = M.J.A. Gatteyrias, tr. "Elégie sur les malheurs de l'Arménie et le martyre de Saint Vahan de Kogthen: Episode de l'occupation arabe en Arménie," *JA* ser. vii, 16 (1880), 177–214. The edition, in vol. 12 of the *Petite bibliothèque historique arménienne*, was not available to me; an abridged version appears in L. Alishan, *Hayapatum* (Venice, 1901), 250–53 (no. 202).

CHINESE

Tu Yu. *T'ung tien*: for references to editions of this work and a translation of the portion that concerns the western barbarians, among them the Arabs, see Wakeman, *The Western Barbarians*. A translation of the section on the Arabs is given by Behbehani, "Arab-Chinese Military Encounters," 99–101.

Liu Hsii. *Chiu T'ang shu* (Zhonghua shuju; Beijing, 1975).

Ou-yang Hsiu. *Hsin T'ang shu* (Zhonghua shuju; Beijing, 1975).

COPTIC

Isaac of Rakoti. *Life* = E. Porcher, ed./tr. "Vie d'Isaac patriarche d'Alexandrie de 686 à 689," *PO* 11 (1915), 301–90; E. Amélineau, ed./tr. *Histoire du patriarche copte Isaac* (Publications de l'école des lettres d'Alger 2; Paris, 1890).

Homily on the Child Saints of Babylon = Henri de Vis, ed./tr. "Panégyrique des Trois Saints Enfants de Babylone" in *idem*, *Homélies coptes de la Vaticane*, vol. 2 (Coptica 5; Copenhagen, 1929; repr. in *Cahiers de la bibliothèque copte* 6; Louvain and Paris, 1990), 58–120.

Ps.-Athanasius. *Apocalypse* = Morgan Codex M602, fols. 52b–77b; Martinez, ed./tr. *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, 285–411/462–555 (includes edition of an Arabic version); Tito Orlandi, tr. *Omelie copte* (Corona Patrum 7; Torino, 1981), 73–91.

Ps.-Daniel (Coptic). *XIV Vision* = Henry Tattam, ed./tr. *Prophetae majores in dialecto linguae aegyptiacae memphitica sen coptica* (Oxford, 1852), 2.387–405; Joseph Bardelli, ed. *Daniel copto-m.emphitice* (Pisa, 1849), 103–12; A. Schulte, tr. *Die koptische Übersetzung der vier grossen Propheten untersucht* (Münster, 1892), 84–90. This Coptic version is actually a translation from Arabic, for which see

Becker, ed./tr. "Das Reich der Ismaeliten im koptischen Danielbuch," 11–17/17–24; Macler, tr. "Les apocalypses apocryphes de Daniel," 163–76; Meinardus, tr. "Commentary on the XIVth Vision of Daniel," 411–49. All editions and translations have the same paragraph numbering.

ETHIOPIC

John of Nikiu = H. Zotenberg, ed./tr. *Chronique de Jean évêque de Nikiou* (Paris, 1883); R.H. Charles, tr. *The Chronicle of John* (*c. 690 AD*), *Coptic Bishop of Nikiu* (London and Oxford, 1916). Originally written in Coptic, it was translated into Arabic and thence into Ethiopic, in which form alone it now survives.

Ethiopic Synaxary = Ignazio Guidi and Sylvain Grébaut, ed./tr. "Le synaxaire éthiopien," *PO* 1 (1905), 527–703; 7 (1911), 207–454; 9 (1913), 239–476; 15 (1921), 549–798; 26 (1950), 7–113; continued by Gerard Colin in *PO* 43 (1985–86), 326–507; 44 (1987), 6–163; 45 (1990), 8–245; 46 (1994–95), 302–467, 486–595; 47 (1996–97), 200–361. E.A. Wallis Budge, tr. *The Book of the Saints of the Ethiopian Church: a Translation of the Ethiopic Synaxarium*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1928).

Ps.-Peter (Ethiopic tr.). *Apocalypse* = Sylvain Grébaut, tr. "Littérature éthiopienne pseudo-Clémentine III: traduction du Qalêmentos," *ROC* 16–22 (1911= 19), 26 (1927–28); for page nos. see Graf, *GCAL*, 1.292. This is a translation from an Arabic original (see the section on Christian Arabic sources above).

GEORGIAN (*see also Excursus E above*)

John Moschus (Georgian tr.). *Pratum spirituale* = I. Abuladzé, ed. *Ioane Moshi. Limonari* (Tbilisi, 1960). Nos. 12–30 of the 30 narratives appended to this version (*ibid.*, 85–118) are translated into Latin by Garitte, "'Histoires édifiantes' géorgiennes," 406–23; an edition and translation of narrative no. 19 is given by Flusin, "L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des arabes," 19–22.

Michael the Sabaite. *Passion* = K. Kekelidze, ed. *Monumenta hagiographica georgica I: Keimena* (Tbilisi, 1918), 165–73; Peeters, Latin tr. "Passion de S. Michel," 66–77; Monica J. Blanchard, tr. "The Georgian Version of the Martyrdom of Saint Michael, Monk of Mar Sabas Monastery," *Aram* 6 (1994), forthcoming, who demonstrates that it is a translation from Arabic.

Palestinian-Georgian Calendar = Gerard Garitte, ed./tr. *Le calendrier palestino-géorgien du Sinaiticus 34, Xe siècle* (Subsidia Hagiographica 30; Brussels, 1958).

Peter of Capitolias. *Passion* = K. Kekelidze, ed. "Žitie Petra Novago, muchenika Kapetolijskago," *Khristianskij Vostok* 4.1 (1915), 1–71; repr. in *idem*, *Etiude bi jveli k'art'uli literaturis istoriidan*, vol. 7 (Tbilisi, 1961), 177–223; Peeters, summary. "Passion de S. Pierre," 301–16. This is probably based on a Greek original.

Romanus the Neomartyr. *Passion* = Peeters, Latin tr. "S. Romain le néomartyr," 409–27 (French summary at 393–403). *Ibid.*, 393, gives references for an edition by a Professor Khakhanov and a Russian translation by K. Kekelidze. This probably derives from a Greek original via an Arabic intermediary.

GREEK

Anastasius of Sinai. *Viae dux*. ed. K.H. Uthemann (*CCSG*8; Turnhout and Leuven, 1981); *PG* 89, 36–309.

———. *Questions*. *PG* 89, 329–824; in references I cite first the question number given in Ms. Moscow gr. 265, which is the earliest witness to Anastasius' *Questions* and is used in the edition by Joseph Munitz to appear in *CCSG*.

———. *Dialogue against the Jews*. *PG* 89, 1204–81.

———. *Narrat.* A1–42 = Nau, ed. "Le texte grec des récits du moine Anastase," 60–87; *idem.*, tr. "Les récits inédits du moine Anastase," 9–44. Nau edits 40 narratives of cycle A (I-XL); Mss. Vaticanus gr. 2592 and Vaticanus syr. 623 (dated 886) give 42 in an order very different to the two Paris manuscripts used by Nau.

———. *Narrat.* B1–9 = Nau, ed. "Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase," 61–75 (XLIII–LI); summarised by *idem*, "Les récits inédits du moine Anastase," 52–60, and very briefly by Flusin, "Démons et Sarrasins," 385–86.

———. *Narrat*. C1–18 = Ms. Vaticanus gr. 2592, fols. 123–35 (see *Canart*, "Nouveaux récits du moine Anastase," and *idem*, "Une nouvelle anthologie monastique"); a brief summary is given by Flusin, "Démons et Sarrasins," 386–88. C4 (without prologue) and C11 are edited by Nau, "Le texte grec des récits du moine Anastase," as XLI and LII respectively (and summarised by *idem*, "Les récits inédits du moine Anastase," 45–48, 60–61); C3 is edited and translated by Flusin, "L'esplanade du Temple à l'arrivée des arabes," 25–26. An edition of all the narratives according to Vaticanus gr. 2592 is being prepared by Bernard Flusin and Philip Pattenden.

———. *Sermo* 3 ("In creationem hominis secundum imaginem Dei"). *PG* 89, 1152–1180.

Andreas Salos. *Life* = *Acta sanctorum*. 28 May (Corollarium), 6.4–111; repr. in *PG* 111, 627–888. The apocalypse alone is edited and translated by Rydén, "The Andreas Salos Apocalypse," 201–14/215–25 (= *PG* 111, 852–873).

Antiochus of Mar Saba. *Epístola ad Eustathium*. *PG* 89, 1422–28, which is prefixed to his *Pandecta*, *PG* 89, 1428–1849.

Bacchus of Mar Saba. *Passion* = F. Combefis, ed./tr. *Christi martyrum lecta trias* (Paris, 1666), 61–126 (notes, 126–54).

Chron. paschale = G. Dindorf, ed. *Chronicon paschale* (Corpus scriptorum historian byzantinae; Bonn, 1832); Michael and Mary Whitby, tr. *Chronicon paschale 284–628 AD* (Translated Texts for Historians 7; Liverpool, 1989).

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Cosmas Indicopleustes. *Christian Topography.* ed./tr. W. Conus-Wolska (Sources chrétiennes 141; Paris, 1968–73).

Cosmas of Jerusalem. *Hymns* = H.M. Stevenson, ed. *Theodori Prodromi commentarios in carmina sacra melodontm Cosmae Hierosolymitani et loannis Damasceni* (Rome, 1888).

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Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo = McGiffert, ed. *Dialogue between a Christian and a Jew*, 51–83.

Diathēkē tou Mōameth. ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus in his *Analekta Hierosolymitikēs Stachyologias* 4 (St. Petersburg, 1897; repr. Brussels, 1963), 401–403.

Doctrina Jacobi = Déroche, ed./tr. "Juifs et chrétiens," 47–229; Bonwetsch, ed. "Doctrina Iacobi," 1–91. I cite Bonwetsch's numbering of paragraphs when it is not in accord with that of Déroche.

Elias of Damascus. *Passion* = F. Combefis, ed./tr. *Christi martyrum lecta trias* (Paris, 1666), 155–206; Papadopoulos-Kerameus, ed. "Syllogē palaistinës kai syriakēs hagiologias," 42–59.

Evagrius Scholasticus. *Ecclesiastical History.* ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898).

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George of Khoziba. *Life* = C. Houze, ed./tr. "Sancti Georgii Chozebitae confessons et monachi vita auctore Antonio ejus discipulo," *AB 7* (1888), 95–144; Leali di Segni, tr. *Nel deserto accanto ai fratelli. Vite di Gerasimo e di Giorgio di Choziba* (Magnano, 1991), 83–125.

George Syncellus. *Chronographia.* ed. G. Dindorf (Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae; Bonn, 1829); ed. Alden A. Mosshammer (Teubner; Leipzig, 1984).

Germanus. *Epistolae. PG* 98, 136–221. The letter to Thomas of Claudiopolis is also found in *Concilia sacra*, 13.108–28, and is translated by J. Mendham, *The Seventh Oecumenical Council* (London, 1849), 229–49.

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John of Damascus. *De haeresibus* = Kotter, ed. *Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 4.19–67; *PG* 94, 677–780. For the chapter on Islam see Kotter, ed. *Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 4.60–67; *PG* 94, 764–73; Voorhis, tr. "John of Damascus;" Sahas, ed./tr. *John of Damascus on Islam*, 132–41; Le Coz, ed./tr. *Jean Damascène: Ecrits sur l'Islam*, 210–27; Glei and Khoury, ed./tr. *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurra*, 74–83.

———. *De fide orthodoxa* = Kotter, ed. *Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 2.7–239; *PG* 94, 789–1228.

———. *De imaginibus orationes* 1–3 = Kotter, ed. *Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, 3.65–200; *PG* 94, 1232–1420; D. Anderson, tr. *St. John of Damascus on the Divine Images: Three Apologies against Those who Attack the Divine Images* (New York, 1980).

———. *Disputatio Saraceni et Christiani* = Kotter, ed. Schriften des Johannes *von Damaskos*, 4.427–38; *PG* 96, 1336–48 (cf. *PG* 94, 1595–97); Voorhis, tr. "Discussion of a Christian and a Saracen;" Sahas, ed./tr. *John of Damascus on Islam*, 142–59; Atiya, tr. "Al-jadal al-dīnī al-Masīḥī al-islāmī," 416–22; Glei and Khoury, ed./tr. *Johannes Damaskenos und Theodor Abu Qurra*, 169–83.

John Moschus. *Pratum spirituale* = *PG* 87, 2852–3112; M. Rouët de Journel, tr. *John Moschus: le Pré Spirituel* (Sources chrétiennes 12; Paris, 1946); D.C. Hesseling, partial tr. *Morceaux choisis du Pré Spirituel de Jean Moschos* (Paris, 1931). A critical edition is being prepared by Philip Pattenden for *CCSG*.

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John Moschus. *Pratum spirituale* (Ms. Berlin gr. 221), nos. I–X = Nissen, ed. "Unbekannte Erzählungen," 354–67.

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———. *Ep.* 8, "End" = Robert Devréesse, ed./tr. "La fin inédite d'une lettre de saint Maxime: un baptéme forcé de Juifs et de Samaritains à Carthage en 632," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 17 (1937), 34–35/33–34; Joshua Starr, ed./tr. "St. Máximos and the Forced Baptism at Carthage in 632," *Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbiicher* 16 (1940), 194/194–95; Dagron, tr. "Juifs et Chrétiens," 31.

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———. *Wars* = H.B. Dewing, ed./tr. *Procopius I–V: History of the Wars* (Loeb; London, 1956–62).

Ps.-Daniel (Greek). *First Vision* = Berger, ed./tr. *Die griechische Daniel-Diegese*, 12–18 (edits the Montpelier Ms., which is then translated with extensive commentary in Chapter 8); 19–23 (gives the variant readings in the Bodleian Ms., which was originally edited by V. Istrin, *Oktrovenie Mefodiya Patarskago i apokrificheskie Videniya Daniila*, Moscow, 1897, 145–50, and is translated by Zervos, "Apocalypse of Daniel," 763–70); 24–26 (edits the Venice Marciana Ms., which is considerably different). The Venice Ms. bears the title "First Vision of Daniel (*Daniēl horasis prōtē*), vision and apocalypse of Daniel the prophet," and I adopt this for the source.

Ps.-Methodius (Greek tr.). *Apocalypse* = A. Lolos, ed. *Die Apokalypse des Ps Methodios* (Meisenheim am Gian, 1976); corrected by Th. Frenz, "Textkritische Untersuchungen zu 'Pseudo-Methodius:' das Verhältnis der griechischen zur ältesten lateinischen Fassung," *BZ* 80 (1987), 54–58. A new edition by W.J. Aerts has been prepared for *CSCO* (see *idem*, "Zu einer neuen Ausgabe der 'Revelationes' des Pseudo-Methodius," *ZDMG supplement* 8, 1990, 123–30). The interpolation alone is given by Schmoldt, *Die Schrift vom. jungen Daniel*, 278–83. See the section on Syriac sources below for details of the Syriac original.

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———. *Holy Baptism* = A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, ed. "Tou en hagiois patros hēmōn Sōphroniou archiepiskopou Hierosolymōn logos eis to hagion baptisma," *Analekta Hierosolymitikēs Stachyologias* 5 (St. Petersburg, 1898; repr. Brussels, 1963), 151–68; Antonino Gallico, tr. *Le omelie* (Rome, 1991), 188–207. See Nissen, "Sophronios-Studien II," 99–103, for corrections to Papadopoulos-Kerameus' edition.

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———. *Miracles* = *PG* 87, 3424–3676; N. Fernandez Marcos, ed. *Los thaumata de Sofronio* (Madrid, 1975).

———. *Life of John the Almsgiver*: preserved in the first fifteen paragraphs of an anonymous paraphrase of the original (ed. H. Delehaye, "Une Vie inédite de saint Jean l'Aumônier," *AB*45, 1927, 19–25; tr. Elisabeth Dawes and Norman Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints*, Oxford, 1948, 199–206) and in an abridged synaxary entry (ed. E. Lappa-Zizicas, "Un epitome de la Vie de S. Jean l'Aumônier par Jean et Sophronius," *AB*88, 1970, 265–78). Leontius of Neapolis made use of Sophronius' *Life* in his own biography of John the Almsgiver (see Halkin, *BHG*^{3}, 2.19, no. 886).

Sozomenus. *Historia ecclesiastica.* ed. R. Hussey, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1860).

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Stephen of Damascus. *Passion of the Twenty Maryrs of Mar Saba* = *Acta sanctorum.* 20 March, 3.2–14 (Appendix, containing the Greek text), 3.166–78 (Latin translation); Papadopoulos-Kerameus, ed. "Syllogē palaistinēs kai syriakēs hagiologias," 1–41.

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Theodore of Sykeon. *Life* = A.J. Festugière, ed./tr. *Vie de Théodore de Sykéôn* (Subsidia Hagiographica 48; Brussels, 1970); Elisabeth Dawes and Norman Baynes, tr. (of Chapters 1–148) *Three Byzantine Saints* (Oxford, 1948), 88185.

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Ps.-Jonathan. *Targum* = E.G. Clarke *et al.*, ed. *Targum. Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Ktav, 1984); Maher, tr. (of Genesis) *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*] for other editions and translations see *ibid.*, 168= 69. This targum is a translation, with interpretative/haggadic additions, of the Hebrew Pentateuch.

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Sherira Gaon. *Letter* = Neubauer, ed. *Medieval Jewish Chronicles*, 1.3–41; Aaron Hyman, ed. *Iggeret Rav Sherira gaon* (London, 1910); Benjamin M. Lewin, ed. *Iggeret Rav Sherira gaon* (Haifa, 1921); L. Landau, tr. *Epitre historique du R. S chérira Gaon* (Anvers, 1904).

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Simon ben Yoḥai. *Secrets* = Jellinek, ed. *Bet ha-Midrasch*, 3.78–82; Eisenstein, ed. *Ozar Midrashim*, 2.555–57; Wünsche, tr. *Aus Israels Lehrhallen*, 3.146–54; Lewis, partial tr. "An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History," 321–30. S. Wertheimer, *Battē midrashōt* (Jerusalem, 1894), 2.25–26, published a Geniza fragment containing a variant version of the opening paragraphs of this text. Even-Shmuel's edition (*Midreshe ge'ullā*, 187–98) represents an attempt to create an *Urtext* from the different versions, but the result is effectively a new recension.

———. *Midrash of the Ten Kings* = Eisenstein, ed. Ozar Midrashim, 2.461–66, which is taken from Chaim M. Horvitz, ed. *Bēt 'eqed ha-aggadōt* (Frankfurt, 1881), 1.16–33; Lewis, partial tr. "An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History," 321–30.

———. *Prayer* = Jellinek, ed. *Bet ha-Midrasch*, 4.117–26; Eisenstein, ed. *Ozar Midrashim*, 2.551–55; Even-Shmuel, ed. *Midreshā gē'ullā*, 268–86; Wünsche, tr. *Aus Israels Lehrhallen*, 3.154–69; Lewis, tr. "An Apocalyptic Vision of Islamic History," 311–20.

Talmud = the Babylonian Talmud unless I specify the Jerusalem version; I use the standard format for references.

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Yohannan ha-Kohen. *Pīyūṭīm* = Weissenstern, ed. *Pīyūṭīē Yōḥannan ha-Kohen.*

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Acta sanctorum. ed. J. Bollandianus *et al.* (Antwerp and Brussels, 1643–1940). A number of Greek texts are also published in this collection.

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———. *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. J. Giles (London, 1844).

Boniface. *Letters* = M. Tangí, ed. *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (*MGH epist. Merov. et Karol, aevi 1*; Berlin, 1892); E. Emerton, tr. *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (New York, 1940).

Chron. Byz.-Arab 741 = J. Gil, ed. *Corpus scriptorum Muzarabicorum I* (Madrid, 1972, 7–14; Enrique Florez, ed. *España sagrada*, vol. 6 (Madrid, 1751), 422–32 (Appendix X); T. Mommsen, ed. *Continuatio Byzantia Arabica ad annum DCCXLI* (*MGH auctores antiquissimi* 11.2 *chronica minora saeculi IV–VII;* Berlin, 1894), 334–59. This text is translated in Excursus B above.

Chron. Hisp. 754 = J. Gil, ed. *Corpus scriptorum Muzarabicorum I* (Madrid, 1973), 16–54; T. Mommsen, ed. *Continuatio Hispana ad annum DCCLIV* (*MGH auctores antiquissimi 11.2 chronica minora saeculi IV–VII*; Berlin, 1894), 334–68; Pereira, ed./tr. *Crònica mozárabe de 754*. *Ibid*., 18–20, cites earlier editions; there is an English translation by Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 111–58.

Codex Carolinus. ed. W. Grundlach (*MGH epist. III Merov. et Karol aevi 1*; Berlin, 1892).

Eulogius. *Liber apologeticus martyrum* = J. Gil, ed. *Corpus scriptorum Muzarabicorum II* (Madrid, 1973), 475–95; PL 115, 851–70.

———. *Memoriale sanctorum* = J. Gil, ed. *Corpus scriptorum Muzarabicorum II* (Madrid, 1973), 363–459; *PL* 115, 735–818.

Fredegar = B. Krutsch, ed. *Fredegarii et aliorum chronica* (*MGH scr. rerum Merov.* 2; Hannover, 1888), 1–193; Hadrill, ed./tr. (omitting Books 13) *Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*; Kusternig, ed./tr. (omitting Books 1–2.LII) *Quellen zur Geschichte des* 7. *und 8. Jahrhunderts*, 44–271.

Istoria de Mahomet = Diaz y Diaz, ed. "Textos antimahometanos," 157–59; Eulogius, *Liber apologeticus martyrum*, §16; Colbert, tr. *Martyrs of Cordoba*, 336–38; Wolf, ed./tr. "Earliest Latin Lives of Muḥammad," 96–97/97–99.

Leo-ʿUmar. *Letter* (Latin) = Symphorianus Champerius, *De triplici disciplina cuius partes sunt philosophia naturalis*, *medicina*, *theologia*, *moralis philosophia*, *mtegrantes quadruvium* (Lyons, 1508). It was reprinted in *Maxima bibliotheca veterum patrum*., vol. 17 (Lyons, 1677), 44–47, and in *PG* 107, 315–24, but both wrongly attribute it to Leo VI and omit parts of the original introduction.

Liber pontificalis. ed. L. Duchesne, 2 vols. (Rome, 1886–92); tr. (to the end of the ninth century) Raymond Davis (Translated Texts for Historians 6, 13, 20; Liverpool, 1989, 1992, 1995).

Martin I. *Epistolae*. *PL* 87, 119–204.

Morienus the Greek. *Testament of Alchemy* = Lee Stavenhagen, ed./tr. *A Testament of Alchemy, being the Revelations of Morienus, ancient adept and hermit of Jerusalem, to Khalid ibn Yazid ibn Muʿawiya, king of the Arabs, of the divine secrets of the magisterium and accomplishment of the alchemical art* (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1974).

Passion of the Sixty Martyrs of Gaza = Delehaye, ed. "Passio sexaginta martyrum," 300–303.

Paul Albar. *Indie ulus luminosus*. *PL* 121, 513–56; J. Gil, ed. *Corpus scriptorum Muzarabicorm I* (Madrid, 1973), 270–315.

Paul the Deacon. *Histona Langobardorum*. ed. L. Bethmann and G. Waitz (*MGH scr. rerum Lang, et Ital. saeculi VI–IX*; Hannover, 1878), 45–187; W.D. Foulke, tr. *History of the Langobards* (Philadelphia, 1907).

Tultusceptru de libro domni Metobii = Diaz y Diaz, ed. "Textos antimahometanos," 163–64; Wolf, ed./tr. "Earliest Latin Lives of Muḥammad," 99–100/100.

Willibald. *Life* = O., Holder-Egger, ed. *Vita Willibaldi episcopi Eichstetensis* (*MGH senptores* 15.1; Hannover, 1887), 86–106; T. Tober and A. Molinier, eds., *Itinera Hierosolymitana et descriptions terrae sanctae* (Geneva, 1879), 243–97; partial translations by T. Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine* (London, 1848), 13–22, and Wilkinson, *Jerusalem. Pilgrims*, 125–35.

PERSIAN (*Middle unless stated otherwise*)

Bahman yasht = Behramgore T. Anklesaria, ed./tr. *Zand-î Vohûman Yasn and Two Pahlavi Fragments* (Bombay, 1957); K.A. Nosherwan, ed./Gujarati tr. *The Text of the Pahlam Zand-i-Vohūman Yašt* (Bombay, 1903); West, tr. *Pahlavi Texts*, 1.191–235.

Bundahishn = Behramgore T. Anklesaria, ed./tr. *Zandākāsīh: Iranian or Greater Bundahišn* (Bombay, 1956). I also use H.W. Bailey, transcription/tr. *The Greater Bundahišn* (Ph.D. thesis; Oxford, 1933), and West's translation of the shorter, more corrupt Indian Bundahishn in *Pahlavi Texts*, 1.3–151. For further information on editions and translations see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Bundahisn."

Dēnkard = D.M. Madan, ed. *The Pahlavi Dinkard* (Bombay, 1911); M.J. Dresden, ed. *Dēnkart: a Pahlavi Text Facsimile Edition of the Manuscript B of the K.R. Gama Oriental Institute, Bombay* (Wiesbaden, 1966); West, tr. *Pahlavi Texts*, 4.3–171 (Book 8), 4.172–397 (Book 9); 5.3–118 (Book 7), 5.119–30 (Book 5); Jean de Menasce, tr. *Le troisième livre du Dēnkart* (Paris, 1973); Shaul Shaked, transcription/tr. *The Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages* (*Dēnkard VI*) *by Aturpāt-i Ēmētān* (Persian Heritage Series 34; Boulder, Colorado, 1979). For further information on editions and translations see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Dēnkard."

Emed i Ashawahishtan. *Rivāyat* = Behramgore T. Anklesaria, ed. *Rivāyat-î Hēmīt-î Asavahistân, Vol. 1: Pahlavi Text* (Bombay, 1962); Nezhat Safa-Isfehani, transcription/tr. *Riva gai-i Hēmīt-i Ašawahistān: a Study in Zoroastrian Law* (Harvard Iranian Series 2; Harvard, 1980).

Firdawsī. *Shāhnāme* (Tehran, 1934–36), which is a. revision and completion of J.A. Vuller's Leiden 1877 edition; abridged translation by Levy, *The Epic of the Kings*. For the numerous other editions and translations, most partial, see *Elr*, *s.v.* "Šāh-nāma." This is a New Persian text that draws on Middle Persian material, whether directly or via Arabic translations.

Jāmāsp nāmag= J.J. Modi, ed./tr. *Jāmāspi, Pahlavi, Pāzend and Persian Texts* (Bombay, 1903). 1–17/19–53; H.W. Bailey, transcription/tr. "To the Zamasp-Namak," *BSOAS* 6 (1930–32), 55–60, 581–86 (with commentary at 60–85, 586–600); French translation with metrical form restored by Benveniste, "Une apocalypse pehlevie."

Manushchihr. *Dādistān ī dēnīg* = Tahmuras D. Anklesaria, ed. *The Dadistan-i Dinik: Part I, Pursisn I–XL* (Bombay, 1913), and P.K. Anklesaria, ed. *A Critical Edition of the Unedited Portion of the Dādestān-ī Dīnīk* (Ph.D. thesis; London, 1958); West, tr. *Pahlavi Texts*, 2.1–276. For further information on editions and translations see *EIr*, *s.v.* "Dādestān i Dēnīg."

Narshakhī. *Tārīkh-i Bukhārā*: I simply cite Richard N. Frye, tr. *The History of Bukhara* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954). There is an edition by Professor Razavi (Tehran, 1939), and a Russian translation by V. Lykoshin (Tashkent, 1897). This text is a New Persian abridgement of an Arabic original.

Pahlavi Ballad on the End of Times = Jehangir C. Tavadia, transcription/tr. "A Rhymed Ballad in Pahlavi," *JRAS* 1955, 30–31/31–32 (with commentary at 32–36); J.M. Jarnasp-Asana, ed. *The Pahlavi Texts contained in the Codex Mk*, Part 2 (Bombay, 1913), 160–61; Bailey, tr. *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, 195–96.

Ps.-Daniel (Judaeo-Persian). *Apocalypse* = H. Zotenberg, ed./tr. "Geschichte Daniels. Ein Apokryph," in A. Merx, ed. *Archiv für wissenschaftliche Erforschung des*

alten Testaments, vol. 1.4 (Halle, 1867–69), 386–427; Darmesteter, partial ed. (transcribed into Persian)/tr. "L'apocalypse persane de Daniel," 409–12/413–17; Jellinek, tr. (from Zotenberg's edition) *Bet ha-Midrasch*, 5.117–30; Macler, tr. "Les apocalypses apocryphes de Daniel," 4353; Wünsche, tr. (from Jellinek's Hebrew translation) *Aus Israels Lehrhallen*, 2.57–78.

Tārīkh-i Sīstān (New Persian), ed. Muḥammad Bahār (Tehran, 1935); tr. L.P. Smirnovoy (Moscow, 1974); tr. Milton Gold (Persian Heritage Series 20; Rome, 1976).

SYRIAC (*Western*)

Athanasius of Balad. *Letter* = Nau, ed./tr. "Littérature canonique syriaque inédite," 129–30/128–29.

Baḥira (Syriac) = Gottheil, ed./tr. "A Christian Bahira Legend," 202–42/203–52. Gottheil edits the complete Jacobite Ms. Sachau 87 and the defective Nestorian Ms. Sachau 10.

Bar Hebraeus. *Chron. eccles.* = Jean Baptiste Abbeloos and Thomas J. Lamy, ed./tr. *Gregorii Barhebraei chronicon ecclesiasticum.*, 3 vols. (Paris and Louvain, 1872–77).

———. *Chron. syr.* = Paul Bedjan, ed. *Gregorii Barhebraei chronicon syriacum.* (Paris, 1890); E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu 'l-Faraj, commonly known as Bar Hebraeus, being the first part of his political history of the world* (London, 1932), which comprises a translation (vol. 1) and facsimile (vol. 2) of Bodleian Ms. Hunt. 52. There is a recent reprint of Bedjan's edition by the St. Ephrem der Syrer Kloster of Holland entitled *The Chronography of Bar Hebraeus/Maktbānūtzabnē d-Bar 'Ebrāyā* (Glane/Losser, 1987).

Chron. Maronite = E.W. Brooks, ed. J.B. Chabot, tr. *Chronicon Maroniticum* (*CSCO* 3–4 *scr. syri* 3–4: Paris, 1904), 43–74/37–57. Notices pertaining to the seventh century are translated by Nöldeke (with edition), "Zur Geschichte der Araber," 89–94/94–98; Nau, "Opuscules maronites," 322–26; Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 29–35.

Chron. Zuqnin = J.B. Chabot, ed. *Incerti avctoris chronicon anonymum pseudo-Dionysianum. vulgo dictum. II* (*CSCO* 104 *scr. syri* 53; Paris, 1933); French translation with same title by Robert Hespel (*CSCO* 507 *scr. syri* 213; Louvain, 1989). This volume covers the years 488–775; volume one falls outside the period of this book and has not been used. The fourth part, covering 586–775, was edited and translated separately by Chabot as *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahrē, quatrième partie* (Paris, 1895). The third part has been translated by Witold Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahrē: Chronicle* (*known also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin*). *Part III* (Translated Texts for Historians 22; Liverpool, 1996). A French translation of Parts Three and Four has been prepared by Amir Harrak.

Chron. 819 = J.B. Chabot, ed./tr. (on the basis of a transcript made by I. Barsaum) *Chronicon anonymum ad AD 819 pertinens* in *Chron. 1234*, 1.3–22/1–16 (see

next but one entry); *ibid.*, 1.10–15, covering the years 590–717, are translated by Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 76–80.

Chron. 846 = E.W. Brooks, ed. J.B. Chabot, tr. *Chronicon ad annum domini 846 pertinens* (*CSCO* 3–4 *scr. syri* 3–4; Paris, 1904), 157–238/123–80. There is an edition and translation of the entries for the years 574–846 by Brooks, "Syriac Chronicle of 846," and a translation of the notices for 600–717, where divergent from those of *Chron. 819*, by Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 8182.

Chron. 1234 = J-B. Chabot, ed. *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, 2 vols. (*CSCO* 81–82 *scr. syri* 36=37; Paris, 1916–20). The first volume was translated into Latin by Chabot (*CSCO* 109 *scr. syri* 56; Paris, 1937), the second into French by A. Abouna (*CSCO* 354 *scr. syri* 154; Louvain, 1972. Notices for the years 582–717 are translated by Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 111–221.

Ehnesh Inscription = Palmer, ed./tr. "Messiah and Mahdi," who provides references for the earlier publications of this inscription by Chabot and Pognon; translation and brief discussion are given by Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 71–74.

Fragment on the Arab Conquest = E.W. Brooks, ed./J.B. Chabot, tr. *Narratio de expugnatione Syriae ab arabibus* (*CSCO* 3–4 *scr. syri* 3–4; Paris, 1904) 75/60; Nöldeke, ed./tr. "Geschichte der Araber," 77–78/78–79; Palmer, tr. *West-Synan Chronicles*, 2–4.

Gabriel of Qartmin. *Life* = Ms. BL Add. 17, 265 (13th century); A. Palmer, ed. *Tashītā d-qadīshā Mār Shemu'il w-Mār Shem'ūn w-Mār Gabr'il* (St. Ephrem der Syrer Kloster; Glane/Losser, 1983), 55–92; repr. in microfiche supplement to Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, where page numbers are given in Roman numerals; Nau, partial ed./tr. "Notice historique," 98–111/55–68. Later versions of the *Life* are to be found in Ms. Paris syr. 375 (ed./tr. of fols. 99–102 by Nau, "Un colloque," 274–79) and in Ms. Sachau 221 (summary and analysis by Sachau, *Verzeichnis der syrischen Handschriften*, 2.581–87 and see 2.535–36).

George of Resh'aina. *Syriac Life of Maximus* = Brock, ed./tr. "Syriac Life of Maximus," 302–13/314–19.

Gospel of the Twelve Apostles = Harris, ed./tr. *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*; Suermann, ed./tr. *Geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 98–109.

Jacob of Edessa. *Replies to Addai*, nos. 1–71 = de Lagarde, ed. *Reliquiae iuris*, 117–44; Lamy, ed./tr. *Dissertatio de Syrorum fide*, 98–171; Kayser, tr. *Die Canones Jacobis von Edessa*, 11–33; Nau, tr. *Canons et résolutions*, 38–66. Nos. 72–98 = Ms. Harvard syr. 93, fols. 16b–18a, 25a–33b. Nos. 99–116 = Vööbus, ed./tr. *Synodicon*, 258–61/235–38 (nos. 1–3, 6, 8–21 in Vööbus' numbering).

———. *Replies to John*, A1–16 = Ms. Harvard syr. 93, fols. 37a–44b; 15 of these (and 2 additional ones) are found in Vööbus, ed./tr. *Synodicon*, 245–54/225–33.

———. *Replies to John*, B1-27 = Vööbus, ed./tr. *Synodicon*, 233–45/215–25.

———. *Canons*, nos. 1–31 = Ms. Harvard syr. 93, fols. 18a–25a; 23 of these are given in Vööbus, ed./tr. *Synodicon*, 269–72/245–47.

———. *Canons* (*BH*) = Bar Hebraeus. *Nomocanon.* ed. Paul Bedjan (Paris, 1898); the material pertaining to Jacob is edited and translated by Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, 5–28 (back)/35–46, and translated by Nau, *Canons et résolutions*, 69–75. For further information on Jacob's canons and resolutions see Excursus A above.

———. *Chronicle* = E.W. Brooks, ed./tr. *Chronicon Iacobi Edesseni* (*CSCO* 5–6 scr. *syri* 5–6; Paris, 1905), 261–330/199–258; *idem*, tr. "The Chronological Canon of James of Edessa," 266–327; Habbi, ed./tr. *Tawārīkh suryānīya*, 53–122/126–201; the seventh-century notices are translated by Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 36–40. For Jacob's preface to his chronicle see Wright, *Catalogue*, 1.106; Michael the Syrian 7.II, 128.

———. *Letters* = Ms. BL Add. 12, 172, fols. 65–135, which is written by two hands (fols. 65–78, 79–135), both of the ninth century, and contains 27 letters: 1 to anon., 6 to Eustathius of Dara, 1 to Abraham the priest, 1 to Thomas the Sculptor, 1 to Cyrius, 16 to John the Stylite of Litarb and 1 to George the Deacon. They are described by Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.592–605 (no. 707), and most of those in the second hand (to John the Stylite and George the Deacon) have been published in some form:

No. 1 (79a–81a): ed./tr. R. Schröter, "Erster Brief Jacobs von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten," *ZDMG* 24 (1870), 267–72/272–76; summary and partial tr. by Nau, "Cinq lettres," 434–36.

No. 2 (81a–81b): summary and partial tr. by Nau, "Cinq lettres," 436–37.

No. 3 (81b–83a): tr. Nau, "Cinq lettres," 431–34.

No. 4 (83a–85a): ed./tr. François Nau, "Lettre de Jacques d'Edesse au diacre Georges sur une hymne composée par S. Ephrem et citée par S. Jean Maron," *ROC* 6 (1901), 120–24/125–28.

No. 5 (85a–87b): summary and partial tr. by Nau, "Cinq lettres," 437–40.

No. 6 (87b–91a): ed./tr. François Nau, "Lettre de Jacques d'Edesse sur la généalogie de la sainte Vierge," *ROC* 6 (1901), 517–22/522–31.

No. 7 (91a–94b): ed./tr. François Nau, "Lettre de Jacques d'Edesse à Jean le Stylite sur la chronologie biblique et la date de la naissance du Messie," *ROC* 5 (1900), 583–87/588–96.

No. 8 (94b–97b): tr. Nau, "Cinq lettres," 428–31.

Nos. 10–11 (99a–110a): summarised by Cook, *Early Muslim. Dogma*, 145–46 (on fixed terms of life).

Nos. 12–13 (110a–121b): William Wright, ed. "Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa," *Journal of Sacred Literature* ser. iv, 10 (1867), 434–60; tr. François Nau, "Traduction des lettres XII et XIII de Jacques d'Edesse (exégèse biblique)," *ROC* 10 (1905), 198–208, 258–79.

No. 14 (122a–26b): John puts a number of questions to Jacob, of which the one on direction of prayer (124a) is translated in Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 173 n. 30, and in the entry on "Sacred Direction of Prayer" in Chapter 13 above.

Outside of BL Add. 12, 172 there exist three letters to a certain Stephen (Scher, *Catalogue*, 61, Codex 81) and one letter each to the priest Addai (Wright, *Catalogue*, 1.233, no. 300), Simeon the Stylite (*ibid.*, 2.800, no. 799), the deacon Barhadbeshabba (*ibid.*, 3.1149, no. 972), John the Stylite (Mingana, *Catalogue*, 10), Constantine (Payne-Smith *Catalogus*, 462, no. 142), Lazarus the ascetic (Ms. Sharf. Patr. 79, fob 27a, noted by Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonessammlungen*, 1A.211 n. 71– cf. Mingana, *Catalogue*, 11), a certain Daniel (Assemani, *BO*, 1.487), and George, bishop of Serug (G. Phillips, ed. *A Letter by Mar Jakob of Edessa on Syriac Orthography*, London, 1869; J.P. Martin, ed./tr. *Jacobi episcopi Edesseni epistola ad Georgium episcopum Sarugensem de orthographia syriaca*, Paris, 1869). There is another on Syriac orthography (Assemani, *BO*, 1.478–79), and one on the divine dispensation (Payne-Smith, *Catalogus*, 460, no. 142). In addition, there exist extracts from letters preserved in citations by later authors or in manuscripts; e.g. to the priest Paul of Antioch (Assemani, *BO* 1.477, cited by Bar Hebraeus), to a certain Moses (Baumstark, "Die Zeit der Einfuhrung des Weihnachtsfestes in Konstantinopel," *OC* 2, 1902, 44243, cited by George of B'altan), to Bar Hadad, bishop of Telia (Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.854, no. 827, cited by Moshe bar Kepha), and to the Melkites of Ḥarran (Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Mss. at Cambridge*, 2.786–87, Add. 2889). Finally, there are the letters giving replies to the questions of correspondents discussed in Excursus A above. Though all the aforementioned are designated as a "letter" (*eggartā*), some are more in the nature of a treatise, a homily or a question-and-answer collection. This will be explored and many of the letters edited in a forthcoming study by Jan van Ginkel.

———. *Scholia* = G. Phillips, ed./tr. *Scholia on Passages of the Old Testament* (London, 1864).

———. *Tract against the Armenians* = Ms. Paris syr. 111, fols. 192a–93b; ed./tr. Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, 3–4/34–5; tr. Nau, *Canons et résolutions*, 67–69. This is part of a dialogue between a pupil and various luminaries of the church. The question put to Jacob is whether anything can render an altar impure, to which he responds with an attack on the religious malpractices of the Armenians; this has probably been excerpted from a tract on

such a subject. See Zotenberg, *Catalogue*, 72; Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, 4.

Maruta, *Life* = François Nau, ed./tr. "Histoire de Marouta métropolitain de Tagrit et de tout l'Orient (VIe–VIIe siècle) écrite par son successeur Denha," *PO* 3 (1909), 61–96.

Michael the Syrian = Chabot, ed./tr. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*. There exists also an Arabic translation (see *ibid.*, 1.xliii-1) and an abridged Armenian version (see the section on Armenian sources above).

Patriarch John-Arab Emir, *Colloquy* = Nau, ed./tr. "Un colloque," 248–53/257–64; Suermann, tr. "Orientalische Christen und der Islam," 122–25; Atiya, tr. "Al-jadal al-dīnī al-Masīḥī al-islāmī," 411–14. Gerrit Reinink has prepared a new edition and translation of this text.

Ps.-Ephraem. *Sermon on the End of Times* = E. Beck, ed. *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones* III (*CSCO* 320 *scr. syri* 138; Louvain, 1972), 60–71 (Sermo 5); reproduced with German translation by Suermann, *Geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 12–33.

Ps.-Ezra. *Apocalypse* = F. Baethgen, ed./tr. "Beschreibung der syrischen Handschrift 'Sachau 131' auf der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 6 (1886), 200–204/204–10; Chabot, ed./tr. "L'apocalypse d'Esdras," 243–50/333–41 (according to Ms. Paris 326). It is also found in Ms. BL Add. 25, 875 (Wright, *Catalogue*, 3.1065, no. 922) and in a Vatican Ms. (Assemani, *BO* 2, 498; 3.1, 282).

Ps.-Methodius, *Apocalypse* = Gerrit J. Reinink, ed./tr. *Die syrische Apokalypse des pseudo-Methodius* (*CSCO* 540–41 *scr. syri* 220–21; Louvain, 1993); Martinez, ed./tr. *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, 58–92/122–54; Suermann, ed./tr. *Geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 34–85; Alexander, tr. T*he Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 36–51.

Ps.-Methodius (Edessan fragment) = François Nau, ed./tr. "Révélations et légendes. Méthodius-Clément-Andronicus," *JA* ser. xi, 9 (1917), 415–52; Martinez, ed./tr. *Eastern Christian Apocalyptic*, 222–28/232–39; Suermann, ed./tr. *Geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 86–97.

Qenneshre Fragment = Nau, ed./tr. "Notice historique," 124–35/114–23.

Sergius the Stylite. *Disputation against a Jew* = Hayman, ed./tr. *Disputation of Sergius against a Jew*.

Short Chron. 705 = Land, ed. *Anecdota Syriaca*, 2.10–11 (Addenda et emendanda in tomo primo); Nau, tr. "Un colloque," 226 n. 1; Palmer, tr. *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 43.

Short Chron. 724 = Land, ed./tr. *Anecdota Syriaca*, 1.40/41; it also appears appended to Thomas the Presbyter's *Chronicle* (*CSCO* 3–4 *scr. syri* 3–4, 155/119; see the entry on him at the end of this section).

Short Chron. 775 = E.W. Brooks, ed./tr. *Expositio quomodo se habeant generations et familiae et anni ab Adamo usque hunc diem* (*CSCO* 5–6 *scr. syri* 5–6; Paris, 1905), 337–49/267–75; Habbi, ed./tr. *Tawārīkh suryānīya*, 228–40/243–58. Notices for the years 582–724 are translated by Palmer, *West-Syrian Chronicles*, 51–52; the whole chronicle is described and notices from 618 to 775 are translated in the relevant entry in Chapter 10 above.

Simeon of the Olives. *Life* = Philoxenus Y. Dolabani, ed. *Maktabẓabnē d-'ūmrā qaddīshā d-Qartmīn* (Mardin, 1959), 125–58, which is a loose edition of Ms. Mardin Orth. 8 (no. 259), fols. 203–47 (see Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, 161); summarised by Brock, "The Fenqitho of the Monastery of Mar Gabriel," 174–79. An edition is being prepared by Andrew Palmer.

Syriac CS: the Syriac common source of the chronicles of Theophanes, Agapius and Dionysius of Tellmaḥre (as preserved by Michael the Syrian and *Chron. 1234*), written by Theophilus of Edessa (see the entry on him in Chapter 10 above).

Theodotus of Amida. *Life* = Ms. Damascus Patr. 12/18 (12th century), fols. 58a–69b (no. 83). See Arthur Vööbus, "Découverte de la biographie de Théodote d'Amid par Šem'ōn de Samosate," *Le Muséon* 89 (1976), 39–42, and idem, "Discovery of an Unknown Syrian Author: Theōdōtë of Amid," *Abr-Nahrain* 24 (1986), 196–201. An edition and translation has been prepared by Andrew Palmer.

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In the arrangement adopted here, the Arabic definite article (al-) at the beginning of an entry, the transliteration symbols for the Arabic letters *hamza* (ʾ) and *ʿayn* (ʿ), and distinctions between different letters transliterated by the same Latin character (e.g. *d* and *ḍ*) are ignored for purposes of alphabetization.

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